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‘De Storm der Hartstogten Woedt’: The works of Johannes Jelgerhuis Rienkszoon as a source of stagecraft for the historically informed performer

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Citation
Neuman, L. C. (2025, December 5). *‘De Storm der Hartstogten Woedt’: The works of Johannes Jelgerhuis Rienkszoon as a source of stagecraft for the historically informed performer*. Retrieved from https://hdl.handle.net/1887/4284591

Version:	Publisher's Version
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Downloaded from:	https://hdl.handle.net/1887/4284591

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Chapter 4, case study 2

Jelgerhuis extended: Staging *Proserpina*

This second case study extends my previous experience with techniques drawn from Jelgerhuis's oeuvre and explores how these techniques can be useful for performers today.[1] While starting from Jelgerhuis's works as a source for acting techniques to prepare and stage a performance, I push the boundaries of the techniques, hitherto acquired and described in Chapters 2–3, by integrating them with techniques drawn from other historical sources, in a theatrical genre distinct from the spoken theatre as practiced by Jelgerhuis.[2] The monodrama *Proserpina* of 1815 by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832) and the composer Franz Carl Eberwein (1786–1868) offers a range of challenges well suited to this objective.[3] Composed of spoken text and music, the genre of melodrama (monodrama when featuring a solo actor) provides interaction between music and delivery as new components in my practice.[4] Moreover, scholarship on this monodrama — by Kirsten Gram Holmström, Lorraine Byrne Bodley, Gabrielle Bersier, and others — provides information on its historical context, which richly contributes to this case study.[5]

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[1] Elements of this chapter's content were presented at the symposiums 'Tanz als Musik- Zwischen Klang und Bewegung' (Schola Cantorum Basiliensis, 2021), and 'Actio! Actio! Actio! European Acting Techniques in Historical Perspective' (Leiden University, 2022), and partly published as an article. See Laila Neuman, 'Performing Goethe's *Proserpina* (1815): A Practice-Based Study of Gestural Attitudes, Movement, and Music,' in *Tanz & Musik. Perspektiven für die Historische Musikpraxis*, ed. by Christelle Cazaux, Martina Papiro, and Agnese Pavanello, in Basler Beiträge zur Historischen Musikpraxis, 42 (2023), 299–320. A word of thanks is due to Martina Papiro for her dedication to the layout details of this article, and to Lorraine Byrne Bodley for her supportive encouragement of my research on *Proserpina*.

[2] *Proserpina* was most likely unknown to Jelgerhuis. I have not found Goethe's melodrama version of *Proserpina* on the playbills of the Amsterdam Schouwburg during Jelgerhuis's lifetime and he does not mention the monodrama in his works.

[3] Eberwein was the musical director at Goethe's house and later the musical director at the Weimar Opera. See Wilhelm Bode, *Goethes Schauspieler und Musiker: Erinnerungen von Eberwein und Lobe* [...] (Berlin: Mittler & Sohn, 1912), p. 16; Gaynor G. Jones, 'Eberwein, (Franz) Carl (Adalbert)' in *Oxford Music Online* https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.08501 (accessed 28 February 2023).

[4] The melodrama genre, in its basic form of spoken text and music, such as Jean Jacques Rousseau's (1712–1778) melodrama *Pygmalion* of 1770, gained in popularity particularly in the German speaking countries, which can be seen in examples such as Georg Benda's (1722–1795) *Medea* and *Ariadne auf Naxos* (both of 1775).

[5] Kirsten G. Holmström, *Monodrama, Attitudes, Tableaux Vivants: Studies on Some Trends of Theatrical Fashion, 1770–1815* (Uppsala: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1967). See also Lorraine Byrne Bodley, *Proserpina: Goethe's Melodrama with Music by Carl Eberwein*, ed. and transl. by Lorraine Byrne Bodley (Dublin: Carysfort Press 2007). And see Gabrielle Bersier, '"Hamiltonian-Hendelian" Mimoplastics and Tableau of the Underworld: The Visual Aesthetics of Goethe's 1815 *Proserpina* Production', in *Goethe Yearbook*, 23, ed. by Adrian Daub, Elisabeth Krimmer, and Birgit Tautz (2016), 171–194.

Eberwein's score was not the first that was composed to accompany Goethe's text: *Proserpina* had already been set to music by Karl Siegmund von Seckendorff (1744–1785) and performed in 1779.[6] But the *Proserpina* production of 1815, which premiered on 4 February at the Weimar Court Theatre, reflected various creative and artistic trends of its time important enough to be recorded by several authors, including Goethe himself.[7] A tableau vivant and a chorus were added to the final scene of *Proserpina*, and the performance of the actress Amalie Wolff (1780–1851) featured a particular use of costume and movement. Pivotal to the development of this case study were Goethe's following thoughts on his creation, expressed in a letter to his friend Carl Friedrich Zelter (1758–1832) in May 1815:

> *Meine Proserpina habe ich zum Träger von allem gemacht, was die neuere Zeit an Kunst und Kunststücken gefunden und begünstigt hat: 1) Heroische, landschaftliche Decoration, 2) gesteigerte Recitation und Declamation, 3) Hamiltonisch-Händelische Gebärden, 4) Kleiderwechslung, 5) Mantelspiel und sogar 6) ein Tableau zum Schluß, das Reich des Pluto vorstellend, und das alles begleitet von der Musik, die du kennst, welche diesem übermäßigen Augenschmaus zu willkommener Würze dient.*[8]
>
> I made my Proserpina the messenger of all the art and artifacts found and promoted by our new era: 1) heroic landscape setting, 2) enhanced recitation and declamation, 3) Hamiltonian-Hendelian gestures, 4) costume changes, 5) mantle craft, and even 6) a final tableau, representing the kingdom of Pluto, and all of that accompanied by the music that you are familiar with, to add pleasant spicing to this lavish visual banquet. [9]

This list was published with few alterations in the *Morgenblatt* of May 1815, followed by Goethe's detailed description of these points relating to the performance (and possible future productions) of *Proserpina*.[10] This chapter mainly focuses on points three to five, (Hamiltonian-Hendelian gestures, costume changes, and mantle craft) as they directly refer to movement.[11] Information on these various points follows throughout the chapter, but point three, the 'Hamiltonian-Hendelian gestures', requires immediate attention as it directly affects this case study's structure: Goethe's mention of these gestures refers to the 'attitude' genre practiced by Emma Hamilton (1765–1815) and the actress Henriette Hendel-Schütz (1772–1849), both of whom used costume for expressive purposes in their performances. The attitudes they performed can be defined as expressive, full

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[6] See Petra Maisak, 'Theater-Effekte: Bilder zu Goethes "Proserpina"', in *Goethezeit — Zeit für Goethe*: *Auf den Spuren deutscher Lyriküberlieferung in die Moderne* [...], ed. by Konrad Feilchenfeldt and others (Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2003), 111–129 (p. 111).

[7] Goethe was the director of the Weimar Theatre between 1791 and 1817. See Harang, *Das Weimarer Theater*, p. 21.

[8] Letter to C. F. Zelter, 17 May 1815, *Goethes Werke* (Weimar: Hermann Böhlaus Nachfolger, 1901), WA 4.25, pp. 328–329.

[9] Transl. by Bersier, in Bersier, '"Hamiltonian-Hendelian" Mimoplastics', p. 173.

[10] 'Proserpina. Monodrama von Goethe mit Musik von Carl Eberwein' in *Morgenblatt für gebildete Stände*, 136 (8 June 1815), 541–544 (pp. 542–543). This article was also published in *Goethes Werke* (Weimar: Hermann Böhlaus Nachfolger, 1901), WA 1.40, 106–118 (pp. 108–115).

[11] In *Mantelspiel* (mantle craft), elements of the costume, such as a mantle or veil, are an integral part of the performer's movements and expression.

body stances, incorporating the use of shawls or a mantle to imitate paintings and classical sculpture. Both women were famous in Goethe's time for their individual series of gestural attitudes, which differed from Jelgerhuis's stage attitudes (described in Chapter 1). The attitudes performed by Hamilton and Hendel-Schütz can be described as expressive postures referring to works of art, featuring the use of shawls and mantles as a means of expression. As this attitude genre and its characteristic use of costume seemed in line with my objectives, I included the study of this genre and its use of costume in my research, as complementing elements to the acting techniques described by Jelgerhuis. The search for *welstand* in every moment on-stage is again an important guideline.[12]

The following guiding questions inform my investigations: how might the genre of attitudes and the use of costume as practiced by Hamilton and Hendel-Schütz add to the attitudes and other techniques described by Jelgerhuis, in creating a staged performance of *Proserpina*? And how might other fragments of the documentation on *Proserpina* combined with early nineteenth-century sources on acting contribute to the preparation process and performance? With Goethe's words and these questions as guidelines, this chapter illustrates the process preparatory to staging a historically inspired rendition of *Proserpina* as performed at the Utrecht Early Music Festival of 2021 and at the Leiden Overacting Theatre Festival of 2022. In doing so, I am building on the research done by theatre scholars, in offering an approach to Goethe's monodrama from a performer's perspective. As stated in the Introduction, section 'Terminology', I use the term historically 'inspired' intentionally: the style and performances resulting from combining these sources today cannot and are not intended to be the recreation of a historical event. For instance, the work with the costume and particularly with the dance-like movements go beyond Jelgerhuis's instructions in his treatise. However, the core of this dissertation centres around Jelgerhuis's works and acting skills. As I did in the first case study (Chapter 3), I continue to prioritize those elements Jelgerhuis addresses over those he leaves unmentioned. This approach also allowed me to concentrate on elements of acting I was able to engage with for longer periods of time (such as the costume and acting skills), as opposed to production elements (such as lighting, acoustics, and sets), which were available only during the very last rehearsal. In areas where Jelgerhuis provides no explicit guidance, I make informed choices based on available research and aligned with the practical and artistic needs of my creative process. The original contribution to existing knowledge added by this case study thus consists in combining acting techniques as described in Jelgerhuis's published and unpublished works with the attitudes as practiced by Hamilton and Hendel-Schütz both as training tools and to create an aesthetic, expressive, and moving stage language. Performers and stage directors have used Jelgerhuis's treatise *Theoretische lessen* in combination with other sources to stage historically informed performances, but the use of additional unpublished sources by Jelgerhuis in combination with the sources on Hamilton, Hendel-Schütz, and Goethe, has not as yet been attempted. Although Goethe and Eberwein's *Proserpina* has been produced in recent decades – this production was, to my knowledge, the first to attempt a historically inspired

[12] I use the word *welstand* here in its general, overarching sense (defined in Chapter 1, section 1.2.4 on '*welstand*') as 'that which looks good', a concept referring to beauty in form, harmonious proportions, and/or expression.

performance of the monodrama based on practice-based research.[13] The order of the following paragraphs closely follows that of the research process as it alternates between research sections related to the sources, sections on practice, experimentation, reflection, and so on. It presents as closely as possible the steps I took to progress 1) from a physical understanding of the attitudes executed in silence, 2) to using attitudes as foundations for staging spoken text 3) to creating a unity between attitudes, movement, and music in a unified performance. The processes of artistic creation and other types of research (acting, reading, writing, and experimenting) in reality frequently overlapped, but an attempt to reflect this in writing, if at all possible, would make this chapter more difficult to read.

4.1 PREPARATION

The first preparatory steps included basic research of the Proserpina myth in its various forms through time, both in written form and in the visual arts. This helped me to create images in my mind not only of the various mythical characters of whom Proserpina speaks in Goethe's libretto, such as Pluto,[14] Ixion, Demeter, and the Danaids, but also of the objects and surroundings described: Tartarus, the pomegranate tree, the fields where Proserpina played with her friends, and so on. The story of Demeter's daughter Proserpina (Persephone in Greek mythology), which inspired Goethe's text, is generally seen as an allegory of the changing seasons. The myth is about the young Proserpina, picking flowers with her friends in the fields of Enna, when she is suddenly abducted by Pluto and brought to the underworld. Demeter searches for her in vain, and Demeter's sadness causes the earth to suffer (as symbolized by the seasonal shift to winter). Proserpina's father Jupiter then makes a pact with Pluto: Proserpina may return to the land of the living, but only if she has not eaten. Proserpina, unaware of the pact, sees a pomegranate tree and eats a few seeds (versions vary in the number of seeds) of the pomegranate fruit. Because she ate of the fruit, she may return to the land of the living part of the year (during which her mother's happiness results in spring and summer) but must return as queen of the underworld and Pluto's wife for the remaining months (versions vary between four and six months). In the months Proserpina spends in the underworld, Demeter mourns the absence of her daughter (the winter months symbolizing Demeter's sadness).

Goethe begins his version of the narration after the abduction. Proserpina finds herself alternating between her present role as queen of the Underworld, her memories, and her hopes and longing of being returned to the land of the living. The moment she eats the pomegranate seeds, a choir

[13] For the dates and details of three different *Proserpina* productions in 2007, 2009, and 2010, which used Bodley's *Proserpina* edition with Eberwein's music, see Lorraine Byrne Bodley, 'From Mythology to Social Politics: Goethe's Proserpina with Music by Carl Eberwein', in *Musical Receptions of Greek Antiquity: From the Romantic Era to Modernism*, ed. by Katerina Levidou, Kaitē Rōmanu, and George Vlastos (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016), 35–67 (p. 1). *Proserpina* was also performed in 2016 in München, Germany, with the Münchner Symphoniker and Salome Kammer in the title role. Kammer can also be heard in as Proserpina in a CD recording of 1997, with the Wuppertal Symphony Orchestra and the conductor Peter Gülke.
[14] I use the Roman names throughout this chapter, as Goethe uses these in his libretto.

of Fates (*Parzen*) sing her fate, and she unwillingly takes her place as Queen of the underworld. Goethe's monodrama ends in anger and hopelessness; there is no liberation.[15]

4.1.1 Stage indications in other melodramas

Other melodramas, such as Rousseau's *Pygmalion* and Georg Benda's *Ariadne auf Naxos* and *Medea* contain stage directions for the actors and occasional directions for the voice, such as those for Ariadne: '*Sie ruft laut*' [...] '*Sie ruft*' (She calls aloud [...] She calls out); '*Sie sinkt zur Erde*' (She sinks to the ground); '*sie fährt plötzlich auf, indem sie auf der hohen See ein Schiff erblickt, das schnell vorüber eilt*' (she suddenly stands up, as she sees a ship hying away on the high seas).[16] Some directions also take into account the stage set, for instance, examples for Medea and Jason: '*Sie lehnt sich an eine Säule*' (She leans against a pillar); '*er will in den Palast und bebt zurück*' (he wants to enter the palace and recoils, trembling).[17] In *Pygmalion*, Rousseau not only notes the staging, but also inserts passions preceding a passage or sentence, such as '*avec plus d'attendrissement encore*' (with even more tenderness) and '*vive indignation*' (vivid indignation).[18] Neither Goethe's libretto nor Eberwein's score offer any such clues for the actress except the moment when Proserpina picks a pomegranate and eats a few seeds. Contriving the stage action therefore relies on the interpretation of the libretto and the music, while piecing together elements from other documentation of the piece and its performance.

I identified a vast range of emotions in Goethe's poetic text, including sadness, joy, despair, hope, pity, anger, helplessness, courage, rapture, and hatred. The text can be interpreted in many ways, although the music influences the mood and atmosphere, and therefore the passions. I mapped out the sequence of passions in the text to obtain a better understanding of Proserpina's emotions and consequently of her actions. I then noted the passions in the musical score, knowing that they affect the vocal colour, the timing of the spoken text, and the interaction with the music. To give an idea of such a passionate sequence I feature, here, my interpretation of Proserpina's passions (influenced by the musical score) in the following synopsis:

> Proserpina cannot find a way to escape from the underworld (anxiety to sadness). She remembers her innocent days of playing with her friends in the fields of Enna (longing and

[15] For a summary of Goethe's version of the narrative, see 'Proserpina: Melodram von Goethe, Musik von Eberwein' in *Journal für Literatur, Luxus und Mode*, 30 (Weimar: Carl Bertuch, April 1815) pp. 232–241.

[16] For the musical score, see Georg Benda, *Ariadne auf Naxos: Ein Duodrama von Georg Benda, vollständige und verbesserte Partitur* (Leipzig, im Schwickertschen Verlage, n. d.), in *Ariadne auf Naxos* [...], introduction by Thomas Bauman (New York & London: Garland publishing, 1985), 4, pp. 62, 70, 73.
For the libretto, see Georg Benda, *Ariadne auf Naxos: Ein Duodrama mit Musick* (Gotha: n. pub., 1775), pp. 6–7, in *Digitalisierte Sammlungen der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin*, http://resolver.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/SBB00006E0600000000 (accessed January 2025).

[17] Georg Benda (1722–1795), text by Friedrich Wilhelm Gotter (1746–1797) *Medea 'ein mit Musik vermi*[s]*chtes Drama zum Gebrauche gesellschafttlicher Theater* [...]', ed. from the autograph manuscript by Enrico Gatti (2014), p. 14, bar 195 and p. 62, bar 848.

[18] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Horace Coignet, *Pygmalion; Scène Lyrique*, ed. by Jacqueline Waeber (Genève: Éditions Université Conservatoire de Musique, 1997), pp. 39, 51.

> joy), but also the abduction by Pluto (pain, anger). She would like to free Tantalus, Ixion and the Danaides from their tortures (pity to hope), but although she is a queen now, she has no power to do so (helplessness). She imagines her mother's searching for her in vain (hopelessness), and envisions sending her mother Demeter to her father Jupiter, the one who knows where Demeter can find Proserpina (hope). Proserpina implores her father to send Demeter to the underworld (courage) to free her (hope). The underworld transforms and comes to life, and Proserpina sees a pomegranate tree (wonder) and eats of the fruit (rapture). At that moment she hears thunder and is struck by unbearable pain (fear). The fates call her, represented by the chorus offstage (disillusionment-despair), and (rage-hatred) she accepts her fate as queen of the underworld.[19]

This interpretation shows the passions arranged in contrasts (joy to anger, rapture to fear) as well as in subtle gradations of intensity (hope-courage-hope, wonder-rapture). To become familiar with the text and the music, and to come to a mutual agreement on the progression of passions, Artem Belogurov and I organized several rehearsals in which I declaimed the spoken text and Belogurov played the music on a fortepiano. Other objectives in these rehearsals were: memorisation (on my side) and experimenting with different tempi and vocal colours. We used the piano reduction in Byrne Bodley's 2007 edition of *Proserpina* for this first rehearsal period, as well as a copy of the *Proserpina* manuscript currently kept at the Goethe- und Schiller-Archiv in Weimar.[20] There are small differences in the text between the Weimar fair copy of the manuscript and the various published versions of Goethe's *Proserpina* text in prose and verse from 1778 onwards. My citations in this chapter follow the *Proserpina* text as published in the *Journal für Literatur, Luxus und Mode* of 1815.[21]

4.1.2 Images and text

To avoid corrections later, I turned to professionals for coaching sessions on German pronunciation early on in the process. Leila Müller, Barbara Tanze, and Andreas Gilger corrected my German pronunciation, and Claus Weimar kindly gave me his insight on the historical pronunciation of the mythical figures and terms (names of rivers, surroundings, and so on). Once I had obtained a first impression of Proserpina's character and emotions by studying the text, the music, and the myth, I created a visual 'road map' as an inspiration and guide for attitudes and gestures, by inserting pictures of illustrations and engravings into a word document with a transcription of Goethe's text (see Figure 1). The first version of this visual road map primarily featured pictures from selected works by Jelgerhuis, including the *Theoretische lessen*, *Tooneelkledingen van den Koninglyken Schouwburg te Amsterdam*, the manuscript *Schettzende Herinneringen*, and his portfolio *Studiën van Klederdragten*.[22] I chose illustrations and other depictions of actors in full body

[19] Laila Neuman, Narrative interpretation of *Proserpina*, used to guide the staged performances of 2021 and 2022. Unpublished.
[20] Byrne Bodley, *Proserpina*, pp. 122–170. For the manuscript, see *Proserpina. Monodrama von Goethe mit Musik von Carl Eberwein*, Goethe- und Schiller-Archiv, Klassik Stiftung, Weimar, GSA 32/61 (45 double pages).
[21] See 'Proserpina', in *Journal für Literatur*, 232–241.
[22] For the full reference to Jelgerhuis's four works mentioned here, see Appendix H.

attitudes, as well as those intended as costume designs (many costume designs are shown to suit a character, often in action). In order to expand my repertoire of gestures and attitudes, which in the first case study had been based predominantly on male figures, I now prioritized using and studying gestures and attitudes of female figures.

Warum öffnetest du sein Herz

Auf einen Augenblick?

Und warum nach mir?

Da du wußtest,

Es werde sich wieder auf ewig verschließen?

Warum ergriff er nicht eine meiner Nymphen

Und setzte sie neben sich

Auf seinen kläglichen Thron?

Warum mich, die Tochter der Ceres?

O Mutter! Mutter!

Wie dich deine Gottheit verläßt

Im Verlust deiner Tochter,

Die du glücklich glaubtest,

Hinspielend, hintändelnd ihre Jugend!

Figure 1, A section of my 'roadmap'. A passage from Goethe's *Proserpina* text with added images.

From top to bottom: Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, plate 73, detail; Jelgerhuis, 'Twaalf studies van acteurs en actrices' (c. 1800–1820), drawing, pen and black ink, grey wash, Museum Boijmans van Beuningen Collection, MvS 153 (PK), detail; Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, plate 42, detail; Jelgerhuis, costume designs for Badeloch and Adelgunde in *Gijsbreght van Aemstel*, Amsterdam, Allard Pierson, theatre collection, t000748.000;
Heinrich Sintzenich, (1781), Esther Charlotte Brandes as Ariadne, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek

This was also a way to lay the physical and mental foundation for Proserpina's character, which represents various facets of womanhood. I also included in this first draft the attitudes and gestures in plate 20 of the *Theoretische lessen*, of which Jelgerhuis states he depicted a male figure to make the position of the legs visible, while the examples can also be used by women.[23]
The preparatory procedure of assembling and arranging images of attitudes followed my work on the full body passionate attitude series, as described in Chapter 2, during which I had experienced the rapid response of my mind and body to visual images. By creating this visual plan – a sequence of images corresponding to the text – before doing any bodywork, the process of putting the images into the body was made easier. The choice to follow as much as possible the rule of representing the persons and surroundings carrying negative connotations on Proserpina's left, and the positive images on her right (so as to refer to and gesticulate with respectively the left and the right hand), was a decisive factor in this first set-up.[24] For instance, Proserpina sees and addresses her playing friends, her father Jupiter, and the pomegranate tree on her right, whereas she indicates Pluto's horses, Amor (whom she blames for her pain and abandonment), and the Fates, on her left.

4.1.3 Training 1

Having created the first attitude road map (images of attitudes inserted in the Proserpina text), I practiced the attitudes in silence, before connecting them with the text and the music. This was done in several steps, similar to the passionate attitude series preparation described in Chapter 2 (section 2.5.1, 'Choice and order of the images'): 1) observation of the depicted attitude and creation of a mental image; 2) embodiment of a single attitude; 3) combining these single elements in a sequence of two or more attitudes, emotions, or vocal colours, for instance; 4) executing sections while declaiming the text or during a musical passage. I often added the layer of emotion, and/or the transitions between the various passions in stages 2, 3, or 4. The emotion influenced the imagination, muscle tension, facial expression, and movement.

The embodiment process consisted not only in training and repetition but also in periods which might be called 'playing'. By 'playing' I mean practicing an attitude or sequence while leaving my body and my imagination free to explore the timing and quality of each movement and its transition to the next, or to find their own way to new movements or images. For me, playing, just like training through imitation, is part of creating a solid technique and embodied understanding. Moreover, when playing resulted in a new attitude or transition which might be useful in the future, I tried to master that particular component through repetition. The newly discovered element

[23] See Chapter 2, section 2.2.1, 'Guidelines to plates 20 and 21 on gesticulation', or Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, pp. 84 and 86.
[24] Jelgerhuis mentions the alternation of left and right as follows '*1°. Neem alles wat groot, goed, en edel is regts; - met den regter hand. 2°. Alles wat verachtelijk en afkeerwekkend is, links, met den linker hand* [...] *3°. En het hoofd nu regts, dan links draaijende, naar den aard der zake, brengt in dezen veel toe, tot gratie en welstand*' (1°. Take all that is great, good, and noble on the right side; - with the right hand. 2°. All that is despicable and revolting, left; - with the left hand [...] 3°. And turning the head now to the left, now to the right, according to the nature of the subject, adds much to grace and *welstand*). Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, pp. 78–79.

could then become part of my physical and mental repertoire. Having learned, during earlier practice, that observation is important to adjust minor differences between my attitudes and those on the illustrations, I regularly worked with a mirror and feedback from colleagues online (particularly during the pandemic) or in person, as well as by watching video recordings of my own practice.[25]

When the passions, gestures, the sequences of attitudes, and their transitions thus far conceived for *Proserpina* had become unified with the text and the music, I showed my progress to my colleagues of the Dutch Historical Acting Collective (DHAC). I handed them the visual road map with the text and the images, and performed the first half of the text. In four interactive sessions, I used their feedback – with them present – to improve various elements of this first version. This exchange between myself and the group members as my audience also encouraged experimentation with new ideas. The sum of their advice was invariably to go further than I thought, whether in pronunciation, speed of delivery, or vocal range. For instance, Andreas Gilger encouraged me to exaggerate my German pronunciation; Gilger's and Anne Smith's experiments with speed of recitation based on the treatise of Seckendorff inspired me to try certain sections much slower or much faster than I had done; and Jed Wentz motivated me to increase both the pitch levels and the volume. The presence of Anne Smith provided an added opportunity to work on various aspects of acting using Alexander Technique. Her recommendations helped improve my vocal quality and physical expression. I became aware of the possibility of executing certain attitudes or stage actions with less physical tension. This augmented my physical possibilities, invariably leading me to much more ease of movement and vocal freedom, while simultaneously resulting in increased expression.

4.1.4 Training 2

Later on, I added details to the staging road map and inserted more images into the word document between sections of the text, also taking into account the musical interludes. I now used depictions of male as well as female figures and photographs of engravings and art works that were not by Jelgerhuis, although they were direct extensions of his technical instructions (to derive inspiration from sculptures and paintings). Some images spurred me on to more complex movements than others. Achieving the position visible in this drawing by Jelgerhuis (Figure 2), for instance, worked better when divided into two gestures.[26] The two hands are pointing in different directions. Instead of swiping both arms simultaneously into this position, I used the gestures separately in a passage spoken by Proserpina's mother: '*Will keine Stunde ruhen, bis ich sie finde, | Will keinen Gang scheuen | Hierhin und dorthin!*' ([I] will not rest a single hour until I find her, will shun no path, hither/this way or thither/that way).

[25] For Jelgerhuis on practicing attitudes in front of a mirror, see Chapter 2 or Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, p. 55.
[26] Johannes Jelgerhuis, 'Twaalf studies van acteurs en actrices' (c. 1800–1820), drawing, pen and black ink, grey wash, Museum Boijmans van Beuningen Collection, Rotterdam, MvS 153 (PK).

Figure 2, Jelgerhuis, 'Twaalf studies van acteurs en actrices' (c. 1800–1820), drawing, pen and black ink, grey wash, Museum Boijmans van Beuningen Collection, MvS 153 (PK), detail.

Doing so resulted in contrasting movements, gave emphasis to the words, and created momentum in this passage fuelled with anger. Video F shows how I inserted this sequence in the 2021 *Proserpina* performance. Because of the direction I moved in, I inverted my gestures (compared to Jelgerhuis's depiction on Figure 2): I first moved my left hand into the horizontal position across my body at the word '*hierhin*' (hither/this way), and then flung the right hand into the higher position at the word '*dorthin*' (thither/that way).

Play Video F

The passions added at the beginning (mainly corresponding to the passions as described in the *Theoretische lessen*) were not sufficient for the range of passions I read in Goethe's Proserpina text.[27] I therefore inserted combinations of passions like those described in Jelgerhuis's study of the role of Siméon, in his *Toneel Studien* manuscript of 1811 (see Chapter 3, case study 1). Adding precise passionate states – such as '*woede in stilte gehouden*' (anger contained in silence) and '*langzaam opbruisende woede*' (slowly increasing ebullition of anger) – helped me to break down longer sequences of attitudes into precise emotional progressions. These progressions could also contain combinations of different passions (joyful hope, despairing rage) and different shades within the main passions, such as disappointment, abandonment and helplessness as nuances of sadness, and '*zin verwardheid*' (bewilderment) as a nuance of wonder. Having multiple points absolutely clear in my mind, in a way that provided a more detailed roadmap, facilitated the transitions and made the story-telling more varied. I followed Jelgerhuis's advice to search for gracefulness and *welstand* even in passions such as sadness, as transpires in his description of Madame Anatole's performance:[28]

> *Zij heeft ons al die hartstogten voor oogen gesteld, die wij juist doorloopen hebben.* [...] *Laat ik U liever doen aandachtig wezen, met hoeveel gratie zij steeds, tot hare diepe droefheid en tot het storten van tranen gekomen, het gelaat geheel heeft weten te bedekken nu eens met eene en dan met beide de handen; wel wetende dat het schreijen het gelaat geheel misvormt, zoo als ik aanwees.*[29]
>
> She brought all the passions before our eyes, which we have just discussed. [...] Let me bring to your attention with how much grace she, when brought to tears by deep sadness, covered her face every time, now with one hand, then with both hands; well aware that crying disforms the face.

This passage shows Jelgerhuis's ideal of beauty on stage, even in moments of great suffering.[30] I experienced once again (as I had done in the experiments described in Chapter 2) that following this ideal need not take away from the vehemence of the emotion itself, as the passion of sadness can be suggested by other physical phenomena, such as the way of breathing and the body's muscle tension. To continue with the example of sadness (without hope), for instance, there is an absence of physical support caused by slack muscles. This emotion creates not only a posture devoid of muscle tone or strength but also directly affects the information the voice transmits. The audience is influenced by various levels of information, such as the music playing softly, the body language, and the weak, lamenting voice, which does not arrive in a steady flow, but in waves, with sighs and pauses. Whether conscious or not, the audience will recognize, (physically or otherwise) the state simulated by the actor. Madame Anatole, however, was a mimist/dancer, and therefore did not have to combine such gestures with spoken text, thereby compromising the audibility of the voice.

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[27] In order to extend my variety of passions, I could have also used treatises on declamation such as those by John Walker, *Elements of Elocution* (London: 1799, part 2) and James Burgh, *The Art of Speaking* (1761); both sources feature extensive lists with passions, but the solution of combining passions gave me the full range of passions I needed while staying close to Jelgerhuis's works.
[28] Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, p. 171. It is possible that Jelgerhuis speaks of the French ballet dancer Constance-Hippolyte Gosselin (dates 1793–18[?]), also known as Madame Anatole.
[29] Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, pp. 171–172.
[30] For *welstand* in contempt and hatred, see Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, p. 144; *welstand* in fright, p. 146; *welstand* in fear, p. 150.

The moments at which I covered part of my face with one or two hands in moments of shame and sadness (see Figure 3), were musical moments in which Proserpina does not speak: for instance, in the music before she exlaims, '*Heruntergerissen* | *In diese endlosen Tiefen!* | *Königin hier!* | *Königin?* | *Vor der nur Schatten sich neigen!*' (Snatched down | Into these endless depths! | To be Queen here! | Queen? | Before whom only shades will bow!) and once during the chorus's accusations to her.[31]

Figure 3, (left) Engraving by Charles-Nicholas Cochin in Dandré-Bardon, *Gewoonte der aloude volken*, transl. anonymous, vol. 1, plate 43, detail; (middle) Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, plate 23, details; (right) video still taken from one of the 2021 *Proserpina* performances.

The second road map saw changes and improvements until the final rehearsals, and was enriched with a third stage of research, centring around two essential aspects of the *Proserpina* production of 1815: the Hamiltonian-Hendelian gestures and the costume.[32]

4.2 ATTITUDES AS AN ART FORM: EMMA HAMILTON, HENRIETTE HENDEL-SCHÜTZ AND IDA BRUN

To get a better understanding of the attitudes as performed by Emma Hamilton and the actress Henriette Hendel-Schütz, I referenced written and visual sources in combination with physical practice and experimentation. The written sources included documents by Goethe and other contemporaries concerning the 1815 *Proserpina* performance, as well as secondary sources (articles, biographies, lectures) relating to both the production and the genre of attitudes as performed by

[31] Transl. Byrne Bodley, *Proserpina*, p. 174.
[32] See the citation of Goethe's Letter to Zelter, 17 May 1815 (page 180 of the present chapter).

Hamilton, Hendel-Schütz, and others. The visual sources consisted of drawings, paintings and engravings, vases, sculptures, and other objects originating in, or inspired by (Greek and Roman) Antiquity. Kirsten Gram Holmström's book *Monodrama, Attitudes, Tableaux Vivants: Studies on Some Trends of Theatrical Fashion, 1770–1815* provided more insight into this genre of attitudes, the historical context, and its performers.[33] Holmström offers information not only on Hamilton and Hendel-Schütz, but also on the Danish artist Ida Brun (1792–1857).[34] All three women used shawls or veils to imitate classical sculpture and paintings or to refer to myths, and their attitudes were captured in engravings, paintings, and drawings.[35] The beauty of Brun's attitudes persuaded me to add them to my research for *Proserpina*, even though they were not mentioned by Goethe.

The following short biographies provide insight into the different performance styles of these three women. **Emma Hamilton** mainly performed her attitudes in the private sphere. She was known for her dramatic expression in series of rapidly contrasting attitudes including Niobe, a nymph, Maria Magdalena, and the muse of dancing. Her attitudes are depicted in engravings by Friedrich Rehberg, etchings by Pietro Antonio Novelli, as well as paintings by George Romney and others.[36] Romney also depicted her in attitudes showing general affects mentioned by Birgit Jooss, such as *sensibility* and *absence*.[37] **Hendel-Schütz** also performed for larger audiences, throughout Europe, for instance at the city hall in Weimar in 1810 (it was in this time that Goethe saw her perform) and at Riddarhuset in Stockholm in 1812.[38] She created programs, which included religious themes, and she occasionally introduced her attitude scenes by reading poetry or stories from mythology. The engravings of her attitudes by Joseph Peroux, *Pantomimische Stellungen von Henriette Hendel* [...], published in 1809, show Hendel-Schütz in attitudes portraying an odalisque, a caryatide, and mythical figures such as Ariadne and Cassandra, but the majority are narrative scenes from the life of the Virgin Mary.[39] **Ida Brun** occasionally performed her attitudes with music, and, like Hamilton, mainly on private occasions. Her mother, Friederike Brun, wrote a memoir of Ida's upbringing, entitled '*Idas ästhetische Entwicklung*' (Ida's aesthetic development).[40] In this document, she describes the way she stimulated Ida's talents, which, if accurate, would mean that Ida's inspiration for her attitudes was cultivated during her youth, being taught stories from mythology, and shown images of ancient Greek (art) objects from Antiquity. Brun's attitudes are depicted in

[33] See Holmström: *Monodrama.*
[34] Adelaide Caroline Johanne Brun (known as Ida Brun and later as Ida (de) Bombelles).
[35] For a detailed portrayal of these three women and their attitudes, see Holmström, *Monodrama*, 110–208.
[36] Rehberg, *Drawings Faithfully Copied*; Novelli, *Emma performing her attitude*s; see also Pietro Antonio Novelli, etching, late eighteenth century, H. Beard Print Collection, Theatre and Performance Collection, s. 5154-2009, https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O1153249/h-beard-print-collection-print-novelli-pietro-antonio/ (accessed 2 March 2023).
[37] For reproductions including the drawings by Rehberg, the etchings by Novelli, and paintings by Romney and others, see *Emma Hamilton: Seduction and Celebrity*, ed. by Quintin Colville and Kate Williams (London: Thames & Hudson: 2016): George Romney, *Emma as Sensibility*, 1780s, oil on canvas, Jean Johnson Kislak Collection, see p. 87; for George Romney, *Emma as Absence* (c. 1786), oil on canvas, National Maritim Museum, p. 83. For Jooss's citation, see p. 193 below.
[38] Bersier, '"Hamiltonian-Hendelian" Mimoplastics', 173; Holmström, *Monodrama*, p. 185.
[39] Peroux, *Pantomimische Stellungen*.
[40] Friederike Brun, *Wahrheit aus Morgenträumen und Idas ästhetische Entwicklung* [...](Aarau: Sauerländer, 1824), pp. 193–270.

drawings by Christoph Heinrich Kniep (1755–1825) and assembled by Friederike Brun in a book with drawings and paintings on various subjects.[41] The actress Hendel-Schütz toured with more extensive programs, and all three women performed in the private sphere.

To avoid confusion in the following discussion, I will differentiate between two styles of attitudes, which I, for the purpose of this dissertation, have termed as 'stage attitudes' (attitudes used by actors and other performers in plays, opera, and so on) and 'artistic attitudes' (performed mainly outside of the theatre by women who used the costume as an expressive tool inherent to their performances).

4.2.1 Stage attitudes

Chapter 3 focused on the attitudes illustrated and described by Jelgerhuis, which I will hereafter refer to as stage attitudes. Jelgerhuis devotes considerable attention in his treatise to stage attitudes as they are one of the actor's key means of expression. Actors can learn and draw inspiration from the visual arts based on Greek and Roman myth, not with the aim of creating direct imitation of figures in art on stage but to acquire, through observation, the standard skills required for the stage, such as contrast, *welstand*, a variety of stances, and graceful, painterly ways of turning the head and shaping the hands.

I maintain that these qualities of expression must then be adapted to the theatrical genre and the character the actor portrays. The inspiration drawn from classical iconography and Greek and Roman myth, for instance, must be modified to fit the role and the costume of a king or a queen in a tragedy situated in the courts of Northern countries. To portray a character of lower rank or a character in a comedy or farce, an actor or actress must lessen the grandeur and grace of the Hellenistic statues or refuse its style entirely, depending on the character. In this case, paintings of later periods and more quotidian genres can be useful.[42] Although Jelgerhuis's *Theoretische lessen* includes sixteen chapters on costume, he does not advocate active use of the costume to create dramatic effects in (sequences of) the attitudes. Many costumes, particularly those for tragedy, included mantles and veils, but their use seems to be a part of the character's costume throughout the play (also indicating rank and character), and any variations in the costume or the movements thereof, would be a natural consequence of the character's developing emotional states.[43]

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[41] *Kniep. Attitudes de la Ida Brun*, in '*Friederike Brun's book*', nineteenth century, Frederiksbergmuseerne, Bakkehuset Collection, Denmark, Photographer: Stewart McIntyre, (Napoli, 1810), pen and ink on paper, Bak 0021x0068 and (n.d). pencil on paper, Bak 0021x0091–0021x0099.

[42] Jelgerhuis advises to observe paintings as inspiration for different passions and mentions the Dutch painter Jan Steen (1626–1679) as an example for facial expression and make-up in the genre of comedy. See Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, p. 128.

[43] These assumptions are based on my study of Jelgerhuis's costume designs, his manuscripts and the *Theoretische lessen*.

4.2.2 Artistic attitudes

Alternatively, the artistic attitudes as performed by Hamilton, Hendel-Schütz, and Brun, were neither part of a play nor necessarily intended for the stage. These attitudes were performed in silence or with musical accompaniment but not with spoken text. As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the costume had multiple functions in these artistic attitudes. A simple dress in the Greek classical style was often a basis upon which were added one or more veils and in some cases a mantle. The veils and/or mantles could serve in the creative transformations from one scene, emotional state, or character, to the next. The performers of these attitudes not only derived inspiration from the visual arts, but also created a direct physical reference to the art object itself by creating an imitation of the picture or sculpture with their pose and costume. These art objects included classical sculpture and paintings, but artistic attitudes could also refer to mythological stories or religious themes. Lorenzo Hammarsköld (1785–1827), cited in Holmström, defined these attitudes as 'representing plastic works of art by mimic means, gestures and draping, and transforming their local and existing life into a successive temporal one'.[44] Depending on the audience, spectators could recognize the work of art and experience it as momentarily brought to life.[45] There might be several characters or works portrayed in one performance, or a single character in various stages of a story known to the audience (such as Hendel-Schütz's attitudes depicting various stages in the life of the Virgin Mary). Another definition of these attitudes is provided in an article by Birgit Jooss, entitled 'Zwischen Kunstideal und sinnlicher Pose; Lebende Bilder und Attituden der Goethezeit':

> *Attitüden, auch als mimo-plastische Kunst bezeichnet, zeigen in ihrer Reinform Posen von Einzelfiguren frei nach antiken Statuen sowie allgemeine menschliche Affekte. Sie werden in einem schnellen Wechsel durch eine einzelne Darstellerin vorgestellt.* [...] *die Attitüden* [*fordern*] *das Talent der Selbstenszenierung. Die Künstlerin ist Bildnerin und Bild zugleich.*[46]
>
> Attitudes, also known as mimo-plastic art, in their pure form exhibit poses of single figures loosely based on antique statues as well as general human affects. They are presented in rapid alternation by a single performer. [...] the attitudes [demand] the talent of self-staging. The artist is both the maker of the image and the image itself.

Although Hamilton and Hendel-Schütz occasionally also interacted with other persons in their series of attitudes, particularly with children, most of the attitudes were indeed performed and

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[44] Transl. by Holmström, in *Monodrama*, p. 119.

[45] This may mostly have been the case in specific private occasions which united audience members with an interest in and knowledge of the Greek Mythology and/or the visual arts. For an example, see the memoirs of the Comtesse de Boigne (Louise-Eléonore-Charlotte-Adélaide d'Osmond 1781–1866) — cited in Holmström, *Monodrama*, p. 114 — in which she recalls the audience exclaiming: 'Bravo la Médéa!' and 'Viva la Niobé!', after Hamilton's performance. See Madame de Boigne, *Récits d'une tante : mémoires de la comtesse de Boigne, née d'Osmond*, *Publiés d'après le manuscrit original, par M. Charles Nicollaud*, 5th edn, 4 vols, (Paris: Plon, 1907 [1908?]), 1, p. 115.

[46] Birgit Jooss, 'Zwischen Kunstideal und sinnlicher Pose: Lebende Bilder und Attituden der Goethezeit', in *Stillstand und Bewegung: intermediale Studien zu Theatralität von Text, Bild und Musik*, ed. by Günther Heeg and Anno Mungen (2004), 103–113 (p. 109).

staged by a single artist.[47] Jooss's definition of attitudes as creating an image (sculpting, painting, embodying) recalls Jelgerhuis's description of: '*het beeld zelve, 't welk men op het Tooneel met zich zelven moet maken, om* [...] *de beelden in de Schilderij te zijn*' (the figure itself, 'which one must make on stage with oneself, to be [...] the figures in the Painting).[48] This was a sensation which I had already experienced in my previous work on the attitudes – combining the passionate attitude series described in Chapter 2, for instance, when staging sections of an aria or recitative on-stage, and in the process of 'play' during practice as described above – but this idea of the artist as sculptor or painter in real time, also influenced my study of the attitude prints of Hamilton, Hendel-Schütz, and Brun. The experience of putting a two-dimensional visual image or observation of any plate into a physical pose, involved a certain embodied awareness and leap of the imagination from the visual object before the eyes into the many possibilities of executing the following transition and the next pose. By viewing the prints and anecdotes through this lens, the artistic attitudes were a vast source of inspiration: from each attitude, a multitude of others could follow, and the styles of Hamilton, Hendel-Schütz and Brun each offered variations, which further increased my options.[49]

That the artistic attitudes attained popularity in Goethe's time is discernible not only in his letter to Zelter (see page 180 above) but also in Friedrich Wilhelm Riemer's written accompaniment to Goethe's text, published in the *Journal für Literatur, Kunst, Luxus und Mode*, April 1815.[50] According to Riemer, this art form had become so well-known that the audience would feel its absence if it were not included in a performance:

> *Die Kunst, das Ideelle der Plastik und Malerei in Formen, Stellung, Bekleidung, Beleuchtung wieder zur Natur und Wirklichkeit zu machen, diese Kunstmimik, damals noch im Werden, ist seitdem durch die Bestrebungen einer Hamilton, einer Händel=Schütz* [sic] *und die an mehreren Orten veranstalteten Bilderscenen, so in Aufnahme gekommen, daß unser Auge, wie an einen gewissen Luxus gewöhnt, sie bei manchen Gelegenheiten sogar zu vermissen anfängt, und sie beinahe eben so erheischt, als das Ohr einen vollkommenen Rhythmus.*[51]
>
> The art of reviving the ideal of nature and reality in painting and sculpture through shapes, attitudes, clothing and lighting, this imitative art to which we have since become so accustomed through the efforts of Hamilton, Händel-Schütz, and the tableaux vivants

[47] For Hamilton with children, see Novelli, *Emma performing her attitude*s, (after 1791), etching, Victoria and Albert Museum e-253-2000, https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O63626/the-attitudes-of-lady-hamilton-print-novelli-francesco/ (accessed 2 March 2023). See also Friedrich Rehberg (drawings) and Tommaso Piroli (engravings), *Drawings Faithfully Copied from Nature at Naples, and with Permission Dedicated to the Right Honourable Sir William Hamilton* [...], ([n.p.] 1794), plates 8 and 12; and Holmström, *Monodrama*, 114. For Hendel-Schütz see, for instance, Joseph N. Peroux, *Pantomimische Stellungen von Henriette Hendel* [...]*, in Kupfer gestochen durch Heinrich Ritter* [...], (Frankfurt am Main: Selbstverlag 1809), plates 11 and 25.

[48] Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, p. 42.

[49] For a detailed description of these women and their styles of attitudes, see Holmström, *Monodrama*, pp. 110–145; for Brun, see pp. 145–182; for Hendel-Schütz, see pp. 182–208.

[50] 'Aufführung des Trauerspiels Zenobia, nach Calderon, und des Melodrama Proserpina, neu motivirt von Göthe', ascribed author: Friedrich Wilhelm Riemer, in *Journal für Literatur, Luxus und Mode*, 30 (Weimar: Carl Bertuch, April 1815), 226–232.

[51] 'Aufführung' in *Journal für Literatur*, 226–232, (p. 227); English transl. by Dr. Julia Muller.

> performed at several venues, that our eyes, as if they had been somehow indulged, even start to feel the want of it, almost demanding it as the ear would demand an ideal rhythm.

This account suggests that the time was right for **Amalie Wolff**'s rendition of Proserpina: to my knowledge, all written accounts of her rendition agree on her creating a convincing performance (Riemer, Gries, and Goethe). While remaining in the single character of Proserpina, Wolff seems to have infused her acting style with elements of the artistic attitudes. With this in mind I continued searching for an acting style befitting the artistic characteristics of a time in which various neighbouring art forms such as the melodrama, *tableau vivant*, attitudes, and ballet-pantomime were combined, and when the aesthetic ideals of the classical visual arts were represented in performances in private houses as well as on stage.

4.2.3 Training 3: Artistic attitudes and costume practice

My initial approach to practicing the attitudes of Hamilton, Hendel-Schütz and Brun was similar to practicing Jelgerhuis's attitudes (see Chapter 2 and section 4.1.3, 'Training 1' of this chapter), mainly by creating a mental image first, followed by an embodied pose and eventually a series of poses. In addition, testimonies and anecdotes about the artistic attitudes gave food for thought and inspired further experimentation. For instance, reviews of Hamilton's rapid transitions between the attitudes (including extreme changes of facial expression[52]) inspired me to increase the tempo of my attitude series. Quicker transitions enhanced the contrast between attitudes or passions, and forced me to anticipate a precise mental concept of the next pose before moving into it. The imitation of the artistic attitudes by Hamilton, Hendel-Schütz and Brun also called for experimentation with the costume and the concept of *Mantelspiel* (mantle craft), mentioned in the introduction. As advised by Jelgerhuis, I observed the print to acquire a taste for draping.[53] Yet in practice, the addition of draping veils or a mantle in the attitudes was a challenge, particularly when attempting to copy exactly the original engraving or drawing. To get a garment (especially a light, slippery textile) to move precisely into the shape it has on the image, requires an understanding of the fabric's movement. Spontaneous beautiful results were quite frequent, even from the beginning, but learning to anticipate the fabric's behaviour, envisioning the visual effect on the observer, and developing a serendipitous gesture into a repeatable item of stagecraft and into a harmonious whole until, as Goethe writes, the 'moving elegance of the figure and the garment merge into one, so that the spectator doesn't know anymore how to separate them' – was a time-consuming process.[54]

Pictures taken of the first experiments showed rather disappointing results. While Anne Smith and I were examining these, she pointed out to me that in most, the drape (particularly with thicker, opaque fabrics) hid my limbs completely, so that the lines and angles necessary to show movement

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[52] Holmström, *Monodrama*, 119.

[53] Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, pp. 58–59, also cited in Chapter 1, section 1.6.7, '*Theoretische lessen*, 1824–1830'.

[54] Citation translated from German in *Goethes Werke*, WA 1.40, p. 112: '*bewegliche Zierlichkeit der Gestalt und Kleidung flossen in eins zusammen, so daß der Zuschauer, weder in der Gegenwart noch in der Erinnerung, eins von dem andern abzusondern wußte noch weiß.*'

and contrast were lost. In Figure 4 (right), for instance, there is no visible articulation between the neck and shoulders; my left elbow, upper torso, legs, and knees are hidden by the fabric which is not supple enough to indicate their position. In this drawing of a similar attitude by Ida Brun (Figure 4, left) Kniep suggests the bodily articulations by drawing the many pleats in the fabric.

Figure 4, (left) illustration by *Kniep. Attitudes de la Ida Brun*, pencil on paper, (n.d.), Frederiksbergmuseerne - Bakkehuset, Denmark, Bak 0021x0097, photo: Stewart McIntyre; (right) experimentation with an attitude inspired by Ida Brun.

Figure 5, Picture of a kneeling attitude

Other pictures, such as Figure 5, were slightly better: although the left knee articulation is still hidden, and the position of the hips and torso not evident, the right elbow, the right knee and the shoulders are free, and create contrast with the flowing veil on the left.

In time, I learned how to make the garment follow the movement: how fast to move, which fingers to use to hold the fabric, and what small adjustments can be made out of sight (behind one's back, or on the side of the garment invisible to the audience) to achieve the desired visual effect. Experimentation with garments made of different textiles and in different sizes also showed the importance of the choice of fabric. Heavy textile hides the physical movement and articulations more than transparent fabrics do. Moreover, the fabric influences the quality and speed of the movements. Most gestures, steps, and other movements cause the garment to soar upwards, flow, or drop. In these cases, the garment's movement ends later in time than the physical movement (gesture, step, kneeling) itself. On the other hand, if the goal is to make the garment flow or fly up, a certain speed of movement is necessary. As a consequence, the entire tempo of transitions between attitudes, gestures, and so on, changes when working with veils or shawls. This in turn influences the tempo of the delivery. In general, the addition of the veil made the attitudes and transitions more flowing. The most graceful combinations of the fabric and the body were those in which it seemed that the draping had spontaneously followed the physical movement. These were often caused by movements which had originated in an emotional state or passion, rather than an idea of 'aesthetic draping': the more the garment became part of the story, the more natural the result was.

The artistic attitudes served as inspiration only. As with Jelgerhuis's stage attitudes, the aim was neither to refer to works of art or mythical characters on stage (other than Proserpina) nor to create copies of stances and movements recognisable as attitudes by Hamilton, Hendel-Schütz and Brun. Instead, the aim was to generate stances and movements appropriate for Proserpina's character. The work on the artistic attitudes broadened my repertoire, enriched my acting style, and increased my confidence in working with the costume as a means of expression. My interpretation of the artistic attitudes in comparison with Jelgerhuis's stage attitudes resulted in a softer, more fluid style with moments of stronger contrast. When I felt that I sufficiently understood the impact of the costume on expression and movement, I had a costume made for the performance.

4.3 THE COSTUME

To create a historically informed costume for Proserpina would have been a research project of its own (including research on the costuming practice at the Amsterdam Schouwburg and/or the Weimar theatre in the early nineteenth century, and on their sewing techniques and specific use of fabrics). I have no expertise in this subject and such a project is beyond the scope of my dissertation. However, the effect of the costume on the acting styles described above, along with the importance Goethe attached to the costume in Wolff's performance, persuaded me to attempt the creation of a combination of garments that would suit Proserpina and increase my expressive options. In 1815, Johann Heinrich Meyer (1760–1832) was in charge of the costume and theatre

sets of the *Proserpina* production.[55] Unfortunately, to my knowledge, there is no visual evidence of Wolff's costume. I therefore searched the written accounts of the 1815 performances for more information. Goethe's description of Wolff's costume included a mantle, pleated robes, veils, and a diadem.[56] Because the trend of historically correct costumes had reached Weimar at this time, I first looked for sources by authors who shared this interest in historical costume, such as Jelgerhuis and Dandré-Bardon.[57] Examples of the garments mentioned by Goethe can all be found in Jelgerhuis's illustrations and descriptions of classical Greek and Roman costume in his *Theoretische lessen*, in addition to which I consulted Jelgerhuis's *Tooneelkledingen* of 1810 (depicting a dress, veil and diadem in Greek style) and Dandré-Bardon's *Gewoonten der aloude volken*.[58] I also studied the dresses of Hamilton, Hendel-Schütz, and Brun, as well as costumes on antique bas-reliefs, vases, and sculptures. My aim was to create a simple dress with little ornamentation, to suit Proserpina's youth and innocence. There was no need to include a corset with this costume, Jelgerhuis even clearly advised against it:

> *Ik moet nu doen opmerken dat de dames, in Grieksche of Romeinsche kostuum, zoo veel mogelijk zich moeten passeren van rijglijven of korsetten, of zoo zij die niet kunnen ontberen, ten minste dezelve in dat kleed zoo veel mogelijk trachten te verbergen.*[59]
>
> I must remark that the ladies, in Greek or Roman costume, must avoid laced bodices and corsets under costumes in the Greek and Roman style as much as possible, or if they cannot do without them, at least hide them as much as possible in that garment.

[55] See Maisak, 'Theater-Effekte', p. 112.
[56] 'Proserpina' in *Morgenblatt*, p. 542; see also *Goethes Werke*, WA 1.40, p. 111.
[57] For 'historische Korrektheit' on the Weimar stage, see Maisak, 'Theater-Effekte', p. 124.
[58] Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, pp. 201–203 and plate 58. See also Fedra vervuld door Mev. Ziesenis geb. Wattier' in Johannes Jelgerhuis Rz, *Tooneelkledingen van den Koninglyken Schouwburg te Amsterdam. Getekend en geëtst door J. Jelgerhuis Rz. Acteur van gemelden schouwburg* (Amsterdam: J. Groenewoud en Zoon, 1810).; and see Dandré-Bardon, *Gewoonten der aloude volken*, transl. anonymous, vol. 1, plate 77 (as stated in Chapters 1 and 3, Jelgerhuis repeatedly refers to this last source).
[59] Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, p. 199.

I based the concept of Proserpina's dress, mantle, and veil on the combination of the three dresses on plate 58 (Figure 6) and the second figure on plate 23 (Figure 7).[60]

Figure 6, Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen,* plate 58

This concept was discussed and realized with Myriam Pol and Shari Terwisscha van Scheltinga of Atelier Gerritsen Theaterkostuums. Following this discussion, Terwisscha van Scheltinga first made the *toile* – 'a pattern for a garment made up in muslin, cotton, or the like, for fitting or for use in making copies' – with an option for a short sleeve.[61] The third figure on plate 58 (Figure 6) has a short sleeve on her left arm, and no sleeve on her right. The figures on plate 23 (Figure 7) also show both styles. During the fitting of the *toile*, Pol, Terwisscha van Scheltinga and I decided in favour of the sleeveless option because the bare arms and the simple dress gave a more youthful and vulnerable impression. The neckline was also taken from the third figure's dress, whereas a high waistband was based on the second figure, as were the length of the veil and the positioning

[60] Figure 6 (right) is Jelgerhuis's copy of two of the four caryatides by Artus Quellinus (1609–1668) on the Amsterdam Paleis op de Dam. Jelgerhuis depicted the caryatides more dressed than the originals, for the sake of propriety in the lessons, see Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, p. 91, 92.

[61] For this definition of *toile* see the *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. '*toile*, n.1., sense 3', www.oed.com/view/Entry/202916 (accessed 23 March 2023).

of the veil and diadem. The length and simple hem of the dress are visible on the first figure. A decoration was added onto the shoulders, where the mantle could be attached (Figure 7, second figure).

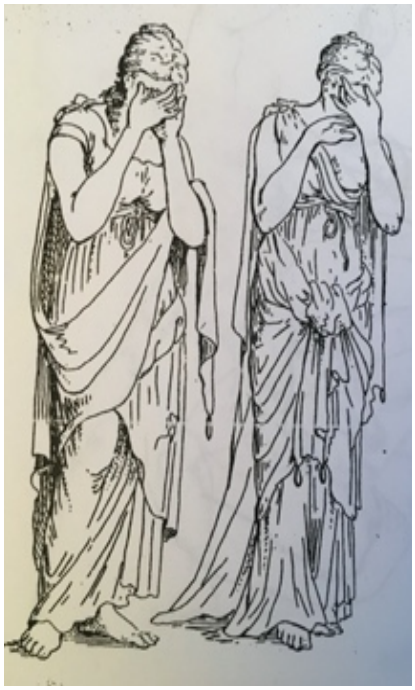

Figure 7, Jelgerhuis, engraving from *Theoretische lessen*, plate 23, detail

Figure 8, Mantle worn by the actress Joanna Cornelia Ziesenis Wattier, (c. 1800–1850), cotton, gold thread and gold fringe, Amsterdam, Allard Pierson, theatre collection, kt00035.000b.

The veil, waistband, and decorations on the shoulders were trimmed with a narrow golden ribbon. I had seen a similar combination of gold and red on two still existing costume items: a mantle (Figure 8) and peplum kept at the Allard Pierson in Amsterdam. This peplum and mantle were worn by Jelgerhuis's colleague, the Dutch actress Wattier, and are decorated with a gold fringe and embroidery in gold thread.

Gold is also the predominant decorative colour in two coloured versions of Jelgerhuis's etching of Wattier in the role of Fedra (Figure 9).[62]

Figure 9, (left) Etching by Jelgerhuis, depicting the costume of Johanna Cornelia Ziesenis-Wattier in the role of Fedra (undated), hand-painted etching, Amsterdam, Allard Pierson, theatre collection, g002917.0000;
(right) Etching by Jelgerhuis, depicting the costume of Johanna Cornelia Ziesenis-Wattier in the role of Fedra, coloured with gold, in Jelgerhuis, *Tooneelkledingen*.

A simplified version of a triangular diadem was embellished with paste gems in various colours, as shown in the second coloured example (Figure 9, left). My hair was arranged with a combination of braids, ribbons, and loose curls (Figure 10, left), based on engravings in *Gewoonten der Aloude Volken* and in the *Theoretische lessen* (Figure 10, right).[63]

[62] Figure 9 (right) holds a closer resemblance to the written description in the publication, which includes the coloured gems, and gold embroidered linen, but no red mantle.
[63] For braids, see Dandré-Bardon, *Gewoonten der aloude volken*, transl. anonymous, vol. 1, p. 23 and plate 77, figure G; for '*banden*' (ribbons), see *Theoretische lessen*, p. 202. For braids, ribbons and loose curls, see *Theoretische lessen*, plate 58.

Figure 10 (left) Detail of a video still of one of the 2021 *Proserpina* performances. Hair styled by Pilo Pilkes;
(right) Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, plate 58, detail (flipped). (Author's collection)

Fabrics: I wanted a fabric that would flow and drape itself around my movements, yet strong enough to last through multiple performances without fraying. I was advised not to use silk, as this would probably prove too fragile, nor cotton, probably too inflexible. I suggested the use of a light wool for the mantle, but the costumières decided on another fabric due to the availability of colour ranges and fabric weights available at that moment: the COVID-19 situation had reduced the stock and prevented our choosing the fabric together in the shop. The dress was made with two layers of supple textiles; the hems of the lower layer and the almost transparent upper layer were not attached, to give a naturally flowing quality to the costume, which was enhanced by movement. Figure 11 shows how the pleated dress and mantle add to the movement.

Figure 11, Video stills showing the movements of the costume during a performance of *Proserpina*, Leiden Theatre, 2022

In retrospect, the dress followed the movements as I had envisioned, it was comfortable, and I was satisfied with the visual effect. However, the modern synthetic fabrics used for the mantle and veil were more slippery than the natural textiles I had practiced with: cotton, silk, and wool. This had positive and negative sides. On the one hand, the veil made of a polyester chiffon, for instance, was so slippery I had to slow down my arm movements to prevent it from falling down. On the other hand, the same slippery quality was practical when removing the crown and veil in dance-like movements: it did not get stuck in my hair or the crown, and it slid off my shoulder and arm, where I caught it in my hand. If a future production budget and time allow, I would like to attempt a similar result with natural fabrics that would have been available in Jelgerhuis's time.

Apart from the use of modern fabrics, I deviated from historically informed options in several other costume-related items for various practical reasons. The most important choices involved *akers*, skin-coloured undergarments, and sandals.

Akers: In all the examples here depicted by Jelgerhuis, small decorative pendants are attached to either a veil, a mantle, or a waistband. Jelgerhuis mentions these pendants in the *Theoretische lessen* as 'akers' (acorns),[64] which according to the description in the Middle Dutch Dictionary (MNT) were 'acorn-shaped tassels which adorned handkerchiefs and scarves, sometimes made of gold or silver thread'.[65] These akers were not added to the Proserpina costume, for lack of time to find historical Dutch examples to copy from. I suspect, however, that depending on their weight, these decorative elements also influence the draping of the veil.

Undergarments: It is possible that skin-coloured undergarments were worn to cover the neckline and bare arms and legs on-stage in the beginning of the nineteenth century, but I did not have information about this practice in the Netherlands. Jelgerhuis annotates the third dress on plate 58 with '*ontblootte borst en schouders*' (bare neckline and shoulders) '*zonder mouwen, ook met ontblootte schouders*' (without sleeves, also with bare shoulders).[66] It may be that Jelgerhuis does not mention specific stage undergarments, either because it was basic practice to wear them or because it was not. He does mention long sleeves (actual sleeves, not of the undergarment) for old actors.[67] I finally decided to perform with bare arms and a low neckline.

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[64] Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, p. 202.

[65] *Aker*: '*Een eikelvormig versiersel, bij wijze van een kwastje afhangende, zooals voorheen de mannen aan de koordjes van halskragen en beffen, de vrouwen aan de uiteinden van hals- en neusdoeken plachten te dragen; hetzij van linnen garen, hetzij van goud- of zilverdraad enz., soms zeer kostbaar en kunstig bewerkt*' (an acorn-shaped ornament, hanging like a tassel, such as the men used to wear on the strings of collars and bands, the women at the ends of handkerchiefs and neckerchiefs; either of linen thread, or of gold or silver thread, etc., sometimes very costly and artfully decorated). See *Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal*, s.v. '*aker*', sense 2.a, https://gtb.ivdnt.org/iWDB/search?actie=article&wdb=WNT&id=M003210&lemmodern=aker&domein=0&conc=true (accessed 3 March 2023).

[66] Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, p. 202. Jelgerhuis does not specify which dress he refers to, but I deduce that he means the dress and the peplum of the third figure on plate 58; it is the only costume on the plate with bare shoulders and without sleeves.

[67] Jelgerhuis suggests long sleeves in certain circumstances: '*Lange tot op de hand, somtijds voor bejaarden*' (long [sleeves] down to the hand, sometimes for the old). See Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, p. 202.

Sandals: Both plate 58 and the engraving of Wattier show sandals under the costume. Such sandals can easily be bought today, but mostly with plastic or hard leather soles. These are often noisy when walking, which on stage can be distracting. I did not succeed in having stage sandals made in time, so I used a beige open dancing shoe with a soft leather sole, which was inconspicuous and barely audible when walking.

Interestingly, the final version of my costume for Proserpina was very similar to this description by August Wilhelm von Schlegel, cited in Holmström, of Mme de Staël's costume for Phèdre:

> *einem weissen gold gestickten Gewände ohne Aermel und ohne allen Zuschnitt, auf den Schultern durch Agraffen und unter dem Busen durch einen Gürtel gehalten, und rings umher faltig auf die Füsse herabfallend; der königliche Purpurmantel, ebenfalls ohne allen verkünstelnden Zuschnitt, viereckig, und auf die einfachste Weise befestigt und getragen; dann die ächte Sandale* [...]*; das von Edelsteinen strahlende in der Mitte zugespitzte Diadem, und anfangs den golddurchwirkten Schleier nicht zu vergessen, den sie bei den Worten abwirft: Que ses vains ornements, que ces voiles me pèsent.*[68]
>
> a white gold-embroidered robe without sleeves and without a particular cut, held on the shoulders by clasps and under the bosom by a belt, and falling down all around the feet in folds; the royal *Purpurmantel*, likewise without any pretentious/sophisticated cut, square, and fastened and worn in the simplest way; then the genuine sandals [...]; the diadem, radiant with precious stones, pointed in the middle, and not to forget in the beginning, the veil interwoven with gold thread, which she casts off at the words: 'how these vain ornaments, these veils weigh me down'.

This description differs from my costume for *Proserpina* only in the use of real sandals. I based the colours for Proserpina's dress on a combination of Jelgerhuis's indications and my own taste. Jelgerhuis mentions various colour options for the Greek/Roman costumes. For example:

> *Prachtige sluijers op het hoofd, was een van de sieraden der vrouwen, die dan van doorschijnende stoffe waren; de kleur was meest wit, zoo ook het kleed en de mantel rood; ook de peplone, het kleed purper zijnde.*[69]
>
> Splendid veils on the head were one of the ornaments for women, which were then made of transparent material; the colour was mostly white, the dress too, if the mantle is red. The peplum is white too, if the dress is crimson [*purpur*].

My costume was white, red, and gold: the white dress to symbolize Proserpina's youth and innocence, the mantle and transparent veil in different shades of deep red to create contrast with the dress. I could have taken my experiments a step further by using even more garments: One

[68] For the citation, see Holmström, *Monodrama*, footnote 83, pp. 256–257. For more on Mme de Staël's acting as described by Ida Brun's mother, Frederikke Brun, see Holmström, *Monodrama*, pp. 169– 172.
[69] Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, p. 203.

eyewitness's review of the 1815 *Proserpina* production mentions veils in three different colours, which Wolff placed on the bushes and trees on-stage:

> *Nicht weniger als drei Shawls hatte sie um und an sich, die sie an den Bäumen und Büschen umher aufhing, und wovon sie, nach Maßgabe des Textes, bei den majestätischen Stellen den purpurnen, bei den tragischen den dunkelfarbigen, bei den heitern den himmelblauen gebrauchte.*[70]
>
> She had no fewer than three shawls on and about her, which she draped on the surrounding trees and bushes, and which she changed according to the text, from crimson for the majestic parts, to darker colour for the tragic ones, and sky blue for the happy moments.

Goethe also mentions more than one garment, though, in the 1815 *Morgenblatt*, he focuses on the movement with one main garment throughout the performance, omitting the colour and number of shawls:

> *sie* [...] *ergreift eins der Gewänder, mit welchem sie den größten Theil der Vorstellung über ihre Bewegungen begleitet, sich bald darein verhüllt, sich bald daraus wieder entwindet und zu gar mannichfaltigem pantomimischem Ausdruck, den Worten gemäß, zu benutzen weiß.*[71]
>
> she [...] takes hold of one of the garments with which she accompanies her movements for the greater part of the performance, sometimes wrapping herself in it, sometimes unwinding herself from it, and knows how to use it for a very varied pantomimic expression, with reference to the words.

For various practical reasons I decided to stick with one veil, while using the mantle for specific expressive moments.[72] The idea of garments in different colours to express various emotional states gave me food for thought, however. Finally, various passages in the monodrama reflecting different emotional states (according to my interpretation of the text and music), were instead suggested by the lighting at the performance venue in 2021.[73] Although I had practiced the artistic attitudes with various garments before the costume was made, the visual effect and physical sensation of the full costume changed the way I walked and moved and, just as importantly, the picture I had of Proserpina in my mind's eye. The combination of the various garments influenced the quality of movement. Certain gestures seemed more majestic when the arm was covered by the drapery of the veil, and transitions from one attitude to another appeared to be augmented in movement and in time, as the fabric of the dress continued moving when the body was already still. To avoid stepping on the dress when moving quickly (particularly when walking backwards), I had to lift the dress or go on my toes. This gave Proserpina a lighter step than I had imagined. The bare arms, which I associated with summer, gave me a both a physical and a mental feeling of

[70] Eye witness account by Johann Diederich Gries, written to Bernhard Rudolf Abeken on February 7, 1815, edited transl. and citation reference in Bersier, '"Hamiltonian-Hendelian" Mimoplastics', p. 172.
[71] *Goethes Werke*, WA 1.40, p. 112.
[72] For more details, see section 4.6. 'Two venues: the stage and the performance'.
[73] For more details, see section 4.6. 'Two venues: the stage and the performance'.

lightness and freedom of movement as compared to wearing a costume with long sleeves. At the same time, the bare arms and light dress made me feel vulnerable when Proserpina is fearful, easily cold and shivery. The more I developed the character, and therefore the movements and reactions of Proserpina, the more instinctively I wanted to cover myself by the mantle or veil, particularly in situations of fear or shame. Now I could work on the entire staging with the full costume.

4.4 QUALITIES OF MOVEMENT

Exploring how costume could serve as a means of expression for Proserpina also required considering other aspects of Wolff's acting style and quality of movement. I returned to working on the road map I had created for staging *Proserpina*. The different facets of Proserpina's character started to take shape, and I started working more on details. I searched for ways to merge the artistic attitudes with stage attitudes, by adding *Mantelspiel* (mantle craft) and other elements to the sequence. At the same time, I became aware of a difference between my interpretations of the various styles of the performers I had studied: although the visual sources show only minor differences in posture (depicting the body more or less upright, for instance) or in the torsion of the bodies kneeling and standing, my experience of embodying the attitudes brought about a division between the attitudes of Hamilton and Brun on the one side and those of Hendel-Schütz and Jelgerhuis on the other. My physical and mental experience and interpretation were influenced by the written accounts of performances and by the illustrations. The resulting difference in my stylistic execution is therefore also shaped by stylistic differences of the various illustrators (such as Peroux, Jelgerhuis, Kniepp, and Rehberg) and the authors of the written accounts. The draping of the costumes depicted on the prints showing Hamilton and Brun, for instance, suggested more movement than the costumes in the engravings of Jelgerhuis and Hendel-Schütz. In general, there seemed to be more torsion in my body and more fluidity of motion when my attitudes and movements were inspired by the attitudes of Hamilton and Brun than that of Hendel-Schütz. The attitudes of the latter seem more akin to Jelgerhuis's stage attitudes, in which the movement of the garment is less essential and the dramatic effect is strongest in powerful, static moments with slow transitions. This awareness did not prevent my merging the different styles of attitudes, but was useful for creating and intensifying different aspects of Proserpina's emotional states. In scenes that required Proserpina's moments of innocent playfulness or delicate sadness, for instance, the fluid quality of movement I had come to associate with the illustrations of Hamilton and Brun could be used to soften and complement the more sculptural attitudes and transitions inspired by Hendel–Schütz and Jelgerhuis. At this stage, I started looking into other descriptions of Wolff's performance, focusing in particular on the terms that connotate movement. On one occasion, Goethe mentions Wolff's '*edelbewegte plastische Darstellung'* (nobly moving plastic representation).[74] In the *Morgenblatt*, he emphasizes the importance of transitions between the different aspects intrinsic to this melodrama and describes a delicate balance between movements, spoken words, music, and even a 'dance-like' quality of movement:

[74] 'Edelbewegte plastische Darstellung', in *Goethes Werke*, *Tag- und Jahreshefte* [...] (Weimar: Hermann Böhlau, 1893), WA 1.36, p. 89; also cited in Waltraud Maierhofer, 'Goethe on Emma Hamilton's "Attitudes": Can Classicist Art Be Fun?', in *Goethe Yearbook*, 9 (1999), 222–252 (p. 243).

> […] *die melodramatische Behandlung hat das große Verdienst mit weiser Sparsamkeit ausgeführt zu sein, indem sie der Schauspielerin gerade so viel Zeit gewährt, um die Gebärden der mannichfaltigen Uebergänge bedeutend auszudrücken, die Rede jedoch im schicklichen Moment ohne Aufenthalt wieder zu ergreifen, wodurch der eigentlich mimisch=tanzartige Theil mit dem poetisch=rhetorischen verschmolzen und einer durch den andern gesteigert wird.*[75]
>
> the […] melodramatic treatment has the great merit of being carried out with wise parsimony, in that it allows the actress just enough time to meaningfully express the gestures of the many transitions, and yet to grasp the speech again at the right moment without interruption, whereby the actual mimic and dance-like part is fused with the poetic-rhetorical part, and one is intensified by the other.

4.4.1 Dance-like movements

It is difficult to say to what extent Wolff used lighter, dance-like steps in her performance, but Goethe's descriptions 'nobly moving' and 'mimic-dance like' inspired me to seek out a quality of movement that I had neither previously encountered in Jelgerhuis's works nor explored in my practice-based research into historical acting techniques so far. Jelgerhuis refers to dance (ballet and contradance) mainly from the viewpoint of its usefulness to the actor. Actors might benefit from dancing lessons to learn some basics, such as improvement of the actor's posture, bowing properly when paying one's compliments, and at least the *pas de bourrée* step. With these basics, actors can join in the few dances, such as minuets and contradances, in little operas and other theatrical pieces '*opdat hij* [...] *niet benard sta*' (so that he [...] does not awkwardly stand about).[76] Jelgerhuis is also in favour of attending ballet performances (*Consepten* N° 6) to observe what was learned in the dancing lessons and to learn about grouping multiple actors with contrasting postures to create a balanced visual effect on-stage.[77] Furthermore, only some ways of positioning the feet can be used by actors, but most movements of this art form (such as pirouettes), he writes, are too exaggerated for the actor.[78] These instructions were not sufficient to investigate how I might incorporate Goethe's description into my movements. I therefore returned to the engravings and drawings of Hamilton and Brun for inspiration, and to explore the boundary between acting and dance movements. Although Holmström states that the anecdotes of Hamilton's attitudes reveal 'no mention whatever of dance-like movements as a connecting link between the different attitudes, or of any musical accompaniment', the images shown in Figure 12 illustrate moments within a series of attitudes which also suggest dance.[79]

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[75] 'Proserpina' in *Morgenblatt*, p. 543; see also *Goethes Werke*, WA 1.40, pp. 112–113.
[76] Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, pp. 112–113.
[77] For groupings and other benefits of dancing lessons, see *Theoretische lessen*, pp. 112–113 and plates 30, 31; for the curriculum including lessons and attending performances see *Consepten*, N° 5 and 6, in Appendix G.
[78] For Jelgerhuis's positions of the feet, see *Theoretische lessen*, pp. 104–105 and plate 28.
[79] Holmström, *Monodrama*, p. 115.

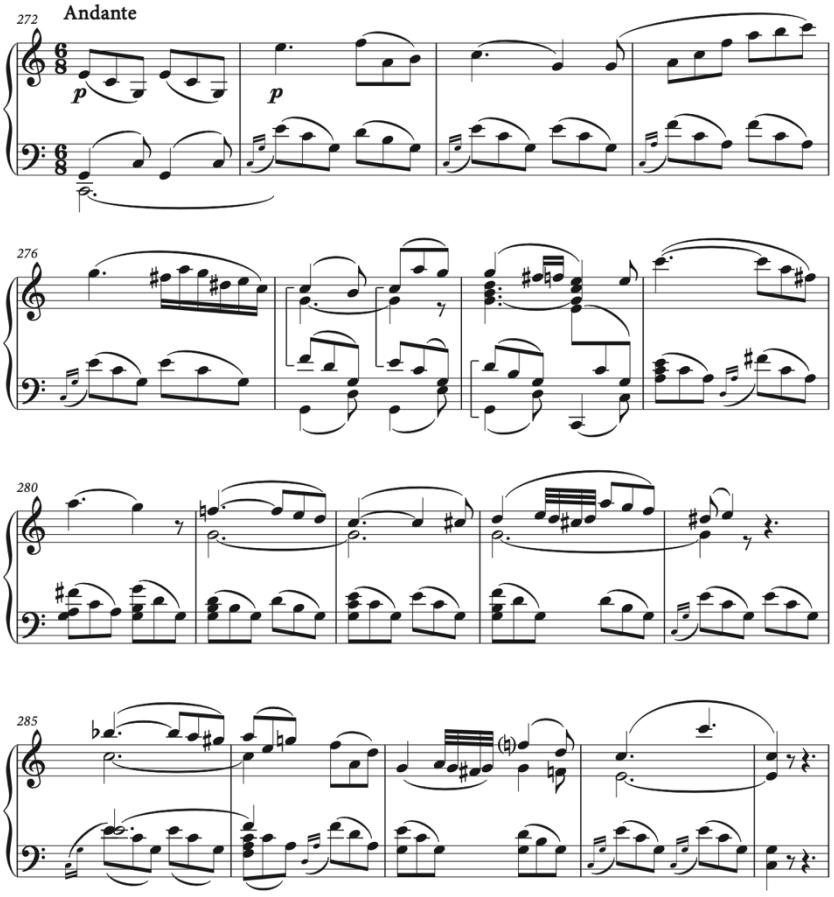
Figure 12, (left) Emma Hamilton in a dancing attitude, from Rehberg, *Drawings faithfully copied from nature at Naples* [...] (1794), plate 6, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-2010-34;
(right) C. H. Kniep: Ida Brun in a dancing attitude, from 'Kniep, attitudes de la Ida Brun' undated, pencil on paper, Frederiksberg museerne, Bakkehuset Collection, Denmark, Bak 0021×0091, Photographer: Stewart McIntyre.

The uncomplicated, natural movements (as opposed to ballet steps or techniques, for instance) seemed to fit in with the music and the sequences of attitudes conceived for *Proserpina*, as they are based on the same ideals of beauty inspired by antique statuary. The two following scores show examples of the moments in Eberwein's composition which I deemed well-suited to incorporating such movements. The music in bars 272–290 (Score 1), in 6/8 measure, would have been a perfect moment for Proserpina to transition from her previous, dark thoughts to lighter reminiscences of her happy past in the meadows with her friends, and to break into dance, but there was one complication: Goethe was quite specific about a moment of costume change:

> *Proserpina tritt auf als Königin der Unterwelt; prächtige, über einander gefaltete Mäntel, Schleier und Diadem bezeichnen sie; aber kaum findet sie sich allein, so kommt ihr das Nymphenleben wieder in den Sinn, in das Thal von Enna glaubt sie sich versetzt, sie entäußert sich alles Schmucks, und steht auf einmal blumenbekränzt wieder als Nymphe da. Daß nun dieses Entäußern der faltenreichen Gewänder zu den schönsten mannichfaltigsten Gestaltungen Anlaß gebe* [...]*, wird niemanden entgehen.*[80]

[80] 'Proserpina' in *Morgenblatt*, p. 542, see also *Goethes Werke*, WA 1.40, p. 111.

Proserpina appears as the Queen of the Underworld; she is characterized by splendid mantles folded over one another, veils, and a diadem. But the moment she finds herself alone, her life as a nymph comes back to her mind, she believes she is back in the valley of Enna, she relinquishes all jewellery and suddenly stands there as a flower-wreathed nymph again. That this relinquishing of the richly pleated robes gives rise to the most beautiful and varied shapings [...] will not escape anyone.

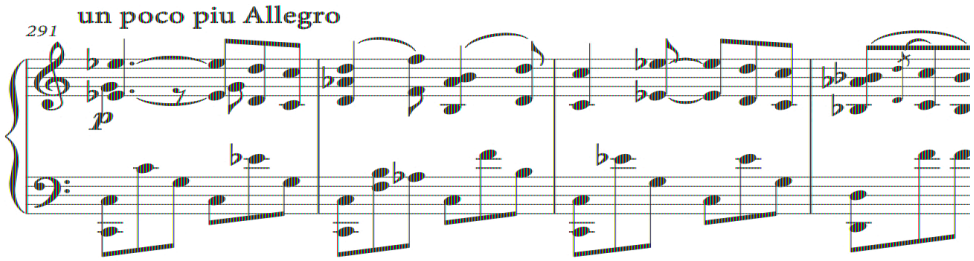


Score 1, Fragment from *Proserpina*, based on Lorraine Byrne Bodley's piano reduction in *Proserpina: Goethe's Melodrama with Music by Carl Eberwein*, ed. and transl. by Lorraine Byrne Bodley, Dublin: Carysfort Press 2007, 136

Eberwein's 6/8 measured interlude seems the only possible moment to enact the costume change in Goethe's description: 'She relinquishes all jewellery and suddenly stands there as a flower-wreathed nymph again'. In search of Goethe's 'beautiful and varied' movements with a noble quality, I enhanced the practical action of removing the crown, veil, and the mantle, until the movements became flowing, while also serving the symbolic dramatic purpose of the Queen of the Underworld transforming into the nymph. The removal of the emotional and physical weight of the crown and garments gave way to a feeling of lightness, which increased until Proserpina's steps could transition effortlessly into a few simple dance movements at the end of the following text: '*Und die Sonne | Riß leichter nicht aus ihrem Silberbette |Sich auf, als wir, voll Lust zu lebe*n,| *Früh im Tau die Rosenfüße badeten*' (And the sun did not rise more easily out of its silver bed |Than we

returned early, full joy for life, | To bathe our rosy feet in the dew).[81] The music of bars 291–295 (Score 1b) is still in 6/8 measure, but *un poco più allegro* (a little faster), and now in a minor tonality. This was one of many examples in which the musical interlude precedes the transition to the following affect in the text. As can be seen on Video G, Proserpina's moment of blissful dance is almost instantly brought to a halt in bar 295, as Proserpina suddenly is aware again (the music guiding her thoughts and feelings) of the present reality.

Gespielinnen!
Als jene blumenreiche Täler
Für uns gesamt noch blühten,
Als an dem himmelklaren Strom der Alpheus
Wir plätschernd noch im Abendstrahle scherzten,
Einander Kränze wanden
Und heimlich an den Jüngling dachten,
Dessen Haupt unser Herz sie widmete,
Da war uns keine Nacht zu tief zum Schwätzen,
Keine Zeit zu lang,
Um freundliche Geschichten zu wiederholen,
Und die Sonne
Riß leichter nicht aus ihrem Silberbette
Sich auf, als wir, voll Lust zu leben,
Früh im Tau die Rosenfüße badeten.

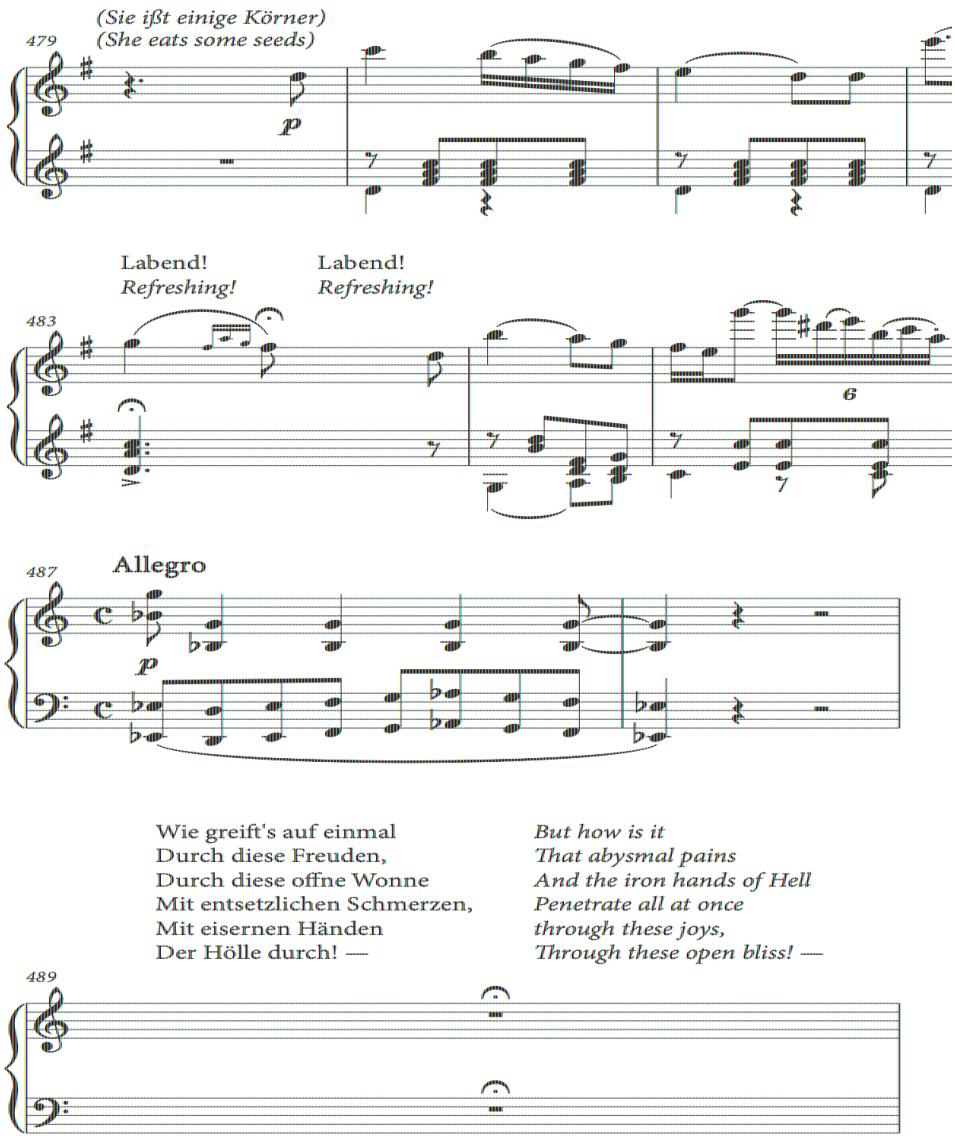


Score 1b, Fragment from *Proserpina*, based on Lorraine Byrne Bodley's piano reduction in *Proserpina: Goethe's Melodrama with Music by Carl Eberwein*, ed. and transl. by Lorraine Byrne Bodley, Dublin: Carysfort Press 2007, p. 137

Play Video G

I added another example of dance-like movement just before the final scene of the monodrama (Score 2, bars 479–486), immediately after the decisive moment when Proserpina tastes the pomegranate fruit and exclaims in wonder and rapture, alternating with the melody of the flute: '*Labend! Labend!*' (Refreshing! Refreshing!). Her rapture in this moment invited an open, joyous movement, which I articulated by spinning gently with the fruit in my hand. Doing so helped to set up the contrast with the next moment (bars 487–488), in which Proserpina contracts in fear and pain, as her fate begins closing in on her.

[81] Transl. Byrne Bodley, *Proserpina*, p. 174.



Score 2, Fragment from *Proserpina*, based on Lorraine Byrne Bodley's piano reduction and translation in *Proserpina: Goethe's Melodrama with Music by Carl Eberwein,* ed. and transl. by Lorraine Byrne Bodley, Dublin: Carysfort Press 2007, p. 157, 178.

Such transitions into dance-like movements arose from emotions suggested by the text and the music and did not seem to disturb the balance between the other elements of the monodrama, such as the costume change, the attitudes, the transitions, and the interaction with the chorus. Having avoided an actual choreography, in which dance steps and arm movements suggest a specific dancing style, the dancing movements I used were semi-improvised, differing slightly over the course of various performances. Rather than inserting yet another genre (dance) into this already eclectic art form (monodrama), my goal was for these movements to appear as a natural extension of Proserpina's emotional expression.

4.4.2 'Nobly-moving' quality

My search for a nobly-moving element of performance is more difficult to describe, as it depends on interpretation of the character as well as on physical aspects. In my estimation, the term 'noble' in Proserpina's case has nothing to do with social rank, but with a nobleness of heart (her fortitude and empathy). This, for me, is the essential difference between a Proserpina who seems to complain for twenty-five minutes, and one who honestly and deeply experiences suffering in her situation. If the text is not read and conveyed through the eyes of Proserpina's noble feelings, the piece will not fulfil its role of 'school for civilization', discussed in Chapter 1, in which the behaviour of the heroine is a didactic example for the audience. Consequently, my source of inspiration for movements with a noble quality stemmed from Proserpina's goodness and innocence, and, from there, was physically manifested in aspects such as the poise of the head – the way the eyes move and the muscle tension around the eyes, the eyes being the mirror of the soul and the heart – the upright and at the same time flexible softness of the posture, as well as the gracefulness of almost all the movements (kneeling, walking, reaching, dancing, and so on). This quality must permeate all the attitudes and passions, even if it may not be recognisable (and even visible) as such to the audience at all times. For instance, Proserpina's noble heart may not be as evident in the passion of fear, but it will show in the relief from fear.

In some moments I found it difficult to find a sense of nobility. One was the sentence: '*Warum ergiff er nicht eine meiner Nymphen*' (why did he not seize one of my nymphs) and its continuation: '*Und setzte sie neben sich Auf seinen kläglichen Tron*' (and [why did he not] sit her down by his side upon his wretched throne).[82] In the first rehearsals I used a tone of self-pity and envy for the first line, ending in an angry, despising tone of voice. But the more I practiced and performed the role, the more my interpretation changed from 'I wish he had abducted one of my friends instead of me' into an honest, open question: 'why did it happen in this way, why did he choose me?' And the more I felt the second half: '*und setzte sie neben sich auf seinen kläglichen Tron*' as a feeling of profound sadness and horror. The transformation of my interpretation from self-pity and anger to wonder and sadness was not a matter of principle for me; one should not claim a character's innocence or nobility at all costs when this is not true to the text. A character may fail at their noble intentions, perform evil deeds, or may have no noble intentions at all. But this shift made it easier to find a noble quality of expression and created more contrast in the final scene, when Proserpina loses her battle and all hope, and gives in to hatred and despair.

4.5 THE MUSIC

Just like the dance-like movements and the artistic attitudes were elements foreign to Jelgerhuis's practice, so was the music. Yet the music in *Proserpina* not only shaped the passages with dance-like movements; it bore upon all the aspects of acting. Each choice concerning the music was connected with the quality of movement and vocal delivery on-stage. I will provide examples of

[82] Transl. Byrne Bodley, *Proserpina*, p. 175. For this passage in the fair copy, see *Proserpina*, Weimar, GSA 32/61, fol. 27^{v}.

such choices (many of which are intrinsic to the genre of melodrama), ranging from the musical adaptation of the piece to the relationships between the music, movement, and vocal delivery.

4.5.1 Orchestration

To suit the number of musicians for the 2021 *Proserpina* production, Artem Belogurov adapted Eberwein's orchestral score. Belogurov worked from the copy of the Weimar manuscript and consulted the 2007 edition by Bodley, selecting those instruments which would, even in a smaller ensemble, still represent all the musical colours and affects needed to emphasize the images created in Goethe's text and stimulate the imagination of the audience.[83] The final version of this adaptation was for an extended version of Postscript — a chamber music ensemble that bases performance practice on historical sources, using historical instruments — and featured a string quartet with the addition of a flute, a double bass, a piano, and four singers: a mezzosoprano, a tenor, and two basses.[84] Belogurov and I initially intended to include eight singers to create the effect of a double chorus as indicated in the Weimar fair copy of *Proserpina*,[85] but for practical reasons the score was finally adjusted for four voices.[86] The fortepiano used for this production belongs to Museum Geelvinck and was made in Vienna by Conrad Graf in 1836. The tuning was at 430 Hz.

4.5.2 Collaboration and aim

The collaboration with Postscript was one of joint efforts and ideas. There was no conductor: the musical cues were given by the leading instrumentalist in each passage, from an impulse corresponding to a particular movement or gesture, or from the rhythm in the words. Postscript and I worked together closely, searching for ways to let the text and movements interweave with the music and complement each other. Finding this balance did not imply creating harmony between these separate elements at all times, but rather, it entailed establishing a condition of constant interaction and communication. The goal was to let the voice, movements and music reflect (and/or contradict) Proserpina's wide range of passions, and to bring out the different aspects of this role. The various musical themes and their individual colour, created by the instrumentation as well as the way in which the musicians play, emphasize the text and correspond to different aspects of Proserpina's character as well as her roles in life: she is a mother's daughter, a father's daughter, queen and wife, victim, a heroine, and a young girl. For instance, the themes concerned with Proserpina's carefree youth with her friends is represented by the sound of the flute; the Fates, represented by the chorus, with their low range and almost spoken quality, suggest at once both a threat and a prayer; the section in which Proserpina speaks of the tortured souls surrounding her, while lamenting her incapacity to help them, is accompanied by string instruments only.

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[83] *Proserpina*, Weimar, GSA 32/61; Byrne Bodley, *Proserpina*.

[84] For more information on Postscript, see https://www.postscriptensemble.com (accessed 3 March 2023).

[85] *Proserpina*, Weimar, GSA 32/61, fols 37^{r}, 38^{r}, 40^{r}, 43^{v}.

[86] Reasons included availability of singers during the Covid-19 pandemic as well as placement in the venue, which had changed due to Covid-19.

Eberwein's composition and the spoken text alternate mostly in a kind of dialogue. In a few passages they coincide, however: the dramatic effect is intensified, as the actress speaks over the music. As is common in melodramas, Eberwein deploys mainly three types of structures:

1. musical passages alternating with longer fragments of text;
2. short sentences spoken in alternation with chords (similar to a *recitativo secco* in opera. See, for instance, p. 155, and the example above: p. 146;
3. longer musical passages coinciding with the text (pp. 143–144) (similar to a *recitativo accompagnato*).

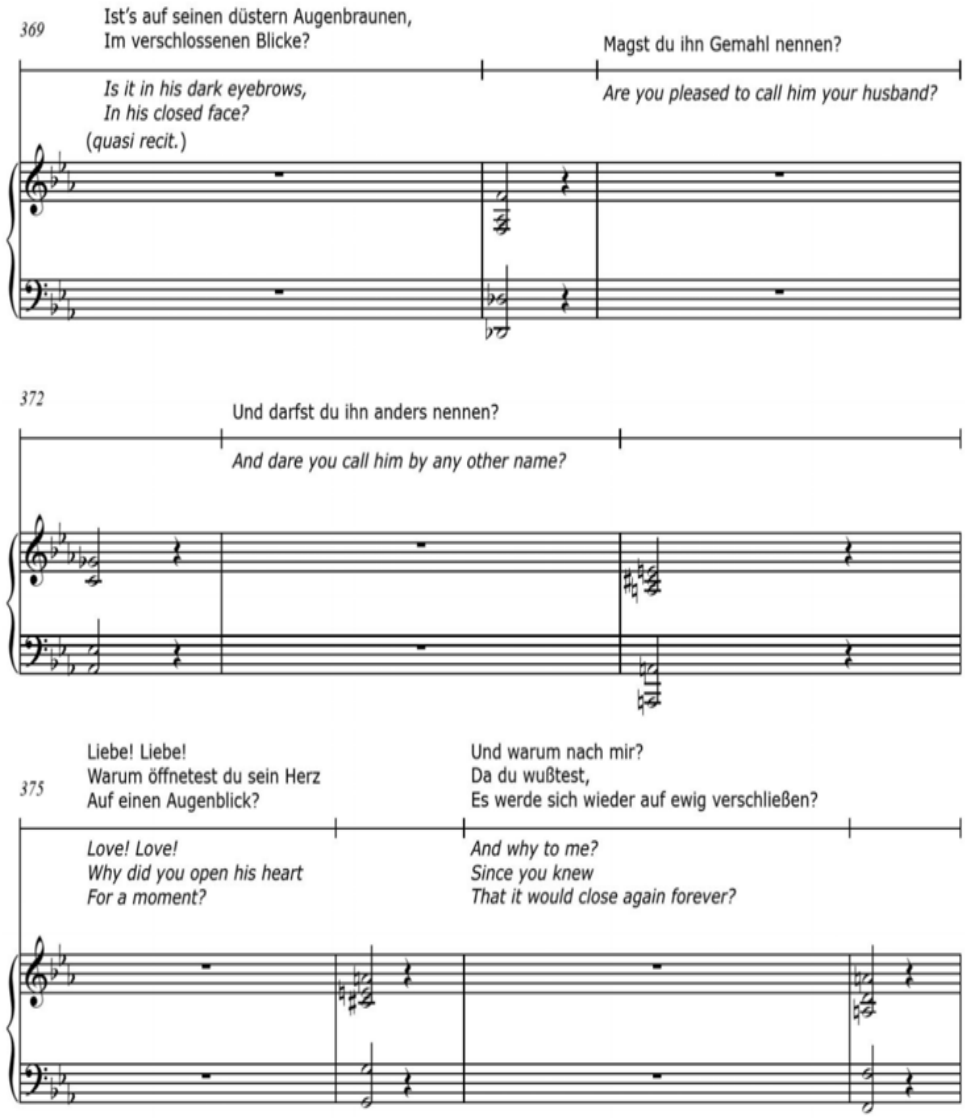
The role of the music increases in the finale: the chorus is added, and the musical blocks and Proserpina's text accelerate and intertwine – alternating, coinciding, or overlapping. As Postscript and I looked for balance in the alternation of music and text, we discovered that often the best way to maintain the dramatic tension was not by waiting for one another at the connection points, but by actively chaining one element to the other, with the music cutting in on the text or the other way around. Naturally, the better the musicians understood the German text, the better their way of playing resonated with my lines and movements, creating an uninterrupted flow of storytelling.

4.5.3 Emotion and movement, timing and delivery

In general, the atmosphere evoked through Eberwein's music confirmed my *basic* interpretation of the passions in the text. Yet each musical passage requires its own *precise variation* of the passion, which was often decisive for the exact impulse, quality and tempo of the attitudes, gestures, transitions, and facial expression (grand or small, quick or slow, forceful or graceful, contracted or expanded posture, and so on). Similarly, the music strongly influenced the timing of the delivery and vice versa. I have discussed the freedom to use pauses and forms of differentiation for expressive purposes in acting in Chapter 3 on Jelgerhuis's *Toneel Studien.* I now continued to use and develop these principles in combination with Eberwein's music. My interpretation of the text included moments of silence, *accellerandi* [accelleration] and *rallentandi* [slowing down], to which the instrumentalists adapted. At the same time, the musical rendition automatically affected the speed, volume, and other aspects of my delivery, such as articulation and colour. We experimented with these ideas to optimize communicating the meaning of the text and its emotional content. Doing so was particularly relevant in recitative-like sections, in which the text alternates with short musical interjections.

In Score 3, bars 360–378, for instance, the harmony in each chord suggests a different passion, influencing the timing and the musicians' rendering of the chord (long or short, with emphasis, or softly, for instance).[87] The way they played determined, in turn, how long I waited before speaking again.

[87] Byrne Bodley, *Proserpina*, p. 146, bars 369–381.



Score 3, Fragment from *Proserpina*, in Lorraine Byrne Bodley's piano reduction in *Proserpina: Goethe's Melodrama with Music by Carl Eberwein*, ed. and transl. by Lorraine Byrne Bodley, Dublin: Carysfort Press 2007, p. 157.

4.5.4 Turning inward in moments of transition

A piece with as many emotional build-ups as *Proserpina* requires just as many moments to reduce the tension, whether positive or negative, and return almost inward, as it were, and, from there, to navigate again towards a new thought and thus a new emotional sequence. Jelgerhuis describes such moments in various roles of his *Toneel Studien* manuscript as '*zich bezinnen*' (to reflect), '*tot zich zelf keren*' (to contemplate), '*zich hernemend*' (to recover).[88] Such transformations from a highly

[88] See Jelgerhuis, *Toneel Studien*. For '*Zig intussen ogenblikkelijk herneemende*', see the role of Avogaro, p. 62; '*mij herneemende*', role of Gijsbrecht van Aemstel, p. 87; '*mij herneemende*', role of Siméon, p. 126; '*tot mij zelve keerende Zonk ik Een poos in gedagten over 't geen gepasseert was, – mij bezinnend*' role of

passionate state to recovery require attention in preparation as they often take time. In spoken theatre, an actor or actress can take as much time as needed in a monologue, but when two or more characters on stage interact, the actors ideally adapt their timing to each other. In monodramas there is no interaction with other actors, but the transitions for recovery are often accompanied, anticipated, or followed by the music, and must therefore be well prepared with the ensemble.

4.5.5 Imagination and atmosphere

In some passages, the music (musical theme and colour of instrumentation) created a particular atmosphere, which I interpreted with a corresponding affect, while my interpretation of Goethe's text indicated another affect. For instance, the text may suggest anger/sadness even as Eberwein's music illustrates a contrasting passion through a tonality in major. In such cases, which prevails, the music or the text? Contrasting interpretations of the text and the music usually demanded going deeper (into one's imagination), and looking for another layer within the story. The solution was either found during the rehearsals – through experimentation and by discussing the various viewpoints of Proserpina's situation – or in moments of reflection in between rehearsals. It was often a question of recalibrating whether the music had a following or a guiding function. In case of the music as a following function, Proserpina's text propels the action, which the music deepens or comments on. The guiding function in the music can be seen as an upbeat to Proserpina's next thought, or a foreshadowing of the next passage: preparing, even warning the audience, while Proserpina herself is yet unaware of the imminent change. (Again, both cases can be compared to an aside or a line spoken by another character in a play, whereas in a monodrama, it is the music informing the audience.)

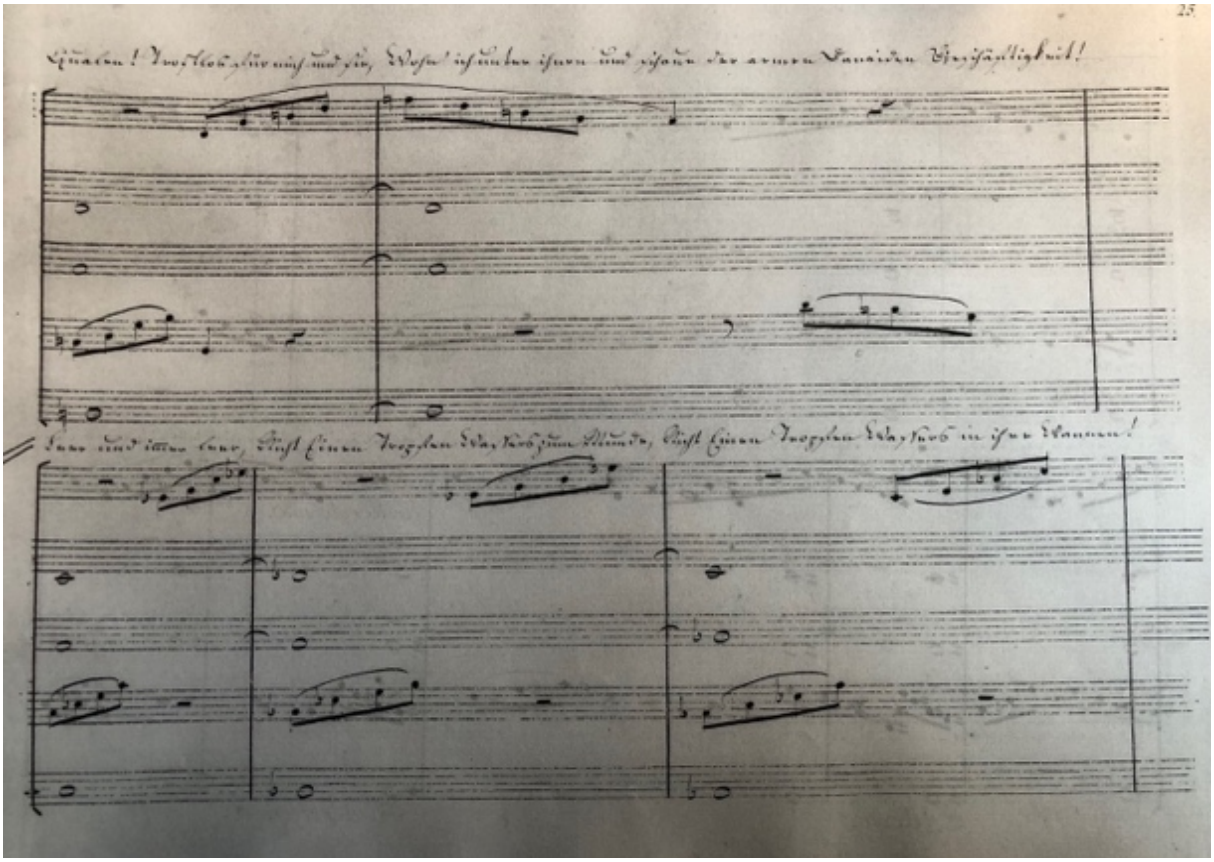
4.5.6 The manuscript and the *Proserpina* edition

In the case of differences between the 2007 Byrne Bodley edition and the Weimar manuscript, we tried to favour the latter. Those differences were few and minor, however, and I will only mention the two examples that had the biggest impact on our rendering of the monodrama. In the 2007 edition, the text is printed and distributed differently over certain bars in comparison with the handwritten version (for the latter, see Score 4).[89] Although both in her editorial note and in a footnote to the score Byrne Bodley explains that the text is to be delivered freely according to the interpretation of the performer, seeing the linear distribution of the text in the manuscript was still helpful. (Score 4 shows the visual effect of the continuous flow of words written out above the musical score). As Byrne Bodley describes it, 'performers take charge of the inflection and especially of the placement of their speech against the musical background, which can radically

Siméon, p. 128; '*weederom tot zig zelve keerende*', role of Siméon, p. 135. For the citation of a similar description by the French actor Francois-Joseph Talma of taking time for a character's thoughts and/or feelings, see Dene Barnett, *The Art of Gesture*, p. 375.

[89] See, for instance, *Proserpina*, Weimar, GSA 32/61, fols 24^{v} and 25^{r} of the Weimar manuscript and Byrne Bodley, *Proserpina*, pp. 142–143.

alter the meaning of the work'.[90] Indeed, the exact timing of the words on the music was crucial to obtaining the desired atmosphere, particularly in the following passage. In bars 333–336 (Byrne Bodley, *Proserpina*) the harmony changes while Proserpina says: '*Ach, das fliehende Wasser | Möcht ich dem Tantalus schöpfen, | Mit lieblichen Früchten ihn sättigen! | Armer Alter! | Für gereiztes Verlangen gestraft!*' ('Oh, I would like to draw the fleeing water | For Tantalus! | Satisfy him with sweet fruits! | Poor old man, | Punished for provoked craving!').[91]



Score 4, *Proserpina. Monodrama von Goethe mit Musik von Carl Eberwein.*
Klassik Stiftung, Weimar, Goethe-und Schiller-Archiv, GSA 32/61, fol. 25r,

The initial arpeggios in B flat Major (the first two bars) lend Proserpina's wish a positive (hopeful longing) tone, but the tonality changes into b flat minor, which, when timed with '*armer Alter*', gives these words a beautiful sadness with the warmth of compassion (pity). This is also a more meaning-based solution for the timing within the given four bars. The first three (hopeful longing) lines are spoken faster, within the first two bars, leaving more time to express compassion/pity in the last two. Another difference between the two scores was the omission of the text '*wie sie schöpfen und füllen! Leer und immer leer!*' ('empty, [and] always empty! How they draw and fill!')[92] in the Weimar manuscript (see Score 4). Goethe's published text and Bodley's edition includes these lines:

[90] Byrne Bodley, *Proserpina*, p. xiv, xvi; for an example in the orchestral score: p. 64; in the piano reduction: p. 142.
[91] Transl. Byrne Bodley, *Proserpina*, p. 174.
[92] Transl. Byrne Bodley, *Proserpina*, p. 175.

Leer und immer leer!
(Wie sie schöpfen und füllen!
Leer und immer leer!)
Nicht einen Tropfen Wassers zum Munde,
Nicht einen Tropfen Wassers in ihre Wannen!
Leer und immer leer!
Ach, so ist's mit dir auch, mein Herz!

In order to declaim this text with the given music, however, one would need to speak quickly, slow down the tempo of the musical accompaniment, or add a bar to the score. Byrne Bodley provides an example of the latter practice in her editorial note to *Proserpina*, mentioning repeated bars to accommodate the right delivery in Liszt's melodrama *Lenore*.[93] In our production of *Proserpina* performed in the Netherlands at Gasthuis Leeuwenbergh in Utrecht in 2021, Belogurov and I chose this option: he inserted a bar (a repetition of the arpeggio in the previous bar), and I spoke the complete text. In preparation of the 2022 performance at the Theatre Festival Overacting in Leiden, I tried the version with the shortened text: the extra bar was left out, and the timing of music and speech was harmonious.

In retrospect, both options worked. The threefold repetition of '*Leer und immer leer*' in the first version enhances the hopelessness of the situation, but requires a decrease in volume, which in the first performance venue was possible, though less so in the Leiden theatre where the acoustic was dry. The shorter version was thus a good solution for the Leiden theatre. The concern of remaining audible with the speaking voice against the music is recurrent in many melodramas. Apart from finding the right balance between the instruments and the voice and employing a clear articulation, moving to the front of the stage provided another solution to this problem.

4.6 TWO VENUES: THE STAGE AND THE PERFORMANCE

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Postscript and I performed *Proserpina* in the Netherlands one year later than planned, at Gasthuis Leeuwenbergh in Utrecht in 2021 and at the Leiden theatre in 2022. The choices related to each venue, such as the lighting, the placement of the musicians, the sets, and the positioning of the chorus, directly influenced the performances.[94]

4.6.1 The first venue

Gasthuis Leeuwenbergh is a historical venue, part of a late sixteenth-century pesthouse, renovated in 2020 and equipped with the newest technology to manipulate the lighting and even the acoustics.[95] I decided to use everything this modern venue has to offer to create the atmosphere

[93] Byrne Bodley, *Proserpina*, p. xiv.
[94] I owe sincere and grateful thanks to Xavier Vandamme, who invited me co-curate an exhibition on acting, and gave me the opportunity of performing *Proserpina* at the Festival Oude Muziek Utrecht 2021. Without him, this second case study would not have been the same.
[95] https://leeuwenbergh.me (accessed 3 March 2023).

most fitting to our conception of Proserpina's story. This concert venue, created within a huge space, was acoustically favourable to the speaking voice; I could make use of louder and softer tones in my delivery, which would be heard by the audience as long as I kept articulating clearly. The musicians were seated on the same level as the audience, and there were windows on one side of the seats. As the performances took place in daytime, the audience and musicians were visible, and the effect of the stage lighting was not as strong as it might have been, had it been possible to darken the auditorium. I created a lighting plan with the help of the venue's technician, which was not based on historical sources (my research did not include investigations of footlights, chandeliers, or other lighting systems in the Weimar theatre in 1815).[96] The lighting was devised to enhance the atmosphere created in the text and the music, and to differentiate the various stages of Proserpina's story, reflecting the different situations in the dramatic development of the piece. For instance: Proserpina's happy childhood memories in the field of Enna (a warm soft yellow), the abduction (darker), the prayer-like section in which Proserpina addresses her father (dark with a spotlight from above), one for the enchantment of the pomegranate (a warm pink), and red flaming lights for the final section, increasing in strength each time the chorus sings to Proserpina.

Placing the chorus: There were complications concerning the placing of the singers as described in the sources. The Weimar manuscript indicates a first and second chorus, placed on the right and left side of the theatre, first singing in alternation, then together.[97] Bodley's edition mentions '*unsichtbar*' and 'off-stage' for the chorus entries, and Riemer describes his experience of this effect as '*Wie ein unsichtbares Geisterchor so schienen die Stimmen von allen Seiten einzudringe*n' (the voices seemed to invade from all sides, like an invisible chorus of ghosts).[98] For various reasons, the singers could not be placed behind both sides behind the stage. Instead, to create part of the ghost-like atmosphere described by Riemer, the chorus started singing from an area invisible to the audience but beside it, moving closer as they continued to sing. This increased the volume of the voices as they approached, and had the effect of an invasion as the singers became visible standing near the audience.

The acoustical construction and the depth of the stage did not allow for theatre sets, or for a tableau to be revealed behind a second curtain on-stage. Without the sets, we decided against the '*geforderte Granatbaum*' (the required pomegranate tree) mentioned by Goethe[99] and other trees or bushes on stage, mentioned in the eye–witness account by Gries.[100] As mentioned in section 4.3 on costume, this determined my choice to use one, instead of three veils, in the performances. Without the trees and bushes to hang the veils on, I would have had to carry all three veils at all

[96] As this dissertation focuses on the works of Jelgerhuis, I decided to concentrate on those aspects Jelgerhuis has written about. His comments on lighting in describing his portrayal of Koning Lear in 1832 were not enough sufficient to plan the lighting for a full performance. See Jelgerhuis, *De tooneelspeler J. Jelgerhuis Rz.*, pp. 15, 18.)

[97] *Proserpina*, Weimar, GSA 32/61 '*Erster Chor auf dem Theater zur Rechten.*', fol. 37[r] ; '*Zweiter Chor auf der linken Seite des Theaters*', fol. 38[r]; '*Zweiter Chor, Erster Chor*,' fol. 40[r] ; '*Erster und 2[ter] Chor*', fols. 41[v] and 43[v].

[98] The word '*unsichtbar*' (Byrne Bodley, *Proserpina*, p. 160) is in keeping with the libretto. See 'Aufführung', in *Journal für Literatur*, p. 23; and 'Proserpina', in *Journal für Literatur*, p. 239.

[99] 'Proserpina' in *Morgenblatt*, p. 542; see also *Goethes Werke*, WA 1. 40, p. 110.

[100] See the citation by Gries above in section 4.3, 'The costume'.

times, or to lay them on the stage floor, which would have been neither a practical nor an elegant option. The stage set in the Leiden theatre, one year later, did include bushes and trees, but again I decided against the multiple veils, as there was no time to practice hanging and picking them up.

4.6.2 The second venue

The Leidse Schouwburg, built in 1705, is the oldest theatre in the Netherlands that is still in use as a theatre. It has been renovated many times, but in 1997 the auditorium was reconstructed to resemble the interior of 1865.[101] Performing at this theatre offered an opportunity to work with historical stage sets from the Van den Berghe collection.[102] Although both the sets and the theatre are of a later date then the 1815 *Proserpina* production, they created a harmonious visual unity with the Schouwburg interior, my costume, and my movements.

Figure 13, Video still of the *Proserpina* performance at the Leidse Schouwburg, 2022 showing the stage sets 'De Grot', part of the Van den Berghe collection. Photo by Marieke Wijntjes.

In agreement with Jed Wentz, who was in charge of the organization and the stage sets, I selected a set called '*Rotsen*' (Rocks) (visible in Figure 13), with a cut out backdrop and two shutters, to represent '*Eine öde, felsigte gegend, Höhle im Grund, auf der Seite ein Granatbaum mit Früchten*' (A desolate,

[101] See 'Informatie over theater' on Theater.nl, https://www.theater.nl/leiden/leidse-schouwburg/#Impressie (accessed 3 March 2023).
[102] Photo: Marieke Wijntjes. For Wentz's blog on the Van den Berghe stage sets, see Jed Wentz, 'What goes where', on the Van den Berghe stage sets (accessed 15 August 2025).

rocky region, a cave in the background, on one side, a pomegranate tree with fruit) described in early versions of the libretto.[103] Behind this was a backdrop showing a mountain and a lake.[104] Supplementary poplars, rocks, and a pomegranate tree completed the set. The pomegranate tree had cut-outs to allow the fruits to light up at the moment that hell turns to spring. This model was based on a similar construction of a painted orange tree (Figure 14, left) and grape vines (Figure 14, right) which I had seen at the Český Krumlov Palace Theatre.

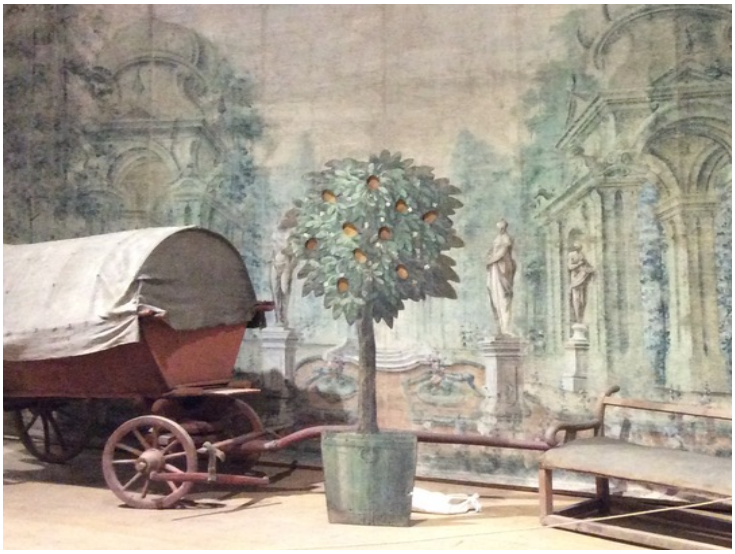


Figure 14, Stage set pieces of an orange tree (left) and grape vines (right), (c. 1765–1770), spruce wood, painted with tempera. Slots (oranges, grapes) are covered from the reverse with waxed paper, with tempera painting. At the reverse, small hooks were fixed for little candles, so the painted and translucent fruits were shining. Pictures displayed with the permission of the collections of the State Castle Český Krumlov, administered by the Czech National Heritage Institute.

The set-up resulted in a shallow stage area, front to back. Not only did this strengthen the feeling of Proserpina's entrapment in hell, but it probably also reflected historical practice: with this set-up there would have been space behind the backdrop to reveal a final tableau vivant.[105] In this theatre, the musicians played from the pit, except for the traverso player, who was seated in the nearest box (and the person manipulating a thunder sheet, who stood on the first balcony, across from the stage). The four singers now sang from the pit, unseen. We would have needed a much larger chorus to create a stereo effect as described above while remaining audible from backstage in this acoustic.

[103] See, for instance, *Goethes Sämtliche Werke*, 5 (Leipzig: Der Tempel [n.d.]), p. 123; and 'Proserpina, ein Monodram', in *Der Teutsche Merkur*, (Weimar: February 1778) 1/4, p. 97 (this version of Goethe's text is in prose). The English transl. I used here is taken from Byrne Bodley, *Proserpina*, p. 173.

[104] For information on what the sets may have looked like, see Maisak, 'Theater-Effekte'. For Goethe's commentary on the sets, see 'Proserpina' in *Morgenblatt*, p. 543; see also *Goethes Werke*, WA 1. 40, pp. 109–111.

[105] See *Goethes Werke*, WA 1. 40, pp. 113–116. For information on the final tableau vivant and how it may have looked, see Maisak, 'Theater-Effekte', pp. 125–129.

A different lighting plan was created for this performance: there were fewer changes in the general atmosphere but additional other effects. Apart from the pomegranates lighting up to draw Proserpina's attention to the tree, we added the sound of a thunder sheet to simulate thunder and lightning (before and after Proserpina's words '*Im fernen Schoße des Abgrunds* |[scheinen] *Dumpfe Gewitter tosend sich zu erzeugen*' ([it seems like,] in the womb of the abyss, | muffled thunderstorms are beginning to roar!) towards the end of the monodrama. Although these effects were based on historical stage practices, to my knowledge, no back-lit pomegranate or thunder effects were mentioned by Goethe or other members of the audience in 1815. Adding them to the *Proserpina* performance, then, was an example of my artistic freedom. As discussed in Chapter 1, 'Jelgerhuis's costumes', Jelgerhuis described choices of artistic freedom (as opposed or as addition to the information in the consulted sources) in favour of the dramatic effect or good taste. My choices in this performance were based on the content of the libretto and served both to increase the dramatic effect and to help convey the story to the audience. The thunderstorm in particular had a positive impact on the performance in Leiden. It changed the timing of the music and the spoken text and intensified my interpretation of that last scene. For instance, as neither the musicians nor I knew exactly when the lightning or thunder would occur, it added an element of unpredictability. At some moments, the musicians had to play louder to balance the volume of the thunder sheet. Moreover, I had to wait for the sound of the thunder to pass before speaking again so that I be heard by the audience. The threat and violence created by the unexpectedness and the volume made me recoil into a fearful attitude, protecting myself by covering myself with part of the mantle. The surrounding stage sets not only added to my imagination but also allowed for different stage actions: entering the scene from upstage, the larger space allowed for bigger steps and thus more movement of the costume. I could place my crown, veil, and mantle on the set pieces representing rocks – this changed my movement as I did not need to kneel down to place them on the stage floor. The curtain was closed during the overture, opening just before my entrance, and closed again with the last chords of the music after Proserpina's last words. In my estimation, these staging aspects added to the magic of the performance. Without a curtain, the audience already takes in the atmosphere while they are entering and talking. This merges the world on-stage with the real world. With the curtain, the audience is allowed a view into Pluto's underworld only for the duration of the story, after which, they return to reality again. However simple, this theatrical principle is important and situationally ideal. However, the separation between these worlds can also be created in venues without a stage or a curtain: the narration initiates when the music starts (as was the case at Gasthuis Leeuwenbergh), for instance, or when the lights are turned on or off.

4.6.3 Audience

Ultimately, my hope was to find a practice-based acting style through which the audience (in 2021 and 2022) would experience the attitudes and transitions not only as aesthetically pleasing, but also as emotionally stirring.[106] Although today's audience is different from an early nineteenth-century

[106] My aim was to allow the piece to realize its potential — a moment of enchantment (visual, audible, emotional, and cognitive) — as I came to envision it within this style, in which the imagination of the performers and the audience is immersed in the story. By performing in this acting style and sharing its particularities with the audience, I hope to contribute to a broader diversity within 21st-century performance practice.

one, I tried not to adapt the staging of *Proserpina* to my idea of its potential reception. However, in retrospect I made at least the following decisions with the modern audience's reception in mind: firstly, a short lecture-introduction held by Wentz previous to the performance was intended to give the audience a minimum of context as to the story and the research behind the performance. Secondly, I added the lighting plan in Gasthuis Leeuwenberg (2021) as well as the lighting pomegranate tree and thunder in Leidse Schouwburg (2022) to visually and audibly support the story for the non-German speaking part of the audience. Prior to the 2021 performances, notwithstanding Byrne Bodley's positive account on the reception of the Proserpina myth with contemporary audiences, I was concerned that today's audience might feel detached when viewing a performance based on nineteenth-century aesthetic ideals. Instead, many of the audience's reactions indicated otherwise.[107] I do not know what the entire audience thought during or after each performance (even a survey cannot guarantee this knowledge). My impression of the event is subjective and based on the quality of attention and silence, reactions in the audience during the performance (their facial expressions and body language during the applause), reviews, feedback from colleagues, scholars, and audience members previously unknown to me. Given the sum of these elements, it now seems to me that the narrative and music of *Proserpina* still have the power to move present-day audiences, and that many nineteenth-century attitudes, when embodied in performance, can still convey and even strengthen the emotional portrayal and reception of this monodrama.

4.7 FUTURE RESEARCH

Conducting future, practice-based research on *Proserpina* could entail adding other aspects of the descriptions regarding the 1815 production to present-day *Proserpina* performances. For instance, staging the final *tableau vivant* and/or adding a double chorus (singing from both sides backstage) could influence both the performance and the audience's experience of the drama. The space on-stage at the Gasthuis Leeuwenberg did not allow for the final tableau, and staging the tableau at the Leidse Schouwburg would have required additional costumes, actors, an additional stage set, and mostly more time in the theatre, which were no option within the context of this production. Because the tableau takes up only the very last moments of *Proserpina*, I suspect that adding it would strengthen the final dramatical impact of the melodrama, yet omitting it did not disturb the story line. Moreover, I am curious how a raked stage, historically informed lighting, and the use of veils in different colours, would affect a performance of *Proserpina*. My experience on historical stages taught me that a raked stage has a slight influence on one's manner of walking and posture, for instance. This might influence my sensation as a performer, but might not be visible to the audience. Differently coloured veils, on the other hand, mainly have a symbolic meaning and not a practical one. The organization of placing and removing the garments for symbolic reasons could appear awkward and unnatural to a Western-European audience today. This is a presumption, and would benefit from actual testing.

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[107] For a discussion of the Proserpina myth and its reception by audiences today, see Byrne Bodley, 'From Mythology to Social Politics', pp. 36, 67.

4.8 REFLECTION ON NINETEENTH-CENTURY SOURCES IN PERFORMANCE PRACTICE TODAY

In retrospect, the work inspired by the sources mentioned above changed various aspects of my performance practice. A time span of more than two years (comprising the research, the preparation, and the performances in different venues) had allowed for experimentation with and development of the various acting tools. Where my practice based on Jelgerhuis's *Theoretische lessen* had given me a basis of stage attitudes, and the *Toneel Studien* taught me the importance of contrast in delivery, my work on the artistic attitudes and the merging of the different styles further expanded my expressive options. I enriched my repertoire of attitudes, and the work on movement, vocal delivery, costume, and the interaction with the musicians taught me to push my creative boundaries in the transitions from one attitude to another, whether working in silence, with spoken text, or with music. My search for a rendition of *Proserpina* guided by the ideal of beauty inspired by antiquity (shared by Jelgerhuis and Goethe), linked the historically unrelated sources, resulting in a unified acting style. Images including costume designs, statues, and paintings, functioned as clear examples for direct imitation, whereas the transitions between the images in terms of tempo, fluidity, and contrast left more artistic freedom and more responsibility to the present-day performer. Yet in order to express Proserpina's thoughts and feelings, meaningful transitions were required. The acting style, inspired by antique statuary and featuring the expressive use of costume as well as noble and dance-like movements, had to become so familiar to my body and mind that the complex interplay between thought and imagination, text and music, emotion and movement could merge into a multi-layered yet unified flow. Only then could each moment and movement on stage become a natural consequence of the dramatic content.