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The Snow Queen: An Opera in Three Acts Based on a Story by Hans Christian Andersen

Elaine Fine

Eastern Illinois University

This research is a product of the graduate program in Music at Eastern Illinois University. Find out more about the program.

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An Analysis of The Snow Queen

BY

ELAINE FINE

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

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ABSTRACT

This is the analysis portion of my thesis *The Snow Queen*, an opera based on an 1845 story by Hans Christian Andersen. This analysis examines the opera from a structural standpoint and focuses on the harmonic language, the functions of melodic and rhythmic motives in the opera, and the relationship between the original story and its adaptation as an opera.

In addition to the structural analysis I include a discussion of literary and philosophical elements connected with the opera and elaborate on the incorporation of material from Norse mythology, contemporary Finnish poetry, and the work of the 19th-century naturalist Richard Jefferies into the opera.

In order to show some of the influences that helped me adapt the story into an opera, and to show the relationship of this opera to other contemporary operas, I compare elements and ideas in *The Snow Queen* to elements and ideas in selected operas by Stravinsky, Puccini, Britten, and Berg.

In the appendices I have included the libretto, descriptions of characters in the opera, and a set of guidelines for set design, action, and dance.
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Dr. Marilyn Coles helped a great deal by carefully scrutinizing the vocal writing, and the mechanics of dramatic expression. I also had the honor of hearing Dr. Coles perform an aria from the opera.

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Dr. Peter Loewen worked with me on an independent study concerning 20th century opera. This independent study introduced me to possibilities in operatic writing that I had never considered, and helped me to provide a context for my own work in its time.

Professor Richard Rossi helped me write the piano reduction of the opera. His experience as a singer, conductor, composer, and as a pianist proved to be an invaluable resource.

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INTRODUCTION

The Danish writer Hans Christian Andersen (1805-1875) grew up in a tradition rich with stories from Norse mythology. It is likely that Andersen based some of the characters in his loosely autobiographical tale “The Snow Queen” (1845) on gods and giants from stories in the Edda of Snorri Sturluson (c. 1225), a treatise on the myths of pre-Christian Scandinavia. My adaptation of “The Snow Queen” follows Andersen’s tale, but I have enhanced some of the characters with elements from Norse Mythology in order to add history and breadth. I have also incorporated poetry by the Swedish/Finnish poet Elmer Diktonius and the English naturalist Richard Jefferies as texts for two arias in the opera.

The central theme of The Snow Queen involves attempts to define “eternity” within the roughly eighty minute span of the opera. The opera uses musical ways of manipulating time (all music, after all, is a manipulation of time) to follow the journey of Gerda in her quest to save her friend Kay from an evil abductress. I have tried to create aural illusions that suggest ideas of travel, and have used musical devices to give the impression of a musical “spot” suspended in eternity.

The analysis elaborates on the structure of the opera: the harmonic language, the functions of melodic and rhythmic motives in the opera, and the relationship between the original story and its adaptation as an opera. It also discusses the use of musical devices that seem to manipulate time.

In order to show the relationship of this opera to other contemporary operas, I also offer a comparison of elements and ideas in The Snow Queen to elements and ideas in selected operas by Stravinsky, Puccini, Britten, and Berg.
CHAPTER ONE: A TALE IN SEVEN STORIES BECOMES AN OPERA LIBRETTO IN THREE ACTS

In order to organize Hans Christian Andersen’s “Tale in Seven Stories” into an opera in three acts, some of the original material had to be altered, some had to be eliminated, and some material had to be added. I used David McDuff’s English translation of sections of a “Light Ugly Beautiful Dark,” a poem by the Swedish/Finnish poet Elmer Diktonius (1896-1961) and a text concerning “eternity” by the English naturalist Richard Jefferies (1848-1887), to enhance the extremes of light and dark in the opera and to explore aspects of the characters presented in the tale.

In the tale an omnipresent narrator comments on the action, “telling” the story. With the exception of the opening sequence, which is narrated by four characters, the function of the narrator is replaced by monologues sung by various characters. The operatic setting of “The Snow Queen” is achieved mainly through a series of dialogues, monologues and musical motives.

The First Story Which Has to Do with A Mirror and Its Fragments: The Tale

Andersen begins his Tale with a story about a hobgoblin who made a mirror that had the power to reflect all that was good and beautiful so that it would appear worthless and ugly. The hobgoblin’s students (he had a school) were so taken with the mirror that they wanted to bring it to heaven to show God and the angels, but the mirror slipped and fell to Earth, shattering into millions of tiny fragments.
The First Story Which Has to Do with A Mirror and Its Fragments: The Opera

The opera begins with a narration that describes the Goblin’s mirror. The orchestra punctuates the opening narration with musical fragments that ascend (like the mirror). The motives in the Prologue foreshadow material that will be developed later in the opera. The last part of the Prologue has material that begins the second story of Andersen’s tale.

A Little Boy and A Little Girl: The Tale

The second story describes a girl named Gerda and a boy named Kay who live in adjoining houses that share a rooftop rose garden. It is winter and Gerda and Kay are asking the Grandmother (Andersen does not make clear whose grandmother she is) questions about the snow. She tells them about the Snow Queen.

Winter quickly turns to spring and Gerda and Kay are in their rooftop garden. Gerda teaches Kay a song about roses blooming in the vale.

“Where roses bloom so sweetly in the vale,  
there shall you find the Christ Child without fail.”

Suddenly Gerda’s song is interrupted by a cry from Kay. A fragment of glass from the goblin’s mirror has fallen into his eye and another fragment has pierced his heart. These glass fragments instantly distort his vision and change his personality. He becomes cold and critical. He prefers the company of rough boys to the company of Gerda, and spends his time sledding with his friends.

One day, while Kay is sledding in the square, he hitchs his sled to the back of a white sleigh driven by a woman wearing a white bear coat. She is the Snow Queen. The
Snow Queen kisses Kay so that he no longer feels the cold, and she takes him away to her ice palace.

A Little Boy and A Little Girl: The Opera

The balance of the opera’s first act is made from the second story. The Prologue ends with the dialogue between Gerda, Kay, and the Grandmother about the Snow Queen. In the opera the Grandmother is given the name “Edda,” a named derived from the Edda of Snorri Sturluson (c. 1225), a treatise on the myths of pre-Christian Scandinavia that is based on Skaldic poetry, the major poetic form of the Viking age.

Because Andersen does not give any background information about the motivation for the malevolence of the character of the Snow Queen, I incorporated the history of the giant Skadi from the Edda into the character of the Snow Queen.

According to tradition, Skadi was the daughter of Thiassi, a giant who was murdered by the gods at Asgard. Skadi came to the gods seeking compensation for her father’s death. The gods told her that she could choose a husband from among them, but she was required to wear a scarf tied around her eyes so she could only see the feet of the gods. She chose the god with the nicest feet, hoping that he would be Baldr, the god she wanted to marry. Unfortunately the nicest feet belonged to Njord, the god of the seacoast. Skadi and Njord were incompatible. Soon after their marriage Skadi left Njord at the seacoast to return to her snow covered world at Jotunheim to hunt with her wolves. In Norse tradition, Skadi is the goddess of the wilderness, the mountains, snow, skis, and sleds. She is sometimes referred to as the “Queen of the Shades,” and “Scandinavia” is derived from her name.
Chapter I: A Tale in Seven Stories

The short instrumental transition to spring (still within the second story) is animated with dancers acting as flowers. Kay, who is a young man in the opera (a baritone), sings to Gerda (a soprano) about his vision of the Snow Queen. Gerda consoles Kay by singing a duet with him set to a textual adaptation of the song about roses from the tale. I altered Andersen’s text to make a clearer connection to the climax and subtext of the opera by substituting “eternity” for “Christ Child” so that the text of the song reads as follows.

“Where roses bloom so sweetly in the vale, there shall you find eternity without fail.”

After the glass fragments from the Goblin’s mirror have fallen into his eye and his heart, Kay exits. Gerda then sings a monologue about the passing of summer to fall and then to winter, and what she knows of Kay’s abduction. Her song leads directly into an instrumental interlude depicting Skadi’s ride with Kay, and that interlude ends with Skadi’s kiss and introduction of herself.

Skadi’s aria “Skadi is the Name” is an adaptation of the autobiographical poem “Light Ugly Beautiful Dark” by the Swedish/Finnish poet Elmer Diktonius, an expressionist composer and a revolutionary idealist whose work was embraced by representatives of the international communist movement.

I replaced the poet’s name in the poem’s first line “Diktonius is the name,” with the name of Skadi, and used about half of the poem’s text. The aria is about six minutes long and is the darkest point in the opera.
Chapter I: A Tale in Seven Stories

The Flower Garden of the Woman Skilled in Magic: The Tale

In the third story Gerda, who believes that Kay is still alive, offers her red shoes to the river in exchange for information about him. Since the river keeps returning Gerda’s shoes to her, she steps into a boat that is not tied to the shore in order to throw her shoes farther out into the water. The boat takes Gerda down the river, and eventually she comes upon a garden and a woman who lives in the garden.

The woman who lives in the garden has no name (there is no goddess in any standard mythology who answers to her description) and she is childless and lonely. She sees Gerda as a gift from the river and asks her to come rest in her garden. Her garden is magical. The flowers in it bloom all the time, everything in every season (like Breugel’s flower paintings). She also knows magic and can communicate with the flowers in her garden. When she hears about Gerda’s search for Kay, she covers up the roses in the garden because she knows that they will remind Gerda of Kay. The Garden Woman uses her magic to make Gerda forget where she has come from and where she is going.

In her passive way, The Garden Woman is a seductress, just like Skadi is a seductress (as well as an abductress). The Garden Woman lures Gerda with comfort and the illusion of security, and for a while Gerda is happy in the garden because she is aware of nothing else. In some way the Garden Woman’s garden is a larger and more elaborate version of Gerda’s rose garden, but without the roses.

Nobody knows how long Gerda stays in the garden, but as soon as she sees some painted images of roses on the woman’s hat (the images of roses are just as evocative of Kay as the flowers themselves) Gerda remembers her quest.
At that point everything changes for Gerda. She knows she must leave the garden and does so without a second thought. Her only thought at this point is to find Kay.

**The Flower Garden of the Woman Skilled in Magic: The Opera**

In the opera Gerda takes off her shoes, steps into a boat, and sings as she floats down the river. When the Garden Woman greets Gerda, she offers to comb Gerda’s hair and sings to her. Hypnotized by the Garden Woman’s song, Gerda falls asleep. Once Gerda is asleep the Garden Woman uses her magic to make the roses disappear. When Gerda wakes up she sings a short song about eternity set to a text by Richard Jefferies. The repetitive quality of the music gives the illusion that the song lasts a long time although it is very short.

When Gerda sees the woman’s hat with its painted roses she is reminded of the song that she sang with Kay about roses. Gerda then realizes that she has been detained from her quest for Kay. As she leaves the Garden the musical landscape becomes increasingly dissonant.

**The Prince and the Princess: The Tale**

In the fourth story Gerda meets a crow who she believes might have news of Kay. The Crow tells Gerda many stories, but the most important one is the story of a clever Princess who put a notice in the paper in search of a husband. The Crow tells Gerda about a young Prince who answered the notice and was living at the Princess’s castle.\(^1\) The Crow, leading Gerda to believe that the Prince could be Kay, takes her to the castle.

\(^1\) According to fairy tale logic since he was a prince rather than a king, he and the Princess were not yet married.
The Princess, who is relieved to find that her Prince is not Kay, gives Gerda a coach, a
dress, food for her journey, and a fur muff.

**The Prince and the Princeess: The Opera**

In the adaptation of the fourth story, the Crow tells only the story about the Princess
and her Prince. The Princess in the opera, like the Princess in the story, prides herself on
cleverness. After it is revealed that the Prince (who is her husband in the opera) is not
Kay, the Princess does what she can to help Gerda.

**The Little Robber Girl: The Tale**

In the fifth story, a band of robbers interrupts Gerda’s journey in the Princess’s coach.
An old Robber Woman who looks like a witch (but does not perform magic like the
Garden Woman or the Snow Queen) grabs Gerda and says that she wants to eat her. Her
spoiled daughter, The Robber Girl, manages to get Gerda away from her mother and
takes Gerda to see her pets.

The Robber Girl has a rough exterior but a good soul. Gerda tells the Robber Girl the
story of Kay’s abduction, a story overheard by the Robber Girl’s talking Reindeer. The
Reindeer tells Gerda and the Robber Girl that he knows where to find the Snow Queen’s
summer tent in Lapland, the land of his birth.

The Robber Girl is moved by Gerda’s story, and like the Princess, she gets excited
about helping Gerda find Kay. She lets Gerda go to Lapland with the Reindeer.

**The Little Robber Girl: The Opera**

The libretto for the fifth story follows the text closely. After a musically illustrated

crash, the Robber Woman bounds in and captures Gerda. Immediately the Robber Girl
runs in and fights with her mother over Gerda. The Robber Girl’s dialogue with Gerda includes the reprise of the aria she sang about Kay’s abduction from the first act.

After the Robber Girl takes Gerda to her bed they both hear the Reindeer singing. The Robber Girl sings a sentimental duet with the Reindeer who “tames” the Robber Girl into letting Gerda go with him to Lapland.

Gerda once again allows herself to be taken, but in this case, she knows where she is going and knows she is in good hands. Fortified by the strength she showed when attacked by the robbers, she is not afraid of what lies ahead. The Reindeer, on the other hand, does not believe that Gerda would have enough strength to battle the Snow Queen, so he brings Gerda to the house of a powerful magic woman in order to get help.

The Lapp Woman and the Finn Woman: The Tale

In the sixth story the Reindeer and Gerda stop at the huts of two wise women, the Lapp Woman and the Finn Woman. The role of the Lapp Woman in the story is basically to send a message to the Finn Woman. When Gerda and the Reindeer arrive at the Finn Woman’s house, she reads a message (written on a fish) from the Lapp Woman. When the Reindeer asks the Finn Woman to use her power to give Gerda strength, the Finn Woman tells the Reindeer that Gerda has all the strength and power she needs in her heart. She tells the Reindeer to bring Gerda to the Snow Queen’s garden and leave her there alone. Fortified with her own strength, Gerda is not afraid when she is left alone at the Snow Queen’s palace.
The Lapp Woman and the Finn Woman: The Opera

Since the function of the Lapp Woman in the sixth story is to lead the way to the Finn Woman, I combined both women and cast them as a character from the Edda called the “Volva.” The Volva, the wise woman from Norse mythology, could have been a likely inspiration for both of Andersen’s wise women.

What Happened in the Snow Queen’s Palace, and What Came of It: The Tale

When Gerda arrives at the palace in the seventh story of Andersen’s tale, she sees Kay, blue-black from the cold, arranging flat pieces of ice into words and geometric patterns. The Snow Queen tells him that if he can puzzle out the word “eternity” she would give him the whole world, a new pair of skates, and that he would be his own master. He is unable to do it.

The Snow Queen goes off to cap the volcanos of Etna and Vesuvius, and leaves Kay to ponder his “eternity” problem. As soon as the Snow Queen leaves, Gerda runs in calling to Kay, but he does not recognize her. She holds Kay and cries hot tears that melt the ice in his heart, and she sings him the song about roses which makes him burst into tears. As Kay cries his tears wash the glass fragments out of his eye. He and Gerda embrace, and everyone is happy. Even the ice pieces dance, and on their own they form the word “eternity,” giving Kay his freedom. Gerda and Kay return home saying goodbye on the way to the reindeer, the Finn Woman, the Lapp Woman, and the Robber Girl. Upon their return home the Grandmother reads to them from the Bible “Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.”
What Happened in the Snow Queen’s Palace, and What Came of It: The Opera

The opera and the tale diverge in the seventh story. After she arrives at the palace, Gerda finds a place to hide. She sees Kay playing with a geometric puzzle and hears Skadi humiliating Kay by asking him riddles that she knows he cannot solve. The riddle that Skadi asks happens to be a riddle made up by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart—one of his “Zoroastrian Riddles.”

After Kay’s failure to solve the Zoroastrian Riddle, Skadi wagers Kay’s freedom for the solution to her next riddle: “what always makes sooner and later useless measures?” Confident that Kay will not be able to solve her next riddle, Skadi leaves the palace to cap her volcanos. Left on his own, Kay sings a song asking which measures are useless, how many measures there are, and which ones are useful.

From her hiding place Gerda begins to sing “When Roses Bloom” in counterpoint with Kay’s “useless measures.” The answer that Kay needs is the word “eternity.” Skadi knows that Kay will not be able to find the answer because the ice in his heart and in his eye make him rely only on linear measurement and reason, and therefore make it impossible for him to comprehend an abstract concept like “eternity.”

At exactly the point in his song where Kay needs to utter the word “eternity,” he hears Gerda sing as part of her song “When Roses Bloom.” Kay automatically joins her singing “eternity without fail,” though he does not fully realize he is singing with her because his heart is still frozen and he is incapable of intimacy. All Kay knows is that he solved the Snow Queen’s riddle.

Gerda embraces Kay, and, echoing their embrace in the rose garden after Kay is struck with the glass fragments, he pushes Gerda away. She begins to cry but holds
tightly onto Kay so her tears fall on his chest, melting the glass in his heart. Kay then realizes that Gerda has come there to save him, and as he cries his tears wash the glass fragments from his eye.

Gerda wants to leave right away, but Kay wants to stay in order to write the word “eternity” so that Skadi will know that he solved the riddle and is his own master. At that point Gerda realizes that she too is her own master. She has grown during her journey in search of Kay and knows that she can decide what will happen next.

Gerda accomplished what she set out to do, and in the process found her own identity and her own strength. She (and the audience) saw Kay’s shortcomings—his pride, arrogance, and his desire to still impress the Snow Queen. At the end of the opera Gerda and Kay are together once again, but it is now up to Gerda to determine if the action that follows the opera will be a marriage or a parting of the ways.

After Gerda and Kay leave there is a short instrumental epilogue during which Skadi returns to her palace and sees the word “eternity.” She finds Kay’s “eternity” puzzle, a puzzle that he was playing with when Skadi asked him the first riddle. She muses over it, and finally lets it drop to the ground. Her frozen heart is broken. She has been defeated.
CHAPTER TWO: THEMES AND MOTIVES USED IN THE OPERA

*The Snow Queen* is made of many motives that represent characters, actions and ideas presented in Andersen’s story as well as motives that represent the philosophical and folkloric additions to the story. Because many of the motives are derived from one another and therefore relate directly to one another, it is hard to clearly define where elaboration of one motive ends and the statement of another begins. For this reason I have divided the motives into two categories, “fixed” and “mutable.” The fixed motives, which are actually more like themes, are always stated intact or in literal transpositions, while the mutable motives appear as fragments and in variations.

Because these motives occur at scattered points within the opera I have catalogued them by type rather than by point of occurrence.

**Goblin Motives**

The Goblin Motive I and Goblin Motive II are mutable motives. Goblin Motive I, shown in Example IIa.1, is first heard first in the Prologue played by the clarinet.

![Example IIa.1](image1)

The Goblin Motive II, shown in Example IIa.2 is also mutable. It occurs often in augmentation and inversion. Its characteristics are descending and ascending fourths and minor seconds.

![Example IIa.2](image2)
The most important mutation of the Goblin Motive II is its mutation into Skadi’s Motive I, the “Harp Motive.”

**Skadi’s Motives**

Skadi’s Motive I is an example of a fixed Motive. Example IIb.1 is an F minor seventh arpeggio in second inversion followed by a passing raised sixth degree (implying the Dorian mode) that moves through the dominant note C, and back down to the mediant. The Motive then leaps up a major seventh to G, and, like the Goblin Motive I, the figure begins again.

Skadi’s Motive II, a mutable motive, is a statement of her name *soggetto cavato*. Example IIb.2 illustrates its occurrence in the cello at the beginning of Edda’s aria “Skadi the Huntress” (Act I/2). Example IIb.3 illustrates a variation on this motive that opens the Prologue and serves as the basis for other motives in the opera.
Another important motive connected with Skadi is the Skadi Motive III, the fixed "Lie like everyone else" Motive. It is first heard in measure 24 of "Skadi is the Name" (Act I/9). Example IIb.4 (a piano reduction of the score) shows the echoes in the winds of the Skadi Motive III.

The Skadi Motive III (altered slightly with an A natural as its second note) is echoed in measure 62 by the piccolo (Example IIb.5), after a variation on the Goblin Motive II set bitonally in F major against Skadi's statement in C minor.
Chapter II: Themes and Motives

Example Ilb.6 shows the Skadi Motive IV, a fixed motive that is Skadi’s statement of her name in the beginning of “Skadi is My Name” (Act I/9). It also further illustrates the Skadi Motive III.

Mirror Motive

In the Prologue the variation on Skadi’s name shown in Example Ilb.3 is answered by a mutable Mirror Motive that represents the mirror’s ascent and fragmentation. Example Ilc.1 illustrates its first statement (it functions here as an answer to the first Skadi statement) in measure 6. It is further elaborated later in the Prelude. Example Ilc.2 illustrates its more developed appearance in measure 51 played by the flute.

Example Ilc.3 shows the opening Motive of “Kay Caw Kay” (Act II/6), a Motive that is derived from the Mirror Motive.
In Example IIc.4 the flutes play a combination of the Skadi Motive and the Mirror Motive in measure 101 of “Skadi’s Puzzle for Kay” (Act I/6).

**Travel Motives**

All the travel motives in the opera are mutable. Most of the travel motives are derived from the Skadi Motives I and II and the Mirror Motive. Example IId.1 illustrates Travel Motive I that opens the “Spring Transition Music” (Act I/3), a version in compound time of the ascending Skadi Motive II in the Dorian mode. This travel motive represents the passage of time, or travel “through” time.
Example IIId.2 shows that the “Sled Music,” the music in the key of G minor that represents Kay’s ride with Skadi to her palace, keeps the same rhythmic pattern as the “Spring Transition Music.” Example IIId.3 shows a G major variation of Travel Motive II used in “Reindeer Music,” the music that ends the second act (Act II/15) and the Prologue that begins Act III.

Example IIId.4 shows that “Gerda’s ride to Skadi’s Palace” (Act III/4) uses the same travel motive as the “Sled Music” (Act I/7) transposed into A minor.

The music that accompanies Gerda’s travel by water to the Garden is mainly a water motive that will be discussed later, but in counterpoint to the water theme the harp plays a variation on the “Spring Transition Music.” Example IIId.5 shows the second flute and
the oboe playing a water motive in counterpoint to Travel Motive III in the harp and in the solo violin.

Travel Motive IV, that illustrates Gerda’s journey to the castle of the Princess (the end of Act II/6 and Act II/9), is a folklore motive from the Norwegian Hardanger Fiddle tradition. This motive is based on an F-sharp minor tetrachord. Example IId.6 comes from the end of “Kay Caw Kay,” (Act II/6).

Water and Snow Motives

The water and snow motives are interrelated. Water Motive I first appears in the Prologue when Edda asks “see the white bees swarming, Kay?” Example Ile.1 illustrates
a repetitive motive made of sixteenth notes ascending and descending by minor seconds
and set in parallel fifths as it appears in the Prologue to Act II.

Example IIe.1
Water Motive I
Act II/1, mm. 1-3

Example IIe.2 shows Water Motive II as it appears in the first Prologue. Example IIe.3
shows the way the motive appears in the Prologue to Act II.

Example IIe.2
Water Motive II
Act II/1, mm. 63-65

Example IIe.3
Water Motive II
Act II/1, m. 8

The parallel fourths in the Harp that lead Gerda to Skadi’s Palace, shown in Example
IIe.4, measures 54 through 57 of “Gerda’s Ride to Skadi’s Palace” (Act III/4) “Snow
Motive I” represents cold falling snow.
When Gerda sees the Snow Queen at the beginning of “Skadi’s Puzzle for Kay” (Act III/6), the parallel fourths are replaced by parallel fifths. The instrumental texture of two flutes and harp pays homage to the snow motive that Puccini uses in *La Bohème*.

Example IIe.5 illustrates Snow Motive II.

![Example IIe.5](image)

New snow motive, like the snow motive in Puccini’s *La Bohème*

**Eternity Theme**

The Eternity theme sung by Gerda in measure 12 of “It is Eternity Now” (Act II/4) and shown in Example IIf.1 is derived from a retrograde of Gerda’s section of the “Magic Combing Song” (Act II/3) that precedes it. Example IIf.2 shows this passage.

![Example IIf.1](image)
The Eternity Theme appears once again as Gerda approaches Skadi’s palace.

Example Ilf.3 shows the bassoon’s accompanied statement of the Eternity Theme set between Gerda’s statement about the size of the palace and her statement of courage.

When she sings “But I’m not afraid,” she sings it over an augmentation of the Skadi Motive I, and after another “measure of Eternity” when the Horns sound the Skadi Motive IV, we know Gerda has arrived in the palace. Example Ilf.2 shows the passage beginning in measure 47 of “Gerda at the Snow Queen’s Palace” (Act III/5) that illustrates this.
Roses Themes and Melodies

All the themes and melodies that relate to roses are fixed. The “Roses Theme” first appears in measure 10 of the duet between Gerda and Kay “When Roses Bloom” (Act I/5) illustrated in Example Ilg.1.

Another rose theme is a quotation from the popular Hebrew song by Josef Hadar “Erev Shel Shoshanim” (Evening of Roses). Example Ilg.2 shows theme played by the oboe in measure 28 of “When Roses Bloom.”

The restatement of the Roses Theme in “Gerda Leaves the Garden” (Act II/5) symbolizes the restoration of Gerda’s memory and sense of purpose. Example Ilg.3
shows the theme played in D minor by the harp at the moment when Gerda sees the painted roses on the Garden Woman’s hat.

Example IIg.3
Roses Theme
Act II/5, mm. 8-13

Gerda's memory and sense of purpose. She remembers the song about the rose garden.

The melody to “When Roses Bloom” is one of the most important melodies in the opera. Gerda sings this melody in counterpoint to the “Roses Theme” (shown in context above in Example IIg.1) and is shown below in Example IIg.4 as the melody alone.

Example IIg.4
“When Roses Bloom”
Act I/5, mm. 48-64

Gerda sings this melody in counterpoint with Kay’s “useless measures” in “Sooner or Later” (Act III/8) to help Kay solve the riddle. Example IIg.5 shows this duet.
Example Ilg.5
Roses theme and Sooner or Later
Act III/7, mm. 26-42

Example Ilg.6 shows the strophic melody that Gerda sings in “The Roses Bloomed” (Act I/6) over an ostinato bass line and a rhythmic snare drum ostinato.
When the Robber Girl asks Gerda if she is a princess in “Gerda and the Robber Girl” (Act II/11), Gerda’s answer in measure 14 is sung in counterpoint to the “Roses Bloomed” melody played in the cello. Example Ilg.7 shows this counterpoint.

Example Ilg.7
The Roses Bloomed Melody
Act I/11, mm. 15-23

The next statement of this theme is in “The Roses Bloomed Reprise” (Act II/12), but this time brushed strings replace the snare drum, and a raised sixth in Gerda’s melody changes its mode from Aeolian to Dorian. Example Ilg.8 shows this Dorian version of the melody.

Example Ilg.8
The Roses Bloomed Dorian
Act II/12, mm. 4-12

The rhythmic figure that comes before and after this melody (shown in the snare drum part of Example Ilg.6) continues through the second act of the opera. When the Reindeer sings his song about Lapland “It Was There I Was Born” (Act II/14), the snare
drum rhythm first used in “The Roses Bloomed” is set against his melody and put into compound time. Example IIg.9 shows the way this ostinato rhythmic figure is used in dialogue between a solo bassoon, a solo viola, and a solo cello beginning in measure 60.

“Dies Irae”

This rhythmic ostinato shown in Example IIg.9 also accompanies a quotation of the “Dies Irae” sequence that is heard at the end of Gerda’s song “The Roses Bloomed (Act I/6).” Example IIIh.1 shows that statement of the “Dies Irae” played by two horns and accompanied by the rhythmic ostinato in the snare drum.
Example Ilh.2 shows the strings playing the rhythmic ostinato in measure 72 of "The Roses Bloomed" (Act I/6) after Gerda asks "Oh Kay, where did you go?" This wind statement of the "Dies Irae" leads directly into Skadi's sled ride with Kay.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example Ilh.2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Dies Irae&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>String Rhythmic Ostinato</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act I/6, mm. 71-76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Musical notation image]

**Segue**
CHAPTER THREE: TONAL STRUCTURE OF THE OPERA

*The Snow Queen* uses several different kinds of harmony: traditional tertian harmony with tonal centers, bitonality, quartal harmony, and atonality. Each type of harmony enhances the dramatic action of the story.

Table 1 illustrates the overall tonal plan of the opera. Each of the keys, or sets of keys, shown on the table represents a character in the opera or a concept. The table shows the flow from D minor, through several keys towards G major, and back again through the same keys to the end of the opera in the key of D minor. I have omitted music that is atonal from this table.

**Tertian Harmony: Tonal Centers**

After thirteen measures of introduction punctuated by an ascending statement of the Goblin Motive (Chapter II, Example IIb.3), the actual beginning of the opera happens when the Mirror Motive (Chapter II, Example IIc) reaches the key of D minor. The opera ends in the key of D minor. All the music of the Epilogue (Act III/8) is transposition to D minor of Skadi-related material previously heard in the key of C minor.

The minor modes on C represent Skadi, the Snow Queen. Ædda’s song “Skadi the Huntress” (Act I/2) that introduces Skadi is in C Dorian, Kay sings “I Mustn’t Tell” (Act I/4) about his encounter with Skadi in C minor, Skadi sings her autobiographical aria
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>D minor</th>
<th>C minor and F minor</th>
<th>G minor and G Dorian</th>
<th>B minor and B flat minor</th>
<th>E minor</th>
<th>D major and Lydian; A major, Minor, and Mixolydian</th>
<th>G major</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key of Beginnings and Endings</td>
<td>Key that represents Skadi</td>
<td>Key of Gerda and Kay</td>
<td>Keys of Enchantment</td>
<td>Key of Possibility</td>
<td>Keys of Motion</td>
<td>Key of Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I/1 Prologue</td>
<td>I/2 Skadi the Huntress</td>
<td>I/3 Spring Transition</td>
<td>I/4 When Roses Bloom</td>
<td>I/5 The Roses Bloomed</td>
<td>I/6 Sled Music</td>
<td>I/7 Skadi's Puzzle for Kay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I/8 Your Lips are Cool</td>
<td>I/8 The Roses Bloomed (Reprise)</td>
<td>I/9 Skadi is the Name</td>
<td>I/10 Gerda Leaves the Garden</td>
<td>I/11 When Roses Bloom</td>
<td>I/12 Skadi's Palace</td>
<td>I/13 Skadi's Palace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I/14 It Was There I was Born</td>
<td>II/6 Kay Caw Kay (end)</td>
<td>II/7 Sooner or Later</td>
<td>II/8 Epilogue</td>
<td>II/5 The Princess Sends Gerda on Her Way (D Lydian)</td>
<td>II/9 Gerda in her Coach (A Major/Mixolydian)</td>
<td>II/15 Reindeer Sings to the Volva (A Minor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II/1 Prologue</td>
<td>II/2 Gerda's Song to the River</td>
<td>II/3 Magic Combing Song</td>
<td>II/4 It is Eternity Now</td>
<td>II/5 Skadi's Puzzle for Kay</td>
<td>II/6 Kay Caw Kay (end)</td>
<td>II/1 Prologue</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Skadi is the Name” (Act I/9) in C minor with some bitonal additions, and in C minor when Gerda enters Skadi’s palace (Act III/5) the music is in C minor. “Twelve Strong Men” (Act III/3), sung by the Volva, the parallel character to Edda from Act I, is mostly in F minor, but some of the material in her aria is in C minor, which is the dominant key of F minor.

The relationship between Gerda and Kay is represented by the minor modes on G. The transition from winter to spring (Act I/3), the duet “When Roses Bloom” (Act I/5), Gerda’s song about Kay’s abduction “The Roses Bloomed” (Act I/6 and its reprise as Act II/12), the sled music that takes Kay away from Gerda (Act I/7), “Kay Caw Kay,” the song she sings inquiring about Kay (Act II/6), and the music that reunites Gerda and Kay “Sooner or Later” (Act III/7) are all in G minor or G Dorian.

B minor and B-flat minor are the keys that signify enchantment. When Kay is enchanted by Skadi’s kiss (Act I/8), his experience is colored by a B minor seventh chord in third inversion. The Garden Woman’s “Magic Combing Song” (Act II/3) that lulls Gerda to sleep and makes her forget about Kay is in B minor, and the music remains chiefly in B minor for the whole time Gerda is in the garden. Her exit from the garden begins in B minor, and by way of bitonality prepares a modulation to B-flat major, the parallel major of the B-flat minor tonality used later in the opera to set Skadi’s riddle song for Kay (Act III/6). (See Example III.2 for an illustration of the bitonal preparation for modulation that leads into “Kay Caw Kay,” (Act II/6) in B-flat major.)

E minor is the key of possibility. The Prologue to Act II, “Gerda’s Song to the River,” (Act II/2) and “It Was There I Was Born” (Act II/14) all represent the possibility of a journey.
These major and minor modes on D and A are grouped together because they represent decisive action. “Kay Caw Kay” (Act II/6) ends in A Major/A Mixolydian, “The Princess Sends Gerda on her Way” (Act II/8) is in D Lydian, “The Reindeer Sings to the Volva” (Act III/2) is in A minor, and “Gerda’s Ride to Skadi’s Palace” (Act III/4) is in A minor.

G major is the key that marks the key of Gerda’s final journey towards the Snow Queen’s palace. Table I shows that after the arrival in this key (Act II/15) the harmonic flow reverses direction and moves back through pieces in A minor, B-flat minor, G minor, and C minor, ending in D minor where it began. Because of its position in the change of harmonic flow, the key of G signifies change.

Bitonality

Bitonality is used in The Snow Queen as a device for casting familiar motives in unusual light. It is used sparingly, but its use is important. In measure 58 of “Skadi is the Name” (Act I/9) there are four measures of bitonality between the piccolo and the harp. The piccolo plays a passage that suggests a dominant seventh chord in the key of F major that is set against a passage in the pre-established “Skadi key” of C minor.

Example III.1
Bitonality
Act I/9, mm. 57-61

I understand much, know hardly anything, but what concerns is this of
Another instance of bitonality happens when Gerda is leaving the Garden (Act II/5). The inner voices in this passage have an ostinato E-flat major chord in first inversion framed in the outer voices (the first violin and the double bass) by a D-flat augmented chord. In measure 17 the outer voices outline A minor triads while the inner voices remain in E-flat major. Beginning in measure 19, a D-flat augmented triad in the outer voices alternates by measures with a whole note E natural, implying E minor against the E-flat major ostinato in the inner voices.

Example III.2
Bitonality
Act II/5, m. 14

Quartal Harmonies

Quartal and quintal harmonies are used to enhance special moments of odd intimacy like the moment when Skadi kisses Kay in measure 54 of the “Sled Music” (Act I/7) and the harp plays a series of fourths and fifths.

Example III.3
Quartal Harmonies
Act I/7, mm. 54-56
Skadi’s arpeggiated motive in “Skadi is the Name” (Act I/9) sounds quartal because it is framed by an ascending perfect fourth and a perfect fifth at its beginning (separated by a minor third) and an ascending perfect fourth at its ending. The middle of the motive has a passing pattern of a descending minor second, a major second, a major third, and an ascending seventh leads to the last perfect fourth of the motive. Example III.4 shows the Skadi Motive I with its repeating pattern of intervals and its arrangement of intervals.

The interval pattern begins and ends with a perfect fourth, but the octave C is an elision that ends the motive as well as begins its repetition.

The strongest intervals in the motive are the perfect fourth between C and F, the perfect fifth between A flat and E flat, and the perfect fourth between G and C.

Another intimate moment that uses quartal and quintal harmonies comes in the Reindeer’s song “It Was There I Was Born” (Act II/14). Example III.5 shows a canon at the interval of a fifth in measure 43 between the first violin and the viola. Example III.5a is an interval analysis of the passage that shows the quartal and quintal harmonies.
The quartet harmony in the above passage is all derived from the quartet chord F-sharp-B-E-A as shown in Example III.5b.

The bassoon enters in measure 56 with an ostinato figure, and the dialogue between the first violin and viola shown above now moves in parallel fifths. The quartet harmony gains another member, becoming a chord made of F-sharp, B, E, A, and D. Example III.6 shows the passage, Example III.6a shows a quartal reduction, and Example III.6b shows the chord on which the passage in Example III.6 is based.
The opening of "Skadi's Puzzle for Kay" (Act III/6), shown in Example III.7, is an example of harmony that sounds quartal because of its parallel fifths, but is essentially implied tertian harmony with an emphasis on fourths and fifths. Example III.7a shows an interval analysis of the passage, and Example III.7b shows a tertian analysis of the passage with implied thirds filling in the fifths.
Example III.7 Skadi's Puzzle for Kay
Act II/6, mm. 1-14

Example III.7a
Interval Analysis, Act III/6, mm. 1-5

Example III.7b
Implied Triadic Analysis Act III/6 mm 1-2

Implied Triadic Harmony (with thirds filling in the fifths)

A flat G flat B flat minor seventh with an added 4 D flat D flat G flat B flat minor seventh with an added 4
Atonality

There is only one instance of atonality in the opera. When the Robber Woman enters in “The Robber Woman Stops Gerda’s Coach” (Act II/10), she sings an atonal melody. Her atonal melody is accompanied by material derived from Goblin Motive I (see Example IIa.1) and the Mirror Motive (see Example IIc.2). Example III.8 shows the Robber the Woman’s atonal melody with its accompaniment, and Example III.9 shows it alone. Example III.10, a pitch analysis of the melody, shows that the set $679TE1024$ does not use the pitches D-sharp, F, or G-sharp. The equal weight of the nine pitches in the set and the unresolved dissonances give the melody its atonal color.

Example III.8
The Robber Woman: Atonality
Act II/10, mm. 1-10

Example III.9
The Robber Woman Alone
Act II/10, mm. 4-18
Example III.10
Pitch Analysis of The Robber Woman's Melody, Act II/10, mm. 4-18

Example III.10a
Interval Class Analysis of The Robber Woman's Melody, Act II/10, mm. 4-18

Example III.10a is an interval class analysis of the Robber Woman’s melody. The interval class analysis chart in Example III.10b shows that the intervals most often used in this atonal melody belong to the third interval class that consists of minor thirds and major sixths. There are equal numbers of intervals in the pitch classes one, two, and four, only one instance of an interval in the fifth class, and no tritones.

Example III.10b
Interval Frequency Analysis of the Robber Woman’s melody

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interval Class</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 minor seconds and major sevenths</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 major seconds and minor sevenths</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 minor thirds and major sixths</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 major thirds and minor sixths</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 perfect fourths and fifths</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 tritones</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Example III.10c shows the recurring pattern of the five note pattern of 9T746. The last pattern of the example has a half step alteration on the second note.

Example III.10d shows which pitches in the melody have longer note values, and Example III.10e shows that those pitches outline a D major harmony with a lowered sixth, which makes the melody sound more modal than atonal.
Other harmonic and contrapuntal devices used in the opera are chord clusters, pedal point, and whole tone harmonies.

**Cluster Chords**

Example III.11 illustrates the chord clusters that represent the two fragments of glass that fall into Kay’s eye and his heart at the end of “When Roses Bloom” (Act I/5).

Example III.12 shows how chord clusters represent the interruption of Gerda’s coach ride by a band of robbers in Act II/9.

**Pedal Point**

At the end of Act I/5, after the glass has struck Kay’s eye and heart, a G pedal point in measure 80 changes what had been a light G minor character earlier in the piece into drone as shown in Example III.12.
Whole Tone Scales and Harmony

The “Sled Music” (Act I/7) has an example of ascending and descending whole tone scales as shown in the first two measures of Example III.13. Measures 21 and 22 of Example III.14 show an example of a whole-tone dominant seventh sonority (a G\(^7\) chord with a raised fifth).

Use of Modes

Much of the music in the opera is modal, and the use of modes helps to bring out the folkloric elements in the story. The primary modes used in the opera are Dorian, Phrygian, Lydian, and Mixolydian. Selected examples of the use of the Dorian mode are
the opening motive of the “Spring Transition Music” (Act I/4), shown in Example III.15, the “Magic Combing Song” (Act II/3), shown in Example III.16, and the reprise of “The Roses Bloomed” (Act II/12), shown in Example III.17.

Example III.16, Dorian Mode, Act I/4, mm. 1-2

Example III.17, Dorian Mode Act I/3, mm. 1-8

Example III.18, Dorian Mode, Act II/12, m. 4
In Act II I use the Phrygian mode to represent water. Example III.17 comes from the Prologue to Act II.

Example III.19 Phrygian Mode Act II/1, m. 1

Example III.18 in the Mixolydian Mode comes from “Gerda’s Song to the River” (Act II/2).

Example III.20 D Mixolydian Mode Act II/2, mm. 5-7

Example III.19 shows a Gangar dance that resembles music from the Hardanger fiddle tradition from the Telmark region of Norway that alternates between A major and A Mixolydian.

Example III.21 Mixolydian Mode Act II/6, mm. 58-61
Example III.20 from “The Princess Sends Gerda on Her Way” (Act II/8) shows the use of the Lydian mode to prepare the Princess for her energetic entrance. The sound of D-Lydian tetrachords in the violins against broken D-major seventh arpeggios in the piccolo, oboe, and xylophone give a color similar to passages in Igor Stravinsky's Le Rossignol, an opera he set to a story by Hans Christian Andersen.¹

¹ See Chapter VIII for a comparison of The Snow Queen to the Le Rossignol.
CHAPTER FOUR: RHYTHMIC STRUCTURE AND THEMES

The metric structure of The Snow Queen opera is integrated into the progress of the dramatic action, heightening points of departure, repose, and arrival on the separate journeys of Gerda and Kay. Just as melodic motives are important in the opera (see Chapter II), rhythmic motives involving syncopation, ostinato, and mixed divisions of beats are equally important.

Rhythmic Motives

Many of the rhythmic motives in the opera involve syncopation. Example IV.1 shows the rhythmic counterpoint in measure 45 of “When Roses Bloom” (Act I/5) between the oboe, clarinet, and harp involves a syncopated motive in the clarinet against a “time keeping” steady non-syncopated rhythm in the harp.

Example IV.1 Syncopation “When Roses Bloom”
Act I/5, mm. 45-48

Another instance of syncopation is the entrance of the Princess in “At the Castle of the Princess” (Act II/7). Example IV.2 shows the contrast between the Princess’s
syncopation and the steady sixteenth notes sung by the Crow. The Princess’s syncopated entrance is intended to generate activity and excitement in her character.

Example IV.2 Syncopation
Act II/7, mm 7-18

Ostinato

Ostinato is one of the main rhythmic devices in the opera. It is used to unify sections, give motion to dramatic action, and suspend and propel the sense of time. Here are some important ostinato figures used in the opera.

The Snare drum ostinato in “The Roses Bloomed” returns often throughout the opera. Example VI.3 shows that figure.

Example IV.3 Snare Drum Ostinato
Act I/6, mm. 106
Two ostinato figures, one in the cello and bass, and one in the upper strings, are set in counterpoint to one another in the “Sled Music” (Act I/7). Example IV.4 shows these figures as they appear together in “Sled Music.”

Another important ostinato figure in the Skadi Motive incorporates hocket. Example IV.5 shows the steady eighth note ostinato figure in the harp and its hocket relationship with the pizzicato upper strings that play on the last eighth note in measures 1 and 2. This example is from the opening of “Gerda at the Snow Queen’s Palace” (Act III/5).
A marked instance of ostinato in combination with other rhythmic devices happens in “When Roses Bloom” (Act I/5). Example IV.6 shows a sudden accented cluster chord on the second beat of measure 73 that represents the fragment glass that lands in Kay’s eye. A measured five-beat silence is followed by another cluster chord on the fourth beat of measure 74 that represents the fragment of glass that lands in Kay’s heart.

The measured silence between clusters distorts the established sense of motion. A silence of indeterminate length, notated as the comma between measure 74 and measure 75, further alters the momentum. After two measures of quarter note pedal Fs, a modal alternation of the leading tone of G minor, the rhythmic motive heard in measures 70 through 73 (before the clusters) is restated in measures 77 through 79. Finally, in measure 80, the bass is taken over by an ostinato drone-like repeating quarter pattern that continues under a statement of “Erev Shel Shoshanim” (see Example IIg.2). Example IV.6 illustrates this combination of ostinato with the change in the rhythmic flow.

Example IV.6
Act I/5, mm. 70-89
Chord clusters, Ostinato drone
Measured and unmeasured silence
In the “Magic Combing Song” (Act II/3), the B minor ostinato in the harp and the second violin seems to hypnotizes Gerda and cause her to forget her reason for coming to the Garden Woman’s garden. Example IV.7 shows this ostinato.

While Gerda sings “It is Eternity Now” (Act II/4), she is accompanied by an eighth note ostinato figure in the vibraphone and in the solo cello set in counterpoint with one antiphonal ostinato dialogue between the two solo violins and another ostinato in the solo viola. Example IV.8 shows this ostinato.
“It is Eternity Now” is the temporal center of the opera and its lightest colored moment. Though it lasts only one minute and forty-three seconds, it seems to take much longer because of the two ostinato figures playing in counterpoint with Gerda’s through-composed melody.

Though not an ostinato pattern, the rhythm of the water motive is also made of a consistent repeating rhythm. Water in the opera is always represented in compound time with evenly moving sixteenth notes. Sometimes the sixteenth note figure is in counterpoint with eighth notes and dotted quarter notes as shown in Example IV.9 (Act II/1).

Example IV.9 Water Motive Rhythm
Act II/1, mm. 10-13
Mixed Divisions of Beats

Occasionally there are mixed divisions of beats in the opera. The opening of Act II/13 “The Reindeer Speaks to Gerda” in compound time has a division of the dotted quarter note into quintuplet eight notes. Example IV.10 shows this rhythmic dialogue between temple blocks and harp.

Example IV.10
Mixed Divisions Act II/13, mm. 8-12

Meter Changes

Meter changes often help to define the beginnings and endings of sections, enchantments, journeys, and clarify points of repose.

A meter change helps intensify Gerda’s trance induced by the Garden Woman. Gerda sings only eight measures of 6/8 during the Garden Woman’s song and then she falls asleep. Example IV.11 shows the offsetting effect of the meter change.

Example IV.11 Change of Meter Act II/3, mm. 48-61
Chapter IV: Rhythmic Structure and Themes 53

There is a moment of repose at the end of “The Roses Bloomed Reprise” (Act II/12) when the Robber and Gerda lie down in bed together, and shortly thereafter the meter changes to 9/8 to make the moment when the Reindeer speaks sound enchanted and different from all that came before it.

The music in Example IV.12 shows a dramatic change in the action. It illustrates the point where Gerda knows she is on the right path to find Kay. This change is marked by a change in meter that incorporates a compound time version of the snare drum rhythm (see Example IV.3) in the statement of the “Dies Irae” in measures 65 and 66.

Example IV.12
Change of Meter
Act II/12, mm. 65-75

Although the “Dies Irae” passage before the fermata in measure 67 is in 4/4 time, it has the feeling of compound time because of its steady and constant triplet eighth notes. The fermata suspends the function of the meter, and the slower tempo at measure 68 gives the duplets the feeling of being in a different meter from what came before, even though the meter has not changed. The 9/8 meter in measure 73 gives the feeling of forward motion that, with a slight written-in sense of rubato in measure 75 resulting from the use of duplet eighth notes in compound time, leads into the 9/8 meter of “The Reindeer Speaks to Gerda.” The forward motion continues from the 9/8 meter of Act
II/13, and after a few changes of mixed meter in compound time (12/8, 6/8, and 9/8) leads to the 12/8 meter of “It Was There I Was Born.”

**Points of Arrival and Metric Changes**

Kay’s journey involves only one point of arrival: his arrival at the Snow Queen’s palace after his abduction at “Your Lips are Cool” (Act I/8). When Kay arrives at the palace the meter changes from 6/8 to 4/4.

Gerda’s journey in the opera is far more complicated than Kay’s, but both characters have their points of arrival signalled by meter changes. Kay has one point of arrival (Act I/8) and Gerda has four important points of arrival and one point of repose that are all highlighted by meter changes. Example IV.3 is a table that shows the places Gerda arrives, the meter that preceded it, and the meter that happens when she arrives. Gerda’s arrival at the house of the Volva (Act III/3) remains in the same meter because it is not really a point of arrival for her. Gerda goes off to rest while the Reindeer talks with the Volva, making that “stop” more like an extension of Gerda’s last point of departure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gerda’s Points of Departure</th>
<th>Gerda’s Points of Arrival</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gerda’s Song to the River Act II/2</td>
<td>Arrival in the Garden Act II/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kay Caw Kay Act II/6</td>
<td>Arrival at the Castle Act II/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Roses Bloomed Again Act II/12</td>
<td>Point of Repose with the Robber Girl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Reindeer Music Act II/15)</td>
<td>(Arrival at the Volva’s house not a true point of arrival for Gerda)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerda Rides to Skadi’s Palace Act III/4</td>
<td>Gerda at the Snow Queen’s Palace Act III/5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER FIVE: TEXTURE AND ORCHESTRATION

Instrumentation

_The Snow Queen_ is scored for a theatre-sized orchestra of two flutes (one doubling piccolo, one doubling alto flute), one oboe, one B-flat clarinet (doubling bass clarinet), one bassoon, percussion (two players playing timpani, bongo drums, conga drums, suspended cymbal, guiro, snare drum, wood block, triangle, sleigh bells, xylophone, vibraphone, and temple blocks), two horns, harp, and strings (four first violins, four second violins, three violas, three cellos, and one double bass). Table V.1, the Orchestration Density Table, shows the distribution of instrumentation throughout the opera.

The Table makes clear that there is very little duplication of instrumentation between "numbers" of the opera. The only pairs of pieces with identical instrumentation are the adjacent Prologue to Act II and Gerda’s Song to the River (Act II/2), and the also adjacent “Reindeer Music” (Act II/15) and Prologue to Act III (Act III/1). The instrumentation of “Twelve Strong Men” (Act III/3) and “Gerda at the Snow Queen’s Palace” (Act III/5) are very similar but not identical. Act III/3 calls for flute, oboe, bassoon, two horns, harp, strings and conga drums, while Act III/5 has similar instrumentation but calls for piccolo and timpani in place of flute and conga drums.

There is a large variety of instrumental combinations used in the opera. The instrumental density ranges from small ensembles of four instrumentalists to the full orchestra of 24. Table V.2 shows the numbers of musicians used for each "number" of the opera and illustrates some of the marked contrasts in instrumental density.
Table V.1 Orchestration Density

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Act One</th>
<th>Act Two</th>
<th>Act Three</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>flute</td>
<td>2 2 1</td>
<td>1 2 2</td>
<td>1 1 1 1 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oboe</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 1 1</td>
<td>1 1 1 1 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clarinet</td>
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<td>1 1 1 1 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>horn</td>
<td>1 2 2 2</td>
<td>1 2 2 2</td>
<td>1 2 2 2 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>percussion</td>
<td>5 1</td>
<td>1 2 1</td>
<td>1 1 1 1 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>harp</td>
<td>1 1 1 1</td>
<td>1 1 1 1</td>
<td>1 1 1 1 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>violin</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>viola</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cello</td>
<td>t s t s t t t t t s s t s t t t t t t ts t t t t t t t t t t t t t</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bass</td>
<td>t t t t t t t t t t t t t t t t t t t t t t t t t t t t t t t t</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(t = \) tutti strings  
\(s = \) solo strings  
\(ts = \) tutti thinning out to solo strings  
The numbers in bold indicate the "number" within each act  
The numbers 1-5 indicate the number of instruments or players used
Table V.2 Number of Instrumental Musicians

ACT ONE

ACT TWO

ACT THREE

Number of Instrumental Musicians
Small Ensemble Combinations

The smallest ensembles in the opera consist of four instrumentalists and either one or two singers. There are six small ensemble pieces in the opera, each with a unique instrumentation and character.

“Skadi the Huntress” (Act I/2) is scored for contralto, bass clarinet, cello, bongo drums, and harp. The dark color and heavy texture of the bass clarinet contrasts with the reedier color of the middle register of the cello. The definition of attack in the harp and the bongo drums also contrasts with the relative smoothness of the bass clarinet and cello. Despite the darkness of the instrumental timbres, the texture is sparse enough for Edda’s deep voice to be heard, even if she speak-sings the lower notes.

“I mustn’t Tell” (Act I/4) scored for alto flute, harp, solo violin, solo cello, and the middle register of Kay’s baritone voice, has a lighter small ensemble texture than “Skadi the Huntress” though it shares some thematic material.

“It is Eternity Now” (Act II/4) uses the opera’s brightest instrumental combination: the upper middle register of the flute and the vibraphone in the same register, along with harp, and string quartet to accompany Gerda’s soprano voice. The flute and vibraphone are scored soloistically while the strings and harp play more of a secondary role.

In “Kay Caw Kay” (Act II/6) the bongo drums, xylophone, clarinet, and bassoon all play important parts in the dialogue between the Crow and Gerda. Example V.1 shows the way the instruments make “comments” between the Crow’s phrases.
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Example V.1 Instrumental Dialogue
Act II/6, mm. 24-27

Example V.2 Clarinet Echo of Vocal Line
Act II/6 m 13 and m. 30

In Example V.2 from the same piece shows the clarinet echoing a slight variation of a motive introduced earlier by the Crow.

“At the Castle of the Princess” (Act II/7) is set for oboe, clarinet, bassoon and two horns. The texture is full, smooth, and sustained with periods of contrasting staccato interjections by the Crow and the clarinet making reference to “Kay Caw Kay.”

The final small ensemble piece “It Was There I Was Born” (Act II/14) begins with a
solo bassoon and full strings and ends with bassoon and solo strings. After this piece the ensemble increases to its nearly full size of 18 players for the finale of Act II.

**Larger Ensemble Combinations**

The larger ensemble combinations range from 18 to 24 players, and all use the full string section. The music for the string section (eight violins, three violas, three cellos, and a contrabass) is scored in a variety of homorhythmic, homophonic, and contrapuntal textures. The double bass often has the role of playing ostinato figures and rarely doubles the cello, even in *tutti* sections.

Example V.3 shows a duet between the cello section and the bass.

Example V.3 Cello and Bass Duet
Act I/5, mm. 4-12

An example of homorhythmic string playing is illustrated in Example V.4. Also illustrated in the example below is the use of *col legno* bowing (playing percussively with the wood of the bow stick in the strings) as well as a case where the double bass doubles the cello one octave lower.
Use of Winds and Brass

With the exception of the flutes, all the woodwind parts call for single players. Both flute parts are doubling parts: the first flute doubles on the piccolo and the second flute doubles on the alto flute in G. There is a prominent part for the alto flute in “Skadi the Huntress” (Act I/2) and various prominent parts for the piccolo, but only one soloistic piece for the flute. The flutes play as a pair in the Prologue to Act II and “Gerda’s Song to the River” (Act II/2). The only time the flute plays as a soloist is in “It is Eternity Now” (Act II/4), a transparent-textured piece that uses flute, string quartet, vibraphone, and harp to accompany Gerda.

The oboe has some exposed sections, but it does not have any prominent solos. The most exposed oboe writing is in “At the Castle of the Princess” (Act II/7), scored for oboe, clarinet, bassoon, and two horns, and “The Princess Sends Gerda on Her Way” (Act II/8), where it plays in a virtuosic staccato dialogue with the xylophone.

The B-flat clarinet doubles on bass clarinet. The bass clarinet is used in a solo capacity in “Skadi the Huntress” (Act I/2). The B-flat clarinet is often used in a solo
capacity, and is featured with the bassoon and solo strings in “Kay Caw Kay” (Act II/6).

The bassoon plays an equal part to the singers in “It Was There I Was Born” (Act II/14), and plays an important part in pieces that include the Skadi Motive IV (shown in Example IIb.6), “Skadi is the Name” (Act I/9), “Gerda at the Snow Queen’s Palace” (Act III/5), and the “Epilogue” (Act III/8).

The horns play a crucial part in the orchestration of *The Snow Queen*. They are the only brass instruments used and almost always play as a pair. Most of their writing is exposed and prominent. The horns are often scored in combination with harp. Example V.5a shows the horns echoing the Skadi’s motive in succession, in “Skadi is the Name” (Act I/9) making a contrasting texture to their parallel thirds scoring in the opening of the “Magic Combing Song” (Act II/3) shown in Example V.5b.

Example V.5a
Horn Writing in “Skadi is the Name” (Act I/4), mm. 138-144

Example V.5b
Horn Writing in “Magic Combing Song” (Act II/3), mm. 1-8
Use of Harp

The harp plays a major role in the orchestration of the opera, playing almost constantly from the second half of Act I to the middle of Act II, and for almost all of Act III. The harp plays in most of the smaller ensemble pieces as well as the pieces for full ensemble, and often plays ostinato figures like the Skadi Motive I shown in Example V.6.

Example V.6
Skadi Motive I:
Harp Ostinato
Act I/9, mm. 1-4

Use of Percussion

Like the harp, the percussion instruments are extremely important in the orchestration of the opera, and there is a fairly even distribution of instruments throughout the work. The Prologue uses the largest battery of instruments, most of which are not called for later in the opera. These instruments are the triangle, suspended cymbal, guiro, and the wood block. These instruments help to enhance the depiction of the goblin in the Prologue.

The timpani, like the harp, often accompanies Skadi, the Snow Queen. The bongo drums are used almost melodically as solo instruments in “Skadi the Huntress” (Act I/2) and “Kay Caw Kay” (Act II/6). The conga drums in “Twelve Strong Men” (Act III/3) are used in a similar way to the bongo drums in “Skadi the Huntress,” but to suggest the “largeness” of the Volva, she is accompanied by larger and deeper instruments than Edda.

The snare drum is a soloist in Gerda’s song “The Roses Bloomed” (Act I/6),
introducing an ostinato rhythm that is echoed many times in the opera. In “Gerda’s Ride to Skadi’s Palace” (Act III/4) the snare drum plays the part that the sleigh bells played in “Sled Music” (Act I/7). The xylophone plays a solo role in “Kay Caw Kay” (Act II/6) in dialogue with the bassoon, clarinet, bongo drums, a solo violin and a solo cello, and the Crow.

The xylophone is given a dialogue with the piccolo and the oboe in “The Princess Sends Gerda on Her Way” (Act II/8). The vibraphone only plays when Gerda is in the garden, and has important solo writing in “It is Eternity Now” (Act II/4). The soft, sustained ringing quality of the vibraphone gives the impression of lulling otherworldliness to Gerda’s time in the Garden.

Another percussion-enhanced moment of otherworldliness happens in “The Reindeer Speaks to Gerda” (Act II/13) when five temple blocks are used to rouse Gerda and the Robber Girl from their sleep in the magical moment when the Reindeer begins to speak.

**Character Enhancement through Vocal Type and Instrumental setting**

The opera calls for five vocal types: soprano, mezzo-soprano, contralto, tenor, and baritone. Gerda is a high soprano and Kay is a baritone. The pairing of high soprano and baritone is not a traditional pairing of voices, but is used here to bring out the awkwardness of the union between Gerda and Kay. Their duets “When Roses Bloom” (Act I/5) and “Sooner or Later” (Act III/7) are the only vocal duets in the opera. Casting Kay as a young man and a baritone is intended to give the impression of a person uncomfortable with signs of his adulthood. Despite the depth of his voice, Kay is not yet a fully-grown man. Since as a high soprano she is not cast against type, Gerda is put in the position of being quite comfortable with her youth and innocence.
Kay never sings with Skadi, the Snow Queen, who is cast as a mezzo-soprano. Because of the glass in his heart he is unable to have intimate relationships, like the kind of intimacy a person has singing a duet, with anyone.

In order to musically illustrate the power of the word “eternity” to release Kay from the Snow Queen’s spell, it is only after the utterance of the word “eternity” by Gerda that Kay is able to sing together with Gerda in “Sooner or Later” (Act III/7).

The tenor parts are all given to the animals. The Crow and the Reindeer are both leaders and beacons for Gerda to follow. They are given tenor voices because the tenor register is high and clear and tenor lines are often the dominant voices in ensembles.

Edda and the Volva, the two folklore characters, and the Robber Woman are all contraltos. Because each woman appears only once, and each woman appears in a different act, these three characters can easily be played by the same singer. The settings for Edda’s song “Skadi the Huntress” (Act I/2), The Robber Woman’s song “The Robber Woman Stops Gerda’s Coach” (Act II/10), and The Volva’s song “Twelve Strong Men” (Act III/3) all have a light enough instrumental textures to allow the singer’s low register to project, even if she speak-sings.

The Garden Woman, the Snow Queen, the Robber Girl, and the Princess are all mezzo-sopranos.

The Garden Woman and the Snow Queen share a voice type. They are both enchantresses: the Garden Woman could even be considered a summer version of the Snow Queen. Both women use magic to enchant young people in order to possess them. Both are lonely women who live alone, and both eventually lose the young people they try to possess. Examples V.5a and V.5b show the Garden Woman and the Snow Queen
accompanied by harp and a pair of horns.

The Princess is young and clever. Being royal she is in a position of power and is surrounded by activity. In “The Princess Sends Gerda on Her Way” (Act II/8) her mezzo-soprano voice is accompanied by xylophone, piccolo, oboe, and staccato strings.

The Robber Girl, who is a bit of a “tomboy,” has a mezzo-soprano voice that contrasts with Gerda’s lighter soprano voice. They sing amid different kinds of instrumentation. Example V.7 shows the Robber Girl’s instrumental setting in “Gerda and the Robber Girl” (Act II/11). In this excerpt she is accompanied by oboe, clarinet, bassoon, and strings playing off beats against a snare drum playing on the second beat of each 4/4 measure. In Gerda’s part of the dialogue, illustrated in Example V.8, she is accompanied only by cello, bass, bassoon, and a snare drum playing the rhythmic motive from “The Roses Bloomed” (Act I/6).
Example V.8
Gerda's Instrumental Accompaniment
Act II/11, mm. 15-22

I'm not a princess. My name is Gerda, and I am looking for my friend named Kay.
CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION OF LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHICAL ELEMENTS

Andersen and His World

Hans Christian Andersen (1805-1875) was born in Odense, a city named for the Norse god Odin, in Denmark. In 1819, at the age of 15, he set out on his own and arrived in Copenhagen with the burning desire to become connected with the theatre. He had a soprano voice, very little talent as an actor, and very little education. Shortly after his arrival his voice changed which foiled his aspirations as a singer.

Andersen made many musical contacts during his first years in Copenhagen including Friedrich Weyse and Frederich Kuhlau, and in 1822 managed to get his first book published using the pen name of Villiam Christian Walter (an amalgamation of Shakespeare, Walter Scott, and his own name).\(^1\) The book made clear the weaknesses in Andersen’s writing and through the generosity of his new friend and guardian Jonas Collin, the director of the Royal Theatre, Andersen entered the “Latin School” Slagelse in order to get a basic education. By the time Andersen was 23 he was able to enter the University as a regular student, and began to publish his poems and stories regularly.

Collin was able to obtain an annual stipend for Andersen from King Fredrick VI which made it possible for him to travel throughout Europe. Like Gerda in The Snow Queen, Andersen’s life was a series of journeys. Andersen was comfortable introducing

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\(^1\)Christoph Ernst Friedrich Weyse (1774-1842) and Friedrich Kuhlau (1786-1832) were both important Danish composers.
himself to people of talent, power, and influence, because people all over Europe enjoyed his stories. In Paris he introduced himself to Victor Hugo, Honoré de Balzac, Theo Gautier, and Heinrich Heine (one of the heroes of his youth). In Berlin he became friends with Meyerbeer, and in Leipzig he introduced himself to Liszt and Mendelssohn and visited Clara and Robert Schumann. While in England in 1857 he spent a month as a houseguest of Charles Dickens.

Andersen visited royalty, musicians and writers all over Europe and received many honors and decorations. In spite of his active social life, he was unable to have intimate adult relationships with either women or men. He related to people in the adult world as if he were a child, entertaining them with stories, puppets, and intricately cut paper figures.

Though he never had intimate love relationships, he had several that were unrequited. His most famous instance of unrequited love was for the Swedish “nightingale,” the singer Jenny Lind whom he met in 1843. Lind was the inspiration for Andersen’s story “The Nightingale,” (a story that Igor Stravinsky adapted for opera during the first decade of the 20th century). While he was writing “The Snow Queen” Andersen was hopelessly in love with Jenny Lind.

**Autobiographical Elements in the Story and the Opera**

*The Snow Queen* contains characters that could be seen as autobiographical, and some characters can be seen as amalgamations of people and experiences in Andersen’s life. I see the character of Gerda as a mixture of Jenny Lind and Andersen. Like Lind she is a soprano and like Lind (in Andersen’s eyes) she has only good qualities. There is
nothing lacking in Gerda. She has faith, courage, hope, and love. She is trusting, open, and honest.

Like Andersen, Gerda is always on the move. In order to find what she wants and needs she must go elsewhere. In order to grow into a woman she must make a long journey. Gerda and Kay live in a town very much like Andersen’s native Odense. When he went to Copenhagen, Anderson put his trust in strangers who saw something special in him. In the course of her journey Gerda comes into contact with people who immediately want to help her.

Andersen could have also seen part of himself in the character of Kay. Andersen, who was a very tall man himself, could have named Kay in homage to the character named Sir Kay “The Tall” from the legend of King Arthur. According to the Arthurian legend Sir Kay, the foster brother of King Arthur had extraordinary powers but a cruel nature.²

The Snow Queen is the opposite of Gerda. She is cold, manipulative, selfish, angry, narcissistic, and is filled with hate for everyone and everything. She is definitely a “bad woman” in contrast to Gerda’s qualities that epitomize a “good woman.” Before he left for Copenhagen, Andersen’s closest familial relationship was with his grandmother. His grandmother was a storyteller, probably very much like Edda.

The relationship between Gerda and the Princess clearly comes from Andersen’s experience visiting royalty. All Gerda needed was an introduction from the Crow, and she was generously welcomed by the Princess. Andersen clearly knew how to present

² Andersen’s extraordinary tallness was a result of Marfan Syndrome. This connective tissue disorder causes people to grow abnormally tall, have loose joints and abnormally shaped chests, heart problems, vision problems, and lung problems. In addition to Marfan Syndrome, Andersen was obsessive-compulsive, and had agoraphobia.
himself to royalty, and was supported from the time he was fifteen until his death by the kindness of royalty.

**Use of Non-Andersen Material in the Opera**

The composer and poet Elmer Diktonius (1896-1961) was born in Helsinki and spoke both Swedish and Finnish. As a writer he was highly influenced by Nietzsche, Strindberg, Dostoevsky, and Whitman and as a musician was influenced by Arnold Schönberg. His literary work was embraced by the international Communist movement.

In his autobiographical poem “Light Ugly Beautiful Dark,” shown in its entirety in Appendix 4, Diktonius exemplifies the darkest qualities in the Snow Queen’s character, qualities that Andersen was probably not able to develop in his story because of his relative innocence. Diktonius’s poem reduces every reader to the position of relative innocence with the darkness of his words. Because Andersen left the Snow Queen’s motivation for abducting Kay to the imagination of the reader, I felt it necessary to give her an autobiographical “mad song” to suggest the repressed, musty corners of her character.

These lines from “Light Ugly Beautiful Dark” seem to describe the self-loathing of the Snow Queen perfectly, especially Diktonius’s metaphor of granite: smooth, hard, and well-worn by hardship. His use of the phrase “my soul has a strange smile” seems to describe the need for some kind of vengeance.

My face weeps in the darkness-
but I know I am made of granite.
The savage floods have ground me smooth
but hard:
my soul has a strange smile.
Later in the poem the self-loathing and self-pitying qualities of the speaker come even more into the foreground, and provide the emotional climax of Skaci’s aria.

I hate
the sun the moon all things
even you.
I love the sorrow of my heart
the darkness of my spirit
and my soul’s despair.

Diktonius structured his extremely musical poem as if he intended to set it to music. I began writing *The Snow Queen* with this poem and based much of the music in the opera on the opening motive of Skadi’s aria. Because I did not feel that the aria should be too long, I only used about half of the poem’s text. Even with its reduced text, the aria serves as the darkest moment in the opera.

The English naturalist Richard Jeffries (1848–87) wrote long rhapsodic works about the nature of eternity, the most famous of which is *The Story of My Heart* (1883). His text used in “This is Eternity Now” (Act II/4) serves as the lightest moment in the opera, a contrast to the darkness of Diktonius’s text.

It is eternity now
I’m in the midst of it
It is about me in the sunshine
I am in it
as a butterfly in the light laden air.

It is eternity now.
Nothing has to come.
It is now.

During the Vienna Carnival in 1786 Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart sent a copy of his “Excerpts from the Fragments of Zoroaster” to his father Leopold. Leopold sent his
son's riddles to a newspaper in Salzburg, and one of the riddles appeared without credit to the writer in the newspaper on March 23, 1786. In 1970 autographs of the rest of the riddles were found in the Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz in Berlin.

I have used one of the Zoroastrian Riddles in Skadi's Puzzle for Kay (Act III/6) in honor of Mozart. My intention was to give Skadi a connection to the Queen of the Night from Mozart's opera *Die Zauberflöte*. In *The Snow Queen* Skadi uses this riddle to distract Kay from playing with a puzzle because she wants Kay to pay attention to her, even if it is only to be humiliated by her.

The clear precedent for incorporating characters from Norse mythology into opera comes from the example of Richard Wagner who incorporated characters from Norse mythology into *Der Ring des Niebelungen*. Because Andersen grew up listening to his grandmother tell ancient stories, it is highly possible that his grandmother's stories could have come from the tradition of Norse mythology. For this reason I found it natural to enhance Andersen's text with selected characters and stories from Norse mythology.

The *Eddic* stories about Skadi and the Volva are stories that Wagner did not use for the *Ring*. The stories that use these characters celebrate the power and wisdom of women. The stories about Skadi focus on power and revenge, while the stories about the Volva celebrate vision, magic, and wisdom.

The Volva, a visionary, is described the *Edda* as an old woman who traditionally lives in a secluded hut, carries a staff, and goes into a music-induced trance in order to see the future. The Volva belongs to an ancient Nordic form of shamanism called *Seidr* (pronounced syid) that is connected with the fertility cult of the goddess Freya. The
Volva is the clear model for both the Lapp woman and the Finn woman in Andersen's story. I have combined the two women in the opera and have given the resulting character the name of her Eddie model.
CHAPTER SEVEN: COMPARISON TO OTHER TWENTIETH-CENTURY OPERAS

_The Snow Queen_ is organized in three acts and in the style of a “number opera.” Though the different “numbers” often flow into each other, most are distinct pieces with distinct beginnings and endings.

The opera draws from several different styles of contemporary composition, but does not require any extended instrumental techniques or electronic enhancements in order to be performed. The harmonic language used in the opera is eclectic and does not adhere exclusively to any one style.

_The Snow Queen_ uses dramatic and musical devices that have been used by other contemporary opera composers. Though it bears little general resemblance to the operas I will discuss in this chapter, there are brief but useful comparisons to be made. These comparisons often reflect intentional homage to some aspect of each opera.

Igor Stravinsky used the Hans Christian Andersen story “The Emperor and the Nightingale” as the basis for his 1914 opera _Le Rossignol (The Nightingale)._ Andersen dedicated “The Emperor and the Nightingale” to the singer Jenny Lind, “The Swedish Nightingale.” In _Le Rossignol,_ Stravinsky casts the mechanical nightingale instrumentally and in _The Snow Queen_ the role of the goblin is “cast” instrumentally. Example III.20 shows a passage similar in color to the Japanese palace music that Stravinsky uses to open the second act of the _Song of the Nightingale._
The Snow Queen also resembles Stravinsky’s The Rake’s Progress. Stravinsky wrote The Rake’s Progress in English in 1951 with a libretto by W.H. Auden based on the sequence of events depicted in a series of Hogarth prints. Like The Rake’s Progress, The Snow Queen is written in three acts and includes “number opera” arias.

The Rake’s Progress, features Nick Shadow, a Skadi-like character, who offers Tom Rakewell the chance to stay alive by challenging him to a card guessing game. Rakewell is able to guess Shadow’s card by way of a chance occurrence (a spade falls nearby, so he guesses the deuce of spaces), and through the image of his true love Anne Truelove (he guesses the next card to be the Queen of Hearts). The guessing game that Skadi plays with Kay (“Skadi’s Puzzle for Kay, Act III/6) is inspired by the guessing game Nick Shadow plays with Tom Rakewell in Act III of The Rake’s Progress.

Puccini’s last opera Turandot also has a woman with an icy heart who asks impossible riddles as its title character. Princess Turandot served as a great inspiration for the character of Skadi.

The Snow Queen also incorporates some outward characteristics of Alban Berg’s 1925 opera Wozzeck based on a play by Georg Büchner. Wozzeck is set in three acts with a libretto written by the composer and so is The Snow Queen. The leading male character in Wozzeck is a baritone and his girlfriend Maria, the leading female character, is a soprano—the same vocal types as Kay and Gerda. While writing The Snow Queen I was unaware of the similarity of the philosophical questions raised in The Snow Queen to the discussion about time and eternity that opens Wozzeck.

Captain: Slowly Wozzeck, you make me giddy. How shall I begin to use the ten minutes that you save if you finish early?

Think about it Wozzeck. You still have almost thirty years yet to live! Thirty years; that’s three hundred and sixty months to go, and how many
days, hours, and minutes? What will you do with that enormous amount of
time before you? Make up your mind, Wozzeck!

Wozzeck: Yes sir Captain!

Captain: It makes me afraid for the world to think about eternity. “Eternal” that is
eternal, you understand. Then again, it can’t be eternal, rather it is just a
moment, yes a moment.

Wozzeck, I’m terrified when I think that the whole world revolves in one
short day, and if I see a mill wheel that turns it always makes me
melancholy.

Benjamin Britten’s opera *Turn of the Screw* is an operatic adaptation of a story by
Henry James that resembles Andersen’s “The Snow Queen.” Britten’s (or rather
James’s) character Miles was enchanted and seduced by Peter Quint, whose presence in
the opera is that of a ghost. Britten makes Miles very much like the Kay in the beginning
of Andersen’s story, and his relationship with his sister Flora resembles Kay’s innocent
childhood relationship with Gerda. The description of the evil nature of his character by
Mrs. Grose, the housekeeper, shows Peter Quint as a character who could be compared to
the character of the Snow Queen in Andersen’s story.

At the end of the opera’s first act the character of Miss Jessel (another ghost) makes
direct reference to Andersen’s story “The Little Mermaid,” and to Gerda in “The Snow
Queen.”

Miss Jessel: All those we have wept for together;
Beauty forsaken in the beast’s demesne,
The little mermaid weeping on the sill,
Gerda and Psyche seeking their loves again
Pandora, with her dreadful box as well.
CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSIONS

*The Snow Queen* uses dramatic action and musical language to explore the relationship between linear time, ("real" time), and imaginary time and ponders a musical projection of the abstract concept of "eternity." Perception of time in the opera is based on the relative matters of rhythm, meter, and repetitive techniques discussed in Chapter IV in combination with applications of different harmonic devices discussed in Chapter III.

"Eternity" itself has not yet been defined or proven. We don't even know what eternity is not and what properties it does not have. The question of defining eternity eventually involves questioning the origins of the universe (Augustine wondered in his *Confessions* what God was doing before God created the universe), and ultimately becomes a discussion involving philosophy, theology, mathematics, and quantum mechanics, disciplines far beyond the scope of this analysis.

It is impossible to give a logical definition of eternity that applies to music, a mode of expression which is defined in time. A piece of music must have a beginning: a cessation of sound that is not intentionally musically organized and the start of sound that is intentionally musically organized; and an ending, a cessation of musical sound that is intentionally organized as such and its replacement by sounds that are not musically organized.

Though, by this definition, it is not possible to represent eternity in music, it is possible to use music to illumine relationships that make us perceive how eternity might feel within the confines of a given set of musical constants. The illusion of freedom within a given meter can be
achieved by using rhythmic devices that defy the gravity of meter. In the proper context
controlled instances of monotony like repetitive minimalist techniques that would otherwise be
thought of as deathly boring, can be very effective for projecting a sense of timelessness.
Harmonic and rhythmic devices that prolong or obscure harmonic expectations can also foil our
sense of time. The use of ostinato can produce a pattern that causes the listener to focus on
everything that is not the ostinato, making the ostinato audibly invisible even though it is the
functional basis for the music being heard.

The Snow Queen’s riddle has “eternity” as its answer, but her riddle is not solved by
philosophy, theology, mathematics, or quantum mechanics. It is solved by chance and instinct.
“Eternity” is the answer that frees Kay from the Snow Queen, but by the end of the opera we
know less about eternity than we knew at the beginning. Andersen begins his tale oddly “Now
then! We will begin. When the story is done you shall know a great deal more than you know
now.” When we begin to think about the larger implications of the opera, we understand that the
more we think we know, the less we do know (rendering Andersen’s opening statement
somewhat ironic).

The musical setting of the story offers an abstract field with only relative players: time, pitch,
 volume, tessitura, combinations of instruments and voices, intensity, and energy. By setting up
certain expectations it is possible set up situations that make temporal illusions. My goal in
writing this opera was to construct it in such a way to give a temporary musical illusion of a
“spot” in eternity.

By placing “It is Eternity Now” (Act II/4) in the temporal center of the opera and flanking
that fleeting, calm, simple, and abstract statement with “pillars” that declare the definition of
eternity (the only times in the opera when two singers sing together are when Gerda and Kay
declame that eternity can be found where roses bloom sweetly in the vale in the beginning of Act I and at the end of Act III), I offer a starting point for a musical discussion about the relativity of time and the musical illusions that can be made by manipulating it.
Appendix 1: Opera Libretto 81

APPENDIX 1: OPERA LIBRETTO

Narrator 1:

You must listen to the beginning of this story, for when we get to the end you will know more than you do now. It begins with a wicked hobgoblin who invented a looking-glass that had the power to make everything good or beautiful that was reflected in it seem to shrink to almost nothing, while it made everything that was worthless and bad look greater in size and worse than ever.

Narrator 2:

Everyone who went to the goblin's school—for he kept a school—talked of the wonders of this looking glass, and declared that people could now, for the first time, see what the world and mankind were really like. They carried the glass about everywhere until the people in every land had been looked at through this distorted mirror.

Narrator 3:

They wanted to fly with it up to heaven to see the angels, but the higher they flew, the more slippery the glass became, and they could scarcely hold it. At last it slipped from their hands, fell to the earth, and broke into millions of pieces, all of different sizes.

Narrator 4:

If one of the tiniest glass fragments flew into a person's eye, it would remain there unnoticed; but it would distort everything he saw. It would be even worse for someone to get a piece of glass in his heart because it would make his heart grow cold, like a lump of ice.

Scene 1  Kay and Gerda are sitting in Kay's grandmother Edda's house during a cold winter night. Kay is playing with a Geometric toy, and Edda redirects his attention to the snow.

Dancers pantomime snowflakes and continue to illustrate the story that follows, maybe in silhouette.

Edda:  (Spoken) See the white bees swarming, Kay?

Kay:  (Spoken) Do the white bees have a queen?

Edda:  (Spoken) Yes they do. She flies in the thick of the storm. She is the biggest bee of all. She can never stay quietly on earth.

Edda:  Skadi the huntress, queen of the shades. Goddess of skates, and skis, and sleds. Mother death, a goddess with a frozen heart.

A giant like her father, who was killed by the rival gods at Asgard.

Skadi went there to avenge her father's death.

The gods said they'd throw his eyes high up in the skies to become two shining stars but this did not appease Skadi.

Skadi the huntress, queen of the shades.

Goddess of skates, and skis, and sleds.

Mother death, a goddess with a frozen heart.

She asked to choose a husband from among the gods, but had to choose her mate with a cloth tied around her eyes.
so she
could see
no higher than the ankles of the gods.

Skadi the huntress, queen of the shades.
Goddess of skates, and skis, and sleds. Mother
death, a goddess with a frozen heart.

The god with beautiful feet she thought must be Baldr,
the one she loved,
the god she wanted.

The gods tricked Skadi.
The feet she chose weren't the feet of the god that she loved
but the feet of Njord
the god of the foggy sea coast.

Skadi hated the sound of the seagulls
Njord hated the cry of the wolves.
Skadi left Njord alone at the sea coast
on her skis of wood,
ever to return

Skadi lives in a palace of ice,
and sometimes winter nights when its cold and dark she goes into the town
and looks around.
She flies through the streets and peers in the windows.
No one knows why.

She leaves her trail of painted flowers
on every window
where she's been.

(Spring Transition Music)

Scene 2

In the rooftop rose garden. (Dancers are holding abstract suggestions of roses, and Kay is absorbed with his geometric
toy. He is distant and distracted.)

Gerda:  
(Spoken) What's wrong Kay?

Kay:  
I mustn't tell. I've tried to forget.
It almost seems like a dream but I still feel the chill and I know it was real.
I'm afraid
If I even think of her
that she'll come back.

Gerda:  
Who? Please tell me Kay! Who is it?

Kay:  
Do you remember Skadi?

Gerda:  
Who? The Snow Queen, from Edda's story, last winter?

Kay:  
Well I heated a penny
I made a peep-hole through the painted flowers,
and in the moonlight I saw snowflakes falling.
I saw them fall softly on the flower boxes.
As I was watching, one snowflake began to grow.
It became a beautiful woman
a beautiful woman, dressed all in white.
Gerda:

She was lovely, she was graceful,
with shining eyes that sparkled like restless stars.

Well she reached out her hand
and she beckoned me to come with her.

I know it was the snow queen.
I know that it was Skadi.
But what did she want with me?

Gerda: Kay, my Kay, don't worry
It is Spring and roses are blooming for us to see
And nothing can harm you.

Gerda and Kay:

When roses bloom so sweetly in the vale,
Its there you'll find eternity without fail.

Gerda: (Spoken) Kay! What's wrong?
Kay: (Spoken) Something struck me in the eye, something struck me in the chest.
Gerda: (Spoken) Let me see, let me help you
(Kay pushes Gerda away and she begins to cry)
Kay: (Spoken over music) Nothing's the matter with me. Why are you crying? It makes you look so ugly...like these roses. Look! This rose is crooked and this rose is worm-eaten. You really should take better care of your roses, Gerda!

Scene 3

Gerda: The roses bloomed through the summer days,
and less and less did I see of Kay.
The autumn came, it was just the same
he rarely even called my name.

He found fault in most everyone,
he mocked and mimicked just for fun,
distant and cold
brash and bold,
he spent more and more time alone.

The winter snow fell one dark night,
and lay on Earth a blanket of white,
Kay took his sleigh and rode away
Where he went he would not say.

I heard talk in the village below,
that Kay rode his sleigh through the ice and snow.
He went to the glen
to race with the men
and no one saw dear Kay again.

They said he went with a woman in white,
who just appeared out of the night.
Kay hitched to her sleigh
and they flew away.

Into the night they flew
Just where nobody knew
Oh Kay where did you go?

Sled Music transition to Scene 4--the Snow Queen's Palace

Skadi:  We've made good time Kay. My, you are trembling from the cold. Crawl under my bear coat.

(Skadi kisses Kay)

Kay:  Your lips are cool, your fragrance that of snow.
Your kiss
passionate as fire, yet cold as ice.

Everything is clear--Everything is quiet--Everything is perfect
I feel at home by your side.
Let me have one more kiss.

Skadi:  No more kisses or I should kiss you to death.

Kay:  But why? Who are you?

Skadi:  Skadi is the name--
but I lie like everyone else.
It's not songs that I sing
but concrete,
I have no thoughts--
my interior is an iron skeleton--
My lines are those of an explosion
my heat that of a crater.
If you seek coolness,
I will give you blocks of ice.
I understand much,
know hardly anything,
but what concern is that of yours?

Fire blooms in me!--
Cataracts of fire and waterfalls of passion.
Ash stones and coal.
Soot,
Dust,
lava lava.

My face weeps in the darkness--
but I know I am made of granite.
The savage floods have ground me smooth
but hard:
my soul has a strange smile.

I slipped
and fell and
became a human being.

God how I ran!--
like all the other rats.
That is what is called
the struggle for existence,
but is really only fear.

I am
the pointed entrails
of the harshest defiance.
The screeching contact
with life’s satin skin
does not frighten me.
I hate
the sun the moon all things
even you.
I love the sorrow of my heart
the darkness of my spirit
and my soul’s despair.

(Kay falls asleep at Skadi’s feet)

End of Act One

Act Two

Prologue (Dancers dance with scarves to create the illusion of water)

Scene 1 Gerda at the river. She takes her shoes off and steps into an imaginary boat.

Gerda: River will you take me, take me where I should go?
This boat and the wind will take me, maybe
closer to Kay
River take me closer to Kay.

Scene 2

(at river near the Garden Woman’s garden. The Garden Woman is an old woman who knows magic. She lives alone in a magic garden that has flowers of every season blooming all the time.)

G.W.: (Spoken dialogue) Finally the river has brought me company! I've been alone for so long. (To Gerda)
You poor child! However did you get lost on this big swift river. Come with me to my garden where it is safe and beautiful.

Gerda: My name is Gerda, and I'm trying to find my friend Kay who might have been taken by the Snow Queen to her palace of ice. Have you seen him?

G.W.: Kay hasn’t come by yet, but he might be along any day now. Come with me for a while and sit with me in my garden. Oh look at your hair! Let me comb it for you.

(Magic combing song introduction)

G.W.:

I have always wanted a daughter
with lovely flowing hair
to live in my garden
and keep me from despair

My flowers
deep are so lovely
their blooming never ceases
But I have been alone so long
I hardly even notice.

Gerda: It is so lovely
here in the garden
I can’t remember
how I came here
but I feel so at peace
here in the bright sunshine
that I was ever so lucky to find.

*(After Gerda has fallen asleep the woman helps her to a comfortable spot on the ground)*

G.W.: *(Spoken)* Now that Gerda is asleep I must use my magic to hide the rose bushes. *(She points her staff at dancers holding roses and they make the roses disappear.)* Now Gerda won't be reminded of Kay and she will be happy to stay here with me forever.

**BLACK OUT**

Scene 3  Lights up *(Gerda wakes up)*

Gerda: It is eternity now
I'm in the midst of it
It is about me in the sunshine
I am in it
as a butterfly in the light laden air.

It is eternity now.
Nothing has to come.
It is now.

Gerda: *(Spoken over music)* The sun is so bright today. Look! The Garden Woman, left her hat here. I suppose she won't mind if I wear it. What a lovely hat, and what beautiful flowers she has painted on it: lilies, violets, and roses. Roses!! That's what been missing in the garden. Why am I here, and how long have I been here? I must leave this garden and go and find Kay!

Scene 4  *(Dancers become trees)*

Gerda: Its cold and dark out here, and the woods are deep.
I just don't know which way to go.

Crow: Kay Caw Kay!

Gerda: Kay?

Crow: Kay Caw Kay!

Gerda: What do I hear? Who is calling Kay's name?

Crow: Kay Caw Kay Caw Kay.

Gerda: Do you know Kay, little crow?

Crow: Kay? who is your Kay?

Gerda: He was taken long ago, I don't know how long ago, by a woman in the snow, I don't know where they went. Have you heard perhaps something, anything would do.

Crow: Kay Caw Kay well I know quite distinctly of a princess who decided she wanted to get married to a clever husband.

Well, you know that's a problem when all the men you know are princes.

Now she was a clever princess she put a little notice in the paper and immediately she had hundreds of clever men who stood in line for days to have a chance to match wits with the Princess.
Some were young
some where old
some were hairy
some were bald
and everyone wanted to show how clever he was.

but none would do for her.

On the last day a man who had shining eyes and long hair...

Gerda: Kay?
Crow: Though he had read the paper. He was not coming as a suitor
He said he just wanted to hear the wisdom of the princess.
He just marched right in with his knapsack upon his back.

Gerda: It was his sled, I know it! He was Kay, He was Kay! Oh I know that he was Kay. Can you take me to the princess soon?
Crow: Oh Kay! We'll go. This way!

Scene 5 (At the palace of the princess)
Princess: What have you brought me today crow? I hope its something exciting.
Crow: A girl named Gerda who is looking for her friend Kay Caw Kay, who was taken by the Snow Queen when a little piece of something pierced his heart. Do you think that your prince might be he?
Princess: Bring her in. I'll get my husband.

(The Dancers promenade with chevron flags as Gerda and the Crow walk in, the Princess and the Prince approach Gerda)

Princess: Welcome to the palace Gerda. Crow says you might know my husband.
Gerda: Thank you very much. He resembles Kay but he's not. He's not Kay. I don't know where he's gone. Can you think of any way to find Kay?
Princess: You'll need a coach and you'll need a coat, and you'll need some boots and a muff. All I can do is help on your journey, I hope that is enough. If you take the coast to the North, you will reach the top of the world. There I believe you will find Skadi the Snow Queen. Gerda, be careful.

Gerda quickly puts on a nice dress over what she is wearing, pulls on some fur boots, a coat, and her muff and exits while the Carriage Music plays. All of a sudden the Robber Woman comes out of the woods holding a knife. She drags Gerda on to the stage.

Scene 5 near a robber camp in the woods

Rob.Wom.: It's mine! That coach is mine. I bet it's made of gold. And look at the girl! She looks like a fat lamb! What a dainty dish she'll be... OUCH! (the Robber Girl comes up suddenly and bites her mother) You little brat. What are you doing?

Rob.Girl: I want the girl. Give her to me. She shall play with me. I want her dress and I want her coat and she shall sleep with me in my bed. (to Gerda) The robbers shan't kill you unless I get angry with you. I think that you might be a princess.

The Robber Woman exits

Gerda: I'm not a princess. My name is Gerda, and I am looking for my friend named Kay. I believe that, but I'm not certain, it might have been the Snow Queen who took him away. Have you seen my friend?

Rob.Girl: I haven't seen your friend, and that is probably better for him cause I'm not too sure he'd stay alive here.
You're lucky you're a girl. Now give me your coat and your dress. Yes give them to me now.

*(Gerda takes them off revealing her original light shift).*

And the muff. I've always wanted a muff. Now come with me and see my pets. These are all mine.

*(the Robber Girl points to her pigeons. She picks one up and sticks it in Gerda's face)*

Kiss it!

*(Gerda reluctantly kisses the pigeon, and the Robber Girl brings Gerda to see the Reindeer).*

This is my old sweetheart Bae. We have to keep a sharp eye on him or else he will run off to the North. Every night I tickle him with the blade of my knife. He is afraid of that *(she takes out her knife).*

Gerda: Are you going to keep that knife in bed with you?

Rob. Girl: Of course *(she teases Gerda with her knife)* I always sleep with my knife. You can never tell what might happen. Now tell me more about Kay and the Snow Queen.

Gerda: The roses bloomed through the summer days
and less and less did I see of Kay
The autumn came, it was just the same
he rarely even called my name.

He found fault in most everyone,
he mocked and mimicked just for fun,
distant and cold
brash and bold,
he spent more and more time alone.

The winter snow fell one dark night,
and lay on earth a blanket of white,
Kay took his sleigh and rode away
Where he went he would not say.

I heard talk in the village below,
that Kay rode his sleigh through the ice and snow.
He went to the glen
to race with the men
and no one saw dear Kay again.

They said he went with a woman in white,
who just appeared out of the night.
Kay hitched to her sleigh
and they flew away.

Into the night the flew
Just where nobody knew
Oh where did my Kay go?

Scene 6

Reindeer: Gerda! Gerda, can you hear me?

Gerda: Who's that?

Rob. Girl: That's my reindeer. He can talk.

Reindeer: Gerda. I have seen the palace of the Snow Queen.

Rob. Girl: He's from Lapland. He might know something about Kay.
Appendix 1: Opera Libretto 89

Gerda: About Kay!

Rob. Girl: Lie still or I'll stick my knife in your stomach. Now Reindeer, tell me. Do you know how to get there?

Reindeer: Of course I do.

It was there I was born, it was there I was raised.
I have wanted to return there for all of my days down here.
Oh Lapland is my home.
Oh Lapland is my home.
Take me home.
Where northern lights shine bright
where day light shines all night
My home is where I belong
It is so far from here.

Reindeer: You're my pet, you're my Bae
and you answer to me
I have kept and fed and tamed you
so you would want to stay with me
but Bae you want to go.
You want to go back home
to your home
You want to go away from me
You want to go home
back home
It makes me sad to hear you cry like this.

Robber Girl: (Spoken over music) I have never done anything good in my life—and I don't know if this is something good because the fate you could have at the hands of the Snow Queen might even be worse than the fate you would have here at the hands of the robbers.

Take my reindeer and go with him to Lapland. You must leave immediately while my mother and the robbers are sleeping. Here. You'll need your coat and your boots, (takes them off and gives them to Gerda) but I'll keep the dress and the muff. Mother's huge mittens should keep your hands warm. (Gives Gerda an ugly pair of mittens.).

If anyone can get Kay to become himself again, you can. As for me, there is no hope. Because of my mother and the robbers, I am bound to continue my life exactly the way it always has been.

Now go! Before I change my mind!

Gerda: Thank you! There is hope for you!

(Reindeer Music)

End of Act Two

The Reindeer and Gerda arrive at the Volva's house.

Act Three

Prologue

Scene 1 at the house of the Volva

Reindeer: Greetings Volva. You are such a wise woman. I know that you can tie the winds of the world together with one little bit of cotton string. And if a sailor unites one knot, he gets a favorable wind. If he unites another, he gets a stiff gale. Surely you could give my friend Gerda the strength
of twelve men so she can overpower Skadi the Snow Queen, who has taken captive her friend Kay.

Volva: Twelve strong men wouldn't stand a chance fighting Skadi. I know that Kay is with her and it's perfectly fine with him because he has a piece of glass from the goblin's mirror in his heart. Gerda is the only one who can save him.

Reindeer: Can't you give her a potion that would give her more strength?

Volva: Gerda doesn't need my magic, don't you see? No power could be as great as the power that she has. Can't you see how people and animals are compelled to serve her?

We must not tell her of her power, or else she might not know when she should use it. Her strength lies in her heart.

Gerda must go herself to the Snow Queen's palace. That is the only way she can free Kay. Bring Gerda to the Snow Queen's garden and leave her by the red berry bush, then return here alone.

(Gerda enters)

Gerda: Can we go to the Snow Queen's palace? Is Kay there?

Music: "Gerda Rides to Skadi's Palace"

Gerda: (spoken over music) My boots, my mittens!

Reindeer: We don't have time. We must hurry.

Black out

Scene 2: At the Snow Queen's Palace (Dancers hold abstractions of snowflakes)

Lights up

Gerda: The snow is monstrous. The snowflakes are alive. They're shaped like spiders and snakes and porcupines. It's cold, but I'm not afraid. I've come so far and I am so close. The walls here are driven snow, the windows are knife-edged wind. There are more than a hundred halls, lit by the flame of the Northern Lights. But I'm not afraid.

Gerda sees Kay who is playing with a geometric toy. Skadi enters immediately and Gerda quickly finds a place to hide. Skadi takes Kay's geometric toy away and puts it down on a bench, where it will remain until the end of the opera.

Skadi: I have a puzzle for you Kay. If you can answer it I'll give you the Northern Lights.

Kay: I'll try. What is the puzzle?

Skadi: I know a set of many sisters. It's painful to unite as well as separate. They live in a palace that they could call a prison for they live securely locked up. There they must work for the sustenance of men.

Both day and night the doors open for them but they do not come out except when they are pulled out by force. What are they?

Kay: A palace that's a prison? I don't quite understand it. It's painful to unite as well as separate? They do not come out though the doors are open? I do not understand this riddle. I don't know the answer.

Skadi: (Laughs) The Northern Lights are still mine! The answer is stuck in your mouth! Those sisters are teeth!

(Spoken without music) Because you play this game so well I have another riddle. For the answer to this I will give you the whole world, and you shall be your own master. (she laughs). Here is the
riddle: What always makes sooner and later useless measures?

I have to fly south and cap some volcanoes, so take your time answering this riddle. If you don't have an answer by the time I return you will never be your own master and will be beholden to me forever. (she exits)

Kay: Sooner or later. Useless measures. What makes them useless? Useless measures. I must find an answer, but how will I get it? How many measures? Which ones are useful. Useless measures. What makes them useless? Sooner or later I will find the answer.

Gerda: (from a distance, and gradually growing closer) When roses bloom so sweetly in the vale.

Kay: (Looks up as if in a dream.)

Gerda: It’s there you’ll find…

Kay and Gerda: …eternity without fail.

Gerda: Ah! I’ve found you!

Kay: Gerda I’ve solved the riddle. It is eternity that makes measures useless! What are you doing here Gerda?

Gerda: I have come to bring you home.

(Gerda embraces Kay, but he pushes her away and she cries. She embraces him again and her tears warm his chest)

Kay: (He starts to cry) The pain in my chest is gone, and so is the pain in my eye. Gerda!

Gerda: Kay let’s leave here now.

Kay: We can leave but first I have to let the Snow Queen know I’m my own master.

One by one, Kay taps the dancers who pick up large cut-out shapes that have the letters of ETERNITY written on them. The dancers put them on a frame that allows the letters to stand up, and then they exit.

Gerda: And I know I am mine!

(Gerda and Kay run off stage)

Skadi enters, hoping to see Kay. Instead of seeing him she sees the word ETERNITY, and realizes that she has lost Kay. She goes to the bench, picks up Kay’s geometric toy, muses over it, and finally allows it to drop to the ground.

Curtain
APPENDIX TWO: CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS

Four Narrators can be played by characters who appear later in the opera.

Edda (contralto) is an old woman who tells stories. She gets her name from the collection of Norwegian folklore and mythology.

Kay (baritone) is a gentle character who changes into a different person when he gets struck by the glass of the mirror. His transformation mirrors the changes that often happen to boys when they reach adolescence. In the course of the opera he gets seduced by a beautiful, powerful, and cold woman who takes him away with her and humiliates him.

Gerda (soprano) is a young woman who begins the opera thinking like a girl and ends the opera thinking like a woman. In order to save Kay she has to take many risks and must rely on blind trust, but somehow she manages to get herself pointed in the right direction. She never actually faces the Snow Queen but she does have to use everything she has in her heart to face her fears and rescue Kay.

Skadi (mezzo soprano) is a beautiful but cold woman who reveals her bipolar personality after she has abducted Kay. She is the Snow Queen, a goddess descended from giants, who is suffering because of a bad marriage with one of the gods. She can take the form of a snowflake or the form of a woman, and has tremendous power that she uses to humiliate Kay. She does not change at all in the course of the opera.

The Garden Woman (mezzo soprano) is an old woman who is gifted in magic. She is the opposite of Skadi, the Snow Queen, but she is just as lonely. She lives in a garden that has every flower constantly in bloom, but she does not see the beauty of it because she is all alone. When the river brings Gerda to her she wants to keep Gerda there and uses her magic comb to make Gerda forget about everything that is not in the garden.

The Crow (tenor) serves as a source of entertainment for a clever princess.

The Princess (mezzo soprano) is a woman who prides herself on being clever. She gives Gerda a coach and some clothes and gives her advice on how to find Skadi.

The Prince is the husband of the Princess. He makes one brief appearance and neither sings nor speaks.

The Robber Woman (contralto) is a cannibal who looks like a witch. She is the mother of the Robber Girl.

The Robber Girl (mezzo soprano) is a complicated person. She is a spoiled brat who gets whatever she wants from her mother (she has many pets), and she is desperate for
friendship. She wants Gerda to sleep in her bed (!) and scares her because she sleeps with her knife. She does have a soft side, and eventually sends Gerda on her final journey to the Snow Queen's palace.

**The Reindeer** (tenor) is very wise and very willing to help Gerda.

**The Volva** (contralto) is a wise woman from Norse Mythology. She sees everything and knows everything. She makes it clear that Gerda is strong enough to save Kay because of the strength in her heart.

**Four Dancers**

Instrumentation:

- 2 flutes (one doubling piccolo, one doubling alto flute)
- 1 oboe
- 1 B-flat clarinet (doubling bass clarinet)
- 1 bassoon
- 2 percussion players: 3 timpani, 2 bongo drums, 2 conga drums, suspended cymbal, guiro, snare drum, wood block, triangle, sleigh bells, xylophone, vibraphone, temple blocks
- 2 horns
- 1 harp
- strings: 8 violins, 3 violas, 3 cellos, 1 double bass

**Casting Concerns**

Because many of the roles are quite small, it is possible to cast the opera so that one singer sings several parts.

The roles of Edda, the Robber Woman, and the Volva can be sung by the same contralto. The roles of the Garden Woman, the Princess, and the Robber Girl can be sung by the same mezzo soprano (with a quick costume change during “Gerda in her Coach”). The roles of the Crow and the Reindeer can be sung by the same Tenor.
APPENDIX THREE: ACTION, DANCE, AND SET DESIGN IDEAS

The stage is set by using ten 4X8 flats, each painted blue with a similar texture along the middle third of each to give continuity. They are straddled to offer the singers and dancers places from which to enter and places to exit.

Act One

It is winter and it is night. Gerda, Kay, and Edda are seated on two benches (Edda alone on one, Gerda and Kay sharing another), frozen in their places in the front corner of the stage. They do not face the audience.

Act I/1

Four "narrators" are center stage in a straddled formation. They are members of the cast who have yet to appear in the action. They are completely still, and have their backs to the audience. Each narrator turns around to face the audience during the music that precedes his or her turn to speak, and after speaking exits through a space between the flats.

Four modern dancers dressed in plain black unitards enter from different sides immediately after the exit of the last narrator (measure 15 or so). Their dance should reflect the substance of the narration, ending in a representation of snow falling. At measure 47 Gerda, Kay, and Edda turn towards the audience and begin to move. Kay is absorbed in his geometric toy, Gerda is trying to get his attention, and Edda is focused on the snow outside.

Act I/2

The focus goes on Edda, though the dancers punctuate her story with a light pantomime. The dancers exit in measure 70, right after "never to return."

Black Out: everyone exits. One of the benches remains on stage.

Act 1/3 (Spring Transition Music)

Lights up. It is Spring. Two dancers enter from different sides wearing floral colored scarves (red, pink, yellow). When Gerda and Kay enter the Garden the dancers become rose bushes. Kay and Gerda are fussing over their flowers, carrying one of the benches back towards upstage center, placing "flowers" on them, and Kay is suddenly distracted.

Act I/4

The dancers remain still during this song and the next. They can be seated if they wish.
Appendix 3: Action, Dance, and Set Design Ideas

Act I/5

Act I/6

Gerda steps forward, the dancers wilt and slip away.

Act I/7

Four dancers enter and illustrate the frantic flight of Skadi and Kay. They move the bench forward as part of their dance. At measure 43 they exit and rest for the rest of Act I.

Act I/8, I/9

Skadi and Kay enter. Skadi is wearing a long white robe (a bear coat).

**Act Two**

Act II/1

Dancers enter immediately wearing blue scarves and carry long scarves which they use to make movements to represent water.

Act II/2

Gerda enters, removes her shoes, and steps into an imaginary boat, which is actually the center stage bench. The dancers' movements give the illusion of Gerda moving.

Act II/3

Suddenly the dancers stop their water movement, drop their scarves, and take the attitude of roses in the Garden Woman's garden. The Garden Woman enters wearing a hat and carrying a staff and greets Gerda. Gerda sits on one of the benches to have her hair combed.

After her song the Garden Woman points her staff at the roses (dancers), and one-by-one they leave the stage, picking up scarves as they go. The Garden Woman leaves her hat on the bench.

Act II/4, Act II/5

Gerda alone.
Act II/6

The Crow enters and meets Gerda, they exit together.

Act II/7

Dancers in black unitards with flags represent a palace. They usher in the princess, who sits on the bench. At measure 25 they make another procession of flags while Gerda enters to find the princess with her prince.

Act II/8

Dancers put down their flags and rush around like servants, running offstage to bring Gerda a dress, a coat, some boots, and a muff.

Black out, all exit, picking up flags as they go. The Dancers rest.

Act II/9

Music only. The Bench gets moved downstage left and is covered by a blanket and a few pillows.

Act II/10

Lights up, the Robber Woman enters while singing her first line. The Robber Girl, wearing her knife around her waist, runs in at measure 20 and bites her mother. In measure 27 they drag Gerda on stage and fight over her. The Robber Girl is the victor, and the Robber Woman exits.

Act II/11

The Robber Girl begins singing in the direction of her mother offstage, but by measure 9 she directs her total attention to Gerda. The dialogue is all done with pantomime props, except for the knife. When she introduces Bae the Robber Girl leads him in from offstage, and then lets him go backstage again.

Act II/12

After Gerda's song the Robber Girl leads Gerda to her bed which she arranges from the blankets on the bench. They lie down.

Act II/13

The Reindeer begins singing from offstage and finally makes it to center stage.
Act II/14
The Reindeer sings from center stage.

Act II/15
Black Out. Gerda, Robber Girl, and Reindeer exit.

Act Three

Act III/1
Lights Up. Dancers Bound in wearing brown and red scarves. The exit at the end of the Reindeer Music, drop their scarves off stage and enter again in plain black at the beginning of the Prologue placing "Eternity" cards on the floor as part of their dance. They exit. Gerda and the Reindeer enter at measure 40. Gerda takes off her mittens and goes to rest.

Act III/2
The Volva enters.

Act III/3
The Volva sings and exits at measure 70. Gerda enters at measure 73.

Act III/4
Gerda: My boots, my mittens! Reindeer: Forget about them. We can't lose time. Gerda and the Reindeer exit, and the dancers enter with white scarves.

Dancers dance. They remain on stage when they are finished, draping their white scarves across the stage.

Act III/5
Gerda is alone. Skadi enters with Kay at measure 61. Gerda "hides" by running upstage and turning away from the audience. The dancers "hide" too. Kay sits down and plays with his geometric toy which bothers Skadi. She uses her puzzle to distract him.

Act III/6
Skadi and Kay. Gerda is still "hiding."
Act III/7

Kay thinks he is alone. When Gerda starts singing her voice should sound like it comes from far away or even from another time. Kay hears Gerda but he does not see her and does not recognize her. He still has the glass in his heart and his eye. Gradually they come together at measure 59, and Kay drops his geometric toy. The dancers have gradually moved to their positions in front of the letters of the “eternity” cards that they placed face down on the stage.

At measure 108 Kay taps each of the dancers lightly. The rise up and stand up the Eternity cards. Each dancer exits when s/he is finished. Gerda and Kay exit in measure 120.

Act III/8

Skadi enters alone. She sees the word “Eternity” and is understandably upset. She knows that Kay is gone and that she is alone. She knows that some stronger force helped him, but she does not know just what that force might have been. Skadi picks up Kay's geometric toy, handles it, and finally drops it. She has been defeated.
Light Ugly Beautiful Dark by Elmer Diktonius, translated by David McDuff

1.

Diktonius is the name—
but I lie like everyone else.
It's not songs that I sing
but concrete,
I have no thoughts—
my interior is an iron skeleton—
My lines are those of an explosion
my heat that of a crater.
If you seek coolness
I will give you blocks of ice.
I understand much,
know hardly anything—
but what concern is that of yours?

2.

Fire blooms in me!—
no buttercup: a crater!
Cataracts of fire and waterfalls of passion.
Ash stones and coal.
Soot,
Dust,
lava lava.

The gravel ferments
The granite comes to life
rock cracks
continents shake—
man man
god god
You:
fire blooms in me!

3.

My face weeps in the darkness—
but I know I am made of granite.
The savage floods have ground me smooth
but hard:
my soul has a strange smile.
4.

No one sees
my glooms passion’s
dizzying curves of joy.
But I know that my dark arrow
will penetrate the sun’s light lap
like dark lightning in brilliant day.
Then heavy-hearted weightless children will be born!

5.

I slipped
and fell—
and became a human being.

God how I ran!—
like all the other rats.
That is what is called
the struggle for existence,
but is really only fear.

I am still
on the move
and am looking for the spot
where I fell
so that I may escape.

6.

My rage!—
with flowers!—
Fields swoon in burning colors,
earth is out of breath
sun streams
in torrents
goes precociously straight to the point.
My frenzy
makes light breezes hover
above meadows of voluptuousness.
I shout hurrah for every embrace!
My wildness
knows no restraints.

7.

I am
the pointed entrails
of the harshest defiance.
The screeching contact
with life's satin skin
does not frighten me.
I hate
the sun the moon all things
even you.
I love the sorrow of my heart
the darkness of my spirit
and my soul's despair.

8.

My poems are not composed in forms,
but in human flesh.
In all flesh.
In all flesh there are sinews, cartilage,
ugly things, ganglia.
it can be beautiful—
but cut it in pieces:
it's ugly.
I am always in pieces—
no glue will hold me together.

9.

They tore off the eagle's talons and said:
look, it's limping!
They smashed its beak and said:
strike, damn you!
They put out its eyes and said:
now see!
They broke off its wings and said:
now fly!
They stuffed it into a cage and said:
some eagle!

But an eagle is still an eagle
even if it's a carcass!
Tear off its talons, smash its beak, break its wings,
put out its eyes, lock it in a thousand cages—
of such is the eagle's great harsh fate composed.
of such is the air for the eagle's great, harsh flight.

10.

Far from me are all chivalrous grand airs;
I don't contend, I fight,
irregularly and wildly,
with dirty hoodlum's fists
and kicks that are not allowed.
Many do not give me
their blessing.
But I sing
as I fight.
Not the glitter-stringed harp
is my instrument,
not the pining cello
or the oboe that coos
and cackles—
but the whistle that shrieks
between raw-frozen lips.
Yet I know:
it will set the train of the era
in motion.
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