

A Feast for the Ears Means Food for Soul **The Publishing of *Orpheus* and Psychoanalysis** by Jay Livernois

The school of psychoanalysis that Roy Hart Theatre (RHT) voice work is most closely associated with is the analytical psychology of C. G. Jung. I first visited the RHT in Malérargues, France, in January 1984 because of RHT's connection and affinity with Jung's work, although I did not really know at the time why it had this connection to Jung or how it had come about. I traveled there with the famous Jungian analyst and psychologist, James Hillman, along with the mythologist and translator, Charles Boer. We were there to see for ourselves what this group influenced by Jung's thought was doing with multiple voices and voice extension and what, if any, were its psychological and even mythological implications for our ideas and writings.

The summer before, in August of 1983, we had seen the superb RHT performance of *Pagliacci* in Locarno, Switzerland. We were in the Italian Swiss region attending the well-known annual Eranos Conference in nearby Ascona. Also I had worked in the late 70s and early 80s in Italy in theatre and opera and had heard about the RHT and had met some actors who had done their training. Their vocal abilities were impressive and strange as they contorted themselves along the floor in a small theater in the Pitti Palace in Florence to a performance called *The Death of Geometry*.

From our brief contact with some of the actors of RHT in Switzerland, we were extended an invitation to visit Malérargues and participate in a small conference and workshop they were having as their guests of honor. I was all for the adventure, but I had a hard time convincing Hillman and Boer to go.

Hillman had lived in Paris after WWII where he had tried to write erotic novels (he published only one) and get into films (he did land small walk-on roles in two movies) and found himself rather a failure and bored and sharing a woman with the much older avant-garde artist Tristan Tzara whose Dada gifts to this shared mistress drove him crazy. She also did not give him much encouragement in his vocation as a writer or actor, telling him he would fail as a writer because he always had to have clean underwear! Hillman went on to meet his first wife later in Paris at the Café Select while trying to listen in on the gossip of the Existentialists, and he and his wife left France for other countries and adventures until settling in on trying analysis with Jung in Zürich. The rest is, as they say, Jungian history, but besides this, France and the French were and are not open to Jungian analytical psychology. Freud and Lacan are the schools of psychoanalysis allowed and institutionalized, and this had become even more so since François Mitterand, a personal friend and analysand of the notorious Freudian, Princess Marie Bonaparte—it was in reference to her that Freud had said in despair, “What do women want, what do they want!”—had become French President in 1981. All Hillman could imagine on this trip was a hostile reception from any of the French who might be connected to RHT, and he still insisted, that if he decided to go, on having enough underwear so he would have a clean pair every day.

Charles Boer was not as hard to convince, but France too brought up romantic memories gone bad; terrified horse rides in the south of France with a French Swiss girlfriend while in his twenties. More importantly for Boer, January was the time he had

almost four weeks off from teaching at the University of Connecticut. He would escape every year to a warm spot in the Caribbean to help him get a break from the tough New England winter. He did not think he could sacrifice this for a cold, dark January vacation in France in spite of the food and wine.

Being much younger and able to speak a more pragmatic French than either of them, (I was working on my Ph.D. in languages and literature) I promised to look after them, be in charge of transportation and directions, and even chauffeur them around if necessary. Both of them were poor drivers at best, with Hillman not even having a driver's license at that time. With reservations, we all agreed to go. Plans were made and plane tickets bought.

However, on the day before leaving, at dinner at Charles Boer's, Hillman had second thoughts about the proposed adventure. On his arrival, the first words out of his mouth were, "Charles, can you tell me again why the fuck I'm going on this trip to goddamned France?" We gave him a glass of wine and over dinner assured him it would be great, and if the RHT turned out to be a sect or some kind of cult, we could get a taxi to Nimes and take the first train back to Paris and enjoy the city of light until we caught our plane.

Well, Paris was great. After a couple of days of excellent food and good wine, we took the TGV train down to Nimes. In Nimes we got a taxi to take us into the Cévennes mountains to the village of Lasalle, and next day made our way by foot to the RHT at Malérargues. The RHT was on their best behavior, with an excellent performance every night, and we had a wonderful time. I made friends there whom I have to this day.



James Hillman, Jay Livernois, Liza Mayer, and Charles Boer
Malérargues, January 1984

But most importantly, while we were there for two weeks, we heard that the founder of this voice work, Alfred Wolfsohn, a German Jewish Berliner who had survived WWI and II and the Holocaust, had written a philosophical and psychological book called *Orpheus*, which had direct connections with Jung and Jungian psychology. Its caretaker in the Theatre, Marita Günther, was a second cousin of Wolfsohn's, and she was interested in maybe publishing parts of it she had translated into English. Hillman, besides being a famous analyst, was also a publisher of psychology and also published the oldest and most scholarly Jungian oriented journal in the world, *Spring*. He loved to find odd bits of Jungiana to publish and so was interested in what Marita might have. In short order Hillman came to an agreement with Marita to publish excerpts of her choosing.

Well, it was not for almost another five years until *Spring* received a manuscript of Marita's selections from *Orpheus*. By then, 1989, Boer and I were running the *Spring Journal* out of the University of Connecticut with Hillman as publisher in name only. The manuscript we received was in an English no Anglophone could easily recognize. The *Orpheus* had been put into a rather bad translationese. We needed to see the original German. Marita refused to give us access to any of the original. For her, her words were Wolfsohn's and not one could be changed. We pleaded to see the original German and lied saying that the manuscript needed some fine tuning when in fact it needed retranslating. Marita was not about to retreat or give in. Her answer was "No."

At this point, with the journal already late to be published, Charles Boer made an editorial decision. He took the manuscript of excerpts and worked it into English and had it make sense the best he could without checking the original German. Marita was not about to admit that she did not know English all that well and really had not been well educated first under Nazi Germany and then under the East German Communists. During those governments, women were not to be educated but relegated to "children, cooking, and church."

Much to our surprise, we found out that Hillman, in his original meeting with Marita, had agreed to publish the whole of *Orpheus* as a book for Spring Publications but exactly as Marita had translated it. This was to be done after this first selection was published in *Spring*. We showed him the part she sent us for the journal. He agreed with us that Marita's translation had to be checked against the original or it could not be published in any viable manner. That summer of 1989, Hillman attended the second *Myth and Theatre* conference at Malérargues and met with Marita along with Charles Boer. Marita would not budge and allow any editing changes to her translation. "No" was her answer to allowing Hillman and Boer to edit it and make suggestions using the original German text.

Afterwards, no one touched *Orpheus*, and it stayed locked away in a metal cabinet in Marita's apartment in Malérargues. Then Marita died in 2002. James Hillman had sold *Spring Journal* to me in 1997 and lost interest in actively running a publishing house in 2001. Charles Boer also lost interest in this material and moved on to other work. But I finally was able to secure a copy of the German manuscript and its English translation in 2006 while Director of the Roy Hart International Arts Centre at Malérargues. Then later, wanting to get back into publishing, I reached an agreement through the Centre to publish *Orpheus* in 2009. Finally I completed the editing and annotating the *Orpheus* in 2011, and I typeset the *Orpheus* in Florida in early 2012.

Now, having outlined *Orpheus*' publishing history, I would like to quickly say something about its structure. It is divided into ten sections, not chapters, roughly based on themes in the book, but not in the original German. Sheila Braggins did this work; she had been a student of Wolfsohn's for fourteen years in London. Plus she was a close friend of Marita's, had helped her with English revisions of the translation, and has recently published a biography of Wolfsohn, which I read in an early draft and did some editing of it at her house in London in April 2009. In addition to the ten sections, there is a foreword by Sheila on Wolfsohn and "Notes on *Orpheus*" by Wolfsohn written after WWII.



Sheila Braggins with Ian Magilton, Malérargues 31 December 2007

However, let's get back to this paper's theme, *Orpheus* and psychoanalysis.

The base of what became *Orpheus* seems to have been written, submitted for publication, rejected, put aside, and then heavily revised. This first version was completed in 1932. I read the cover letter in German to the publisher and its English translation, which were held by Sheila Braggins. This first version seems to have been a work where Wolfsohn presented his ideas on singing and voice as a therapy relying on Jungian ideas with traces of the influence of Freud and Adler. However, revisions, and probably deletions and additions, most notably in the first and the last parts of the book, especially where Wolfsohn describes his experience of his "mask" being made, were written in 1937 and 1938. The quotes and references to Jung's writings, which I have been able to identify are from some of Jung's essays published in 1930 and 1931 in German. There are still more quotes of Jung, or at least Wolfsohn says they are Jung's, which need to be researched more. Here, I would like to note that Wolfsohn is not always accurate or correct with his quotes, and not just of Jung. It seems that after the spring of 1933, when Jews in Germany were not allowed access to libraries and even had prohibitions on their buying books, Wolfsohn had to work probably from memory or

books he could borrow from private libraries. So when he quotes Michaelangelo's poems, he is getting them from Rilke's reworked version of them and not from the original Italian or a good translation.

The reason I mention these irregularities and changes in relation to *Orpheus* and psychoanalysis is that I believe the revisions were somewhat necessary because post-1933 Germany was a different place than was pre-1933 Germany. The reason—Hitler and the Nazis take power in January 1933. Proscriptions against Jews begin almost immediately. The first concentration camp opens in March 1933—Dachau. The Nuremberg Laws are applied in April, and the famous burning of books in universities and libraries occurs in May. But whose books are burned? The burned books were those of Freud and Adler, and any other Jewish psychoanalyst or writer or opponent of the regime (Marlene Dietrich's films were burned except one copy of *The Blue Angel* which Hitler kept and watched once a week!). It was prudent if writing or even holding a manuscript to make no mention of banned writers except to condemn them or put them in a historical context. In all of the *Orpheus*, Wolfsohn mentions Freud by name once, and alludes to him only once more (as he does Adler).

But who replaces Freud in Germany in the world of psychoanalysis? Well, the non-Jewish Jung as his analytical psychology steps into the void left by Freud and psychoanalysis. It seems that Jung, still hurt over his break with Freud and his banishment from Freud's international circle of psychoanalysis, was only more than happy to take over even with such an unsavory government, which most foreign observers thought was only to survive temporarily. Germany at this time was still one of the world's great centers of science and culture and probably the leader in psychoanalysis. The Berlin psychoanalytical training institute had become (and still is) the model for analytic training institutes around the world even though Freud was in Vienna.

So Jung's analytical psychology becomes the psychology to which Wolfsohn can safely use and refer to for ideas and support of his theories on voice and psyche while writing under the Nazi regime. As a result, throughout *Orpheus*, Wolfsohn uses classical Jungian terms—the Self, *anima*, *animus*, *persona*, *puer*, introvert, and extravert—to help define and illustrate his new theories of singing and voice. He draws parallels to his philosophical theories of singing and analytical depth psychology. Below is an example of his application of Jung's idea of archetypes to the voice.

If in modern psychology one speaks of archetypes, or primal images, which constantly recur in the dreams of all peoples and races, then we find its counterpart in the human voice, where the four basic voices represent these primal images. This made sense to me especially as I see the voice as a direct form of the manifestation of soul. Sec. 9

Wolfsohn even takes over certain practices of Jung. He encourages his students to write down their dreams as a gauge of their progress in singing, and like a Jungian analyst, interprets them for his students and relates his deductions to what he is doing with his singing lessons, to art, literature, and contemporary film. He also encourages his students to draw their dreams as Jung was recommending his analysands do, and which of course Jung had been privately doing with the result of the recently published and now famous *Red Book*.

Wolfsohn says to a student in the text of the *Orpheus*:

Remember, I told you from the beginning to consider the recording of your dreams as only a complement to your singing lessons in the same way as Professor Jung in Zürich encouraged his patients to draw their dreams.”

He (Jung) explains it in the following way:

“Although from time to time my patients produce artistically beautiful creations which might very well be shown in modern ‘art’ exhibitions, I nevertheless treat them as wholly worthless according to the tests of serious art. It is even essential that no such value be allowed them, for otherwise my patients might imagine themselves to be artists, and this would spoil the good effects of the exercise. It is not a question of art – or rather it should not be a question of art – but of something more, something other than mere art: namely the living effect upon the patient himself.

... The patient can make himself creatively independent by this method – if I may call it such. He is no longer dependent on his dreams or on his doctor’s knowledge, but can give form to his own inner experience by painting it.¹”

This is all fine as far as it goes. However, Wolfsohn had a problem with Jung and by extension with analytical psychology. The problem was the fact that Jung never met him or helped to promote Wolfsohn’s work in any way. In the 50s both Jung and Wolfsohn were either too ill, old, or busy to meet, and they both died in roughly the same year.

According to a letter published in the appendix of *Dark Voices*, a book about the early history of RHT to 1975 by Noah Pikes, after an exchange of letters, Jung agreed to meet Wolfsohn in Berlin after one of his lectures. However, in late 1930s Berlin, Jung was not going to meet a Jew in a public hotel. Whether this was the hotel’s decision or Jung’s is not clear; the Jung family is still withholding correspondence between Wolfsohn and Jung under the excuse of medical confidentiality. But make no mistake about it, Jung was an anti-Semite in the 1930s and war years albeit in a rather petty bourgeois manner; see Deirdre Bair’s *A Biography on the Vladimir Rosenbaum affair*² and the part in the book *Jung, my mother, and I* by Jane Cabot Reid where Jung discusses Jews in analysis in a psychoanalytical session in December 1941 with her mother, Katy Cabot.³

However, to what extent Jung’s anti-Semitism was not pathological, as his apologists for it claim, should be questioned. Even in the late 30s in Nazi Germany, he was still involved professionally and personally with the SS intelligence agents, Jakob Wilhelm Hauer and Gustav Richard Heyer. Both lectured under the aegis of Jung in Switzerland in 1938; Hauer at the Zürich Psychological Club in October 1938 and Heyer at Eranos in August 1938. No one spoke or was invited to these places without Jung’s approval while he was alive and had control. Also a lecturer usually had to speak on a subject that Jung wanted to hear. And I will not mention Jung’s involvement with the Goering Institute in Berlin and his association with the

¹ The German original used by Wolfsohn is found in C. G. Jung, *Seelenprobleme der Gegenwart*, Rascher & Cie, Zürich, 1931. The English translation of these quotes come from C. G. Jung, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, eds. W. S. Dell and Cary Baynes, trans. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961, pp. 79, 80.

² Deirdre Bair, *Jung: A Biography*, Boston: Little, Brown, 2003, pp. 448-451.

³ Jane Cabot Reid, *Jung, My Mother, and I*, Einsiedeln, Switz.: Daimon Verlag, 2001, pp. 389-390.

German, but non-Jewish Jungian analysts working there (except for Kaethe Buegler, who was the mistress of Heyer and hence protected and not deported).⁴

So, what I think this rejection and avoidance of Wolfsohn by Jung led to was a further revision of the *Orpheus* by Wolfsohn after he escapes to London in 1939. I believe that Wolfsohn adds a section where he becomes subtly critical of Jung by putting down one of Jung's students who is also a voice student of his. Wolfsohn says:

... I greatly admire his (Jung's) ideas. Yet, in order to work with you, to help you, I had no other choice but to be critical of him. I was aware of the fact that, basically, I was not critical of Jungian psychology, but I needed to fight against your understanding of it. Your idea of it, and the effect it had on you, must have been wrong to a certain extent. This is the only way I can explain why your voice – for me the mirror of your inner psychological life – sounded so soulless.

I learned from you that the essential part of your psychological studies consisted in recording your dreams and then searching, with the help of literary examples, to find a range of dream associations and commentaries. This dependency on your dreams, this preoccupation with your nocturnal life, took on such a pattern that you began to feel anxious if you did not dream for a few nights. You even began to fear that it meant your health was suffering or that you had stopped in your development.

From my point of view, I do not deny the importance of dreams, which represent the creative forces of our unconscious. But I do believe that they are not the one and only way to our inner Self. I understand the concept of dreams as a transposition of creative forces in a larger sense.

I can understand that the interpretation of so many dreams gave you pleasure and satisfaction, enabling you to relate yourself to mythologies in the world, but it paralyzed your emotional development and the world of your feelings. This is my attempt to explain why your voice does not resonate. Furthermore, I should try to stop you from following your psychological studies, by this I mean in the way that you are doing it. This does not mean in any way that I want you to throw away the knowledge you have acquired. I merely want to try to show you another way of finding yourself. In this way you will see that the principles which have made modern psychology will emerge in a different form.

The subtle criticism ends, though, in this last paragraph.

I cannot imagine that it will actually help you much when Jung points out the conceptual difference between soul and *psyche*. And I believe that it might even give you a bigger headache when you read: "The *psyche* comprises the totality of all psychological processes, the conscious ones as well as the unconscious." You may even agree with me when I maintain that when he says the *psyche* comprises the totality of all psychological processes, this is not a definition of the *psyche*, because now I have to rack my brain and ask, what the hell is a psychological process?

In addition to putting Jung's psychology into question, I find it odd in Wolfsohn's "Notes on *Orpheus*" at the beginning of *Orpheus* that he quotes and repeats verbatim the following passage from a letter of testimony from this student, which is also found in section three. The letter reads in both places in the book:

⁴ Thomas B. Kirsch, *The Jungians*, London: Routledge, 2000.

During treatment for depression in Jungian analysis (due to a failed romance), I was made to practice meditation. I was urged to concentrate on my inner breathing. Up to then I had lived exclusively in the outside world, so this journey inside myself was an extraordinary experience for me. I saw visions coming from another world and experienced the depth in which these visions had their origin. I realized that by the concentration of breathing in a center lying somewhere below the solar plexus, a language of pictures was evoked – a language arising from contact with the unconscious, which alone makes possible psychological development.

When I started to learn to sing, once again there began the concentration on that mysterious center. When I was asked to train my consciousness on the source of the sound, I felt the origin of the sung notes to be in that same place. As time went on, I realized more and more that the way taken in the development of my voice was similar to that found in the psychology of Jung. On this route to the inner spheres, leading always by diverse ways to the origin and source, the thought came to me that the Hindus speak of the first *chakra* as the origin of life, where the serpent Kundalini lies rolled up and where the first movements begin. In this work of developing the human voice, the singer penetrates into the depths of the body and so arrives at the new, unknown sounds of one's voice. However it is when the "It" sings within that the adult person is brought again back to a child-like state, a truly creative state of a human being. Then one can be certain that the "It" inside the listener is listening too, and that art fulfills the same function as religion, which turns us towards a deeper sphere in ourselves, leading us through depth to transcendence.

The use of this excerpt from a letter of one of Jung's unidentified students seems to imply that if Wolfsohn could not have Jung's blessing, he would at least get the approval of one of his students. And the student would testify in *Orpheus* that singing is as good as Jungian analysis and perhaps even better.

Well, I think that most people would agree that Jung was not stupid. He had a copy of Wolfsohn's *Orpheus*; Wolfsohn sent it to him (see *Dark Voices*, "Appendix: The Wolfsohn / Jung Letters"). Of course Jung could see that what Wolfsohn had developed via singing, potentially, could become a new competitor to the "talking cure" and his analytical psychology, especially as Wolfsohn had co-opted his psychology and even was teaching some of his students. Therefore there was no way that Jung was going to help a new form of therapy which could rival what he had spent almost the last forty years of his life on promoting and elaborating. He certainly was not going to share his moneyed contacts. I think it is important to remember that even in the world of ideas as in business and commerce at that time, monopoly and / or colony was the model. Free trade in anything was looked at as foolish, and the last thing a person would do would be to help to make themselves obsolete; it took a Steve Jobs with Apple to finally break that paradigm. However, Jung was always more than happy to use someone to promote his own reputation and psychology just so long as it was not a threat to his franchise.

I think what Wolfsohn has done in *Orpheus* was create a new form of psychoanalysis using another function of the voice to bring the same if not better results than psychoanalysis. Wolfsohn asserts this first in a comparison to what he is doing with the voice to graphology.

In our day and age, we have come to accept the interpretative methods of graphology⁵ as a science; no longer is it seen as just a childish amusement. In other words

⁵ Graphology is the study and analysis of handwriting especially in relation to depth psychology.

handwriting has been found worthy of serious study, providing us with clues about a person's character. Similarly, yet more profoundly, the expressive qualities of the voice enables a trained ear to draw conclusions about an entire personality. Sec. 3

Wolfsohn, later in *Orpheus*, says it more boldly and directly. He declares that with singing no one will need other Teachers (probably like Jung or him). He writes:

That is to say, after much struggle and effort, the singer has succeeded in creating the sound within, in filling the whole being; using every external stimulus for an internal vocabulary. He has absorbed every impression in order to achieve the expression of himself. Now he sings in front of people, and he must give back, externalize, all he has learned, so that – turning full circle – his expression can “call” forth the impression in the listener.

If you can comprehend the meaning of singing in this way, no voice will tell you to go to the woods anymore, nor will you fall prey to depression due to your inner emptiness. You will no longer have to listen to the words of others – the Teachers. The sound will be inside you. It will grow and fill out your whole being, and one day you will be able to hear the sound of your own voice, and a great joy will come over you as you discover that you exist: your voice will be proof. Sec. 9

And finally Wolfsohn's singing is transformative.

Music is not good or evil. It is neither moral nor immoral. Music represents the law of nature, which orders that whatsoever is created is allowed to grow and blossom. It must not be destroyed before its time, just as every human being says “Yes” to life. Contained in this “Yes” is the ethic of music. Everyone who sets forth on the conscious road of singing bears witness to this “Yes” and thereby may transform a feast for the ears into food for soul. Sec. 9

With this affirmation of life one “may transform a feast for the ears into food for soul.”