Opera for Everyone

The Industry's Experiments with American Opera in the Digital Age

Megan Steigerwald Ille

Opera for Everyone

Opera for Everyone

The Industry's Experiments with American Opera in the Digital Age

Megan Steigerwald Ille

University of Michigan Press
Ann Arbor

To Chris

Contents

Digital materials related to this title can be found on the Fulcrum platform via the following citable URL: https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.12081134

Figures

Tables

Acknowledgments

Much like an operatic production—experimental or traditional, inside or outside of the opera house—*Opera for Everyone* has benefited from the efforts of a cast, crew, and production team (and cheering audience) too numerous to list here. Nonetheless, I will try to account for the rich and varied forms of support I have received throughout this process, with thanks in advance for the grace of those whom I fail to mention.

Most prominently featured on the operatic stage should be the wonderful ethnographic collaborators who have truly made this project possible. Thank you to the members of The Industry who warmly welcomed me into your worlds and so generously shared your experiences. Thanks especially to Elizabeth Cline and Yuval Sharon for your support of this project since day one. Finally, a special thanks to those members of the *Sweet Land* creation, production, and performance teams. I was and am humbled to have gotten the opportunity to be even a small part of your community.

The kernels of this book began with my dissertation research at the Eastman School of Music. Thank you to my advisor, Melina Esse, whose openness to what was at the time an unconventional topic meant I was able to pursue this work from the beginning of the research process with full support.

Research for chapter 3 and my initial fieldwork trip for chapter 4 was supported by the American Musicological Society's Holmes D'Accone Grant for Travel and Research in the History of Opera and the Paul R. Judy Center for Innovation and Research. Additional fieldwork trips for material in chapter 4 were supported by the American Culture Studies Program at Washington University in St. Louis. Earlier versions of portions of chapter 2 appear as "Live in the Limo: Remediating Voice and Performing Spectatorship in Twenty-First Century Opera," *Opera Quarterly* 36, nos. 1–2 (Winter–Spring

2020): 1–26, https://doi.org/10.1093/oq/kbaa012. A portion of chapter one appears as "The Operatic Ear: Mediating Aurality," *Sound Stage Screen* 1, no. 1 (Spring 2021): 119–143, https://doi.org/10.13130/sss14186. My thanks to the University of Oxford Press and the Milan University Press for allowing the reprint of this material. My sincere thanks to Christopher Cerrone, The Industry, Constance Vale, Jill Thomsen, and Raven Chacon for extending their permission for images and/or score excerpts.

Opera for Everyone's current form took shape during my time as a post-doctoral fellow in American Culture Studies at Washington University in St. Louis, and specifically during a book workshop instigated by Pete Benson (then) of American Culture Studies.. Thank you to Abram Van Engen and Maire Murphy for bringing this idea to fruition. In addition to Abram and Maire, thank you to Iver Bernstein, Joanna Dee Das, Alexander Stefaniak, Todd Decker, and Paige McGinley for generously sharing your ideas and feedback during the September 2019 book workshop. Special thanks are due to Eric Drott and Joy Calico for traveling to St. Louis and sharing your time and expertise as guest participants in the same workshop.

My colleagues at the University of Cincinnati have been supportive of this project since my time at the College-Conservatory of Music (CCM) began in fall 2020. Thanks especially to Jonathan Kregor, whose administrative support meant that I was able to navigate the obligations of a 4/4 teaching load with as much time to complete the manuscript as was possible. Thanks also to my CCM research assistants Katerina Hall, Kabelo Chirwa, Jacob Ottmer, and especially Caitlan Truelove, the last of whom set musical examples and tirelessly copyedited citations. My doctoral seminar students Ian Axness, Erin Alcorn, Michael Ebie, Jacob Ludwig, Brian McCann, and Bryce Newcomer provided wonderful support as we thought through the dimensions of coloniality in Western art music together in Spring 2022. Additional thanks are due to my CCM colleagues, Matthew Peattie, Jenny Doctor, Steve Meyer, Jeongwon Joe, Stefan Fiol, Darlene Miller, the other members of the Composition, Musicology, and Theory division, and especially my fellow junior colleagues, Kristy Swift and Shelina Brown.

I was fortunate enough to give a number of talks on the book material while completing the manuscript. Thank you to those scholarly interlocutors at conferences and invited talks for your rich discussion of my ideas. Thanks especially to Lea Luka Sikau, Juliana Pistorius, Colleen Renihan, and Neo Muyanga for conversations and feedback around our shared interests. Thanks also to the members of the Black Opera Research Network as well as Gundula Kreuzer and the members of the Opera Studies Working

Group for welcoming me into rich virtual conversation about contemporary opera as I was finishing the manuscript.

Giulia Accornero, Esther Kurtz, Caitlin Hines, and Katie Grogan have been faithful and supportive writing partners, not to mention incredible friends who also provided written feedback on chapters. Thank you. Thanks also to Jacek Blaszkiewicz, Gabrielle Cornish, and Jane Sylvester for your peer mentorship and support since our time at Eastman, and especially as I have finished this manuscript. A special thanks to Ryan Ebright for his thoughtful perspective on all things late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century opera, to say nothing of his generous feedback on my ideas. Scott Linford, thank you for your enthusiasm for my methodology and for your discerning feedback on the introduction. Mark Helms, Ian Axness, William Robin, Liz Blaszkiewicz, Jacek Blaszkiewicz, Jenny Doctor, and Helena Kopchick Spencer generously read drafts (sometimes multiple times) throughout the writing process and provided invaluable feedback. Special thanks are also due to the anonymous readers who provided commentary on both the proposal/sample chapters and the full manuscript. Your generous and thoughtful perspectives greatly enriched my ideas and improved the final manuscript.

Thank you to Paige McGinley and Joy Calico, who have tirelessly supported me throughout this process. Your mentorship—including a willingness to read drafts, talk through ideas, and support me through the demands of a high teaching load—has been immeasurable, and I am grateful.

Thank you to my editor, Sara Cohen, who has shepherded this project with enthusiasm and care since our first meeting. Thanks also to the members of the Faculty Executive Committee for their feedback, Annie Carter for editorial assistance, Danielle Coty-Fattal for her work promoting the book, production editor Mary Hashman, copyeditor Richard Isomaki, indexer PJ Heim, and to Mary Francis, whose excitement about my monograph in its early stages led me to the wonderful team at the University of Michigan Press and Sara's discerning editorial eye.

Now to thank those individuals who have been cheering in the wings all along: thanks to Willow and Ollie for the feline support and (sleepy) company as I wrote. Thank you to the dear friends outside academia—too many to name, but you know who you are—who have listened to me talk about this book and patiently put off time together for more occasions than I can count so I could finish writing. Thank you to my sister, Alison Steigerwald, who makes both academia and life less lonely (and a lot more fun). Thank you to my dad, Joe Steigerwald, who is a daily model of perseverance and

patient curiosity—necessary skills for both ethnography and writing. Thank you to my mom, Connie Steigerwald, for helping me fall in love with books from an early age. I don't know if this is the text either of us had in mind when I decided I wanted to be an author in elementary school, but I do know it wouldn't be here if it weren't for you. Thank you to my daughter Maeve, whose kicks have kept me company during the last nine months of this book's life, and whose bright eyes and transcendent smile have given the production period new meaning. And thanks, most of all, to Chris, who has lived with this book—and me—with patience, warmth, humor, and tireless support. This book is dedicated to him.

Introduction

On October 24, 2014, journalist Heather Heise published an audio interview with Yuval Sharon, the artistic director of the Los Angeles–based experimental opera company The Industry, titled "Opera for Everyone." In the eight-minute recorded conversation, Sharon shares the inspiration behind the founding of The Industry:

> What if opera is actually an emerging art form? What if it's an art form that is developing and finding its audience and finding new ways of expression? I started The Industry with that mission, that idea of breaking those boundaries, and the only way to do that really is to bring opera into the public sphere. We wanted to eliminate that gap between everyday life and art making. Opera has a particularly bad rap in this scenario because the first operas were done in private rooms. The Florentine Camerata was all about this very private and privileged room where you were invited in to see this opera if you were a friend of the prince. So, for me, the idea of that elitism, that's something I've really been trying to explode and get out of the private realm of these temples of art. Nothing against them, I love them. . . . I don't have anything against the proscenium arch or traditional theaters, but if we are going to keep the art form alive, I think we have to do the things that keep artistic excellence high while inviting the public in to mingle with what we are doing.[1]

In this quotation, Sharon draws together two concepts key to understanding The Industry's vision of "opera for everyone": the operatic genre's historical elitism, and the role performance space plays in mediating this generic exclusivity. Sharon's words highlight another juxtaposition as well, that between

the site-specific spectacles created by The Industry and the fourth-walled grandeur of the "temples of art" where opera is typically performed in the United States. The Industry's approach to operatic production and, indeed, the company's working definition of the operatic genre represent a dramatic change within the opera world in the twenty-first century: a deliberate exodus from the institutional spaces of opera houses. His words also allude to one of the key tensions between historical and contemporary opera central to this book. As *Opera for Everyone* demonstrates, The Industry's attempts to subvert opera's elite reputation and create "opera for everyone" are complicated by the company's own entanglements with the genre's historical preoccupations.

The production Heise and Sharon discuss in the interview, *Invisible Cities* (2013), was staged in the public space of LA's Union Station. Both audience members and performers wandered the station during the performance, the musicians singing into microphones that transmitted the opera to the audience via headphones, regardless of where any individual was in the busy transit center. *Invisible Cities* called on passersby, audience members, and even the houseless individuals who find safe space in the station to enact operatic entertainment. However, it was far from opera for "everyone." Audience member Andrew observed:

> Union Station is a place in LA where people with nowhere else to go, go. And [the staging in Union Station] was potentially problematic but also interesting in that it forced the audience to engage with that. . . . I'm not sure where I came down on that, like if it was good or bad, because in certain points the show did in a way kind of co-opt the environment, which included these people who were homeless people.[2]

As Andrew's observations illustrate, although *Invisible Cities* was performed in a public space that was for "everyone," not every person occupies space in the same way. *Invisible Cities* may have brought spectating Angelenos face-to-face with the housing inequalities of their city, but it also incorporated houseless individuals into the performance without their consent.[3] Additionally, musicologist Nina Eidsheim has pointed to how the opera enacted a form of sonic gentrification, in which paying audience members could listen to an acoustically enhanced version of the production through headphones while others in the station heard only unmediated voices sans orchestra.[4]

The Industry's 2015 opera *Hopscotch* exemplifies a similar tension between public and private access. Performed in limousines, on rooftops, and in

more mundane spaces such as bookstores and parking lots, *Hopscotch* could be viewed in person or through audience-created livestreamed footage sent to a public viewing space in downtown LA. Referred to as the "Central Hub," this space was open to ticketed and nonticketed spectators alike and contained casual seating arranged around a number of television screens playing the various operatic scenes. Performer Marja Lisa Kay explained that in comparison to a work done inside a theater, "[*Hopscotch*] was done more for the people. I think it was more accessible. It was for the high end—the people in the limos—and also the free end, for the people who just wanted to come by and see what it was about at the Central Hub."[5] Despite Kay's observations, *Hopscotch*'s presence in certain public spaces like the gentrifying Latinx neighborhood of Boyle Heights also ignited protests by an organization that saw the opera as a manifestation of class privilege.[6] This group, the Maoist antigentrification organization Serve the People LA (STPLA), described *Hopscotch* as

> a group of exclusively white people strolling around the park; one person, dressed like a pseudo-vaudevillian in front of a paletero cart, playing it like a drum, a woman on the Hollenbeck Park stage playing the cajón, dressed like a forgotten purple power Ranger, a woman on roller skates with a parasol, and a man, in a deep white V-neck T-shirt with a fedora singing, leading the entire absurd group. A circus of white, privileged petite-bourgeoisie literally occupying a historically oppressed neighborhood that has and is fighting against gentrification.[7]

As this description implies, "opera for everyone" is a politically fraught statement. Why should "everyone" be interested in opera to begin with? Daring models of performance can change the experience of opera for some spectators, but the move from opera house to the street relies on the premise that "everyone" occupies the street in the same way and that this space is free to be occupied.[8] Presenting an opera through alternative means also does not necessarily free it from bourgeois stereotypes of the genre. The mobility within public spaces that makes The Industry's productions possible is also a privilege attached to class, race, gender, and even genre. Opera is welcomed into public spaces because of its common perception as high-brow art, whereas other genres of music might be approached by those in power more skeptically.[9]

While Sharon expresses a desire to share opera with different audiences from an aesthetic perspective, the phrase "opera for everyone"—a phrase

eventually used by The Industry as a marketing slogan—also communicates an economic mission. As documented by economists William J. Baumol and William G. Bowen in 1966, the widely discussed phenomenon of cost disease describes the process by which the costs to put on live performance increase while the amount of "product" produced by the laborers engaged in the performance stays steady.[10] Moreover, in the twenty-first-century United States, the genre of opera is frequently seen as a stuffy, marginalized art form, a signifier of cultural capital, and octogenarian entertainment, what musicologist Lawrence Kramer famously refers to as "opera with a capital O."[11] The negative perception of Opera coupled with cost disease drastically shapes the economic possibilities of operatic performance. In sum, opera is expensive to produce and unpopular to attend. A greater number of audience members—the eponymous "everyone"—offers one way of overcoming this dual challenge by increasing operatic demand.

One of the reasons The Industry's new model of producing opera has drawn significant attention is its seemingly appealing financial potential. A common misperception is that the performances of The Industry and other companies that produce work outside of traditional musical institutions are cheaper to produce and sell out more quickly to a broader, more economically and racially diverse audience. This story of success is only partially true. These operas might hint at the possibility of new funding models for operatic production, but they are still bound to traditional US patronage structures, including donations and grants. Scaling up the "opera for everyone" approach to achieve profit, however, cannot be consistently attained through The Industry's model.

And yet the works of The Industry are also hardly opera for *no one*, nor is the company's model of production an economic lost cause. Since The Industry's founding in 2010, one of the organization's primary missions has been to "expand definitions of opera" and, in so doing, make the form accessible beyond the four walls of the opera house. Creating opera for everyone also means producing opera that acknowledges the genre's development within the structures of coloniality and white supremacy that have persisted into the twenty-first century. To this end, the narrative of The Industry's 2020 opera *Sweet Land* was written expressly to confront the violence and racism at the core of the founding of the United States. *Sweet Land* was a deeply collaborative project that prioritized the contributions of a multi-racial, multiethnic creative team and cast, many of whose perspectives are not featured in mainstream twenty-first-century operatic performance. Like *Invisible Cities* and *Hopscotch*, *Sweet Land* was also an opera meant to expand

perceptions of the genre. At the same time, *Sweet Land* also operated under more inclusive means than that of The Industry's earlier productions: as this book shows, opera for everyone signals differently within this racially and ethnically diverse context.

Throughout this book, I use the phrase "opera for everyone" as short-hand for the multivalent ways The Industry has approached the operatic genre since its founding. Perhaps conveying the ambiguity of this mission, the phrase "opera for everyone" has also drawn critique.[12] Variations upon this slogan like the Cincinnati Opera, Chicago Opera Theater, and LA Opera's (unaffiliated) "opera for all" programs have also begun to appear in other US company efforts at marketing or community outreach.[13] Auxiliary programming, or performances beyond the mainstage for traditional opera companies that emblematize this paradigm of access, has been a part of opera companies' efforts to reach audiences beyond the walls of the opera house at least since the 1970s. The outsized press attention attracted by The Industry as well as the company's digital modifications to these types of public performances, however, might be understood as playing a role in shaping the forms these most recent initiatives take.[14] The Industry, on the other hand, has only used the phrase "opera for everyone" once, on a bright yellow marketing postcard with a Carolingian-inspired font created to distribute to supporters during the company's initial years (Figure I.1).[15]

Just as The Industry's "Opera for Everyone" postcard paradoxically refers to a mission of access while visually implying notions of Western antiquity, my use of the phrase in this book is deliberately ambivalent and meant to invoke the simultaneous and sometimes conflicting meanings with which I have opened this discussion. These contradictions include accessibility and inclusivity but also financial instability for artists and organizations and assumptions about public space and performance. Similarly, the concept of opera for everyone in the title of this monograph may seem to contradict the notion of "experimentation"—and thus an implied exclusivity—also in the title. These tensions deliberately illustrate the productive instability central to the productions of The Industry and, indeed, my research on the company. My work begins to answer the following questions: Should, or can opera be for everyone, and do operas outside of the opera house function differently for "everyone" than those within? Do experimental practices explored by companies like The Industry coexist with notions of accessibility? What structural inequalities in the US operatic ecosystem, including the conditions of performers laboring in traditional and experimental spaces, must change for this statement to be

Figure 1.1. "Opera for Everyone" promotional postcard. Author's own.

true? This book shows that the answers to these questions are intertwined because reproducing operatic convention often means reproducing precarious economic and labor conditions. While challenging opera's conventions can productively highlight and even stabilize the precarities at the heart of the genre, such outcomes are far from guaranteed.

Opera for Everyone draws on seven years of multisited ethnography, representing an important methodological shift in opera studies. While contemporary and historical operatic performance have long been an object of musicological study, ethnographic methodologies respond to increased critical interest in opera scholarship informed by practitioners. Moreover, this methodological orientation allows me to move away from the primacy of an operatic text that still dominates a significant portion of scholarship focused on performance. In recent decades, a number of scholars have observed that this operatic text is far from unified, noting opera's "clash of systems,"[16] "surplus of signature,"[17] and, most famously, David Levin's notion of opera's ontological "unsettledness."[18] Levin, whose work is a familiar touchstone throughout this book, compares the performance text and the operatic text—that is, "opera

in performance" versus the "score, the libretto, and the stage directions prior to performance"—to point out the ways specific productions emphasize certain elements in performance.[19] The Industry's operatic creations signal a new way of thinking about the operatic genre that, rather than focusing on the presentation of a single text (be it performance text or operatic text), instead highlight the role of each individual in creating a specific work.[20] This shift invites—even demands—an ethnographic methodology.

My methodological approach works against a singular understanding of operatic performance and is therefore intertwined with one of the book's overarching claims: a definition of opera that highlights its multiplicity as an art object. An ethnographic analysis of opera foregrounds the genre's multiplicity: through each collaborator's lens, opera is an amalgamation of multiple individual interpretations.[21] My work thus highlights the voices, observations, and experiences of performers who perhaps best represent the economic precarity and aesthetic possibilities of operatic performance in the twenty-first century. In so doing, this book envisions a mode of polyphonic criticism that compliments the genre's polyphonic performances.

In this context, The Industry's works offer a helpful emphasis on operatic processes over operatic products, which brings attention to the individuals laboring within operatic systems and the inequalities therein. The stakes of opera's ontological tensions are more than aesthetic; they also raise issues related to political economy and the ethics of representation. I investigate not only The Industry's definition of opera, but also ask what this definition of opera reveals about operatic production, both in and out of the opera house, in the twenty-first-century United States. The book traces the path of The Industry from *Crescent City* (2012), the company's first production, to *Sweet Land* (2020), the company's final production before transitioning to a three-member artistic director cooperative model in 2021. While telling the story of The Industry's experimental efforts in opera, my ethnographic research also highlights the individual musicians, dancers, creators, and producers who shaped new modes of spectatorial engagement and narrative. In this way, the "everyone" in the book's title also acknowledges these individuals, treating The Industry as a collection of people with different experiences rather than a homogenous, agentive block. Their nuanced perspectives fill in the polarities between exclusion and access, individual experimentation and the rigidity of late capitalism within which opera in the United States operates.

From Recession to Pandemic: Operatic Contexts

The Industry's story of generic experimentation within the US opera industry has been shaped by the political and social events of the first two decades of the twenty-first century. Like most cultural institutions, opera companies were not spared the effects of the 2008 Great Recession. In the twenty-first century, most opera companies in the United States are designated nonprofits, meaning they are exempt from federal taxes, do not distribute profits to officers, members, or directors, and are created for purposes other than generating profit.[22] Many healthy nonprofits—though not all opera companies—run on income generated from an invested-principal endowment. Thus, the recession impacted some companies directly due to declining stock prices, decreased endowments, and less investment income for operating budgets. Declining stock market prices had other indirect but substantial effects on regional opera houses in the United States, which survive on a combination of grants and donations. As donors' pocketbooks shrank, so too did their financial support. Most opera companies faced both budget reductions and scheduling changes in the aftermath of 2008. Some were forced to dramatically restructure their modes of operation. For example, Opera Theater of Pittsburgh cut its budget by 40 percent and eventually shifted to a summer festival model in 2012.[23] Partially due to the recession's effects on the arts industry, small and large companies ranging from the New York City Opera to Pacific Opera, Berkshire Opera, the Baltimore Opera Company, Connecticut Opera, and Orlando Opera closed.[24]

The dire financial situation precipitated by the Great Recession exacerbated another tension already present in twenty-first-century US opera production: a tendency toward conservative programming that favors trusted canonic works over new or experimental operas. As I discuss in chapter 3, while adventurous programming such as that initiated by the Houston Grand Opera's David Gockley in the closing decades of the twentieth century is certainly a substantial part of US opera history, this experimentation is not a given. Skepticism on the part of US audiences about "concept driven" or *Regieoper* productions has meant that most "traditional" houses program more or less literal interpretations of canonic works and avoid interpretations that rely on substantive dramaturgical interventions or seasons that rely heavily on new works.[25] In turn, ticket sales from these "safe" interpretations of canonic works tend to subsidize the ticket sales of new or experimental operas.[26] The events of 2008 only solidified this fiscally driven tendency toward conservative programming.[27]

The aftermath of the Great Recession and the conservative programming choices of US companies underscore the condition of precarity in which all US opera is produced in the twenty-first century, one of the foci of this book. As Barry Singer observed of the recession's effects in *Opera News*, "Crashing markets were, however, no more than a deus ex machina, stripping away any veneer of financial health that each organization may have projected to explore the desperately tenuous underpinnings of their daily operations."[28] Operatic precarity is the norm not just for performers, but also for producers who must create works on tight budgets. The works of The Industry exemplify a dramatic shift in US operatic performance that has taken place since 2008 due to both economic precarity and aesthetic goals: a move from traditional modes of proscenium-bound presentation to site-specific and digitally mediated forms of performance. Leaving the opera house, creators reasoned, would result in productions that were directly relatable to audience members. These productions would be exciting to view in new ways and would counter negative operatic stereotypes that forestall engagement with the genre.

While site-specific opera has historically been less common in the United States, site-specific theater has a long history of performance. Beyond a highly influential tradition of site-specific visual art, site-specific theatrical precedents include "localizations," "open-air spectacles," historical recreations, environmental theater, political theater, and Allen Kaprow's Happenings.[29] Companies such as the Living Theatre, En Garde Arts, Chicago's Walkabout Theater Company (now arts collective Wender), Third Rail Productions, and UK imports such as London Theatre Collective Punchdrunk have normalized taking theatrical performance into nontraditional spaces since the latter decades of the twentieth century.[30] Similarly, as I discuss in greater detail in chapter 1, composers as far-ranging as Edgard Varèse, Max Neuhaus, Meredith Monk, Janet Cardiff, and Raven Chacon have incorporated in their works a spatiality beyond that used within traditional performance venues.

While The Industry has received the most national and international press and scholarly attention for this twenty-first-century move "off" the operatic stage among US companies, it is not the only company that has determined this place and media-driven shift. Up until 2019, the work of companies like Beth Morrison Projects, On-Site Opera, Opera Parallèle and Opera Philadelphia echoed components of The Industry's work (and vice versa). For example, the NYC-based On-Site Opera has staged performances of both canonic and new works at sites such as the Bronx Zoo, Madam

Tussauds New York, and the American Museum of Natural History. In comparison to the works of On-Site Opera and other companies, however, The Industry's operas represent a more extreme degree of the experimentation seen elsewhere. For instance, *Invisible Cities*, *Hopscotch*, and *War of the Worlds* were not only site specific but also mobile and digitally mediated. *Sweet Land* performed a reckoning with both the structural racism of the opera industry and US history through not only its performance, but also its creation.

Responding to an increase in funding devoted to attracting new audiences from granting bodies such as OPERA America and the financial upheaval of the recession, regional opera companies began to consider moving beyond the walls of the opera house as one strategy to recruit new audiences and change perceptions of the genre.[31] For example, OPERA America's 1990–96 initiative "Opera for a New America" "issued grants to Professional Company members for audience-building initiatives that deepen connections with new North American works."[32] Closer to the period studied in this book, Opera Philadelphia's inaugural performance festival, O17, was described as "an unprecedented civic experiment" that "transformed Philadelphia into an urban stage, where diverse audiences gathered to share an experience and amplify human connectedness."[33] As musicologist Cormac Newark notes, taking opera outside of the opera house was seen as post-2008 financial necessity on both sides of the Atlantic. While productions that rely on digital mediation and site specificity have represented a fringe economy in Europe for the past twenty years, in the wake of 2008, these creative efforts were often positioned as economic gambits that would expose audiences to opera without their having to seek it out (the "opera for everyone" effect mentioned in the previous section). To this end, composer Brian Irvine and writer-director John McIlduff examined the ways operatic performance outside of the opera house challenges genre in a 2009 University of Ulster symposium. These performances are, in McIlduff's words, "not so much shows, as happenings, designed to be captured on video and distributed over the internet."[34] McIlduff's observation points to another phenomenon taking place (especially in the global North) at this time: the proliferation of digital entertainment services and the growing ubiquity of digitally driven modes of communication that would have a greater impact on live performance than even the Great Recession.

Back in the United States, artists looking for creative opportunities not provided to them by an increasingly competitive operatic landscape—and who were likely influenced by neoliberal ideologies of entrepreneurship

central to late-stage capitalism—began starting their own organizations to provide both a source of income and creative satisfaction.[35] The New York Opera Alliance, for example, was founded in 2011, and Indie Opera Toronto was founded in 2014.[36] Both collectives represent a range of small, independent companies whose diverse aims are often satisfied by performances that diverge from the regional opera status quo of mainstage productions of primarily canonic repertoire. The proliferation of these types of companies also speaks to the ways the US (and to a lesser extent, Canadian) operatic ecosystem functions in comparison to other twenty-first-century "operatic geographies."[37] While opera companies in Europe and Great Britain are (partially) supported by subsidies, those in the United States are not guaranteed this type of financial support on a state or national level. In turn, financial networks of operatic creation and support are directly related to programming choices. As both Amy Stebbins and Danielle Ward-Griffin detail, autonomous "zones" of operatic programming have emerged throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries as a result of the intertwining systems of programming and economics.[38]

Partially as a result of these divergent geographic systems of funding—and particularly, the lack of public-sector subsidies—there is a long history of independent opera companies (however short-lived or small in budgetary structure) that have produced work outside of the traditional support structures provided by regional opera houses in the United States.[39] These organizations, like the Music Group (MTG / Lennox Arts), Nautilus Music-Theater, Pro Arts, the Quog Music Theater, the Center for Contemporary Opera, and the George Coates PerformanceWorks (GCPW), produce a range of experimental theatrical and musical works, many of which incorporate operatic performance. Encompass New Opera Theatre, originally known as the Encompass Theatre Company, is an instructive example as to one form these types of companies have taken since the 1970s. Cofounded by Nancy Rhodes and Roger Cunningham in 1975, the New York City–based Encompass has partnered with a number of national and international venues to present contemporary US opera and music theater since its founding, with funding support coming from organizations such as OPERA America and the National Endowment for the Arts.[40] Much like twenty-first-century opera company Beth Morrison Projects (discussed in chapter 3), Encompass partners primarily with other theatrical venues to present its works rather than, like The Industry, pursuing less traditional performance spaces. Similarly, organizations like Quog Music Theater and GCPW present works in theatrical, but not necessarily operatic, venues. Organizations

like Meredith Monk's House Foundation for the Arts and ensembles such as the Philip Glass Ensemble might also be understood to be a part of the rich ecosystem of independent producers and organizations of which The Industry represents one manifestation. While many of these organizations, like The Industry, are interested in supporting the development of new and experimental works, The Industry is significant in its consistent use of site-specific theatrical techniques paired with digital mediation to catalyze a vision of a broader—and often more accessible—definition of opera and particularly operatic spectatorship.

Thus, The Industry offers an opportunity to examine a shifting culture of US operatic modes of production in the twenty-first century. The Industry first filed taxes under its nonprofit exemption status in 2011 for the financial year 2010–11, less than a year before the company's first production of *Crescent City* in May 2012. These early tax reports reveal a small company consisting of founder Yuval Sharon, secretary and producing director Laura Kay Swanson, and board member Caroline Mankey. Following *Crescent City* (2012), the company produced *Invisible Cities* (2013), *Hopscotch* (2015), and *Sweet Land* (2020) as mainstage productions, and co-produced *War of the Worlds* and *Europeras 1 & 2* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic. The Industry's mainstage productions were supplemented by smaller concerts and workshops of other works. While other companies moved productions outside of the opera house while sustaining a mainstage season or produced work for several seasons in well-known operatic spaces like New York City, however, The Industry's productions have attracted consistent national and international attention in LA, a city that could not boast of a permanent opera company until 1986.

Opera occupies a different historical and contemporary role based on where in the United States the performance is based. As a company based in Los Angeles—rather than Boston, Philadelphia, or New York—The Industry participates in a form of self-fashioning that allies the company with West Coast avant-gardism, the products of the popular culture film industry, and even economic "experimentation" in the form of start-up culture. For instance, The Industry's name is a tongue-in-cheek reference to the film industry dominant in Los Angeles, and the polished public relations materials produced by the company speak to the influence of this "other" industry on the opera company's marketing. The Industry hints at its geographical identity through other means as well. These include the Highway One series, which "brings to life rarely performed milestones of California's counter-cultural musical history in inventive presentations," as well as mar-

keting language (and performance techniques) that reference Silicon Valley start-up culture by aligning technological innovation with language around remaking operatic practice, particularly in *Invisible Cities* (2013) and *Hopscotch* (2015).[41]

With the acclaim surrounding The Industry's unconventional productions comes the assumption that these new experimental modes of performance offer a more profitable way to produce and package opera, specifically within the experience economy. This term, which gained popular traction when used in a 1998 *Harvard Business Review* article by Joseph Pine and James H. Gilmore, describes a higher commodity value being given to an experience than to a good or service. Of course, while attending an opera in an opera house has been an experience for centuries, productions by The Industry and other small-scale producers of opera partially draw viewers in by using the word "experimental" to encompass experiential spectatorship practices such as those utilized in *Hopscotch*, rather than exclusively experimental compositions. "Experimental" opera in the context of The Industry describes a production that constellates innovative forms of spectatorship, social or political critique, and frequently—but not always—unconventional operatic sounds. When compared to operatic composers of the twenty-first century like Chaya Czernowin, Angélica Negrón, or Brett Dean, much of The Industry's pre-2016 work is, in fact, on the tonal and timbrally conventional side of the traditional-experimental spectrum (with of course, some exceptions). To this end, The Industry's engagement with the preoccupations of the operatic genre tends to focus on spectatorial experience first and musical signifying systems—including voice—second.[42] Thus, this book foregrounds experiential spectatorship and performer/audience experiences over musical evidence.

Stories of opera's decline and "reinvention" through experimentation are also a key part of both this book and larger operatic history. For instance, when baritone Richard Hodges observed that "*Sweet Land* is the Monteverdi of its time" in one of our conversations, he was both asserting the significance of the production within his own operatic context by referring to the composer of the earliest opera still part of today's canon *and* performing what might be understood as a convention of the genre: an articulation of opera's constant process of reinvention.[43] At the same time, this claim to reinvention should also be taken seriously as one way The Industry fits within operatic history. As my collaborators, most prominently Sharon, explained throughout my fieldwork, The Industry is not attempting to create a new subgenre of *experimental* opera—rather, the company's produc-

tions are meant to be simply "opera." In so doing, the company is suggesting that work that seems to be at the genre's margins is actually central to understanding the genre itself. In other words, The Industry's operas are not meant to exemplify experimental opera that exists on the periphery of contemporary practice. Rather, they are meant to change the definition of what opera—experimental, mainstage, independent, or regional—might become.

The Industry's 2013–20 productions were influenced not only by operatic stages, but also political ones. In the middle of the period that is my primary focus in the book, 2013–20, Donald Trump was elected the forty-fifth president of the United States. His racism, homophobia, and misogyny shaped the reactions and resistance of those individuals in left-leaning communities such as Los Angeles and underscored the necessity of art that challenged the corruption and violence symbolized by the US government. While, for The Industry, the election of Trump led to the creation of works more explicitly political in comparison to the narratives that had come before, for the US opera industry at large, such a change was not recognized as an imperative until after the May 25, 2020, murder of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter protests following his death. The institutional reckoning that has begun to take place in US operatic institutions should thus be understood as one part of the context for *Sweet Land*'s reception and The Industry's organizational decisions.

Since 2011, there has been an overdue critical shift in opera studies to explicitly political musicological scholarship that recognizes the coloniality and racism of the anglophone and Eurocentric operatic endeavor. Publications such as Pamela Karantonis and Dylan Robinson's edited collection *Opera Indigene: Re/presenting First Nations and Indigenous Cultures* (2011), Naomi André's *Black Opera: History, Power, Engagement* (2018), Hilde Roos's *The "La Traviata" Affair: Opera in the Age of Apartheid* (2018), Nina Eidsheim's *The Race of Sound: Listening, Timbre, and Vocality in African American Music* (2019), and Antonio Cuyler's *Access, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Insights from the Careers of Executive Opera Managers of Color in the US* (2020) have confronted the colonial and racial biases baked into the conventions of operatic performance. As a result of these conversations and others, platforms such as the Black Opera Research Network, founded in 2020, have been formed to "chart a terrain in interdisciplinary opera studies that attends to the racialized politics of contemporary and historical cultural formations."[44] Similarly, authors such as Philip Ewell, Loren Kajikawa, and Dylan Robinson have reckoned with the institutional racism at the heart of the endeavor of anglophone music scholarship, leading to a proliferation of

articles, conference presentations, and scholarly networks focused on such inequalities, not to mention polemics and push back within the field.[45]

Within the US opera industry at large, a greater number of new operas have also featured the experiences of historically underrepresented characters since 2017, including Daniel Bernard Roumain and librettist Marc Bamouthi's *We Shall Not Be Moved* (2017), Jeannine Tesori and librettist Tazewell Thompson's *Blue* (2019), Terence Blanchard and librettist Kasi Lemmons's *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* (2019), and Anthony Davis's Pulitzer Prize–winning *Central Park Five* (2019), with libretto by Richard Wesley. Starting in 2020, Sharon, in his capacity as the newly appointed artistic director of Detroit Opera (then Michigan Opera Theater), helped assemble deliberately political programming—including a long-overdue revival of Anthony Davis and Thulani Davis's *X: The Life and Times of Malcom X* (1986). Artist-driven groups such as the Black Opera Alliance (2020) and Asian Opera Alliance (2021) are advocating directly with US opera companies to demand antiracist practices within US opera companies. The US opera industry still has a long way to go. OPERA America, the trade organization that supports the US and Canadian opera industries, held its first demographic survey of administrators and board members of Professional Company Members in 2021; the results reveal that only 15 percent of board members and 20 percent of administrators identify as Black, Indigenous, or people of color, as opposed to 40 percent of the US population who identifies as such.[46] While these attempts at improving racial diversity within the US opera industry are only the beginning of what will be a decades-long process, it is within this environment of increasing dialogue about racial representation that The Industry's most recent work should be interpreted.

In addition to an antiracist reckoning, the years covered in the book witnessed the Covid-19 pandemic, which dramatically impacted the arts. While the first US Covid-19 case was confirmed by the Center for Disease and Control on January 20, 2020, opera companies did not face the consequences of the pandemic until several months later, in mid-March 2020, when lockdowns began rolling across communities in the United States. The Industry, which was in the middle of the run of the 2020 opera *Sweet Land*, announced the end of the performance run on March 13, 2020, after a Zoom call with the cast and creative team on March 12. Many houses remained shuttered for in-house performances for the remainder of 2020 and into 2021 but pivoted quickly to digital content. Large and small companies across the United States such as the Metropolitan Opera, Opera Philadelphia, On-Site Opera, Opera Omaha, White Snake Proj-

ects, Opera Parallèle, and the Lyric Opera of Chicago offered a range of streamed content and even operas performed live over Zoom to viewers at home; in 2023, many of these performance techniques remain standard.[47] Likewise, as information emerged about the airborne dangers of Covid-19, performances outside of the enclosed walls of the opera house offered safety advantages for audiences and singers, and revenue possibilities for strapped opera houses. As I discuss in the conclusion, Sharon's experiences staging works outside the opera house came in handy for his work as artistic director for the Detroit Opera. *Twilight: Gods*, a *Hopscotch-* inspired *Götterdämmerung* coproduced with the Lyric Opera of Chicago was held in a parking garage, with other operas performed in outdoor amphitheaters. Other companies such as San Diego Opera and the English National Opera followed suit by holding drive-in operas and other performance events outdoors. The Covid-19-driven move beyond the walls of the opera house should be attributed to a virus, not viral performance techniques popularized by The Industry. However, the 2020 ubiquity of The Industry's performance techniques in opera companies across the country also offered a unique test of the viability of these strategies of place and digital mediation for attracting audiences.

Yuval Sharon and The Industry

The Industry founder Yuval Sharon was one of several individuals who responded to the shift in operatic modes of production taking place in the first decade of the twenty-first century by founding an independent opera company. Born in Chicago in 1979, Sharon graduated from the University of California at Berkeley and majored in English literature. His reluctant introduction to opera came during his childhood and adolescence through his Israeli-born father, Ariel, with whom he would attend operas at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, the two usually eating fast food together beforehand.[48] It was only after moving to Berlin after college to teach English—and to learn how to read Brecht and Wagner in the original language—that he began to see the exciting interpretive potentials of the art form. Sharon relocated to New York City in 2002, where he worked for New York City Opera (NYCO), eventually moving on to run VOX, NYCO's annual opera festival for new works from 2006 to 2009.

Sharon's early years in New York reveal his interest in both demystifying operatic performance and creating theatrical performances that draw on a

range of spectatorial practices and approaches to narrative. For example, while at the NYCO, Sharon was also responsible for producing a number of minidocumentaries titled "Opera for All" meant to promote the Opera-for-All Festival, an accessibility effort by the NYCO.[49] Early "Opera-for-All" promotional videos created by Sharon and filmmaker Greg Emetaz foreshadow the accessible language of The Industry. The 2006 video promoting *La Bohème*, for example, begins with children's chorus member Christopher Gomez and then deck stage manager Caroline Dufresne taking turns to tell the story of the opera backstage while frantic activity goes on around them. As Emetaz explained via email, such a light, accessible approach was one of the primary goals of the video:

> We talked with the hair and make-up team and interviewed other behind-the-scenes roles in all the OFA videos. Yuval and I both found that they had compelling perspectives on the process and often added much needed levity when the principals were more serious about their work. The whole idea was to make opera more accessible and less rarified.[50]

On an aesthetic front, Sharon's work with cofounder Erik Nelson in producing works under the auspices of their New York City company Theater Faction demonstrates an interest in divergent narrative perspectives, mixed media, and a postmodern omnivory with source texts. Theater Faction's first production, an adaptation of Aeschylus's trilogy *Oresteia*, used three different directors who remained deliberately ignorant of the other directors' perspectives in staging each play in the trilogy.[51] Sharon's adaptation of *The Libation Bearers*, titled *The Mourners or Mourning Is a Form of Activism*, incorporates a range of textual insertions from playwright Charles Mee, Sophocles, Euripides, Rage Against the Machine, Destiny's Child, and the aria "Orest! Orest! Orest!" from Richard Strauss's *Elektra*.[52] Other Theater Faction productions such as the June 2004 *God Is a DJ*, translated, adapted, and directed by Sharon after Falk Richter's original play in German, incorporate the digital elements seen years later in The Industry works and, indeed, in Sharon's other directorial ventures.[53] *God Is a DJ* muddied the line between real-life performance and social media presence through blogs maintained by the lead actors and incorporated live video close-ups of the performers broadcast onstage during the performance, anticipating the video projection in *Crescent City* (2012) and the amorphous divide between physical and digital worlds in *Hopscotch* (2015).[54]

As Sharon relates in a 2022 *New York Times* profile, it was during this time in the city that he began to observe the dominance of musical elements in his theatrical shows as well as a growing interest in his work with NYCO, where he had begun to run VOX as a project director in 2005. Starting an opera company in New York City, however, felt both aesthetically uninteresting and financially unachievable. By contrast, he had gotten to know LA starting in 2008 through his work as an assistant director to Achim Freyer, who was directing LA Opera's first *Ring* cycle. (Sharon's work with Freyer is not the only time he has worked within traditional spaces.) While, in 2019, Sharon would later admit to seeing the problematic colonial implications of this statement, he jokingly described LA in these first ten years (2009–19) as the Wild West: "Because there is still this love of the undiscovered and the new, and innovation, [LA] is a city that I think really prizes innovation."[55] 2009 was his last season with VOX, which included excerpts from Anne LeBaron's *Crescent City* and Christopher Cerrone's *Invisible Cities*, and, soon after, he relocated to LA.

The Industry was founded in 2010. Sharon recruited LA-based conductor and composer Marc Lowenstein, who had conducted many of the VOX works (2006–9) to serve as a music director for the fledgling company. While The Industry's first official production was the 2012 *Crescent City*, the new company's "test project," in the words of Lowenstein, was a 2010 chamber opera titled *The Mortal Thoughts of Lady Macbeth* by Veronika Krausas. The thirty-minute chamber opera is written for soprano (Lady Macbeth), three voices in any vocal range (scored for two mezzo sopranos and one alto, who play the witches), and eight chamber players. The work, a portion of which had premiered at VOX in 2008, tells the story of Lady Macbeth's rise to ambition, madness, and suicide.[56] The production was set in the expansive club Fais Do-Do which had been transformed into a "haunted, spider-infested attic."[57] A human-sized spiderweb and three acrobats ensured that the theatrical action took place not only on all sides of the audience members seated throughout the space, but also above them.[58] In the final scene of the opera, Lady Macbeth was wrapped in spider webs and, while devoured by balletic arachnids, raised into the web on the ceiling as a relentless pounding quarter-note ostinati pulsed in the chamber orchestra. Krausas's vocal writing interweaves spoken text with jagged vocal leaps for Lady Macbeth, and tight cluster chords for the witches that move in and out of the orchestral texture. When recalling *The Mortal Thoughts of Lady Macbeth*, Lowenstein

remarked on the necessity of a "pilot project" for an opera company and compared its significance to that of a workshop for an opera composer: "A lot of great companies start out small and do a couple of pilot projects, as much to see if they get along personally—you know, each company is like a family in a way—and they see how they get along."[59] Having established strong collaborative relationships—and positive press reviews, which celebrated *The Mortal Thoughts of Lady Macbeth* as "a production where surprise sidesteps operatic convention," The Industry moved on to its first official opera: *Crescent City*.[60]

Like *The Mortal Thoughts of Lady Macbeth*, Anne LeBaron's *Crescent City* was an expansion of a performance initially given during Sharon's time at VOX (2009). The work, originally titled *Wet*, was described by *LA Times* critic Scott Timberg as the "coming-out party" for The Industry.[61] *Crescent City* premiered May 10, 2012, with a new libretto written by Douglas Kearney, who had worked with LeBaron as a student at the California Institute of the Arts, where the composer has served as a faculty member since 2001. The opera tells the story of a city that loosely resembles the flood-driven destitution of a post-Katrina New Orleans. In a variation of the story of Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 18, the nineteenth-century Voodoo queen, Marie Laveau, has been resurrected in the disaster and has asked the Voodoo gods to save the city, but they will only grant her request if one good person can be found to prove the city's worth.[62] Performed at the huge warehouse space of Atwater Crossing, the opera featured six art installations created by Mason Cooley, Brianna Gorton, Katie Grinnan, Alice Könitz, Jeff Kopp, and Olga Koumoundouros that musicians performed in and around. Based on the price of a given ticket, an audience member could wander around the warehouse, sit in a beanbag chair near the bar, or tread raised ramps around the space to watch the action. Performers also shot live video of certain scenes, which were then projected throughout the space. Described as a "hyperopera," a genre that amplifies opera's inherent multiplicity, *Crescent City* was, according to Sharon, meant to exist in a "see-sawing state between multiple possible meanings."[63] The work—and The Industry—received rave reviews, with Marc Swed of the *LA Times* noting after the premiere that, thanks to the new opera company, "we now have something that can genuinely be called LA Opera."[64]

Crescent City exemplifies the roots of many of the concepts that would become key aesthetic principles for The Industry, such as multiple perspec-

tives, audience choice, and intensely collaborative processes of creation. The opera, however, has more in common with contemporary work created by other experimental artists such as Punchdrunk's oft-referenced *Sleep No More* or even some of the black-box operatic work created by Beth Morrison Projects than The Industry's post-2012 productions. *Crescent City* is a traditional "site-specific" production (if such a thing can be said): it is a work performed in a warehouse for ticketed audience members who stand, sit, and walk around the performance space. To put it another way, although Swed might have claimed *Crescent City* as a distinct form of LA opera, the work could have been performed in any city with a large warehouse space—and would have been especially home in New York City were it not for Atwater Crossing's appealing LA-based price tag. By contrast, the post-2012 works I explore in this book were given in public spaces in Los Angeles for both ticketed and nonticketed audience members. They incorporated multiple simultaneous performances in varying spaces and attracted national and international press and scholarly attention for their scope and range.

Sharon's 2012 observations about *Crescent City* do, however, highlight the processes of open-ended creation that have remained a central aspect of The Industry's identity since the company's founding. He states: "Each [opera] should be an experimental process. The process is more important than having a narrative or not having a narrative. The creation of the opera is the experiment."[65] To this end, from 2010 to 2020, the company identified itself as an "independent, artist-driven company creating experimental productions that expand the definition of opera."[66] The link between process-based experimentation and notions of the operatic genre is a key component of The Industry's identity and, as such, appears throughout this book as a major theme. In support of the company's mission of supporting artistic processes over final products, The Industry has offered additional programming to support the development of new works. These programs include *First Take*, a biannual performance featuring excerpts from new operas modeled on the NYCO VOX program, as well as *Second Take*, a less regular performance series that offers the complete performance of one of the operas featured within a *First Take* program. Other programs include performances offered through the previously mentioned Highway One series, The Industry Company (a group of featured performers and creators who work frequently with the company), and an independent record label launched in 2014, The Industry Records, which was created to "support artists and document and disseminate new operatic works."[67]

Methods: Precarity, Perspectives, and Critique

Ethnography allows me to approach opera not only as an art form and genre, but also as a culture. While musicologists working on contemporary Western art music have made great use of techniques drawn from ethnomusicology, such as interviews and oral histories, sustained time in the field has provided a different context for my research.[68] This undirected time, what anthropologist Renato Rosaldo describes as "deep hanging out," has allowed me to build relationships with performers, to witness and sometimes take part in the rituals of daily rehearsals and performances, and to spectate as an audience member.[69]

My ethnographic work on The Industry began in 2015. During two- to three-week site visits in 2016, 2017, 2019, and 2020, I interviewed performers, production staff, audience, and community members, and observed rehearsals, recording sessions, and meetings. Along with these more structured times, I attended cast parties, spent downtime in informal conversations at rehearsals with performers, and got meals with my collaborators. It was during these informal moments, for example, that the term "colonizer opera," a key concept of chapter 4, emerged. Similarly, some of my conclusions have been limited to the topics most relevant to my collaborators; to this end, theorization on voice, for example, is limited in comparison to discussions of other topics more pertinent to my collaborators' specific experiences. This book has benefited greatly from material that my ethnographic collaborators have shared with me from pre-2016, including footage from the initial livestreaming of *Hopscotch*, which I was unable to attend in person. The Industry is a particularly rich site for ethnographic research because of the dense network of experimental artists who work within different configurations in LA. Notably, many performers have been active in most of The Industry's productions since the company's founding and generously shared experiences from productions that took place before my fieldwork commenced. My approach has foregrounded members of The Industry performance and audience community rather than members of the various neighborhoods and communities that make up LA. To that end, the "everyone" at the heart of this book is necessarily limited: my hope is that scholars interested in broadening the scope of my study will choose to spend deep time with these communities and others who live in the spaces where site-specific performances take place.[70]

Ethnographic methodologies also represent one way I have worked to

resist an auteurist reading of The Industry that falls prey to the hyperbolic "genius" narratives that have accumulated around Sharon. Sharon received the MacArthur "Genius" Fellowship in 2017 for "expanding how opera is performed and experienced through immersive, multisensory, and mobile productions that are infusing a new vitality into the genre."[71] Yet he himself has expressed discomfort with the megalomanic control implied by the actions of a single auteur. Denouncing individual applications of the term "genius" in a 2018 essay, he argues for a definition of the word that emphasizes its role in enabling collaborative achievements: "As an opera director, my work is never a solitary act; it is inherently social and dialogic. . . . In short, my work consists entirely of creating the conditions for genius to flow . . . it resides in that flow of output, which everyone participates in."[72] At the same time, Sharon does loom large in this narrative because of the ways his ideas and productions have shaped the work of The Industry. As the composers Eric Salzman and Thomas Desi point out, one distinguishing feature of many of the historical ensembles that serve as a precedent to The Industry is an "auteur" who is key to the creation of the work.[73] In this way, these auteur-driven ensembles seem to anticipate Sharon's centrality to The Industry in the first ten years of the company. It is crucial, however, to disentangle Sharon from the productions he has played a large role in conceiving. In other words, for the concept of opera emblematized by The Industry to grow beyond Sharon, The Industry's operas must exist in ways distinct from him. To that end, this book features the perspectives of a wide variety of creative collaborators rather than accepting Sharon's voice as an ostensibly sole auteur. It is also for this reason that this book does not focus substantially on Sharon's work directing canonic productions in a range of traditional spaces, including his 2018 production of *Lohengrin* at Bayreuth. From another angle, while his work in these spaces may seem to run counter to that of The Industry, he himself has communicated that he sees these types of projects as complimentary to one another: "I like to think about conventional repertoire and experimental, site-specific repertoire as being in complete dialogue. I don't think I could have come up with something like *Hopscotch* in Los Angeles without being a deep lover of Wagner's work and his idea of the Gesamtkunstwerk."[74]

Because The Industry's performances are collaborative in nature and often put together within a short rehearsal span, follow-up conversations and interviews have been integral to my research process. Composers and performers often cannot spare the time (or surmount vocal fatigue) to

deeply articulate thoughts about a production when obligations such as final rehearsals, reorchestrations, or last-minute libretto changes must be accommodated. Many of the performer interviews I rely upon in this book have been conducted through digital forms of communication such as Skype, FaceTime, Zoom, or via mobile phone. After the unexpected closing of *Sweet Land*, these means of communication evolved into a necessary and standard way of catching up with my collaborators throughout the completion of this manuscript.

I approach my ethnographic research and writing from a disciplinary grounding in opera studies and a background in vocal performance. This background also meant I brought lived experiences of the employment precarities and working conditions facing my collaborators in the twenty-first century and heightened my investment in their experiences. Given this investment and the fact that many collaborators are in the early stages of their careers, I have anonymized performer interviews when requested. In consideration of anthropologist Peter Benson's reminder of the consequences of the "entangled relationships" inherent to ethnography, I have also worked to make my conclusions a product of coconstructed knowledge, often discussed during follow-up interviews with collaborators when possible.[75] This book would not exist without their input, which has in turn shaped my understanding of The Industry's work. Any misrepresentations of the motives of performers, producers, and audience members, however, are my own. Throughout this book, conversations with my collaborators are enriched by analysis of press reception and close readings of musical and written texts (when available) and of performances. To this end, the book necessarily puts the experiences of practitioners in dialogue with recent turns in opera scholarship and models the advantages of this approach for future scholars in opera studies and beyond.[763]

By highlighting the boundaries of operatic production, performer, and genre as porous and in flux, *Opera for Everyone* responds to anthropologist Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing's suggestion that scholars center notions of precarity within our studies of contemporary culture and economics. Precarity, Tsing argues, allows for an understanding of vulnerabilities and shifting assemblages. This word is also one that should be used with care. Precarity for an arts organization is very different from the precarity faced by millions of individuals every day who deal with food or housing scarcity and/or the consequences of systemic violence. While the artists who form of the bulk of my collaborators deal with varying degrees of precarity with regards to

wages and job security, the vulnerabilities they face as early-career artists are most often (but not always) of a different nature than the experiences of those who face dire insecurity. I use this word with Tsing's definition in mind, highlighting the contingency, vulnerability, and instability often encompassed or catalyzed by opera for everyone in the first decades of the twenty-first century.

The topic of precarity and, more broadly, the political economy of arts production has proved to be an attractive lens for approaching experimental performances in the twenty-first century. Works such as Marianna Ritchey's *Composing Capital: Classical Music in the Neoliberal Era* and research by Andrea Moore, John Pippen, William Robin, and, more broadly, Jen Harvie and Timothy Taylor explore the relationships between contemporary music production and the tenets of neoliberalism.[774] These works, and particularly Ritchey's scholarship, represent an important critical perspective on The Industry. Ritchey, who devotes a chapter to the Boyle Heights protests against *Hopscotch* and the role of such performances in gentrification, represents one end on the critical spectrum of The Industry. Her skepticism about The Industry's claims provides a hefty counterweight to the enthusiastic attention The Industry has received in the press. With this attention in mind, earlier reviewers for this book pointed out that any critical work that engages with The Industry at great depth must also work to avoid hagiographic portrayals of Yuval Sharon. From one perspective, my proximity to Sharon—and his to The Industry—makes the critical distance often assumed to be a requirement of musicological scholarship a challenge.

Or perhaps such intimacy is a gift. As literary scholar Rita Felski notes, the requisite "hermeneutics of suspicion," a phrase first used by philosopher Paul Ricoeur to describe the act of critique, has limitations of its own.[78] She explains:

> The key elements [of critique] include . . . a spirit of skeptical questioning or outright condemnation, an emphasis on its precarious position vis-à-vis overbearing and oppressive social forces, the claim to be engaged in some kind of radical intellectual and/or political work, and the assumption that whatever is *not* critical must therefore be *un*critical.[76]

Felski argues that "[de-essentializing] the practice of suspicious reading by divesting it of presumptions of inherent rigor or intrinsic radicalism" allows for a range of interpretive possibilities, including those informed by affect and

those that move away from the "implicit story line" often privileged in such suspicious interpretations.[80] In other words, operatic ethnography offers one means by which Sharon's role within The Industry might be critiqued with nuance, rather than suspicion. Such an approach also acknowledges The Industry's ethical and political growth since the company's founding, rather than presenting one version of the company as representative, as previous critical accounts have done. Additionally, an ethnographic perspective may provide the means to counter the often-hyperbolic acclaim The Industry has generated in the press while also cultivating a critical-affective perspective. My ethnographic approach follows Heather Wiebe's recent suggestion that analyses of immersive or experimental opera "call into question any assumption that [experimental operatic practices] *automatically* have some sort of positive social or ethical force" and to "develop a more refined sense of the *different* ways in which audiences"—or I would add, performers—"are engaged, and the limits of that engagement."[81]

A hermeneutics of suspicion overlooks the nuance upon which an ethnographic experience relies. For me, ethnographic research into the protests, for example, has meant sitting both with Elizabeth Blaney, a member of the antigentrification group Union de Vecinos, which, like STPLA, operates in Boyle Heights, *and* The Industry music director and *Hopscotch* composer Marc Lowenstein to hear about experiences of the protests. Blaney emphatically explained her frustration about artistic performance in the neighborhood and gentrification: "We want a Laundromat, and we get an art gallery. We want a childcare center and we get a coffee shop."[82] By contrast, Lowenstein expressed his frustrations about all of the ways The Industry tried to work with members of the community only to have the production end in protests that he felt endangered the performers.[83] As an anonymous representative of a community organization condemned by STPLA for assisting The Industry with Boyle Heights community engagement during *Hopscotch* observed: "You can't dictate how or what people create, *and* the community has a right to say, 'We don't want this.'"[84]

A hermeneutics of suspicion, however, requires the scholar to choose the position of radical critique even when that critical reading likely deserves nuance. Moreover, despite the worthy efforts of scholars to align themselves with "radical intellectual or political work," it seems worth mentioning that, in the case of the antigentrification protests, members of STPLA were (understandably) just as suspicious of someone like me—a scholar, a white woman, a non-Spanish speaker—as they were of the *Hopscotch* performers themselves. During my September 2017 fieldwork, I tried repeatedly to get

in touch with members of STPLA but to no avail. Finally, someone returned my calls, only to tell me that he didn't want to tell me anything, because he didn't want his experience to be used as a narrative tool to advance someone else's scholarly career.[85] In this way, scholars who practice a hermeneutics of suspicion, including myself, are just like the members of The Industry who have been critiqued in previous scholarship: we are complicit in systems of neoliberal oppression, *and* we are trying our best to use our platforms to make a positive difference.

Ethnography may provide one affective pathway beyond such hermeneutics; perhaps this is because ethnographic methodologies are by nature biased toward the opinions of one individual—the writer. Despite my attempts toward critical discernment, I have built relationships with those members of The Industry with whom I have worked over the past seven years. Like one definition of opera, a single critical argument is ultimately based on one perspective and is not an immutable truth. Ethnography tries to account for multiple perspectives and critiques—indeed such multiplicity is a key argument of this book—but it is also a perspective mediated through the voice of the author. *Opera for Everyone* puts forth this perspective. May many others follow.

Plan of Book

Opera for Everyone considers how The Industry uses opera outside of the opera house to interrogate the systems of precarity, digital modes of production and listening, and conflicts central to the genre's historical identity through the examination of four productions considered in chronological performance order. The works I examine, *Invisible Cities* (2013), *Hopscotch* (2015), *Galileo* (2017), and *Sweet Land* (2020), are grounded in two central production themes: mediation and place. These concepts manifest in not only literal forms in productions—in the way *Hopscotch*, for example, is livestreamed, or how *Galileo* was envisioned to be performed beside a bonfire on Santa Monica beach—but also intersect thematically with the book's consideration of political economy. For instance, digital mediation was a key component in the financial success of *Sweet Land* after the Covid-19 pandemic forced the production to close early. Likewise, the site-specific accessibility of the works examined in the book is made more compelling when contrasted with traditional institutional spaces and sounds.

The book's four chapters build on one another by starting broadly from

practices of music consumption and spectatorship and moving inward toward those individuals laboring within the productions themselves. Chapter 1 lays the groundwork by showing how The Industry's first major production, *Invisible Cities*, reconceptualized historic concepts such as Wagnerian Gesamtkunstwerk by putting them into dialogue with contemporary practices of mobile music consumption. Performed in Los Angeles's Union Station in 2013, The Industry's production of Christopher Cerrone's opera *Invisible Cities* relocated the audiovisual space of the opera house to a set of wireless headphones worn by each audience member. Despite the seemingly innovative structure of production, *Invisible Cities* capitalized upon historic tensions inherent to the operatic form. This chapter brings together traditional operatic theories of spectatorship espoused by Richard Wagner and Bertolt Brecht with writing on mobile music consumption and urban soundscapes. By examining the material processes inherent to *Invisible Cities*, I highlight the ways technology mediates aesthetic and social performance and, in turn, how social processes inform our expectations and experiences of mediated performances.

The second chapter builds upon the contradictory notions of historical and contemporary spectatorship explored in chapter 1, but shifts from spectator experiences to those of the performer. Performed in limousines across LA and transmitted by audience members via livestream, The Industry's 2015 opera *Hopscotch* challenges conventions of operatic spectatorship and, indeed, the scale of operatic production. I present an analysis that accounts for audience members who, through digital modes of viewership, are cast as participants within the operas themselves. Throughout the chapter, I juxtapose performer experiences as contingent labor on the operatic stage—or in this case, in limousines, under bridges, and on top of buildings in LA—with the experiences of audience members. Although this new form of opera emphasizes the live presence of performers who interact with audiences, the performance is reliant upon technological mediation. *Hopscotch* scales liveness and personalization using digital platforms and services familiar to audience members, and in turn, these forms of digital media scale structures of precarity.

Chapter 3 identifies two dominant institutional models used to produce US opera and considers what happens when those two models come into conflict. I think through the limits of aesthetic experimentation and operatic ecosystems of reproduction through three productions: *Galileo*, a The Industry work that never made it to a full production; *War of the Worlds*, a coproduction between The Industry and the LA Philharmonic;

and *ATLAS*, an exclusively LA Phil production directed by Sharon—as a way of thinking through the limits of aesthetic experimentation and operatic ecosystems of reproduction. This chapter shifts from the single production model of chapters 1 and 2 to contextualize The Industry's work within the broader US opera industry. I reveal how institutional identity—be it of a traditional company like the LA Opera, or an experimental one like The Industry—determines both the economics and aesthetics that shape US opera.

The fourth and final chapter moves to what I think of as the political core of these works: the experiences of individual creators whose experiences of marginalization within the US opera industry led them to dub many traditional operas as "colonizer operas." Performed in February and March 2020, *Sweet Land* engages with themes of oppression and restitution in a violent settler-colonial narrative. The opera uses iterations of two fundamental American myths—the first Thanksgiving and Manifest Destiny—to critique hegemonic narratives of progress and domination. *Sweet Land* presents both a historical and affective challenge. To confront the historiography of opera as genre through *Sweet Land* and to analyze this process as ethnographer means parsing out how racism and operatic convention are intertwined, and what to do with the detritus of both systems. This chapter claims that through collaborative practices that destabilize conventional operatic hierarchies *Sweet Land* confronts the opera industry's history of colonial behaviors. While the work falls short of attaining what I consider to be the goals of anticolonial opera, it gestures toward the methods by which such a form might take shape.

Finally, the conclusion asks how the Covid-19 pandemic has shaped the future of opera for The Industry and ponders the future of "opera for everyone" within US regional operatic institutions. The conclusion also reapproaches the instability inherent to the operatic form that The Industry's works emphasize. In so doing, I point to the productive instability of the operatic genre down to the level of individual perspective.

Taken as a whole, this book asks what it means to make "opera for everyone" and acknowledges the political and aesthetic work at the heart of this statement. I argue that by moving opera outside of the opera house, The Industry's productions expose the economic and aesthetic structures key to the circulation of operatic performance in the contemporary United States. I also argue that ethnography is a key research method for studying opera in this context because it centers the people who make the works. Through my ethnographic work, I demonstrate how the creators of and performers in

The Industry's productions foreground opera as a multivalent, fragmented art. *Opera for Everyone* reveals how The Industry's experiments in American opera map out future pathways for new operatic directions while signaling toward the historical hazards along the way. In this way, the company's 2013–20 works paradoxically provide both road map and boundary line for experimental and traditional companies alike trying to find new ways to approach operatic performance in the twenty-first-century United States.

Opera as Mobile Music

Invisible Cities

"The opera of the future,"[1] an "über-creative, ingenious staging,"[2] and an "unprecedented, interactive dramatic experience"[3]—such enthusiastic press commentary celebrated The Industry's production of composer Christopher Cerrone's opera *Invisible Cities* in 2013. The acclaim was premised upon The Industry's use of new technologies to "reformulate" operatic listening and foreground the notion of an individuated spectatorship. Accompanied by the angular choreography of Danielle Agami and the efforts of the LA Dance Project company, the site-specific opera was performed twenty-two times in October and November 2013. Wireless headphones allowed audience members to spectate from any location as they wandered the "stage" of Los Angeles's Union Station while miked performers roamed the space. Far from the rooted experience of sitting in a theater, viewers drifted through the ticket concourses, waiting areas, and outdoor patios of the historic station while attempting to both locate and link the voices in their ears to the bodies in front of them. Meanwhile, projected supertitles danced on the walls of the station. The performers began the opera in street clothes—every commuter within the station a potential artist—and gradually donned costumes as the work progressed. After the opera's dramatic conclusion, ushers drew audience members into a common space for the final scene, applause concluded the performance, and spectators returned their headphones to the stage managers and left the station. Stage (and station) remained open, but the opera had ended.

Based upon several episodes from Italo Calvino's 1972 surrealist novel *Le città invisibili*, *Invisible Cities* recounts a series of conversations, memories, and elaborate stories exchanged between the explorer Marco Polo and the

emperor Kublai Khan. As the Khan listens, Polo describes the cities that constellate the aging emperor's realm with visceral detail. From the work's inception, a concert staging at the New York City Opera's VOX Festival in 2009, where The Industry's Yuval Sharon was working as program director, it was clear *Invisible Cities* might require a different performance treatment to succeed.[4] The ambiguity of the narrative, lyric opacity of the text, and elongated musical lines meant that the work seemed to lack dynamism on the traditional stage. Enter the mobile staging of the opera four years later, which fused Sennheiser wireless headphones with audience imaginations, and drew in patrons through the allure of immersive *and* site-specific performance. Described by the 2014 Pulitzer Prize committee as "a captivating opera . . . in which Marco Polo regales Kublai Khan with tales of fantastical cities, adapted into an imaginary sonic landscape," the 2013 work was a finalist for the 2014 Pulitzer Prize in Music.[5]

The reception with which I began this chapter points to the ways *Invisible Cities* and, indeed, the productions of The Industry are read by the press as particularly genre defying. Cerrone's rejection of the traditional operatic genre enhances these innovative impressions: "I don't identify particularly with opera per se," Cerrone explained to me. "I love some parts of opera, but it doesn't mean that I want to make something necessarily that emerges directly out of a nineteenth-century tradition."[6] Cerrone's comment also reinforces the extent to which the performance of nineteenth-century canonic works shapes *perceptions* of US operatic performance for even those intimately acquainted with the norms of the classical music industry. For instance, Cerrone jumps to these generic standards as the conventions against which his work reacts, rather than aligning his work with other contemporaneous composers or even chronological predecessors of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Just as Cerrone rejected what he perceived as the norms of conventional opera when composing *Invisible Cities*, so too do The Industry's 2013–20 productions promise to "expand the definition of opera," thus implying a move away from historical generic preoccupations.[7]

Despite these intriguing promises of Cerrone and The Industry alike, *Invisible Cities* capitalized upon historic tensions inherent to the operatic form. In other words, rather than representing a dramatic break with operatic tradition, *Invisible Cities*' dependence on contemporary listening behaviors was a means of building upon historical and even conventional concepts of operatic listening and performance. Opera's "surfeit of signifying systems" and "unsettledness" have become critical touchstones when considering the multiple signifiers at work in operatic performance.[8] Laurel Zeiss

has suggested that, in fact, "counterpoint and complementarity" might be a more useful way for thinking through operatic ontologies.[9] These scholarly conceptions of operatic performance are exemplified by a number of late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century productions. For example, a spectator watching director Peter Sellars's 1987 *Don Giovanni*, which resituates the opera's narrative to late twentieth-century Harlem, might experience a conflict between the playful gavotte of Zerlina's "Batti, batti, o bel Masetto" and the staging, in which a literal slap is heard from offstage before Zerlina's aria begins.[10] At a more basic level, tensions between perceptions of plot-oriented libretti, onstage spectacle, audience viewing practices, and musical composition have been a key part of operatic performance since the genre's earliest inceptions. Analyzed through Zeiss's contrapuntal lens, rather than making a dramatic break with operatic tradition, *Invisible Cities* makes visible and even extends this unsettledness. To put it another way, *Invisible Cities* reveals that expanding the definition of opera also means renegotiating opera's historic preoccupations.

In the introduction, I outlined the claim that despite The Industry's attempts to subvert opera's elite reputation, the company's experimental works are deeply invested in conflicts central to the identity of the operatic genre itself. In this chapter, I examine how wireless headphones—digital technologies that, in *Invisible Cities*, seem to transform operatic performance—might inform the historical understandings and contemporary iterations of the genre. The Industry's production of *Invisible Cities* challenged the very definition of operatic spectatorship by suggesting that an individual's interpretation of the opera need not necessarily encompass any singular visual aspect of the work itself. Instead, Sharon asserted that the aural performance of the work was the most important part of the opera: "The music roots you, the music makes sure that everyone has something that is communal, you know? . . . Everyone had the same aural experience."[11] Just as a director in a traditional theater might consider sight lines to be a key part of audience experience, Sharon believed that the intimacy inherent within the music would be communicated most clearly through the aural experience of compartmentalized listening. This description, in fact, is an interpretation of opera at its most conservative: the disembodied operatic voice is piped intimately into the ears of a spectator without the distraction of a production to get in the way. He explained further: "The performance at Union Station will be as close to immaterial as opera can allow while remaining a live experience . . . the singers and dancers will be all around you, but you may never see them."[12] At the same time, Sharon's notion of an invisible

opera performance, in which a consistent aural narrative is a crucial part of the spectating experience, indicates how the opera took on other patterns of spectatorship beyond the traditional opera house.

Invisible Cities was more than just a live performance piped through headphones. Rather, audience members relied on specific sociocultural notions of listening to synthesize components of aural and visual alike within the work. The practices of spectatorship key to interpreting the opera depended upon each viewer's past experiences with modes of mobile-music consumption like mobile phones and listening devices like iPods. Mobile music creates a narrative world around the listener that she herself controls. *Invisible Cities* was dramaturgically oriented around these notions of individual control and intimacy. Just as listeners might create a narrative linking a specific song heard on their mobile phone to a rainy day or crowd of apathetic commuters, spectators at Union Station linked the sounds emanating from the headphones to the physical actions of the station, regardless of the actions of the performers. This experience also enhanced audience impressions that they were part of an imagined community of spectatorship. At the same time, the opera was a tightly controlled auditory event—a manifestation of the traditional conception of voice conveying narrative—that seemingly provided little or no variation between listening experiences while assuming facility in several listening techniques dependent upon individual choice.

The technologies behind *Invisible Cities* also create the effect of "immersion" in the digital advertising, entertainment, and sales ventures that encompass the "experience economy."[13] The experience economy describes a higher commodity value being given to an experience than to a good or service. From one perspective, *Invisible Cities* linked intimacy and individuality in an immersive consumer experience designed for the age of neoliberalism.[14] While the opera's use of participatory technology has been critiqued as a manifestation of neoliberal values, focusing exclusively on this critique overlooks the historiographical and dramaturgical implications of auditory technologies in operatic performance.[15] Moreover, this reading ignores the specific ways events described as "immersive" point to a changing system of values around the commodities of performance and listening. Approached from this way, *Invisible Cities* offers a possible critique of neoliberalism while simultaneously benefiting from this system. "Interpreting" the opera through the headphones thus includes more than just an act of mediation between performance and listener. Interpretation also describes interactions between listeners, devices, and systems of production and consumption.

The visibility of the material processes at the heart of *Invisible Cities*—

particularly the headphones crowning the head of each audience member—reveal both new and old ways that technology mediates aesthetic and social performance. Thus, the opera represents a dialogue not just between Marco Polo and Kublai Khan, but also between concepts of experimentation and tradition. By focusing on conflicting signifiers in *Invisible Cities*, this chapter gestures toward two major historic preoccupations of the operatic genre: the role of spectatorial agency in opera and the (in)visibility of opera's technicity.

Experiencing Mediated Performance: Logistics

Invisible Cities began with a short speech made by Sharon, in which spectators were told that each experience of the opera was meant to be determined by individual choice. This speech was followed by an overture performed in the Harvey House restaurant, which has been closed since 1967. Following the overture, audience members began meandering through the station.[16] The overture is followed by a prologue and seven scenes that depict conversations between the two central characters of the opera, Marco Polo and Kublai Khan. (The details of the libretto are explained in the following section.) The seven scenes of the opera are listed with key plot points and libretto excerpts in Table 1.1.

Along with the Khan and Polo, two sopranos, a SATB quartet, and a

Table 1.1. Invisible Cities Scenes and Libretto Examples

Opera Scene	Moment in Plot	Libretto Text Excerpts, *Stage Directions*, or (Spectator Actions)
Overture	(Orchestral)/Harvey House Restaurant	(Sharon gives welcoming speech and overview of "how" to spectate. Audience listens to overture with headphones on in collective space.)
Scene 1, Prologue: The Imperial Gardens of the Mongol Empire	Introduces Polo/Khan	Khan: In the lives of emperors, there is a moment which follows pride in the boundless extension of the territories we have conquered and the melancholy and the relief of knowing we shall soon give up any thought of knowing them. Sopranos: Kublai Khan does not believe what Marco Polo tells him, but he does listen with great attention and greater curiosity.
Scene 2, City 1: Isidora, The City of Desire	Polo describes the city of Isidora	Polo: Isidora is a city where buildings have spiral staircases with spiral seashells encrusted. . . . Isidora is the city of his dreams. With one difference. The dreamed of city contained him as a young man. He arrives at Isidora in his old age.

Table 1.1—*Continued*

Scene 3, Confrontation I: Language: Imperial Garden	Description of the envoys who visit the Khan, speaking in many languages from across the realm. Polo and the Khan learn to communicate with one another.	*POLO and the CHOIR (dressed as ambassadors) address the KHAN and vie for his attention, redoubling their efforts with each entrance, trying new gestures, tones, and tactics.* Khan: I remain a foreigner to each of my subjects. . . . *(to Polo)* You are newly arrived and quite ignorant of our tongue, but express as you can your report to me. Woman 2 and Woman 1: As time went by, words began to replace objects and signs in Marco Polo's tales. Exclamations, isolated, then phrases, metaphors, and tropes. The foreigner had learned to speak the emperor's tongue.
Scene 4, City 2: Armilla: The City of Nymphs	Polo describes the city of Armilla	Polo: You are likely to glimpse young women, nymphs and naiads, slender, not tall, in the baths or under the showers. Streams of water channeled in the pipes have remained the possession of nymphs and naiads. . . . Their invasion may have driven out the humans or Armilla might have been built as an offering to the nymphs.
Scene 5, Confrontation II: Venice	The Khan confronts Polo about Venice. Why does Polo never speak of this city by name?	Khan: Did you ever happen to see a city resembling this one? Bridges arching over canals? . . . Polo: No, sire. I could never imagine a city like this would exist. Choir: Kublai remained silent the whole day . . . Polo: Every time I describe a city, I am saying something about Venice. . . . Perhaps I am afraid of losing Venice if I speak of it.
Scene 6, City 3: Adelma: The City of the Dead	Polo describes the City of Adelma	Polo: An old man was loading a basket of sea urchins on a cart. I thought I recognized him, but I realized he looked like a fisherman who I knew as a child, who could no longer be among the living. . . . I turned my gaze aside. I no longer dared look anyone in the face. I thought, if Adelma is a city one only sees in a dream, then that dream frightens me.
Scene 7, Epilogue: Imperial Garden	The Khan and Polo speak about the nature of listening, narrative, and humanity	Khan: When you return to the West, will you repeat the tales you tell me? Polo: I speak and I speak, but the listener retains only what he is expecting . . . Khan: It is useless if the last landing place can only be the infernal city. Polo: We shall not cease from exploration. And the end of our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time . . . All: Kublai Khan, seek and find who and what in the midst of the inferno are not the inferno. Make them endure. Give them space.

cast of eight dancers play a changing set of characters within the opera. Two shows were given a night, one at 7:00 p.m. and another at 10:00 p.m.

Tickets to the opera allowed access to the aural performance of the work. That is, audience members received a set of Sennheiser wireless headphones that delivered the live-mixed version of the opera. While they are permitted to be in any part of the station (ushers keep spectators within the boundary lines of the station), audience members heard the same operatic stream. The singers and dancers moved throughout Union Station wearing lavalier and in-ear microphones. Although there were no monitors for them to see conductor Marc Lowenstein, performers hear a dry recording of the music being played by the orchestra pumped into the microphones and could hear the other singers, regardless of where they might be in the station. Tenor Ashley Faatoalia, who played Marco Polo, described the experience:

> You're singing for random people in a random space. Some people will know what's going on, some people won't. So every night was a little bit different. When we started the run, we had a little more lee-way because people were following us [versus during rehearsals, when performances were less of a distinct event]. So then some people were like OK, *something's* going on. But even that was chaos, because then the curiosity would peak to a certain point where people who were or weren't involved were cavorting around and following us in different crowds. . . . Some people came multiple nights to find different parts of the story—because of that, someone was always looking with anticipation, so even when you weren't ready to sing, you had to sit there, trying to be a character, or emote, or engage with the person on the other side of the entire campus that you couldn't see.[17]

A number of musical devices were used to mitigate the challenges Faatoalia describes, including ostinati, a strong sense of pulse used as varying types of signals throughout the entire opera, and a reduced number of vocal forces. The final scene, which was the most complex in terms of ensemble, also required all of the singers to be in one room together, although the orchestra was still in a separate space.

Audience members accessed the aural performance of the opera through the use of Sennheiser headphones mediating the performance, but experiences of the opera's other elements were completely variable.[18] The live audio mix being streamed into spectators' headphones was the only consistent ele-

ment of the performance from night to night. Unless audience members removed these headphones—which some did for brief moments to share with other people in the train station, or to listen to a nearby singer live— they heard the same live-mixed recording of the opera. Thus, Sharon's production juxtaposed two landscapes: a consistent aural "staging" controlled by the sound designer, and a variable, and perhaps secondary, staging within the station.

Sound designer E. Martin Gimenez is given credit for originating the idea of the headphones in the opera along with Sharon; however, sound designer Nick Tipp worked as lead sound designer for the opera after Gimenez's relationship with The Industry ended unexpectedly. Tipp juggled three mixes during the performance: a dry mix intended for singers and dancers, a live-mixed stream meant for audience members with a number of atmospheric and spatial effects, and a third mix for the orchestra. This final mix had balance adjustments that enabled the instrumental musicians and Lowenstein to better hear one another.[19]

Another consequence of the headphones was an uncanny silence during performances. Passersby in the station who were not wearing headphones might see six dancers moving in slow synchronization on a ticket booth but hear nothing except for echoes of a lone voice in an adjacent corridor and the ambient sounds within the station. The headphones isolate and contain the sounds of the work, leaving the performing bodies to signify throughout the station without an aural referent. The unsettling absence of the aural (sans headphones) points to the significance of the imagined landscape of the performance and imagined audience community created through the spectacle of the sonic.

Interpretive Ambiguity, Audience Agency

Invisible Cities draws out themes already present within Calvino's *Le città invisibili*.[20] These include the competing roles of words, image, and sound in memory, conflicts between imagination and reality, and the complex and varied nature of spectatorship.[21] Spectatorship is dialogic, and, indeed, Calvino's text and Cerrone's adaptation suggest multiple interpretations for reading and listening spectators alike. The novel's ambiguity thereby worked in tandem with audience experience with the headphones. A more linear and explicit text might have indicated that listeners should expect mimetic forms of visual representation. Instead, the opera's program suggests viewers

could "visualize Marco Polo trying to communicate to [Kublai Khan]," and this abstract concept was supported by the libretto's text.[22]

The complex form of the novel highlights the role of the reader as spectator by presenting multiple avenues of interpretation and routes of engagement. In a lecture given in 1983 at Columbia University, Calvino emphasized the open-ended structure of the book. "A book," he said, "is a space which the reader must enter, wander round, maybe lose his way in, and then eventually find an exit, or perhaps even several exits, or maybe a way of breaking out on his own."[23] The myriad ways in which a novel might be read is analogous to the multiple ways of interpreting the operatic journey. To this end, literary scholar Carolyn Springer argues that the journey of the Khan as listener directly parallels the experience of the reader. "As he listens to Marco Polo's tales, the Khan searches for a pattern in the narrator's words. As model reader *within* the text, [Kublai Khan] enacts our own range of responses as readers of Calvino's *Invisible Cities*."[24] Just as Calvino emphasizes the reader's interpretation as central to the novel, Cerrone and The Industry seemingly place the role of interpreter on the audience. The Khan listens, the reader reads of him listening, and in the operatic adaptation she must learn to listen herself.

The libretto's text, lifted directly from the 1974 William Weaver English translation of the novel, builds in complexity through layers of detail, sometimes-paradoxical ambiguity, and suggestive dialogue. In fact, the opera (and novel) emphasize the Khan's role as a skeptical listener and Polo as an unreliable narrator. The fluctuating relationship between Polo and the Khan mirrors the relationship between the opera's performers and spectators. Even the prologue establishes this interpretive ambiguity. The Khan sings, "In the lives of emperors, there is a moment which follows pride," beginning the line with the leap of a minor seventh and continuing in lilting triplets that fill in the pitches he has just leaped past (Figure 1.1). The harmonic writing of the orchestra mirrors the ambiguity between listener and performer, the Khan and Polo, as the piano drifts between eighth-note dyads that drift between C minor and the relative major. As the Khan continues, "In the boundless extension of the territories we have conquered, and the melancholy and the relief of knowing we shall soon give up any thought of knowing them," two women's voices enter without vibrato, singing "Kublai Khan does not believe what Marco Polo tells him." This second line, however, is experienced as a kind of temporal augmentation: the Khan's text is easily discerned by the listening ear, while the text sung by the two sopranos is staggered and rhythmically drawn out in an overlapping pattern of half and quarter notes. Although the text does repeat several times, this brief example

Figure 1.1. Christopher Cerrone, *Invisible Cities*, prologue excerpt, mm 53–60, piano-vocal score.

Figure 1.2. Christopher Cerrone, *Invisible Cities*, "Language," m 2, piano-vocal score

reveals that the listener must choose how to listen and what semiotic signi-
fiers to prioritize throughout the opera. Even in the moment of being told
that the Khan does not believe Polo, the operatic listener herself cannot
quite discern the text being sung.

Scene 3, "Language," represents the only text supplemented by material
from outside of the original novel. Here too, the notion of individual inter-
pretation plays a role in the creation of the textual additions. To represent
the efforts of the "Great Khan's envoys" and "tax-collectors" to communicate
with the Khan, Cerrone copied text from Wikipedia entries written in the
different languages cited in Calvino's novel.[25] For example, the Croatian sen-
tence used in measure 19 (Figure 1.2), "Kopnena površina iznosi 56.578 km²,
a površina obalnog mora 31.067 km² što Hrvatsku svrstava među srednje
velike europske zemlje," is taken from the Wikipedia page written on Croa-
tia.[26] In this example, the 2013 audience's experience of the opera is based
upon text crowd-sourced from other individuals' constructions of reality.

The vague details of the text pervade the musical texture of the opera as
well. Notably, Cerrone claims that Calvino's writing has substantially influ-
enced the development of his own compositional voice.[27] More specifically,
he explained that Calvino showed him the importance of "tonality," "trans-
parency and clarity" in his compositions. In *Invisible Cities*, this "transpar-

ency and clarity" translates to an accessible, lyrical sound world that helps to facilitate the sonic experience for audience members. Cerrone confirmed for me the importance of early compositions based on other Calvino texts when he emailed a clip of a piece entitled "knotting and loosening." The title of the piece is taken from Calvino's 1981 novel, *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler*.[28] Although Cerrone could only find an excerpt of the piece, this audio recording unveiled an exciting surprise. Toward the conclusion of the excerpt, a deluge of sound—from an incessant ostinato of tam-tam beats to repeated pitches on the piccolo—suddenly clears to reveal a spare, open texture reminiscent of moments within the overture to *Invisible Cities*.[29] Cerrone's reading of Calvino's *Invisible Cities* specifically led to several more stylistic insights:

> I know this sounds kind of like a corny story, but I remember very distinctly opening to the first page [of the novel] and sitting down to the piano in graduate school and playing the first few notes of it. It really came to me in a way . . . and my music really changed in that moment. It was denser and more complicated. And I felt like that music and the need to evoke the melancholy of that opening—something changed in terms of what I do as a composer. . . . I simplified things, which didn't mean that it became less complicated. I just became more transparent. So that's the thing I tried to do: create a music of more direct emotional expression. Because that's the other thing I love about Calvino, which is that despite the fact that it's very heady, there tends to be a lyric strain running through it, and that really struck me about his work.[30]

While some of the ideas in "knotting and loosening" were used in the overture to *Invisible Cities*, Cerrone clarified the significance of this discovery: "I was headed in a direction, already aided by Calvino," he wrote to me, but "nothing as simple as the opening of the Prologue (the unabashed if untampered diatonicism) . . . not to mention the use of pulse."[31] Cerrone aligns himself stylistically with Calvino's writing. "[Calvino] really taught me that when you're viscerally attractive, you can be intellectual, you can play games," he explained.[32] The "intellectual," playful capacity of *Invisible Cities*—in other words, the ambiguity that seems to suggest multiple audience interpretations—is translated from Calvino's text into the media interfaces used by Cerrone and The Industry in the operatic adaptation. While Sharon's bold staging of the opera seems to be antithetical to the relative

conservatism of Cerrone's musical language, both interpretations align with the same source text.

Performance History and Digital Adaptation

Audience reception of *Invisible Cities* as a piece of individually interpreted, aural "spectacle"—in other words, a form of mobile music—was dependent upon three factors: the suggestive ambiguity of Calvino's text, Sharon's staging, and Cerrone's musical attempts to create an opera that sounded more like a studio recording than live performance. The 2013 production of *Invisible Cities* was the first version of the work to use headphones as the primary means of spectatorship. Earlier iterations of the music, however, had begun to show the influence of amplified, individuated patterns of listening. While the staging of *Invisible Cities* signaled an attention to mobile music, this mode of listening was already integrated into the composition of the opera.

A workshop performance of the opera was first given on May 3, 2009, at the VOX Festival produced by New York City Opera, where Sharon was working as program director. Begun in 1999, the VOX Festival provided opportunities for composers to develop and showcase new operas. *Invisible Cities*, however, was a flop—at least from the perspective of some in the audience. In the words of *New York Times* critic Anthony Tommasini, "It is better for an opera to be skillfully written and imaginative, however conventional, than to be experimental and inept."[33] Notably, while Tommasini read such a work as unsuccessfully *experimental*, Cerrone interpreted this version as more operatically *traditional*. Put more diplomatically, it was clear that from the outset that *Invisible Cities* needed a different performance (and perhaps musical) treatment to be successful.

While the VOX performance was an in-concert presentation, the first semistaged premiere of the work took place on May 13, 2011, in collaboration with the Italian Academy at Columbia University and the new music ensemble Red Light New Music.[34] Cerrone noted that by this point he was aware that the opera needed an extremely "unconventional staging."[35] The Columbia performance, however, fell short of his expectations. Video footage from director Louisa Proske's staging reveals a darkened, proscenium-style production, in which Polo and the Khan often converse in front of a closed curtain. This curtain opens to reveal the various locales described by Polo, which are visually conveyed through colored light projections on an extremely dark stage.[36] Although, admittedly, this production was only

semistaged, the work's long, lyrical lines, dependence on chant-like melodies, and lofty, metaphoric text were not well served by the many moments of physical stasis in the Italian Academy staging.

The VOX version of the piece was originally scored for full orchestra, while the final performance score is written for two small chamber ensembles. After workshops at VOX, the John Duffy Institute for New Opera at the Virginia Arts Festival, and the Yale Institute for Music Theater in the summer of 2009, Cerrone completely rescored the piece.[37] He explained: "It was revealed to me that I did not want it to be like an opera, in a sense. . . . I had scored the original version for orchestra, and I realized I did not want it to be orchestra anymore. I wanted it to be for a more chamber-like ensemble."[38] He amplified the pianos and harps used in both left and right ensembles and added two electronically processed files of bells to the score.[39] These changes add to a sense of spatiality between the ensembles. Cerrone also wanted to intensify the percussive elements of the instruments and accomplished this effect through amplification so listeners would pick up on details such as the plucking and pulsing of the harp.

Perhaps most importantly, Cerrone's revisions incorporated techniques from other genres, forms of production, and in turn, modes of listening. For example, he explained to me that although the score does not specify it, he made the decision that the singers should be amplified along with the pianos and harps. He stated that "the singers are all to be amplified and there's reverb."[40] Cerrone made this change with the hope that amplification would allow singers to vary vocal timbre throughout the piece. To this end, Faatoalia (Polo) drew on other vocal techniques when eventually performing *Invisible Cities*, saying, "I think my experience with mikes before on pop and contemporary projects helped for sure, to learn how to balance and engage and it took time and effort."[41] Amplification shaped vocal choice and in turn, spectatorial experience as audience members listened to the piece using techniques borrowed from other modes of musical listening.

Cerrone believed that earlier productions had been less successful because "the music was not in keeping with the staging(s)."[42] This is an interesting slip: what he seems to mean is that the stagings were not in keeping with the music, which depended on an ambiguous narrative and therefore multiple avenues of interpretation. Perhaps too, the earlier versions suggested an aesthetic far from the conventional space of the opera house and traditional means of spectating. If we pursue Cerrone's original wording, however, it seems that the music too, did not fit the apparatus in which it was confined.

The challenges Cerrone faced when revising *Invisible Cities* speak to one

of the main reasons Sharon founded The Industry. Recalling his time at VOX, Sharon explained:

> I noticed that there was an amazing layer of countercultural compos-
> ers whose voices are not being heard, not being performed in big
> houses or in big theaters, and partially it's because what they are doing
> is so outside the box. It started me thinking, maybe there needs to be
> a home for these composers and for these pieces . . . so if a composer
> isn't writing for an apparatus, an already set apparatus, but actually
> the apparatus adapts to what the nature of the piece is.[43]

How though, to find an apparatus that would make space for the level of ambiguity foregrounded in Cerrone's interpretation of Calvino's text? It was not until Sharon got in touch with Cerrone that the possibility of the head-phones as spectating solution became apparent.

> Yuval emails me out of the blue, and asks, "What do you think of this
> idea of doing this opera in Union Station and in headphones?" And I
> was really thrilled to do it, because the piece is *already amplified* [post-
> VOX] and it had all of these ambient sound design elements where
> the use of headphones would be so perfect.[44]

In fact, Cerrone felt that Sharon's suggestion of headphones within the pro-duction idiomatically *enhanced* his style as a composer.[45] Cerrone explained that he had been "thinking of [himself] more and more as a composer for headphones." When I asked him to clarify this comment, he explained:

> I would say that maybe a better way to put it would be to talk about
> the tradition I grew up out of, which was studio albums and popular
> music, but also hearing classical music on recordings and thinking
> a tremendous amount about how things sound on a recording. . . .
> That's very much a part of my tradition. . . . This [opera] should sit
> on the precipice of an album, an electro-acoustic product.[46]

While the reception narrative around *Invisible Cities* tends to highlight the 2013 staging of the piece as the moment where sound design became a part of the score, these comments demonstrate how The Industry's 2013 produc-tion enhanced elements of the score and Cerrone's idiom that were already present. Although the headphones brought out the "ambient sound design

elements" already nested within the score, the opera was, from the beginning, written as a spectacle that originated within the headphone-trained ears of audience members.

Writing for Headphones: Making Sound Design Visible

An opera for headphones is not revolutionary because of the amplified voices within each earpiece. Rather it is the *visibility* of the headphones in performance that represents a departure from operatic histories of technology. As Ryan Ebright has shown, sound design has become an accepted—if mostly unacknowledged—component of operatic performance in the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries.[47] Ebright defines operatic sound design as the "construction of the sonic space through amplification, sound effects, and musical recordings."[48] He locates the origins of this practice in the field of spatialized electroacoustic music by composers such as Edgard Varèse, Pierre Schaeffer, Pierre Henry, and Karlheinz Stockhausen.[49] (The term "sound design" is typically a descriptive, not prescriptive, term in the context of most of these works.) The practice is translated into the operatic realm in works such as Stockhausen's *LICHT*, Bernd Alois Zimmermann's *Die Soldaten*, Harrison Birtwistle's *The Mask of Orpheus*, Libby Larsen's *Frankenstein*, and John Adams's *Doctor Atomic*. Despite Cerrone's disavowal of operatic history, many of these works offer important operatic predecessors to concepts explored within The Industry's early works. Musicologist Emily Richmond Pollock writes of Zimmermann's operatic vision of a new type of auditorium that would allow "sound (instrumentalists and loudspeakers) to encircle the audience."[50] Composers such as Kaija Saariaho and Chaya Czernowin are also known for their uses of sound design in operatic composition.[51] Ebright notes that sound design in operatic performance "[restructures] operatic space" and "creates new relationships between opera's components," both of which could also be said of the headphones in *Invisible Cities*.[52] In the words of director Peter Sellars:

> This technology [sound design] is still evolving, and as it does, the nature of theatre itself will be transformed. We will completely reorient the relationship between performer and audience, to transform a theatrical space, to create distance or sudden proximity, to create a densely populated zone or an endless arid expanse.[53]

Sharon's earlier quote regarding the creation of The Industry might be read as a paraphrase of Sellars's desire to reorient spectatorial relationships: a headphone opera is in some ways an extension of Sellars's goal of transforming spectatorial practice. These compositional predecessors—and the similarity between the visions of Sellars and Sharon—also point to *Invisible Cities*' reliance on mid- to late twentieth-century compositional models.

In *Invisible Cities*, sound design is a crucial means of creating the imaginative space of the performance. The amplified elements added to the *Invisible Cities* score pre-headphones are visually enhanced by the visible signal of the headphones. The difference is that this imagined space does not manipulate the audience's perception of a consistent visual proscenium-like space. Instead, the headphones work with the elements in the score to evoke an imagined space that is complimented by the visual spectacle of the station. *Invisible Cities* is thus an extension of the trajectory outlined by Ebright, in which the individual spectator's engagement with the spatiality evoked by the sound world follows them throughout the station. This process relies on a strange tension between the spectator's control over their physical journey through the station contrasted by their lack of control over the sound world of the opera itself. If, recalling Calvino, the Khan is a model reader within the novel, "[enacting] our range of responses as readers," the model listener in the opera, might in fact be the sound designer.[54]

The headphone-based staging of *Invisible Cities* enhanced elements of aural spectacle already in the score. In a discussion of the amplified and live properties of sound in *Invisible Cities*, Nina Eidsheim quotes (original) sound designer Gimenez's explanation for the importance of sound design within the opera: "What you gain in a digitally controlled situation, in Gimenez's opinion, is dynamic range in the lower end . . . and the ability to change the reverb and sound placement, and hence imbue these parameters with meaning."[55] Performers too, noticed the prominent role sound engineering played in creating the imagined landscape of the opera. Faatoalia pointed out significant differences between a "live" version of the piece and the mixed version heard by audiences in the headphones:

> The cast was on a different mix . . . no effects, very dry. The audience was getting this balanced, very specifically tuned soundscape they had created, and we were being told, wow, you guys sound amazing, and it was like well, we hear ourselves on dry mikes, and it sounds like us . . . fine, but what are you hearing? And finally, we heard it, and it made the music even make more sense in a way. There was a lot of

space in the sound. . . . And to put the headphones on, you focused the sound—it's interesting for people to really zone in on one person's ears and give them that exact experience. You can't do that in the house—if someone's sitting in the balcony or someone is sitting in front—you hear different things, but in this way, everyone hopefully heard some of the same things. And that to me is the real immersive quality of it.[56]

Faatoalia's comparison of Union Station with a traditional concert space highlights how the former (the station) is *both* aurally individuated and highly controlled. His words also illustrate one way *Invisible Cities* diverged from its historical predecessors: by overcoming what Faatoalia perceives as the insufficiencies of the space of (even) a sonically enhanced concert hall, *Invisible Cities* seemingly transplanted an ideal concert space into each listeners' ears.

This distinctive sound world was created through a range of techniques borrowed from the production studio, including compression, reverb, separate miking, and panning. For instance, the left and right orchestral ensembles located in the Harvey Restaurant were grouped unconventionally (the winds were opposite one another rather the more conventional groupings by instrument families), which created spatial contrast between the two groups rather than solely timbral contrast. Cerrone explained that he thought of these groupings as equivalent to the left and right channels in a recording. To emphasize this sense of spatial motion between orchestral groups in the headphones, Cerrone described how he and Tipp worked together to mix the instruments in an unconventional manner:

If you listen to the pianos, the pianos are panned in the recordings in a really weird way, which is not how you [typically] pan pianos. In *Invisible Cities*, on the left it's high to low and on the right it's low to high. So you get the highest point of each piano on the furthest end of each ear.[57]

A listener might notice this panning effect most clearly when listening to the second of the two electronic recordings used in the score while wearing headphones. The recording can be heard gradually "moving" from the left ear of the headphones to dominance in the right ear. This sense of spatial distance was enriched by the acousmatic nature of the performance itself, in which the sources of many sounds were not necessarily seen.[58] One listener's

left ear is not going to be in the same "left" location as another listener's left year somewhere else in the station, and thus, the dimension of acoustic space could also be thought of as enlarged.[59] At the same time, as Eidsheim points out, the elements of sound design within the piece also prevent the listener from discerning where in the station certain sounds are originating.[60] Sound is unmoored from visual spectacle and open to interpretation.

Reflecting on the use of postproduction techniques drawn from other genres, *Invisible Cities* was "as much a sort of studio album as it is a live piece," Cerrone commented, describing the influence of recorded and compressed modalities such as MP3s to the sound-identity of the opera. He said, "We wanted it to sound more like a pop record than a classical record. So it was sort of like bringing classical music into a more sonically connected pop music [sound] than your average classical recording."[61] These elements together intensified the likelihood that audience members would listen to the recording using audile techniques associated with mobile music rather than those of live performance, as the next section explores.

New Rules of Spectatorship: Listening to *Invisible Cities*

Thinking about spatiality in opera is not only about considering the space of the site-specific work, but also about the experience of listening within this space. *Invisible Cities* relies on an aesthetics of listening drawn from both mobile music and the opera house. Thus, the opera was designed around an assumed fluency with mobile modes of musical consumption. Just as attending an operatic performance in an opera house has a set of audile techniques associated with it, so too does listening to a work using headphones. Eidsheim refers to this set of sonic expectations as a two-dimensional figure of sound, in which sound is present both in front of and alongside a group of audience members, as in a proscenium-style opera house or traditional concert hall.[62] In so doing, she argues that the cultivated aesthetic of *Invisible Cities* can simply be thought of as another version of the designed acoustic of the opera house.[63] While this interpretation seems to align with how the creators of *Invisible Cities* generically designate the work, the opera's use of mobile music aesthetics demonstrates another way of thinking of the figure of sound at play in the opera. In this second interpretation, sound design works in tandem with the mobile-music signal of the headphones to create a three-dimensional figure of sound. This three-dimensional figure of sound surrounds and isolates the listener, for whom the visible technology catalyzes

an "invisible" process of spectatorship premised upon mobile music habits.

The ubiquity of personal mobile-music technologies such as the car radio, Walkman, iPod, and smart phone in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries has drastically changed the way music and space are perceived in relation to these innovations.[64] To this end, the headphones were more than just a practicality of the performance. These devices initiated a specific set of spectatorial behaviors. This responsive pattern to material culture has a long historical precedent. Media scholar Jonathan Sterne's helpful term "audile technique" explains the ways in which listeners assimilate new ways of understanding and interacting with sound in tandem with these same technologies of mechanical reproduction. As Sterne explains, in the early twentieth century, audile techniques—like the ability to "construct an auditory field with 'interior' and 'exterior' sounds"—were learned through "media contexts" and "through sound-reproduction technologies like telephony, sound recording, and radio."[65] As musicologist Eric Clarke puts it, headphones "act upon" listeners by initiating a range of behaviors.[66] As technologies of mechanical reproduction—and corresponding audile techniques—developed, listeners began to understand auditory space as private and individually constructed. This emphasis on individual control has continued to dominate rhetoric surrounding mobile music in the forms of commercial advertising and individual behaviors alike.

One of the greatest allures of the individual, portable music device is the way it allows the listener to control her experience of space. In the act of covering her ears with the soft leather of headphones, or inserting earbuds, a listener demarcates a private aural zone and shapes personal perception of the visual arena beyond this intimate aural space.[67] As sound studies scholar Michael Bull demonstrates, those practitioners well versed in the use of mobile music through hardware such as the Walkman, iPod, mobile phone, and even the automobile use sound to control and aestheticize changing urban environments, often through what he terms a "filmic" experience.[68]

Cerrone also acknowledges the influence of these patterns of musical consumption; his compositional style is a by-product of the dominant technologies of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.[69] This aspect of individual control and private space contributed to his own listening habits and, subsequently, those compositional practices at work in *Invisible Cities*:

> For me, [listening on headphones] is a very immersive thing, and I think it's a more private experience. There's something very public about hearing or playing music live for people, and there's something

very private about the idea that you're having this experience and maybe no one else is around you. That's very much a part of *Invisible Cities*, the sense of walking around in a world. It's a modality that is much more private.[70]

Cerrone's words demonstrate how *Invisible Cities* aestheticized mundane actions, spaces, and acts of individual passersby. They also illustrate one of the key tensions in the "opera for everyone" aesthetic purported by The Industry that I introduced at the beginning of this book. The headphones give the listener the impression that she has personal control over her auditory, and thus visual, environment in a public space and make the concept of an opera for everyone possible.

To this end, scholars of mobile music emphasize the role of the individual within the listening environment. Musicologist Shuhei Hosokawa describes the Walkman's capacity to "[mobilize] the Self" and in that process of mobilization, what Hosokawa calls the walk-act, to indicate to others the presence of a *secret* as indicated by the appearance of the Walkman.[71] Hosokowa's conception of the walk-act in connection with the Walkman relies upon philosopher Michel de Certeau's writing on urban geographies, also pertinent to *Invisible Cities*. Just as Certeau reads the walker's ability to transform spatial signifiers through choice, so too do the actions of audience members at *Invisible Cities* transform everyday actions into spectacle.[72]

In this focus on individual choice and sound, the mobile practices of *Invisible Cities* build upon the tradition of performance art installations such as Deborah Warner's *The Angel Project* and site-specific sound walks such as Janet Cardiff's *Her Long Black Hair*. Cultural historian Iain Chambers frames the "secret" as "site of dwelling" when considering the separate space afforded by the audio walk.[73] Chambers's use of the word "dwelling" is particularly noteworthy in the forms that the word takes as noun or verb. As noun, it describes the separate space occupied by and demarcated by the headphones. As verb, "dwell," it describes how a listener is both absorbed by sound and how that process of absorption leaks beyond the private space of the headphones and into the public space beyond. Rhetoric surrounding *Invisible Cities* supports the presence of this "secret dwelling." The website states: "Over the next 70 minutes, you will discover a secret level of reality at the station, isolating singers and dancers from pedestrians, soaking in LA's architectural gem, and having a highly private experience in this public space."[74] The description implies exclusive access to a secret operatic world; you will listen, the description seems to suggest, in a way that no one else can!

This perception of individuality and control initiated by mobile music audile techniques exists in tension with the real and imagined public within which the individual herself navigates. The audience member does not control the soundscape of the opera as she would control the streaming content on her own personal device, but the success of the narrative relies on her ability to link visual with aural spectacle. Moreover, she might imagine herself as separate from the Union Station public, while simultaneously, these same individuals in the public sphere are also key to enacting the narrative enabled by the headphones. Sumanth Gopinath and Jason Stanyek describe the multiple intimacies of headphone listening as creating a "network of interrelated bonds," placing special emphasis on both "the intimacy of the *human other* (the radio deejay, the voices of the singers)" and "the intimacy of the distributed collective (listeners drawn together through the synchronic time engendered by radio technology)."[75] This sense of communal intimacy is expressed by audience member Ellen's recollections of seeing *Invisible Cities*:

> Listening to music on my headphones is really an intimate experience I have with myself. For people of our generation, it's what you do—you listen to your headphones. And then there's an element of almost cinematic storytelling that happens. Where you're listening to this beautiful song, and then a butterfly floats by—and you feel like you're in a movie—kind of making up this story about the people around you, and the light on the grass. . . . And when I was watching *Invisible Cities*, because I had on the headphones—for the first few split seconds, I felt like that's what was happening, and then I realized that every person around me was doing the same thing.[76]

Ellen's past experiences with mobile music not only allowed her to create synchronicity between audio and visual elements in *Invisible Cities*, but also heightened her awareness of communal viewership. In fact, she explained that what she termed the "vernacular of the headphones" made *Invisible Cities* more communal than an experience in an opera house, rather than focusing exclusively on a sense of individuation. Her observations highlight the ways works like *Invisible Cities* also build upon an audience member's sense of belonging to an imagined collective, what might be read as a manifestation of Benedict Anderson's imagined communities.[77] While Anderson emphasizes the role of print media in establishing the sense of a collective national body, *Invisible Cities* uses a shared digital technology to provide a

sense of collective identity to listeners. In this way, the opera mirrors similar headphone-based gatherings such as silent disco, in which participants choose one of several tracks to listen to in a large group but experience community through group listening. *Hyperallergic* reviewer Sarah Zabrodski also emphasizes the sense of connection with other spectators from the perspective of a communal space: "The thrill of *Invisible Cities* lies in creating a shared focus within a space where we intuitively tend to keep to ourselves."[78]

In establishing a shared space, *Invisible Cities* also created a place in which certain individuals were not included. As I mentioned in the introduction, *Invisible Cities* has been critiqued for the ways it enacted a sonic form of gentrification, in which ticket-buying viewers accessed the sound-designed space of the opera, while the general public experienced only the live performance.[79] Similarly problematic is the way that headphone-wearing spectators co-opted the experience of houseless individuals into the narrative. Headphones may have created a sense of private community and individual discovery, but they also enabled separation between the different modes of access and privilege that individuals have in public spaces, to say nothing of the ethics of incorporating the greater Union Station public into a staging without their consent (or compensation).

These contradictions between private and public spectating represent one way that *Invisible Cities* gestures toward the precarious nature of spectatorship as a whole. If, following anthropologist Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, precarity is a form of consistent instability, then the sum of the spectatorial practices in *Invisible Cities* can be best described as precarious.[80] Opera is built upon an unstable bedrock of signifying systems, and *Invisible Cities* foregrounds this unsteadiness through individuated spectatorship that is also highly controlled. As technologies indicating specific listening practices based on individual control become *more* visible, spectatorial choice appears to be less consistent. Likewise, individual interpretive freedom is explicitly foregrounded in the production, even as a communal experience of listening is emphasized through Ellen's "vernacular of the headphones."

Crucially, the headphones scripted certain audile techniques only to those well versed *in* these techniques. To the listener trained in habits of mobile music, the visual spectacle of the opera could be choreographed in a number of ways among various audience members. The spectacle of the production, after all, is firmly situated in the headphones themselves. Ellen's earlier description relies on previous experiences with mobile music: "For people of our generation it's what you do—you listen to your headphones." Audience members were primed for the experience of mobile listening thanks

to the ways the piece built upon an established social dialectic of mobile music consumption. The headphones' power, however, was predicated on the assumption that audience members would understand the implicit signal the technology communicated about how the opera should be watched.

Spectator accounts of the opera paralleled this advertising hype. Audience member Andrew emphasized the individualized experience of the work, explaining that "you could follow someone, you could see where they go and sing, and then you could follow someone else, and then they would lead you to a totally different part of the train station."[81] Rita Santos, who managed the supertitles for the original run of the opera and assisted in the audio booth for the opera's extension, also emphasized individuality and ownership. She explained that "*Invisible Cities* is totally your own exploration—you can see *Invisible Cities* many times, and never really see every single thing that happened—Yuval [Sharon] didn't even see every single thing that happened, and he was walking around every night. The point is that you never really know what is going to happen."[82]

Many glowing reviews of the work also reveal this fluency with modes of mobile listening and individual narrative creation. At the same time, these reports describe how the visual experience of the opera did not add up to a consistent narrative. For instance, Alissa Walker wrote in *Gizmodo*: "A secret opera erupts inside California's biggest train depot. I discovered that I didn't even have to follow the story to have a transcendent experience—it was more like I was stepping in and out of different conversations between the music, the public and the building."[83] Similarly, Lisa Napoli of National Public Radio member station KCRW explained that the opera "made you pay better attention to the random other humans who happened in on the experience, as they gazed with wonder or concern or even disinterest at those dancers writhing on the floor of the terminal."[84] Audience members described by Maane Khatchatourian seemed to be even more removed from any sort of visual spectacle: "Some [audience members] wandered aimlessly throughout the building, listening instead of watching."[85] Fulfilling Sharon's rhetorical emphasis on individualism, each of these people had a different experience of the work. At the same time, individual spectators were left to interpret their own experience as *the* visual staging of the opera.

By contrast, those individuals who came to the production and expected a more traditional presentation of aural and visual elements did not enjoy the production or expressed frustration with some parts of the structure.[86] Reviewer Isaac Schankler told readers that although "Cerrone's music provides a powerful through line for the entire duration [of the opera],"

Schankler also "[missed]" parts of the performance. "When we re-entered the station [from another scene], there were several audience members clustered around some chairs where two men were sitting," he wrote. "One looked bewildered, while one was sleeping or pretending to sleep. We had clearly just missed something, but what?"[87] Schankler was disappointed with a lack of consistency in the visual narrative as compared to the aural spectacle provided by the headphones.[88] His reaction thus exhibits the conflict between certain modes of mobile-music spectatorship versus traditional spectating expectations.

Another reason this confusion occurred was the setting of the opera in crowded Union Station as well as the fact that all of the performers began the piece costumed in everyday, casual clothing. In these examples, the headphones seemed to obscure traditional means of spectatorship. (Audience members were marked as spectators through the headphones; however, performers were unmarked.) Andrew described the unexpected discovery that certain individuals in Union Station were actually performers. "I had moments where I was like, oh, I'm standing right in front of someone who is singing, and sometimes I didn't even realize the singer was actually a singer."[89]

In other cases, spectators who came expecting to see a certain performer often had a difficult time finding that person. The point was to engage with the visual experience as an audience member, not necessarily to see all of the performers in the production. That purpose, however, was implicit in the presence of the headphones themselves, not stated directly. Faatoalia explained that certain friends were disappointed when they couldn't find him or locate a specific scene they had heard about. "I tried to tell people, don't feel bad if you missed different things. Just be immersed in the experience and find your own sort of show."[90] Faatoalia's advice to his friends—"be immersed in the experience"—acknowledges the role of individualism, sensory experience, and even spectatorial ambiguity (who is a performer, who is an audience member, who is a commuter?) key to the opera. In this way, *Invisible Cities* not only highlighted the interpretive ambiguity at the heart of operatic practice in or out of the opera house, but also amplified it.

Audile Technique and Consumerism

Audile technique is not just about learning to listen; it also encompasses the patterns of advertising and consumption accompanying new listening technologies. Described as a "once-in-a-lifetime immersion," a "360-degree,

immersive experience," and "the future of immersive theater," *Invisible Cities* built upon not only patterns of audile technique developed through the long twentieth century, but also patterns of consumerism developed in the digital age.[91] As economists B. Joseph Pine and James H. Gilmore explain in their work on the experience economy, the two main indices of an "experience" are customer participation (passive to active) and "connection" or "environmental relationship" that "unites customers with the event or performance" (absorption to immersion).[92] Thus, *Invisible Cities* was marketed with language resembling other experience-economy endeavors, and many audience members experienced it as such. Recall Faatoalia's words above: "Be immersed in the experience." By using the word "immersive" he implicitly gestures toward the larger networks of neoliberal consumption inherent within this production model and method of spectatorship. As this section later reveals, immersivity also signaled levels of personalization and control for spectators.

"The piece, which is so intimate and so warm and so fragile, would best be suited being heard as if it's being whispered in your ear," Sharon said in an interview with *Variety* magazine. "It's a story that's really meant to take you to a very internal place. It's not about a traditional narrative and more about experience as narrative."[93] Sharon erases the importance of the opera's actual narrative arc in comparison to the actions of the individual spectator. Here too, his description of experience versus narrative claims a form of innovation for *Invisible Cities*. At the same time, his comment sidesteps many other nonlinear twentieth-century operas that are equally focused on "experience" rather than narrative, such as Philip Glass's *Einstein on the Beach*. Each spectator purchases not only a ticket to the opera, but also a belief in the value of her or his own interpretive choices.

From one perspective, *Invisible Cities* uses intimate, digitally enabled forms of listening to provide an "immersive" experience for the neoliberal consumer. Following the work of Milton Friedman and Gary Becker of the Chicago school of economics, neoliberalism reifies the potential of free market forces unencumbered by regulations and oversight as a naturalized economic system.[94] With this belief comes the notion that atomized individuals hold the resources to their own success and that in turn, failure within the self-regulating market is also the individual's responsibility. As Jen Harvie and W. B. Worthen have explored, (nonoperatic) immersive and site-specific theatrical experiences often capitalize upon ideologies of neoliberal consumerism.[95] From these critical perspectives, the audience member is given the impression of individual choice and customization without actual freedom.

Similarly, audience members at *Invisible Cities* both expected the sonic experience to be tailored to their individual experiences and were ideologically primed for the idea that they themselves were responsible for the experience.

Another interpretation, however, would be that the contradiction between freedom and complete control symbolized by the headphones was a critique of neoliberal constraints. Like the neoliberal market, *Invisible Cities* promises freedom while entrapping consumers within a set apparatus of consumption. In imitating the contradictions of neoliberal strictures, the work might be understood as a critique of this system. However, Harvie reads these precarious spectatorial practices as doing the opposite, that is, as inuring audience members to systems of neoliberal oppression.[96] The nuances of historiographical listening—communal, isolated, and dependent on unspoken mediated behaviors for some, but not for others—suggest we should consider the multiple manifestations of political economy at play in the opera.

To this end, the ways the "innovation" rhetoric of Sennheiser and The Industry align demonstrates how the work *also* plays into systems of neoliberal consumption. Musicologist Marianna Ritchey has critiqued *Invisible Cities* (and the 2015 *Hopscotch*, discussed in the next chapter) for conflating the social principles of participatory art with the personalized experiences of the experience economy. Ritchey's analysis aligns with my own reading of the headphones within the production; however, as Pine, Gilmore, and my own research reveal, such experiences of personalization versus participation are also more varied than her reading might convey.[97] Moreover, criticizing the creative class for replicating the structures of neoliberalism can be a monolithic approach that effaces the individuals behind such endeavors. This process of criticism inadvertently perpetuates the inequalities of neoliberalism by assuming that the individuals of the creative class can transcend the dominant ideological and economic systems key to twenty-first-century opera production. Wary of this pitfall, I want to briefly analyze the partnership between Sennheiser and The Industry in greater detail. This partnership—while unequal in resources—provides details as to how Sennheiser's involvement shaped spectators' auditory and rhetorical experience of the opera. Correspondingly, Sennheiser headphones symbolize the dual notions of intimate, personalized experiences and the notion of individual control central to the visual conceit of *Invisible Cities*.

Sennheiser has collaborated with The Industry in what executive producer Elizabeth Cline describes as a mutually beneficial relationship since 2013. Sennheiser donated equipment and technical advice that made *Invisible Cities* possible, and The Industry provided a promotional opportunity by show-

ing how Sennheiser's technology could be used in new ways.[98] Sennheiser's involvement brought *Invisible Cities* to life, and *Invisible Cities*—immersive, individualized, and intimate—provided free advertising for Sennheiser.[99] In an advertisement on The Industry's *Invisible Cities* home page, Sennheiser emphasizes the lack of "distortion, delay and interference" that would otherwise impede audience experiences of *Invisible Cities*.

> The involvement of Sennheiser, a leader in sound and wireless transmission technology, ensures that *Invisible Cities* will offer the highest possible sound reproduction, without distortion, delay and interference. This one-of-a-kind intersection of the classical arts and state-of-the-art technology was not possible even ten years ago and would remain unrealizable without Sennheiser's pursuit of innovation and perfection.[100]

This type of rhetoric details how individuals engage with material culture and in turn, material culture engages individuals in a process predicated on aesthetic experience *and* consumerism. Sennheiser creates and supports bespoke operatic experiences; thereby each "seat" in the headphones of the invisible theater is equal. This rhetoric of equal access to sound also echoes Faatoalia's description of the ways in which *Invisible Cities* equalized listening opportunities between every audience member.

"Immersion," that omnipresent advertising copy of the experience economy, indexes not only the aesthetic experience of *Invisible Cities*, but also notions of individual control and experiences linked with digital age products and streaming platforms. From experiential performances in multiple genres, social-media-friendly museums such as the Color Factory, to products as far ranging as art collective Dashboard's glow-in-the-dark ramen noodle popup, Kohler's Numi 2.0 Immersive Toilet, or 3D internet models like the Metaverse, the hype around immersivity as advertising copy indicates a contemporary desire on the part of advertisers and consumers to reconstitute individual sensorial experiences in the digital age.[101] As interdisciplinary scholars Florian Freitag et al. note, "immersion" is both an "inherent quality of objects in general and of mediated and thus delineated, real and imagined spaces in particular."[102] While, as the next section explores, the experience of immersion can be traced to historical artistic forms, its contemporary use appears in scholarship around both phenomenological (e.g., visual artistic and experimental theatrical experiences) and screen-based experiences around the same time, in the 1990s.[103]

As a manifestation of materiality and mediation, it is perhaps not surprising, then, that "immersion" is a mainstay in the context of headphone advertising, where it appears frequently.[104] Companies such as Sennheiser, Bose, and Alpine rely on the adjective "immersive" to accomplish several goals: it reflects the physicality of the product (headphones sold by each company literally enclose the ear), invokes an impenetrable environment established by the product, and, perhaps most important, suggests the product's high quality implies a multisensory experience. These companies use adjectives like "immersive" because this word suggests individual consumer control *and* product quality. *Invisible Cities*' immersive potential is thus enhanced by Sennheiser's digital technologies, and vice versa.

The adjective immersive is often used in tandem with digital technologies for another set of reasons also at play in *Invisible Cities*. "Immersive" becomes a rhetorical signifier that suggests something "more" than, or even the opposite of, "just" a screen. In the case of most of these technologies—from headphones to operas—companies are assuming that media combined with individual sensory experiences (even if the sensory experience is as mundane as walking or eating) are equivalent to a form of corporeal reconstitution. This rhetorical obsession with reminding consumers of their own senses or bodily experiences is a direct response to the dominance of screens in the digital age. Consumers want to be actors in sensory experiences because, on the proliferating screens of phones, computers, and tablets, they feel as though they are far from the sensory realm. Here I differ from performance theorists like Worthen who theorize the popularity of "immersivity" in performance as a by-product of "contemporary device culture."[105] While technological devices play a huge role in shaping contemporaneous performances—as in the headphone-based reception of *Invisible Cities*—these performances are appealing because of the way they integrate sensory experiences, not despite them.

Part of immersivity too, is the promise that you, the user, will no longer be isolated by screens. In effect, the immersive digital product is most successful when cleverly distanced from the unescapable consequences of digital technologies—isolation and distance. Sennheiser and, by extension, The Industry gesture toward the ways that technologies enable *connections* between users. In a press release describing Sennheiser's involvement in the production, Stefanie Reichert, Sennheiser's director of strategic marketing argues:

> As social media and personalized listening experiences permeate the lives of modern consumers, *Invisible Cities* illustrates that people can

share a communal experience with others while still enjoying art independently. This production actually leverages this phenomenon into its dramatic presentation, creating a deeper and more meaningful experience for participants.[106]

Compare Reichert's statement with Sharon's remarks on technology prior to a performance of *Invisible Cities*:

Technology, which we often think has a way of distancing us from everything and everybody around us, can actually be a force that brings us together. And we can have experiences that allow us to be individuals and allow us to be in our own isolated world, but among a larger group, and allow us to also notice the world around us in an even more powerful way.[107]

"Noticing the world" is, in Sharon's words, a way of constituting sensory experiences that might otherwise be missed—with the help of Sennheiser. Ironically though, the apparatus of the headphones upon which *Invisible Cities* was based relied on individual, not communal, interpretations of the opera.

This sense of individual agency is more than just the ability to choose a specific path. More so, I believe it signifies how the production marketed individual experiences (and Sennheiser products) to viewers. For example, audience member Ellen's experience in the previous section shows how the headphones initiate a process of spectatorship: audience members give interpretive meaning to the opera's staging, regardless of what visual action is taking place based on where they are in the station at a specific time. At first blush, this process may not seem to differ from the way an audience member might interpret an avant-garde staging of a canonic work, putting together images or a directorial concept that might appear radically different from that suggested by the music or traditional setting as in *Regieoper*. In *Invisible Cities*, however, the headphones recontextualize the process of spectatorship in tandem with Calvino's ambiguous text, Cerrone's transparent setting, and the absence of a visually consistent staging for all spectators. Paratextual elements surrounding the production such as the program and Sharon's speech preceding the overture also directed audience members to emphasize individual forms of interpretation. The Industry describes *Invisible Cities* as a production in which "No two audience members will have the same *visual* experience of the opera as they wander freely through the

operating station, searching for the singers and dancers."[108] The notion of individual control inherent in this description is inextricably linked with commercialized notions of mobile music consumption, although without the aural choice implicit within the model.

During *Invisible Cities*, audience members would sometimes follow specific singers who, in Santos's words, "didn't have a large group following them," with the hope of discovering something new. In doing so, individuals would sometimes abandon the group of people with whom they were attending the opera. The previously quoted audience and stage manager accounts emphasize the importance individual "personalization" played in reception of *Invisible Cities*. As Zabrodski noted: "No one observes the show in the same way, making it a highly *personal*, not private, experience. It is this individualized element that provides the source for sharing different stories connected by a single, very public event."[109] Zabrodski's observation captures the tension between the personal and private, public and exclusive experience-economy event that was *Invisible Cities*. The dialectic of the headphones implied both exclusive personalization *and* privacy, although neither was actually true for the spectating audience.

Sharon's production decision creates a hierarchy in which the shared aural experience is prioritized as the core of the production rather than a consistent visual experience. The performer's voice is separated from her body, and the audience, the staging seems to suggest, does not necessarily need the latter at all times. Even the title of a documentary produced by local public broadcasting station KCET (and commissioned by Sennheiser) about *Invisible Cities* itself supports this claim: "*Invisible Cities*: The Dematerialization of the Opera."[110] Attending a "dematerialized opera" requires the audience member to engage in an act of interpretation between mediated device and spontaneous action in Union Station, rather than an act of interpretation between choreographed visual and aural spectacle. While any opera requires varying competencies to reconcile the various signifying systems at play, *Invisible Cities* relies on significantly fewer moments of visual consistency in the process of interpretation. In this process, spectators are given fewer numbers of standardized "resources" to make sense of the narrative.

Wagner's Invisible Theater, Brecht's Headphones?

The use of the headphones within *Invisible Cities* may have seemed to be a radical departure from operatic convention. As I have shown, the *visibility* of

the headphones, rather than their presence as amplifying technology, *was* the radical component of the opera. These same headphones also gesture toward historical notions of operatic listening. Seen through this historic lens, *Invisible Cities* is not even the first operatic production to draw the commercial and aesthetic potentials of the genre together under the mantle of immersive spectatorship. Specifically, Sharon deploys certain historical luminaries, including Richard Wagner and Bertolt Brecht, to signal both tradition and innovation within a long history of opera. This tension between tradition and innovation constitutes one part of The Industry's identity and *Invisible Cities*' significance within twenty-first-century operatic production.

Bertolt Brecht and Richard Wagner have been central thinkers for Sharon, and he invokes both men's theories frequently. Perhaps epitomizing this creative overlap, Joy Calico notes that Sharon's choice to relocate to LA was partially catalyzed by his experience assisting Brecht protégé Achim Freyer with a new production of Wagner's *Ring* cycle.[111] Similarly, his decision to move to Germany after college was partially to learn to read Brecht and Wagner in the original language. Despite Sharon's deep familiarity with the ideas of both individuals, it is worth noting that he tends to integrate the ideas of both—especially Wagner—on a surface level when discussing modes of performance. For the purposes of my discussion here, I will provide a brief, but noncomprehensive overview of both thinkers with more attention paid to Brecht, whose ideas are more frequently deployed by Sharon.

Richard Wagner's notion of Gesamtkunstwerk describes a totalizing work of art, in which all of the disparate "signifying systems" of opera come together. Just as *Invisible Cities* seemingly renegotiated the relationships between operatic signifiers, Wagner's *Zukunftsmusik* ("music of the future") envisioned new relationships between operatic conventions and space. With unobstructed sightlines, submerged pit, and the first consistent use of complete darkness in the house, Wagner's Bayreuth embodied late nineteenth-century conceptions of theatrical immersion from a sensory perspective. By contrast, Bertolt Brecht's epic theater is meant to catalyze a shift in the audience from passive spectator in the theater immobilized by "continuous music" (with a correlating passivity in society) to active participant in both spheres through estrangement. As a result, Brecht writes, "The audience can no longer have the illusion of being the unseen spectator at an event which is really taking place."[112] To this end, Calico explains that Brecht's estrangement is meant to be a "two-step process" that encompasses both "alienation" and a form of "re-cognition," in which the spectator sees a familiar work or concept through a "new perspective."[113] The concept of epic theater

plays a role in many twenty-first-century alternative operas that are site-specific or technologically mediated. While Calico considers the works of The Industry to be post-Brechtian—essentially, fragmented without a single decisive meaning—she reminds readers that that "post-Brechtian theater is still indebted to Brecht."[114] Aesthetically, Wagner and Brecht might seem to be unlikely bedfellows; however, the aesthetic preoccupations of each figure have more in common than might be expected. For instance, Matthew Wilson Smith goes so far as to theorize the notion of a Brechtian Gesamtkunstwerk. He reads Brecht's interest in presenting a unified work of art through aesthetics of estrangement as similar to the project, if different in political intention, of Gesamtkunstwerk.[115]

The innovative spectatorship practices showcased in *Invisible Cities* are thus a product of performance ideologies purposefully drawn from operatic history. Sharon explains that while Brecht's work on spectatorship has been a huge influence in all his major productions with The Industry, he is also looking for work that approaches Wagner's ability to evoke an "immersive" setting:

> I want to look [in my productions] for [work] that feels Brechtian, and it also is not that far from Wagner. Because Wagner has [semantic] breaks, tons of breaks between music and text, and what he imagined versus what is. I don't think [Wagner] thought of things as a complete picture, but he definitely thought about creating a world, you know?[116]

Invisible Cities could be understood as an application of Wagnerian Gesamtkunstwerk, with the totalizing apparatus concealed within the headphones themselves. From this perspective, audience facility in uniting visual and aural elements through the headphones is assumed and thus consistent. The headphones are also paradoxically ignored as operatic technology in this interpretation. Instead, they *are* the theater. On the other hand, the use of a consistent audio track paired with disparate visual scenes could be understood to take part in a Brechtian aesthetics of estrangement. The opera thus emphasizes the contradiction between the audience member's perception of control and her lack thereof. Spectatorship is a precarious process with finite resources. The Wagnerian perspective looks within the headphones, where the technicity of the opera is concealed, while the Brechtian reading focuses on the headphones as the visible mechanism of the production. Analyzing the work through this dichotomy reveals another way that *Invisible Cities*

instead extends concepts central to operatic history rather than breaking with operatic tradition.

Sharon deploys both Wagner and Brecht for strategic reasons. Both figures have the advantage of representing operatic tradition *and* innovation. In fact, musicologically minded techies might have even thought of Wagner when reading the *Wired* magazine review of *Invisible Cities* with which I open this chapter—"The opera of the future?"[117] As Wagner notes, within the ideal theatrical space, "The public . . . forgets the confines of the auditorium and lives and breathes now only in the artwork which seems to it as Life itself, and on the stage which seems the wide expanse of the whole World."[118] Just as the headphones encase the ear in *Invisible Cities*, Bayreuth as performance space "encased" the spectator. At Bayreuth, lights were dimmed, and Wagner's "mystic gulf" of the orchestra pit emerged as the object that—like the headphones—initiated a specific mode of spectatorship. In the process of immersion into a more "rigorously structured" spectating experience, the hypothetical spectator might experience a loss of control, or even loss of self; Wagner describes the "spectator who transplants himself onto the stage."[119] Much like the headphones that promise a highly structured yet personalized aural experience, the experience of the Gesamtkunstwerk at Bayreuth is all-encompassing and yet individuated because of an equality of perspective.

Bayreuth as a site of immersion, however, eventually fell short of Wagner's aesthetic aims. This was due to the *onstage* spectacle to which the audiences' attention was drawn. Bemoaning the materiality of production in his 1882 *Bühnenweihfestspiel* (stage-consecrating festival play) *Parsifal*, Wagner reportedly said to Cosima Wagner: "Having created the invisible orchestra, I now feel like inventing the invisible theatre."[120] In 2013, the headphones of *Invisible Cities* hosted this invisible theater, circumventing the excesses of production.

The similarities between Wagner's aesthetic goals and those of *Invisible Cities* with regards to technology begin to diverge at this point. Wagner, as Gundula Kreuzer has demonstrated, harbored a "deep ambivalence" about the inner technical workings behind fantastic onstage effects and sought to obscure them.[121] In contrast, The Industry makes a baroque show of these machinations, with the hype of production existing as a sort of twenty-first-century deus ex machina.[122] *Invisible Cities*' biggest technological advance is not the use of headphones and sound design. Rather, it is the *prominence* of these technologies within the performance.

To invoke Sharon's other historical luminary of choice, the opera's rejection of conventional modes of listening and setting in Union Station might

cultivate a sense of Brechtian estrangement.[123] The clearest way of think-ing about this sense of estrangement is to imagine Union Station during a performance from the perspective of an audience member who takes her headphones on and off. She watches Faatoalia sing in front of her, listens to his voice through the live-mixed recording on the headphones, removes the headphones, and hears him sing acoustically. She walks to another room, headphones off, and watches four dancers move synchronously, but in silence. She puts the headphones on again, and the narrative clicks into place once more as she hears the sound. The headphones represent an overt visual that catalyzes the meaning of the performance. She can listen to the opera while staring at a blank wall of the station, at a fellow spectator listen-ing in another space, or (problematically) at a houseless person looking for a warm place to sleep for the night. The everyday object is simultaneously aestheticized and brutally realistic.

Invisible Cities' visible technologies and emphasis on individual inter-pretation gesture toward a form of distancing and perhaps to the poten-tial political critique I have mentioned earlier. And yet Sharon's application of Brechtian theory brings forth a number of questions. For instance, the headphones amplify the dangers of "continuous music" so problematic for Brecht while also placing music in a hierarchy over text.[124] Moreover, the filmic music effect key to *Invisible Cities* is anathema to a spirit of Brechtian performance. While experiencing defamiliarization, audience members can also unite whatever visual spectacles are in front of them with the sound in the headphones, often to ethically problematic effects. As Calico explains, overt synchronicity between performing bodies and music might be per-ceived as a form of estrangement; however, this was not Sharon's intention (or what happened) during *Invisible Cities*.[125] Accompanied by Cerrone's haunting lyricism, the production problematically (and inadvertently) implies that the houseless individuals forced to live in Union Station are operatic entertainment. Reviewer Christian Herzog described Faatoalia as "seemingly another homeless person" until he "suddenly sang and revealed himself as Marco Polo."[126] The work may *appear* to be the ultimate per-formance of an aesthetics of estrangement, and yet the disturbing conse-quences in these examples suggest otherwise. Although the intention of the performance was indeed to create work that is both aesthetically innovative *and* political, the sociocultural consequences of the headphones circumvent these aims. In other words, the opera invokes the aesthetics, rather than the politics, of Brecht.

By creating work that "feels Brechtian and is also not that far from Wag-

ner," Sharon succumbs to the historical difficulty of reconciling the work, writings, and practice of two theorists who, while aesthetically similar in some ways, differ extraordinarily in others. "Wagner" seems to be shorthand for a fictional world that exists parallel to the reality of the station, while "Brecht" suggests thoughtful engagement (and perhaps utopian possibility) within the real world from the perspective of the idealized operatic fiction. Sharon's adaptation of Brecht's theories echoes the influence of *Regietheater* on twenty-first-century operatic performance.[127] Together, both figures do even more: they root *Invisible Cities* within the canon of traditional opera and histories of spectatorship.[128]

Convention or Experimentation?

I want to return to one of the central questions with which I began this chapter: just how "new" are the apparent innovations of *Invisible Cities*? As I have shown, the contradictions between seeing and hearing, spectatorial control and directorial interpretation, hiding technology and highlighting it that are central to *Invisible Cities* are also key historical questions that have haunted opera since the genre's inception.

Thus, the final question that can help us understand this contradiction between convention and experimentation is not how *Invisible Cities* engaged with the operatic genre, but, rather, how Sharon and Cerrone *believe* it engaged with the operatic genre and why this engagement was important to them. Sharon positioned *Invisible Cities* as a natural successor to historical opera convention, while Cerrone demonstrably resisted operatic traditions throughout the composition and performance process. Opera, as I show throughout this book, is a discursive tool that is deployed in various ways and to various ends.

As has already been made clear throughout this chapter, Cerrone has a complicated relationship with *Invisible Cities* as "opera." From his comments, however, it seems that operatic convention and his perceptions of opera's limitations had more to do with his rejection of the genre's stereotypes than the historical record. For Cerrone, opera's ossified reputation, and the fossilized reactions of the genre's old guard during his work collaborating with The Industry on *Invisible Cities*, determined his choice to reject certain notions of the genre. Cerrone summarized his time at the Duffy Institute as a "complete crash course in the complete and utter convention-alness of the opera world."[129] For example, at the institute, he was told by

composer Libby Larsen that certain soprano parts of *Invisible Cities* could not be soprano parts because they were written without vibrato. Instead, she suggested that Cerrone change the parts to boy soprano parts. Cerrone, however, felt strongly that the timbre of a boy soprano was different from what he would get from the timbre of a soprano singing without vibrato. This is a small detail, but it illustrates how clearly specific timbres are associated with certain *Fächer*, or categories, of the operatic voice.[130]

More broadly, Cerrone knew that he "didn't want conventional opera singing" in *Invisible Cities*. By amplifying the singers, he believed he could eliminate one of the technical motivators for a rich, full operatic tone in a large space: volume and resonance. In turn he felt this meant performers could bring more nuance to their interpretations. Amplification also allowed Cerrone to double many of the vocal lines at the unison within the opera. This doubling allowed him to both characterize certain lines through shifts in timbre and cultivate vocal color that was distinctly nonoperatic:

> One of the ways that opera singers are unappealing as singers is that the pitch centricity can be a little off, often because they aren't doubled [by other instruments] . . . but anyway, there's a lot of aspects of the score where the doubling of the voice with different combinations of instruments was very much a characterization thing that happened throughout the piece.[131]

Freely doubling the voice with "different combinations of instruments" allowed Cerrone to move even further from what he conceived of as a "traditional" sound—again, a full sound with vibrato.[132] This comment is particularly interesting because it illuminates how Cerrone was reacting to a stereotype of operatic timbre rather than a strict reality. Orchestral doubling of the voice is a standard technique in much operatic composition, a fact with which Cerrone is certainly familiar. This comment then, might communicate the extent to which Cerrone felt that amplification allowed for different types of singing and instrumental writing alike. It also suggests the degree to which his timbral ideal diverged from what he perceived to be a traditional operatic sound.

Invisible Cities constituted a "breakout" work for both Cerrone and Sharon in the paths of their respective careers. In Cerrone's oeuvre, *Invisible Cities* represents a moment of stylistic crystallization and international attention after the work's 2014 Pulitzer nomination. Cerrone's most recent

operatic work after *Invisible Cities*, *In a Grove* (2021) is, like *Invisible Cities*, situated between genres. The work shares many characteristics with *Invisible Cities*: an open-ended staging and unconventional instrumentation, including the heavy use of electronic processing.[133] By framing *Invisible Cities* as opera—but unconventionally so—Cerrone can be both traditional enough to categorize (and thus program) *and* innovative enough to draw critical attention.

Sharon has different stakes in classifying *Invisible Cities* as opera. His assessment of the opera as part of a historical line of operas that engage with questions of immersion, listening, and spectatorship directly links the experimental work to the stylistic preoccupations of the centuries-old form. "I've often thought that one of the joys of opera is that your ears get to watch and your eyes get to listen," Sharon explained before the November 15 performance of *Invisible Cities*.[134] "The more you can create scenarios in which that confusion of the senses, all that cognitive dissonance, becomes a part of your experience, that's a way we can expand all of our senses." Here Sharon positions *Invisible Cities* as the natural successor to traditional opera—as the "opera of the future"? At the final dress rehearsal of *Invisible Cities*, Sharon suggested as much. Referencing Wagner and the technologies pioneered at Bayreuth, he stated that, in the past, "technology was advanced mostly by artists who wanted new ways to tell stories."[135] Especially given Sharon's then-recent experience serving as an assistant director for the LA Opera's 2012 *Ring* cycle, it is clear that he is comparing the new technologies used in *Invisible Cities* to those innovations of Bayreuth. Once more, however, Sharon foregrounds these technologies, while, in comparison, Wagner sought to conceal them.

Sharon's willingness to embrace the technical narrative behind *Invisible Cities* may be because, unlike Wagner, he rejects the idea of total control as artistic director. In a 2014 podcast with the arts and culture digital magazine *Ampersand*, journalist Heather Heise says to Sharon: "The whole idea of simultaneities happening [in *Invisible Cities*]—it seems very resistant to the idea of an *auteur*. Like no one is really in charge here. It's very non-Wagnerian." Sharon seems relieved at Heise's assessment. "That's nice to hear," he says.

A lot of people introduce me to people as an impresario, which, to me, has to me these kinds of very negative associations of a domineering auteur with big ideas that everyone needs to fall in line with,

and that's definitely not the way I work. I don't see that value. I'm interested in other people's ideas, including the audience! That's why I like these projects that are so open to the audience's interpretation.[136]

Sharon then goes on to paraphrase the prolific twentieth-century director Wieland Wagner, grandson of Richard, whose efforts at Bayreuth are commonly agreed to have significantly reshaped interpretations of Richard Wagner's works and established a *Regietheater* approach to the operas.

> There's always been a quote that I've been inspired by [from] the great director Wieland Wagner, who says that "every production is a journey to an unknown destination," and that is definitely the case of the work that I've been doing with The Industry. It is work with an unknown destination, but we just keep walking closer towards it, and as we get closer it becomes more and more real and more and more vivid, and it's a really exciting process.[137]

Here Sharon neatly circumvents the problematic aspects of both Wagners' legacies (Richard and Wieland) while establishing his work as the natural successor to this historical lineage.[138] The Industry is guided by a vision of discovery, a journey with an unknown destination, but whose historical roots grow out of the same operatic tree under which Siegfried dreamed or Hunding dwelled.

Conclusions: Contradictory Spectatorships and the Operatic Genre

Invisible Cities is in dialogue with a historical narrative dependent on tensions between seeing, hearing, and perceiving that are at the heart of the operatic spectacle. This tension may be relocated and reshaped by the sociocultural influence of the headphones, but it is not new to this production. The conflict between variable signifiers within an opera house, and how audiences look and listen, is inherent to conventional definitions of opera. Thus, in its role as "opera for everyone," the work seemingly recasts traditional operatic spectatorial patterns and priorities only to demonstrate that a headphone staging can be one of the most "traditional" ways to present an opera in the twenty-first century. Works like *Invisible Cities*—unintentionally, or not— champion the primacy of the aural amid the multiple operatic signifying

systems at play in the genre, an approach to operatic performance that is far from experimental.[139]

In *Invisible Cities*, a unified aural performance was composed and presented through contemporary production techniques while audience members used audile techniques developed through other genres to "create" narratives. The viewer well versed in these systems of consumption will invent a narrative, and even those individuals expecting a more traditional form of synchronization will have a distinct experience walking through the opera. This is, after all, one of the goals of the production. At the same time, the aural component of what promises to be a highly individuated spectatorial experience is tightly controlled. The work's "immersive" appeal drew on both historical concepts of immersion and twenty-first-century advertising rhetoric coupled with digital technology to draw in screen-weary consumers yearning for sensory appeal. In the process, the opera both critiqued and reinforced modes of neoliberal consumption and, indeed, envisioned forms of precarious spectatorship.

As the above contradictions reveal, *Invisible Cities* is an unstable work, and that is why it provides an effective way to think about the broader questions of precarity, performance, spectatorship, and genre considered within this book. Genre, Eric Drott reminds us, is an unstable category that must be both "enacted and reenacted." Drott advocates for a fluid understanding of genre in which multiple "material, institutional, social, and symbolic" factors play a role in constituting and reperforming genre.[140] Each iteration of a work that claims to be an opera, as *Invisible Cities* does, may shift the genre's definition. But how exactly is *Invisible Cities* engaging *with* the definition of opera? Cerrone's answer is simple: "I was always calling it an opera because an opera is just a vague—to me, it has music, it has drama, you know, it has text, it's an opera."[141] As Drott argues, "Groupings enacted by genre . . . continue to shape our understandings of modernist music"—and, I would add, contemporary composition and performance as a whole.[142]

"Opera is dead! Long live opera" proclaim productions like *Invisible Cities*.[143] While these seemingly new types of performance restage historic conversations about operatic signifiers, they also offer new opportunities to understand the modes of listening, technicity, and spectatorial control that are a part of the operatic genre. One of Sharon's oft-quoted directorial guidelines is a paraphrase of Marcel Duchamp's statement, "The creative act is not performed by the artist alone; the spectator brings the work in contact with the external world by deciphering and interpreting its inner qualifications

and thus adds his contribution to the creative act."[144] In Sharon's words, "The audience completes the work."[145] Polo puts it another way:

> I speak and I speak, but the listener retains only the words he is expecting. The description of the world to which you lend a benevolent ear is one thing; the description that will go the rounds of the groups of stevedores and gondoliers on the street outside my house the day of my return is another; and yet another, that which I might dictate late in life, if I were taken prisoner by Genoese pirates and put in irons in the same cell with a writer of adventure stories. It is not the voice that commands the story: it is the ear.[146]

"Traditional" opera is not reliant upon the structure wherein it is performed. Rather, it is made up of a multiplicity of contrapuntal systems, including signifiers of both technology and spatiality. Although opera houses have concretized certain relationships between spectator, performer, sound, and narrative, those relationships are symptoms of opera rather than the ontological diagnosis itself. Thus, the tensions of spectatorship inherent to the operatic apparatus sound in and out of the headphones, and beyond Wagner's—and Sharon's—visible and invisible theaters.

Operatic Economics

Liveness and Labor in Hopscotch

Tourists to Los Angeles's historic Bradbury Building might have been taken by surprise in late October 2015 by a wiry brunette in a trench coat slowly wandering the upper floors of the building. Sometimes singing, sometimes silent, she was followed by a saxophonist playing disjunct lines and by dancers running from floor to floor. The curious tourists might not have noticed the group of four people coming out of the elevator watching Lucha, the character in the trench coat, maneuver through the building. This group fulfilled an integral performance role, however, by serving as an on-site audience as well as livestreaming the action in the Bradbury Building back to the "Central Hub," a communal viewing space where other audience members could watch the livestreamed action for free. Lucha's musical stroll through the Bradbury Building was one of twenty-four chapters of the mobile opera *Hopscotch* put on by The Industry in October and November 2015. Productions like *Hopscotch* give the illusion of intimate spectator access to performers and performance through production techniques. As spectator Megan Dobkin tweeted after seeing *Hopscotch* on November 4, 2015, "Why go see theater in Los Angeles when you can BE theater in Los Angeles?"

As befitting a production by The Industry, *Hopscotch* abandoned generic markers such as elaborate costumes, a vast set, or a large onstage chorus. Most striking of the operatic changes, however, was not *Hopscotch*'s departure from the opera house altogether—by now the lack of conventional institutional space was de rigueur for the company. Rather, the opera's scenes were staged simultaneously in multiple public spaces throughout Los Angeles. This massive production represents a significant expansion in the history of The Industry. While *Invisible Cities* (2013) received national acclaim, *Hop-*

scotch increased production scale on all fronts: budget, spectacle, length, cast, and site(s).[1] In the words of multiple interlocutors, *Invisible Cities* proved that The Industry could realize what, at first blush, appeared to be dramatically ambitious production concepts. Stage manager Rita Santos's comment, "After *Invisible Cities*, I thought we [The Industry] could literally do whatever we wanted to!" emblematized the attitudes of many performers and production staff alike when discussing their enthusiastic involvement in *Hopscotch*.[2]

For now though, I want to return to the Bradbury Building—the four audience members, the tourists, the saxophonist, the dancers, and Delaram Kamareh, the woman in the trench coat singing the role of Lucha. Kamareh's recollections of the experience were more fraught than the animated press reception of *Hopscotch* might suggest:

> People are all on their phones recording you, taking pictures of you. Two millimeters away from your face. . . . It's very funny to me, because sometimes I think to myself, "Don't you think—I am a person, I can see you! I'm not a machine!" Some people were in your face with the livestream. Some people were on their phones the whole time, taking pictures of the building while I am singing, and it's very hurtful sometimes too, to the performer, because I can see them![3]

The juxtaposition of Kamareh's frustrated recollection with Dobkin's exuberant account of *Hopscotch* reveals an underlying tension between audience and performer experiences directly linked to *Hopscotch*'s modes of production. The digital tools and performance structure that played a significant role in imbuing the performance with a sense of "liveness" and immediacy for audience members reshaped and changed experiences for performers. These structural shifts also brought questions of ownership and control over performance to a head; thus, in this chapter I ask what it means to have "ownership" over a performance, whether it be as performer, audience member, or as in *Hopscotch*, a role somewhere in the middle.[4] This question points to the ways many of the innovative spectatorial practices of The Industry focus our critical attention on broader historical questions about the nature of operatic performance and spectatorship. While chapter 1 considered spectatorship from the lenses of auditory consistency and perceptions of private experience in public space, here I consider the consequences of a performer's inability to establish "ownership" over her performance. That is, how do experimental spectatorial offerings shape the precarious experiences of performers in these productions?

Hopscotch represents a dramatic shift in operatic spectatorship enabled by digital interfaces. This shift is a response to how intimacy is performed and experienced in the digital age. Notably, Sharon was praised by the MacArthur Foundation in 2017 for the ways his "immersive, multi-sensory, and mobile productions . . . are infusing a new vitality" into the genre of opera.[5] But these artistic and aesthetic commitments are only made possible through an equally firm commitment to technological mediation, especially forms that transmit live action to distant places in real time. Such technologies—mobile phones, livestreamed online content, and social media platforms—are an integral part of his audiences' daily lives and crucial to a modern-day discourse of an intimate liveness only economically possible through mediation.

Hopscotch's mediation relies on a process predicated on invisibility: both the work of the audience member filming the opera and the many repetitions of each musician's performance remain unknown to us, just as they would be to spectators at the Central Hub. Describing how historical discourses of sound fidelity had the effect of effacing the technological network, Jonathan Sterne writes that "attending to differences between 'sources' and 'copies'"—or I would add, the live and the mediated—"diverts our attention from processes to products; technology vanishes, leaving as its by-product a source and a sound that is separated from it."[6] The "vanishing mediator," a term first used by philosopher Frederic Jameson, describes a process of "strategic substitution" in which an idea mediates between two concepts only to have its significance obscured by the final product of the transition.[7] In the opening vignette, the audience member filming the scene acts something like Sterne's (and Jameson's) vanishing mediator; the network and the labor facilitating the process of transmission have disappeared, leaving only a "copy" of the performance dependent on an invisible network.

Odeya Nini, one of the ten *Hopscotch* composers and 126 performers, approaches mediation from a very different perspective—that of a performer. Speaking of *Hopscotch*, she explained: "You have to take responsibility, as a performer, as an artist, responsibility for yourself, and for the audiences' experience. And not just think, OK, the music is going to do the work, the composer did the work, it's gonna work—I'm just kind of the in-between."[8] I want to go beyond simply making Sterne's technological process of mediation visible, as Nini describes and *Hopscotch* seems to accomplish. Rather, this chapter investigates the matrix of relationships between performer and audience that arise through experimental performance.

The invisible matrix of these relationships and the consequences of their remediation can also be superimposed on a larger economic network, one

that hums in the background of all types of contemporary opera production. As discussed in the introduction, Baumol and Bowen's 1966 concept of cost disease describes the economic phenomenon that haunts live performance regardless of genre.[9] Cost disease describes a process in which the costs to produce a live performance increase due to inflation while the number of performances produced remain the same. In other words, whether it is 1853 or 2023, the same number of musicians are required to perform *La Traviata*. Regardless of the increasing costs of their wages and renting the venue, however, the output of these musicians will remain the same: one *La Traviata*.

Hopscotch suggested a way this common economic pitfall might be subverted: by using digital tools to "scale" the experience of liveness. In the process, however, as The Industry and consequently, spectators, conflated physical proximity to performers with embodied intimacy, they also engaged in a process that resulted in unexpected consequences. As I demonstrate, access to these musicians through the intimate medium of performance became an exportable commodity on digital networks such as Instagram and Twitter.[10] Encouraged by the presence of the livestream and marketing of *Hopscotch* as an interactive experience, audience members also inadvertently *interacted* with performers as though they were content found while on the internet or a mobile phone application. In this way, the screens of the livestreaming devices themselves acted as agents of fetishization: seen through the screen, labor became spectacle.[11] The conflation of proximity with intimacy led to fraught experiences for performers on the other side of the livestream.

As *Invisible Cities* revealed, participatory and immersive forms of performance are often critiqued for the way their structures imitate the precarities of neoliberal political systems.[12] These critiques offer one perspective on new modes of operatic and theatrical performance. By focusing on operas like *Hopscotch* as complicit in the neoliberal project without also exploring the nuances of performer, audience, and producer experiences, however, scholars overlook an opportunity to understand how changing modes of digital spectatorship redefine the intimacy, power dynamics, and economic structures at the heart of "live" performance.

While in this chapter I am primarily focused on the relationships between audience members and performers enabled by digital mediation, these interactions might also be reconfigured through the lens of spatiality. Urban geographer Edward Soja's theorizations of the role of spatiality in constructing networks of power provide a gloss on relationships between performers, audience members, bystanders, and the performative space of LA in *Hopscotch*. As Soja argues (building on philosophers Henri Lefebvre and Michel Foucault), urban space is c=reated by the superimposi-

tion of three spaces, Firstspace, Secondspace, and Thirdspace. Firstspace describes the built environment. Secondspace describes imagined notions of this environment, including historical and social conceptions of what this space might be—for instance, LA as equated with Hollywood in the popular imagination, manifested in the 2016 film *La La Land*. Thirdspace is "an-Other way of understanding and acting to change the spatiality of human life, a distinct mode of critical spatial awareness that is appropriate to the new scope and significance being brought about in the rebalanced trialectics of spatiality–historicality–sociality."[13] In other words, Thirdspace is more than the combinations of First- and Secondspace or the way people occupy space. Thirdspace is real and imagined, full of the constructive possibility of understanding inequality, marginality, and possibility within space. It is experienced when an audience member in *Hopscotch* looks up from the livestream and notices the changes of a performer's breath as this performer makes eye contact with the audience member. It is enacted when, after anti-gentrification protests during one of the *Hopscotch* scenes, one of the *Hopscotch* performers considers the consequences of her whiteness in a primarily Latinx space differently. And it appears when a bystander observes a scene in *Hopscotch* on the street in downtown LA and sits down on a bench to relax and enjoy a piece of music in an unexpected place.

Operatic Tradition on Wheels: The Production

Hopscotch's nonlinear narrative depicts an Orpheus-like figure, Lucha, who falls in love with an elusive scientist named Jameson. After a long and fruitless search, Lucha must find meaning in life beyond Jameson's disappearance. As Lucha ultimately falls in love with her artistic collaborator, Orlando, the opera becomes a meditation on the many paths each individual might follow over the course of a lifetime. The nonlinear narrative means that many audience members will not grasp the particularities of Lucha's love, loss, and self-renewal. Regardless, the opera's broad themes of searching and discovery are easily apparent for most viewers.

The title of the opera is drawn from Argentinian Julio Cortázar's novel *Hopscotch*. Originally published in Spanish in 1963, the episodic, nonlinear work tells the story of protagonist Horacio in search of his lost love, Lucía, nicknamed La Maga. When Sharon and the production team could not get permission to use Cortázar's work, however, a new plot had to be written. In a reference to operatic history, the Orpheus myth ended up serving as the backbone of the narrative. Several elements of the original *Hopscotch* novel

did remain in the opera: the narrative structure and the plot conceit of a lost lover, as well as the name Lucha (from Lucía). In Cortázar's original novel, the reader is encouraged to progress through each of the book's 155 chapters in the order they prefer, although Cortázar prescribes two alternate means of experiencing the narrative. Similar to *Invisible Cities*, a loose narrative driven by implications of audience choice amplifies the sense of viewer control over the opera's story. *Hopscotch*'s nonlinear narrative as well as the audience's ability to "jump around" imitates the structure of the novel. Moreover, this quality of viewer control also intensifies the effect for some spectators that any possible observation during the course of the opera could be an intentional part of the performance.

Lucha's search for Jameson in the opera loosely mirrors the novel's narrative, in which a central protagonist is searching for his lover. Certain qualities of the original novel's plot even remained within the music of the opera. For example, Ellen Reid's composition of chapter 22, "Despair," was influenced by her reading of the novel: "Originally we were talking about using the book *Hopscotch*. . . . And in [the novel] they are always just drunk and driving around Paris and listening to jazz. And I liked this idea of—and it's a taxicab experience, after a long, late night out, riding home in a cab, and all of the city lights are going—and so I wanted this idea of a Doppler effect of these kinds of morphing chords, like tired, a little tipsy."[14]

The rewritten Orpheus myth that became the main plot of the opera served as both a deliberate reference to Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* and a loose canvas upon which Lucha's journey could be pinned in the chaos of cocreation and brainstorming.[15] Sharon explained that the idea for incorporating the Orpheus myth came as the production team thought of LA as a place that could "feel like a 'city of angels' and an underworld."[16] He noted that "using Monteverdi's setting of [the Orpheus myth] . . . puts us into conversation with operatic history."[17] Recasting the search of the protagonist in the original Cortázar novel as a type of Orphic myth is a clear way in which Sharon is contextualizing *Hopscotch*—a structurally unconventional opera—within a trajectory of conventional operatic works. Even more than placing *Hopscotch* into operatic history, this type of direct linkage between *L'Orfeo* and *Hopscotch* also positions *Hopscotch* as a kind of inheritor of the operatic tradition. Four hundred years of operatic history are swept away, and *Hopscotch* manifests as the twenty-first-century ur-opera.

In *Hopscotch*, direct musical quotations of Monteverdi occur most prominently in chapter 31, "Orfeo," in which tenor James Onstad sang "Possente Spirto," Orfeo's act III aria on the stage of LA's Million Dollar Theater. The

aria is Orfeo's attempt to convince Charon to allow him to enter Hades and find Eurydice. In chapter 31, audience members return with Lucha to the memory of a night at the opera with Jameson, whose favorite opera, coincidentally, is Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo*. Overt plot references to *L'Orfeo* also occur in chapter 7, "The Reunion," in which Lucha and her partner Orlando are rehearsing a puppeteer interpretation of the myth, and chapter 26, "Hades," in which Lucha descends the banks of the Los Angeles River and encounters the Furies and Charon himself. These numerous examples of musical and narrative engagement demonstrate how *Hopscotch* is self-consciously engaging with operatic history in the process of reimagining the content of the operatic form.[18]

Fractured Logistics

The opera is arranged into twenty-four ten-minute chapters, which are divided into three routes: red, green, and yellow. Each route traces its own path through LA and, imitating a serial podcast or YouTube series model, portrays a different segment of the story of which Lucha is a part. Table 2.1 lists the chapters for each route.

Nineteen singers play Lucha in the production, each costumed in some version of a yellow dress, and there are 126 performers total in the opera. The routes take spectators under highway overpasses, into abandoned factory spaces, and to iconic LA tourist spots. The opera, therefore, consisted of eight ten-minute chapters per route, with four spectators per chapter, and ninety-six people viewing the show "on-site" or "live" each time it is performed. These ninety-six spectators, however, were not the only ones able to view the opera "live."

Each group of four (limousine-riding) audience members was given a Samsung Galaxy 6 phone, which, if audience members followed instructions, transmitted the opera's live footage back to a communal viewing space constructed for the purposes of the opera. (Spectators are meant to share the filming duties throughout the performance.) The idea of livestreaming through smartphones originated partially through practical reasons. Production designer Jason Thompson explained to me that Los Angeles is a particularly difficult (and expensive) place to use wireless transmitter receivers, so The Industry turned to cellular data as an alternative in the brainstorming phase of the production.[19] T-Mobile offered the option of month-to-month contracts, and although the company did not sponsor *Hopscotch*, it did offer

Table 2.1. *Hopscotch* Routes, Chapter Titles, and Composers

Red	Yellow	Green
4: Lucha's Quinceañera Song; Rosenboom	22: Despair; Reid	15: A Fortune; Krausas
32: Orlando Portrait; Norman	28: Lucha and Orlando in Love; Shocked	35: The Phone Call, Part 2; Lowenstein
17: Orlando's Farewell; Krausas	25: The Other Woman; Krausas	18: Interlude (Car Wash); Krausas
2: Crash; King	20: The Experiment; Rosenboom	9: Angel's Point; McIntosh
14: The Phone Call, Part 1; Lowenstein	31: Orfeo; Lowenstein/ Monteverdi	19: Passengers; Pesacov
33: Farewell from the Rooftops; Reid	6: Jameson Portrait; Norman	26: Hades; Rosenboom
24: The Red Notebook; McIntosh	12: Wedding; McIntosh	29: Lucha Portrait; Norman
8: First Kiss; Lowenstein	7: The Reunion; Nini	11: The Floating Nebula; Reid
Finale: Norman	Finale: Norman	Finale: Norman

phones for The Industry to try in the testing phase. The Samsung Galaxy 6 ended up being the cheapest phone that could access the T-Mobile network. The communal viewing space to which the livestreams were broadcast was a temporary structure designed by architects Constance Vale and Emmett Zeifman that contained twenty-four TVs set up in an arc around an open-air gathering space seen in Figure 2.1.

While tickets to get into a limousine to see a single route started at $125, interested individuals could enter the Hub for free. Streamed from each group's phone, scenes would occur on repeat on the individual televisions, and audience members at the Hub could, using Sennheiser wireless headphones, tune into the audio on the appropriate screen. In sum, there were three groups of audience members present at every performance: limousine riders who filmed the performance, Central Hub viewers who watched these live transmitted performances, and spectators at the on-site locations who might happen to see parts of the opera performed in various locations around Los Angeles.

Performances occurred three times on both Saturday and Sunday of each weekend from October 31 to November 22, 2015. The final performance of each day culminated in a dramatic finale, in which the majority of the livestreamed characters stepped out of their respective limousines or were

Figure 2.1. The Central Hub. Architectural design and execution overseen by Constance Vale and Emmett Zeifman. Photo by Joshua Lipton.

transported from their site-specific locales and appeared in person at the Central Hub. Only limousine spectators who had purchased tickets to the final show of the day would be transported to the Hub to view the finale; however, all spectators (limousine, Hub, or interested passersby) were welcome at the Hub for the finale of the third show each Saturday and Sunday.[20]

The music of *Hopscotch* was written by six composers: Veronika Krausas, Marc Lowenstein, Andrew McIntosh, Andrew Norman, Ellen Reid, and David Rosenboom. Additional music was provided by Phillip King, Odeya Nini, Louis Pesacov, and Michelle Shocked. The libretto was written by Tom Jacobson, Mandy Kahn, Sarah LaBrie, Jane Stephens Rosenthal, Janine Salinas Schoenberg, and Erin Young. Rather than the group collectively writing each chapter, composer-libretto teams were assigned to several nonlinear chapters throughout the opera.

While The Industry is self-described as an experimental opera company, the music of *Hopscotch* is generally—as much as could be generalized of a work composed by ten composers with distinct styles—one of the more traditional aspects of the opera. Many of the chapters utilize a tonal harmonic scheme, acoustic voices, and small chamber-like orchestration. There are exceptions, however. For instance, chapter 7, "Reunion," composed by

Odeya Nini, uses a collage of field recordings—some taken from the Pilates studio where the scene was eventually performed—and electronic sounds over which Nini improvises a series of ululations and other wordless vocalisms.[21] Likewise, Ellen Reid's chapter 11, "The Floating Nebula," uses a Janet Cardiff–inspired setup of electronic speakers surrounding the performers. Soprano Quayla Bramble plays a chime and sings in a high tessitura while a recording by the Trinity Youth Chorus is played through the speakers surrounding audience members. With some exceptions, the experimental modes of performance in *Hopscotch* draw predominantly on minimalism, chance, and electronic compositional idioms of the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Although chapters were meant to be ten minutes in length, each scene needed to have some flexibility to expand or contract based on potential transportation issues related to the flow of the work. For example, Reid's scenes in chapter 22, "Despair" (previously discussed regarding Reid's use of the doppler effect), relied on the limousine containing the audience members and two performers to circle around a traffic loop four times as four trumpet players played cluster chords in a punctuated, improvisatory rhythm. Each time the limo went around the loop, another trumpet player appeared, and her, his, or their line was added to the cluster. However, during a recording session I observed on August 22, 2016, the trumpet players and Reid discussed the fact that in performance, there was never an instance in which there was time for all four trumpet players to be added to the chord. Instead, a signal was communicated into an earpiece worn by one of the trumpet players that the ensemble needed to skip to the next section of the piece because of time. Likewise, in chapter 15: "A Fortune," singer Justine Aronson described constantly having to change which version of the chapter's aria she sang based on traffic in the area.[22]

An assistant stage manager (ASM) was present during each of the chapters. This individual would help move the scene along, slow it down based on the speed of the rest of the cars on the route (as in chapter 15), and handle appropriate communication issues with the rest of the production. The ASM would give a signal to the performers, either in earpieces or via a nonverbal cue such as the contracting of hands before or during the scene. ASMs also served as crowd control in scenes like chapter 20, "The Experiment," when a mysterious figure wearing a lucha libre mask who dragged the singer playing Jameson out of a car seemed too lifelike, causing the police to intervene.[23]

Andrew Norman's finale, held at the Central Hub, incorporated ele-

ments of indeterminacy as well as physical and aural gestures to signal to the performers when to move on to the next musical section. Because the finale was dependent upon all ninety-six audience members and a majority of the performers being present in the Hub, the score needed to be flexible, and ranged in performance time from twenty-five to forty-five minutes. As an audience member journeyed through *Hopscotch*, she would hear an array of styles not only from this group of ten composers, but also quotations from other works and styles, including Monteverdi, traditional quinceañera music, vocal percussion over improvised harp, folk song, and electronic music. Hybridity of musical gesture was thus linked with the multiple spectatorial modes and even forms of characterization within the opera (for example, the nineteen performers playing the central figure of Lucha).

Hybrid Spectatorships

As in *Invisible Cities*, *Hopscotch* incorporated a hybrid set of viewing interfaces for spectators with unspecified norms of behavior for each modality. For instance, those viewers watching the production for free at the Central Hub might have interpreted the situation as a televisual or on-demand experience of spectatorship imitating streaming services such as Netflix. By contrast, those audience members in the limousine experienced intimate moments of personalized performance while using the production-assigned smartphone to mediate individual operatic experiences. In addition to these two groups, onlookers who just happened to observe moments of performance in the various LA sites in which the opera was staged were also present. Finally, performers operated in a fourth "mode" of performance and were caught between the expectations and behavioral norms of these two groups.

By combining these multiple modes of spectatorship, *Hopscotch* encapsulated aesthetics of both DIY-scrappy opera and luxurious traditional opera. This tandem approach of accessibility and capital-"O" *O*peratic luxury—to say nothing of experience economy marketing—might be thought of as key to one version of an "opera for everyone" aesthetic, in which opera is made to feel approachable and new and yet still draws on positive marketing stereotypes.[24] In *Hopscotch*, The Industry's DIY aesthetic was conveyed by the jittery livestream feeds, the free entrance to the Hub, and the small-scale feel of the company's offerings. Luxury was represented by the limousines, proximity to the musicians, and the performance's promise of participation.

Hopscotch scales liveness and personalization using digital platforms and services familiar to audience members, and in turn, these forms of digital media scale structures of precarity.

Audience members in the limousines were made to feel as though they were coperformers in the opera through a variety of means. While spectators in *Invisible Cities* were expected to determine their own journey through the narrative, *Hopscotch* incorporated a constantly changing model of viewership. "Any time you feel like you understand your relationship to the spectacle, it should change. Because then you're finding your footing again," Sharon explained.[25] Works like *Hopscotch* are meant to increase the rate at which the audiences' footing changes. Sharon states:

> One of the key ideas was that every time you entered a car it was a different composer, different artists, a different part of the city, everything was different. So that every time you entered a car, you had a changed experience. It allowed me to think that, OK, here's a car in which there's a direct participatory relationship between audience and actor, and here's one in which the audience feels as though they've stumbled into the character's inner psyche. Here's one where they're really *really* removed from it—it was all of the different modes of spectatorship put right next to each other.[26]

Sharon interprets the constant shifting between forms of spectatorship as a catalyst for forcing audience members into participation. By creating a scenario in which the terms of contract for the performance were constantly changing, audiences were asked to mentally adjust their "frame" throughout the entire ninety-minute performance.

Ticket holders were sometimes invited to interact with performers, sometimes disoriented by the appearance of a performer from an unexpected place—like a motorcycle appearing beside the car in chapter 19—and constantly in motion. For instance, as seen in Figure 2.2, chapter 33, "Farewell from the Rooftops," was performed in an elevator and on top of a roof. As audience member Michael recounted:

> At many different points I didn't fully know what my relationship to these performers should or could or would be . . . because it wasn't just that they were performing and these were settings, it was that they were asking you to do things and stand in certain places, and you were following them in certain places.[27]

Figure 2.2. Chapter 33, "Farewell from the Rooftops." Photo by Jill Thomsen.

To this end, during chapter 20, "The Experiment," audience members wore a brain-sensing or biofeedback headband. The electroencephalogram data taken from the brain of the audience member influenced the music, which increased in tempo or volume in response to the audience member's heightened reactions. Not only was the spectator fused with the technology through mediation; now, the audience member's neurological responses determine dynamic qualities of the music being performed.

Hopscotch overlayed Secondspace (imagined) on top of Firstspace (built) to blur the boundaries between when the operatic performance began and reality ended. For instance, singer Jon Keenan, Jameson in chapter 12, "Wedding," described how Los Angeles mayor Eric Garcetti stopped in the middle of a speech at town hall to congratulate him and singer Ashley Allan on their "marriage."[28] These sorts of anecdotes help to explain how audience members would feel like insiders within the world of *Hopscotch*. Misunderstanding my question about the experience of livestreaming and thinking I was assuming they were at the Central Hub, audience member Beryl almost indignantly exclaimed, "No! We were participants!" as she recounted her and her husband's experience of the opera.[29] Beryl's intense reaction speaks to the sense of ownership that audience members had over their individual experiences as participants in the narrative structure of the opera. It hardly needs to be said that participation in an imagined space is not the same thing

as performing. But for audience members who had a range of participatory encounters, it was difficult to parse out how they fit as spectators and coperformers into the fabric of the opera.

Participatory moments of engagement between opera and "real life" gave limousine-riding spectators the sense that they were actors within a fictional narrative. Moreover, certain production elements came together to suggest that the narrative itself was drawn from other forms of popular entertainment such as film or streaming. Audience members' comments often indicated that they felt themselves to be physically "in" a movie. These observations were amplified by The Industry's advertising rhetoric. On the *Hopscotch* website, a quote from soprano Maria Elena Altany compares the experience of being in the opera to that of "being in a movie. It felt so cinematic and breathtaking."[30] Altany's comment alludes to the ways in which The Industry deliberately positioned the genre of *Hopscotch* as "film-like," emphasizing Secondspace notions of LA. It was Sharon's goal that viewers feel as though they, like the *Hopscotch* musicians, were an essential part of a film. Thus, spectators felt they were participating in a hybrid narrative that was made up of the fictional story of the opera and the suggestion of mediated spaces drawn from other forms of entertainment. While *Invisible Cities* communicated audience control of the performance space through a mobile music idiom, *Hopscotch* layered forms drawn from cinema, YouTube, and livestreaming to encourage audience members to see the urban space as fictional. Of course, the unintended consequences of seeing real space as fictional space, as all forms of site-specific performance encourage, is to also see real people's experiences (the passersby living their lives) as fictional.

For Sharon, the company's location in Los Angeles heightened *Hopscotch*'s connection to other well-known spaces of the entertainment industry and normalized fantastic events and narratives within the space of the city: "If we're doing something in public, people will stumble upon it. . . . They just assume we're doing a film, even though they don't see a camera . . . because that's a common occurrence here."[31] More than just site-specific, *Hopscotch* was LA- or even Southern California–specific opera. Sharon explained, the reaction of spectators outside of the ticket-buying audience supported this conclusion:

> One of the scenes for *Hopscotch* was in Chinatown [chapter 15], and there was a burger joint that opened right where we were. There were always people sitting, eating, watching what's happening, not even

questioning it. They're just like, OK, this is a dramatic scene, someone must be filming this, this must be a new film or a TV show.[32]

Importantly, the association of certain iconic LA spaces with forms of fictionalized media also indicated to viewers and performers that *Hopscotch* was taking place in a kind of extended space of fantasy.[33] As audience member Michael suggested, these places "would have this familiarity of maybe being there once or seeing it in a movie."[34] Delaram Kamareh, the Lucha described in the introduction (chapter 25, "The Other Woman"), said of her scene: "One of my favorite movies is *Bladerunner*, and it was shot [in the Bradbury Building]. That was the selling point, when Yuval [Sharon] said, 'I'm going to put you in the Bradbury Building,' I was like, OK, sold."[35] Michael too mentioned his experience watching Kamareh's scene in the Bradbury Building, referring to it as "the *Bladerunner* building" rather than the Bradbury Building. In these examples, the cinematic history of the city is layered upon the experience of watching the opera. Spaces of fantasy are mediated by a cinematic past and invoke participation and a kind of corporeal "reality" for those audience members who are physically present.

How might audience members perceive a small interaction or suggestion of a fictitious space as participation? Teresa de Lauretis reasons that certain recurring narratives in cinema—and I would argue, other popular forms of mediated entertainment—result in the creation of what she refers to as "public fantasies."[36] Public fantasies can be workings or reworkings of "dominant cultural narratives or scenarios of the popular imagination" and might be thought of as enacted forms of secondspace conceptions.[37] Through settings familiar from film and a narrative drawn from myth, *Hopscotch* encouraged audience members to engage within these public fantasies and to subsequently imagine themselves, like the (actual) musicians of *Hopscotch*, as agents within this world. By taking on this role, their spectatorship was embodied—as coparticipants, they acted and reacted within the sensorial world of the opera. Moreover, audience bodies were often caught within the shots of the livestream, shoulder to shoulder with the hired operatic performers.

Spectators in the limousines were acutely aware of the ways their production of the livestream would shape experiences of the scene at the Central Hub. For example, Michael said, "My head immediately went to framing. . . . It felt like I'm responsible. Where do I need to be so that the people viewing this get a good experience? What is the most interesting

way to shoot this? . . . How do I set these characters in a place where you're actually watching the interaction?"[38] Likewise, audience member Elizabeth recounted the often-overbearing awareness that she was creating an artistic product for others, sometimes to the extent that her own viewing experience was limited: "I was conscious of trying to make sure that the singers remained in frame. At times, that interfered with my own role as spectator—both in terms of my own sightline and because I was aware of my camera duties. But it also made me a participant in the opera."[39]

In other instances, audience members refused to film the opera because they felt as though filming would make it more difficult to focus on the performance in front of them. Audience member Miranda explained that in fact, all four members of her limousine group were reluctant to film the opera at all.[40] The group's negative reaction to the filming requirement demonstrates the extent to which certain audience members perceived the responsibility of filming as extremely participatory. As in *Invisible Cities*, the mixed modes of perception at work in *Hopscotch* required varying levels of audience participation and engagement.

Indeed, reproducing (or refusing to reproduce) the experience of *Hopscotch* either verbally, using social media, or via livestream amplified spectators' awareness of the simultaneous networks of the performance. Michael, who attended all three routes, described to me how audience members on his final route would ask him "what the other routes were. They were all asking me a lot of questions, like what I had experienced story-wise, and I was conveying some of the crazy things that I had seen during the other routes."[41] Maxwell Williams's review of the green route of *Hopscotch* reflects this curiosity: "I jokingly told musical director Marc Lowenstein that I had a sense of 'route envy' when I heard others discussing their experiences."[42]

The Labor of the Live

The audience control and sense of participation enabled by both livestream and shifting modes of participation is an illusion of agency rather than agential power itself. Online algorithms on Google, for instance, may provide an illusion of choice, when human biases are built into the search results themselves.[43] While interactive performance can often masquerade as purely aesthetic experiment—even to the production's creators—one of the commodities being bought, performed, and sold is some version of the audience's performance of itself. In effect, one of the appeals of the opera for

many audience members is the manufactured agency of attending the work. While this was true in *Invisible Cities* as well, *Hopscotch* emphasized the role of audience participation through key structural elements like the livestream. A spectator's sense that she is also a participant in the world of *Hopscotch* and the actions that she takes as "coperformer" during a chapter, however, have little or no effect on the actual performance.

Even a spectator's choice not to film a scene would not have affected performances at the Central Hub. To ensure fidelity during all performances, Thompson had already taken prerecorded videos of each scene during the preview week. In the instances in which the viewer-controlled live feed did not work (usually because of connection issues), the stage managers at the Central Hub would "switch to the prerecorded version so that the audience at the Hub wouldn't know something was going on at our end," according to Santos, the stage manager for *Hopscotch*'s yellow route.[44] Sometimes, when certain connections were unreliable, Santos and the other stage managers would be forced to "leave the prerecorded video on auto."[45] This fascinating piece of evidence demonstrates that, to those at the Hub, it did not particularly matter where exactly (or when exactly) the feed was coming from. Here technological reproduction is "invisible" as the audience member acts as the vanishing mediator I described in the introduction. This invisibility invalidates the efforts of the audience members as mediators. Furthermore, it illustrates the way in which mediation as *belief* rather than reality played a role in spectator experiences of the production. Cultivating and exporting an individual perspective—livestreaming as one-way performance—is tellingly less about the response of the person receiving that footage than the experience of the audience member filming that footage.

The prevalence of the audience-controlled livestream despite its nonessential role as technology demonstrates just how important the symbolic performance of liveness was to the narrative of the performance. Limousine viewers' sense of liveness and correlating performer experiences are interdependent elements because it was the projection and constant revivification of liveness that allowed *Hopscotch* to offer participatory experiences to certain audience members and scale the size of production to a greater number of viewers. Digital interactivity and, indeed, intimacy were thus fundamental to the opera's structure. At the same time, this cultivation of liveness dramatically shaped performer experiences. How though, might rethinking the values ascribed to liveness more clearly illuminate the labor *of* the live and the living labor at the heart of *Hopscotch* and operatic performance more broadly? That is, what is an audience member seeking when she or

he spectates at a "live" performance? And how does the performer bear the consequences of these expectations?

Performance studies scholar Philip Auslander has argued that live performance is increasingly dependent upon behavioral and aesthetic codes established by "dominant" mediated forms, positing that liveness is a "historically contingent term."[46] In turn, these "dominant" mediated forms shaped audience perceptions of the performers and performance. In *Hopscotch*, it was the livestream's correspondence with social media networks that *suggested* a participatory equivalency between spectators and performers. Using a device commonplace for many (the smartphone), audience members also brought tangible behaviors and social codes from their daily lives along for the ride. While Auslander's original formulation of liveness has long been a part of musicological and performance studies discourse, I believe that clarifying and reformulating the definition of liveness in the digital, rather than the televisual, age is crucial to understanding the role this system of values plays in *Hopscotch*. "Why actually bother having an oboe player play a piece of music?" *Hopscotch* composer Andrew Norman asked me during our interview in August 2016.[47] He continued: "They're more expensive than an electronic file. We have to really think about what it means to have real people do things anymore, because we can do anything with electronic sounds anyway."[48] He felt that "the point" of hiring the more expensive musician was "to watch those people live," to embrace the experience of "the act of human beings making something."[49] In other words, in this section I am curious about identifying the specific qualities of liveness or even "aliveness" that Norman's comment describes.

As an aesthetic quality, liveness combines human labor with the intimacy and immediacy of experiencing that labor. For instance, early definitions of "liveness" had to do with tensions between actual performers and machines. In 1965, the *Toronto Globe and Mail* proclaimed the triumphant headline: "Musicians Oust Discotheque at Two Motels!" The article described how, through the boycotting efforts of the American Federation of Musicians, "live" dance music was able to triumph over the mechanized efforts of the discotheque, that is, "dead" music.[50] As sociologist Sarah Thornton points out, partially due to this dichotomous positioning by labor movements, "The expression 'live music' gave positive valuation to and became a generic term for performed music. It soaked up the aesthetic and ethical connotations of life-versus-death, human-versus-mechanical, creative-versus-imitative."[51] In this example, liveness is directly linked to "aliveness" and, perhaps more simply, the Marxist notion of living labor, in which the capacity and potential

labor power of the musician are bound within the system of production and consumption that results in circulating capital. Auslander has emphasized that in a televisual context liveness conveys immediacy and intimacy, both qualities that can also describe the performance of Norman's oboe player and the Toronto musicians.[52] In its capacity to be observed, the creative labor becomes authenticated—and potentially compensated—as a human effort. As was demonstrated by the illusion of the audience-dependent livestream in *Hopscotch*, one of the latent capacities of this creative labor is also that of risk and possibly failure.

These definitions of liveness—living labor, intimacy, immediacy, potential failure—do not fully describe the media interfaces that, since the early twenty-first century, have shaped live performance and ultimately influenced works like *Hopscotch*. To that end, media scholar Nick Couldry has suggested another conceptualization of liveness. In Couldry's formulation, liveness is relational. He offers two types of online liveness, group and online liveness. In the digital age, he explains that any number of live transmissions can coexist, therefore broadening the potential interactions an individual might juggle at a single moment, be it with friends via texting services, online in chat rooms (group liveness), or through the shared awareness of constantly updating news websites (online liveness).[53] This formulation of liveness accounts for the way copresent transmissions like updating websites and the use of mobile phones allow "individuals and groups to be constantly co-present to each other" regardless of where they are in space.[54] In the digital age, therefore, the idea of liveness is inextricably linked with constant copresence—participation and awareness—with a group of social imaginaries.[55] In Couldry's (and Auslander's) formulations, new forms of media change the way live interactions and thus the formation of social imaginaries are conducted and perceived. With more mediated points of contact, the imaginary map of imagined communities only grows. When Couldry first conceptualized online liveness in 2004, however, it was before SMS (short messaging service), MMS (multimedia messaging service) and OTT (over the top) applications such as WeChat, WhatsApp, and even iMessage services had become more ubiquitous among US users because of unlimited texting plans and broader access to wireless networks.[56] Mobile phones still allow for text messaging and accessing the internet, but the smartphone marks a more dramatic means of "carrying" online liveness with you because of the affordances of the operating system, and particularly, applications such as Instagram and Twitter. Thus, I extend and update Couldry's concept of online liveness to a system I describe as digital liveness. In digital

liveness, group liveness and internet liveness are combined and embedded within the affordances of a single device: the smartphone. Digital liveness describes the way in which the smartphone represents forms of copresence (texting and video chat); constant updates among a group of broader social imaginaries (applications such as Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok as well as updating access to news); and most important, the user's increasing awareness that she is able to contribute, shape, and control each of these types of space through personalization. Digital liveness can be experienced as a form of copresence in both live and mediated interactions. For example, someone attending a virtual meeting might experience digital liveness by surreptitiously feeling the desire to update a smartphone's news application while simultaneously attending the meeting (or virtual performance). Notably, Auslander offers a related definition of digital liveness that, also in dialogue with Couldry, focuses specifically on the individual's decision to respond or not to respond to an interface. His definition, however, does not account for the centrality of the smartphone to a conception of digital liveness, as I do here.[57] Put into dialogue with spatiality, digital liveness has the potential to impose Secondspace upon Firstspace in real time (think of a carefully curated Instagram photo) and enables an escape from one Firstspace (the visible built environment) into another (the invisible but omnipresent digital network). It might also enact Thirdspace—perhaps making a performance accessible for someone differently abled or located across the country—by connecting that person with an audience member.

Hopscotch amplified the desire for constant connection endemic to digital liveness. It enacted digital liveness in a corporeal sense by integrating aesthetic performance with social participation. Audience members feel connected to one another in the constantly changing chapters of the nonlinear narrative. They were also connected to a broader, imagined audience through mobile devices and renegotiated relationships with narrative and performers because of the opera's shifting contract of spectatorship. As a result, audience members participated through interactive moments within the narrative while enacting the digital network that made the performance possible.

Meanwhile, most audience members had a sense of the coexisting transmission networks operating in the form of the other routes and received at the Central Hub. By purchasing a ticket, audience members were only able to view a single route—yellow, red, or green. The knowledge that other routes existed and *could* all be viewed at the Central Hub, however, demonstrates an audience's potential awareness of the coexistence of other "live" transmissions.

Digital liveness is an inextricable part of a cycle in which sociality and self-expression are transfigured into mechanisms for performance and consumption without thought for the precarious bodies—audience members performers, and passersby—that enable this cycle. As Joshua Lubin-Levy and Aliza Shvarts note, "living labor"—or in *Hopscotch*, the labor of the live—"could . . . be further understood as the performance of the body under the structures of capitalism and within the temporality of the capitalist mode of production—the lure of its promise of the good life always just on the horizon."[58] As I discuss later in the chapter, the forms of digital liveness key to *Hopscotch* resulted in a process of fetishization of both audience and performer as commodities.

Mediated Entertainment and Operatic Distance

While *Hopscotch* replicated the relational aspects of digital liveness for audience members, it also heightened estrangement from the living, laboring bodies of performers and the experiences of the living communities in LA. The audience mindset of a perceived "distance" from these communities because of the presence of mobile technology was then amplified by the use of multiple framing devices that further attenuated the presence of the performers from that of spectators.[59] Some chapters used cinematic framing to make audience members feel as though they were participants in films. Others incorporated technological framing devices that, along with the specific element of underscoring-like music, suggested spectators were not only "living" the action, but also that they were watching mediated entertainment through other types of frames. Executive producer Elizabeth Cline described the ubiquity of these frames:

> You had the frame of the phone, the frame of the window. Everything that became a physical frame as well was mediating your experience and asking you to *be*—but then also asking you to be within the performance. So it was doing both, that is, asking you to experience something both live and mediated.[60]

While multiplying frames provided yet another perspective with which to enjoy the opera as a spectator, they also heightened the sense of distance between audience and performer experiences.

The Secondspace framing of events taking place in real time in public

also created distance between potential Thirdspace understandings of the role of space in mediating power and access. *Hopscotch*'s inability to recognize these spatial inequalities is best summed up by the antigentrification protests led by the Maoist group Serve the People LA (STPLA) against chapter 8, "First Kiss," that took place in the historically activist neighborhood Boyle Heights on Sunday October 4 and Sunday November 22.[61] The introduction to this book points to the ways the nuances of these protests that have been reduced to binarisms in critical readings of *Hopscotch*. It is worth briefly returning to the way Secondspace cinematic frameworks mediated The Industry's approach to Hollenbeck Park and, in turn, the response of protesters to the performance of the opera. While Sharon did not want *Hopscotch* to focus on spaces that represented a tourist's view of the city, it was important to him that each chapter engage with a site's "true" identity. As Cline explained:

> LA was the biggest character in the piece. . . . Part of the joy of *Hopscotch* is . . . how quickly the neighborhoods change, and so when you're working in these different neighborhoods and you're asking them to be a part of it, [the opera] actually . . . becomes— "representation" is not the word I want to use—it becomes closer to what happens in that neighborhood than just being an arts organization that's enacting it.[62]

Cline's explanation seems to describe. if not a Thirdspace realization of LA, an attempt toward such a representation. In practice, however, despite attempting to network with community organizations from each neighborhood, Sharon's definition of what each site's "vernacular" differed from what residents might have chosen to represent.

This disparity came about most directly from Sharon's emphasis on LA's Secondspace cinematic identity. More specifically, the whimsical staging and musical composition of chapter 8, in which food vendors, a roller skater, and a park musician seem to be sharing in Lucha and Jameson's blossoming love, directly references the song "Once a Year Day" from the 1957 musical *The Pajama Game*, filmed in Hollenbeck Park. The scene's staging and setting are a direct reference to, as composer Marc Lowenstein put it, "the late fifties, magical realism, musical theater approach" of the original film.[63] The intertextual relationship between chapter 8 and *The Pajama Game* thus facilitates a vision of Hollenbeck Park as a fictitious performative environment rather than an actual neighborhood. Notably, it was these elements

of magical realism to which STPLA seemed to take the most offense. The dualism of imagined understandings of LA along with the distancing effect of digital liveness prevented scenes of this sort from achieving the types of Thirdspace possibilities that certain site-specific performances (like the 2020 production of *Sweet Land*, discussed in chapter 4) can, with care, enact. Seen from this lens, the contradiction inherent within *Hopscotch* as an "opera for everyone" might be understood to be one of space and function, exacerbated by digital liveness.

Moreover, the effect of these types of technologies was to reduce performers' embodied presence throughout the opera, drawing audiences' attention to the visual image of performers on the livestream as well as fetishizing the media used in the performance itself. In chapter 2, "Crash," audience members were able to hear the voices of performers distant in physical space from the vehicle they (the audience members) were sitting in. In this scene, audience members sat in the limousine with beat-boxing harpist Phillip King while the vehicle slowly drove around the staged aftermath of a car accident involving the characters Lucha and Jameson. As the vehicle circled the faux wreckage of a motorcycle and car, audience members could hear the voices of performers being pumped into the vehicle while watching the scene. This effect, which also incorporated King's playing, was accomplished by requiring audience members to look through the windshield of the limousine as though it were a television screen.

In another example, during chapter 6, "Jameson Portrait," on the yellow route, images were projected from the side of the limousine, which audience members saw on the sides of the Second Street tunnel as music was played with the windows rolled up. As in "Crash," the car windows worked as a screen mediating the audience's viewpoint as they listened to music now presented as accompaniment to the event happening outside of the window. In both "Crash" and "Jameson Portrait," the audience's attention is drawn to the "screen" rather than the sounding bodies of harpist Phillip King and percussionists Ray McNamara and MB Gordy sitting next to them in the car. The divider of the "screen" disassociates visual attention from aural attention, and consequently creates a gap between the sounding and listening bodies of performer(s) and audience members.[64]

Sharon extended this distance in one of our conversations, saying of the desired effect of the scene, "Maybe my windshield is a projection screen, you know, in some way, maybe like a digital screen. Maybe those people aren't really even there, even?"[65] The list of conditionals in Sharon's comment— "maybe," "really," "even"—highlight how the multiple screens in the exam-

ple have the effect of producing corporeal absence. In these examples, the spectator's attention is drawn away from the bodies of individual performers and redirected through viewing habits and behaviors associated with mediated forms of entertainment. In effect, the intermediary of the digital device (or car screen) constitutes the performer as an ersatz digital reproduction. If Sharon is able to suggest that the performers "aren't even there," one wonders how much attention should be directed toward them in comparison to the technological apparatus enabling their presence. Moreover, in order to facilitate the livestream, audience members were encouraged to watch the performers through the screen of the mobile phone rather than focusing exclusively on them "live." To this end, Cline interprets the experience of livestreaming as "two and the same," saying, "You'd be looking and filming and looking and filming," fusing the separate entities of performer and screen into a single entity.[66]

The multiplying screens in the performance—livestreaming device, audience member's device, and car window—might also be understood as functioning as a kind of fourth wall for audience members. This fourth wall created a sense of distance and even ease for audience members but also separated them from the messy reality of performance. While the intimacy of listening to someone perform in a small space was one of the appeals of *Hopscotch*, operatic phonation is a full-bodied practice accompanied by spit, manipulation of the facial and neck muscles, and emotive expressions. It could have been that the screens also allowed some audience members to distance themselves from the corporeality, and indeed, the labor, of performance. In the same way the smooth interfaces and convenient structure of smartphone applications hide the ugly underbelly of the gig economy, the screens could have been a way of establishing distance from the "overwhelming" presence of performers performing.

"We've Never Sung It Together": Isolation in Digital Performance

One of the premises of *Hopscotch* was to create intimate experiences between spectators and performers by blurring the lines between performing musicians, real-life occurrences, and the livestreaming audience-participants. In reality, these multiple and sometimes contradictory goals could not always be realized. While audience members may perceive constant connectivity and control due to a performance that imitates the use of technologies in real

life, performers often experienced both the audience's disengagement from the present moment and isolation from fellow performers in the work.[67] In other words, audience members experienced the relational aspect of digital liveness while performers were caught in the isolating process of replicating liveness through repeat performances. This disconnect also demonstrates how performers' and audiences' expectations of connection and intimacy in performance differ from one another.

Musicians' senses of isolation in *Hopscotch* came not only from the behavior of the audience members, but also physically by their frequent separation from other performers. For example, in chapter 14, "Phone Call, Part 1," and chapter 35, "Phone Call Part 2," performers Maria Elena Altany and Susanna Guzmán performed opposite ends of a phone call with one another. Because Altany's scene was performed with a prerecorded track—Guzmán at the other end of a phone call—she emphasized how much she missed interacting with other performers. She remembered the difficulty of "being alone in that car with people staring at you, but you feel such a distance."[68] Altany went further to describe what she had learned through the performance of *Hopscotch* about herself as a performer: "My favorite part about performing and production is playing with my colleagues, responding to them and singing with them. That's the part I love the most."[69] Likewise, Marja Lisa Kay, Lucha in chapter 33: "Farewell from the Rooftops," described being able to talk to brass performers Jonah Levy, Tony Rinaldi, and Matt Barbier, who were on top of buildings with in-ear microphones, but not being able to hear them respond to her. "They could hear me, so we could kind of coordinate. . . . Well, I was alone, but they weren't so alone."[70] David Aguila, one of four trumpet players in chapter 22: "Despair," described "feeling a little extracted from it all" and "being at our specific locations" but separate from the rest of the performance.[71] As Kay pointed out, she "didn't know half the people" performing in *Hopscotch*, a fact that was emphasized during my fieldwork: sometimes interviews would overlap, but *Hopscotch* performers would not recognize each other.[72]

Kamareh described her sense of separation from the audience: "This is my twentieth performance and there is no applause."[73] Altany's comment about her isolation and Kamareh's comment about the lack of audience feedback echo opera singer Leon Alfred Duthernoy performing on radio for the first time: "I sang the aria to the tiny tin can. When I had finished, the room seemed dead. . . . At the end, there was the same dull, empty silence. I would have given anything for even a pathetic pattering of applause. . . . I felt like a bell tinkling in a vacuum."[74] In a traditional proscenium produc-

tion, the stage acts as a mediating point between the backstage world of performers and the spectating space of audience members. In *Hopscotch*, the performer's only point of connection is a shared space with a group of four audience members who physically move into the performance space and depart the scene every ten minutes. Rather than progressing from the beginning to end of a performance with the same group of people, the group of audience members changes around these performers. The audience comes and goes, while the performers dwell in narrative and physical stasis.

Thompson's description of spectators repeatedly watching certain chapters at the Hub reveals the contrast between this form of stagnation for performers versus access and flexibility for audience members. As individuals viewed the same scene at the Hub over and over again, were they watching the framing of the scene or the scene itself? When the audience member takes on the performative role of shaping and transmitting the scene with others, the performer herself is reduced to a kind of content. Her performance is not an end point; rather, it is the starting point for a chain of transmission controlled by spectating performers. Thompson supports this perspective when describing the opportunity to watch certain performers develop throughout the day at the Central Hub:

> You go and see a show once, and that's your memory of it, that's your experience of it. With *Hopscotch*, because you're always seeing these performances live, you're able to see [the performers'] performances grow over time. And you're able to see . . . the nuances that develop, even on a day, how they feel in the morning to how they are in the evening.[75]

By contrast, Altany expressed a lack of knowledge about how Susanna Guzmán, the other performer on her prerecorded track, had changed her performance since the original recording was made: "We've never sung it together, and I'm dying to sing it with her . . . because I really want to hear what she is doing with it now." While spectators at the Central Hub watch scenes evolve, the performers themselves remain separate and spread throughout the city.

Curation and Commodification

Simultaneously performers and curators, livestreaming *Hopscotch* spectators embodied the network that dispersed the opera for others. As Thompson put

it, "We let [the audience] explore their perspective of what they were viewing, and sometimes quite literally by handing them a camera to livestream the opera so that other people could see it, and they could really show us their perspective."[76] Digital liveness describes the ability to "go" into chat rooms of *your* choosing, access the content that *you* as a viewer are interested in accessing, and to participate in the way that *you* want to participate. In effect, this element of choice also allows a spectator to choose a Second-space perspective with which to constitute lived reality. Cline describes this personalized, participatory interaction: "The screen [of the livestream] is a frame for which your experience is being on display . . . your experience is ultimately mediated, but it's also a different kind of performative action that you're a part of."[77] By marketing intimacy with operatic performers as an exclusive experience, *Hopscotch* encouraged audience members to facilitate online interactions via the livestream and other social media interfaces. In this model, the consumer's ability to choose her experience and "contract" with the supplier is one of the most important elements of the transaction.

Seen through this lens, the structure of *Hopscotch* is a continuation of "prosumerism."[78] Established as a term by Alvin and Heidi Toffler, prosumerism describes the practice of consumers producing to in turn consume the very products they have created. Prosumers are sold a notion of participatory labor as control and creative outlet even as they perform invisible economic labor. For instance, online banking services represent a prosumer technology: customers are sold a notion of personal engagement with their online banking experience even as banks save money and time by employing fewer employees as tellers. In *Hopscotch*, the consumer's ability to personalize—or curate—her experience is "marketed" as one of the most important elements of the transaction.[79]

As prosumers, spectators thus felt their agency mattered in the success of the opera. Traci Larson, a graphic designer who has worked with The Industry on both *Invisible Cities* and *Hopscotch*, described her design role in marketing the projects and experience encountering the work of The Industry, and in particular *Hopscotch*, saying, "Making people feel a part of it and have ownership—I think that really changes your feeling of the presentation overall . . . so it's less like people on a stage talking to me."[80] As Cline succinctly put it: "The immediacy of [*Hopscotch*] is that you're using prosumer technology to explore narrative."[81] Having "ownership" in *Hopscotch*, however, required different sorts of negotiations of power between the parties involved.

Thompson notes that audience members were "invited to stand any-

where around the performance if they were out on a site, and when they are getting in a car they [could] sit in any open seat . . . to experience it how *they* want to experience it." He observes:

> Our society is so used to everything on demand. . . . We watch TV programming when we want, in the order we want. . . . We call Uber to get a car whenever we want to show up. This kind of point-of-view lifestyle that we curate for ourselves—[*Hopscotch*] feeds into that: now go see a show in the way that you wanna go see it, and you'll have a totally unique experience from everybody else.[82]

The curatorial lifestyle Thompson depicts is an extension of conveniences enabled and popularized through digital platforms. Composer Andrew Norman also referred to the point-of-view lifestyle, saying, "The idea that you as an audience member have agency to choose [what you see], that you have power over what you are seeing—this is a very contemporary idea."[83] Norman linked the experience of watching *Hopscotch* to a video game, saying:

> In a video game you choose what you're going to do, and in a movie someone has chosen for you—and so I think that idea of giving the audience agency or power to make choices about their experience is very powerful. And so the moving around thing is part of that, and I also think that in a way it reflects . . . how we are in real life. We curate our own experiences, we walk around, we choose what we see, we move through the world based on choices.[84]

On the original *Hopscotch* website, a "Social Feed" page included "live tweets, photos, and videos from the world of *Hopscotch*" curated from contributions that used the hashtag #HopscotchLA.[85] The curated feed is an amalgamation of posts from audience members, performers, observers, and production staff. Posts of four audience members in matching shirts who shared a limousine ride, and images of the finale at the Central Hub are interspersed with performer contributions celebrating the opening days of the opera and significant events that occurred throughout (like the Hollenbeck Park protests). These remediations of the performance give the impression of a hyperconnected, constantly updating network of operatic participants, in which performers and audience members alike have the ability to shape the performance itself. This democratic image of community, however, was not experienced by all members of the performance.

Posts revealed the inner workings of social media routines in which moments of self-disclosure were highly selected and edited. Presented in a framework informed by digitally enabled habits that emphasize choice for the individual consumer, intimate moments of performance—and performers—were ready to be "pinned" and "posted" via social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook in the same way commercial advertisements position their goods and services. Traci described how this desire to share an individual perspective of *Hopscotch* extended beyond the performance itself: "During *Hopscotch* time, a lot of my friends . . . were all shooting pictures of their program book, or they were at the Hub."[86] Performers-as-content are shared with aplomb equal to that surrounding a well-circulated video of a toddler's newfound ability to somersault or a particularly photogenic Instagram of an acai smoothie bowl. In effect, being a participant in a production like *Hopscotch* is to buy into a notion that the opera is an experience and that access to performers is one form of commodity available through this experience.

By combining an immersive structure with the enactment of a digital performance network, *Hopscotch* capitalized on the contemporary habits of consumers. Participation in the digital network, however contrived, can be equated with an expression of self. A picture of a *Hopscotch* performer perched on top of a building in Los Angeles in my Instagram feed conveys my trendiness, sense of adventure, or love of opera—my personal brand of cultural capital—to family and acquaintances alike.

Olivia Turnbull has pointed to the ways in which participatory forms of theater are based on audience forms of "self-disclosure" that subvert power dynamics between audience members and performers.[87] Part of the popularity of immersive theater, Turnbull argues, is due to the way it capitalizes upon the narcissistic sense that the production is designed around the spectator.[88] Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, by contrast, connect this sense of user-based design to the presence of digital interfaces themselves rather than participatory theater. Many digital interfaces are dependent upon the perspective of the user; thus user contribution, device, and sharing platform are enmeshed. By extension: "I tweet, therefore I am (in the opera)." Digital liveness synchronizes user-based design with patterns of device-based consumption.

Hopscotch was alluring for audiences because it incorporated behaviors of self-disclosure normalized by social media, including images of chapters, personal impressions, *and* the livestream as integral elements of a production that incorporates user-based design. Mediated forms of self-disclosure, tangible representations of the self, can be understood as a form of embodied

presence in the digital age. As Bolter and Grusin remind readers, "As [forms of digital media] become simultaneously technical analogs and social expressions of our identity, we become simultaneously both the subject and object of contemporary media. We are that which the film or television camera is trained on, and at the same time we are the camera itself."[89] Digital liveness relies on the assumption that there are other individuals, other audience members, on the other end of the transmission receiving the performance. In the process of this communication, the audience member is both immersed in and experiences the opera as a performer—an individual who participates within the opera but performs the self. While interactive performance can often masquerade as purely aesthetic experiment—even to the production's creators—in fact, the commodity being bought, performed, and sold is some version of the audience's performance of itself.

Mediating Intimacy and Isolation

If we examine the curatorial mindset from another perspective, though, what does the spectator own or control from the performance? Her experience and memories of the opera? The images she or he takes while spectating? The performance itself? And where might the performer fit within this nexus of spectatorship and power?

I have thus far discussed how *Hopscotch* was hailed as innovative because of its ability to engage audiences and bring them even closer to the experiences of performers. As audience member Jim phrased it, an opera like *Hopscotch* takes place in a "separate world from that of the opera house."[90] Although intimacy with performers as coparticipants might have been part of the allure of this world, proximity is not the same as a shared experience. In fact, my interlocutors explained that the experience of *performing* in *Hopscotch* required a constant policing of personal space as viewers unknowingly crossed boundaries using personal technological devices. The presence of the livestream seemed to encourage many other audience-participants to capture the experience of the opera using their personal cell phones during the performance. In a world in which proximity to a singer or instrumentalist is a rare thing, the moment of physical proximity (and the degree to which this closeness is experienced) becomes something to be shared and exported.

Notably, digital technologies do sometimes cultivate intimacy. In fact, operatic technologically enabled intimacy is not unique to *Hopscotch* or the development of a Covid-19-based attitude to performance. The voice

of a performer is imported directly into our ears through the cool plastic of headphones. We watch Joyce DiDonato speak to *us* directly through her vlog, calling fans by name as she answers their questions. Proximity in *Hopscotch* might allow the audience member to watch the abdomen of the singer expand and contract, and to see her larynx bob up and down beneath her skin each time she takes a breath. Arguably, it resituates the voice (or breath) *in* the singing or playing body, allowing audience members to see the corporeal labor of creating sound. As composer Ellen Reid recounted, "I heard [audience members saying] that when they were in the elevator with a French horn that was just playing—it was the only time they had ever been so close to a musician."[91] Similarly, audience member Elizabeth recalled:

> I also thought that [experiencing performance in a limousine] . . . humanized the singers some and made them seem more like people and less like characters (some of the latter might be a function of the nature of traditional opera too). These sorts of close-up settings also make me much more aware of the physicality of singing, and I found myself noticing the singers' breathing.[92]

Recollections like Elizabeth's, Reid's, or other performers' anecdotes of moments of connection with audience members during the performance speak to fleeting manifestations of Thirdspace uncovered by *Hopscotch*. These moments of connection, in effect, were enabled by proximity, imagination, and the reality of an unexpected performance space. Proximity, however, does not automatically result in intimacy or connection. Rather, as the varied experiences of audience members and performers reveal, intimacy requires intentional copresence from both performers and audience members.

More than just the audience's desire for "sharing" their experiences via the livestream, the behavior of spectators became a way of curating a specific outlook and exporting this perspective as a part of the *audience's* identity, rather than that of the performer. Viewer behavior encouraged in *Hopscotch*, in fact, suggests that a bifurcated way of experiencing the present is a way that many individuals interpret as normal, and even preferable. In effect, it seems that the introduction of mobile phones as a structural element in performances makes today's "distraction culture" behavior more permissible.[93]

Performers acknowledged the role of digital mediation in everyday interactions by sharing mixed responses to being on the receiving end of the livestream. Kay (chapter 3: "Farewell from the Rooftops"), for example, felt

the cameras did justify the physical proximity. At the same time, she also felt that some audience members overstepped the appropriate amount of space: "[The audience] didn't have a sense of space, really. They just kind of got into you, so I had some people like right here," she said, holding a hand just in front of her face. "There was one guy," she continued, "who did an up-and-down on me. . . . It was a little uncomfortable, but funny at the same time." Recall Kamareh's (chapter 7, "The Other Woman") observations from the beginning of the chapter too, which make clear how the opera's structure positioned performers as content within the participatory framework for spectators. Both Altany and Kay described similar situations, Altany saying:

> Some people would be on their phones the whole time. . . . It was really difficult because you're expending all of this effort, and it's such a difficult setting to have them so close, and it—it's a little bit dehumanizing . . . they're not registering that I can see them, you know![94]

What many spectators interpreted as a normal way of experiencing the performance—personal phones at the ready—was at times psychologically painful for performers. Altany described the "dehumanizing" aspect of not getting the audience's full attention while performing for only four people. Kamareh, too, noted, "I can see that they are texting during my performance. Here I am pouring my heart out. . . . I've been singing this piece for like twenty times already that day. . . . I can see that you are texting, I can see when you are taking a picture of the wall!"[95] Even while sharing these negative experiences, Kay did emphasize the *normalcy* of these types of screen-obsessed interactions in contemporary culture: "That's how they're choosing to enjoy a particular experience that they've attended. . . . I have no problem with it."[96] While performers seemed to recognize that behaviors unintentionally reinforced throughout the livestreaming process were commonplace in our everyday experiences of digital liveness, the end result was painful—simultaneously intrusive and distancing. Their comments emphasize the lack of agency they felt as the object of mediated performance.

Not all digital attention, however, was deemed negative. Kamareh explained that "a lot of people were present. And that was very encouraging to me as a performer, because I felt they were with me. . . . Even if they took a picture here and there, it wasn't out of place, it wasn't disrespectful. I didn't feel abused and violated or taken for granted. I felt they were there with me the whole time, and they were appreciative, they were there."[97] Similarly, Sharon Chohi Kim (chapter 22, "Despair") recalled how perform-

ing in the space of the limousine allowed her to experience "a different kind of energy. . . . You can see [the audience member's] expression and you can hear their breath."[98] James Onstad, chapter 31: ("Orfeo") commented that he often sang "specifically *for* the camera": "I could watch where people where facing and where the camera was, and [I'd] try and get their attention— 'Hey, get the camera on me!'"[99] Notably, however, Onstad was placed on a stage, while Kamareh, Kay, and Altany were on the same physical plane as audience members. Onstad, therefore, was framed in a more traditional way in which undesired physical access was less possible. While Onstad's desire to be "seen" by the livestream is not in the same vein as other performers' frustrations with the omnipresence of other (primarily nonlivestreaming) screens, the conflicting reactions of performers speak to the array of complications surrounding mediated performance.

Performers, Participants, and Power

Did audience members immediately equate participation in the opera with a form of agency in the structure of the performance? Most spectators seem to have been drawn to the absorptive potential of the opera, the alluring ways in which *Hopscotch* promised to transform the pedestrian elements of everyday life into the magic of operatic performance. Quotations on the *Hopscotch* website in fact advertise the performer's power to manage and beguile the viewer. On the landing page for chapter 14, "The Phone Call, Part 1," on the website, Altany states:

> [The audience] is just completely at the mercy of the show, which is great. We feel a lot of the time like our art form, we're at the mercy of the audiences—whether they come, whether they don't. This was very much the opposite. You're completely at our mercy, there's no—we were in the driver's seat, very literally.[100]

Many performers, however, also pointed to strategies employed to gain control over the situation, and in fact, demonstrate reactions to "too much" intimacy, which, based on the response of my collaborators, I interpret as (partially) based on the gender identity of the performer.

Contrast for instance, the above quotation with Kamareh's description of her experiences with spectators at the Bradbury Building: "Your audience, in these kinds of productions, the audience gets so much control. They can

stand wherever they want. They can be behind you or on your side. They can get as close to you as they want, and some people really push that."[101] Kamareh even interpreted this audience-based power as part of the allure of the *Hopscotch*: "We are giving you this power, because part of the gimmick of [the opera] is that, right? It's that sort of power that you give the audience. They are so close to you, they can creep up behind you."[102] This observation seems particularly astute when contextualized with the narratives of personal curation discussed in the earlier section.

While part of *Hopscotch*'s allure was the way it redistributed power between performers and those watching the opera, musicians had to manage personal boundaries during the performance. Altany described manipulating the interior of the car so she could have more control over her scene in relation to the audience members. Commenting on the striking image in the *New Yorker* of her looking distraught while seated next to ticket holders who look on with avid interest during the chapter 14: "The Phone Call" limo ride, she says:

> The people who were in that picture in the New Yorker—that was the last time I had two people sit next to me, because after that we put down the armrest. . . . It was just really close. . . . And I couldn't move—I like to change my position, lean against the window, shift to look out the window from the edge of my seat, come back. It's really hard when someone is sitting next to you.[103]

What I perceived in my conversations with many performers was the attempt for some type of control in a situation in which "sharing" the space with coperformers became stressful. Kamareh was particularly vocal about her embodied relationship to the audience in both *Hopscotch* and *Invisible Cities*:

> There's not a traditional stage setting or the Wagnerian thing with the lights on you, audience in the dark, you show them what you want. [*Hopscotch*] is not the same case. It's more like you have to lead them in the right direction. You have to be so much more focused and also in control. You, as a performer, you like to feel in control. . . . To a certain extent, that's part of your job, to feel like you are controlling the events, because already it's so nerve-racking to perform. . . . But in that setting it's like a whole layer of skin is taken off. . . . People are surrounding you.[104]

Kamareh's comment reflects her belief that "feeling in control . . . [is] part of the job" of the performer and, indeed, reinforces a kind of spectator/performer binary in the face of a production that attempted to disrupt this idea.

Gender identity played a large role in how performers reacted to moments of spatial proximity with audience members. Many of the performers I talked to who identified as women communicated that they felt more vulnerable to objectification or what they interpreted as voyeuristic audience behavior. These feelings were also dependent upon where performers encountered audience members (Altany inside a car, Delaram in a building and an elevator, Kay on top of a building and also in an elevator, versus Onstad on a stage with spectators walking around the auditorium). This vulnerability is especially highlighted in the anecdote Kay conveyed that describes the livestreaming audience member scanning up and down her body with the camera, and also Kamareh's comments about viewers surprising her from behind. Perhaps performers who identify as women or as belonging to more socially vulnerable groups may experience the negative consequences of alternative performance more directly. More broadly, because the majority of *Hopscotch* performers are in the earlier stages of their careers, they are in more vulnerable positions to advocate for themselves in performance, regardless with which groups they identify.

By removing the behavioral norms associated with the performer/spectator binary, *Hopscotch* obscured social norms around performance. My collaborators described how they used nonverbal communication like eye contact and prolonged gazes to communicate agency over a scene to audience members. These strategies also provided an outlet for performers to deal with the overwhelming presence of technology that permeated every scene. Odeya Nini (chapter 7: "The Reunion") perceived that "the intimacy was really intimidating and uncomfortable for [some audience members]."

> If you're in a tight car and someone is doing something right there . . . people could feel uncomfortable. And it's vulnerable. . . . And so I would make eye contact with people and walk slowly . . . kind of taking care of them, because they've just walked into your home, basically.[105]

For Nini, attempting direct gaze with spectators at the beginning of her scene established a kind of reciprocal, welcoming relationship with audience members uncomfortable with the constantly changing apparatus and intimacy of *Hopscotch*. Her description of this process also reveals how perform-

ers were better at coping with an absent fourth wall than audience members. In defining the performance space as her "home," her comment affirms her agency within a performance space.

Rather than using eye contact as a gesture of welcome, Kamareh and Altany used a direct gaze as a response to the overwhelming presence of technology in their scenes that they felt detracted from their performances.[106] Altany explained that both during *Invisible Cities* and *Hopscotch*, she would strategically employ eye contact to make audience members uncomfortable. When I asked how she employed eye contact in *Hopscotch*, Altany admitted to doing it once to one man who was overtly ignoring her performance while on his cell phone. "I was so annoyed that once I stopped singing, I just stared at him and didn't break until he got out of the car."[107] Altany's and Nini's use of eye contact is particularly interesting because of the way it allows the performer to deploy presence as a tool to combat the types of anonymity and retreat popularly used in digital spheres.

Participating in Precarity

The extended curatorial experience of *Hopscotch* made it difficult for many audience-participants to recognize performer labor as primarily an individual expression of artistry (and economic effort), rather than as a cog in the machine of the performance. Moreover, while personal social media postings about the opera were attributed to those individuals who posted them, the opera's global structure required that the livestream, the audiences' performance of self, be presented anonymously. This process of invisibility masked the efforts of spectators as coparticipants and alludes to a larger issue of masked labor within the work.[108]

Performance studies scholar Jen Harvie argues that participatory theater's "endorsement of amateurism [in the form of audience-participants] can risk de-professionalizing the artist and devaluing artistic expertise, skill, commitment, training, and education."[109] The process of deprofessionalization that Harvie describes can occur when audience members become participants in a production and experience the "thrill" of creative production without also experiencing the economic and challenges of being a performer.[110] In this process, the training undergone by the performers decreases in value in the face of the cheap or typically free labor of the audience members. At the same time, spectator labor—the livestream of the performance—goes uncompensated and unseen.

While musicians' performances were never invisible to individual "live" audience members, their repetitions went unseen by those in the limousines. Performers had to repeat their scenes twenty-four times a day, in effect imitating a process of digital reproduction in which low or no-cost reproducibility is created without distortion or corruption to each copy. In so doing, they effectively devalued their own efforts through repetition for the opera to function successfully. Notably, the invisible repetition of performing bodies is built into most live cultural performance. From Broadway performers giving over eight shows a week, to symphonic musicians yearly reproducing the same canonic body of works, to dancers executing the same routine choreography sixteen times a week in theme park parades, repetition is a huge part of the labor of performance, in or out of the opera house. *Hopscotch* distilled and intensified the repetition endemic to performance while making this repetition invisible, even essential to the creation of one performance. The product of a single performance, which is experienced by one set of four viewers, must be "mass-produced" through twenty-four repetitions in order for *Hopscotch* to be seen by ninety-six audience members and to be available at the Hub for three hours in a single day.[111]

Given the repetitive physical and emotional requirements of *Hopscotch*, artists expressed a sense of frustration with the amount of compensation they received. I could not access payment records for the performers of *Hopscotch*, and musicians were not able to share how much they were getting paid to perform for The Industry. Because sharing information and opinions about payments could endanger my collaborators' future contracts with The Industry, the following comments are presented anonymously:

> People don't want to talk about getting paid. . . . There is *nothing* for the performer. Nothing. I get paid less than a cleaning lady. . . . I basically spent all the money I made on just the food I had to buy [on the days I was performing]. . . . I wish I was kidding, but I'm not. . . . I really want to focus on this because people say, "Oh, this is for the art." Yes it's for the art, but . . . it's that I'm singing there. I'm spending three months of my life learning this piece—which is atonal, very difficult. . . . I have no orchestra. . . . I have to pick up [my pitch]—that's *hard*. I get paid less than a cleaning lady, and I'm giving a lot of people something. So that's why when somebody comes and takes time to text, and I know they paid two, three hundred dollars to be in my performance and they're not there with me, they are betraying me.[112]

While this individual's comment reveals an interesting way in which cultural labor is perceived differently than physical labor, the comparison is also a reminder of the monotony and physical demands of many kinds of musical performance. In comparison, other individuals described their paychecks as "paying for their gas." Another collaborator admitted that "it's not a whole lot of money, and I know some performers—they really should have been paid a lot more. And I do know that was somewhat of an issue." Many performers did note the positive economic impact of the short rehearsal period of *Hopscotch*, meaning rehearsing did not take up as much time as it would for a traditional opera. For some performers I talked to, performance was an economic "side project," not a main source of income. Although the paycheck amount was not a "problem" for these individuals, this information belies the fact that labor should be appropriately compensated irrespective of the laborer's individual circumstances. In sum, it was not necessarily that pay alone was poor for *Hopscotch*. Rather it was the pay in the context of the working conditions of the performance that made it problematic.

As I have earlier described, performers emphasized the physical difficulties of the lengthy repetitions of "content" in *Hopscotch*. While describing the repetition as "easy to recreate" because of the needs of his specific scene, Babatunde Akinboboye (chapter 26, "Hades") also described the performance as "assembly line, because it just felt like again, and again, and again."[113] Altany and others focused on the monotony of performing the same ten-minute scene forty-eight times in a weekend. Altany described a typical day of performance:

> Our limos would pull up in the parking lot, and our individual stage manager would give us the cue, it's time to go. And we'd usually get to our "break" location . . . just a parking lot. And we had a container for the set, and that was like our break room, and there was a toilet thing, and that was pretty much it. We'd bring our yoga mats, and just lay down in the container. And so we do the chapter eight times, then go back to that lot, and then rest for twenty-four minutes—I would bring my own food. Stage managers and people would prep for chapter 7, and then back in the car, eight more times, take another break, do it the last eight times, then go to the finale, and then from the finale they'd take us back to the regular green room. It was a really long day.[114]

Kamareh too, described her frustrations with the difficulty of performance:

I didn't have time to eat all day. I swear to God, I would choose between eating a banana or going to the bathroom in the next building. At one point, I would have a thing of pineapple, and I would just put one pineapple at a time in my mouth and try to swallow it quick enough before the next people would come up.[115]

Although Kay recalled the sense of spontaneity that came from the repetitions, saying, "That made it more exciting, because no performance was ever the same," she also described the repetition as "horrible." She went on: "We were working so hard. It was probably the most taxing show I have ever done. I mean, singing for 240 minutes a day is crazy."[116] All of the performers I talked to made some reference to counting down the number of performances each day.[117] Aguila (one of the four trumpet players in "Despair") described the difficulty of playing so much in a single day:

This is a complete endurance test—in every way. Physically, mentally, playing-wise. You're doing this scene twenty-four times a day. . . . And for this particular scene, and I know for a few other scenes with trumpet players . . . they were like, it's so killer on the chops . . . just being completely taxing as a musician.[118]

The chapter 22 score required Aguila and the other trumpet players to stand on a loading dock for the duration of the performance, first playing fanfare-like cluster chords in a rapid pattern, and then a longer chorale section. The palindrome-like requirements of the scene (audience members could enter the scene with the preceding chapter being chapter 28, "Lucha and Orlando in Love," or chapter 7, "The Reunion," depending on what direction they were going around the route) meant that players would repeat this pattern every seven to eight minutes, depending on when the limousine appeared for the next scene. As the comments of Altany and others demonstrate, the novel framing for spectators often resulted in a repetitive, monotonous, and physically dangerous work environment for artists in which each repetition exacerbated the physical fatigue and economic devaluation of the voice or instrument.

Performers had different strategies for dealing with the opera's repetitiveness. One strategy was incorporating different aspects of improvisation, be it musical improvisation to save the voice or physical improvisation to work through the negative psychological aspects of repetition. Said Kamareh:

> I would try to mentally find a different way of doing everything in the scene, like a different purpose . . . just to tell myself, "I am here, I am here, I'm still here." . . . We're not robots, we're all human beings. . . . So we had to create something to keep the morale up of the group, the group as a whole.[119]

Kamareh is referring to little jokes she would make with the other musicians in the scene. When I asked her what she meant by finding "a different way of doing everything in the scene," she described microadjustments to her blocking, small changes she could make in order to stay present in the scene. "You have to dilute your energy . . . just the creativity—when you put something on a loop, then the creativity gets lower. . . . And mentally I had to really pace myself technically, really pace myself because you can hurt yourself singing something like this."[120] Similarly, Kim recalled, "I would try to cry every scene, but I was so exhausted that I would just stare into the air conditioning. Like a couple of tears would come out."[121] Altany, too, focused on mitigating the physical consequences of so much repetition:

> I hid Ricola around the car, and I would save the wrappers and water bottles so I could suck on it for a minute and then stick it back in my dress. Someone asked me, "How are you doing this?"—another singer in a different chapter, whose rehearsals were after mine—and I was like, "Hide some Ricola in your bra."[122]

Altany would also "make some spots more speechlike or not give as much" vocally. She described "[pitching] my voice higher and a little lighter to save [it]" during different parts and repetitions of her scene. In these ways, the demands of the operatic singing key to *Hopscotch* were in direct conflict with other forces that shaped the opera: the need to produce enough repetitive content to sustain the performance. Notably though, while performers struggled with the understandable challenges of performing in the opera, they also discussed the excitement of performance in a small space or the opportunity to connect with specific audience members. Such performance experiences were clearly both exciting and fraught.

It is worth emphasizing that The Industry circa 2015 was far from the only opera company asking performers to labor extensively under difficult circumstances and long hours. The concept of economic devaluation through mass production could also be applied to more traditional opera apprentice programs in which singers, in exchange for experience, are

expected to sing or play multiple performances per week for little or no pay, or to many summer stock musical theater companies, in which performers are given substandard housing and expected to work up to eight three-hour shows per week while receiving as little as twenty-five dollars per show, or five to six dollars per hour. Younger performers and those early in their careers are especially vulnerable to these conditions because of the dearth of performance opportunities for less-experienced or developed singers.[123] In her 2013 commencement speech at Northwestern University, Claire Chase, founder of the International Contemporary Ensemble, lauded the potential of the musician as entrepreneur, optimistically stating: "The traditional classical and arts management structures have dissolved . . . so what happens when the line between the artist and producer has disappeared altogether? . . . This is your stage. And anything is possible."[124] Seen through the rose-tinted glasses of neoliberalism, anything may be possible, but when the artist and producer are one and the same, there are even fewer resources for those artists being exploited in a saturated market. From a darker perspective, what of a neoliberal market where, as Rebecca Schneider, Nicholas Ridout, and Tavia Nyong'o argue, performers-as-commodities can be understood as "affect [factories]"?[125] While factories are places of machine-driven creation, not the service labor key to *Hopscotch*, the point is that scaling live performance up through digital interfaces risks expecting living labor to act like a dead resource meant to be used, consumed, and abandoned.

Although *Hopscotch* may provide a spectacular example of the broader issues surrounding artistic production in the United States, I do not intend to cast the company itself as the villain in this moment of my "operatic" narrative. In observing the rehearsal process for subsequent post-*Hopscotch* productions, the camaraderie and mutual respect between singers—many of whom were a part of *Hopscotch*—and Sharon was evident. As music director and composer Mark Lowenstein described to me, the composers hired for *Hopscotch* "fought" over their favorite singers for individual scenes; this pattern of performers returning to work with The Industry has remained consistent since the 2015 production.[126] Significantly, *Hopscotch* also represented a turning point for The Industry with regards to the ethical treatment of singers as well as compensation: since 2015, the company has not created a production with this dimension of repetition or isolation for performers. If, as chapter 3 explores, each production of The Industry experiments with some aspect of operatic process, the experience of performers in *Hopscotch* might be understood as a form of productive failure that was not repeated in future productions. Moreover, when researching the final chapter of this

book, the case study on the 2020 opera *Sweet Land*, I was grateful to hear musicians lauding both The Industry's treatment of performers and the amount of compensation they received from the company. When I asked Cline if she could explain why *Sweet Land* musicians talked about pay so positively in comparison to *Hopscotch* performers, she explained that a major priority of The Industry has been to increase compensation for musicians with every production.[127]

Notably, union requirements often hamper the financial possibility of established companies producing experimental works. Even beyond experimentation on the operatic stage, anecdotes abound with regards to the ways singers are often paid by certain companies long *after* instrumental musicians, if at all.[128] However, to be a nonunion employee in *any* sector can often mean poor working conditions and lower compensation. *Hopscotch* highlights the consequences of asking human bodies to act as mechanized subjects. Including interactive technological experiences in performance is compelling, but not at the expense of the treatment of the live voices we still expect to sing for us.

Commodities and Conclusions

Performances that heavily rely on mechanization, be they *Hopscotch* or even in-house operatic productions, present new opportunities to understand how "aliveness," rather than "liveness," is an inextricable part of our engagement with the mechanical.[129] Instead of the mechanical replicating the live, the live is meant to replicate the mechanical. In turn, audience members perceive the live *as* mechanized, and, as in the case of *Hopscotch*, the live musicians become a commodity. *Hopscotch* hints at the ways digital networks might "scale" liveness to offer cultural products to a greater number of viewers. It also, however, demonstrates how these same digital networks can exploit a vulnerable labor force while disguising the consequences of this exploitation. More broadly, the opera speaks to the nature of repetition and intimacy in performance. Works like *Hopscotch*, in fact, can make us think differently about the question of operatic performance as inherently repetitive or inherently creative. Finally, performances such as these demonstrate alternate ways to approach the digital and "live" spaces with which we engage on a daily basis and that play a huge role in economic inequalities in the twenty-first century.

Rather than condemning this experimental operatic performance, it is

more helpful to think of these types of experimental productions as a means to consider the forms of labor required by the neoliberal gig economy and the role it plays in operatic and nonoperatic productions alike. As I have suggested, by providing an excess of performers or "repetitive content" positioned within an experiential opera, *Hopscotch* inadvertently imitated the labor inequalities of the gig economy with implications for workers beyond the artistic sector. The ambivalent experiences of these people reveal tensions between individualized consumer experiences and the needs of the communities providing these experiences. The "everyone" meant to spectate at this opera is, in reality, an economic imaginary for whom it is not humanely possible to produce enough content. In turn, the assumption that every space is meant for *everyone's* enjoyment of a performance is false. Equitable, mass-produced, and individualized intimacy, it seems, is only an operatic fantasy.

It is possible to redefine the "affect factory"—what Schneider, Ridout, and Nyong'o define as the "manufacture" of "affects as commodities"—of performance in which both audience members and performers seem to be for sale.[130] If precarity offers us a new way to understand both historical and contemporary norms of operatic production in the twenty-first-century United States—for the gig economy and operatic performance are systems that flourish in precarity—then the solution is far from the commodity form itself. Perhaps it has less to do with buying a ticket to the affect factory and more to do with looking up from the livestream to meet the direct gaze of the performer staring pointedly toward you or understanding the impact of an operatic performance in someone else's space, and encountering something, anything, together.

Experiments with Institutionality

Galileo, War of the Worlds, *and* ATLAS

In a May 2019 interview, executive director of The Industry Elizabeth Cline reflected on the company's growth since 2016, when artistic director Yuval Sharon began his three-year collaboration with the LA Philharmonic:

> The Industry has become synonymous with a successful model of innovation. . . . Pre-*Hopscotch* it was hard to open doors without this kind of proof of concept that these projects [can] turn into something that you want to get behind that you want to see, and you want to support.[1]

By contrast, "Some of the big things continue to be problems," an issue Cline attributes to scale:

> And I think that [these problems] aren't any different than anyone else's who are trying to do something out of the box—it's scalable, in the exact same way that our problems with being a nonprofit and challenges are no different than those of the LA Opera's or LA Phil.[2]

Cline's words speak to a tension between aesthetic and economic experimentation that is key to understanding The Industry's identity. For Cline, the experimentation described in The Industry's motto does not seem to signal innovation from the perspective of administrative practice or economic frameworks more broadly. In fact, she notes that the company faces strategic challenges that echo those of larger institutions such as the LA Phil or LA Opera, albeit at a smaller scale.

114

The Industry's reception in the popular press, however, describes a company that is both aesthetically *and* economically innovative in comparison to (one assumes) the traditional opera industry. Productions are described as "the future of the genre" and "the hottest ticket in town."[3] Events frequently sell out in advance, necessitating show extensions when possible. While pronouncements about the "future" of the operatic genre are, as many scholars have noted, cliché enough to be their own operatic convention, such descriptions also make implicit comparisons between operas produced by large US institutions versus those produced by The Industry. To this end, the latter's supporters (and donors) frequently expect a correlation between aesthetic experimentation and institutional innovation. Cline relayed the consistent feedback she gets about The Industry from these groups: "'You are such an innovative, out-of-the-box company, why aren't you doing better? Why aren't you making more money?' . . . It's really hard to explain that when you are making something live with a bunch of people, it's hard to find someone crazy enough to want to figure out how to make it replicable in some way."[4] Cline's reaction reveals the strain between creative experimentation and economic practice at the heart of this chapter: standardizing and replicating processes of experimentation that require flexibility is, to put it mildly, a tall order. Here my focus departs significantly from the production-oriented studies of the other chapters in this book to explore how The Industry operates within a broader ecosystem of twenty-first-century experimental opera.

This chapter identifies two primary institutional structures, a closed network and open assemblage, that help to explain the inner workings of contemporary US operatic ecosystems of which The Industry is a part. I also establish the historical precedents for these structures. In the chapter, I draw on three productions that took place during the 2016–19 period, a time when The Industry was balancing a collaboration with the LA Phil with its own efforts and productions. These works, *Galileo* (2017), *War of the Worlds* (2017), and *ATLAS* (2019), were not all produced by The Industry—in fact, *ATLAS* was not technically linked to the company at all. Nevertheless, these productions intersect at the nodal point of The Industry. They reveal a shifting landscape of US operatic production and how economic and aesthetic experimentation are at odds with one another due to the financial strictures of this terrain. Furthermore, examining these works demonstrates how members of The Industry themselves began to understand the company as a US opera institution during this period.

What appear to be similarities between The Industry and larger musical institutions hide significant structural differences beyond those of scale.

Galileo, *War of the Worlds*, and *ATLAS* signify the conflict between the closed and open institutional frameworks—here represented by the LA Phil and The Industry—at the heart of this chapter. I show that economics and aesthetics are directly linked to institutional identity. Consequently, I consider how The Industry's aesthetic commitment to experimentation *limits*, rather than expands, the potentials of such experimentation being mapped onto larger structures in the opera industry. While explaining the economic, political, and historical shifts that led to the decoupling of operatic production from large historical institutions in the United States is beyond the scope of this book, considering The Industry against this framework provides one way to understand how the company is in dialogue with the US opera industry. Seeing this larger industry as an ecosystem in which aesthetic, institutional, and economic principles are intertwined allows for a complete ontology of opera that is contextualized within the institutional systems that produce and replicate it. Thus, this chapter also demonstrates the need for new ways to analyze small and large musical institutions alike and, correspondingly, the need for new methods to analyze institutional culture in the United States.

Previous scholarly attention has focused on how small opera companies and, similarly, new-music ensembles have internalized neoliberal economic and ideological frameworks, thereby replicating the structures of precarity that come with these structures.[5] However, by focusing specifically on how the inner workings of organizations are linked to neoliberal values— primarily through close readings of promotional materials and reception studies—these critiques give the impression of revealing what is going on at an institutional level while overlooking the practical details of how these organizations function. Thus, my analysis of the economic/aesthetic tensions in the contemporary opera industry highlights such details by putting actor-network theory and its variants in dialogue with production experiences.

Originally intended to be performed on a Santa Monica beach, *Galileo*—an adaptation of Bertolt Brecht's 1938 play, *Leben des Galilei*, composed by Andy Akiho—fell victim to aesthetic, institutional, and practical forces. While the most direct of these forces originated from the production structures of the LA Phil, *Galileo* also highlights the weaknesses and strengths of The Industry's emerging experimental model of production. *Galileo* was workshopped in September 2017, at the same time The Industry was juggling the forthcoming LA Phil collaboration *War of the Worlds*, which premiered two months later. Rather than pushing either The Industry or the LA Phil into new aesthetic territory, however, *War of the Worlds* proved to be a small-

scale reproduction of *Hopscotch*'s 2015 performance structure. Performed on the streets of LA and in the Walt Disney Concert Hall, and composed by Annie Gosfield, *War of the Worlds* was a Brechtian critique of music's role in preventing individuals from intervening in the inequalities of everyday life. Amplifying the organizational disparities between The Industry and LA Phil, the success of this critique relied on codified identities of the two coproducing institutions. The third and final work, Meredith Monk's *ATLAS*, which I examine in the conclusion of this chapter, was given a new production by the LA Phil in 2019, with Sharon at the helm directing. While not an official coproduction with The Industry, *ATLAS* relied on performance relationships established by the company's role in LA's experimental music assemblage. At the same time, the 2019 *ATLAS* reveals the effects of institutional codification at the heart of repetitive and scalable operatic processes of production. In effect, considering these three productions in dialogue with one another reveals The Industry's pivoting (and precarious) identity and points to the conflict between two types of institutional structure: one predicated on replicability and circulation tied to consistent production processes (LA Phil), and another in which repetition is anathema to the experimentation at the heart of the company's identity (The Industry).

Precarities and Production: *Galileo* and *War of the Worlds*

Different types of institutions—and thus, systems of production and circulation—create infrastructures for different types of opera. While only *War of the Worlds* made it to a complete performance, considering both works, as I do throughout this chapter, reveals the open and closed institutional frameworks within which The Industry and the LA Phil operate.[6] Bertolt Brecht's *The Life of Galileo* (*Leben des Galilei*) was written in 1938 while Brecht was in exile in Denmark and was first performed in Zurich in 1943. Typical of Brecht's process of constant revision, the play underwent two more revisions in 1945 and 1955, with Hans Eisler providing incidental music in 1947.[7] (Brecht was still revising the play at the time of his death in 1956.) The play tells the story of scientist Galileo Galilei's arguments for empirical reason and disproval of the Ptolemaic system, in which the earth, rather than the sun, is the center of the solar system. After Galileo is threatened with torture by agents of the Inquisition, he recants his discoveries. The play concludes when Galileo reveals a secret transcript of his scientific treatise, the *Discorsi e dimostrazioni matematiche intorno a due nuove scienze* (referred

to as the *Discorsi* in the text), and gives it to his former pupil, Andrea Sarti, to smuggle to Holland.

While presenting numerous challenges, *Galileo* also promised to bring The Industry into new experimental terrain. The opera was originally conceived in 2016 as a performance around a bonfire on Santa Monica beach, with Sharon describing the fire as a kind of "motor" driving the concept of the piece. This communal fire was planned as a rejoinder to *Hopscotch*'s fragmented performance experience and meant to draw disparate audience members together. In Sharon's words: "[The fire] hearkens back to the Greek theater, with the idea that the theater was this opportunity for the entire community to gather together, and reflect on its own values."[8] In comparison to the multiperspectival productions that preceded *Galileo*, this work would require The Industry to interpret Brecht's famously complex edicts about the role of music in narrative and to do so in a single gathering space.

In the spring of 2016, the final performances of *Galileo* were listed as October 6–8, 2017, with free admission on Santa Monica Beach.[9] By March 2017, The Industry had received $40,000 from the Mike Kelley Foundation for the Arts to stage the piece not in Santa Monica, however, but thirty-two miles south, on Cabrillo Beach in San Pedro.[10] The initial performance concept was meant to conclude with a dramatic scene in which a helicopter departed from the beach with Galileo's *Discorsi* on board. After a fatal helicopter crash on Cabrillo Beach in 2017—as well as other mounting complications—this idea was also abandoned.[11] *Galileo* was finally given as a concert performance on September 16 and 17 at the Angel's Gate Cultural Center in San Pedro, with the full (eventually canceled) performance postponed to May 2018. Although these types of changes are reflective of The Industry's typical process, in which many adjustments are made between an initial concept and its realization, the production still seemed unable to get off the ground due to additional text and musical challenges at the heart of the piece, as I discuss later in the chapter.

For the workshop, audience members sat on folding chairs set up in a semicircle facing a graffiti-covered concrete wall that formed the main backdrop of the performance. Conductor Marc Lowenstein, a small chamber orchestra, artists from the Los Angeles Taiko Institute, and the new-music ensemble Sandbox Percussion sat behind a chain-link fence that topped the concrete wall backdrop of the "stage" overlooking the Pacific Ocean. A goblet-shaped sculpture made of silver and brightly painted pieces of scrap metal created by artist and production designer Liz Glynn occupied the

center of the gravel-sand stage. At the performance's opening, actor and stunt artist Stephen Beitler (who played the motorcycle-driving Jameson in chapter 19, "Passengers," *Hopscotch*) danced with two lit torches around the sculpture to drumming from the Taiko ensemble. At the moment the chorus entered with a percussive homophonic rhythm emphatically repeating the words "Truth is the child of time, not authority," Beitler leaped into the air with one of the torches, and Glynn's sculpture burst into flames, revealing itself as a pyre.

Musically, *Galileo* draws on a range of Akiho's eclectic compositional influences. These include West African drumming, Trinidadian music—specifically steelpan and calypso—minimalism, and Western-based percussion ensembles such as drum corps. In *Galileo*, these influences appear through frequent use of melodic and rhythmic additive processes, cyclic melodic and rhythmic structures (structures that, within a Western historical framework, imply a kind of "vamping" that lends itself well to the centrality of spoken text to the work), and frequent metric modulations. To this end, Lowenstein noted that "Andy thinks very deeply about rhythm as expressivity, . . . pulling threads out of rhythms, and threads can go in different directions, or they can go in the same direction for a long time."[12] While most scenes in the work were driven primarily by spoken rather than sung dialogue, perhaps pointing to the tension between text and music inherent in *Galileo* I later discuss, characters such as the Ballad Singer, Little Monk, and members of the chorus framed the protracted spoken scenes with sung commentary.

War of the Worlds marked the first large-scale collaborative performance created between The Industry and the LA Phil (with additional coproduction credits given to NOW Art, the group responsible for refurbishing the air-raid sirens key to the production). The work was composed by Annie Gosfield with a script adapted from Howard Koch's 1938 *War of the Worlds* radio play, famously directed by Orson Welles. Additions to the 1938 script were provided by Sharon, Gosfield, and performer Susanna Guzmán. Described as an opera by Gosfield, *War of the Worlds* was performed on November 12 and 18, 2017, in Walt Disney Concert Hall and simultaneously in three locations across Los Angeles (see Table 3.1). The three siren sites were chosen from the 240 historic air-raid sirens that remain spread across the city of Los Angeles. These sites were refurbished with Meyer Sound speakers for the performance. While the 1938 script interrupts the music of a radio show ("Ramon Raquello and his orchestra,") with various reports from those witnessing the invasion, the 2017 production uses the performance of a solar-

Table 3.1. Siren Sites for the November 2017 LA Phil and The Industry *War of the Worlds*

Performance Location	Distance from Walt Disney Concert Hall	Description of Events
Walt Disney Concert Hall	N/A	Sigourney Weaver narrates what is happening on the street for concertgoers. Only those within the hall survive the explosion at the end of the opera.
Siren 1: 135 South Olive St.	0.1 mile	Professor Pierson is here to study the recently arrived space debris and reports on a green flash seen in the sky. The young hippie Starshine Meadows arrives to experience the destruction.
Siren 2: 416 S. Main St.	0.7 mile	Reporter Melissa Morse interviews eyewitness and local business owner Mrs. Martinez about what she heard when the aliens arrived. La Sirena begins singing and the two listen as they watch another alien emerge. The Secretary of the Interior arrives to make a report.
Siren 3: 719 S. Hill St.	0.9 mile	The US Army, led by General Lansing, is mobilizing at Siren Site 3. The soldiers flee.

system-themed work by Gosfield in Walt Disney Hall as the entertainment interrupted by the invasion.

War of the Worlds begins in Walt Disney Concert Hall, evoking the premise of a "normal" afternoon attending a concert. After the first movement, "Mercury," begins, the narrator—Sigourney Weaver of 1979 *Alien* fame—interrupts to relay the situation taking place on the streets of LA. Eventually, witness reports from the three siren sites are broadcast live into the hall, and sounds such as the crash of a cymbal at Siren Site 3 interject into the orchestral texture of Gosfield's solar system pieces, which take on an underscoring role beneath the dialogue provided by the narrator and the broadcasts from the siren sites. As the piece continues, the sounds of the alien "La Sirena" (soprano Hila Plitmann with theremin/samples performed by Joanne Pearce Martin and percussion for live Foley by Matthew Howard), performing from a giant plexiglass space in Walt Disney Concert Hall, infiltrate the air-raid siren speakers on the LA streets. It becomes increasingly apparent that audiences in the hall are aurally witnessing the complete destruction of the city, and the piece reaches its climax with the sounds of a dramatic explosion. A stagehand runs on stage to inform the audience that although the city is destroyed and everyone in LA is likely dead, the "titanium of the building [Walt Disney Concert Hall] repelled the heat ray" and those within the hall have survived.[13]

Traditional Structures and Closed System

The two types of institutions represented by The Industry and traditional musical institutions like the LA Phil or LA Opera might best be understood through the models of an open assemblage and closed network, or open and closed systems. The aesthetic consequences of these institutional types can also be mapped onto productions like *Galileo* (open) and *War of the Worlds* (closed). The dichotomy of open/closed builds upon Gavin Steingo's conception of the broken systems that explore the implications of many of actor-network theory's (ANT) theoretical claims.[14] Steingo's model of broken networks, in which fluid assemblages between nodal points are an alternative to the bounded networks of ANT, offers a new analytical perspective on contemporary music production. This analytical approach reveals the ways operatic institutions in the United States encourage repetition and replication of standardized products and processes rather than creating space for more fluid representations of genre.

ANT is a methodology used to examine the interactions between actors, who can be abiotic, nonhuman, and human.[15] In the context of an institution like the LA Phil, 1992–2009 music director Esa-Pekka Salonen might be one obvious example of an actor. While Salonen's commitment to programming new music in the late 1990s might be understood to be one part of institutional history that eventually led to Sharon's appointment in 2015, this commitment was *facilitated* by a dense network of human and nonhuman connections. ANT highlights each of these connections to allow for the unseen influences that might have shaped this relationship. A nonhuman actor could be an entity like the main auditorium of Frank Gehry's 2003 Walt Disney Concert Hall, one of the main LA Phil performance venues. Just as the Salonen-Sharon connection was facilitated by a thick network existing of notable and mundane entities—from donors who might have seen a review of *Invisible Cities* in the *LA Times*, to former Chief Operating Officer Chad Smith, who worked closely with Salonen, to the mobile phone Sharon used to answer a call from the LA Phil to discuss logistics of the collaboration—the main auditorium performance space is an actant that shapes the offerings of the institution. For example, the presence of the wood-paneled auditorium itself (and the $130 million price tag) means that it is unlikely the LA Phil would ever program an entire season that took place entirely outside of this performance space. In effect, the existence of this stage guarantees the presence of the proscenium "apparatus" in LA Phil performances. This place-based claim has far-reaching applications. Under

the rules of the American Federation of Musicians, most collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) are made according to the needs of a certain hall or specific institutional structure. The San Francisco Opera's CBA with Local 784 of the Theatrical Wardrobe Union, for example, had to be appended after the new performance space of the Wilsey Center became a standard part of the SFO's seasons.[16]

Crucially, the connections between entities within a network are also irreversible. The network that is established by the interactions of actors involved is particularly helpful in the context of the union example in the previous paragraph: the existing union needs to be accommodated in the context of a new performance space, the CBA must be appended, and another set of connections is made between Wilsey Hall and Local 784. Thus, the network becomes increasingly more bound. Steingo describes these networks as "closed" or "entangled," giving the example of closed hardware systems like those created by Apple.[17]

The notion of a closed network like the LA Phil or Opera captures the way in which repertoire, physical infrastructure, bureaucratic organization, and personnel are intertwined within a traditional musical institution. The physical infrastructure of the building—and the city and state within which it operates—predicates the labor relations within it, the repertoire that will be performed, and the expectations of the subscribers who will come to hear that repertoire.[18] The same might also be said of any other individual element within this system. Breakages and disparities can still exist within this institutional network: think, for example of the breakdowns that can occur during contract negotiations between orchestras and administrative bodies or select instances of companies canceling planned productions or concerts.[19] The network, though, is *designed* to function with all parties present and accounted for. As The Industry music director Marc Lowenstein observed, the LA Phil "plan[s] eighteen months in advance what the rehearsal dates will be."[20] This type of advance planning reflects the dense network within which these types of institutions function.[21]

Closed Institutional Precedents and Contemporary Manifestations

In the final decades of the twentieth century, systems emerged for creating new opera that rewarded institutional collaboration and, eventually, repetitive systems of circulation, effectively establishing a precedent for closed operational systems. As musicologists Ryan Ebright and Sasha Metcalf note,

producing new American opera in the 1980s and 1990s was typically a result of fundraising and production undertakings that originated from the efforts of specific opera companies.[22] These late twentieth-century operatic precedents reveal how closed institutional processes have informed the bones of new works from their inception. As US companies became responsible for producing experimental work in the 1980s, their values and systems of production became as much a part of the new works as a libretto or set design. By the twenty-first century, this scalable system of repetition had become standardized. Understanding the advantages and pitfalls of these scalable systems demonstrates the dominant mode of production against which The Industry worked during the LA Phil collaboration.

In the case of *Galileo* and *War of the Worlds*, the closed institutional model of the LA Phil allowed no space for a cancellation or delay, while as the next section shows, an open assemblage (the working mode of The Industry) is predicated upon such delays. *Galileo* thus fell victim to several forces that impeded The Industry's open process—most directly the timing of the LA Phil/The Industry/NOW Art *War of the Worlds* coproduction. Cline described this decision:

> We had to take a minute to really think about what it would take to get behind [*Galileo*] to produce it, and there was no time, and we were already on to the next thing. So it was like we would all have to stop what we were doing for a year and dedicate/rededicate ourselves— and we had already spent a year on it—so that seemed like a disaster for the company to then go *another* year in development. That's really hard. And so imagine that then we've done that workshop, develop it for another year, put it on hold, and then that pushes everything back three or four years; [then] *War of the Worlds* wouldn't have happened, and that was already contracted and done with LA Phil.[23]

As Cline makes clear, there were no options for *War of the Worlds* to fail because it had been created and scheduled within a closed system. By contrast, *Galileo* (and The Industry as an institution) had a built-in element of flexibility as a key part of the company's creation process.

The closed model also helps to explain why opera's ontologies are frequently written about as though they represent a homogenous entity. As many have shown, opera's generic identity is intertwined with the identities of those institutions that produce it and the economic system within which these institutions function.[24] The closed model accommodates the systems

of repetition and canonicity at the heart of the US operatic enterprise. This system, which includes coproductions, robust development efforts, and season schedules laid out years in advance, is dependent upon a consistent mode of operatic production from house to house.

Coproductions rely on multiple investor companies that come together (sometimes with unequal investments) to fund a new opera or a new production of an existing work. Commodities such as the sets and costume designs are shared between the investor companies, and the original stage director's interpretation of the work is reperformed at each of the investor companies. Individual investor companies are responsible for covering singer fees. After the production has circulated to each of the individual investor companies, the production is for hire for other companies, and the investor companies split the proceeds depending on the original percentages of investment. In 2015, General Director and president of Opera Philadelphia David Devan noted, "People can fuel their artistry by sharing resources. . . . Sure, if you're working with the wrong partners, you give something up by doing co-productions, but with the right partners, you gain."[25] Other tensions can emerge when considering the performance order of the production among the collaborating companies. Frequently, the lead company for the coproduction is given rights to the premiere performance, which can be a way to draw in audiences. Moreover, sometimes companies other than the lead company do not have as much of a say with regards to the final product.[26] Sharon, in fact, communicated as much when he shared his frustrations with certain aspects of the coproduction system in 2016: "Productions would be coproductions with three other opera companies, and as a director, I found that very frustrating, to see like well here's something that got worked out somewhere, and now is dropped in here. . . . I know it makes economic sense, but you know, I'm coming from a place where none of my projects ever get taken anywhere."[27] Sharon's comment also provides a tongue-in-cheek acknowledgment of the limitations of an open system: while the closed coproduction system has its drawbacks, it does allow pieces to circulate within a specific framework of reproduction and access.

Institutionally driven models of funding new US opera, like coproductions, emerged in the 1970s and had solidified by the 1980s.[28] Funding streams such as Opera for the Eighties and Beyond and expanded National Endowment for the Arts categories for funding opera led to a strengthened model of institution-driven efforts to produce and perform new American opera, repertoire that was increasingly driven by developments in related or overlapping genres like experimental music theater.[29] Fiscal and marketing

approaches like coproductions as well as renting and trading productions between companies strengthened the role of the musical institution within the US performance ecosystem.[30] As *LA Times* journalist John Henkens put it at the time, coproductions were "the producing mode of the 80s."[31] As operatic institutions took on the risk of new productions, coproductions ameliorated the financial risk of new opera, and gave coproducing companies "a share in the artistic decisions and concomitant prestige."[32] Almost forty years later, as of this writing in 2023, coproductions have evolved into one of the primary ways that operatic productions circulate and, indeed, how new projects are justified and funded. At the same time, the notion of a coproduction as both circulating and collaborative commodity can obscure the ways these efforts reinscribe national themes and reinforce the institutional power of those companies involved as well as conceptions of the genre itself.[33]

There are some labor advantages to the closed model of production, chief among them consistent and fair working conditions for a small group of unionized workers. At the same time, this closed model relies on the presence of consistent replicable musical works that the small group of unionized workers is meant to slot within. Consequently, there is also less flexibility for musical styles that fall outside the realm of canonic familiarity with which these individuals are familiar. For example, when Terence Blanchard's opera *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* premiered at the Metropolitan Opera in fall 2021, reviewers like podcast Trilloquy host Garrett McQueen conjectured that the orchestral musicians were not comfortable playing the unfamiliar material in comparison to more oft-performed works.[34] Closed systems that rely on replication are an obvious manifestation of this tension between familiar and unfamiliar repertoire and the necessary investment it takes to perform this new material.

Indeed, the closed system is not only a model of how an institution may function internally. The network also extends to how audience members interact with an institution and, consequently, genre. Community and/or donor expectations of what types of opera should be produced on an institutional level thus form another layer of the entangled system that shapes contemporary operatic production. An example from LA opera history is instructive: Metcalf convincingly reads the late twentieth-century history of opera in LA as indicative of the tensions that can arise between a community and producing institution by examining events preceding the 1986 founding of the LA Opera.[35] Robert Fitzpatrick was hired in 1980 by the Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee to put together an arts festival that would

take place in tandem with the 1984 Olympic Games. While Fitzpatrick initially proposed the creation of an avant-garde opera directed by Robert Wilson (in collaboration with Philip Glass) titled *the CIVIL warS: a tree is best measured when it is down*, the project was eventually canceled because of a lack of local support, among other factors. Wilson's proposed work was instead replaced by three canonic operas imported from the English Royal Opera. These productions—*Die Zauberflöte*, *Turandot*, and *Peter Grimes*— were presented in collaboration between the Olympics Arts Festival, the Music Center Opera Association (MCOA), and the Los Angeles Philharmonic Association as part of the watershed 1984 Olympics Arts Festival.

While Metcalf emphasizes the failure of *CIVIL warS* to materialize in LA as indicative of tensions between avant-garde and traditional practices represented by Wilson and the Royal Opera productions, the *CIVIL warS* fiasco might also be understood as the result of community desire for the circulating commodities and correlating institutions that represented "opera" to the LA community, what Lawrence Kramer refers to as "opera with a capital O."[36] As Metcalf puts it:

> For proponents of *the CIVIL warS* hybrid, the unconventional style of music theater it represented symbolized American operatic innovation. LA locals, on the other hand, desired a well-financed regional opera company commensurate with the established opera companies of other major metropolitan US cities.[37]

Critics sympathetic to American avant-garde musical theater saw *the CIVIL warS* failure as one of genre. For my purposes here, the failed effort might also be understood to be a misunderstanding of institutions. *CIVIL warS* was a production built within an open institutional framework, with an unstable budget, increasing run time, and myriad, shifting collaborators.[38] By contrast, the Royal Opera productions were a known commodity that operated within a (predictable) closed system—and importantly, the type of commodity traditional LA audiences longed for.[39]

To this end, the creation of the LA Opera in 1986 was the result of the desire for an institution able to produce the operatic commodities audiences already expected, *not* for a new form of art that would depart from already-established production networks. Prior to the 1980s, the main operatic institutions in LA were presenting institutions, organizations that present productions from other companies, rather than companies that created new work. While organizations such as Long Beach Opera (1979) and Los Ange-

les Opera Theater (1979) offered some new productions, these companies were overlooked and not taken seriously by municipal arts advocates and philanthropists.[40] Rather than Long Beach or LA Opera Theater offerings, these individuals favored imported performances brought in by the MCOA, which had been founded in 1948 as the Los Angeles Civic Grand Opera. The MCOA was primarily a presenting organization that imported productions from other companies. Thus, the Royal Opera imports of 1984 whose box-office success led, in part, to the 1986 founding of the LA Opera were an extension of the MCOA model audiences were already accustomed to.

It is not only large and/or historical institutions that operate within a closed framework. In sharp contrast to The Industry, the independent company Beth Morrison Projects (BMP) has been steadily growing in program services revenue from year to year, partially due to the company's work within such a system. BMP cultivates replicable operatic products that are toured to various regional opera and university presenters. While each opera is different from another, each work can be presented within the same black-box structure, and thus performances can be easily scaled in terms of presenting institutions. Moreover, the chamber operas BMP creates convey a similar thematic brand: edgy, provocative themes and nonconventional orchestration that frequently incorporates mixed media and electronics. A brief skim of the nineteen projects available to interested presenters in 2022 reveals similarities that also lend themselves to touring: many incorporate video or projections that allow for spectacle within small performance spaces, most require reduced orchestral or chamber forces, and all are designed for traditional spectatorial relationships between audience and performers (in contrast to The Industry).[41] As Ebright has argued, BMP might be understood as an arts incubator, in which the small opera organization creates artistic "products"—the operas—that are circulated among the "marketplace" of presenters like LA Opera, Opera Philadelphia, and the San Francisco Opera.[42] BMP brings together collaborators and offers a space and support for creating a new operatic work. After the opera is created, presenting organizations take on the responsibility for reperformance and circulation.

Rather than representing a new way of producing opera, BMP's creation model and repetitive system of circulation echoes the new opera commissioning structures utilized by US institutions in the 1970s and 1980s. The difference, of course, is the addition of a presenting organization that takes on the risks and requirements for performance. In effect, after taking on creation costs, BMP outsources the costs of the production process to presenting organizations like the LA Opera—whose institutional frame-

work extends the goals of organizational predecessors like MCOA. BMP therefore works within the same closed institutional framework as its larger operatic counterparts. From one perspective, BMP's incubating and touring model circumvents one part of the cost disease affecting the performing arts famously described by Baumol and Bowen by finding a way to scale up production.[43] The disparity between the need for increased wages and the inability to make production more efficient remains: there is no way to make performing one of BMP's productions more efficient. The touring model, however, creates a system wherein the cost of creating an opera, like that of the coproduction system, is borne by multiple presenting investors. This ability to scale up the initial investment of the incubator partially explains how BMP's program service revenue has remained consistently between 50 percent and 70 percent of annual yearly revenue for the company, in comparison to presenting organizations like LA Opera or Opera Philadelphia, where program service revenue is significantly lower despite a larger operating budget.[44] Although this is an oversimplification of the BMP model—for instance, producing organizations often coproduce the premieres of BMP productions *with* BMP—other nonoperatic new-music organizations like Bang on a Can have strengthened the case for the financial saliency of the touring model.[45]

In contrast to exclusively operatic presenters, musical organizations such as orchestral institutions that *also* function as presenters have greater latitude when it comes to the circulation of musical commodities. This flexibility is due to the differences between producing opera and other musical works. These types of organizations, however, still operate with similar "closed system" boundaries like a specific performance space or groups of unionized musicians. Additionally, these institutions perform fidelity to a canon of symphonic works that maintain their own type of closed networks.[46] Moreover, nonoperatic institutions require less extramusical "stuff" to circulate than that which is required for operatic performance. While musical commodities like Beethoven's Symphony no. 5 might be offered at the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, and North Carolina Symphony in a single year, the three institutions do not need to go in together to create a new *set* of parts for the symphony, as three regional opera companies might need to do were they to consider a new production of *Le Nozze di Figaro*. Thus, the relationship between anticipated sales and profits is navigated differently. On the other hand, when new symphonic works are commissioned, there is a frequently a standardized number of orchestral forces a composer is typically required to work with, and contem-

porary composers are often asked to write for the same number of musicians as that required by a canonic work also on the program.[47] The exception to such commissioning systems are late twentieth-century artist residency projects such as the 1982–91 Orchestra Residencies Program, which, as William Robin details, positioned composers as essential parts of the orchestral ecosystem.[48] Generally speaking, however, symphonic organizations that also work as presenters—like the LA Phil—exemplify more flexibility within a closed network. This is a good and bad thing for operatic collaborators like The Industry. Just as certain operatic institutions—say, The Industry versus LA Opera—will produce different forms of the operatic genre, so too will symphonic, university, or various types of presenting organizations produce different ontologies of new music.[49] Thus, in the case of the LA Phil collaboration with The Industry, the LA Phil could take advantage of The Industry's operatic cache without the liabilities of becoming an opera company itself.

<div align="center">

New Approaches to Political Economy:
Open Models of Production

</div>

By comparison to the LA Phil, a company like The Industry represents an open assemblage in which multiple individuals, ideas, genres, and spaces are autonomous and thus more flexible. Steingo explains:

> Contrary to a model in which component parts function only in relation to other component parts, in assemblages, parts are not fused together and may be detached at used in other assemblages. Thus, component parts maintain relative autonomy while simultaneously functioning within larger systems.[50]

To this end, from the company's founding in 2011 to the appointment of the three-member Artistic Director Cooperative in July 2021, the group has consistently had between two and three full-time employees while contracting with others on a project-by-project basis. The Industry does not maintain a central institutional space beyond a small office in the Toy District. In Lowenstein's words, "We've purposefully kept ourselves small—I mean, we're [itinerant] because if you have a home, you have a large overhead, and we can't exist with a large overhead."[51] This flexible model allows the organization to expand or contract based on the size of the project and the ideas of the creative team. While not identical, assemblages like The Industry might

be understood to better fit the models used by some experimental collectives and organizations like Fluxus, the Paul Dresher ensemble (particularly works produced by artists outside the immediate organization), Theatre du Soleil, Mabou Mines, and the Quog Music Theatre.[52]

Considering The Industry as an open system accommodates the flexibility of the creation process represented by *Galileo* as well as the ways individual actors might move in and out of collaboration to meet the needs of a given production. More broadly, certain parts of the production assemblage might also move in and out of affiliation with other parts of the system altogether. This loose organizational model also helps to explain some of the productive instability at the heart of The Industry's interactions with the LA Phil. In Lowenstein's words, the flexibility baked into The Industry's structures means that the fluid requirements of the specific opera being made can dictate the other elements within the open system:

> One of the reasons for the company's success is we delay productions all of the time. We want to get it right. We don't want to be beholden to a schedule, and I think our audiences understand that, so we sell tickets pretty close to the time. I mean, obviously when we have big shows and are relying on large orchestras and singers, we have to be respectful of their calendars, but you know, four or five months, we've said, "OK, we're not doing it in November, we're doing it in March."[53]

Lowenstein is specifically detailing the rehearsal schedule for *Sweet Land*, but he could be talking about any production by The Industry in terms of flexibility. Indeed, Sharon interpreted *Galileo*'s postponement and eventual cancellation as an affirmation of The Industry's flexible processes:

> It was hard at first to make the decision to make it a workshop, but ultimately, it was, like, wait—that should be the *benefit* of having a company that is trying to do things differently. We don't have to operate like every other company. . . . How can we inspire a version, a model for the future of a company, that does respond to where the art is first and not, What does the organization need? And more what does the art need? . . . When it becomes a workshop, it's like you know, wait, we should be allowed to do that. And that's the company that I want this [The Industry] to still be.[54]

Open processes of creation can lead to a more satisfying and experimental work, but, as *Galileo* proved, they also require a large time investment on the

part of the producing institution and collaborators who are able to sustain such work.

Exemplifying these open-system advantages and disadvantages, much of *Galileo*'s composition was in process until just before the performance began. For example, performer Sarah Beaty recalled, "We were getting new music hot off the press, literally. We were sitting in the rehearsal room and Andy, I remember, would be in the corner on his laptop, frantically composing. He'd disappear for a few minutes and come in and give us stacks of paper that were literally warm from the printer."[55] Notably, though, each of The Industry team members were enthusiastic regarding their admiration for Akiho and emphatically avoided placing blame on him for any delays in composition even in conversations that took place years after the 2017 performance.

From my perspective during fieldwork, however, it was clear that organizational and creative miscommunications between Akiho and The Industry had taken place and played at least a partial role in the full production's cancellation. My impression of these organizational challenges was supported by Akiho himself in a 2021 *New York Times* article, in which he recalled the lack of executive functioning skills that challenged him earlier in his career in a conversation with Zachary Woolfe: "[Akiho] is an inveterate procrastinator, regularly crashing deadlines only to face others he's blown past. 'I would go a year without looking at email,' [Akiho] said, shaking his head in disbelief."[56] Akiho also described instrumentation decisions that had slowed the compositional process. These included the addition of the Taiko ensemble, and, after Akiho learned more about the ensemble's enthusiasm for the collaboration, an expansion of their planned role in the composition. While compositional setbacks are not exclusive to open processes, the absence of certain institutional structures and internal processes can exacerbate these types of organizational challenges. The creative challenges that emerged from *Galileo* point to the collaborative impediments that can arise when attempting experimental modes of creation on a flexible, versus a strict, timeline, as I explore in greater detail in the next section.

The open system of collaboration key to The Industry's model (and arguably, the failure of *Galileo*) also makes space for the other experimental groups and new-music ensembles that move in The Industry's orbit, and vice versa. This assemblage includes formal performance organizations such as Wild Up modern music collective and the LA Dance Project, and also relationships on an individual level, such as the many informal relationships The Industry maintains with individuals (but not official institutional partnerships) as part of the California Institute of the Arts (widely known as

"CalArts"). In turn, each of these organizations might also count The Industry as part of *its* own open assemblage. These models of creation often rely upon other flexible venues key to the LA experimental music scene. Organizations (and sometimes affiliate venues) such as Clockshop, Art Share LA, Pieter Performance Space, and even formal institutions like the Hammer and the Autry Museums play a key role in supporting these types of open systems of creation and collaboration.[57] Performer Carmina Escobar serves as one example of the loose networks of which The Industry's open assemblage is one part: Escobar is a graduate of and faculty member at CalArts, performed in The Industry's first unofficial production, *The Mortal Thoughts of Lady Macbeth* in 2011, has given improvisational performances in public spaces with the experimental music venue Machine Project, and interpreted one of the central roles in *Sweet Land*.[58] Lowenstein described this fluid ecosystem of new-music creators differently by stating that the story of The Industry was also "the story of LA." As he explained, "Small arts organizations create an ecosystem . . . [in which they] do not compete—they actually support each other."[59]

Open or assemblage-based institutional structures like The Industry prevent the sorts of standardized processes of generic repetition key to closed systems—productions referred to as "cookie cutter" by 2020 *Sweet Land* performer Richard Hodges.[60] They have been heavily critiqued, however, for the way they institutionalize forms of economic instability. Doris Ruth Eikof and Chris Warhurst highlight the precarities inherent within such project-based models of production, another way of reframing the workings of companies like The Industry.[61] In Eikof and Warhurst's words, these projects "require only a temporary commitment of resources and allow for an easier attribution of costs and surpluses to a particular creative output . . . and allow for resources to be brought together across organizational boundaries," resulting in "networks or project ecologies."[62] "Project ecologies" of course, refers to the ecosystem of new music production described in the previous paragraph, one that performers themselves recognize as enabling the success of many artists in the LA area.

Given the inherently precarious structure of such project-based efforts, it is perhaps no surprise that the organizational structures of small chamber music and performing arts organizations like The Industry have come under critique from scholars. As Andrea Moore, Marianna Ritchey, William Robin, John Pippen, and Yi-Hong Sim have noted, musical entrepreneurship training and the entrepreneurial ensemble valorize the precarities inherent to neoliberal capitalism, recasting these negative working consequences

as positive attributes like "flexibility" and "creative expression." [63] Ritchey suggests that individual artists and small entrepreneurial ensembles (inadvertently) "model" and "naturalize" neoliberal ideologies in "US culture at large."[64] Indeed, she reads their submission to neoliberal capitalism as not only an ideological capitulation, but also an aesthetic one, interpreting the (project-based) creations of these small ensembles as expressions of market-driven neoliberal values. As Ritchey argues, the marketing of project-based ensemble work does indeed incorporate the language and organizational techniques of neoliberalism. While these critiques are accurate, they are also unsatisfying because of the way they hold the creative class responsible for remaking a system in which they have very little practical power. In fact, Eikof and Warhurst's model recognizes that most twenty-first-century creative institutions—whether small, large, closed, or open—incorporate elements of project-based production and the accompanying precarities that come with these models. As they write: "A [project-based model of production] translates into project-based work and employment with high insecurity of employment and income . . . unsocial working hours, high geographical mobility and network-based recruitment."[65] In both closed and open institutions, the labor of *most musicians* falls under these descriptions. Even the unionized members of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, for example, were not paid for a large portion of 2020, while General Director Peter Gelb received approximately 98 percent of his 2019 salary of $1.49 million.[66] Because project-based labor is intrinsic to the opera production system in the United States (versus a repertory-based system dominant in certain European houses, for example), the components that represent labor—be they in an open or closed system—are consistently the most precarious.

Open Institutional Lineages: Economic and Experimental Tensions

Open institutions are a smaller, but no less substantial, part of the US twentieth- and twenty-first-century histories of operatic production. As noted in chapter 1, part of the reason Sharon founded The Industry had to do with his understanding of the relationship between genre and performance space:

> I really noticed there was an amazing layer of countercultural composers whose voices are not being heard, not being performed in big houses or in big theaters, and partially it's because what they are doing is so outside the box. . . . Maybe there needs to be a home for these

composers and for these pieces for them to explore what they're actu-
ally doing, so if a composer isn't writing for an apparatus, an already
set apparatus, but actually the apparatus adapts to what the nature of
the piece is.[67]

The "apparatus" represented by The Industry constitutes not only a chang-
ing conception of performance space, but also a changing conception of
institution. In our conversation, Sharon linked the institutionality of place
with the institutionalization of genre: "All of these things—the proscenium
arch, the standard opera house, the standard orchestra and chorus—have
made these companies institutions. . . . If you are doing a project there, you
have to grapple with these different abstract [concepts]."[68] In Sharon's read-
ing, the physical—and labor-based—infrastructure of an opera house con-
ditions both the institutionalization of genre and its specific conventions.

Sharon is far from the first American operatic creator to consider the
intertwining relationships between performing space and genre, nor are
The Industry's internal conflicts between economics and experimentation
unique. Ebright, for example, notes that composers such as Steve Reich rec-
ognized how the generic codes associated with production within an opera
house might negatively impact the creation of contemporary works as far
back as 1980.[69] While both Sharon and Reich link production frameworks to
generic signaling, their focus on the minutiae of the opera production—the
opera orchestra, the proscenium arch—belies the larger economic forces like
season subscriptions, coproductions, and the star system that also constitute
genre and shape institutional practice. Reich and Sharon instead focus on
the aesthetics of genre: the limits and advantages that come from playing
within the institutional system.

Just as the LA Opera/MCOA and BMP examples demonstrate how
closed networks can shape production patterns and reception, the 1987 com-
mission of Meredith Monk's *ATLAS* demonstrates the limits of collabora-
tion between an open and closed system and, indeed, the differing expecta-
tions of individuals used to operating within open versus closed institutional
frameworks. The 1991 *ATLAS* also establishes an important precedent from
which the 2019 production diverged, as the end of this chapter reveals. In
this initial production, Monk's working method, which relies on open net-
work procedures like fluid rehearsal times, collaborative processes, chang-
ing plots and titles, and varying degrees of score notation, conflicted with
closed institutional procedures such as union-pay requirements and the
distribution of orchestral parts. Monk was formally commissioned in 1989

by the Houston Grand Opera, Minneapolis's Walker Arts Center, and the Philadelphia-based American Music Theater Festival for an opera to be premiered in February 1991 in Houston. As Ebright's research reveals, Monk's working style did not gel with the institutional expectations of the *ATLAS* cocommissioners, who expressed trepidation about budget and performing forces throughout the creation process. Moreover, the institutional "record" of the production in the form of the score Monk was contractually obligated to deliver does not accurately reflect the performance.[70] As Ebright writes, *ATLAS* reveals "how much the few success stories of the American opera renaissance of the 1980s and 1990s are predicated upon a traditional operatic model, in which a composer's score becomes the authoritative text for the subsequent productions that then become markers of its success."[71] The *ATLAS* commission shows how Monk was able to produce a work outside the confines of the closed institutional system. At the same time, the opera was not successfully revived beyond the original production run until 2019, when it was staged at the LA Phil by Sharon in a new production, as I discuss in the conclusion to this chapter.

While The Industry is part of a long avant-garde tradition engaged with performance beyond the remits of the operatic stage (and operatic genre), there are also internal financial tensions. In contrast to a Reich, Sharon, or Monk, an administrative figure like the Houston Grand Opera's David Gockley or The Industry's Elizabeth Cline must respond differently to the needs of artists working within open systems. Despite sharing an artistic vision with creative team members, Cline and other producers cannot move beyond the confines of a "stage" of capitalist production reliant upon primarily closed systems of production. For example, The Industry has considered the possibility of touring certain productions because of the economic appeal of such models. A comprehensive touring rider for the 2013 production of *Invisible Cities* is available via The Industry's website, and various possibilities for tours both in France and in the United States were discussed between 2013 and 2019.[72] As Lowenstein remarked, though, there is a divide between the ethos of experimentation that is core to The Industry's identity as a company and the repetition necessary to producing opera in the twenty-first century: "I think *Invisible Cities* still can work. . . . And then we look at the numbers . . . and we'd rather do new work, and we want to do new things. Having said that, from a *company* point of view it would be very valuable to be able to [tour]."[73] This discrepancy between financial and aesthetic goals also translates to different definitions of what the "experiments" of The Industry were meant to accomplish for members of the organization itself.

The Industry's open model of production is characterized by a process of experimentation, in which a specific work is *not* designed with institutional circulation in mind. As Lowenstein remarked: "Other companies can't take the same risks. . . . Our productions will always be a risk because [they are] so site-specific."[74] For example, some of the miscommunications that delayed *Galileo* came from aesthetic difficulties that Akiho and Sharon faced in determining the relationship between music and text in the piece. As I have previously noted, Brecht has been a key influence in Sharon's philosophy of art. In turn, Sharon often invokes musicologist Joy Calico's scholarship on Brecht to explain his own understanding of how to apply Brecht's theories: "Joy brought out the idea that Brecht was following an idea of complex seeing . . . that there's multiple layers."[75] The "complex seeing" is, in Calico's analysis, initiated by the process of watching and reading "in quick alternation or simultaneously," that is, both "perceiving action on the stage and the mise-en-scène" and "comprehending the literal text written on placards, for example, or projected on a screen."[76] Thus in Sharon's interpretation of *Galileo*, the complex spectatorial process of watching and reading would be mapped onto the alternation of textual and musical experience and interpretation, even when the two are happening simultaneously, as is true for much of the work. Although Sharon was able to articulate the ideal he wanted to achieve in *Galileo*, realizing what he described as this "messiness" in a practical form was more difficult. Sharon explained:

> I always imagined that it should be more than just underscoring . . . and yet it can't be so distracting that you can't follow the text. And so, it lives in a weird in-between world that we haven't totally been able to pin down.[77]

However, finding a way to make the music prominent and yet not dominate the text proved to be difficult. In Akiho's words:

> I almost feel like we need a Foley artist in addition to the music happening, because we are trying to orchestrate these Foley hits, but it could be in the middle of a vamp where you are playing a lick, so it's hard to time that right without it being a set thing where they're going to stay at this speed every time. That's a challenge. . . . That way it doesn't sound so forced.[78]

The lack of being able to find a specific solution for this text/music relationship was clear throughout the workshop. For example, in the beginning

scene, the final sung-spoken portion of the ballad singer's initial song ("My friends, this kind of teaching, just won't do / The slaves would get lazy, the maids would get crass / The hunting dogs fatten while the schoolboys cut class") is difficult to hear behind Akiho's writing for the Taiko ensemble (bass-drum splits reminiscent of Akiho's experience with marching drum corps). Scene 1 offers another interpretive possibility, incorporating underscoring reminiscent of the work of a Foley artist. Onstage physical movements like the insertion of a pencil into an apple (to demonstrate the rotation of the earth without people being aware of the movement) are accompanied by humorous sound effects, like a wooden scraping sound accompanied by a marimba gliss when the pencil pierces the apple (perceived as one sound because of the onstage blocking).[79] These effects though, are equally unsatisfying: they read as special effects rather than a kind of musical commentary or implied multiplicity of the spoken text.

On the other hand, both Akiho and Sharon noted that scene 8, a conversation between the Little Monk and Galileo about the impact of the latter's discoveries on the faith of the poor, was a text-music success. Scene 8 begins as a traditional operatic scena in which the Little Monk sings a seven-minute, through-composed aria after a brief conversation with Galileo. The aria's spare orchestration is occasionally interrupted by dramatic statements interjected by the full ensemble and echoes of the Little Monk's text sung by chorus members. After the aria's conclusion, the spare, haunting orchestral writing spills over into the remainder of the (spoken) dialogue between Galileo and the Little Monk, seemingly taking on the role of tense underscoring, despite Sharon's and Akiho's misgivings. For the listener however, the sentiments expressed by the Little Monk seem to linger and import their meaning onto the dialogue as the music continues, partially through the use of melodic themes borrowed from the Little Monk's aria.

Although scene 8 represented a moment of creative consensus, the difficulties of finding a balance between text and music were inflated by Sharon's and Akiho's differing understandings of the text itself. Some of these misunderstandings came from Akiho's self-described inexperience with setting text by other people; however, elsewhere, he and Sharon disagreed about the specific emotions conveyed by certain musical sounds. For example, speaking of scene 13, Akiho explained, "We both thought [the music] was building suspense, but . . . what I thought was sounding suspenseful, sounded melancholy to [Sharon]."[80] These miscommunications about musical meaning significantly delayed the completion of the work, adding one more challenge to the timeline. From my observations of rehearsals and conversations with Akiho and others, it appeared that

Akiho and Sharon's disagreements about musical meaning were fused with the text/musical challenges ever present when performing Brecht.[81] The creation process behind this new work might also be understood as a direct contradiction of the "laboratory setup" of canonic performance and reperformance described by Clemens Risi in which "repertoire classics" exist as an aesthetic template onto which directors and institutions impose experimental interpretive strategies.[82]

Exacerbating conflicts between the timelines needed for creative experimentation and those imposed by financial limitations is the fact that "experimentation" has different meanings for the various members of The Industry. For Cline, the word "experimentation" signifies the tension between a codified process of creation and The Industry's (successful) and highly variable process. She faces the challenge of determining how to standardize and replicate a process of experimentation that requires flexibility. Process-based creation is, in her mind, key to how The Industry defines experimental opera:

> When I think about Beth Morrison Projects, I think [of them] as "indie opera" because [Morrison] is really interested in exploiting what a black-box opera can be—so it's experimentation that happens *in a structure she's working in*. How the works are dispersed, how they are experienced is the same, while we—hopefully, from project to project there is a thread—but the production structure, and everything there *is*, in a way, shifts. . . . That's why we call it experimental.[83]

As Cline understands it, BMP creates works that are meant to be experienced within the same structure, while The Industry is focused on creating works that use evolving performance frameworks based on the concept of the particular piece. For companies like BMP, the closed structure of the performance institutions begets a closed model of production and thus a system that can be scaled up. Of course, Cline's definition of experimentation is based upon her institutional role: she must figure out how to capitalize upon a process that is inherently noncapitalistic.

Similarly to Cline, Lowenstein emphasizes process and, indeed, the risk that comes from this open process:

> So the first thing is always team building as you're building the concept—it sort of goes hand in hand. And I could be talking about *Hopscotch* as well. It's the exact same process: you get the concept, you collect the team, and then you realize, oh, *this* isn't the concept, it's the back

and forth. Same thing in *Sweet Land*—we had the concept, we got the team, and then the team said, that's *not* the concept, so you sort of sidle back and forth, back and forth. . . . We started rehearsal and it was a big [question]: Can this work? As always, there is that element of "Susie's got a barn, Bobby's got some costumes, let's do a show!" which you realize, when you've been around a lot of professional groups, that there's a lot of that that goes on anyway, and if it's not there, you might not be doing it right because there's not enough risk. If you try to take all the risk out, you're not going to be flexible. And if we were not flexible, we would not be able to make the art we make. And therefore—it's stomach churning, it's really risky. . . . Like in *Galileo*, there was a *printer* at the dress rehearsal *printing out music*, which I don't recommend. We try not to do that. But we recognize that it's going to happen.[84]

As Lowenstein joked later, in a comparison of The Industry and the LA Phil, a printer is hardly going to appear at a dress rehearsal for the latter institution. By comparison, such a process was necessary given *Galileo*'s needs: last-minute printing of scores to accommodate last-minute composition. Levity aside, Lowenstein recognized the risk inherent to The Industry's creation process, but also shied away from identifying this process of experimentation *as* standardized. By contrast, Cline thought of each production as a logistical opportunity to refine a standardized process of creation:

> When we started talking about *Sweet Land*, it was during *Galileo*. And we were thinking about how different people collaborate and how relationships evolve, and that, you know, maybe *Galileo* should have been a prototype for a collaboration in a larger scale. And the way that it ended up being was semistaged—and so thinking that maybe that's a great model, so that there's always this prototype of working together before we go into a full production.[85]

Cline, then, saw the cancellation of the full production of *Galileo* as an experiment that, in turn, led to a refined process of creation for The Industry.

Lowenstein, on the other hand, used the word "experimentation" to describe the goal of discovering different outcomes during production. Although the process he describes in the above quotation is standardized, "experimentation"—in Lowenstein's understanding—is less about codifying a process by repeating the same experiment in the way Cline describes. Rather, for Lowenstein, experimentation means combining *different* ele-

ments every time to get a different result. While Cline used *Galileo* to explain changes in The Industry's process that influenced how *Sweet Land* was created, Lowenstein was more focused on which outcomes might emerge after each production considered separately from one another. In fact, the process, he explained, may evolve as one of the multiple elements!

Crescent City (2012) and *Sweet Land* librettist Douglas Kearney was ambivalent about the differences between the results of the operatic experiment and the standardization of process, noting: "The metaphor [of experimentation] falls apart at the material level, but it doesn't fall apart at the processual level."[86] His point is that within a positivistic framework, an experiment is meant to show how anyone might reproduce similar results by following the same process. The example he gives to support this comment, though, tends toward the Lowenstein (creative), rather than Cline (procedural) end of the spectrum. "What *Sweet Land* does as an experiment in opera is it gives somebody a model to look at and go, like, 'OK, this is what they did. I can imagine something similar. Here is what I would do differently,' and push on that."[87] He explained too that experimentation as a process can "bring an awareness of the myths built into the opera itself," focusing attention on the intersections between the aesthetic and praxis-based components of genre.[88] At the same time, though, Kearney sees the lack of inherent reproducibility as a limitation of The Industry's projects, perhaps echoing Sharon's comment from earlier in the chapter. "I don't know how many people see Industry productions and recognize that the opera is actually this book with music and lyrics in it that anybody can take and do," he noted.[89] For Kearney, the experimental process key to The Industry's identity seems to obscure, rather than reveal, the obvious fact of reproducibility. It is an *opera industry* assumption that works produced for closed institutions like the LA Opera are reproducible at any similar institution; however, for The Industry, this institutional mobility is not the case.

War of the Institutional Frameworks?

Unsurprisingly, Sharon and the LA Phil each described Sharon's appointment as "artist-collaborator" with the LA Phil and The Industry's relationship with the larger institution differently. In a September 2, 2015, letter to The Industry supporters published on The Industry's blog announcing the collaboration, Sharon positions the partnership between the two companies as a natural pairing:

> When I started The Industry as a home for new and experimental opera, it was clear that the kind of company I wanted to create could never exist in Los Angeles without the LA Philharmonic's decades of dedication to new work—and the wonderfully open-minded audience that has generated. I am excited to see how the ideas I have developed with The Industry can now be applied to a completely different artistic ensemble. . . . The Industry and LA Phil share a commitment to contemporary composers that expand the field of musical possibilities, and we also share a belief in exploring the unpredictable intersection of different art forms. I hope that the collaborations between the two companies will build off our independent discoveries, while pushing both organizations into new terrain.[90]

This statement accomplishes several rhetorical moves that echo similar types of established-upstart relationships.[91] Sharon both positions The Industry as a natural successor to the LA Phil new-music inheritance *and* describes the pairing of the two institutions as a partnership between equals. On the other hand, the LA Phil's mandate for Sharon conspicuously does *not* mention The Industry:

> [Sharon will] curate multiple projects for the LA Phil using his experience in developing new works and reinterpreting established works. These projects will cut across the LA Phil's various series and incorporate several performance genres. These varied performances will take place not only within Walt Disney Concert Hall, but also outside of the venue in diverse locations throughout Los Angeles. The collaboration marks the first multi-year association Sharon has entered into with a major US orchestra.[92]

Here Sharon's rejection of an auteur identity with The Industry seems to exist in tension with how he is framed by the LA Phil. Although from The Industry's perspective, Sharon's position as "disrupter-in-residence" with the LA Phil represents an opportunity for collaboration between the two companies, the LA Phil focuses on the literal boundaries of the partnership—that is, between Sharon and the orchestral organization.[93] Sharon is the primary collaborator, and thus The Industry's involvement—if it warrants mentioning at all—is perhaps implicit in the pairing. Table 3.2 lists the LA Phil / Industry productions during 2016–19, Sharon's period of residency with the

LA Phil. As this table makes clear, multiple productions overlapped between the orchestral institution and The Industry during this time.

Perhaps reflecting this (deliberate?) miscommunication, and Sharon's equivocating rhetoric, the disparity in size between the two organizations and their different institutional structures came into conflict during the partnership. The "terrain" that Sharon suggests that both organizations would discover through the collaboration was, I suggest, one of *difference* between the two companies, rather than similarities. Because of the partnership, in fact, The Industry rehashed old creative discoveries rather than solving new aesthetic problems. As the remainder of this section shows, *Galileo* and *The War of the Worlds* reveal conflicts between open and closed models of production and highlight the fragility—or what Sharon and Lowenstein interpret as a strength—of The Industry's open assemblage.

Despite *Galileo*'s indefinite postponement, the two productions were unexpectedly bound together: both relied on libretti written by Sharon that were adapted from previously existing source material, engaged politically with the specific post-2016 US presidential elections, and dealt with similar aesthetic challenges (how to negotiate the relationship between text and music). The similarities between the productions also point to the unacknowledged influence of *Galileo* upon *War of the Worlds* as well as *Galileo*'s influence on future productions of The Industry. Broadly speaking, despite the thematic correspondences between *Galileo* and *War of the Worlds*, looking at the productions together also shows that *War of the Worlds* forced neither The Industry nor the LA Phil to move into "new territory"; when the time needed for an open-style production (*Galileo*) was not available, *War of the Worlds* easily took its place as a smaller-scale *Hopscotch*.

Originally, *Galileo* headlined The Industry's 2016–17 season, which, in a deliberate response to the 2016 possibility of the election of Donald Trump, problematized the notion of "truth" (the season was determined before the outcome of the election). *Galileo* fit into this season as a manifestation of "a triumph of freethinking over authority."[94] Sharon's introduction of the *Galileo* workshop concretized the political commentary of the work. He commented, for instance on "art's ability to inspire audience desire for a better world,"[95] a tamer echo of his blistering address "I Pledge Allegiance to Art," delivered at the USC "Visitors and Voices" performance on January 20, 2017: "I pledge allegiance to art that helps us grapple with this terrifying new reality not to anesthetize it but to aestheticize it into a form of expression. . . . For when everything that made up our identity seems under attack, art can remind us what it is we are called to fight for namely our humanity."[96]

Table 3.2. 2016–19 Productions of the LA Phil and The Industry

Production Name	Composer/Creator/Author	Date of Performance	The Industry Involvement	LA Phil Involvement	Overlapping Industry Personnel other than Sharon
Nimbus Installation	Rand Steiger	2016–17	Y	Y	N/A
First Take: 2017	Marc Lowenstein, Dylan Mattingly, John Hastings, William Gardiner, Thomas Rawle, Laura Karpman, Nicholas Deyoe	February 2017	Y	N	N
Second Take: Bonnie and Clyde	Andrew McIntosh	February 2017	Y	N, but personnel overlap.	N
Night and Dreams	Franz Schubert/Samuel Beckett	March 2017	N	Y	N
Young Caesar	Lou Harrison	June 2017	Y	Y	Y
Galileo [Classified as a "program," not a production]	Andy Akiho	September 2017	Y	N	N/A
War of the Worlds	Annie Gosfield	November 2017	Y	Y	Y
A Trip to the Moon	Andrew Norman	March 2018	N	Y	Y
Das Lied von der Erde	Gustav Mahler	April 2018	N	Y	N
The Industry Meet the Company Benefit Concert	N/A	September 2018	Y	N	N/A
Europeras 1&2	John Cage	November 2018	Y	Y	Y
Thought Experiments in F# Minor (Video/Audio walk)	Janet Cardiff/George Bures Miller using music by Witold Lutosławski, J. S. Bach, Sarah Beaty, Ellen Reid, Joseph Pereira, Silvestre Revueltas	March 2019–present	N	Y	Y
ATLAS	Meredith Monk	May 2019	N	Y	Y

War of the Worlds ended up taking up *Galileo*'s thematic mantle of "post-truth." "I feel like it's mandatory for us to engage in politics," observed conductor Christopher Rountree in a November 2017 *LA Times* piece by Jessica Gelt in which he, Gosfield, and Sharon explicitly connect Orson Welles's original radio production of *War of the Worlds* to the 2016 Russian disinformation campaign surrounding the Trump's presidential victory.[97] As Sharon stated later in the same article, "Part of what we hope to achieve with our audience is that they realize the value of their own critical faculties in assessing what's true and what's fabricated." While *Galileo* was about attempts to hide the truth, *War of the Worlds* seemed to be a commentary on the types of truth put forth.

Examining *War of the Worlds* through a LA Phil/The Industry collaborative lens, however, I read the 2017 production not as a critique about recent presidential politics. Rather, *War of the Worlds* should be interpreted as an overt institutional critique of Western art music and the traditional concert hall space—both central preoccupations of The Industry. Such a theme was keenly noted by Sharon in one of our September 2017 conversations:

> *War of the Worlds* is actually very critical of—in a more ironic way—of an institution being protected from the street. . . . I wrote the libretto for *War of the Worlds*, and it is one of the key themes that comes back over and over again is that you are very protected in the concert hall from outside influences. So this attack that is happening on the street, they keep saying to the audience at Disney Hall, there's this constant discussion of stay right here, you're safest right here. And at the end the audience at Disney Hall is saved, and the rest of LA is destroyed.[98]

This institutional comparison was hardly a secret. Sharon's critique of the concert hall—itself a paraphrase of Brechtian critiques of music's ability to bewitch audiences—recast through the lens of the 2016 US presidential election, appears almost verbatim in the previously quoted *LA Times* article by Gelt. "After the election, [Sharon] found himself wondering, as an artist, if there wasn't something more important he should be doing." Sharon himself notes that "the passivity with which we sit in a concert becomes the attitude with which we approach our daily lives."[99] *War of the Worlds* reinforced the differences between the two institutional identities of The Industry and the LA Phil. Rather than pushing either organization into "new territory," as claimed by both mandates, the production foreshadowed the ways The Industry's collaborations with the LA Phil cri-

tiqued traditional art spaces and reinforced the public-facing identities of both institutions.

While Sharon does not explicitly associate the *War of the Worlds* Walt Disney Hall performance with the institution of the LA Phil and the siren sites with The Industry, a comparison is easily made: the siren sites are free and are compared to the Central Hub of *Hopscotch*, and, as Sharon noted, the entire opera might be understood as a "continuation" of the 2015 work.[100] Indeed, the use of Sigourney Weaver (and *Alien* reference) might be thought of as an extension of Secondspace so prominent in *Hopscotch*. In this way, *War of the Worlds* allowed the LA Phil to put on the trappings of The Industry (and The Industry to put on those of the LA Phil), without either organization being asked to structurally change. Instead, organizational tensions emerged most prominently with regard to the close timing of the two productions. The production of *War of the Worlds* and cancellation of *Galileo* both affirmed the success of The Industry's open assemblage and highlighted the need for new institutional models of production. Sharon described the paradoxical nature of these developments:

> All these projects . . . have been so successful that people have been pushing [The Industry] in the direction of a regional opera company or something. . . . I'm like, well, the whole point of starting this company was to buck that system, not to tear it down at all, but to say actually maybe there are some alternate ways of creating operas that are just as valuable and need the attention and support and need to be there to broaden the landscape of what opera is. So, in a way, this changing to a workshop is really effective in conveying that.[101]

At the same time, Sharon's words represent a rosy interpretation of a conflict between two systems of production that operate at vastly different economic levels. Contrast the BMP/LA Opera partnership with The Industry/LA Phil partnership. In the former, the organizations have identical identities—they are both operatic institutions—and both operate within a closed network. In the latter, the two organizations operate under very different models of production and genre. Moreover, as I noted at the beginning of this chapter, The Industry's open assemblage is not equipped for scaling up the means of production, and thus, in a system where closed systems dominate, there will be conflicts of power and interest when such elements of scale are required.

Galileo and *War of the Worlds* also are revealing when considering how

aesthetic processes relate to open and closed models of institutionality. In the case of *Galileo*, both Sharon and Akiho were fairly inexperienced; Akiho had never written an opera, and Sharon has written few libretti. While The Industry and particularly Sharon have emphasized how canceling *Galileo* was an affirmation of their creative process, the opera also demonstrates how certain parts of the reliable The Industry open assemblage process were ignored (partially) as a consequence of the LA Phil demands: in my reading, Sharon was too creatively close to *Galileo* and, thus, there was not enough room for the piece to evolve in terms of the open assemblage under which The Industry most successfully operates. Sharon might have been the best person to stage *Galileo*, but The Industry's process works best when there is more room to throw out ideas and let them evolve in different ways, as the *Sweet Land* case study in the following chapter demonstrates. Because Sharon was producer, director, conceptual designer, and librettist in *Galileo*, the assemblage was too rigid. In *War of the Worlds*, a rigid assemblage led to success primarily because Sharon *had* to be in collaboration with the inflexible structure of the LA Phil and because the aesthetic and logistical questions had in effect already been worked out through *Hopscotch* and, to a lesser extent, *Galileo*.

In comparison to *War of the Worlds*, however, *Galileo* arguably brought The Industry into the "new experimental terrain" promised by the LA Phil collaboration rather than rehashing old themes within a new institutional context. Half joking, Sharon conjectured that perhaps the workshop as performed represented an ideal Brechtian setup: although they were fully costumed, the piece was only semistaged and the performers used music stands to hold scripts and scores.

> I've actually thought of this project a lot as a kind of "Brecht meets [Antonin] Artaud" kind of a thing . . . quite literally—that pull, between the immersive, the direct, the immediate, and then the distanced, the removed, the analytical, and that those two things, that those two modes of seeing and experiencing really oscillate. And that's something that—I feel like—it's almost perfected in this workshop, because it is *so* presentational.[102]

Although Sharon casts the "pull" between "immersive" and "distanced" forms of spectatorship as a key concept in *Galileo*, this tension is present in all his works. The difference between these works and something like *Galileo*, however, might be that, because of the workshop presentation, *Galileo* was one of the few productions that required all the audience members to

be in the same contained space for the entirety of the performance. In this way, this presentation does seem to correspond more neatly to what might be thought of as a historical application of Brechtian minor pedagogy, especially with regards to the unified concept offered by the production, versus what Joy Calico has noted is a more typical post-Brechtian aesthetic common to Sharon's work.[103] At the same time, by abandoning *Galileo* rather than taking on the challenges of text/music, The Industry lost the opportunity to make further aesthetic discoveries.

Coda: *ATLAS*

As an ethnographer, it was consistently difficult to have conversations about the LA Phil/The Industry collaboration with most people involved on the part of TheIndustry. Confidential reports evaluating the outcomes of the collaboration were shared, but I was asked not to circulate them in my work regardless of the positive or negative tone that was taken within. Similarly, my collaborators would speak of their experiences, but only on condition of anonymity or with conversations peppered with the phrases "on the record," and "off the record" to protect future opportunities with either company. A closed institutional system is also a dense system of power relations. Accessing a single institutional node in the system can open doors in other seemingly impermeable networks, or—should things not work out—also close them. Of course, this statement is not an indictment of the LA Phil; any small institution could likely say the same of their experiences working with a much larger one. While The Industry has scrupulously defended the LA Phil's actions in all aspects of the collaboration, this too, I read, as a manifestation of the LA Phil's power in comparison to that of The Industry. In Lowenstein's words, "It was really interesting dealing with the LA Phil. It's like you're building your own car out of spare parts, and suddenly there is this really attractive race car over here, like, 'Hey, come on, let's drive you around.' And it sure has its benefits."[104] To put it another way, the collaborative experience The Industry had with the LA Phil matters less than the power disparity between the two organizations that will always prevent The Industry from revealing the details of the experience.

The precarity of The Industry in comparison to the LA Phil and the complexity of putting such open/closed systems in dialogue with one another is perhaps best expressed through Sharon's final production with the LA Phil: Meredith Monk's *ATLAS*, which was produced by the LA Phil and directed by Sharon in June 2019. Here I use *ATLAS* as a coda that shapes how opera

scholars and practitioners might think about closed and open networks and the future of these institutional models. Moreover, although *ATLAS* was not an official collaboration with The Industry, several frequent Industry performers appeared in *ATLAS*, perhaps illustrating the institutional opportunities represented by the LA Phil for them. Just as *War of the Worlds* took advantage of the open production infrastructure established by *Hopscotch* (and to a lesser extent, *Galileo*), *ATLAS* benefited from the experimental music assemblage of which The Industry is a part. To put it differently, the 2019 *ATLAS* may have been produced within a closed institutional model, but it relied upon the fluid scaffolding of an open one.

Earlier in the chapter, I pointed to *ATLAS* as an example of a well-known experimental operatic work that did not fit neatly into a closed institutional system despite its 1991 performance at the Houston Grand Opera. While I identified the 1991 *ATLAS* as an open-system production, by 2019, Monk's reputation and system of creation had, in effect, become codified as its own reproducible process. Because Sharon was the first person to whom Monk had given permission to direct *ATLAS*, expectations for the 2019 production were high. Sharon communicates this pressure in multiple public interviews, with the production described as "an enormous honor," a "milestone," and something that cannot be taken on "with any sense of casualness."[105] Reviews of the production also convey the gravity and preservationist legacy for which the 2019 production seemed to be responsible. *New York Times* reviewer Zachary Woolfe notes that at the beginning of the opera, "there was a sense of the talented cast trying to do the piece 'correctly'—an ever-so-slightly stilted quality, a degree of self-consciousness" and describes the 2019 performance as a "faithful cover" of the original.[106] Alex Ross takes the preservationist impulse of the production even further, writing that "the LA Phil performances [of *ATLAS*] were more than a revival; they set a precedent for the preservation of Monk's legacy as part of a renovated repertory."[107]

This codified approach to Monk's legacy also played a role in the auditioning and rehearsal process. The 1991 production was notable (and frustrating) for the Houston Grand Opera's David Gockley because of the multiple elements of Monk's open mode of creation that attenuated the rehearsal process. Elements of the 2019 production, however, seemed to echo the strictures of other closed institutional production processes predicated on repetition, rather than what might be expected to be a more fluid mode of production as associated with Monk. Monk Vocal Ensemble member Katie Geissinger, who was a part of the original *ATLAS*, served as vocal coach

for the LA Phil production, ostensibly reinforcing patterns of vocality that imitated the original production rather than allowing those cast to drive the creation of the work as was true for the initial *ATLAS*. Similarly, performer Sarah Beaty (Out of Body Soprano Solo, Ice Demon, Ensemble) noted the difference in the way Sharon directed *ATLAS* in comparison to her experience working with him for other The Industry productions:

> So the first time I really experienced a different directing style [from Yuval] was during *ATLAS*, which was actually the first time I had worked with him that wasn't officially an Industry production. . . . So in the past, when it's been an Industry production, it's always been a little more laid back. Still very professional, we are still very focused, but just a little more laid back, a little more personable. . . . It just felt very friendly and a little more collaborative. In *ATLAS* it felt more like director/performer. It wasn't quite as collaborative—which is fine—that's most of the productions that I do, but that was a style I had gotten used to with Yuval. He is always very open to asking the performers, "What do you think, how do you feel, what makes sense here?" There was definitely a little bit of that, but I think less, much less.[108]

Beaty, like other performers I talked to, noted the immense pressure generated by the production: "It was *such* a big deal, you know. I think there was a lot of pressure put on [Sharon] from the LA Phil. It was a huge budget, and then Meredith Monk—it was the first time that Meredith had let anybody direct one of her pieces."[109] Performer Sharon Chohi Kim (Hungry Ghost, Ice Demon, Out of Body Soprano Solo, Ensemble) similarly explained:

> *ATLAS* has so much prestige and classical music elitism, and it's like elitist New York City society with this history, and Meredith Monk is a god, people just worship her—so there is so much expectation. This is the first time she allowed someone else to direct her opera, so it's a huge thing. I could really *feel* that—there was so much expectation from everyone.[110]

Additional anonymous interviewees paid special attention to the rigor of the *ATLAS* audition process, noting that although the initial auditions were held in LA, those who were called back had to pay for their own expenses

to travel to New York City for the callbacks so Monk could be present.[111] I find this observation notable because it speaks to the way Monk's process of creation had itself become institutionalized, informing every aspect of the production as a kind of recreation of the original experimental process, even to the extent to the location where auditions took place.

Far from representing a new experimental approach to performing *ATLAS*, these anecdotes seem to convey the rigidity of Monk's process. Of course, one could argue that the process of creating *ATLAS* in 1991 was just as rigid as that of recreating it in 2019; after all, much of the rehearsal for the original production also took place in New York rather than Houston. Notable in this case though, is the way what was seen as an open process in 1991 had calcified into an established one by 2019. To put it another way: Monk would have hardly been described as representing "classical music elitism" in 1991 when her works represented a challenge to the operatic status quo for Gockley.

Interestingly, despite the preservationist impulses of the 2019 *ATLAS*, Beaty noted that the success of the production may have also been partially due to the presence of The Industry as open assemblage in LA's experimental music scene. As she described, many of the *ATLAS* singers had previously worked together with The Industry: "We had already developed that sense of community and that bond which was *so* important in *ATLAS*—I've never done a show before or since that had such a bonded cast. . . . I think it's because a lot of us had already worked together with Yuval."[112] Similarly, *ATLAS* choreographer Danielle Agami had collaborated extensively with Sharon for previous Industry productions, including *Invisible Cities*. Thus, while *ATLAS* was not an Industry production, it relied on the relationships built through open networks of which The Industry is one part.

At the beginning of this chapter, I observed the challenges faced by The Industry in attempting to "scale up" experimentation. As this chapter demonstrates, scale and reproducibility are key components of any operatic ontology and directly shape how a work is performed and perceived. Modes of (re)producing opera—regardless of where it falls on the experimental–traditional scale—directly impact what the works are and how they fit into specific institutional types. One of the contradictions inherent in the concept of an operatic experiment allowing for the creation of "opera for everyone" is that scale is necessary for broadened access. Despite Cline's comments about scale, with which I began, the open assemblage process of creation in which The Industry participates is *not* scalable in the context of

a closed institutional model. As *ATLAS* shows, reproducibility and codification go hand in hand, regardless of the process of producing the original. At the same time, though, as the influence of The Industry on *ATLAS* and, to a lesser extent, that of *Galileo* on *War of the Worlds* reveal, an open assemblage can be scaled in different ways than a closed system. *Hopscotch* may not ever be reproduced, but *War of the Worlds* was performed two years later. *Galileo* may not have received the treatment of a full production, but the experiences The Industry had in *Galileo* as process directly impacted the approach the workshop-style development brought to *Sweet Land*.

A final gloss on this other form of "scaling" was communicated by Kim when I asked her the difference, as a performer, between getting hired by the LA Phil and by The Industry.

> I would say a few years ago, especially when I did *ATLAS*, it was this giant difference. . . . It felt so validating to be working with a big institution like the LA Phil. Lately though, there [are] so many overlaps with the LA Phil and the community that I felt like I was a part of, in the growth [of the experimental music scene] in LA, like Chris Rountree [of Wild Up] and Yuval, and so lately . . . it really depends on the project and the people involved and [the institution] just doesn't really affect me so much anymore. I've done performances for fifteen people in a tunnel, and those are sometimes the ones that really stick. So I am chasing that, and that could be through the LA Phil, and it could be through The Industry.[113]

For Kim, the institutional model matters much less than the experience of creating a piece of art. This observation seems to be an abrupt shift from the economic perspective posed in this chapter, in which aesthetic experience is directly linked with institutional identity. Kim rejects institutionality as an entry point. She can do this because as a performer she has little affiliation with and, crucially, little *support* from either model—a consequence of the neoliberal capitalism within which both systems operate. And yet her answer also affirms the aesthetic power of open assemblage and an institutional lens more broadly. It is this latter open model—at least in the current system of US operatic production—that relies on new modes of collaboration, facilitates metaphorical and literal performances in tunnels, and, in so doing, dissolves the aesthetic and economic immutability of a closed model.

"What You Remember Doesn't Matter"

Toward an Anticolonial Opera

"Consuming is not to do some pure erasure, but a brutal assimilation. That's the act of ghosting."[1] Douglas Kearney, one of two poet librettists for the opera *Sweet Land*, spoke these words during a preperformance community lecture on March 1, 2020. To be colonized is to be consumed, extracted by what Dylan Robinson describes as a practice of hungry listening.[2] In Kearney's interpretation, being consumed, however, is not a process of disappearance. Rather, bones left behind by ghosting *remain*: they are "bleached and blanched on a plate after a feast of who ate whom. The bones leave a trace, *not* an erasure. A trail of flesh, its ghost, the extraction."[3]

The Los Angeles State Historic Park where Kearney stood as he spoke these words is a site of both ghostings and ghosts. The park, which was part of the ancestral lands of the Tongva people, is a five-minute walk from Chinatown, the site of the 1871 Chinatown massacre where seventeen men and boys were murdered. It is less than a mile from the predominantly Mexican American neighborhood of Chavez Ravine, which was torn apart by the construction of Dodger Stadium in 1961. And it was the site of the performance of *Sweet Land*, an opera performed by The Industry in February and March 2020.

This moment on March 1—Kearney's words emplaced within a site of historical violence and erasure in LA—is a prelude to the opera that will be performed two hours after his lecture. It is also a postlude to a three-year creation process in which *Sweet Land*'s creators grappled with the legacy of the operatic genre's fraught history. Kearney continues, speaking in broad metaphors about the experience of "making a myth to kill a myth"—that is, making an opera to kill the myth of opera: "What devours you uses you

152

for power unless you manage to be poisonous. To eat or be eaten is intimacy fraught with violence. A peculiar ambivalence."[4] The "peculiar ambivalence" of which Kearney speaks hints at *Sweet Land*'s relationship with operatic history and, indeed, The Industry's engagement with the operatic genre.

First conceptualized in 2017, *Sweet Land* combines site-specific performance with musical-narrative fragmentation to present a vision of Western hegemony through the lens of settler colonialism. The work was created collaboratively by three pairs of multiracial, multiethnic artistic pairs: librettists Douglas Kearney (African American, arrivant), Aja Couchois Duncan (Ojibwe, French, and Scottish, Indigenous, settler), composers Raven Chacon (Diné, Indigenous) and Du Yun (Chinese, American immigrant), and directors Yuval Sharon (first-generation Israeli American, settler) and Cannupa Hanska Luger (Mandan, Hidatsa, Arikara, and Lakota, Indigenous).[5] Initially conceived as an opera about erasure and later described as one about survival, *Sweet Land* dramatizes encounters between the two groups of people, the Hosts and Arrivals, who, in the opera, repeat abstracted and whitewashed founding myths of the archetypal "Sweet Land," a thinly veiled representation of the United States.[6]

In recent years, scholars have given much attention to the omissions, inequalities, and forms of violence committed by actors within the historic and contemporary opera industries.[7] Many of these scholars focus on uncovering operatic participation by historically marginalized groups—in other words, revealing what has been hidden by historical and contemporary modes of erasure. While relatively little critical attention has been paid to the capacities of the operatic creation and performance process to reinscribe and/or confront colonial violence and historical trauma, *Sweet Land* critiques these histories of erasure through means both literal and hermeneutic.[8] This chapter explores how *Sweet Land*'s creators navigate the violence of settler colonialism through operatic production, and by extension, challenge the structural inequities of the contemporary opera industry. Using collaborative practices that deliberately invert colonial hierarchies, the composers, librettists, directors, and performers of *Sweet Land* confront and re-envision their own lived experiences of racial and ethnic violence to create, if not an anticolonial opera, an anticolonial critique of opera. At the same time, the conventional hierarchies that reemerged during moments of the creation and reception process point to the entrenchment of operatic systems of power. *Sweet Land* constellates and resists multiple ways of representing narratives of historical trauma.

Colonialism describes a system of extraction and oppression in which

one nation (broadly defined) dominates another. Settler colonialism encompasses that same system of extraction but also includes the attempted genocide of the original sovereign peoples and the attempt to replace those people with individuals from the colonizing nation, what Patrick Wolfe refers to as "the logic of elimination."[9] Postcolonial, decolonial, and anticolonial approaches have arisen as both academic and applied responses to the systems of oppression engendered by colonialism; these frameworks have most recently been utilized in opera studies by Neo Muyanga, Sarah Hegenbart, Colleen Renihan, Naomi André, Juliana Pistorius, and Rena Roussin, among others.[10] Postcolonial theory is based on the claim that "the world we inhabit is impossible to understand except in relationship to the history of imperialism and colonial rule" and draws heavily on the foundational work of Edward Said, Franz Fanon, Homi Bhabha, and Gayatri Spivak, among many others.[11] While the "post" in postcolonial theory is not meant to imply that the world no longer functions within the repercussions of such systems, the term has been critiqued for implying as much. As Eve Tuck and Wayne Yang remind reminders in their field-defining essay, "Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor," the theoretical application of decoloniality is similarly fraught.[12] Decolonization, Tuck and Yang argue, applies strictly to the literal "repatriation of Indigenous lands"; when scholars use the concept of "decoloniality" figuratively, they participate in what the authors call "settler moves to innocence" that perpetuate, rather than destroy, systems of settler colonialism. Anticoloniality is a step toward the decolonial.[13] It recognizes colonial frameworks as systems of oppression and actively opposes them, including by means of subversion and ways of knowing that divert power from the colonial machine.[14] As Fanon writes, "The problem of colonialism includes not only the interrelations of objective historical conditions but also human attitudes towards these conditions."[15] To this end, anticoloniality describes both an orientation and a set of actions that work to change both attitudes and outcomes.

This chapter explores the collaborative creation and rehearsal process of *Sweet Land* in depth to reveal the contradictions of the anticolonial operatic project. I begin with an overview of the hierarchies endemic to the performance genre that my interlocutor Joanna Ceja (first-generation Mexican American, Indigenous settler soprano playing the role of Rifle) dubbed "colonizer opera"—that is, what opera scholars typically refer to as "opera."[16] The varying perspectives of the performers and creative team established a rehearsal space in which a range of nontraditional narrative concepts and musical epistemologies became a key part of the performance. Because *Sweet*

Land's narrative and rehearsal process was so heavily focused on the experiences of individuals who have been historically marginalized in the United States—and particularly, in the opera industry—the concepts of individual expression and inclusion pervaded most aspects of each person's experiences. The specific experience of racial inclusion was another radical component of *Sweet Land* that shaped every aspect of the opera's creation and performance, especially for emerging performers for whom opera industry hierarchies may loom particularly large. The chapter concludes with a reading of the Wiindigo character of Anishinaabe legend as a complex representation of settler-colonial violence in *Sweet Land*, focusing on the textual and performative ambiguities of a scene entitled "Crossroads" that relied heavily on performer improvisation. This reading of the Wiindigo brings together ethnographic research and hermeneutics, gesturing toward the complexities of *Sweet Land* as a work that both presents an anticolonial critique *of* opera in performance and moves toward a form of anticolonial opera in practice. As *Sweet Land* demonstrates, an anticolonial form of opera is not an ending point of generic arrival, or an achievement easily gained when the historical detritus of the opera industry is still so very dense. Rather, *Sweet Land* signals toward the processes by which the US opera industry might move toward anticoloniality.

Throughout this chapter, I have identified not only the role each person played in the production such as a librettist, performer playing a specific role, or lighting designer, but also their self-declared ethnicity and/or race (depending on individual preference), and their relationship to the land of what is now referred to as the United States. For the latter, I rely on terminology established by Tuck and Yang: settler, arrivant (someone who has descended from those forcibly brought to the United States through systems of chattel slavery), and Indigenous.[17] To these categories, I have also added first generation and immigrant to clarify the structural inequalities some individuals have faced due to the financial and social challenges of immigration, as well as the generational trauma that often accompanies such change: as Deborah Wong points out, categories of settler, Indigenous, and arrivant are also not monolithic descriptors.[18] Moving toward anticoloniality mean recognizing both the privileges and the obstacles an individual faces due to the structural inequalities at the heart of the operatic enterprise—and more broadly, that of the US empire. As a white settler I have experienced discomfort with the idea of identifying each person in this way: I naively feel as though having these identities in my text implies each person's value is related to their racial, ethnic, or land-based identity, rather than the rich

contributions they bring to the production or their importance to me as individuals separate from this text. The color-evasiveness of this impulse is of course, an insidious part of racism; it hides the lived experience of each individual for which *Sweet Land* was meant to make space.[19] It also perpetuates the assumption that the white settler experience is the normative standard, and that which is different is deviant or non-normative. It is my hope that for some readers, the identification of all my interlocutors in this way *is* destabilizing and reminds them of the structural inequalities in both operatic performance and scholarship that they may have historically been given the privilege to overlook. Readers will also note that this chapter, more than any other in this book, contains a large and varied number of collaborator quotations and experiences. This plethora of voices—many of them from historically marginalized groups—is a deliberate textual reflection of *Sweet Land* as, after Naomi André, what I later describe as an "engaged" production: an effort to counter the dominant narrative thread too often perpetuated by the contemporary opera industry that the experiences of such individuals hold less value than their counterparts with white and/or settler identities.[20]

Colonizer Opera

As *Sweet Land* codirector Cannupa Hanska Luger noted multiple times during the creation and rehearsal process, the development of early opera chronologically parallels the development of colonial subjugation in the Americas. The operatic genre, an export of the West, was one part of a suite of cultural tools that played a role in purporting such subjugation.[21] While an extensive discussion of the dominating role of colonial hierarchies and systemic racism in operatic practice is beyond the scope of this chapter, I use the term "colonizer opera" here as a way of denoting the specific technologies of settler colonialism that inform the production of knowledge and culture within a Western context. la paperson argues that approaching settler colonialism in this way allows those interested in "[forecasting] colonial next operations and [plotting] decolonial directions" to understand the "mechanisms" of coloniality. He writes:

> Machines of genocide, enslavement, land mining, and war run through the colonial apparatus and produce multiple colonialisms as adaptations to each particular place and time. This is why specific colonial

apparatuses differ, but similar technologies recirculate in them—pieces of desiring machines that assemble into new machines.[22]

Opera and the system of Western art music of which it is one part are one component of such "desiring machines," and thus a technology of paperson's "multiple colonialisms" within a corresponding framework of colonial behaviors. Likewise, musicologists Mary Ingraham, Joseph So, and Roy Moodley convincingly draw on sociologist Anibal Quijano's theorization of the "coloniality of power" in their recognition of coloniality as a "central construct within opera."[23] They note that "coloniality implicates not only the practices and values of individuals in postcolonial nations"—or I would add, countries such as the United States that are still embedded within structures of settler colonialism—"but also the institutions and practices on which they were founded and that remain embedded in governing structures."[24] To put it another way, colonizer opera could also be described simply as "opera." To this end, as a number of scholars have recently noted, Western musical institutions are a by-product of the systems of coloniality in which they function.[25] Thus, racial, ethnic, and gender hierarchies shape interactions within institutions in which those of the global majority are systematically discriminated against by systems of power that favor those in the global minority. While opera as genre is produced within institutions, genre might also be understood as something produced *by* institutions. The historical and contemporary systems of operatic enculturation, training, and performance are also part of a colonial framework.[26]

Thus, opera in the twenty-first century encompasses the hierarchies of Western art music that fetishize both the intent of the composer and/or a single unified text arrived at by way of *Werktreue*-informed ideologies and/or Modernist approaches to art work. The composer's authority is reified in comparison to that of the other creative contributors, perhaps best reflected by the argument made by the title of the 2020 Dramatists Guild film *Credit the Librettist*. Moreover, the authority of the composer is frequently mapped onto that of the conductor—and to a lesser extent, the director—in the opera rehearsal room. For instance, in Michael Vitale's guidebook for contemporary stage management he writes:

> In an opera rehearsal room, hierarchy is incredibly important to keep in mind. If the Conductor is in the room, everything will go through them, despite the fact that room (or staging) rehearsals are considered the Director's rehearsals. . . . the music is the single highest priority

in opera, so if the person charged with overseeing the music for the production has a strong desire to rehearse something that will likely take precedence over the staging.[27]

In fact, performers typically encounter the hierarchal system described by Vitale as an early part of institutional enculturation. In many formal musical training institutions in the United States, students are taught early on to respect the authority of their primary studio teacher. In many cases, this voice teacher will be the final authority on the specific pieces young musicians will learn, the roles they will study, the competitions they will enter, and the summer programs they will pursue.[28] As sociologist Ayesha Casie Chetty's research demonstrates, the voice teacher's authority is often an instrument of colonial machinery, of which white supremacy is one component. Chetty offers an example from her research during which a voice teacher explicitly told a Black student that her Afro was unacceptable for a voice competition setting.[29] The many examples shared by Chetty's informants echo those comments made by my *Sweet Land* interlocutors about the experiences they have had within US operatic institutions.

The colonial framework of behaviors that inform the creation of opera also infuse its narrative preoccupations and symbols. Musicologist Ralph Locke writes, "Operas are not pale copies of 'real' societal attitudes: they are active units of cultural discourse, contributing materially to the ways we understand and respond to issues of gender, race, and social class, constructing images for us of what the individual owes to the larger community (and vice versa)."[30] Thus, opera also encompasses a specific set of narrative symbols and social values. Another way of thinking about the Western way of representing culture is put forth by Larissa Behrendt (Eualayai/Gamillaroi), who contrasts Western versus Indigenous research methodologies and the specific perspective put forward by each:

> The Western tradition assumes neutrality or objectivity by a scholar and a researcher. It is suspicious of subjectivity. Indigenous approaches to knowledge are completely the opposite. They understand that where you are placed—your positioning or your standpoint—will fundamentally influence the way you see the world.[31]

Similar to the way a Western research methodology might offer an objective "truth," disguising the singular opinion of the author as a kind of objective knowledge, the rehearsal and performance of US opera is presented as objec-

tively neutral, thus obscuring the ways in which it can also be exclusionary to certain performers, creators, and audiences. It is this objective neutrality (or unacknowledged whiteness) that musicologist Naomi André critiques when she recognizes the presence of a "shadow culture" of Black opera. Moreover, it is with this critique in mind that André argues that the operatic genre also offers a unique opportunity for the types of historiographical reimaginings offered by works such as *Sweet Land*.[32] To this end, as musicologist Gayle Murchison has recently argued, analyzing Black opera—and I would suggest, confronting colonizer opera more broadly—requires acknowledging not only the biases of operatic content and industry but also those of critical dialogue and analysis.[33]

More broadly, other modes of settler-driven theatrical performance reinforced both Western conceptions of US history and norms of performance, thus informing a long history of spectacle-driven performance of which opera—and particularly site-specific opera—is a related genre. Literary scholar Abram van Engen observes that a variety of cultural rites were used to solidify a US national identity in the decades following the American Revolution.[34] Practices such as mapmaking and public Independence Day celebrations reinforced conceptions of nationhood through synchronized bodily ritual while establishing the "scenography" of the American project. Of these physicalized rituals, the 1921 Tercentenary Celebrations, which included a "Pilgrim Pageant," provide the most obvious example of the intersection between site-specific performance and the performance of US identity.[35] As satirized by playwright Larissa FastHorse almost one hundred years later, the myth of mutual cultural collaboration evidenced in the 1921 pageant is still present in contemporary educational rituals for children across the United States.[36]

While the 1921 Pilgrim Pageant provides the most obvious example of the use of site-specific performance to craft a settler-driven American narrative, this pageant was but one small part of the performance of American identity through community-based site-specific performance. As musicologist Tim Carter has noted, twentieth-century American pageantry and American mythmaking were intertwined and self-reinforcing practices that served national, regional, and local ends as the situation demanded. American pageantry across the country also often incorporated traditions from the minstrelsy stage, featuring white performers in blackface and redface. While exceptions such as W. E. B. DuBois's 1911 pageant, *The Star of Ethiopia*, exist, the most dominant "American" identity asserted by many of these performances was—and is—one deeply rooted in insidious racism and settler colonialism.[37]

When exploring the possibilities of *Sweet Land* as an anticolonial critique, then, members of the creative team and ensemble recognized the intersectional relationship between commonly taught narratives of US history, operatic convention, and systems of colonial subjugation. Throughout this chapter, my interlocutors often speak to these multiple orientations simultaneously: the genre of opera, the contemporary US operatic industry, and individual experiences. Moreover, because feelings of racial and ethnic belonging made so much of the opera creation process possible for the individuals who performed *Sweet Land*, it is impossible to disentangle when individuals were reacting to and against operatic conventions, and when they were reacting to the systems of white supremacy embedded within the twenty-first-century workings of the US opera industry. To put it differently: while the *Sweet Land* ensemble is trying to confront "colonizer opera," it is not always clear which operatic hierarchies are expressed through histories of marginalization and which come from generic convention.

New Models of Collaboration

While *Sweet Land*'s historical and contemporary precedents reflect a process by which settler colonialism is ritualized onstage, *Sweet Land* differs in a number of ways. In the previous examples, the process of settler colonialism is not the primary narrative of the drama; rather, it is the by-product. In other words, many performances of Western art music *produce* colonialism rather than thematizing and critiquing it. Of course, the challenge of telling the story of whitewashing without reinscribing it—and through the medium of opera, no less—was key to the challenges faced by the creators of *Sweet Land*. The collaborative creation process of *Sweet Land* was therefore an essential part of the work's anticolonial exemplar and critique.

The creation story of *Sweet Land* illustrates the importance of not only foregrounding the stories of Black, Indigenous, and people of color on the operatic stage, but also the ways the *structures* of opera commissioning and the writing process must evolve to give agency to those telling those stories. Allyship on the part of those in traditional operatic hierarchies—usually white people—requires more structural change than just amplifying the voices of underrepresented groups. While, thanks to the efforts of activists and scholars, conversations about representation in the US opera industry have become more common since 2018, less attention has been trained on the *processes* by which various artists are asked to represent themselves.

Indeed, 2021 events in the opera industry such as the decommissioning of Black composer Daniel Bernard Roumain by Tulsa Opera after the composer refused to change the text of a commission, speak to the ways in which these processes of inclusion are just as important as final onstage products.[38]

Recognizing the potential pitfalls in collaborative structures, Dylan Robinson critiques "inclusionary" methods of collaboration that signal toward representation but ask the Indigenous collaborator to fit within existing settler-musician structures of musical performance.[39] He juxtaposes these inclusionary practices with those he describes as "Indigenous+art music," performances that "foreground a resistance to integration, and [signal] the affectively awkward, incompatible, or irreconcilable nature of such meetings."[40] Robinson's concept of Indigenous+art music might also be put into dialogue with André's "engaged musicology," in which the questions of "who is being represented, who is telling the story, and who watches and interprets the story" are foregrounded in scholarly inquiry.[41] As this section reveals, by making space for collaborators to reject the themes and spaces they would and would not be interested in engaging with, and to bring in other aesthetic models of collaboration, engagement, and narrative, the creation and performance process of *Sweet Land* took on aspects of both Indigenous+art music and what I refer to as an engaged form of production.

Sweet Land originated from a prompt posed to The Industry from Boston Lyric Opera: 2020 was the four hundredth anniversary of the Pilgrims landing at Plymouth Rock and what is recognized as the first Thanksgiving. The Boston Lyric saw the anniversary as an auspicious opportunity for creating an opera around the event, and The Industry as an ideal partner. Because of the long precedent for such a site-specific and historically inflected concept, the proposed collaboration between Boston Lyric and The Industry needed to, from the beginning then, reject a performance history of whitewashings of American history.[42] It became clear, however, that Boston Lyric and The Industry were envisioning different types of thematic engagement with the original Thanksgiving narrative, and the companies amicably parted ways after only a few discussions. For Sharon, though, the potential of the initial concept lingered, and The Industry moved forward with the project.

The Boston Lyric prompt does not feature in many retellings of the *Sweet Land* creation story. Although leaving out this part of the story might be due to respect shown to the other opera company, it also means that the decision to perform *Sweet Land* gets swept up in another narrative about the production, one that better fits in with a retrospective ethos of *Sweet Land* as an anticolonial attempt at operatic production.

For instance, in a Colorado College "Conversations with the Artists" Zoom event held on January 7, 2021, Sharon explained that *Sweet Land* came out of the xenophobia and division exacerbated by the election of Donald Trump.

> We were thinking about a new piece right around the time of President Trump's election in 2016, about how opera could be part of not just a resistance to what we were seeing happening on a national level, but also as an opportunity for a deeper reckoning with how we got to that position. . . . And so I did feel the impetus to try to think about how opera could, in its kind of more oblique way, talk about where we are as a country and where we are in terms of a civic identity. I think it really began with that notion of civic identity and thinking about how to peel away the layers of mythology around what it means to be American. I knew that as a white male who identifies as American, I would have a pretty limited perspective on this topic. So I instantly was thinking, how can we create a kind of large-scale collaboration to allow for an enormous multiplicity of viewpoints to be at the heart of what it is that we were exploring? And how can we take that large-scale collaboration and go back to the origins of the myth of America and the making of America.[43]

As Elizabeth Cline (white settler executive director of The Industry) noted in a 2021 follow-up interview however, "[The Boston Lyric prompt] is a part of the mythology of [*Sweet Land*]. Yuval didn't say after *Galileo* [2017 production]: '*Galileo* makes me think I really want to do a Thanksgiving opera,' it was a prompt from Boston."[44]

The Boston Lyric collaboration is important for multiple reasons. While the retrospective tone of Sharon's 2021 commentary is understandable given the directions The Industry has taken since *Sweet Land* and, indeed, the learning that took place throughout the creation process, his amended narrative also veils the process by which *Sweet Land* initiated processes of anti-coloniality within The Industry itself. Moreover, the Lyric prompt shows how the *Sweet Land* concept came out of a direct link to historic traditions of colonizer-driven mythmaking. Consequently, the creators of *Sweet Land* initially worked against this tradition in form and narrative, so much so that they eventually rejected the notion of Thanksgiving being a part of the narrative at all. In Aja Couchois Duncan's words, focusing too much on the original creative concept behind the opera "harms where *Sweet Land* got,"

perhaps indicating the extent to which rejection of this concept allowed the creative team to move in their chosen direction(s).[45]

In early days of the creation process, "Thanksgiving" became a creative shorthand for the conversations the team began to have about a white-washed perspective on history. This concept also proved to be an important litmus test for collaboration with The Industry for several members of the creative team. As the team began to discuss how to deliberately distort various historical binaries, so too did the narrative of *Sweet Land* emerge as an opera about the process, rather than the aftereffects, of whitewashing. For example, when Raven Chacon, the first member of the creative team who agreed to be a part of *Sweet Land*, was first approached by Sharon, Chacon had a visceral reaction to the notion of a "Thanksgiving opera":

> Yuval approached me asking if I would be interested in being involved [in *Sweet Land*]. I think he felt that he needed to have an Indigenous composer or some Indigenous, Native American folks on the team from the beginning. I appreciated that he was conscious of that, but at the same time, I was, like, I don't want to do anything about Thanksgiving. And he understood that.[46]

Responding to Chacon's concerns about Thanksgiving, Sharon explained that the initial concept could evolve, and flew Chacon out to Los Angeles to see the 2017 production of *War of the Worlds*. In initial discussions about collaboration between The Industry and Chacon, rejecting "Thanksgiving" provided a clear way to show how the latter would not create art in specific service to a settler-driven conception of Indigeneity. In turn, The Industry was given an opportunity to show allyship in response to Chacon's concerns.

While Chacon was the first member of the creative team who agreed to be a part of *Sweet Land*, he was ambivalent about identity-related reasons for his involvement:

> I'm resisting the reason I'm being involved [in *Sweet Land*] in the first place. The reason I'm being involved in the first place is—I appreciate anybody's consciousness to inviting Indigenous people to be a part of *any* artwork. And, of course, if they didn't invite any Indigenous people to be involved, they would have gotten a lot of shit for that. So I'm glad they did. However—I'm not going to represent them. Or anybody specifically. The challenge was to represent Indigenous people without actually representing Indigenous people.[47]

This pitfall of representation was described by fellow co-composer Du Yun in the tandem composer's note for the *Sweet Land* digital program as a "double trap," "a situation that first essentializes your worldview, then punishes you for sharing it in the first place."[48] Obviously, Sharon's interest in commissioning Chacon came from more than just the latter's Indigenous identity, although that did play a part in the commission. Sharon noted: "[Because of Chacon's work with interdisciplinary artist collective Postcommodity] I knew that he had a kind of mindset for this kind of work . . . and had been thinking about visuals, and representation and video, and sound not as a pure thing but as part of a full experience."[49] More than just an interdisciplinary organization, Postcommodity is an anticolonial arts collective whose works provide "a shared Indigenous lens and voice to engage the assaultive manifestations of the global market and its supporting institutions."[50] Chacon's work with the collective from 2009 to 2018 signaled not only an orientation toward collaboration, but also a desire to create politically engaged art that challenged systems of coloniality. Both Chacon's and Du Yun's observations, however, also speak to the tensions those individuals who have traditionally been excluded from operatic performance must navigate when anticolonial efforts and modes of engaged production like *Sweet Land* are attempted.

Librettist Douglas Kearney's early involvement in the project also provoked conversations about positionality using the myth of Thanksgiving. When The Industry first approached Kearney about the project, Sharon explained that it would be within the context of Thanksgiving and that the work would include two operas "clashing in some sort of way."[51] Kearney assumed that he'd be expected to write the libretto for the Indigenous "side" of the opera. He immediately began suggesting Indigenous writers who would be a better fit than himself, only to be told by Sharon that he would be writing for the Pilgrims. When I asked Kearney why he assumed he'd be writing for the Indigenous peoples, he responded:

> I assumed I'd be writing for the Indigenous "side" of the opera because of a history of interchangeability when it comes to "swarthy" people. That white people can write/represent anyone, but that the rest of us can't write or represent white people. I was pleased that in this *case*, I was wrong.[52]

Like Chacon's initial skepticism about the Thanksgiving origins of the project, Kearney's assumption about who he would be asked to represent

suggests how narrative representation in the opera industry is shaped by a white hegemonic framework. While the creative process of *Sweet Land* went against a number of stereotypes with regards to representation, this example seemed to be particularly important to Kearney, who shared this anecdote not only in our individual interview, but in several public discussions about the opera in January and May 2021.[53] Indeed, as Kearney later put it, the inversion of his expectations in this conversation also provided a "kind of code in some way, of how to build [the narrative of *Sweet Land*]" during the creative process.[54]

For Kearney there was a second important moment in the early days of production that also had to do with working against an assumed binary of representation:

> This is still *very* early on in the process when we were considering a structural narrative split along imagining Indigenous American and pilgrim experiences *before* their contact. [Librettist] Aja [Couchois Duncan] and [Composer] Raven [Chacon] (teamed initially) remarked—how come *we* never get to be the white people? That was a fantastic moment of rupture and correction.[55]

In Kearney's words, this second example, like the above "code," "made the entire project possible because it was the first critical breach of a binary." It was similarly important to Chacon that he not be responsible for writing a specific type of "Native" music:

> I already don't quote Native music in my own compositions, but the music that was going to represent the Indigenous people, we tried to make it so that I wouldn't write too much of that. I would write the hymns and things. . . . But, then, would we still quote some, you know, Tongva music or other regional Indigenous music? We had other solutions. We found some similarities between Navajo music and Mongolian music and started there. Inverted Mongolian music. Or found other similarities and turned that into the Indigenous music.[56]

As he put it in our interview: "Why recruit the Indigenous people just to write about Indigenous historical events? We can write about other things!"[57]

As the above examples demonstrate, in the process of reacting *to* Thanksgiving, the initial members of the creative team were able to have conversa-

tions about the meaning of operatic representation. In turn, these conversations made each individual more willing to commit to the project in the long term despite concerns about the subject matter. In Couchois Duncan's words, the team "[grounded] equity in the ways [they] were working together."[58] Thus, the early collaborative efforts of *Sweet Land* were driven by the needs of those on the creative team rather than those of The Industry. In Chacon's words:

> Once there was a multitude of voices, some of my skepticism [about the project] went away. . . . So the fact that [The Industry] brought in an African American librettist poet [Kearney] and a Chinese composer [Du Yun], then we start getting into the complexity about what we can talk about. And at the same time, I didn't want to be the sole Indigenous voice either. I wanted to be able to bounce some ideas off of somebody and, also, have a different perspective, maybe someone who's not from my tribe [Aja Couchois Duncan and Cannupa Hanska Luger].[59]

While much of the flexibility of creating Sweet Land was due to The Industry's willingness to allow those on the creative team to lead the conversations about narrative and modes of production, The Industry's open model of production also provided an environment that supported this process of creation.

After Couchois Duncan and Du Yun were commissioned by The Industry, the creative team and Sharon gathered in Berlin in May 2018, where Chacon was in residence as a fellow at the American Academy. During this meeting, it quickly became evident that the initial Thanksgiving concept was a direction that all five collaborators felt uncomfortable pursuing. As Kearney related, "Raven was conscientiously firm about if we center the idea of Indigeneity in the Northeast then we are forgetting the rest of the country and we are creating this sort of block idea of Indigeneity."[60] Chacon himself explained that he also felt he should not represent the experiences of northeast tribes to which no one in the creative team belonged.[61] As Chacon explained: "The more discussions we started to have, we started to realize that [*Sweet Land*] didn't have to pigeonhole itself into anything that was going to be a didactic presentation of 'all the Indians were killed, the white people did this.' . . . It's much more complicated than that."[62]

Perhaps most importantly, the August 2017 "Unite the Right" white supremacy rally and former president Trump's reckless statement that there

were "good people on both sides" of the demonstration cast a more urgent light on the consequences of retelling historical narratives in particular ways. As Kearney recalled, Trump's interpretation of the violent extremism of that day intensely affected Sharon, who realized that telling both sides of the story without more acutely engaging with the violence of settler colonialism would be deeply problematic.[63] The visceral reaction to a kind of "both sides" approach also appeared in a pointed composers' note written by Du Yun and Chacon and appearing in the final *Sweet Land* digital program: "This is not reconciliation. These rooms are tight! And we cannot fit everyone in here. So why must those who skewed the narrative of North American history always be given a seat, let alone be head of the table again?"[64]

All four original creative collaborators were offered multipart contracts that allowed them to work on the material until a certain date and be compensated for that work. They could then decide if they wanted to continue with the project or, if they preferred, to step away. This contracting practice is not standard for The Industry, but Cline explained: "Because the material was sensitive or very personal and people were bringing their own subjectivities in this real way, we wanted to make space for everyone to feel very comfortable to say, 'This is not for me.'"[65] In this way, The Industry subverted traditional commissioning structures to make space for, in Kearney's words, "collaboration without consequence."[66]

Codirector Cannupa Hanska Luger's strong creative voice, bold directorial impulses, and team-oriented mentality significantly shaped *Sweet Land*. Luger was added to the creative team in late April 2019, just prior to the first performance workshops on May 4–5, 2019. *Sweet Land* performers and creative team members enthusiastically described the significance of Luger's presence in the project. Peabody Southwell (white settler mezzo-soprano who played "Scribe") said, "I think the shift when Cannupa got involved was profound. [The production] took on a dramatically different shape and look."[67]

Sweet Land performers and creative team members also noted how Luger's involvement in the project signaled a specific type of allyship on the part of Sharon. Especially because Sharon's presence is inextricable from The Industry's artistic identity, inviting Luger to share his directorial power "modeled," in Kearney's words, the process of "being transformed by the making of the art."[68] Couchois Duncan remarked on the "deep humility" Sharon demonstrated by inviting Luger: "He met Cannupa and he was like, 'Oh, Cannupa can hold things I can't, like, let's make him co-artistic director.'"[69] Part of this humility might also have been communicated in the

way Luger was brought into the project. Kearney explained that Sharon was deliberate about how he introduced Luger to the rest of the team.[70] Sharon Chohi Kim (first-generation Korean American settler voice artist who played Wiindigo) also thought about the idea of sharing power: "Cannupa gave such a different voice, and Yuval just let it happen."[71] Derrell Acon (African American arrivant baritone who played Grandfather) put it another way: "I don't think Yuval came into this process knowing exactly how this piece was going to be successful, exactly what was going to happen. But he had the courage to know sort of what it looked like to share his power, and he was willing to do that."[72]

Acon and other performers also expressed how the addition of Luger gave them greater trust in Sharon. As Babatunde Akinboboye (first-generation Nigerian American settler baritone who played Father) put it, "I could trust Yuval. The only way I would have been comfortable with any of this was by having a director who was actually Native, just because, as a Black person, I have seen the delicate nuances, the stuff no one talks about because it is too difficult to put into words."[73] Sharon himself explained the ways in which it had been obvious from the beginning that he needed a codirector: "I felt like it just doesn't make any sense to have two composers, two conductors, and only have one director, it doesn't work. . . . I suddenly had a partner who was really going to be looking at this from an Indigenous perspective."[74] Following paperson's work on anticoloniality, challenging the mechanized processes of settler colonialism requires a "strategic reassemblage" of the colonial machine's component parts.[75] An engaged form of production considers who is a part of this strategic reassemblage. Luger was both a self-admitted outsider to operatic convention and someone in a position of power *within* these systems of generic convention. As such, his voice remarkably shaped the anticolonial orientation of *Sweet Land*.

The Industry's choice to deliberately cultivate a racially and ethnically diverse creative team meant that many perspectives were present in the creation of *Sweet Land* from the beginning of the opera. At the same time, ongoing conversations about diversity and representation originating from members of the creative team themselves changed how the team interacted and who was included. In the process, as Sharon explained, this group composition also meant that "there was no way to be pan-anything—there was no way to be pan-Native, there was no way to be pan-American, because all of us had a different perspective."[76] This range of (sometimes divergent) voices meant that creative team members—and eventually performers— were given space to express what they needed from the collaboration and how best to receive it.

"Giving agency" and "making space," however, also describe processes within a stable hierarchy in which individuals in power decide to share it, rather than situations in which historically oppressed people exercise agency without someone giving it to them by *demanding* or *taking* space. While the former model of transferring power did take place, the members of the creative team were far from passive figures in the collaboration. As Kearney, Chacon, and Couchois Duncan expressed, their agreement to participate within *Sweet Land* was conditional upon the circumstances of their experience. To this end, Couchois Duncan emphasized the way in which conversations and experiences with Chacon and Luger brought "a lot of ease [into the process] for me." She explained her initial hesitancy:

> Yuval is a lovely man . . . and I admire him deeply, but he's a white Jewish man, and I was like, I don't know how you are going to hold Indigeneity and the storytelling, and I need to know I have partners I can trust. And I felt a kinship with Douglas and I knew I could trust him. So I had a conversation with Raven Chacon, and it just felt good. I felt like, OK, he and I can figure out whatever we need to figure out together, and I felt that alignment. And we were both like, if things get weird, we're out! You are not going to use us as instruments or whatever—it's just a place of distrust that one comes to after a lifetime of being tokenized and exploited.[77]

As Couchois Duncan explains, the creative team members were not only "given" space: there were also opportunities in which their participation was contingent upon their experiences within that space with consequences for The Industry. The Industry's flexible contracting practices were not only a way of sharing agency, but were also a necessary response to ensure the involvement of members of the creative team.

While the *Sweet Land* creative process incorporated many components of Robinson's Indigenous+art music and André's engaged musicology to create a mode of engaged production, the process was complicated and sometimes fraught. As I discuss in the final part of this chapter, both Kearney and Couchois Duncan also stressed that the combination of identities on the creative team and operatic hierarchies made telling the *Sweet Land* story challenging. Many of my collaborators lauded The Industry's efforts while recognizing the changes that need to continue to be made at even the most progressive opera companies, including The Industry.[78]

Experimenting with Form: From Workshop to Film

Musical workshops took place on May 4–5 and November 9, 2019. These workshops served a dual purpose: allowing the creative team to work through certain parts of the score in rehearsal and performance and to attract a future audience (and potential donors) to the project. The workshops also conveyed the specifically anticolonial ethos of *Sweet Land*. In an introduction to the May workshop, Sharon described *Sweet Land* as an "opera that is both a reckoning with American history and opera itself," and described one of the questions at the "heart of [The Industry's *Sweet Land*] inquiry" as a procedural one: "How can the process of creating this work of art reflect the society we actually want to create?"[79] Additionally, Luger asked May workshop performers to wear some sort of red item along with concert black for the performances to call attention to missing and murdered Indigenous womxn (May 5 is a National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls). The May performances concluded with an improvisation by Du Yun and Chacon to the screening of a ten-minute film by Martha Colburn (white settler filmmaker) titled *The Triumph of the Wild*. As described in a 2011 press review, the stop-motion film chronicles "America's history of violence from the Revolution to the War on Terror."[80] In this way, the anticolonial orientation of *Sweet Land* was prominent from the earliest public iterations of the performance.

Sweet Land opened on February 29, 2020, at the Los Angeles State Historic Park. The story had evolved from a Pilgrim/Indigenous encounter to the archetypal exploration of a first encounter between Hosts (the Indigenous community) and Arrivals (the newly arrived community). The opera is broken into five parts (seen in Table 4.1). Librettists and composers worked in a variety of combinations to offer musical and literary engagement with one another's contributions. Throughout the night, supertitles were projected on various expected and unexpected surfaces: screens hung in specific places around the set as well as built parts of the landscape such as billboards and bridges.

In the final version of the production, audience members entered a rudimentary, bleacher-style setup made of plywood. This rough echo of a proscenium sets the stage for the first encounter between the archetypal Hosts and the Arrivals. As Gundula Kreuzer notes in her reading of the production, the pageant-like style of this first scene gestures toward the way the production stages transhistoric encounters between past and present and, indeed,

Table 4.1. Chart of Sweet Land Creative Team Contributions and Performance Order. Scenes performed simultaneously are linked by a line.

Movement	Librettist	Composer
Contact	Douglas Kearney	Raven Chacon
Feast 1 ⎤	Aja Couchois Duncan	Du Yun
Train 1 ⎦	Douglas Kearney	Raven Chacon
Crossroads	N/A	Raven Chacon, Du Yun, Improvisations by performers Carmina Escoar, Micaela Tobin, and Sharon Chohi Kim
Feast 2 ⎤	Douglas Kearney	Raven Chacon
Train 2 ⎦	Aja Couchois Duncan	Du Yun
Echoes and Expulsions	Aja Couchois Duncan and Douglas Kearney	Du Yun and Raven Chacon

between historic and contemporary opera.[81] After the Host-Arrival meeting, the audience is separated in half based on the color of a wristband received at check in (yellow or blue). One group attends Feast I and II, while another attends Train I and II. The Hosts and Arrivals are divided along with the audience: "Half will be taken to a ceremonial feast" (Feast I and II), and "Half will be guided onto the land and taught the ways of the community" (Train I and II).[82] Feast I and Train I play simultaneously, as do Feast II and Train II; audience members only attended one track (Feast or Train) per production.

The Feast I audience members are led by the Feast Coyote (first-generation Filipina American settler performer Micaela Tobin) down a gravel path to a large circular structure made of plywood. The Feast I space is warm and welcoming, with hundreds of electronically lit candles peeking out from wheat stalks on the benches surrounding the space. Once inside, audience members sit alongside one another, facing chorus members costumed as Arrivals who also sit at the feast waiting to be fed. After a blessing, the Father (Hosts) addresses the Arrivals to tell them that his daughter Makwa will "dance the unseen world alive" as part of the evening's festivities. After a startling shift to a baroque-inflected continuo texture, Arrival Jimmy Gin interrupts Makwa's preparations to reject the Hosts' offerings, stating, "Your generosity is poison to the freedom of a man / we must ask for nothing, accept nothing from another's hand."[83] Gin tells the Host community that, with Makwa, he will "give the [community] children stronger than [their] own," who will claim the land. Accompanied by a synth-pop track, Makwa sings in response: "I would no more breed with you than welcome an inva-

sion of maggots into my chest." She leaps toward Gin with a knife in hand, and the scene freezes just before she kills him. Coyote Tobin, the only character who is not frozen after these events, gives a tip of her head to lead the audience members out of the Feast I space.

To reach the site of Train I, the scene offered simultaneously with Feast I, audience members were led out of the bleachers by the character of the Train Coyote (played by Mexican American immigrant, settler performer Carmina Escobar) and down a long open-air corridor made of linked plywood rectangular doorways. Chorus members dressed as railway workers in nondescript, loose blue pants and striped shirts lined the spaces between doorways, some humming the melody of a railroad work song that would emerge during Train I. Similar to Feast, Train is performed within a circular structure with audiences sitting facing inward. Unlike the Feast set, however, the Train set has a number of concentric circles: that of the orchestra located at the center of the round, and then two circles that nest inside one another, the smaller of which is missing every other inner panel. Throughout the scene, the smaller of the two larger concentric circles rotates to reveal and conceal characters who stand between the two outermost circles. While the Train set, which was meant to imitate a zoetrope, posed several logistical problems throughout the performance run, the effect (when it worked) was both unexpected and eerie for audiences (and sometimes performers who had to juggle the changing conditions).

Train I is a musically taut, pacing scene whose tension is sonically relayed by the rhythmic tapping of a railroad spike. The spike's rhythm increases and decreases in frequency and tempo based on the narrative. The first iteration of the scene juxtaposes the worldviews of the Hosts and Arrivals, with Guide, Bow, and Drum (Hosts), whose roles find analogous counterparts to the Arrival characters of the Captain, Preacher, Rifle, and Scribe introduced in the first scene. For example, Bow tries to teach Rifle how to hunt sustainably, but is horrified to instead witness Rifle massacring a herd of animals (represented by dissonant glissando groans in the chorus and woodwinds). In another moment, after Drum communicates with the Arrivals, the Captain worriedly sings the phrase "Drums of war!" In turn, the Scribe dismisses Drum's communications, saying, "Just senseless rat-a-tat. Ignore it." While these confrontations take place, the Arrivals carry on a sustained conversation about the nature of dominion and, in their minds, the absence of Christian symbols of blood and resurrection in the New World. As the Arrivals begin to take ownership over the land, the railroad work song grows out of the ominous silence that, for the past few moments, has only been

Figure 4.1. Sharon Chohi Kim, who played Wiindigo. Photo by Casey Kringlen for The Industry.

punctuated by the clink of the railroad spike played in the orchestra. The scene concludes when the Captain strangles Guide with the words "I name you, Lamb," in a culmination of the libretto's violent Christian imagery.

Both groups come together between the first and second iterations of their individual scenes to attend "Crossroads," a performance of astounding—and distinctly nonoperatic—vocality and improvisation I explore in the conclusion. Crossroads is performed by the two Coyotes and the spectral figure of the Wiindigo (Figure 4.1), a cannibalistic figure who appears in Anishinaabe legend, around whom audience members cluster as they spectate, sometimes even sitting on the ground. Crossroads is accompanied by projection designs by Hana S. Kim (South Korean, American immigrant, settler) that depict a woman falling through space upside-down, train cars forming, and brightly colored animals running against the landscape of the train.[84] Following Crossroads, the Feast and Train audiences are led back into their respective spaces for Feast II and Train II. In the second version of both scenes, the few surviving individuals from the Host community struggle to understand the violence of colonization that has taken place, only to be told by the Arrivals, "What you remember doesn't matter."

Upon entering the Feast II space, the audience is immediately aware that

something has gone horribly wrong. The warm candles surrounded by blowing grass stalks have been replaced with white tablecloths and metal-lidded serving trays reminiscent of an abandoned catering event. The chorus members, seated in a circle, stare at what seems to be a pile of metallic fabric in the center of this table. The tautness of Kearney's poetry in Train I is translated to tightly wound, grotesque lines of recitative traded between the white-hooded chorus members in Feast II: "Here, dear, right here is where you'll stand. . . . You'll cry a little . . . You'll say I will, you'll say I do." As the chorus members sing instructions, the pile of silver fabric on the table shifts, and it becomes clear that Makwa, draped in the fabric, is the only member of the Hosts who remains in this dystopian, all-too-familiar future. Jimmy Gin comes forward to claim his bride as Makwa sing an arietta that begin with a plaintive octave leap followed by a descending stepwise line that compresses into chromaticism: "If I could find my Father, I'd ask how to shut a house without doors." The scene ends with Gin wrapping his arm forcefully around Makwa as the pair stand on the table in a manner reminiscent of figures on a wedding cake. "We'll always make a place for you in our sweet, sweet land," the chorus sing.

Train II is a snapshot of a world drunk upon the empty spectacle of unbounded capitalist waste. The Captain appears as an inebriated bum who sings articulated sixteenth-note passages that are somehow both indecent and delicate: "All this is mine! . . . The whole world, I name it, I claim it." As the Captain sings, the other Arrival characters from Train I interject commentary amid the flashing neon lights and boisterous big band-esque chords played by the orchestra. The Preacher, whose abrupt gestures resemble a 1960s Disney animatronic figure, offers false promises to a listening congregation of chorus members: "Everything I tell you is true! This deal. This opportunity is chosen for you." The chorus members eventually spread out around the inner set circle in an echo of the Train I Railroad song blocking, except this time, they roll out false green turf shaped like yoga mats. In Preacher's words: "Home ownership. Be the master of your domain. . . . This is how we know we are chosen. We take whatever we want, whatever we need." Rifle strides proudly around the circle, jauntily passing out handguns to the chorus members, who begin pointing them at each other as they sing staccato phrases on the same pitch: "Everything I want! Everything I need!" As the chaos builds to a crescendo, the Preacher leads his acolytes out of the Train II circle and beyond the sight of the audience. A lyrical moan emerges from a bent-over figure lying on one side of the circle. It is Bow, who, like Makwa in Feast II, seems to be the only figure from the first iteration of the

scene who is aware of what has happened. In the silence, she begins singing a mournful aria that recognizes what has been lost. Bow's costume relies on bone imagery and her aria text draws on the spiritual "Dem Bones." As she sings, Guide (Figure 4.2), who has appeared lost and confused among the house-hunting chorus members (sung by Yuchi, Seminole, and Shoshone Indigenous performer Jehnean Washington), performed a Muscogee Creek text that provides a gloss on the English text sung by Bow. The pair's voices intertwine, growing louder and louder as feedback on the electric guitar, which has been quietly present since the beginning of Bow's solo, builds to an unbearable crescendo.

Following the second version of both scenes, the audience is led back to the bleachers by both Coyotes for the last scene. A small boy (named "Speck" in the libretto) shuffles around a campfire that burns just beyond the chain-link fence that separates the undeveloped part of the park from the rear of the "stage space" from the first scene. As Speck digs in the dirt and moves rocks around the fire, he sings a melancholy vocalise on the vowel [u]. Speck's vocalise frames four overlapping arias sung by unseen performers, the text of which expresses the violence that had been enacted upon them. No longer confined to the realm of myth, these arias recall specific historical moments: the murder of a young boy during the Chinese Massacre of 1871 (sung by Kim), the ostracization faced by a young female Greek immigrant (sung by first-generation Indian-German settler Nandani Sinha), the enslavement and murder of a young Pomo girl (sung by white settler Molly Pease), and the forced sterilization of a Latina woman (sung by Ceja). These arias emplace the "Sweet Land" of the opera's title as the United States. The final words of the opera, "No Sweet Land here," echo into the chill of the night, and the audience and performers disappear into the darkness, with no collective bow.

Sweet Land ran from February 29 to March 8 without interruption, with a planned extension of the run to March 22. Reflecting the company's priority of making the opera financially accessible to all communities, 350 twenty-five-dollar tickets were (planned) to be released over the course of the full run, with free tickets also distributed to some of The Industry's community partners for the production. The 9:00 p.m. show on Sunday, March 8, however, was the last performance of the opera with audience members. On the morning of March 12, Sharon emailed the cast and production team of the opera to inform everyone that he and Cline were attempting to come up with a solution that would not involve canceling the production and to ask individuals to reach out if they had any specific health-related needs or con-

Figure 4.2. Jehnean Washington, who played Guide. Photo by Casey Kringlen for The Industry.

cerns. Six hours later, a Zoom call had been scheduled for that same day at 8:00 p.m. for the entire cast. At the Zoom meeting, Sharon announced the decision to cancel the rest of the live run of *Sweet Land* because of Covid-19. All performers would receive their full contracted payments for the entirety of the run (even the canceled shows) and the production would be filmed on Friday March 13 to distribute for a small fee to recoup The Industry's financial losses.

The challenges continued to mount, even after the decision to cancel was made. The performance sites at the park were swamped with mud after days of rain, and the filming was put off to Sunday March 15. (Note that in March 2020, the airborne transmission of Covid-19 was not yet public knowledge and LA County guidelines at the time limited gatherings to under fifty people.) Directed by white settler Jonathan Stein, *Sweet Land* was filmed on the afternoon of March 15, with time for only one take of each scene (Train I received a take and a half because the inner circle of the set stopped working). The film was distributed for free on March 25 to all those who had donated the value of their tickets to the canceled shows to The Industry. Other interested parties could purchase access to both the Train and Feast tracks for $14.99 from Vimeo.[85] As the epilogue discusses in detail, performers expressed a range of emotions regarding the film, from pride at the final product salvaged from the cancellation to sorrow that a production that had meant so much on levels of representation and personal experience had been cut short.

Representing Individuals, Rejecting Tokenism, Re-envisioning Opera

Sweet Land radically went beyond the oft-used surface meanings of "diversity" and "inclusion" to be actively anticolonist. One of the most powerful components of *Sweet Land* as operatic performance was the way the writing, rehearsal, and performance itself gave BIPOC performers, often excluded from colonizer opera, agency in shaping and representing the narratives of *Sweet Land*. For the most part, performers were actively given space to bring themselves to the creation process of the opera rather than being asked to perform a tokenized identity. As Couchois Duncan put it, *Sweet Land* "created some groundwork for an ecosystem of performers of color working in a medium that is dominantly white western European."[86] As a result, many described *Sweet Land* as an opera they felt conveyed their own experiences.

Richard Hodges (an African American arrivant baritone singing the role of Captive/Preacher), for example, reflected on the ways his personal experiences of racism shaped his performance of the Captive character: "I have felt racism firsthand. And I know what it feels like not to be liked or wanted or to even be harmed for something that I can't change, for something that can't be hidden."[87]

Many performers' excitement about being in a production with many people of color conveyed how often they themselves are the racially tokenized individual within an operatic rehearsal space. "The one elephant that's in the room is how many people of color and different background actually are in this production and performance," Hodges said. "I don't think I'll ever do another opera, unless I'm doing *Porgy and Bess*, that has this number of different cultures represented. And people of color."[88] Ceja explained, "I was talking to another cast member who is one of my friends, Babatunde [Akinboboye]. He was like, 'I've never seen this many people of color all at once in an opera,' and I was like me neither."[89] As Ceja, Hodges, and Akinboboye observe, the experience of racial tokenization versus racial representation is crucial to an engaged form of production. Similarly, Fahad Siadat (first-generation American of Middle Eastern ethnicity settler tenor playing the role of Brother) noted:

> Every brown person who does opera is a fish out of water, right? And one of the shared experiences between the performers [of *Sweet Land*] that has been discussed is this idea of being accused of being like an Oreo. And suddenly we're in a room full of people where we don't stand out *and* we've all had that shared experience.[90]

As Siadat articulates, *Sweet Land* created a space where performers both felt as though they fit in and could discuss experiences of feeling excluded with other performers who would understand these experiences.

Open-call audition notices for *Sweet Land* in February 2019 asked for "singers of diverse backgrounds and identities" who reflect "the cultural and ethnic diversity of Los Angeles," and listed a range of vocal styles: "trained operatic styles, to distinctive folk styles, to more theatrical singing." The Industry also shared the audition invitation with renowned theatrical ensembles such as Native Voices at the Autry in order to attract artists for whom opera might not necessarily be a stylistic home, but whose lived identities and experiences were crucial to include in *Sweet Land*. The Industry's willingness to engage with auditioning individuals beyond the identity they

represented, however, began in the audition space. Acon described being "so blown away by the spirit of the [audition] process" that after he heard more details about *Sweet Land* in the audition room, he responded by saying, "You know, this is kind of weird, but it sounds like it might be worth offering a bit more about who I am as an artist." He performed an autobiographical slam poem for the panel.[91] Acon explained that although he had never heard of The Industry prior to his audition, the spirit of the audition room communicated the sense that "this is a company that is really wanting to involve the artist in the process and bring full people into the space."[92] Stylistically, the audition panel asked singers (both those who began with a piece in an operatic idiom and those who did not) to, if possible, offer pieces that revealed different parts of their training or experiences. Sinha, for example, sang "Jana, Gana, Mana," the Indian national anthem, Washington offered "Homanisey Sey Sac Bey Mee" (Home, sweet home / Do you recognize?) in the Nisenan language (phonetic spelling), and Hodges performed two pieces he had composed in addition to a canonic aria.[93]

"Confronting" colonizer operas, as Ceja and others felt they were able to do through *Sweet Land*, was also a result of performers' many experiences of being *excluded* in conventional productions. Highlighting just how important the audition, rehearsal, and performance environment was for these performers of color, many members of the *Sweet Land* ensemble (workshops and final performances) described a strict divide between an artistic world in which they felt excluded in ways directly related to their racial or ethnic identity, and that of their experiences with *Sweet Land*. Kim described her initial experience of opera as a "very small box," where "it feels like I never really felt like I fit in anyway, so the box felt small for me and the characters I could play, or I always felt like I had to work *harder* than the next person."[94] Ceja describes a similar type of Kim's "small box" in her own recollection of being told that she "didn't look like a countess" by a voice teacher, in a reference to the character of Countess Almaviva in *Le Nozze di Figaro*. She continued: "I've always wondered about this art form I've studied and loved," she said, "but is this glass ceiling penetrable for me?"[95] In normalizing the historical and lived experiences of Black, Indigenous, Asian American and Pacific Islander, Latinx, and Arab people in the United States, *Sweet Land* also did not ask performers to assume the white identity implicit in the classical music industry described by Ceja and others. As Acon put it:

> Especially in opera, my story is not really front and center. . . . And a
> lot of Black folks, and I'm sure other people of color too, can often feel

that when you are going into an opera contract of a standard work . . .
you are not only portraying the character, you are portraying a white
person portraying the character. . . . And so, by being a Black person
singing Sarastro, being a Black person singing Desdemona, that is an
additional part of the narrative that the audience is taking in. They are
not just receiving you as another character in the drama.[96]

As Acon reveals, for many of those in the global majority, the experience of
performing even a fictional character is to first recognize that the spectator
is viewing the operatic stage through the lorgnette of the white gaze. Cor-
respondingly, this perspective requires that the Black performer (in Acon's
case) must perform the role of a white person portraying an operatic char-
acter. Echoing Acon's description of a character's assumed whiteness, Ceja
explained that audiences "won't allow their brains to accept that a Black per-
son or a Mexican person could play a duchess or a countess because in their
minds, they are like, 'No, I want to see a thin white girl with that role.'"[97]
In a practical application of one of the primary arguments of musicologist
Nina Eidsheim's work on the perceived (false) relationship between race and
voice, Hodges explained that the white gaze encompasses more than the
visual: "There are still today certain roles people would never cast me in . . .
because the stereotype and the relationship [between voice and racial iden-
tity] is '*This* [timbral] color denotes *this* voice type for African Americans.'"[98]
   Sweet Land, on the other hand, challenged these expectations through
racial and ethnic representation *and* narrative. As Acon pointed out:

When you can actually play on that [white gaze set of expectations]
in an authentic way, when what [audiences] are seeing is not this
sort of extra-operatic form of disruption, but rather, they see a Black
person and they also see aspects of that Blackness from society in the
portrayal of that character, then there is an authenticity that makes
sense. It frees you up as an artist, and it makes you feel like you are
inherently a part of that story.[99]

Acon's words describe the difference between playing a character audiences
expect to be white, and the experience of playing *any* character to an audi-
ence willing to separate that character from the expectations of a white racial
frame. The latter situation allows the Black artist to inhabit the character in
a way that makes space for his, her, or their identity, rather than a projection
of that identity from a white lens.

As performers expressed how their own ideas and experiences played a role in *Sweet Land*, stylistic diversity was often spoken of in the same breath as racial or ethnic diversity. Both Tobin and Kim, who were more deeply involved in improvisation in *Sweet Land*, discuss the ways an openness to vocal stylistic experimentation also allowed for more fluid expressions of identity. Tobin notes that *Sweet Land* allowed her "to showcase all of the types of voice that I have and do that as *my* identity."[100] Kim also expressed the way style and representation often intersected in the rehearsal process: "Because there were lots of different styles of singing, styles of music, it felt so exciting, and it felt like, OK, that's different from me—but that's OK, because that's what we're talking about right now, an enmeshing of cultures and people and styles, and not just in one way but in so many ways."[101] The production's openness to multiple stylistic and cultural identities led performers in turn to describe how *Sweet Land* aligned more clearly with their own creative and ethical principles than colonizer opera. Tobin, for instance, explained:

> I felt a disconnect from traditional opera for a long time. . . . But I realized after seeing other people's work that the reason I felt so alienated in that world was because those stories were very Eurocentric, and I didn't see myself in them and also my feminism was not reflected in those storylines. . . . So for [The Industry] to just put [these macro structures of inequality] on the table like that, I think it's great.[102]

Similarly to Tobin, Kim described The Industry's decision to talk about colonialism as "a relief, like, oh, great, [the opera] is deliberately working towards opening up the opera world for people of color to tell the stories of just—more people!"[103] In these comments, *Sweet Land*'s departures from operatic convention are manifested by the production's foregrounding of racial representation, acknowledging the history of the operatic form, in addition to more "traditional" departures from convention—stylistic play and new models of creation.

Moving Beyond Colonial Collaboration: Rehearsals

The plurality of experiences within the *Sweet Land* creative, production, and performance teams translated to a rehearsal environment that made space

for a range of approaches to rehearsal hierarchies and even aesthetic epistemologies. This (primarily) nonhierarchical approach to rehearsals meant that performers felt they could suggest things that would improve the performance and bring their lived identities to the space. In Acon's words:

> The rehearsal process was something that was special about the project . . . even being in the rehearsal room on breaks with all of these different perspectives. . . . I remember having conversations with people about how they felt about a scene or being asked to do something. . . . When you are having those conversations with such a broad diversity of perspectives, you know, you are just immediately elevating the art form.[104]

As Acon alludes, many performers attributed their feelings of inclusion within the creation process to the open attitude in the rehearsal room toward creation and play.

Most performers were involved in both the May and November 2019 workshops and, because of this, were significantly involved in multiple permutations of the opera. The racial and ethnic diversity of the cast was inextricable from the spirit of community many felt in the production, and as a result many linked this extensive creative process to the goal of reshaping the genre of opera. As Akinboboye put it, "*Sweet Land* kept evolving, kept changing and growing, and it kept doing this, much more than any other opera I've ever done with The Industry."[105] Similarly, Hodges described the anxiety with which he approached the first workshop rehearsal: "The opera world talks about preparation so much, going into rehearsal already knowing your role so we don't waste time."[106] After Hodges's first rehearsal for the May 2019 workshops, though, he realized that the expectations were different for *Sweet Land*: "Every single day was a brand-new script and score," and, in turn, this expectation of in-flux creation "created space for camaraderie, communication, safety, and creativity."[107]

Performers frequently described how the rehearsal process of *Sweet Land* also supported processes of negotiation around identity not only for spectating audiences, but also for performers themselves. For instance, Akinboboye described how being in such a "heavily Native" space was hugely influential in giving him a more nuanced understanding of Indigenous culture in the land now called the United States: "I understand that just by being in rehearsal with Native people, I wasn't going to [understand], but there was *input*, and other versions of the story, and that was what was beautiful."[108] To

this end, codirector Luger was particularly helpful in Akinboboye's under-standing of Indigenous culture. As Akinboboye put it: "I kind of had an idea of who I am and my importance in the [Host] culture, and then Can-nupa would casually say something, and I would realize I had understood [things] backwards the entire time."[109] Indeed, for Akinboboye, the experi-ence of being in *Sweet Land* showed him just how much he did not know about US history: "I want to know the real story now . . . how much more is backward, how much more do I not understand?"[110] Siadat too, described his experience in *Sweet Land* as "revelatory" when it came to understanding Indigenous experiences: "I grew up focused so much on the Black/white dynamics in the US, and later issues with our Hispanic and immigrant rela-tions that I haven't really paid much attention to the Indigenous horrors in the past. Being part of the show changed that for me in a big way."[111] Simi-larly, Sharon noted that he "was confronted again and again with [my own] kinds of subconscious archetypes."[112] For example, after Sharon suggested that Makwa pull a knife on the character of Jimmy Gin at a certain point in the Feast I staging rehearsals, Luger countered that perhaps it was a little early in the narrative for Makwa to "go savage."[113]

At other times, performer assertions about representation shaped the choices of what did and did not end up in the final version of the opera. Acon elaborated:

> [The rehearsal space] gave us the license to be open and honest about where we were, if there were any concerns, or if we wanted to offer something . . . so that was something for which I was pulling from *personal* experience, and sort of coming out of youth into larger soci-ety and seeing how Black people were received by larger society, and so the rehearsal process gave me permission to do that.[114]

In another example, performers were able to suggest what material they felt should *not* appear in the final performance. For example, white settler audio engineer Louis Pesacov asked Tobin and Escobar to record improvisations based on a recording made by Washington of a prayer and stomp dance song that opened the first scene of the opera. Tobin recalled her extreme discomfort at this request: "Well, improvising against this [music] can have a different connotation because we're not Native, and I'm not interested in mimicking or appropriating sounds to make an improvisation."[115] She said that after expressing their feelings, the group had a conversation, and she and Escobar avoided imitating the specific sounds made by Washington

and the text of the piece in their contributions. This example points to The Industry's willingness to upend rehearsal hierarchies as well as the centrality of performer contributions to the rehearsal process.

Beyond conversations about representation, rehearsals were also a place where more significant epistemological differences in performance were respectfully accommodated. This was especially true when it came to Indigenous forms of knowing in contrast to established operatic industry rehearsal norms for colonizer opera. During one music rehearsal for the May workshops, Washington and Carolina Hoyos (first-generation Peruvian-Ecuadorian Afro-Indigenous Latine of Quechua-Kichwa with Moche-Inca-Pima descent, who played one of the Workshop Guides) were experiencing extreme challenges with the music despite their preparations. Washington recollected:

> There were a lot of hitches that kept happening in rehearsal, like the timing for me just didn't feel right. The way I was singing classically was just the way it was written, but it just didn't gel—but not because of the way it was composed. And I stumbled a lot even though the creative team was gracious and open minded. . . . There was a moment, though, when we stopped rehearsal because it just wasn't working. And both Carolina and I were called out of the room. Cannupa came and took us out of the room, and we were like, "Oh, we're fired. That's it." Once outside the rehearsal space, he said, "You know, this just isn't working," and we were like, "We know." And he said, "the reason it isn't working is . . ."—and we knew [what he was going to say] on the inside of us, but we didn't know if we were allowed to say it: we felt strongly that [the music] was meant to have more ancestral voices, and our voices as Native people heard the way they would naturally be heard, and not Native people being cast to sing opera very Anglo and colonial—not that we did not appreciate the beauty of classical opera—we do. But we could tell that our ancestors were speaking. We knew something was pulling at us, as every time we opened our mouth, something was amiss, a rhythm went wrong. But we had to go back in the room, and we had to explain that to a diverse, classically accomplished, trained, mostly non-Indigenous, audience. And say that now we were going to introduce this into opera.[116]

Washington described how Luger "marched us right back in [to the rehearsal space] and in front of everyone said, 'This is the reason it's not working,

and this is what we are going to do.'"[117] This moment was a turning point for Washington and, I would argue, one of the most significant in the creation of *Sweet Land*. In Washington's memory, white settler conductor Marc Lowenstein[118] as well as Chacon (who had composed Train I) responded positively: "Marc was like, 'Throw your sheet music out the window—to a certain extent—and we'll just write some new lines."[119]

I too remember approaching this specific rehearsal from a settler perspective, so much so that I remember feeling anxious for the performers and unclear as to what the next step would be. As Hodges's earlier anxiety about preparations conveyed, the de facto expectation in colonizer opera is that all musicians show up for a rehearsal with their parts rehearsed and confidently learned. To this end, another performer and I who observed Washington's and Hoyos's rehearsal challenges (but not the moment when Washington, Luger, and Hoyos came back in the room) discussed how *our* impression of the interaction was an example of The Industry's transformative approach to rehearsing—the idea that what is typically considered "valuable" rehearsal time was being shared to help a performer learn her part. After interviewing Washington, the ethnocentric degree of my assessment, however, was clear. These perspectives, it is worth noting, are endemic to colonizer opera and in scholarship about opera. By contrast, Washington's explanation of the interaction demonstrates how an Indigenous-informed approach to music making superseded a traditional hierarchy of operatic production within a Western art music tradition, from performer agency to historical conceptions of vocal timbre, rehearsal, and performance. From a final perspective, this moment also reveals that in a work about who shapes the meaning of history, different individuals will likely have varying opinions about how they would like to represent themselves. Therefore, bringing a range of viewpoints into the opera industry is crucial to envisioning anticolonial forms of production.

The final observation I take from this rehearsal example is the way in which *Sweet Land* made space for different epistemological approaches to music making, as well as the more granular example of what happened to the rehearsal process when Luger was in a position of power. While it was very important to Chacon that he *avoid* overt aural references to his Indigenous identity, Washington's ancestors—and through them, Washington herself—felt strongly that certain forms of Indigenous expression be included in her performance of the opera. Indeed, even though the score for Washington's part reads "not bel canto" over the Guide's lines, she still assumed she should make "Anglo, colonial" sounds until the conversation with Luger and Hoyos

took place and the ancestors' voices were recognized in the rehearsal space. In her words: "The way it came out in the end was the way that it was supposed to be, with our real Native influence, with our Indigenous feel, with our language incorporated."[120] Despite their differing attitudes toward representation, Washington also explained that, from her perspective, Chacon was very enthusiastic about including her suggestions. The way of knowing that Washington describes in this example quite literally changes the tone of the conversation around how an opera is created, rehearsed, and performed. Washington's experience and the space for her ancestors' contributions supersedes Western art music perceptions of a "coherent" work, the structure of a rehearsal, and even the initial suggestions made by another Indigenous composer.

As a result of this dynamic rehearsal environment, some performers interpreted the rehearsal process itself as a form of social justice. Acon noted that rehearsals modeled egalitarian interactions for future performer experiences:

> All of the folks who were coming out of [*Sweet Land*] are going into new spaces with a reference point for authentic conversation and productive consideration of artistic truths and requests and moments. . . . And having been offered that freedom, so even in the future if they are *not*, they have a reference point to know they are not.[121]

To put it another way, performers were given the opportunity to rehearse not only the opera, but also the opportunity of self-assertion and dialogic exchange. Siadat saw the space of rehearsal as shaping the creative projects he chose to cultivate and move forward with after *Sweet Land*:

> I don't think I can really separate the experience of *Sweet Land* with the months that followed: Covid-19 highlighting major inequities between groups of people, the explosion of the Black Lives Matter movement following George Floyd's death, and suddenly spending a great deal of time on DEI [diversity, equity, and inclusion] work and integrating it into my day-to-day thinking (something that definitely started with *Sweet Land*). *Sweet Land* was *perfectly* timed as the beginning of an entirely new change in consciousness.[122]

As Siadat explains, *Sweet Land* accelerated his understanding of social inequalities within the United States, understandings that deepened in the coming months with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. Thus, *Sweet Land*

not only performed moves toward anticoloniality, but also catalyzed future anticolonial actions on the part of those involved.

Moving Beyond Colonial Collaboration: Performer Composition

In our April 2020 conversation, Akinboboye linked racial and ethnic representation directly to operatic ontology, observing the ways the rehearsal process allowed the "traditional Western art form" (opera) to "break apart." "Once you break the structure," he argued, the genre "can crystallize into a new art form."[123] To Akinboboye's point, performer decisions played a significant musical role in the composition of *Sweet Land*, most significantly through improvisation. In fact, Escobar explained that she resisted being involved in the opera until the creative team agreed she would be able to improvise her own part. "I want to get out of the format of composed music and the hierarchies it entails. . . . Usually, the creative team is the creative team and you're just an instrument."[124] While Escobar (Train Coyote), Tobin (Feast Coyote), and Kim (Wiindigo) were the performers most consistently acknowledged as improvisers in the opera's creation, many others made significant contributions to both music and libretto. As these performers shaped *Sweet Land*, their cocompositional efforts, in turn, destabilized what might be thought of as the traditional production hierarchies of "colonizer opera."

What did the cocomposition process look like for the improvising performers? Escobar's parts were improvised after conversations with Chacon and Du Yun during the rehearsal process. She observed all the initial Train rehearsals, and at certain points the composers would point out specific places where an inserted improvisatory line might be appropriate. Escobar would then play with what materials might fit. This conversational process between performers and composers began as early as the initial May 2019 workshop, when, after rehearsal concluded one night, the composers asked Tobin and Alexandra Smither (a Canadian-British settler soprano who played one of the coyotes in the May workshop) to experiment with the coyote-like sounds they could make using amplification. Some of these sounds ended up shaping future moments in the composition.

In comparison to Escobar's parts, certain musical lines for Tobin and Kim are more clearly notated in the final *Sweet Land* score. This scored notation, however, partially conceals the creative freedom Tobin experienced in rehearsals and performance. She explained:

> My parts in Black Box I [Scene described in the final production as
> "Contact."] and both Feasts were all notated. And then there were
> sections in that—like my howling. It was a squiggly line, but I tried
> out different types of howls and sounds in the rehearsals. . . . As we
> kept going, the music loosened up more because certain music cues
> couldn't be heard, the orchestra was remote, and so I had to just come
> in, and so things loosened up a little bit. . . . Black Box I [Contact]
> opened up rhythmically . . . and we ended up doing some of those
> entrances just based off of blocking. . . . I added more character ele-
> ments with [some of the text]—*Sprechstimme* sometimes or really giv-
> ing more growl to it, not being superoperatic.[125]

In this example, the part ultimately performed by Tobin was the result of
concomitant processes of composition, improvisation, and blocking. Indi-
vidual interpretations became compositional choices that were intertwined
with the performed conception of *Sweet Land*.

Kim's contributions as the Wiindigo seemed to sit between the more
heavily notated lines of Tobin and the open choices of Escobar. The Wiin-
digo appears in Train I, Crossroads, and Feast II, where texted and untexted
vocal lines were interspersed with gurgling sounds, vocal fry, gasps, and
virtuosic shifts in register. Like Tobin, Kim worked off lines in the score
that were notated, such as those seen in Figure 4.3, and added completely
improvised material in scenes such as Crossroads. In Figure 4.3 for example,
while the words "who," "upon an apple," and "so red, red, red" are pitched,
Kim was performing her specific interpretation of these pitches in context,
and, indeed, only the phrase "so red, red, red" was sung on the specifically
notated pitches. Kim's interpretation of the "stuttery" directive above the
word "ketchup" was a kind of inhalatory, airless performance of the word,
with the stutter appearing on the [k] consonant.

Crossroads, the scene of rupture between Train I/Train II and Feast I/
Feast II, was the most obvious moment of performer composition in *Sweet
Land*. In the scene, Kim, Escobar, and Tobin performed an extended vocal
improvisation over a track layered by Chacon. As Chacon said, "We wanted
[the coyotes] to be outside of [the narrative] . . . so I was always looking at
them like, how can we sonically or temporally get them outside of what we
are seeing? And for me, it was having them improvise on top of the layer
of notated prompts or scores."[126] Just as much of the collaborative structure
of *Sweet Land* was divorced from conventional operatic convention, so too
were the vocal styles used by Escobar, Tobin, and Kim drawn from non-
operatic styles of singing. The initial structure of the scene came together

Figure 4.3. Raven Chacon and Douglas Kearney, Feast II score excerpt, Wiindigo's vocal line, mm 16–21

through a community event performance on January 26, 2020, at the Autry Museum of the American West titled "*Sweet Land*: Creating an Opera." In Kim's words:

> Raven gave us a track, and we had maybe thirty minutes to put it together, and so Carmina, Micaela and I, we've performed together a lot before, and we are so used to showing up together and bringing it. . . . So it wasn't new for us. So we were like, I'm Wiindigo, the Coyotes are going to come down from the aisles, I'm going to start on stage. It started from there, and then we did it a few times, and then it took shape, and then of course once it took shape, once we got it into the space, it changed, because space changes everything. And then it kind of kept changing, honestly until the dress rehearsal, and then it *set*.[127]

Kim and Escobar also claimed rhetorical agency when describing their roles as cocomposers in *Sweet Land*. As Kim noted: "With these different styles of music, too, the hierarchy kind of does have to disappear. . . . [Escobar] is an improviser, and I am also an improviser, and that means we are kind of composing some of the project. . . . [The Crossroads scene] is not a composer/performer separation thing—it is a collaboration."[128] Escobar's autonomy as a composer for *Sweet Land* was also expressed in the digital program, where a short note she contributed titled "To Exist in Sound: Improvising in Sweet Land" appeared on the same page as the note written by Du Yun and Chacon. In this note, Escobar observed: "*Sweet Land* . . . [provokes] the stereotype of a composer working apart and above the ensemble, challenging the myths of western classical form and cosmogony."[129]

Both composers acknowledged these varying contributions in the reception of *Sweet Land*. In a September 2021 public forum, Du Yun related how Escobar agreed to be a part of the project only if she did not sing notated parts, and expressed her deep respect for Escobar's request.[130] Chacon even reframed the improvisations of Escobar, Kim, and Tobin as improvisations inscribed into ritualized compositions through repetition: "I don't know if I would even call it improvisation," he said. "It's singing a [newly created] song over and over and learning it, and that's much like something that might be carried down over generations."[131]

Washington was less explicitly acknowledged as an improviser in *Sweet Land*. Her musical and textual additions to the opera, however, made a significant impact in the expression of the work. Washington's additions are similar to Escobar's (and some of Kim's): more dramatic in nature, with specific text and melodic lines as well as timbral shifts that were consistent from night to night, but that were not reflected in the notated score. Moreover, unlike most of Escobar's and Kim's contributions, Washington's additions were both sonic and texted. For example, at the end of Train II, Washington interpolated the text of a prayer chant in the Muscogee Creek language that provided a culturally contrapuntal gloss upon the text performed by Bow:

> [Bow] was singing some very powerful lyrics—she is literally calling this force into the arena—and I just started singing in [Muscogee Creek] an interpretation in the spirit world of what she was saying, and adding extra, because that was what came to me. So she was singing, "Oh, Mother," and she was calling on the mother—and our mother is the earth in cultural terms, and the water is a living thing, and we are born out of the water, we are made up of water, so "Hokti Ahdis Weee Wah," "Mother, take me to the river/water," and "Ah mee doc doe go sudjeh wush kin," "I'm sewing myself back together. No matter what you do to me, I am sewing myself back together, I am resurrecting."[132]

Scholar and composer Bode Omojola addresses a similar kind of compositional hybridity in his own practice, using the term the "notation-orality dynamic," which he describes as "the pervading engagement, perhaps even tension, between orality and notation."[133] In *Sweet Land*, the relationship described by Omojola might be reinterpreted as one that existed between performer choices and the resulting destabilization of operatic hierarchies of production. Of course, many historical and contemporary operas are created

in dialogue between the composer and the performer premiering a certain role. *Sweet Land*, however, exemplifies how a rehearsal process based on collaborative experimentation might also translate into a more egalitarian and engaged model of operatic creation.

"If You're Going to Change Opera, You Have to Change It": Lingering Colonial Hierarchies

Sweet Land may have worked against the ideologies and practices of colonizer opera, but it was still a work created within this system. Kearney, Couchois Duncan, and certain performers stressed that despite the success of the opera in working against historical structures, the combination of identities on the creative team and pervasiveness of operatic hierarchies also made telling the *Sweet Land* story a challenge. As composer Neo Muyanga recently shared in a 2022 keynote about collaboration and practices of decoloniality, such processes take time, resources, and effort.[134] As Couchois Duncan put it: "Opera is enrooted in the cultural tradition from which it comes. It's extraordinarily hierarchical, and I think The Industry does an incredible job of complicating and even shifting some of that, but it played out in all the kinds of ways that it does, based on who cares about what, right?"[135] At the same time, the hierarchies that reemerged despite the best efforts of those involved in this process of operatic creation and reception point to new ways of thinking about the operatic genre.

One of the most substantial ways colonizer opera conventions impacted *Sweet Land* was through the shifts that took place in the creation process from libretto to final production. Although Couchois Duncan and Kearney had a significant amount of control over the final product, this level of control was not equal to the directors or composers. As Kearney noted: "I appreciate how hard we work in collaboration, and I appreciate the rhetoric of collaboration. But at the end of the day, there's a hierarchy . . . just admit that at the end of the day, if you have to choose between music and language, you are going to choose music every time. But also recognize that what that means is that some [aspects of the final narrative] are not going to make sense!"[136] Similarly, Couchois Duncan recalled her surprise that the librettists were not immediately chosen for promotional interviews along with the composers (they were eventually interviewed) and recalled realizing, "Oh right, because the composers are the only ones who matter in opera—that's a real thing!"[137]

To this end, there were several significant cuts from the original libretto that affected the performed version of *Sweet Land* in the minds of both writers. One of the significant erasures to the narrative had to do with the role of Speck, the character whose vocalise frames the overlapping arias sung during the final scene, "Echoes and Expulsions." In the 2019 version of the libretto, Speck ends the scene with the words: "They told me nothing / They gave me nothing / The day is nothing / and then it ends." Speck's bleak words were meant to communicate the ways in which the encounters between Hosts and Arrivals and the ensuing violence reverberates into the present. In Aja Couchois Duncan's explanation:

> Speck was kind of a representation of . . . the suffering that is the result of a disconnection from past, from ancestry and culture. . . . So, for me, what was really important in the end was that Speck was experiencing—and not able to locate, touch, or connect with, but wanting to—these echoes of history and lineage and ancestry and historical trauma and things like that.[138]

Kearney emphasized that Speck was meant to be "another way of decentering a sort of a binary idea [one of the main goals of the creative process], which was that the sum total of the opera would be, at some level, this kid who's not sure they've inherited anything."[139] Speck's disconnection from the opera's temporalities was also meant to embody how *Sweet Land* emphasized multiple, rather than exclusively linear, conceptions of time, a key epistemological difference between settler and Indigenous conceptions of temporal development.[140] In the final version of the performed libretto, however, Speck's vocalise was wordless and his connection to the narrative of the opera unclear. In May 2021, Kearney still expressed ambivalence over this final iteration, going so far as to distinguish between *Sweet Land* [as written] and the March 2020 production.[141]

Similarly, the March 2020 version of the production was missing clear references to the African American arrivant experience in the story that had been in early versions of the narrative. As Couchois Duncan admitted:

> One of the things that I do think happened in the end [of the creative process] that wasn't necessarily [present] earlier on, is that the presencing of African American experience through [the opera] really did in some literal ways get erased. It got erased from sections of the work I had done it and became increasingly less of a priority and focus.[142]

Part of this was due to the makeup of the creative team, what Kearney described in May 2020 as the "sneaky math of *Sweet Land*":

> By the time we're done, the core creative team, however that's verbalized, is six people, and three of them are Indigenous artists. . . . When you add it up, this opera is created by a mostly Indigenous creative team. Because you know, if you want to do the identity game math, Du Yun is a Chinese immigrant, I'm Black, Yuval is Israeli Jewish. . . . So that to me is important to think about. And so that education [of creating *Sweet Land*], which just happened through the work and sometimes it happened through direct kind of debate, argument, like aesthetics, ego, all of that kind of stuff, but that *process* of making this work was very important.[143]

One of the most prominent cuts Couchois Duncan expressed regret about was a change to the character of Drum in Train II that was made partially because of staging challenges. In the 2019 version of the libretto, Drum was a tap dancer in Train II and meant to be a reference to the history of enslaved Africans who used tap as an "enduring act of resilience against [cultural erasure]." Couchois Duncan's suggestion that the tapping take place on an upper level of scaffolding, however, proved too difficult to realize in production. As she later explained,

> In retrospect, I would have done something that made [the character] less dependent upon production. Because it felt like a deep—if there was an erasure . . . for me, that was one of the biggest erasures. And done for all logical reasons . . . but I think it's significant—I think that absence is significant and makes *Sweet Land* less fulsome than what we had sort of imagined, at least [for] Douglas and I in our writing.[144]

In addition to the tap-dancing Drum, Couchois Duncan had also written a possible vignette for an original conception of Crossroads that included a scene depicting the experience of Ona Judge, a person formerly enslaved by George Washington, who, with her children, escaped Mount Vernon. She had also written the text of a possible aria for the final scene "Echoes and Expulsions" that conveyed the story of a previously enslaved couple freed after the Emancipation Proclamation. However, neither narrative made it into the 2020 version of the work.

Both Couchois Duncan and Kearney remarked upon how Hodges's deep and deliberate engagement with Black subjectivity, while not a panacea for the erasures in the text, did ameliorate some of the ways Black American narratives had disappeared from the libretto through the production process. The Preacher, Hodges's character, evolves significantly three times throughout the opera, from Captive (Contact) to Preacher (Train I) to Preacher (Train II) and is the sole representation of any type of African American experience in the narrative. The librettists also called attention to how Hodges's interventions in *Sweet Land* shaped an audience understanding of his character as arrivant rather than "Arrival."[145] While Kearney had wanted to challenge the Host/Arrival binary structure of the opera's narrative from the beginning of the opera's creation process, it was through Hodges's performance that this complication actually emerged. Hodges explained his interpretation of the significance of this role in the context of *Sweet Land*: "Aja apologized to me. She said, 'I'm sorry, I didn't realize how much responsibility I left on your shoulders to tell the story.' . . . [Couchois Duncan and Kearney] said it was the *way* I [Hodges] brought their words to life that made Train (I and II) more believable."[146]

Similarly, there were other challenges that arose with regards to representation in certain moments of the production process. Kim, who sang an aria about the 1871 Chinese Massacre in the finale, "Echoes and Expulsions," described feeling uncomfortable singing about the violent event so close to the site where the murders happened: "As a Korean American, I felt a little weird and guilty about not knowing too much about [the massacre]. I felt a sense of responsibility and a sense of guilt of not being so involved."[147] Her feelings intensified when, very close to the opening, Du Yun asked her to inflect the aria with a "Beijing Opera" sound. According to Kim: "I had lots of mixed feelings about it, just feeling like I need to represent this [sound], but I don't know what Du Yun wants me to do, and I also don't want to imitate someone else's culture too in an insensitive way."[148] Additionally, Kim described her concern about a return of some of the racial hierarchies *Sweet Land* was seeking to erase:

I was aware that—oh, of course, they want *me* to sing it. Because I'm Asian right? And they only auditioned Asian people [for the aria]. And I understand why—right? They want someone to represent this story—and actually, all of the Asian people in the cast were Korean, I believe. And so, it was either me or one of the other two Korean women were going to sing it, and they wanted me to do it.[149]

Kim's ambivalence about her casting echoes some of the feelings expressed by Hodges when he described an awareness of why he was or was not cast in certain roles in traditional operas and, indeed, even Chacon's ambivalence about the need to represent Indigenous sounds in *Sweet Land* with regards to his personal identity. For all three individuals, there is an awareness that perhaps their racial or ethnic identity might be a reason they are (or are not) given opportunities, which in turn, amplifies feelings of not belonging in certain spaces or being typecast.

As these erasures make clear, *Sweet Land* raised more questions than it answered as an anticolonial opera. As Chacon recalled, the team had to make difficult choices about which stories to tell

> without it turning into what we in the team were joking about, which was called the "United Colors of Trauma"—you know, like, let me insert *my* trauma. We all wanted to tell our story and relate to this thing that we are all sharing. But we didn't say, OK, let's add the immigrant story, let's add the Chinese story, let's add the Japanese internment, and it's like well wait—it would never end! So how do we reference these things [without] turning it into OK, my turn, my turn, my turn?[150]

Similarly, as in the example Kim brought up, what was the ethical decision for The Industry to make regarding representation and narrative? Can or should Kim represent a Beijing opera sound as a Korean singer? Is asking her to sing this role an act of inclusion given the lack of a Chinese singer in the cast? Or—and perhaps *and*—does this request intensify the homogenization of Asian Americans as a single group despite coming from different countries? In our conversation, Kim did not seem to have a clear answer as to what the "right" choice was in this situation, and I think this is the point. *Sweet Land* created a space for these conversations to take place—every choice made was not necessarily the best or most ethical—but such conversations must take place for opera production to become anticolonial. As Kim noted: "There's just so much work to do—which is exciting, and then it's also daunting because it is so deep! But it's good because I hope that [this work] makes people be more curious in general—and me too!"[151]

Finally, even though *Sweet Land* was created with the goal of moving from the hierarchies of colonizer opera, the work often fell into traditional pathways of reception in popular press venues. To this end, certain members of the creative team play a more dominant role than others in

the opera's coverage in the press, most prominently Sharon. Mark Swed's 2020 review of the production for the *Los Angeles Times*, for example, mentions Luger, but refers most consistently to Sharon when describing various directorial choices in the production.[152] Table 4.2 lists a representative sampling of panels on *Sweet Land*. Despite his consistent acknowledgment of Luger's contributions, Sharon's celebrity overshadows Luger's in press reception. As the chart makes clear, although panels tended to feature multiple members of the creative team, it was often Sharon who was invited to give talks on *Sweet Land* rather than Luger or another member of the creative team alone (a notable exception is Chacon's moderation of both Colorado College panels). Finally, although performers such as Kim, Tobin, and Escobar were acknowledged in panels as contributors to the work, there was only one panel that featured a performer with the creative team, the 2021 "Developing New Themes in Opera," rather than a panel on *Sweet Land* specifically.

The above examples diverge from the narrative of collaborative creation that surrounds *Sweet Land*. Virtual and live panels from March 2020–September 2021 honoring *Sweet Land* typically foregrounded collaboration by bringing together two or more members of the creative team and asking them to talk about the work. By constantly emphasizing the egalitarian nature of the project, the reception story of *Sweet Land* thus glosses over certain ways a collaborative model still can preserve hierarchies of creation like the choices of the composer over the librettist, or the lack of consistent credit given to performers as composers. From another angle, focusing on collaboration as a cooperative, rather than sometimes jagged process, also forces each member of the creative team—and, indeed, the opera itself—to perform a kind of coherency that might not be accurate or necessary. Deeply collaborative works like *Sweet Land* increase the number of operatic and performance texts exponentially.[153] As a result, these works indicate how musician and audience interpretations of opera constitute a kind of endlessly proliferating third category of texts. The implicit hierarchies between text, music, director, librettist, composer, and performers, however, shape which systems signify in operatic performance and how they do so. As Kearney put it: "I kind of feel like if you are trying to change opera, you have to *change* it."[154] Changing colonizer opera requires thinking deeply about all elements of the genre. Kearney's statement then points to the ways "making a myth to kill a myth"—engaged modes of production—should describe not only changes in onstage operatic narratives, but also processes behind the scenes.

Table 4.2. Post-cancellation Panels on *Sweet Land*

Panel Information/Host	Date	Participants from *Sweet Land*
Center Theater Group: "L.A. Theatre Speaks"	May 7, 2020	Yuval Sharon
Tilt Podcast Episodes 1–3, Santa Fe Art Institute	August 14, 2020	Cannupa Hanska Luger, Raven Chacon
Quarantine Tapes Podcast, Episode 98, with Paul Holdengraber	September 15, 2020	Yuval Sharon, Cannupa Hanska Luger
Creating *Sweet Land*, Conversations with the Artists, Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center at Colorado College	January 6 and 8, 2021	Night 1: Moderated by Raven Chacon; Cannupa Hanska Luger, Du Yun (invited but could not attend) Night 2: Moderated by Raven Chacon; Douglas Kearney, Aja Couchois Duncan, Yuval Sharon
Y/Opera/Studies/Today Annual Conference: "Opera and Representation." "Director's Commentary and Screening."	May 6, 2021	Yuval Sharon
Y/Opera/Studies/Today Annual Conference, Panels "Developing New Themes in Opera" and "Diversification through Collaboration"	May 7, 2021	Developing New Themes: Derrell Acon, Du Yun Douglas Kearney, Yuval Sharon (and George E. Lewis) Diversification/Collaboration: Raven Chacon, Du Yun, Douglas Kearney (and George E. Lewis, Mimi Lien)
Music Critics Association of North America Award Keynote Panel, "Best New Opera"	September 12, 2021.	Yuval Sharon, Cannupa Hanska Luger, Douglas Kearney, Raven Chacon, Du Yun

Conclusion: Colonial Hauntings, Anticolonial Ambiguities

I would like to conclude with a moment of hermeneutics that sums up the ambiguities of an anticolonial practice and the hauntings of settler colonialism that *Sweet Land* might have thematized, but not completely overcome. The persistence of such a malevolent system is encapsulated by the Wiindigo, one such manifestation of the violence of settler colonialism. Created as a result of hunger and suffering, the Wiindigo also continues the cycle of that suffering. It is a spirit that simultaneously encompasses the unceasing hunger of the Arrivals and prefigures the historical trauma they will bring about. The cannibalistic figure is also a commonly used figure in Indigenous

critical theory that considers the effects of settler colonialist oppression. At the same time, as Couchois Duncan emphasized in our conversations, the Wiindigo precedes the arrival of colonists; it is not a figure dependent upon the existence of the settler.[155]

In *Sweet Land*, Wiindigo (sung by Kim) appears in Train I, Crossroads, and Feast II. I'd like to focus on a particular moment in Crossroads, in which she voices the words, "Go back to where you came from." Reviewers and performers frequently understood this statement as a reference to the anti-immigrant slur. Kim breathlessly says, "Go back to where you came from" in a long, drawn-out inhalation, as though the words are being forcibly pulled from her, with clicks interspersed. She repeats the text multiple times and combines different registers and forms of fragmentation in each register. The text has three meanings in the context of the piece. First of all, it provides a direction: the two primary audience groups are meant to return to the performance spaces for part two of both pieces. Second is the reference to the slur, which, to some performers like Siadat, was so familiar and visceral as to be, in his words "almost uncomfortably overt."[156] Finally, the line references a poem called "At the Crossroads," written by Couchois Duncan, which appeared in only the digital version of the program. "Go back to where you came from," in this context, is a reference to a return to the story of the land. This performance represents the brutality signified by the Wiindigo. Her vocalizations are a confrontational utterance of the fragmented traces left behind, the hauntings of settler colonialism that remain with us today. Both the text itself and Kim's interpretation of it suggest the multiplicity inherent in the Wiindigo as well as the shifting positionality of the audience.

In *Sweet Land*, ghosting is a liminal manifestation of the violence of erasure and also an expression of the ambiguous promises of an anticolonial operatic practice. For instance, despite the threat of what Wiindigo represents, the figure is also contained in Crossroads within an Indigenous musical space. Chacon created the drone effect over which the Wiindigo performs using multiple elements, including a recording of his grandfather singing a song from the Navajo Long Walk, the 1864 forced march and attempted genocide of the Navajo people by the US government.[157] The drone thus represents colonial violence *and* Chacon's response to that violence. Like Washington's textual additions throughout the opera, Kim's improvisatory vocal choices simultaneously embody and contradict colonial hierarchies. She performs within an operatic framework and yet challenges processes of hierarchical composition through her substantial improvisatory agency. Here too, the operatic voice is both fragmented *and* abundant with mean-

ing, even as what we might think of as "conventional" bel canto phonation has disappeared. A tension also arises between the three meanings of the text, Chacon's drone, and Kim's agency as a representation of Indigenous+art music hermeneutics, which are, in Robinson's words, "affectively awkward" when held in space together.

In these readings though, the Wiindigo also catalyzes that act of consumption with which I began this chapter, in which only the flesh remains. Ghosting is a liminal manifestation of the violence of erasure, but how to understand the multiplicity of what is left behind? Hortense Spillers's "hieroglyphics of the flesh" offer one possible interpretation:

> These undecipherable markings on the captive body render a kind of hieroglyphics of the flesh whose severe disjunctures come to be hidden to the cultural seeing by skin color. We might well ask if this phenomenon of marking and branding actually "transfers" from one generation to another, finding its various *symbolic substitutions* in an efficacy of meanings that repeat the initiating moments.[158]

Spillers notes how the inheritance of racial violence is embedded within "symbolic substitutions"—the repeating traumas catalyzed by the middle passage in which the body of the Black woman is, in Spillers's words, "ungendered." The flesh *separate* from the body thus represents the racialized, othered identity of the enslaved person or arrivant. In this reading, Kearney's observation that the "flesh remains" after the process of settler colonialism again reveals a narrative of survival. This reading though emphasizes inherited trauma, the consequences of surviving the Wiindigo's hunger.

These arrivant, critical Indigenous, and settler readings of the Wiindigo are too tidy for a production meant to resist such closure, indeed, perhaps deliberately so. *Sweet Land*'s creation and performance process might similarly be understood to be deliberately incongruous and conflicting. Wary of writer Ta-Nehisi Coates and music theorist Philip Ewell's invocations against "solutionism," I have hesitated to describe *Sweet Land* as an anticolonial opera. Indeed, I might even question whether, in 2023, an anticolonial opera is yet possible. If we apply Ewell's observations about music theory to opera: "Solutionism is problematic because it usually frames the racism that is part of [opera's] racialized structures as a disease that can be cured, rather than as a structure that needs dismantling." The racialized structures that Ewell and Robinson point out are partially dismantled in *Sweet Land*. Creation, rehearsal, and performance hierarchies were challenged in multiple ways and

critical Indigenous epistemologies shaped some of the narrative priorities of the opera. As Escobar pointed out:

> In a way [*Sweet Land*] was not like recolonizing a Western system but transforming it. Should we keep the name [opera]? Maybe, because that's also a political stand, like a political challenge to the traditional form. . . . I think you can—but it's like a reversal, like, let's take the form of this interdisciplinary form of art, but let's change the symbols, you know?[159]

In changing the symbols, as Escobar suggests, *Sweet Land* made space for other epistemologies. At the same time, certain hierarchies emerged throughout the creation and reception process of the work.

Tuck and Yang remind their readers that "an anti-colonial critique is not the same as a decolonizing framework."[160] From one perspective opera will never be decolonized, but, as Robinson points out almost ten years later, "iterative practices of return and revision"—essentially, the process of operatic creation that *Sweet Land* initiated—offer new ways of moving from the "brutal assimilation," the "ghosting" described by Kearney. Following Kearney, "the peculiar ambivalence" of "making a myth to kill a myth" comprises such hieroglyphics. This ambiguous process is one possible route that opera meant to address the violence of settler colonialism might follow.

In the example of *Sweet Land* as opera for everyone, lowercase-*o* opera has, like the Wiindigo, consumed capital-*O* stereotypical opera. Instead of a manifestation of settler colonialism (a typical interpretation of the Wiindigo's hunger), however, this act of consumption is a recasting of this hunger, a form of engaged production that simultaneously critiques and performs a future of the genre. In this way, the Wiindigo might also be interpreted as a representative of anthropophagy as articulated by Oswald de Andrade, in which consumption of the colonizer's culture—in this case, Opera—is a form of "resistance" that allows for the creation of decolonial perspectives (opera).[161] The "everyone" for whom *Sweet Land* is intended is not the same utopic "everyone" performed by certain Secondspace visions of *Invisible Cities*, *Hopscotch*, or *War of the Worlds*. Rather, this vision of "everyone" is, in part, also meant to challenge those structurally privileged individuals who already assumed they were a part of the "everyone." From another angle, by invoking Indigenous+art music practices and engaged forms of production, *Sweet Land* enacts a Thirdspace understanding of both opera and everyone.

"What you remember doesn't matter," say the Arrivals to the Hosts in

Train II. *Sweet Land*, though, does more than remember. It makes space to take apart the myths of operatic genre and practice while acknowledging the inadequacies of such an attempt and opening the door to future dismemberment and reconstitution.[162] Confronting colonizer opera and moving toward an anticolonial practice means changing how operatic convention is critiqued and challenging which individuals have the power to remember and forget. To close with Kearney's words from the preshow performance poem with which this chapter began:

> What we re-member we take apart again and again and over to show a kind of ghosting that's a kind of hosting we arrived at and we came to like we awakened from what wasn't sleeping but a dream that isn't dreaming what we dreamed.[163]

Epilogue

I began this book by comparing reactions to *Invisible Cities* (2013) and *Hopscotch* (2015) with *Sweet Land* (2020) to illustrate the tensions encompassed by the phrase "opera for everyone." This phrase, a shorthand for the ways The Industry has been working to transform operatic performance from an aesthetic and accessibility perspective by leaving the opera house, encompasses the company's marketing savvy, earnest engagement with historic operatic convention, attempts to change audience and performer relationships with opera as a genre, and the (sometimes ambivalent) consequences of these attempts. However, *Hopscotch* and *Sweet Land* are remarkably different "operas for everyone." *Hopscotch* offered one example of how intimate spectatorial strategies might be scaled through digital liveness, with both exciting and problematic consequences for performers, audience members, and LA communities. By contrast, *Sweet Land* was a deeply ethical, collaborative production that, in my reading, confronted the racism and coloniality of colonizer opera partially through its engagement with the idea of the land of the performance space and the land of the United States more generally. To put it differently, *Sweet Land* grapples with many of the assumptions about space, access, and presence for which *Hopscotch* was critiqued by organizations such as STPLA.

Due to the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic in the United States in early 2020, however, the two productions ended up having more in common than expected. In *Hopscotch*, digital mediation was part of the allure of the performance. By comparison, *Sweet Land*, a performance predicated on the site of the Los Angeles State Historic Park, was made possible *only* through digital mediation due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The cancellation of *Sweet Land* required The Industry to market a form of site-specific performance that required audience members to participate *less* and to spectate in a traditional, rather than experimental, way as a means of sustaining The

202

Industry financially as an organization. At the same time, in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic, The Industry's small institutional footprint and models of experimental performance offered other advantages to survival as a company. This epilogue returns to the cancellation of *Sweet Land* and the changes The Industry has made since March 2020 to reveal the company's emerging identity in the second decade of its institutional history. In so doing, I gesture toward the future(s) of site-specific performance in a digital age made fraught by the threat of current and future pandemics.

Closing the Curtain on *Sweet Land*: March–November 2020

The Covid-19 pandemic forced The Industry to create a digital version of *Sweet Land* to preserve the production and, more urgently, make up for the lost profits due to the cancellation. This final modality hints at the elision of past, present, and future subjectivities and fragile definitions of opera brought to light by this production. Performer recollections of the March 15, 2020, taping of the performance convey the gravity of the situation as well as the consequences of canceling a production that had signified so much with regards to representation and the opera industry. For instance, Joanna Ceja noted:

> It was so surreal knowing it was the last time. I just remember I couldn't cry because it wasn't a good time [to cry] because I knew it would ruin everything if I did. But I just remember feeling like, "I am so glad that [this happened]." I tried to soak it in as much as I could, because I had to be grateful.[1]

Micaela Tobin, like Ceja, sought closure through the performance: "I honestly was so grateful just to be able to perform it and have closure with that role. For me it was like a ritual. . . . A lot of artists didn't get closure on projects that got canceled."[2] After the filmed production was distributed to ticket holders and those who purchased access on March 25, however, *Sweet Land*'s story did not end.

The Industry had to make up for $168,500 in lost profits by using the entirety of their savings as well as selling access to the film at $14.99. Executive producer Elizabeth Cline explained that while 63 percent of ticket buyers donated the cost of their tickets, the remaining 37 percent requested refunds or partial refunds.[3] Importantly, The Industry also committed to

paying everyone involved with *Sweet Land* their entire contracted fee even for the performances that did not take place, including substitute performers who had not yet taken on their contracted roles. As Tobin noted, "The fact that we were paid our whole contract saved me. I could pay rent."[4] Additionally, Cline noted that *Sweet Land* went significantly over budget because the process of striking (breaking down the sets) was encumbered by Covid-19 restrictions that added to the costs. As she observed, "How much we really rely on the closeness of people and transactions was deeply felt in the strike."[5] Cline's comment speaks to the difficulties of being a small organization that relies on community-based relationships in a time of financial crisis. The Industry made the decision to immediately deplete the entire cash reserve Cline had been building for the company since 2015 so the organization could meet all financial commitments. By May 2020, however, the cost of making the *Sweet Land* film had been recuperated and The Industry was beginning to envision its next projects. As Cline noted:

> Because we are so small and nimble, and because we are project based and we don't have a season, we are already at an advantage in a way. We can put the brakes on things that are too big to develop right now. We can also—what we're doing is developing projects that we can imagine in a post-Covid-19 performance space and public space. We are already in the recovery process. We've stabilized, and now we know there is a future.[6]

While larger closed organizations that plan seasons years in advance were still reeling from the consequences of the pandemic—some making the unethical decision not to pay singers—The Industry had been able to regroup and envision next moves.

Marketing the film version of *Sweet Land* required The Industry to navigate a contradictory set of messages: the importance of the original performance space of *Sweet Land* and the possibilities of a digital stream that excluded this space for audience members. Early reviews of *Sweet Land* had focused on the experience of seeing the production in the Los Angeles State Historic Park, a site that had formerly been part of Yaang'na, one of the large Tongva villages in what is now known as Los Angeles. As Sharon noted prior to a May 2021 showing of the *Sweet Land* film:

> If you took a topological look of the land, it carries with it the entire story of America in so many ways, and it became the perfect site for

what we wanted to do, which was to invite an audience into a meditation on these particular topics, on the notion of contact as you can see here, the contact between different civilizations and what happens with a colonialist power, the efforts made to erase and to gaslight a particular people as a way of disenfranchising them of the very land they lived on.[7]

Reflecting this deep engagement with the land's history, executive producer of *Sweet Land* Jhane Myers (Comanche and Blackfeet) had organized a blessing of the park's land by Indigenous representatives from the Tongva community for both the beginning of the rehearsal period and the first preview performance.[8] Reviews of the work engaged with the "richly suggestive site" and the importance of being cold and even wet during the experience.[9] Mark Swed of the *Los Angeles Times* did not sugarcoat his review of the film, noting, "You had to be there. The opera was designed as immersive art, and you needed to feel it physically."[10] However, he also heartily endorsed the mediated product. Similarly, The Industry marketed the film in a way that sidestepped the fact that a work predicated on site specificity had become one of digital ubiquity:

> With cameras as the only audience, the ensemble of *Sweet Land* came together for one final impassioned performance to preserve a new work the *Los Angeles Times* called "opera as astonishment." A modest on-demand fee will help The Industry survive this emergency, by making up lost box office income and allowing us to fully pay the artists and crew.[11]

Perhaps reflecting on these contradictions, Sharon has expressed a similar ambivalence about the digital mediation of the work and the ethics of producing the film from a health and safety perspective. While he, like other creative team members, has expressed gratefulness for having the film as a record, he has also called it "dissatisfying" from an aesthetic perspective.

> We are used to videos being a very quick, transactional activity, and not about this different experience of time—and so I think there is a fundamental clash with opera and with video that I think some people are doing an amazing job of trying to explore and maybe overcome, but I still grapple with the ways that I find it to be very challenging. And with this piece, there's an additional challenge, which

is, for me, [that] the central character of this opera was the land and was the park in which the opera took place.[12]

Similarly, Luger noted, "If there was anything that's absent [in the video], it's really your being on the land."[13] Chacon too described the way moving from land to digital mediation meant a loss of spectatorial experience through the sonic:

> [When viewing the work live] you might hear the geese or birds or see a bird flying above you, and then it gets interrupted by the Gold Line Metro train car whizzing by every fifteen minutes. And while it's not something I put in the score that the train was going to be going by at that exact time, you had this sense of encroachment. You heard a bird, then it was interrupted by the train.[14]

In these ways, *Sweet Land*'s production story also stands as a fascinating testament to The Industry's changing approaches to mediation and place in operatic performance from 2013 to 2021. *Invisible Cities* and *Hopscotch*, the company's breakout works, assumed a kind of nonspecificity with regards to how mediation could convey place, or who could experience such places. In taking opera to everyone, the assumption was also that every space could be compatible for operatic performance. *Sweet Land* turned this assumption on its head by thinking deeply about what place might mean, and, thus, the video's inadequacies were directly tied to the inability to engage deeply with the specificity of place.

The Future of Opera for Everyone and The Industry's Artistic Director Cooperative

On September 9, 2020, Yuval Sharon was announced as the Gary L. Wasserman Artistic Director of the then-Michigan Opera Theater in Detroit. During his remarks at the announcement ceremony, which was broadcast virtually from a reduced-capacity live ceremony, Sharon argued that "opera should be for everybody," aligning this vision directly with Detroit's identity:

> Detroit is also a deeply musical city. It's at the intersection of so much American music. I think that's where opera has a natural affinity with this city because opera is also an intersection of all of the arts: litera-

ture, music, architecture, fashion—all of that finds a place in opera. I think because it's an intersection, *opera should be for everybody*. It should be for people who already know how to sing along with Verdi and Mozart, and it should be for people experiencing opera for the very first time.[15]

While the notion of "opera for everyone" has certainly never been confined to The Industry, Sharon's remarks and appointment at one of the United States' budget level 1 opera companies (those with operating budgets over $15 million) signify a shifting landscape of US operatic production that has taken place over The Industry's first ten years as an organization, one possibly accelerated by the pandemic.[16]

In the initial years of the pandemic (2020–21), US opera companies were forced to adopt techniques from companies like The Industry such as digital mediation and performance outside of the opera house wholescale. These techniques were not completely new to these companies. As I described in the introduction, regional companies have been gradually experimenting with smaller-scale outreach performances and site-specific chamber works since the early years of The Industry's formation. The success of The Industry and the press attention it has received, however, have certainly accelerated the acceptance of these techniques.[17]

Thanks to Sharon's appointment, such changes took place at Michigan Opera Theater in a much more dramatic way. Sharon directed a one-hour adaptation of Richard Wagner's *Götterdämmerung* titled *Twilight: Gods* in October 2020 that was coproduced between Michigan Opera Theater and the Lyric Opera of Chicago (performances April 2021).[18] Performed in the Detroit Opera House Parking Center and the Millennium Lakeside Parking Garage, *Twilight: Gods* broadcast live singers' voices and orchestral performance into individuals' cars à la *Invisible Cities* and *Hopscotch*. Reflecting Sharon's promise to produce opera that was reflective of Detroit as a majority-Black city, the 2021–22 Michigan Opera Theater season included an outdoor performance of Jeannine Tesori and librettist Tazewell Thompson's *Blue* and a revival of Anthony Davis and Thulani Davis's *X: The Life and Times of Malcom X*. Michigan Opera Theater announced a name change to Detroit Opera in February 2022. This name change might be thought of a site-specific signal of the opera company's desire to connect more directly to Detroit's other iconic musical genres, as well as a gesture toward the community itself.[19]

It remains too soon to see how Sharon's promise to create "opera for

everybody" will pan out in Detroit. As of this writing in early 2023, it is unclear how Sharon's leadership will continue to impact US regional opera. On the one hand, his work within such a closed system has meant that several of Detroit Opera's recent productions are coproductions and thus are produced elsewhere. In the case of Davis's *X*, this means that the production will be performed at the Lyric Opera Chicago, Metropolitan Opera, Opera Omaha, and Seattle Opera in the coming years. At the same time, Detroit Opera's 2022–23 season has proved to be more traditional in the appearance of a greater number of canonic works and performing spaces.[20] Closed institutional systems require incremental change and new strategies of engagement with regards to spectatorial strategies.

In the case of The Industry, large-scale institutional change has also been taking place since March 2020. In November 2020, the company announced that it would be expanding from one artistic director (Sharon) to a three-member artistic director cooperative model. As Sharon explained, the idea for such a model came directly out of his work with Cannupa Hanska Luger in *Sweet Land*: "[Cannupa's codirecting] felt like the next step towards what this organization might be if we had other artistic directors that were pursuing their vision."[21] Sonic artist Ash Fure and artist, writer, and composer Malik Gaines were introduced as codirectors with Sharon on June 21, 2021, with all three artists serving a three-year term. Each codirector will direct one large-scale and one small-scale project as well as contribute to the overall development of the company.[22] Ash Fure presented a new production of their experimental sound work *Hive Rise* in November 2021, and Malik Gaines will direct a complete production of his opera *Star Choir* (libretto by Alexandro Segrade) in September 2023. Finally, Elizabeth Cline, who served as executive director of The Industry starting in 2014, left to become executive director of experimental music collective Wild Up in October 2022.

Just as The Industry has operated in the space between past operatic models and future possibilities, The Industry's 2021 shift to a three-artist cooperative might also be understood as an institutional framework that, similarly, exists between experimentation and tradition. The three-artist cooperative is both a continuation of *Sweet Land*'s ethos of representation and collaboration and an experimental step toward new forms of institutionality. It is also a pragmatic choice that represents Sharon's shifting institutional roles within the US opera industry at large.

Along with the shift in leadership structure has come a new company

description. As of May 2022, The Industry's self-description changed from an "independent, artist-driven company creating experimental productions that expand the definition of opera" to "an experimental company that expands the operatic form. We value experimentation, collaboration, and boldness."[23] I see this shift in language, coupled with Sharon's choices at Detroit Opera and the work of Fure and Gaines, as a move away from the "opera for everyone" ethos that characterized the first ten years of The Industry. This is not to say The Industry has abandoned goals of access. Rather, the new motto's double emphasis on "experimentation" (which appears twice) and "boldness" seems to signal a more dramatic move into *aesthetic* experimentation over the earlier goal of experimentation that tied together aesthetic play with new modes of spectatorial access. Performers who worked consistently with The Industry in the first years of the company seem to have perceived an aesthetic shift ten years in as well. Soprano Sarah Beaty noted, "I think part of the journey is [The Industry] has moved even farther away from traditional opera, and I don't think that's necessarily a good or bad thing, but it seems like their journey has taken them *even* more experimental, and I think even blurs the definition of opera even more."[24] Of course, experimental sonic works can be just as accessible as the tonal writing of *Invisible Cities*. However, the goal of using opera to facilitate new aesthetic experiences seems to have shifted to that of using new aesthetic experiences to facilitate opera. In this shift, *Sweet Land* might be read as a transitional piece: the work thematized opera as a means for aesthetic and spectatorial critique.

Everyone's Opera

During our first conversation in 2016, Cline explained to me that, in her view, "opera is really a word that is a placeholder for something."[25] The past four chapters have explored how the empty placeholder evoked by Cline might be understood more specifically as the space between a set of tensions central to opera as genre: historical versus experimental, live versus mediated, closed versus open systems of production, and colonial versus anticolonial machinery. To close, I would like to return to *Sweet Land*, both the last opera of The Industry's first ten years, and a transitional work to what the company would continue to become, with a final gloss on what this placeholder might be.

During the Music Critics Association of North America Conference, Heidi Waleson asked *Sweet Land* codirector Cannupa Luger and cocomposer Raven Chacon if, as "newcomers" to the operatic genre, they would consider continuing to explore the form. Luger wryly replied:

> Opera is a newcomer. . . . Opera is an infant with a golden crown, and we have taken care of it and coddled this little creature, but we [Chacon and Hanska Luger] actually are part of a culture that is much older and has maintained something that is incredibly operatic. I mean, this is not new, this is very, very old, and so as newcomers, welcome! We'll take care of you, just relax.[26]

Luger's words reorient the narrative of operatic history and offer a productive challenge to opera scholars. Recontextualizing the operatic genre within older forms of Indigenous storytelling, as Luger does in his response, offers yet another way of pointing to the productive contingency of opera as genre and how opera studies might welcome in new modes of thinking.

I believe that this story—that is, my collaborators' accounts in my book—speak to how ethnography is also a contingent genre. I am hardly the first scholar to observe this; since the reflexive turn of the late 1980s, ethnomusicologists have noted that our understandings and constructions of a kind of thick truth are just that—painstakingly constructed and yet embedded within our own positionality.[27] A collaborative, ethnographic approach to opera research allows for a multivocal text that both recognizes the contingencies of my own blind spots and makes space for continued inquiry that highlights the words of my interlocutors. At the same time, ethnography, like opera, exists in tension between multivocality and singularity.

From my perspective, so much of what *Sweet Land* accomplished originated from the idea that opera as a genre is a means of sharing individual stories and experiences. As scholars, we spend much time on what Luger later called the mechanisms of opera, what is typically framed as conventions of the genre. Affect may be productively theorized, and every few years, scholars exhort us to feel, but feeling, empathizing, trying to understand what this opera meant to the *Sweet Land* community requires me to move from convention, and generic discourse. Instead, I listen to the story that the performer is telling me as we sit watching another group rehearse, or I see her look away from the camera on Zoom as she admits to why *Sweet Land*

ending early due to the Covid-19 pandemic is so heartbreaking for her. That experience, this now, is the operatic—or, following Hanska Luger—oral storytelling tradition *Sweet Land* and the works of The Industry have asked me to be a part of. Opera for everyone can be a radical practice that begins with one individual, this performer's voice as she recounts her experience. This *is* the ritual, the *opera* that I am invited to join in this moment. Listen.

Interviews by Author

Anonymous members (2) of Union de Vecinos, Los Angeles, September 16, 2017.

Anonymous Boyle Heights nonprofit administrator, phone, September 12, 2017.

Anonymous member of Serve the People LA, phone, February 25, 2018.

Anonymous auditionees for 2019 ATLAS, Zoom, January 19, 2022, January 21, 2022.

Derrell Acon, Zoom, March 19, 2021.

Andrew A (*Hopscotch*, Central Hub), Skype, February 13, 2017. (All audience accounts are indicated as such by the presence of an "A" and are anonymized.)

Andrew A (*Invisible Cities*), August 20, 2016.

Beryl A, (*Hopscotch*, *Limousine*), San Pedro, September 17, 2017.

Daniel A (*Hopscotch*, Central Hub), phone, February 8, 2017.

Elizabeth A (*Hopscotch*, Limousine, *Invisible Cities*, *Galileo*), email, September 18–20, 2017.

Joy A (*Sweet Land*, Train), Zoom, July 2, 2020.

Jim A (*Hopscotch*, Limousine), San Pedro, September 17, 2017.

Michael A (*Hopscotch*, Limousine), phone, December 2, 2016.

Miranda A (*Hopscotch*), St. Louis, August 19, 2019.

David Aguila, Los Angeles, August 17, 2016.

Andy Akiho, Los Angeles, September 9, 2017.

Babatunde Akinboboye, Zoom, April 17, 2020.

Maria Elena Altany, Los Angeles August 17, 2016.

Sarah Beaty, San Pedro September 12, 2017; Zoom, February 15, 2022.

Stephen Beitler, San Pedro, September 14, 2017.

Scott Belluz, Zoom, April 28, 2021.

Elizabeth Blaney, Los Angeles, September 16, 2017.

Joanna Ceja, Zoom, April 4, 2020.

Christopher Cerrone, phone, August 24, 2017.

Raven Chacon, Zoom, August 20, 2020.

Elizabeth Cline, Los Angeles, August 17, 2016; May 2, 2019; Zoom, May 13, 2020.

Aja Couchois Duncan, Zoom, May 8, 2020.

Carmina Escobar, Zoom, April 8, 2020.

Ashley Faatoalia, San Pedro, September 12, 2017.

Malik Gaines, Zoom, June 14, 2022.

Joel Garcia, phone, September 12, 2017.

Cannupa Hanska Luger, Zoom, September 17, 2021.

Richard Hodges, Zoom, April 16, 2020.

Delaram Kamareh, Los Angeles, August 20, 2016.

Marja Lisa Kay, Los Angeles, August 18, 2016.

Douglas Kearney, Zoom, May 12, 2020.

Jon Keenan, San Pedro, September 16, 2017.

Sharon Chohi Kim, Zoom, February 26, 2021; Zoom February 10, 2022.

Traci Larson, Los Angeles, August 19, 2016.

Marc Lowenstein, San Pedro, September 15, 2017; Zoom, December 9, 2021.

Vivian Martinez, Los Angeles, August 20, 2016.

Andrew McIntosh, Los Angeles, August 22, 2016.

Ash Nichols, conversations September 2017–March 2018.

Odeya Nini, Los Angeles, August 20, 2016.

Andrew Norman, Los Angeles, August 18, 2016.

James Onstad, Los Angeles, August 17, 2016.

Molly Pease, Zoom, April 22, 2020.

Lindsay Patterson Abdou, Zoom, April 20, 2020.

Ellen Reid, Los Angeles, August 22, 2016.

Rita Santos, Los Angeles, August 18, 2016.

Yuval Sharon, Los Angeles, August 16, 2016; San Pedro, September 16–17, 2017; Zoom, September 20, 2020, and October 5, 2021.

Fahad Siadat, Los Angeles, February 29, 2020.

Nandini Sinha, Zoom, April 20, 2020, May 28, 2020.

Peabody Southwell, Zoom, April 27, 2021.

Micaela Tobin, Zoom, April 14, 2020.

Jason Thompson, Los Angeles, August 17, 2016.

Jehnean Washington, Zoom, June 15, 2021.

Notes

INTRODUCTION

1. Heather Heise, "Opera for Everyone: Yuval Sharon, *Invisible Cities*, and Union Station," October 24, 2014, https://www.ampersandla.com/author/heather-heise/, accessed June 15, 2019.

2. Andrew A. Throughout the notes I use first names only with the last initial *A* to designate audience interviewees. While only some audience accounts are anonymized, all audience accounts appear with last names removed.

3. Indeed, in a conversation in 2020, Yuval Sharon noted that this exposure to the housing inequalities of LA was an important component of the performance. Author's fieldnotes, October 5, 2020.

4. Nina Eidsheim, "Acoustic Slits and Vocal Incongruences," in *The Oxford Handbook of Voice Studies*, ed. Katherine Meizel and Nina Eidsheim (Cary, NC: Oxford University Press, 2019), 301–14.

5. Marja Lisa Kay, interview by author, Los Angeles, August 18, 2016.

6. See Marianna Ritchey, *Composing Capital: Classical Music in the Neoliberal Era* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019), 100–105, for a brief history of Boyle Heights. See also Marina Peterson, *Sound, Space, and the City: Civic Performance in Downtown Los Angeles* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010) for a consideration of Los Angeles as civic performance space.

7. "Goodbye Gentrifiers," Serve the People LA Blog, October 4, 2015. Accessed December 10, 2016, https://servethepeoplela.wordpress.com/page/2/. Website is no longer active.

8. I've noted elsewhere the role The Industry has played in gentrification: Megan Steigerwald Ille, "Bringing Down the House: Situating and Mediating Opera in the Twenty-First Century" (PhD diss., University of Rochester, 2018). Ritchey makes a similar argument and provides a comprehensive analysis of the intersections of gentrification and participatory theater in *Composing Capital*, 90–113.

9. See Theodore Gioia, "Bach at the Burger King," *Los Angeles Review of Books*, May 17, 2018, https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/bach-at-the-burger-king/; and Jacques Attali, *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

10. William J. Baumol and William G. Bowen, *Performing Arts: The Economic Dilemma* (New York: Twentieth Century Fund, 1966).

11. Lawrence Kramer, *Opera and Modern Culture: Wagner and Strauss* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 1–17, especially 16. I first began thinking about this concept in relation to this project through Joy Calico's usage of the term in *Brecht at the Opera* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 141.

12. Ritchey, for example, writes: "The Industry presented *Hopscotch* as an opera for everyone, an opera that would show Los Angeles to itself, an opera that would take art out of the exclusive, moribund zone of the opera house and deliver it out into the real world. Like its rhetoric of participation, though, The Industry's lofty claims about space and community disguised a biased worldview and a consumer-oriented attitude toward space." Ritchey, *Composing Capital*, 111.

13. "Opera for All," LA Opera, https://www.laopera.org/community/opera-for-all/, accessed February 10, 2023; "Opera for All," Cincinnati Opera, https://www.cincinnatiopera.org/opera-for-all, accessed February 10, 2023; and "Opera for All," Chicago Opera Theater, https://chicagooperatheater.org/ofa, accessed February 10, 2023. See also the KHOL Podcast entitled "Opera for Everyone," https://www.operaforeveryoneshow.com/, accessed February 10, 2023. While not a marketing slogan, the phrase "[opera] is an art form for everyone" is used by South Africa's Isango Ensemble's co-Music Director Mandisi Dyantyis and explored in Lena Van Der Hoven and Liana Maasdorp, "'Opera is an art form for everyone': Black Empowerment in the South African Opera Adaptations *Unogumbe* (2013) and *Breathe—Umphefumlo* (2015)," in *African Theatre 19: Opera and Music Theatre*, ed. Christine Matzke, Lena van der Hoven, Christopher Odhiambo, and Hilde Roos (Rochester: Boydell & Brewer, 2020), 52–76.

14. Such auxiliary programming has been an understudied topic in US opera scholarship. Megan Steigerwald Ille, "Negotiating Convention: Pop-Ups and Populism at the San Francisco Opera," *Journal of the Society for American Music* 14, no. 3 (2020): 419–50.

15. Elizabeth Cline, email to author, July 19, 2022.

16. Carolyn Abbate and Roger Parker, eds., *Analyzing Opera: Verdi and Wagner* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 24.

17. Roger Parker, *Remaking the Song: Operatic Visions and Revisions from Handel to Berio* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 8.

18. As Levin notes, the description of opera as a set of multiple systems that work

together comes from Pierluigi Petrobelli, "Music in the Theater (Apropos of *Aida* Act III)," in *Music in the Theater: Essays on Verdi and Other Composers*, trans. Roger Parker (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 113. See David Levin, *Unsettling Opera: Staging Mozart, Verdi, Wagner, and Zemlinsky* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

19. Levin, *Unsettling Opera*, 25.

20. With this claim, I build upon Naomi André's assertion that "multiple simultaneous meanings of an operatic production" can be produced through focus on the identities of creators and audience members." Naomi André, *Black Opera: History, Power, Engagement*, Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2018, 194.

21. See Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), and Georgina Born: "Music and the Materialization of Identities," *Journal of Material Culture* 16, no. 4 (2011): 377, for two approaches that foreground transfer, exchange, and social mediation to support a theory of operatic performance that is necessarily fluid and multiplanar.

22. "Non-profit Organizations," Legal Information Institute, Cornell Law School, https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/non-profit_organizations, accessed August 1, 2022.

23. Heidi Waleson, "Intimate Attractions," *Opera News* 78, no. 12 (June 2014), https://www.operanews.com/opera_news_magazine/2014/6/features/intimate_attrac tions.html, accessed July 24, 2022. For instance, see Emily Richmond Pollock, *Opera on Uncommon Ground: Five American Festivals* (forthcoming) on the role of opera festivals in regional opera performance across the United States.

24. Barry Singer, "Opera in the Age of Anxiety," *Opera News* 74, no. 3 (September 2009), https://www.operanews.com/Opera_News_Magazine/2009/9/Features/Opera _in_the_Age_of_Anxiety.html, accessed July 25, 2022.

25. David Levin, "Opera out of Performance: Verdi's *Macbeth* at San Francisco Opera," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 16, no. 3 (2004): 250. See also James Steichen, "The Metropolitan Opera Goes Public: Peter Gelb and the Institutional Dramaturgy of *The Met: Live in HD*," *Music and the Moving Image* 2, no. 2 (2009): 26, for commentary on the threat of *Regietheater* at the Metropolitan Opera.

26. Kasper Holten, "Inside and outside the Operatic Canon, on Stage and in the Boardroom," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Operatic Canon*, ed. Cormac Newark and William Weber (Cary, NC: Oxford University Press, 2020), 535–46.

27. See Levin, "Opera out of Performance," 265–67, for an example of programming changes made based on market upheaval.

28. Singer, "Age of Anxiety."

29. Bertie Ferdman, *Off Sites: Contemporary Performance beyond Site-Specific* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2018), 10–19.

30. Selected studies include Ferdman, *Off Sites*; Anna Birch and Joanne Tompkins, eds., *Performing Site-Specific Theatre: Politics, Place, Practice* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Mike Pearson, *Site-Specific Performance* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); and Jen Harvie, *Fair Play: Art, Performance, and Neoliberalism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

31. See, for instance, the Building Opera Audience Grants, which ran from 2013 to 2016, were discontinued, and shifted to Civic Practice Grants in 2017. https://www.operaamerica.org/programs/services/grants-awards/former-grant-programs/building-opera-audiences-grants/. See also Steigerwald Ille, "Negotiating Convention," for a brief overview of these twenty-first-century granting programs.

32. "Former Grant Programs: Opera for a New America," OPERA America, https://www.operaamerica.org/programs/services/grants-awards/former-grant-programs/opera-for-a-new-america/, accessed February 21, 2023.

33. "A Groundbreaking Opera Experience," Opera Philadelphia, https://www.operaphila.org/festival/festival-o17/, accessed August 1, 2022. See also Steigerwald Ille, "Bringing Down the House," 40–51.

34. Cormac Newark, "Recession Opera: Is the Party Over for Opera?," *Journal of Music*, April 1, 2009, https://journalofmusic.com/focus/recession-opera

35. Andrea Moore, "Neoliberalism and the Musical Entrepreneur," *Journal of the Society for American Music* 10, no. 1 (2016): 33–53.

36. "About," Indie Opera Toronto, http://indieoperatoronto.ca/about/, accessed August 1, 2022.

37. Suzanne Aspden, ed. *Operatic Geographies: The Place of Opera and the Opera House* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019).

38. See Amy Stebbins, "Dramaturgical Oper(a N)ations: De-internationalization in Contemporary Opera Libretti," in *Theatre and Internationalization: Perspectives from Australia, Germany, and Beyond*, ed. Ulrike Garde and John R. Severn (New York: Routledge, 2020), 128–45, and Danielle Ward-Griffin, *Televising Opera* (New York: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

39. While a history of these types of independent opera companies is beyond the scope of this book, such a musicologically and/or institutionally oriented study would be welcome. See Eric Salzman and Thomas Desi, *The New Music Theater: Seeing the Voice, Hearing the Body* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), for a broad overview of experimental music theater that provides a partial history of such companies. My thanks also to Ryan Ebright for his suggestions regarding other independent companies of which I should be aware. Alternate considerations of the topics of participatory and/or mediated experimental opera also appear in several recent and/or forthcoming dissertations. See Kathryn Caton, "Participatory Opera: Performing and Creating Audiences" (PhD diss., University of Kentucky, 2022) and Jingyi Zhang,

"Opera of the Future: The Future of Opera" (PhD diss., Harvard University, forthcoming).

40. "Our History," Encompass New Opera Theatre, https://www.encompasstheatre.org/history, accessed March 30, 2023.

41. "Highway One: In C," The Industry, https://theindustryla.org/projects/in-c/, accessed August 1, 2022. For a discussion of new music performance aligned with digital innovation, see Ritchey, *Composing Capital*, 21–57.

42. My thanks to Douglas Kearney for his help in thinking through spectatorship versus musical experiences at The Industry's productions.

43. Richard Hodges, interview by author, Zoom, April 16, 2020. See also Tim Carter, *Monteverdi's Musical Theater* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015).

44. "What Is Black? What Is Opera? What Is the Black Opera Research Network?," Black Opera Research Network, https://blackoperaresearch.net/about/, accessed July 10, 2022.

45. Philip Ewell, "Music Theory and the White Racial Frame," *Music Theory Online* 26, no. 2 (September 2020), https://mtosmt.org/issues/mto.20.26.2/mto.20.26.2.ewell.html; Loren Kajikawa, "Leaders of the New School? Music Departments, Hip-Hop, and the Challenge of Significant Difference," *Twentieth-Century Music* 18, no. 1 (2021): 45–64, https://doi.org.10.1017/S1478572220000262; Dylan Robinson, *Hungry Listening: Resonant Theory for Indigenous Sound Studies* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2020). Recent conferences and conference panels include "Global Musicology—Global Music History Conference," virtual, January 25–28, 2022, https://globalmusicology.org/gmgm2022/; "Black Identities on the Operatic Stage: A Symposium with Music," University of North Carolina at Greensboro, March 26, 2022, https://vpa.uncg.edu/music/black-identities-on-the-operatic-stage-symposium/; "Theorizing African American Music Conference," Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, OH, June 16–18, 2022; Tammy Kernodle, "Building Temples for Tomorrow: The Black Music Intelligentsia and the Institutionalization of Black Music Culture," AMS President's Endowed Plenary Lecture, American Musicological Society, virtual, November 12, 2021; Sarah Hankins, Lucy Caplan, Elena Farel, Ryan Ebright, Elizabeth Campbell, Anthony Davis, Brenda Mhlambi, and Kira Thurman, "Black Opera," American Musicological Society, virtual, November 8, 2020; James Gordon Williams, Kimberly Hannon Teal, and Aldwyn Hogg Jr., "Black Arts Intersections," Society for American Music, Tacoma, WA (virtual), June 11, 2021; and Maya Brown, Larissa Irizarry, and Hannah Strong, "Hip Hop Activism: A Sonic Index of #BlackLivesMatter in America," Society for American Music, Tacoma, WA (virtual), June 12, 2021.

46. "Fieldwide Demographic Report," OPERA America, published June 23, 2022, https://www.operaamerica.org/industry-resources/2022/202206/2021-field-wide-opera-demographic-report/

47. "Opera Philadelphia Reinvents its 2020–2021 Season with the Fall Debut of a Digital Opera Channel," Opera Philadelphia, July 29, 2020, https://www.operaphila .org/about/news-press/pressroom/2020/opera-philadelphia-channel/

48. Sharon's father, Ariel Sharon, is unrelated to Ariel Sharon, former prime minister of Israel. For another brief biography of Sharon, see Joy Calico, "Brecht in the Creation, Production, and Analysis of Opera Today," in *Bertolt Brecht in Context*, ed. Stephen Brockmann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 218–21.

49. Gail Wein, "City Opera's VOX Introduces New Works April 30 and May 1," *Playbill*, March 23, 2010, https://playbill.com/article/city-operas-vox-introduces-new -works-april-30-and-may-1

50. Greg Emetaz, email to author, March 30, 2021.

51. D. J. R. Bruckner, "Theater Review: A Tragedy in Three Parts, Each Imagined Separately," *New York Time*s, January 22, 2004, https://www.nytimes.com/2004/01 /22/theater/theater-review-a-tragedy-in-three-parts-each-imagined-separately.html

52. Adam Klasfeld, "Oresteia," January 28, 2004, https://www.theatermania.com /new-york-city-theater/reviews/oresteia_4325.html

53. For the latter, see the 2021 Detroit Opera and the LA Philharmonic's collaboration, *The Valkyries*. "The Valkyries," Detroit Opera, https://detroitopera.org/season-sc hedule/the-valkyries/, accessed February 10, 2023.

54. Adam Klasfeld, "God Is a DJ," June 10, 2004, https://www.theatermania.com /new-york-city-theater/reviews/god-is-a-dj_4812.html

55. Heise, "Opera for Everyone."

56. Veronika Krausas, "The Mortal Thoughts of Lady Macbeth," https://veroni kakrausas.com/music/opera/the-mortal-thoughts-of-lady-macbeth.html#:~:text=The %20Mortal%20Thoughts%20of%20Lady%20Macbeth%20is%20an%20opera%20 inspired,descent%20into%20madness%20and%20suicide, accessed August 1, 2022.

57. Mark Swed, "Opera Review: 'Lady Macbeth' at Fais Do-Do," *Los Angeles Times*, August 27, 2010, https://www.latimes.com/archives/blogs/culture-monster-bl og/story/2010-08-27/opera-review-lady-macbeth-at-fais-do-do

58. "Final Scene from *The Mortal Thoughts of Lady Macbeth*," composed by Veronika Krausas, libretto by Tom Pettit after Shakespeare, directed by Yuval Sharon, conducted by Marc Lowenstein, August 2010, https://vimeo.com/18353706?embedded= true&source=video_title&owner=5548695

59. Marc Lowenstein, interview by author, Zoom, December 9, 2021.

60. Mark Swed, "Something Novel This Way Comes," *Los Angeles Times*, August 28, 2010, ProQuest.

61. Scott Timberg, "Opera in the Eye of the Storm," *Los Angeles Times*, May 9, 2012, ProQuest.

62. Gen. 18:24–33. See also Sharon and executive producer Elizabeth Cline's assess-

ment of *Crescent City* after the murder of George Floyd in May 2020 for a retrospective assessment of the work: "We Must Do Better," *The Industry Opera Blog*, June 10, 2020, https://theindustryla.org/we-must-do-better/

63. Director's Program Note, *Crescent City* program, May 2012. For scholarly work on the "hyperopera" concept, see Tereza Havelkova's *Opera as Hypermedium: Meaning Making, Intimacy, and the Politics of Perception* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021). Havelkova briefly refers to the 2013 The Industry opera *Invisible Cities* but does not mention *Crescent City*.

64. Mark Swed, "'City' Sights Mesmerize," *Los Angeles Times*, May 12, 2012, ProQuest.

65. Timberg, "Eye of the Storm."

66. The Industry's website changed to the new company motto in May 2022.

67. "The Industry Records," The Industry, https://theindustryla.org/records/, accessed August 1, 2022.

68. Many scholars of contemporary topics employ these strategies to great effect. Two representative examples include William Robin, *Industry: Bang on a Can and New Music in the Marketplace* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021), and Alejandro L. Madrid, *Tania León's Stride: A Polyrhythmic Life* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2021). For an anthropological perspective on opera, see Paul Atkinson, *Everyday Arias: An Operatic Ethnography* (Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2006); Vlado Kotnik, *Opera, Power and Ideology: Anthropological Study of a National Art in Slovenia* (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2010); and Vlado Kotnik, *Opera as Anthropology: Anthropologists in Lyrical Settings* (Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016). See also Lea Luka Sikau's work on rehearsal ethnography, "Rehearsing New Opera: An Ethnographic Lens on Becoming Posthuman," (PhD diss., University of Cambridge, 2023.)

69. Coined by Rosaldo, the term "deep hanging out" is often associated with James Clifford and Clifford Geertz, both of whom elaborated upon it. See Clifford, "Anthropology and/as Travel," *ETNOFOOR* 9, no. 2 (1996): 5–15, and Geertz, "Deep Hanging Out," review of *Chronicle of the Guakaki Indians*, by Pierre Clastres and *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, by James Clifford, *New York Times*, October 22, 1998, Sunday Book Review.

70. One such perspective can be found in Guillermo Aviles-Rodriguez, "Playing *Hopscotch* on Dangerous Ground: Site-Based, Transit-Oriented Opera in Los Angeles," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 35, no. 2 (2023): 178–94, which was published just as this book was going to press.

71. "Yuval Sharon," MacArthur Foundation, October 11, 2017, https://www.macfound.org/fellows/class-of-2017/yuval-sharon#searchresults

72. Yuval Sharon, "Genius as Circumstance," *Los Angeles Review of Books*, May 14, 2018, https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/genius-as-circumstance/

73. Salzman and Desi, *The New Music Theater*.

74. Yuval Sharon, "Director Yuval Sharon in Conversation," interview by Megan Steigerwald Ille, October 9, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UqMBW0lK -bA

75. Peter Benson, "Tobacco Capitalism, an Afterword: Open Letters and Open Wounds in Anthropology," *Journal for the Anthropology of North America* 21, no. 1 (2018): 21–34.

76. While not a study of opera, John Pippen's ethnographic research on contemporary instrumental ensembles provides an important methodological counterpoint to the work of my study. See "The Boundaries of 'Boundarylessness': Revelry, Struggle, and Labor in Three American New Music Ensembles," in "Boundaries of the New: American Classical Music at the Turn of the Millennium," ed. Judith Lochhead, *Twentieth Century Music* 16, no. 3 (2019): 424–44.

77. Ritchey, *Composing Capital*; Yi Hong Sim, "Avatars of the Work Ethic: The Figure of the Classical Musician in Discourses of Work" (PhD diss., University of California, San Diego, 2019); Moore, "Neoliberalism"; Timothy Taylor, *Music and Capitalism: A History of the Present* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016); Harvie, *Fair Play*; and William Robin, "Balance Problems: Neoliberalism and New Music in the American University and Ensemble," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 71, no. 3 (Fall 2018): 749–93.

78. Rita Felski, *The Limits of Critique* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015). I first became aware of Felski's work through discussion at the panel entitled "Better off Dead? Challenges in Researching Living Composers" given by William Robin, Alice Miller Cotter, Alejandro L. Madrid, Cecilia Livingston, and Ana Alonso-Minutti at the American Musicological Society Annual Meeting, Chicago Illinois, November 11, 2021.

79. Felski, *The Limits of Critique*, 2.

80. Felski, *The Limits of Critique*, 3.

81. Heather Wiebe, "Opera and Relational Aesthetics," *Opera Quarterly* 35, nos. 1–2 (Winter–Spring 2019): 139–42. I first became aware of Felski's work through discussion at the panel entitled "Better off Dead? Challenges in Researching Living Composers" given by William Robin, Alice Miller Cotter, Alejandro L. Madrid, Cecilia Livingston, and Ana Alonso-Minutti at the American Musicological Society Annual Meeting, Chicago Illinois, November 11, 2021.

82. Elizabeth Blaney, interview by author, Los Angeles, September 16, 2017.

83. Lowenstein, interview, December 9, 2021; Marc Lowenstein, interview by author, San Pedro, September 15, 2017.

84. Anonymous Boyle Heights nonprofit administrator, September 12, 2017.

85. Anonymous member of Serve the People LA, phone interview by author, February 25, 2018.

CHAPTER 1

1. Jeffrey Marlow, "Is This the Opera of the Future?," *Wired*, October 22, 2013, https://www.wired.com/2013/10/is-this-the-opera-of-the-future/, accessed June 15, 2017.

2. Tony Frankel, "Los Angeles Theater Review: *Invisible Cities* (The Industry and LA Dance Project at Union Station)," *Stage and Cinema*, October 23, 2013, https://www.stageandcinema.com/2013/10/23/invisible-cities-the-industry/

3. Shari Barrett, "BWW Reviews: *Invisible Cities* Offers a Total Immersion Experience at Union Station," *Broadway World, Los Angeles*, https://www.broadwayworld.com/los-angeles/article/BWW-Reviews-INVISIBLE-CITIES-Offers-a-Total-Immersion-Experience-at-Union-Station-20131025#

4. See Anthony Tommasini, "Sampling of New Dishes, Some Still Being Seasoned," *New York Times*, May 9, 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/05/arts/music/05vox.html?mcubz=3, accessed August 30, 2017.

5. "Finalist: *Invisible Cities*, by Christopher Cerrone," The 2014 Pulitzer Prize Finalist in Music, The Pulitzer Prizes, last updated 2020, https://www.pulitzer.org/finalists/christopher-cerrone

6. Christopher Cerrone, phone interview by author, August 24, 2017.

7. Home page, The Industry, https://theindustryla.org/, accessed April 15, 2020.

8. See Carolyn Abbate and Roger Parker, eds., *Analyzing Opera: Verdi and Wagner* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 24; David Levin, *Unsettling Opera: Staging Mozart, Verdi, Wagner, and Zemlinsky* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 11; Roger Parker, *Remaking the Song: Operatic Visions and Revisions from Handel to Berio* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 8.

9. Laurel Zeiss, "The Dramaturgy of Opera," in *The Cambridge Companion to Opera Studies*, ed. Nicholas Till (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 197.

10. Wye Allanbrook interprets Sellars's staging of "Batti, batti" as a "misguided attempt at social realism," while Levin reads Sellars's work as emphasizing "noncongruity, difference, or distance," all qualities I interpret as key to both unsettledness and definitions of the operatic genre more broadly. Levin, *Unsettling Opera*, 93; Wye Jamison Allanbrook, Mary Hunter, and Gretchen Wheelock, "Staging Mozart's Women," in *Siren Songs: Representations of Gender and Sexuality in Opera*, ed. Mary Ann Smart (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 64–65.

11. Yuval Sharon, interview by author, Los Angeles, August 16, 2016.

12. Yuval Sharon, "The De-materialization of the Opera," KCET Artbound Performances, October 10, 2013, https://www.kcet.org/shows/artbound/invisible-cities-the-dematerialization-of-the-opera

13. See Joseph Pine and James H. Gilmore, "Welcome to the Experience Economy," *Harvard Business Review* July–August 1998, https://hbr.org/1998/07/welcome-to-the-experience-economy, accessed December 2, 2017.

14. Marianna Ritchey, *Composing Capital: Classical Music in the Neoliberal Era* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019), 91–92.

15. See Ritchey, *Composing Capital*, 55–57 and 91–92.

16. See Nina Eidsheim, *Sensing Sound: Singing and Listening as Vibrational Practice* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015), 82–90, for a first-person account of the opera.

17. Ashley Faatoalia, interview by author, San Pedro, September 12, 2017.

18. See Eidsheim, *Sensing Sound*, 58–94, for another perspective on how *Invisible Cities* shaped audience perception of sound.

19. Marc Lowenstein, email to author, June 25, 2020.

20. *Le città invisibili* has been hailed for its semiotic complexity and numerical organization. Throughout, Polo describes ten types of cities: "Cities and memory," "Cities and desire," "Cities and signs," "Thin cities," "Trading cities," "Cities and eyes," "Cities and names," "Cities and the dead," "Continuous cities," and "Hidden cities." For more on the novel and Calvino's writing, see Martin McLaughlin, *Italo Calvino* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998).

21. Kathryn Caton deals with the significance of imagination and memory in the opera in "Imagined Memory in Christopher Cerrone's *Invisible Cities*," presentation given at the Forty-Fourth Annual Meeting of the Society for American Music, March 3, 2018. For a literary perspective on Cerrone's interaction with Calvino's original text, see Erika Marina Nadir, "Prima La Musica o Prima La Parola: Textual and Musical Intermedialities in Italian Literature and Film" (PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2017), 170–93.

22. Frankel, "Los Angeles Theater Review."

23. Italo Calvino, "Text of a Lecture Given by Italo Calvino at Columbia University on March 29 1983," *Columbia: A Journal of Literature and Art*, no. 40 (October 2004): 38.

24. Carolyn Springer, "Textual Geography: The Role of the Reader in Invisible Cities," *Modern Language Studies* 15, no. 4 (1985): 292.

25. Reflecting the importance of Wikipedia as a source for these texts, Cerrone explains, "In the scene, they're all real texts. I think I represented all the foreign languages Calvino points at with Wikipedia articles in different languages. I used Turkish, Coptic, and Persian, all languages that Calvino actually cites. But there's also the idea of being overwhelmed. It is very much described in the book as a kind of information overload, too, so I felt like I was doing a very straight adaptation." Christopher Cerrone, "Invisible Cities: An Interview with Christopher Cerrone," interview by Tim Horvath, March 31, 2015, https://tinhouse.com/invisible-cities-an-interview-with-christopher-cerrone/, accessed June 20, 2019.

26. The text translates to "The land area of Croatia is 56,578 km2 and the coastal area is 31,067 km2, which makes Croatia a mid-sized European country." "Croatia," Wikipedia, https://hr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hrvatska-, accessed July 12, 2019.

27. Cerrone, interview by Tim Horvath.

28. Italo Calvino, *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler*, trans. William Weaver (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979), 89.

29. Listening to the excerpt himself, Cerrone pointed out a moment of the clip to me: "The material at 0:48 is amazingly close to what became the opening of *Invisible Cities*. Musicology at work!" Email to author, July 9, 2019.

30. Cerrone, interview by Tim Horvath.

31. Christopher Cerrone, email to author, July 10, 2019.

32. Cerrone, interview by Tim Horvath.

33. Tommasini, "Sampling of New Dishes."

34. Christopher Cerrone website, "About the Work: *Invisible Cities*, an Invisible Opera for Wireless Headphones," http://www.christophercerrone.com/invisible-cit ies/, accessed July 5, 2017.

35. Cerrone, interview by author.

36. Excerpts from the Italian Academy staging can be viewed at http://s1786058 24.onlinehome.us/cerrone/invisiblecities/watch.html

37. For information on the history of the John Duffy Institute for New Opera, see https://www.vafest.org/education-community/john-duffy-institute-for-new-opera/, accessed August 31, 2017. The Yale Institute for Music Theater concluded its final season on June 25, 2017. http://drama.yale.edu/YIMT/institute-home, accessed August 31, 2017. Web page is no longer active.

38. Cerrone, interview by author.

39. Cerrone, interview by Tim Horvath.

40. Cerrone, interview by author.

41. Faatoalia, interview.

42. Cerrone, interview by author.

43. Sharon, interview.

44. Cerrone, interview by author.

45. "The Dematerialization of the Opera," KCET Artbound Special, October 10, 2013, https://www.kcet.org/shows/artbound/invisible-cities-the-dematerialization-of -the-opera, accessed May 10, 2017.

46. Cerrone, interview by author. See Jeremy Grimshaw, "High, 'Low,' and Plastic Arts: Philip Glass and the Symphony in the Age of Postproduction," *Musical Quarterly* 86, no. 3 (Autumn 2002): 19, for a discussion on the effect of studio recording, listening, and the Western classical symphony.

47. Ryan Ebright, "Doctor Atomic, or How John Adams Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Sound Design," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 31, no. 1 (2019): 85–117, and especially 93–96 for a summary of sound design in opera and the influence of electro-acoustic music on the practice.

48. Ebright, "Doctor Atomic," 92.

49. Robert Adlington, "Music Theatre since the 1960s," in *The Cambridge Companion to Twentieth-Century Opera*, ed. Mervyn Cooke (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 227.

50. Emily Richmond Pollock, *Opera after the Zero Hour: The Problem of Tradition and the Possibility of Renewal in Postwar West Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 144.

51. See Giulia Accornero, "'What Does ASMR Sound Like'? Composing the Proxemic Intimate Zone in Contemporary Music," *Contemporary Music Review* 41, no. 4 (2022): 337–57, https://doi.org/10.1080/07494467.2022.2087377, and Joy Calico, "Composite Libretti and Spatialized Sound Design as Dramaturgies of Trauma in Chaya Czernowin's *Infinite Now* (2017)" in *Contemporary Opera in Flux*, ed. Yayoi Uno Everett (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, forthcoming).

52. Ebright, "Doctor Atomic," 116.

53. Qtd. in Ebright, "Doctor Atomic 92"; Peter Sellars, "Foreword," in *Sound and Music for the Theatre: The Art and Technique of Design (New York City: Routledge, 2016) eds Deena Kaye and James LeBrecht*, viii–ix.

54. I am grateful to Ryan Ebright for pointing out this connection between model reader and model listener.

55. Eidsheim, *Sensing Sound*, 80. Eidsheim describes the ways the singers' voices were manipulated by Gimenez to convey meaning to listeners at length. See especially 80–82.

56. Faatoalia, interview.

57. Cerrone, interview by author.

58. See Brian Kane, *Sound Unseen: Acousmatic Sound in Theory and Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 15–41.

59. Clarke notes the disparity between a "stereo stage" versus the real space a sound seems to occupy. Eric Clarke, "The Impact of Recording on Listening," *Twentieth-Century Music* 4, no. 1 (2007): 47–70.

60. Eidsheim, *Sensing Sound*, 84.

61. Cerrone, interview by author.

62. Eidsheim, *Sensing Sound*, 2.

63. Eidsheim, *Sensing Sound*, 91.

64. Sumanth Gopinath and Jason Stanyek, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Mobile Music Studies*, 2 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 1:2.

65. Jonathan Sterne, *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 137.

66. Clarke, "Impact of Recording," 65.

67. Gopinath and Stanyek, *Oxford Handbook*, 2:31–32.

68. Michael Bull, *Sounding Out the City: Personal Stereos and the Management of Everyday Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 86–87.

69. Cerrone, interview by author.

70. Cerrone, interview by author.

71. Shuhei Hosokawa, "Walkman Effect," in *The Sound Studies Reader*, ed. Jonathan Sterne (New York: Routledge, 2012), 113–14.

72. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Stephen Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 98.

73. Iain Chambers, *Migrancy, Culture, and Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 51. I became familiar with Chambers's work through Joanna Steindorf's "Walk-Along with a Mediated Presence: The Audio Walk as a Mobile Method," *Wi: Journal of Mobile Media 11*, no. 1 (2017), http://wi.mobilities.ca/walk-along-with-a-mediated-presence-the-audio-walk-as-a-mobile-method/, accessed February 10, 2019.

74. "Invisible Cities Production," www.invisiblecitiesopera.com/production/, accessed August 16, 2017.

75. Gopinath and Stanyek, *Oxford Handbook*, 2:31–32.

76. Ellen A, interview by author, Los Angeles, August 22, 2016.

77. Benedict Anderson, *Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (New York: Verso Books, 2006).

78. Sarah Zabrodski, "The Public Spectacle of a Personal Opera in LA's Union Station," *Hyperallergic*, November 14, 2013, https://hyperallergic.com/92262/the-public-spectacle-of-a-personal-opera-in-los-angeles-union-station/

79. Nina Eidsheim, "Acoustic Slits and Vocal Incongruences," in *The Oxford Handbook of Voice Studies*, ed. Katherine Meizel and Nina Eidsheim (Cary, NC: Oxford University Press, 2019), 301–14.

80. Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015), 20.

81. Andrew A, interview by author, Los Angeles, August 20, 2016.

82. Rita Santos, interview by author, Los Angeles, August 18, 2016.

83. Alissa Walker, "A Secret Opera Erupts inside California's Biggest Train Depot," *Gizmodo*, October 21, 2013, https://gizmodo.com/a-secret-opera-erupts-inside-californias-biggest-train-1447832488

84. Lisa Napoli, "The Drama of Humanity Unfolds in Union Station—Oh, and an Opera Too," KCRW, October 18, 2013, https://www.kcrw.com/culture/articles/the-drama-of-humanity-unfolds-in-union-station-2014-oh-and-an-opera-too

85. Khatchatourian, "*Invisible Cities* Opera Gets Immersive with Wireless Technology," *Variety*, November 16, 2013, https://variety.com/2013/legit/news/invisible-cities-immersive-opera-1200841486/

86. See Eidsheim, *Sensing Sound*, 84, for a different interpretation.

87. Isaac Schankler, "*Invisible Cities*: Choose Your Own Opera," *New Music Box*,

November 27, 2013, http://www.newmusicbox.org/articles/invisible-cities-choose-your-own-opera/

88. The disconnect between visual and auditory spectacle in this example is another way in which *Invisible Cities* parallels the directorial preoccupations of *Regieoper*.

89. Andrew A, interview.

90. Faatoalia, interview.

91. "Invisible Cities: Production," The Industry, http://invisiblecitiesopera.com/production/, accessed August 31, 2017. The latter two quotations are from Khatchatourian, "Opera Gets Immersive."

92. Pine and Gilmore, "Welcome to the Experience Economy."

93. Khatchatourian, "Opera Gets Immersive."

94. For analysis of the influence of neoliberal thought on the composition, marketing, and performance of twenty-first-century Western art music, including *Invisible Cities*, see Ritchey, *Composing Capital*; Yi Hong Sim, "Avatars of the Work Ethic: The Figure of the Classical Musician in Discourses of Work" (PhD diss., University of California, San Diego, 2019); John Pippen, "The Boundaries of 'Boundarylessness': Revelry, Struggle, and Labour in Three American New Music Ensembles," in "Boundaries of the New: American Classical Music at the Turn of the Millennium," ed. Judith Lochhead, *Twentieth Century Music* 16, no. 3 (2019): 424–44; and Andrea Moore, "Neoliberalism and the Musical Entrepreneur," *Journal of the Society for American Music* 10, no. 1 (2016): 33–53. See also Timothy Taylor, *Music and Capitalism: A History of the Present* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016).

95. Jen Harvie, *Fair Play: Art, Performance, and Neoliberalism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), and W. B. Worthen, "'Free Reign'? Designing the Spectator in Immersive Theatre," in *The Routledge Companion to Scenography*, ed. Arnold Aronson (New York: Routledge, 2017), 302–10.

96. Harvie, *Fair Play*, 44.

97. Ritchey, *Composing Capital*, 94–95.

98. Other sponsors for *Invisible Cities* include TRAXX Restaurant, the California Community Foundation, the Los Angeles Philanthropic Committee for the Arts, and the Instituto Italiano di Cultura. The score was commissioned by Stephen A. Block and Raulee Marcus. Other support was provided by Gary and Olly Brown, Mary Ann O'Connor, Stuart Meiklejohn, Elizabeth and Justus Schlichting, and Myrna Cook. "Invisible Cities: Production," The Industry, accessed August 31, 2017.

99. Sennheiser also commissioned a KCET documentary, "Invisible Cities: An Opera for Headphones," which won an Emmy Award for Best Entertainment Programming in 2014. Mareike Oer, "Invisible Cities: An Opera for Headphones Receives Emmy for KCET Documentary of Landmark Headphone Opera Production," July 30, 2014, https://en-de.sennheiser.com/news-invisible-cities-an-opera-for-headphones-receives-emmy-for-kcet-documentary-of-landmark-headphone-opera-production.

Ritchey makes a parallel observation with regards to Sennheiser advertising through The Industry (*Composing Capital*, 92).

100. www.invisiblecitiesopera.com/production, accessed August 16, 2017. Marianna Ritchey has productively examined the ways tech innovators have aligned themselves with creative industries, emphasizing ideas of innovation. See Marianna Ritchey, "'Amazing Together': Mason Bates, Classical Music, and Neoliberal Values," *Music and Politics* 11, no. 2 (Summer 2017), accessed February 10, 2018. See also Susan Carlin, "How Sennheiser Expanded Its Brand with a Headphone Opera," *Fast Company*, December 12, 2013, https://www.fastcompany.com/3023205/how-sennheiser-expand ed-its-brand-with-a-headphone-opera

101. "About Us," Dashboard, http://www.dashboard.us/about, accessed July 2, 2019.

102. See Florian Freitag, Céline Molter, Laura Katharina Mücke, Helena Rapp, Damien B. Schlarb, Elisabeth Sommerlad, Clemens Spahr, and Dominic Zerhoch, "Immersivité: Une approche interdisciplinaire aux espaces d'immersion," *Ambiances: Revue internationale sur l'environnment sensible, l'architecture et l'espace urbain* (2020), https://doi.org/10.4000/ambiances.3233

103. Freitag et al., "Immersivité," 3. See also Janet Murray, *Hamlet on the Holodeck: The Future of Narrative in Cyberspace* (New York: Free Press, 1997), 97–125.

104. Sennheiser emphasizes the "immersive" effects of its products. Bose too advertises a "deep, immersive sound," and Alpine headphones promise the use of "Full Frequency Immersion Technology." See Alpine Headphones, home page, http://www.al pineheadphones.com, accessed March 2, 2018, and Bose Soundlink around-ear wireless headphones II, https://www.bose.com/en_us/products/headphones/over_ear_hea dphones/soundlink-around-ear-wireless-headphones-ii.html, accessed March 2, 2018. Bose page is no longer active.

105. Worthen, "Free Reign," 303.

106. Mareike Oer, "Invisible Cities Opens to Sell-Out Performances at Los Angeles's Union Station," "Press," Sennheiser, October 25, 2013, https://en-us.sennheiser .com/news-invisible-cities-opens-to-sell-out-performances-at-los-angeles-union-stat ion-

107. This quotation appears in both Carlin, "How Sennheiser Expanded," and Khatchatourian, "Opera Gets Immersive."

108. "Invisible Cities: Production," The Industry, http://invisiblecitiesopera.com/pr oduction/, accessed August 31, 2017.

109. Zabrodski, "Public Spectacle."

110. See Stephanie Schmidt, "Invisible Cities: An Opera for Headphones Receives Local Emmy Nomination for Best Entertainment Programming," "Press," About Sennheiser, July 16, 2014, https://en-us.sennheiser.com/news--invisible-cities-an-ope

ra-for-headphones-receives-local-emmy-nomination-for-best-entertainment-program
ming

111. Joy Calico, "Brecht in the Creation, Production, and Analysis of Opera Today," in *Bertolt Brecht in Context*, ed. Stephen Brockmann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 218.

112. Bertolt Brecht, *Brecht on Theater: The Development of an Aesthetic*, trans. and ed. John Willett (New York: Hill and Wang, 1964), 92.

113. Joy Calico, *Brecht at the Opera* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 140.

114. Calico quotes Elaine Kelly's work to explain that post-Brechtian opera "fragmented opera into its constituent parts, eschewed coherence as a dominating principle on stage, and abandoned the notion of a singular authoritative text." Elaine Kelly, "Ruth Berghaus and the Rise of Post-Brechtian Opera: Opera Production as a Political Barometer," in *Ruth Berghaus und Paul Dessau: Komponieren—choreographieren—inszenieren*, ed. Nina Noeske and Matthias Tischer (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2018), 100, qtd. in Calico, "Brecht in the Creation," 220.

115. Matthew Wilson Smith, *The Total Work of Art: From Bayreuth to Cyberspace* (New York: Routledge, 2007).

116. Sharon, interview.

117. Marlow, "Is This the Opera."

118. Richard Wagner, *Richard Wagner's Prose Works*, trans. William Ashton Ellis, 2nd ed., vol. 1 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench Trübner, 1895), 185.

119. Wagner, *Richard Wagner's Prose Works*, 185. See also Jonathan Crary, *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), 250–51.

120. The idea of opera's aural spectacle—its musical text—symbolizing "the opera" itself is one rooted in nineteenth-century concepts of *Werktreue*. Stephen C. Meyer, "*Parsifal's* Aura," *19th-Century Music* 33, no. 2 (Fall 2009): 166, was incredibly helpful in my initial understandings of *Invisible Cities'* relationship to Wagnerian aesthetics. For information on the "invisible theater" Wagner quotation in *Parsifal*, see *Cosima Wagner's Diaries, 1878–1883*, trans. Geoffrey Skelton, ed. Martin Gregor-Dellin and Dietrich Mack, 2 vols. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980), September 23, 1878, 2:154.

121. Gundula Kreuzer, *Curtain, Gong, Steam: Wagnerian Technologies of Nineteenth-Century Opera* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2018), 17.

122. The creation narrative of the opera looms even larger in the case of *Hopscotch*. I'm grateful to Nina Eidsheim for pointing out the dominance of the production narrative as parallel to the operatic narrative in a 2016 conversation. While this production narrative differs in nature from what James Steichen has described as "institutional dramaturgy," in which a production shapes the public story of a company;

the two ideas are complimentary to one another. Kreuzer, *Curtain, Gong, Steam*, 17; Steichen, "HD Opera: A Love/Hate Story," *Opera Quarterly* 27, no. 4 (Autumn 2011): 446. See also James Steichen, "The Metropolitan Opera Goes Public: Peter Gelb and the Institutional Dramaturgy of *The Met: Live in HD*," *Music and the Moving Image* 2, no. 2 (Summer 2009): 24–30.

123. Calico, *Brecht at the Opera*, 6 and 140.

124. See Kim Kowalke, "Singing Brecht vs. Brecht Singing: Performance in Theory and Practice," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 5, no. 1 (March 1993): 55–78, and Calico, *Brecht at the Opera*, especially 16–75. See Calico, "The Operatic Roots of Gestus," *Brecht at the Opera*, 43–75.

125. Calico, *Brecht at the Opera*, 53.

126. See Christian Herzog, "Invisible Cities, the Wandering Opera through Union Station, Is a Welcome Adventure," October 29, 2013, https://www.laweekly.com/invis ible-cities-the-wandering-opera-through-union-station-is-a-welcome-adventure/

127. See Calico, *Brecht at the Opera*, 140–63. For more on Regietheater, see Levin, *Unsettling Opera*; Gundula Kreuzer, "Voices from Beyond: Don Carlos and the Modern Stage," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 18, no. 2 (2006): 151–79; Clemens Risi, "Shedding Light on the Audience: Hans Neuenfels and Peter Konwitschny Stage Verdi (and Verdians)," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 14, nos. 1–2 (2002): 201–10, http://www.jstor.org/stab le/3878291, accessed December 12, 2015; and Calico, "The Legacy of GDR Directors on the Post-Wende Opera Stage," in *Art outside the Lines: New Perspectives on GDR Art Culture*, ed. Elaine Kelly and Amy Lynn Wlodarski (New York: Rodopi, 2011), 131–54, but especially 132.

128. See Calico, *Brecht at the Opera*, for a detailed study of Brecht's engagement with opera and his influence on operatic production in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

129. Cerrone, interview by author.

130. The German *Fach* (of which *Fächer* is the plural) system describes how each voice type can be correlated with a specific repertoire as well as range, tessitura, and timbral expectations within that repertoire. For a practitioner's guide to *Fach*, see Pearl Yeadon McGinnis, *The Opera Singer's Career Guide: Understanding the European Fach System* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2011).

131. Cerrone, interview by author.

132. Although there are clearly many historical and contemporary variations in what an operatic "sound" might be, Cerrone's comments, especially those with regard to vibrato, indicate that by "operatic sound" he means a full tone (lowered larynx, high, relaxed tongue, and expanded pharyngeal space) with consistent vibrato at five to seven beats per second.

133. See "In a Grove," Christopher Cerrone, http://www.christophercerrone.com/ music/in-a-grove/ access date: October 22, 2023.

134. Khatchatourian, "Opera Gets Immersive."

135. Marlow, "Is This the Opera."

136. Yuval Sharon, "Opera for Everyone: Yuval Sharon, *Invisible Cities*, and Union Station," interview by Heather Heise, October 24, 2013, http://www.ampersandla.com /opera-for-everyone-yuval-sharon-invisible-cities/

137. Sharon, "Opera for Everyone."

138. Harold Schonberg, "Wagner's Dream 100 Years Later," *New York Times*, July 18, 1976, https://www.nytimes.com/1976/07/18/archives/wagners-dream-100-years -later-wagners-dream-100-years-later.html. For more on Wieland Wagner's relation- ship to the Nazi Party, see Rick Fulker, "How Wieland Wagner, Once Hitler's Friend, Lifted the Nazi Shadow from Bayreuth," *Deutsche Welle*, July 27, 2017, https://www .dw.com/en/how-wieland-wagner-once-hitlers-friend-lifted-the-nazi-shadow-from-ba yreuth/a-39856191

139. In this vein, Meyer has suggested that the "playback"—not the staging—"of recorded *Parsifal* is the ideal staging of the work" ("*Parsifal*'s Aura," 166).

140. Eric Drott, "The End(s) of Genre" *Journal of Music Theory* 57, no. 1 (April 2013): 1–45.

141. Cerrone, interview by author.

142. Drott, "End(s) of Genre," 3.

143. Steichen also uses this phrase to express a similar sentiment about tradition and "reinvention" about the Metropolitan Opera's Live in HD series. See Steichen, "HD Opera," 450.

144. Marcel Duchamp, *The Essential Writings of Marcel Duchamp*, ed. Michel Sanouillet and Elmer Peterson (London: Thames and Hudson, 1975), 140.

145. Notably, composer Philip Glass also uses this phrase about his early operas, as did John Cage of his works. Sharon paraphrased Duchamp's statement in our inter- view. Other Duchamp references include the *Invisible Cities* KCET documentary, as well as a 2014 interview. See "A Q&A with The Industry's Yuval Sharon," Hammer Museum, April 9, 2014, https://hammer.ucla.edu/blog/2014/04/a-qa-with-the-indust rys-yuval-sharon/, accessed August 22, 2017, and Sharon, "Disrupting the Dominant (Operatic) Narrative," 2016–19, In Terms of Performance, http://intermsofperforman ce.site/keywords/narrative/yuval-sharon, accessed September 10, 2020.

146. Calvino, *Invisible Cities*, 135.

CHAPTER 2

1. The production budget for *Invisible Cities* was $500,000. In comparison, *Hop- scotch's* budget was $1 million. For additional information about The Industry's finan- cial operations, see "GuideStar Profile: The Industry Productions Inc.," in GuideStar

Professional Database, last modified 2019, https://www2-guidestar-org.libproxy.wustl
.edu/profile/45-3307896, accessed August 12, 2019. Additional information provided
by Elizabeth Cline, email to author, August 12, 2019.

2. Rita Santos, interview by author, Los Angeles, August 18, 2016.

3. Delaram Kamareh, interview by author, Los Angeles, August 20, 2016.

4. For an analysis of *Hopscotch* that focuses specifically on the role of the voice in
this production, see Steigerwald Ille "Live in the Limo: Remediating Voice and Per-
forming Spectatorship in Twenty-First Century Opera," *Opera Quarterly* 36, nos. 1–2
(Winter–Spring 2020): 1–26.

5. "MacArthur Fellows: Yuval Sharon," https://www.macfound.org/videos/561/,
accessed November 5, 2017.

6. Jonathan Sterne, *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction*
(Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 21.

7. Fredric Jameson, "The Vanishing Mediator: Narrative Structure in Max
Weber," *New German Critique* 1, no. 1 (Winter 1973): 53.

8. Odeya Nini, interview by author, Los Angeles, August 20, 2016.

9. William J. Baumol and William G. Bowen, *Performing Arts: The Economic
Dilemma* (New York: Twentieth Century Fund, 1966).

10. I will be referring to X (formerly known as Twitter) as "Twitter" throughout the
manuscript as this was the terminology used when researching and writing *Opera for Every-
one*.

11. For multiple perspectives on creativity as fetishized commodity, see the col-
lection *Joy Forever: The Political Economy of Social Creativity*, ed. Michal Kozlowski,
Agniezka Kurant, Jan Sowa, Krystian Szadkowski, and Jakub Szreder (London: May-
FlyBooks, 2014).

12. Jen Harvie, *Fair Play: Art, Performance, and Neoliberalism* (Basingstoke: Pal-
grave Macmillan, 2013); W. B. Worthen, "'Free Reign'? Designing the Spectator in
Immersive Theatre," in *The Routledge Companion to Scenography*, ed. Arnold Aron-
son (New York: Routledge, 2017), 302–10; and Adam Alston, "Audience Participa-
tion and Neoliberal Value: Risk, Agency, and Responsibility in Immersive Theatre,"
Performance Research 18, no. 2 (2013): 128–38, address the ways that immersive theater
specifically imitates structures of neoliberal precarity. Marianna Ritchey, *Composing
Capital: Classical Music in the Neoliberal Era* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press,
2019), uses The Industry's *Invisible Cities* and *Hopscotch* as a case study.

13. Edward Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined
Places* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1996), 10.

14. Ellen Reid, interview by author, Los Angeles, August 22, 2016.

15. For the role of the Orpheus myth in operatic performance, see Yayoi Everett,
Reconfiguring Myth and Narrative in Contemporary Opera (Bloomington: Indiana Uni-
versity Press, 2015), 7–8. See also Jane Forner, "Distant Pasts Reimagined: Encoun-

tering the Political Present in Twenty-First Century Opera" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2020).

16. Yuval Sharon, email to author, August 12, 2019.

17. Sharon, email.

18. *Hopscotch* also engages with opera history as it falls into the category of self-referential or even "meta" operas, such as Richard Strauss's *Capriccio* and *Ariadne auf Naxos*.

19. Jason Thompson, interview by author, Los Angeles, August 17, 2016.

20. Of the audience members I spoke with, roughly a third made an effort to attend the finale at the Hub at a separate time because they did not attend the last show of the day.

21. Nini, interview.

22. "Muchas Luchas: *Hopscotch* Opera Singers Discuss the Character," interview and video by Corinne DeWitt, October 19, 2015, http://www.ampersandla.com/much as-luchas-hopscotch-opera-singers-discuss-their-character/

23. Vivian Martinez, interview by author, Los Angeles, August 20, 2016. This incident is also described in "Chapter 20," *Hopscotch*, http://hopscotchopera.com/chapter /20/, accessed March 5, 2019.

24. Lawrence Kramer, *Opera and Modern Culture: Wagner and Strauss* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 1–17, especially 16.

25. Sharon, interview.

26. Sharon, interview.

27. Michael A, phone interview by author, December 2, 2016.

28. Jon Keenan, interview by author, San Pedro, September 10, 2017.

29. Beryl A, interview by author, San Pedro, September 17, 2017.

30. "Soprano Maria Elena Altany Speaks about How Singing in *Hopscotch* and for The Industry Is Different Than Performing in Other Operas," https://hopscotchopera .com/Chapter/14/, accessed January 18, 2017.

31. Sharon, interview.

32. Sharon, interview.

33. For more on fictionalized representations of LA and LA as urban space, see, for example Edward W. Soja, *My Los Angeles: From Urban Restructuring to Regional Urbanization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), and Mike Davis, *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles*, 2nd ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1992).

34. Michael A, interview.

35. Kamareh, interview.

36. Teresa de Lauretis, "Popular Culture, Public and Private Fantasies: Femininity and Fetishism in David Cronenberg's 'M. Butterfly,'" *Signs* 24 (Winter 1999): 307–8.

37. De Laurentis, "Popular Culture," 307.

38. Michael A, interview.

39. Elizabeth A, email to author, September 20, 2017.

40. Miranda A, interview by author, St. Louis, August 2019.

41. Specific instances of mediated interactions between routes heighten this awareness of simultaneity. For example, Altany and Guzmán's phone call takes place between the red route and green route, respectively. During the finale at the Hub, this reinteraction concludes the finale, as both Altany and Guzmán face one another and hug in recognition over a blue rotary phone sitting on the ground that symbolizes the phone each used in her individual chapter. Michael A, interview.

42. Maxwell Williams, "*Hopscotch*: A Mobile Opera for 24 Cars," *KCET Artbound*, October 27, 2015, https://www.kcet.org/shows/artbound/hopscotch-a-mobile-opera -for-24-cars

43. Virginia Eubanks makes a compelling version of this argument in her book *Automating Inequality: How High-Tech Tools Profile, Police, and Punish the Poor* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2017).

44. Santos, interview.

45. Santos, interview.

46. Philip Auslander, *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2008), 10; Auslander, "Digital Liveness: A Historico-Philosophical Perspective," *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art* 34, no. 3 (September 2012): 5. The invocation of other dominant forms of media to suggest liveness is not new to the operatic genre. See, for instance, Melina Esse, "Don't Look Now: Opera, Liveness, and the Televisual," *Opera Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (Winter 2010): 81–95.

47. Andrew Norman, interview by author, Los Angeles, August 18, 2016.

48. Norman, interview.

49. Norman, interview.

50. John Kraglund, "Musicians Oust Discotheque at Two Motels," *Globe and Mail* (Toronto), November 12, 1965, accessed September 10, 2017, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

51. Sarah Thornton, *Club Cultures: Music, Media and Subcultural Capital* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1996), 221.

52. Norman, interview.

53. Nick Couldry, "Liveness, 'Reality' and the Mediated Habitus from Television to the Mobile Phone," *Communication Review* 7 (2004): 353–61.

54. Couldry, "Liveness," 356–57.

55. See, for example, Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003).

56. While the Pew Research Center did not start examining smartphone adoption among Americans until 2011, usage almost doubled from 35 percent in 2011 to 64 per-

cent in 2015. For more on the use of OTT services in 2015, see "Mobile Messaging and Social Media 2015," Pew Research Center, August 19, 2015, https://www.pewresearch .org/internet/2015/08/19/mobile-messaging-and-social-media-2015/, accessed May 10, 2020.

57. Auslander, "Digital Liveness," 7.

58. Joshua Lubin-Levy and Aliza Shvarts, "Living Labor: Marxism and Performance Studies," *Women and Performance* 26, nos. 2–3 (2016): 118.

59. Christopher Morris offers an alternate perspective on the role of mediating technologies to foreground the labor of performers. See Christopher Morris, "'Too Much Music': The Media of Opera," in *The Cambridge Companion to Opera Studies*, ed. Nicholas Till (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 111.

60. Elizabeth Cline, interview by author, Los Angeles, August 17, 2016.

61. For a history of the Boyle Heights neighborhood and perspective on the protests, see Ritchey, *Composing Capital*.

62. Cline, interview.

63. Marc Lowenstein, interview by author, San Pedro, September 15, 2017.

64. While not catalyzed by a screen, Nina Eidsheim also describes the distancing effect she experiences from performers in *Invisible Cities* through the use of the headphones. Nina Eidsheim, *Sensing Sound: Singing and Listening as Vibrational Practice* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015), 59.

65. Sharon, interview.

66. Cline, interview.

67. Michael Bull refers to this form of disengagement as "urban chill." See Michael Bull, *Sound Moves: iPod Culture and Urban Experience* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 8.

68. Maria Elena Altany, interview by author, Los Angeles, August 17, 2016.

69. Altany, interview.

70. Marja Lisa Kay, interview by author, Los Angeles, August 18, 2016.

71. David Aguila, interview by author, Los Angeles, August 17, 2016.

72. Kay, interview.

73. Kamareh, interview.

74. Quoted in Sterne, *The Audible Past*, 239.

75. Thompson, interview.

76. Thompson, interview.

77. Cline, interview.

78. See Alvin Toffler, *Future Shock* (New York: Random House, 1970), and Ritchey, *Composing Capital*, 97.

79. The curatorial form of spectatorship inherent to *Hopscotch* was partially inspired by Sharon's engagement with entertainment media facilitated on digital plat-

forms. In one of our conversations, Sharon described how the experience of watching the web series *High Maintenance* exemplified the curatorial form of spectatorship that he wanted to capture in *Hopscotch*: "There's no real order for how to experience these chapters, and yet the more you watch it, the more you suddenly are like, oh, *this* is connected to *that* chapter. It's so ingenious because they're all connected to each other without a prescribed order. You know, I just loved that." Sharon, interview.

80. Traci Larson, interview by author, Los Angeles, August 19, 2016.

81. Cline, interview.

82. Thompson, interview. The curatorial lifestyle is described in numerous other sources, but is cheekily summarized by Joshua Rothman in "Why J.Crew's Preppy Vision of America Failed," *New Yorker*, May 3, 2017, http://www.newyorker.com/business/currency/why-j-crews-vision-of-preppy-america-failed, accessed May 4, 2017.

83. Norman, interview.

84. Norman, interview.

85. "*Hopscotch*: Social Feed," October 17, 2016, archived with Wayback Machine, https://web.archive.org/web/20161017232929/http://hopscotchopera.com/storify/

86. Larson, interview.

87. Olivia Turnbull, "It's All about You: Immersive Theatre and Social Networking," *Journal of Contemporary Drama in English* 4, no. 1 (2016): 150–63.

88. Turnbull, "It's All about You," 153.

89. Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), 231.

90. Jim A, interview by author, San Pedro, September 17, 2017.

91. Reid, interview.

92. Elizabeth A, email to author, September 20, 2017.

93. As detailed by numerous sources (WQXR, *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*), starting as early as 2009, many orchestras and opera companies, including the New York Philharmonic, the San Francisco Symphony, the Indianapolis Symphony, the Cincinnati Symphony, ProMusica Arizona, the Pacific Symphony, Underworld Productions Opera Ensemble, and Dayton Opera, created "tweet seats" for patrons to live tweet during the concerts, or established modes of live feedback, including selecting encores, that rely on mobile interaction. *Los Angeles Times* culture blog contributor Kevin Berger sums up the dilemma in Berger, "Should Phones Be Turned On at Classical Concerts?," *Culture Monster: All the Arts, All the Time* (blog), *Los Angeles Times*, August 6, 2011, http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/culturemonster/2011/08/should-phones-be-turned-on-at-classical-concerts.html, accessed March 10, 2017.

94. Altany, interview.

95. Kamareh, interview.

96. Kay, interview.

97. Kamareh, interview.

98. Sharon Chohi Kim, interview by author, Zoom, February 10, 2022.

99. James Onstad, interview by author, Los Angeles, August 17, 2016.

100. "Soprano Maria Elena Altany Speaks about How Singing in *Hopscotch* and for The Industry Is Different Than Performing in Other Operas," http://hopscotchopera .com/Chapter/14/, accessed January 18, 2017.

101. Kamareh, interview.

102. Kamareh, interview.

103. Altany, interview. The photo to which I refer was taken by Angie Smith and appears in Alex Ross, "Opera on Location," *New Yorker*, November 16, 2015, http:// www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/11/16/opera-on-location, accessed January 10, 2016.

104. Kamareh, interview.

105. Nini, interview. As this comment and others convey, Nini did not experience the same degree of vulnerability due to her gender identity as did the other women performers I spoke with. However, Nini was in a large warehouse space with another performer present for the entirety of her scene, in contrast to Altany, who was alone in the car, and Kamareh and Kay, who were in elevators alone with audience members (and respective ASMs).

106. Altany's and Nini's commentaries offer intriguing examples of the performer inverting the traditional gaze that is typically applied to the performer from the audience member.

107. Altany, interview.

108. For a range of perspectives on performance and precarity, see the entirety of Rebecca Schneider and Nicholas Ridout, eds., "Precarity and Performance," special issue, *TDR: The Drama Review* 56, no. 4 (Winter 2012).

109. Harvie, *Fair Play*, 41.

110. Harvie, *Fair Play*, 50.

111. Notably, Sharon acknowledged the challenges of repetition from the beginning of the rehearsal process. See Corinne Dewitt, "Yuval Sharon's Invocation," *AmpersandLa*, October 9, 2015, http://www.ampersandla.com/may-the-road-rise-to -meet-you-yuval-sharons-invocation-to-cast-and-crew-of-hopscotch-at-their-first-full -rehearsal/, accessed June 10, 2020.

112. Anonymous, interview.

113. Babatunde Akinboboye, interview by author, Zoom, April 17, 2020

114. Altany, interview.

115. Kamareh, interview.

116. Kay, interview.

117. For example, Kay explained that "we were always counting because all of us—it was an endurance test," and Kamareh kept referring to "the repetitive nature of the work."

118. Aguila, interview.

119. Kamareh, interview.

120. Kamareh, interview.

121. Kim, interview.

122. Altany, interview.

123. Much scholarship has been done on the experience of performers in Punchdrunk Theatre's productions such as *Sleep No More*. See Keren Zaiontz, "Narcissistic Spectatorship in Immersive and One-on-One Performance," *Theatre Journal* 66, no. 3 (2014): 405–25; Jennifer Flaherty, "Dreamers and Insomniacs: Audiences in *Sleep No More* and *The Night Circus*," *Comparative Drama* 48, nos. 1–2 (2014): 135–54; and Meghan O'Hara, "Experience Economies: Immersion, Disposability, and Punchdrunk Theatre," *Contemporary Theatre Review* 27, no. 4 (2017): 481–96.

124. "Northwestern Bienen School of Music, 2013 Bienen School of Music Convocation Address—Claire Chase," http://davee-archive.pick.northwestern.edu/video/20 13-bienen-school-music-convocation-address-claire-chase, accessed October 10, 2017. For a deeper analysis of Chase's rhetoric of musical entrepreneurship, see Andrea Moore, "Neoliberalism and the Musical Entrepreneur," *Journal of the Society for American Music* 10 no. 1 (2016): 33-53.

125. Following Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, Rebecca Schneider, Nicholas Ridout, and Tavia Nyong'o define the production of "affect" as those processes and efforts that build relationships and immaterial connections. Through this assessment, the experience of watching and participating in the creation of *Hopscotch* is certainly one that generates affect. Schneider and Ridout, "Precarity and Performance: An Introduction," in "Precarity and Performance," 6, 8.

126. Lowenstein, interview.

127. Elizabeth Cline, interview by author, Zoom, May 13, 2020.

128. This disparity came up when speaking with anonymous singers of the 2020 *Sweet Land* cast when they were describing how timely The Industry was with payment in comparison to other regional opera companies they had worked for in the western part of the United States. While this standard for fair compensation practices for nonunion performers is clearly abysmal, it is worth noting the small but significant ways in which The Industry shows respect to otherwise vulnerable, early-career performers.

129. For a brief sense of this production of *Die Zauberflöte*, see http://www.19 -27.co.uk/the-magic-flute/. The coproduction has successfully been produced at LA Opera, Minnesota Opera, and Opera Philadelphia.

130. Schneider and Ridout, "Precarity and Performance: An Introduction," 6.

CHAPTER 3

1. Elizabeth Cline, interview by author, Los Angeles, May 2, 2019.

2. Cline, interview.

3. The "hottest ticket in town" comes from a *Purewow* review no longer available online. See "Invisible Cities," The Industry, https://theindustryla.org/projects/invisib le-cities/, accessed September 5, 2021. The "future of the genre" line can be found in Lola Blanc, "Experimental Operas Might Make the Genre Cool Again," *Vice*, November 12, 2015, https://www.vice.com/en/article/kwx54m/experimental-operas-might -make-the-genre-cool-again-511

4. Cline, interview.

5. See Marianna Ritchey, *Composing Capital: Classical Music in the Neoliberal Era* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019); Andrea Moore, "Neoliberalism and the Musical Entrepreneur," *Journal of the Society for American Music* 10, no. 1 (2016): 33–53; and John Pippen, "The Boundaries of 'Boundarylessness': Revelry, Struggle, and Labour in Three American New Music Ensembles," in "Boundaries of the New: American Classical Music at the Turn of the Millennium," ed. Judith Lochhead, *Twentieth Century Music* 16, no. 3 (2019): 424–44.

6. For an exploration of the value of incomplete works and/or fragment studies more generally (as represented by *Galileo*), see Joy Calico, *Brecht at the Opera* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 9–13.

7. David Blake, "Eisler, Hans," Grove Music Online, https://doi-org.uc.idm.oc lc.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.08667, accessed June 5, 2022. See also *Brecht, Music and Culture: Hans Eisler in Conversation with Hans Bunge*, ed. and trans. Sabine Berendse and Paul Clements (London: Bloomsbury, 2014).

8. Yuval Sharon, interview by author, Los Angeles, August 16, 2016.

9. The Industry 2016–17 program guide. Author's personal copy.

10. Deborah Vankin, "Chicano Murals, Industry Opera on a San Pedro Beach among Winners of Mike Kelley Foundation Grants," *Los Angeles Times*, March 22, 2017, https://www.latimes.com/entertainment/arts/la-et-cm-mike-kelley-foundation -grants-20170320-story.html

11. Veronica Rocha, "Veteran Freelance Photographer Killed in Helicopter Crash in Port of LA," *Los Angeles Times*, January 6, 2017, https://www.latimes.com/local/lan ow/la-me-ln-photographer-killed-helicopter-crash-20170106-story.html

12. Marc Lowenstein, interview by author, Zoom, December 9, 2021.

13. *War of the Worlds* program, Los Angeles Philharmonic New Music Group, November 12 and 18, 2017, 10, https://theindustryla.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11 /WOTW_Program.pdf

14. Gavin Steingo, "Actors and Accidents in South African Electronic Music: An

Essay on Multiple Ontologies," *Contemporary Music Review* 37, nos. 5–6 (2018): 554–74.

15. See Marianne De Laet and Annemarie Mol, "The Zimbabwe Bush Pump: Mechanics of a Fluid Technology," *Social Studies of Science* 30, no. 2 (2000): 225–63. ANT has proved to be an appealing methodology for scholars of new music. As Georgina Born and Andrew Barry make clear in a recent special-issue introduction to *Contemporary Music Review*, mediation theories such as ANT and Manuel DeLanda's assemblage theory are directly related to "a growing wave of post-essentialist, post-formalist, materialist, and material-culture directions in music research." See "Introduction," in "Music, Mediation Theories and Actor-Network Theory," ed. Georgina Born and Andrew Barry, *Contemporary Music Review* 37, nos. 5–6 (2018): 446. While a number of scholars have taken up applications of ANT to musicological topics, Piekut's essay remains significant for his enumeration of ANT's offerings to the field. Benjamin Piekut, "Actor-Networks in Music History: Clarifications and Critiques," *Twentieth-Century Music* 11, no. 2 (2014): 194–95. See also William Robin, "A Scene without a Name: Indie Classical and American New Music in the Twenty-First Century" (PhD diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2016), and William Robin, "The Rise and Fall of 'Indie Classical': Tracing a Controversial Term in Twenty-First Century New Music," *Journal of the Society for American Music* 12, no. 1 (Spring 2018): 55–88. See also Eric Drott, "The End(s) of Genre," *Journal of Music Theory* 57, no. 1 (April 2013): 1–45.

16. Steigerwald Ille, "Negotiating Convention: Pop-Ups and Populism at the San Francisco Opera," *Journal of the Society for American Music* 14, no. 3 (2020): 439. I reached out by email to Linda A. Rapka, AFM Local 47 communications director, to discuss the current CBA under which the LA Phil operates as of this writing but was told that CBA contents are restricted to members of the local and the employer. Email to Linda A. Rapka, January 6, 2022. James Odom, AGMA Midwest business representative, has been extraordinarily helpful with regards to discussions about musical unions in the twenty-first-century United States.

17. Steingo, "Actors and Accidents," 559.

18. Similarly, Kasper Holten notes that different cities have different operatic performance canons. Kasper Holten, "Inside and outside the Operatic Canon, on Stage and in the Boardroom," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Operatic Canon*, ed. Cormac Newark and William Weber (Cary, NC: Oxford University Press, 2020), 534–47.

19. Recent illustrative examples include the dramatic dissolution of the San Antonio Symphony (https://sasymphony.org/, announced June 16, 2022); the postponement of Toledo Opera's production of *Blue* due to Covid-19 rates (https://www.toledo.com/news/2022/01/10/daily-dose/toledo-opera-postpones-all-performances-of-the-opera-blue/); and the canceled simulcast of the Metropolitan Opera's Live in HD

broadcast of John Adams's *The Death of Klinghoffer* (https://www.theguardian.com /music/2014/jun/18/new-york-metropolitan-opera-cancel-death-of-klinghoffer-simu lcast).

20. Lowenstein, interview.

21. While different from the open/closed model I employ in this chapter, Robin offers another way of considering the extensions and implications of ANT. See "Scene without a Name," 178–235.

22. Ryan Ebright, "'My Answer to What Music Theatre Can Be': Iconoclasm and Entrepreneurship in Steve Reich and Beryl Korot's *The Cave*," *American Music* 35, no. 1 (Spring 2017): 29–50; Sasha Metcalf, "Funding 'Opera for the 80s and Beyond': The Role of Impresarios in Creating a New American Repertoire," *American Music* 35, no. 1 (Spring 2017): 7–28. See also Sasha Metcalf, "Institutions and Patrons in American Opera: The Reception of Philip Glass, 1976–1992" (PhD diss., University of California, Santa Barbara, 2015).

23. Cline, interview.

24. See, for instance, John Rosselli, *The Opera Industry in Italy from Cimarosa to Verdi: The Role of the Impresario* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984); Ebright, "My Answer"; Metcalf, "Funding Opera"; and Ryan Ebright, "Incubating American 'Opera-Theater': Beth Morrison Projects, Los Angeles Opera, and Missy Mazzoli's *Song from the Uproar*," presented to the Annual Meeting of the Society for American Music, Kansas City, March 2018.

25. John Berry, *Economist Online*, February 11, 2015, https://www.economist.com /prospero/2014/01/06/a-florence-for-the-21st-century. See also Michael E. McKelvey, "Making American Opera in the 1990s: The Co-commissioning and Co-producing of Houston Grand Opera from the 1990–1991 through 2000–2001 Seasons" (DMA treatise, University of Texas at Austin, 2004). Danielle Ward-Griffin's work provides another way of thinking about collaborative operatic structures, including coproductions. See *Televising Opera* (New York: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

26. McKelvey, "Making American Opera," 83–90.

27. Sharon, 2016 interview. As noted in the epilogue, Sharon's role within the US operatic ecosystem has changed since making this comment.

28. My thanks to Ryan Ebright for his informative suggestions regarding coproductions and institutional development in the 1970s.

29. Metcalf, "Funding Opera." See also Michael Uy, *Ask the Experts: How Ford, Rockefeller and the NEA Changed American Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), and William Robin, *Industry: Bang on a Can and New Music in the Marketplace* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021), for more information on the changing ecosystem of arts funding in the latter half of the twentieth century.

30. For more on renting and trading productions, see John Henkens, "The Business of Making an Opera: Partnerships Promise to Be the Way Expensive Productions

Will Be Staged," *Los Angeles Times*, February 12, 1989, https://www.latimes.com/archi
ves/la-xpm-1989-02-12-ca-3048-story.html, accessed August 5, 2022.

31. Henkens, "Business of Making an Opera."

32. Henkens, "Business of Making an Opera." See also Ebright, "My Answer," 30.

33. Amy Stebbins, for instance, notes that the German, Austrian, and Swiss oper-
atic ecosystem tends to operate in a category separate from Anglo-American collabo-
rations and, indeed, describes the landscape of American contemporary opera as a
"(mostly) closed national echo chamber." See "Dramaturgical Oper(a N)ations: De-
internationalization in Contemporary Opera Libretti," in *Theatre and International-
ization: Perspectives from Australia, Germany, and Beyond*, ed. Ulrike Garde and John
R. Severn (New York: Routledge, 2020), 129.

34. Garrett McQueen, Scott Blankenship, and Alexander Lloyd Blake, "Disturb
the Earth," October 19, 2021, in *Trilloquy*, produced by TrillWerks Media, podcast,
2.01.54, https://www.trilloquy.org/opuses/previous/2

35. Metcalf, "Institutions and Patrons," 22–73.

36. Lawrence Kramer, *Opera and Modern Culture: Wagner and Strauss* (Berkeley:
University of California Press, 2004), 1–17, especially 16.

37. Metcalf, "Institutions and Patrons," 22.

38. Metcalf, "Institutions and Patrons," 42.

39. Metcalf, "Institutions and Patrons," 60–62.

40. Metcalf, "Institutions and Patrons."

41. "Touring," Beth Morrison Projects, https://bethmorrisonprojects.org/projects
/touring/, accessed May 5, 2022.

42. Ebright, "Incubating American Opera-Theater."

43. William Baumol and William Bowen, *Performing Arts, the Economic Dilemma:
A Study of Problems Common to Theater, Opera, Music, and Dance* (New York: Twenti-
eth Century Fund, 1966).

44. For instance, in 2018, LA Opera earned 25.7 percent of revenue from pro-
gram services; Opera Philadelphia earned 21.5 percent, and BMP earned 50.5 percent.
According to OPERA America classification, Opera Philadelphia and LA Opera are
budget level 1 companies (annual operating budget exceeding $15 million), and BMP
is a level 3 company (annual operating budget between $1 million and $3 million). See
"Los Angeles Opera Company," ProPublica Nonprofit Explorer, https://projects.prop
ublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/952096402, accessed December 7, 2021; "Opera
Philadelphia," ProPublica Nonprofit Explorer, https://projects.propublica.org/non
profits/organizations/231504706, accessed December 7, 2021; and "Beth Morrison
Projects," ProPublica Nonprofit Explorer, https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits
/organizations/208422447, accessed December 7, 2021. Information about OPERA
America budget designations can be found in "2021 Annual Field Report," OPERA

America, https://www.operaamerica.org/media/lgtfgytz/2021-annual-field-report
.pdf, accessed May 20, 2022.

45. Robin, *Industry*, 132–37 and 38–160.

46. Lydia Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

47. My thanks to Michael Fiday for our helpful discussions about symphonic commissioning practices.

48. Robin, *Industry*, 54–58.

49. For more on the role of the university arts presenter see William Robin, "Balance Problems: Neoliberalism and New Music in the American University and Ensemble," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 71, no. 3 (Fall 2018): 749–93.

50. Steingo, "Actors and Accidents," 567.

51. Lowenstein, interview.

52. Eric Salzman and Thomas Desi, *The New Music Theater: Seeing the Voice, Hearing the Body* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

53. Lowenstein, interview.

54. Yuval Sharon, interview by author, San Pedro, September 16–17, 2017.

55. Sarah Beaty, interview by author, Zoom, February 15, 2022.

56. Zachary Woolfe, "One Composer, Four Players, 'Seven Pillars,'" *New York Times*, December 2, 2021, https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/02/arts/akiho-sandbox
-percussion-seven-pillars.html

57. Andrew Kluth suggests that these fluid spaces for experimental performance in LA emerged as a reaction to several cultural and environmental forces that converged in the early 1990s: the culture wars, in which certain performers and ensembles lost access to NEA funding they had previously relied on for access to stable performance venues, the 1992 LA Riots, and the 1994 Northridge earthquake. Kluth, "A Study of the Los Angeles DIY Experimental Music Scene: Reflections on the Promise of the Possible" (PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles 2018), 124. For more info on the impact of the culture wars on new music organizations, see Robin, *Industry*, 104–37.

58. Kluth, "Los Angeles DIY," 132.

59. Lowenstein, interview.

60. Richard Hodges, interview by author, Zoom, April 16, 2020.

61. Doris Ruth Eikhof and Chris Warhurst, "The Promised Land? Why Social Inequalities Are Systemic in the Creative Industries," *Employee Relations* 35, no. 5 (2013): 497. My thanks to John Pippen, who made me aware of Eikhof and Warhurst's work.

62. As Eikof and Warhurst note, the term "project ecologies" originates from several places: G. Grabher, "The Project Ecology of Advertising: Tasks, Talents and

Teams," *Regional Studies* 36, no. 3 (2002): 245–62; R. E. Caves, *Creative Industries* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000); and A. Windeler and J. Sydow, "Project Networks and Changing Industry Practices: Collaborative Content Production in the German Television Industry," *Organization Studies* 22, no. 6 (2001): 1035–60.

63. Ritchey, *Composing Capital*; Moore, "Neoliberalism and the Musical Entrepreneur"; Yi Hong Sim, "Avatars of the Work Ethic: The Figure of the Classical Musician in Discourses of Work" (PhD diss., University of California, San Diego, 2019); and Pippen "The Boundaries of Boundarylessness."

64. Ritchey, *Composing Capital*, 61.

65. Eikhof and Warhurst, "The Promised Land," 498.

66. Associated Press, "Met Opera Says $31M on Tax Return Is Mostly Pledges," *AP News*, June 10, 2021, https://apnews.com/article/nyc-state-wire-opera-business-entertainment-music-3d8a60f6f1f85e203406cd2fbdfbc3b5

67. Sharon, 2017 interview.

68. Sharon, 2017 interview.

69. See Ebright, "My Answer."

70. Ryan Ebright, "Tracing the Development of Meredith Monk's Atlas and the Embodiment of American Opera," *New York Public Library Blog*, June 29, 2018, https://www.nypl.org/blog/2018/06/29/meredith-monk-atlas-american-opera

71. Ryan Ebright, "Scoring the Body: Meredith Monk's *Atlas* as Operatic Work," presented to the annual Meeting of the American Musicological Society, Rochester, NY, November 2017.

72. Lowenstein, interview; Cline, interview. Information on touring *Invisible Cities* can be found on "Tour," *Invisible Cities*, http://invisiblecitiesopera.com/tour/, accessed May 12, 2022.

73. Lowenstein, interview.

74. Lowenstein, interview.

75. Sharon, 2017 interview.

76. Calico, *Brecht at the Opera*, 152.

77. Sharon, 2017 interview.

78. Andy Akiho, interview by author, Los Angeles, September 9, 2017.

79. I am indebted to Jacob Ottmer for his assistance in identifying the auxiliary percussion used in this scene.

80. Akiho, interview.

81. Author's fieldnotes September 16, 2017.

82. Clemens Risi, *Opera in Performance: Analyzing the Performative Dimensions of Opera Productions* (New York: Routledge, 2021), 162.

83. Cline, interview. Emphasis added.

84. Lowenstein, interview.
85. Elizabeth Cline, interview by author, Zoom, May 13, 2020.
86. Douglas Kearney, interview by author, Zoom, May 12, 2020.
87. Kearney, interview.
88. Kearney, interview.
89. Kearney, interview.
90. Yuval Sharon, "LA Phil and The Industry: An Exciting Announcement," *Industry Blog*, September 2, 2015, https://theindustryla.org/la-phil-the-industry-excit ing-announcement/
91. See, for instance, Robin, *Industry*, 161–89.
92. Sharon, "LA Phil and The Industry."
93. David Allen, "Opera's Disrupter in Residence, Heading to Bayreuth," *New York Times*, July 20, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/20/arts/music/operas -disrupter-in-residence-heading-to-bayreuth.html
94. The Industry 2016–17 brochure, 4, author's personal copy.
95. Steigerwald Ille, field notes, September 16, 2017.
96. Brian Marks, "Artist Resistance: Yuval Sharon's Pledge of Allegiance," *Ampersand*, January 26, 2017, https://www.kcet.org/news-analysis/i-pledge-allegiance-to-art. See also Yuval Sharon, "I Pledge Allegiance to Art," *KCET*, January 23, 2017, https://www.ampersandla.com/yuval-sharons-new-pledge-of-allegiance/
97. Jessica Gelt, "'War of the Worlds' to Invade Disney Hall and the Streets of Downtown LA," *Los Angeles Times*, November 8, 2017, https://www.latimes.com/ente rtainment/arts/la-et-cm-la-phil-war-worlds-20171108-story.html
98. Sharon, 2017 interview.
99. Gelt, "War of the Worlds."
100. Sharon, 2017 interview."
101. Sharon 2017 interview.
102. Sharon, 2017 interview.
103. Calico contrasts Brecht's minor pedagogy "a means of empowering the audi- ence in its estrangement with conventional bourgeois theater repertoire" with major pedagogy, which is meant to "[instigate] literal political activism." *Brecht at the Opera*, 141.
104. Lowenstein, interview.
105. Joshua Barone, "Meredith Monk Lets Go of Her Masterpiece," *New York Times*, June 4, 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/06/04/arts/music/atlas-la-philha rmonic-meredith-monk.html
106. Zachary Woolfe, "Review: After 27 Years, Meredith Monk's 'Atlas' Returns to Earth," *New York Times*, June 12, 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/06/12/arts /music/atlas-meredith-monk-review.html
107. Alex Ross, "Meredith Monk's 'Atlas' and the LA Phil's Extraordinary Season,"

New Yorker, June 24, 2019, https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2019/07/01/mered ith-monks-atlas-and-the-la-phils-extraordinary-season

108. Beaty, interview.

109. Beaty, interview.

110. Sharon Chohi Kim, interview by author, Zoom, February 10, 2022

111. Anonymous, interviews with author, Zoom, January 10, 2022; January 21, 2022.

112. Beaty interview.

113. Kim, interview.

CHAPTER 4

1. Kearney, *Sweet Land* digital program. "Of _____ We Sing: Making *Sweet Land*" is "remixed, in part," from Kearney's *Mess and Mess and* (Blacksburg, VA: Noemi Press, 2015).

2. Dylan Robinson, *Hungry Listening: Resonant Theory for Indigenous Sound Studies* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2020).

3. Kearney, "Of ___ We Sing."

4. Douglas Kearney, interview by author, Zoom, May 12, 2020.

5. Du Yun clarified that she came to the United States with the intention of studying, not immigrating. Email to author, August 28, 2022.

6. "Director's Commentary: The Industry's *Sweet Land*," presented to "Opera and Representation," Annual Conference of Y/Opera/Studies/Today, Zoom, May 6, 2021.

7. For a representative sampling, see Naomi André, *Black Opera: History, Power, Engagement* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2018); Juliana Pistorius, "Inhabiting Whiteness: The Eoan Group *La Traviata*, 1965," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 31, no. 1 (2019): 63–84; Hilde Roos, *The "La Traviata" Affair: Opera in the Age of Apartheid* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2019); Kristen Turner, "Class, Race, and Uplift in the Opera House: Theodore Drury and His Company Cross the Color Line," *Journal of Musicological Research* 34, no. 4 (2015): 320–51; Dylan Robinson and Pamela Karantonis, eds., *Opera Indigene: Re/presenting First Nations and Indigenous Cultures* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011); Lucy Caplan, "High Culture on the Lower Frequencies: African Americans and Opera, 1900–1933" (PhD diss., Yale University, 2019).

8. Important exceptions include André, *Black Opera*, 167–92, Colleen Renihan, "Haunting, History, and the Politics of Performance in Clement and Current's *Missing,*" presentation, American Musicological Society Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL, November 21, 2021, and Rena Roussin, "The Canadian Opera Company and Cultures of Anticolonial Activism," presentation, Society of American Music Conference, Tacoma, WA, June 9, 2021.

9. For an overview of colonialism and settler colonialism, see "Settler Colonialism," Cornell Law School Legal Information Institute, https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/settler_colonialism#:~:text=Settler%20colonialism%20can%20be%20defined,with%20a%20new%20settler%20population, accessed March 31, 2023; Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2006): 387–409.

10. While providing an overview of the field of postcolonial studies is beyond the scope of this book, interested readers might begin with J. Daniel Elam, "Postcolonial Theory," Oxford Bibliographies, last modified January 15, 2019, https://doi.org/10.1093/OBO/9780190221911-0069. For a representative sample of opera scholarship employing post-, de-, and anti-colonial frameworks see: André, 167-92; Roussin, "The Canadian Opera Company," 2021; Neo Muyanga, "A Revolt in (More than Just) Four Parts," in *African Theatre 19: Opera and Music Theatre*, ed. Christine Matzke, Lena van der Hoven, Christopher Odhiambo, and Hilde Roos (Rochester: Boydell & Brewer, 2020), 17–28; Lena Van Der Hoven and Liana Maasdorp, "'Opera is an art form for everyone': Black Empowerment in the South African Opera Adaptations *Unogumbe* (2013) and *Breathe – Umphefumlo* (2015)," in *African Theatre 19: Opera and Music Theatre*, ed. Christine Matzke, Lena van der Hoven, Christopher Odhiambo, and Hilde Roos (Rochester: Boydell & Brewer, 2020), 52-76; Sarah Hegenbart, "Decolonising Opera: Interrogating the Genre of Opera in the Sahel and Other Regions in the Global South," in "*Gefühle Sind Von Haus Aus Rebellen*": *Musiktheater Als Katalyzsator Und Reflexionsagentur Für Gesellshaftliche Entwicklungsprozesse,* ed. Dominik Frank, Ulricke Hartung, and Kornelius Paede (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2020), 167–94; Robinson and Karantonis, *Opera Indigene, 2011;* Mary Ingraham, Joseph So, and Roy Moodley, eds., *Opera in a Multicultural World: Coloniality, Culture, Performance* (New York City: Routledge, 2016); Roos, *The "La Traviata" Affair*; Renihan, "Haunting, History," 2021, and Juliana Pistorius, "Colonial Trauma and Operatic Mourning in Kentridge and Miller's *Black Box/Chambre Noire*," American Musicological Society Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL, November 21, 2021. Pistorius's review article "Predicaments of Coloniality, or, Opera Studies Goes Ethno," *Music & Letters* 100, no. 3 (2019): 529–39 provides a helpful overview of many of these texts. Finally, the 2023 establishment of the *Journal of Black Opera and Music Theatre* and the theme of the first issue "(De) Coloniality & Opera/Music Theatre," speaks to the growing prominence of these theoretical approaches in opera studies. See "Call for Submissions" *JBOM,* accessed August 2, 2023, https://bop.unibe.ch/index.php/J-Bom/announcement/view/128

11. Elam, "Postcolonial Theory." See Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. C. L. Markman (London: Pluto Press, 2008); Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979); Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994); Gayatri Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?," in *Colonial Discourse and*

Post-colonial Theory: A Reader, ed. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (New York: Routledge, 2013), 66–111.

12. Eve Tuck and Wayne Yang, "Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education, and Society* 1, no. 1 (2012): 1–40.

13. Tuck and Yang "Decolonization," 19. "While Tuck and Yang are careful to distinguish between antiracism and decoloniality, the two are intertwined practices. For more on antiracism, see Ibram X. Kendi, *How to Be an Antiracist* (New York: Penguin Random House, 2019). Roussin theorizes the relationship between antiracism and anti-coloniality and explores the creation of "ongoing cultures of anticoloniality" within operatic practice in another context. Roussin, "The Canadian Opera Company," 2021."

14. la paperson, *A Third University Is Possible* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), https://manifold.umn.edu/projects/a-third-university-is-possible

15. Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 62, qtd. in Ghassan Hage, "The Affective Politics of Racial Mis-interpellation," *Theory, Culture & Society* 27, nos. 7–8 (2010): 113. My reading is indebted to Hage, who argues for an interpretation of Fanon that combines both affective and intellectual interpretations. Similarly for many cast members, *Sweet Land* was experienced as an intellectual and affective experience of antiracism.

16. Author's field notes, May 3, 2019.

17. See Eve Tuck, Allison Guess, and Hannah Sultan for the complexities and insufficiencies of such descriptors: "Not Nowhere: Collaborating on Selfsame Land," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education, and Society* (2014): 4, https://decolonization.wordpress.com/2014/06/26/not-nowhere-collaborating-on-selfsame-land/, accessed February 12, 2021. Tuck and Wayne Yang also acknowledge this lack in their article "Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor."

18. Robinson, *Hungry Listening*, 242. Deborah Wong, Ellen Waterman, and Robinson's conversation (235–58) exemplifies the type of critical thinking about identity and fraught listening I am interested in catalyzing with this paragraph.

19. On the roots of this dis/ability critical race theoretical term see Subini Ancy Annamma, Darrell D. Jackson, and Deb Morrison, "Conceptualizing Color-Evasiveness: Using Dis/ability Critical Race Theory to Expand a Color-Blind Racial Ideology in Education and Society," *Race Ethnicity and Education* 20, no. 2 (2017): 147–62, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13613324.2016.1248837. On the ways liberal white settlers perpetuate color evasiveness, see Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, "What Makes Systemic Racism Systemic?," *Sociological Inquiry* 91, no. 3 (2021): 513–33.

20. André, *Black Opera*, 8.

21. See Andrew Chung, "Songs of the New World and the Breath of the Planet at the Orbis Spike, 1610: Towards a Decolonial Musicology of the Anthropocene," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 76, no. 1 (Spring 2023).

22. paperson, *A Third University Is Possible*, chap. 1.

23. Ingraham, So, and Moodley, *Opera in a Multicultural World*, 5–6.

24. Ingraham, So, and Moodley, *Opera in a Multicultural World*, 5–6.

25. A representative, but far from comprehensive, survey includes Philip A. Ewell, "Music Theory and the White Racial Frame," *Music Theory Online* 26, no. 2 (September 2020), https://mtosmt.org/issues/mto.20.26.2/mto.20.26.2.ewell.html; Loren Kajikawa, "Leaders of the New School? Music Departments, Hip-Hop, and the Challenge of Significant Difference," *Twentieth-Century Music* 18, no. 1 (2021): 45–64, https://doi.org/10.1017/S1478572220000262; Robinson, *Hungry Listening*; Ellie Hisama, "Getting to Count," *Music Theory Spectrum* 43, no. 2 (Fall 2021): 349–63; Ronald Radano and Philip Bohlman, eds., *Music and the Racial Imagination* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

26. See Ayesha Casie Chetty, "Voice, Body, and Identity: Negotiating the Color Line in Opera" (PhD diss., University of Cincinnati, 2021), for a sociological approach to these colonial frameworks, particularly in the US musical conservatory space.

27. Michael Vitale, *Introduction to the Art of Stage Management: A Practical Guide to Working in the Theatre and Beyond* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019), 112.

28. See Nina Eidsheim, "Race and the Aesthetics of Vocal Timbre," for more information about the relationship between post-Garcia vocal pedagogy and colonial attitudes. In *Rethinking Difference in Music Scholarship*, ed. Olivia Bloechl, Melanie Lowe, and Jeffrey Kallberg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 338–65.

29. Chetty, "Voice, Body, and Identity," 78.

30. Ralph Locke, "What Are These Women Doing in Opera?," in *En Travesti: Women, Gender, Subversion, Opera*, ed. Corinne E. Blackmer and Patricia Juliana Smith (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 76, qtd. in Ingraham, So, and Moody, *Opera in a Multicultural World*, 1.

31. Larissa Behrendt, "Indigenous Story-Telling: Decolonizing Institutions and Assertive Self-Determination and Implications for Legal Practice," in *Decolonizing Research: Indigenous Storywork as Methodology*, ed. Jo-ann Archibald Q'um Qum Xiiem, Jenny Bol Jun Lee-Morgan, and Jason DeSantolo (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019), 176.

32. André, *Black Opera*, 178–82.

33. Gayle Murchinson, "Topoi and Defining Taxonomies of the African American Opera Tradition," presented to "TOSC@Bayreuth," Fourth Transnational Opera Studies Conference, Bayreuth, Germany, June 24, 2022.

34. Abram C. Van Engen, *City on a Hill: A History of American Exceptionalism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2020).

35. I am grateful to W. Anthony Sheppard for pointing out this historical precedent of *Sweet Land* and directing my attention to the 1921 Plymouth Pageant. Earlier pageant precedents include the 1910 Peterborough Pageant (see Robin Rausch, "The

1910 Peterborough Pageant and the Genesis of the MacDowell Colony," in *Very Good for an American: Essays on Edward MacDowell*, ed. E. Douglas Bomberger [Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, 2017], 195–212), and the 1914 St. Louis Pageant and Masque (see Shilarna Stokes, "Choreographies of the Great Departure: Building Civic Bodies in the 1914 *Masque of St. Louis*," *Journal of American Drama and Theatre* 31, no. 3 [Spring 2019]: 1–18, https://jadtjournal.org/2019/05/13/choreographies-of-the-great-departure-building-civic-bodies-in-the-1914-masque-of-st-louis/).

36. Larissa FastHorse, *The Thanksgiving Play* (New York: Samuel French, 2019). FastHorse was an early consultant for *Sweet Land*.

37. For more on W. E. B. Du Bois's *Star of Ethiopia* pageant, see David Krasner, *A Beautiful Pageant: African American Theatre, Drama and Performance in the Harlem Renaissance* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 81–94.

38. Daniel Bernard Roumain, "@TulsaOpera just DEcommissioned me. I was asked to create a new work for them. I composed the words and music for a new aria, and the last two lines are 'God Bless America; God Damn America!' They asked me omit 'Damn.' I refused. They fired me. Life in Black America," Twitter, March 19, 2021. For more information see "They Still Want to Kill Us: feat. J'Nai Bridges and DBR, the Uncensored Aria," May 25, 2021, YouTube, 23:42, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Sij2TQ4G4I

39. Robinson, *Hungry Listening*, 7–8.

40. Robinson, *Hungry Listening*, 7–8.

41. André, *Black Opera*, 8.

42. See Van Engen, *City on a Hill*, 205. For more on pageantry within the United States, see David Glassberg, *American Historical Pageantry: The Uses of Tradition in the Early Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990).

43. Yuval Sharon, Raven Chacon, and Aja Couchois Duncan, "Creating *Sweet Land*: Conversations with the Artists Part I," online panel, Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center at Colorado College, January 7, 2021, https://fac.coloradocollege.edu/connect/creating-sweet-land-conversation-with-the-artists/

44. Elizabeth Cline, interview by author, Zoom, May 13, 2020.

45. Aja Couchois Duncan, interview by author, Zoom, May 8, 2020.

46. Raven Chacon, interview by author, Zoom, August 20, 2020.

47. Chacon, interview.

48. "*Sweet Land* Digital Program," 21, The Industry Opera, https://theindustryla.org/sweet-land-opera/, accessed June 24, 2020.

49. Yuval Sharon, interview by author, Zoom, September 20, 2020.

50. "About," *Postcommodity*, http://postcommodity.com/About.html

51. Kearney, interview.

52. Douglas Kearney, email to author, February 12, 2021.

53. Cannupa Hanska Luger, Raven Chacon, and Du Yun, "Creating *Sweet Land*:

Conversations with the Artists Part I," online panel, Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center at Colorado College, January 5, 2021, https://fac.coloradocollege.edu/connect/creating-sweet-land-conversation-with-the-artists/. Although Du Yun was listed as attending the event, she was unable to join.

54. Kearney, interview.

55. Kearney, interview.

56. Raven Chacon, Du Yun, Douglas Kearney, Mimi Lien, and George E. Lewis, "Diversification through Collaboration," Panel, "Opera and Representation," Annual Conference of Y/Opera/Studies/Today, Yale University and Zoom, May 7, 2021.

57. Chacon, interview.

58. Couchois Duncan, interview.

59. Chacon, interview.

60. Kearney, interview.

61. Chacon, interview.

62. Chacon, interview.

63. Kearney, interview.

64. "*Sweet Land* Digital Program," The Industry, 21, https://theindustryla.org/sweet-land-digital-program/, accessed March 8, 2020.

65. Cline, interview.

66. Kearney, interview.

67. Peabody Southwell, interview by author, Zoom, April 27, 2021.

68. Kearney, interview.

69. Couchois Duncan, interview.

70. Kearney, interview.

71. Sharon Chohi Kim, interview by author, Zoom, February 26, 2021.

72. Derrell Acon, interview by author, Zoom, March 19, 2021.

73. Babatunde Akinboboye interview by author, Zoom, April 17, 2020.

74. Sharon, interview.

75. paperson, *Third University*, chap. 3.

76. Sharon, interview.

77. Couchois Duncan, interview.

78. paperson, *Third University*.

79. The Industry, "Sweet Land Workshop," *The Industry Blog*, May 21, 2019, https://theindustryla.org/sweet-land-workshop/

80. Jessica Baran, "Featured Review: Triumph of the Wild," *Riverfront Times*, August 4, 2011, https://www.riverfronttimes.com/arts/featured-review-triumph-of-the-wild-2495602

81. Gundula Kreuzer, "Butterflies on Sweet Land? Reflections on Opera at the Edges of History," *Representations* 154, no. 1 (2021): 69–86, https://doi.org/10.1525

/rep.2021.154.6.69. Jingyi Zhang offers another reading of the production in "Parallel Worldbuilding in Indie Opera: The Industry's Sweet Land (2020)," presentation given at the Eighty-Eighth Annual Meeting of the American Musicological Society, November 11, 2022.

82. *Sweet Land* digital program, 5.

83. W. Anthony Sheppard theorizes the voicing of Gin as countertenor in "The Countertenor Voice in Contemporary Opera," presented to "TOSC@Bayreuth," Fourth Transnational Opera Studies Conference, Bayreuth, Germany, June 25, 2022.

84. Kim was nominated for a Live Design Achievement Award for *Sweet Land*.

85. For a review of the filmed version of *Sweet Land*, see Jelena Novak, "Review: 'Sweet Land,' A New Opera by The Industry," *Sound Stage Screen* 1, no. 1 (2021), https://doi.org/10.13130/sss15390

86. Couchois Duncan, interview.

87. Richard Hodges, interview by author, Zoom, April 16, 2020.

88. Hodges, interview.

89. Joanna Ceja, interview by author, Zoom, April 4, 2020.

90. Fahad Siadat, interview by author, Los Angeles, February 29, 2020.

91. Acon, interview.

92. Acon, interview.

93. Jehnean Washington, email to author, July 20, 2021; Nandani Sinha, interview by author, Zoom, April 20, 2020; Hodges, interview.

94. Kim, interview.

95. Ceja, interview.

96. Acon, interview.

97. Ceja, interview.

98. Hodges, interview. See Nina Eidsheim, *The Race of Sound: Listening, Timbre, and Vocality in African American Music* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019).

99. Acon, interview.

100. Micaela Tobin, interview by author, Zoom, April 14, 2020.

101. Kim, interview.

102. Tobin, interview.

103. Kim, interview.

104. Acon, interview.

105. Akinboboye, interview.

106. Hodges, interview.

107. Hodges, interview.

108. Akinboboye, interview.

109. Akinboboye, interview.

110. Siadat, interview.

111. Fahad Siadat, email to author, July 21, 2021.

112. Sharon, interview.

113. Sharon, interview.

114. Acon, interview.

115. Tobin, interview.

116. Washington, interview by author, Zoom, June 15, 2021.

117. Washington, interview.

118. Lowenstein expressed concerns about the taxonomies of identity used in this chapter as particularly antithetical to *Sweet Land*'s deliberate move *away* from representing any Indigenous, Arrivant, or Immigrant experience as a homogenous one: "Any taxonomy that flattens out the individual, even in the telling of a large group tragedy, borders on the blasphemous to me as it uses the same [system] that brought out the genocide in the first place." He self-described as "Marc Lowenstein, like all of us, contains multitudes, and like all of us, does contradict himself." Lowenstein, email to author, September 1, 2022.

119. Washington, interview.

120. Washington, interview.

121. Acon, interview.

122. Siadat, interview.

123. Akinboboye, interview.

124. Carmina Escobar, interview by author, Zoom, April 8, 2020.

125. Tobin, interview.

126. Chacon, interview.

127. Kim, interview.

128. Kim, interview.

129. *Sweet Land* digital program, 21.

130. Du Yun, "2021 Best New Opera Recipient and Other Adventurous Productions by The Industry and MOT as Models for New Opera," Keynote and Award Ceremony, Annual Conference of the Music Critics Association of North America (MCANA), Detroit, September 12, 2021, http://www.mcana.org/pastannualmeetings/2021annualmeeting.html

131. Chacon, MCANA keynote panel.

132. Washington notes that texts in Muscogee Creek can also be interpreted in Seminole and Yuchi. (The Yuchi people are federally recognized as a part of the Muscogee Creek nation.) All text written with phonetic pronunciation as provided by Washington. Washington, interview; and Washington, email to author, September 21, 2021.

133. Bode Omojola, "Towards an African Operatic Voice: Composition, Dramaturgy, and Identity Strategies in New Yorùbá Opera," in *African Theatre 19: Opera and*

Music Theatre, ed. Christine Matzke, Lena van der Hoven, Christopher Odhiambo, and Hilde Roos (Rochester; Boydell & Brewer, 2020), 110.

134. Neo Muyanga, "Opera as Protest," Keynote, Transnational Opera Studies Conference, Bayreuth, Germany, June 23, 2022.

135. Couchois Duncan, interview.

136. Kearney, interview.

137. Couchois Duncan, interview.

138. Couchois Duncan, interview.

139. Kearney, interview.

140. Couchois Duncan, email to author, January 24, 2021. See Mark Rivkin, *Beyond Settler Time* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017). I am grateful for Colleen Renihan for making me aware of this source.

141. Kearney, email to author.

142. Couchois Duncan, interview.

143. Kearney, interview.

144. Couchois Duncan, interview.

145. Guess, Sultan, and Tuck, "Not Nowhere"; Tuck and Yang, "Decolonization."

146. Hodges, interview.

147. Kim, interview.

148. Kim, interview.

149. Kim, interview.

150. Chacon, interview.

151. Kim, interview.

152. Mark Swed, "Review: 'Sweet Land' Astonishes. Opera in an LA Park Examines What It Means to Be American," *Los Angeles Times*, March 1, 2020, https://www.latim es.com/entertainment-arts/story/2020-03-01/sweet-land-opera-industry-review

153. David Levin, *Unsettling Opera: Staging Mozart, Verdi, Wagner, and Zemlinsky* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 25.

154. Kearney, interview.

155. Aja Couchois Duncan, email to author, February 11, 2021.

156. Siadat, interview.

157. Chacon, interview.

158. Hortense Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book," *Diacritics* 17, no. 2 (Summer 1987): 67.

159. Escobar, interview.

160. Tuck and Yang "Decolonization," 19.

161. Neo Muyanga first suggested I think about anthropophagy in the context of the Wiindigo. See Luis Fellipe Garcia, "Only Anthropophagy Unites Us: Oswald de Andrade's Decolonial Project," *Cultural Studies* 34, no. 1 (2020): 138, https://doi.org/10

.1080/09502386.2018.1551412. I will emphasize that I am putting the two concepts in dialogue, not stating that they are one and the same or exchangeable in any way.

162. Thank you to Neo Muyanga for sharing his ideas on the role of re-membering and dis-membering in anticolonial practice.

163. Kearney, "Of _____ We Sing."

EPILOGUE

1. Joanna Ceja, interview by author, Zoom, April 4, 2020.
2. Micaela Tobin, interview by author, Zoom, April 14, 2020.
3. Elizabeth Cline, interview by author, Zoom, May 13, 2020.
4. Tobin, interview.
5. Cline, interview.
6. Cline, interview.
7. Yuval Sharon, "Director's Commentary and Screening," presentation, "Opera and Representation," Annual Conference of Y/Opera/Studies/Today, Yale University and Zoom, May 6, 2021.
8. Author's field notes, February 29, 2020.
9. Zachary Woolfe, "Review: An Opera Erases and Rewrites the American Myth," *New York Times*, March 9, 2020, https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/09/arts/music/sweet-land-opera-review.html. Mark Swed's review for the *Los Angeles Times* emphasizes the importance of being cold and wet when attending the opera: "Review: 'Sweet Land' Astonishes. Opera in an LA Park Examines What It Means to Be American," March 1, 2020, https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/story/2020-03-01/sweet-land-opera-industry-review
10. Mark Swed, "Review: 'Sweet Land' Triumphantly Moves Online. It's the Best Ticket in Opera Right Now," *Los Angeles Times*, March 30, 2020, https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/story/2020-03-30/coronavirus-industry-sweet-land-opera-streaming-vimeo
11. "Sweet Land: A New Opera by The Industry," Vimeo, last modified March 17, 2020, http://stream.sweetlandopera.com/
12. Sharon, "Director's Commentary and Screening."
13. Cannupa Hanska Luger, Raven Chacon, and Du Yun, "Creating *Sweet Land*: Conversations with the Artists Part I," online panel, Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center at Colorado College, January 5, 2021, https://fac.coloradocollege.edu/connect/creating-sweet-land-conversation-with-the-artists/
14. Luger, Chacon, and Du Yun, "Creating *Sweet Land*."
15. "Gary L. Wasserman Artistic Director Announcement Ceremony," Michigan Opera Theatre, September 9, 2020, transcription by author.

16. "2021 Annual Field Report," OPERA American, https://www.operaamerica .org/media/lgtfgytz/2021-annual-field-report.pdf, accessed May 20, 2022.

17. See for instance, Greg Stepanich, "360 Opera: Stunning 'Immersive' Productions Are Surging in Popularity," July 11, 2023, https://www.operaamerica.org/r/reperto ire-productions/11786/360-opera-stunning-immersive-productions-are *Opera America Magazine* for an overview of a number of production techniques reminiscent of The Industry's 2012–2020 productions.

18. *Twilight: Gods* has attracted scholarly attention from Jingyi Zhang, "Unsettling Opera through Site-Specific Staging: Reconsidering Immersion and the Politics of Collaboration in Yuval Sharon's *Twilight: Gods* (2020)," Annual Meeting of the American Musicological Society, November 11–12 and 20–21, 2021, online; and Nicholas Stevens, "Twilight: Us, or Apocalyptic Wagnerism," paper presentation, Fourth Annual Transnational Opera Studies Conference at Bayreuth, Germany, June 25, 2022.

19. The name change is described by Detroit Opera as a deliberate "[reflection] of the creativity and energy of the Detroit community." "2022–23 Season of Opera and Dance," Detroit Opera, https://detroitopera.org/2022-23-season-of-opera-and -dance/, accessed July 15, 2022. See also Jacek Blaszkiewicz, "Detroit's *Bohème*," *Opera Quarterly*, October 18, 2022, https://doi.org/10.1093/oq/kbac004

20. Detroit Opera, "2022–23 Season."

21. "Introducing The Industry's Artistic Director Cooperative," April 27, 2022, YouTube, 6.18, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MaaS4wDH8Vo

22. For scholarship on Fure's work, see Nicholas David Stevens, "Fear of an Envoiced Planet: Speculative Arias of the Operatic Hyperobject," in *Contemporary Opera in Flux*, ed. Yayoi Uno Everett (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, forthcoming). For work on Gaines, see Jayna Brown, *Black Utopias: Speculative Life and the Music of Other Worlds* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2021).

23. Home page, The Industry, https://theindustryla.org/, accessed September 2, 2022.

24. Sarah Beaty, interview by author, Zoom, February 15, 2022.

25. Elizabeth Cline, interview by author, Los Angeles, August 17, 2016.

26. Cannupa Hanska Luger, "2021 Best New Opera Recipient and Other Adventurous Productions by The Industry and MOT as Models for New Opera," Keynote and Award Ceremony, Annual Conference of the Music Critics Association of North America, Detroit, September 12, 2021, http://www.mcana.org/pastannualmeetings/20 21annualmeeting.html

27. See, for instance, Gregory Barz and Timothy J. Cooley, eds., *Shadows in the Field: New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

Bibliography

Abbate, Carolyn, and Roger Parker, eds. *Analyzing Opera: Verdi and Wagner*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989.

Accornero, Giulia. "'What Does ASMR Sound Like'? Composing the Proxemic Intimate Zone in Contemporary Music." *Contemporary Music Review* 41, no. 4 (2022): 337–57. https://doi.org/10.1080/07494467.2022.2087377

Adlington, Robert. "Music Theatre since the 1960s." In *The Cambridge Companion to Twentieth-Century Opera*, edited by Mervyn Cooke, 225–43. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Allanbrook, Wye Jamison, Mary Hunter, and Gretchen Wheelock. "Staging Mozart's Women." In *Siren Songs: Representations of Gender and Sexuality in Opera*, edited by Mary Ann Smart, 47–66. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000.

Alonso-Minutti, Ana R., Eduardo Herrera, and Alejandro L. Madrid, eds. *Experimentalisms in Practice: Music Perspectives from Latin America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018.

Alpine Headphones. "Homepage." http://www.alpineheadphones.com. Accessed March 2, 2018.

Anderson, Benedict R. *Imagined Communities: Reflection on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Rev. ed. New York: Verso, 2006.

Aronson, Arnold, ed. *The Routledge Companion to Scenography*. New York: Routledge, 2017.

Aspden, Suzanne, ed. *Operatic Geographies: The Place of Opera and the Opera House*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019.

Atkinson, Paul. *Everyday Arias: An Operatic Ethnography*. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2006.

Attali, Jacques. *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*. Translated by Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.

Auslander, Philip. "Digital Liveness: A Historico-Philosophical Perspective." *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art* 34, no. 3 (September 2012): 3–11.

Auslander, Philip. *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture*. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge, 2008.

Aviles-Rodriguez. "Playing *Hopscotch* on Dangerous Ground: Site-Based, Transit-Oriented Opera in Los Angeles." *Cambridge Opera Journal* 35, no. 2 (2023): 178-194.

Baran, Jessica. "Featured Review: Triumph of the Wild." *Riverfront Times*, August 4, 2011. https://www.riverfronttimes.com/arts/featured-review-triumph-of-the-wild-2495602

Barrett, Shari. "BWW Reviews: *Invisible Cities* Offers a Total Immersion Experience at Union Station." *Broadway World, Los Angeles*, October 25, 2013. https://www.broadwayworld.com/los-angeles/article/BWW-Reviews-INVISIBLE-CITIES-Offers-a-Total-Immersion-Experience-at-Union-Station-20131025#

Baumol, William, and William Bowen. *Performing Arts, the Economic Dilemma: A Study of Problems Common to Theater, Opera, Music, and Dance*. New York: Twentieth Century Fund, 1966.

Benson, Peter. "Tobacco Capitalism, an Afterword: Open Letters and Open Wounds in Anthropology." *Journal for the Anthropology of North America* 21, no. 1 (2018): 21–34.

Berry, John. "A Florence for the 21st Century." *Economist Online*, February 11, 2015. https://www.economist.com/prospero/2014/01/06/a-florence-for-the-21st-century

Beth Morrison Projects. "Touring." https://bethmorrisonprojects.org/projects/touring/. Accessed May 5, 2022.

Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. New York: Routledge, 1994.

Birch, Anna, and Joanne Tompkins, eds. *Performing Site-Specific Theatre*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

Blanc, Lola. "Experimental Operas Might Make the Genre Cool Again." *Vice*, November 12, 2015. https://www.vice.com/en/article/kwx54m/experimental-operas-might-make-the-genre-cool-again-511

Blaszkiewicz, Jacek. "Detroit's *Bohème*." *Opera Quarterly*, October 18, 2022. https://doi.org/10.1093/oq/kbac004

Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. "What Makes Systemic Racism Systemic?" *Sociological Inquiry* 91, no, 3 (2021): 513–33.

Born, Georgina. "Music and the Materialization of Identities." *Journal of Material Culture* 16, no. 4 (2011): 376–88.

Born, Georgina. "On Musical Mediation: Ontology, Technology, and Creativity." *Twentieth-Century Music* 2, no. 1 (2005): 7–36.

Born, Georgina, and Andrew Barry, eds. "Music Mediation Theories and Actor-Network Theory." Special issue, *Contemporary Music Review* 37, nos. 5–6 (2018).

Bose Soundlink. "Around-Ear Wireless Headphones II." https://www.bose.com/en_us/products/headphones/over_ear_headphones/soundlink-around-ear-wireless-headphones-ii.html. Accessed March 2, 2018. Web page is no longer active.

Brecht, Bertolt. *Brecht on Theater: The Development of an Aesthetic*. Translated and edited by John Willett. New York: Hill and Wang, 1964.

Brittan, Francesca, and Carmel Paz. "Introduction." "Colloquy: Attention, Anxiety, and Audition's Histories." *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 72, no. 2 (2019): 541–80.

Brown, Jayna. *Black Utopias: Speculative Life and the Music of Other Worlds*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2021.

Bruckner, D. J. R. "Theater Review: A Tragedy in Three Parts, Each Imagined Separately." *New York Times*, January 22, 2004. https://www.nytimes.com/2004/01/22/theater/theater-review-a-tragedy-in-three-parts-each-imagined-separately.html

Bull, Anna. *Class, Control, and Classical Music*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2019.

Bull, Anna, and Christina Scharff. "Classical Music as Genre: Hierarchies of Value within Freelance Classical Musicians' Discourse." *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 24, no. 3 (April 2021): 673–89. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1367549421 1006094

Bull, Michael. *Sound Moves: iPod Culture and Urban Experience*. New York: Routledge, 2007.

Bull, Michael. *Sounding Out the City: Personal Stereos and the Management of Everyday Life*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Calico, Joy. *Brecht at the Opera*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008.

Calico, Joy. "Brecht in the Creation, Production, and Analysis of Opera Today." In *Bertolt Brecht in Context*, edited by Stephen Brockmann, 217–25. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021.

Calico, Joy. "Composite Libretti and Spatialized Sound Design as Dramaturgies of Trauma in Chaya Czernowin's *Infinite Now* (2017)." In *Contemporary Opera in Flux*, edited by Yayoi Uno Everett. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, forthcoming.

Calico, Joy. "The Legacy of GDR Directors on the Post-Wende Opera Stage." In *Art outside the Lines: New Perspectives on GDR Art Culture*, edited by Elaine Kelly and Amy Lynn Wlodarski, 131–54. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2011.

Calvino, Italo. *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler*. Translated by William Weaver. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1982.

Calvino, Italo. *Invisible Cities*. Translated by William Weaver. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1972.

Calvino, Italo. "Italo Calvino on *Invisible Cities*." *Columbia: A Journal of Literature and Art*, no. 8 (Spring–Summer 1983): 37–42.

Calvino, Italo. "On *Invisible Cities*." *Columbia: A Journal of Literature and Art*, no. 40 (October 2004): 177–82.

Caplan, Lucy. "High Culture on the Lower Frequencies: African Americans and Opera, 1900-1933." PhD diss., Yale University, 2019.

Carlin, Susan. "How Sennheiser Expanded Its Brand with a Headphone Opera." *Fast Company*, December 12, 2013. https://www.fastcompany.com/3023205/how-sennheiser-expanded-its-brand-with-a-headphone-opera

Carter, Tim. "Celebrating the Nation: Kurt Weill, Paul Green, and the Federal Theatre Project (1937)." *Journal of the Society for American Music* 5, no. 3 (2011): 297–334.

Carter, Tim. *Monteverdi's Musical Theater*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015.

Caton, Kathryn. "Participatory Opera: Performing and Creating Audiences." PhD diss., University of Kentucky, 2022.

Cerrone, Christopher. "Invisible Cities: An Interview with Christopher Cerrone." Interview by Tim Horvath. *Tin House*, March 31, 2015. https://tinhouse.com/invisible-cities-an-interview-with-christopher-cerrone/

Cerrone, Christopher, and Louisa Proske, dirs. *Invisible Cities*, "Scene 6: Adelma." Excerpts from the Italian Academy staging, Red Light New Music and Ekmeles Chamber Choir, Ted Hearne. http://s178605824.onlinehome.us/cerrone/invisiblecities/watch.html

Certeau, Michel de. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Translated by Stephen Rendall. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984.

Chambers, Iain. *Migrancy, Culture, and Identity*. London: Routledge, 1994.

Chetty, Ayesha Casie. "Voice, Body, and Identity: Negotiating the Color Line in Opera." PhD diss., University of Cincinnati, 2021.

Clarke, Eric F. "The Impact of Recording on Listening." *Twentieth-Century Music* 4, no. 1 (March 2007): 47–70.

Clifford, James. "Anthropology and/as Travel." *ETNOFOOR* 9, no. 2 (1996): 5–15.

Cornell Law School. "Non-profit Organizations." Legal Information Institute. https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/non-profit_organizations. Accessed August 1, 2022.

Couldry, Nick. "Liveness, 'Reality' and the Mediated Habitus from Television to the Mobile Phone." *Communication Review* 7 (2004): 353–61.

Crary, Jonathan. *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999.

Dashboard. "About Us." http://www.dashboard.us/about. Accessed July 2, 2019.

Denning, Michael. *The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth Century*. London: Verso, 1997.

Detroit Opera. "2022–23 Season of Opera and Dance." https://detroitopera.org/2022-23-season-of-opera-and-dance/. Accessed July 15, 2022.

Drott, Eric. "The End(s) of Genre." *Journal of Music Theory* 57, no. 1 (April 2013): 1–45.

Duchamp, Marcel. *The Essential Writings of Marcel Duchamp*. Edited by Michel Sanouillet and Elmer Peterson. London: Thames and Hudson, 1975.

Ebright, Ryan. "Doctor Atomic, or How John Adams Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Sound Design." *Cambridge Opera Journal* 31, no. 1 (2019): 85–117.

Ebright, Ryan. "'My Answer to What Music Theatre Can Be': Iconoclasm and Entrepreneurship in Steve Reich and Beryl Korot's *The Cave*." *American Music* 35, no. 1 (Spring 2017): 29–50.

Eidsheim, Nina. "Acoustic Slits and Vocal Incongruences." In *The Oxford Handbook of Voice Studies*, edited by Katherine Meizel and Nina Eidsheim, 301–14. New York: Oxford University Press, 2019.

Eidsheim, Nina. "Race and the Aesthetics of Vocal Timbre." In *Rethinking Difference in Music Scholarship*. Edited by Olivia Bloechl, Melanie Lowe, and Jeffrey Kallberg, 338–65. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

Eidsheim, Nina. *The Race of Sound: Listening, Timbre, and Vocality in African American Music*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019.

Eidsheim, Nina. *Sensing Sound: Singing and Listening as Vibrational Practice*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015.

Eikhof, Doris Ruth, and Chris Warhurst. "The Promised Land? Why Social Inequalities Are Systemic in the Creative Industries." *Employee Relations* 35, no. 5 (2013): 495–508.

Elam, J. Daniel. "Postcolonial Theory." Oxford Bibliographies. Last modified January 15, 2019. https://doi.org/10.1093/OBO/9780190221911-0069

Encompass New Opera Theatre. "Our History." https://www.encompasstheatre.org/history. Accessed March 30, 2023.

Ewell, Philip. "Music Theory and the White Racial Frame." *Music Theory Online* 26, no. 2 (September 2020). https://mtosmt.org/issues/mto.20.26.2/mto.20.26.2.ewell.html

Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin White Masks*. Translated by C. L. Markman. London: Pluto Press, 2008.

Felski, Rita. *The Limits of Critique*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015.

Ferdman, Bertie. *Off Sites: Contemporary Performance beyond Site-Specific*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2018.

Frankel, Tony. "Los Angeles Theater Review: *Invisible Cities* (The Industry and L.A. Dance Project at Union Station)." *Stage and Cinema*, October 23, 2013. https://www.stageandcinema.com/2013/10/23/invisible-cities-the-industry/

Freitag, Florian, Céline Molter, Laura Katharina Mücke, Helena Rapp, Damien B. Schlarb, Elisabeth Sommerlad, Clemens Spahr, and Dominic Zerhoch. "Immersivité: Une approche interdisciplinaire aux espaces d'immersion." *Ambiances: Revue internationale sur l'environnment sensible, l'architecture et l'espace urbain* (2020). https://doi.org/10.4000/ambiances.3233.

Fulker, Rick. "How Wieland Wagner, Once Hitler's Friend, Lifted the Nazi Shadow from Bayreuth." *Deutsche Welle*, July 27, 2017. https://www.dw.com/en/how-wieland-wagner-once-hitlers-friend-lifted-the-nazi-shadow-from-bayreuth/a-39856191

Garcia, Luis Fellipe. "Only Anthropophagy Unites Us: Oswald de Andrade's Decolonial Project." *Cultural Studies* 34, no. 1 (2020): 122–42. https://doi.org/10.1080/09502386.2018.1551412

Geertz, Clifford. "Deep Hanging Out." Review of *Chronicle of the Guakaki Indians*, by Pierre Clastres and *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, by James Clifford. *New York Times*, October 22, 1998, Sunday Book Review.

Gelt, Jessica. "'War of the Worlds' to Invade Disney Hall and The Streets of Downtown L.A." *Los Angeles Times*, November 8, 2017. https://www.latimes.com/entertainment/arts/la-et-cm-la-phil-war-worlds-20171108-story.html

Goehr, Lydia. *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Gopinath, Sumanth, and Jason Stanyek, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Mobile Music Studies*. 2 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Grimshaw, Jeremy. "High, 'Low,' and Plastic Arts: Philip Glass and the Symphony in the Age of Postproduction." *Musical Quarterly* 86, no. 3 (Autumn 2002): 472–502.

Hammer Museum. "A Q&A with The Industry's Yuval Sharon." April 9, 2014. https://hammer.ucla.edu/blog/2014/04/a-qa-with-the-industrys-yuval-sharon/. Accessed August 22, 2017.

Harvie, Jen. *Fair Play: Art, Performance, and Neoliberalism*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

Havelkova, Tereza. *Opera as Hypermedium: Meaning Making, Intimacy, and the Politics of Perception*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021.

Hegenbart, Sarah. "Decolonising Opera: Interrogating the Genre of Opera in the Sahel and Other Regions in the Global South." In "*Gefühle Sind Von Haus Aus Rebellen": Musiktheater Als Katalyzsator Und Reflexionsagentur Für Gesellshaftliche Entwicklungsprozesse,* ed. Dominik Frank, Ulricke Hartung, and Kornelius Paede, 167–94. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2020.

Herzog, Christian. "Invisible Cities, the Wandering Opera Through Union Station, Is a Welcome Adventure." October 29, 2013. https://www.laweekly.com/invisible-cities-the-wandering-opera-through-union-station-is-a-welcome-adventure/

Holten, Kasper. "Inside and Outside the Operatic Canon, on Stage and in the Boardroom." In *The Oxford Handbook of the Operatic Canon*, edited by Cormac Newark and William Weber. 535–46. Cary, NC: Oxford University Press: 2020.

Hosokawa, Shuhei. "Walkman Effect." In *The Sound Studies Reader*, edited by Jonathan Sterne, 104–16. New York: Routledge, 2012.

Hoven van der, Lena and Liana Maasdorp. "'Opera is an art form for everyone': Black Empowerment in the South African Opera Adaptations *Unogumbe* (2013) and *Breathe – Umphefumlo* (2015)," in *African Theatre 19: Opera and Music Theatre*. Edited by Christine Matzke, Lena van der Hoven, Christopher Odhiambo, and Hilde Roos, 52–76. Rochester: Boydell & Brewer, 2020.

Indie Opera Toronto. "About." http://indieoperatoronto.ca/about/. Accessed August 1, 2022.

Ingraham, Mary I., Joseph K. So, and Roy Moodley, eds. *Opera in a Multicultural World: Coloniality, Culture, Performance*. New York: Routledge, 2016.

Jameson, Fredric. "The Vanishing Mediator: Narrative Structure in Max Weber." *New German Critique* 1, no. 1 (Winter 1973): 52–89.

Kajikawa, Loren. "Leaders of the New School? Music Departments, Hip-Hop, and the Challenge of Significant Difference." *Twentieth-Century Music* 18, no. 1 (2021): 45–64. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1478572220000026

Kane, Brian. *Sound Unseen: Acousmatic Sound in Theory and Practice*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Karantonis, Pamela, and Dylan Robinson, eds. *Opera Indigene: Re/presenting First Nations and Indigenous Cultures*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011.

Kelly, Elaine. "Ruth Berghaus and the Rise of Post-Brechtian Opera: Opera Production as a Political Barometer." In *Ruth Berghaus und Paul Dessau: Komponieren—choreographieren—inszenieren*, edited by Nina Noeske and Matthias Tischer, 99–114. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2018.

Kendi, Ibram X. *How to Be an Antiracist*. New York: Penguin Random House, 2019.

Khatchatourian, Maane. "*Invisible Cities* Opera Gets Immersive with Wireless Technology." *Variety*, November 16, 2013. https://variety.com/2013/legit/news/invisible-cities-immersive-opera-1200841486/

Klasfeld, Adam. "God Is a DJ." Theater Mania, June 10, 2004. https://www.theatermania.com/new-york-city-theater/reviews/god-is-a-dj_4812.html

Klasfeld, Adam. "Oresteia." Theater Mania, January 28, 2004. https://www.theatermania.com/new-york-city-theater/reviews/oresteia_4325.html

Kotnik, Vlado. *Opera, Power and Ideology: Anthropological Study of a National Art in Slovenia*. Berlin: Peter Lang, 2010.

Kotnik, Vlado. *Opera as Anthropology: Anthropologists in Lyrical Settings*. Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016.

Kowalke, Kim. "Singing Brecht vs. Brecht Singing: Performance in Theory and Practice." *Cambridge Opera Journal* 5, no. 1 (March 1993): 55–78. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0954586700003888

Kramer, Lawrence. *Opera and Modern Culture: Wagner and Strauss*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.

Krasner, David. *A Beautiful Pageant: African American Theatre, Drama and Performance in the Harlem Renaissance*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002.

Krausas, Veronika. "The Mortal Thoughts of Lady Macbeth." https://veronikakrausas.com/music/opera/the-mortal-thoughts-of-lady-macbeth.html#:~:text=The%20Mortal%20Thoughts%20of%20Lady%20Macbeth%20is%20an%20opera%20inspired,descent%20into%20madness%20and%20%20suicide. Accessed August 1, 2022.

Krausas, Veronika, composer, and Yuval Sharon, dir. "Final Scene from *The Mortal Thoughts of Lady Macbeth*." Libretto by Tom Pettit after Shakespeare, conducted by Marc Lowenstein. August 2010. https://vimeo.com/18353706?embedded=true&source=video_title&owner=5548695

Kreuzer, Gundula. "Butterflies on Sweet Land? Reflections on Opera at the Edges of History." *Representations* 154, no. 1 (2021): 69–86. https://doi.org/10.1525/rep.2021.154.6.69

Kreuzer, Gundula. *Curtain, Gong, Steam: Wagnerian Technologies of Nineteenth-Century Opera*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2018.

Kreuzer, Gundula. "Voices from Beyond: Don Carlos and the Modern Stage." *Cambridge Opera Journal* 18, no. 2 (2006): 151–79.

Latour, Bruno. *The Pasteurization of France*. Translated by Alan Sheridan and John Law. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988.

Latour, Bruno. *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Law, John, and John Hassard, eds. *Actor Network Theory and After*. Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 1999.

Lena, Jennifer C. *Entitled: Discriminating Tastes and the Expansion of the Arts*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019. Princeton Scholarship Online, May 2020.

Levin, David. "Opera out of Performance: Verdi's *Macbeth* at San Francisco Opera." *Cambridge Opera Journal* 16, no. 3 (2004): 249–67.

Levin, David. *Unsettling Opera: Staging Mozart, Verdi, Wagner, and Zemlinsky*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

Locke, Ralph. "What Are These Women Doing in Opera?" In *En Travesti: Women, Gender, Subversion, Opera*, edited by Corinne E. Blackmer and Patricia Juliana Smith, 59–98. New York: Columbia University Press, 1995.

MacArthur Foundation. "Yuval Sharon." October 11, 2017. https://www.macfound.org/fellows/class-of-2017/yuval-sharon#searchresults

Marlow, Jeffrey. "Is This the Opera of the Future?" *Wired*, October 22, 2013. https://www.wired.com/2013/10/is-this-the-opera-of-the-future/. Accessed June 15, 2017.

McGinnis, Pearl Yeadon. *The Opera Singer's Career Guide: Understanding the European Fach System*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2011.

McLaughlin, Martin. *Italo Calvino*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998.

Metcalf, Sasha. "Funding 'Opera for the 80s and Beyond': The Role of Impresarios in Creating a New American Repertoire." *American Music* 35, no. 1 (Spring 2017): 7–28.

Metcalf, Sasha. "Institutions and Patrons in American Opera: The Reception of Philip Glass, 1976–1992." PhD diss., University of California, Santa Barbara, 2015.

Meyer, Stephen C. "*Parsifal*'s Aura." *19th-Century Music* 33, no. 2 (Fall 2009): 151–72. https://doi.org/10.1525/ncm.2009.33.2.151

Mol, Annemarie. "Actor-Network Theory: Sensitive Terms and Enduring Tensions." *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* 50, no. 1 (2010): 253–69.

Mol, Annemarie. *The Body Multiple*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002.

Moore, Andrea. "Neoliberalism and the Musical Entrepreneur." *Journal of the Society for American Music* 10, no. 1 (2016): 33–53.

Morris, Christopher. "Too Much Music': The Media of Opera." In *The Cambridge Companion to Opera Studies*, edited by Nicholas Till, 95–116. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Murray, Janet. *Hamlet on the Holodeck: The Future of Narrative in Cyberspace*. New York: Free Press, 1997.

Muyanga, Neo. "A Revolt in (More Than Just) Four Parts." In *African Theatre 19: Opera and Music Theatre.* Edited by Christine Matzke, Lena van der Hoven, Christopher Odhiambo, and Hilde Roos, 17–28. Rochester, Boydell & Brewer, 2020.

Nadir, Erika Marina. "Prima la Musica o Prima la Parola: Textual and Musical Intermedialities in Italian Literature and Film." PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2017.

Napoli, Lisa. "The Drama of Humanity Unfolds in Union Station—Oh, and an Opera, Too." KCRW, October 18, 2013. https://www.kcrw.com/culture/articles/the-drama-of-humanity-unfolds-in-union-station-2014-oh-and-an-opera-too

Newark, Cormac. "Recession Opera: Is the Party Over for Opera?" *Journal of Music*, April 1, 2009. https://journalofmusic.com/focus/recession-opera

Novak, Jelena. *Postopera: Reinventing the Voice-Body*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015.

Novak, Jelena. "Review: 'Sweet Land,' A New Opera by The Industry." *Sound Stage Screen* 1, no. 1. https://doi.org/10.13130/sss15390

Oer, Mareike. "Invisible Cities: An Opera for Headphones Receives Emmy for KCET Documentary of Landmark Headphone Opera Production." July 30, 2014. https://en-de.sennheiser.com/news-invisible-cities-an-opera-for-headphones-receives-emmy-for-kcet-documentary-of-landmark-headphone-opera-production

Oer, Mareike. "Invisible Cities Opens to Sell-Out Performances at Los Angeles's Union Station." "Press." Sennheiser. October 25, 2013. https://en-us.sennheiser.com/news-invisible-cities-opens-to-sell-out-performances-at-los-angeles-union-station-

Omojola, Bode. "Towards an African Operatic Voice: Composition, Dramaturgy, and Identity Strategies in New Yorùbá Opera." In *African Theatre 19: Opera and Music Theatre.* Edited by Christine Matzke, Lena van der Hoven, Christopher Odhiambo, and Hilde Roos, 107–35. Rochester; Boydell & Brewer, 2020.

OPERA America. "Fieldwide Demographic Report." June 23, 2022. https://www.op eraamerica.org/industry-resources/2022/202206/2021-field-wide-opera-demogra phic-report/

OPERA America. "2021 Annual Field Report." https://www.operaamerica.org/media /lgtfgytz/2021-annual-field-report.pdf. Accessed May 20, 2022.

Opera Philadelphia. "Opera Philadelphia Reinvents Its 2020–2021 Season with the Fall Debut of a Digital Opera Channel." July 29, 2020. https://www.operaphila .org/about/news-press/pressroom/2020/opera-philadelphia-channel/

Packer, Renee Levine. *This Life of Sounds: Evenings for New Music in Buffalo.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.

paperson, la. *A Third University Is Possible.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017.

Parker, Roger. *Remaking the Song: Operatic Visions and Revisions from Handel to Berio.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006.

Pine, Joseph, and James H. Gilmore. "Welcome to the Experience Economy." *Harvard Business Review*, July–August 1998. https://hbr.org/1998/07/welcome-to-the-exper ience-economy. Accessed December 2, 2017.

Pippen, John. "The Boundaries of 'Boundarylessness': Revelry, Struggle, and Labour in Three American New Music Ensembles." In "Boundaries of the New: American Classical Music at the Turn of the Millennium," edited by Judith Lochhead, 424–44. *Twentieth Century Music* 16, no. 3 (2019).

Pistorius, Juliana. "Inhabiting Whiteness: The Eoan Group *La Traviata,* 1965." *Cambridge Opera Journal* 31, no. 1 (2019): 63–84.

Pistorius, Juliana. "Predicaments of Coloniality, or, Opera Studies Goes Ethno." *Music & Letters* 100, no. 3 (2019): 529–39.

ProPublica Nonprofit Explorer. "Beth Morrison Projects." https://projects.propublica .org/nonprofits/organizations/208422447. Accessed December 7, 2021

ProPublica Nonprofit Explorer. "Los Angeles Opera Company." https://projects.prop ublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/231504706. Accessed December 7, 2021.

ProPublica Nonprofit Explorer. "Opera Philadelphia." https://projects.propublica.org /nonprofits/organizations/952096402. Accessed December 7, 2021.

Pulitzer Prizes. "Finalist: *Invisible Cities*, by Christopher Cerrone." The 2014 Pulitzer Prize Finalist in Music. https://www.pulitzer.org/finalists/christopher-cerrone. Accessed June 12, 2023.

Renihan, Colleen. *The Operatic Archive: American Opera as History.* New York: Routledge, 2020.

Richmond Pollock, Emily. *Opera after the Zero Hour: The Problem of Tradition and the Possibility of Renewal in Postwar Germany*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2019.

Risi, Clemens. *Opera in Performance: Analyzing the Performative Dimensions of Opera Productions*. New York: Routledge, 2021.

Risi, Clemens. "Opera in Performance: In Search of New Analytical Approaches." *Opera Quarterly* 27, nos. 2–3 (2011): 283–95.

Risi, Clemens. "Shedding Light on the Audience: Hans Neuenfels and Peter Konwitschny Stage Verdi (and Verdians)." *Cambridge Opera Journal* 14, nos. 1–2: 201–10. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3878291. Accessed December 12, 2015.

Ritchey, Marianna. "'Amazing Together': Mason Bates, Classical Music, and Neoliberal Values." *Music and Politics* 11, no. 2 (Summer 2017). https://doi.org/10.3998/mp.9460447.0011.202

Ritchey, Marianna. *Composing Capital: Classical Music in the Neoliberal Era*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019.

Robin, William. "Balance Problems: Neoliberalism and New Music in the American University and Ensemble." *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 71, no. 3 (Fall 2018): 749–93.

Robin, William. *Industry: Bang on a Can and New Music in the Marketplace*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2021.

Robin, William. "The Rise and Fall of 'Indie Classical': Tracing a Controversial Term in Twenty-First Century New Music." *Journal of the Society for American Music* 12, no. 1 (Spring 2018): 55–88.

Robin, William. "A Scene without a Name: Indie Classical and American New Music in the Twenty-First Century." PhD diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2016.

Robinson, Dylan. *Hungry Listening: Resonant Theory for Indigenous Sound Studies*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2020.

Roos, Hilde. *The "La Traviata" Affair: Opera in the Age of Apartheid.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2019.

Rosenberg, Donald. "Cleveland Blues." *Opera News* 76, no. 2 (August 2011). https://www.operanews.com/Opera_News_Magazine/2011/8/Features/Cleveland_Blues.html. Accessed July 25, 2022.

Rosenfeld, Jake. *What Unions No Longer Do*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014.

Rutherford-Johnson, Tim. *Music after the Fall: Modern Composition and Culture since 1989*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2017.

Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1979.

Salzman, Eric, and Thomas Desi. *The New Music Theater: Seeing the Voice, Hearing the Body*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Schankler, Isaac. "*Invisible Cities*: Choose Your Own Opera." *New Music Box*, November 27, 2013. http://www.newmusicbox.org/articles/invisible-cities-choose-your-own-opera/

Schmidt, Stephanie. "Invisible Cities: An Opera for Headphones Receives Local Emmy Nomination for Best Entertainment Programming" and "Press." About Sennheiser, July 16, 2014. https://en-us.sennheiser.com/news--invisible-cities-an-opera-for-headphones-receives-local-emmy-nomination-for-best-entertainment-programming

Schonberg, Harold. "Wagner's Dream 100 Years Later." *New York Times*, July 18, 1976. https://www.nytimes.com/1976/07/18/archives/wagners-dream-100-years-later-wagners-dream-100-years-later.html

Serve the People LA. "Goodbye Gentrifiers." October 4 2015. https://servethepeoplela.wordpress.com/page/2/. Accessed December 10, 2016. Website is no longer active.

Sharon, Yuval. "The De-materialization of the Opera." *KCET Artbound Performances*, October 10, 2013. https://www.kcet.org/shows/artbound/invisible-cities-the-dematerialization-of-the-opera

Sharon, Yuval. "Director Yuval Sharon in Conversation." With Megan Steigerwald Ille. October 9, 2020. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UqMBW0lK-bA

Sharon, Yuval. "Disrupting the Dominant (Operatic) Narrative." In Terms of Performance. http://intermsofperformance.site/keywords/narrative/yuval-sharon. Accessed September 10, 2020.

Sharon, Yuval. "Genius as Circumstance." *Los Angeles Review of Books*, May 14, 2018. https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/genius-as-circumstance/

Sharon, Yuval. "Opera for Everyone: Yuval Sharon, *Invisible Cities*, and Union Station." Interview by Heather Heise. October 24, 2013. http://www.ampersandla.com/opera-for-everyone-yuval-sharon-invisible-cities/

Sharon, Yuval, and Elizabeth Cline. "We Must Do Better." *The Industry Opera Blog*, June 10, 2020. https://theindustryla.org/we-must-do-better/

Sikau, Lea Luka. "Rehearsing New Opera: An Ethnographic Lens on Becoming Posthuman," PhD diss., University of Cambridge, Forthcoming.

Sim, Yi Hong. "Avatars of the Work Ethic: The Figure of the Classical Musician in Discourses of Work." PhD diss., University of California, San Diego, 2019.

Singer, Barry. "Opera in the Age of Anxiety." *Opera News* 74, no. 3 (September 2009). https://www.chartwellbooksellers.com/author/operanews/16.%20Opera%20in%20the%20Age%20of%20Anxiety.pdf. Accessed July 25, 2022.

Smith, Matthew Wilson. *The Total Work of Art: From Bayreuth to Cyberspace*. New York: Routledge, 2007.

Soja, Edward M. *My Los Angeles: From Urban Restructuring to Regional Urbanization*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014.

Soja, Edward. *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1996.

Spillers, Hortense. "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book." *Diacritics* 17, no. 2 (Summer 1987): 64–81.

Spivak, Gayatri. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" In *Colonial Discourse and Post-colonial Theory: A Reader*, edited by Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, 66–111. New York: Routledge, 2013.

Springer, Carolyn. "Textual Geography: The Role of the Reader in Invisible Cities." *Modern Language Studies* 15, no. 4 (1985): 289–99.

Steichen, James. "HD Opera: A Love/Hate Story." *Opera Quarterly* 27, no. 4 (Autumn 2011): 443–59.

Steigerwald Ille, Megan. "Bringing Down the House: Situating and Mediating Opera in the Twenty-First Century." PhD diss., University of Rochester, 2018.

Steigerwald Ille, Megan. "Negotiating Convention: Pop-Ups and Populism at the San Francisco Opera." *Journal of the Society for American Music* 14, no. 3 (2020): 419–50.

Steindorf, Joanna. "Walk-Along with a Mediated Presence: The Audio Walk as a Mobile Method." *Wi: Journal of Mobile Media* 11, no. 1 (2017). http://wi.mobilities.ca/walk-along-with-a-mediated-presence-the-audio-walk-as-a-mobile-method/. Accessed February 10, 2019. Website is no longer active.

Steingo, Gavin. "Actors and Accidents in South African Electronic Music: An Essay on Multiple Ontologies." *Contemporary Music Review* 37, nos. 5–6 (2018): 554–74.

Sterne, Jonathan. *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003.

Stevens, Nicholas David. "Fear of an Envoiced Planet: Speculative Arias of the Operatic Hyperobject." In *Contemporary Opera in Flux*, edited by Yayoi Uno Everett. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, forthcoming.

Swed, Mark. "'City' Sights Mesmerize." *Los Angeles Times*, May 12, 2012. ProQuest.

Swed, Mark. "Review: 'Sweet Land' Astonishes." *Los Angeles Times*, March 1, 2020. https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/story/2020-03-01/sweet-land-opera-industry-review

Swed, Mark. "Review: 'Sweet Land' Triumphantly Moves Online." *Los Angeles Times*, March 30, 2020. https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/story/2020-03-30/coronavirus-industry-sweet-land-opera-streaming-vimeo

Swed, Mark. "Something Novel This Way Comes." *Los Angeles Times*, August 28, 2010. ProQuest.

"Sweet Land: A New Opera by The Industry." Last modified March 17, 2020. http://stream.sweetlandopera.com/

Taylor, Diana. *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003.

Taylor, Timothy. *Music and Capitalism: A History of the Present.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016.

The Industry. "Highway One: In C." https://theindustryla.org/projects/in-c/. Accessed August 1, 2022.

The Industry. "Homepage." https://theindustryla.org/. Accessed April 15, 2020.

The Industry. "Invisible Cities: Production." http://invisiblecitiesopera.com/product ion/. Accessed August 31, 2017.

The Industry. "*Sweet Land* Digital Program." https://theindustryla.org/sweet-land-dig ital-program/. Accessed March 8, 2020.

The Industry. "Sweet Land Workshop." *The Industry Blog*, May 21, 2019. https://thein dustryla.org/sweet-land-workshop/

The Industry. "The Industry Records." August 1, 2022. https://theindustryla.org/rec ords/

Tommasini, Anthony. "Sampling of New Dishes, Some Still Being Seasoned." *New York Times*, May 9, 2009. http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/05/arts/music/05v ox.html?mcubz=3 Accessed August 30, 2017.

Tsing, Anna Lowenhaupt. *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015.

Turnbull, Olivia. "It's All About You: Immersive Theatre and Social Networking." *Journal for Contemporary Drama in English* 4, no. 1 (2016): 150–63.

Turner, Kristen. "Class, Race, and Uplift in the Opera House: Theodore Drury and His Company Cross the Color Line," *Journal of Musicological Research* 34, no. 4 (2015): 320–51.

Uy, Michael. *Ask the Experts: How Ford, Rockefeller and the NEA Changed American Music.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2020.

Van Engen, Abram C. *City on a Hill: A History of American Exceptionalism.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2020.

Vankin, Deborah. "Chicano Murals, Industry Opera on a San Pedro Beach among Winners of Mike Kelley Foundation Grants." *Los Angeles Times*, March 22, 2017. https://www.latimes.com/entertainment/arts/la-et-cm-mike-kelley-foundation-gr ants-20170320-story.html

Virginia Arts Festival. "John Duffy Institute for New Opera." https://www.vafest.org /education-community/john-duffy-institute-for-new-opera/. Accessed August 31, 2017.

Vitale, Michael. *Introduction to the Art of Stage Management: A Practical Guide to Work- ing in the Theatre and Beyond.* London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019.

Wagner, Cosima. *Cosima Wagner's Diaries, 1878–1883.* Edited by Martin Gregor-Dellin and Dietrich Mack. Translated by Geoffrey Skelton. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980.

Wagner, Richard. *Richard Wagner's Prose Works*. Translated by William Ashton Ellis. 2nd ed. Vol. 1. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1895.

Waleson, Heidi. "Intimate Attractions." *Opera News* 78, no. 12 (June 2014). https://www.metguild.org/Opera_News_Magazine/2014/6/Features/Intimate_Attractions.html

Walker, Alissa. "A Secret Opera Erupts Inside California's Biggest Train Depot." *Gizmodo*, October 21, 2013. https://gizmodo.com/a-secret-opera-erupts-inside-californias-biggest-train-1447832488

Ward-Griffin, Danielle. "As Seen on TV: Putting the NBC Opera on Stage." *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 71, no. 3 (2018): 595–654.

Ward-Griffin, Danielle. *Televising Opera*. New York: Oxford University Press, forthcoming.

Wein, Gail. "City Opera's VOX Introduces New Works April 30 and May 1." *Playbill*, March 23, 2010. https://playbill.com/article/city-operas-vox-introduces-new-works-april-30-and-may-1

Wiebe, Heather. "Opera and Relational Aesthetics." *Opera Quarterly* 35, nos. 1–2 (Winter–Spring 2019): 139–42.

Wikipedia. "Croatia." Last modified March 30, 2022. https://hr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hrvatska. Accessed July 12, 2019.

Woolfe, Zachary. "Review: An Opera Erases and Rewrites the American Myth." *New York Times*, March 9, 2020. https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/09/arts/music/sweet-land-opera-review.html

Worthen, W. B. "'Free Reign?' Designing the Spectator in Immersive Theatre." In *The Routledge Companion to Scenography*, edited by Arnold Aronson, 302–10. New York: Routledge, 2017.

Yale Institute for Music Theater. "Homepage." http://drama.yale.edu/YIMT/institute-home. Accessed August 31, 2017. Web page is no longer active.

Zabrodski, Sarah. "The Public Spectacle of a Personal Opera in LA's Union Station." *Hyperallergic*, November 14, 2013. https://hyperallergic.com/92262/the-public-spectacle-of-a-personal-opera-in-los-angeles-union-station/

Zeiss, Laurel. "The Dramaturgy of Opera." In *The Cambridge Companion to Opera Studies*, edited by Nicholas Till, 179–201. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Zhang, Jingyi. "Opera of the Future, the Future of Opera." PhD diss., Harvard University, forthcoming.

Index

accessibility: assumptions about, 202; of experimental sonic works, 209; of *Invisible Cities*, 41, 52, 209; notions of, 5; production personnel's perspectives and, 7; site-specific accessibility, 26, 202, 205

Acon, Derrell, 168, 179–80, 182, 186, 197, 213

actor-network theory (ANT), 121, 240n15, 241n21

aesthetics: to facilitate opera, 50, 209; limits of aesthetic experimentation, 27, 28; mediated by technology, 27; open/closed models of institutionality and, 146; US operatic performance and structures of, 28

affect, production of, 210, 239n123

Agami, Danielle, 30, 150

Aguila, David, 95, 109, 213

Akiho, Andy, 116, 119, 131, 136–38, 146, 213

Akinboboye, Babatunde, 108, 168, 178, 182–83, 187, 213

Alpine headphones, 58, 229n104

Altany, Maria Elena, 84, 95, 96, 102, 103, 106, 108, 110, 213, 234n39, 238nn103–104

ambiguity: of Calvino's text, 42, 59; interpretive ambiguity, 37–38, 40–42

American Music Theater Festival, 135

amplification: *Invisible Cities* and, 46, 66; of score(s), 66

André, Naomi, 14, 154, 156, 159, 161, 247n8

Angel's Gate Cultural Center, 118

The Angel Project (Warner) (performance art), 50

Anglo-American operatic ecosystems, 242n33. *See also* US operatic ecosystems

Anishinaabe people, 155, 173

ANT (actor-network theory), 121, 240n15, 241n21

anthropophagy, 200, 255n161

anticoloniality: ambiguities in, 197–201; decolonization and, 154, 200; methodological approaches, 154, 248nn13, 15; moving toward, 155; in operatic genre, 154–55, 201, 209; remembering/dis-membering in, 201, 255n162; *Sweet Land* and, 28, 153, 160, 170, 177, 197–201

antigentrification groups, 3, 25, 92, 202

antiracism, 248nn13,15

Aronson, Justine, 80

arrivant experience, 155, 253n118

Artistic Director Cooperative, 129, 208

Art Share LA, 132

Asian Opera Alliance, 15

assemblage theory. *See* open assemblage model

ATLAS (2019), 28, 115–16, 117, 134–35, 143, 147–51. *See also War of the Worlds* (2017)

275

entrepreneurship and, 11; neoliberal precarity and, 132; of US opera industry, 7

Cardiff, Janet, 9, 50, 80

Caton, Kathryn, 224n21

CBAs (collective bargaining agreements), 122, 241n16

Ceja, Joanna, 154, 178, 179, 203, 213

Center for Contemporary Opera, 11

Central Hub, 3, 73, 78, 79, 81, 83, 85, 87, 90, 96, 98, 145, 233n17, 234n39

Central Park Five (2019), 15

Cerrone, Christopher: engagement with operatic history, 45; *In a Grove*, 66–67; influence of music consumption patterns, 49–50; interview, 213; *Invisible Cities* composer, 18, 27, 30, 37–42, 53, 66, 224nn21,25,29; lyricism of, 64; on opera genre, 69; on operatic genre, 31; on operatic sound, 231n132; on operatic voice, 65–66; revisions, 43–44; on sound design, 47; transparent setting of, 59; on vibrato, 231n132. *See also Invisible Cities* (2013)

Certeau, Michel de, 50

Chacon, Raven, 9, 163–64, 165, 166, 167, 169, 185–89, 195, 196, 198, 199, 206, 210, 213

Chambers, Iain, 50

Chase, Claire, 111, 239n122

Chavez Ravine, 152

Chetty, Ayesha Casie, 158

Chicago Opera Theater, 5

Chinatown massacre (Los Angeles), 152, 175, 194

Cincinnati Opera, 5

circulation: coproductions and, 125; institutional structure and, 117; repetitive system of, 127; repetitive systems of, 122

Civic Practice Grants, 218n30

CIVIL warS (proposed opera), 126

Clarke, Eric, 49, 226n59

Cline, Elizabeth, 56, 91, 92, 94, 97, 112, 114–15, 123, 139–40, 150–51, 162, 167, 203–4, 208, 209, 214

Clockstop, 132

closed models of production: capitalism and, 135; contemporary manifestations of precedents of, 122–29; drawbacks in, 124; incremental change and, 208; institutional precedents of, 122–23; labor advantages of, 125; LA Philharmonic as, 121–22; limits of collaborations, 134; in operatic genre, 209; precarity and, 117–20; reproducibility and, 140; traditional structures and, 121–22, 126; US operatic modes of production and, 115

Coates, Ta-Nehisi, 199

cocomposition process, 187–89

Colburn, Martha, 170

collaboration: coproductions and, 125; critiques of inclusionary methods of, 161; ethics of, 208; in The Industry's performances, 22, 130, 209; new models of, 160–69; between open and closed systems, 134; open system of, 131; in operatic genre, 20; *Sweet Land* and, 153, 154, 160–69; systems rewarding, 122

collective bargaining agreements (CBAs), 122, 241n16

colonialism: colonial biases, 14–15; colonial hauntings, 197–201; coloniality of power theory, 157; as consumption, 152; Kearney on, 152–53; in operatic genre, 4, 14, 156, 157, 209; performer composition and, 187–91; rehearsals and, 181–87; scholarship on, 153, 154; Sharon on, 18; *Sweet Land* and, 153; as system of extraction and oppression, 153–54; violence of, 173

colonizer operas: BIPOC performers and, 177; broad confronting of, 159, 179; hierarchies in, 154–55, 158, 191–97; *Sweet Land* and, 156–60, 201, 202; traditional opera as, 28

commissioning practices, 127–29, 134–35, 160–61, 164, 166, 167, 243n47

commodification: curation and, 96–100, 112–13; of listening, 33; of performance, 33

and, 54–60; consumption and, 33, 56; cost disease and, 4; Great Recession and, 8–10; neoliberalism and, 55–56; open models of production and, 129–33; tensions in open institutions, 133–40; of US operatic performances, 28

Eidsheim, Nina, 2, 14, 46, 48, 180, 226n55, 230n122, 236n62

Eikof, Doris Ruth, 132, 133, 244n62

Einstein on the Beach, 55

Eisler, Hans, 117

elitism, 1, 32

Emetaz, Greg, 17

Encompass New Opera Theatre, 11

engaged musicology, 161, 169

engaged production, 25, 156, 161, 164, 168, 169, 178, 191, 196, 200

En Garde Arts, 9

English National Opera, 16

entrepreneurship, influence of, 11

Escobar, Carmina, 132, 172, 183, 187–90, 200, 214

ethics: of collaboration, 28; COVID-19 pandemic closures and, 204, 205; of representation, 7

ethnicity: of production personnel, 155–56; representation and collaboration ethos of, 168, 180; *Sweet Land* and, 4–5, 153, 155, 160, 168

Eubanks, Virginia, 235n41

Europe: Anglo-American operatic ecosystems, 242n33; funding systems in, 11; opera for everyone concept in, 10

Europeras 1&2 (2018), 12, 143

Ewell, Philip, 14–15, 199

exclusion, 5, 7

experience economy, 13, 33

experimental spaces, 6, 244n57

experimentation: Cline on, 138; *Crescent City* and, 20; experience economy and, 13; with form, 170–77; groups and new-music ensembles, 131; individual, 7; of The Industry, 9–10; in The Industry's performances, 209; institutional structure and, 117–20;

Invisible Cities and, 34; Lowenstein on, 139–40; as not a given, 8; opera for everyone concept and, 5; in operatic genre, 209; precarity and, 117–20; as process, 20, 140; reinvention through, 13–14; tensions in open institutions, 133–40; US companies and, 123

Faatoalia, Ashley, 36, 43, 46–47, 54, 55, 57, 64, 214

Fach system, 231n130

Fanon, Franz, 154, 248n15

Fasthorse, Larissa, 159

Felski, Rita, 24

Fiday, Michael, 243n47

Fire Shut Up in My Bones (2019), 15, 125

First Take, 20

Fitzpatrick, Robert, 125–26

flexibility: closed systems and, 125; *Galileo* and, 123; The Industry and, 123, 130; musical organizations and, 128–29, 129; neoliberalism and, 133; *Sweet Land* and, 166; venues and, 132

Floyd, George, 14, 186

Fluxus, 130

Foucault, Michel, 74–75

Freitag, Florian, 57

Freyer, Achim, 18, 61

Friedman, Milton, 55

funding systems, 10–13; closed systems and, 122–29; coproductions and, 124–25; in Europe, 11; Great Recession and, 8; institutionally driven, 124–25; operatic precedents and, 123; regional opera companies and, 10, 11; *Sweet Land* and, 170, 203–4, 205; touring model and, 127–28

Fure, Ash, 208, 209

Galileo (2017), 143, 146–47; cancellation of, 131, 142, 147; Cline on, 140; closed systems and, 121, 123, 142, 146; composer, 119, 136; as co-production, 115, 116; flexibility of, 123, 130; influence of, 142, 151; Lowenstein and, 118, 119, 139; opening, 119; open

livestreams: audience controlled, 86–91; *Hopscotch* and, 3, 21; *Invisible Cities* and, 36–37; performers experiences of, 72

Living Theatre, 9

Locke, Ralph, 158

logistics, 34–37

Long Beach Opera, 126

L'Orfeo (Monteverdi), 76, 77

Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee, 125–26

Los Angeles Opera Theater, 126–27

Los Angeles Philharmonic. *See* LA Philharmonic

Los Angeles State Historic Park, 152, 170, 202, 204

Lowenstein, Marc: on antigentrification protests, 25; on experimentation, 139–40; *Galileo* and, 118, 119, 137–38; *Hopscotch* and, 79, 111, 139; on identity in *Sweet Land*, 253n118; interview, 214; *Invisible Cities* and, 36; on LA Philharmonic, 122; *The Mortal Thoughts of Lady Macbeth* (2010) and, 18–19; on open model of The Industry, 129, 130, 138–39; *The Pajama Game* (1957), 92; on risks of open process, 138–39; Sharon's recruitment of, 18; on small arts organizations, 132; *Sweet Land* and, 139, 185; on touring, 135–36

Lubin-Levy, Joshua, 91

Luger, Cannupa Hanska, 156, 166, 167–68, 169, 170, 183, 184–85, 196, 206, 208, 210, 211, 214

Lyric Opera of Chicago, 16, 207, 208

Maasdorp, Liana, 216n12

Mabou Mines, 130

MacArthur "Genius" Fellowship, 73

Manifest Destiny, as central American myth, 28

Mankey, Caroline, 12

marginalization: experiences of, 28; operatic hierarchies and, 160. *See also Sweet Land* (2020)

Martinez, Vivian, 214, 234n22

materiality, 58

McIntosh, Andrew, 79, 214

MCOA (Music Center Opera Association), 126, 127, 134

McQueen, Garrett, 125

mediation: as central production theme, 26; immersion effect and, 58; mediated entertainment, 91–94; mediated interactions, 234n39; mediating intimacy and isolation, 100–103; and operatic distance, 91–94; in operatic genre, 209; technological mediation, 27, 235n57; theories of, 240n15

Metcalf, Sasha, 122–23, 125–26

methodology, 21–26; digital forms of communication and, 23; ethnography as, 6, 7, 28, 210; hermeneutics of suspicion, 24–26; identity categories, 155–56; power disparity and, 147–48; racism and, 28; Sharon and, 24–25

Metropolitan Opera, 133, 208; COVID-19 pandemic and, 16; *Fire Shut Up in My Bones*, 125; Live in HD series, 232n143, 241n19

Meyer, Stephen C., 230n120, 232n139

Michigan Opera Theater, 15, 206–7. *See also* Detroit Opera

Mike Kelley Foundation for the Arts, 118

Minnesota Opera, 239n127

minstrelsy, 159

mobile interaction: digital liveness, 89–90, 93, 97; methodology and, 23; music consumption and, 27; in public spaces, 3; tweet seats, 237n91; walk-act concept, 50

mobile music: aesthetics of listening from, 48–54; audile technique and, 54–60; *Invisible Cities* and, 27, 42; modes of consumption of, 33; opera as, 31, 32; perceptions of control, 51; postproduction techniques and, 48; writings on, 27. *See also Hopscotch*; *Invisible Cities* (2013)

settler colonialism, 199, 200; narratives of, 28; pageantry and, 159; perpetuating systems of, 154, 157; *Sweet Land* and, 28, 160; technologies of, 156; violence of, 153, 154. *See also* colonizer operas

Sharon, Yuval, 114; address at USC "Visitors and Voices" performance, 142, 144; artistic director cooperative model, 208; *ATLAS* (2019) and, 135, 149; on aural performance, 32; Brecht and, 61, 63, 64–65; collaboration with LA Philharmonic, 114, 140–47; on coproductions, 124; on creative act, 69–70; on *Crescent City*, 19, 20; on curatorial form of spectatorship, 236n77; Detroit Opera and, 15, 16, 209; Duchamp and, 232n145; on flexibility, 130; *Galileo* and, 136, 137; on Heise's assessment, 67–68; on *Hopscotch*, 82, 84–85, 92; *Hopscotch* and, 111; on individualism, 53; on The Industry, 1, 13–14, 46; The Industry and, 18–19; as The Industry founder, 12, 18, 133–34, 141; interview, 1, 2, 214; *Invisible Cities* and, 66, 67; libretti and, 146; in Los Angeles, 18; Lowenstein and, 18; MacArthur "Genius" Fellowship, 22; methodology and, 24; Michigan Opera Theater, 206–8; in New York, 16–18; on opera for everyone, 1–2, 4; on performance space, 133–34; politics and, 15, 142, 144; on repetition, 238n109; role within operatic ecosystem, 242n27; sound design in opera and, 37; *Sweet Land* and, 162, 163–64, 167–68, 170, 183, 196, 204–6; Theater Faction and, 17; *Twilight: Gods*, 256n18; VOX Festival and, 18, 31, 42, 44; Wagner and, 61, 63, 64–65; *War of the Worlds* and, 119, 144–45. *See also ATLAS*

Sheppard, W. Anthony, 250n35, 252n83

Shocked, Michelle, 79

Shvarts, Aliza, 91

Siadat, Fahad, 178, 183, 186, 214

simulcasts, Live in HD series, 241n19

Sim, Yi-Hong, 132

Sinha, Nandini, 179, 214

siren sites, 119–20, 145

site specificity, 10, 26, 50, 159, 161, 202, 205, 207

Sleep No More (2003), 20, 238n121

smartphone adoption: ANT and, 121; increase in, 235n54; mobile interactions during concerts, 237n91

Smith, Chad, 121

Smith, Matthew Wilson, 62

Smither, Alexandra, 187

So, Joseph, 157

social media: digital liveness, 89–91; *God Is a DJ* (2004) and, 17; immersion effect and, 57

Soja, Edward, 74–75

solutionism, 199

sonic gentrification, 2

sound design in opera: auditoriums and, 45; *Invisible Cities* and, 37, 44–46; *Sweet Land* and, 183–84; visibility of, 45–48

sound(s): audience perception of; Clarke on, 226n59; immersive effects of sound products, 229n104; linking of visual to, 51; sonic gentrification, 2; traditional institutional sounds, 26

South Africa, 216n12

Southwell, Peabody, 167, 214

space(s): assumptions about, 202, 206; consumer-oriented attitude toward, 216n11; fluid spaces for experimental performances, 244n57; *Hopscotch* and, 71; The Industry's claims about, 216n11; *Invisible Cities* and, 36, 47, 52; mobile practices and, 50; nontraditional spaces, 9, 207; public/private access tension, 2–3; role of spatiality, 74; small performance spaces, 127; sound design in opera and, 45; *Sweet Land* and, 200; traditional institutional spaces, 6, 26; urban space, 75. *See also* experimental