Kane O'Hara's MIDAS It's Origins and Reception With a Full Music Edition.

Rachel Talbot
Dublin Institute of Technology

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KANE O’HARA’S MIDAS

ITS ORIGINS AND RECESSION WITH A FULL MUSIC EDITION

RACHEL TALBOT BA (MOD), LTCL, ALCM.

SUBMITTED FOR THE AWARD OF PHD AT DUBLIN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY.

SUPERVISED BY DR KERRY HOUSTON.

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND TOURISM: CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC AND DRAMA.

APRIL 2014.
ABSTRACT

The popularity of Kane O’Hara’s *Midas* lasted from its introduction to the public stage, in Dublin in 1762 and London in 1764, until the end of the nineteenth century. The name of the opera, and the new genre of English burletta which it epitomized, outlived the name of its author, who is frequently referred to as ‘the author of *Midas*’ on the title pages of his later operas. This thesis outlines the theatrical, musical and social milieu out of which *Midas* grew and in which it flourished. An analysis of the different versions of the opera, in Chapter 2, gives a greater insight into the purpose and dramatic priorities of the opera. The musical and literary antecedents of *Midas* are discussed in Chapter 3, with reference to the Enlightenment, the *Querelle des Bouffons* and Rousseau’s *Le Devin du Village* from which O’Hara borrowed in *Midas*. Chapter 4 explores the performance history and reception of *Midas*, with a detailed presentation of the reception of the most popular air in the opera, ‘Pray Goody’. Kane O’Hara’s close connection with the puppet theatre and the reception of *Midas* there is also discussed. Two later operas based on *Midas*, and a literary parody, are compared with the original opera to establish the lasting associations of *Midas*. A full music edition of *Midas* is presented in the Appendix, taking the most common form of the opera, the second edition of 1766, as the main version in Appendix A. Appendices B and C provide the material necessary to recreate the two three-act versions from 1764 and 1762. (A DVD of a DIT student performance of a shortened version of the opera is included with the edition). Chapter 5 discusses the music in *Midas*, leading to notes on the edition in Chapter 6.
DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis which I now submit for examination for the award of PhD, is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others, save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

This thesis was prepared according to the regulations for postgraduate study by research of the Dublin Institute of Technology and has not been submitted in whole or in part of another award in any other third level institution.

The work reported on in this thesis conforms to the principles and requirements of the DIT’s guidelines for ethics in research.

DIT has permission to keep, lend or copy this thesis in whole or in part, on condition that any such use of the material of the thesis be duly acknowledged.

Signature _______________________________ Date __________________
Candidate
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my supervisor, Kerry Houston, for encouraging me to pursue this research topic, making arrangements for *Midas* to be performed at Dublin Institute of Technology Conservatory of Music and Drama in 2009 and for facilitating masterclasses in baroque gesture with Christine Pollerus for the cast of the opera. I am grateful to the following members of staff and students at the DIT, and others, for exploring the opera with me: Anne-Marie O’Sullivan, Roy Holmes, Andrew Robinson, Audrey Trainor, Ross Scanlon, Eoin Hynes, Wayne Woodman, Jennifer Hughes, Ciara McMackin, Niamh Abbey, David Scott, Robert Duff and Gina Oberoi. I would also like to thank the following members of *Opera Antiqua* for staging the related work *Thomas and Sally*, by Thomas Arne, which contributed to my understanding of the context of Kane O’Hara’s *Midas*: David O’Shea, Niamh McCormack, Niamh Fitzgerald, Eoin Hynes, Richard Bridge, David Scott, Michael Lee, Deirdre McCabe, Isabelle Fahy, Rachel Rynne-Lyons, Norah O’Leary, Phelan Murphy, Sandra Collins, Muireann Ni Dhubhghaill and Margaret Bridge.

I am indebted to Patrick O’Connell for drawing my attention to *The O’Hara Papers* at the National Library of Ireland and to conversations with Barra Boydell, Peter Holman, Denise Neary, Donald Burrows and Suzanne Aspden for defining the focus of my thesis. I most particularly wish to thank my husband, Michael Lee, for his support, enthusiasm, insights and encouragement. For the imperative to persevere with this prolonged study, I am grateful to John Wallace and my late mother, Alice Talbot.
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Introduction

Kane O’Hara’s *Midas* enjoyed an enduring international success in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Its structure evolved gradually; originally intended for private performance, it was expanded as a three-act opera for the public theatre before reaching its most enduring form as a two-act afterpiece. In this form, it was performed 121 times in the seasons 1766–74 at Covent Garden theatre.\(^1\) Within a decade *Midas* was appearing regularly at regional theatres in Ireland and Britain and even as far afield as Philadelphia (1769) and St Petersburg (1772).\(^2\)

Despite its long-lasting popularity, *Midas* is no longer remembered or included in discussions of eighteenth-century opera. A number of reasons have contributed to the opera’s falling into neglect. Some critics held reservations regarding the ‘low humour’ in *Midas* at the height of its popularity. These reservations appear to have coloured the passing acquaintance with the opera of later generations:

> What little criticism of his work has been recorded in histories of the drama is more often than not a cavalier dismissal of O’Hara as being beneath notice rather than an unprejudiced judgment of his work resulting from a study of it.\(^3\)

The dismissive attitude towards O’Hara’s works has been compounded by their inconvenience in relation to categorisation. The terms *burletta* and English burletta have fallen out of use and their associations with opera and comedy are now forgotten. Similarly, the meaning of the word ‘burlesque’, from which the

---

3 Maxwell, 130.
name and tone of the burletta are partly derived, has undergone a transformation. The specific style of wit epitomized by O’Hara’s English burlettas has been subsumed into satire and irony and is no longer recognized as a distinct genre.

The use of borrowed music, rather than a score conceived by one composer, has precluded Midas from serious discussion as an opera. Borrowing and parody, once valued as arts in their own right, came to be viewed as the antithesis of originality.

The stigmatization of literary parody as an essentially parasitic activity, and the concomitant denigration of parodic reference as an authorial technique manifestly unworthy of serious critical scrutiny, exerted the force of profoundly influential stereotypes within our literary culture for an extraordinarily long time.\(^4\)

Thus, although Midas is sung throughout, with an overture and symphonies, it is less likely to be considered an opera than Grétry’s Le jugement de Midas which contains spoken dialogue. Perhaps for this reason, the only discussion of Midas in the twentieth century has come from a literary angle. Although commentators stress the importance of its music, Midas is repeatedly presented as a play rather than an opera.

The music in the play, as so many eighteenth-century reviewers pointed out, is the most delightful part of Midas.\(^5\)

The most detailed examination of Midas and the English burletta has been undertaken by Phyllis T. Dircks, in her monograph The Eighteenth-Century


\(^5\) Maxwell, 132.
English Burletta and her editions of the librettos of Midas and the Golden Pippin.\(^6\) She develops a number of the theories originally voiced by W. J. Lawrence, in his series of articles on Irish theatre from the early twentieth century, in these publications. These include the categorising of operas into separate genres and observing the progress of the works in each genre towards their ideal form. In Two Burlettas of Kane O’Hara, she provides a detailed biographical account of Kane O’Hara and in The Eighteenth-Century English Burletta, she outlines the chronology of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century operas commonly referred to as English burlettas. However, she overlooks the essentially musical nature of the works discussed by terming them plays or playlets, as can be seen in the following comment:

\[
\text{Much of the play’s success was due to O’Hara’s genius for selecting music which would effectively dramatize his literary text.}^7
\]

This thesis aims to revisit Midas, presenting it as a musical work and discussing it in relation to its musical and theatrical contexts, with a view to discovering the reasons for its prolonged popularity.

To facilitate this discussion, a full music edition of Midas has been included in the Appendices. The edition combines the extant sources to present as much of the music printed or referred to as possible, in a consistent format, informed by the stage directions in the 1762 manuscripts. The edition is presented in three parts.


\(^7\) Phyllis T. Dircks, Midas: an English Burletta, 1766, vi.
The first relates to the second edition of the libretto of 1766, the most enduring form of *Midas*. The second part relates to the supplemental material necessary to recreate the three-act version of the opera and is based on the 1764 libretto. The final part relates to the Dublin sources of 1762. The music source for the edition is the undated score published by John Walsh in London, after 1764.\(^8\) This score does not contain any recitatives, and also omits the twenty-five airs which appear in Appendix C. To facilitate the performance of *Midas* as a dramatic whole, I have composed settings of the recitatives printed in the second edition of the two-act libretto of 1766, and in the 1764 libretto. I have also retrieved and arranged the music which is named, but not printed, in the 1762 Dublin manuscripts and *Songs in the New Burletta of Midas*.\(^9\)

**Summary**

The first chapter reviews Kane O’Hara’s life, focusing on his musical and theatrical activities and placing them in the context of Dublin’s social and theatrical life. The origins of *Midas* are explored through a discussion of the earliest source material and O’Hara’s earlier works. The choice of subject is viewed in light of the classical and burlesque aspects of the opera. The second chapter draws comparisons between the different versions of *Midas*, suggesting reasons for the changes which were made and allying the elements which were retained with new trends in opera on the continent. The third chapter investigates

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\(^8\) Kane O’Hara, *Midas, A Comic Opera, As it is perform’d at the Theatre Royal in Covent-Garden. For the Harpsichord, Voice, German Flute, Violin, or Guitar*. (London: I. Walsh, [n.d.]).

\(^9\) Kane O’Hara, *Songs in the New Burletta of Midas. As it is performed at the Theatre-Royal in Crow-Street. 1762*. (Dublin: 1762).
the identity of the English burletta, and the claim by W. J. Lawrence and later authors that *Midas* was the first English burletta. Earlier instances of the English burletta are suggested and discussed. The related genres of dramatic pastoral, masque, *pasticcio*, Italian burletta, pantomime, ballad opera and farce are also discussed, leading to reflections on the influence of social change and international debate on comic opera.

The fourth chapter presents the first casts of *Midas*, as a means to illustrate the performance style of *Midas* in particular and the English burletta in general. This is developed in a case study of the performance history and reception of the opera’s most popular air ‘Pray, Goody, please to moderate the rancour of your tongue’. The parallel performance history and reception of *Midas* at the puppet theatre is also considered and observations are made on the similarities between the repertoire of the puppet theatre and the musical borrowings in *Midas*. The relation of *Midas* to its later incarnations—*Apollo turn’d Stroller* (1787) by John Oldmixon and Samuel Arnold, *A Parody of the Songs in the Burletta of Midas* (1789) and *Le Jugement de Midas* (1778) by Grétry and Hales is assessed.

The fifth chapter presents the music in *Midas*, in conjunction with the music edition in the Appendices. The relationship between borrowed melodies and their original sources is illustrated and the airs and their settings are analysed in terms of distinctive characteristics within the airs and their symphonies. The settings of the ensemble movements are the most original element of the music in the opera, and support conclusions relating to the musical humour of the opera.
The original music for the recitatives in Appendices A and B is no longer extant. In order to present *Midas* as an all-sung opera, and to represent the original proportions of the opera, I have composed new settings for these recitatives. The influence of the stage directions in the 1762 manuscripts of *Midas* on the composition of the new recitatives is illustrated in chapter 5 and the musical models for their composition—taken from Boyce, Arne and Dibdin, are discussed and compared with relevant recitatives in Appendices A and B. To facilitate the inclusion of material from the 1762 Crow Street production, I have sourced and arranged the tunes for the airs which appear in Appendix C. These settings are also discussed in chapter 5.

The sixth chapter relates exclusively to the music edition of *Midas* in the Appendices. Details of the origins of the borrowed music are presented, with a commentary on the textual variations between the sources of both the air texts and the recitatives. The purpose of this chapter is to allow performers to draw on the broadest range possible of original material.
CHAPTER 1: THE ORIGINS OF *MIDAS*

Biography of Kane O’Hara

A ‘gentleman of good connections, and well known in the fashionable world’,¹ Kane O’Hara was a popular figure in eighteenth-century Dublin. J. Fitzgerald Molloy relates that ‘[i]n manner he was polite, sensible and cheerful, “foremost and chief modulator in all fashionable entertainments, the very pink of gentility and good breeding, and a very necessary man in every party for amusement”’.² His physical appearance was widely remarked upon, giving rise to anecdotes which have been more accurately remembered than his achievements. Most references made to O’Hara include a comment on his height. Probably the most extensive comment is made by the very successful Irish tenor Michael Kelly in his *Reminiscences* of 1826:

O’Hara was so remarkably tall, that, among his intimate friends in Ireland, he was nick-named St. Patrick’s Steeple. At one time, Giardini’s Italian glee, was extremely popular, and sung every where, in public, and in private. The words in Italian are, -

“Viva tutte le vezzose
Donne, amabile, amorose,
Che non hanno crudeltà,”

It was parodied, and for the last line -

they substituted this, -

“Kane O’Hara’s cruel tall:”

a combination of sounds which, from early association, I am unable entirely to overcome whenever I hear the glee.’³

---

¹ Robert Hitchcock, *An Historical View of the Irish Stage; from the earliest period down to the close of the season 1788* (Dublin: Marchbank, 1788), 2:92n.
As well as being extremely tall, Craig relates that he had ‘the appearance of an old fop’. To quote Molloy, ‘his eyes were protected by gold-rimmed spectacles, and he wore an antiquated wig’.

---

4 This glee was better known in its English translation in the nineteenth century:
Here’s a health to all good lasses,
Pledge it merrily, fill your glasses,
Let a bumper toast go round.
May they live a life of pleasure,
Without mixture, without measure,
For with them true joys are found.


6 Molloy, 2:152.
O’Hara was also noted for the most prized attribute in the eighteenth century—wit, being described by another Irish librettist, John O’Keeffe, as ‘a first-rate wit’. Like O’Keeffe, O’Hara wrote a number of successful opera librettos for the

---

7 Portrait of Kane O’Hara by Edmund Dorrell (London: 1802). National Portrait Gallery NPG D5391
Dublin and London stages. O’Keeffe always collaborated with a composer, but O’Hara selected the music for his operas himself, from pre-existing music, and there is no attribution for a composer for the operas.\(^9\) A number of sources describe O’Hara as a composer; Molloy describes him as ‘a popular composer’.\(^10\)

This has led to confusion with regard to his contribution to music. This confusion is due to a change in the perception of the relative importance of the libretto and the music in opera which began in the mid-eighteenth century. By the nineteenth century, opera was identified by its composer, but in the mid-eighteenth century it was quite common, acceptable and even desirable for an opera to contain music by a number of different composers, sometimes altering the musical content from performance to performance, and consequently to be attributed to its librettist. Writing in 1897, Molloy would have presumed that the popular classic known as ‘Kane O’Hara’s Midas’ had been composed by Kane O’Hara, rather than musically compiled by him. Kane O’Hara’s actual musical contribution to the opera would have been seen as peripheral or ancillary by later commentators, as illustrated by Phyllis T. Dircks’s comments on the attribution of *La Finta Sposa* and *La Creanza* to Zingoni:

*Le Creanza* [sic.]... appeared under the name of Zingoni, who apparently did little more than orchestrate and arrange them, further suggesting the pasticcio nature of their musical offerings.\(^{11}\)

---

\(^9\) Charles Dibdin is sometimes associated with O’Hara’s *The Two Misers* and probably composed the recitatives included in the vocal score of that work. See Chapters 4 and 5. Similarly, Thomas A. Arne is sometimes associated with O’Hara’s *The Golden Pippin*.


Perhaps the clearest assessment of O’Hara’s musical contribution is given by Michael Kelly, who had sung O’Hara’s works both as a child and as a successful singer at Drury Lane.

a distinguished musical amateur; his adaptations were not alone elegant and tasteful, but evinced a thorough knowledge of stage effect.12

There is no record of O’Hara performing on an instrument but Maurice Craig reports that ‘At the first (private) performance of Midas he played the part of Pan himself’.13 Michael Kelly remembers: ‘I heard him, when a boy, sing at his own house in Dublin, with exquisite humour, the songs of Midas, Pan and Apollo’s drunken song of, “Be by your friends advised, too harsh, too hasty Dad”. When I acted the part of Apollo at Drury Lane, I formed my style of singing and acting that song from the recollections of his manner of singing it.’14

Kane O’Hara is considered by some sources to be a playwright.15 He is described as a ‘writer of burlesques’ by W. J. Fitzpatrick in his 1894 article on O’Hara in the Dictionary of National Biography, and this seems to reflect the essence of his talent.16 O’Hara also made adaptations of three Metastasio texts: Isaac—an oratorio, the serenata Cupid’s Triumph—an adaptation of l’Endimione, and

12 Kelly, 2:181.
13 Craig, 187. Craig’s source for this assertion may have been The Private Theatre of Kilkenny. See n.109 on p51.
14 Kelly, 2:181.
According to Maurice Craig, he wrote a satirical novel in the manner of Voltaire and was the ‘laureate’ of the ‘Kingdom of Dalkey’. This was a society which held meetings, wrote poems and burlesques and had a ‘King’ and druids among its members. The Dalkey Gazette finished in 1797 and the kingdom was abolished in 1798. Walsh includes a contemporary illustration of ‘the Kingdom of Dalkey’.

Fig. 3. The Kingdom of Dalkey, illustration from John Edward Walsh, Ireland Sixty Years Ago, Dublin: 1847. 107.

In common with John O’Keeffe, O’Hara was a talented artist. Fitzpatrick records that ‘his etching of Dr. William King, the learned Anglican archbishop of Dublin, was copied by Richardson’.

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17 These can be found in manuscripts at the National Library of Ireland, IRL–Dn, MS 9251, IRL–Dn, MS 9252, IRL–Dn, MS 9258.
18 John Edward Walsh, Ireland Sixty Years Ago (Dublin: 1847), 107.
19 Craig, 187.
20 Fitzpatrick, 64.
There is debate about Kane O’Hara’s date of birth. Rev. Samuel C. Hughes gives his year of birth as 1714 while William H. Grattan Flood gives it as 1710. There are some inaccuracies and approximations in both of these sources, which puts both of these suggestions in doubt. The most recent biographies of Kane O’Hara give dates in between the two above. Phyllis Dircks, writing for the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* in 2004, gives 1711/12 while Patrick M. Geoghegan gives c.1712 in his article in the *Dictionary of Irish Biography* of 2009, perhaps acknowledging and averaging both years put forward in earlier sources. Kane O’Hara was born at Templehouse Co. Sligo, the second son of Kean Og O’Hara. Molloy describes him as ‘a member of the tribe of O’Hara which descended from Cian or Kane, son of Oliol Olum, king of Munster in the third century’. Fitzpatrick adds that he ‘came of old Sligo stock famous for their musical taste’. His father, High Sheriff of Sligo in 1703, was a patron of the harper Turlough O’Carolan, who stayed with the family regularly. Carolan composed the song *Cupán Uí Echgra* for Kean Og O’Hara:

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24 Geoghegan, 531.
25 Molloy, 2:152.
26 Fitzpatrick, 63.
According to Patrick Geoghegan, O’Hara was educated locally. However, Phyllis Dircks and earlier sources agree that ‘he received his early schooling from the Revd William Jackson at Mount Temple’. He entered Trinity College Dublin, aged sixteen on 3 March 1728, graduated with a BA in 1732 and received an MA in 1735. Geoghegan is the only source to give further details of O’Hara’s life. He became a freemason in 1738. Although Hughes describes him as ‘an old bachelor’ Geoghegan clarifies that he married a relative, Anna Maria Matthew, and they had one daughter, Charlotte. O’Hara lived permanently in Ireland. His Dublin address for most of his life was King Street, off St Stephen’s Green. In his

28 Dircks, ODNB, 41:629–630.
29 Ibid.
final years he moved to Molesworth Street, ‘only a few doors from Baron Dawson’.  

O’Hara’s sight failed in latter years and ‘he became totally blind in 1778, but he enjoyed a capital performance of his “Golden Pippin” at Crow Street on November 6, 1779, when John O’Keeffe and Owenson were respectively Momus and Mercury’. Around that time, rather than using his signature to sign a covenant with Ryder, he ‘made his mark’. Fitzpatrick relates that ‘despite his affliction’ he ‘posed as a brilliant wit and fine gentleman’. He died in Dublin on 17 June, 1782.

**The Dublin Musical Academy**

In 1757, Kane O’Hara founded the Dublin Musical Academy with Garret Colley Wellesley, Lord Mornington. Lord Mornington was a composer and is perhaps now best known for being the father of the future Duke of Wellington. In 1764 Lord Mornington became the first Professor of Music at Dublin University, Trinity College and was also conferred with the degree of Mus.D. The Dublin

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30 Craig, 187.  
31 Flood, *Sketch*, 54. Owenson was an Irish singer from an Irish-speaking background, who was successful on the London stage.  
32 Fitzpatrick, 64.  
33 Most sources agree that O’Hara founded the Academy jointly with Lord Mornington. Hughes, mistakenly, reports that O’Hara was the first President of the Dublin Musical Academy and he would appear to be Eric Walter White’s source as he makes the same assertion. O’Hara was definitely Vice-President. According to the statutes of the Academy, instituted in 1758 (which leads some sources to date the beginning of the Academy as 1758), there were four vice-presidents of the Dublin Musical Academy.  
34 Flood, *Sketch*, 56.
Musical Academy comprised “persons moving in the highest sphere of society”. Recent sources describe it as a society of musical amateurs but the term ‘amateur’ has significantly different connotations in a twenty-first century context. Where amateur is now seen as inferior to professional, in the eighteenth century the term was contrasted with ‘mercenary’. ‘Indeed in 1774, the famous singer and teacher Giambattista Mancini advised young Italian singers to learn acting from the educated “Gentlemen, and Men of letters, and cultivated people, who recite and act Plays for their [own] pleasure. As they are in themselves skilful Actors, so, willingly they kindly teach one who asks them.”’ The fourth statute of the Academy states that ‘no public mercenary performer, professor, or teacher of music, shall ever be admitted into any rank of the Academy on any account whatsoever’.

The Academy met every Wednesday evening at seven o’clock from November to May at Fishamble Street Music Hall. ‘In every month there shall be three Wednesdays of private practice, and one or more of public performance. On these last strangers shall be admitted by tickets.’ There were three levels of active membership. Performers entered as probationers. Male instrumentalists could also be admitted as associates. Above these were the academics, male and female, and the lady patronesses. The male academics were responsible for the expenses of the Academy and had the right to vote in debates and on the admission of new members. A guest could attend one private practice per season. Provision was

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35 J. Warburton, J. Whitelaw and R. Walsh, History of the City of Dublin (London: Cadell & Davies, 1818), 77. The source of the quote is not given.
37 Warburton, Whitelaw and Walsh, 78.
38 Statute 12.
made to allow non-professional male performers to participate, although not being members of the Academy. Non-attendance of an academic for four consecutive evenings was interpreted as resignation.

‘Once in the year a public musical entertainment shall be exhibited by the Academy for the benefit of the Charitable Loan, or any other which shall be deemed more worthy’. The Charitable Loan Society, referred to in the statute above, was also instituted in 1757 and ‘is first mentioned in connection with the performance of Acis & Galatea for this Fund on 22.4.57’. Its purpose was to give small loans ‘to poor Industrious Trade Folk’. This performance was given by ‘male and female amateurs of the first rank’, and is likely to have been the first unofficial performance of the Dublin Musical Academy. The first advertised public performance of the Dublin Musical Academy was on 6 April 1758. The performance was of Metastasio’s serenata l’Endimione, with music by Andrea Bernasconi. ‘On these occasions crowds were naturally attracted, as well by the talents as by the consequence of the performers. They saw on the stage all rank obliterated, profession disregarded, and female timidity overcome in the cause of charity; while noblemen, statesmen, lawyers, divines, and ladies, exerted their best abilities, like mercenary performers, to amuse the public.’ Mrs Delany was an audience member at one of these concerts and made a mixed response to it in a letter dated 30 December 1758: ‘The Italian taste prevails too much, and takes off

39 Statute 17.
43 Boydell, 249.
44 Warburton, Whitelaw and Walsh, 77.
the pleasure I should otherwise have in their performance, which is better than I would have imagined.  

William H. Grattan Flood points out that the ‘Academy was the first to introduce ladies into the chorus—an innovation that had incorrectly been claimed for Dr. Arne’. While women could not vote in the Academy they could be full academics and sang and played harpsichord in the public performances. Two of the ladies were particularly praised for their performances, Lady Caroline Russell and Miss Stuart. The wives of the male academics were welcome at all performances. Mrs Delany views the Academy from the female perspective: ‘Lady Tyrone patroness: her employment is to go with the young ladies that sing in the orchestra…I was once there; it was a public night, (which they have once a month), there was a gallant appearance of ladies in rows one above the other, not less than 300.’ Due to the popularity of the public concerts, the Dublin Journal requested ‘that the Ladies will be pleased to come without Hoops, and order their Coaches down Fishamble-street’. The title page of the manuscript of O’Hara’s adaptation of Orlando, in the National Library, states that it was ‘intended to be publickly performed by the Ladies and Gentlemen of the Musical Academy’. It is for five soloists and a chorus and the title page describes it as an ‘Interlude’.

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45 Boydell, 236n.
46 Flood, History of Irish Music, 297.
47 ‘Lady Caroline Russell was the daughter of the Duke of Bedford, then the Lord Lieutenant’ (Boydell, 237n.)
48 ‘The chief and most applauded singer is a Miss Stuart, a perfect Mingotti, (with all her trills and squalls), but a great command and cleverness of voice.’ (Mrs Delany’s letter of 30 December 1758, cited in Boydell, 236n.)
49 cited in Boydell, 236n.
50 cited in Boydell, 237n.
51 IRL–Dn, MS 9258.
52 Orlando, An Interlude; from Metastasio. Intended to be Publickly Performed By The Ladies and Gentlemen of The Musical Academy, For The Benefit of A laudable Charity, instituted by Themselves. Dublin. 1772.
Another manuscript, the serenata *Cupid’s Triumph* (1768)\(^{53}\)—O’Hara’s adaptation of Metastasio’s *l’Endimione*\(^{54}\) may also have been intended to be performed by the Academy, but that is not explicitly stated in the manuscript. In the manuscript

\(^{53}\) In the ‘Advertisement’ to *Cupid’s Triumph*, O’Hara writes: ‘It is but Justice, to acknowledge that, This little Drama is only an Abridgement in English of Metastasio’s justly-admired Serenata, L’Endimione’. (*)IRL–Dn, MS 9252*.

\(^{54}\) *L’Endimione* was the work performed at the Academy’s first public concert in 1758.
of *Orlando*, O’Hara notes that ‘the Drama is contracted as much as Possible, to render the Performance less fatiguing to the Ladies’.

In the earlier manuscript of *Cupid’s Triumph*, O’Hara also apologises for the contraction of the work, but here ascribes it to the need to limit the performance to two hours: ‘The Translator humbly hopes Indulgence for the many bold Liberties taken with his excellent Original; warrantable only by the Necessity of contracting the Representation to a Space of two Hours’.
This would suggest that the regular length of the public performances of the Dublin Musical Academy was two hours. The activities of the Dublin Musical Academy ceased c.1777.\textsuperscript{55} A number of musical societies and charitable musical societies had been active in Dublin in the eighteenth century. The Dublin Musical Academy was the first such society to have a formal constitution. The exclusion of professional, or mercenary, players distinguished it from the Charitable Musical Society, which postponed its 1756 performance of the \textit{Messiah} due to the fact that ‘the principal instrumental Performers are engaged at the playhouse’ on the date originally advertised.\textsuperscript{56} Other aristocratic musical activity included a series of subscription concerts advertised as ‘The Gentleman’s Morning Concert’, which took place on Wednesday mornings in 1756 and 1757, initially at Johnson’s Great Music-hall in Crow Street and later at Fishamble Street. The music, which was conducted by Signor Bernardo Palma, was advertised a week in advance.\textsuperscript{57}

\textbf{The Influence of France and Italy – in Society and in the Theatre}

Although Kane O’Hara was resident in Dublin for all his adult life, he had access to European thought and culture. Máire Kennedy reports that ‘throughout the century books in the classical languages and European vernaculars were also imported to cater for the needs of students and the intellectual elites’. She later adds that ‘Dublin bookshops stocked books published in the major cities of

\textsuperscript{55} Boydell, 269.
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., 222. This phrase appears in quotation marks in the text.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., 221–2.
Europe in a variety of languages, especially French, Italian and Spanish’. There were also some French language publications in Dublin.

An interest in Italian music had been fostered in Dublin from the early eighteenth century. In 1728, a musical academy was set up by ‘a group of “enthusiastic musical amateurs, inspired by the aim of the Royal Academy of Music, London” to cultivate Italian music’. In 1730 the academy commissioned John Johnson to construct Crow Street Music Hall, which was later to form part of the Crow Street theatre where *Midas* was first publicly performed. Concerts, balls and ridottos were regularly held there and Italian music clearly remained a central interest for the academy, as is attested by an advertisement in the *Dublin News-Letter* of 3–7 March 1741:

> they had ‘brought Instrumental Musick to so great Perfection, and as there is such great deficiency in Vocal Musick, they are determin’d to send to Italy for those of that kind that shall excel, in hopes of bringing the one on a Par with the other’.

In 1742, ‘Gentlemen’s morning concerts’ were held in Crow Street Music Hall and in 1748 ‘Grand Festinatas’ or ‘Venetian Balls’ were being presented there by John Bardin. For a six-year period from 1750, Stephen Storace, among others, leased the premises for plays, operas and other musical events.

Italian musicians resident in London visited Dublin and Cork on a regular basis and a number of these musicians settled in Dublin:

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60 Greene, *History*, 85.
There was regular interaction with the highly active musical centres of Dublin and Edinburgh; and furthermore top violinists were always in demand to lead provincial festivals during the early autumn, when there was scarcely any employment available in London.⁶¹

The most notable Italian in Dublin was the violinist and composer, Francesco Geminiani, who moved between London, Paris and Dublin from 1732 until his death in Dublin in 1762.⁶² Niccolò Pasquali worked in the theatre in Dublin between 1748 and 1752 and composed the masque *The Triumphs of Hibernia* for Dublin in 1749. This masque was revived at Covent Garden theatre on his return to London in 1752.⁶³ Pietro Castrucci moved to Dublin in 1750, ending his days there two years later.⁶⁴ The violinist and promoter Giuseppe Passerini also settled in Dublin in 1762, remaining there until his death in 1783.⁶⁵

Familiarity with French music and theatre is illustrated by references to French airs among Kane O’Hara’s personal papers. A number of French airs appear in a collection of small cards, the size of playing cards, with the words of the airs ornately handwritten in small writing, which can be found in the O’Hara Papers in the National Library.⁶⁶ There has been an attempt to fit one air to each side of the card. All the airs are in French and the feminine endings on an ‘e’ vowel have been given an accent not used in written French but helpful to a singer for the purpose of matching notes to syllables. ‘(Bis)’ is added at the end of a line if it is intended to be repeated. The clef and time signature are given in a box on the top

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⁶² Ibid., 168.
⁶³ Ibid., 170–1.
⁶⁴ Ibid., 165.
⁶⁵ Ibid., 171.
⁶⁶ *The O’Hara Papers: IRL-Dn*, 36,471/1 (78).
left and the tempo is given in a box at the top right. “Alberti” is written at the top of two of the three airs from Le Peintre amoureux by Philidor, which may be describing the bass-line. Stage directions, such as ‘a elle’ (to her) and ‘a part’ (aside) are also included.

The supplemental information included on the cards relating to Le Peintre Amoureux is as follows:

AIRS from LE PEINTRE AMOUREUX
‘Chere Laurette’ Allegretto

‘Oh! Pour le coups, Je perds patiencê’ Andante

‘Me promenant pres du logis’ posato e dolce

Alberti Andante goioso

On the final card, ‘La Fortunê se presentê;/ Hatê toi de la saisir’, bracketed numbers seem to suggest long melismas, such as (24) after ‘rouleras’.

On the reverse is

Laurette seule Andante

‘De l’amour je sens la flammê’

Do. Vivace

Dans le Badinagê/ L’Amour se plait

There are also airs from *Le jardinier et son seigneur*

Mtre Simon Allegro

‘Ouffê! J’êtouffê… ‘ [ends with DC al Segno]
On the reverse of this card is written, in slightly bigger writing, ‘Il y a dans cette petite Piece/ une tres jolie Quintette/ de Monsr. Philidor’ (In this piece, there is a very pretty quintet by Mr Philidor).

On a larger piece of paper, folded into the same shape, there is a trio for: Seigneur, Simon, Mme Simonette.

\[ \text{3}\] ‘Elle est charmantê,… Elle est touchantê’ Allegro

The order in which the characters sing is clearly shown, as are the ensemble sections and the number of times a line is repeated.

Fig. 9. ‘Air Card’ from The O’Hara Papers: IRL-Dn, 36,471/1.

It can be deduced from this collection of cards, that music from the latest French operas was being sung in private in Dublin, even before the spread of French language printing in the last quarter of the eighteenth century.
Kane O’Hara’s Fantoccini Performances

Kane O’Hara’s musical and dramatic activities were not limited to the Dublin Musical Academy. His all-sung *Fussalia* of 1757 was clearly written for a domestic setting. Molloy refers to his puppet theatre: O’Hara ‘had a stage in his own house, the actors whereon were puppets worked by Nick Marsh, a fellow of infinite humour, who made the little people he controlled play such pranks and utter such witticisms as convulsed all who heard and saw’. 67 The celebrated tenor, Michael Kelly, recalls singing the role of Daphne in O’Hara’s burletta *Midas* in his childhood: ‘Kane O’Hara, the ingenious author of Midas, had a puppet-show for the amusement of his friends; it was worked by a young man of the name of Nick Marsh, who sang for Midas and Pan. … In the performance of this fantoccini I sang the part of Daphne, and was instructed by the author himself; the others were by other amateurs. It was quite the rage with all the people of fashion, who crowded nightly to see the gratuitous performance.’ 68 W. J. Lawrence provides an account of these performances drawing on other contemporary sources, such as newspaper advertisements:

Known as “The Patagonian Theatre”, it was installed in a house in Abbey Street in the middle of December, 1775, and the performances at first were given solely by invitation, and that only to *PEOPLE OF RANK AND FASHION*. Subsequently a few public performances were given by request at a high rate of admission so as to keep the rabble out. For the 27th January, 1776, “Signor Polichinello” the manager, advertises a performance of the opera of “Tom Thumb” and the last new pantomime

67 Molloy, 2:152.
68 Kelly, 1:5.
on behalf of the poor Confined Debtors of the city. The tickets were 7s. 6d. each, British, or three for a guinea.  

While Molloy relates that Kane O’Hara’s puppet theatre was in his home rather than in Abbey Street, he may be referring to performances which preceded the Patagonian Theatre, which dates from 1774.  

O’Hara’s puppet performances were certainly not restricted to the Patagonian Puppet Theatre. Two years after it was set up, the scene-painter John Ellis brought the Patagonian Puppet Theatre to Exeter Change London, ‘in October 1776, where it successfully presented puppet show performances of ballad operas, burlesques, and burlettas for five years’. While Ellis was in London, assisted by Mick Stoppelaer who spoke as a ‘Hibernian Punch’, O’Hara continued with his puppet productions in Dublin. It can be seen from a prologue in the O’Hara papers in the National Library that O’Hara opened a ‘new Patagonian Theatre in Great George’s Street’ in 1779. His Tom Thumb the Great was first performed at the Patagonian Puppet Theatre in Abbey Street, and in 1780 it was being performed both in London by The Patagonian Puppet Theatre and in Dublin by O’Hara’s company at George’s lane and later at The Microcosm in Digges Lane.

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69 W. J. Lawrence, ‘Some Old Dublin Puppet Shows’, *The Dublin Evening Mail*. 17 October 1908, 2.
70 Although Lawrence states above that the Patagonian theatre opened in Abbey Street in December 1775, George Speaight gives a more detailed account, dating it back to early 1774: ‘There [in Dublin], early in 1774, an amateur marionette theatre known as Mr Punch’s Patagonian Theatre had been established at a house in Abbey Street, with seats for about 120 people’. George Speaight, *The History of the English Puppet Theatre* (London: Harrap, 1955), 123.
Hats and sung prologues

The prologues for the puppet operas shed some light on their Dublin audiences. In some cases they name distinguished audience members, e.g. “Prologue to Midas, when perform’d before Their Excellencies the Lord and lady Buckinghamshire.”

In one undated prologue to *Midas* Joan, Punch’s wife, sings an Air to the Ladies in the audience, advising them to remove their hats:

Hist, hist, I hear my husband Call,
Ladies begin
Your Caps unpin;
If you be slow
Around he’el go
And pin em to the Wall
The Wall.

For shame, why this absurd delay?
Till you obey
You’ll see no play. -----
Since ’tis our Rule.
Why play the fool,?
Strip, in this place
’Tis no disgrace,
And I, myself will lead the Way.
Another prologue from O’Hara’s papers seems to have been written for a performance a few days later. This time Punch addresses the ladies very eloquently in prose:

Most beautiful and benevolent Ladies,
My present Embassy to you is of a more pleasing
Nature than any I have hitherto discharged; being
Commissioned by their high Mightinesses the Patagonian
Society, to return you their sincerest acknowledgements
For your Great Condescension, on Saturday last, in
Divesting your Heads of their exhuman ornaments
In order to afford an uninterrupted View of our exhibition to those who sat behind you.
After this he sings an air in thanks, to the tune, ‘the Wanton God who pierces hearts’ from Arne’s *Comus*. This tune had been sung by Venus to the words “Love reigns supreme in female souls” in the 1762 Dublin production of *Midas* but was dropped from later productions when the opening masque scene for the gods was considerably shortened. After this air, Punch switches his attention to the bad behaviour of the gentlemen in the audience and sings them an air to the tune ‘Woffington’s Minuet’.
While *Midas* and O’Hara’s later English burlettas are all-sung operas — made up of recitatives and airs, it is quite novel for the music to spill out into the prologue. It is very unlikely that the whole prologue would have been sung, as recitative, as it is not written in rhyming couplets. There is one other amusing item among O’Hara’s papers on the subject of ladies’ hats, entitled *Interlude - - - Cantata*. This is sung throughout by the characters Punch and Joan. Here Punch’s violent nature comes to light as he likens ladies’ fashionable clothes to a shuttlecock:

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AIR
A Woman, so feather’d at top.
At Bottom so guarded with Cork,
Is a shuttlecock: Lads, to your Work! …
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Joan counters these aspersions by describing Punch’s cap as:

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A Night-Chair’s Pan inverted.
Wherein you Conic Sconce most aptly is inserted.
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After setting out the appropriate spheres for the sexes (coffeehouse-politics for men and fashion for women) they join in a duet and Punch ends the cantata in an uncharacteristically submissive tone:

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Now, may some Curses attend such Husbands’ Lives,
As will not be well govern’d by their Wives!
And may those Wives ne’er taste Connubial Bliss
Who, when they Govern, Govern them amiss! ~~
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The prologues also made reference to rival puppet theatres. In one of the *Tom Thumb* prologues, written neatly on lined paper in a mixture of red and black ink, O’Hara writes:

No Minikins, like those of Johnny Ellis,  
Nor danc’d on Springs, by hand, like Cardarelli’s;  
Large as the Life, I’ve form’d my Fantoccini,  
Stage-prancers like Pinetti or Festini…
The Dublin Theatres

The rivalry between Smock Alley Theatre\(^{72}\) and the newly opened Crow Street Theatre (1758) ensured a vibrant theatrical life in Dublin. In 1757, the music hall

\(^{72}\) Dating from 1662, Smock Alley Theatre was the first Theatre Royal built in Dublin and was contemporary with Drury Lane Theatre in London.
in Crow Street was converted into a theatre ‘which was to be “as ample and magnificent as Drury Lane”’.\textsuperscript{73} In October 1759 the master of the revels, Robert Wood, made the Crow Street managers, Barry and Woodward, his deputies ‘by which act Crow-street became the theatre royal’,\textsuperscript{74} enjoying the patronage of the Lord Lieutenant and his wife, the Duke and Duchess of Dorset. In \textit{An Historical View of the Irish Stage}, Robert Hitchcock describes Crow Street as having ‘undoubtedly great strength in every line of the drama; not only in tragedy and comedy but also in musical pieces and pantomime’.\textsuperscript{75} Writing about the season of 1762, he observes that ‘music at this time, began to make some progress in this kingdom. It had always been cultivated, but in an inferior degree. Hitherto, it had been considered as an auxiliary to the theatre, but we shall soon find it beginning to take the lead, and constituting a principal feature in it’s amusements.’\textsuperscript{76} He later remarks that in 1764, opera began to ‘take the lead in the attractions of the drama; and she has ever since retained this powerful charm, in a very superior degree.’\textsuperscript{77}

\section*{Choice of Subject}

Sir, the scene lies in Ovid’s Metamorphoses; and so, pray, sir, don’t ask any more questions, for things of this nature are above criticism.\textsuperscript{78}

\textsuperscript{74} Hitchcock, 2:9.
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., 51.
\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., 111.
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid., 120.
Midas is based on a story from Book XI of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*:

So Pan made music on his rustic reeds  
And with his uncouth song entranced the king.  
(Midas by chance was there.) To Phoebus next  
Grave Tmolus turned and, as he turned, his fringe  
Of trees turned too. Apollo’s golden hair  
Was garlanded with laurel of Parnassus;  
His mantle, rich with Tyrian purple, swept  
The ground he trod; in his left hand he bore  
His lyre, inlaid with gems and ivory;  
His right the plectrum held; his very pose  
Proclaimed the artist. Then with expert touch  
He plucked the strings and, won by strains so sweet,  
Old Tmolus bade the reed bow to the lyre.  
   
   The sacred mountain’s judgement and award  
Pleased all who heard; yet one voice challenging,  
Crass-witted Midas’ voice, called it unjust.  
Apollo could not suffer ears so dull  
To keep their human shape. He stretched them long,  
Filled them with coarse grey hairs, and hinged their base  
To move and twitch and flop; all else was man;  
In that one part his punishment; he wears  
Henceforth a little ambling ass’s ears.  

The story of Midas had earlier appeared on the stage in a play by John Lyly. Lyly used the earlier part of the Midas story— the golden touch, as well as the musical contest, into which he adds a sub-plot relating to Midas’s barber. While Lyly’s *Midas* is generally considered to be a depiction of King Philip II of Spain, the burlesque humour in O’Hara’s *Midas* appears not to be aimed at any individual but at corruption in general. A verse from Jonathan Swift’s *The Fable of Midas* (1712) is closer in tone to O’Hara’s work:

This fool had got a lucky hit;  
And people fancy’d he had wit.  
Two gods their skill in music try’d,  
And both chose Midas to decide;  
He against Phoebus’ harp decreed,  
And gave it for Pan’s oaten reed:  
The god of wit, to shew his grudge,  
Clapt asses’ ears upon the judge;  

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A goodly pair erect and wide,
Which he could neither gild nor hide.\textsuperscript{81}

The depiction of Midas as a contemporary lawyer or judge appears to have been inspired by ‘The Ass’, an air from a song collection of 1753, which shares its tune ‘Push about the brisk bowl’ with the finale to \textit{Midas}:

\begin{verbatim}
The Lawyer so grave when he puts in his Plea,
With Forehead well cover’d with Brass;
Tho’ he talks to no Purpose, he pockets your Fee;
There you, my good Friend, are the Ass.\textsuperscript{82}
\end{verbatim}

It seems quite likely that in his treatment of the classical subject O’Hara was influenced by the following passage in Algarotti’s \textit{Essay on Opera}: ‘the opera may be said to have fallen from heaven upon the earth, and being divorced from an intercourse with gods, to have humbly resigned itself to that of mortals.’\textsuperscript{83} In \textit{Midas}, Apollo (the god of music) is cast out of heaven by Jupiter. After bowing to Jupiter, Apollo muses ‘well, down I am; no bones broke, tho’ sorely pepper’d! Here doom’d to stay, What can I do? turn shepherd.’\textsuperscript{84} To lend strength to the argument that an operatic subject may have been prompted by the remarks of a commentator, reference can be made to the connection between a remark by Jonathan Swift and John Gay’s \textit{The Beggar’s Opera}. Alexander Pope writes that ‘Dr Swift had been observing once to Mr Gay, what an odd pretty sort of thing a Newgate Pastoral might make. Gay was inclined to try at such a thing for some time, but afterwards thought it would be better to write a comedy on the same

\textsuperscript{81} \textit{The works of Dr Jonathan Swift, Dean of St Patrick’s, Dublin} (Edinburgh: Donaldson, 1759), 6:241.
\textsuperscript{82} \textit{The Wreath. A Curious Collection of above Two Hundred New Songs, Including those of The Bottle, Mirth and Hunting, Jollity, With all those Sung by The most Eminent Performers, At, Vauxhall, Ranelagh, Marybon, Cupers-Gardens, 2\textsuperscript{nd} ed.,} (London: Slater, 1753), 46.
\textsuperscript{83} Francesco Algarotti, \textit{An Essay on the Opera written in Italian by Count Algarotti} (London: Davis and Reymer, 1767), 16. The original Italian \textit{Saggio sopra l’opera in musica dates from 1755.}
\textsuperscript{84} Recitative 4 in \textit{Midas}. 
play. This was what gave rise to the *Beggar’s Opera.* More relevant to Kane O’Hara is the case of *Tom Thumb*, adapted as a burletta by him in 1780. The subject was suggested in James Ralph’s pamphlet *The Touchstone*, and was adopted by Henry Fielding as the subject for his *Tragedy of Tragedies* in 1733 which was later adapted as an opera on three separate occasions.

Kane O’Hara’s *Midas* is set in ‘the pastures of Lydia’ but, in the burlesque spirit of ‘making dignified personages raise in our minds trite and ordinary ideas, or else in giving to trivial objects a serious air of gravity and importance’, Pan and Apollo (in disguise) play more modern instruments and Midas is an eighteenth-century lord mayor rather than a king.

**The Origins of Kane O’Hara’s *Midas***

The earliest manuscript sources of Kane O’Hara’s *Midas* date from 1762. Three manuscript librettos and a printed book of *Songs in the New Burletta of Midas* from 1762, although disagreeing in terms of the specific use of language and to a lesser extent the choice of music, give a clear representation of the opera. The differences between these sources are due not only to the inevitable dictates of the censor and the adjustments prompted by audience reaction, but also to the fact that

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86 From the preface ‘To the Reader’ in the 1764 libretto of *Midas*.
87 Two manuscripts dating from 1762 are held in the National Library of Ireland: IRL-Dn, MS 9249 and IRL-Dn, MS 9250. There is also a manuscript in the Larpent Collection at Huntington Library, California: US-SM, Larpent Collection, 235. Phyllis T. Dircks, in *Two Burlettas of Kane O’Hara: an edition with commentary* (New York: Garland, 1987, xi) states that this is the manuscript which was submitted to the Lord Chamberlain for licensing. *Songs in the New Burletta of Midas. As it is performed at the Theatre-Royal in Crow-Street,* was printed in Dublin in 1762 by William Sleater.
Midas was making a transition from the domestic sphere to the public arena. While its raison d’être at Crow Street theatre in 1762 was to provide a response and rival entertainment to the Italian burlettas, then enjoying a successful run at Smock Alley theatre, its original composition had been for private performance by ‘non-mercenary’ amateurs.

As Roger Fiske comments, ‘its origins are not so well documented as one would wish’. The eighteenth-century source closest to Kane O’Hara himself is the librettist John O’Keeffe. In his Recollections he claims:

I was at O’Hara’s house in King-street, Stephen’s-green, one morning, at a meeting with Lord Mornington, Mr. Brownlow, M.P. a musical amateur and fine player on the harpsichord, when they were settling the music for Midas. 89

This quotation is referred to in both the earliest, 90 and the most recent articles on Kane O’Hara in the Dictionary of National Biography. 91 The expression ‘settling the music’ is not very specific. It may indicate that the three men chose the music for Midas together but this conclusion is contradicted by the tenor Michael Kelly, who also knew O’Hara personally:

From my earliest days, I was fond of the music of “Midas,” which, in my humble opinion, is delightful. It was entirely selected by Kane O’Hara, who was a distinguished musical amateur; his adaptations were not alone elegant and tasteful, but evinced a thorough knowledge of stage effect. 92

88 Fiske, ETM, 318.
89 O’Keeffe, 1:53.
92 Kelly, 2:201.
Benjamin Victor agrees with Kelly that O’Hara chose all the music himself. O’Keeffe may simply have meant that Mornington and Brownlow assisted O’Hara in harmonizing and arranging the melodies on which he had based his libretto.

While William Brownlow’s creative involvement with Midas is debatable, it is certain that he hosted the first performance of O’Hara’s opera. Fitzpatrick specifies that Midas was ‘composed at the seat of William Brownlow, M.P., on

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Lough Neagh’.

No other source offers a location for the composition of *Midas* and the information in Phyllis T. Dircks’s 2004 entry in the *Dictionary of National Biography* appears to be more reliable.

In this article and in her introduction to *Two Burlettas by Kane O’Hara* she agrees with William Grattan Flood’s account of the first performance of *Midas* in his *History of Irish Music*:

In 1759–1760 Kane O’Hara, at the request of Lord Mornington, wrote his charming burletta of *Midas*, which was first performed at the private theatre attached to the residence of the Right Hon. William Brownlow, at Lurgan, in April, 1760.

Lord Mornington’s involvement with *Midas* is undisputed. Again drawing on O’Keeffe’s *Recollections*, Roger Fiske and Eric Walter White agree that ‘Lord Mornington commissioned O’Hara to write *Midas*’. Fiske specifies that Mornington ‘commissioned O’Hara to create a somewhat similar burletta for private performance in April 1760’. However, the quotation from O’Keeffe does not refer to private performance and clearly links Mornington’s encouragement of O’Hara to Crow Street theatre:

A wish to encourage native talent induced Lord Mornington to prevail on Kane O’Hara to write “Midas” for Crow-street, in opposition to the Italian burletta at Smock-alley.

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94 Fitzpatrick, 63.
95 Phyllis T. Dircks, *Two Burlettas of Kane O’Hara: an edition with commentary* (New York: Garland, 1987), vi. (She adds more detail to the location of Brownlow’s residence—‘at Lough Neagh, near Lurgan’).
96 Flood, *History*, 299.
97 White, 194.
98 Fiske, 318.
99 O’Keeffe, 1:53.
Maurice Craig confirms that *Midas* was initially performed in a private context, reporting that ‘at the first (private) performance of *Midas* he [Kane O’Hara] played the part of Pan himself’.  

It can be deduced that Lord Mornington encouraged Kane O’Hara to create *Midas* in 1760 for private entertainment and in 1762 recommended it to the managers of Crow Street theatre as a fitting alternative to the Italian *burlettas* at Smock Alley theatre. The privately printed *The Private Theatre of Kilkenny* reports that *Midas* ‘originally consisted of but one Act’ and that ‘[m]any additions were made to it, before its introduction to the Public; and, among others, the opening scene of “Jove in his Chair,” as it is now represented’.

From Private Masque to Public Theatre: Amateur versus Professional

The earliest Italian operas had been for private events rather than public entertainment, either growing out of intellectual enquiry and debate or presented as lavish productions to impress visitors. Although opera was thriving in the public domain in the mid-eighteenth century, private performances of opera continued throughout Europe. Esterház, where Haydn was the court composer,
had an opera theatre and a puppet theatre for which Haydn wrote operas to be presented to the Prince’s guests. Groups of aristocrats also staged operas in which they themselves sang and danced.

An article on ‘Private Theatricals’ published in The University Magazine credits the performance of Kane O’Hara’s Midas, at the seat of the Right Hon. William Brownlow in Lurgan in 1760, as being the first in a long tradition of ‘Irish private theatricals’. Little evidence remains of operas written specifically for private performance and it is often assumed that they were of a lower quality than the operas written for the professional stage. However, in the eighteenth century the distinction between amateur and professional was seen in terms of the contrast between educated, tasteful performers and mercenary performers and not between inferior and superior quality. The operas of Maurice Greene give an insight into the musical quality of private opera.

Yet Greene did also compose operas, and though none were performed in a London theatre or published, more MS scores of them survive than all of the operas by Arne, Dibdin, Shield and Storace put together. Much of the music they contain is astonishingly good.

103 ‘Daily performances were arranged in the exquisite little theatre of the castle Esterház, which was capable of seating four hundred and possessed a roomy stage equipped with every artistic and technical device of the Baroque period. The dramas were performed by touring companies, but for the operas a special cast was engaged under Haydn’s direction. He studied the parts with the singers, rehearsed the orchestra, discussed scenic effects with the stage-manager, and conducted the performances. The results attained the highest standard, and Vienna was not overpleased when the Empress Maria Theresa, after a visit to Haydn’s prince, was overheard saying: “When I want to hear a good opera I have to go to Esterház”.’ Karl Geiringer, ‘Haydn as an Opera Composer’ Proceedings of the Musical Association, 66th Session, (1939–40), 23.

104 ‘Private Theatricals – Moore – Miss O’Neill – Chief Justice Bushe: A chapter from The Domestic History of Ireland’, The Dublin University Magazine: literary and political journal (Dublin: June, 1850), 714. The article is unattributed. No record survives of a work entitled The Domestic History of Ireland.

105 Fiske, 174.
There were social issues which kept some of the finest performers off the public stage. It was not respectable for a married lady to sing on the stage:

Elizabeth [Linley], [Richard Brinsley] Sheridan’s wife, was among the finest of the century, but … after her marriage, her husband forbade her to sing professionally.\textsuperscript{106}

Mrs Delany relates an instance of virtuoso amateur singing at the Dublin Musical Academy:

The chief and most applauded singer is a Miss Stuart, a perfect Mingotti, (with all her trills and squalls), but a great command and cleverness of voice. Mr Brownlow plays charmingly on the harpsichord: he gave us two Whip-syllabub lessons “perfectly neat!”\textsuperscript{107}

It was also inappropriate for members of the clergy to be associated with the public theatre, but many were involved in private theatrical performances.\textsuperscript{108}

Kane O’Hara had been involved in exclusive, if not private, performances of opera and other music before the first performance of Midas. In 1757, he and Lord Mornington had founded the Dublin Musical Academy and Kane O’Hara was involved in preparing the music for the public performances of the Academy. The title page of the manuscript of his adaptation of the opera Orlando,\textsuperscript{109} states that it was ‘intended to be publickly performed by the Ladies and Gentlemen of the Musical Academy’. The distinction between Ladies-and-Gentlemen and professional performers is accentuated in the fourth statute of the Academy, which states that ‘no public mercenary performer, professor, or teacher of music, shall

\textsuperscript{106} Ibid., 413.
\textsuperscript{107} From a letter dated 30 December 1758, cited in Brian Boydell, A Dublin Musical Calendar, 236n.
\textsuperscript{108} The librettist John Hoadly, chaplain to the Prince of Wales, is an example of this. (See Fiske, ETM, 177).
\textsuperscript{109} IRL-Dn, MS 9258.
ever be admitted into any rank of the Academy on any account whatsoever’. It was only considered appropriate for the ladies and gentlemen of the Dublin Musical Academy to stage performances for the purpose of charity.

‘Private Theatricals’ gives a number of examples of private performances of operas and plays. In 1760, shortly after *Midas*, there was a performance at the residence of Mr Thomas Connolly at Castletown at which there was an epilogue spoken by ‘the celebrated Hussey Burgh’. The following year, there was a performance of *The Beggar's Opera* at the ‘princely mansion of Carton’, remarked upon by William Grattan Flood:

> Private theatres were all the rage from 1752 to 1782, and at one memorable performance of the *Beggar's Opera*, at Carton, in 1761, the caste was as follows:— Captain Morris (Macheath), Lord Charlemont (Peachum), Rev. Dean Marlay (Lockit), Thomas Connolly (Filch), Miss Martin (Polly), Lady Conolly (Lucy), the Countess of Kildare (Mrs. Peachum), Viscount Powerscourt (Mrs. Slammaekin), Miss Vesey (Jenny Diver), and Miss Audley (Coaxer).  

At this performance a prologue was spoken by the uncle of Henry Grattan, Rev. Dean Marlay:

> Our play to-night wants novelty, 'tis true;  
> That to atone, our actors all are new —  
> And sure our stage, than any stage is droller,  
> Lords act the rogue, and Ladies play the stroller,”

The author of ‘Private Theatricals’ describes the practice of preparing a prologue for a specific occasion as ‘a trait of the manners of the time’ and many such prologues can be found among the O’Hara papers at the National Library of Ireland. In 1776 at Marlay, the seat of the La Touche family, the mask of *Comus*

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110 Warburton, Whitelaw and Walsh, 78.
was performed by 17 members of the La Touche family and other guests. On this occasion an epilogue, written by Henry Grattan, was spoken by Miss La Touche.

The scale of these private performances was grander than might be expected for a private function. A private theatre in Galway, active in 1786, could hold 200 people and at a performance at the private theatre in the Ranger’s House in the Phoenix Park in 1778 Mrs Robert Jephson played Lady Macbeth ‘in a dress of “gold ground silk ornamented with artificial and silver flowers, and with diamonds to the amount of 100,000 pounds”’.\footnote{Ita Hogan, \textit{Anglo-Irish Music 1780–1830} (Cork: Cork University Press, 1966), 25. The author is quoting \textit{The Compleat Irish Traveller} (Dublin: 1788), 1:46.} Ita Hogan gives a summary of other private theatrical activities in the last quarter of the eighteenth century.

Private theatricals also took place at the house of Sir Hercules Langrishe at Knocktopher in County Kilkenny, and at the seats of Lord Blessington in Rash, County Tyrone and Lord Granard in Castle Forbes, County Longford. Dorothea Herbert described several theatrical performances which were organized by her family and acted in the parlour and in the garret of their home. The famous Edgeworths also indulged in amateur theatricals.\footnote{Ibid., 25.}

In Dublin in 1786, the Countess of Ely converted the upper part of her house in Ely Place into a theatre ‘from which, as well no doubt as from other and better claims to the title, their little Play-house was not inaptly called the “Attic Theatre”’.\footnote{The Private Theatre of Kilkenny, 6.} There was also a ‘beautiful private theatre’ at Shawe’s Court on Dame Street at which leading members of the House of Commons performed. From 1793 to 1797, members of the House of Lords and House of Commons also
performed at a private theatre in Fishamble Street, known as ‘The Gentleman’s Theatre’.  

Fussalia

Kane O’Hara had written at least one private opera before Midas. Described on its title page as ‘A Musical Masque’, Fussalia\textsuperscript{116} (1756) shares a number of characteristics with the printed librettos of Midas. It can thus be assumed that these characteristics were in the original performance of Midas and that their inspiration was independent of the Italian burlettas at Smock Alley, which post-date Fussalia.

\textsuperscript{115} Illustration from Hogan, taken from \textit{Walker’s Hibernian Magazine}, March 1794, courtesy of the National Library of Ireland.
\textsuperscript{116} \textit{IRL-Dn}, MS 9248.
Fussalia was performed on 6 January 1756, the feast of Epiphany or ‘Women’s Little Christmas’. This was an appropriate date as the greater part of the dramatis personae, the nine Muses—Calliope, Clio, Erato, Melpomene, Terpsichore, Polyhymnia, Thalia, Euterpe and Urania, were female. It was written

117 ‘Epiphany is commonly known in Ireland as ‘Little Christmas’ and is celebrated with a festive meal of somewhat milder proportions than that of Christmas. In Irish it was known widely as Nollaig na mBan (‘Women’s Christmas’) which designation was usually explained by the assertion that Christmas Day was marked by beef, and whiskey, men’s fare, while on Little Christmas Day the dainties preferred by women – cake, tea, wine, were more in evidence’. Kevin Danaher, The Year in Ireland: a Calendar (Cork: Mercier Press, 1972), 263.
to celebrate the birthday of a little girl named Mary. It is possible that *Fussalia* was written for Kane O’Hara’s daughter.\(^{118}\) In any case, the girl in question was certainly well known to O’Hara as can be seen in the ‘Advertisement’: 

![Advertisement](image)

Advertisement:

The subject of the ensuing ludicrous Interlude is a very young lady, of eminent Beauty and Merit, who, from her early Infancy betrayed such a bashfulness and Diffidence of herself as greatly disparaged her numerous amiable Qualities. Her innate Humanity, Sensibility, unaffected Modesty and Sincerity in Friendship, joined to the Graces of her Person, rendered her the Object of Universal Love and Esteem. Yet her little Inadvertencies and the Embarrassments to which her Diffidence expos’d her, frequently drew upon her the cheerful good-natur’d Raillery of her Intimates, and acquired her the ironical Title of the *Queen of Fuss*. Many such like harmless Strictures are recorded in the following Lines, which being written merely for the Entertainment of herself and her Family, met with not only the Pardon, but even the Approbation, of the inestimable Fair One whose Peculiarities gave rise to them.

\(^{118}\) Although her name was Charlotte, her middle name may have been Mary. Her mother’s middle name was Maria.
She is described on the title page (above) as:

our right-inadvertent Liege and truly hack-about Sovereign Lady Maria Fidgetia Flustria, By the grace of pure unaffected Nature Of Great Fussia Queen, Grand Patroness and most eminent Example of embarrass’d Bashfulness, Whom Innocence long preserve!

**Synopsis of Fussalia**

The ‘Parish Bell-man’ wakes the parish to celebrate the birthday of the Fussian Queen. The sun, Phoebus, is roused ‘before Break o’ Day’, and greets the people of Fussia, his ‘neighbours’, by telling them that they have got the date wrong—it should have been the 27th of December. The first Plebeian replies ‘that to make the more fuss...we have alter’d the Stile’. The noise awakes the Muses, who approach Phoebus and the Plebeians. They are not amused when Phoebus mocks them for being ‘A Pack of Old Maids’ and praises the Queen of Fussia as ‘lovely, fresh and gay’. Phoebus acknowledges that ‘her Merits are such Wrongs as Females ne’er forgive’ and invites the Muses to vent their Rage upon the Queen ‘in fell Curses’. The Muses proceed to load nine amusing curses on the Queen of Fuss, with an air each:—that she may be teased, embarrassed, lose her doll, not be let into secrets etc. The Plebeians respond by wishing the curses back on the Muses, adding ‘What Poet minikin, finicking, first gave the Nick-name of Goddess t’ye?’ Phoebus has slept through all the curses and wakes up with a start to find he is late for the Sunrise. Phoebus appeases the Plebeians by claiming that the Queen of Fuss’s eyes have already ‘set Earth on fire’. Finally, the cast unite
with good wishes for the birthday-girl— ‘Be her Reign glorious! In Glee uproarious’.

**Burlesque and Classical References**

In common with *Midas*, *Fussalia* mixes classical deities with mortals in a domestic setting, drawing on the burlesque tradition. The title, *Fussalia*, is a play on the Latin word *Pharsalia*, a town in ancient Greece. It may be a reference to the work of that name by Lucan and certainly resonates with the following passage from poem LXIV by Catullus:

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But when at the appointed time those longed-for days
Arrived, the whole of Thessaly by invitation
Crowds the house, fills the palace with delighted throng.
They bring gifts with them. Faces manifest their joy…
They flock to Pharsalus; they crowd Pharsalian roofs. 119
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The story is clearly not located in the classical location of Pharsalia but in the burlesque fantasy kingdom of Fussia. O’Hara equates Dublin with Fussia by giving the ‘Scene’ as Dublin at the end of the list of ‘Persons’.

The burlesque humour in *Fussalia* is very much in the vein of Henry Fielding’s plays and ballad operas. The title the ‘Queen of Fuss’ is reminiscent of the ‘the Queen of Nonsense’ in the puppet play, *The Pleasures of the Town*, contained in Fielding’s *The Author’s Farce* (1730). The mock-heroic contradictions in the first

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air of *Fussalia* (sung to the tune ‘Death and the Lady’) are typical of burlesque humour.\(^{120}\)

Ye wakeful Sleepers! To my strains give heed;
And slowly fall a-rising with all speed;
Ye also, who are not lain down to rest,
Spring up betimes, in your bare Buffs full-drest.

Don’t stand There lying, but, tho’ dead awake.
Your Fill of Joy with heavy Hearts to take,
This Ev’n the Morning’s Sun-Beams to survey;
For, To-night is our Fussian Queen’s Birthday.

The use of the sun, also known as Phoebus or Apollo, as a character appears to build on Fielding’s *Tumble-down Dick; or Phaeton in the Suds* (1737). Apollo reappears in *Midas* as a central character. In Fielding’s play, Machine, the composer of the entertainment, informs Fustian (an author observing the rehearsal of the entertainment) that ‘the Sun is introduced in the character of a watchman; and that lanthorn there represents his chariot’.\(^{121}\) The day is dedicated to Phaeton, a little boy who claims to be Phoebus’s son. Phaeton has asked his father to give him a sign for his friends to see that he really is Phoebus’s son. Phoebus indulges him:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Dialogue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phoebus:</td>
<td>I’ll give my bond, whate’er you ask to grant:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I will by Styx! An oath which break I can’t.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Phaeton:</td>
<td>Then let me, since that vow must ne’er be broke,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carry, one day, that lanthorn for a joke.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phoebus:</td>
<td>Rash was my promise, which I now must keep:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>But oh! Take care you do not fall asleep.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Phaeton:</td>
<td>If I succeed, I shall no scandal rue;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If I should sleep, ’tis what most watchmen do.(^{122})</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{120}\) Fielding gives examples of such absurdities in *Tumble-down Dick; or Phaeton in the Suds*: ‘Does not a dragon descend from hell in Doctor Faustus? And people go up to hell in Pluto and Proserpine?’ Fielding, 10:290.
\(^{121}\) Fielding, 10:283.
\(^{122}\) Ibid., 284.
Phaeton does indeed fall asleep, disturbing some countrymen and eventually falling out of the sky. In \textit{Fussalia}, Phoebus falls asleep, delaying the break of day. \textit{Fussalia} shares the teasing, intimate tone of \textit{Tumble-down Dick; or Phaeton in the Suds}- ‘O little Phaey! pr’ythee tell me why/ Thou tak’st this evening’s walk into the sky?’.\textsuperscript{123}

Another vehicle of burlesque humour is the use of colloquial language, especially by elevated characters. A number of colloquial phrases which can be found in \textit{Midas} also appear in the earlier \textit{Fussalia}. The phrase of assent ‘“A Match”, “A Match”’\textsuperscript{124} reappears at the end of the drinking recitative ‘Come Pan, your toast’ for Midas, Mysis and Pan in Act III of the three-act version of \textit{Midas} (1764) and Act II of the more enduring two-act version of 1766.\textsuperscript{125} The word ‘clapper’, referring to the tongue or speech in general,\textsuperscript{126} also appears in this recitative. Its use in \textit{Fussalia}—‘sooner shall your Clappers rot’\textsuperscript{127} is varied in \textit{Midas} as ‘I always chuck a priming at the tap, or /A cogue of Nantzy, just to oil my clapper’, and ‘Peace oh!, is hell broke loose? What means this jawing?/ Under my very nose this clapper clawing!’\textsuperscript{129} The related term ‘jawing’ also appears in \textit{Fussalia}—‘Sisters, for shame! stand jawing with the Rabble!’\textsuperscript{130} The use of the word ‘minikin’ as a derogatory term is common to both operas. In \textit{Midas}, the quarreling sisters accost each other in a duet which begins ‘My minikin miss,—do

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\textsuperscript{123} Ibid., 283.
\textsuperscript{124} \textit{Fussalia}, 11.
\textsuperscript{125} 1764 three-act libretto of \textit{Midas}, 48. 1766 two-act libretto of \textit{Midas}, 2\textsuperscript{nd} ed., 24. For a discussion of the four main versions of \textit{Midas}, see Chapter 2.
\textsuperscript{126} The origin of the term is clarified in the following line from the 1764 three-act libretto: ‘you’d swear her tongue was bell-metal’, 16.
\textsuperscript{127} \textit{Fussalia}, 12.
\textsuperscript{128} 1764, 48. This phrase is omitted in the 1766 libretto.
\textsuperscript{129} 1764, 53; 1766, 2\textsuperscript{nd} ed., 28.
\textsuperscript{130} \textit{Fussalia}, 13.
you fancy that Pol/ Can ever be caught by an infant’s dol?’. In *Fussalia* the word in used to slight the classical poets—‘What Poet minikin, finicking, first gave the Nick-name of Goddess t’ye?’

In his *Recollections*, John O’Keeffe describes *Midas* as being ‘made up of Dublin jokes and bye-sayings, but irresistibly humourous’. Referring to this statement, Phyllis Dircks gives examples of some Irish phrases in the version of *Midas* prepared for the Crow Street run, which were omitted from later versions of the opera. Her first example clearly supports her point: ‘for example, the phrase, “in Faulkner’s Journal,” occurring in the Dublin manuscripts, had been altered to “in every weekly Journal” for the English audiences (III, I, 72)’. However, the other changes which she lists seem to be for the purpose of avoiding vulgarity rather than to make private jokes more accessible. This can be seen in her next two examples: ‘heedless piddling’ is changed to ‘easy cooing’ and ‘I have a rod in piss’ is changed to ‘I have a rod in pickle’. In one instance a London reference is removed, presumably to avoid the risk of giving offence. The phrase ‘sooner to Drury’s hottest stews I’d send her’, a reference to the London brothels, is changed to ‘to the plantations sooner would I send her’.

Some colloquial phrases which appear in *Fussalia* may have Irish origins: ‘Busk ye out braw’, ‘Don’t mind ‘em’ and ‘Did y’ever hear such spit-fires?’.

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131 1764, 29; 1766, 2nd ed., 19.
132 O’Keeffe, 2:54.
133 Dircks, *TB*, 5.
134 1764 libretto, 49; 1766 libretto, 2nd ed. 24.
135 *Fussalia*, 4.
136 Ibid., 13.
137 Ibid., 19.
There are some nationalist undertones in *Fussalia*.\(^{138}\) The bad-tempered Muses refer to the local people as ‘Her Clans’ and ‘warrant in a Crack,/ Ere you can turn your Back./ We shall disperse ’em’, before proceeding to sing the next air (‘Ye Blackguard Scum’) in chorus to the tune of ‘Rule Britannia’. The Irish and burlesque aspects of *Fussalia* meet in the *nom-de-plume* which O’Hara takes on the title page: ‘By/ Phelim Soogah O’Flaherty/ Poet Laureate to her Restless Majesty.’

The shared elements in *Midas* and *Fussalia* are also characteristic of Goldoni’s librettos.\(^{139}\) The librettos of the burlettas performed at Smock Alley Theatre in 1761 were by Goldoni, but O’Hara would appear to have been aware of Goldoni’s reforms and innovations prior to these performances. An element of *Fussalia* which is indicative of later librettists, particularly W.S. Gilbert, is the use of traditional song refrains— for instance ‘Hey down, down, hey dery down’ in the first chorus of *Fussalia*\(^{140}\) and amusing expressions such as ‘topsy-turvy’ used by the Muse, Urania, on page 8.\(^{141}\)

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\(^{138}\) This theme comes to the surface in O’Hara’s later opera *Tom Thumb* and its prologues, as references to the Irish Volunteers.

\(^{139}\) Carlo Goldoni is credited with major theatrical and operatic innovations and closely associated with the Italian *burletta*.

\(^{140}\) The chorus is sung to the tune ‘The King and Abbot of Canterbury’.

Solo. 1  Rouse, rouse, Master Phoebus! . . Up, up, . . . shake your ears; ---
        Busk, busk ye out braw, in ye’r Holiday-Gears;
        Cock smart your Gold Hat, with the flame-colour’d feather,
        And don your best Jerkin of gilt Turkey-Leather!
        Hey down, down, hey dery down.

Solo. 2 . . .  Be your Liveries new; your lank Garsons bedizen
        With red Ribbons, trailing along the Horizon!
Cho: . . .  Chase Vapours and clouds from the Sky and your Brow!
        If you ever were Glad, be in Extacy Now!
        Dery down, down &c.

Solo. 3 . . .  For This is, the Sixth of the Month January.
        Which Fussia first bless’d with our restless Queen Mary,
Cho: . . .  Whose Festal to grace, . . . and its Pomp to display,
        Haste! make your appearance before Break o’ Day.
The Music in Fussalia

There is no musical notation in the manuscript of Fussalia but it is unmistakably a musical work. Even without knowledge of the tunes named for the airs, the reader’s imagination is led to music by the humorous references to music, which begin on the title page. Above the author’s name there is a line of unconnected Italian words written in red ink, all with onomatopoeic, expressive connotations indicating gesture or inflection: ‘Bombalio, Clangor, Stridor, Tarantantara, Murmur.’ The manuscript was clearly written to be read aloud. There are two amusing musical stage directions in the same vein.

Enter a Crowd of the Plebeians of Fuss, in Choral Acclamation, accompanied by all the various Noises of Braziers, Hammers, Filing of Saws, Apothecaries’ Pestles and Morters, Knife-grinders’ Wheels, News-Hawkers, Fish-wives, Chimney-Sweepers, Children, Cats, Dogs, Pigs, &c. clinking, grating, pounding, scraping, roaring, screaming, squalling, miaowing, barking, grunting &c.  

The theme of unusual instruments and sounds continues a few pages later:

Chorus of all the Muses, accompanied by Marrow-bones and Cleaver, Paper and Comb. Fire-Shovel and Tongs, Salt-box, Bladder and String &c.  

The structure is similar to Midas, alternating recitative with airs, in the manner of Italian opera. Unlike Italian opera, the airs in Fussalia and Midas are sung to

\[
\text{Dery down, down, hey dery down.}
\]

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141 The full phrase is “These Rioters scurvy/ Have turn’d us topsy-turvy…”.  
142 Fussalia, 4.  
143 Ibid., 12.
borrowed tunes, mostly borrowed from folk-music and popular songs rather than opera. The derivation of poetic metre from dance music, the aspect of *Midas* which is arguably the reason for its long-lived success and certainly influenced later librettists, is already present in *Fussalia*.

The tunes for all the airs in *Fussalia* are named in the libretto. Example 4 gives the name of each tune and the first line of its respective air.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Air</th>
<th>Tune</th>
<th>First Line</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Air 1</td>
<td>Death and the Lady</td>
<td>Ye wakeful Sleepers!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chorus</td>
<td>The King and Abbot of Canterbury</td>
<td>Rouse, rouse, Master Phoebus!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air 3 Chorus</td>
<td>Up Stairs, Down Stairs</td>
<td>Hurry, Durry, Fluster, Flurry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air 4</td>
<td>On this Bank of Pinks and Lilies</td>
<td>From their Mats and Palliasses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air 5</td>
<td>The terrible Law he</td>
<td>I’ll have you to know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air 6</td>
<td>How happy cou’d I be with either</td>
<td>Pray, who is this Queen?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air 7</td>
<td>The Broom, the Broom, the bonny</td>
<td>The Queen, the queen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air 8 Muses</td>
<td>Rule Britannia</td>
<td>Ye Blackguard Scum!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air 9</td>
<td>Gossip Joan</td>
<td>Why, how now, Queen of Fuss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air 10</td>
<td>All you that wou’d take a Leap</td>
<td>May this fussing Queen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air 10</td>
<td>Fill ev’ry Glass</td>
<td>May in each Trap, three mice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air 11</td>
<td>We’re au dry wi-drinking</td>
<td>May she not have hair enough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air 12</td>
<td>My Time, o ye Muses</td>
<td>May she never be trusted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air 13</td>
<td>Dusty Miller</td>
<td>May Chairs baulk her Foot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air 14</td>
<td>When Sol had loos’d his weary Teams</td>
<td>With Fuss in the Circle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air 15</td>
<td>Twas within a furlong of Edenhoro’Town</td>
<td>Whene’er this Fussian Queen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air 16</td>
<td>Giles Colin</td>
<td>This proud Queen to humble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air 17</td>
<td>Sheelah na Ghig</td>
<td>Ne’er be ye courted, or wed!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air 18 Duet</td>
<td>Let us take the Road</td>
<td>’Tis as dark as Pitch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Chorus</td>
<td>Capt. Courtenay’s gone to Sea</td>
<td>Joy to the Queen of Fuss!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Five tunes specified in *Fussalia* have connections with *Midas*. Four of these appear in the 1762 book of *Songs from Midas* but are not included in any librettos of *Midas*. Of these four tunes, two are borrowed from the *Beggar’s Opera*. Air 9 ‘Why how now, Queen of Fuss’ is set to the tune ‘Gossip Joan’, which is the tune for Air 38 (‘Why, how now, Madam Flirt’) in the *Beggar’s Opera*. In *Midas*, it is the tune for the duet ‘Why Ny:- you’re lost to Shame’, which appears only in the
1762 book of Songs. Air 10\textsuperscript{144} is set to the tune ‘Fill ev’ry Glass’, which is the tune for Airs 18 and 19 in the Beggar’s Opera.\textsuperscript{145} In Midas, this is the tune for ‘Huzza for Pol’. As is the case with ‘Gossip Joan’, this tune appears in the 1762 book of Songs but in no other version of Midas. The other two tunes from Fussalia which appear in the 1762 book of Songs, but no later version of Midas, are ‘Twas within a furlong of Edinboro’ Town’ (also borrowed in Polly, the sequel to The Beggar’s Opera) and ‘Giles Colin’. The fifth air in Fussalia which also appears in Midas, was not included in the 1762 book of Songs but it appears in all subsequent versions of Midas. It is Air 17, set to the Irish tune ‘Sheelah na Ghig’. O’Hara sets it to the words ‘Ne’er be ye courted, or wed’ in Fussalia and ‘Jupiter wenches and drinks’ in Midas.

Fussalia is in one act, although it appears to have lasted for two hours; at the beginning the Watchman announces that it is ‘past five o’clock’ and at the end he tells Phoebus that it is ‘past seven’.\textsuperscript{146} Midas was ‘enlarged’ to three acts for its first public performance, before being reduced to a two-act afterpiece. It seems quite likely that it was originally structured along the lines of Fussalia—in one act.\textsuperscript{147} Like Midas, Fussalia is all-sung; the sections between the airs are marked as ‘Recitative’, ‘Simple Recitative’ or ‘Recitative accompanied’ (i.e. by more instruments than just continuo).

\textsuperscript{144} There are two Air 10s in Fussalia, apparently a copying error. The Air 10 referred to here is the second one.
\textsuperscript{145} The tune ‘Fill Ev’ry Glass’ is of French origin. The original text begins ‘Que chacun remplisse son verre’ and the air can be found in La Clef des Chansonniers (Paris: 1717), 2:234.
\textsuperscript{146} Fussalia, 20.
\textsuperscript{147} See quotation from The Private Theare of Kilkenny on p51, n.109.
The recitatives are in rhyming couplets and each line is preceded by inverted commas. The use of inverted commas in a libretto traditionally indicated that this section of the libretto was to be read but was not included in the performance. However, the frequency of their use in Fussalia makes it unlikely that they were intended to be understood in this way.

The first recitative in Fussalia is extremely similar to ‘Zooks, what a crush’ from Midas:

Recit 1 in Fussalia

Phoeb: “Augh! .. ogh! – Below there! – Why d’ye scream & bawl so?
“Zooks, what a Yell! … this is not So, but Also. –

148 These performance librettos indicated by means of inverted commas placed at line beginnings (called virgolette) which passages had been cut from performance but allowed the audience to know what the librettist had originally produced.’ From Robert Ketterer, Ancient Rome in Early Opera (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 16. Virgolette also appear in the recitatives in the manuscripts of Midas.
“Why, Neighbours! you’re all out;
“For, I do well remember,
“You ought t’have kept this rout
“Upon the Twenty seventh of December. –

Recit 4 in *Midas*

Apol: Zooks! What a crush! A pretty decent tumble!
Kind usage, Mr. Jove —sweet sir – your humble.

Below is my setting of the recitativative from *Midas*. It seems that the setting would work as well for the recitativative from *Fussalia*.

![Fig. 20. A setting of Recit 4 from *Midas*](image)

This raises a question as to whether O’Hara set not only the airs in his librettos but also the recitatives to pre-existing music.

*Midas at Crow Street Theatre*

Rumours circulated in the late 1750s that a new theatre was to be built, to oppose the only public theatre in Dublin, the Theatre Royal in Smock Alley. The campaign for a new theatre was fuelled by a wish to reform and, to some degree, by a personal resentment against Thomas Sheridan, the manager of Smock Alley Theatre. In a letter, Charles Macklin, one of the actors involved in setting up the new theatre, ends his criticism of Sheridan thus: ‘Upon these pretensions he
founds his claim to a theatrical monopoly’.  

Macklin and Spranger Barry traveled over from London to pursue the project.

Soon after the arrival of Barry and Macklin in Dublin, the former began to solicit the names of subscribers to his new theatre, and was so successful that the walls of the Crow Street music-hall, together with several of the adjoining houses, were levelled to the ground, and the foundation of a new playhouse laid.

The site of the new theatre had rich musical associations. John O’Keeffe relates:

I recollect seeing the building: the front, with great gates, faced the end of Crow-street: and here Handel had his sublime oratorios performed, he in person presiding. I well remember seeing the bill of Handel’s concert on the gate of this hall, in 1758.

Crow Street Theatre was a great success and secured the patronage of the Lord Lieutenant, thereby acquiring the title of the ‘Theatre Royal’:

Their company was perhaps the strongest, and best formed, of any hitherto beheld in Ireland. High in public favour, their credit established, a new theatre, an excellent wardrobe, they had every advantage which could be derived from a combination of circumstances so fortunate. To crown these, and give animation to the whole, they were in a very eminent degree possessed of every influence which the court could give…

The opening of the new theatre led to a period of intense rivalry between the two theatres, providing the people of Dublin with a very high standard of entertainment. Smock Alley Theatre had a major success on 19 December 1761, when Mossop, the manager, presented the public with an Italian burletta, performed by the De Amicis family:.

But what Mr. Mossop relied most on, and on which he had founded the most sanguine expectations, was a species of entertainment which had novelty to recommend it. He opened a subscription for an Italian Burletta, which fully answered his wishes.

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149 Molloy, 2:51.
150 Ibid., 47.
151 O’Keeffe, 1:28–9.
152 Hitchcock, 2:8.
153 Ibid., 2:91.
LA CASCINA

DRAMA GIOCO SOSO

DA

Rappresentarsi sopra il THEATRO

DI

SMOCK-ALLEY.

LA

Musica del celebre Maestro Baldassar Galuppi, detto il Buranello.

DUBLINO:

Appresso S. Powell, in Crane-Lane.

M.DCC.LXI.

Fig. 21. Title page of La Cascina by Carlo Goldoni and Giuseppe Scolari (advertised as Baldassare Galuppi).
The burletta, which ran from 19 December 1761 to 22 May 1762\textsuperscript{154} was \textit{La Cascina}, written by the Venetian librettist and theatrical reformer Carlo Goldoni, with music by Giuseppe Scolari.\textsuperscript{155} Hitchcock records the following details of the performance:

\begin{quote}
the dances by Signior Tioli, Signior Giuseppe Genovisa, Signiora Ricci, and Signiora Vincenze Lucchi. The boxes and pit were laid together, at five british shillings; the galleries remained at their usual prices. The Burletta pleased much.\textsuperscript{156}
\end{quote}

The success of this burletta at Smock Alley Theatre prompted the staging of \textit{Midas} at Crow Street Theatre: ‘To oppose this rage of the public, the Burletta of Midas was first produced’.\textsuperscript{157} John O’Keeffe gives a fuller account of the transfer of \textit{Midas} to the public stage:

\begin{quote}
‘A wish to encourage native talent induced Lord Mornington to prevail on Kane O’Hara to write “Midas” for Crow-street, in opposition to the Italian burletta at Smock-alley’.\textsuperscript{158}
\end{quote}

Clearly, \textit{Midas} had already been written and performed at the time the Italian burlettas were drawing audiences to Smock Alley, but the reference to the encouragement of his friends to put \textit{Midas} on the public stage is echoed in the preface (‘To the READER’) to the 1764 libretto.

\begin{quote}
‘The public spirit of those, for whom it was originally intended, prevailed on the author to enlarge his design. Accordingly MIDAS adventured on the stage, and met with uncommon success for a series of nights’.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{154} Flood, \textit{Sketch}, 55.
\textsuperscript{155} The title page mistakenly gives the composer as Baldassare Galuppi.
\textsuperscript{156} Hitchcock, 2:92.
\textsuperscript{157} Ibid., 92n.
\textsuperscript{158} O’Keeffe, 1:53.
In *The Romance of the Irish Stage*, Molloy elaborates that ‘The managers of the latter house [Crow Street] seized on the idea, and this musical trifle, which already had been performed with success in private, was lengthened and made to burlesque the Italian singers who had attracted the town. To aid this ridicule the performers in Midas [sic] had their names Italianized’. Hitchcock provides a full list of the Italianized names of the cast.

The piece was put into rehearsal, with great expectations, and announced, in ridicule of the others, under the conduct of Signior Josephi Vernon, (honest Jo. Vernon). The principal characters by himself, Signior Patrico Mahoni, Signior Lewiso Olivero, Signiora Frederunda Bridgesa, Signiora Elizabetta Gloverina, and Signiora Maria Juvanelli; with dancing by the afterwards celebrated Slingsby.

O’Keeffe gives the names of the performers without their Italian disguise. (As with the previous quotation, his memory is not entirely reliable and there are discrepancies between his list and that of Hitchcock. Molloy confirms that Elizabeth Glover was a member of the first cast.)

Spranger Barry [one of the managers] was to have performed Sileno in Midas, and rehearsed it several times; but not being equal to the musical part, gave it up, and it was played by Robert Corry, a favourite public singer. The first cast was thus: Apollo, Vernon; Midas, Robert Mahon; Dametus, Oliver; Pan, Morris; Daphne, Miss Elliott; Nysa, Miss Polly Young (afterwards married to Barthelemon, the fine violin performer); and Mysis, Miss Macneil (afterwards Mrs. Hawtrey.)

Ita Hogan suggests an earnest intent behind O’Hara’s comic opera, and perhaps also the mistrust of mercenary performers: –

Knowing the liberties which were taken with the performance of operas, O’Hara took precautions on the occasion of the first performance of *Midas* by writing to the Manager as follows: ‘I propose to be present at every representation accompanied by some friends who will take their cue of clapping from me; and you may assure the

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159 Molloy, 2:147.
160 Hitchcock, 2:93.
161 O’Keeffe, 1:54.
company of the theatre that any deviation on their part will be reprimanded in the
most marked mode of disapprobation.’ Surely the only case on record of a composer
threatening to hiss his own work!162

The performance of Midas had the desired effect; it was ‘excessively humorous, it
obtained immediate success and long remained popular.’163 Hitchcock gives an
insight into how success was measured at the time when he adds that ‘the Earl of
Halifax, honoured the 4th night with his presence, and it continued to be
occasionally acted during the season.’164

Conclusion

Authors referring to Midas make certain assumptions regarding the amateur
nature of its earliest performance. While eighteenth-century sources speak very
highly of O’Hara, Mornington and Brownlow, Roger Fiske colours his
appreciation with a twentieth-century understanding of the word ‘amateur’:

All three must have been good amateur musicians, and Lord Mornington even had
semi-professional status as a composer, for his glees were among the most popular of
the day.165

J. Fitzgerald Molloy refers to the original version of Midas as ‘this musical
trifle’,166 while Phyllis T. Dircks refers to it as ‘a slight comic opera’167 and ‘a

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162 Hogan, 205. The source for this quotation appears to be O’Hara’s letter to Michael Arne (1777)
rather than an account of the first performance of Midas. See John C. Greene, Theatre in Dublin,
163 Molloy, 148.
164 Hitchcock, 2:92–93n.
165 Fiske, 318–9.
166 Molloy, 2:148.
167 Dircks, TB. vi.
slight mock pastoral’. Her explanation of how O’Hara expanded *Midas* for the public stage is consistent with her low estimation of the content and value of the original opera, which she appears to suggest lacked music, classical references and domestic humour.

O’Hara transformed his play into an eclectic *Midas*, incorporating the deities and the recitative aria musical pattern of Italian opera seria and the comic domestic plot and lively music of the Italian burletta, subtitling his play ‘an English burletta’.

It seems likely that the original version of *Midas* was similar in its form and conception to *Fussalia*, lasting approximately two hours. The alternation of borrowed airs and recitatives must have been an essential part of its original form. This is borne out by the fact that some of the airs in *Midas* share tunes with airs in *Fussalia*. With its classical subject, it would have been impossible to avoid including classical deities in any setting of the Midas story. O’Hara’s talent for domestic humour is already apparent in *Fussalia* and must have been an intrinsic part of *Midas* in its private form. *Midas* came into the public arena, not to nourish the poverty of amateur creativity, but to enrich the public debate on opera, comedy and entertainment.

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169 Ibid.
170 Two hours appears to have been the customary duration of an opera in private performance, as is implied in the following passage taken from the libretto of Kane O’Hara’s *Cupid’s Triumph*: ‘The Translator humbly hopes Indulgence for the many bold Liberties taken with his excellent Original; warrantable only by the Necessity of contracting the Representation to a Space of two Hours’. *IRL-Dn*, MS 9252.
Kane O’Hara presented *Midas* to the public in a number of different versions, according to the demands of individual theatres. After its introduction to the public theatre at Crow Street in Dublin in 1762, *Midas* moved to Covent Garden in London in 1764 and had a short run as a full-length opera. It was revived there, shortened to a two-act afterpiece in 1766, and remained a favourite on the London stage well into the nineteenth century.\(^1\) The most enduring version of *Midas* was the second two-act edition printed in London in 1766. An analysis of the differences between this version and those presented earlier gives a greater insight into the purpose and dramatic priorities of the opera.

**The Earliest Sources**

The full score of *Midas* was never published and does not survive in manuscript form. However, the music for the airs was printed by Walsh in London and this publication corresponds to the three-act libretto for the 1764 Covent Garden production.\(^2\) Of particular interest is a pamphlet printed in Dublin of the *Songs in the New Burletta of Midas* from 1762,\(^3\) which contains the words of the airs from the 1762 production. (See figure 1.) The tunes for most of the airs are named,

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which makes it possible to retrieve a large amount of the music included in the first Crow Street production. Two manuscript librettos of Midas, also dated 1762, are preserved in the National Library. It is interesting to note that these librettos do not contain the same airs as appear in the pamphlet printed in Dublin in 1762. One other undated manuscript of Midas is held in the Larpent collection, which would have been submitted to the Lord Chamberlain for licensing.

It is impossible to determine conclusively the chronological order of these four earliest sources. However, it would appear that the undated Larpent manuscript was the latest written, as it most closely resembles the libretto printed in London in 1764. Phyllis T. Dircks observes that these two sources ‘are the only editions which include the prologue’. Dircks also observes some grammatical errors shared by these two sources and lists the phrases in the Dublin manuscripts which are altered in the Larpent manuscript and the printed librettos. The two Dublin manuscripts are very similar. The most notable divergence is Air 14 in Act 3—Pan’s offering in the contest between Pol and Pan. In MS 9250 the words (A Pox of your pother about this or that) are the same as in later printed librettos but in MS 9249 the words are entirely different (When Norah sits to milk her cow). The tune in MS 9249 is named as ‘Drimenduffh’ and the song ends with the refrain ‘Ooro Drimenduffh’. This song may have been chosen as a reference to the Italian burletta ‘La Cascina’ or ‘the dairy farm’ which was being performed at Smock Alley theatre and which was the catalyst for bringing Midas to the public theatre. It appears that when the reference was no longer relevant, the topic of the

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4 Phyllis T. Dircks, *Two Burlettas of Kane O’Hara: an edition with commentary* (New York: Garland, 1987), 17n. The prologue was to be performed by Mr Shuter, containing a letter to the London audience from Kane O’Hara.
5 Ibid., 12.
6 Ibid., 5.
air reverted to musical issues. This seems to confirm, as the numbering of the manuscripts suggests, that MS 9249 predates MS 9250 and the Larpent manuscript. In the printed book of Songs of 1762, no words are printed for this air or the following air; both airs are marked ‘Trial-song: - Ad Libitum’.
This version of *Midas* was clearly printed at a more flexible stage of the opera’s development. It seems likely that this pamphlet is the earliest source for *Midas*, reflecting its earliest performances; it is subtitled ‘As it is performed at the Theatre-Royal in Crow-Street.’ The manuscripts at the National Library of Ireland appear to be based on alterations and ammendments made after the first run of *Midas* and are more representative of later performances. Thus, the four earliest sources for *Midas* can be placed in the following chronological order:

1) *Songs in the new burletta of Midas*, IRL-Da, HP306/4,
2) IRL-Dn, MS 9249,
3) IRL-Dn, MS 9250,

**The Three-Act Versions**

**Synopsis of the three-act version of Midas**

**The first act** begins with a chorus of the ‘Heathen Deities seated amidst the clouds’. Jupiter accuses his wife Juno and Apollo, the god of the Sun, of spying on him and banishes Apollo from heaven, so that his amorous affairs will go unseen in future. The thunder-bolt that casts Apollo down to earth scares away some shepherds who were sleeping in a field, leaving a coat, hat and guitar behind them. Apollo adopts these as a disguise and decides to hire himself out to the farmer Sileno, under the name of Pol. At Sileno’s house we meet his wife Mysis and their two daughters, Daphne and Nysa, laughing about their suitors. Mysis does not appreciate the new addition to the household, all the more so because her daughters Daphne and Nysa do.

In the next scene Squire Midas and his associate Damaetas lament their lack of success with Sileno’s daughters and blame Pol (Apollo). Midas sets up a contest
between Pan, the local piper, and Pol, hoping to drive Pol away. Pan is happy to join in the plot after hearing ‘The wenches have turn’d tail — to yon buck ranter,/ Tickled by his guitarr — they scorn your chanter’ and vows to ‘smash his trim guitarr — about his chaps’.

The second act opens with an echo duet for Sileno and the ‘oracular oak’ on the subject of the uproar in Sileno’s house. Meanwhile, Pol serenades Daphne, observed by Nysa, until he is called away by Mysis. The two sisters, rivals for Pol’s affections, exchange insults. Midas appears and promises Nysa that if she yields now he will marry her as soon as his wife is dead. She retorts ‘Till I’m made a bride i’ th’ church/ I’ll keep men from doing.’ Mysis is fuming and Sileno gathers that she and Pan are plotting against Pol and warns him. Act 2 ends with a trio for Pol, Daphne and Nysa. The sisters have discovered that he has claimed to love both of them. He defends himself by assuring them that he ‘will satisfy both’.

Mercury opens the third act slandering Apollo and telling him how Juno has tricked Jupiter in his amorous exploits, taking advantage of the darkness to do so. After this deception, Apollo is to be summoned back to heaven. Meanwhile, Mysis, Midas and Pan resolve to defeat Pol, with the unnecessary help of a bribe from Mysis. Sileno is disgusted when Damaetas suggests marrying Daphne and asserts that Pol is ‘richer than thou with all thy brags/ of flocks, and herds, and money bags’. When the daughters hear of the rigged contest between Pol and Pan, they stop their rivalry and Nysa wishes Daphne happiness with Pol. This leads to an ensemble where Sileno and the girls support Pol and Mysis and Damaetas support Pan.

Midas arrives, attended by nymphs and swains, to judge the contest between Pol and Pan. He praises Pan’s offering and falls asleep before hearing Pol’s. Pan is crowned with bays and Pol is told to ‘go trudge’. At this point Pol reveals that he is Apollo, god of music, and rewards Midas for his corruption and bad judgement with ass’s ears. Apollo returns to heaven, where all the gods laugh at Midas and the Grand Chorus concludes with advice to critics – ‘Now, criticks, lye snug/ Not a hiss, groan or shrug,/ Remember the fate of Midas.’

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Fig. 2 Synopsis of three-act version of *Midas*.

While no recitatives are included in the 1762 book of *Songs*, the structure is indicated by the inclusion of scene numbers, giving a clear idea of an earlier overall structure of the opera. The 1764 Covent Garden libretto includes the full text of the opera but the scenes within the acts are not indicated. A number of scenes from the 1762 version are replaced in the 1764 libretto. The scene with the

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Oracle that opens Act II of the 1762 version is retained but entirely rewritten in the 1764 libretto. This would indicate that it was dramatically unconvincing in its original form. However, the fact that the scene was retained and reworked rather than dropped shows that it was intrinsic to O’Hara’s original conception of the opera. The air ‘Oracle, Oracle’ from the Dublin production is replaced by ‘Oh! Fye wood’n Oracle’ in the 1764 version. The second air of the scene is also substituted in the 1764 version. ‘Thy Daughters are two flirting Queens’ is replaced by a duet ‘Wond’rous Timber’ sung by Sileno and the Oracle. It appears to be an echo duet—the Oracle repeats the end of each of Sileno’s phrases so that his own words provide the answer to his question. The music for these new airs does not appear in Walsh’s publication which corresponds to the 1764 three-act libretto. The scene may have been dropped from the Covent Garden production at an early stage. The only part of this scene which remains in Walsh is ‘O! Fye wood’n Oracle’. This is set to a traditional tune which seems to be English or Scottish. Carolan composed some variations on this tune which would suggest that it was also popular in Ireland.8

A number of domestic scenes were reworked for the Covent Garden production in 1764, particularly the two scenes which preceded the Act II finale. The first of these scenes is a hostile exchange between Daphne and Damaetas. ‘Since first those eyes enslav’d my heart’ is the first air in both versions. There are some changes to the words and choice of rhyme in the later version but the air is essentially the same in both versions. The 1764 version adds a third air to the scene, ‘By whining, pining’ to a popular tune from the collection Calliope. It also

substitutes ‘Yes; your wealth I hold at naught’ for the earlier air ‘Yes, all your wealth I scorn’. In both of these airs, Daphne rebuffs Damaetas in favour of Pol, using the image of a gander. The change seems to be made primarily for musical reasons. The rousing traditional tune ‘There is a pretty girl and a tenant of my own’ is dropped in favour of the more poignant French tune ‘Tourlerette’ which prompts the corresponding change of tone in the lyrics:

Daphne’s Air in 1762

Yes, all your wealth I scorn, and your person I
Detest, and your
   Tol lol de ra, &c.
No jealous put shall ever find a welcome in my
Breast, or my
   Tol lol de ra, &c.

The swain you vilely slander,
Is frank and debonair,
To him you’re but a gander –
Go go – that’s all your share, of my
   Tol lol de ra, &c.

Daphne’s Air in 1764

Yes your wealth I hold at naught
DAPHNE’s heart shall ne’er be bought.
Ne’er to church haste basely,
Purchas’d by a rich ninny,
Who to keep her chaste,
Wou’d lock her up like his guinea.

In your pain my pleasure is,
Jealous dolt I hate your phiz,
Hissing gander, my philander
Scorns your aspersion,
Pitiful slander,
Renders you more my aversion.

In the 1762 version this scene is followed by another hostile exchange, this time between the sisters Daphne and Nysa who have become rivals for Pol’s affection. The 1764 version bypasses this altercation and concentrates instead on a dialogue between their parents, Mysis and Sileno, building on Mysis’s air from 1762, ‘The
wolf that slaughter’d finds her whelps’, sung ‘to an Italian Opera tune’. Sileno’s air ‘When gathering clouds’ also appears in both three-act versions. Both of these dialogue scenes are dropped from the two-act versions of 1766. All of the music discarded by this cut was popular folk music from the British Isles, with the exception of ‘Tourlerette’.

The finale of Act 2 is rewritten in the 1764 version. As with the Oracle scene, the characters and situation remain the same but O’Hara provides alternative airs with a new selection of musical material. Both versions end with a trio for Pol, Daphne and Nysa. The Dublin version has three other airs but the Covent Garden version only precedes the trio with a recitative. The scene was dropped in the subsequent two-act versions of Midas, as the shortened libretto no longer needed a finale at this point in the plot. Sileno and his family retain a short scene in every version of the opera just before the final scene. Sileno’s duet with Damaetas, ‘If a rival thy character draw’ appears in every version, although the 1762 version places it in a different scene and with slightly different words. The ensuing quintet for Sileno, Damaetas, Daphne, Nysa and Mysis, ‘Mother, sure you never will endeavour’, set to a French tune, also appears in all versions.

The opening scene of Midas is set on Mount Olympus with Jupiter and the ‘Heathen Deities seated amidst the clouds’. The rest of the action proceeds on earth, on the pastures of Lydia, following Apollo’s expulsion from Olympus by his father Jupiter. The 1762 book of Songs contains the most extensive array of gods, being the only version to include Mars, Venus and Vulcan with Jupiter, Juno, Apollo, and Momus who appear in all versions of the opera.
The 1764 version adds the god Mercury at the beginning of Act III. Mercury’s dialogue with Pol makes overt reference to politics:

A monarch may huff,
A senate may rage
In edicts too bluff,
In speeches so sage!
The minister glib
While he gives himself airs
Thinks how he may crib
For his private affairs.\(^9\)

*Faulkner’s Dublin Journal* suggests that *Midas* essentially has a political meaning, likening it to *The Beggar’s Opera* in that respect.

Of this strange droll thing called Midas, we know not what to make, unless, as some thought of the Beggar’s Opera, it has a political meaning. Ay, ay, it must be so.\(^{10}\)

Mercury, being the messenger of the gods, may have been intended as a reference to the press. He is omitted from the two-act versions of *Midas*, as are many of the references to *The Beggar’s Opera*. The threat of bigamy and hanging, underlying the finale to the second act in the 1764 three-act version, forms a direct parallel with *The Beggar’s Opera*. The omission of this ensemble and the preceding recitative, necessary for the reduction in scale of the opera, diminishes the association of *Midas* with *The Beggar’s Opera*.\(^{11}\)

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\(^9\) Kane O’Hara, *Midas; an English burletta. As it is performed, at the Theatre-Royal, in Covent-Garden* (London: 1764), 44.


\(^{11}\) Mysis’s interjection ‘Would he were hang’d!’ in ‘Fye, why so cross-grained’ is the last trace of references to hanging in the second edition of 1766. (*Midas* Edition, 51).
The degenerate Pan, a central character in the opera, is also a god but does not seem to belong with the dwellers of Olympus. Pan’s first appearance with Damaetas at the ale-house is a feature of both versions and is not substantially changed for the 1764 libretto, retaining the three airs from the 1762 version. The Irish tune ‘Sheelagh na Gheiragh’ is sung in the following scene between Pan and Mysis with a slight alteration to the first line, changing ‘Half this Vexation might set me distracted’ to ‘Sure I shall run with vexation distracted’. The opening scene of Act 3 of the 1762 version presents the characters Midas, Mysis and Pan in Midas’s parlour, plotting against Pol. The airs, which are taken from a variety of sources and countries, are mostly replaced in the 1764 version. The length and theme of the scene remain the same, depicting the corruption of the judge, Midas, and use mainly Irish music. One notable addition to the scene in 1764 is the trio ‘Master Pol and his toll-de-roll-loll’, set to the tune ‘Cold and Raw’. This tune is borrowed from *The Beggar’s Opera* and is the only borrowing from the *Beggar’s Opera* to be carried into later versions of *Midas*, although six other tunes had been borrowed from it for the 1762 version.

The duet ‘Those random threats’ between Pan and Mysis from the Dublin version is replaced by ‘This rash frenzy’ in the 1764 version, replacing a traditional tune with the gavotte from Handel’s overture to *Ottone*. The later versions of the opera do not end the first act at this point and it is presumably for this reason that they omit the duet altogether. The two three-act librettos include another air for Pan in this scene, ‘When at your foe a mortal blow’ set to Carolan’s *Planxty Johnson*. This air is also dropped from later versions of the opera.
A Comparison of the Afterpiece with the Three-Act Versions

**Synopsis of the Two-act version of Midas**

The first act begins with a chorus of the ‘Heathen Deities seated amidst the clouds’. Jupiter accuses his wife Juno and Apollo, the god of the sun, of spying on him and banishes Apollo from heaven, so that his amorous affairs will go unseen in future. The thunder-bolt that casts Apollo down to earth scares away some shepherds who were sleeping in a field, leaving a coat, hat and guitar behind them. Apollo adopts these as a disguise and decides to hire himself out to the farmer Sileno, under the name of Pol. At Sileno’s house we meet his wife Mysis and their two daughters, Daphne and Nysa, laughing about their suitors. Mysis does not appreciate the new addition to the household, all the more so because her daughters Daphne and Nysa do.

In the next scene Squire Midas and his associate Damaetas lament their lack of success with Sileno’s daughters and blame Pol (Apollo). Midas sets up a contest between Pan, the local piper, and Pol, hoping to drive Pol away. Pan is happy to join in the plot after hearing ‘The wenches have turn’d tail --- to yon buck ranter,/ Tickled by his guitarr --- they scorn your chanter’ and vows to ‘smash his trim guitarr – about his chaps’. Meanwhile, Pol serenades Daphne, observed by Nysa, until he is called away by Mysis. The two sisters, rivals for Pol’s affections, exchange insults.

The second act opens with Midas promising Nysa that if she yields now he will marry her as soon as his wife is dead. She retorts ‘Till I’m made a bride i’ th’ church/ I’ll keep men from doing.’ Midas and Pan plot Pol’s downfall and strengthen their resolve with a bribe from Mysis. Sileno is disgusted when Damaetas suggests marrying Daphne and asserts that Pol is ‘richer than thou with all thy brags/ of flocks, and herds, and money bags’. When the daughters hear of the rigged contest between Pol and Pan, they stop their rivalry and Nysa wishes Daphne happiness with Pol. This leads to an ensemble where Sileno and the girls support Pol, and Mysis and Damaetas support Pan.

Midas arrives, attended by nymphs and swains, to judge the contest between Pol and Pan. He praises Pan’s offering and falls asleep before hearing Pol’s. Pan is crowned with bays and Pol is told to ‘go trudge’. At this point Pol reveals that he is Apollo, god of music, and rewards Midas for his corruption and bad judgement with ass’s ears. Apollo returns to heaven, where all the gods laugh at Midas and the Grand Chorus concludes with advice to critics – ‘Now, criticks, lye snug/ Not a hiss, groan or shrug./ Remember the fate of Midas.’

Fig. 3. Synopsis of two-act version of Midas.
In 1766 *Midas* appeared at Covent Garden in the form of an afterpiece, in two acts. It is not known if this version reverts to an earlier, shorter version of *Midas* but one indication that it does not is the inclusion of elements present in the 1764 librettos which are not present in the 1762 book of *Songs*. This afterpiece was altered shortly after it opened. It may be the case that the second edition of the libretto better reflects what was actually presented on the stage.

Figure 4 outlines the acts and scenes of *Midas*, indicating the differences between the main versions of *Midas*. The scene numbers have been added for clarity and convenience but do not relate consistently to one specific source of *Midas*. It is colour-coded—green for the 1762 book of *Songs*, red for the 1764 London libretto and black for the 1766 two-act versions—with material only included in one of those versions in italics. Material from the three-act versions carried over to the two-act versions is printed in black followed by a green asterisk to denote a correspondance with the 1762 *Songs* and a red asterisk to denote a correspondance with the 1764 libretto.

**MIDAS: Scenes**

**Key:**
- **Black** = 2-act version
- **Black italic** = only in one 2-act version
- **Green** = from the 1762 Dublin 3-act version
- **Red** = from the 1764 London 3-act version
- **Green or Red * =** also in the Dublin or London version, respectively.
ACT I

Scene i
Heathen Deities, amidst the clouds. (Jupiter, Juno, Apollo.
Optional – Mars, Vulcan, Venus, Momus)

CHORUS
Gods & Instruments
Jove in his chair**

RECI T
Jupiter & Juno
Immortals, you have heard*

AIR
Jupiter
To happy ignorance*

RECI T
Juno
What new rape

AIR
Juno
Think not lewd Jove**

RECI T
Jupiter & Apollo
Peace termagant*

AIR
Mars
To earth be quick

AIR
Venus
Love reigns supreme

AIR
Vulcan
To avoid ridicule

AIR
Momus
No difference of character*

RECI T
Jupiter & Apollo
O brave, we nod his doom

RECI T ACC
Apollo
What can this hurly-burly

AIR
 Apollo
Be by your friends advised*

RECI T
Jupiter
You saucy scoundrel*

RECI T ACC
Jupiter
Roll, thunders, roll*

Scene ii
A champaign country … (Apollo, Sileno & shepherds)

RECI T ACC
Apollo
Zooks! What a crush*

AIR
 Pol
With fun my disgrace I’ll parry*

RECI T
Sileno & Pol
Whom have we here?*

AIR
Sileno & Pol
Since you mean to hire**

RECI T
Pol
From Nectar and Ambrosia

Scene iii
Sileno’s farm house (Daphne, Nysa, Mysis)

RECI T
Daphne & Nysa
But Nysa, how goes on*

AIR
Nysa
If the swain we sigh for**

RECI T
Daphne
Arch Monkey*

AIR
Daphne
If I cannot plague*

RECI T
Mysis
Hey-day!* 

AIR
Mysis
Girls are known**

Scene iv
(Sileno, Pol, Mysis, Daphne, Nysa)

RECI T
All of above
Now, dame, and girls*

AIR
Pol
Pray, goody**

RECI T
Mysis, Nysa, Sileno
SIRRah, this insolence*

Scene v
(Sileno, Mysis, Daphne, Nysa)

RECI T
all of above
Fye, why so cross grain’d*

AIR
all of above
Mama, how can you**
Scene vi
(Midas & Damaetas)
RECIT
Midas & Damaetas
Nysa, you say, refus’d*
AIR
Damaetas
Wretched he

RECIT
Midas & Damaetas
I’ve heard of that Pol’s tricks*
RECIT ACC
Midas
What boots my being Squire*
AIR
Midas
Shall a paltry clown**

Scene vii
An ale-house (Pan & Damaetas)
AIR
Pan
Jupiter wenches*
RECIT
Damaetas
There sits the old soaker*
AIR
Damaetas
All around the maypole**
RECIT
Pan
O blood and guts!
AIR
Pan
Shall he run away with the lasses*
RECIT
Pan & Damaetas
Keep yourself cool

Scene viii
(Pan & Mysis)
RECIT
Mysis & Pan
O Pan! The devil to pay*
AIR
Mysis
Sure I shall run with vexation**
RECIT
Pan
Soa, soa. – don’t flounce*
AIR
Pan
When at your foe
RECIT
Mysis & Pan
Out on’t
AIR
Pan & Mysis
This rash frenzy
AIR
Pan & Mysis
Those random threats

[ACT II]
Scene ix
An old grove (Sileno & Oracle)
Symphony
RECIT ACC
Sileno
Hail, mystic oak!
AIR
Sileno
Oracle, Oracle
DUETT
Sileno & Oracle
Wond’rous timber
AIR
Oracle
Thy daughters are
AIR
Sileno
Oh fye

Scene x
Wood near Sileno’s farm, with flocks (Daphne & Nysa)
RECIT
Nysa
O ho! Is it so*
AIR
Nysa
To blast a rival’s happiness**
RECIT (ACC)
Daphne
La! How my heart goes*
AIR
Daphne
He’s as tight a lad to see to**

Scene xi
(Daphne & Pol)
RECIT  Pol  Think o’ the devil*
AIR  Pol  Lovely nymph**
RECIT  Daphne  Sir; you’re such an oglio*
AIR  Daphne  If you can caper**
RECIT  Pol & Daphne  I ask but you
RECIT  Mysis, Pol, Daphne  Pol, Pol, make haste*
AIR  Pol  Neatest, compleatest

Symphony

Scene xii  (Daphne & Nysa)
AIR  Daphne  Why Ny: - you’re lost to shame
RECIT  Nysa & Daphne  Marry, come up*
DUET  Daphne & Nysa  My Minnikin Miss**

ACT II

Scene xiii  A grove  (Midas & Nysa)
RECIT  Midas & Nysa  Turn, tygress, turn*
AIR  Midas  O what pleasures will abound**
RECIT  Nysa & Midas  Young birds*
AIR  Nysa  Ne’er will I be left i’ th’ lurch**

Scene xiv  (Midas, Pan, Pol)
RECIT  Midas & Pan  Well, master Pol I’ll tickle*
AIR  Midas  If into your hen-yard**

Scene xv  A lawn before Midas’s house  (Nysa)
RECIT  ACC  Nysa  Good lack!*
AIR  Nysa  In those greasy old tatters**

Scene xvi  (Pan & Midas)
RECIT  Pan & Midas  So Squire, well met*
AIR  Midas  Strip him, whip him
AIR  Midas  If in the courts**
AIR  Pan  Do you sign his Mittimus
DUET  Midas & Pan  Thus arm’d with Beer

Scene xvii  A room in Sileno’s house  (Daphne & Damaetas)
RECIT  ACC  Damaetas  Heigho! My very heart
RECIT  Daphne & Damaetas  Who sent for you
AIR  Damaetas  Since first those eyes*
RECIT  Daphne  You purseproud bag of lies
AIR    Daphne    Yes; your wealth
AIR    Daphne    Yes, all your wealth
RECIT  Damaetas  Hey toss!
AIR    Damaetas  By whining, pining

Scene xviii  Sileno’s garden  (Sileno & Mysis, later Pol)
RECIT  Sileno & Mysis  Why – is the devil in you, Gammer
AIR    Mysis      When gathering clouds*
DUET  Mysis & Sileno  Made! – to our Shame
RECIT  Mysis & Sileno  Well! – I’ll be even
AIR    Pol        The wolf that slaughter’d finds*
RECIT  Sileno & Pol  Gad’s bud, I dread
AIR    Pol        To Midas let the churl appeal
RECIT  Pol        Poor fools!*  

Scene xix  (Pol, Daphne, Nysa)
AIR    Pol        When fairies dance round**
RECIT  Daphne, Nysa, Pol  O Pol! The fat’s all in the fire
AIR    Pol, Daphne, Nysa  My heart so o’er flow’th
AIR    Nysa       Now, let your jealous Soul
AIR    Daphne     How could you strive
TRIO   Pol, Daphne, Nysa  No fear shall drive me ever hence
DANCE of Nymphs and Swains

[ACT III]

Scene xx   (Mercury & Pol)
SYMPHONY
AIR    Mercury    O yes, O yes
RECIT  Pol        Hush, ribald cur
AIR    Pol        Fine times
RECIT  Mercury & Pol  Come, come, let’s buss
AIR    Mercury    The Gods were all called in
RECIT  Pol        Oh I shall burst!
DUET  Pol & Mercury  A monarch may huff

Scene xxi  Midas’s Parlour  (Midas, Mysis, Pan, Damaetas)
RECIT  Midas, Mysis, Pan  Come, Pan, your toast*
RECIT  Pan & Midas    The justice is quandary!
AIR    Midas        Have you seen two figures tugging
CHORUS Shepherd & Shepherdesses   Come, let’s support our patron, Pan
AIR    Damaetas     If you take my advice
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Characters</th>
<th>Scene</th>
<th>Lines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AIR</td>
<td>Pan</td>
<td>xxii</td>
<td>At fairs and wakes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIR</td>
<td>Mysis</td>
<td></td>
<td>Thankless! – Pusillanimous!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIR</td>
<td>Mysis</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mark what I say</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIR</td>
<td>Midas</td>
<td></td>
<td>If in the courts*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RECIT</td>
<td>Pan, Mysis, Mysis</td>
<td></td>
<td>Well said, my lad of wax*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIR</td>
<td>Pan, Mysis</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ha! Ha! Sit down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRIO</td>
<td>Midas, Pan, Mysis</td>
<td></td>
<td>As soon as her doating piece</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RECIT</td>
<td>Sileno &amp; Damaetas</td>
<td>xxii</td>
<td>My Daph a wife for thee!*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DUET</td>
<td>Sileno &amp; Damaetas</td>
<td></td>
<td>If a rival thy character draw**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RECIT</td>
<td>Mysis, Daphne, Nysa</td>
<td>xxiii</td>
<td>Soh! – you attend the tryal*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QUINTET</td>
<td>Daph, Ny, Mys, Síl, Dam</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mother, sure you never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHORUS</td>
<td>Shepherdesses</td>
<td>xxiv</td>
<td>Huzza, for Pol!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RECIT</td>
<td>Midas</td>
<td>xxv</td>
<td>Peace ho!*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIR</td>
<td>Midas</td>
<td></td>
<td>What the devil’s here to do**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RECIT</td>
<td>shepherds</td>
<td></td>
<td>O tremendous justice Midas**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIR</td>
<td>Midas</td>
<td></td>
<td>I’m given to understand**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RECIT</td>
<td>Midas</td>
<td></td>
<td>Soh! You allow it then*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RECIT</td>
<td>Midas, chorus, Pol, Pan, Damaetas</td>
<td>xxv</td>
<td>Oh, here comes Pol, and Pan*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIR</td>
<td>Midas</td>
<td></td>
<td>Now I’m seated**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHORUS</td>
<td>shepherds</td>
<td></td>
<td>O tremendous justice Midas**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RECIT</td>
<td>Mid, Dam, Pan, Pol</td>
<td></td>
<td>Masters, will you abide*</td>
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<tr>
<td>AIR</td>
<td>Pan</td>
<td></td>
<td>When Norah sits to milk her cow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIR</td>
<td>Pan</td>
<td></td>
<td>A pox of your pother*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RECIT</td>
<td>Midas &amp; Pol</td>
<td></td>
<td>By jingo, well perform’d*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIR</td>
<td>Pol</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ah, happy hours, how fleeting*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RECIT</td>
<td>Midas</td>
<td></td>
<td>Silence, this just decree*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHORUS</td>
<td>shepherds and nymphs</td>
<td></td>
<td>O tremendous justice Midas*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RECIT</td>
<td>Midas</td>
<td></td>
<td>All bow with me to mighty Pan*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHORUS</td>
<td>shepherds &amp; nymphs</td>
<td></td>
<td>See triumphant sits the bard**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RECIT</td>
<td>Midas</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tis well! –what keeps you here*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RECIT ACC</td>
<td>Pol</td>
<td></td>
<td>Now, all attend/ Now listen all</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The romantic emphasis in the later versions of the libretto shifts from Daphne and Damaetas to Midas and Nysa. An entire scene for Midas and Nysa, taken from the 1764 three-act version, opens the second act of the 1766 two-act versions. All of the airs in this scene were carried over from the 1762 version, indicating that this was one of the most successful scenes of O’Hara’s original opera. Another part of the opera that remains mostly the same in each version is the end of the first act of the two-act version, which corresponds to the second, third and fourth scenes of Act II in the three-act version. It involves the characters Nysa, Daphne and Pol, embroiled in a love triangle. Four of the six airs from the 1762 book of Songs are retained. The last of these, the duet ‘My Minnikin Miss’, became the finale for the first act in the two-act version. A number of scenes were expanded in the later versions of the libretto, particularly those involving Midas or Nysa.

The part of Pan was cut back for the two-act versions of Midas. His character serves merely to support Midas and is reduced from seven airs in 1764 to just two airs in both editions of 1766—his first air in the ale-house and his contest song. This may have been because the humour in his airs was best appreciated by an Irish audience. Pan is the local musician and plays the pipes. A song included in the 1762 book of Songs in the New Burletta of Midas, makes it clear that Pan is an Irish traditional musician:
The Kisses smack’d,
The Benches crack’d,
My Drone melodious humming;
The buxom Frisk
Of Planxties brisk,
Made Lasses kind and coming.

This air (set to the tune ‘Jack Lattin’, named after a musician and dancer of the time) is replaced by ‘As soon as her doating piece’ set to another Irish tune but referring to Midas’s pursuit of Nysa rather than to Pan himself. The availability of a suitable performer for the role may also have caused it to be cut back. The specifically Irish nature of the role is confirmed by its association with Robert Owenson. ‘Throughout his career, a role for which Owenson was famous was as Pan in Kane O’Hara’s immensely successful musical piece Midas...about one-half of the roles Owenson played in any season could be considered “Irish”’.12

The three-act version of Midas, as it was performed at Covent Garden, remained popular in Dublin for the next two decades, both in print and on stage.13

Five airs are included in the first edition of 1766 which do not appear in the second and subsequent editions. Three of these are part of larger scenes which were initially retained unchanged from the 1764 version but were later adapted to the reduced proportions of the afterpiece. An attempt was made to preserve two airs from scenes which were dropped in the afterpiece. ‘If in the courts’ appears in both three-act versions but in sections of the opera which do not correspond to each other, although both are near the beginning of the third act. The reason for

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13 Ibid., ‘In Dublin Midas was the only English burletta to be performed as a mainpiece in a theatre, all others being staged as interludes or afterpieces’. 1:337.
the attempt to retain the air would appear to be the relevance of the words to the overall theme of the opera:

If in the courts your suit depend,
Or a grudge if you entertain;
Be sure you make the judge your friend
By a tip behind the curtain.
Then decree goes
Glib against your foes,
Tho’ before it seem’d uncertain.

An attempt was made to incorporate ‘When fairies dance round on the grass’ into an earlier scene in the first two-act version of 1766. The air is borrowed from Boyce’s opera *The Shepherd’s Lottery* and would have been recognised by the audience. The allusion is clear and apt; O’Hara gently parodies the original words in which a shepherd and shepherdess arrange a moonlit assignation. Like Jupiter with his mistresses, the lovers are careful not to be seen by the ‘envious sunshine’. O’Hara borrows the rhyming scheme and overall meaning of the original song as well as the music:

The original words from *The Shepherd’s Lottery*

When fairies dance round on the grass,
And revel to night’s awful noon;
O say, will you meet me, sweet lass,
All by the clear light of the moon?

Too slow rolls the chariot of day,
Unwilling to grant me my boon:
Away, envious sun-shine, away,
Give place to the light of the moon.  

O’Hara’s words in *Midas*

When fairies dance round on the grass
And revel to night’s awful noon,
Each elf with his tight little lass
Trips to the pale light of the moon.

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If’t chance that the grey dawn of day
Peep in on their frolicks too soon,
In fright they all scuttle away,
And follow the glimpse of the moon.

Nineteen airs appear in all versions of *Midas*. Figure 5 lists these airs, providing the names of the characters who sing them, the names of their tunes, their position in the two-act version of *Midas* and their number in the concordance which can be found in the Appendices.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Air</th>
<th>Tune</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chorus</td>
<td>Jove in his chair</td>
<td>King of Prussia’s March</td>
<td>I i</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juno</td>
<td>Think not, lewd Jove</td>
<td>Shaan Bwee</td>
<td>I i</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sileno &amp; Pol</td>
<td>Since you mean</td>
<td>Hasse <em>Comic Tunes</em></td>
<td>I ii</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pol</td>
<td>Pray Goody</td>
<td><em>Queen Mab</em> Burney</td>
<td>I iv</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensemble</td>
<td>Mama, how can you</td>
<td>Non, non, Collette, Rousseau</td>
<td>I vi</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midas</td>
<td>Shall a paltry clown</td>
<td>A la santé du Pere d’Oleron</td>
<td>I viii</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damaetas</td>
<td>All around the Maypole</td>
<td><em>Fortunatus</em> Burney</td>
<td>I x</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mysis</td>
<td>Sure I shall run</td>
<td>Sheelagh na Gheiragh</td>
<td>I xi</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daphne</td>
<td>If you can caper</td>
<td>The priest in his boots</td>
<td>I xiii</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daphne &amp; Nysa</td>
<td>My Minnikin Miss</td>
<td>Bobbing Joan</td>
<td>I xiv</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midas</td>
<td>O what pleasures</td>
<td>The Lottery</td>
<td>II i</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nysa</td>
<td>Ne’er will I be left</td>
<td>To a pantomime tune</td>
<td>II i</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midas</td>
<td>If into your henyard</td>
<td>Larry Grogan</td>
<td>II ii</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nysa</td>
<td>In those greasy old tatters</td>
<td>Assis sur l’herbette</td>
<td>II iii</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sileno &amp; Damaetas</td>
<td>If a rival thy character draw</td>
<td>Come hither country Squire</td>
<td>II v</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensemble</td>
<td>Mother sure you never</td>
<td>Viens que j’examine</td>
<td>II vi</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midas &amp; chorus</td>
<td>What the devil’s</td>
<td>Kettle bender (Ally Croaker)</td>
<td>II vii</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chorus</td>
<td>See triumphant</td>
<td>‘See the conquering’ Handel</td>
<td>II viii</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pol et al</td>
<td>Dunce, I did but</td>
<td>Boyce &amp; Burney</td>
<td>II viii</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 5. Airs appearing in all versions of *Midas*.

Almost all of the choruses and ensemble movements in the second edition of 1766 are carried over from the earlier versions. The only ensemble which does not originate in the 1762 book of *Songs* is ‘Master Pol and his toll-de-roll-loll’, which is set to an air from the *Beggar’s Opera*. None of Pan’s airs is present in every
version of the opera but five of Midas’s airs appear in each version. Ten of the airs in figure 5 are set to folk melodies, the other music sources being pantomime and opera. Four Irish melodies appear in all versions: Shaan Bwee, Sheelagh na Gheiragh, Larry Grogan and Ally Croaker. Perhaps surprisingly, there are an equal number of French melodies in each version.

**Conclusion**

The transition from the private to the public theatre was a gradual process. Over the six-year period before Midas settled into the two-act version of the second edition of 1766, the opera shed both the elements alluding to O’Hara’s previous private opera, Fussalia, and the mock-Italian content specific to the first public performance of Midas. The prominence of the gods of Olympus in the 1762 book of Songs was reduced considerably by 1766. They may have been emphasized as a facetious reference to Italian opera seria or it may have been a souvenir of O’Hara’s earlier works.† Scenes with clear political references are omitted from the two-act versions and the association of Pol, Daphne and Nysa with MacHeath, Polly and Lucy from The Beggar’s Opera is considerably reduced. The 1762 description of Midas as ‘the New Burletta’ and the Italianization of the names of the cast are clearly topical, referring to the rivalry with the burlettas at Smock Alley Theatre. MS 9250, which appears to be later than the book of Songs, does not include the word burletta, instead subtitling Midas ‘a Comic-Opera’.

† The gods reappear with greater prominence in O’Hara’s later work The Golden Pippin.
The elements which are retained are those which are associated with Goldoni’s operatic reforms: ensemble finales, domestic scenes and recognisable characters. Removed from Ireland, Pan and his planxties are side-lined. On the subject of Goldoni, Patrick J. Smith writes of ‘the loosely strung-together structure of the comic form, which consists of the thread of a plot hung with the pearls of each comic situation’. It is helpful to view the different versions of Midas in this light. The comic situations were interchangeable and dispensable; the plot could accommodate a variety of ‘pearls’. Midas repeatedly adapted itself to its audience and its function. Its essential characteristics are clarified by a study of the elements that were consistently retained.

CHAPTER 3: THE MUSICAL AND LITERARY ANTECEDENTS OF MIDAS

English Burlettas before Midas

Kane O’Hara’s Midas was the most successful opera to be termed an ‘English Burletta’, and it is widely credited with being the ‘first English burletta’. However, this distinction was not claimed by Kane O’Hara on the title pages of any of the manuscript or printed librettos of Midas, and appears to have been first attributed to Midas in the following passage, written by W. J. Lawrence in 1922:

The Italian burletta season which began at Smock Alley in December, 1761, with a performance of La Cascina, had a momentous outcome, historically considered. It led to keen theatrical rivalry and occasioned the production in Dublin of the first English burletta.

The librettist John O’Keeffe, an exact contemporary of Kane O’Hara, uses the term ‘burletta’ for a much earlier English opera—The Dragon of Wantley (1737). The association of Midas with The Dragon of Wantley is supported by the preface to the 1764 libretto of Midas:

The Editor begs leave to add a word concerning the stile which prevails in the following scenes. They are written in the true spirit of the mock-heroic. Burlesque, in

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all times, from the stage of Athens down to the Dragon of Wantley, has been esteemed one of the provinces of the Drama.\textsuperscript{4}

The term ‘burletta’ appeared in the prefatory ‘Advertisement’ in the printed libretto of Galligantus (1749), an adaptation of the Irish librettist Henry Brooke’s ballad opera Jack the Giant Queller (1749). Like The Dragon of Wantley, Galligantus contains spoken dialogue rather than recitative (with the exception of one recitative) and for this reason it might not be considered to be an ‘English burletta’. While the definition of the ‘English burletta’ fluctuated in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, its all-sung nature was a defining feature. However, Galligantus was still referred to as a ‘burletta’ ten years later, when it was produced by ‘Mrs Midnight’ (Christopher Smart).\textsuperscript{5}

The opera which arguably has the strongest claim to be the first ‘English burletta’ is Robin Hood (1750), which has a libretto by Moses Mendez and music by Charles Burney. The subtitle ‘An English Burletta’ appears on the manuscript of this opera although not in the printed libretto. The music does not survive but it can be seen from the libretto that there are two simile arias, one of which appears to be in \textit{da capo} form. Four of the airs use dialogue between the singers, but the libretto suggests alternating voices rather than a duet. In one of these dialogue airs, the second verse is a parody of the first, sung by a different character. Robin Hood shares the burlesque spirit of The Dragon of Wantley and The Beggar’s Opera, ridiculing the taste for foreign entertainment:

\begin{enumerate}
\item Preface ‘To the Reader’ from Midas; an English burletta. As it is performed, at the Theatre-Royal, in Covent-Garden (London: 1764).
\end{enumerate}
Glitter: Paris and Rome have taught me what I know…
Primrose: Of all the Wretches Fate could hither bring,
Your travell’d Coxcomb is the vilest thing. ⁶

The disguises and self-explanatory names (Graspall and Sir Humphrey Wealthy) are in the same vein as the farces and comedies of the time. The libretto shares the opera seria characteristic of lieto fine or ‘happy ending’, as the two lovers are united by Robin Hood. As is characteristic of Italian comic opera, there is a moral at the end:

Robin Hood: The Tale may displease, yet the Moral is sound. ⁷

Robin Hood’s disguise and final revelation, and also his exposure and punishment of corruption and avarice, bear a striking resemblance to Apollo’s parting words in the finale of Midas:

Robin Hood: Yet what are Riches to a noble Heart.
But you, Squire Ape, must leave your Horses here,
Your Rings, your Money, and your other Geer:
Trudge home on foot, and when you leave the Wood,
Tell all you see, You met with Robin Hood. ⁸

Phyllis T. Dircks supports Robin Hood’s claim to be the ‘first English burletta’, commenting that it is:

written in genuine burletta style, consisting of recitative and aria, the whole ending with an extensive grand chorus. ⁹

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⁶ Moses Mendez, Robin Hood (London: Cooper, 1751), 8. The anti-Italian character ‘Primrose’ was sung by Kitty Clive, who at one time was heard to say ‘a set of Italian squalling devils who come over to England to get our bread from us; and I say curse them all for a parcel of Italian bitches’. (Tate Wilkinson, Memoirs, York: 1790), 2:29.
⁷ Mendez, 19.
⁸ Ibid., 21.
⁹ Phyllis T. Dircks, The Eighteenth-Century English Burletta (Victoria: English Literary Studies, 1999), 44.
Roger Fiske appears to disagree with this assertion, stating that *Robin Hood* contains spoken dialogue.\textsuperscript{10} In 1795, Joseph Ritson referred to *Robin Hood* as a ‘ballad farce’.\textsuperscript{11} Kane O’Hara’s earlier, unpublished opera *Fussalia* (1756), although not termed an ‘English burletta’, is written in what could be termed ‘genuine burletta style’, with recitatives, arias and ensembles, and bears a closer resemblance to *Midas* and later ‘English burlettas’ than *Robin Hood* or *Galligantus*.

At Marylebone Gardens, the public were entertained with a different type of ‘English burletta’ which also predates *Midas*. The Italian *opera buffa*, or *burletta*, *La Serva Padrona* by Pergolesi was performed there in 1758, translated into English by Stephen Storace as *The Servant Mistress*. The success of *The Servant Mistress* (it had 65 performances) prompted the erection of a burletta theatre at Marylebone Gardens. William J. Burling sees this opera as the real beginning of the ‘English burletta’:

\begin{quote}
The significance of the burletta form has only recently been recognized and explored, but we now know that the rage for the English version can be dated from the summer of 1758 through 1762, rather than, as has long been supposed, from the London premiere of O’Hara’s *Midas* in 1764.\textsuperscript{12}
\end{quote}

Pergolesi’s opera was originally an *intermezzo*, its two acts performed separately in the intervals of another opera. It differs from the earlier English operas which had been termed burlettas in a number of ways. There are fewer characters—two singers and a mute part, and the duration is considerably shorter. While the arias


are witty and light-hearted, they are more operatic than the ballads in *Galligantus* would have been (and more operatic than the borrowed airs in *Midas*). The colloquial language is similar in tone to the English operas, but the scenario in the English operas is less realistic. *The Servant Mistress* is an ‘English version’ of an Italian burletta, retaining its Italian title in the libretto. *Midas* seems to consolidate an English *response* to the Italian burletta, providing the basis for a succession of similarly conceived works.

**Defining the English Burletta**

Throughout the eighteenth century, the term *burletta* was used interchangeably with other descriptions, such as ‘comic opera’ or ‘musical entertainment’. This was as true of the Italian burletta as the English burletta. Rinaldo da Capua’s *La comedia in comedia*, performed during the first complete season of full-length burlettas in London in 1748, was advertised as ‘a Burletta or Comic Opera…being the first of this species ever exhibited in England’. In a letter to Benjamin Victor in Dublin in 1750[?], Colley Cibber extends the biological image of a ‘species’ along botanical lines, reporting on a later burletta season:

> The Italian burletta … I believe, like a sickly Plant, will die, before it takes any great Root among us.\(^\text{14}\)

Cibber may have been right in this assessment of the Italian burletta, but Lieutenant-General John Burgoyne remarks in 1780 that, when ‘grafted’ onto

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\(^{13}\) Fiske, *ETM*, 249.

English comic opera, the Italian burletta thrived in the new form of the English burletta:

One branch of comic opera which meets with success on our stage is evidently a graft from the Burletta of the Italians; and little as I may admire it in general, I will venture to say, respectively to the writing, it is improved in our soil. Midas, The Golden Pippin, and some others, considered as pieces of parody and burlesque, are much better than any Italian Burletta I know.\textsuperscript{15}

These eighteenth-century remarks on the nature and development of the burletta reveal quite different criteria for observing art-forms and genres from the criteria of twentieth-century commentators on the burletta.\textsuperscript{16} The first writer to investigate the English burletta in the twentieth century (and hail Midas as ‘the first English Burletta’) was W. J. Lawrence, who, while cautioning against those who are ‘swayed by their passion for scientific determination’,\textsuperscript{17} writes in terms of ‘the influences being rapidly brought to bear on primitive comic opera, with resulting approaches to full scientific form’.\textsuperscript{18} Lawrence clearly sees the English burletta and other types of opera in evolutionary terms, refining and improving themselves from ‘primitive’ forms to their ultimate, perfect form. Phyllis T. Dircks also sees the succession of operas which were termed English Burlettas as an organic development of an individual entity:

\begin{quote}
\textit{a strain of the pure English burlettas continued in the burlettas of James Robinson Planché…Planché produced four successful burlettas of the “original” kind in two years.}\textsuperscript{19}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{15} Eric Walter White, \textit{A History of English Opera} (London: Faber and Faber, 1983), 197. Taken from the preface to \textit{The Lord of the Manor}. (\textit{The Golden Pippin} is also by Kane O’Hara).

\textsuperscript{16} Twentieth-century commentators were inevitably influenced by the nineteenth-century ‘diachronic historiographical model: that is, narratives based on causal relationships constructed according to the scientific historical method’. (Blair Sullivan, ‘Musicology-Principal Methodologies For Musicological Research’, http://science.jrank.org/pages/10338/Musicology-Principal-Methodologies-Musicological-Research.html (accessed 15 July 2014).

\textsuperscript{17} W. J. Lawrence, ‘Early Irish Ballad Opera’, 397.

\textsuperscript{18} Lawrence, 409.

\textsuperscript{19} Dircks, \textit{The Eighteenth-Century English Burletta}, 135.
While twentieth-century commentators concentrate on purity and originality, eighteenth-century commentators bring the concept of propagation to the theatre, introducing precious specimens from abroad and adapting native treasures to cultivate new and wonderful forms and enrich the native stage. The English burletta can be more easily understood and appreciated when viewed in this light.\textsuperscript{20}

The English burletta could be defined, and separated from other theatrical genres, by its musical attributes. The replacement of spoken dialogue by recitative was one of the English burletta’s defining features. Fiske illustrates this point by making a comparison with the earlier opera *Penelope* (1728):

*Penelope* is not in itself a Burletta for it has spoken dialogue, but it prepared the way.\textsuperscript{21}

Musical ensembles at the end of acts were also a defining feature of the English burletta, distinguishing it from ballad opera and comic opera. Describing the process of adapting *The Capricious Lovers* as an English burletta (*Phillis at Court*), the anonymous author of the preface writes,

In order to make that piece [*The Capricious Lovers*] entertaining (and in conformity with the Italian burletta) musical dialogues have been added towards the end of each act.

\textsuperscript{20} Eighteenth-century commentators readily accepted the legitimacy of entertainments of a collaborative or referential nature and judged musical works according to their individual parameters. The nineteenth-century emphasis on the inspired composer ‘whose sole task was to objectify in music something unique and personal and to express something transcendent’ marginalised these entertainments, leaving the music historian with the choice of devising a system for legitimising them or discarding them as trivial. (The quotation is from Lydia Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, 208).

\textsuperscript{21} Fiske, 106.
act; these are known among the Italians by the word *finale*, and are deemed indispensably necessary in an entertainment of this sort.22

The nature of the music for the airs between the recitatives and before the finales is less clearly defined. In *Midas*, the music for the airs is borrowed. Most of the borrowed airs were well known at the time, in the manner of ballad opera, while some of the airs were borrowed from other operas, in the manner of the *pasticcio*. Phyllis T. Dircks appears to suggest that the music for the recitatives may also have been borrowed:

> English audiences…enjoyed hearing their own slang expressions sung to imported Italian music.23

However, borrowing was not a defining feature of the English burletta, as evidenced by Samuel Arnold’s *The Portrait* (1770), which had a score of ‘entirely new’ music.24 Whatever the provenance of the music, it was expected that it would be of a high standard and contribute to the overall effect of the entertainment. In 1773, one author described the English burletta as ‘a strange mixture of Buffoonery and Grotesque, with good Musick, [and] Scenery’.25

Fiske and White agree that most English burlettas imitated or were based on *Midas*:

> *Midas*, which had set the fashion for ‘English Burlettas’.26

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22 The preface to *Phillis at Court* (1767), cited in Lawrence, 409. *Phillis at Court* was written by Robert Lloyd and Tomaso Giordani and based on Favart’s *Caprices d’Amour, ou Ninette a la Court*.


24 Fiske, 322.


26 White, 194.
The libretto leans heavily on that of *Midas*, as did most burletta librettos for the rest of the century.\(^{27}\)

Notwithstanding the far-reaching influence of *Midas*, there is great variation in the English burlettas presented to the London audience, in terms of structure and the length of the arias. *Midas* was originally written in three acts, while the English burlettas performed at the pleasure gardens and in the minor theatres in the summer were shorter, usually in two acts. The three-act English burlettas were subsequently shortened to appear as two-act afterpieces and thus came to resemble more closely the shorter Italian-style burlettas. The arias in these English translations of Italian burlettas were quite long and often in *da capo* form with repetition of phrases, in the manner of arias in *opera seria*. The airs in *Midas*, and the English burlettas based on it, are rarely in *da capo* form, generally taking the form of strophic ballads. (There are only two *da capo* arias in *Midas*).\(^{28}\) A number of English burlettas were based on French comic operas rather than Italian. In the case of Burney’s *The Cunning Man* the music, and therefore the structure, is exactly the same as Rousseau’s *Le Devin du Village*. Samuel Arnold’s *The Portrait* is based on Anseaume’s *Le Tableau Parlant*, but with newly composed music, and Kane O’Hara’s *The Two Miser* is based on Fenouillot de Falbaire’s *Les Deux Avaries*, to borrowed music, although not borrowed from Grétry’s recent opera on the same subject.

It could be argued that the unifying feature of these operas, which were recognised as English burlettas, was the style of performance. The term ‘burletta singer’ was in common usage before the rise of the English burletta. In relation to

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27 Fiske, 388.

28 These are both near the beginning of the opera—‘Pray Goody’ and ‘Jupiter wenches’. The latter is a simple dance tune.
the season of Italian burlettas at Smock Alley, which precipitated the presentation of Kane O’Hara’s *Midas* at the public theatre, a writer in the *Freeman’s Journal* relates that:

> Mr Minelli came over here some Time ago as Director to a Company of Burletta Singers.\(^{29}\)

Roger Pickering, writing in 1755, demonstrates the high regard in which burletta performers were held, in his discussion of ‘correct and spirited Action’ and ‘a judicious Variation’:

> The ITALIANS I think, are allowed to carry off from other Stages the Preference in this Point; and, if they have several Actors as adroit as their astonishing Country-woman in the Burletta’s of the season before this, I do not see who can refuse to give it them.\(^{30}\)

The female performer alluded to by Pickering was Nicolina Giordani, who had received universal praise for her performance as Spiletta in the burletta *Gli amanti gelosi* at Covent Garden in December 1753. She epitomised the vivacity and grace of the burletta singer and for the rest of her career she was generally referred to as ‘La Spiletta’, in recognition of the remarkable first impression she had created. Her style of performing overcame the patriotic misgivings of the London audience to the extent that ‘they forgot their prejudices, they forgot, that they did not understand a word of the language’.\(^{31}\) Wilkes suggests that the acting of the Giordani family, and ‘the Italian Comedians’ in general, was comparable to that of the ancient Greeks:

\(^{29}\) *The Freeman’s Journal*, Tuesday 21 February (Dublin: 1764).


\(^{31}\) Thomas Gray, in a letter to Count Algarotti, cited in *Biographical Dictionary*, 218.
I question whether the antient mimes excelled them in attitudes, postures, agility, and grimace: they have a surprising power of distorting the countenance, and perhaps nothing was ever more entertaining than the various faces made by La Spiletta and her father, crying, in one of these pieces.32

La Spiletta’s singing was granted moderate praise:

Her voice has strength and scope sufficient; has neither too much of the feminine, nor an inclining to the male.33

Although he dismissively remarks that she has ‘little voice and less beauty’, Gray allows that she has ‘the utmost justness of ear’. However, the variety in her performances was the attribute most praised by all commentators, and particularly her skill in the art of gesture. Gray relates to Algarotti that the audience:

made her repeat all her songs, & continued their transports, their laughter, & applause to the end of the piece.34

Charles Burney explains that this effect was brought about by her ability:

to vary [an air] so much by her singing and acting, that it appeared at every repetition, a new song, and she another performer.35

Describing her acting, Gray declares that she possesses:

The strongest expression of countenance, the most speaking eyes, the greatest vivacity & variety of gesture.36

Horace Walpole echoes this impression in his private correspondence, asserting that she has ‘more vivacity and variety of humour than ever existed in any

34 Gray, letter to Algarotti, cited in Biographical Dictionary, 218.
35 Cited in Biographical Dictionary, 218.
creature’. Arthur Murphy remarks on her ‘pleasing variety of action, and such variety of graceful deportment’, describing her as ‘an excellent comic actress’. The most detailed analysis of her performance is offered by Paul Hiffernan:

She plays off with inexhaustible spirits all muscular evolutions of the face and brows; while in her eye wantons a studied archness, and pleasing malignity… her gestures are ever varying; her transitions quick and easy.

By the end of the eighteenth century, the term ‘English burletta singer’ was current. John Edwin was held up by Michael Kelly as the finest example of this type of performer:

O’Keefe’s muse, Edwin. I knew him well; he was the best English burletta singer I ever heard; he had great rapidity of utterance, and was a competent musician; his Peeping Tom and Lingo were masterpieces.

The clearest confirmation that ‘the meaning of the word Burletta’ is essentially connected with a style of performance is found in Paul Hiffernan’s discussion of burletta and its performers:

Some over-nice critics, forgetting, or not knowing the meaning of the word Burletta, cry that her manner is outré. Wou’d she not be faulty were it otherwise? The thing chargeable to her is (perhaps) too great a luxuriousness of comic tricks; which (an austere censor would say) border on unlaced lasciviousness, and extravagant petulence of action.

The English burletta, similarly, could be defined by its style of performance, which appears to be its most consistent feature. The characteristics borrowed from the Italian burletta were graceful deportment, a variety of attitudes and postures,

38 Arthur Murphy, Gray’s Inn Journal, 22 December, 1753.  
39 Hiffernan, 1:17.  
41 Hiffernan. 1:17.
ever-varying gestures, quick and agile transitions, comic tricks and facial expressions, ranging from archness and petulance to distortions and grimaces. The burletta singer had a moderately strong voice and a good ear and could vary musical expression and interpretation as much as gesture. The English burletta blended this Italian performing style with aspects of the traditions of the English theatre to create the specifically ‘English burletta singer’.

**Influences on the Structure of the English Burletta**

The more tangible aspects of the Italian burletta, its libretto and music, were less frequently commented upon by contemporary authors, and certainly not held in as high regard as the burletta performers (as illustrated in Hiffernan’s article).

They are a strange mixture of speaking and mummery, without any instruction, and with very little meaning, of which many of my readers must have had a recent and convincing proof in the exhibitions of Burlettas, made, about three years since, by the Giardino [sic] family, in the Hay-Market: the admirable action, indeed, of La Spiletta must have made a lasting impression, while no one that understands Italian would chuse to retain a syllable of the writing.42

Wilkes later expands on this theme:

They cannot be properly called Comedies, because they have no regular plot: the scenes are unconnected, and they are void of character or composition.43

These comments suggest that the Italian burletta had no clear identity beyond its style of performance. This lack of a structural model would explain why the

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43 Ibid., 53.
operas grouped together as English burlettas do not share a common musical structure or literary style, but draw on a variety of musical and literary styles and conventions. The libretto and music of the English burletta varied chiefly according to the situation of its performance. The table below outlines the situational, musical and literary influences which can be found in the English burletta.

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Fig. 1. Influences on the English Burletta

**Private Operas**

*Midas* was originally written for private performance, contributing to an aristocratic tradition which stemmed from court entertainments. Skill in acting and musical performance was pursued and valued by the aristocracy but public performance was not respectable or acceptable. Dramatic performance was a
serious study rather than a pastime. As late as the 1780s and 1790s there were private theatres at Shaw’s Court on Dame Street, where members of the House of Commons performed, at Fishamble Street, where members of the House of Lords and House of Commons performed, and in Ely Place.

The operas of Maurice Greene were similarly intended for private performance. His first opera, *Florimel*, with a libretto by Rev. John Hoadly, was performed in the drawing-room of Farnham Castle, the episcopal seat of Hoadly’s father, the Bishop of Winchester in 1734.

The Bishop, it appears, had a particular liking for music and the theatre which, in his calling, it was impossible to gratify without impropriety. His penchant for amateur theatricals was evidently shared by the entire family. And especially John, whose passion was so great, William Hogarth tells us, ‘that few visitors were ever long in his house before they were solicited to accept a part in some interlude or other’.44

The quality of Greene’s operas was in no way inferior to those publicly performed—‘The general level of invention is not only remarkably high, but also remarkably consistent’.45 The privacy of the opera’s performance did not prevent some of Greene’s airs from being circulated and published in Bickham’s *Musical Entertainer*.46 Greene’s *Florimel* is a dramatic pastoral and in its structure and dramatic setting resembles *Midas* in a number of ways. It is all-sung, with recitatives rather than spoken dialogue between the airs, and the opera ends with a

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chorus. *Florimel* is set in Arcadia (with a mixture of divine and mortal characters), while *Midas* is set on the pastures of Lydia.

### The Dramatic Pastoral

The dramatic pastoral was not confined to private performance. Boyce and Mendez’s *The Chaplet* and *The Shepherd’s Lottery* were presented as afterpieces in Drury Lane theatre in 1749 and 1751 respectively. While set in Arcadia and sung throughout, Boyce’s dramatic pastorals differ from Greene’s insofar as the airs are in the style of ballads rather than Italian airs. Only one air in *Florimel*—‘The Charms of Florimel’ is in strophic ballad style but this air proved to be the most popular, being included in Bickham’s *Musical Entertainer*. The musical style of *The Shepherd’s Lottery* is very close to that of *Midas*, which is illustrated by O’Hara’s borrowing of one of the airs from *The Shepherd’s Lottery*—‘When fairies dance round on the grass’.\(^{47}\) Both operas end with a vaudeville finale and the setting of the duets and dialogues is also similar.

There is an element of comedy in the dialogues of Daphne and Colin in *The Shepherd’s Lottery* which is not present in *Florimel*. This comic, folk-like style characterised later dramatic pastorals and brought them closer to the style of the Italian burlettas, which also appeared as afterpieces at the theatre. Arne’s *Thomas and Sally* is a dramatic pastoral in two acts and was first performed as an afterpiece at Covent Garden in 1760. The musical content is similar to Boyce’s

\(^{47}\) For a fuller discussion of this air, see Chapter 2.
The Shepherd’s Lottery with recitatives and mostly short airs, ending with a chorus. The setting is not Arcadia, but rather everyday life in the English countryside. The style of the airs reflects the inner feelings and motives of the characters so that Dorcas and Thomas sing folk-like strophic airs. The Squire sings more virtuosic dance-like airs, some of which are strophic. Sally sings a mixture of more operatic airs and tender folk-like airs with virtuosic ornaments.

There are no gods in Thomas and Sally and the plot is firmly grounded in the England of 1760 and its wars with the French. However, the heroine Sally invokes divine assistance in ‘Grant me, ye Pow’rs’.\footnote{This is the second part of air no. 7 ‘Were I as poor as wretch can be’. Thomas Arne, Thomas and Sally, ed. Roger Fiske (London: Schott & co. 1977), 25.} This air offers an interesting parallel with Phillis’s air ‘Goddess of the dimpling smile’\footnote{William Boyce, The Shepherd’s Lottery (London, I. Walsh, 1751).} in The Shepherd’s Lottery. Both are in an elevated style with a fuller orchestra. The Arne air opens out to oboe, two horns, two violins and bassoon for the invocation, although there had only been strings in the first section of the air. The Boyce air is scored for oboe, two violins, viola and bass, with imitation and dialogue between the oboe and strings. Both of these airs are written in two distinct sections with a change of metre for the second section. The Arne air begins presto in common time, changing to 3/4 and moderato for the invocation section. The Boyce air begins in 2/4 moderato, changing to 3/8 allegro assai for the second section.
The Masque

The presence of gods in the dramatic pastoral is one of the elements it holds in common with the masque, a musical entertainment which also appeared as an afterpiece in the theatre. Two masques by Nicolò Pasquali were performed in Dublin as afterpieces in 1748 and 1749 respectively—*Hibernia’s Triumph* and *The Temple of Peace*. These works were all-sung, alternating airs and recitatives and ending with a chorus. All of the characters in *The Temple of Peace* are gods or personifications of virtues except for a chorus of nymphs and swains. The masque seems to inhabit the same world as the early dramatic pastoral but is confined to its highest social level. The dramatic aspect is more static than in the dramatic pastoral and the music is less original. The musical aspect however, seems to be very relevant to the works of Kane O’Hara, as many of the airs are borrowed from other composers—notably Arne’s ‘O Peace! Thou fairest Child of Heav’n’ and Boyce’s ‘With Hounds and with Horns’. Other composers popular on the English and Irish stages are also included in the borrowings:

The temple of peace, a masque of one act, as it is perform’d at the Theatre-Royal in Dublin. Occasioned by the present happy peace, established over Europe. In which are introduced several favourite songs of Mr. Handel, Mr. Purcel [sic], Mr. Galliard, Mr. Arne, and Mr Boyce. The rest of the Musick compos’d by Signor Pasquali.\(^{30}\)

The borrowings in *Hibernia’s Triumph* are also relevant to *Midas* as it includes some Irish airs. O’Hara’s earlier opera *Fussalia*, written in 1756, is subtitled ‘a Musical Masque’. It is all-sung with borrowed airs and many divine characters and, like Pasquali’s masques, it is intended to celebrate a special occasion. Unlike Pasquali, O’Hara adds the element of burlesque humour, so that where Pasquali

\(^{30}\)Nicolò Pasquali, *The Temple of Peace* (Dublin: Edward Bate, 1749).
celebrates public events—the ‘Anniversary of the birth of his ever glorious and immortal King William III’ in the case of *Hibernia’s Triumph* and ‘Occasioned by the present happy peace, established over Europe’ in the case of *The Temple of Peace*—O’Hara celebrates

the hurrific Anniversary of the Birth-day and Noisy Coronation of our right-inadvertant Liege and truly hack-about Sovereign Lady Maria Fidgetia Flustria, by the grace of pure unaffected Nature of Great Fussia Queen. Grand Patroness and most eminent Example of embarrass’d Bashfulness. Whom Innocence long preserve.  

The masque had Italian connections going back to the beginning of the eighteenth century. Writing about Richard Leveridge’s *Pyramus and Thisbe* (1716), Peter Lewis confirms that ‘the description ‘Comick Masque’ refers to the short Italian-style operas in one or two acts performed as afterpieces’.  

The Comick Masque was the English equivalent of the Italian *intermezzi*, or ‘interludes and mimical entertainments of singing and dancing,’ described by Charles Burney as ‘the first attempt at dramatic Music, in action, perhaps, in the kingdom [1703]’. Richard Leveridge added some characters with musical names to his *Comick Masque of Pyramus and Thisbe*—Crotchet, Gamut and Mr Semibreve, the composer—and described his masque in the following way:

> From that Immortal Author’s Original [Shakespeare] I have made bold to Dress out the same in Recitative, and Airs, after the present Italian Mode, hoping I have given it the same Comical Face, though in a Musical Dress.

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51 Title page of *Fussalia, IRL-Dn, MS 9248.*

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In 1745, John Frederick Lampe revisited Leveridge’s *Pyramus and Thisbe* as a ‘mock opera’. First performed at Covent Garden theatre on 25 January 1745, this opera was also performed in Dublin in the same year. Lampe was resident in Dublin between 1748 and 1750.

Pasquali, in 1748, sub-titled his *Hibernia’s Triumph* ‘a masque of two interludes’ and the term ‘interlude’ was also employed by O’Hara for his English adaptation of Metastasio’s *Orlando* for the Dublin Musical Academy. The masque, however, had existed in England long before the arrival of Italian interludes. They were particularly associated with spectacular staging; at the court of King James I the celebrated architect Inigo Jones was engaged as designer of the masques. In keeping with the masque, *Midas* includes the element of stage machinery, presenting the gods in a cloud machine at the beginning of the opera and ending with the spectacle of Apollo ascending to the heavens. The use of stage machinery was alien to the more recent Italian burlettas as was O’Hara’s choice of a classical subject. Italian burlettas generally presented everyday situations in simple settings. Most of *Midas* follows this model but the underlying subject is taken from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* and in that respect has a closer affinity with the comic masque. The classical subject of Midas brought together elements of the masque, dramatic pastoral, burletta and burlesque opera.

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55 Kane O’Hara, *Orlando 1772. IRL–Dn*, MS 9258.
56 The story of Leveridge’s comic masque, *Pyramus and Thisbe* also originates in Ovid.
The *Pasticcio*

The practice of borrowing music from other works was common and unremarkable in the eighteenth century. The term *pasticcio* was applied to an *opera seria* which revived a libretto and adapted borrowed arias to be incorporated into it. The nostalgic aspect of the *pasticcio* is highlighted by Horace Walpole, who writes in 1742, that ‘[o]ur operas begin tomorrow with a pasticcio, full of most of my favourite songs’. The lack of originality or perhaps musical coherence was not seen as compromising the quality of the opera. Handel borrowed from his earlier works and from other composers in his London operas and Curtis Price observes that ‘as with *Oreste*, the only part of *Rinaldo* that is entirely new is the secco recitative’. The lack of originality, then, does not distinguish O’Hara’s *Midas* from the operas of Handel so much as the nature of the material which was borrowed. The *pasticcio* borrowed operatic arias and parodied or replaced the texts to suit the new context. Most of O’Hara’s borrowings were not from opera. Of the fewer than 20 airs with their origin in opera, most are themselves borrowed airs in ballad operas, some are in ballad style taken from dramatic pastorals while others are borrowed from instrumental music. The only air which is definitely an Italian aria is ‘Semplici Amanti’ from Pescetti’s *Alessandro in Persia* (1741).

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58 Ibid.
59 This air only appears in the three-act version of *Midas* and is not present in the pamphlet of *Songs* printed in Dublin in 1762.
Two other operas in the 1760s, by O’Hara’s Irish contemporary Isaac Bickerstaff (the librettist of *Thomas and Sally*), similarly borrow airs but are designated as comic operas rather than burlettas:

In the middle sixties … a new brand of pastiche opera enjoyed a startling success. *Love in a Village* (1762) and *The Maid of the Mill* (1765) were the most famous, together with Kane O’Hara’s popular burlettas, *Midas* (1764) and *The Golden Pippin* (1773). All were full-length …

The term *pasticcio* is the Italian for ‘pastry’ and in 1735 the librettist Carlo Goldoni describes the task of adapting arias for Vivaldi, so that they could fit into another libretto, as ‘cooking up the drama’ to the composer’s taste. In a *Critical Discourse on Opera’s and Musick in England* (1709), an anonymous writer gives satirical advice on how to create a *pasticcio*:

> Pick out about an hundred Italian Airs from several Authors, good, or bad, it signifies nothing. Among these, make use of fifty five, or fifty six, of such as please your Fancy best, and Marshall ’em in the manner you think most convenient. When this is done, you must employ a Poet to write some English Words, the Airs of which are to be adapted to the Italian Musick. In the next place you must make a Bargain with some Mungril Italian Poet to Translate the Part of the English that is to be Perform’d in Italian; and then deliver it into the hands of some Amanuensis, that understands Musick better than your self, to Transcribe the Score, and the Parts.

In 1709, François Raguenet described Italian opera as being “patch’d up with thin, insipid Scraps”. Half a century later, Kane O’Hara gives a similar account of the creation of *Midas*, complete with a culinary reference.

> My Opera’s not quite new;… yet, ’tis as proper as Most of the modern, motley, patch-work Operas; ’Tis musi-danci-farci-comi-tragical;… An Oglio a-la-mode. – ’tis what Hotch-potch I call.

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60 Fiske, 265.
61 François Raguenet [and John Galliard], *A Comparison between the French and Italian Musick and Opera’s. Translated from the French with some remarks. To which is added a critical discourse upon Opera’s in England, and a Means proposed for their Improvement*. (London: 1709), 71.
62 Raguenet, 4.
In short, 'tis... Midas, long your fav’rite Oddity,
And, I’ll be sworn, each Line Irish Commodity;
Cull’d from Old Pieces, bought at Stalls; sure, scarce any
Will judge my garbling Works — Larceny._
We, Ministers of State and Stage-Stock-jobbery,
Ne’er think the Pillage of the Public Robbery;
And I, Pink of Premiers! keep clear of jeopardy,
Who thus restore to’t fairly it’s own Property;...
Disguis’d, I grant;... toss’d up with sauce so savoury,
That the high Dressing recommends the Knavery.  

The Italian Burletta and International Debate

The Italian burletta was the immediate catalyst for the presentation of Midas on
the public stage. The plays and operas of Goldoni would not have been seen and
heard in the Dublin theatres before 1761 and were quite a new addition to the
London stage. However, Goldoni was internationally successful and the topic of
comic opera was hotly discussed across Europe. Goldoni, a Venetian lawyer,
playwright and librettist, based some of his characters on stock characters from
the commedia dell’arte but also brought realism and social criticism to comic
opera. He replaced the abstract stage designs of the commedia dell’arte with
detailed familiar scenes from his native Venice and the characters spoke either in
Venetian dialect or a variety of languages and dialect which would frequently be
heard in Venice.

Apollo’s disguise as a shepherd was a favourite comic device in Goldoni’s
comedies. ‘Often disguise was used to invoke faraway lands and peoples—or to

63 Buckingham Prologue from The O’Hara Papers: IRL-Dn, 36,471/1.
satirize the opera seria’. Devices used for similar effect were stage machinery, the arrival of a foreigner, a trial and mock-heroic language in the love scenes. For the most part, the language in Midas is colloquial, echoing Goldoni’s use of what Carroll terms ‘the many levels of the daily, spoken language: sincerity, spontaneity, dissimulation.’ The heated exchange between the two sisters Daphne and Nysa is in the vein of Goldoni’s women from Chioggia, who hurl insulting nicknames at each other. Such exchanges were not unknown on the English and Irish stage however, as can be seen in the bitter exchange between Margery and Mauzalinda in Act 2 of The Dragon of Wantley. In his Recollections of 1826, John O’Keeffe describes Midas as being ‘made up of Dublin jokes and bye-sayings’. The libretto went through a number of changes before settling into the two-act version of 1766. The language in this version seems to be colloquial in a general way, with Goldoni’s ‘calculated irreverence’, but without much evidence of specifically Irish idioms. The book of Songs in the New Burletta of Midas of 1762 contains more Irish references and phrases but not a significant amount. Structurally, Midas incorporates elements of Goldoni’s librettos:—the opening chorus, end-of-act ensembles, shorter airs than in opera seria, duets and trios and very few da capo arias, resulting in an even balance between air and recitative.

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66 Carroll, 150.
67 O’Keeffe, 54.
68 Smith, 107.
The *Querelle des Bouffons*\textsuperscript{69} which raged in Paris in the 1750s set French comic opera against the Italian burletta. Kane O’Hara was clearly aware of this dispute since he included melodies from Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s *Le Devin du Village*, an opera associated with the French side of the dispute, in *Midas*. The international nature of theatrical debate at that time can be illustrated by tracing the operatic settings of Samuel Richardson’s epistolary novel *Pamela: or Virtue Rewarded* (1740). In 1756 Goldoni created a libretto based on *Pamela* which became the opera *La Buona Figliuola* by Egidio Duni, performed in Parma. In 1760, Nicolò Piccinni also composed an opera based on this libretto, which achieved international success. In 1765, Pablo Esteve adapted Piccinni’s opera as the zarzuela *La Buena Muchacha* in Madrid and, in the same year, the Irish librettist Isaac Bickerstaff based his opera *The Maid of the Mill* on *Pamela*, using borrowed airs. Rousseau’s *Le Devin du Village* (1752), a French response to the burletta, also resonated through the European theatre world. Madame Favart and de Guerville parodied it as *Les Amours de Bastien et Bastienne* in 1753, which formed the basis of Mozart’s *Bastien und Bastienne* (1768). Meanwhile, in 1766 Charles Burney created an English translation of *Le Devin du Village—The Cunning Man*, retaining Rousseau’s music and presenting it at Drury Lane theatre.

\textsuperscript{69} This ‘Quarrel of the Buffoons’ was an argument which divided commentators and polite society in general. The king and his supporters were in favour of the classic French opera while the queen and her supporters were in favour of the Italian opera. It had been sparked by the performance of Pergolesi’s *La Serva padrona* in 1752, an intermezzo originally written in 1733, which had been performed previously in Paris (in 1746) without provoking comment.
Dance in the Burletta

Dancing was included in the Dublin performances of La Cascina, performed by a troupe of dancers who had accompanied the singers from Italy.

At Smock Alley, beginning on 19 December, the Italian burletta began performing several times each week. A part of their program consisted of named entr’acte dances by their special troupe of dancers. Between the acts of La Cascina, Tioli, Giuseppe Genovisi, Sga. Ricci and Sga. Vincenze Lucchi, joined by master Godwin, danced “The Hungarian Camp.” Sga. de Amicis was added in “The Furnace of Vulcan,” which included ‘a grand Entry of Venus and her attendants in which will be introduced a Song in Praise of the City of Dublin”. Both “The Italian Millers” and “The Woodcutters” were added to the repertoire later in the season.\(^{70}\)

Hitchcock cites an advertisement for the first performance of Midas with a burlesque cast list,\(^{71}\) which concludes ‘with dancing by the afterwards celebrated Slingsby’. Musically, dance is a central element of Midas, as many of the airs are set to dance music, from opera, pantomime and folk music. This may reflect the prominence of dance in Irish culture where ‘in-bound traffic facilitated the adoption of the modern violin (fidil in Irish) and imported a bevy of dancing masters who sold their steps to all classes of society’.\(^{72}\) The Rince Fada (long dance) was regularly performed at the end of public balls. The English geographer Arthur Young, who toured Ireland in the late eighteenth century, observed ‘dancing in general among the poor people, almost universal in every cabin. Dancing masters of their own rank travel through the country from cabin to cabin, with a piper or blind fiddler; and the pay is sixpence a quarter. It is an absolute

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system of education’. Dance rhythms are also prominent in Arne and Bickerstaff’s *Thomas and Sally*, contributing to the humorous dimension of the characters.

**Pantomime**

The eighteenth-century pantomime consisted primarily of dance; spoken dialogue was only gradually introduced after 1780. Like opera, the English pantomime was the product of attempts to revive the drama of ancient Greece and Rome. One of the earliest pantomimes, John Weaver’s *The Loves of Mars and Venus*, was advertised as ‘A New Dramatick Entertainment of Dancing after the Manner of the Antient Pantomimes’. The plot was communicated by gesture, dance and song—including recitative, arias, ensembles and choruses. Some observers considered pantomime an English alternative to Italian opera; Colley Cibber remarks that ‘even thinking Spectators allow’d it both a pleasing and a rational Entertainment’. It is perhaps less than obvious that ‘in the eighteenth century pantomimes and operas were composed by the same composers and sung by the same singers. Music was borrowed from opera for pantomimes and their overtures, and from pantomime for operas. The air ‘Thomas, I cannot’ from the pantomime *The Shipwreck, or Perseus and Andromeda*, which was included in

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74 Fiske, 70.
75 Cited in Fiske, 70.
76 Fiske, 67.
The Dancing Master (1719) was borrowed in The Beggar’s Opera and also in the 1762 Dublin production of Midas.

Characters from the commedia del’ arte often featured in pantomime, particularly Harlequin, Columbine, Pantaloon and Scaramouche. These characters would adopt the roles of the pantomime’s plot, so that recurring Classical characters would be superimposed on stock Italian characters. This can be seen in Jupiter and Europa (1723) where Harlequin plays Jupiter, Scaramouche plays Pan and Punch plays Apollo.

The pantomime had many elements in common with the masque and sometimes was referred to as a masque. Apart from its music, dance and Italian associations, special effects and spectacular staging allied the pantomime with the masque. Arne and Lampe wrote music for both forms as well as opera and the music historian Charles Burney is known to have contributed music for pantomimes. Midas borrows tunes from Perseus and Andromeda, Fortunatus (performed in Dublin’s Crow Street theatre in 1759) and Queen Mab. Ovid’s Metamorphoses, the source for the story of Midas, was also a source for a number of Rich’s pantomimes at Covent Garden.

Pantomime could act as satire or as parody of another work – Harlequin Dr Faustus, Cupid and Psyche/ Columbine Courtezan and Orpheus and Euridice.

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77 Queen Mab, with music by Burney, was first performed at Drury Lane in 1750. It is possible that this pantomime is related to a pantomime performed at Smock Alley theatre in Dublin in 1748, entitled Fairy Friendship; or The Triumph of Hibernia, which is reported by Greene to have been performed at Drury Lane as Queen Mab and to have been particularly successful under that title on its return to Dublin. (Greene, Calendar, 188.)
with the Metamorphoses of Harlequin\textsuperscript{78}—unlike the more serious, celebratory masques. It could employ a double plot, combining the tricks and gestures of the ‘grotesque’ characters with the classical tableaux of the masque, either by alternating or by framing one with the other. This may have suggested the structure of Midas, opening with the gods in council before descending to everyday country life and ending with Apollo reassuming his divine nature and rising up to rejoin the gods. The double role of Apollo/Pol reverses the convention in pantomime; in pantomime Harlequin is disguised as a god or hero whereas in Midas, Apollo is disguised as a sort of Harlequin.

**Burlesque**

The unnamed ‘editor’\textsuperscript{79} of the 1764 Covent Garden libretto of Midas states clearly that Midas is written in the style of burlesque opera:

> The Editor begs leave to add a word concerning the stile which prevails in the following scenes. They are written in the true spirit of the mock-heroic BURLESQUE, in all times, from the stage of ATHENS down to the DRAGON OF WANTLEY, has been esteemed one of the provinces of the Drama.\textsuperscript{80}

Henry Fielding, in the preface to Joseph Andrews, describes burlesque as ‘the Exhibition of what is monstrous and unnatural, and where our Delight, if we

\textsuperscript{78}A French influence probably inspired these parodies; there were approximately seven hundred parodies performed at the Paris fairs in the eighteenth century, two hundred of which were opera parodies.

\textsuperscript{79}The ‘editor’ is referred to in the ‘To the Reader’ section of the libretto which immediately follows the title page: ‘The Editor of the following piece thinks proper to observe…’. Rather than making reference to a specific person, this construction appears to form part of the burlesque of Italian operatic conventions. Editors are not generally referred to in the librettos of English burlettas or comic operas.

\textsuperscript{80}Preface to Midas, 1764, A2.
examine it, arises from the surprizing Absurdity, as in appropriating the Manners of the highest to the lowest, or è converso’. The editor of the 1764 libretto of *Midas* describes the burlesque humour in *Midas* in a similar manner: ‘It’s [sic] humour principally consists in making dignified personages raise in our minds trite and ordinary ideas, or else in giving to trivial objects a serious air of gravity and importance.’ Burlesque is a kind of humour similar to parody and satire but it differs from satire insofar as it ridicules style rather than individuals. This distinction is put simply by V.C. Clinton-Badeley,—‘laughing for pleasure, not laughing for hurt’. As burlesque overlaps with other sorts of comedy and often takes on the characteristics of the form it is parodying, the term can cover a wide range of diverse material and variety of tone. In his book *Fielding’s Burlesque Drama*, Peter Lewis comments that

Like literary parody, dramatic burlesque can range from gentle playfulness to uncompromising ridicule; the attitude of the burlesquer or the parodist to what he is burlesquing or parodying may be hostile, but at the other extreme it can be wryly affectionate.

In *The Dragon of Wantley*, much of the burlesque humour relates to Italian opera. The title page names the librettist, Henry Carey, as *Sig. Carini* and in his 1738 *Dedication* to the composer, Lampe, he also italianises the name of one of the cast members, John Laguerre, as *Signor Laguerrini*. The burlesque treatment of the name of Frederick Charles Reinhold, as *Mynheer Reinhold*, reflects the Germanic

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82 Preface to *Midas*, 1764, A2.
84 Lewis, 2.
origins of Handel and of the impresario John James Heidegger.\textsuperscript{85} The final chorus of the opera is in a sort of mock-Italian:

Sing, sing, and rorio,  
An Oratorio  
To gallant Morio,  
Of Moore-Hall.  
To Margereenia  
Of Roth’ram Greenia,  
Beauty’s bright Queenia,  
Bellow and bawl.\textsuperscript{86}

Carey offers some more specific comments on Italian opera in his \textit{Dedication} to Lampe, discussing the composition of an opera in a tone similar to O’Hara’s in his prologues to \textit{Midas}:

Many joyous Hours have we shared during its Composition, chopping and changing, lopping, eking out, and coining of Words, Syllables, and Jingle, to display in \textit{English} the Beauty of Nonsense, so prevailing in the \textit{Italian Operas}.\textsuperscript{87}

The Argument for \textit{Margery; or, a Worse Plague than the Dragon}, the sequel to \textit{The Dragon of Wantley}, continues the commentary in the same vein:

The Opera concludes, according to the Custom of all Opera’s [sic], with the general Reconciliation of all Parties, no matter how absurd, improbable, or ridiculous.\textsuperscript{88}

Gubbins’s air in \textit{Margery}, ‘Come follow, brave Boys’ strikes a challenging tone that is later taken up by Mysis in \textit{Midas}:

Gubbins: What, what are your Opera’s to me,  
But Tweedlecum-Tweedlecum-twee:  
No Musick, that’s under the Sky,  
Can equal the Hounds at full Cry.

\textsuperscript{85} John James Heidegger was of Swiss origin.  
\textsuperscript{86} Henry Carey, \textit{The Dragon of Wantley}, 5\textsuperscript{th} ed. (London: 1737), 24.  
\textsuperscript{87} Ibid., iii  
\textsuperscript{88} Henry Carey, \textit{Margery; or, a Worse Plague than the Dragon}, 4\textsuperscript{th} ed. (Dublin: 1744), 3.
Then a Fig for Italians, their Squeak and their Squawl,
One true English Sportsman shall dumb-found ’em all.\(^{89}\)

Mysis: Send the Guitar back to Courts again;
Fob off this Tatterdemallion:
We’ll to our innocent Sports again.
Fogh upon Fashions Italian.\(^{90}\)

Margery’s air in *The Dragon of Wantley*—‘If that’s all you ask, My Sweetest, My Featest, Compleatest, And Neatest, I’m proud of the Task’\(^{91}\) would appear to be echoed in the air ‘Neatest, Compleatist’ in *Midas*.

Comparisons with Italian opera were not confined to burlesque opera. When Bononcini’s opera *Camilla* was staged in English in 1726, the preface asserts ‘Yet upon Encouragement, young Persons might be train’d up and instructed to sing after the Italian Manner, and in time establish *English Opera’s* to that degree that We may be able to vye with the Italians, if not exceed them’.\(^{92}\) An anonymous prologue to *Camilla* similarly expresses a patriotic frustration:

> Nor think so poorly of your Native Tongue,  
> That English is unworthy to be sung;  
> Or that an Opera, where the Music’s good,  
> Shou’d please the worse for being understood.\(^{93}\)

Kane O’Hara places *Midas* within the tradition of opera in English (seeking ‘to vye with the Italians, if not exceed them’) in his letter to the audience, included in the prologue for the first run of *Midas* at Covent Garden in 1764:

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\(^{89}\) Henry Carey, *Margery; or, a Worse Plague than the Dragon*, 4\(^{th}\) ed. (Dublin: 1744), 15

\(^{90}\) Kane O’Hara, *Songs in the New Burletta of Midas* (Dublin: 1762), 40. In the preceding air, Pan sings: ‘This Prig’s soft squeak, now hits your Freak;’.

\(^{91}\) Carey, *The Dragon of Wantley* (1737), 11.


To Mr TOWN,
At the Theatre-Royal in Covent-Garden, London.
Dublin, 20th January, 1764.

Many Headed SIR,
You, to whom Authors ever must be civil,
As Indians worship – out of fear – the devil;
To you who have admir’d – Mia Spiletta,
A stranger Poet offers a Burletta;
And hopes to please – (he owns it, for ‘tis true)
With English musick, English humour too. –
Full glad he heard that Artaxerxes’ strains,
And Village-love, chaunted by rural swains,
Have shar’d, with Italy, your kind applause;
To make one effort more, his pen he draws –
His piece receiv’d, and into favour grown,
The whole Italian Drama is your own.

Then judge not, critics, by rules too severe,
Scenes where wild whim and frolick should appear.
Ev’n polish’d París dedicates a stage
Where strong Burlesque each night diverts the age;
But all in French; and shall a British pit,
Like Boniface, to jargon list’ning sit,
And what they understand not take for wit?
For you, the bard thinks English most expedient;
And so, good Mr Town, your most obedient.

Another aspect of burlesque discussed in Carey’s *Dedication* to Lampe is low humour:

they say ‘tis low, very low; now (begging their Worships Pardon) I affirm it to be sublime, very sublime __

*It is a Burlesque Opera:*
*And Burlesque cannot be too low.*

Lowness (figuratively speaking) is the Sublimity of Burlesque: If so, *this Opera is,* consequently, the tip-top Sublime of its Kind.

Carey’s assertion is supported by Hiffernan’s comments (quoted above) on the performance style of a celebrated Italian burletta singer:

Wou’d she not be faulty were it otherwise? The thing chargeable to her is (perhaps) too great a luxuriousness of comic tricks; which (an austere censor would say) border on unlaced lasciviousness, and extravagant petulence of action.

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The low humour in *The Dragon of Wantley* is more extreme than in *Midas* but the bitter exchange between Margery and Mauxalinda in Act 2 of *The Dragon of Wantley* may well have provided a model for the exchanges between Daphne and Nysa.

Burlesque references to opera appeared in plays and pamphlets right through the eighteenth century, in Italy as well as in England. In 1716, the singer Richard Leveridge made observations on Italian opera in his *Pyramus and Thisbe*, based on an episode in Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. After witnessing Pyramus die, while singing, the commentator Crochet remarks, “I’ll assure you the man died well, like a Hero in an Italian Opera to very good Time and Tune”.97 In *The Pleasures of the Town*, the play-within-a-play in Fielding’s *The Author’s Farce*, the allegory of Opera ‘Signior Opera’ gives a similar performance:

**AIR IV. Silvia, my dearest.**

**SIGNIOR OPERA.**

Claps universal,
Applauses resounding;
Hisses confounding
Attending my song:
My senses drowned,
And I fell down dead;
Whilst I was singing, ding, dang, dong.98

The Beggar in the prologue to John Gay’s *The Beggar’s Opera* admits that his opera does not follow the Italian model so successfully: ‘I hope I may be forgiven,

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96 Hiffernan. 1:17.
97 Clinton-Baddeley, 48.
98 Henry Fielding, *The Author’s Farce* (Dublin: George Risk, 1730), 36.
that I have not made my Opera throughout unnatural, like those in vogue; for I
have no Recitative’. 99

In his Il Teatro alla Moda; a sure and easy method to compose well and to
produce Italian operas in the modern fashion from the early eighteenth century,
the composer Benedetto Marcello gives the following advice to librettists:

It is extremely useful for the modern librettist to include a note to the reader in which
he points out that he wrote this opera back in the days of his earliest youth. He might
add that it took him only a few days to write the opera…At this point he might well
add that he writes “only for his own amusement”, as a relief from more serious work.
He never dreamed of having his work published: only the urging of his friends and the
wishes of his superiors caused him to do so—certainly not any desire for praise, or
any financial considerations. Moreover, “the renowned talent of the composer and the
skill of the extras and the theater bear will cover up the libretto’s deficiencies”.100

The preface to the 1764 Covent Garden production of Midas adheres to this
advice in emphasising the ‘urging of his friends’ and attributing the success of the
opera to the performers.

Thomas Arne, the composer of a number of operas in the Italian style, is parodied
in the anonymous Music Alamode; or Bays in Chromatics, a one-act ‘Burlesque
Entertainment’ of 1764, as Dr Crochet,101 a character whose name is borrowed
from Leveridge’s Pyramus and Thisbe. In Samuel Foote’s The Commissary
(1765),102 Arne is parodied as Dr Cat-gut and he is more directly attacked by

99 Clinton-Baddeley, 50.
Quarterly 34, no. 3, (July, 1948), 1:374.
101 Dane Farnsworth Smith & M. L. Lawhon, Plays about the Theatre in England, 1737–1800
(Cranbury, New Jersey: Associated University Presses, Inc. 1979), 125.
102 Smith & Lawhon, 125.
Charles Churchill in *The Rosciad*. In *Music Alamode*, Dr Crochet gives the following advice to a singer on how to sing an Italian aria:

> You must Rant it a little more and not pronounce your Words so plain for the Audience will never applaud you, if they understand what you say; they admire that most which they don’t understand… Confuse the Words a little more in the Italian manner.

Indeed, according to the fictitious annotator ‘Scriblerus Secundus’ in the 1731 preface to Fielding’s *The Tragedy of Tragedies; or, Tom Thumb the Great*, ‘The greatest perfection of the language of a tragedy is, that it is not to be understood’. He adds to this later: ‘What can be so proper for tragedy as a set of big sounding words, so contrived together as to convey no meaning?’

Performers of Italian opera were parodied in other works. Charles Bannister was well-known for his imitations of celebrated castrati and Mrs Clive specialised in parodies of Regina Mingotti. Songs and arias were also parodied or treated in a burlesque manner. Handel’s aria ‘Powerful Guardians’ from his oratorio *Alexander Balus* appears in *The Rehearsal* by Mrs Clive. Although it remains unaltered by parody, the burlesque effect is created by the contrast between its original context and its new setting, not least by the character who sings it. In *The Rehearsal*, a girl with a cockney accent arrives asking for a part in the burletta which is being rehearsed during the course of the play. When she is asked, ‘Are you qualified?’ , she replies ‘O yer, Mame; I have very good Friends’ and

103 Fiske, 307.
104 Smith & Lawhon, 127.
105 Henry Fielding, *The Tragedy of Tragedies; or, The Life and Death of Tom Thumb the Great* (London: 1731), vii. This text was set as an opera on three occasions, once by Kane O’Hara.
107 Fiske, 271 & 206.
proceeds to sing ‘Powerful Guardians’.

The singer Edward Shuter, who performed the role of Midas in the first Covent Garden production of *Midas*, presented *A Day of Taste, or, London Raree Show* as an added attraction to an anonymous parody in 1760. Terming it an ‘Italian opera’ he sings the following parody of an Italian aria as an introduction to it (with a possible reference to Carey’s *Margery*), to the tune of ‘Daniel Cooper’:

Now – London dotes on Opera Notes.  
Both Forte and Piano;  
A specimen neat, I’ll here repeat,  
And Quaver Italiano,  
Ah, Bribble ti, Brabble ti, Gibble ti, Gabble ti,  
Tweedle dum, Deedle, dum dini,  
And thus ye hear the Opera Air,  
Of Signior Shuterini.  

John Gay introduces the operatic simile in his burlesque introduction to *The Beggar’s Opera:* ‘…all the Similes that are in all your celebrated Operas: The Swallow, the Moth, the Bee, the Ship, the Flower, etc.’. Perhaps unintentionally Gay’s emphasis on similes echos Benedetto Marcello’s ironic advice to librettists for writing arias in his *Il Teatro alla Moda* from the early seventeenth century:

…it should be full of such things as sweet little butterflies, bouquets, nightingales, quails, little boats, little huts, jasmine, violets, copper basins, little pots, tigers, lions, whales, crabs, turkeys, cold capon, etc. Thus the poet will demonstrate to the world his proficiency as a natural scientist who, by his well-chosen similes, shows off his knowledge of animals, plants, flowers, etc.

Comedy had been an inherent part of opera, before the Arcadian Academy’s operatic reforms at the beginning of the eighteenth century ruled out the presence

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108 Fiske, 216.  
109 Smith & Lawhon, 122.  
110 Quoted in Clinton-Baddeley, 50.  
111 Marcello, 1:377.
of comedy. A quarter of the airs in *Camilla* are sung by comic characters. Lowell Lindgren comments on the unlikeliness of this aspect of Stampiglia’s libretto:

Since he was a founder member of the Arcadian Academy, Stampiglia might well have eliminated comic scenes, non-exit arias, melodramatic incidents and the other old-fashioned delights that Zeno and other Arcadians were industriously excluding from their texts during the 1690s.\footnote{Lindgren, xiv.}

A review of the 1726 production of *Camilla* in *The London Journal* describes one of the burlesque aspects of the opera—‘King Latinus was an unfortunate Prince from the Beginning; [that] he ever appeared with a certain ridiculous Dejection and Distress in his Countenance, which is termed by the Vulgar the Picture of ill Luck and is the absolute Burlesque of Majesty’.\footnote{Ibid., xxiii.} The servants Tullia and Linco provide most of the comic scenes, with low humour, asides and mock heroic sentiments. The dialogue and incongruity of the sentiment with the music are as burlesque as in Burlesque opera. Tullia’s air in Act I sc. xii would not seem out of place in *The Beggar’s Opera*:

Among women, they for certain
Know the most, that least discover,
To the Husband, or the Lover,
Whom they study to betray.\footnote{Giovanni Bononcini & Silvio Stampiglia, *Camilla* (London: Tonson, 1706), 10–11.}

The ensuing recitative (see figure 2) supports the characters’ asides with static harmony, momentarily arresting the action to let the audience in on their ruses. Linco’s air, in ABB form, is remarkably short—just long enough to allow him the gestures required for a marriage proposal. The plangent ‘Air a 2 Voices’, which follows another static recitative, is a modified da capo aria in miniature. Tullia’s
expressive melody accentuates the irony of her mock lament, exacerbated by Linco’s eager interjections.
should mis-car-ry, should I a peas-ant mar-ry
in-deed I own that I a-dore him,

oh Heavns

but dare not yield yet for de-co-rum.

I lan-guish

I'm sor-row, my Tre-as-ure, I speak not, I speak not to

whom? my Dear, I'm here.

Air a 2 Voices

I'm here;

thee, My Tre-as-ure, I speak not, I speak not to thee, I speak not to thee. Me
wouldst thou oh help me, thus pensive I go, and utter my thee, thee here, here

Woe, and utter my Woe; I languish, I sorrow, my For whom? my Dear, I'm here, for whom my Dear; I'm here my Dear, my

Trea sure thus pensive I go, and utter my Woe, I speak not to thee, I'm here, for whom my Dear; I'm here my Dear, my

Dear I'm here, for whom my Dear;
Ballad Opera

Kane O’Hara’s most consistent borrowings for the first public performances of *Midas* were from the ballad operas of John Gay. Six airs were borrowed from *The Beggar’s Opera* and six from its sequel, *Polly*. However, it seems likely that these airs were hastily added to lengthen O’Hara’s original opera. Only two airs from *Polly* appears in the 1766 versions of *Midas* and all of the airs from *The Beggar’s Opera* which appear in the 1762 pamphlet of *Songs* are omitted from later versions. A different air from *The Beggar’s Opera* was introduced into the 1764 version of *Midas* and this air, ‘Master Pol and his toll-de-roll-loll’, was included in all subsequent versions. The airs in these two ballad operas are mostly English, Scottish or Irish ballads but there are also a number of Italian and French airs.

The most pronounced difference between ballad opera and burletta was the absence of recitative. Ballad opera, like English comic opera, alternated spoken dialogue with sung airs and in ballad opera all the airs were borrowed. Ballad operas were generally set in contemporary situations although two early
eighteenth-century ballad operas, *Penelope* and *Achilles*, were based on Classical subjects, treated in a burlesque manner. The subject for Henry Fielding’s *Tumble-down Dick; or, Phaeton in the suds* was also classical, taken from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, the source of *Midas* and a number of pantomimes.

The subject for *The Beggar’s Opera*, the most successful ballad opera, appears to have been suggested by Jonathan Swift. Alexander Pope writes that ‘Dr Swift had been observing once to Mr Gay, what an odd pretty sort of thing a Newgate Pastoral might make. Gay was inclined to try at such a thing for some time, but afterwards thought it would be better to write a comedy on the same play. This was what gave rise to the *Beggar’s Opera’*.\(^{115}\) As in Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* (referred to in *Midas*),\(^{116}\) satire on prominent political figures can be detected beneath the surface. The burlesque side of the opera is created by the incongruity of the characters with the situations they find themselves in and how they express themselves. The setting is Newgate Prison and the characters are criminals, a jailor and his daughter. In terms of allusion, the audience would have recognised that Peachum was based on the criminal Jonathan Wild and that Macheath was based on another criminal, Jack Sheppard. More astute audience members could find ‘a double current of satire, directed against the thief-taker Jonathan Wild and through him the prime minister, Robert Walpole’.\(^{117}\) Clinton-Badeley describes *The Beggar’s Opera* as wearing ‘four faces’—‘It is a satire on low life, a satire on high life, a satire on government—and a burlesque of the Italian opera’.\(^{118}\) In his

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\(^{115}\) White, 172.
\(^{116}\) Lilliput and Brogdignag [sic.] are referred to in ‘My minikin miss’, *Midas* Music Edition (Appendix A), 82.
\(^{118}\) Clinton-Baddely, 47.
preface to *Polly*, Gay asserts that ‘my only intention was to lash in general the reigning and fashionable vices, and to recommend and set virtue in as amiable a light as I could’. This stated aim is consistent with O’Hara’s purpose in *Midas*, but the suppression of *Polly* on the grounds that ‘it is fill’d with slander and calumny against particular great persons, and that Majesty it self is endeavour’d to be brought into ridicule and contempt’ confirms that Gay’s works were not perceived as being so innocent.\(^{119}\)

Unlike the recycling of musical material in the *pasticcio*, borrowing in ballad opera and the English burletta supplied a layer of allusion to other works and contexts which added depth to the social commentary. The cross-referencing and echoing from work to work (whether play or opera) could extend to the performer who played a favourite role. Music was also involved in this elusive conversation, where tunes that were strongly associated by the public with one context were inserted into another context so that the joke could be made without the relevant text (from the original source) being printed or heard at all. This could be done by a close parody or by the absurd incongruity of the air’s new surroundings. It could be argued that this additional allusive potential of music was the main reason for the inclusion of music in burlesque theatre.

The balance between music and drama was a distinguishing feature between the two genres of ballad opera and English burletta. In the introduction to *Polly*, Gay intimates that the best singers were not available to him and so the airs were sung

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\(^{119}\) It is interesting to note that when *Midas* was adapted to apply to the Regency crisis, the roles of political and royal figures were not merely superimposed onto O’Hara’s characters. Airs were taken from a selection of characters to fit one contemporary figure. The Regency crisis will be discussed in chapter 4.
by actors.\textsuperscript{120} By contrast, the quality of musical performance was a priority in \textit{Midas}. John O’Keeffe remarks that ‘Spranger Barry was to have performed Sileno in \textit{Midas}, and rehearsed it several times; but not being equal to the musical part, gave it up, and it was played by Robert Corry, a favourite public singer’. Greene establishes the significance of this circumstance by clarifying the vocal roles that Barry had previously performed:

That Barry had a more than passable singing voice is suggested by his repeated performance in the vocally demanding roles of Macheath in \textit{The Beggar’s Opera}, Lord Aimworth in \textit{The Maid of the Mill}, and as King Arthur. On the other hand, as we have seen above, Barry’s voice was not considered up to the role of Sileno in O’Hara’s popular burletta, \textit{Midas}.\textsuperscript{121}

\textbf{Farce}

Phyllis T. Dircks remarks that the characters in \textit{Midas} are ‘closer to the characters of popular English farce’,\textsuperscript{122} a genre she defines as ‘a short play peopled by stock characters, who engaged in a series of episodes, often incongruously bound together by favorite devices such as the chase and disguise. Action was swift and often improbable, timing was precise, and the comedy was hilariously physical’.\textsuperscript{123} One of the stock characters who regularly appeared in farces was the ‘stage Irishman’. In 1743, Thomas Sheridan translated Molière’s \textit{Monsieur de Porceaugnac} as \textit{The Brave Irishman}, with Captain O’Blunder as the title role. Pan in \textit{Midas} appears to correspond to this character and he was generally played by

\textsuperscript{120} John Gay, \textit{Polly} (London: 1729), ix.
\textsuperscript{121} Greene, \textit{History}, 231.
\textsuperscript{122} Dircks, \textit{The Eighteenth-Century English Burletta}, 47.
\textsuperscript{123} Ibid., 39.
performers who specialised in Irish characters. Kane O’Hara’s recognition and appreciation of Irish characters on the stage is suggested by his choice of the name ‘Phelim Soogah O’Flaherty’ as his nom de plume for Fussalia. Figure 3 lists the Irish characters referred to by Greene in his discussion of the ‘stage Irishman’:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Role/Play</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Macahone</td>
<td>The Stage Coach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside</td>
<td>The Humours of the Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phelim O’Blunder</td>
<td>The Double Disappointment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O’Brallaghen</td>
<td>Love a la Mode</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Irishman</td>
<td>The Apprentice</td>
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<tr>
<td>O’Cutter</td>
<td>The Jealous Wife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O’Connor</td>
<td>The Summer’s Tale</td>
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<tr>
<td>MacShuffle</td>
<td>The Oxonian in Town</td>
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<tr>
<td>Captain Mac O’Brogue</td>
<td>The Lottery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felim O’Flann</td>
<td>The Bankrupt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Moody</td>
<td>The Provoked Husband</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major O’Flaherty</td>
<td>The West Indian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paddy Mullouney</td>
<td>A Trip to the Dargle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrick O’Neill</td>
<td>The Irish Widow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sir Dermot O’Durroghoo</td>
<td>The Collegian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sir Thady O’Brallaghan</td>
<td>The True Born Irishman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teague</td>
<td>The Twin Rivals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thady O’Shannaghan</td>
<td>Harlequin in Ireland</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 3. Stage Irishmen on the Dublin Stage

**Social Change**

Musical comedies attained a new popularity on the Dublin stage in the 1760s and for the rest of the century. John C. Greene states that ‘the earliest comic opera to be staged in Dublin was The Jovial Crew by Edward Roome, Matthew Concanen, and Sir William Yonge in the 1760–61 season’. In the same year that Midas,

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124 The role of Pan was reduced in the two-act afterpiece version of Midas, which was the opera’s main form outside Ireland. In Dublin, the three-act version continued to be performed, in which Pan played a major role.

125 Greene, History, 337. Both Midas and The Jovial Crew were originally presented as mainpieces but were subsequently reduced in length and presented as afterpieces. Comic operas were less likely to be reduced to afterpieces, presumably because they contained spoken dialogue. This distinction
Dublin’s first English burletta, premiered at Crow Street theatre, Isaac Bickerstaff’s Love in a Village also received its first performance. Bickerstaff’s comic operas, like the Italian burlettas at Smock Alley theatre, were presented as three-act mainpieces. English burlettas, however, with the exception of Midas, were always presented as afterpieces. Greene calculates that there were 318 English burletta performances in Dublin, most of which were by Kane O’Hara. A fifth of theatrical mainpieces were musical entertainments and almost half of the theatrical programs from 1760 onwards contained a musical entertainment.\textsuperscript{126}

The rise to prominence of comic opera on the Dublin stage in the second half of the eighteenth century was not a consequence of the opening of a new theatre but rather a reflection of a broader European trend. A clear indication of this change in the reception of comic opera is the sudden success of La Serva Padrona in Paris in 1752, nineteen years after it was written and six years after its first Paris performance had provoked little comment. A change of attitude in society towards class distinction led to the championing of comic opera by leading philosophers. Glenn Palen Pierce outlines a change in the balance of power within the class structure of Venice, where the aristocracy had become dependent on the middle-class merchants. He suggests that Goldoni uses dialect as ‘a social statement on the moral and intellectual superiority of the popular culture’.\textsuperscript{127} The theatre was one of the few places in which all classes of society could gather and enjoy the same entertainment, although the classes did not mingle, coming in and out through separate doors. In Venice, seats were reserved for the gondoliers, who

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\textsuperscript{126} Ibid., 337–9.
saw themselves reflected on stage in some of Goldoni’s comedies, along with ‘perfume and toothpaste sellers, custodians of public baths, peasants, workers, café owners, and hunters’. In London and Dublin, all classes could attend the theatre and the opera, but the seating order was different for the opera—the lower classes sat in the gallery while the aristocracy were down in the pit.

The affinity of the English burletta’s plot and characters to the farce ensured its appeal to all classes of society. It is interesting to note that a number of Irish librettists—Kane O’Hara, John O’Keeffe, Isaac Bickerstaff and Richard Brinsley Sheridan—were particularly successful in the genres of comic opera and English burletta. Perhaps the smaller social circle in Dublin and the closer relation between the classes which that entailed predisposed these authors to communicating with a broader audience. Referring to the changing audience of the English burletta, Phyllis T. Dircks remarks that ‘the original toy of the aristocrats had become, by the end of the century, the entertainment of the crowd’.

In his Saggio sopra l’Opera, of 1755, Count Francesco Algarotti comments on the migration of opera from the classical deities to everyday life:

> the opera may be said to have fallen from heaven upon the earth, and being divorced from an intercourse with gods, to have humbly resigned itself to that of mortals.

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128 Smith, 108.
129 Dircks, 8.
Apollo himself, the god of music, suffers this fate in *Midas*. He is thrown to earth by his father Jupiter and reduced to working as a farm hand. In the final scene, the god of music is recalled to heaven, rectifying the poor musical judgment of Midas and punishing his corruption, as he ascends to his rightful position. In earlier burlesque operas and ballad operas, the burlesque humour was at the expense of foreign style and taste. In *Midas*, the humour is more often directed against prejudice. The most direct expressions of prejudice in the 1762 pamphlet of *Songs* are not included in later versions of the opera:

Damaetas: Let’s bid this Spark, go hang  
With his new-fangled Twang,  
For Shepherd-swains he ne’er can be the Plan.  

Why shou’d we consent t’advance  
This new Raree-Show Vagary,  
Just brought in from *France*!\(^{131}\)

Whereas the most popular air in the opera ‘Pray Goody’ specifically addresses the issue:

Pol: Remember when the judgment’s weak, the prejudice is strong.  
A stranger why will you despise?\(^{132}\)

**Conclusion**

Opera moved from being an international art for the aristocracy to being the music of the people. The presentation of this new kind of opera in the language of its audience came about in conjunction with a growing mood of patriotism. In *Midas*,

O’Hara created a synthesis of theatrical genres inspired by classical drama, drawing on the masque, pantomime, farce and burlesque opera as well as the pasticcio and ballad opera. Without direct reference to the Italian burletta but with an awareness of developments in opera across Europe, O’Hara reached an English, or more specifically Irish, equivalent to the burletta.

Burlesque, and comedy in general, came from a correctional motivation—what Simon Trussler calls ‘the critical purpose of burlesque’. In defence of burlesque (and probably making reference to Thomas D’Urfey’s song anthology *Wit and Mirth: or Pills to Purge Melancholy*), Fielding writes that:

> it contributes more to exquisite Mirth and Laughter than any other; and these are probably more wholesome Physic for the Mind, and conduce better to purge away Spleen, Melancholy and ill Affections, than is generally imagined.

The classical premise for burlesque is cited in the Latin inscription on the title page of *The Dragon of Wantley*, taken from the *Satires* of Horace.

> Humour is often stronger and more effective than sharpness in cutting knotty issues. [Humour was the mainstay of those who wrote the Old Comedy.]

This purpose is clearly common to Goldoni’s aesthetic of comic opera—‘From a genre dedicated to a little innocent merriment, Goldoni passed to one which could carry out a Horation program of entertaining and instructing at the same time’.

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Kane O’Hara also intended to entertain and instruct, as the following fragment from an undated sheet among the prologues and addresses in the O’Hara Papers in the National Library of Ireland illustrates:

'Tis an establish’d Maxim, that the stage
Shou’d represent the Manners of the Age;
Shou’d hold the Mirror up to Life; shou’d show
Follies and Vices pregnant as they grow;
Shou’d cull Examples from the virtuous Few,
And Their bright blaze display to publick view;
With glowing Imag’ry, coercive Song,
Fire to what’s Right, and Shame from what is Wrong.\textsuperscript{137}

\textsuperscript{137} The O’Hara Papers: IRL-Dn, 36,471/1 (78).
CHAPTER 4: THE PERFORMANCE HISTORY AND RECEPTION OF MIDAS

Performance Style

More than any other aspect of the works termed ‘English burlettas’ in the second half of the eighteenth century, performance style was the identifying and unifying feature. Reference to the first cast lists from Crow Street theatre in 1762 and Covent Garden theatre in 1764 offers some insight into the original performance style of Midas. Few similarities can be discerned between the performers of each role in the two earliest casts, as the performers of each role do not appear to have shared many other roles before or after their appearance in Midas. Robert Hitchcock provides the cast list of the Crow Street production, using the burlesqued Italian forms of their names from early advertisements.

The piece was put into rehearsal, with great expectations, and announced, in ridicule/ of the others, under the conduct of Signior Josephi Vernoni, (honest Jo. Vernon). The principal characters by himself, Signior Patrico Mahoni, Signior lewiso Olivero, Signiora Fredrisunda Bridgesa, Signiora Elizabetha Gloverina, and Signiora Maria Juvanelli; with dancing by the afterwards celebrated Slingsby.¹

John O’Keeffe names the performer of the title character as Robert Mahon but otherwise mostly concurs with Hitchcock.² Without the Italian disguises, the cast list is as follows:

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¹ Robert Hitchcock, An Historical View of the Irish Stage; from the Earliest Period down to the Close of the Season 1788 (Dublin: 1794), 2:92–3.
² John O’Keeffe, Recollections, 1:54.
It is interesting to note that Joseph Vernon and Ann Elliot had both come to Dublin from the London stage and both had returned to London before the first Covent Garden performances of *Midas* but were not included in the Covent Garden cast. There are two possible reasons for the omission of Ann Elliot from the cast. She suffered from ill health in the 1764–5 season and may have been unavailable to resume her part as Daphne.\(^4\) Although Miss Elliot was praised for her beauty and vivacity, she is described in *Thespis* as being ‘circumscrib’d in voice’.\(^5\) Her vocal limitations may have rendered her less suitable for the part than Miss Miller, who played Daphne at Covent Garden. Joseph Vernon was a member of the Drury Lane company in 1764 and thus not available to play Apollo at Covent Garden. Perhaps a more relevant link to the Covent Garden production of *Midas* is Edward (Ned) Shuter. Shuter had performed at Crow Street theatre and in Cork in the summer of 1760 and later appeared at Smock Alley theatre in the summer of 1763. He was an extremely popular comic actor who specialised in Irish roles such as Sir Callaghan O’Brallaghan in *Love-à-la-mode* and O’Flarty in

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\(^3\) ‘Polly’ (Maria) Young’s name was altered to ‘Signiora Maria Juvanelli’ in the burlesque cast list.

\(^4\) George Ann Bellamy, whose roles she had taken over, remembered that she regained her parts, ‘Miss Elliot’s ill health obliging her often to decline playing’ (Bellamy, 4:103). Quoted in Lawrence Goldman, ed., *ODNB*, 18:161.

The English Tars in America. He presented an entertainment at Bartholomew Fair ‘interspersed with the Droll Behaviour and Odd Adventures of MacDermott Geohaghan Ballinbrogue’ in 1759.\(^6\) He subsequently had successes in operas by the Irish librettists Isaac Bickerstaff, John O’Keeffe and Arthur Murphy. It is possible that Shuter brought the score of *Midas* to John Beard, the manager of Covent Garden theatre, on his return to London in 1763.

The cast for the 1764 Covent Garden production of *Midas* is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Actor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jupiter</td>
<td>Mr Legg.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juno</td>
<td>Mrs Stephens.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apollo</td>
<td>Mr Mattocks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Momus</td>
<td>Mr Dibden.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercury</td>
<td>Mr Baker.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pan</td>
<td>Mr Dunstall.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midas</td>
<td>Mr Shuter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damaetas</td>
<td>Mr Fawcett</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sileno</td>
<td>Mr. Beard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mysis</td>
<td>Miss Poitier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daphne</td>
<td>Miss Miller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nysa</td>
<td>Miss Hallam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oracle</td>
<td>Mr. Wayle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the casts of the first two productions of *Midas* have no performers in common, a comparison of the two performers who shared each role may shed some light on the performance style of the earliest productions.

The two performers of Midas do not appear to have belonged to a set type of performer. Both appeared in *The Beggar’s Opera*, *The Maid of the Mill* and *Love

\(^6\) Philip H. Highfill et al., *Biographical Dictionary*, 16:374.
in a Village, but never in the same role. Their only shared role apart from Midas appears to have been Sir Callaghan O’Brallaghan.

Pan would appear to be the only role that John Morris and John Dunstall played in common although they both played roles in two Irish comic operas—The Devil to Pay by Charles Coffey and Love in a Village by Isaac Bickerstaff. Robert Mahon (who played Midas in 1762) played Pan in a later run of Midas. He and Dunstall had both played Mat o’ the Mint in The Beggar’s Opera but they had also both played other roles in that ballad opera. Mahon and Morris had played Giles in The Maid of the Mill, but Mahon was not particularly identified with that role, having also played Mervin. John Morris is described by John C. Greene as ‘one of the premiere stage Irishmen of his day’,\(^7\) and the role of Pan often fell into that category in subsequent runs of Midas.

The performers of the role of Sileno were both primarily singers. John O’Keeffe remarks that ‘Spranger Barry was to have performed Sileno in Midas, and rehearsed it several times; but not being equal to the musical part, gave it up, and it was played by Robert Corry, a favourite public singer’.\(^8\) Robert Corry and John Beard had both played MacHeath in The Beggar’s Opera but Beard played a wide variety of roles, being ‘in constant demand to sing in ballad operas, pantomimes, and burlesques, as well as more serious pieces’.\(^9\) The casting of the role might suggest that Sileno was a less animated role—‘Mr Beard’s appearance and manner of singing were all that could be wished, but his speaking was intolerable,

\(^8\) John O’Keeffe, *Recollections*, 1:53.
and he appeared too much of the gentleman’.\textsuperscript{10} Since neither Corry nor Beard appear to have returned to the role, their strengths and limitations may not be a defining reflection on the role. Another member of the Covent Garden cast, Thomas Baker, offers a better insight into the role of Sileno because of his long association with the role.

His last recorded London performance was at Covent Garden on 18 October 1784 in his most constantly recurring character, Sileno in Kane O’Hara’s popular burletta, \textit{Midas}.\textsuperscript{11}

Baker was an actor, singer and dancer. He played the role of Mercury in \textit{Lethe} and \textit{Harlequin Skeleton} as well as in \textit{Midas}. Like Beard, he appeared in ballad operas, pantomimes, comic operas and some Shakespeare plays. He was an accomplished singer, being chosen to sing tenor in the Handel Memorial Concerts at Westminster Abbey and the Pantheon in June 1784, and was ‘a singing-master of some repute’.\textsuperscript{12}

Little is recorded of Lewis Oliver, who played Damaetas in Crow Street. John Fawcett, the Covent Garden Damaetas, is described evocatively in \textit{A Pin Basket to the Children of Thespis} of 1797 as:

\begin{quote}
Nimble FAWCET by dashing, and splashing, and noise,
And o’ercharging his lungs, draws down peals of applause.\textsuperscript{13}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{11} Philip H. Highfill et al., \textit{Biographical Dictionary}, 1:230.
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{13} Quoted in Philip H. Highfill et al., \textit{Biographical Dictionary}, 5:193.
Fig. 1: John Fawcett as Robin Roughhead in *Fortune’s Frolic*. 1768/9.
As with the role of Sileno, Damaetas was subsequently played by another member of the 1764 Covent Garden cast, Charles Dibdin. (Baker and Dibdin had played the roles of Momus and Mercury, which were dropped in the more common two-act version of *Midas*.) Dibdin was well regarded as a singer and singing teacher but is now better remembered as the composer of English burlettas, other dramatic music and patriotic songs. John O’Keeffe creates a lively impression of his stage presence in the one-man-shows he presented later in his career.

Dibdin’s manner of coming on the stage was in happy style; he ran on sprightly, and with nearly a laughing face, like a friend who enters hastily to impart to you some good news. Nor did he disappoint his audience:…and his peculiar mode of singing [them] surpassed all I have ever heard.\(^\text{14}\)

The role of Apollo was sung by Joseph Vernon in the Crow Street production of *Midas*. He and George Mattocks (the Covent Garden Apollo) were praised for their singing and their acting. Vernon had been a chorister at St Paul’s cathedral and composed a number of vocal pieces. One of these was ‘When that I was and a little tiny boy’ for the Epilogue of Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night*, which O’Hara borrowed in *Midas*. Greene records that he ‘came to Crow Street at the highest
salary ever given up to a singer in Ireland',\textsuperscript{15} and Genest’s comments (in reference to \textit{Theatrical Biography}) suggest that he was an excellent singer at this point in his career.

\begin{quote}
it is seldom found that a good actor is a good singer — Vernon stands an exception to that rule; for tho’ he now only lives in point of voice upon the echo of his former reputation, he was excellent in both.\textsuperscript{16}
\end{quote}

John Bernard considers the two performers comparable in their abilities, and finds Mattocks ‘with the exception of Vernon, the best acting vocalist I ever saw’.\textsuperscript{17} Other critics were less complimentary. \textit{Theatrical Biography} laments Mattocks’s ‘stiffness and lack of feeling’ while \textit{The Smithfield Rosciad} refers to him disparagingly as ‘Miss Molly Mattocks’.\textsuperscript{18} Both singers were tenors but Fiske surmises that Mattocks sang mostly in falsetto.\textsuperscript{19} The usually satirical \textit{Thespis} is sympathetic to his style of performance, justifying his casting as Apollo, ‘prince of song’:

\begin{quote}
Whose tender strain, so delicately clear,  
Steals, ever honied, on the heaviest ear;  
With sweet-toned softness exquisitely warms,  
Fires without force, and without vigour charms.\textsuperscript{20}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{15} John C. Greene, \textit{Calendar}, 1:559.  
\textsuperscript{17} Quoted in Lawrence Goldman, ed., \textit{ODNB}, 37:379.  
\textsuperscript{18} Lawrence Goldman, ed., \textit{ODNB}, 37:379.  
\textsuperscript{20} Hugh Kelly, \textit{Thespis}. Quoted in Roger Fiske, \textit{ETM}, 634. (Apollo’s own reception is similarly divided within the libretto of \textit{Midas}.)
The two performers of Mysis came from a dancing background. (It was as a result of his under-age marriage to Jane Poitier that Joseph Vernon had moved to Dublin and was in a position to sing Apollo in the 1762 Crow Street performance of *Midas.*) Miss Poitier (later Mrs Vernon and Mrs Thompson), who sang the role of Mysis at Covent Garden, mostly sang in ballad operas and comic operas and had created the role of Dorcas in Bickerstaff and Arne’s *Thomas and Sally* in 1760. In

Fig. 3: George Mattocks as Apollo in *Midas*. 1778.
Thespis, she is described as ‘the liveliest baggage on the modern stage’. Miss MacNeil (later Mrs Hawtry) sang in the pleasure gardens and public concerts as well as at the theatre. In the 1767–8 season she sang at Fishamble Street Music Hall with Signora and Master Passerini and Tenducci and in 1773 she performed Dibdin’s The Ephesian Matron at the burletta theatre at Ranelagh Gardens, Dublin. It is likely that she sang at puppet performances of Midas in Dublin as ‘a press clipping from the Morning Chronicle in 1777 reports her singing at the Patagonian Theatre in Dublin’.

Both performers of Nysa were rather small, (a definite requirement of the role, since her sister Daphne taunts her for being a ‘pigmy elf’). Mary (Polly) Young was only thirteen years old when Midas was performed at Crow Street Theatre. She moved to London with her Aunt, Cecilia Arne, in the same year and does not appear to have sung in any of O’Hara’s other works. She married François Barthélémon and sang in many of his burlettas in London and Dublin. She also sang with the Italian Opera company at the King’s theatre. Like Polly Young, Isabella Hallam (later Mrs Mattocks) had ‘an exceeding good natural voice, improved by a knowledge of music’. She shared the repertoire of many of the male performers in Midas. The nineteenth-century publication The Georgian Era reviewed her career favourably:

Besides sustaining a respectable line in tragedy, Mrs. Mattocks was the Rosetta, Polly, &c. of the theatre: “but she has latterly,” says a critic, writing in 1800, “devoted herself entirely to the comic muse, whose cause she supports with admirable spirit,

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22 John C. Greene, Calendar, 2:1461.
and with a peculiarity of humour, which though it may sometimes exceed the precise limitations of critical propriety, is richly comic, and perfectly original.25

Both performers of Daphne (the taller sister) were beautiful and relatively new to the theatre. Ann Elliot, who played Daphne at Crow Street, was described as ‘sylphic and enchanting’ by Jesse Foot.26 Describing her face as ‘more form’d to create Passion, than to Express it’, 27 David Garrick was not impressed by her acting abilities. Elizabeth Miller had a longer and more varied career. In 1761, The Theatrical Review predicted that she would be ‘a shining ornament to the theatre’,... ‘from the elegance of her figure, the delicacy of her deportment, and

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25 The Georgian Era: Memoirs of the most eminent persons, who have flourished in Great Britain, from the accession of George the first to the Demise of George the fourth (London: Vizetelly, Branston & Co., 1834), 4:563.
26 Jesse Foot, The Life of Arthur Murphy (London: J. Faulder, 1811), 188.
the sweetness of her voice’. 28 These descriptions do not refer to comic talents but Miss Miller subsequently performed in many comic operas. It is perhaps surprising to observe that the role of Daphne was later performed by two male performers—Michael Kelly and John Edwin. Michael Kelly sang the role as a boy for one of Kane O’Hara’s puppet performances. 29 John Edwin’s travesty performance of Daphne is less surprising when his earlier performance of the role of Lucy in The Beggar’s Opera is taken into account.

Although the distribution of roles in the early casts of Midas does not indicate specific characteristics being associated with each role, a picture emerges of a type of interactive performing. While it was not important for a performer to retain the same role in each production, the performers in the earliest casts of Midas tended to perform together in subsequent English burlettas and comic operas. Mollie Sands refers to the performers of Arnold’s The Magnet at Marylebone Gardens as the ‘burletta team’. 30 The singers at the pleasure gardens were engaged for the season and thus performed as a team by necessity. Mrs Thompson (née Poitier—the first Mysis at Covent Garden) was one of the singers referred to by Sands and the performer of Nysa in Crow Street—Mrs Barthélémon (née Young) performed burlettas regularly at Marylebone Gardens and Ranelagh Gardens.

While the patent theatres were not constrained in this way, members of the original Midas cast appeared together repeatedly and a number of English

28 Philip H. Highfill et al., Biographical Dictionary, 1:231.
burlettas and Irish comic operas figured prominently in their later careers. Nine members of the Covent Garden cast later played in Bickerstaff’s *Love in a Village* and *The Maid of The Mill*. A painting by Johann Zoffany depicts Edward Shuter, as Justice Woodcock, John Beard as Hawthorn and John Dunstall as Hodge in a scene from *Love in a Village*. (figure 5). It is interesting to note that when Dunstall was considered unsuitable for the role of Ralph in *The Maid of the Mill* he was replaced by Charles Dibdin, another member of the 1764 *Midas* cast, who had a great success with the role.31

31 Other works which figure prominently in the careers of the first casts of *Midas* are *The Beggar’s Opera*, *Thomas and Sally*, *Lionel and Clarissa*, *Perseus and Andromeda*, and *The Duenna*. 

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Fig. 5. A Scene from *Love in a Village* by Isaac Bickerstaff. Act I, sc.ii, with Edward Shuter as Justice Woodcock, John Beard as Hawthorn, and John Dunstall as Hodge. Painted by Johann Zoffany in 1767. (The Holburne Museum).
A similar phenomenon can be seen in Dublin in 1763, when six of the performers in *Midas* (Mahon, Corry, Oliver, Slingsby, Miss MacNeil and Mrs Glover) reappear in a work from which O’Hara had borrowed:

Mon 2 Feb, and March. 1763 Feb. *King Arthur* (Vocal parts by a Passerini, Miss McNei, Wilder, Mahon, Eals, Oliver, Mrs Glover, Saddler, Corry, Hamilton, Master Passerini. The music composed by Purcell. The Dances by Slingsby.  

The defining feature of these English burletta singers was their versatility. The following description of John Fawcett in *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors, Actresses*... is typical of many of the performers in the original casts of *Midas*:

now a straight dramatic performer, now a singer either in chorus or entr’acte solo, most at home in comedy but seen often in sober small parts in tragedy and melodrama, capable of oratorio but not above pantomime.  

A high standard of singing came to be expected in English burlettas. Kane O’Hara reflected upon this humourously in a prologue spoken by Merlin, for his later English burletta, *Tom Thumb*.

Let but the Vocal Parts be “quite enchanting”... No Sentiment too low, no Phrase too slattern,...  

Isabella Hallam, Polly Young, Thomas Baker and John Beard also sang in oratorio. Polly Young (later Mrs Barthélémon) performed with the Italian Opera Company at the King’s Theatre and Mrs Thompson (née Poitier) sang Italian operas at Smock Alley theatre, Dublin in 1777 and 1778. Charles Dibdin, Polly Young (as Maria Barthélémon) and Joseph Vernon also composed. John Beard is

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32 John C. Greene, *Calendar*, 1:833.  
34 Prologue from *The O’Hara Papers: IRL-Dn*, 36,471/1 (78).
described in *The Dramatic Censor* (1770) as ‘that truly great intelligent English Singer’. The *Biographical Dictionary* summarises his significance as a singer.

Beard’s place in the hearts of his music-loving countrymen, whether they attended him at the patent houses or heard him at private ridottos or in the public gardens, was confirmed chiefly by his performance of English songs…his “specialty acts,” whether solus or with Vernon or Lowe or others in comic or pathetic dialogue, were the delight of the audiences. Just as Handel and Giardini created grand parts for him in oratorio, so Dr Thomas Augustine Arne and Dr William Boyce, John Stanley, Charles Burney, William DeFesch, and Richard Davies vied in furnishing him with rousing beef-and-porter songs in the English tradition. He was enjoyed in sea chanteys, hunting songs, patriotic ballads, shouts of soldierly defiance, and college songs, as well as melting pastorals and love-lyrics touched with the fashionable “sensibility.”

Many burletta singers also acted and sang in Shakespeare plays. One of Isabella Hallam’s earliest roles was as Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet* and Edward Shuter was particularly popular in the roles of Falstaff and Autolycus. John Dunstall also included Falstaff in his Shakespeare roles.

Individuality was another defining feature of these performers and their idiosyncracies and physical appearance identified them as burletta singers rather than actors. *Theatrical Biography* comments that Miss Hallam ‘was considered too short and not beautiful enough for leading parts in tragedy’. Similar limitations influenced Dibdin’s career:

> Although he did not have the appearance necessary to be a leading man, his singing ability and his wide range of dialects ensured a great success in character roles.38

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Audiences delighted in the individuality of these performers and their comic features. *The Rational Rosciad* of 1767 remarks that John Dunstall was ‘designed by nature for a clown’. 39 Ned Shuter was similarly blessed with comic talents:

He had strong features, and was happy in a peculiar turn of face, which, without any natural deformity, he threw into many ridiculous shapes by various alterations of the muscles of the cheek, or rather, of the mouth and nose. Nature did a great deal for this actor—education very little; but the goodness of his head was such, that he daily advanced towards perfection.40

The same source acknowledges Miss Hallam’s original talents:

a peculiarity of humour, which though it may sometimes exceed the precise limitations of critical propriety, is richly comic, and perfectly original.41

The exuberant individuality of the burletta singers prompted librettists to create roles which suited the nature of particular performers. Bickerstaff created the role of Justice Woodcock in *Love in a Village* for Edward Shuter (who had played Justice Midas in 1764) and the roles of Young Meadows and Lucinda for Mr and Mrs Mattocks (*née* Hallam) in the same opera. Some performers appeared repeatedly in the works of particular librettists or composers; Joseph Vernon sang consistently in Charles Dibdin’s burlettas and Maria Barthélémon (Polly Young) regularly played the female lead in her husband’s burlettas. The reliance on performers for the success of a work was not limited to the English burletta, but arguably the specific talents of some of the performers of the time made the existence of the English burletta inevitable.

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41 Ibid., 4:563.
The stage began to offer a new and non-literary attraction. It was enough for the dramatist to give a “cue for passion”; he need only serve as a collaborator, as one whose work was half finished till presented by a trained performer. O’Keeffe’s success depended so largely on Edwin’s interpretations that when the actor died the playwright was expected to fail.\(^{42}\)

John Edwin was the most notable of the second generation of English burletta singers. He performed in O’Hara’s *The Golden Pippin, April-Day, The Two Misers* and *Tom Thumb* as well as in *Midas*, but was even more closely associated with John O’Keeffe. Although the first casts of *Midas* readily adapted to different roles, performers began to be restricted to a particular ‘type’ later in the century. Edwin was generally recognized as the successor of Edward Shuter—‘a performer of the first eminence in low comedy’,\(^{43}\) and took on his most characteristic roles. The admiration of low comedy decreased as the century progressed and Edwin epitomized a new, improved Midas for a later generation:

> Nature in gifting him with the *vis comica* had dealt with him differently from low comedians in general, for she had enabled him to look irresistibly funny, with a very agreeable, if not handsome, set of features, and while he sung in a style which produced roars of laughter, there was a melody in some of the upper tones of his voice that was beautiful.\(^{44}\)

Edwin was noted for his rapport with the audience, a quality he had admired in Shuter.

> Reynolds the dramatist recalled that Edwin “established a sort of entre-vous-ship…with the audience, and made them his confidants.”\(^{45}\)

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\(^{43}\) *Eccentric biography, or, Memoirs of remarkable characters, ancient and modern* (Boston: B & J. Homans, 1804), 296.

\(^{44}\) Colman, quoted in Philip H. Highfill et al., *Biographical Dictionary*, 5:24.

This leaning towards familiarity and interaction had prompted a critic of Shuter to exclaim ‘Is all his aim to hear the galleries roar?’\(^{46}\) It predicted the course which later burlettas would take, no longer presented to ‘pit, box and gallery’ at the Theatre Royal but rather providing the lower levels of society with entertainment.

**Gesture**

An aspect of eighteenth-century performance, easily overlooked in the present, is gesture. The scene depicted in figure 5 illustrates the deliberate placing of the feet, hands and head and the distribution of weight, which were essential to eighteenth-century theatre. Performers interacted with each other and the audience by means of a shared understanding of gesture, further clarified by the directions of the librettist:

> during rehearsals...he [the poet-librettist] describes and demonstrates exactly their appearance; their exits and entrances; the carriage of the body; the movements of their hands and feet; their facial expressions, if they express passion.\(^{47}\)

Gesture was an integral part of education across Europe, having its roots in the study of classical oratory, particularly Quintillian.

In addition to constant practice in the declamation, with gestures, of verse and prose, students regularly acted in dramas, and sometimes in operas, as a basic part of the courses in eloquence and oratory.\(^{48}\)


The singer Giambattista Mancini, in his *Pensieri, e riflessioni pratiche sopra il canto figurato* of 1774, encourages singers to study with educated gentlemen who are skilled in acting:

> Gentlemen, and Men of letters, and cultivated people, who recite and act Plays for their [own] pleasure. As they are in themselves skilful Actors, so, willingly they kindly teach one who asks them.\(^{49}\)

A clear code of gestures was understood by the audience in the pit and the boxes. This knowledge was expected of the audience, whose judgement was only valued in so far as they were ‘persons of taste’. The purpose of gesture was to communicate the words and passions of a character to the audience — ‘This is the thing which gives strength, expression, and vivacity to the speech’.\(^{50}\) Gesture was predominantly used in the recitatives, as the characters interacted and the plot progressed. The most significant word in a phrase was emphasised by a corresponding gesture.

> a basic function of the gestures was to create for the eyes of spectators a concrete picture of the ideas expressed by the words. Indicative and imitative gestures especially can have the vivid effect of bringing before the eyes events and things which are not on stage.\(^{51}\)

Gesture was expected to play an equal role with the words and music, in communicating meaning and passion. However, beauty and grace were to be maintained at all times, no matter how distressing the passion being expressed.

Acting in comedy was less stylized and more natural than in *opera seria*, but a

\(^{48}\) Ibid., 11.

\(^{49}\) Giambattista Mancini, *Pensieri, e riflessioni pratiche sopra il canto figurato* (Vienna: 1774), 175.

\(^{50}\) Ibid., 165.

knowledge of gesture was needed to appreciate the comic effects intended by deviating from gestural convention.

Innovations in stage lighting in the 1760s facilitated a more natural style of acting. In the first half of the eighteenth century, the stage was lit by overhead chandeliers and by footlights at the front of the stage. However, in the 1760s David Garrick attached candles to the back of the side flats, providing an added light source and creating new movement possibilities for the performers, who had till then been restricted to the centre of the stage. The side lights ‘allowed the actor to increase emphasis merely by moving toward them’. The freedom to use more of the stage allowed the performers to dispense with ‘the traditional arrogant lift of the chin – in order to get light on the face from overhead chandeliers’. This made their facial expression visible to the audience.

Performances and Printings of *Midas*

As a two-act afterpiece, *Midas* was performed 121 times in the seasons 1766–74 at Covent Garden theatre. By the end of the eighteenth century it had been performed 226 times at the London patent theatres. From its first public performance at Crow Street theatre in 1762, *Midas* continued to be performed in

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33 Ibid., 85.
Dublin both as a two-act afterpiece and three-act mainpiece. Before its popularity had been established, by its transition to a two-act afterpiece, *Midas* was already being performed in Cork, in 1765.56 There was a recurring interest in *Midas* in Belfast, where it was performed five times in 1768, and a further nine times before 1790.57 This interest may have been due to the proximity of the opera’s first performing venue—the private theatre attached to the residence of the Right Honorable William Brownlow, M.P., at Lough Neagh, near Lurgan. This level of interest, however, carries limited significance when compared with the only slightly lower number of performances of Bickerstaff and Arne’s comic opera *Love in a Village*.58 The newly-opened High Street theatre in Newry, another theatre with local associations, included *Midas* in its first performance, with ‘all the Original Music, Machinery, Scenery, Dresses, and Decorations, as Performed at the Theatres of London and Dublin with universal Applause’.59 Performances of *Midas* were also given in Limerick (1771–82), Kilkenny (1770–3), Derry (1782–93), Drogheda (1782), Waterford (1787), Ennis (1790) and Clonmel (1794).60

*Midas* featured in the repertoires of the regional theatres in England and Scotland in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. A member of the original Covent Garden cast, Edward Shuter, was still being praised for his performance of the role in a performance in Edinburgh in 1773.

57 Ibid., 325.
58 *Love in a Village* was performed twice in 1765, and twice in 1766 in Belfast. It had a further seven performances in Belfast before the end of the eighteenth century. (Clark, 287).
59 Clark, 192.
60 Clark, 325.
Poor Ned has lost some of his teeth and is in other respects worse for the wear, tho’ I think he played Midas very nearly as well as he used to.\textsuperscript{61}

Phyllis T. Dircks refers to a performance in Brighton as late as 1859 and at Trinity College Hall, Cambridge in 1923. \textit{Midas} proved successful in America, with performances being recorded in Philadelphia as early as 1769 and as late as 1840. It was also performed in New York (1773) and Boston (1794). Dircks refers to two surprisingly exotic performances in Montego Bay, Jamaica (1777) and St Petersburg (1772).\textsuperscript{62}

Figure 6, listing the printings of \textit{Midas}, indicates the extent to which \textit{Midas} was performed and read during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The following study of ‘Pray Goody, the Favorite Air in Midas’ provides a detailed survey of the reception of the most popular air in the opera, drawing on primary sources held at the British Library, and the performance history of the character Apollo.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Printer</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1762</td>
<td>Dublin</td>
<td>William Sleater</td>
<td>Songs in the New Burletta of Midas as it is performed at the Theatre-Royal in Crow Street</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1764</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>Printed for G. Kearsly, W. Griffin, J. Coote, T. Lownds, &amp; W. Nicols</td>
<td>Midas; an English burletta, As it is performed, at the Theatre-Royal, in Covent Garden</td>
<td>Contains preface ‘To the Reader’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1764</td>
<td>Dublin</td>
<td>Printed for W. &amp; W. Smith, P. Wilson, J. Exshaw, T. Dyton, J. Hoey jun., A. McCulloh,</td>
<td>Midas…</td>
<td>Contains preface ‘To the Reader’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{61} Sylas Neville, quoted in Philip H. Highfill et al., \textit{Biographical Dictionary}, 16:379.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>Title Details</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1766</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>W. Griffin</td>
<td>Midas: an English burletta. In two acts. As it is performed, at the Theatre-Royal, in Covent Garden</td>
<td>No preface</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1766</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>W. Griffin</td>
<td>Midas…The second edition, with alterations</td>
<td>No preface</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1766</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>W. Griffin</td>
<td>Midas…The third edition.</td>
<td>No preface</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1766</td>
<td>London</td>
<td></td>
<td>Midas: an English burletta…in verse. Recast</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1767</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>Lowndes</td>
<td>Midas…The fourth edition.</td>
<td>No preface</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1768</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>W. Griffin</td>
<td>Midas…a new edition.</td>
<td>No preface</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1770</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>R Butters</td>
<td>Midas. A burletta. Written by Kane O’Hara Esq. Taken from the manager’s book, at the Th. Royal</td>
<td>New cast members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1770</td>
<td>Dublin</td>
<td>W. Smith</td>
<td>Midas; an English burletta. As it is performed at the Theatre-Royal, in Covent-Garden</td>
<td>Contains preface ‘To the Reader’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1770?</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>I. Walsh</td>
<td>Midas, a comic opera, as it is perform’d at the Theatre Royal in Covent-Garden. For Harpsichord, Voice, German Flute, Violin, or Guitar.</td>
<td>Musical notation of the airs in the 3-act version</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1771</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>Lowndes</td>
<td>Midas: an English burletta, (in two acts.) The sixth ed.</td>
<td>No preface</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1780</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>R Butters</td>
<td>Midas… Taken from the manager’s book,…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1784</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>R Butters</td>
<td>Midas… Taken from the manager’s book</td>
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<tr>
<td>1787</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>G. Lister</td>
<td>Midas: an English [sic] burletta. In two acts. As it</td>
<td>Smaller text (intended for reading)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1789</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>Stockdale</td>
<td>An improved edition of the songs in the burletta of Midas, adapted to the times.</td>
<td>No preface or cast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1789</td>
<td>Dublin</td>
<td>P. Byrne</td>
<td>An improved edition of the songs in the burletta of Midas, adapted to the times.</td>
<td>Latin inscription ‘inducere Plumas Undique Collatis Membris’ No preface or cast list</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1789</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>Stockdale</td>
<td>A parody of the songs in the burletta of Midas, as they are now singing by the following illustrious personages: Her M-y, His R. H. the P. of W. … A new edition, with additions</td>
<td>Latin quotation on title page, no preface or cast list</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1794</td>
<td>Boston</td>
<td>Pub.</td>
<td>Midas… Taken from the manager’s book…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1795?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A new edition of The Favorite</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The airs sung by the character Apollo, rather than by Midas himself, proved to be the most popular in the opera. The ‘Favorite Song’ *Lovely Nymph asswage my anguish* was reprinted several times between 1772 and 1815 with considerable changes being made to its structure, melodic line and bass line. However, the air with the most enduring appeal was *Pray Goody please to moderate the rancour of your tongue*. This air had originally been a ‘Fairy Dance’ from the pantomime *Queen Mab*, which was first performed at Drury Lane theatre on St Stephen’s Day, 1750. The music for the pantomime was attributed to the Society of the Temple of Apollo and was published by John Oswald in that year as the ‘*Comic*

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63 The Favorite Air of Pray Goody arranged for the Harp & Dedicated to Miss Catherine Russell By Madame Krumpholitz (London: 1821).
Tunes in Queen Mab as they are perform’d at Drury Lane, set for the Violin, German Flute or Hoboy; with a Thorough Bass for the Harpsichord’.

Thirty-nine publications relating to ‘Pray Goody’ are held at the British Library. A broad survey of this material suggests four categories into which the publications can be grouped. The first category consists of arrangements based on John Walsh’s vocal score of Midas (believed to date from 1764). The arrangements in the second category appear to aim at recreating the performance of a favourite singer, changing the key of the air from G to F major and adding ornamentation and cadenzas. A third category retains the new key but is less ornate and more reminiscent of Walsh’s score. The arrangements in the fourth category are in keys other than F and G major and, for the most part, do not relate to a specific performer.
'Pray Goody’ was not printed separately until 1802, with the sub-title ‘As sung by/ Mr. Kelly’. The Irish tenor, Michael Kelly, appears to have been largely responsible for the new-found popularity of the air. In his Reminiscences of 1826, Kelly recalls that:

“Pray Goody, please to moderate the rancour of your tongue,” (before I sang it at Drury Lane,) was always sung in a quick jig time; — it struck me, that the air would be better slower, and I therefore resolved to sing it in the “andantino grazioso” style, and added a repetition of the last bars of the air, which I thought would give it more stage effect. When I rehearsed it the first time, as I had arranged it, Mr. Kemble was on the stage, who, with all the performers in the piece as well as the whole band in the orchestra, una voce, declared, that the song ought to be sung in quick time, as it ever had been; but I was determined to try it my own way, and I did so: and during the run of the piece, it never missed getting a loud and unanimous encore. When “Midas” was
revived at Covent Garden Theatre, it was sung by Mr. Sinclair in the exact time in which I sang it, and with deserved and additional success.64

The versions of ‘Pray Goody’ described as being ‘as sung by Mr. Kelly’ are very similar to the first printing of ‘Pray Goody’ found in Walsh’s vocal score of *Midas*.

The singer most often associated with the air in later publications was John Sinclair. However, the writer of the preface to the 1837 libretto of *Midas* suggests that ‘Pray Goody’ was already popular before Sinclair began to play the role of Apollo and also gives an indication of the extent of the air’s popularity:

Sinclair is, probably, the best Apollo that has ever appeared, and his execution of the popular song of “Pray Goody,” produced nearly the same effect that is attributed to the “Di tanti” of Rossini—its echo was universal and prolonged, it was heard in every house, and whistled in every street; and the busy hum of the court and mart was haunted by the omnipresent ghost of this favourite melody.65

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A tradition of double encores developed around ‘Pray Goody’. A commentator in the *Belle Assemblée Magazine* of 1824 remarks:
In a revival of Midas, Mr. Sinclair has sustained his legitimate character of Apollo, made, indeed, by him the true god of song. “Pray Goody,” the heir-loom of a British audience, was honoured with a double encore.66

This Covent Garden tradition of double encores, which originated with Madame Catalani, was also extended to Sinclair at other theatres and continued in his honour with subsequent performers of Apollo. ‘Pray Goody’ was held as a standard against which the success of other airs could be measured. Writing of Sinclair, the London Literary Gazette states that ‘his new simple Scottish ballad, the Bonny Breast-Knot, seems to rival even Pray Goody in its attractions; being always demanded three times, and sung with similar applause’.67

Comparison of four printings of ‘Pray Goody’: 1) Walsh 1764. 2) re: Sinclair 1811a. 3) re: Sinclair 1811b. 4) re: Sinclair 1823.

To return to the sheet music records of ‘Pray Goody’, there is only a small amount of variation between the different sources of the melody in print in the nineteenth century. Figure 9 represents four printings of the melody, presented in parallel to facilitate comparison. The top line is taken from Walsh’s vocal score and the lower three variants relate to Sinclair’s performance, from 1811 (in two forms) and 1823.

66 Belle assemblée: or, Court and fashionable magazine (London: J. Bell, 1824), 30:177.
Allegretto
The versions differ mainly at the ends of the second and third sections of the melody, where cadenzas are added to the nineteenth-century versions. These
cadenzas are clearly a transcription of the same performance practice, with small changes to a few details, and are consistent with Sinclair’s reputation for ‘the felicity of his cadenzas, and the rapidity of his shake’.  

The principal areas for comparison are: key, time signature, tempo, number of staves, accompaniment, introductions, interludes, postludes, cadenzas and ornaments.

Most of the versions relating to Sinclair are set in F major, but at least two publications are in G major. The use of this key, along with cut common time, an allegretto tempo marking, figured bass and the use of ‘D.V. al Segno’ in place of a written-out reprise indicate that these publications are based on Walsh’s 1764 score and use Sinclair’s name for marketing rather than musical reasons. The variation in time signatures in the nineteenth century does not seem to indicate a difference in performance style. This view is supported by a source from 1856, which, while being printed in cut common time, has a supplemental guitar part in common time. The guitar version also has relevance in relation to the key of the air. It is written in F major, rather than the G major of the vocal part. The appending of a supplementary instrumental part in a different key was not unusual. The second version of the air dating from 1811 includes a flute part, transposed to G major and another version relating to Sinclair (possibly from 1810) includes a duet version ‘For 2 Voices, or German Flutes’, also in G major.

68 ‘Memoirs of Mr. Sinclair’, The Theatrical Inquisitor: or, Monthly Mirror (London: Chapple, February 1814), 4:70.
69 Kane O’Hara, ‘Pray Goody, sung by Mr Sinclair in Midas (London: 1815) and Kane O’Hara, ‘Pray Goody please to Moderate, Sung by Mr Sinclair in the Burletta of Midas at the Theatre Royal Covent Garden’. This publication can be found, bound with other songs and collected as ‘Cyclopedia Music’, at the British Library. GB-Lbl H.2342. [London: 1856]
70 ‘Pray Goody’ [London: 1856].
which can be seen in Figure 10. The absence of rests for the interlude sections indicates that the instrumental part is an alternative to the arrangement, in a more suitable key, rather than an addition.

Fig. 10. ‘Pray Goody’ Duet. 1810.

Although Kelly claims credit for the new-found popularity of ‘Pray Goody’, his ‘andantino grazioso style’ is not found in nineteenth-century arrangements, although an instrumental rondo from 1812 and a set of variations from 1817 based on the melody are marked grazioso.71 The most common tempo marking in the arrangements of the air is moderato.

71 Pray Goody, A Favorite Rondo, For the PIANO FORTE, BY M. HOLST (London: [1812]); PRAY GOODY. With variations for the Piano Forte AND An Accompaniment for the FLUTE. Composed & Inscribed To the RIGHT HONORABLE Lady Charlotte Gordon, By J. Mazzinghi. (London: Goulding, D’Almaine, Potter & co., [1817]).
The differences between the versions of ‘Pray Goody’ relating to Sinclair are more apparent in the accompaniments, and these are more apt to reflect changing musical taste in the nineteenth century. Arrangements dating from later in the century, and unrelated to Sinclair, omit the cadenzas, and the accompaniments use staccato chords and fewer counter-rhythms to support the voice. The last 6 bars of Lindsay Sloper’s 1880 arrangement can be seen in Figure 11.

Fig. 11. The last 6 bars of ‘Pray Goody’, arranged by Lindsay Sloper.72

‘Pray Goody’ was also printed in relation to other performers and, remarkably, all of these were women. Notwithstanding his disapproval of the practice, the anonymous author of the prefatory ‘Remarks’ to a libretto of 1838 praises Madame Vestris’s performance:

Midas has many sins to answer for in the shape of bringing ladies on the stage, in man’s character. That of Apollo, though it may not strictly be termed a “breeches part,” has always been and still continues a favorite with our female stars. We shall never forget the sensation Madam Vestris created in this Burletta. Her singing was

72 Pray Goody, From the Burletta of Midas, By Dr. Arne, The Symphonies & Accompaniment Written Expressly for Madame Mary Cummings, By Lindsay Sloper (London: 1880), 3.
exquisite; we have heard no one, except Catalani, who could ascend with so graceful
an ease into the highest heaven of sound, and sport and revel at will in its liquid
elements. . . 73

Despite her success in the role, there are no printings of ‘Pray Goody’ ‘as sung by
Madame Vestris’. Perhaps her appeal in the role was not primarily musical, as is
suggested by a slightly disparaging review in The Chronicle:

She was encored in ‘Pray, Goody,’ but Sinclair used invariably to be called upon to
sing it three times. Madame Vestris sings to be sure sufficiently well for the part, but
her claim to it depends much more upon her legs than upon her voice.74

73 Pattie’s modern stage: a collection of the most approved and popular dramas (London: Pattie,
1838), 2:72.
74 Charles E. Pearce, Madame Vestris and her Times (New York: Brentano’s, 1920), 135.
Fig. 12. Madame Vestris as Apollo in *Midas*.
Other ladies followed in Madame Vestris’s footsteps. References are made to a Miss Coveney, Miss Sanders, Miss Isaacs, Miss Featherstone and Miss Poole.

In addition to recording and recreating the performances enjoyed at the public theatre, publications of ‘Pray Goody’ adapted the air for private music-making and new social settings. A book presented to ‘the members of the Abbey Glee Club’ contains a four-part harmonization of ‘Pray Goody’ by Samuel Webbe junior, the first page of which can be seen in Figure 13.
Fig. 13. Extract from four-part arrangement of 'Pray Goody' by Webbe.75

A note written below the sheet music, referring to the extent of the repeat of the first section, illustrates how performance practice changed over time.

“NB Ply me &c” to be sung a 2d. time; and then Da Capo “Pray Goody.” [crossed out in pencil, replaced with ‘Remember’].

‘Pray Goody’ also appears in a book owned by the Adelphi Glee Club. It forms the second part of a glee by Henry Bishop, which is a setting of Shakespeare’s words ‘Who is Sylvia’ from Two Gentlemen of Verona. The setting is for five voices (SATTB or SSTTB) and piano accompaniment, with a four-bar introduction in smaller print. The word underlay can be seen in Figure 14.

Fig. 14. Underlay of Henry Bishop’s setting of ‘Who is Sylvia’ to the air ‘Pray Goody’. Melody of the second part of the Glee ‘Who is Sylvia’.76

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76 Henry R. Bishop, Who is Sylvia! Glee, Sung By Miss H Tree, Mr Pyne, Mr Taylor, Mr Isaaccs, Mr Tinney. In Shakespeare’s Play of the Two Gentlemen of Verona, at the Theatre Royal, Covent
The poetry does not fit the melody as naturally as ‘Pray Goody’, which leads to altered phrase lengths, fewer slurs and the omission of a bar (at bar 25). Other changes to the melody are a matter of musical taste. These two publications trace the migration of the air from the public theatre to the private performance sphere, for which Midas had originally been created.

In parallel with arrangements of the air, several sets of variations based on ‘Pray Goody’ were published, mostly for pianoforte, but also for the harp. The earliest of these appears to be by George Kiallmark, and consists of an arrangement of the
The variations reflect the theatrical context of the theme, extending Apollo’s disguise into different settings and moods by means of harmony and rhythmic motifs. The movements are entitled: *Siciliano*, *Lentement, Tempo di Marica—Lento, Allegro Brillante* and *Andantino Espressivo*. Variations were also composed by Joseph Mazzinghi, Matthias Holst, Martha Greatorex, Sophia Dussek, Madame Krumpholz, Dr. J. Jay and W.H. Cutler. Perhaps the furthest removed setting of the air is the ‘Pollaca’ (variation 7) in 3/4 time, from Dr. J. Jay’s Variations, which can be seen in Figure 16.

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77 Pray Goody, *The favorite Air, Sung by Mr Sinclair, in Midas, with Variations & a Finale, for the Piano Forte, Composed & Dedicated to the Hon’ble Lady Mary Erskine, by G. Kialmark* (London: Mitchell, 1808).
‘Pray Goody’ was also used as a theme for rondos and divertimentos.

The names of the dedicatees of these pieces indicate the status to which ‘Pray Goody’, originally a ‘comic tune’ from a pantomime, had risen. Mazzinghi’s variations are dedicated to the right honorable Lady Charlotte Gordon and
Kiallmark’s variations are dedicated to the Honourable Lady Mary Erskine. Lindsay Sloper’s ‘Symphonies & Accompaniment [are] WRITTEN EXPRESSLY FOR MADAME MARY CUMMINGS’. Griffin’s Rondo and Madame Krumpholz’s variations are dedicated respectively to Miss Henrietta and Miss Catherine Russell while Dr. Jay’s variations are ‘composed and dedicated to’ a Miss Pearson. While ‘Pray Goody’ served as a means of honouring eminent ladies at the upper end of society, it also sustained its popularity at the lowest levels of society. The words of ‘Pray Goody’ are included in a small hard-backed book entitled *Curious Tracts*, which is a collection made by James Mitchell in 1828. On a card affixed to the third leaf of the collection, Mitchell informs the reader that:

> It may be considered as the Library of the Scottish Peasantry, the works being sold by itinerant Chapmen about the country, especially at fairs.\(^{78}\)

In the second half of the nineteenth century there was uncertainty about the origins of the favourite air ‘Pray Goody’. The version associated with Miss Poole, from 1859, refers to the air as an ‘Old English Song’ while a printing of the air in 1873 termed it ‘The Favorite English Ballad’. The first page of Mazzinghi’s arrangement published in 1874 has the sub-title ‘Popular Song’ but the title page names ‘Pray Goody’ in conjunction with a popular song by Arne. This may have led to the erroneous assumption made in the title of Lindsay Sloper’s arrangement of the air: ‘Pray Goody, from the Burletta of Midas, by Dr. Arne’. Michael Kelly also misleads the public about the origins of ‘Pray Goody’ in his *Reminiscences*, remarking that

> It is not, I believe, generally understood, that Rousseau was the composer of it.\(^{79}\)


\(^{79}\)
Henry Bishop gives the issue deeper consideration in a footnote to his glee of 1821. He writes:

The Melody of this movement was, I believe, first introduced to an English Public in the Pantomime of “Queen Mab”; it was afterwards sung in the Burletta of “Midas,” and the composition has often been attributed to Rousseau; But, although “Midas,” contains two Melodies from the “Devin du Village,” I know of no satisfactory evidence to prove that the popular Air of “Pray Goody” is by the Composer of that Opera! That it is French however, is, I think, unquestionable. \(^{80}\)

Contributors to the *The Quarterly Musical Magazine and Review* take issue with Bishop’s final assertion:

He knows of no satisfactory evidence to prove the fact, yet he decides it to be French. We should like to know why? For to us it appears to have “no character at all;” a reason which would, caeteris paribus [all things being equal], induce us to assign to it an English birth. \(^{81}\)

The music for *Queen Mab* had been attributed to the Society of the Temple of Apollo, which may be the reason for Bishop assuming that it was borrowed. However, in his unpublished memoirs, the well-respected music historian Charles Burney reveals that he composed the music for this pantomime, not acknowledging the work at the time for fear of provoking Arne, his former teacher. \(^{82}\) The ‘Fairy Dance’, which O’Hara borrowed for ‘Pray Goody’, was not printed separately prior to its association with *Midas*. However, a certain degree of popularity may be assumed, given its inclusion in two undated manuscripts,

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\(^{82}\) Roger Fiske, *ETM*, 223. The Scottish printer James Oswald, also known as David Rizzio, is occasionally credited with composing the music for *Queen Mab*. 
held in San Francisco State University and Pennsylvania Libraries.\textsuperscript{83} The San Francisco source appears to attribute the tune to Giardino. The ‘Pheasant’s Dance’ or ‘Peasant’s Dance’ from \textit{Queen Mab} also appears in two eighteenth-century manuscript sources. Figure 17 below presents Burney’s ‘Fairy Dance’ from \textit{Queen Mab}, the original source for ‘Pray Goody’.

\textsuperscript{83} ‘Fairy Dance in Queen Mab by Giardino’ (\textit{US–SFsc*}M2.5v. 45); ‘Dance in Queen Mab’ (\textit{US–PHu faC7.H7777.A837c} v. 12).
When the Scene changes

Allegro Moderato
The enduring appeal of ‘Pray Goody’ may be due to the popularity of its words as much as to its musical content. Its power to make a point can be judged from the following anecdote relating to Madame Vestris:

Once at Norwich, a gentleman in a side-box rudely and loudly objecting to an encore of her great song “Pray, Goody,” she ventured on the repetition till she came to the lines,

“Remember when the judgment’s weak,
The prejudice is strong;”

then artfully paused, turned to her enemy’s side-box, and dropped him a malicious and sedate curtsey, which drove the sneerer from the house.

Parodies of the words of ‘Pray Goody’ were popular in the theatre and in the chapbooks sold at the fairs. The following parody is printed in A Garland of New Songs from 1810.

On Tuesday I’d a holiday, I went to see the play,
And I took my sweetheart, Polly by my side;
Unto the shilling gallery, to spend the time away,
A bottle of good gin I did provide.
Hosey,
Cosey,
Cock up play, nosey;
A Barber near me,

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84 Charles Burney, Comick Tunes in The Fairies or Queen Mab as they are performed at the Theatre Royal in Crow-Street: set for the violin, German flute or hautboy, with a thorough bass for the harpsichord (Dublin: William Manwaring, ca. 1751), 7.
85 Mary Elizabeth Braddon, Belgravia (London: Robson and Sons, 1869), 9:465.
He did jeer me,
Twig the Tailor, he cry’d.
Oh! Mr. Barber, please to moderate the rancour of your tongue,
Why flash those sparks of fury from your eyes?
Oh! Remember, I’m a tiny man, and you are very strong,
A tailor, a tailor, why would you despise?86

The parodied words seem designed to fit with the added ornaments found in Sinclair’s version of the air. These parodies only serve to accentuate O’Hara’s skill in matching words to airs which were intended for dance or mime.

‘Pray Goody’, originally a pantomime dance tune, came to prominence because of its inclusion in the burletta Midas. It was not an instant favourite however, and the tune’s popularity in the nineteenth century is equally due to the manner of its performance. The change of tempo from allegretto to Michael Kelly’s ‘andantino grazioso’ marked a turning point in the fortunes of the melody. By adopting this modified style, John Sinclair established ‘Pray Goody’ as a show-stopper, initiating a tradition of double encores which was carried on by later performers and at other theatres. ‘Pray Goody’ was equal in popularity to the favourite arias from the Italian operas of the day and the merits of airs newly-introduced to the public were measured against ‘Pray Goody’. It can be seen from the many publications of the air in the nineteenth century that the melody remained largely unaltered, and that Sinclair’s cadenzas were retained as an intrinsic part of the air. There is, however, some variation in the accompaniments printed for the air, and these reflect changing musical taste, as well as a new interest in returning to the original source (or Urtext) of the music.

The compositions based on ‘Pray Goody’ have a distinctly dramatic character, acknowledging the mock heroic or ‘burlesque’ nature of the opera from which the air is borrowed. The appeal of the air transcended genres, social settings and social classes. It became fashionable to praise it in polite society and composers and arrangers chose it as a suitable tribute to their patronesses. At the other end of the social spectrum, it was sold by pedlars and bought by the poorest members of society at fairs. The origins of the air, beyond its association with *Midas*, were either ignored or assumed incorrectly in most of the publications of ‘Pray Goody’. Without O’Hara’s words, and its inclusion in *Midas*, it is unlikely that Burney’s comic tune would have been dignified with an attribution to Arne or Rousseau or have travelled to America to be declared ‘without exception, the most beautiful thing I ever heard!’\(^87\)

**Midas at the Puppet Theatre**

*Midas* also attained long-lasting popularity in the less well documented arena of the puppet theatre. The Patagonian Puppet Theatre arrived in London from Dublin in 1776 and included *Midas* in its first performance.\(^88\) The theatre was located in ‘The Grand room over Exeter Change, in the Strand, no other room in town being


\(^88\) ‘In October 1776 “the beautiful Patagonian Theatre from Dublin” opened its doors. The programme opened with a double bill of *Midas* and a new pantomime, *The Enchanter*, concluding with “a superb piece of Perspective Architecture, being a copy of the magnificent Altar erected in the Jesuit’s church at Rome, as designed by Poppo”.’ George Speaight, *The History of the English Puppet Theatre* (London: Harrap, 1955), 117.
so commodious in size and form for the erection of the machinery’. From a study of illustrations of the room, George Speaight estimates that it ‘was about seventy feet long; at one end the roof had been raised to allow the erection of the gallery’. The stage was approximately six feet wide and the theatre could accommodate an audience of two hundred spectators.

The success of the Patagonian Theatre is confirmed by its long residence in London.

The Patagonian Theatre kept its doors open for five years, presenting about forty productions as well as numerous interludes and scenic displays.

The puppet theatre was not presented as an amateur or juvenile entertainment but rather as an elite amusement on a smaller rather than an inferior scale, often advertised under the heading *Multum in Parvo* — ‘much in little’. The Patagonian Theatre was originally the creation of Kane O’Hara and its earliest performances had been private:

it was installed in a house in Abbey Street in the middle of December, 1775, and the performances at first were given solely by invitation, and that only to people of rank and fashion.

Little has been recorded about the performers in these productions but the scale of the performances is alluded to in some comments in newspaper advertisements:

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91 Ibid., 118.
92 W. J. Lawrence, ‘Some Old Dublin Puppet Shows,’ *The Dublin Evening Mail*, October 17, 1908. 2.
‘No Persons whatever, except the performers, will be admitted behind the scenes, or into the orchestra.’

In the Dublin performances of *Midas*, some of the female roles were performed by boys. The celebrated tenor Michael Kelly recollects singing in *Midas* at the Patagonian Theatre as a boy.

In the performance of this fantoccini I sang the part of Daphne, and was instructed by the author himself; the others were by other amateurs. It was quite the rage with all the people of fashion, who crowded nightly to see the gratuitous performance.

Public performances were occasionally given by special request ‘at a high rate of admission so as to keep the rabble out. For the 27th January, 1776, “Signor Polichinello” the manager, advertises a performance of the opera of “Tom Thumb” and the last new pantomime on behalf of the poor Confined Debtors of the city. The tickets were 7s. 6d. each, British, or three for a guinea. The attitude proclaimed in the [statutes] of the Dublin Musical Academy, that the amateur performer was superior to the mercenary professional musician, appears to have been preserved at the puppet theatre into the last quarter of the eighteenth century and the attitude to the audience is equally anacronistic. Lawrence remarks upon the exclusive nature of puppet performances in Dublin as late as the early nineteenth century, where high prices ensured a ‘genteel’ audience in the Little Theatre in Capel Street in 1807, and performances at the Large Supper Room in

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93 Contained in a book of cuttings on Exeter Change in the Enthoven Collection at the Victoria and Albert Museum.
95 W. J. Lawrence, ‘Some Old Dublin Puppet Shows,’ *The Dublin Evening Mail*, October 17, 1908, 2.
96 Some performances of the kind were given there tri-weekly in July, 1807, evidently to genteel audiences, as the prices of admission were by no means of the popular order ranging as they did from 3s 4d to 1s 3d. Kane O’Hara’s old burletta of “Midas,” and a ballad opera called ‘The Purse,” were among the pieces represented.’ W. J. Lawrence, ‘Old Dublin Side Shows,’ *The Saturday Herald*, 3 February, 1912.
the Rotunda in 1825 were given in French. While the performances at the London Patagonian Theatre were not private, the focus remained on the nobility and command performances, as can be observed in the following extracts from advertisements dating from October and November 1776:

In order to accommodate the Nobility, &c. Places in the Boxes may be taken at the Theatre from Two to Twelve each day.

There has been the greatest care taken to have the Theatre well and properly aired, and it will be illuminated with wax-lights for the reception of the Nobility, Gentry, and others.

MULTUM in PARVO.
The Third Exhibition of the Beautiful PATAGONIAN THEATRE, from DUBLIN will be in the GREAT ROOM over EXETER 'CHANGE, (which is elegantly fitted up for the purpose) TO-MORROW, the 2d of November inst. When (by particular desire) the admired BURLETTA of MIDAS Will be performed, as it was originally intended by the Author, with all the Scenery, Machinery, &c, incident to that piece.

The Patagonian Theatre was presented to the London public as an entertainment of exceptional quality. The first advertisement collected in the Exeter Change Scrapbook claims that ‘the public will be entertained, in all probability, with a performance the first of the kind ever seen in Europe’. The scenery was particularly praised and the following extract confirms the prominence of this aspect of staging in Midas:

The scenes which were exhibited in Midas, and other pieces performed there, but particularly in the pantomime of the Enchanter, gave reason to suppose that the artist had reached the summit of excellence in that species of painting.

The artist associated with the scenery was John Ellis, whose ‘scenery at the Patagonian Theatre was so greatly admired that he was awarded a silver palette by

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97 The long continued vogue of the marionettes testifies to the linguistic accomplishments of the Dubliners of the period, as all the performances were given in French.’ W. J. Lawrence, ‘Old Dublin Side Shows,’ The Saturday Herald, 3 February, 1912.

98 Exeter Change Scrapbook.

99 Exeter Change Scrapbook.
the Dublin Society in recognition of it’.\textsuperscript{100} He appears to have been responsible for bringing the theatre to London, when personal reasons required him to leave Dublin. Kane O’Hara refers to him with affectionate mockery in one of his prologue’s to \textit{Tom Thumb the Great} — ‘No Minikins, like those of Johnny Ellis’.\textsuperscript{101}

A letter printed in the \textit{Morning Chronicle} within a month of the opening of the Patagonian Theatre, and signed in burlesque style by ‘Your very humble servant, MICRO-MEGAS’ at the Oxford Coffee-house on the Strand, asserts that in ‘the representation of the Burletta of Midas, [in which] some characters were performed superior to the Theatre Royal’. The members of the company listed by Speaight\textsuperscript{102} do not appear to have been regular theatre performers but, notwithstanding this, ‘there are several references to the excellent vocal performers engaged by the proprietor’ and recitals were sometimes given on the theatre’s organ.\textsuperscript{103}

Newspaper advertisements intriguingly state that \textit{Midas} was to be performed ‘as it was originally intended by the Author’. This statement may refer soley to ‘all the Scenery, Machinery, &c. incident to the piece’, the ensuing phrase in the advertisement. However, this sweeping claim may also suggest that the libretto and music had been restored to an earlier form. The inclusion of songs in \textit{The

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Speaight, 124.
\item \textit{The O’Hara Papers: IRL-Dn}, 36,471/1 (78).
\item ‘Members of the company included Mr and Mrs Mapples, Mr Hutton, Mr Chapman, Mr Costellow, Mr Louin, and Mrs Child’. Speaight, 122.
\item Speaight, 122.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Coal-Hole of Cupid; A Collection of Songs\textsuperscript{104} published in London in 1768, which had only previously appeared in a 1762 Dublin publication of songs in Midas, raises the possibility that an early version of Midas may have been preserved in the puppet theatre while the opera only existed on the regular stage in a shortened form.

In his discussion of Midas, Speaight comments that ‘some of the incidents are peculiarly suited to puppetry’.\textsuperscript{105} The scenic effects of the council of the gods among the clouds, Apollo’s descent and disguises, and the transformation of Midas’s ears into ass’s ears are certainly comparable to effects described in the librettos of other puppet operas and plays. In 1780 a new burletta, The Nuptials of Venus, at the Patagonian Theatre boasted ‘entire new scenes and decorations, representing the DIFFERENT DEITIES, together with the HIGH HALL and THRONE OF JUPITER, with celestial brilliancy’.\textsuperscript{106}

Kane O’Hara’s personal connection with the Patagonian Theatre would suggest that the suitability of Midas for puppet performance was not entirely coincidental. A survey of puppet repertoire in the eighteenth century reveals the remarkable proximity of the puppet theatre to composers and librettists. The Patagonian Theatre was preceded at Exeter Change by the puppets of Charles Dibdin, a composer and librettist who played the role of Momus (the god of ridicule) in the

\textsuperscript{104} The Coal-Hole of Cupid; A Collection Of Songs: Now published for the Entertainment of all those Bucks, Who would render themselves agreeable to the Fair, When in Midnight Conversation. (London: 1768).

\textsuperscript{105} Speaight, 118.

\textsuperscript{106} Exeter Change Scrapbook.
first Covent Garden run of *Midas*.\footnote{Momus: The Greek god of mockery and ridicule, and subsequently of clowns, who was banished from heaven for criticizing the other gods…Momus frequently appeared as a character in the Masque and Harlequinade’. Jonathan Law, ed., *The Methuen Drama Dictionary of the Theatre* (London: Methuen Drama, 2011), 336.} The composer Dr Samuel Arnold later bought Dibdin’s puppets and staged performances at the Apollo Gardens.\footnote{Speaight, 116.} Although not the proprietor of a puppet theatre, Henry Fielding includes a puppet show in his play ‘*The Author’s Farce* of 1730 [which] tells the story of a penniless author whose plays lie unread in the bookshops, and who conceives the idea of presenting a puppet show that will satirize the literary and theatrical follies of the day.’\footnote{Ibid., 173.} Fielding’s ballad operas *The Old Debauchees, or the Jesuit Caught* (1738), *The Covent Garden Tragedy* (1734), *The Pleasures of the Town* (1734) and *Tom Thumb* (1734) were all performed at puppet theatres. Kane O’Hara adapted *Tom Thumb* as an English burletta in 1777, specifically for puppet performance. The association of opera with the puppet theatre also had a broader European dimension; the librettist Carlo Goldoni, credited with major theatrical and operatic innovations and closely associated with the Italian *burletta*, also owned a private puppet theatre.\footnote{The castrato Guadagni, who performed the role of Orfeo in Gluck’s *Orfeo ed Eufidice*, staged puppet performances of that opera in his retirement, performing the role of Orfeo for invited guests. (T. J. Walsh, *Opera in Dublin: The Social Scene* (Dublin: Allen Figgis, 1973), 84.)} Twenty-one operas were staged at the Patagonian Theatre and this was representative of native and touring Italian puppet theatres in the late eighteenth century. The objection to recitative on the grounds that it was unnatural ceased to be relevant when the performers were wooden rather than human. All-sung operas were in keeping with puppet shows and scenic displays, which were generally accompanied by music.
The elaborate staging of the Jacobean masques, which was no longer a feature of the regular theatre, led an underground existence at the puppet theatres at fairs. The special effects from the masques found new expression in pantomime and this type of entertainment was offered more consistently at the Patagonian Theatre than in any of the other puppet theatres. The eighteenth-century pantomime comprised singing, dancing and instrumental music, with no spoken dialogue. The Patagonian Theatre created its own pantomimes based on earlier plays, adding songs, dances, chorusses and scenic effects:

To which will be added, the Pantomime Entertainment of HECATE. With the Songs and Chorusses from Macbeth. And a great variety of new and splendid Scenery. To conclude with a magnificent View of a piece of PERSPECTIVE ARCHITECTURE.  

Fig. 18. Page from the Exeter Change Scrapbook.

111 Advertisement 18 February 1778. *Exeter Change Scrapbook*. 

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The sources of the music borrowed for the pantomime created from Aphra Behn’s *The Emperor of the Moon* appear to be representative of the music at the puppet theatre and illustrate *Midas*’s affinity with entertainments created specifically for the puppet theatre.\(^{\text{112}}\) Airs and chorusses are borrowed from *Cymon* (Michael Arne), *The Chaplet* (Boyce), *The Capricious Lovers* (Lloyd & Rush), *The Shepherd’s Lottery* (Boyce), *Polly* (Gay), *King Arthur* (Purcell), *Britannia* (Lampe), *Alexander’s Feast* (Handel) and *Comus* (Thomas Arne). Kane O’Hara borrows from five of these works in *Midas* and also borrows from other works by Purcell, Handel and Arne. A further seven melodies are borrowed directly from pantomimes. The comic tunes from pantomimes are typically characterised by leaps, repeated notes and uneven phrase lengths. Melodies in *Midas* which are borrowed from other sources often contain some of these characteristics which implies that the music in *Midas*, in its resemblance to pantomime music, is particularly suited to performance by puppets.

The references to foreign culture found in *Midas*, particularly in its earlier versions — ‘a stranger, why would you despise’\(^{\text{113}}\) and ‘fop outlandish’,\(^{\text{114}}\) also abound at the puppet theatre. The antipathy to and prejudice against foreign culture in British (and Irish) society is a central theme in *Midas*. Apollo exposes this prejudice and maintains an identity beyond local allegiances. The puppets or *fantoccini*, like Apollo, remember their foreign origins and references are frequently made to the French, the Italians, and Italian opera. In 1778 The

\(^{\text{112}}\) *The emperor of the moon. A dialogue-pantomime, written by Mrs. Behn; with alterations, and the addition of several airs, duets, and choruses, selected from other compositions; as performed at the Patagonian Theatre* (London: 1777).

\(^{\text{113}}\) From ‘Pray Goody’.

\(^{\text{114}}\) From ‘Mother, sure you never’.
Patagonian Theatre presented ‘a New Comic Opera, (Never Performed) call’d, The MACARONI. The Music entirely new, composed by C. Dibdin. Unlike Kane O’Hara’s advice, conveyed by his reprieved Apollo, to be tolerant with what is unfamiliar, Dibdin’s use of the term ‘Macaroni’ expresses a suspicion of foreign influence.

Macaronism was a late-century craze, a kind of foppery in which men lately returned from the Grand Tour displayed their foreign tastes and affectations. It was a visual display of Otherness and, many worried, a rejection of ‘natural’ Britishness.

Lawrence observes that ‘the puppet showmen had moved with the times, and by means of their wooden manikins were now giving performances of well-known burlettas and ballad operas’. In view of the classical and continental influences of the puppet theatre, its wish to oppose censorship and corruption and the coincidence between its repertoire and the borrowings which combined to create the English burletta, it could be argued that the English burletta grew out of the puppet theatre and found its natural home there.

Satire and burlesque featured prominently in the repertoire of the puppet theatre. Frustration with the licensing act had proved a stimulus to some authors to set up puppet theatres which gave free performances as an accompaniment to a warm beverage — “Dish of Tea” performances in which drama had been performed gratis, with a charge made for the spectators’ refreshment. Samuel Foote, the

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115 Exeter Change Scrapbook.
manager of The Little Theatre in the Haymarket, overcame his failure to gain a licence for year-long productions by presenting ‘The Primitive Puppet Show’ performing satires of fashionable comedies. Direct reference is made to the corruption of the licensed theatres and the implementation of the law in puppet prologues and epilogues. In the prologue to Leonard MacNally’s Apotheosis of Punch, Roscius Secundus protests that

Tho’ Satire on the Theatre you smother,
In paragraphs you libel one another.120

Kane O’Hara’s Apollo epitomises the spirit of the puppet theatre, exposing corruption and ridiculing the poor judgement of those in authority. In an epilogue by O’Hara dating from 1775, Punch declares that Apollo has commissioned him to carry on his mandate:121

No __ judge you must, tho’ dread Apollo lowers,
And pours upon you Asses Ears, in Showers.
You think you’re snug, because he’s out of sight;
Nor fear your vile Remarks will come to sight:
Now there you’re nick’d _ he sent me in his Place,
With Power, each Critic’s inmost Thoughts to trace.
Punch __ mind, says he, when I to Heaven ascend;
“That you my Mandates carefully attend.
“As I can’t stay to try yon motley Crew;
“My full commission I transfer to you.
“If you can find more Asses in the Throng,
“Who want but Ears to make the Semblance strong:
“Just call, and in an Instant, down they’ll pop,
“And on each stupid Booby’s Noddle drop.122

119 Ian Kelly, Mr Foote’s Other Leg (London: Picador, 2012), 274.
121 In Leonard MacNally’s Apotheosis of Punch, written four years later, Apollo and Pan reappear and Apollo is again referred to as Pol, as if to extend O’Hara’s scenario in Midas.
122 The O’Hara Papers: IRL-Dn, 36,471/1 (78). Epilogue to the Burletta of Midas, as Performed at a private Puppet Shew in Dublin In the year 1775, spoken by Punch.
Later Incarnations of Midas

Apollo turn’d Stroller

O’Hara burlesques the changing fates of the performers in Midas, or rather, their roles, in a prologue to Tom Thumb.

Our Jove is in the Surgeons hands: _ his Page  
Mercurius waits his dolours to assuage. ___  
…Ah, those damn’d Cut=a=dashes of the Age!  
I told him, What they’d bring him to. _ his Chair,  
He leaves to Sugar Plum, the new Lord May’r;  
But warns him to avoid the Strumpets Snare. ___  
Juno has got divorc’d from Board and Bed:  
And, willing to set up in genteel Trade,  
Now keeps a Gun Shop at the Plunkets Head  
There Bacchus, Momus ev’ry Night appear,  
And think their Dram and Doxey princely Cheer;  
Momus turn’d News-boy, Bacchus Volunteer. ___  
Sol, toil’d with jolting, day by day, so far,  
Now, in the Liv’ry of the God of War,  
Drives Sir John Mars’s more refulgent Car.  
Vulcan and Venus, tir’d of Nuptial Strife,  
Now join’d again, like Daw-Mas and his Wife,  
Jog on a Kissing, Scratching=sweet=sour Kind of Life.  
Squire Midas too,… he’s in a scurvier Scrape,…  
Must mount the three-leg’d Pony; for a Rape  
On little Nysa…..no. He can’t escape.  
\ And She, poor Girl! (tho’ naught herein to blame)  
Nobly disdaining to survive her Fame,  
Strove, with her Garter, to end Life and Shame.  
Mysis and Pan are off to Scotland gone: (The lech’rous Goat with his lascivious Crone)  
Detected in the very Act Crim: Con: __

In 1787 the newly-opened Royalty Theatre in Well St, Wellclose Square, invoked Apollo to expose a new injustice. John Palmer had built the theatre in the East end

123 The O’Hara Papers: IRL-Dn, 36,471/1 (78). Prologue to the Opera of Tom Thumb, at the Patagonian Theater in Georges Street, Spoken by Punch.
of London, in the expectation of obtaining a licence to stage five-act mainpieces.

He was initially undeterred by his failure to achieve a licence:

> When local magistrates declined to give Palmer a licence for the Royalty, they cited the recent royal proclamation about ‘disorderly practices’ as well as making the familiar argument that stage performances would be ‘a nuisance peculiarly mischievous in that part of the metropolis’.  

Palmer proceeded to stage *As You Like It* but the theatre was closed down after one performance due to the legal opposition of the patent theatres. In John Astley’s *A Poetical Epistle; being the Farewell Address of the Royalty Theatre to its Late Beloved Master, John Astley, Esq.*, the theatre itself explains its fate:

> My envious relative in Drury Lane,  
(Spite of our consanguinity, my greatest bane)  
Produc’d her patent, which prevented me  
Aid from THALIA or from MELPOMENE;  
But kindly suffer’d me t’amuse the town  
With dumb-shews, or a harlequin and clown;  
With tumbling, or burlettas, or a song,  
Or else with men who dance the slender rope along.  

To accommodate the restrictions imposed on the theatre, ‘soon after the opening of the Royalty Theatre, [Sir John Oldmixon] furnished Palmer with a whimsical continuation of Midas, under the title of “Apollo turned Stroller,” the music of which was supplied by his friend, Dr. Arnold’. In *Apollo turn’d Stroller; or, Thereby hangs a Tale*, Oldmixon reanimates most of the characters in Kane O’Hara’s *Midas* and adds Pallas and cupids from O’Hara’s later English burletta, *The Golden Pippin*. Venus, who was mute in the three-act version of *Midas* and absent from the two-act version, found her voice in *The Golden Pippin* and joins Juno and Pallas in *Apollo turn’d Stroller*. Mercury and Mars, who were also

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124 Moody, 22.  
125 John Astley, *A Poetical Epistle; being the Farewell Address of the Royalty Theatre to its Late Beloved Master, John Astley, Esq.* (London: Lane, Darling & Co., 1807).
dropped from the two-act version of *Midas*, reappear with the new character of Bacchus. Bacchus presumably joins the gods to replace Pan, who is here classified as a mortal. Although referred to, Sileno is absent from the cast. This cannot have been due to the lack of a suitable performer as Daniel Arrowsmith, the ‘first player’, performed in a manner comparable to Joseph Vernon, the original Apollo:

Possessed with a voice of great power and sweetness, Arrowsmith, because of his energetic and spirited manner of singing, was favorably compared to the late Vernon.  

Two notable performers reinforced the association of *Apollo turn’d Stroller* with Kane O’Hara’s *Midas*. Georgina George had already appeared as Nysa in *Midas* at the Haymarket theatre in 1783 and at Drury Lane in 1784, where John Bannister (Pan in *Apollo turn’d Stroller*) had played Pan. Describing Miss George as ‘this little syren’, the *Gazetteer* predicted that she would ‘be as great a favorite in the East as she was in the West’.  

A review in *The General Magazine and Impartial Review* commended the performer of the role of Midas for restoring the part to the stage.

The Midas of W. Palmer met our ideas fully, and merits praise for its originality. Since the days of Shuter, the part has been lost to us till now.  

The premise of the opera is similar to that of *Midas*. Apollo is banished from heaven by Jupiter, with thunder and lightning, and adopts a disguise. The turn of events again leads him to Sileno’s household but he is hired by a group of travelling players rather than by Sileno. Pan is discovered drinking at the ale

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house (as he had been introduced in *Midas*). Mysis arrives in agitation, complaining that her daughters are crazed because of the players who have set up in Sileno’s barn. Mysis and Pan plan to enlist Midas’s help to expel the players. Mysis confronts her daughters on the subject, with a trio adapted from the finale to the first act of the three-act version of *Midas*. Midas appoints Pan ‘king of the constables’ and they attempt to arrest the players that evening in Sileno’s barn. Daphne and Nysa rush to warn the players of their danger but are too late. Apollo reveals his true identity and gives Midas a second punishment—an ass’s tail. Midas repents of his offences against Apollo, vowing to mend his ways. For this reason Apollo reverses both of Midas’s punishments before returning to heaven.

The recitatives are in rhyming couplets and some reference is made to specific words and phrases in *Midas*. It may be coincidental that an unusual rhyme from the 1762 Dublin publication of *Songs in the New Burletta of Midas* is included:

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Midas 1762
Do you sign his Mittimus,
If you wish
That shrewish
Nysa, pretty Mouse,
May be your own Titty-mouse.129

Apollo turn’d Stroller 1787
These vagrants we’ll route with a mittimus,
Make them sing small as a tittymouse.130
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The music in the opera was appreciated as much as its topical significance.

The songs are attractive in the extreme — and the overture is a treat of a superior kind to every lover of sweet sounds.131

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130 John Oldmixon, *Apollo turn’d Stroller; or, Thereby hangs a Tale* (London: S. Bladon, 1787), 9.
The opera is presented as a *pasticcio* on the title page but no names are given for the tunes of the airs. Apollo’s ‘SONG’ would appear to be a parody on lines from ‘Dunce, I did but sham’ at the end of *Midas*, and presumably it would have been sung to the same melody:

*Midas* 1764, 1766.

Dunce, I did but sham,
For Apollo I am,
God of music and king of Parnass:
Thy scurvy decree
For Pan against me,
I reward with the ears of an ass.

Thou a Billingsgate quean,
Thou a pander obscene
With strumpets and bailiffs shall class
Thou, driven from men
Shall wander with Pan,
He a stinking old goat, thou an ass.\(^{132}\)

*Apollo turn’d Stroller*

Thou, silly old fool,
Thou meddling tool,
Can’st thou, for a Justice dare pass,
You forget the decree,
For Pan, against me.
When I gave you the ears of an Ass.\(^{133}\)

The finale to the first act is a much closer parody. In the three-act version of *Midas*, ‘This rash frenzy’ is a duet sung by Mysis and Pan.\(^{134}\) Oldmixon and Arnold redistribute the words and music for Mysis, Daphne and Nysa, making minimal changes to the words.\(^{135}\) The music in O’Hara’s opera, and presumably in

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\(^{131}\) From a review in *The General Magazine and Impartial Review*, (London: Thomas Bellamy, 1787), 382.

\(^{132}\) Kane O’Hara, *Midas; an English burletta. As it is performed, at the Theatre-Royal, in Covent-Garden* (London: 1764), 57–8.

\(^{133}\) Oldmixon, 24.

\(^{134}\) *Midas* Music Edition (Appendix B), 184.

\(^{135}\) John Oldmixon, 12.
Oldmixon’s, was a gavotte borrowed from the overture to Handel’s *Ottone*. One other borrowing of text strongly suggests musical borrowing. The short chorus ‘O Tremendous Justice Midas, Who shall oppose wise Justice Midas’\(^{136}\) is inserted into a recitative sung by Mysis and Pan with the word ‘great’ substituted for the word ‘wise’\(^{137}\). Two similar short choruses earlier in *Apollo turn’d Stroller* may also have been sung to this musical phrase, — ‘Mighty Jove, thy power stupendous, Is at all times quite tremendous’ and ‘Mighty — mighty — mighty Jove, Tho’ we fear you — still we love’\(^{138}\). The glee which Apollo sings with the strolling players on their first meeting appears to be ‘How merrily we live’ by Michael East. The words begin as a close parody and continue with equivalent metre and rhyming scheme:

\[
\text{How merrily we live} \quad \text{Michael East}
\]

How merrily we live that shepherds be,
Roundelays still we sing with merry glee,
On the pleasant downs where as our flocks we see,
We feel no cares we fear not fortune’s frowns.
We have no envy which sweet mirth confounds.\(^{139}\)

\[
\text{How merrily we live} \quad \text{Oldmixon}
\]

How merrily we live that strollers be,
Cheerfully thus we chant our merry glee,
Oft with Shakespeare’s muse we jocund play,
Repeat his strains with joy the live long day,
And each revolving month with us is May.\(^{140}\)

It is likely that the relevance of the composer’s name to the new theatre in the east of London contributed to the choice of this glee for the opera.

\(^{137}\) Oldmixon, 18.
\(^{138}\) Ibid., 4.
\(^{140}\) Oldmixon, 7.
Some references are made to the circumstances in which the Royalty Theatre found itself. Mysis expresses the position of the managers of the patent theatres, — ‘we’ll make ‘em Mute as any Sign-post’. Daphne’s defiance matches the futile aspirations of John Palmer who opened the Royalty Theatre:

I’ll not sit in the house
Be as mum as a mouse;
And be thus of my liberty cheated.
No, no, not I.142

Apollo’s favourite air ‘Pray Goody’ is a conspicuous omission. His plea ‘Ply me Try me, Prove, ere you deny me, If you cast me Off, you blast me Never more to rise’ seems appropriate to the situation. In Apollo turn’d Stroller, Nysa assumes this aspect of Apollo’s role. In the first act she appeals to Mysis, ‘Their being here should please, and ne’er can hurt you, And lib’ral sentiment is the soul of virtue’.144

Nonsense poetry, in the style of burlesque, is used as a refrain in the trio for Midas, Pan and Mysis in Act 2:

Bow, wow, wow,
Diddle, daddle,
Fiddle, faddle,
Bow, wow, wow!145

This may have been intended as an allusion to O’Hara’s Tom Thumb and its characters Doodle and Noodle. Some reference is also made to related works. The

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141 Ibid., 20.
142 Ibid., 22.
144 Oldmixon, 11.
145 Ibid., 19.
Beggar’s Opera appears to be alluded to in the arrest scene in Act 2 and also in the collection of girls’ names recited by Pan:

"'Fore Jove, Sir — they have madden’d all the fancies,  
Of Jennys, Mollys, Bettys, Suckeys, Nancys."

The only name which does not correspond to a character in The Beggar’s Opera is Nancy, a name clearly chosen to rhyme with ‘fancies’.

The libretto of Apollo turn’d Stroller contributed to a public discussion of licensing restrictions and the plight of the Royalty theatre.

The circumstances relative to the opening of the new theatre in Wellclose Square have been amply discussed and contested in the Newspapers.

A Parody of the Songs in the Burletta of Midas

Midas played a part in a much larger pamphlet war in 1789, prompted by the Regency Crisis. An Improved Edition of the Songs in the Burletta of Midas, adapted to the times was published anonymously in London and Dublin in 1789. It reappeared shortly afterwards as A Parody of the Songs in the Burletta of Midas, as they are now singing by the following illustrious Personages.

\(^{146}\) Ibid., 17.  
\(^{149}\) An Improved Edition of the Songs in the Burletta of Midas, adapted to the times (London: 1789). (Also Dublin: P. Byrne, 1789).
Beneath this title the characters in the drama are listed, grouped as nobility and others, rather than the original division of gods and mortals. The title implies that reality has become a burlesque of a comedy. The royal and noble characters named are: Her M[ajest]y, HIS R.[oyal] H.[ighness] THE P.[rince] OF W.[ales], HIS R.[oyal] H.[ighness] P.[rince] W.[illiam] H.[enry], Princesses, Duchess of Rutland, Duchesses of Gordon and Devonshire, The Lord Chancellor. The other characters listed in a parallel column are: Mr. Pitt, Mr. Fox, Mrs. Fitzherbert, Madam Schwellenberg, Mr. Burke, Mr. Sheridan, Dr. Warren. Beneath the dramatis personae is added ‘Duet of a Pittite and a Rat. Rats in Chorus, Ex-Ministers in Chorus, Parliament in Chorus’. The Latin inscription, taken from Horace, emphasises the ridiculousness of the situation: “inducere *Plumas* Undique collatis *Membris*” (plumage, limbs, everywhere).

The Regency crisis was occasioned by the madness of King George III. Both the opposition, led by Charles James Fox, and William Pitt the Younger’s suspended government were in favour of Prince George acting as Regent, but differed on the issue of the degree of power which should be accorded to him. Pitt hoped to remain as Prime Minister but the Prince favoured the opposition, who hoped to gain power by supporting the Prince unreservedly. Pitt was defeated in parliament but the parliamentary outcome quickly became irrelevant as the King recovered in March 1789. The corruption of many politicians was exposed by the crisis. Those who chose to defect to the opposition, rather than remain loyal to the King and his government, were referred to as ‘rats’.

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150 *A Parody of the Songs in the Burletta of Midas, as they are now singing by the following illustrious Personages* (London: 1789). Title page.
The parody is not a corollary of the original burletta. All the airs in the second edition of 1766 are parodied in order but the distribution of characters is not matched to the original characters and the omission of recitatives removes the narrative context of each air. While the situation on which the parody is commenting involves corruption and bad judgement, the relationship between the characters and the number of characters involved differ from the plot of *Midas*. It is remarkable that the airs are so convincingly applied to this new situation. The parodist matches each air to a corresponding situation or affect experienced by an interested party in the Regency crisis, much as airs (from a variety of sources) had been selected for pasticcios over the course of the eighteenth century. The Prince of Wales is substituted for Jove in the first three airs, Sileno in airs 4 and 7 and Midas in air 8. From the end of the first act he assumes the role of Apollo until air 5 of the second act, when he returns to the role of Midas, singing Pan and Apollo’s contest airs before ending the opera as Apollo.

The parodist represents those who deserted the king’s side with a ‘chorus of rats’ and with the ‘Duet of a Pittite and a Rat’.

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151 The author is given as Kane O’Hara in the catalogue of the National Library of Ireland.
The first verse of the air is not a parody of the original, but rather a depiction of its meaning—'Let a rival thy character draw'. The rest of the air is a close parody, the exchange of insults retaining the humour of the original. Queen Charlotte’s air elegantly weaves a reference to the ‘rats’ into the text:

My wavering friends
I will baulk of their ends,
Or into Rats metamorphose them.  

The rivalry between Sileno’s daughters finds a parallel in the rivalry between the Duchess of Devonshire and the Duchess of Gordon, celebrated society hostesses and campaigners for Charles Fox and William Pitt respectively. Their confrontational duet closes the first act. Daphne and Nysa’s animosity, expressed in terms of their physical differences, is replaced by the political differences of the

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two Duchesses. Following the pattern of the ‘Duet of a Pittite and a Rat’, the first verse presents topical issues particular to the Regency crisis:

**D—ss of G—n.** My Buff and Blue Duchess, what think you that Fox
Will keep his place maugre the fall of the stocks?

**D—ss of D—shire.** –And do you, my Scotch woman, fancy that Pitt
Will e’er on the Treasury Bench again sit?[^153]

The second and third verses project the tone of the scene in *Midas* onto the new situation.

The Prince of Wales secretly married the widowed Maria Fitzherbert in 1785, although he did not acknowledge the marriage in public.[^154] Her position is stated in the opening lines of the Improved Edition:

> Chorus of the Ex-Ministers. George in his chair
> By his Popish fair,[^155]

Mrs Fitzherbert makes her appearance as Daphne, the humour of the first verse of her air stemming from the contrast between Prince George and Apollo. The second verse is a closer parody of the original while the final verse returns to Mrs Fitzherbert’s situation with a reference to Shakespeare.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Daphne’s Air</th>
<th>Mrs Fitzherbert’s Air</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>He’s as tight a lad to see to,</td>
<td>He’s as loose a drunken fellow,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As e’er stept in leather shoe,</td>
<td>As e’er paid his court to me:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And what’s better, he’ll love me too,</td>
<td>But I ne’er shall wear the willow,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And to him I’ll prove true blue.</td>
<td>For no longer is he free.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[^154]: It would have been impossible for the marriage to receive Royal approval, as Mrs Fitzherbert was a Roman Catholic.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tho’ my sister cast a Hawk’s eye</th>
<th>Tho’ my rival cast a Hawk’s eye</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I defy what she can do,</td>
<td>I defy what she can do,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He o’ erlook’d the little doxy,</td>
<td>He can’t wed the little doxy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m the girl he means to woo.</td>
<td>He has won and wed me too.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hither I stole out to meet him,</td>
<td>Back to France they say he’ll send me,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He’ll no doubt, my steps pursue,</td>
<td>But I vow I will not go;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If the youth prove true, I’ll fit him;</td>
<td>Nym and Bardolph both befriend me,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If he’s false, — I’ll fit him too.</td>
<td>Falstaff only is my foe.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 20. Air 12 in *Midas* (1766 2nd ed.) and an *Improved Edition* (1789).

Nym and Bardolph are former followers of Falstaff in Shakespeare’s *Henry IV*. Fox appears to be equated with Falstaff, implying that Fox is leading the young Prince astray. References are also made to contemporary theatrical productions.

The character Wowski, an Indian handmaiden, in Colman and Arnold’s *Inkle and Yarico* is alluded to in Prince William Henry’s air: ‘Prince William Henry is discovered, sitting at a Table, with a Tankard, Pipes, and Tobacco before him. Wowski asleep near him.’ This is a reference to his mistress, of whom he sings ‘I have a beauty, Tho’ sooty’, I’d not exchange for his merry wife’.

The Regency crisis was of particular interest to Irish politicians, as ‘intervening in this matter would assert Irish legislative independence in the most unmistakable manner. As a result, Irish politicians surged towards what they thought would be the winning side and, casting caution to the winds, passed an address calling on the prince to take up his responsibilities with unrestricted powers’. Nym and Bardolph, mentioned above, appear to refer to the Irish writers and politicians, Edmund Burke and Richard Brinsley Sheridan, both of whom are mentioned frequently in the parody. Burke’s passionate nature and Irish accent are emphasised:

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156 It is also a reference to Fox’s obesity.
And Burke so noisy, so rude, and so violent,  
With his Teague’s voice, has so broguish a tone.\textsuperscript{159}

Sheridan, often referred to as ‘Dick’, is most closely associated with the prince and has the most to gain:

Prince: Now I tell you once for all, that neither Fox nor Pitt’s the man,  
But the object of my choice is Richard Brinsley Sheridan.\textsuperscript{160}

The whigs were often termed ‘buff and blue’, because they chose to dress in the colours of the American colonials, in solidarity with their cause:

Prince: Since you mean to hire for service,  
Come and join the buff and blue.\textsuperscript{161}

This term gained currency from the many caricatures which appeared during the crisis. The caricature below, by Rowlandson, depicts Sheridan dressed in blue and buff, reacting to the King’s recovery. In the earlier pamphlet war relating to the Royalty theatre, Sheridan was also the butt of protest and satire, as he was the manager of Drury Lane theatre.

\textsuperscript{159} An Improved Edition, 20.  
\textsuperscript{160} Ibid., 32.  
\textsuperscript{161} Ibid., 9.
Charles Fox was dubbed ‘Carlo Khan’ by caricaturists, referring to his Asian business interests. The parody’s pejorative tone towards the opposition is encapsulated in its alteration of O’Hara’s ‘Girls are known to mischief prone’.

Burke is known
To mischief prone,
And so is Sheridan, Sir;
But the head
That most I dread,
Is that of Carlo Khan, Sir:
For he will drink
Until he blink,
Yet talk like any man, Sir.  

One of O’Hara’s simile arias, which draws an analogy with a fox stealing chickens, finds a fortuitous resonance in Fox’s name and character:

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If into your hen yard
The treacherous Reynard
Steals, sily, your poultry to ravage.\textsuperscript{164}

An Improved Edition of the Songs in the Burletta of Midas and the later Parody of the Songs were printed anonymously. Kane O’Hara is named as the author in the catalogue of the National Library of Ireland but this can only apply to the authorship of the original work parodied, as O’Hara died seven years before the Regency crisis. The clever adaptation and careful fidelity to the parodied text support the suggestion in Faulkner’s Dublin Journal that, despite protestations in the preface to the opera, political satire was an intrinsic element of Midas.

Arrah! ye Irish wags, ye Crow Street Politicians, we know well enough whom you mean by your Pan and Sol and Midas and Silenus’s wife — but mum!\textsuperscript{165}

The image of members of the royal family and politicians engaging in theatrical performances is closer to the reality of the time than might be imagined.

When the Prince and Princess of Wales were excluded from the court of their father, it became fashionable among the nobility, then in opposition, to give splendid entertainments for their amusement.\textsuperscript{166}

The theatre had a universal appeal for politicians, to the point of transcending political differences.

Richmond House presents another patrician theatre of bygone times, the attractions of which, on one occasion, shortened the solemn sittings of the House of Commons, and brought Mr. Pitt himself “under the wand of the enchanters.” That festive evening had the glory of having collected Fox, Pitt, and Sheridan, in one hackney-coach to be conveyed to the gay scene.\textsuperscript{167}

\textsuperscript{164} Midas Edition (Appendix A), 93.
\textsuperscript{165} Faulkner’s Dublin Journal, 12–16 January 1762. Quoted in John C. Greene, Calendar, 1:762.
\textsuperscript{167} Ibid.
The *Improved Edition of the Songs in the Burletta of Midas* offers a unique opportunity to experience the allusive, and often elusive, humour of eighteenth-century theatre, as the music, original texts and associations of the borrowed airs are identifiable and extant.

**Le Jugement de Midas**

In the previous decade, the influence of Kane O’Hara’s *Midas* had extended beyond the sphere of the British and Irish theatre. The libretto of André Ernest Modeste Grétry’s *Le Jugement de Midas* (1778) was written by another Irish librettist, Thomas Hales. Hales, known as Thomas d’Hèle in France, makes an evasive and rather irascible reference to the ‘English Midas’ in the *Avertissment* which precedes his libretto.

Some Persons, as well-informed as well-meaning, have taken the trouble to publicise that this work is nothing but a translation of the English *Midas*, a burlesque opera in one act. Those who have a knowledge of both languages, and have leisure and patience enough to compare the two works, will see to what extent this assertion has foundation.¹⁶⁸

His descriptions of *Midas* as ‘one-act’ and ‘English’ appear to be capricious red herrings, a deliberate denial of any familiarity with O’Hara’s opera. David Charlton observes that few critics seem to have had the leisure and patience to accept Hales’s challenge.

¹⁶⁸ Thomas d’Hèles, *Le Jugement de Midas, Comédie en trois actes en prose, Mêlée d’ariette* (Paris: 1778), 3. Translated from the original: ‘Quelques Personnes aussi bien instruites que bien intentionnées, ont eu soin de publier que cette Pièce n’était qu’une Traduction du MIDAS Anglois, opera burlesque en un Acte, ceux qui sçavent les deux Langues, & qui ont assez de loisir & de patience pour comparer les deux Ouvrages, verront jusqu’à quel point cette assertion est fondée.’
Yet few critics seem to have seen for themselves how extensively the outline of the model was retained, yet how taut and clever was the reworking. Hales’s wit is so idiomatic and effective that his *Jugement de Midas* appears to require comparison with nothing else: it is worlds away from O’Hara’s rape of English verse.\(^\text{169}\)

If judged by Hales’s own standard, expressed by Apollo at the end of his opera, Kane O’Hara’s *Midas* must appear superior since it maintained a more long-lasting success in the theatre.\(^\text{170}\)

The plots of the two works are broadly similar. After Apollo is banished from Olympus by his father, Jupiter, he is hired by a farmer. The farmer’s wife takes an instant dislike to him but her daughters admire him and Apollo declares his love to both of them. The resentment of the girls’ suitors leads to a musical contest judged by Midas. Apollo rewards Midas’s bad judgement with ass’s ears before Mercury recalls him to Olympus. Hales, however, conflates the musical contest between Apollo and Pan with that between Apollo and Marsyas (also taken from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*). The character of Marsyas is added and the relationships between the other characters in the opera are significantly altered. Pan and Marsyas are the prospective sons-in-law of Palemon (Sileno in *Midas*), and have been chosen by Midas because their vocal talents match those of Palemon’s daughters – Lise and Cloé (Daphne and Nysa in *Midas*). Midas is presented as a pleasant but misguided Bailiff, reminiscent of Molière’s ‘Bourgeois Gentilhomme’, whose bad taste in music is obvious from the beginning of the

\(^{170}\) Thomas d’Hèles, *Le Jugement de Midas*, 103. Apollon: *De nos talens le seul arbitre est dans ces lieux*. (Apollo: Of our talents, the only judge is in these places).
opera. Apollo’s arrival exposes parental misgivings about the matches and threatens to undo Midas’s plans.

The characterisation of the female characters in *Le Jugement de Midas* is perhaps the most striking dramatic difference between the two operas. Where Palemon’s daughters are compliant and naïve, Sileno’s daughters hurl insults at each other and scorn their suitors. Palemon’s wife, Mopsa, is easily won over by Apollon, unlike Mysis who bribes and abuses her relatives and schemes against Apollo. Kane O’Hara is connected to Grétry by one other opera, *Les Deux Avares*, which he adapted as the English farce *The Two Misers*. Notwithstanding O’Hara’s caveat, *The Two Misers* is a close translation of the original, with a small number of omissions and additions.

The following scenes are taken from a justly admired Piece of Mons Falbhaire’s, entitled, *Les Deux Avares*. The bare Out-line only of his finish’d Characters, with just enough of his Dialogue to connect the Incidents, has been retain’d, in order to realis\[e\] the Whole with in the compass of an English Farce, with what Success, the candid Public will best judge.171

Lines from one of O’Hara’s additional airs in *The Two Misers*, on the subject of escaping from Turkey to Ireland, suggest that women in Irish society enjoyed an unusual degree of freedom.

    Quick, then, away to an island of pleasure,  
    Where each happy female may do as they please,  
    Where liberty’s reckon’d the choicest of treasures.172

_Midas_ and *Le Jugement de Midas* differ most markedly in their music. The airs in _Midas_ are borrowed whereas all the music in *Le Jugement de Midas* is composed

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172 Ibid.
by the same composer. Grétry’s overture, which Charlton likens to a tone-poem, is composed to coordinate with scenic effects which are described in the libretto, in the manner of ballet or pantomime. However, *Le Jugement de Midas* is not sung throughout; its dialogue is delivered in spoken prose rather than in recitatives sung in rhyming couplets. Grétry and d’Hèle’s comic opera comments on musical taste while O’Hara uses music to comment on social and political corruption.

**Conclusion**

Kane O’Hara drew on the musical repertoire of the puppet theatre and other private theatrical performances to create *Midas*. Its appearance at the public theatre in the 1760s coincided with rising musical standards, which approached the musical accomplishment of the Italian burletta singers. The demise of Handel’s opera company in the 1730s has been credited with the creation of a new calibre of theatre singer:

> the great composer had thrust John Beard forward into roles of the type for many years previously reserved for the *castrati*. By doing so, he not only caused a major revolution in the musical taste of the London audiences but also might almost be said to have invented a kind of English singer thitherto unknown but long to be favored by the British public.

Innovations in stage lighting communicated the facial expressions of performers more effectively than before and allowed a greater variety of movement on stage. This new development favoured a highly individual style of performance, which

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could not have been appreciated earlier in the century. *Midas* afforded performers the opportunity to excel in a manner of performance that was true to their nature. O’Hara’s characters did not restrict the performer’s style of expression and for that reason roles were interchangeable and easily adapted to new performers. It could be argued that the versatile performers of the second half of the eighteenth century made the existence of the English burletta inevitable.

In parallel with its public success, *Midas* returned to its origins in the private sphere in the nineteenth century. The favourite air ‘Pray Goody’ provided the theme for rondos and variations by Neville Challoner, Sophia Dussek, Martha Greatorex, George Griffin, Mathias Holst, James Hook, John Jay, George Kiallmark, Anne-Marie Krumpholz and Joseph Mazzinghi. This air also formed the basis for at least two glee by Samuel Webbe junior and Henry Bishop, which featured in the repertoire of the Abbey Glee Club and the Adelphi Glee Club respectively. These publications, destined for private use, were initially associated with celebrated stage performers such as John Sinclair and Madame Vestris. However, the popularity of the air outlived its theatrical associations; there is no mention of *Midas* or celebrated performers on the 1874 reissue of Mazzinghi’s arrangement of ‘Pray Goody’ and the air is attributed to Dr. Arne in Lindsay Sloper’s 1880 arrangement.

The restrictions imposed on many theatres by the licensing laws contributed to the appeal of the English burletta throughout the nineteenth century. One of the celebrated performers of Apollo in *Midas*, Madame Vestris, was herself a theatre
manager who influenced the nature of a new type of entertainment, the *extravaganza*. Many aspects of *Midas* were adopted by later entertainments.

The popular *Midas* (1766) is formally indistinguishable from the burlesque of a century later — the dialogue is in rhymed couplets, the songs are popular tunes fitted with new words, and the characters are the gods of Olympus brought down to earth.¹⁷⁵

The origins of the operettas by Gilbert and Sullivan can be traced back to the English burletta. Incidentally, the plot of *The Mikado* has remarkable similarities to *Midas*; a King’s son is disguised as ‘a wand’ring minstrel’, a thing of rags and tatters’ and avoids a harsh judgment when his true identity is revealed.

The absence of a complete score of *Midas* contributed to the opera’s decline into oblivion in the twentieth century. Although conceived as an all-sung opera, scholars tend to refer to *Midas* as a play, considering it only in terms of its libretto. This oversight is representative of the prevalent attitude towards late eighteenth-century theatre:

The role of music in the London theatres towards the end of the eighteenth century has been woefully underplayed in modern theatrical histories, which focus on spoken drama and therefore consider English operas only on the merits or otherwise of their words. This neglect extends from operas themselves to the musicians who made them possible, making it hard for us to appreciate either the importance of music in the ‘whole show’ or the active musical life of the theatres.¹⁷⁶

In the eighteenth century, *Midas* was appreciated for its clever libretto and its literary and cultural allusion. O’Hara’s universal insights into human nature led to *Midas* being called upon to support other causes and to shed light on corruption in

other situations. Later musical criticism has dismissed it for its lack of musical originality and innovation:

The satire [of Le jugement de Midas] would be infinitely keener than O’Hara’s for having a single composer in charge…

However, the work’s effect can only be achieved through music:

the chief effect must arise from their [musical choices] being known; for the joke will be much less for these jolly fellows to sing anything new, than to give what the audience are used to annex the idea of jollity to.

The rhythmic manipulation of words for characterisation, the choice of borrowings and the use of recitative for burlesque effect combine to realise O’Hara’s dramatic ideal:

With glowing Imag’ry, coercive Song,
Fire to what’s Right, and Shame from what is Wrong.

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178 Richard Brinsley Sheridan, quoted in T. J. Walsh, Opera in Dublin 1705–1797: The Social Scene, 177. Taken from a letter to his father-in-law, the composer Thomas Linley, with regard to the choice of melodies for part of his opera The Duenna.
179 The O’Hara Papers: IRL-Dn, 36,471/1 (78).
CHAPTER 5: THE MUSIC IN MIDAS

The music of Midas is preserved in only one source, *Midas, a comic opera, as it is perform'd at the Theatre Royal, in Covent Garden, For the Harpsichord, Voice, German Flute, Violin, or Guitar*, published by I. Walsh in London. This undated score corresponds to the 1764 three-act version of *Midas*. As this version is not representative of the opera in its most frequently performed form, the edition in Appendix A takes the second edition of the 1766 two-act libretto as its structural basis, rather than the Walsh score. However, Appendix B contains all the additional material necessary to recreate the three-act version of 1764. Appendix C does not contain any of the music in the Walsh score but rather reunites the airs in the 1762 *Songs in the new burletta of Midas*,¹ with the tunes named in that source but not included in the Walsh score. These additional airs have been arranged in the style of the Walsh score, with a view to offering alternative and supplemental material for a three-act performance of *Midas*.

No recitatives are included in the Walsh score. The texts of the recitatives are printed in the two-act and three-act librettos of the opera and these have been set to music in Appendices A and B, respectively. Alternative settings of corresponding recitatives in these two Appendices have maintained key relationships to facilitate switching between the versions, if desired. The 1762 source, on which Appendix C is based, does not contain any recitatives. Unlike the material in Appendix B, the material in Appendix C can not be performed

¹ Kane O’Hara, *Songs in the new burletta of Midas. As it is performed at the Theatre-Royal in Crow-Street. 1762*. (Dublin: 1762).
separately as a dramatic unit. The airs are intended as alternatives to the airs in the other Appendices and are included to offer the broadest view possible of the opera’s musical context.

The edition is presented on two staves with figured bass. The airs from the Walsh score are presented almost exactly as they are in the original, the only additions being the musical setting of verses originally printed as a block of text. These additions are necessary to achieve the aim of making the opera as accessible as possible to performers. Unlike the airs from the Walsh score, the *accompagnato* recitatives in Appendices A and B are presented in full score. This break in consistency is due to a wish to present the material suggested by the libretto as fully as possible (in a style less familiar to the modern performer) informed by relevant sources.

The concordance\(^2\) lays out the correspondence of the three Appendices to each other. The material is presented in three columns, clarifying which material is common to two or more versions. The first column adheres to the two-act version in the second edition of 1766. This version has been chosen as the main text because of its popularity in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and because of the convenience of its length for modern performances. Each air, recitative and ensemble has a number, corresponding to its place in this version of the opera. Alternatives and additions to the 1766 material, in the other Appendices, are indicated by additional letters. In the second and third columns of the concordance the titles of airs are given only if they do not appear in later versions of the opera.

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The punctuation, capitalisation and spelling in each Appendix are faithful to the libretto most relevant to that Appendix, i.e., the punctuation, capitalisation and spelling in Appendix A are faithful to the second edition of 1766. Recitatives and airs appearing in Appendix B are faithful to the 1764 libretto. The punctuation, capitalisation and spelling in the Walsh score (the musical source for the airs in both these Appendices) are inconsistent and have been rejected in favour of the librettos. The only source relevant to Appendix C is the 1762 book of Songs.

The scenes indicated in the concordance relate to the second edition of 1766, although the division into acts and scenes varies from source to source. Prolonged sections of material which do not relate to the version of 1766 are allocated an upper case letter and the airs and recitatives are presented as a sequence of numbers within that section. There are four such sections: W occurs after no.4 in Act 1 scene 1, X occurs after no.24 in Act 1 scene 11, Y occurs after no.42 in Act 2 scene 3 and Z occurs after no.43 in Act 2 scene 4. Further divergences between versions are addressed in the Editorial Notes.

The vocal ranges of the airs, as they are presented in the Walsh score, suggest that all the female roles are sung by sopranos and all the male roles by tenors. (Vulcan’s air, which is not included in the Walsh score, appears in Appendix C in a key which might suit a baritone.\(^3\) However, the 1762 book of Songs gives no indication of the key used in performance.) The choice of keys used for the airs in the Walsh score may have been influenced by their suitability for performance on the ‘German Flute, Violin, or Guitar’ and by the wish to avoid leger lines. The

\(^3\) Midas Music Edition (Appendix C), 278.
many printings of the popular air ‘Pray Goody’, in the nineteenth century, illustrate that the range of an air could be adjusted to suit the individual performer. This flexibility with regard to the keys of the airs requires a corresponding degree of flexibility in the harmonic progressions of the recitatives. It is perhaps the mutable nature of the recitatives which caused them to be omitted from the scores of English burlettas. While the original keys of the airs printed in the Walsh score cannot be conclusively established, the part-writing in the ensembles appears to confirm that all roles were sung in a similar tessitura.

**The Airs in *Midas***

All of the airs in *Midas* are borrowed, with the possible exception of four airs which are sung ‘to its own tune’, and have not yet been traced to any other source. The table in Figure 1 gives an overview of the first lines of the airs in *Midas* and the names of the tunes to which the airs are set. Names of tunes which have been identified by later research, but are not named in any libretto, are printed in italics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Act 1</th>
<th>First Line</th>
<th>Tune</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jove in his chair</td>
<td>King of Prussia’s March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To happy ignorance</td>
<td>To its own tune <em>Venetian Ballad</em> - Hasse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Think not lewd Jove</td>
<td>Shaan Bwee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To Earth be quick</td>
<td>To Arms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Love reigns supreme in female Souls</td>
<td>The wanton God that pierces Hearts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To avoid Ridicule</td>
<td>When a Wife’s in her Pout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No difference of character</td>
<td>There was a jovial Beggar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Be by your friends advised</td>
<td>To its own tune <em>Venetian Ballad</em> - Hasse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With fun my disgrace I’ll parry</td>
<td>Hang me if I marry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Since you mean to hire for service</td>
<td>Its own tune <em>Comic Tune - Hasse</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If the swain we sigh for press us</td>
<td>If ’tis joy to wound a Lover</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I cannot plague the lubber</td>
<td>Mirleton</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls are known to mischief prone</td>
<td>Three Sheepskins</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pray Goody, please to moderate</td>
<td>A tune in <em>Queen Mab</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mama, how can you</td>
<td>Non, non, Colette n’est point trompeuse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wretched he whose pain or pleasure</td>
<td>Fanny’s fairer than a flower</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alack and well-a-day</td>
<td>To its own tune</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shall a paltry clown</td>
<td>A la Santé du Pere d’Oleron</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jupiter wenches and drinks</td>
<td>Sheelagh na Guig</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All around the Maypole</td>
<td>Tune in Pantomime of <em>Fortunatus</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shall he run away with the lasses</td>
<td>My wife’s a galloping young thing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sure I shall run with vexation distracted</td>
<td>Sheelagh na Guiragh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When at your foe a mortal blow</td>
<td>Planxty Johnston</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This rash frenzy</td>
<td>Gavott in Overtune to <em>Ottone</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Those random threats</td>
<td>The Collier had a Daughter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O Oracle, oracle</td>
<td>Giles Collin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wondrous timber, who canst hear</td>
<td>To its own tune</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thy daughters are two flirting queans</td>
<td>Chevy Chase</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oh fye wood’n oracle</td>
<td>Newmarket</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To blast a rival’s happiness</td>
<td>From tree to tree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He’s as tight a lad to see to</td>
<td>Quand on scait aimer et plaire</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lovely nymph</td>
<td>When on thy dear bosom lying</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you can caper as well as you modulate</td>
<td>The priest in his boots</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neatest, compleatest</td>
<td>An Italian tune of Pescetti</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My minikin miss</td>
<td>Bobbing Joan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Act 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Line</th>
<th>Tune</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O what pleasures will abound</td>
<td>The Lottery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ne’er will I be left i’ the lurch</td>
<td>A pantomime tune</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If into your henyard</td>
<td>Larry Grogan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In those greasy old tatters</td>
<td>Assis sur l’Herbette</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strip him, whip him</td>
<td>Tune in <em>Fortunatus</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Since first those eyes</td>
<td>Nanny of the Hill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, your wealth I hold at nought</td>
<td>Tourlerette</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, all your wealth I scorn</td>
<td>There is a pretty girl and a tenant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By whining</td>
<td>Farewel the Hills and Vallies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When gathering clouds</td>
<td>When that I was a little tiny Boy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why, Ny: you’re lost to Shame</td>
<td>Gossip Joan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The wolf that slaughter’d finds</td>
<td>To an Italian Opera tune</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Now, let your jealous Soul</td>
<td>Polwart on the Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How cou’d you strive my Love to thwart</td>
<td>Of all the simple Things we do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Fear shall drive me ever hence</td>
<td>’Twas within a Furlong of Edinboro’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If in the Courts your Suit depend</td>
<td>A lovely Lass to a Fryar came</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you sign his Mittimus</td>
<td>One long Whitson-Holiday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thus arm’d with beer</td>
<td>Thomas I cannot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made! to our Shame</td>
<td>The Man for Life that takes a Wife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When fairies dance round on the grass</td>
<td>When fairies dance round on the grass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My heart so o’er flow’th</td>
<td>To its own tune</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O yes, O yes</td>
<td>The Wooden Shoe-Dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine times</td>
<td>Kiss me fast my mother’s coming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Gods were all call’d in to see</td>
<td>Nancy Dawson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A monarch may huff</td>
<td>When daisies pied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you seen two Figures tugging</td>
<td>A Dance of Maranesi’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Come let’s support our Patron Pan</td>
<td>The Highlander’s March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you take my Advise</td>
<td>The French Peasant’s Dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At Fairs and Wakes</td>
<td>Jack Lattin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thankless! Pusillanimous</td>
<td>Baaltiouragh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark what I say</td>
<td>Baaltiouragh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As soon as her doating piece</td>
<td>Ligurum Cuss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master Pol and his toll-de-roll-loll</td>
<td>Cold and Raw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If a rival thy character/ Let a rival</td>
<td>Come hither, Country ’Squire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To Midas let the churl appeal</td>
<td>No Nymph that trips the verdant Plains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother, sure you never</td>
<td>Viens que j’examine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huzza, for Pol</td>
<td>Fill ev’ry Glass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What the devil’s here to do</td>
<td>Kettle Bender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Now I’m seated</td>
<td>To its own tune. Cease your funning. Countess of Coventry’s Minuet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A pox of your pother</td>
<td>Paddy O’Doody or Liberty Hall or Derry Down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When Norah sits to milk her Cow</td>
<td>Drimmenduffh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ah happy hours</td>
<td>To its own tune</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See triumphant sits the bard</td>
<td>See the conqu’ring Hero comes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dunce, I did but sham</td>
<td>Push about the brisk bowl</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 1. The first lines and tune names of the airs in *Midas*.

The sources of many of the airs have been identified by Roger Fiske.⁴ His research will be referred to in the Editorial Notes, as well as other source references and textual variation between the librettos and the score.

The Settings of the Airs

The settings of the airs vary from simple harmonisations with minimal supplemental material to elaborate arrangements with introductions, interludes and postludes. These instrumental additions, marked as ‘symphonies’ in the score, range from exact repetitions of phrases of the melody to new material derived from aspects of the melody or entirely unrelated melodies. The musical arranger is not specifically acknowledged and assumptions that the arranger was Kane O’Hara himself have been disputed by Roger Fiske and Phyllis T. Dircks, with Lord Mornington being suggested as a more likely arranger.

There must have been a guiding hand throughout the compilation, certainly at the stage when the items had to be orchestrated. It must have been someone with an affection for the rather outmoded pieces publish’d as Hasse’s, someone vain enough to stoop to a little deceit, and someone competent enough to get all this music into shape. Lord Mornington (still in his middle twenties) is a possible candidate.5

However, in a letter to Michael Arne, the musical director at Crow Street theatre, in 1777, Kane O’Hara refers to the music for Midas as ‘his score’, and was particularly concerned with the faithful delivery of every note in the score:

if any actor or actress, or musical performer of Mr. Ryder’s company shall presume to alter, or add, or to omit any word or note, in air or recitative, other than they shall be found in the copy which I authorize and require you to demand, in my name, their parts from them and return to me…Upon the above terms, and them only, will I ever consent that Midas shall appear from my score as a full piece.6

5 Fiske, 319.
The humour and animation generated by the ensemble settings in *Midas* would argue in favour of Kane O’Hara being the musical arranger.

Some of the settings are borrowed almost unaltered from their sources. The setting of ‘When fairies dance round on the grass’ is almost identical to the first verse of its original version in Boyce’s *The Shepherd’s Lottery* (See figures 2 and 3). The key, symphonies, melody, bass-line and figured bass are reproduced almost exactly. Apart from converting the full score to vocal score, the changes are incidental, being confined to moving a section of bass-line to bass clef from tenor clef and changing the figuring at the beginning of b21 to 6 from 5. The reference to Boyce’s opera is underlined by the close parodying of the words—the first two lines of text are the same, as is the rhyming scheme of the rest of the verse, often ending lines with the same word as in the original.

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8 This air is also associated with the tenor Joseph Vernon in both contexts. Vernon sang it as a boy at the first performance of *The Shepherd’s Lottery* at Covent Garden. In 1762 he sang it again in the role of Apollo in the first Crow Street performance of *Midas*. 
Fig. 2: Boyce, ‘When Fairies dance round on the grass’.

Fig. 3: O’Hara, ‘When Fairies dance round on the grass’.
The setting of Rousseau’s ‘Quand on scait aimer et plaire’\textsuperscript{9} is more loosely based on the original, maintaining the key, partly following the bass-line and including the symphonies with some alterations. The melody is a gavotte and one surprising difference between O’Hara’s setting and the Rousseau score is that O’Hara begins the melody on the first beat of the bar whereas the original score begins the melody half-way through the bar. The \textit{Midas} setting is slightly less ornate than the Rousseau, substituting a tied note for a repeated triplet figure in the original. The ‘scotch snap’ figure in bars 5–7 is mostly unaccompanied in \textit{Midas}, where it was supported by a bass-line of repeated notes in Rousseau’s score. A four-bar rising minim phrase, occurring later in the melody, is also unaccompanied in the \textit{Midas} arrangement. While the harmony remains the same in both versions the shape of the bass-line differs.

**Borrowings from Pantomime**

The borrowings from pantomime also correspond closely to earlier printed sources. ‘Strip him, whip him’ borrows the tune ‘The Milk Maids’ from the pantomime \textit{Fortunatus}.\textsuperscript{10} The introduction to the tune, in its setting in \textit{Midas}, seems unrelated to the tune itself. However, its identity is discovered, on a broader examination of the \textit{Comic Tunes in Fortunatus},\textsuperscript{11} to be ‘Harlequin’s Apartment’,
the preceding tune in the pantomime. Only the first half of this melody is used in
*Midas*, retaining the key but with an altered bass line and tempo indication. While
the tune for ‘Strip him’ is the same as the ensuing melody ‘The Milk Maids’,
complete with echo sections, the key and bass-line are different. The key change
was presumably necessary to present the tune in an appropriate vocal range. A
new seven-bar interlude after the first section of the tune is inserted in the setting
in *Midas*, modulating to G major, the key of the second section of the pantomime
tune. The melody of this section also deviates from the original after the first
phrase, to facilitate the singer. The notation in the *Comic Tunes in Fortunatus*,
(the continuation from one tune to the next on the same stave, the end repeat—
start repeat marking, and the change of key signature marking) might suggest that
the two melodies, ‘Harlequin’s Apartment and ‘The Milk Maids’ are connected.
However, there is also an end—start repeat marking and a continuation of the
same stave between ‘The Milk Maids’ and the following tune—‘Farmer’s Yard’.

The other tune borrowed from *Fortunatus*, ‘The Landry’, set to the words ‘All
around the maypole’, is less obviously based on the *Comic Tunes*, appearing in a
different key with a new tempo marking. The bass-line is also altered, although
similar in places. In ‘All around the Maypole’ the melody is repeated.

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*Fortunatus, 17.*

*Violin, German Flute or Hautboy, with a Thorough Bass for the Harpsichord* (Dublin:
Manwaring, ca. 1753), 9.
Borrowings from Folk Music

The arrangements of folk songs and traditional dances are among the simplest in *Midas* (with some exceptions). Some of these had previously been borrowed in ballad operas. The only air from *The Beggar’s Opera* which appears in the Walsh score is ‘Cold and Raw’. The melody differs markedly from its form in *The Beggar’s Opera*, both in rhythm and pitch, but the bass-line is very similar in both sources. The *Midas* version incorporates a climactic rising figure into the last phrase which alters the character of the tune.

Four of the seven airs which appear in both *Midas* and John Gay’s *Polly* are printed in the Walsh publication, generally presented in a different form with a different bass-line. The tune ‘There was a jovial beggar’, set to the air ‘No difference of character’ in *Midas*, is very similar in both versions but the bass-line differs in character and harmony. In both versions, quaver movement begins in the bass when it temporarily ends in the melody. In *Polly*, this new four-quaver figure becomes a feature of the bass-line, employed at two other points of repose in the brief melody. In *Midas*, both parts continue in quaver movement and the bass joins the voice in unison quavers for the final phrase. This unison phrase emphasises the words ‘and a sporting all may go’. In the third phrase, rather than complement the slower pace of the melody with quaver movement, the bass introduces a rising chromatic line in crotchets, adding a sense of propulsion more common in recitative. The *Midas* arrangement adds a four-bar postlude which is based on the last phrase of the melody.

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The tune ‘Bobbing Joan’, set to the air ‘my minnikin miss’ in *Midas*, is in the same key as in the version which appears in *Polly* but the melody is barely recognisable in terms of pitch and rhythm. The *Midas* version sets it with a galloping, dotted rhythm. The dotted rhythm is absent, however, from the introduction (a statement of the first phrase) and the interlude and postlude, both based on the last two bars of the first phrase. There are also significant differences between the *Polly* and *Midas* versions of the tunes ‘Mirleton’ and ‘Three Sheepskins’, set to ‘If I cannot plague the lubber’\(^\text{14}\) and ‘Girls are known to mischief prone’\(^\text{15}\) respectively. In these two settings, dotted rhythm is added and the bass-lines in the *Midas* versions are significantly simpler, although some melodic interest is added to the bass-line of ‘Three Sheepskins’ at the ends of phrases. The Walsh score presents both tunes a third lower than in *Polly* and adds short symphonies. The introductions are statements of the first phrase. The two-bar interlude in ‘Three Sheepskins’ is a slightly altered reprise of the previous phrase and the postlude is almost exactly the same as the introduction. The postlude in ‘Mirleton’ is a repetition of the last three bars of the melody. Although the inclusion of these tunes may have been intended as a reference to Gay’s ballad operas, these operas do not appear to have been used as a musical source.

The folk tunes with no obvious operatic associations are the most simply set airs in *Midas*. The simplest arrangement in the opera is ‘What the devil’s here to do’, with no introduction, postlude or interludes. The bass-line is quite active, particularly in the third bar where the melody has six repeated Gs. Some of the

\(^{14}\) Ibid., (Appendix B), 166.  
\(^{15}\) Ibid., (Appendix A), 44.
other airs, notably those sung by Pan, have very static bass-lines creating a drone effect. Pan’s competition air, ‘A pox of your pother about this or that’\(^{16}\) gives a perfect example of this type of setting, which caricatures the traditional musician. The only movement in the bass-line is at cadence points. The only accidental in the bass-line, at the modulation to the dominant, is perfectly placed to make a joke with the words—under the word ‘flat’ in the phrase ‘you’re flat Master Pol’, the bass-line has a B natural, as if the music were exposing Pan’s dishonesty. Pan’s airs ‘Jupiter wenches and drinks’ and ‘as soon as her doating piece’ and Mysis’s air ‘sure I shall run with vexation distracted’ also have similar bass-lines. The conclusion that drones were used to characterise Irish identity is slightly undermined by the four-bar tonic pedal near the beginning of Apollo’s competition air, ‘Ah happy hours’\(^{17}\), but this appears to be a device to create a moment of stillness at the beginning of the air before continuing with a flowing bass-line.

**Irish Music in *Midas***

Aloys Fleischmann includes fifteen airs from *Midas* in his *Sources of Irish Traditional Music*,\(^{18}\) giving the name of the tune and the first line of text from the opera. Not all the tune names correspond to those given in librettos of *Midas* or in Fiske’s list of borrowings and it is debatable whether all these tunes are specifically Irish. Figure 4 presents the attributions of the airs in question—

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\(^{16}\) Ibid., (Appendix A), 126.
\(^{17}\) Ibid., 129.
specifying the words of the air in *Midas*, the tune’s name in librettos and in the Fleischmann catalogue, and the source suggested by Fiske. The numbers beside the Fleischmann tune names indicate the number of variants for this tune which are contained in the catalogue.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Air in Midas</th>
<th>Tune name in libretto</th>
<th>Tune name in Fleischmann</th>
<th>Tune name in Fiske</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Think not lewd Jove</td>
<td>Shaan Bwee</td>
<td>Seán Bui (1)</td>
<td>Shaan Bwee. Also Scots. Marquis of Granby &amp; Over the water to Charlie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jupiter wenches and drinks</td>
<td>Sheelagh na Guig</td>
<td>The Irish pot stick (1)</td>
<td>Irish. Shela na Gig/ Girig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shall he run away with the lasses</td>
<td>My wife’s a galloping, &amp;c.</td>
<td>Shall he run away</td>
<td>Scots. My wife’s a wanton weet thing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sure I shall run with vexation distracted</td>
<td>Sheelagh na Guiragh/ Gheiragh</td>
<td>Sile Ni Ghadhra (1)</td>
<td>Irish. Chiling o’Guiry (in Thumoth). Sheela na Guira (in Moore, set as ‘Oh had we some bright little Isle’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oh! Fye wood’n Oracle</td>
<td>Newmarket</td>
<td>Johnny cock thy beaver (1)</td>
<td>English or Scots. Cock up your Beaver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you can caper as well as you modulate</td>
<td>The priest in his boots</td>
<td>The priest in his boots (1)</td>
<td>Irish? The priest in his boots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Minikin Miss</td>
<td>Bobbing Joan</td>
<td>My Minikin Miss</td>
<td>English. Bobbing Joan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If into your henyard</td>
<td>Lary Grogan [sic]</td>
<td>The Miser (3)</td>
<td>Princess Royal (<em>Country Dancing Master</em> 1731)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Gods were all call’d in to see</td>
<td>Nancy Dawson</td>
<td>Nancy Dawson (1)</td>
<td>English. Nancy Dawson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark what I say</td>
<td>Baaltiorough</td>
<td>Baaltiorough (6)</td>
<td>Irish or Scots. Baaltiorough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If in the courts your suit depend</td>
<td>To its own tune</td>
<td>The friar and the nun (1)</td>
<td>New</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As soon as her doating piece</td>
<td>Ligurum Cuss</td>
<td>Ligurum cuss (Gliogram cos or Rattle of feet) (1)</td>
<td>Irish. Ligurum Cuss or Lacrum Cush</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master Pol and his toll de roll loll</td>
<td>A Catch. Cold and Raw</td>
<td>Cold and raw (1)</td>
<td>Irish. Cold and raw, or The Irish Ho-hoane.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What the devil’s here to do</td>
<td>Kettle Bender</td>
<td>Ally Croaker (2)</td>
<td>The Kettle bender “But perhaps Irish; it is very like “Ally Croaker””.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A pox of your pother about this or that</td>
<td>(unnamed)</td>
<td>Paddy O’Doody (1)</td>
<td>English. Liberty Hall or Derry Down.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 4: Irish airs in *Midas*

The air ‘If into your henyard’, to the tune ‘Lary Grogan’ [sic] is set with symphonies and a moving bass-line. While most of the airs in *Midas* incorporate a degree of variation in the repetition of melodic material, this air is remarkable for the plainness of its setting. The eight-bar introduction is identical to the first
section of the melody, except for the octave leap before the last three notes. The
two-bar interlude is the same as the last two bars of the introduction and identical
to the postlude.

The plain setting of Irish airs is not peculiar to *Midas*. Isaac Bickerstaff’s *Love in a Village*, a comic opera staged at Crow Street theatre later in 1762, is also made up of borrowed airs from sources comparable to those in *Midas*. The Irish airs in this opera are similarly set in a plainer style than the other borrowed airs. The air ‘a plague of these wenches’ to the tune ‘St Patrick’s Day’, has a bass-line of repeated G dotted minims for the whole air. The introduction is identical to the first four bars of the melody and the postlude, a repetition of the last phrase of the melody, is almost identical to the introduction.\(^{19}\) It is interesting to note that this air was sung by Mr Dunstall, the performer who played Pan in *Midas*. One of the Irish airs in *Love in a Village*, ‘Well, well, say no more’ has a tune named ‘Larry Grogan’, in common with the *Midas* air ‘If into your henyard’ discussed above. Both airs are in G major, 6/8 time and share the feature of repeated notes and words at the ends of phrases. Apart from these similarities the airs bear little resemblance to each other, except in the style of their symphonies.

The only Irish air in the Walsh score which has elaborate symphonies is ‘Mark what I say’, to the tune ‘Baaltiorough’. The tune itself is only eight bars long, in 9/8 time. The bass-line for the first four bars is mostly a tonic pedal, becoming a little more active in the second half, but generally underlining the contour of the melody. The symphonies are in marked contrast. The fifteen-bar introduction is in

\(^{19}\) Isaac Bickerstaff, *Love in a Village* (London: 1763), 44.
3/4 time. Although the traditional tune is entirely built upon an E flat major arpeggio and the introduction is also built upon the intervals of the arpeggio, the two sections make no melodic reference to each other. The introduction alternates movement through the arpeggio in pairs of repeated semiquavers with scale passages, creating a fanfare effect. The ten-bar interlude and seven-bar postlude differ from the introduction in some melodic detail but are mostly similar. The lack of harmonic movement in the bass-line is the only aspect which unifies the symphonies and the tune. The incongruity between the symphonies and the vocal melody contributes to a burlesque, or bathetic, effect in this air.

Another air ‘Fine times’ in the Walsh score has a similarly incongruous setting. The tune ‘Kiss me fast, my mother’s coming’ is not specifically identified as Irish but it clearly is a folk tune. The prominence of the flattened seventh in the melody is characteristic of Irish music but Fiske suggests a Scottish source—‘O where wad bonnie Annie lye’. Like ‘Baaltiorough’, this tune is eight bars long and the proportions of the symphonies in this setting are comparable to those in the setting of ‘Baaltiorough’. The contrast between the tune and symphonies is not so stark, involving no change in metre. The declamatory nature of the opening bar of the melody lends itself very well to the style of eighteenth-century instrumental music. The opening descending arpeggio leads to semiquaver scales and repeated note figures. The movement in pairs of repeated semiquavers occasionally incorporates arpeggio figures similar to those which characterise the symphonies in ‘Mark what I say’. Repeated use of an additional figure, descending demi-semiquaver flourishes, lends poise and presence to the air. The opening vocal bar sustains this atmosphere of nobility but the modal character of the second bar of
the tune jars with the introduction’s interpretation of the opening bar, effecting a sense of bathos, which reflects the bitterness of the text:

Fine times, when each little
Pimping, upstart court lick-spittle
Worth disgrac’d dares back and whittle
Shafts of malice throwing.
See the game cock’s crest with mud upon’;
Strait the dunghill breed grows proud upon’,
Each bare beak
It’s spleen will wreak,
All clapping wings, and crowing.

The interlude and postlude are based on material from the introduction. As observed in ‘Mark what I say’, the character of the bass-line is consistent for the melody and symphonies, although it is more static in the accompaniment of the air.

Two other Irish airs are associated with *Midas*, although not printed in the Walsh score. The tune ‘Jack Lattin’ is named as the tune for the air ‘At fairs and wakes’ in the book of *Songs* published in Dublin in 1762. In one of the manuscript librettos of *Midas* from the same year, Pan’s competition song is ‘When Norah sits to milk her cow’ to the tune ‘Oroo Drimmenduffh’ (Oho, black cow). The milking theme in this tune, and ‘The Milkmaids’ mentioned above, may have been a topical reference to the Italian burletta *La Cascina* (the dairy-house) at Smock Alley theatre, which *Midas* was staged to rival. Seán Donnelly comments that Óró Droimeann Dubh had been published in London in the mid-1740s and suggests that the ‘acceptance of Irish language songs on the Dublin stage could be seen as a sign of a growing confidence and an emerging colonial national

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20 *Midas* Music Edition (Appendix C), 301.
21 Ibid., 308.
identity’. However, the popularity of Irish music in the theatre appears to have been a passing fashion as ‘[t]he acceptance of Irish songs on the Dublin stage did not last into the later eighteenth century, when the very occasional performance was hissed’.22

The tunes ‘Larry Grogan’, ‘Ally Croaker’ and ‘Jack Lattin’ have a history and provenance which give an interesting insight into eighteenth-century Irish musical life. Seán Donnelly reports that Larry Grogan and Jack Lattin were friends and that ‘[t]he two tunes were also unique in being the earliest examples of dance-tunes with Irish associations to carry the names of known musicians’.23 The tune ‘Larry Grogan’ is named after Lawrence Grogan of Johnstown Castle, County Wexford, attorney of the Court of Exchequer in Dublin and described by Captain Francis O’Neill as a ‘gentleman piper’.24 In 1725, Grogan composed the air ‘Ally Croker’, ‘which was taken up immediately by the ballad-singers, circulated far and wide, and within a few years had been incorporated in three operas’.25 Thomas Moore’s song ‘The Shamrock’ was later set to this tune. Alicia Croker, from Ballinagard, County Limerick was the sister of Edward Croker, the High Sheriff of County Limerick. Edward Croker addressed his song ‘The County Limerick Buck Hunt’ to Lawrence Grogan — ‘By your leave, Larry Grogan, enough has been spoken’.26 The tune ‘Jack Lattin’ is named after John Lattin of

23 O’Neill, 181. The operas which included the tune ‘Ally Croker’ were Love in a Riddle (1730) by Colley Cibber (later adapted as Damon and Phillida), The Englishman in Paris (1753) by Samuel Foote and Midas.
26 James Anthony Froude, John Tulloch & Thomas Carlyle, Fraser’s Magazine, 3, 1831, 552–553.
Morristown Lattin in County Kildare. He is remembered for having danced himself to death for a bet at the age of 21.

John Lattin of Morristown House county Kildare (near Naas) wagered he’d dance home to Morristown from Dublin – more than twenty miles – changing his dancing-steps every furlong: and won the wager.²⁷

Two eighteenth-century theatre dancers, Nancy Dawson and Cosimo Maranesi, were also associated with the music in Midas. Nancy Dawson had such a success dancing the hornpipe in the 1759 Covent Garden run of The Beggar’s Opera that a ballad was set to the tune in her honour. Her association with opera, rather than pantomime, is illustrated in the fifth verse of ‘The Ballad of Nancy Dawson’.

See how the Op’ra takes a run
Exceeding Hamlet, Lear and Lun
Though in it there would be no fun,
Was’t not for Nancy Dawson.²⁸

This air is also borrowed in Love in a Village. Nancy Dawson danced at Crow Street theatre in Dublin in 1763.²⁹ The Italian dancer Cosimo Maranesi was celebrated for his ‘wooden shoe dance’ in Paris and London and came to Crow Street theatre in 1759.³⁰

²⁹ Greene, Calendar, 2:852.
³⁰ Ibid., 2:441–2.
The Symphonies

Most of the airs in *Midas* are arranged with introductions, interludes and postludes. The majority of the introductions begins with a statement of the opening bars of the vocal melody, often in an ornamented form, and continues to develop the material with either original melodic material or material which anticipates later phrases in the melody. In more ornate airs, the interludes and postludes correspond to the end of the introduction. In shorter airs, the interludes and postludes are often reprises of all or part of the previous phrase. The supplemental melodic material found in the symphonies consists of arpeggio figures, falling semiquaver flourishes, octave leaps, dotted rhythms, repeated note figures, triplets, sequences, broken chords and common cadential figures. These features are also common in the symphonies in *Love in a Village* and appear to be indicative of the taste of the time.

Simple Settings

‘When gath’ring clouds’ demonstrates this type of setting in a simple form. The first four bars of the introduction are the same as the opening of the tune. The fifth and sixth bars are closely related to the continuation of this phrase, leading to a cadential figure featuring pairs of repeated semiquavers. The last six bars of the introduction form the postlude.

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The introduction of ‘If the swain we sigh for’ is a contraction of the melody, initially stating the first four bars, before linking to the last three bars of the melody (sung on a melisma of triplets) in an ornamented form. The postlude does not employ any material from the melody, introducing a new two-bar cadential figure which features repeated quavers and falling semiquavers. This two-bar figure is repeated once.

‘To blast a rival’s happiness’ also has an eight-bar introduction, stating the melody exactly for the first four bars. The introduction then skips to an exact statement of the four bars from b.25, the end of the second section of the melody. The interlude between the first and second sections of the melody is a slightly ornamented reprise of the last four bars of the first section of the melody. The eight-bar postlude introduces some new material, drawing on motifs and contours in the melody, before ending with the last four bars of the melody, raising the three final notes up an octave.

**More Elaborate Settings**

The twelve-bar introduction to ‘With fun my disgrace I’l l parry’ is more extensive. Melodic material from the first two bars and last four bars of the melody is interspersed with sequences, while the bass-line is entirely in keeping with the bass-line for the vocal melody. The three-bar postlude is an elaboration

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32 Ibid., 163.
33 Ibid., 192.
34 Ibid., 156.
of the end of the melody. ‘To happy ignorance’\textsuperscript{35} similarly begins with two bars of the tune, before continuing with unrelated sequential figures. Neither the two interludes nor the postlude of this air contain material from the melody or from the other symphonies. The ornamental use of triplets, broken chords, ties and descending demi-semiquaver flourishes in the setting of this air is common in the more elaborate airs in \textit{Midas}. The descending demi-semiquaver figure is reminiscent of accompanied recitatives by Boyce and Arne.

‘Be by your friends advised’\textsuperscript{36} does not introduce original material into the symphonies to the same extent as the last two airs discussed above. However, the ornamentation and varying of the melody is particularly inventive, so that at times the vocal melody seems to be an elaboration of the introduction. The two interludes and postlude are ornamented reprises of the preceding phrases, developing the triplet motif which characterises the melody. This setting is comparable to ‘Neatest, compleatest’,\textsuperscript{37} in which the sixteen-bar introduction is identical to the vocal melody and bass-line, except for the addition of trills in the vocal part. The interlude is based on the last seven bars of the melody, but here also the vocal line is slightly more ornate. The postlude begins with the first eight bars of the second section of the melody, followed by a transposition of the last eight bars of the first section of the melody. The sixth bar of this section, in this transposed form, is identical to the third last bar of the second section of the melody. The postlude switches back to this part of the melody for its last four bars. The style of this air, borrowed from Pescetti’s \textit{Alessandro in Persia} (1741), can be seen as a model for the settings of the airs in \textit{Midas}.

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., 145.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., (Appendix A), 30.
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., (Appendix B), 198.


**Instrumental Interpolations**

Some of the instrumental sections in *Midas* are extremely short and could be mistaken for the vocal line if they were not marked ‘Sy’ to indicate ‘symphony’ or instrumental section. In some cases these shorter symphonies are echoes of the preceding notes or ornamental links into the following phrase. ‘Ne’er will I be left i’ the lurch’\(^{38}\) has a number of short symphonies, some linking phrases, some directly echoing or acting as an ornamental echo. The two short symphonies in ‘Since you mean to hire for service’\(^{39}\) are exact repetitions of the previous bars, but seem to be an intrinsic part of the melodic line, perhaps cueing a necessary, physical gesture from the performer. The more extensive symphony after the first two bars of the vocal melody in ‘Now I’m seated’\(^{40}\) similarly gives the impression of being a necessary part of the melodic line rather than a link to the next part of the phrase. The repetition of the phrase does not include this symphony, with the effect that this second statement seems like a contraction of the melody. The inclusion of short symphonies is consistent with the style of the sources from which O’Hara drew.

Two of the airs borrowed for *Midas* have distinctive echo effects. ‘The milkmaids’, borrowed from the pantomime *Fortunatus* and set to the words ‘Strip him, whip him’,\(^{41}\) echoes its first two notes instrumentally, an octave higher, in the first bar and repeats this for the second bar. The second section of the melody

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\(^{38}\) Ibid., (Appendix A), 89.  
\(^{39}\) Ibid., 39.  
\(^{40}\) Ibid., 123.  
\(^{41}\) Ibid., (Appendix B), 212.
opens with these two bars, a tone higher. The process is reversed in ‘Quand on scait aimer et plaire’, borrowed from Le Devin du Village, which includes short, one-bar, echoing symphonies in Rousseau’s setting. O’Hara omits these, retaining only the longer symphonies in his setting.

Unaccompanied Phrases

A number of the settings in Midas include unaccompanied phrases. While this is a feature of some Handel arias, notably ‘Let me wander’ from L’Allegro which is borrowed in Love in a Village, it occurs unusually frequently in Midas. ‘He’s as tight a lad’,42 borrowed from Rousseau’s ‘Quand on scait aimer et plaire’ in Le Devin du Village, illustrates this tendency; the Midas setting is very similar to the source, borrowing the same symphonies, but two and a half bars of the introduction are presented unaccompanied in Midas, where they had been accompanied in Le Devin. This section of the introduction recurs, again unaccompanied, in the interludes and postlude. Later in the air, a three-bar rising scale passage in minims is sung unaccompanied, unlike the original. The reason for this alteration may have been to highlight the words in the phrase ‘If the youth proves true I’ll fit him’. This theory appears to be borne out in other airs. In ‘Ne’er will I be left i’ the lurch’,43 the voice is unaccompanied for the words ‘till I’m made a wife in the Church’. In the ensemble ‘Mama how can you be so ill-natur’d’44 the exclamations ‘Mama, Papa, Psha, Psha’ are also unaccompanied.

42 Ibid., (Appendix A), 71.
43 Ibid., 89.
44 Ibid., 52.
In Apollo’s air ‘Lovely Nymph asswage my anguish’\textsuperscript{45} the first phrase is sung unaccompanied. This is presumably to emphasise the voice and accomplishment of the performer, to set the tone for the long, ornate melisma on the words “Prince of Song”. Two seven-bar unaccompanied sections in ‘A Monarch may huff’\textsuperscript{46} and unaccompanied phrases in ‘Mother, sure you never’\textsuperscript{47} seem less significant. The purpose may have been less for interpretation than for a contrast in texture. In ‘The wolf that slaughtered finds her whelps’\textsuperscript{48} and ‘O Yes, O Yes’\textsuperscript{49} the hiatus in accompaniment seems calculated for comic effect. In the former the ‘howling’ is spread over five bars, not as a smooth melisma but broken up as ‘how wow wow…ling’. In the latter, the word ‘rattling’ is set to a six-bar unaccompanied melisma.

**Register Changes**

Octave leaps and register changes are a common feature of the settings in *Midas*. These occur in the introductions, interludes and postludes of many of the airs, to ornament the melody and to introduce a variety of register. Octaves are also occasionally added to ornament the vocal line, as can be seen in the setting of Arne’s melody ‘When daisies pied’ (‘A monarch may huff’).\textsuperscript{50} This type of ornamentation is, in part, a reflection of O’Hara’s choice of airs, a number of

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., 75.
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid., (Appendix B), 256.
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid., (Appendix A), 111.
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., (Appendix B), 231.
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., 244.
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., 256.
which are characterised by octave leaps. ‘Oh! Fye, wood’n Oracle’, set to the traditional tune ‘Newmarket’, has an octave leap in each of the first four bars of the second section of the melody. This section of the melody forms the basis of the interlude and postlude. An octave leap is also an essential part of the tune ‘Cold and raw’, which is set to the words ‘Master Pol and his toll-de-roll-loll’. Later phrases of the French melody ‘Viens que j’examine’, set to the words ‘Mother, sure you never’, begin with an octave leap, adding emphasis to the words. The rising octaves in the opening phrases of ‘Now I’m seated’ similarly lend emphasis to the words.

One of the three elongations of the word ‘howl’ in ‘The wolf that slaughter’d finds her whelps’ employs octave leaps to contribute to the comic effect of the air. This is one of a number of comic musical effects which relate to the ‘burlesque’ style referred to in the preface to the 1764 libretto and discussed above in Chapter 3.

The Broken Air

The first air in Act 3 is described in the 1764 libretto as a ‘broken air’:

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51 Ibid., 190.
52 Ibid., (Appendix A), 103.
53 Ibid., 111.
54 Ibid., 123.
55 Ibid., (Appendix B), 231.
During the symphony, Mercury descends, and walks to and fro, tolling a bell, at intervals, as a public cryer; at the close, in broken air, he publishes the following advertisements.\(^{36}\)

The symphony, which accompanies Mercury’s descent and tolling of the bell, incorporates many of the characteristics of the other symphonies in *Midas*—dotted rhythms, scale passages and arpeggios built from groups of repeated notes. The effect is of a fanfare, generally with an absence of harmonic movement. The first modulation is formed by a progression more commonly found in recitative. After a root position chord in the tonic, B flat major, the bass rises a semi-tone to function as the third of G major in a seventh chord leading to a temporary cadence in C minor. This is immediately followed by a similar progression ending in a more decisive cadence in D major. At this point the character of the music changes markedly, introducing a descending staccato theme formed from a chain of thirds and supported by a dominant pedal of repeated quavers. The second statement of this theme is followed by a cadential figure in G minor, formed from scales and arpeggios.

After the symphony, Mercury sings ‘O Yes, o yes’ alone, on one note. A four-bar symphony, reinforcing the cadence in G minor, leads to another statement of ‘O yes’ and a short rising phrase on ‘This is to give notice’. The vocal line is again broken by a symphony, which abruptly modulates back to B flat. The following vocal phrase and symphony, based on a descending sequence of leaps, prolong the chord of B flat until the sequence brings about a modulation back to G minor with a change of metre to 6/8. In this new section the melodic line has the character of

\(^{36}\) Kane O’Hara, *Midas; an English burletta. As it is performed, at the Theatre-Royal, in Covent-Garden* (London: 1764), 42.
recitative, describing in its contour the act of ‘reeling down to earth’. The symphony elaborates the voice’s descending figure, to end the first part of the air.

The second section of the air is more melodic, being a setting of a borrowed air. The air is not named in the 1764 libretto but in one of the 1762 manuscripts it is named as ‘the Wooden Shoe dance’. The melody matches the tune ‘le sabotier’ found in an Antwerp publication of 1740. A sabotier was a dance popular in Paris and London in the 1750s, known in London as a ‘wooden shoe dance’. Musically, it resembles a tambourin and is characterised by repeated notes in the bass. Cosimo Maranesi, who performed with Signora Buggiani in Paris between 1751 and 1754, was particularly associated with this dance.

They clearly had wooden shoe dances as a specialty item, one that must have particularly pleased the public, since after dancing “Les Sabotiers” at the Opéra Comique, they took the same dance to the Comédie Française the following year, where they performed several other pantomime ballets as well.

Maranesi and Buggiani also performed ‘wooden shoe dances’ in London during this period and Thomas Sheridan brought them to Smock Alley theatre in Dublin for the 1756-57 season, where ‘the wooden shoe dance’ was among the ‘new comic dances’. This is significant in relation to Midas as one of the airs in the 1762 book of Songs—‘Have you seen two figures tugging’ is set to ‘a dance of Maranesi’. Maranesi moved to Crow Street theatre on 16 December 1759.

57 Kane O’Hara, Midas. IRL-Dn, MS 9249.
60 Greene, History, 441.
61 Ibid., 442.
This ‘broken air’ is indicative of what was new in the English burletta. Many of its characteristics appear in some of the accompanied recitatives in later English burlettas. As is the case with *Midas*, the publications of later English burlettas generally omit the recitatives but two recitatives are printed in O’Hara’s *The Two Misers* (1775) and four are printed in Dibdin’s *Poor Vulcan* (1778). The accompanied recitatives in these two burlettas begin with fanfare-like symphonies. The fanfare in the accompanied recitative from *The Two Misers* is the most elaborate, consisting of an arpeggio figure in dotted rhythm followed by descending demi-semiquaver flourishes. In these recitatives, the short, declaimed vocal phrases are broken by instrumental interludes containing repeated note figures, descending semiquaver flourishes and other gestural figures suggesting stage movement. Changes of tempo and metre are common in these recitatives and one of Dibdin’s recitatives (*Poor Vulcan* p16) is written in a dance-like 6/8 rather than the customary common time, blurring the distinction between air and recitative.62

The interludes between vocal phrases sometimes contain borrowed melodies for the purposes of allusion or characterisation. In the accompanied recitative from *The Two Misers*, the melody ‘Sheelagh na Guig’ is quoted, which is borrowed for the air ‘Jupiter wenches above’ in *Midas*. Two melodies are borrowed from Arne in *Poor Vulcan*. At the words ‘A country Squire the stage I’ll follow and echo rouse with whoop and holla’ in the opening recitative, Dibdin quotes ‘The echoing horn calls the sportsmen abroad’ from Arne’s *Thomas and Sally*. The

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other melody Dibdin borrows from Arne is ‘When daisies pied’, which is played instrumentally at the end of the recitative on p17. The words of Arne’s air were so well known at the time that the melody alone would have brought them to mind, creating a subtly apt comment on the preceding topic of cuckoldry or a wife’s infidelity. The original text of this part of the air is ‘Cuckoo, O word of fear, unpleasing to a married ear’. In *Midas*, the words are parodied both as ‘Cuckoo, that word of fear, familiar grow to married ear’ and as ‘Cuckolds, then cuckolds then will know their friends, and in like coin may make amends’.

**Ensembles**

The most creative settings of borrowed airs in *Midas* are the ensembles, and these are a more common feature in *Midas* than in Bickerstaff’s comic operas. Two of the borrowed airs we re originally ensembles:—‘See the conquering Hero’ from Handel’s *Judas Maccabaeus* (1746) and ‘When fairies dance round on the grass’ from Boyce’s *The Shepherd’s Lottery* (1751). Interestingly, neither of these is presented as an ensemble in *Midas*, clearly having been chosen for their textual resonance rather than for any musical significance. While Handel’s ensemble is sung by the chorus in *Midas*, it is presented as a single melody line, without Handel’s original harmony parts. It is possible that the bass-line was also sung, but the indication ‘chorus’ consistently seems to imply unison singing in *Midas*. Boyce’s air is sung by Pol rather than as a duet, and the words are a close parody on the original. Three, four and five-part harmony is rare in *Midas*, occurring only
in the last four bars of ‘My heart so o’er flowth’ and ‘Mother, sure you never’, in three and five parts respectively.

Although none of the borrowed airs set as ensembles were originally composed in parts, O’Hara’s choice of airs for ensembles appears to be based on musical criteria. Melodic sequences are a prominent feature of all but two of the airs set as ensembles. Repetition of phrases and repetition of melodic material within phrases is a consistent feature of the airs borrowed for the ensembles in *Midas*. The melodies of the longer ensembles generally comprise a number of distinct sections. O’Hara makes use of these musical elements for characterisation and dramatic pacing, using the structure of the melody to shape the interaction of the characters. The repetition of a phrase or the beginning of a contrasting melodic section often coincides with the introduction of a new character, either reinforcing the views of the first character or opposing the statement presented in the previous phrase. O’Hara often adapts the borrowed air to the dramatic situation, adding either vocal or instrumental repetitions of the ends of phrases and sometimes both. Airs are also restructured by larger scale repetition of sections of the melody. The arrangement of ‘Non, non, Colette n’est pas trompeuse’ offers a clear example of O’Hara’s treatment of borrowed sources in his ensembles. Rousseau’s melody is in ABA form with no introduction, postlude or interludes. O’Hara expands it for ‘Mama how can you be so ill-natur’d’ by adding an introduction, postlude

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63 *Midas* Music Edition (Appendix B) 239.  
64 Ibid., (Appendix A) 111.  
65 The two airs which do not contain sequences are ‘Mama, how can you be so ill-natur’d’ (Midas Music Edition, 52) and ‘My Minikin Miss’ (Edition, 82).  
66 There is no repetition in the 8-bar air of ‘If a rival thy character draw’ (Edition, 107) but both parts of the melody are built on sequences.  
67 Rousseau, 27.  
and interludes and by repeating the B and A sections (with the same characters and text), adding 4-part harmony for the final phrase. Internal repetition is a feature of the original air and O’Hara treats this element flexibly, using the second statement of the A material, with its repetition of the end of the phrase, for the introduction while omitting the first statement of this phrase from the second and third A sections. Colin’s protestations ‘Non, non’, which form a bridge between the B and A sections, lend themselves to the domestic dispute in Midas.

‘My heart so o’er flow’th with its love for you both’, sung by Pol, Daphne and Nysa, was originally the finale for Act 2 of the three-act version of Midas and is reminiscent of the confrontation between Polly and Lucy in The Beggar’s Opera, and the hero’s attempts to appease them. O’Hara divides the three-step sequence in the second section of the melody between the three characters so that the sisters answer Pol in turn, with rhyming poetry reflecting the rhyming music. The leaning to the minor third in the second phrase, which eloquently reflects Pol’s earnest pleading, is repeated twice, first scornfully by the sisters before Pol repeats it to lead into the repetition of the opening phrase, which is repeated in turn by each sister. The three-step sequence in ‘Master Pol and his toll de roll loll’ is not exploited to the same extent, although the last step of the sequence is sung by a different character in the second verse. The phrase following this sequence begins with three rising steps and these steps are alternated between the characters in both verses, with the final two notes of the phrase being sung in unison in the second verse before the three characters join in the chorus. The

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69 Ibid., (Appendix B), 239.
70 Ibid., (Appendix A), 103.
treatment of this phrase recurs in reverse in ‘Mother, sure you never’, with Nysa, Daphne and Sileno taking the descending steps in turn.

‘My minikin miss’ is the finale to the first act of the two-act version of *Midas* and, like ‘My heart so o’er flowth’, is reminiscent of *The Beggar’s Opera*. The repetition of phrases in the air, which is much simpler than ‘My heart so o’er flowth’, underpins the insulting exchanges of the girls. As the altercation becomes more heated the pace of the distribution of the voices increases, with the voices alternating after a quarter of a phrase or half of a phrase. In the second part of the melody, rather than waiting to hear each other’s phrases they sing across each other. The first two verses had concluded with the same words sung in harmony. In the third verse, they no longer share the same words. Singing different words in harmony, or sometimes in unison, is a common feature of the ensembles in *Midas*. In the ensembles which begin as single-line dialogues the variation in the words sung simultaneously is slight, reflecting the perspective of the individual characters. More typically the words are quite different but rhyme, with a remarkable number of vowels and consonants in common:

I despise such low disguise/ in surprise the triumph lies.
Zooks I’ll twinge him, I’ll unhinge him/ nay let’s trick him, sooth then nick him.  

Such love is a jest,/ I scorn and detest  
In vain you protest/ double love in one breast,  
And your vows are as false as air,/ such a love is not worth my care.

In some ensembles the words sung simultaneously do not rhyme, either because one character will not countenance the stance of the other or because the text of

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71 Ibid., 111.
72 Ibid., 82.
one line is superimposed on the other as a commentary on it. The latter is the case in ‘A monarch may huff’, which is unlike the other ensembles in *Midas*. This duet between Pol and Mercury is presented as an aside, outside the frame of the plot, applying the theme of the borrowed air to the moral of the opera. The musical repetitions within phrases have no bearing on the distribution of the voices. The last two phrases are sung together in harmony and the final phrase is the only instance of a countermelody in *Midas*; Mercury sings a close parody on the original words to a rising, chromatic line while Pol comments on them to the original tune. The part-writing in the penultimate phrase is more typical of O’Hara’s ensembles. The added part overlaps with the original line in a mixture of thirds and unisons. In ‘If a rival thy character draw’ the singers swap parts on the repetition of the last phrase and the lines are slightly elaborated. The varying of the lines and the avoidance of parallel harmony parts preserve the dynamic of the interaction between the characters.

**Airs Named but not Printed in the Eighteenth Century**

Twenty-two airs are included in the 1762 book of *Songs* which do not appear in the Walsh score. The music named for two of these is contained in the Walsh score but with different words or a different structure. The tune ‘Baaltiorough’ is associated with ‘Mark what I say’ in the Walsh score but had earlier appeared

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75 Ibid., 256.
76 Ibid., (Appendix A), 107.
77 Ibid., (Appendix B), 263.
with the air ‘Thankless! Pusillanimous!’ in the 1762 book of *Songs*, sung by the same character. ‘Push about the brisk Bowl’ is the final air in both versions of the opera. In the Walsh score it is combined with other melodic material and begins at the fourth verse of the air printed in the 1762 book of *Songs*. The setting in Appendix C is entirely derived from the finale in the Walsh score, with a modified structure to accommodate the earlier text. Although the setting in the earlier version of the opera may not have included such elaborate symphonies, the essential similarity of the two finales is emphasized by including these in both versions.

Where possible, the named tunes have been sourced and matched to the words in the book of *Songs* and are included in Appendix C. The settings mainly rely on eighteenth-century sources, retaining bass-lines and figured bass. Although it has been observed above that the settings of ballads from John Gay’s operas are often altered in the Walsh score, Appendix C retains as much of the original settings as possible. This is intended to reflect the difference in musical taste between the two sources. The air ‘Now I’m seated’ offers the clearest example of the shift in the opera’s musical aesthetic between 1762 and 1764. The 1762 source sets the air to ‘Cease your funning’ from the *Beggar’s Opera*. Although the words fit the tune very well, the air reappears in the Walsh score ‘to its own tune’. This entirely new setting alternates symphonies with the vocal line, creating the impression of arioso rather than an air. The incorporation of instrumental music serves to characterise the air with gestural comments.

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Ibid., (Appendix C), 302.
No eighteenth-century bass-lines were found for seven of the airs — ‘O Oracle, oracle’,79 ‘Yes, all your Wealth’,80 ‘Do you sign’,81 ‘Made!’,82 ‘Come let’s’,83 ‘At Fairs and Wakes’84 and ‘To Midas let’.85 Editorial bass-lines and figured bass have been added to these in the style of the simpler airs in the Walsh score. The bass-line in ‘No fear’ (borrowed from John Gay’s Polly)86 has been slightly altered to accommodate the melody’s setting as a trio for Daphne, Nysa and Pol. The disposition of parts and the structure of the trio is suggested by the text in the 1762 source, and informed by the ensembles in the Walsh score. This is the only ensemble in Appendix C which has required the addition of harmony in a vocal line. The duets ‘Those random threats’,87 ‘Why, Ny’88 and ‘Made!’89 are essentially dialogues and require very little alteration. ‘Thus arm’d with Beer’90 is a dialogue with a unison chorus. In the Walsh score, the term ‘chorus’ consistently refers to unison singing, and this principle is maintained in the choruses in Appendix C.

Most of the airs in Appendix C have editorially added introductions and postludes. Two shorter airs, ‘O Oracle, oracle’91 and ‘When Norah sits’,92 have introductions but no postludes. ‘Love reigns supreme’,93 borrowed from Arne’s Comus, retains the original air’s symphonies — an introduction, interludes and a

79 Ibid., 282.
80 Ibid., 284.
81 Ibid., 292.
82 Ibid., 296.
83 Ibid., 298.
84 Ibid., 301.
85 Ibid., 304.
86 Ibid., 289.
87 Ibid., 280.
88 Ibid., 285.
89 Ibid., 296.
90 Ibid., 294.
91 Ibid., 282.
92 Ibid., 309.
93 Ibid., 276.
postlude. One air has neither introduction nor postlude — ‘Thy daughters’\textsuperscript{94} is only eight bars long and is sung through a speaking trumpet by the Oracle. Any additional instrumental music would risk weakening the dramatic effect of the Oracle’s utterance. Interludes are added to two airs. ‘Come let’s support’\textsuperscript{95} adds an interlude between the Chorus of Shepherds and the Chorus of Shepherdesses. ‘To Midas let’\textsuperscript{96} adds short instrumental interpolations between phrases to complement the ornate melody. The final air\textsuperscript{97} draws its musical material from the Walsh score, including an introduction, interludes and a postlude. While its style is consistent with the finale in the Walsh score, its structure differs considerably.

**The Recitatives**

No music has been preserved for the recitatives in *Midas*. The texts of the recitatives printed in the two-act libretto of 1766, in its second edition, have been set to music in Appendix A. The recitatives in the three-act version are set to music in Appendix B. Some of these are alterations or conflations of recitatives in Appendix A. Recitatives which appear in both Appendices, but in different forms or with different adjacent airs, correspond closely to facilitate switching between the two versions. This allows enlargement of scenes in the two-act version or shortening of scenes in the three-act version.

\textsuperscript{94} Ibid., 283.  
\textsuperscript{95} Ibid., 298.  
\textsuperscript{96} Ibid., 304.  
\textsuperscript{97} Ibid., 310.
The Influence of Stage Directions

The stage directions which appear in the 1762 manuscript librettos of *Midas*, but not in the printed librettos, have guided the rhythmic pacing of the recitatives. These stage directions, which are included in Appendices A and B, can be divided into three categories — 1) Basic directions similar to those in the printed libretto, but more detailed, 2) The method for creating specific effects and 3) Adjectives and adverbs relating to facial expression and physical actions. Directions in the first category generally differ from the printed libretto by having the added element of expression — ‘Exit’\(^98\) appears as ‘Exit in disdain’, and ‘Mysis enters hastily’\(^99\) is expressed as ‘Mysis hastily entering surprizes them & is displeas’d’.

![Extract from *Midas*](image)

Fig. 5. Extract from *Midas* (*IRL-Dn, MS 9249. 17*).

The 1762 stage directions accentuate the comic nature of the opera, with directions such as ‘kneels and holds up his hands ludicrously’\(^100\) and ‘Exeunt Mysis & Pan, taking leave ridiculously’\(^101\).

\(^{98}\) O’Hara, *Midas; an English burletta* (1764), 37.
\(^{99}\) Ibid., 13.
\(^{100}\) Corresponding to *Midas* (1764), 43.
\(^{101}\) After a catch, which is an alternative to the catch in *Midas* (1764), 48.
Detailed directions for the use of a prop are given in two recitatives. The stage directions in the printed libretto give a general description of the use of the prop—‘Squire Midas discovered in his parlour, smoaking his pipe, lolling in an easy chair. Damaetas waiting at a respectful distance’. The manuscript libretto gives the following specific directions for the use of the pipe:\footnote{This corresponds to Midas (1764), 16. Some of the words are different.}

\begin{quote}
\textit{Mid.} Nysa, you say, (puff) refus’d the guineas British. (puff,)
\textit{Dam.} Ah! Please your worship—she’s damnatious skittish.
\hspace{1em}Out, pimp, said she,–take back to him who sent it,
\hspace{1em}That trash —
\textit{Mid.} Death! (puff) scorn’d! (Puff) the minx shall sore repent it.
\textit{Dam.} She hums you —
\textit{Mid.} (Puff) But when you told her what I meant to settle —
\textit{Dam.} She flounc’d, you’d swear she had bedew’d a nettle.
\textit{Mid.} I’ll have her, cost what ’twill, (Puff) odsbods —
\hspace{1em}(Dashes his pipe on the floor) I’ll force her —
\textit{Dam.} The halter —
\textit{Mid.} As for madam I’ll divorce her —
\end{quote}
A ‘bowl of punch, glasses, pipes and tobacco’ are called for when Midas, Pan and Mysis begin to plot against Pol.$^{103}$ No stage directions are included in the printed libretto but there are extensive directions in the manuscript libretto:

$^{103}$ Corresponding to Midas (1764). 46.
Mid. (filling his glass) Come, Pan, your toast ——

Pan. (fills) Here goes, ’t’our noble Umpire.

Mys. (fills) And Pol’s defeat — I’ll pledge it in a bumper. (all drink)

Mid. (fills again) Rot him, in every scheme that whelp has cross’d us.

Mys. (fills) Sure he’s the devil himself.

Pan. (fills) Or doctor Faustus. (All drink)

Mys. (fills) Ah! Squire — for Pan wou’d you but stoutly stickle,

This Pol would soon be in a stinking pickle. (drinks)

Pan. (having filled while Mysis spoke) You may say that.

Mid. (fills) His toby I shall tickle. (drinks)

Mys. (laying down her pipe, and drawing out a long purse) Look, Squire,

I’ve sold my butter, here it’s price is

At your command, (empties it before him) do but this jobb for Mysis

Count ’em. – Six guineas and an old jacobus

Keep Pan, and shame that scape-grace corum nobus.

Fig. 8. Extract from Midas (IRL-Dn, MS 9250. 70).

These extremely detailed stage directions make it possible to recreate the scene exactly as it was performed in 1762.\textsuperscript{104}

Stage directions indicating a mixture of movement and expression are typical of the manuscript librettos. The recitative for Damaetas, Pan and Pol before the musical contest is a parody of the manners of the day. The gestures anticipated by the stage directions clarify the pacing appropriate for the recitative.

\textit{Dam.} (to Pol & Pan) Masters, will ye abide by this condition.

\textit{Pan.} (bowing) I ask no better

\textsuperscript{104} In the DIT production of \textit{Midas} (December 2009), the life-like nature of this scene seemed to have a resonance with the audience and the humour proved extremely effective.
Pol.  (bowing) — I am all submission.
Pan.  (ironically to Pol) Strike up sweet Sir.
Pol.  (politely) Sir, I attend your leisure. (bows)
Mid.  (surlily) Pan, take the lead
Pan.  (cringing awkwardly to Midas) Since 'tis your worship’s pleasure.
(Pan bowing, coughing & spitting, and accompanied, by the Bag-Pipe, confidently begins.)

Fig. 9. Extract from Midas (IRL-Dn, MS 9250. 85).

The detailed stage directions in the following altercation between Mysis and Sileno suggest not only the pacing of the recitative but also melodic gesture and changes in harmony.

Sil.  (impatiently) Why – is the devil in ye, Gammer.
     Have I no refuge from your clamour?
Mys.  (wringing her hands) Was ever wife so basely treated?
     So cross’d, so gaul’d, so fretted! (screams, sobs & stamps to & fro)
O Gods! I shall run crazy: -
Mad, mad!

Sil. No March-hare madder, (soothing ironically & patting her on the shoulder)
Do, lambkin! give it vent. - 'twill ease ye;
Check’d it might burst your Bladder.

Mys. (transported with Rage) Well! — I’ll be even with that spark yet.
Of fish a dainty kettle
You’ve drest — you numskull beetle;
You’ve brought your hogs to a fair market.

Sil. (surprised) Why! — I’m all I’th’ dark yet.
Mys. (tauntingly) Know then, thou peerless blockhead,
Your Scoundrel, would he were choaked,
With his quips, and his quirrels
And running his rigs
With both your daughters has intrigues (Sileno disregarding)
Nay here, read but these billets — (offering Letters.)

Sil. (rejecting them) Pish! put them in your pocket
Did not the sacred oak,
Mys. (disdainfully interrupting) I mock it —
Sil. (continuing) Swear to me on it’s conscience
That by Pol’s means —?
Mys. (flinging angrily from him) His means! — what nonsense! —
(advancing sternly up to him) But, mark me; - I’ve a Plot for you
shall make the house too hot for you;

In Appendices A and B, the suggestions inherent in these stage directions are
applied to the conventions for writing recitatives in English in the mid-eighteenth
century, as exemplified by the following models.

Models for composition

One earlier English opera and one contemporary opera have been taken as models
for the composition of the recitatives — Boyce’s The Shepherd’s Lottery
(1751)\textsuperscript{105} and Arne’s Thomas and Sally (1760).\textsuperscript{106} The choice of these two operas
as models for the Midas recitatives is supported by a number factors. Both are all-
sung, unusual for English operas of the time, and both were presented as after-

\textsuperscript{105} William Boyce, The Shepherd’s Lottery (London: I. Walsh, 1751).
\textsuperscript{106} Thomas Arne, Thomas and Sally ed. Roger Fiske. (1760; London: Schott & co. 1977).
pieces, the most common context for *Midas*. To an extent, both operas were in the style of Boyce’s earlier pastoral opera, *The Chaplet* (1749). However, *Thomas and Sally* is set in the present day, showing the influence of the Italian burlettas and thus increasing its relevance to *Midas*.

In addition, some performers from both of these works later performed in *Midas*, suggesting a consistency in musical standard and performance style. Three of the four performers in the original Covent Garden cast of *Thomas and Sally* — John Beard, George Mattocks and Jane Poitier, appeared four years later in the first Covent Garden performances of *Midas*. John Beard had earlier played the role of Colin in *The Shepherd’s Lottery*, when Joseph Vernon (later Apollo in the Crow Street performances of *Midas*) played the role of Thyrsis as a boy treble.

The recitatives in Appendix A are also influenced by recitatives from later English burlettas by Kane O’Hara and Charles Dibdin. Two recitatives survive from Kane O’Hara’s burletta *The Two Miser*, with music by Dibdin. A further four recitatives survive from Dibdin’s burletta *Poor Vulcan*. These later recitatives blur the distinction between recitative and air. The pace of harmonic movement is slower, with less step-wise movement in the bass than in the earlier recitatives. This more static style, with consequently fewer modulations, is reflected in the increased use of key signatures. Departing from the customary common time, the recitatives include frequent changes of metre and make regular use of compound metre. The dialogue in the recitative ‘Here Maudlin, Grace’, from *Poor Vulcan*, is set entirely in dance metre.
The opening of ‘There sits the old soaker’ in Appendix A is composed in this style. However, as Damaetas accosts Pan, the metre changes to common time and the harmonic progressions begin to reflect the affects of the text, conveying Damaetas’s alarming news to Pan. The recitative ‘O Pan, the devil to pay’, in the following scene, also applies a change of metre to a change of direction in the text. In this instance, the change of metre is combined with a reversal of harmonic direction to reflect the movement on stage. The overbearing single-mindedness which characterises Mysis is expressed harmonically by a rising chromatic bass-line supporting a steady progression through the circle of fifths. This device is borrowed from Arne, who sets the recitatives of Dorcas (a similar character) in this way. Her unswerving harmonic advance in ‘What! Will you never’ (fig. 3), as she attempts to persuade Sally to abandon her true love for a wealthy suitor, ironically leads her back to where she started for the following air. (The roles of Dorcas and Mysis were both sung by Jane Poitier.)

108 Ibid., 66.
Fig. 11. ‘What! Will you never’ from *Thomas and Sally*, 16–17.

Pan counters the momentum of Mysis’s advance with a slide back through the circle of fifths in the dance-rhythm employed to describe him in the previous scene. In the drinking scene ‘Come, Pan, your toast’, a change to compound metre follows Midas’s acceptance of a bribe from Mysis. The compound section concludes with the words ‘My award’s your sure card’.

Instrumental interludes are a feature of the recitatives in the later English burlettas. Many of these are quite long, allowing the insertion of humourous references to well-known music. The Irish tune ‘Sheelagh na Guig’, presented in the unusual metre of 18/8, is borrowed for an interlude in ‘If it were done’ from
O’Hara’s *The Two Misers*. This tune had earlier appeared in *Midas*, with the air ‘Jupiter wenches above’.¹⁰⁹

A recitative from *Poor Vulcan* also borrows an air, previously borrowed in *Midas*—a reference to cuckolding is again reinforced by allusion to Arne’s ‘When daisies pied’.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 62.
The stage directions ‘seeing the Shepherd’s cloak &c. lying on the ground’ and ‘having put them on he surveys himself’ in ‘Zooks!’, \(^{110}\) (Apollo’s recitative after his fall from heaven) prompted the inclusion of a short interlude in a different metre. The opening of ‘Tell me lovely shepherd’, from Boyce’s *Solomon*, is borrowed as a symphony to accompany Apollo’s disguise as Pol, the shepherd. The visual, musical joke of an enharmonic change, when Apollo decides to change his identity, is partly a reference to the musical joke in Pan’s contest air ‘A pox of your pother’, \(^{111}\) where the bass plays a B natural beneath Pan’s words ‘you’re flat Master Pol’. The ‘tender slow symphony’ which precedes Nysa’s recitative ‘O ho! is it so’ \(^{112}\) in scene 12 is borrowed from Boyce’s *The Shepherd’s Lottery*. \(^{113}\)

All four recitatives from *Poor Vulcan* and one from *The Two Misers* are *accompagnato* rather than *secco*. It is likely that they were printed precisely because they were exceptional, rather than representative of the other recitatives in the works. Some of the instrumental writing is comparable to the *accompagnato* recitatives in *The Shepherd’s Lottery*. Characteristics of the symphonies in Boyce’s *accompagnato* recitatives include falling demi-semi-quaver and semi-quaver figures, arpeggio and broken chord figures (sometimes in pairs of repeated notes), two-note slurs, dotted rhythms and staccato cadences. Repeated note figures and falling demi-semi-quaver figures, which feature prominently in Boyce’s *accompagnato* recitatives, occur to a lesser extent in Dibdin’s recitatives. Both composers alternate vocal phrases with instrumental

\(^{110}\) Ibid., 36.
\(^{111}\) Ibid., 126.
\(^{112}\) Ibid., 68.
\(^{113}\) Boyce, 41. (It has been transposed down a semi-tone.)
passages, leaving the voice accompanied by sustained chords, a bass-line, or unaccompanied. Dibdin deviates from this practice to depict a volcano in ‘Adieu my forge’.

Fig. 14. Extract from ‘Adieu my forge’ from Poor Vulcan, 39.

A similar tremolo effect occurs in ‘You saucy scoundrel’ in Midas, for ‘Roll, thunders, roll’. In general, the instrumental writing in Dibdin’s *accompagnato* recitatives is closer in style to the symphonies in the Walsh score of Midas, adding unison passages and unaccompanied lines as well as topical references to borrowed material. The influence of the galant style can be seen in the opening of ‘Adieu my forge’.

114 Midas Music Edition (Appendix A), 32.
The recitatives in Appendix B, relating to an earlier form of the opera, adhere more closely to the models by Boyce and Arne. Harmonic progressions are governed by and support the text. Chords rarely appear in a stable, root position; the sudden changes and reversals of the text are reflected by inverted chords, which offer the potential for ambiguous shifts and reinterpretations. ‘You purseproud bag of lies’ makes repeated use of two of the most common progressions in mid-eighteenth-century recitatives. It begins with a 6/3 chord acting as a dominant to the following chord by stepping up a semi-tone in the bass. This progression is repeated twice at bar six, over a rising, chromatic bass-

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115 Ibid., (Appendix B), 221.
line. The progression in bars two and three is also common in recitatives of the time. Above a falling, step-wise bass-line, the first chord in bar two becomes a seventh chord, acting as a dominant seventh to the following chord, in 6/3 position.

The momentum of this second progression is dispelled in the opening of ‘La! How my heart’,\(^{116}\) where the dominant function of the second chord is weakened or dismissed by the third chord, which leads back to the dominant of the first chord. This progression evokes the pathos appropriate for Daphne’s sighs — ‘Heigho!’, in the following bar. The second half of this recitative is accompanied, with falling demi-semi-quaver figures in the strings punctuating the vocal line. The momentum of the second progression discussed above is again disturbed as the expectation of an F major chord is thwarted by a sudden jump to an A major chord, in 6/3 position. There is no corresponding diversion in the vocal line but the surprising turn in the harmony serves to emphasise the undesirability of appearing ‘starch’d and stuck up’. Both of these interruptions occur, consecutively, in ‘Why, is the devil’, in the midst of Mysis’s ‘screams, sobs, stamps’ and wringing of hands. In this instance, the step of a third moves down rather than up. Her short, dramatic exclamations ‘so cross’d, so gaul’d, so fretted!’ are set in the manner of *accompagnato* recitative, to heighten the dramatic effect.

\(^{116}\) Ibid., 194.
Conclusion

The study of the music in *Midas* documents the progression of musical style in the different versions of the opera. This is most clearly illustrated by the settings of ‘Now I’m seated’. In the 1762 book of *Songs*, it is set to the tune ‘Cease your funning’, the only source for which is *The Beggar’s Opera*. The 1762 book of *Songs* shares thirteen airs with John Gay’s operas, *The Beggar’s Opera* and *Polly*. Although the air would appear to have been shaped by the rhythm of ‘Cease your funning’, this tune is not mentioned in later sources of *Midas*, and by the time *Midas* had settled into its most enduring form, the second edition of 1766, the number of airs from Gay’s operas had fallen to three. The setting of ‘Now I’m seated’ in the Walsh score is declamatory and punctuated by instrumental interludes. These elements, and particularly the changes of metre, are consistent with the blurring of the distinction between air and recitative which is characteristic of the accompanied recitatives in later English burlettas, such as O’Hara’s *The Golden Pippin* and Dibdin’s *Poor Vulcan*.

Arguably, the development of musical style in *Midas* continued after its creator’s death. At least one new air was added to the opera in the nineteenth century. John Sinclair, a celebrated performer of the role of Apollo, composed ‘The Mountain Maid’ (see figure 16), presumably to serve as Apollo’s air in the musical contest with Pan. Both its literary and musical style seem incongruous with O’Hara’s opera. Its popularity illustrates how effective *Midas* was as a vehicle for star performers, transcending its original context. Over the course of its

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composition and revisions, *Midas* shed its associations with the simpler style of ballad opera and established the English burletta as a distinct musical genre, embracing the galant style and achieving a synthesis of musical, literary and social influences.
Allegretto con Anima

The Mountain Maid

John Sinclair

bow'r has hied, And sped to the glassy

Riverside Where the radiant moon shone clear and
bright, And the willows wav'd in the silver light, The

wil lows wav'd in the sil - ver light, On a mos sy

bank lay a shep herd Swain He woke his pipe to a

tune ful strain He woke his pipe to a tune ful
strain. And so blithe-ly gay were the notes he play'd, That he charm'd the ear of the

Mount-Maid And so blithe-ly gay were the notes he play'd that he charm'd the ear of the

Mount Maid And so blithe-ly gay were the notes he play'd that he charm'd the ear of the

Mount Maid. 

Mountain Maid And so blithe-ly gay were the notes he play'd that he charm'd the ear of the

Mountain Maid And so blithe-ly gay were the notes he play'd that he charm'd the ear of the

Mountain Maid.

Mountain Maid And so blithe-ly gay were the notes he play'd that he charm'd the ear of the

Mountain Maid.
2
She stepp'd with timid fear opprest
While a soft sigh swells her gentle breast,
He caught her glance and mark'd her sigh
And triumph laugh'd in his sparkling eye,
So softly sweet was his tuneful ditty
He charm'd her tender soul to pity
And so blithely gay were the Notes he play'd
That he gained the heart of the Mountain Maid.

Fig. 16. John Sinclair, ‘The Mountain Maid’ (1823).
CHAPTER 6: EDITORIAL NOTES

The music borrowed for *Midas* is identified in the librettos and in the 1762 book of *Songs*. Further details of the sources of the music are provided by Roger Fiske, in Appendix E of *English Theatre Music*.¹ The notes below are indebted to Fiske’s research, while also including some additional information and observations on the sources of the music. In many cases, it cannot conclusively be established which specific source O’Hara (or his arranger) favoured. In discussing the sources of John Gay’s *The Beggar’s Opera*, Jeremy Barlow clarifies this point:

> These publications both reflected and shaped popular taste; they would have influenced Gay’s knowledge of tunes, songs and ballads, but this does not mean that he consulted them for every tune they have in common with [the] B[eggar’s] O[pera].²

Popular tunes were generally published without bass-lines and required improvisation on the part of an accompanist. Consequently, there is nothing remarkable in the fact that the bass-lines in the Walsh score often differ from those found in earlier publications of the borrowed melodies. The notes below also identify textual variations between the librettos, the book of *Songs*, the Walsh score and the manuscripts of *Midas* from 1762. It cannot be determined whether the handwriting in these manuscripts is that of Kane O’Hara as no verified sample of his handwriting is extant. Phyllis T. Dircks suggests that the handwriting is consistent with that in a manuscript of O’Hara’s *The Golden Pippin*:

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A study of the manuscripts indicates that the two Dublin manuscripts of *Midas* were written by one individual; and the Larpent version, that is, the one submitted to the Lord Chamberlain for licensing, was copied by a different person. The Dublin manuscript of *The Golden Pippin*, written nine years later, is written in the same style as the Dublin manuscript of *Midas*, and is probably by the same person, either the prompter or an actor working as an amanuensis.3

**Source Details and Textual Variation in the Airs**

**Overture.** The overture, in galant style, is identified by Fiske as the third symphony by John Collett.4 The quality of Collett’s symphonies is such that Christopher Hogwood considers the slow movement of his second symphony to ‘stand as an equal beside J. C. Bach’s best cantabile movement’.5 (The inclusion of the Collett overture in the Walsh score suggests that the score was printed later than 1764, as Collett was only eleven years old at that time).

1. Chorus **Jove in his chair.** The tune for this chorus is named as the ‘King of Prussia’s March’. Fiske attributes it to Niccolini and dates it as 1758. ‘Jove in his chair’ is not included in the Walsh score but can be accessed at the British Library, printed in Dr Kitchener’s collection of ENGLISH SONGS,6 and also on manuscript paper inserted into Dr Kitchener’s score of *Midas*.7 The word ‘squeaks’ appears as ‘quakes’ in the 1762 book of *Songs*. The penultimate line ‘To stir must cease’ appears as ‘Dare not say Pease’ in the 1762 *Songs* and ‘Don’t dare to wheeze’ in the 1762 manuscripts. The final line ‘Or gnaw’ appears as ‘Nor gnaw’ in the 1764 libretto.

4 Fiske, 608; John Collett, *Six Symphonies or Overtures in 8 & 10 parts with a thorough bass for the Harpsichord... Opera Seconda* (London: Bremner, [1765]).
7 GB-Lbl D.272.(3.)
3. **Think not lewd Jove.** This air is set to an Irish tune, named ‘Shaan Bwiy’ in the 1762 *Songs* and ‘Shaan Bwee’ in the 1764 libretto. Fiske also identifies it as ‘Shawn Boy’, ‘Marquis of Granby’ and ‘Over the Water to Charlie’. Aloys Fleischmann includes this tune as ‘Seán Búi’ in his *Sources of Irish Traditional Music*. The text in all sources of *Midas* is consistent, with the small exceptions of ‘with darkness’ appearing instead of ‘in darkness’ in the 1762 *Songs*, and ‘I will plunge’ replacing ‘I’ll plunge’ in the Walsh score.

5. **Be by your friends advised.** The 1764 libretto indicates that this air was sung ‘to its own tune’. Fiske identifies it as a Venetian Ballad from the second volume of *Venetian Ballads Compos’d by Sigr. Hasse and all the celebrated masters* (1742).

9. **Since you mean.** The 1762 *Songs* and 1764 libretto give no source for this tune (‘to its own tune’). Fiske observes a resemblance between its opening and that of a ‘comic tune’ by Hasse. In verse 3, ‘When we get you once at home’ appears as ‘When I get you once at home’ in the 1762 *Songs*. All versions except the second edition of 1766 begin the fourth verse with ‘Done, strike hands’. In the final verse, ‘I may fare worse’ appears as ‘I might fare worse’ in the 1762 *Songs*.

11. **Girls are known.** This air is set to ‘Three Sheepskins’, also the tune for Air 24 from John Gay’s *Polly* (1729). Dianne Dugaw identifies the tune as a morris dance associated with the skinning trade. This air appeared as ‘Air 7’ in the first 1766 edition of *Midas*. ‘Poor silly jades, All after men are gadding’ appears as

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‘With silly Heads, All after men run gadding’ in the 1762 Songs. ‘Pell-mell’ appears as ‘pall-mall’ in the 1764 libretto, but this is likely to be a misprint.

13. Pray Goody. The most reprinted air in Midas, the tune for ‘Pray Goody’ is a ‘Fairy Dance’ borrowed from the pantomime Queen Mab (1750) by Charles Burney. The line ‘A stranger why will you despise?’ appears as ‘Unknown you wrong me to despise’ in the 1762 Songs.

16. Ensemble Mama, how. This ensemble is based on the air ‘Non, non Colette n’est point trompeuse’ from Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s Le Devin du Village (1752).

19. Shall a paltry. The tune for this air is named as ‘A la Santé du Pere d’Oleron’. The 1762 Songs presents an earlier version of the air, which differs considerably in language, although not in meaning, from the air printed in the Appendix:

Shall a paltry Clown, not fit to wipe my Shoes,  
Dare my Amours to cross?  
Shall this Minx, when a ‘Squire of my Importance woos,  
Her Nose up at me toss?  

Hold — Her Father is my Tenant —  
Her Spark I’ll transport, in foreign Parts to range,  
So, glut — as I see convenient;  
My Love and my Revenge.  

20. Jupiter wenches. This air is set to the tune ‘Sheelagh na Guig’. In his preface to Sources of Irish Traditional Music, Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin comments that this tune had also appeared under the title ‘Old Simon the King’ in a London

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12 Charles Burney, Comick Tunes in The Fairies or Queen Mab as they are performed at the Theatre Royal in Crow-Street: set for the violin, German flute or hautboy, with a thorough bass for the harpsichord (Dublin: William Manwaring, [1751]), 7.


14 Kane O’Hara, Songs in the new burletta of Midas. As it is performed at the Theatre-Royal in Crow-Street. 1762. (Dublin: 1762), 13–14.
publication of 1679. A tune by this name appears as Air 62 in *The Beggar’s Opera* (1728), but does not bear close resemblance to the tune in *Midas*. In the Walsh score, ‘strole’ appears as ‘troll’.

22. **All around the Maypole.** The tune for this air is ‘The Landry’ from the pantomime *Fortunatus* (1753). ‘Good ale’ appears as ‘brown air’ in the Walsh score and the 1762 *Songs*. ‘To see us sad’ appears as ‘to see us so sad’ in the score and *Songs*. ‘The lasses’ appears as ‘the doxies’ in the 1764 libretto and the 1762 *Songs*. The 1762 *Songs* also reverses the order of ‘Routing, Shouting’ and changes ‘Fleering, Jeering’ to ‘Sneering, Fleering’.

24. **Sure I shall run.** This air is set to a tune named ‘Sheelagh na Gheiragh’ in the 1762 book of *Songs* and ‘Sheelagh na Guiragh’ in the 1764 libretto. It was published by Burk Thumoth as ‘Chiling o’Guiry’ in 1746. The first line of this air is different in the 1762 *Songs* — ‘Half this Vexation might set me distracted’. ‘All things run contrary’ appears as ‘all things go contrary’ in both the Walsh score and the 1762 *Songs*. ‘Tis he pays the piper’ appears as ‘tis he’ll pay the piper’ in the 1762 *Songs*.

27. **He’s as tight a lad.** The tune for this air is ‘Quand on scait aimer et plaire’ from Rousseau’s *Le Devin du Village*. In the 1762 *Songs*, ‘he’ll love me too’ appears as ‘he loves me too’. In both the Walsh score and the 1762 *Songs* the fifth line appears as ‘Tho’ my sister cast an Hawk’s eye’.

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15 Micheál Ó Súilleabháin in the preface to Aloys Fleischmann, *Sources of Irish Traditional Music*, 1:xxv.
16 Gay & Pepusch, *The Beggar’s Opera. Written by Mr. Gay. With the ouverture in score, the songs, and the basses, engrav’d on copper plates* (London: Tonson, 1761), 42–3.
17 *The Comic Tunes in Fortunatus as they are perform’d at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane: to which is added the additional tunes and song, as perform’d at the Theatre in Crow-Street for the violin, German fulte or hautboy, with a thorough bass for the harpsichord* (Dublin: William Manwaring, [1753]), 17.
18 Burk Thumoth, *Twelve Scotch, and Twelve Irish Airs with Variations, Set for the German Flute Violin or Harpsichord* (London: J. Cox, 1748), 32.
19 Rousseau, 31.
29. **Lovely nymph.** The tune for this air is named as ‘When on the dear bosom lying’, (‘thy dear’ in the *Songs* of 1762).\(^{20}\) ‘The lad who courts you’ appears as ‘the lad that courts you’ in both the Walsh score and the 1762 *Songs*.

31. **If you can caper.** The Irish jig ‘The priest in his boots’ is the tune for this air.\(^{21}\) All but the first word of the penultimate line is presented in brackets in the score. There are two apparent misprints in the score, — ‘set’ is changed to ‘sit’ and ‘beard’ is changed to ‘breed’. In the penultimate line, ‘as I did’ appears as ‘than I did’ in the 1762 *Songs*.

34. Duet **My minikin miss.** This air is set to the tune ‘Bobbing Joan’, which appears as Air 15 in *Polly*.\(^{22}\) The air proved very popular in ballad operas, appearing in:

*Fielding’s Author’s Farce* (1730), Odingsell’s *Bay’s Opera* (1730), Worsdale’s *A Cure for a Scold* (1735), and Baker’s *The Mad House* (1737). One recalls that Fielding’s Squire Western had Sophia play this on the harpsichord every afternoon “as soon as he was drunk,” although, she, as a young lady of refined taste, preferred the works of Handel.\(^{23}\)

The second line begins with ‘E’er can’ rather than ‘Can ever’ in the 1762 *Songs*. The third line is preceded with ‘And’ in the Walsh score and the 1762 *Songs*. The score changes ‘You will’ to ‘You’ll’ and ‘mouldy’ to ‘musty’ in the last line of the first verse. All sources except the second edition of 1766 print ‘Brobdignag’ rather than ‘Brogdignag’. The third verse is omitted from the 1762 *Songs*.

36. **O what pleasures.** This air is set to the tune ‘The Lottery’ from the pantomime *Perseus and Andromeda* (1730). Fiske suggests its composer is John Galliard. There are two small textual variations in the sources. ‘When my wife is

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\(^{21}\) Fleischmann, 308.


laid in ground’ appears as ‘When my wife’s laid in the ground’ in the 1764 libretto and ‘Oh how happy should I be’ appears as ‘O how happy I shou’d be’ in the 1762 Songs.

38. Ne’er will I be. This air is set to an unnamed ‘pantomime tune’. The 1764 libretto and the first edition of 1766 include a second verse for this air. In the 1764 libretto, ‘wooing’ and ‘doing’ appear rather than ‘wheedling’ and ‘meddling’ and ‘wife’ appears instead of ‘bride’. The last line of the first verse appears as ‘For our easy cooing’. In the first and third lines, ‘In the’ is printed in the score, rather than ‘i’ th”.

40. If into your henyard. The tune of this air is named after an eighteenth-century gentleman piper, Larry Grogan, discussed in chapter 5 under the heading of ‘Irish Music in Midas’. Fleischmann names the tune ‘The Miser’. Fiske identifies the tune as ‘Princess Royal’ from the Country Dancing Master (1731). The substitution of ‘When’ for ‘If’ in the first line of the Walsh score is the only appreciable difference between the sources of this air.

42. In those greasy old tatters. The tune for this air is named as ‘A French tune. Assis sur l’Herbette’. Fiske suggests that the tune may have been changed in the Walsh score. He identifies the tune in Walsh as ‘The Fields and the Groves’ by James Worgan, in the collection Amaryllis (1746). It is likely that the substitution of ‘these’ for ‘those’ in the first line of the Walsh score is a misprint.

44. Trio Master Pol. The tune for this trio, ‘Cold and Raw’, is also borrowed for Air 3 of The Beggar’s Opera. It had earlier appeared in Thomas D’Urfey’s Pills to Purge Melancholy. A different Air 8 is printed in MS 9249 — ‘Catch for 3

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24 Fleischmann, 309.
25 Gay & Pepusch, The Beggar’s Opera, 10–11.
26 Thomas D’Urfey, Wit and Mirth, or, Pills to Purge Melancholy. Being a Collection of the best merry Ballads and Songs, old and new. Fitted to all humours, having each their proper tune for
Voices, Tune by Purcel [sic’], followed by a scene which is not included in the other sources. The text is as follows:

Fill ev’ry glass
And about let it pass;
This toast none shall refuse
2. Still may we three
In our sway resistless be,
To destroy or enjoy whom we chuse.
3. All o’er the left thumb.
Supernaculum
‘Fore George! Tis noble Booze.

(Exeunt Mysis & Pan, taking leave ridiculously. Manet Midas in deep meditation)

Scene 3.
Recitative Accompanied.
— Midas (solus) in great agitation
Here’s the to be, or not to be. — — untoward
Dilemma! — puny Conscience makes me Coward. — My Wits are all wool-gath-ring. — Stay. — Pol husled, — Pan fix’d, — and Nysa ravish’d: — ha! — I’m puzzled. — (walks to & fro distractedly)
What damps thee Midas? — how! — like a raw Novice
Wilt thou, now, boggle? — no. — Limbs, do your Office

Air 9.
To a Pantomime Tune.
Have you seen two Figures tugging.27

46. Duet If a rival. The tune named for this air in the 1762 Songs is ‘Come hither, Country ’Squire’. It is unnamed in the 1764 libretto but Fiske identifies it as ‘The Modern Beau’ from Henry Carey’s The Honest Yorkshireman (1735). In the 1762 Songs, this air is a solo for Sileno and ends after the first verse. The first line reads ‘Let a Rival your Picture draw’. The rest of the verse is identical to the other sources except for the first word of the third line, which appears as ‘In’ rather than ‘With’. At the end of the third verse ‘This insolent puppy’ appears as ‘This insolent fellow’ in the 1764 libretto.

27 Midas MS 9249, 76–78.
48. Ensemble **Mother sure you never**. The tune named for this ensemble is ‘Viens que j’examine’ (or ‘Bien que j’examine’ in the 1762 *Songs*). This ensemble begins with Nysa singing ‘Shepherds, sure you never’ in the 1762 *Songs*. The second line appears as ‘Wou’d endeavour’ rather than ‘Will endeavour’ in the Walsh score. The third and fourth lines appear as ‘To discover, From our favour’ in the 1762 *Songs*. The musical reprise of this first section has no new text in the 1762 *Songs*. In the first line of the second section ‘his modest grace’ appears as ‘his charming grace’ in the 1764 libretto. The line is shortened to ‘His guitar and Grace’ in the 1762 *Songs*. The fifth line of this section (‘Wrath disarming’) is omitted in the 1764 libretto but this is likely to be a misprint. The section beginning ‘Sluts are you lost to shame?’ is omitted from the 1762 *Songs*. In the following section, the line ‘Herds and clinkum’ is followed by Nysa singing ‘Never think ’em’ in the 1764 libretto and the Walsh score. In the final section, ‘Pan’s drone is fit’ appears as ‘Pan’s pipes are fit’ in the 1762 *Songs*. In the following line, ‘cool grots’ appears as ‘cool groves’ in the Walsh score, the 1764 libretto and the 1762 *Songs*. The description of Pan in the 1764 libretto reads ‘Pan is old and rusty, Stiff and fusty, Sour and musty’. In the 1762 *Songs*, ‘Let Pan fall’ appears as both ‘Must Pan fall’ and ‘Shall Pan fall’. In the final five-part section, the following lines are added in the 1764 libretto:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nysa</th>
<th>Yes he shall go</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Damaetas</td>
<td>Poor Pan, poor I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sileno</td>
<td>Blood, Pan shall go.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Walsh score includes two further additions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nysa</th>
<th>Yes, he must go</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sileno</td>
<td>Go spit fire go.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
50. **What the devil’s.** The tune named for this air is ‘Kettlebender’. Although the tune in the Walsh score ends with a choral refrain from ‘Kettlebender’, Fiske notes that ‘it is very like “Ally Croaker”’ and Fleischmann confirms his theory. ‘Ally Croaker’ was composed by Larry Grogan, mentioned above. In the line ‘And each one of you tipsey is’, the word ‘one’ is omitted from the 1764 libretto. In the following line, ‘But I’ll as sure’ appears as ‘But I’ll soon’ in the 1764 libretto. In the second verse ‘Disputing whether Pan or Pol’ is reversed to ‘Disputing whether Pol or Pan’ in the 1764 libretto. ‘Disputing’ appears as ‘Debating’ in the 1762 *Songs*. In the second half of the line ‘to you’ is omitted in the 1762 *Songs*. ‘Clumsy lugs’ appears as ‘clumsy lungs’ in the Walsh score, the 1764 libretto and the 1762 *Songs*. However, ‘lugs’ seems more appropriate in the context. The words for the final chorus differ from the other sources in the 1762 *Songs*:

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Let them be judg’d by Justice Midas.
Who has either Taste or Skill, compar’d to Justice Midas?

O tremendous Justice Midas!
Who shall oppose wise Justice Midas?
Let them be judg’d by Justice Midas:
Who can boast of Taste or Skill so great as Justice Midas?
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52. **Now I’m seated.** The tune named for this air in the 1762 *Songs* is ‘Cease your funning’, Air 37 from *The Beggar’s Opera*. However, it is not set to this tune in the Walsh score. The 1764 libretto indicates that it is sung ‘to its own tune’. Fiske detects a resemblance between the beginning of the tune in Walsh and the first two bars of a Venetian Ballad. The second section of the air in the Walsh score

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appears to be set to the ‘The Countess of Coventry’s Minuet’.\textsuperscript{30} ‘Shall be fix’d’ appears as ‘skill’d be fix’d’ in the 1762 Songs and the 1764 libretto. ‘Shall shew nose here’ appears as ‘Shall shew his nose here’ in the Walsh score and the 1764 libretto and as ‘Shall shew’s nose here’ in the 1762 Songs. ‘But be transported’ appears as ‘But transported be’ in the 1762 Songs.

54. A \textit{pox of your pother}. The tune of this air is unnamed in the librettos but Fleischmann identifies it as ‘Paddy O’Doody’,\textsuperscript{31} while Fiske identifies it as ‘Liberty Hall’ or ‘Derry Down’. In the 1764 score, ‘they the lady extol’ appears as ‘they the ladies extol’.

56. \textit{Ah happy hours}. No tune is named for this air. John Sinclair’s ‘The Mountain Maid’ may have been substituted for this air in the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{32}

58. \textit{See triumphant}. The source for this chorus is named as ‘See the conqu-ring Hero comes’ in the 1762 Songs, and is borrowed from Handel’s \textit{Judas Maccabaeus} (1747).

60. Finale \textit{Dunce, I did but sham}. The tune for the finale is named as ‘Push about the brisk Bowl’ in the 1762 Songs and ‘To various Tunes’ in the 1764 libretto. Fiske identifies two other tunes within the finale — ‘The Watchman’ (at ‘Detected, baulk’d, and small’) from Burney’s \textit{Queen Mab} (1750) and a rondo theme from Boyce’s \textit{The Chaplet} (1749). The section of text beginning ‘Now my heart’s cur’d’, which is set to this rondo, only appears in the 1764 libretto, the 1762 manuscripts and the Walsh score. See 60b below. The 1766 libretto returns to ‘Push about the brisk bowl’ after the Burney pantomime tune. The air in the 1762 Songs consists of nine verses, all set to the tune ‘Push about the brisk bowl’.

\textsuperscript{30} The melody, as it appears in \textit{Midas}, is closest to ‘The County of Coventry’s Minuet’ in an undated manuscript from The Scottish Catholic Archives (\textit{GB Eca, LS/11/7/165}). Other variations of the melody appear in print as ‘Lady Coventry’s Minuet’.

\textsuperscript{31} Fleischmann, 310.

See 60c. below. This tune was already associated with ‘an Ass’ and a lawyer, appearing in the song collection *The Wreath* as the setting for the air ‘The Ass’:

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The Lawyer so grave when he puts in his Plea,
With Forehead well cover’d with Brass;
Th’ he talks to no Purpose, he pockets your Fee;
There you, my good Friend, are the Ass.
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‘Thou’ appears as ‘you’ in some instances in the Walsh score.

2b. **To happy ignorance.** No tune is named for this air. Fiske identifies it as a Venetian Ballad.³⁴

W4. **No Difference.** This air is set to the tune ‘There was a jolly Beggar’, which is borrowed from air 51 of John Gay’s *Polly*.³⁵ It can also be found in D’Urfey’s *Pills to Purge Melancholy*,³⁶ and appeared in ten other ballad operas.

This air was originally the Beggar’s Chorus in Richard Brome’s *The Jovial Crew*, which was acted at the Cockpit in Drury Lane in 1641. It appeared in the following: John Gay’s *Polly* (1729), Theophilus Cibber’s *The Lover* (1730-31), Thomas Walker’s *The Quaker’s Opera* (1728), Henry Fielding’s *Don Quixote in England* (1734), Mrs. Mary Manley’s *The Court Legacy* (1733), Captain John Durant Breval’s *The Rape of Helen* (1733), the anonymous ballad-opera, *The Humours of the Court* (1732), Thomas Baker’s *An Act at Oxford* (1704), Charles Coffey’s *The Beggar’s Wedding* (1729), William Rufus Chetwood’s *The Lover’s Opera* (1729), and George Lillo’s *Silvia; or, The Country Burial* (1730).³⁷

In the third line ‘only’ appears as ‘empty’ in the Walsh score and the 1762 *Songs*, and ‘must’ appears as ‘will’ in the *Songs*. In the second verse, the line ‘No wanton

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³⁴ Hasse, *Venetian Ballads*, 1:27.
³⁶ D’Urfey, 3:265.
need to fear surprize’ appears as ‘No wanton Dame needs fear Surprize’ in the
1762 Songs. The last verse differs considerably in the 1762 Songs:

Then hey for Pam, for Matadores,
Voles, Taxes and Rewards!
Old Maids will spend—when past Amours,
A live-long Night of Cards—And a gamb-
Ling all will go, will go, will go, &c.

The following air appears after ‘Peace Termagant’ in the 1762 manuscripts:

Jupiter: Ye shall feel the Effects of incurring
My displeasure by saucy Demurring
When our Thunder, your Spy down hurr’ing
Shall leave Heav’n dark as Hell.

(to Juno) You may sit to spin, by a Candle;--
Master Phoebus shall give no handle
To new Scandal.
You may hug your lonely Pillow;
Wear the weeping Willow
‘Till your jealous Clack lye still o:--
‘Till you learn
To discern
Your Lord and Master from Tom Bell.38

8b. With fun my disgrace. The tune for this air is ‘Hang me if I marry’, borrowed from Boyce’s The Chaplet (1749). In verse two, ‘rack’ appears as ‘wreck’ in the Walsh score and the 1762 Songs.

10b. If the swain. The tune named for this air is ‘If ’tis joy to wound a Lover’. However, Fiske identifies it as ‘Nature fram’d thee’ from Arne’s The Judgment of Paris (1742). In the 1762 Songs, ‘fright’ appears as ‘Shock’ and ‘delightful’ appears as ‘transporting’.

10d. If I cannot. This air is set to ‘Mireton’, a tune which is also borrowed for Air 29 of Polly.39

38 Midas MS 9249, 9.
16b. The following scene appears after the ensemble ‘Mama, how’ (no. 16) in the second 1762 manuscript:

RECITATIVE Accompanied. Sileno alone.

Sil. Odsfish! Th’ old Trot is, more than usual, testy—
A smock-fac’d Youth!—but, I se not seem o’er-hasty,—
The Oracle I’se question—and be guided
By his Response.
He will, for sarten, let us know
Whether the Boy shall Stay or Go;
And so at once
This knotty point’s decided.

AIR 14.
Tho’, for fear of sprights,
Thump, thump, beats my Heart.
To be set to rights
I at no Ghosts will start.
Pitch-dark, tho’ the Wood
Groping will I steer:—
His Wife’s Mood
Who hath withstood
Can know no Fear. (Exit.)

17a2. Wretched he. The tune named for this air is ‘Fanny’s fairer than a flower’.

MS 9249 adds that the tune is ‘by St. Germain’.

22c. Shall he run away. This air is set to the folk tune ‘My Wife’s a galloping young Thing’. Fleischmann includes it in his collection as an Irish air in Midas. In the 1762 Songs, the second line appears as ‘Because he a smug ruddy Face has’ and ‘I’ll pinch, and’ appears as ‘I’ll mangle’. In both the score and the 1762 Songs, ‘I’ll make him’ appears as ‘I’ll teach him’.

X2. When at your foe. The tune for this air is ‘Planxy Johnston’ by Turlough O’Carolan. It can be found as ‘Baptist Johnston’ in Donal O’Sullivan’s Songs of

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39 Gay & Pepusch, Polly, 12. ‘a mirleton or mirliton is a little reed pipe, the sound of which this dance tune is meant to evoke’. (The Beggar’s Opera and Polly, ed. Hal Gladfelder (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 230).
40 Midas MS 9250, 22.
41 Fleischmann, 308.
There is some textual variation in the 1762 Songs. ‘The sailors say’ appears as ‘Do as at sea’, ‘to the mitre that would fill his wish up’ appears as ‘to the Mitre wou’d fill his whole Wish up’, and ‘tip-a-toe’ appears as ‘silently’. The last five lines are as follows:

’Till winking,
Unthinking,
She catch him,
Dispatch him,
And swallow him up at a Mouthful.

X4. This rash frenzy. The tune for this air is the Gavotte from the overture to Handel’s Ottone (1723). ‘With smiles’ appears as ‘in smiles’ in the Walsh score. ‘Kick’ appears as ‘nick’, and ‘shall swing’ appears as ‘and swinge’.

X11. Oh fye. The tune for this air is named as ‘Newmarket’. It is clear that it was well-known in Ireland as the Scottish air ‘Cock up Your Beaver’ earlier in the eighteenth century, as Carolan had written variations on the tune under that name.

25b. To blast a rival’s happiness. The tune for this air is named as ‘From tree to tree’. The earlier 1762 manuscript states that it is by B. Palma. Fiske notes that the same tune appears as ‘Come let us all be blith and gay’ in Arne’s The Winter’s Amusement [1762]. The words for the second verse in the 1762 Songs are as follows:

In Jealousy’s unequal Scale
Her Loss appears our Gain.
Unblest ourselves, we seek to steal
A Pleasure from her Pain.

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43 O’Sullivan, Songs of the Irish, 277.
32b. Neatest, Compleatest. The 1764 libretto describes the tune for this air as ‘An Italian tune of Pescetti’. Fiske further identifies it as ‘Semplici amanti’ from the pasticcio, Alessandro in Persia (1741). In the 1762 manuscripts ‘Could brave and stay’ appears as ‘wou’d slight, and stay’ and ‘Kind creature’ appears as ‘Dear creature’. The air is followed by the stage direction ‘During the last symphony, they take a tender leave and part. Exit Pol sighing’.

38a. Ne’er will I be. This is set to the same tune as 38 above. In the 1762 Songs and the second edition of 1766 the air has one verse. However, the two verses in 38a are printed in the Walsh score and the 1764 libretto.

Y2. Strip him. The tune for this air is ‘The Milkmaids’ from the pantomime Fortunatus (1753). In the 1762 manuscripts ‘Let his shoulder feel your lash on it’ appears as ‘Let his Buttock feel your lash on’t’. In the Walsh score, ‘Clip him, Rip him’ appears as ‘Snip him, Clip him’ and ‘Thus we gain’ appears as ‘So we gain’.

Y4. Since first those eyes. This air is set to the tune ‘Nanny of the Hill’ by John Worgan, which can be found in The Muse’s Delight. In the 1762 manuscripts ‘scout’ appears as ‘snouch’, ‘lout’ appears as ‘slouch’, ‘frown’ appears as ‘flout’, ‘clumsy clown’ appears as ‘lousy lout’ and ‘win’ appears as ‘smouze’. In the 1762 Songs, the second lines of verses two and three are the same as in the 1764 libretto, but the other lines of these verses differ considerably:

> My Vows you slight, you mock my Sighs,  
> My Tears but make you laugh:  
> Each Parent with my Wish complies—  
> None frowns but cruel Daph—

> My Love you hate, my Person scorn,  
> My Wealth despise as Chaff—  
> Yet to that Vagabond forlorn,  
> To Pol you’re gentle Daph.

44 Apollo’s Cabinet, or the Muse’s Delight (Liverpool: John Sadler, 1756), 68.
Y6. **Yes; your wealth.** The tune named for this air in the 1764 libretto is ‘A French tune. Tourlerette’. The opening line of the air is similar to 6Yb in Appendix C—‘Yes, all your Wealth I scorn, and your Person I detest’, but a different tune is named in the 1762 Songs. The structure of the air in that source is different, featuring a ‘tol lol de ra’ refrain. The dramatic situation is the same in both airs.

Y8. **By whining.** This air is set to the tune ‘Farewel the Hills and Vallies [sic]’. Fiske identifies it as ‘The Country Girl’s Farewell’, found in Calliope (1737) and other sources. In the 1762 manuscripts the first three lines appear as:

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By whindging
Bindging
Cringing.
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Y10. **When gathering clouds.** The tune for this air is by Joseph Vernon. The 1762 book of Songs names the tune after its refrain ‘Heigh ho!’. The 1764 libretto gives the more usual title, ‘When that I was a little tiny Boy’, a setting of words from Shakespeare’s Twelfth Night. Vernon was the first Apollo in a public performance of Midas. In the 1762 manuscripts ‘crish, crash’ appears as ‘crash, dash’. In the Walsh score ‘The rain and all its lullaby’ appears as ‘Then rain and all is lullaby’ and ‘Tongue all ire, Eyes on fire’ appears as ‘Tongue, Ire, Eyes, Fire’.

Y13. **The wolf that slaughter’d.** This air is set to an unnamed ‘Italian Opera tune’. In the 1762 Songs ‘shrillest’ appears as ‘shrilling’ and ‘The wrongs he did my daughters’ appears as ‘The wrongs to my poor daughters’.

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45 Fiske names it as ‘Torteuille’.
46 O.G.T. Sonneck attributes this air to Seedo. It also appears in Fielding’s The Lottery (1731). (Dircks, TB, 101).
Y22. **When fairies.** This air is a parody of ‘When fairies dance round on the grass’ from Boyce’s *The Shepherd’s Lottery* (1751). In the 1762 *Songs* ‘And revel’ appears as ‘And frolick’, ‘Peep in on their frolicks’ appears as ‘Break in on their Revels’ and ‘In fright’ appears as ‘Disturb’d’.

Y24. **My heart so o’er flow’th.** This air is set ‘to its own tune’. There are some textual differences between the 1764 libretto and the Walsh score. The first two lines appear as ‘My heart so o’erflows, With its love for you both’ in the score, where ‘its’ is omitted in the libretto. ‘For your vows are false as air’ in the libretto, appears as ‘And your vows are as false as air’ in the score. ‘What heart’ appears as ‘That heart’, ‘That at night’ appears as ‘That e’er night’ and ‘How, at night will you satisfy both?’ appears as ‘How, by night can you satisfy both?’

Y26. **O yes.** No tune is named for this air in the 1764 libretto, but MS 9249 gives the name of the tune as ‘the Wooden Shoe-Dance’. The air comprises more than one tune; the section beginning ‘a finical’ is set to a ‘wooden shoe-dance’, ‘le sabotier’.

In the 1762 manuscripts, the first line appears as ‘Hollo! (tolls) Hollo! (tolls)’. ‘And trades With jades’ appears as ‘Smacks Dirty Packs’ and ‘As a switch tall and thin Ne’er a rag to his skin’ appears as ‘Tall, Slim as a Switch Not a rag to his Breeches’.

Y28. **Fine times.** This air is set to the tune ‘Kiss me fast my mother’s coming’. Fiske comments that the tune is also known as ‘O where wad bonnie Annie lye’.

Y30. **The gods were all.** This air is set to the tune ‘Nancy Dawson’, named after a celebrated dancer on the London stage. ‘Yet, roguishly’ appears as ‘but roguishly’ and ‘Swore’ appears as ‘and swore’ in the Walsh score. There are also some textual differences with the 1762 manuscripts. ‘How fond a husband’ appears as

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‘How kind a husband’, ‘He storm’d’ appears as ‘He blush’d’, ‘Pretended’ appears as ‘affected’ and ‘Swore, to his girls he’d stick like pitch, And wench in open day-light’ appears as ‘Then swore, henceforth he’ll go thro’ stitch, And whore in open day-light’.

Y32. Duet A monarch may huff. The tune for this air is Arne’s ‘When daisies pied’, a setting of words from Shakespeare’s *Love’s Labour Lost*. In the Walsh score, ‘too bluff’ appears as ‘to chuff’ and ‘While he gives himself’ appears as ‘While they give themselves Airs’.

Z6. Mark what I say. This air is set to the tune ‘Baaltiorough’, a tune which had earlier appeared with the air ‘Thankless! Pusillanimous!’ in the 1762 book of *Songs*, sung by the same character. In the 1762 manuscripts, the last three lines appear as:

    Fob off yond’ tatterdemallion,
    We’ll stick to Pan, and his Doodle-Sac
    Foh upon Cetras Italian!

Z8. If in the courts. No name is given for the tune of this air in the 1764 libretto. However, the tune is named in the 1762 book of *Songs* as ‘A lovely Lass to a Fryar came’, which can be found in *The Vocal Miscellany* (1738). In the Walsh score, ‘tip’ appears as ‘fee’ and ‘plumb’ appears as ‘plump’. In the 1762 *Songs* ‘Or a cause you’d fain do hurt in’ appears as ‘Or a Grudge if you enter—tain’ and ‘plumb’ appears as ‘glib’.

Z9. As soon as her doating. This air is set to the tune ‘Ligurum Cuss’, also referred to as ‘Gliogram cos’ or ‘Rattle of feet’ in Fleischmann.30

60b. Dunce, I did but sham. The section of text beginning ‘Now my heart’s cur’d’, which is set to a rondo from Boyce’s *The Chaplet*, only appears in the

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50 Fleischmann, 309.
1764 libretto, the 1762 manuscripts and the Walsh score. However, the ending of this section in the 1764 libretto and 1762 manuscripts is not included in the score:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daph.</td>
<td>All together, but into an ass, laugh at the ass!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sil.</td>
<td>to several airs, into an ass, a real ass!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mys.</td>
<td>While Midas joins in chorus, braying like an ass.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dam.</td>
<td>What a sad ass.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apol.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A similar section sung ‘together, to several airs’, before the final chorus, is also only present in the 1764 libretto and 1762 manuscripts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apollo</td>
<td>All the Gods laugh at Midas (ascends in the sun. Exit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dam.</td>
<td>Alas! Alas!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid.</td>
<td>(Goes about braying like an ass).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mys.</td>
<td>What a sad pass – Ah, poor Midas! (exit wringing hands)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dap.</td>
<td>Chang’d to an ass—Well bray’d Midas. (manet laughing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nys.</td>
<td>Well bray’d Midas; manifest ass. (manet capering for joy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sil.</td>
<td>Laugh at the ass; long-ear’d Midas! (manet laughing).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

W1. **To earth be quick.** The tune for this air is ‘To Arms’ from Purcell’s *Bonduca* (1695). The source for the setting in Appendix C is *Orpheus Britannicus*.52

W2. **Love reigns supreme.** This air is set to ‘The wanton God that pierces Hearts’, borrowed from Arne’s *Comus* (1738).53

W3. **To avoid ridicule.** This air is set to ‘When a wife’s in her pout’. The bass-line in Appendix C is borrowed from Air 48 in John Gay’s *The Beggar’s Opera*.54

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51 ‘long-ear’d Midas’ and the stage directions included in this section are incorporated from the 1762 manuscripts.
X5. **Those random threats.** This duet is set to the tune ‘The Collier had a Daughter’. The bass-line in Appendix C is borrowed from Air 60 in John Gay’s *Polly*.  

X8. **O Oracle, oracle.** This air is set to the tune ‘Giles Collins’ (‘Giles Collin’ in the book of *Songs*). The source for this air is in Simpson’s *The British Broadside Ballad*. A bass-line and introduction have been added editorially.

X10. **Thy daughters.** The tune for this short air is ‘Chevy Chase’. The bass-line in Appendix C has been borrowed from Air 61 in *The Beggar’s Opera*.

Y6b. **Yes, all your wealth.** This air is set to the tune ‘There is a pretty Girl and a Tenant of my own’. The source for the tune in Appendix C is Fleischmann’s *Sources of Irish Traditional Music*. The bass-line, introduction and postlude have been added editorially.

Y11. **Why, Ny.** This air is set to ‘Gossip Joan’. Its bass-line in Appendix C is borrowed from Air 38 in *The Beggar’s Opera*.

Y14. **Now let your jealous soul.** The tune for this air is ‘Polwart on the Green’. The bass-line of the setting in Appendix C is borrowed from Air 20 of John Gay’s *Polly*.

Y15. **How cou’d you strive my Love to thwart.** This air is set to the tune ‘Of all the simple Things we do’. The bass-line of the setting in Appendix C is borrowed from Air 5 of John Gay’s *The Beggar’s Opera*.

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57 Gay & Pepusch, *The Beggar’s Opera*, 42.
58 Fleischmann, 110.
Y16. **No fear shall drive**. The tune for this trio is ‘’Twas within a Furlong of Edinboro’ town’, composed by Henry Purcell and first performed is 1695 as part of *The Mock Marriage* (Z605). The bass-line of the setting in Appendix C is borrowed from Air 5 of *Polly*, with some minor alterations. The melody from this source has been adjusted with reference to a version in Simpson’s *The British Broadside Ballad*. The distribution of parts is suggested by the layout of the text in the 1762 book of *Songs*.

Y17. **If in the Courts**. Musically, this is identical to Z8 above. However, the second line of text in this source is ‘Or a Grudge if you enter—tain’. The second last line begins with ‘Glib’ rather than ‘Plumb’.

Y18. **Do you sign**. This air is set to the tune ‘One long Whitsun holiday’, also known as ‘The Parson among the Peas’. The melody in Appendix C is borrowed from *Pills to Purge Melancholy*. The bass-line, introduction and postlude are added editorially.

Y19. **Thus arm’d with Beer**. This duet is set to the tune ‘Thomas I cannot’. The bass-line is borrowed from Air 10 of *The Beggar’s Opera*. The introduction and postlude are added editorially. The distribution of parts in the duet is governed by the layout in the 1762 book of *Songs*.

Y20. **Made! to our Shame**. This dialogue air is set to the tune ‘The Man for Life that takes a Wife’. The melody in Appendix C is borrowed from Air 1, Act 2 of Colley Cibber’s *Love in a Riddle* (1729). The bass-line, introduction and postlude have been added editorially. The distribution of voices is governed by the layout of the text in the 1762 book of *Songs*.

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63 *BBB*, 636.
64 D’Urfey, 1:38.
Z1. **Have you seen.** The tune named for this air is ‘A Dance of Maranese’s’. This would suggest a wooden–shoe dance, but none has been found which is suitable to the text. This air also appears in MS 9249 ‘to a Pantomime Tune’.  

Z2. Chorus **Come let’s support.** This air is set to the tune ‘The Highlander’s March’. The source for the melody in Appendix C is Fleischmann’s *Sources of Irish Traditional Music*. A bass-line, introduction, interlude and postlude have been added editorially.

Z3. **If you take.** The tune named for this air in the 1762 book of *Songs* is ‘The French Peasant’s Dance’. No suitable tune has been located.

Z4. **At Fairs and Wakes.** This air is set to the Irish tune ‘Jack Lattin’. The source for the melody is Fleischmann’s *Sources of Irish Traditional Music*. The introduction, postlude and simple bass-line have been added editorially.

Z5. **Thankless, Pusillanimous!** This air is set to ‘Baaltiouragh’, the same tune as Z6 above. The words in the 1762 book of *Songs* have been set to the arrangement in the Walsh score.

46b. **To Midas let.** This air is set to the tune ‘No Nymph that trips the verdant Plains’ by John Worgan. The melody of the setting in Appendix C is borrowed from the Dovaston music manuscripts in the British Library. The bass-line, introduction, postlude and interludes have been added editorially. A completely different setting of the air is included in *Clio and Euterpe* (1758). The theme of the original air also relates to a character rivaling Apollo (Sol) but with a milder tone:

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The Beams of Sol delight and cheer,
While Summer Seasons roll:
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67 Midas MS 9249, 78.
68 Fleischmann, 237.
69 Fleischmann, 710.
70 Dovaston music manuscripts, 1. GB-Lbl, Add. 63507.
But Sally’s smiles can all the Year
Give pleasure to the Soul.71

48b. **Huzza for Pol!** This chorus is set to the tune ‘Fill ev’ry Glass’. The melody and bass-line in Appendix C are borrowed from Air 19 of *The Beggar’s Opera*.72 The introduction and postlude are added editorially.

52b. **Now I’m seated.** The words of this air are the same as 52 above. However, the tune named for the air in the 1762 book of *Songs* differs from that printed in the Walsh score. The tune is named as ‘Cease your Funning’. The melody and bass-line for the setting in Appendix C are borrowed from Air 37 of *The Beggar’s Opera*.73 The introduction and postlude are added editorially.

54b. **When Norah sits to milk her cow.** This air only appears in MS 9249. The tune is named as ‘Drimmenduffh’, ending with the refrain ‘Oroo Drimenduffh!’.

The melody and bass-line in Appendix C are borrowed from Thumoth’s *Twelve Scotch, and Twelve Irish Airs*.74 The air has been transposed down a third and an introduction has been added.

60c. Finale **Why! You pitiful.** Unlike the finale in the Walsh score, this air is set to only one tune—‘Push about the brisk Bowl’. The setting of this tune in the Walsh score has been borrowed for the setting in Appendix C, and adapted to accommodate the additional verses.

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74 Thumoth, 38.
Textual Variation in the Recitatives

2/2a. Immortals. ‘Hoh!’ appears before ‘We’ll make him an example’ in the 1762 manuscripts.

2c. What new rape. The first two lines appear as ‘What new Rape’s toward? — that at six and seven This Tyrant, for it’s sake, thus jumbles Heaven’ in the 1762 manuscripts. The line beginning ‘That you of lawless love’ appears as ‘That you in Cuckoldom at large may wallow’ and ‘thou grand monarque’ appears as ‘O grand Monarque’ in the manuscripts.

4/4a. Peace termagant. In the manuscripts ‘I swear’ appears as ‘We swear’ and ‘to the earth’ appears as ‘down to Earth’. Before ‘O jest most precious’ Momus sings ‘What Lungs can hold?’.

6. You saucy scoundrel. ‘There, sir—come Disorder’ appears as ‘take you That—(a Box o’ the Ear) Damn Order!’ and ‘flash around him’ appears as ‘flash about him’ in the manuscripts and the second edition of the 1766 libretto.

8/8a. Zooks. In the 1762 manuscripts ‘what a crush’ appears as ‘what a squelsh’.

8c. Whom have we here. ‘A shepherd once my dad, sir’ appears as ‘my Dad, once, a warm Cadger’ and ‘You’ve drawn a prize i’ th’ lottery.—So have I too’ appears as ‘You rose, today, Bum foremost; so did I too’ in the 1762 manuscripts.

9b. From Nectar. ‘Why could I not’ appears as ‘why cou’d not I’ in the manuscripts.

10/10a. But Nysa. ‘His great worship’ appears as ‘his good worship’ and ‘I’ve cur’d him, I believe’ appears as ‘I fancy I’ve cur’d him’ in the 1762 manuscripts.
12/12a. Now dame. The section beginning ‘He shall not stay’ and ending ‘thou’rt a wise one’ is retained in the first two-act edition of 1766 but omitted in the second edition of that year.

17/17a. Nysa, you say. ‘She is wond’rous skittish’ appears as ‘she’s damnation skittish’ and ‘she scorns you’ appears as ‘she hums you’ in the 1762 manuscripts. ‘You’d swear her tongue was of bell-metal’ appears as ‘you’d swear she had bedew’d a nettle’, ‘Did she not give the slip’ appears as ‘Did not she give the Belt’ and ‘Some favour’d lout incog’ appears as ‘Some favour’d swain belike’ in the manuscripts.

21. There sits the old soaker. ‘You’ve trod on a thistle’ appears as ‘you’re all in the Noggin’ and ‘go whistle’ appears as ‘be jogging’ in the manuscripts.

22d. Keep yourself cool. ‘our Squire, when mellow, ’Tis he shall do’t, he’s a rough hect’ring fellow’ appears as ‘The Squire, when mellow, I’ll lye perdue; he is a bold hect’ring fellow’ in the manuscripts.

X3. Out on’t. ‘I’ll ne’er flatter, Not I, I scorn it, tell me no such matter’ appears as ‘I’ll ne’er hug, or Coax him, I scorn all plotting, hugger-mugger’ in the manuscripts. Similarly, ‘My gossips all would loll their tongues’ appears as ‘My gossips would loll out their tongues’ and ‘bawling’ appears as ‘Brawling’.

26/26a. La! how my heart. ‘La!’ appears as ‘Lord!’ in the manuscripts.

28/28a. Think o’ the devil. ‘Some melting, plaintive strain’ appears as ‘some soothing, plaintive strain’ in the 1762 manuscripts.

31b. I ask but you. ‘D’you think I’ll range’ appears as ‘Fear not I’ll range’ in the manuscripts.

33. Marry come up. ‘Ay, tho’ a dozen’ appears as ‘Ay, were’t a dozen’ in the manuscripts.
34b/41. **Good lack.** The lines ‘I’m all bewitch’d, untwisted. Ah! Cupid, thou’rt a wizard Thy spells are not to be resisted. Alas’ appear in 34b but not in 41.

35. **Turn Tygress.** In the 1762 manuscripts there are some additional lines after ‘Burnt up t’a very cinder? and before ‘Sir, to my virtue’:

Nysa

Squire, I resent your Rudeness
As much as I detest your Lewdness.
Off! (tearing from him) to some Brothel Trull.
Your beastly Markets try There:
But know, obscene Town-Bull!,
You’ve Now, the wrong sow by th’ear.

Midas (fondly)

And can you then determine
To spurn a Magistrate in Ermine,
And fondle that scald Vermine?

In the second line, ‘I swear by the Old Harry’ appears as ‘I swear, by the Lord Harry’ in the manuscripts.

37/37a. **Young birds.** The manuscripts begin with ‘Only young birds’ and ‘e’er shall pass’ appears as ‘e’er can pass’.

39/39a. **Well, master Pol.** In the 1762 manuscripts, the first two lines appear as:

Well. Pol shall pay for This;
For him at least, I have a rod in piss.

Y1/39b. **So Squire.** In the manuscripts ‘fate’ appears as ‘feat’ and ‘As St. George did the dragon’ appears as ‘As St. George made the dragon’.

Y3. **Heigho.** In the manuscripts ‘This may be’ appears as ‘But this may be’.

Y5. **You purseproud.** ‘Farther a field’ appears as ‘Make yourself scarce’ in the manuscripts.

Y7. **Hey toss!** ‘A swinging rap’ appears as ‘A dev’lish rap’ in the manuscripts.

Y9. **Why—is the devil.** The final line ‘And make your heart the gladder’ appears as ‘Check’d it might burst your Bladder’ in the manuscripts.
Y12. **Well, I’ll be even.** Mysis’s lines ‘But I’ve a plot shall make you rue, And keep the house too hot for you’ appear as ‘But, mark me; —I’ve a Plot for you, Shall make the house too hot for you’ in the manuscripts.

Y21. **Gad’s bud, I dread.** ‘They stare, gaping like stuck pigs at my lustre’ appears as ‘They stare like stuck Pigs, at the dazzling Lustre!’ in the manuscripts.

Y23. **O Pol the fat’s.** In the manuscripts ‘and quit’ appears as ‘and leave’.

Y27. **Hush ribald cur.** In the manuscripts ‘bawling’ appears as ‘yelping’ and ‘mawling’ appears as ‘skelping’. ‘Oh are you there’ is preceded by ‘Hoa!’; ‘I guess’d at what would follow’ appears as ‘I guess’d a scab wou’d follow’ and ‘you are a rogue’ appears as ‘you’re a Black-guard’.

Y29. **Come, come.** In the manuscripts ‘Jove’s in a raging fume’ is preceded by ‘Oh, Sol’. Similarly, ‘Oh! ’tis such fun’ appears as ‘Why, ’tis such fun’ and ‘Hark then’ appears as ‘Know then’.

Y31. **Oh I shall burst!** In the manuscripts ‘strait in execution’ appears as ‘soon in execution’ and ‘on double wages’ appears as ‘at double wages’. There is greater divergence between the 1764 libretto and the manuscripts later in this recitative.

The section beginning ‘He threatens’ appears as follows in the manuscripts:

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Mercury    Else, as a stray, he’ll advertise you
            Next post. in Faulkner’s Journal.
Pol       Psha!—let him do his worst—
            Why, what care I?—
            Not, that I’m sulky; no,—but, first
            I’ve other Fish to fry?—
            Besides, a counterplot some knaves to catch,
            These in a trice, I shall dispatch,
            And, then, he may command me.
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43/43a. **Come, Pan your toast.** In the 1762 manuscripts ‘our noble Umpire’ appears as ‘t’our noble Umpire’, ‘Hang him’ appears as ‘Rot him’, ‘wretched
pickle’ appears as ‘stinking pickle’ and ‘You reason right’ appears as ‘you may say that’.

Z7. The justice is quandary. In the manuscripts ‘I’ll bully and juggle’ appears as ‘I’ll bully I’ll juggle’ and ‘Blood, he shall fly’ appears as ‘I’ll make him fly’.

43b. Well said. In the manuscripts ‘I’ll have one tryal with this fop’ appears as ‘I’ll take one tryal with the fop’ and ‘our crony’s daughter’ appears as ‘this old Crone’s daughter’.

Z10/43d. Ha! ha! Sit down. In the manuscripts ‘I have no head for business’ appears as ‘My head’s ne’er fit for business’. After the following catch, the manuscripts include a scene which does not appear in print.75

Scene 3.
Recitative Accompanied.
Midas (solus) in great agitation

Here’s the to be, or not to be. - - untoward
Dilemma!—puny Conscience makes me Coward.—
My Wits are all wool-gath’ring.—stay.—Pol husled,
Pan fix’d,—and Nysa ravish’d;—ha!—I’m puzzled.
(walks to and fro distractedly)
What damps thee Midas?—how!—like a raw Novice
Wilt thou, now, boggle?—no.—Limbs, do your office

This leads to Z1 ‘Have you seen two Figures’ in Appendix C.76

45. My Daph a wife. In the manuscripts the line ‘To the plantations sooner would I send her’ appears as ‘Sooner to Drury’s hottest stews I’d send her’. ‘Hag of Endor’ appears as ‘Witch of Endor’ and ‘congees and scrapes’ appears as ‘cringes and scrapes’.

47. Soh, you attend. In the manuscripts ‘Mama will storm’ appears as ‘Mamma’ll be mad’.

75 Midas MS 9249. 77–8.
49. **Peace ho.** The opening of this recitative appears as ‘Peace oh!’ in the 1764 libretto and as ‘Peace hoa’ in the 1762 manuscripts. ‘What means this jawing’ appears as ‘why all this jawing’ in the manuscripts.

51. **Oh, here comes Pol.** In the 1762 manuscripts, this recitative begins with ‘Oh, here comes Pan, and Pol’.

55. **By jingo.** ‘How, hang dog’ appears as ‘Now, hang dog’ and ‘Why, master Midas’ appears as ‘Why, look’ee, Midas’ in the manuscripts.

59/59b. **’Tis well!** ‘All attend’ in the 1766 libretto appears as ‘listen all’ in the 1764 libretto. In the manuscripts ‘Go trudge’ appears as ‘Shog off’ and ‘The wrath of Jove’ appears as ‘The wrath of heav’n’.

**Conclusion**

It is interesting to note the recurring similarities between the words in the Walsh score and those in the book of *Songs* from 1762. The undated Walsh score must have postdated the 1764 libretto and may have postdated the first two editions of 1766. These printed librettos would appear to have been the obvious sources from which to draw for the vocal score. The reversion to an earlier source for a number of airs suggests that a manuscript score dating back to the 1762 Crow Street production may have been available. A variety of sources of *Midas* was clearly current in the 1760s.

The textual divergences between the different sources of *Midas* are not extensive. However, they serve to shed light on the varying contexts within which the opera
was performed. The purpose of these notes is to allow performers to draw on the broadest possible range of original material, facilitating performances which emphasise the aspects of Irish references, bawdy humour and classical allusion which characterised the opera’s earliest performances. The notes will also contribute to an understanding of the characterisation of the roles in *Midas*. The edition is not so much a search for a definitive version of *Midas*, as a tracing of the evolution of the opera.
CONCLUSION

The second half of the eighteenth century was a time of transition in the theatre and in wider society. Social changes had an impact on theatre audiences and on the nature of opera itself. The alignment of the upper classes with their counterparts in other countries began to be superseded by a new sense of patriotism. Italian opera, which had found patrons all over Europe, became less desirable and was increasingly rivaled by native productions which aimed at equaling the innovations of Italian opera, but in the style of its host country. The innovations incorporated into new operas in French and English were themselves manifestations of the changes in society. The most notable opera to be offered as a rival to the Italian burletta was Rousseau’s *Le Devin du Village*, which Burney describes in his translation as ‘so much the music of nature’.1 Within a decade, Kane O’Hara had borrowed airs from *Le Devin du Village* for *Midas* and, although the melodies would not have been widely known in Dublin or London, the reference to Rousseau provides a key to understanding O’Hara’s choice of airs for the opera. Rousseau and O’Hara were aware of Goldoni’s reforms and developments in drama and opera. Realism and social criticism, set in familiar scenes with regional dialects, were central to the emerging aesthetic of comic opera. To embrace this new aesthetic, it was necessary to present opera in the language of its audience.

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1 Charles Burney, ‘Advertisement’ in *The cunning-man, a musical entertainment, in two acts. As it is performed at the Theatre Royal in Drury-Lane. Originally written and composed by M. J.J. Rousseau* (London: 1766), i.
The musical influence of the Italian burletta on these two operas is also clearly discernible in the short airs, the relative absence of *da capo* arias and the lively end-of-act ensembles. O’Hara’s borrowing of melodies from the theatre and popular culture constitutes not only an expression of the ‘music of nature’, but also a vehicle for social criticism. O’Hara was not alone in borrowing from these sources; John O’Keeffe’s *Love in a Village*, which was also staged in Crow Street in 1762, borrows from similar sources and shares some melodies with *Midas*. O’Hara was already creating works along the lines of *Midas* in the 1750s. The combination of changes in society and in the theatre led to the appearance of such entertainments, which had recently been the preserve of an elite, on the public stage.

The presentation of *Midas* at Crow Street theatre in 1762 coincided with a marked increase in the number of musical entertainments on the Dublin stage. The new prominence of music in the theatre was perhaps a reflection of the already vibrant musical life of the city. The performance of oratorios in the theatre, which had till then always been performed by amateur musical societies in music halls for charitable causes, demonstrates the theatre’s readiness to embrace new forms of entertainment from its environs. The movement of oratorio to the theatre, if only temporarily, found a parallel in the movement of entertainments of the dramatic pastoral type from the private, amateur sphere to the public platform. The early 1760s was a time of experiment in the theatre, with a new interest being taken in the masque at both Crow Street theatre and Smock Alley theatre in the 1760–1

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2 *Fussalia* (1757), discussed in Chapter 1, is the most relevant of O’Hara’s earlier works.
season and in interludes in the 1761–2 season. This season also saw the introduction of Italian burlettas to Smock Alley theatre.³

The rise of music in the Dublin theatres had a subsequent influence on the London stage, as comic operas by the Irish librettists O’Hara, Bickerstaff, O’Keeffe and others found success there. At this point in the second half of the eighteenth century the tide turned in the relationship between the Dublin and London stages. Where once ‘fashionable audiences could relax and enjoy their music, safe in the knowledge that London had approved’,⁴ Dublin now began to create its own operas, led by the strength of its literary tradition. The success of Irish operas in London must have been partly due to the rise in popularity of traditional melodies from Ireland, Scotland, England and Wales in the instrumental music presented on the London stage. Brian Boydell remarks that from the 1760s, ‘an increasing use of popular or traditional melodies, usually of Irish origin, is noted in the context of European-inspired musical forms, typically the final movements of concertos’.⁵

It has been presumed that traditional music was essentially foreign to the urban gentry:

The native music that was so much a part of the life of the Gaelic community flourished outside the metropolis and provincial cities. It was undoubtedly to be heard in taverns and on the streets in Dublin, but, as it belonged to an oral tradition unconnected with formal occasions of a kind that would be reported in the newspapers, there is little firm evidence that it influenced the musical life of the urban gentry more than superficially.⁶

⁶ Boydell, 11.
However, it can be seen from the lives of Jack Lattin, Lawrence Grogan and Alicia Croaker, all of whom gave their names to tunes included in *Midas*, that some of the musicians meeting in Dublin taverns to play traditional music on the pipes and fiddle were, in fact, members of the landed gentry and that traditional airs, travelling between Ireland, Scotland, England and Wales could be named after personalities from the upper classes. (The name of the tune ‘Jack Lattin’ became naturalized as ‘Jocky Lattin’ in Scotland). Traditional melodies had been printed frequently in song collections such as *Pills to Purge Melancholy* in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Up to the middle of the century, these airs and catches had been sung by gentlemen at private gatherings. In the second half of the century these private gatherings began to be represented on the public stage, in comedies which exposed the private thoughts and motives of the privileged. Act 2, scene 4 of the two-act version of *Midas* offers a perfect example of this.

Two other factors contributed to the continued success of the operas of O’Hara, O’Keeffe and Bickerstaff in London. The musical standard of the performers at the licensed theatres rose markedly in the 1760s. It has been argued that the availability of singers who had previously sung in Handel’s operas and oratorios was partly responsible for this. Good musicianship and vocal accomplishment, combined with a vivacious style of acting were particularly necessary for the English burletta as, unlike the comic operas of O’Keeffe and Bickerstaff, the dialogue was sung throughout, in recitative. The second factor which contributed

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to the success of English burlettas and comic operas on the London stage was innovation in stage lighting, which allowed for greater visibility of movement and interaction on stage and presented facial gesture more clearly to the audience. Consequently, a style of performance which was once best appreciated by a small private audience became accessible to the public theatre and all ranks of society.

Although *Midas* appeared to adapt naturally to the new setting of the public theatre, it nevertheless maintained a presence on a smaller scale, at the puppet theatre, ‘as it was originally intended by the Author’.9 What is implied by O’Hara’s ‘original intentions’ remains a matter for conjecture but the appearance of airs from the 1762 book of *Songs* in a 1768 London publication and the reprinting of the three-act version in Dublin in 1795 illustrate the prolonged co-existence of different forms of the opera. This ability to appeal to different worlds simultaneously accounts for the phenomenal popularity of *Midas*, which may seem surprising when considered out of context.

The uncertainty as to the extent of Kane O’Hara’s musical contribution to *Midas* raises a number of questions about the role of the composer in eighteenth-century opera. O’Hara is referred to variously as playwright, librettist and composer in the sources discussed in Chapter 1.10 His reference to the music in *Midas* as ‘my score’ in his letter to Michael Arne of 1777 is the strongest argument in favour of his being the composer although his reference, later in the letter, to the score

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9 Quoted in advertisements for the Patagonian Puppet Theatre, dating from October and November 1776, collected in the *Exeter Change Scrapbook* in the *Enthoven Collection* of the Victoria and Albert Theatre Museum.
10 See Chapter 1, 19–20.
‘authorised by me’ may weaken the argument. Michael Kelly, who performed *Midas* privately in Dublin with Kane O’Hara, writes of his ‘elegant and tasteful’ adaptations. John O’Keeffe remarks that he was present when Mornington, Brownlow and O’Hara met to ‘settle the music’ in *Midas*. This is the only eighteenth-century reference to the involvement of anyone other than Kane O’Hara in the music of *Midas*. Fiske’s suggestion that Mornington was responsible for the music appears to be based on the questionable assumption that only a professional musician could be capable of composing or arranging—that ability is dependent upon remuneration. (The statutes of the Dublin Musical Academy would preclude Mornington from the category of professional or ‘mercenary’ musician).\(^{15}\)

The libretto itself supports the assertion that *Midas* is a musically conceived work. The metre of the airs is governed by the borrowed music, in many cases dance music. This contrasts with the metre in a pasticcio, where the borrowed music was originally composed to fit the metre of operatic arias and consequently the metre was consistent with opera seria. The most musically creative element of the opera (excluding the recitatives, which are no longer extant) is the treatment of the ensemble scenes, where the dramatic dynamic is shaped by the structure of the

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\(^{14}\) ‘There must have been a guiding hand throughout the compilation, certainly at the stage when the items had to be orchestrated. It must have been someone with an affection for the rather outmoded pieces published as Hasse’s, someone vain enough to stoop to a little deceit, and someone competent enough to get all this music into shape. Lord Mornington (still in his middle twenties) is a possible candidate’. Roger Fiske, *English Theatre Music in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Oxford University Press, 1773), 319. On the preceding page, Fiske states that ‘Lord Mornington even had semi-professional status as a composer’.

borrowed music. The musical elements initially dictate the interaction of the characters, until the fusion of the musical and dramatic elements leads to the modification of the music to support dramatic truth. The inclusion of newly-composed music in later versions of *Midas* for Covent Garden appears to confirm that O’Hara composed some of the airs in *Midas*. The galant style of ‘O Yes’ and ‘Now I’m seated’ builds on the comic scenes in Bononcini’s *Camilla*, with their brisk alternations of simple air and static recitative, and establishes a precedent for the ‘broken airs’ or *ariosi* of O’Hara’s later English burletta *The Golden Pippin* and Dibdin’s *Poor Vulcan*.

Kane O’Hara’s name is not included on the title pages of *Midas* or *The Golden Pippin*, although he is credited in the phrase ‘by the Author of Midas’ on the title page of *The Golden Pippin*. Similarly, Charles Dibdin is not named on the title page of *Poor Vulcan*. While this excessive discretion may be a product of the burlesque style which colours all aspects of English burletta librettos, it is interesting to observe that the author is also frequently absent from the title pages of comic operas. On the title page of *The Maid of the Mill*, Isaac Bickerstaff is not named, but acknowledged as ‘the Author of Love in a Village’ and is specifically credited with the words and music of the opera:

The Music Compiled and the Words written
By the Author of
Love in a Village

In his dedication to the Duke of Gloucester, Bickerstaff proposes that comic opera might be acknowledged as a ‘junior offspring of the Drama’.16 The apologetic

presentation of comic operas and English burlettas in the eighteenth century, reinforced by the nineteenth-century attitude that a musical work should be the unique expression of an inspired composer, required music historians to legitimise comic opera by making comparisons with revered composers. On the subject of Grétry’s overture to *Le Jugement de Midas*, David Charlton writes:

Later there is the call of the nightingale, identifiable as such from Apollo’s (16); it bears the same relation to the whole as Beethoven’s quail and cuckoo in the Pastoral Symphony.¹⁷

Although Kane O’Hara may be considered the creator of a new genre—the English burletta, he can not be compared to Beethoven or Mozart as a composer. However, when judged on its own terms and when ‘the particular scope of this piece’ is taken into consideration, *Midas* may ‘be found to have merit, and indeed, excellence in its kind’.¹⁸

*Midas* is essentially concerned with the exposure of injustice. Its most frequently quoted lines are ‘Remember when the judgment’s weak, the prejudice is strong. A stranger why will you despise?’. The element of protest and the demand for freedom of speech were as much a part of the tradition of the puppet theatre as elite entertainment and charity events. When John Oldmixon wished to lend support to the suppressed Royalty theatre, he looked to Kane O’Hara’s *Midas*, and specifically the character of Apollo, to be its advocate, creating a sequel to *Midas*. The English burletta continued to be performed in the unlicensed theatres because of its all-sung nature; spoken dialogue being forbidden without a license. As the

¹⁸ From ‘To the Reader’ in Kane O’Hara, *Midas; an English burletta. As it is performed, at the Theatre-Royal, in Covent-Garden* (London: 1764), 3.
English burletta began to be used as a loophole, allowing plays to be staged with a minimal semblance of recitative, it fell beneath the notice of critics, tainting its reception by later commentators.

The collected evidence offers an intriguing, bizarre and often farcical snapshot of early nineteenth-century theatre: Othello performed as a burletta, with a low accompaniment from the piano every five minutes.\(^{19}\)

The appropriation of the term ‘burlesque’ by a different type of entertainment in the twentieth century has also hindered the accessibility of burlesque opera and the English burletta.

This thesis presents the social, theatrical and musical context of *Midas*. Its origins in private, amateur music making are viewed with a fresh perspective, honouring eighteenth-century values and taste. The reasons for its transition to the public theatre are illustrated and the variety of forms the opera took are discussed in relation to their musical, literary and political implications. The popular phenomenon of the English burletta, which *Midas* heralded, is presented with reference to contemporary commentators and considered in the light of its musical and literary antecedents.

The survey of nineteenth-century primary sources, held at the British Library, relating to the favourite air of ‘Pray Goody’, traces the return of *Midas* to the private sphere, from which it had emerged in the 1760s. The settings associated with the Adelphi Glee Club and the Abbey Glee Club suggest a resonance with O’Hara’s own musical life and with Midas himself, who exhorts his friends to

‘roar a catch’ before joining in an air, set to the tune ‘Cold and Raw’.

The variations and rondos which took ‘Pray Goody’ as their theme, were dedicated to distinguished ladies moving in the social circles for which *Midas* was originally intended. However, these publications were aimed at the middle-class consumer. The association of the later reception of *Midas* and the English burletta with popular music rather than classical music confirmed its separation from *opera buffa* in the eyes of later commentators.

To allow the appreciation of *Midas* as a musical work, rather than a play, and to make it as accessible as possible to performers, a full music edition has been included in the Appendices. The sources of the borrowed airs are identified and discussed and the settings of the airs and ensembles are analysed. The original material included in the edition is related to suitable models and detailed stage directions from the 1762 manuscripts have been included to aid an understanding of the original performance practice. Accounts of the performance style of the singers in the first casts of *Midas* further illustrate the opera’s early performance practice and reception. The opera’s later reception is traced by a study of the printings and reviews of ‘Pray Goody’, the most popular air in *Midas*.

Irish comic operas from the second half of the eighteenth century have been overlooked, despite the extent of their popularity. Because the works of O’Hara, O’Keeffe, Bickerstaff and others encompass musical and literary traditions, they have not been considered in the history of either. Richard Brinsley Sheridan, celebrated for his plays and political career, also collaborated in musical

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entertainments, with his father-in-law, Thomas Linley. Their comic opera *The Duenna* is now the best remembered and most performed Irish comic opera from the period, although it was less successful than *Midas* or *Love in a Village* in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. A re-appraisal of Irish comic opera in the second half of the eighteenth century would be a valuable addition to Irish cultural heritage.

*Midas* contributed to the preservation and dissemination of Irish music in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as the inclusion of fifteen airs from *Midas* in Fleischmann’s *Sources of Irish Traditional Music* attests. However, it was not received in the eighteenth century as a specifically ‘Irish’ opera and was even referred to as ‘the English Midas’ by the Irish librettist Thomas Hales in the ‘avertissements’ to his libretto of *Le Jugement de Midas*.21 While the prologue to the 1764 Covent Garden performances of *Midas* emphasises that O’Hara is a ‘foreign bard’ and ‘stranger Poet’, O’Hara’s letter to the audience, included in the prologue, identifies *Midas* as English rather than Irish:

A stranger Poet offers a Burletta;  
And hopes to please—(he owns it for ‘tis true)  
With English musick, English humour too.  

However, ‘English’ in this context appears to refer to the English language rather than nationality. The native musician, Pan, is portrayed as an Irish musician but is side-lined in the two-act version of *Midas*—the version most often performed outside Ireland. *Midas* was the only English burletta to be performed regularly as

a three-act mainpiece in Dublin. The retention of the Irish elements for an Irish audience allowed the audience to see themselves represented on stage, in the manner of Goldoni’s comedies. O’Hara’s prologues and epilogues for puppet performances of *Midas* make direct reference to the Dublin audience and national issues. The following dialogue between Punch and the Prompter, taken from a prologue spoken in the presence of Lord and Lady Buckingham in 1779, offers a revealing account of the attitudes to the issues of the time:

Pu: My Patriotic Troop, while Times so skittish are,  
    Shall not a single Thread of aught that’s **British** wear:  
    No; … since Association’s grown the Trick of it,  
    It shall go hard, but I’ll be in the thick of it.  
Pr: Ah, Sir! A Party-Stage!  
Pu: ’s Curse! I’ve no patience.  
Pr: Some **Belfast** Lick-spittles may hiss, and chase y’ence  
Pu: ’Blood! I defy them: …. In a Cause so national  
To hang an A__ were base, … nay, quite irrational.  
Much ’gainst the grain ev’n the **English** language I elect;  
“**Tiggen tu Galeg**”? is a better Dialect.  
But **Britain**, ever since she first bestraddl’d us,  
With Taxes, Pensions Place-men has so saddl’d us,  
And with her motley **Saxon** Gibberish addl’d us,  
That now, our Lords, Knights, Squires, in Haste erroneous,  
Disuse their Mother-Tongue…  
Pr: Tho’ more harmonious.  
Pu: For My share, I’d not speak, act, buy, or sell with them.  
Pr: With **Manchester** you mean.  
Pu: They? Scum! To Hell with them.  
/  
Pr: Lord, Sir! A ticklish Topic you have hit upon,  
Pu: That change of Tongue, the shameful Rock we split upon  
    Made us all Slaves deserving to be spit upon.  
    For loss of Speech is Death’s Fore-runner critical, …  
Pr: I’th’ Body Natural.  
Pu: Ay, . _ and the Political.  
Pr: But, to the Prologue, Sir; pray, have some Mercy on  
    Th’expectant Audience; … dread their harsh Aspersion.23

23 *The O’Hara Papers: IRL-Dn*, 36,471/1 (78).
The choice of music in *Midas* and, perhaps to a greater extent, the repertoire Kane O’Hara prepared for performance by the Dublin Musical Academy demonstrate Dublin’s awareness of and engagement with music from the continent.

From a modern perspective, the English burletta seems tangential to the history of opera because of its lack of originality. However, it serves as a reminder that operas that are taken as representative of the eighteenth century did not exist in as stable forms as we may presume. Borrowing and substitution were common practice; for the performance of Gluck’s *Orfeo* at the King’s Theatre in London in 1770, new characters, and airs by J. C. Bach and Pietro Alessandro Guglielmi were added. Operas were revised and adapted before reaching the stable form received by posterity. The mythological framing of the plots of some English burlettas has also marginalised their later reception. However, the themes raised in these operas are remarkably close to those found in the most celebrated operas of the period. The dénouement of *The Marriage of Figaro* bears a striking similarity to the back-story of Act 3 of *Midas*: a neglected wife disguises herself in order to expose her husband’s infidelity and to restore equilibrium. The study of *Midas* suggests that the separation of the English burletta from mainstream opera is artificial, and that its inclusion in a closer examination of the works of the period will enhance our understanding of eighteenth-century opera.

24 Fiske, 547–8.
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