



## **Broken Lutes and Passionate Bodies in A Woman Killed with Kindness**

Deanna Smid

Volume 38, Number 2, Spring 2015

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1087511ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v38i2.25621>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

Iter Press

ISSN

0034-429X (print)

2293-7374 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this article

Smid, D. (2015). Broken Lutes and Passionate Bodies in A Woman Killed with Kindness. *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme*, 38(2), 93–120. <https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v38i2.25621>

Article abstract

Thomas Heywood's 1607 play, *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, ends with the protagonist, Frankford, discovering the lute of Anne, the wife he has just banished for adultery. Grieved by the sight of the instrument that he conflates with his marriage and with Anne herself, Frankford exiles the lute along with his wife. When she receives the instrument, Anne plays a lament, then directs her coachman to "go break this lute upon my coach's wheel, / As the last music that I e'er shall make" (16.69–70). Shortly following the destruction of the lute, Anne dies. Anne's body and memory, clearly, are inextricably linked to the lute: in the drama, her body is a musical instrument that she can play, that can be played upon, and that can be destroyed. The lute as body metaphor is a common image in early modern English literature, and Heywood both uses and complicates the metaphor. The lute, first, demonstrates Anne's impossible and paradoxical identity as a chaste wife, noblewoman, and possible prostitute. Moreover, the lute emphasizes Anne's powerlessness over her own body, particularly her humours. Like other characters in the play, Anne had let her bodily passions control her, but when she breaks the lute, she breaks also her passions' power over herself and others. Yet when she destroys the lute, she does not abandon music altogether, for music can bring about powerful social harmony. Instead, she plays her own body as a musical instrument, which makes her self-slaughter instructive rather than destructive. Her death is didactic for the audience—both onstage and in the theatre—that gathers around her deathbed, and suggests a variety of means of controlling the passions, some of them more deadly than others. In *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, Anne's music is an exemplar of the extraordinary efforts necessary to quell the unruly passions that cause so much of the conflict in the play.

# Broken Lutes and Passionate Bodies in *A Woman Killed with Kindness*<sup>1</sup>

DEANNA SMID

Brandon University

*Thomas Heywood's 1607 play, A Woman Killed with Kindness, ends with the protagonist, Frankford, discovering the lute of Anne, the wife he has just banished for adultery. Grieved by the sight of the instrument that he conflates with his marriage and with Anne herself, Frankford exiles the lute along with his wife. When she receives the instrument, Anne plays a lament, then directs her coachman to "go break this lute upon my coach's wheel, / As the last music that I e'er shall make" (16.69–70). Shortly following the destruction of the lute, Anne dies. Anne's body and memory, clearly, are inextricably linked to the lute: in the drama, her body is a musical instrument that she can play, that can be played upon, and that can be destroyed. The lute as body metaphor is a common image in early modern English literature, and Heywood both uses and complicates the metaphor. The lute, first, demonstrates Anne's impossible and paradoxical identity as a chaste wife, noblewoman, and possible prostitute. Moreover, the lute emphasizes Anne's powerlessness over her own body, particularly her humours. Like other characters in the play, Anne had let her bodily passions control her, but when she breaks the lute, she breaks also her passions' power over herself and others. Yet when she destroys the lute, she does not abandon music altogether, for music can bring about powerful social harmony. Instead, she plays her own body as a musical instrument, which makes her self-slaughter instructive rather than destructive. Her death is didactic for the audience—both onstage and in the theatre—that gathers around her deathbed, and suggests a variety of means of controlling the passions, some of them more deadly than others. In *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, Anne's music is an exemplar of the extraordinary efforts necessary to quell the unruly passions that cause so much of the conflict in the play.*

*La pièce de Thomas Heywood, A woman killed with Kindness (1607), se termine lorsque le personnage principal, Frankford, découvre le luth d'Anne, l'épouse qu'il vient de bannir pour cause d'adultère. Attristé par la vue de cet instrument qu'il associe à son mariage et à Anne elle-même, Frankford exile le luth en compagnie de sa femme. Lorsqu'elle reçoit l'instrument, Anne joue une plainte, puis fait écraser son luth sous les roues d'une diligence, renonçant ainsi à sa musique. Elle meurt peu après. Son corps et sa mémoire sont manifestement liés, de façon intime, au luth : dans le drame, son corps est un instrument de musique dont elle peut jouer, sur lequel autrui peut jouer, et qui peut être détruit. Le luth est une métaphore du corps courante dans la littérature anglaise de l'époque; Heywood utilise cette métaphore tout en la compliquant. En premier lieu, le luth figure l'impossible et paradoxale identité d'Anne : chaste épouse, noble dame et, virtuellement, prostituée. Qui plus est, le luth souligne l'incapacité d'Anne à contrôler son propre corps, surtout ses humeurs. Comme d'autres personnages de la pièce, Anne a perdu la maîtrise de ses passions*

1. This research was supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

*charnelles, mais en détruisant le luth elle détruit aussi l'emprise de ses passions sur elle-même et sur les autres. Cependant, lorsqu'elle détruit le luth, elle ne renonce pas totalement à la musique, car la musique peut engendrer une forte harmonie sociale. Elle joue plutôt de son propre corps comme d'un instrument de musique, faisant de son suicide davantage une instruction qu'une destruction. Sa mort a une valeur didactique pour ceux qui le regardent (tant de la scène que des gradins du théâtre), assemblés autour de son lit de mort; il laisse entendre que plusieurs méthodes permettent de maîtriser les passions, certaines étant plus mortelles que d'autres. Dans *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, la musique d'Anne symbolise la peine extraordinaires pour imposer une discipline aux passions sans règle, à la source de tant de conflits dans la pièce.*

In his review of a modern production of Thomas Heywood's 1603 *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, Richard Hornby outlines the difficult task any modern actor or director undertakes when performing a Heywood play: "Heywood's style is extremely difficult for a modern actor. [...] There is a great deal of moralizing ('Cursed be the fruits of my unchaste desire!'), and no psychology in the modern sense."<sup>2</sup> Hornby's assessment about the nature (or lack) of psychology in *A Woman Killed with Kindness* is apt, and perhaps explains the unease many critics have with the seemingly irrational, one-dimensional characters in the play. Yet while the play contains little "psychology in the modern sense," it abounds with psychology (although, admittedly, that was not a word in common use at the time) in the early modern sense. The fruitful complexity of *A Woman Killed with Kindness* is based in its multifaceted invocation and use of music, and through music, interconnected early modern theories about class structure, gender stereotypes, and the humoral body.

In the play, music is both powerful and symbolic, and audiences would have recognized it as such. Even Anne equates herself with her lute, for by breaking her lute she announces her resolve to starve herself. Music (both of the lute and in other forms) in the play can help readers and audiences better understand Anne's self-slaughter. First, music had sweeping social implications that create Anne's paradoxical identity, signalled by her musical ability on the lute. Second, music, according to early modern theorists, was inexorably linked to the passions of the performer. Third, its marriage to the passions gave music immense corporeal affective power over its audience, both on stage and off. Fourth and lastly, music can bring about the social reconciliation so lacking in the majority of the play. Theories of music linking it to the passions, the body, and society allow readers to reconsider Anne's self-starvation at the end of the

2. Richard Hornby, "The London Theatre," *The Hudson Review* 45.4 (1993): 622.

play. By destroying her lute, ceasing her music, and starving herself, Anne gains control over her physical body, but more specifically, over her body's ability to control and betray her. When she destroys her body, her lute, she silences the disharmony of her passionate body, and through that control allows for the restoration of social harmony.

"Some music there!" Sir Francis, Anne's brother, commands in the opening line of *A Woman Killed with Kindness*.<sup>3</sup> Only five lines later, he calls again, "Music, ho!" clearly establishing the vital role music will play in Heywood's domestic tragedy. Following Sir Francis's opening line, the play continues to offer up many and remarkable references to various types of music and musical instruments, beginning in scene 1 with a marriage dance and an acknowledgment of the newly wed Anne Frankford's musical skill. The next scene depicts the servants debating their own music, listing the names of popular ballad tunes to which they might dance.<sup>4</sup> Following a plethora of other allusions to music, scattered throughout the play, Heywood includes his last (and most emotionally charged) discussion of music in the penultimate scene. There, an adulterous and disconsolate Anne, banished by the so-called "kindness" of her husband, Frankford, plays her lute for the last time. Following her tear-jerking last song, she hands the lute to her coachman, directing: "Go break this lute upon my coach's wheel, / As the last music that I e'er shall make" (16.70–71). He does so off stage because lutes were far too expensive to destroy, even for dramatic emphasis. Her lute in pieces, Anne vows that she will never eat again, and indeed, when we next see her, she is holding court with her wasted body too weak to get out of bed, and soon after, she dies on stage, as broken as her beloved lute.

Anne's actions at the end of the play (the site of the majority of the modern criticism of *A Woman Killed with Kindness*) are then not solely destructive;

3. Thomas Heywood, *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, in *A Woman Killed with Kindness and Other Domestic Plays*, ed. Martin Wiggins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 1.1. All references to the play come from this edition, and will appear in the main text in parentheses (scene and line number) hereafter.

4. Most actors had some expertise in music, and it seems likely that some were hired specifically for their musical skill. The Rose, an outdoor theatre where the play was most likely first staged in 1603, featured a stage with two or perhaps three levels, and the musicians probably played from the third. See David Lindley, *Shakespeare and Music* (London: The Arden Shakespeare, 2006), 100–01, and Robert Cardullo, "The First Production of Thomas Heywood's *A Woman Killed with Kindness*," *Studia Neophilologica* 83 (2011): 202.

rather, her death is purposeful and even didactic. Many critics of the play have read Anne's self-starvation as her last, and perhaps only, expression of self-empowerment.<sup>5</sup> At the end of the play she finally controls her own body and determines what will or will not enter it. Others dissent from this common critical stance, arguing instead that Anne's suicide is another element of Frankford's true, vindictive, murderous punishment.<sup>6</sup> Nancy Gutierrez, in her analysis of female food-refusal in early modern England, and in *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, outlines three readings of Anne's suicide: 1) Anne's suicide is her appropriate expiation for her crime of adultery, 2) Anne takes control of her own destiny in an act of political resistance, or 3) Anne is incapable of making a moral choice because her husband has always made them for her.<sup>7</sup> Although I have sympathy particularly for Gutierrez's second point, I suggest that it can be greatly refined, especially when considering Anne's starvation in new ways: specifically, in relation to the theories of music that underpin it.

### Music and paradoxical identity

As numerous scholars have demonstrated, the acoustic environment of Renaissance England would be unfamiliar to us today, as would the early modern social implications of music.<sup>8</sup> Heywood uses the context and implications of Renaissance music in *A Woman Killed with Kindness* as a sort of shorthand to

5. See, for example, Reina Green, "Open Ears, Appetite, and Adultery in *A Woman Killed with Kindness*," *English Studies in Canada* 31.4 (2005): 66, and Christopher Frey and Leanore Lieblein, "My breasts sear'd: The Starved Female Body and *A Woman Killed with Kindness*," *Early Theatre* 7.1 (2004): 47.

6. Paula McQuade, "A Labyrinth of Sin': Marriage and Moral Capacity in Thomas Heywood's *A Woman Killed with Kindness*," *Modern Philology* 98. 2 (2000): 249; Jennifer Panek, "Punishing Adultery in *A Woman Killed with Kindness*," *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900* 34.2 (1994): 357–78.

7. Nancy A. Gutierrez, "Shall She Famish Then?": *Female Food Refusal in Early Modern England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 36. See also Henry Hitch Adams, *English Domestic Or, Homiletic Tragedy 1575 to 1642: Being an Account of the Development of the Tragedy of the Common Man Showing its Great Dependence on Religious Morality, Illustrated with Striking Examples of the Interposition of Providence for Amendment of Men's Manners*, *Studies in English and Comparative Literature* 159 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943), 144–59, and McQuade, 233.

8. Bruce R. Smith, *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England: Attending to the O-Factor* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999); Christopher Marsh, *Music and Society in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). Erin Minear, *Reverberating Song in Shakespeare and Milton: Language, Memory, and Musical Representation* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2011) and Joseph M. Ortiz,

signal to the audience Anne's impossible and paradoxical position in the play. As I shall demonstrate momentarily, the lute itself defines Anne and gives readers and audiences insight into her:<sup>9</sup> her body, and her role as lady, mother, and wife. Indeed, Elizabeth I, who died the year *A Woman Killed with Kindness* was first staged, also negotiated a fraught identity because of her renowned prowess on the lute.<sup>10</sup> Because the lute has a rich literary and historical precedent as a social signifier, Heywood can use it to give his audience a brief and devastating understanding of Anne's difficult and sexually suspect position in her society and family.

In sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English literature, many authors used the lute as a metaphor for the body in copious, and by now familiar, measure.<sup>11</sup> The shape and composition of the lute as a physical artifact could have contributed to its value as a literary trope. The various parts of the lute, for example, are called the "ribs," "neck," and "belly."<sup>12</sup> Lutes themselves were made not only of wood but also of body parts. The strings on a lute were usually made of sheep's gut: "Is it not strange that sheep's guts should hale souls out of men's bodies?" Benedick asks when he hears Balthasar begin to play in *Much Ado About Nothing*.<sup>13</sup> Moll, in Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker's *The Roaring Girl*, also conflates bodies and musical instruments when she exclaims, "He that can take me for a male musician, / I cannot choose but make him my instrument / and play upon him."<sup>14</sup> She can play the male body as easily as she can

---

*Broken Harmony: Shakespeare and the Politics of Music* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011) are also particularly interested in how music in drama creates meaning.

9. Katrine K. Wong, *Music and Gender in English Renaissance Drama* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 42. Her book contains a brief but rich analysis of the significance of the lute in *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, especially in pp. 41–46.

10. Katherine Butler, *Music in Elizabethan Court Politics* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2015), 19.

11. Carla Zecher analyzes the allegorical significance of lutes in *Sounding Objects: Musical Instruments, Poetry, and Art in Renaissance France* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007).

12. Thomas Robinson, *The Schoole of Musicke* (London: Printed by Tho. Este, for Simon Waterson, dwelling at the signe of the Crowne in Paules Church-yard, 1603), B1<sup>v</sup>.

13. William Shakespeare, *Much Ado About Nothing*, in *The Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Works Second Edition*, ed. John Jowett, William Montgomery, Gary Taylor, and Stanley Wells (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), 2.3.57–59.

14. Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker, *The Roaring Girl*, in *English Renaissance Drama*, ed. David Bevington, Lars Engle, Katharine Eisaman Maus, and Eric Rasmussen (New York: Norton, 2002), 4.1.223–25.

play a musical instrument (in her case, the viola da gamba, a bowed stringed instrument held between the knees).<sup>15</sup>

In seeming contrast to Moll Cutpurse and her viola da gamba, the lute was commonly associated with refined, artistic women such as Elizabeth I, particularly of the gentry or nobility.<sup>16</sup> Noble women would often play the lute in their homes as a symbol of their grace and refinement.<sup>17</sup> Robert Fludd, in his *Temple of Music*, alludes to the nobility of the instrument itself, and Thomas Mace, in *Musick's Monument*, includes a lengthy poem that personifies the lute as a woman.<sup>18</sup> Thomas Robinson, a well-known late sixteenth-century English lutenist, refers in *The Schoole of Musicke* to the practice of young, wealthy men and women learning to play the lute as part of their well-rounded education.<sup>19</sup> Susan (who eventually marries Sir Francis), too, is an accomplished musician: her false friend Sandy tells her that when her brother was free and wealthy, "Then you sung well, played sweetly on the flute; / But now I neither know you nor your suit" (9.24–25).<sup>20</sup> Now that she is penniless, her musical accomplishments have no significance to the tight-fisted Sandy.

Stringed instruments paradoxically signify both prostitution and nobility because instruments such as the lute may have been commonly associated with

15. For more on Moll/Mary Frith, see Raphael Seligmann, "With a Sword by Her Side and a Lute in Her Lap: Moll Cutpurse at the Fortune," in *Musical Voices of Early Modern Women: Many-Headed Melodies*, ed. Thomasin LaMay (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 187–209. Other early modern English examples of the correlation between body and lute include (but are not limited to) Thomas Campion, "When to her lute Corinna sings," in *Campion's Works*, ed. Percival Vivian (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909), 9; William Shakespeare, "Sonnet 8," in *The Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Works Second Edition*, ed. John Jowett, William Montgomery, Gary Taylor, and Stanley Wells (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), 780; and George Herbert, "Easter," in *The Complete English Poems*, ed. John Tobin (London: Penguin, 2004), 37.

16. Matthew Spring, *The Lute in Britain: A History of the Instrument and Its Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 102.

17. John H. Long, *Shakespeare's Use of Music: A Study of the Music and Its Performance in the Original Production of Seven Comedies* (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 1961), 17.

18. Robert Fludd, *The Temple of Music*, ed. Peter Hauge (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2011), 175; Thomas Mace, *Musick's Monument; Or, A Remembrancer of the Best Practical Musick, Both DIVINE, and CIVIL, that has ever been known, to have been in the world* (London: Printed by T. Radcliffe and N. Thompson, 1676), 36.

19. Robinson, B1<sup>v</sup>.

20. For brief descriptions of the Renaissance flute, see Lindley, 237–38, and Gerard Brender à Brandis and F. David Hoeniger, *Concord of Sweet Sounds: Musical Instruments in Shakespeare* (Erin, ON: The Porcupine's Quill, 2009), 48–49.



noble women, but onstage music and public performance were the purview of the socially disadvantaged.<sup>21</sup> Noblewomen were often painted holding a lute as a sign of eligibility, but rarely were they portrayed actually playing the lute. Elizabeth I played her lute only in private or during secret and exclusive concerts.<sup>22</sup> On stage, almost all performed songs were done so by minor characters who were drunk, mad, or melancholy.<sup>23</sup> Early modern audiences would not have seen many protagonists—especially wealthy women—sing or play music on stage, so Anne’s public performance calls into question her gentility. Anne, as a woman and an accomplished lute player, can neither have her cake nor eat it. Being able to play the lute privately highlights her nobility, but actually playing it publicly on stage likens her to a social deviant, perhaps even a prostitute.

The lute also paradoxically represents both Anne’s marriage and her loneliness. Frankford, for example, when he banishes Anne to a nearby manor house, bids her take every one of her possessions, leaving no material objects to remind him of her life there. Roaming through the house to be sure she has obeyed his edict, Frankford comes across her lute, “flung in a corner” (15.12) of a chamber of the house. Picking it up, he mourns the loss of his happy marriage, addressing the visiting Cranwell:

Her lute! O God, upon this instrument  
Her fingers have run quick division,  
Sweeter than that which now divides our hearts.

21. See Linda Phyllis Austern, “‘Sing Againe Syren’: The Female Musician and Sexual Enchantment in Elizabethan Life and Literature,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 42.3 (1989): 420–48, and Scott Trudell, “Performing Music in English Books of Ayres,” in *Gender and Song in Early Modern England*, ed. Leslie C. Dunn and Katherine R. Larson (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2014), 20, on the paradoxical nature of women’s public and private musical performances.

22. Katherine Butler, 15, 42–43.

23. Lindley, 8. In Renaissance England, music was often feared also as a source of effeminacy. See, for example, Linda Phyllis Austern, “Music and the English Renaissance Controversy over Women,” in *Cecilia Reclaimed: Feminist Perspectives on Gender and Music*, ed. Susan C. Cook and Judy S. Tsou (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 57–59; Leslie C. Dunn, “Ophelia’s Songs in *Hamlet*: Music, Madness, and the Feminine,” in *Embodied Voices: Representing Female Vocality in Western Culture*, ed. Leslie C. Dunn and Nancy A. Jones (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 57; Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), 125–26; Linda Phyllis Austern, “‘No women are indeed’: The Boy Actor as Vocal Seductress in Late Sixteenth- and Early Seventeenth-Century English Drama,” in *Embodied Voices*, 90.



These frets have made me pleasant, that have now  
 Frets of my heartstrings made. O Master Cranwell,  
 Oft hath she made this melancholy wood,  
 Now mute and dumb for her disastrous chance,  
 Speak sweetly many a note, sound many a strain  
 To her own ravishing voice, which, being well strung,  
 What pleasant, strange airs have they jointly sung. (15.13–22)

In this instance, and like other English Renaissance authors, he compares the lute to his own body, which Anne has played upon. This analogy may bring to mind the first scene of the play, where watchers marvel at the good match of Anne and Frankford, commenting:

There's equality  
 In this fair combination: you are both scholars,  
 Both young, both being descended nobly.  
 There's music in this sympathy: it carries  
 Consort and expectation of much joy. (1.67–71)

Music creates an intimacy between performer and audience, something Elizabeth I used to her advantage by offering private concerts as “a privilege for the men of the court.”<sup>24</sup> Such intimacy in *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, once full of hope and joy, has become broken and silent. Now, Frankford complains that Anne has “run quick division,” for not only has she played fast-paced, musically complicated pieces on the lute, she has also divided the once happy couple.

Frankford's anguish over Anne's lute playing may stem also from his possible frustration and feelings of alienation from Anne's performances. In his lament over the lute, Frankford explains that she had played “oft,” and although her playing made Frankford “pleasant,” he is excluded from the music making. The lute makes music “to her voice,” and together “strange airs have they jointly sung.” When Anne plays and sings with her lute, Frankford is always on the outside looking in; he is peripheral to the experience. The lute is an instrument often associated with privacy and introspection, even when performed publicly.

24. Katherine Butler, 44.

The spectator, in this case Frankford, often feels a sense of alienation from the performance, for he or she is clearly unnecessary to the musical production.<sup>25</sup> Her lute playing, then, is suspiciously masturbatory: she experiences musical and bodily pleasure without Frankford's involvement. Anne's lute playing may have given Frankford some delight, but perhaps it also increased his feelings of jealousy, of being unnecessary and a stranger in his own home.

Indeed, Frankford's ode to the lute also expresses his bitter distrust and suspicion. When he compares himself to the lute, doubling the frets of the lute and of his heartstrings, he emphasizes not only Anne's musical talent and their compatibility, but also Anne's carnality, as Frankford now views it. Anne's touch on the lute is sensuous, akin to Cloten's crude instructions to the musicians in *Cymbeline* who play in Innogen's bedchamber: "Come on, tune. If you can penetrate her with your fingering, so; we'll try with tongue too."<sup>26</sup> As much as noblewomen such as Elizabeth, Anne Clifford, and Mary Sidney associated—and pictured—themselves with lutes,<sup>27</sup> playwrights also linked the lute to women of poorer reputation. Earlier, I chose the example of Moll Cutpurse deliberately, for it emphasizes that a woman's singing, playing body was often viewed as a sensuous, lascivious, and even unruly body.<sup>28</sup> Bellafont, the title character of

25. See Daniel Fischlin, *In Small Proportions: A Poetics of the English Ayre 1596–1622* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1998), 21, and Zecher, 149.

26. William Shakespeare, *Cymbeline*, in *The Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Works Second Edition*, ed. John John Jowett, William Montgomery, Gary Taylor, and Stanley Wells (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), 2.3.13–14.

27. Nicholas Hilliard, miniature of Queen Elizabeth playing the lute ca. 1580, Berkeley Castle, in Spring, illustration 4.5; *Great Picture of the Clifford Family*, commissioned in 1646, artist unknown, Appleby Castle, Cumbria, in Spring, illustration 10.7; Mary Sidney, Lady Wroth with theorbo ca. 1620, attributed to John de Critz, Penshurst, Kent, in Spring, illustration 11.1.

28. For more on the lute, and music more generally, as a signifier for sex and seduction, see Julia Craig-McFeely, "The Signifying Serpent: Seduction by Cultural Stereotype in Seventeenth-Century England," in *Music, Sensation, and Sensuality*, ed. Linda Phyllis Austern (New York: Routledge, 2002), 299–317; Bonnie Gordon, "The Courtesan's Singing Body as Cultural Capital in Seventeenth-Century Italy," in *The Courtesan's Arts: Cross-Cultural Perspectives*, ed. Martha Feldman and Bonnie Gordon (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 182–98; and Deanne Williams, "Enter Ophelia Playing On a Lute," in *The Afterlife of Ophelia*, ed. Kaara L. Peterson and Deanne Williams (New York: Palgrave, 2012), 120–24. Grace Tiffany, referring to Moll Cutpurse, argues that "The viola-da-gamba's shape and the way it was played (resting between parted knees) resulted in its common Renaissance literary usage as a bawdy metaphor for the female genitalia," in *Erotic Beasts and Social Monsters: Shakespeare, Jonson, and Comic Androgyny* (London: Associated University Presses, 1995), 95.

Thomas Dekker and Thomas Middleton's 1604 *The Honest Whore*, plays and composes music for the lute, as does Franceschina, "The Dutch Courtezan" of the William Marston 1604 play of the same name. Indeed, when Anne receives her lute again, Frankford's servant Nicholas remarks sardonically, "Would that have been the worst instrument that e'er you played on" (16.19–20). Anne's accomplishment on the lute simultaneously signals her refinement and her skill in sensuous touching, making readers and audience members wonder if the praise of her playing in scene 1 is a foreshadowing of her later adultery: "her own hand / Can teach all strings to speak in their best grace, / From the shrill treble to the hoarsest bass" (1.20–22). When she breaks her lute, therefore, she also negates her reputation for carnality. Not only has she severed her ties to her seducer, Wendoll, she has also denounced all sensuality, and never again "touches" her lute or her husband.

The lute again stands in for Anne and sexuality in its link to motherhood. When spurning Anne, Frankford cruelly brings their children before his disgraced wife, bidding her, "Look but on them, and melt away in tears" (13.122). She does not have the chance to do so for long, for Frankford almost immediately directs the maid,

Away with them, lest as her spotted body  
 Hath stained their names with stripe of bastardy,  
 So her adult'rous breath may blast their spirits  
 With her infectious thoughts. Away with them! (13.123–26)

Anne will never see her children again. Rejected by Frankford as his wife, Anne is also no longer a mother. Music in general, but also the lute in particular, was often especially linked to the female body, particularly the maternal body, in early modern texts, songs, and art, as Linda Phyllis Austern has aptly posited in many of her books and articles. Music was often personified as "Lady Music," and the lute as the productive and sensuous maternal body. The lute's "rounded belly," in Austern's words, "visually suggest[s] the fecundity that [...] blesses the family."<sup>29</sup> When Nicholas brings the lute to Anne on her journey to her manor, he delivers this message from Frankford: "My master commends him to ye;

29. Linda Phyllis Austern, "My Mother Musicke': Music and Early Modern Fantasies of Embodiment," in *Maternal Measures: Figuring Caregiving in the Early Modern Period*, ed. Naomi J. Miller and Naomi Yavneh (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 245. For more on lutes and fertility, see Zecher, 139.

there's all he can find that / was ever yours. He hath nothing left that ever you could lay claim to but his own heart" (16.20–21). Their children are still in the house, but Frankford denies that Anne has any right to them or that they are hers in any way. He sends her an object that serves as a potent visible metaphor of her motherhood, but callously makes no reference to her children and her maternal relationship with them.

Although Frankford never even mentions her children to her again, Anne speaks of them and renounces her own right to them. When Anne destroys her lute, she forfeits her role as a mother as she simultaneously announces the destruction of her body. After Nicholas offers to send her commendations to Frankford, Anne demurs:

I dare not so presume, nor to my children.  
 I am disclaimed in both. Alas, I am.  
 O never teach them when they come to speak  
 To name the name of Mother. Chide their tongue  
 If they by chance light on that hated word.  
 Tell them 'tis naught, for when that word they name,  
 Poor pretty souls, they harp on their own shame. (16.83–89)

Anne's punning use of "harp" echoes Frankford's fear that their children will be infected by Anne's adultery. "To harp" is to repeat incessantly, "to harp upon, on, a, one, the same (etc.) string."<sup>30</sup> Playing on only one string of a harp precludes harmony, one of the highest ideals of Renaissance philosophy.<sup>31</sup> Anne and Frankford were in harmony on their wedding day—"There's music in this sympathy"—but the "consort" of their marriage is now absent. If Anne's children

30. *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. "harp, v," accessed June 2013.

31. Early modern texts expounding the nature and necessity of harmony include Thomas Morley, *A Plain and Easy Introduction to Practical Music, Second Edition*, ed. R. Alec Harman (1597; New York: Norton, 1973), Charles Butler, *The Principles of Musik, in Singing and Setting: With the two-fold Use therof, [Ecclesiasticall and Civil]* (1636; New York: Da Capo Press, 1970), 30–35, and William Holder, *A Treatise on the Natural Grounds, and Principles of Harmony* (London: Printed by J. Heptinstall, and sold by J. Carr at the Middle-Temple-Gate in Fleetstreet, B. Aylmer at the Three Pidgeons in Cornhill, W. Hensman, at the King's-Head in Westminster-Hall, and L. Meredith at the Star in St. Paul's Church-Yard, 1694), 198–99. Hyun-Ah Kim's *The Renaissance Ethics of Music* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2015) is one recent example of scholarly work addressing the nature and implications of harmony.

follow her example, she fears, they will be harping on one string, alienated from any possibility of marital, social, and even religious harmony.

If the lute is an extension of Anne's identity, then what a paradoxical identity it is. Lute playing is both a private experience and a public spectacle: Anne plays privately to her lute, but she has an audience both on stage and off. Young noblewomen such as Elizabeth I learned to play the lute as part of their upper class education, but playing in public was associated with lower class, paid performers.<sup>32</sup> Expertise on the lute was a sign of marriageability, but it also carried along with it a whiff of whoredom, for, as Katrine Wong posits, "the dividing line between modesty and promiscuity in the female musicians is in fact mobile."<sup>33</sup> Anne, as a female musician, is in an impossible position in early modern English society.<sup>34</sup> Her music proclaims her a well-educated, genteel woman suitable to be a wife and mother, but it also hints at illicit sensuality.

### Music and the passions

Anne's body, represented in various ways by the lute, is in an impossible position also because of Heywood's repeated invocations of the passions. Heywood often speaks about the passions, which corresponds well with his attention to music, for the two were often closely linked.<sup>35</sup> Indeed, the play explores the intricate and common link between music and the humours, passions, and body—a link I shall explore first by analyzing the nature and role of the humours in the play, and then by theorizing how music affected and even effected the humours or passions. The passions (also called "affections," and somewhat akin to what we might call "emotions")—and the necessity of their control—were of vital philosophical, physiological, and theological concern in early modern

32. For more on employed musicians in early modern England, see Marsh, especially chapter 2: "Occupational musicians: denigration and defence."

33. Wong, 23.

34. For more on the many, various, and paradoxical roles inhabited by female musicians, see Linda Phyllis Austern, "Portrait of the Artist as (Female) Musician," in *Musical Voices of Early Modern Women: Many-Headed Melodies*, ed. Thomasin Lamay (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), particularly pp. 15–16, and especially Austern's "'Alluring the Auditorie to Effeminacie': Music and the Idea of the Feminine in Early Modern England," *Music and Letters* 74.3 (1993): 343–54.

35. F. D. Hoeniger, "Musical Cures of Melancholy and Mania in Shakespeare," in *Mirror up to Shakespeare: Essays in Honour of G. R. Hibbard*, ed. J. C. Gray (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 58.

England. Critics such as Gail Kern Paster and Michael Schoenfeldt have brought the passions back to the forefront of current literary approaches to Renaissance texts.<sup>36</sup> Early modern theorist Thomas Wright neatly summarizes his understanding of the characteristics of the humours and passions in his seminal 1604 text, *The Passions of the Mind in General*:

We may gather, how that the heart is the seate of our passions, that spiritues and humours concurre with them: here we may deduce a conclusion most certayne and profitable, that according to the disposition of the heart, humours, and body, divers sortes of persons be subiect to divers sortes of passions, and the same passion affecteth divers persons in divers manners.<sup>37</sup>

Based on Heywood's contemporaries' arguments, Anne's and the adulterer Wendoll's inability to control their own bodies and actions results overtly from humoral theory and the passions. When Wendoll enters in scene 6, he is "melancholy" and is looking for a way to "drive away this passion" (6.4). One of the servants, Jenkin, witnesses Wendoll's contortions as he struggles with his bodily desires and his conscience, and he says in an aside, "What a strange humour is my new master in" (6.52). As well as placing these three humoral terms in one scene: "melancholy," "passions," and "humour" itself, Heywood also includes references to "heart," "brain," and "spleen," three important organs or seats of the humours, throughout the play.

The early modern period had a healthy respect for the power of the humours and the influence they had over the body. *A Woman Killed with Kindness* contains a number of dramatic, life-altering examples of characters whose bodies control them, rather than the other way around. In their fight over their wager, Susan's brother Sir Charles kills two of Sir Francis's men, an action that precipitates the loss of his liberty and his entire fortune. Looking at the dead bodies, Sir Charles explains his actions:

36. Gail Kern Paster, *Humoring the Body: Emotions and the Shakespearean Stage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), especially the introduction; Michael Schoenfeldt, *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England: Physiology and Inwardness in Spenser, Shakespeare, Herbert, and Milton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

37. Wright, 37.

My God! What have I done? What have I done?  
 My rage hath plunged into a sea of blood,  
 In which my soul lies drowned  
 [...]  
 Forgive me, God: 'twas in the heat of blood,  
 And anger quite removes me from myself:  
 It was not I, but rage, did this vile murder,  
 Yet I, and not my rage, must answer it. (3.41–43; 48–51).

Sir Charles's excuse for his actions is more than a convenient brush-off of his guilt.<sup>38</sup> Rather, his plea of temporary insanity is based on the humoral system's influence on the body and mind, especially through the passions. "These passions," Wright defines, "then be certaine internall actes or operations of the soule, bordering upon reason and sense, prosecuting some good thing, or fly-ing some ill thing, causing therewithall some alteration in the body."<sup>39</sup> Based on his humours—"the heat of blood"—Sir Charles's body, not his reason or will, has caused him to take action: to murder two men. Similarly, when an enraged Frankford chases the adulterous Wendoll, discovered *in flagrante delicto*, the maid physically restrains him from his murderous charge. She does not appeal to his mind or his reason, for his body, at the mercy of his passions, has decided to kill Wendoll, and his body correspondingly must be restrained by an external, physical force.

Against the forces of such irresistible passions, Anne, Sir Charles, Frankford, and Wendoll are powerless, for their bodies—or more specifically their passions—determine their actions. Damaging the body, then, seems to be a powerful means to restrain the otherwise inexorable passions. During Wendoll's brief internal struggle to tamp down his attraction to Anne, he soliloquizes fruitlessly, "I'll hale these balls until my eyestrings crack / From being pulled and drawn to look that way [at Anne, lustfully]" (6.15–16). He cannot counter his passions, for upon seeing Frankford, Anne, and Nicholas pass over the stage in a dumb show, he cries, "O God! O God! with what a violence / I am hurried to my own destruction" (6.17–18). He does not hurry: he is hurried,

38. Martin Wiggins, Introduction, *A Woman Killed with Kindness and Other Domestic Plays* by Thomas Heywood (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), xv.

39. Thomas Wright, *The Passions of the Mind in General*, ed. William Webster Newbold (1604; New York: Garland Publishing, 1986), 8.



passive against powers beyond his control. Wendoll names this irresistibility “fate,” telling Anne: “Such is my fate; to this suit I was born” (6.110).

Although Anne, like all of the other characters in the play, has been at the mercy of her bodily passions, she wrests back control at the end of the play. Her passions had betrayed her with Wendoll, but now she is not just destroying her body; she is destroying her bodily humours so that in the final scene in the play those around her can no longer “read” her. Anne asks, “Blush I not, Master Frankford? Blush I not, Sir Charles? / Can you not read my fault writ in my cheek? / Is not my crime there? Tell me, gentlemen!” (17.54–56). Sir Charles replies, “Alas, good mistress, sickness hath not left you / Blood in your face enough to make you blush” (17.57–58). Starved, Anne has eliminated her body’s involuntary responses, the same ones that had betrayed her to Wendoll and precipitated her betrayal of Frankford. Wooed by Wendoll, Anne had said to the audience,

My fault, I fear, will in my brow be writ.  
Women that fall not quite bereft of grace  
Have their offences noted in this face.  
I blush and am ashamed. (6.153–56)

Now, no one can “read” her blushes, for Anne has won control over her body and is no longer subject to what Timothy Bright calls “The affection that moveth blushing.”<sup>40</sup> Anne is also not necessarily in tears anymore in this final scene. Nicholas and Frankford are weeping, and Frankford refers to Anne’s tears, but she does not: a telling omission after the previous scenes in which Anne mentions her tears incessantly. Her body is no longer made of tears, the outpouring of the passions; indeed, her body is not made of much anymore.

Anne’s self-starvation would have been unsettling to an early modern audience. Although fasting may have been a medieval expression of piety, Renaissance courts had no sympathy for suicide. According to court records and other accounts, the punishments for attempted suicide—a form of murder—were particularly severe in England from around 1500 to 1660.<sup>41</sup> Yet as

40. Timothy Bright, *A Treatise of Melancholie* (1586; New York: Da Capo Press, 1969), 168.

41. Michael MacDonald and Terence R. Murphy, *Sleepless Souls: Suicide in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 75.

Paul S. Seaver argues, depictions of suicide on the early modern stage allowed audiences to consider and debate the nature and legitimacy of an act that was harshly censured.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, Heywood's dramatic depiction of self-slaughter raises questions of affective control and identity, for according to Galenic medical theory, because all bodies produced humours (and thereby passions), individual identity resulted from the control of those passions. Schoenfeldt explains: "The Renaissance seems to have imagined selves as differentiated not by their desires, which all more or less share, but by their capacity to control these desires."<sup>43</sup> Gutierrez puts Schoenfeldt's work in the context of female self-starvation in early modern England: "If we accept [Schoenfeldt's argument], then we must consider female food refusal, the most extreme interpretation of moderating diet, as a unique demonstration of individuality."<sup>44</sup>

In a culture in which selfhood was determined by control, Sir Charles, Frankford, and Wendoll, because they do not control their passions, are without individuated selves. Such an argument sounds absurd to postmodern sensibilities, but it would not have sounded so to early modern readers. All bodies were composed of the same humours, so the only way to be a unique person was to control, shape, and discipline the humours in the individual body. Anne has sometimes been called by critics "one-dimensional"<sup>45</sup> or "a decorative ornament,"<sup>46</sup> but according to Renaissance humoral theory, because she exhibits control over her passions, she has a self, an identity, which she has achieved by rigid self-control, even self-starvation.

In a lengthy list of directives, Wright even recommends a passion-curbing course of action akin to Anne's: "The sixth remedie to mortifie passions, is, to bridle the bodie, that is, to chastise it [...] for questionless, he that pampereth his bodie, feedeth his enemie, and he that will feede it with dainties, cannot but find it rebellious."<sup>47</sup> Anne's death, at the end of the play, is her drastic and deadly

42. Paul S. Seaver, "Suicide and the Vicar General in London: A Mystery Solved?" in *From Sin to Insanity: Suicide in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Jeffrey R. Watt (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), 42.

43. Schoenfeldt, 17.

44. Gutierrez, 3.

45. Lyn Bennett, "The Homosocial Economies of *A Woman Killed with Kindness*," *Renaissance and Reformation* 24.1 (2000): 49.

46. Leanore Lieblein, "The Context of Murder in English Domestic Plays, 1590–1610," *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900* 23.2 (1983): 172.

47. Wright, 86.

control over her own passions. She does more than wrest back ownership of her own body, more than commit suicide in accordance with Frankford's wishes. As well as demonstrating her penitence and remorse, Anne's death serves as an example to the other characters, the audience, and readers: this is how far she will go to master her bodily passions.

Anne's actions are not simply self-empowering suicide, demonstrating her last vestige of control over her body. Susan, in contrast, attempts just such a suicide: "But here's a knife, / To save mine honour, shall slice out my life" (14.84–85), she tells Sir Charles when he attempts to give her as a gift to Sir Francis. Sir Charles has dressed her body like a bride, decorated it with ornaments, and is now about to give it to Sir Francis to acquit his debt. Unable to resist, Susan can do nothing but threaten suicide, which Charles egotistically reads as an expression of her love for him. When Sir Francis offers to marry rather than simply ravish Susan, she recognizes that she still has no power over her own body; she can only "yield to fate" (14.147). Anne (unlike Susan), by means of her slow suicide, has done more than destroy her body; she has destroyed the passions that were manipulating her body and making her helpless to resist her body's "fate." Controlling her passions—the affections—and asserting her own identity are literally a matter of life and death for Anne.

In any discussion of the passionate, humoral body, particularly Anne's body, music can never be far from the argument. Anne is particularly susceptible to the influence of the passions because her woman's body is suspiciously, dangerously carnal. And readers and audiences cannot turn their focus from her body because of her lute, that symbol of sensuality and femininity. Indeed, even the lute's association with the maternal portrays Anne's bodily lust: in order to have children, she must have had sex on numerous occasions, obviously. The lute reminds us, on her way to her banishment, that Anne's unruly, sexual body has precipitated her current troubles, and only if she restrains her body can she have any hope of reconciliation with her husband.

There seems to be a certain inevitability to Anne's downfall, particularly because music has emphasized her bodily susceptibility to the passions. Anne tragically repeats Wendoll's word—"fate"—on the road to her new solitary home: "Why should I ride in state, / Being hurled so low down by the hand of fate?" (16.1–2), she asks. Shortly afterwards, Anne breaks her lute "upon [her] coach's wheel" (16.70), breaking the affective control of her bodily passions, and perhaps also referencing fortune's wheel, to which Anne is yielding

by her suicide but against which she is also rebelling, for her body can no longer fatalistically betray her from this point on. The symbol of her unruly body is gone, and now she can focus on controlling the body itself, and particularly the passions that control it.

Moreover, now sans the music of the lute, Anne retreats from the musical environment that may be encouraging her uncontrolled passions. For music does not just represent the body and the passions; it also creates and manipulates them. The arguments of Julius Caesar Scaliger (cited often in early modern music manuals) provide a reason for music's influence over or sympathy with the bodily humours: "*the Spirits about the Heart take in that trembling, and dancing Air into the Body, are moved together, and stirred up with it; or else the mind as some suppose, harmonically composed, is roused up at the Tunes of Musick.*"<sup>48</sup> Early modern theorists were unsure about the exact relationship between music and the body, demonstrated by the two possibilities Scaliger presents, both of which I shall briefly attend to. All theorists, nevertheless, were convinced that music does indeed powerfully move the body, and through it, the passions.

The body (with its passions), according to early modern theorists, is inextricably a part of its environment, participating in a seamless exchange with the elements outside of it.<sup>49</sup> Food and drink taken into the body from the outside world, for example, would change the balance of the humours, and thence the passions. The "dancing Air" Scaliger describes is just such an environmental element that would influence the passions present in "the Spirits about the Heart." Such "Spirits" are animal spirits, the liquid that carries sense through the body via the sinews.<sup>50</sup> The sound produced through music, particularly lute playing in this instance, has physical, humoral, and passionate consequence. Or, as Gina Bloom puts it, "The human voice possesses a number of attributes we might readily associate with material substances: specifically, the voice (1) has a temporal and spatial life; and (2) is constituted through a process of production,

48. Julius Caesar Scaliger, cited in John Banister and Thomas Low, *New Ayres and Dialogues Composed for Voices and Viols, Of Two, Three, and Four Parts* (London: Printed by M. C. for H. Brome, 1678), N6–N6'.

49. Paster, 42.

50. William Webster Newbold, General Introduction to *The Passions of the Mind in General* by Thomas Wright, ed. William Webster Newbold (New York: Garland Publishing, 1986), 36.

transmission, and reception.”<sup>51</sup> Her arguments apply to the sound of the lute as well, I argue. It too has a temporal life, it too is constituted, and it too, as Scaliger argues, materially affects the body. When Anne destroys her lute, then, she cuts herself and her passions off from the humoral influence of the airy spirit of music, just as she is about to cut herself off from the humoral influences of food and drink. Her spirits will no longer be affected by music, for she has taken away music’s power over her body by destroying her music altogether.

Scaliger’s second theory to explain the powerful influence of music over the body is that the mind is “harmonically composed” and “roused up at the Tunes of Musick.” His theory associates the mind, body, and passions with much more than their physical environment, whether that be through sight, touch, sound, or smell. Instead, Scaliger invokes the longstanding Pythagorean theory of cosmic music, which means that the body, through music, is linked to a spiritual—or at least cosmic—environment. The relationship between the harmony of music and the harmony of the Renaissance macrocosm is, by now, a critical commonplace,<sup>52</sup> but the analogy is essential to *A Woman Killed with Kindness*. The lute, of all instruments, was believed to represent the musical nature of the universe: the belly was akin to the arch of the heavens, and the strings were God’s tendons.<sup>53</sup> When Anne destroys her lute, then, she is destroying a symbol of universal harmony, so certainly her passions can no longer be affected by cosmic forces. In similar fashion, her lute music cannot affect the passions, humours, and bodies of others, a point I shall now explore in more detail.

### Music and corporeal affect

On the way to the site of her banishment and death, Anne performs on the lute a powerful demonstration of the affective influence of music on the body. I turn

51. Gina Bloom, *Voice in Motion: Shaping Gender, Shaping Sound in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 2.

52. For excellent resources on the relationship between music theoretical and performed, see Robin Headlam Wells, *Elizabethan Mythologies: Studies in Poetry, Drama and Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Amanda Eubanks Winkler, *O Let Us Howle Some Heavy Note: Music for Witches, the Melancholic, and the Mad on the Seventeenth-Century English Stage* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 1–17; and Jonathan Willis, *Church Music and Protestantism in Post-Reformation England: Discourses, Sites and Identities* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2010), 11–37.

53. Robin Headlam Wells, *Elizabethan Mythologies*, 16.

now from the humoral link between music and Anne's body, to the corporeal (and still humoral) effect of Anne's music on other bodies. We already know from Frankford's reaction to the sight of the lute that it had played upon his body, his "heartstrings." Then, when Anne plays her lute in the penultimate scene of the play, she prefaces her song with "My lute shall groan; / It cannot weep, but shall lament my moan" (16.29–30). When she plays her song, she causes everyone around her to burst into tears. Tears are a physical manifestation of the humours working on the body, as Timothy Bright argues in *A Treatise of Melancholie* (1586):

The matter [is] partly supplied by the ordinary excrements of the braine, and partly though those vapours which arise from the hart overcharged with concourse of humours [...] The partes about the eyes being porous and rare, the braine moyst, and the partie apt to weepe, upon this melancholie disposition springeth that issue of teares out of melancholicke eyes.<sup>54</sup>

Anne, the pragmatic Nicholas and the audience (if my own response on reading the play for the first time is any indication) are all weeping, moved to tears of passion by the song of the lute. The listening Wendoll remarks,

So poets write that Orpheus made the trees  
And stones to dance to his melodious harp,  
Meaning the rustic and barbarous hinds,  
That had no understanding part in them;  
So she from these rude carters tears extracts,  
Making their flinty hearts with grief to rise  
And draw down rivers from their rocky eyes. (16.50–6)

Anne's song on the lute (which Frankford had earlier called "this melancholy wood" [15.18]) moves all around her to a melancholy humour.

Such power of music over the body was commonly cited with both praise and derision in early modern English texts. Although theorists uniformly attest to the affective power of music, they are often unsure whether music will help

54. Bright, 62.

or hinder the body and mind. Thomas Salmon, in his essay on music, cites the affective power of the lute specifically:

The Lute hath always had an undeniable sovereignty over other instrumental Musick, since that it self is a compleat Consort, sounding with such a soft, but powerful sweetness, as if it were well acquainted with all the intrigues of the mind; sometimes disarming anger, and with its gentle breath, cooling a revengeful rage; sometimes, by a contrary power it kindles a delightful flame, and raises a kinder, but no less fiery passion; as it is observed, that Musick doth always promote that humour, which a man is most inclined to; though there are also several lessons, which in their own nature have a greater tincture of mirth or melancholy.<sup>55</sup>

Anne's tune certainly "rouses up" the minds of all those listening. She is, as she says, "a woman made of tears" (16.77), and her affective song has moved all those around her.

Anne's song is affective because, according to Scaliger, Anne's breath and music are themselves material entities that enter the bodies of the hearers, generating tears by changing the hearers' humoral proportions.<sup>56</sup> We know from the reactions of Wendoll that Anne's *sound* produces such an affective response, for Wendoll is an auditor rather than a spectator of Anne's musical performance. Some in the audience may not have been able to see Anne either, but they could certainly hear her voice. As Andrew Gurr and Mariko Ichikawa explain, early seventeenth-century English audiences considered themselves primarily auditors rather than spectators, and they would group themselves around a stage where they could best listen, rather than witness. Such an arrangement is far different from modern theatres which are organized to give

55. Thomas Salmon, *An Essay to the Advancement of Musick* (London, 1672), 60.

56. For more on gender, tears, and excess humours, see Robin Headlam Wells, "John Dowland and Elizabethan Melancholy," *Early Music* 13.4 (1985): 514–28; Linda Phyllis Austern, "'Sing Againe Syren': The Female Musician and Sexual Enchantment in Elizabethan Life and Literature," *Renaissance Quarterly* 42.3 (1989): 420–48; and Sarah Williams, "'A Swearing and Blaspheming Wretch': Representations of Witchcraft and Excess in Early Modern English Broadside Balladry and Popular Song," *Journal of Musicological Research* 30 (2011): 309–56.



each spectator an optimal view of the front of the stage.<sup>57</sup> Because the sound, not the sight, of Anne's song produces its corporeal effect, the audience should be moved by the performance; the song affects their humours and wrenches their emotions as it does to Nicholas and the other servants.

Audience members would also have a difficult time escaping from Anne's music: while they could easily turn their eyes away from an emotional spectacle, sound follows them in the theatre. Indeed, as Shakespearean critic Wes Folkerth points out, "the ear is considered an unregulated bodily orifice, a site of vulnerability" in early modern England.<sup>58</sup> Because breath and sound were considered material forces in the Renaissance, Anne's song is literally entering—in physical form—the unprotected, open ears of her audience, and her song should be drawing forth a corresponding bodily response—tears. Powerful stuff! Against the moving, corporeal effect of her song, Anne's audience, both onstage and off, are largely powerless. Their bodies, humours, and passions, like Anne's up to this point, may be beyond their control, and their bodies move and react against their wills. The audience can hardly condemn Anne for her bodily actions, then, if their bodies too are held in thrall. Furthermore, not only would Anne's affective song make the audience sympathetic towards her, but it would also make their admiration for her later restraint and control all the more intense. If audience members cannot control their bodies, they must be in awe of someone who can.

The lute song also seems meta-theatrical here at the end of the play: Anne performs for herself and her onstage audience, demonstrating the power of the *sound* of theatre. Heywood, in his prose essay, *An Apology for Actors*, emphasizes the widespread and potentially regenerative influence of the theatre: plays can move an audience to courage, repentance, sorrow, joy, chastity, etc.<sup>59</sup> Why, then, would Heywood script Anne's destruction of the lute, giving up the power of affective music and breath, both a potent demonstration of theatre's affective

57. Andrew Gurr and Mariko Ichikawa, *Staging in Shakespeare's Theatres* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 8. For more on early modern theatres as "sound devices," see Smith, especially ch. 8 and p. 206.

58. Wes Folkerth, *The Sound of Shakespeare* (London: Routledge, 2002), 87.

59. Thomas Heywood, *An Apology for Actors* (London: Printed for Nicholas Okes, 1612), F4<sup>v</sup>–G1<sup>v</sup>. When I cite Heywood's essay, I do so aware that the text is much more nuanced and layered than I can thoroughly acknowledge in the scope of this essay. For further reading on Heywood's *Apology*, see Jonas Barish, *The Antitheatrical Prejudice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981).

nature? I propose that when Anne breaks her lute, she does not give up her affective power over her audience. Instead, Heywood draws our attention to her next, more unconventional, way of controlling the body and making music. After the scene of lute destruction, Anne aims her affective control at herself, although her actions have a didactic result on others both on stage and off. At this point in the play, the lute, ostensibly the stand-in for Anne's body, has been destroyed, but her body remains the focal point of *A Woman Killed with Kindness*.

The corporeally affective nature of Anne's lute song demonstrates that it has powerful social implications. But before I move on to the social consequences of Anne's music, allow me a brief digression on the nature of the performance of Anne's lute song. We have little indication of what song Anne would have sung in the early seventeenth-century performances of the play. Heywood includes no stage directions or printed lyrics for a song, but Anne would have most likely sung something: the lute was often used for accompaniment, and Frankford also testifies that Anne sings to her lute.<sup>60</sup> One modern critic of *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, Otto Rauchbauer, assumes that because Anne says to the lute, "We both are out of tune, both out of time" (16.18), her performance must have been disharmonious.<sup>61</sup> No discordant performance would inspire the affective tears of the listeners, however, so either Anne tunes her lute before she plays, or more likely, she and the lute are only metaphorically out of harmony with Frankford.

Anne's performance is most likely of what David Lindley names "formal song":

These are explicitly called for and performed as complete wholes to an audience on-stage and off. While contributing to the mood and character of a particular scene; they condition our understanding, not primarily of their singer, but of the persons to whom they are performed; and they work to define the society within which they function.<sup>62</sup>

60. Å Brandis and Hoeniger, 17.

61. Otto Rauchbauer, "Visual and Rhetorical Imagery in Th. Heywood's *A Woman Killed with Kindness*," *English Studies* 57.3 (1976): 209.

62. Lindley, 168. For descriptions of different varieties of lute songs, see Elise Bickford Jorgens, *The Well-Tuned Word: Musical Interpretations of English Poetry, 1597–1651* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), 81–83.

Anne's song may or may not have been familiar to the audience, although certainly the audience would have recognized the ballads and dances of scene 2, and they may have sung along at that point. Whether or not the audience participated similarly in Anne's lute song is a matter of speculation, of course. The acting company would have had their choice of many grief songs or elegiac ayres, for the genre was becoming increasingly popular in the early seventeenth-century, as demonstrated by John Dowland's well-known grief songs.<sup>63</sup>

Equally speculatively, we can infer that Anne's song would have been in a certain musical mode which outlines the starting note, range, intervals, melody type, etc., of the song.<sup>64</sup> The mixolydian mode seems most appropriate here, for as the author of the 1586 *Praise of Musicke* writes, "Myxolydius most used in tragedies expressing in melodie those lamentable affections which are in tragedies represented, aunswereth to that which before I named Melancholike and dolefull."<sup>65</sup> Any musings about the (modal) nature of Anne's song must remain speculative, however, for not only do we have no evidence of her performance, theories of modes—their nature, number, and influence—were constantly in flux during the period. Although it is impossible to know exactly what Anne's song would have sounded like, it is important to think of early modern music—perhaps even all music—in performance, not just in theory.<sup>66</sup> Especially when the sound of the music is so corporeally affective, as it is in *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, speculation about the nature of that music is essential, even if only as a constant reminder that music has a tonal quality that can never be encapsulated in a text-only analysis. What sounds produce tears, for instance? What sounds can generate social harmony?

63. For more examples of early modern English elegiac ayres, see Fischlin, chapter 4: "Sighes and Teares Make Life to Last": The Purgation of Grief and Death through Trope."

64. See also Allan W. Atlas, *Renaissance Music: Music in Western Europe, 1400–1600* (New York: Norton, 1998), 556; Leeman L. Perkins, *Music in the Age of the Renaissance* (New York: Norton, 1999), 992–94; Richard Taruskin, *Music from the Earliest Notations to the Sixteenth Century*, *The Oxford History of Western Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 80–86.

65. John Case [?], *The Praise of Musicke* (1586; Reprinted in the Anglistica and Americana series, New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1980), 55. See also Marsh, 290–92.

66. For learned speculation on the nature of lute song performance, see Fischlin, 249–82.

### Music and social harmony

The audience's attention must move beyond Anne's lute in the final scene of the play, for Anne's actions point to the importance of community as much as they proclaim her individual self-assertion. The metaphor of the lute, or of musical instruments in general, is generative again in this context. What if we read Anne's destruction of the lute not as a declaration of her imminent self-starvation, but rather as her rejection of the lute in favour of another (allegorical) musical instrument—her body itself? Anne does say about herself and her lute, "We both are out of tune, both out of time" (16.18), and as I demonstrated above, Anne must have tuned her lute before destroying it. If we consider her body as another musical instrument, we can see her tuning her body (making it musically affective) before destroying it too. Her private control over her body (her self-starvation) is akin to her private control over her lute, and it has a similar public, humoral, and corporeal effect on her audience.

The allegory would not have been foreign to the play's first audiences, for just as the lute-as-body was a common early modern metaphor, so too was the correspondence of the body-as-musical-instrument. "[T]his variable composition of man's body hath made it as an instrument easy to distemper; and therefore the poets did well to conjoin music and medicine in Apollo, because the office of medicine is but to tune this curious harp of man's body and to reduce it to harmony," writes Francis Bacon.<sup>67</sup> Wright's arguments about the musical quality of the body are even more precise: "For as the heart is most delicat and sensitive, so it perceiveth the least motions and impressions that may be: and it seemeth that musicke in those celles playeth with the vitall and animate spirits, the onely instruments and spurres of passions."<sup>68</sup> Anne does not renounce music or the body, then, when she breaks her lute; rather, she takes control of another instrument, her body, "reduc[ing] it to harmony" with her will. The "music" of her body is as moving as her earlier song to the lute: just as Anne's lute playing had elicited tears from her listeners, so now her public act of playing her body elicits similar tears from her spectators, the community that witnesses her passion-controlling suicide.

67. Francis Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning*, ed. Stephen Jay Gould (1605; New York: The Modern Library, 2001), p. 114.

68. Wright, 170.

As Anne “plays” her body as a musical instrument, she re-creates harmony within her community. Frankford may have been frustrated by the private nature of Anne’s public lute-playing (as I argued earlier in this article), so now Anne’s private playing of her musical body has public repercussions. As she lies in her bed, dying, her neighbours and friends all come to visit, all witnessing the spectacle of her controlled body. Then, in the final scene of the play, all of the play’s main characters are on stage together—for the first time—gathered around her death bed. Although Gutierrez opines that “the sharing of a meal, signifies communal bonding [...]. Food refusal, by this definition, apparently enacts an individual’s valuation of self over and above public values,”<sup>69</sup> such is not the case in *A Woman Killed with Kindness*. Instead, Anne’s food refusal has created communal bonding, something the offstage audience both witnesses and participates in as well. On Anne’s and Frankford’s wedding day, Sir Charles had praised the “equality” of their match, linking it to musical harmony, and that social harmony has returned because of Anne’s actions.<sup>70</sup> And herein lies the redemptive potential of Anne’s control over her passions. For Heywood is not, I believe, advocating suicide as the only or best response to raging passions: such an argument would be ludicrous. If the only way to stop the body from controlling you is to destroy the body completely, how could anyone hope to live a disciplined life of harmony between body and soul, self and society? Instead, Anne’s desperate suicide demonstrates the *necessity* of control, but not the best way to achieve that control. For more effective means of curbing the passions, Heywood points us away from Anne’s bed to the people gathered around it.

Two other characters who previously could not control their passions—Sir Charles and Frankford—are among those standing around Anne’s bed when she dies. She has sacrificed her life to master her passions, but has her death affected the two men in any way? The men at her bedside seem still very much under the control of their passionate, humoral bodies. While Anne no longer blushes nor weeps, Sir Francis tells Anne, “I must weep by thee” (17.64), and Frankford twice refers to his own tears. Nicholas drily summarizes his own representative response: “I’ll sigh and sob, but, by my faith, not die” (17.98). Sir

69. Gutierrez, 2.

70. For more on harmony in the play, see Cecile Williamson Cary, “‘Go Breake this Lute’: Music in Heywood’s *A Woman Killed with Kindness*,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 37.2 (1974): 111–22.

Charles, at least, shows signs of change, for he suggests to Frankford another way to master the passions:

Sir, be of good comfort, and your heavy sorrow  
 Part equally amongst us: storms divided  
 Abate their force, and with less rage are guided. (17.123–25)

Divide and conquer the passions, Sir Charles suggests, advice seconded by Cranwell. Even Sir Francis, if read very generously, appears to agree with Sir Charles's course of action: "Brothers and gentlemen," he directs, "All we that can plead interest in her grief, / Bestow upon her body funeral tears" (17.128–30). "We" implies a group of mourners, sharing their grief.

In early modern English medical manuals, authors and physicians often recommend conversation with friends as a means to banish grief and melancholy (and even gout). Roger Bacon, for example, recommends that his readers "argue with ones most dear and beloved Friends,"<sup>71</sup> and Christopher Ballista agrees: "Make choise of such companions, as / be wise and swéet withall: / Whose talke delightful is to hear."<sup>72</sup> Such a means of bringing about good health, dependent upon humoral balance and restrained passions, is much more moderate than Anne's destructive course of action. Yet Anne's death and mastery over her passions has occasioned the meeting at the end of the play; her death has not only taught the others the urgency of controlling the passions, it has also given them the means by which to do so. She has played her body, just as she had her lute, to move those around her (including the listening audience) to action.

She lives long enough to receive visits from her neighbours, family, and other well-wishers. Anne continues to speak, so her lute song is not her final expression, and her throat does not become silent. Instead, she plays her musical body, which has entered and changed the bodies of the on and offstage audiences, meaning that Anne's music, which she produces both by her lute and

71. Roger Bacon, *The Cure of Old Age and Preservation of Youth by Roger Bacon...*; translated out of Latin, with annotations and an account of his life and writings by Richard Browne (London: Printed for Tho. Flesher, 1683), 128.

72. Christopher Ballista, *The Overthrow of the Gout* (London: Abraham Weale, 1577), C4.

by her body—has a contagious quality, particularly because it is an airy spirit.<sup>73</sup> The music of scene 16 has bled into the following scene, where Anne is still producing affective music, this time by controlling the passions of her body. When she dies of self-slaughter, she does not murder her music and her identity; rather, both are reaffirmed. She remains a wife and mother, a noble woman, and someone who can—or could—run quick divisions on an instrument, both her lute and her body. Her music is now disembodied, but it retains its material impact: it exhorts her audience to control their passions, it encourages them to seek companionship with each other, and it remains in their memories.

Anne's performances in scenes 16 and 17, then, do more than focus our attention on Anne and her power over her body, her subjugation to Frankford and societal expectations, or her collapse under the institution of marriage. Instead, the character of Anne exhibits the material, infectious, and lingering influence of music and, I daresay, the theatre itself. Theatre moves the passions (as Heywood himself argues in *An Apology for Actors*),<sup>74</sup> not only through the performance on stage, but also, I suggest, by means of the community of the audience. Especially in an outdoor theatre such as *The Rose*, where the play was most likely first staged, audience members could clearly see each other, and were consciously aware that they were part of a group of spectators and auditors. Moreover, the material sounds—the airy spirits—produced on stage, such as Anne's music, would wash over the audience as well, entering their always-open ears. And, with their minds thus infected by the music of Anne's lute, of her body, and of the play, hopefully the audience will remember that Anne had destroyed her own body (as she smashed her lute) not as an expression of defiance or subjugation but in a desperate attempt to curb her passions, to stop her body from controlling her.

73. On music as infection, see Minear, 9. One of the favourite anecdotes of early modern music theorists is the one about the Danish king driven mad (infected) by music, which Renaissance music theorist John Playford describes in detail. John Playford, *An Introduction to the Skill of Musick, Seventh Edition* (1674; Ridgewood, NJ: Gregg Press, 1966), 60–61.

74. Michael McClintock, "Grief, Theater and Society in Thomas Heywood's *A Woman Killed with Kindness*," in *Speaking Grief in English Literary Culture: Shakespeare to Milton*, ed. Margo Swiss and David A. Kent (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2002), 101.