

Scintillating baroque..



.. Serious **fun**



Director from the Continuo
Andrew Lawrence-King
Early Harps & Research

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Early Opera &
Historical Productions



Action! Action! Action!

Text, Rhythm, Action!

Period priorities for modern performance of early music-drama.

- Historical research
- New rehearsal methodologies
- Award-winning international productions.

Can Baroque Gesture be effective for modern audiences?

Period sources have quite different priorities from today's performers, even specialists in Historically Informed Performance. Gesture is only one element of Historical Action and Rhetorical Delivery. 'Suit the Action to the Word... Speak the speech trippingly on the tongue', writes Shakespeare (1600). Caccini (1601) similarly defines music as 'Text and Rhythm'. The period aim of Rhetoric, *muovere gli affetti*, to move the [audience's] Passions, makes the History of Emotions an appropriate lens.

My investigation re-examined well-known *seicento* sources within the framework of Historical Science of Time and Medicine and – crucially – according to the period priorities of Text, Rhythm and Action. I brought together historical information and recent scholarship to develop a radically revised, but self-consistent view.

The practical phase tested these new understandings in the real world of modern training, rehearsal and performance. I myself trained with dancers, actors and swordsmen to recover lost historical techniques. I then developed new rehearsal methodologies to teach *Text, Rhythm, Action!* skills to specialist performers in countless classes, workshops and seminars.

The artistic results were presented around the world in 20 staged productions of historical music-dramas, including 39 award-winning performances (so far) of the earliest surviving 'opera', Cavalieri's *Anima & Corpo* (1600). Some of these productions involved advanced students and young professionals, most were fully professional. We gave many national and international 'first performances in modern times' with companies of between 15 and 100 performers and audiences from a few hundred to several thousand.

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