



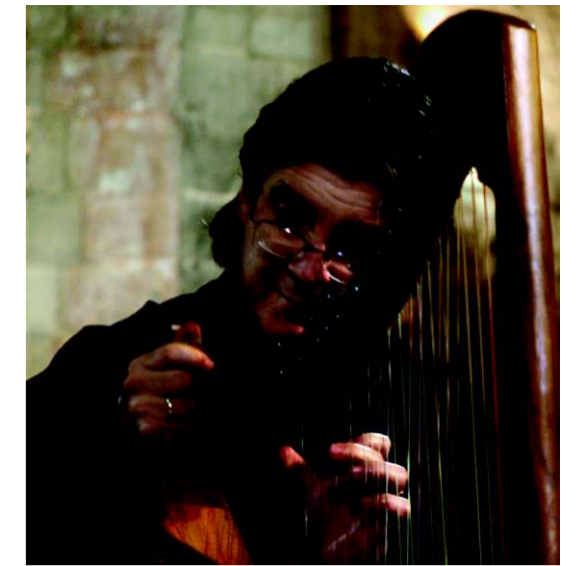
# Text, Rhythm, Action!

Andrew Lawrence-King

Opera, orchestral & ensemble director

Early Harps

[Andrew@TheHarpConsort.com](mailto:Andrew@TheHarpConsort.com)



ALK and \*CHE projects

2011-2012

- 7 staged opera productions
- 7 new international concert programs
- Workshops, master-classes & conference lectures in Russia, \*Australia, \*UK, \*Europe, \*Scandinavia.
- \*Research/education videos
- \*Action Handbook: *Representing Orfeo*
- \*New performing editions
- \*Investigative performances with Text, Music, Dance, Historical Swordsmanship & Audience Research.

## International Partnerships

New Baroque Opera Studio in St Petersburg.  
New opera hall in Moscow.

The earliest surviving baroque opera is the opening production for the Natalya Satz Theatre's new hall.

\*Guildhall School of Music & Drama, London; Royal Academy of Music, London; Trinity Laban Conservatoire, London; \*Royal Danish Academy of Music, Copenhagen; \*Sibelius Academy & \*Helsinki Metropolia, Finland; Schola Cantorum Basiliensis; Scoil na gClairseach, Ireland; \*School of European Swordsmanship, Helsinki; \*London Longsword Academy; Ensemble L'Homme Arme, Florence; The Harp Consort; \*Concerto Copenhagen; \*Ars Nova Denmark; \*Melbourne Early Music Studio; \*Sydney Conservatoire; Australian National University.

## Researchers

**Andrew Lawrence-King:** Historical Performance Practice, Rehearsal Methodology, Artistic Direction. **Katerina Antonenko:** Iconography, Organology, Anatomy & Movement, Photography & Videos. **Guy Windsor:** Historical Swordsmanship, Anatomy & Movement. **Dave Rawlings:** Historical Swordsmanship. **Steven Player:** Historical Dance. **Alan Maddox:** Historical Performance Practice, Rhetorics. **Stephen Grant:** Voice, Feldenkrais. **Xavier Diaz-Latorre:** Theorbo & Baroque guitar. **John Sloboda:** Audience Research. **Jane Davidson:** Audience Research, Music Psychology, Chief Investigator.

## Investigations 2013

**Il Corago (c 1630)** - Reconstructing *recitativo*, redefining *aria*, repositioning 'early opera' as *azione armonica*.  
**L'Arte dei Cenni (1606)** - Facial expressions, gestures and full-body communication.  
**Pneuma** -The Early Modern western concept of mystical, physical and performance energy.

## Projects 2013

UK, Russia, Croatia: **English 17th-century Masque**  
London/Zurich: **Costa Concordia: 'Vada a bordo' canto!** (Coastguard De Falco & Captain Schettino set as baroque recitativo)  
Guernsey/Florence: **Arianna** (A dictionary of 'musical gestures' and a re-construction of Monteverdi's lost opera)  
Germany: **Favola in musica**  
Finland: **Quintessential Bach: Brandenburg 5**  
Spain: **Staging the earliest surviving Spanish oratorio**

Video: **Fior di Battaglia** (Medieval poetry, music & swords)  
CD: **Domenichino Zampieri** (Artist and harp-builder)  
Book: **Handbook for Historical Harps**



## In historical music-drama

Hypothesis: Authentic Action can be Passionately Persuasive  
 Research: How did performers put passions into action?  
 Experiment: How can we rehearse today?  
 Test: How does it work in performance?

## Historical Emotions

Primary investigation:

**Circa 1600 Beginning the Baroque.**  
The first 'operas', sonatas, oratorios, toccatas, cantatas, recitativos & basso continuo. Cavalieri, Peri, Caccini, Monteverdi Dowland, Shakespeare, Lawes, Purcell

Secondary investigations:

**Circa 1200 Ludus Danielis**  
Medieval Music-drama.

**Circa 1750 Empfindsamkeit**  
Pre-revolutionary Pedal-harp.

## Modern-day Performance

Double Authenticity:  
period style & personal 'honesty'.

Early Music is not only fiddling with sound: period instruments, ornamentation, vocal 'purity'. The burning question is how to move the listeners' passions.

## Historical Priorities

Caccini (1601): **'Text, Rhythm & last of all sound, and not the other way around!'**

Action is determined by the Text: **'Suit the Action to the Word'**. Text & Action are synchronised by the dramatic timing of musical Rhythm.

## Period Philosophy

Text creates Visions in your mind. **Spirits of Passion** communicate between Mind and Body, re-balancing the Four Humours.

Spirits of Passion move through the aether by *aenergia* (eyes) and *pneuma* (mystic breath). Your Visions are energised by what you perceive directly, and also by performers' transmitted Passions.

Performed music, *musica instrumentalis*, is linked to the Music of the Spheres, *musica mundana*, and also to *musica humana* (the harmonious nature of the human body).

**Pneuma**, the spirit of performance, is linked to the breath of Creation, and also to the network of energy within the body (c.f. oriental Chi).

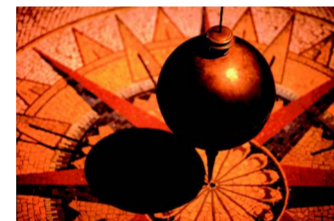
## New rehearsal methods

Rehearsals follow historical priorities: what to do first, what to spend time on.

Rhetorical decorum demands that every small detail correspond to the overall design.

Rehearsal methods build connections.

Precise use of period vocabulary in rehearsal defines the terms of the final performance.



## Text

The poetic text is the blueprint for composing the music, for staging the show.

For performers, text defines articulation of each musical note: joins within syllables, links at consonants, sustain on vowels, separation by punctuation.

Text determines which syllables/notes are Good, which are Bad. Text gives emotional colour to each Good note.

## Rhythm

Rhythm c1600 is controlled by the steady beat of the Tactus, approximately 1 beat per second. Inside this regular beat, Good notes can be longer, Bad notes shorter. More Passion leads to more contrast in syllabic pacing, synchronised by **Tactus**.

Rubato - 'expressive' rhythm- is anachronistic. Singers rather use *sprezzatura di ritmo* (cool rhythm), where the voice moves freely around the regular Tactus beat in the accompaniment, as in jazz.

Every performer has to 'swing': there is no conductor.

Tactus is like a celestial **clock** (*musica mundana*). If Tactus breaks, the heavens will fall!

Tactus is like a **heartbeat** (*musica humana*). If Tactus stops, the music dies!

## Action

**What are the 3 secrets of great performance?  
Action, Action, Action!**

Authentic Action requires not only 'Baroque Gesture' but full-body acting: posture, gesture, movement, expression of the face and eyes, passions, *pneuma*, *aenergia*, changes in the **Four Humours**.

Modern techniques (Alexander & Feldenkrais) help participants experience physically the period concept of **pneuma**.

## Audiences

We reject the 19th-century cliché of a silent audience worshipping in the temple of culture at the feet of that tortured genius, the romantic virtuoso performer. 17th-century music privileges the audience.

Research directed by Jane Davidson and with John Sloboda asks audiences how they feel.

