Understanding the Power of Music as a Cure for the Mind and Body through Shakespeare’s Works

Hannah L. Ryu

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I. INTRODUCTION

As physical and mental health concerns have intensified due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is more important than ever to enhance our understanding and methods of healing. Music is rhythmic and so are human beings. Music as a sensory experience can stimulate heartbeat, breathing, and promote brain activity in patients with neurological diseases among many other benefits (Komaroff). Though music is physical as it is an auditory form made up of sound waves, it not only acts upon the physical human body, but also influences the intangible mind and emotions. Music, as a universal language that exists in all societies, can be a source of healing—whether physical, mental, or emotional—for everyone.

Though music has always been an integral part of humankind, its powers have often been understated, especially in the context of healthcare. My thesis is motivated by two things: my interest in the therapeutic value of music and my passion for Shakespeare. As an English major, Biochemistry minor, and pre-medical student, as well as an avid violinist, pianist, and composer, the connection between music and medicine has always been of great interest to me.
Music is prevalent in almost all of Shakespeare’s plays, not only as a theatrical cue, but also as an element that directly influences the characters. Shakespeare challenges the common notion of music as only a form of expression by portraying music as an influencer that can strongly impact the emotions, mental state, and even the physical body of characters within the plot. From the opening line of Shakespeare’s well-known play *Twelfth Night*, music appears as an influencer of emotion, “If music be the food of love, play on,” and continues to affect the emotions and mental states of the characters, especially Orsino. Music is critical in bringing the statue of Hermione to life in the final scene of *The Winter’s Tale* and in reviving Pericle’s presumed-dead wife Thaisa in *Pericles*, to mention a few other examples.

Through a rigorous and detailed exploration of Shakespeare’s positive outlook on the healing power of music in his plays, I hope this thesis not only pleases lovers of music and Shakespeare, but also serves as a useful guide for future physicians to improve healing and healthcare. My ultimate argument is not simply that music can serve as an effective method of healing, but that, by exploring the role of music in Shakespeare’s rich, complex plots, we can expand our understanding of how improving human well-being involves much more
than the physical and tangible treatments led by the rapid scientific and technological advancements today (Mintz).
II. MUSIC IN TWELFTH NIGHT

In Twelfth Night, music is not only a form of expression, but also an influencer of the mind and body (more the mind in this play), which can be most prominently observed in Duke Orsino. Music appears in various forms throughout the play: instrumental music as in the opening scene with Orsino, songs by Feste, as well as a topic of discussion among characters. Music goes beyond the spoken word to enhance and even control the hidden emotions of characters that are otherwise only implied by words with their limited meanings (Scholes). Beginning with the famous opening line “If music be the food of love, play on,” and then the same “old and antique” music that “relieves [Orsino’s] passion much” in Act 2 Scene 4, music undeniably serves a role in appeasing Orsino. In particular, it holds great value as old, familiar music, which is studied in modern music therapy and even in psychology and Alzheimer’s disease research among other fields of medicine today. Throughout the play, there is no external description of Orsino’s physical or mental condition by a narrator, but we can interpret the character’s speech and behavior as a reflection of their mental state or even physical condition (Zunshine). Though music is auditory, it
acts as both a sensory and figurative element in the play, and whether in one way or the other, it is capable of impacting both the mind and body of Orsino, serving as a promising “cure” for his melancholy (clinical depression as in Burton’s The Anatomy of Melancholy), and psychological self-obsession now known as “The Orsino Complex,” which will be described later in greater detail. Despite the lack of medical data about the relation between the mind and body in Shakespeare’s time and even today, there was a strong belief in the mind-body connection in the 16th and 17th century; it is clear in Twelfth Night that both are necessary for a holistic diagnosis of one’s well-being and that one cannot exist without the other. Through Shakespeare’s complex character Orsino and his engagement with music, we can deepen our understanding of the therapeutic impact of music and expand our approach toward healing.

Note: When referring to Viola, I will use Viola and Cesario interchangeably as well as the pronouns she/her and he/him, but consciously. I will use Viola and she/her when the characters know and see her as Viola, or it feels appropriate to address her as Viola, and use Cesario and he/him when she is disguised and the characters, especially Orsino, know and see her as Cesario.
Twelfth Night begins with music as indicated by Duke Orsino in his opening mini-drama,

ORSINO: If music be the food of love, play on
        Give me excess of it, that surfeiting
        The appetite may sicken and so die. (1.1.1-3)

From the very first line of the play, Shakespeare introduces music as an influencer of love, specifically, as “the food” of love, which holds both a figurative and literal meaning. Figuratively, Orsino anticipates the music to have the potential to “feed” or incite love such that an excess of it will kill his appetite for love in the way that an excess of food can remove one’s appetite. Though it is more common for music to serve as an indication of a banquet or the character’s high status, here, music functions on a more personal, intimate level as opposed to a societal display or aesthetic purpose as Orsino expects it to influence him and himself only. Music is certainly a privilege that Orsino has, being able to bring musicians whenever he pleases, but the focus is not on his privilege, but rather, his dire need for music as though a patient seeks a cure. Herein, music, food, and love can be seen as parallel to drug, medicine, and condition,
respectively, though his condition is not entirely clear from the text yet. We learn just a few moments later that he is most likely suffering a form of melancholy due to his unrequited love for Countess Olivia, but that it may also involve a more complicated psychological issue of self-obsession, which is also revealed later. Assuming that he begins his speech while already suffering from such a condition, he seems relatively desperate in wanting to put an end to it as the words “sicken” and “die” indicate, and he chooses music to be his cure. The conditional “If” suggests Orsino’s uncertainty in regards to the effect of music, but he commands, “play on” and craves music as though craving a drug even without fully knowing its complications. His demand for the music to keep playing, particularly the word “on,” suggests that music is already filling the room before a single word is spoken (Bruce, 13). It is not speech, but music that opens the play, revealing its considerable importance and potential to dictate the course of the plot. Orsino goes on to say, “That strain again! It had a dying fall,” (1.1.4) in which, “That strain again” and the past tense of “had” also indicate that a similar melody was heard before Orsino speaks (Long, 164). Though it is uncertain as to how long Orsino has been hearing the music, it seems likely he is already immersed in a repetitive excess of music. The “dying fall” is most likely a
descending series of tones, or in more technical terms, a fading cadence, which, in Western musical theory, is the ending of a phrase or melody where the harmony comes to a full or partial resolution (DeVoto). In fact, the term “cadence” is derived from the Latin “cadere” that means “to fall” (DeVoto). A primitive type of cadence appeared often in 14th century music, but harmonic cadences became more prominent in the 16th and 17th centuries. Hence, it can be assumed that the tune that Orsino hears descends harmonically. The “dying fall” may also suggest that the music that is being played has a quality of sadness, or at least, Orsino interprets it in such a way due to his melancholic state of mind. Among the various possible impressions and comments about the music, Orsino notes the “dying fall,” a specific aspect of the music, which implies that he is paying close attention to the tune and the effect that it has on him. Recognizing that the tune repeated again—“That strain again!”—also contributes to the implication that he is listening closely to the music. To get a better idea of this opening music and Orsino’s engagement with it, it is useful to turn to a live performance of the play.
In the 2012 Globe Theatre production of *Twelfth Night*, the music in the opening scene is played by a small ensemble of wind instruments, most likely a range of recorders (a combination of soprano, tenor, alto, bass recorders).

*Ensemble of recorder players in the 2012 Globe Production of Twelfth Night*

The recorders produce an airy sound that evoke feelings of emptiness and weariness compared to string instruments that produce a more concentrated sound and can prolong pitch with more strength. In particular, the Renaissance recorder produces a sound that naturally fades, and the pitch of each note tends
to descend slightly before moving on to the next note. Hence, when several
recorders play at the same time as in this production, the flat ends of the pitch
overlap and the entire tune sounds flat to the ear, contributing to the melancholic
mood. The tempo of the tune is Adagio, a slow pace as if walking with heavy feet
and slouched shoulders, which is the way in which the actor walks on the stage.
Further, the tune is in a minor key, which typically evokes feelings of melancholy
and sadness as opposed to a major key, which is often associated with more
happy and positive moods. Specifically, in this production, the tune is in “A”
minor, which, compared to all the other key signatures, has no sharps or flats.
“A” minor tends to evoke a dull, somber mood that lacks warmth, which is
typically associated with flats, and lacks sparkle, which is typically associated
with sharps. Overall, “A” minor lacks any interesting or dramatic effect, but it is
incredibly effective in producing a private, melancholy mood, which suits
Orsino’s opening scene. Given that key signatures began showing up in the 16th
century, it is possible to assume that a tune similar to the “A” minor tune played
by the recorders in this Globe production was played in Shakespeare’s time.
Before Orsino speaks a single word, the music stops abruptly near the end of a
cadence, a moment of instability before resolution, likely expressing but also
further stimulating Orsino’s emotional and mental instability. Stopping before the end of a cadence leaves the listener in a state of discomfort and urges the listener to crave a resolution. As expected, Orsino calls for more music, “If music be the food of love, play on,” and an excess of it, “Give me excess of it,” at which the tune starts again from the beginning but an octave lower in this Globe production (1.1.1-2). The lower register in pitch may have been a technical decision so that the sound does not interfere with the actor’s speech, but effectively, it evokes a heavier feeling and weighs Orsino down into a deeper state of melancholy. Despite the change in register, when the tune repeats the “dying fall”—a few descending notes—Orsino recognizes it as if the music allows Orsino to relate to it and recognize his descending mental state. In plain text, it may seem as though Orsino is obviously the one who controls the music, but a live performance with music suggests a valid interpretation that it is the music that controls Orsino.

Having noted the “dying fall,” Orsino proceeds to describe the music and its effect on him further:

ORSINO: O, it came o’er my ear like the sweet sound
    That breathes upon a bank of violets,
    Stealing and giving odor. (1.1.5-7)
In addition to the figurative meaning of music to “feed” love, music also literally functions as “food” as it physically stimulates all five of his senses. Music is auditory, arriving at his ears first, but ignites a chain of sensory experiences as it also entices his sense of taste (“sweet sound”), touch (“breathes”), sight (“bank of violets”), smell (“odor”), and even movement (“stealing and giving”) (Smith). The music is able to momentarily appease him with a pleasant sensory experience. The imagery of a “bank of violets” that the music conjures in his mind foreshadows the appearance of the character Viola as viola is a type of violet. It may even function as far as planting in him a small seed of anticipation of putting an end to his melancholy by finding love with a woman named Viola in the near future. A “viola” is also a stringed musical instrument known as the viol or viola de gamba in Shakespeare’s time, which existed in three different sizes and pitch ranges: treble, tenor, and bass (Weinfield). In general, the viol had six or seven strings, covering a relatively wide range of upper and lower pitches within a single instrument. The viol, much like a violin, viola, or cello today, had arched bridges and sloped shoulders, resembling the curved body of a female.
The character Viola, like the instrument, is a female body that encapsulates a masculine identity, likely producing both a high- and low-pitched voice as Viola pretends to be a man, Cesario, to gain entry into Orsino’s court after having survived a shipwreck and now stranded on the island Illyria. The words
“violets,” “Viola,” and “viol” contribute, though subtly, to the music of speech throughout the entire play, sustaining the music that begins the play. Even the word *Illyria* incorporates the name of an ancient stringed instrument, the lyre, indicating the prominence and relevance of music within the plot, which entirely takes place on the land of, or rather, soundscape, Illyria (Smith, 11). As in live performance, Illyria is conjured on the stage through sound (music and speech) rather than through props or scenery backdrops.

Despite the momentary sensory pleasure the music provides, Orsino abruptly stops the music as he says,

ORSINO: Stealing and giving odor. Enough, no more.  
’Tis not so sweet now as it was before.  [Music ceases.]  
O spirit of love, how quick and fresh art thou,  
That, notwithstanding thy capacity  
Receiveth as the sea, naught enters there,  
Of what validity and pitch soe’er,  
But falls into abatement and low price,  
Even in a minute. So full of shapes is fancy  
That it alone is high fantastical. (1.1.7-15)

He remarks that the music is “not so sweet” as a moment ago as he grows tired of it rather quickly, “even in a minute.” His love sickness that was supposed to be cured by the excess of music, lives on like a sea that engulfs anything, even music, that gets in its way. His love is able to devour the object and make it not
as sweet as before as it does with music and eventually with Olivia, making us wonder whether Viola’s sweetness will subside later as well. Though music does not seem immediately effective in the opening, this outcome does not devalue music’s therapeutic potential. As much as music is like a drug that may invoke an immediate physical response as in the brief sensory moment Orsino experiences, its greater impact in causing a long-lasting emotional or psychological shift may not be immediate, but rather gradual, especially in the context of something as complicated and ambiguous as love.

The seemingly quick demise of the sweetness of music to Orsino does not deprecate the overall power of music, but rather, raises the need to more deeply identify what Orsino’s stubborn condition exactly is in order to understand how music, deemed as the “food of love,” can truly serve its purpose. The focus is not on speculating whether music can actually be the “food of love” (recalling the conditional “If” that begins the statement), but rather, crystallizing the concept and defining it in greater detail, having witnessed that it indeed does have a “sweet” effect, even if momentarily. In fact, Shakespeare himself liked the idea of music as “the food of love” so much that he returns to it and further validates it in *Antony and Cleopatra* five years later. Cleopatra, who misses Antony, says,
“Give me some music; music, moody food / Of us that trade in love” (2.5.1-2).

Music is not simply a mood, but “moody food,” putting emphasis on “food” and implying that its impact is both emotional and physical. As with food, which is physical, but arouses both a psychological and physical response when ingested by the body, music can be regarded as having a similar function. Music is food like how a drug is medicine: it can be beneficial when taken in the right dosage and method, but on the other hand, it can be ineffective or even detrimental, especially when taken in excess. The surfeit of music is not to blame for being unable to immediately alleviate Orsino’s melancholy since he says it is the love that devours the sweetness. But it is likely that the excess is what makes him grow sick of it just as how after a few intakes, a drug is not as pleasant as the first time, though it may later be sought again due to its addictive nature, which we see in Act 2.

Orsino is not like Cleopatra as he does not trade in love, but rather, as critic Harold Bloom describes, more like John Keats or a Keats gone a bit mad as he is a glutton for the idea of love and dwells in a state of melancholy (Bloom, 147). In fact, Keats was greatly inspired by Shakespeare and his “Ode on Melancholy” echoes Orsino’s opening mini-drama. As with the speaker in the
ode, Orsino does not escape from his melancholy, but instead, tries to overwhelm it with an excess of beauty, or in this case, music. Though the sweetness of music is fleeting, it makes him more aware of his melancholy and reveals the love he suffers from more vividly as he remarks that it is “so full of shapes” and “high fantastical” (1.1.14-15), meaning frenzy or madness, alluding to Plato’s doctrine of the divine creative frenzy (Elam, 163).

In the The Anatomy of Melancholy (1621), one of the cures for melancholy is that “melancholy can only be overcome by melancholy” (Burton). As such, it is the “dying fall,” the sad strain, that seems to salve Orsino’s sadness as it arouses a brief pleasant experience, though the senses he feels are most likely conjured by his imagination. In fact, his brief sensory experience is also a symptom of melancholy as in The Anatomy of Melancholy, “they think they see, hear, smell, and touch that which they do not” (Burton). The only thing that Orsino is engaging with in this scene is instrumental music yet the music has the power to infiltrate his mind and arouse a spectrum of sensory experiences. Orsino sees a bank of violets, hears a sweet sound, smells odor, and touches the breath, all which do not exist but only exist to Orsino. The opening music is a first attempt at healing his melancholy. It is because the music has a sad quality to it that it is
able to grab Orsino’s attention and reach his soul. In accordance with Burton’s theory, Orsino’s melancholy state is caressed by melancholy music.

What Orsino suffers from, which can be diagnosed as melancholy with a touch of madness, affects both his mental state and physical body, revealing that the love he mentions is much more than an emotion, but a condition, a medical condition (Schalkwyk, 104). As complex as it seems, his melancholy does not only involve his love for Olivia but more so a psychological narcissism of loving himself as a love object, which he reveals in his brief conversation with Curio, one of his gentlemen:

CURIO: Will you go hunt, my lord?
ORSINO: What, Curio?
CURIO: The hart.
ORSINO: Why so I do, the noblest that I have.
  O, when mine eyes did see Olivia first
  Methought she purged the air of pestilence;
  That instant was I turned into a hart,
  And my desires, like fell and cruel hounds,
  E’er since pursue me. (1.1.16-22)

Though “hart” is a stag or deer, “hart” also refers to “heart,” a pun that suggests the narcissism that Orsino has in hunting his own heart, which is confirmed in lines 20-22 (Elam, 165). As with many men in patriarchal societies, Orsino is
self-obsessed and so full of self-love, which psychologist Stephen Gross calls, “The Orsino Complex.” As portrayed from his opening speech, Orsino’s love devours the object, whether it be music or even Olivia, making us wonder whether Viola’s sweetness will subside later as well. Critic John Dover Wilson remarks, “Olivia, Viola, womankind in general, are a means not an end. They exist, not as objects to be attained, but as stimulants, stimulants which induce that intoxicating mood of yearning, melancholy and despair in which his spirit delights” (Dover Wilson, 120). Orsino’s melancholy is rooted at his depleted and damaged ego as a love object, or rather, unloved object, for which he is the only one who can love himself. *Twelfth Night* is an example that shows that Shakespeare likely precedes Freud in psychoanalytic theory (the hidden father that Freud would not acknowledge) as he portrays a psychologically complicated character as Orsino (Gross). To sustain a stable relationship with Olivia, or Viola, or any partner, Orsino has to resolve his inner conflict and break out of his shell of self-obsession, which I argue, is aided by music.

In the following scene (Act 1 Scene 2), Viola is first introduced in the play as she becomes stranded on the land—the soundscape—of Illyria after surviving a shipwreck. As she decides to serve Duke Orsino, she says,
VIOLA: I’ll serve this duke.
Thou shalt present me as an eunuch to him.
It may be worth thy pains, for I can sing
And speak to him in many sorts of music. (1.2.55-58)

When serving the duke, she says she will “sing” and speak to him in “music,” implying that music is more powerful and impactful than words alone. Viola also foreshadows that it will be through music that she will develop a deeper connection with Orsino. A number of critics since the late nineteenth century suggest that *Twelfth Night* underwent a major revision and that in the original version, Viola sings all the songs instead of the fool, Feste (Lindley). Though this argument has not been clearly verified, it is a sound speculation that can further support the idea that music is an important element in the play that serves Orsino as much as Viola does. Although Viola does not directly sing to Orsino, the music of her speech is able to influence Orsino and contribute to healing him of his melancholy.

In Act 1 Scene 4, the audience learns that Orsino and Viola (disguised as Cesario) have met and have known each other for three days so far:
VALENTINE: If the duke continue these favors towards you, Cesario, you are like to be much advanced. He hath known you but three days, and already you are no stranger.

VIOLA (CESARIO): You either fear his humor or my negligence, that you call in question the continuance of his love. Is he inconstant, sir, in his favors?

VALENTINE: No, believe me.

VIOLA (CESARIO): I thank you. Here comes the Count. (1.4.1-7)

Valentine, a gentleman in Orsino’s court, has begun to notice that Orsino already favors Cesario despite having known him for only a few days. Instead of denying it, Viola seems to interpret Orsino’s favors as love and talks back to Valentine, questioning whether he thinks Orsino will stop liking her. It is possible that Viola has already begun to fall in love with Orsino as well. When Valentine tells Viola to believe him, Viola thanks him, likely implying that she is delighted that Orsino may actually like her and relieved that his favors towards her may be genuine and long-lasting.

In addition to Valentine’s remarks about Orsino’s favors, Orsino also displays a potential interest in Cesario himself in speech and in action when he enters the scene:

ORSINO: Who saw Cesario, ho?
VIOLA (CESARIO): On your attendance, my lord, here.
ORSINO: Stand you a while aloof. [The others stand aside.] Cesario,
Thou know’st no less but all. I have unclasped
To thee the book even of my secret soul. (1.4.8-12)

Orsino’s favors towards Cesario may be due to the fact that he is his messenger and he has to be honest with him so that his feelings are communicated to Olivia. However, Orsino purposely speaks with Cesario in private and also confesses that he has unveiled his secret soul—his innermost, private self that he has not even revealed to Olivia—to Cesario, potentially indicating that he trusts Cesario more than anyone else. In this moment in the 2012 Globe production of the play, Orsino also displays through his actions a subconscious desire to be more caring and affectionate towards him as the actor kneels on one knee and physically touches Cesario to help him with his attire.

In the midst of giving instructions to Cesario on how to woo Olivia, Orsino says to Cesario to encourage him,

ORSINO: Dear lad, believe it;
   For they shall yet belie thy happy years
   That say thou art a man: Diana’s lip
   Is not more smooth and rubious; thy small pipe
   Is as the maiden’s organ, shrill and sound,
   And all is semblative a woman’s part. (1.4.28-32)
Although Orsino is attempting to woo Olivia through Cesario, here he speaks in sweet language as though he is wooing Cesario instead. In explaining the reasons why Cesario would do a fine job as his messenger, Orsino unabashedly praises Cesario’s physical features out of the blue, first noting that Cesario’s lip is “smooth and rubious.” Orsino finds Cesario’s lips more beautiful than that of Diana, the goddess of the hunt and fertility who was a virgin, presumably like Viola (Britannica). Orsino’s attentiveness to Cesario’s lip among other facial features suggests an attraction even as far as a sexual tension between the two. In addition to the lip, Orsino praises Cesario’s voice, “thy small pipe / Is as the maiden’s organ, shrill and sound,” remarking that Cesario’s voice is high and clear (1.4.30-31). Though Viola does not sing, her voice is like music to Orsino’s ears; indeed, she “speak[s] to him in many sorts of music” as she had promised (1.2.58). Herein, the music of voice has a positive effect on Orsino, not only giving him a sense of reassurance in regards to his mission to woo Olivia, but also pulling him closer to Cesario who will contribute to healing his melancholy. Shakespeare demonstrates that, even as voice, music can be impactful and therapeutic. It seems like Orsino’s main purpose in praising Cesario’s lip and voice is to note their benefit when persuading Olivia, but the fact that he finds
them charming reveal that Orsino is attracted to Cesario, though he may not fully realize himself yet. Orsino remarks that Cesario’s features resemble those of a woman, “And all is semblative a woman’s part” (1.4.32). It is ambiguous whether Orsino finds Cesario’s features attractive because they are like a woman’s or because he thinks that they are feminine-like features of male, with the difference being an attraction towards the features alone versus Cesario as a whole.

Considering his favors towards Cesario, it is likely that Orsino is homoerotic, which can be understood further through their interactions together in later scenes.

Cesario says in response to Orsino’s praise of his features,

VIOLA (CESARIO): I’ll do my best
   To woo your lady. [Aside] Yet a barful strife!
   Whoe’er I woo, myself would be his wife (1.4.38-40)

Assuming that Orsino has left, Viola voices her inner thoughts. She admits that wooing Olivia is a tough task for her, not only in a literal sense, but potentially also in an emotional sense. She may be falling in love with Orsino, hence, it would be easier to woo him instead of Olivia, especially since she is deemed to
be Orsino’s love interest, to which Viola may be jealous. Viola proclaims that she will be the wife of whomever she woos, possibly suggesting that she may plan to woo Orsino. Cesario and Orsino’s interaction in this scene hints at the budding relationship between the two, which unfolds more visibility in Act 2 under the influence of music.

In Act 2 Scene 4, Orsino calls for music again,

ORSINO: Give me some music. Now, good morrow, friends.  
Now, good Cesario, but that piece of song,  
That old and antique song we heard last night.  
Methought it did relieve my passion much,  
More than light airs and recollected terms  
Of these most brisk and giddy-pacèd times.  
Come, but one verse. (2.4.1-7)

Orsino seeks music before he even greets his guests, prioritizing the music over anything else. Even after his greeting, “good morrow,” he is still in search of music as though he cannot go on about his day without it. Especially, the word “but” when he says “but that piece of song” means that he asks only of that song, implying that the music is what he needs the most. He does not just request any music, but specifically, “that old and antique song [he] heard last night” (2.4.3), similar to how he requests for a musical phrase (“That strain again!” (1.1.4)) to be
repeated in the opening scene. It is highly likely that this “old and antique” song is of a similar melancholic tune as the music that begins the play (Lindley).

When Orsino says, “Come on, but one verse” (2.4.7), it can be interpreted as a command to Cesario to sing, considering the possibility that all songs were originally designated to Viola instead of Feste to “sing / [a]nd speak to [Orsino] in many sorts of music” as Viola had planned in Act 1 Scene 2. Whether it is Viola or Feste who sings the songs, it does not change that the music has an influence on Orsino. Despite this postulation, it seems as though the song was sung by Feste last night (though not revealed to the audience):

CURIO: He is not here, so please your lordship, that should sing it.
ORSINO: Who was it?
CURIO: Feste the jester, my lord, a fool that the Lady Olivia’s father took much delight in. He is about the house.
ORSINO: Seek him out, and play the tune the while. (2.4.8-12)

Though he heard the song just the night before, he wishes to get another dose of the same drug of music. Although Feste has not arrived yet, he wants the music so much that he commands the musicians to play the tune while they wait for Feste. In this scene in the 2012 Globe production, the music is again a melancholic tune in a minor key similar to the music in the opening scene. Except
now, it is not played by a full ensemble of recorders, but as a duet with a lute and
a recorder, creating a more intimate mood for the two characters. Music, like
medicine, is most impactful when it is repeated (Nania). As with the repeated
strain in the opening scene and the repeated “old and antique” music in this
scene, Shakespeare portrays Orsino’s heavy dependence on music and
demonstrates the power of repeated music.

Though Orsino had abruptly stopped the music in the opening scene
through which it seemed as though the music was ineffective in curing his
melancholy, now that he seeks music again, he reflects on the effect that music
has had on him. He affirms the positive, therapeutic impact of music in the most
direct and clear manner, “Methought it did relieve my passion much” (2.4.4), in
which “passion,” refers to his melancholy (Elam, 226). Naturally, it may have
taken some time for the patient, Orsino, to fully acknowledge the effect of the
drug, the music. It is specifically the “old and antique” quality of the music that
had consoled Orsino where “antique” means old, quaint, and even fantastic
(Smith). Even in modern music therapy research today, it has been found that
music that is old and familiar to an individual is most effective in treating
depression and even reviving lost memories (Rebecchini). Even further, Orsino
explains that the music relieved him “[m]ore than light airs and recollected terms / [o]f these most brisk and giddy-pacèd times,” referring to silly, artificial songs in his present day (2.4.5-6). It is clear that the oldness of the music is particularly attractive to Orsino, implying that he may be familiar with the music and has heard it before in his youth. This familiarity of the music seems especially important in understanding Orsino’s condition, “The Orsino Complex,” which involves loving the part of himself that was filled with his mother’s love. In other words, Orsino’s self-love or self-obsession as a love object is likely a love for a projection of his mother’s care (Gross). Perhaps the “old and antique” music may be music that was heard or sung by his mother, or passed down from older generations. The very first exposure to any sound or music begins in the womb and it is the mother’s voice and singing that provide the most comfort to the infant, more than any other sound (Rebecchini). Yearning for the motherly love that he misses and tries to fill through self-love, the “old and antique” song serves as an appropriate cure for Orsino. Orsino’s court is an entirely male world; everyone—Orsino, Curio, Valentine, lords, Feste—is a male, even Viola becomes a male, Cesario, to enter Orsino’s court. Within this male world, it is only music that is feminine. Music, whether in Latin, French, Italian, Spanish, or
other European languages, is a feminine word. Music is expressive and emotional, which tend to be associated with feminine qualities, especially in Shakespeare’s time. As a “feminine” figure, music fills in the motherly love that Orsino subconsciously yearns for. Though music gave him a brief pleasant experience in the opening scene, it is only now that Orsino acknowledges its therapeutic effect, perhaps because it took time to process its effect; it is only when he seeks it and craves it again that he realizes his dependence on it and recognizes its value. It is also possible that, in the beginning, he was embarrassed to admit to being influenced by the music so quickly and admit to a yearning for feminine, motherly love as though it is a sign of weakness for a grown man, hence, he stops the music so abruptly (“Enough; no more”) as he was about to become more immersed in the music. Whether he had recognized it before or now, what is most important is that he clearly remarks that music was able to relieve his melancholy much.

When this “old and antique” music plays, Orsino turns to Viola disguised as Cesario,

ORSINO: Come hither, boy. If ever thou shalt love,
   In the sweet pangs of it remember me;
   For such as I am, all true lovers are,
Unstaid and skittish in all motions else
Save in the constant image of the creature
That is beloved. (2.4.13-18)

As soon as the music begins, Orsino leads a lively conversation about love. It can be interpreted that, as in the first scene where music was the food of love, the music controls Orsino, influencing him to feel and think about love again. He tells Cesario to remember him as a model of a “true lover” who is “unstaid and skittish,” opening up his rather personal and vulnerable side to Cesario. His “beloved” love interest is presumably still Olivia, yet, as he speaks to Cesario, Olivia becomes nothing more than a mere “creature.” It is as if Orsino is trying to appeal to Cesario by implying that he is an experienced lover while simultaneously and subconsciously trying to hide anything about Olivia since he may be falling in love with Cesario. During his speech about love and lovers, Orsino suddenly asks Cesario a question about the music,

ORSINO: [...] How dost thou like this tune?
VIOLA (CESARIO): It gives a very echo to the seat
Where Love is throned.
ORSINO: Thou dost speak masterly. (2.4.18-20)

Asking a question about the music amidst a speech about love indicates that Orsino is still focused on the music and wishes to continue taking an interest in
it. Specifically, asking whether Cesario likes the tune suggests that Orsino likes
the music himself and wishes to share it with Cesario. Perhaps Orsino is asking
the question with the hope that Cesario will feel the same way about the music as
he does and thus, develop a deeper connection with Cesario. Orsino’s short
speech about love sets up the question as if urging Cesario to immerse in a
feeling and mindset of love while listening to the music. To Orsino’s question,
Cesario responds immediately, remarking that the music “gives a very echo to
the seat” (2.4.19). Herein, “seat” refers to the heart, Cesario’s heart, implying that
the music has touched Cesario as well. Cesario further adds that the heart is
“[w]here Love is throned” (2.4.19). The music does not only reach Cesario’s heart
but makes Cesario feel what a lover feels. To this impression of the music, Orsino
responds immediately, “Thou dost speak masterly” (2.4.20). Orsino seems highly
satisfied with Cesario’s answer as though he has succeeded in his attempt to
make Cesario feel love by giving him music. Both Orsino and Cesario experience
the influential power of music to arouse the feeling of love. Having received a
satisfying response, Orsino proceeds to continue the conversation about love and
further connect with Cesario by asking a more personal question,

ORSINO: Thou dost speak masterly:
My life upon’t, young though thou art, thine eye
Hath stayed upon some favor that it loves.
Hath it not, boy?
VIOLA (CESARIO): A little, by your favor. (2.4.20-24)

Orsino assumes that, since Cesario is young, he must be in love. More deeply, considering the specificity of his word choice, Orsino not only assumes that Cesario is in love with someone, but potentially hopes that it is he whom Cesario loves: “thine eye / Hath stayed upon some favor that it loves” (2.4.21-22). Orsino is saying that Cesario’s eye must have rested on some face to love, but possibly, that he is subtly suggesting that that face should be him since it is he whom Cesario is looking at. Orsino asks, “Hath it not, boy?” as if wanting to confirm his speculation, to which Cesario responds, “A little, by your favor” (2.4.23-24). In the Globe production, Orsino chuckles at this response as though he is hopeful that Cesario may be in love with him. Cesario admits that he is, at least a little, in love, and adds, “by your favor,” which literally means “if you please,” but may also mean, “like you in feature” (Smith). Repeating the word “favor” immediately after Orsino speaks it suggests that Cesario also means “face” by the word “favor.” Hence, in saying “your favor,” Cesario is most likely referring to Orsino—a subtle confession.
Orsino asks a third question, taking another step into Cesario’s mind,

ORSINO: What kind of woman is’t?
VIOLA (CESARIO): Of your complexion.
ORSINO: She is not worth thee, then. What years, i’faith?
VIOLA (CESARIO): About your years, my lord. (2.4.23-26)

Orsino assumes Cesario is in love with a woman, or at least he asks in such a way to hide his true feelings. In line with “your favor,” Cesario responds, “Of your complexion,” another subtle confession directed towards Orsino, to which Orsino makes a frown then turns away from Cesario in the Globe production.

Still assuming that Cesario is in love with a woman and now also learning that she is of similar complexion as him, it is possible that Orsino begins to doubt that Cesario is not in love with him and may even become slightly jealous of Cesario’s lover who is supposedly similar to him. Hence, he says condescendingly, “She is not worth thee, then” (2.4.25). But unable to resist his curiosity, he asks, “What years, i’faith?” to which Cesario responds, “About your years, my lord” (2.4.25-26). With this additional clue, it is likely that Orsino imagines someone similar to Countess Olivia since she is a woman whom Orsino knows and has
been interested in and is presumably closer in age to him than Cesario. He
remarks on Cesario’s “woman,”

ORSINO: Too old, by heaven. Let still the woman take
    An elder than herself. So wears she to him,
    So sways she level in her husband’s heart.
    For, boy, however we do praise ourselves,
    Our fancies are more giddy and unfirm,
    More longing wavering, sooner lost and worn,
    Than women’s are.

VIOLA (CESARIO): I think it well, my lord. (2.4.26-34)

Orsino is surprisingly quick to criticize Cesario’s “woman” and provide reasons
for disapproval. He even blames the supposed woman for choosing someone
younger like Cesario, seemingly implying a feeling of jealousy. Viola seems to
agree with Orsino not only to hide her identity but also because, in truth, she is a
woman and Orsino is older than herself, which fits Orsino’s argument.

    Orsino continues to criticize women, “For women are as roses, whose fair
flower / Being once displayed, doth fall that very hour” (2.4.36-37). He thinks of
women as flowers, not in a positive way as in praising their beauty, but in a
negative way by saying that their beauty is short-lived. His description of women
is considerably far from that of a man who is supposedly in love with a woman,
Olivia. His negative attitude towards women may be due to two things: First, his
“Orsino Complex.” Though he believes he is in love with Olivia, he is more in love with the idea of love—self-absorbed in himself as a love object—and psychologically obsessed with a need for reciprocated love. Second, a possibility of his homoeroticism. As mentioned before, he may be jealous of Cesario’s supposed lover due to his own subconscious interest in Cesario, causing his haste criticism of women. Hinted in Act 1 Scene 4 when Orsino praises Cesario’s lip and voice, it is possible that Orsino is homoerotic since it is Cesario—who he believes to be a male—whom he likes, not Viola. Considering his latent homoeroticism, it can be further understood that his “Orsino Complex” of self-obsession is caused by a patriarchal or heteropatriarchal pressure to seek feminine love, which Orsino can only find in himself from the remains of his mother’s love due to Olivia’s unreciprocated love. Orsino’s criticism of women is more like locker-room talk and not necessarily an animosity towards Olivia or women, but rather an indication of his budding love for Cesario. This shift in his feelings, or rather, a recognition of his true feelings is arguably made possible due to the music that has been playing since the beginning of this scene. Without it, Orsino would not have asked Cesario, “How dost thou like this tune?” (2.4.18) and the conversation about love that was much like a back and forth of subtle
confessions may not have even occurred. As this scene portrays, music is indeed the food of love as it arouses feelings of love between the two characters.

Meanwhile, Feste finally arrives and Orsino requests for him to sing the “old and antique” song. Feste sings the following lyrics to the tune the musicians have been playing while Feste was on his way,

FESTE: [sings]
Come away, come away, death,
And in sad cypress let me be laid.
Fly away, fly away, breath;
I am slain by a fair cruel maid.
My shroud of white, stuck all with yew,
O, prepare it!
My part of death, no one so true
Did share it.

Not a flower, not a flower sweet
On my black coffin let there be strown;
Not a friend, not a friend greet
My poor corpse, where my bones shall be thrown.
A thousand thousand sighs to save,
Lay me, O, where
Sad true lover never find my grave,
To weep there! (2.4.49-64)

The original melody to this song and in fact, to most songs in Shakespeare's plays have failed to survive, but the score below is a possible version:
The tune that is indicated by this score is melancholic as it is in “D” minor and has a series of descending tones. Similarly, in the 2012 Globe production of the play, Feste also sings a tune in “D” minor with descending tones like the “dying fall” from the opening music. Hence, again, it is melancholic music salving Orsino’s melancholy.

This song, “Come Away, Come Away Death,” is about a man who wants to die due to his unrequited love and can be interpreted as a depiction of Orsino’s psyche. The song influences Orsino to make him more certain that his love is no longer towards Olivia, but rather, Cesario. The “death” that Feste calls upon suggests Orsino to now leave behind the part of himself that wanted Olivia’s love and become reborn into his truer self. Feste sings, “I am slain by a
fair cruel maid,” which is Orsino who has been slain by Olivia’s unreciprocated love (2.4.52). “My part of death, no one so true / Did share it” conveys that Orsino’s love is truer than anyone else, but whom does he truly love (2.4.55)? “Not a flower, not a flower sweet / On my black coffin let there be strown” Feste sings. Recalling Orsino’s depiction of women as short-lived flowers, Feste suggests that Orsino’s true love is not for a woman.

Feste’s music is accompanied by words (the lyrics), with which one may question why he does not just speak the words instead of singing them. The music provides a medium through which he can freely influence others without interruption and wield a power that others in this play do not have. The music attracts Orsino’s attention more than anything else as in the opening scene and his continued craving for music. Hence, the words that Feste puts a melody to will likely be conveyed to Orsino with greater impact than without the music.

After singing, he says to Orsino,

FESTE: Now, the melancholy god protect thee; and the tailor make thy doublet of changeable taffeta, for thy mind is a very opal. I would have men of such constancy put to sea, that their business might be everything and their intent everywhere, for that’s it that always makes a good voyage of nothing. Farewell. (2.4.70-74)
Feste is, as I argue, the mastermind or puppeteer of this play. He is extremely keen to observe and understand others’ feelings and mental states. He notes Orsino’s melancholy and also his changeability as he, in a way, blesses Orsino, “Now, the melancholy god protect thee,” in which the “melancholy god” refers to Saturn, the planet that was thought to control the melancholy temperament (Smith). It is as if his song is a medicine that he gives to Orsino in hopes of relieving his melancholy by urging him to “kill” his past self that has been obsessed with his unrequited love for Olivia, and now pursue his interest in Cesario and his potential homoeroticism.

In this scene in the Globe production, the more Feste sings, the closer Orsino physically gets to Cesario. He first roams around when the music starts but then midway through, sits on the bench where Cesario is seated, then inches closer to Cesario. As the music continues, it seems to more strongly arouse a feeling of love in Orsino that he even takes Cesario’s hand and puts it on his shoulder.
Duke Orsino takes Viola (Cesario)’s hand and puts it on his shoulder while Feste sings in the 2012 Globe production of Twelfth Night.

Near the end of this scene, when others have left and the two are alone, Orsino and Cesario come very close to a kiss, contributing to the interpretation of Orsino’s potential homoeroticism.
Duke Orsino and Viola (Cesario) come close to a kiss near the end of Act 2 Scene 4 in the 2012 Globe Production of Twelfth Night.

Though Orsino may not explicitly realize, there is certainly a shift in his emotions and mental state due to the music. As implied from the text and shown in live performance, it is the music, both the instrumental music that begins Act 2 Scene 4 and the same tune that Feste sings that relieves Orsino of his melancholy and fosters his love for Cesario.

Later in the final scene of the play, even when Viola reveals her true identity as a woman, he calls her,

ORSINO: Cesario, come—
For so you shall be while you are a man
But when in other habits you are seen,
Orsino’s mistress and his fancy’s queen. (5.1.378-381)

By still calling Viola by the name Cesario, Orsino seems to wish to prolong the
male identity of Viola, which is highly suggestive of his homoeroticism. After all,
it is with Cesario, not Viola that he had fallen in love. But it is this homoerotic
attraction to Cesario that finally breaks Orsino free from his unrequited love for
Olivia which had been a side effect of his “Orsino Complex,” a psychological
self-obsession with his own self, the part of himself that was nurtured with his
mother’s love, due to heteropatriarchal pressure. Orsino had been suffering from
melancholy since he was unable to be his true self. But music, with its therapeutic
powers, is able to relieve his melancholy and allow him to come to terms with his
feelings and explore his potential homoeroticism.

The music Twelfth Night influences Orsino greatly in many ways: music as
the “food of love” is able to conjure a momentary pleasurable sensory
experience; music’s then fleeting sweetness allows Orsino to learn more deeply
of his melancholy and self-obsession; his craving for the same “old and antique”
music allows him to realize that music actually “relieved his passion much”; and
the music influences him to recognize more deeply his love for Cesario, relieving
him of his psychological condition and unveiling his true self. It is not entirely clear whether music has put a complete end to his melancholy. In fact, one would not expect it to put an end, if at all possible, but rather, alleviate the melancholy. It is also unclear whether Viola will lose her sweetness considering Orsino’s changeability. But what is certain is that music has an intimate, personal effect on Orisino, serving as the only thing that can truly appease him. Music influences him emotionally, physically, and psychologically, alleviating his suffering from his melancholy, and functioning as a promising cure for his condition.
III. MUSIC IN THE WINTER’S TALE

In The Winter’s Tale, the power of music is demonstrated most prominently in the final scene of the play, in which Hermione is brought back to life. Paulina (the wife of Antigonus, a lord at Leontes’ court) brings a statue of Hermione then calls for music, “Music, awake her; strike!”, to which the stone turns into flesh (5.3.99). The Winter’s Tale is filled with fairy tale-like moments, among which, the revival of Hermione is the most fantastical and miraculous, contributing to the assumption that music merely serves as a magical element. Though the appearance of music is brief and may even seem baffling, by giving music a role in the most climactic scene in the play, Shakespeare demonstrates a moment in which music serves as a powerful figure that can directly influence the human mind and body. To understand this effect of music, it is important to contextualize the scene and analyze the psychological and physical conditions of the characters. Though it may seem as though Hermione is the only character who is most directly impacted by the music, I argue that the music also heals Leontes of his paranoia.
The play begins with Leontes, King of Sicilia, and his childhood friend Polixenes, King of Bohemia, who has been visiting Sicilia for nine months. Polixenes is about to return to his kingdom when Leontes tries to persuade him to stay longer. When he fails, he asks his wife, Queen Hermione, to convince him instead. To Leontes’ surprise, she is able to persuade Polixenes. Leontes suddenly becomes jealous and accuses Hermione of infidelity, convinced that Hermione and Polixenes are having an affair. Many critics remark that Leontes “simply goes mad without cause” (Schwartz). Some say that “Shakespeare removes Leontes’ motives for jealousy,” arguing that Shakespeare does not provide any significant reason for Leontes’ sudden jealousy in the first place (Kermode). Others who follow a theological interpretation, considering the divine elements of the play, are convinced that “His evil is self-born and unmotivated,” arguing that Leontes is simply an evil character and there is nothing that can be done about that (Knight). And some do not even attempt to fully understand Leontes’ attitude, concluding that “Causes of the jealousy are no concern of ours” (Pafford). Leontes is a central character—a deeply flawed protagonist—of the play, and his jealousy is what causes the rest of the story to unfold, hence, it is only natural to wonder what may be the reason behind his
attitude. A deeper understanding of his jealousy should be of great concern in order to more deeply understand the rest of the plot, especially the final scene. Deciphering the causes for his jealousy is not necessarily figuring out the why behind Leontes’ actions, but rather the what. What exactly is Leontes going through? From a psychoanalytic standpoint, it can be understood that Leontes’ jealousy is not simply an attitude, but a psychological condition. French psychoanalyst J. Lacan notes that most critics refuse to consider Shakespeare’s hints and metaphors that depict Leontes’ character as anything significant (Lacan). Though the play is indeed a dramatic reality and there is no external, narrative explanation about Leontes’s character, it is important to recognize that Leontes’ mental condition can be diagnosed through his speech alone.

Leontes’ conversation with Polixenes in the beginning of the play is as follows,

LEONTES: Stay your thanks a while,
       And pay them when you part.
POLIXENES: Sir, that’s tomorrow […]
LEONTES: We are tougher, brother,
       Than you can put us to’t. (1.2.9-10, 15-16)
Leontes’ first words spoken in the play, “Stay your thanks a while,” is a request to postpone Polixenes’ departure. As in many other Shakespeare plays, such as in *Twelfth Night* where Orsino’s opening speech is “If music be the food of love, play on” and music indeed serves as the food for his love for Cesario, the first words spoken by the protagonist are usually highly representative of the character’s internal conflict and indicative of the events to unfold. Herein, Leontes’ conflict is balancing—or rather, a failure to balance—his strong relationship with Polixenes with his relationship with his wife, Queen Hermione, a conflict that becomes quickly visible as this scene unfolds. Polixenes is adamant to Leontes’ request, insisting that he has to return to Bohemia as he fears that something bad may have happened to his kingdom during his absence. Despite his rejection of Leontes’ request, Leontes urges, “We are tougher, brother, / Than you can put us to’t” (1.2.15-16). Leontes implies that, at least to him, his friendship with Polixenes is so strong that it cannot be broken by any test he puts them to. Polixenes refuses to be persuaded again as he says, “No longer stay” (1.1.17). But Leontes says, “One sennight longer,” begging him to stay for not just another day or two, but a week (1.1.18). Though Leontes may be speaking out of hospitality, his repetitive request at such an unwavering Polixenes almost
suggests that he favors Polixenes more than Polixenes favors him and that their relationship may be more than a friendship. A symptom of paranoia is stubbornness and an obsession over something, which is already apparent in Leontes’ speech from the very beginning of the play (Farell). Leontes is particularly stubborn in his plea for Polixenes to stay and seems to obsess over his friendship with him.

Polixenes responds to Leontes’ seemingly unstoppable request,

POLIXENES: Press me not, beseech you, so.
There is no tongue that moves, none, none i’th’ world
So soon as yours could win me
[...]
Farewell, our brother.” (1.2.19-21, 27)

Polixenes strongly insists that there is no one, not even Leontes, who can convince him to stay. Upon hearing the word “tongue” from Polixenes, Leontes suddenly says, “Tongue-tied our queen? Speak you” (1.2.28). Leontes seems to become easily offended by Polixenes’ words—another symptom of paranoia—as he no longer responds to Polixenes (Frysh). Instead, he borrows Polixenes’ word, “tongue,” to command Hermione to respond instead of him in a condescending manner as though mocking the word and Polixenes. Leontes speaks in an
agitated attitude as his words can be translated to, “Are you silent Hermione? Speak up.” In contrast to his friendly attitude toward Polixenes, he is quick to criticize Hermione. By “tongue-tied,” Leontes implies that Hermione is usually too talkative, hence, mocking her silence. Throughout the play, the audience sees that in actuality, Hermione’s speech is graceful, the opposite of how Leontes regards her. Leontes’ irrational belief is also another sign of paranoia (Duszynski-Goodman). Obeying Leontes, Hermione attempts to persuade Polixenes to stay longer. She reassures Polixenes that all must be well in Bohemia, but even to Hermione’s request, Polixenes is unyielding. Only when Hermione cleverly declares that he must stay as either her prisoner or her guest, Polixenes helplessly chooses to be her guest as he cannot offend her by being a prisoner and decides to stay for another week. Polixenes is not quick to accept Hermione’s invitation, suggesting that he is not particularly more fond of Hermione than Leontes and that there is no such hint at an affair. Polixenes seems to be acting out of respect and etiquette, especially towards the Queen whom he does not know as well as Leontes, with whom he can be more honest. During their conversation, Hermione becomes curious about Leontes’ boyhood and asks Polixenes what they were like as boys, to which Polixenes says,
POLIXENES: We were twinned lambs that did frisk i’th’ sun
And bleat the one at th’other. What we changed
Was innocence for innocence. (1.2.67-69)

Polixenes reminiscences on his younger days with Leontes. In particular, he
recollects his and Leontes’ innocence. He depicts himself and Leontes as
“twinned lambs,” suggesting that their relationship is closer than friends, than
man and wife, even closer than a brotherly relationship since twins are more
related to each other than anyone else. “Lambs” symbolize and further
emphasize their innocence. Though Polixenes seemed a bit distant towards
Leontes all the while Leontes was pleading for him to stay, Polixenes reveals that
he too acknowledges his closeness to Leontes in what may be a bond that is
stronger than friendship. He adds,

POLIXENES: Temptations have since then been born to’s. For
In those unfledged days was my wife a girl;
Your precious self had then not crossed the eyes
Of my young playfellow.

HERMIONE: Grace to boot!
Of this make no conclusion, les you say
Your queen and I are devils. (1.2.76-82)
Polixenes suggests that he and Leontes were innocent until they became tempted by the women who have become their wives. Hermione responds that she and Polixenes’ queen must be devils to have corrupted their innocence. Though their exchange is likely lively banter, Polixenes’ remark about their temptation for women foreshadows a serious conflict that soon ignites Leontes’ latent paranoia. Becoming suspicious of Hermione and Polixenes’ lively conversation, Leontes asks impatiently,

LEONTES: Is he won yet?

HERMIONE: He’ll stay, my lord.

LEONTES: At my request he would not.

Hermione, my dearest, thou never spok’st To better purpose.

HERMIONE: Never?

LEONTES: Never, but once. (1.2.87-89)

When Hermione confirms that Polixenes will stay longer, Leontes does not immediately express delight, but rather, he is concerned by the fact that Polixenes accepted Hermione’s invitation but not his. He automatically takes offense and displays an argumentative attitude towards Hermione, consistently showing signs of paranoia. Leontes claims that Hermione has never been useful
except once. Despite Leontes’ hostility, Hermione remains graceful and loyal to Leontes,

HERMIONE: Why, lo you now, I have spoke to th’ purpose twice:
The one for ever earned a royal husband;
Th’other for some while a friend. (1.2.106-108)

She says that the first time she spoke well was when she earned her a husband, a rather flattering remark towards Leontes, and the second time was when she persuaded his friend to stay, which Leontes should thank her for. Both times, she spoke in favor of Leontes. Hermione speaks with good intentions but Leontes interprets them ill given his paranoia. When Hermione says “friend,” Leontes is triggered by the thought of Polixenes and Hermione being friends, or rather, in his irrational interpretation, “lovers,” which intensifies his paranoia. Aside, Leontes says in his infamous speech,

LEONTES: Too hot, too hot.
To mingle friendship far is mingling bloods.
I have tremor cordis on me; my heart dances,
But not for joy, not joy. This entertainment
May a free face put on, derive a liberty
From heartiness, from bounty, fertile bosom,
And well become the agent—’t may, I grant—
But to be paddling palms and pinching fingers,
As now they are, and making practiced smiles
As in a looking glass; and then to sigh, as ‘twere
The mort o’th’ deer—oh, that is entertainment
My bosom likes not, nor my brows. —Mamillius,
Art thou my boy? (1.2.108-120)

Leontes remarks that Hermione and Polixenes are “too hot” and that a friendship
could go as far as having sexual intercourse (Bergeron). Leontes is overly
suspicious, which is a direct sign of his paranoia. Perhaps it is because in his
mind, his own friendship with Polixenes is more than just a friendship that he
asserts that Hermione and Polixenes must be more than friends as well. Leontes
experiences “tremor cordis,” an erratic heart rate which is indicative of a
full-blown paranoia in the form of a panic attack. It is not merely a feeling of
jealousy that Leontes has; both mentally and physically, Leontes displays
paranoia, a serious psychological condition. Though it is unclear whether
Hermione and Polixenes join hands, Leontes remarks that they are “paddling
palms and pinching fingers”; what may be a simple gesture is interpreted as a
scandalous act in Leontes’ psychologically delusional mind. He even questions
whether his son is actually his son, indicating his suspicion that Mamillus is an
illegitimate son and that Hermione who is currently pregnant, bears Polixenes’
child. Though his full-blown paranoia seems sudden, the preceding events and speech indicate that Leontes has shown signs of paranoia from the very beginning and that his irrational behavior is not random, but rather, reasoned. In a way, Leontes is a patient, not a madman.

Now that we understand that it is his paranoia that causes him to blame Hermione for adultery, then what is the possible cause for his paranoia in the first place? The exact cause for paranoia is unknown to this day though some potential causes include genetics, trauma, and stress (Morales-Brown). Considering Jacobean England in Shakspeare’s time, a major cause of Leontes’ paranoia may well be the faultlines in patriarchal culture (Bergeron). In a patriarchal society, a homosocial bond, like the one between Leontes and Polixenes, is considered stronger and more valuable than that between a man and wife. Women were construed as intellectually inferior and physically imperfect compared to men. Patriarchy made men the head of their family and even kingdom in this case, giving them the burden to marry the irrational creatures that women are only because they depend on their reproductive abilities to produce legitimate heirs (Bergeron). Polixenes hinted as he was reminiscing of his past with Leontes when speaking with Hermione that it was
women who corrupted their innocence. As such, it can be understood that Leontes’ paranoia was caused by valuing his relationship with Polixenes more than that with Hermione and the stress that comes from Hermione who disturbs his “innocent” relationship with Polixenes. Additionally, Leontes’ full-blown panic attack and rage towards Hermione seems to be triggered by his dependence on her as a producer of his heir and his suspicion that she has failed to do the only useful thing she is meant to do for him. Leontes shows signs of paranoia from the very beginning, but what seemed dormant, explodes into a full-blown paranoia when Leontes confirms in his mind that Hermione and Polixenes are having an affair, corrupting both his relationship with Polixenes and his need to produce a legitimate heir (Bergmann).

Due to this paranoia, Leontes displays a series of irrational behaviors: accusing Hermione of adultery, attempting to poison Polixenes, taking Mamillus away from Hermione which eventually causes him to die, locking the pregnant Hermione in prison, forcing her to give birth in prison, sending her newborn daughter away, and causing her to “die” upon hearing of Mamillus’ death. Leontes displays numerous unforgivable and treacherous behaviors. However, in a medical and psychoanalytic perspective, it is important to recognize that,
despite his countless wrongdoings, Leontes is a patient after all. He is a patient who requires healing. Though unfair to the people who have been wrongfully accused and even died due to this single person, it is difficult to discriminate Leontes from any other patient with paranoia, and one can only hope for him to recover from his mental illness.

Many critics and readers assume that Leontes recognizes his wrongdoings when his son Mamillius dies. Some critics even argue that Mamillius’ death cures Leontes of his paranoia (Bergmann). As soon as Mamillius is proclaimed to be dead, Leontes says, “Apollo’s angry, and the heavens themselves / Do strike at my injustice,” seemingly acknowledging that he has done injustice (3.2.142-143). When he sees Hermione faint, he also says, “I have too much believed mine own suspicion” as he recognizes his own paranoia to a certain extent (3.2.148).

After this moment, Leontes does not display aggressive behaviors that are comparable to his full-blown paranoia. However, just because his hostile actions have subsided, does not mean that he has been healed of his paranoia. Even after he admits to his wrongdoings, Leontes continues to suffer from what can be considered a more quiet paranoia than before or a slow process of recovery from
the full-blown paranoia. The audience learns through Time in Act 4 Scene 1 that

Leontes has shut himself away for sixteen years,

\[\text{TIME: O’er sixteen years [...]}\]
Leontes leaving—
Th’effects of his fond jealousies so grieving
That he shuts up himself. (4.1.6, 17-19)

It seems like Leontes physically isolates himself from the rest of society, but this
decision may be due to his mental isolation and loneliness, feeling like no one
understands him and losing his self-confidence, which are other symptoms of
paranoia (Mind). Arguably, it is only until the final scene of the play when music
strikes Hermione’s statue and brings it back to life that Leontes is able to fully
recover. Even up until the very moment that the music strikes, we can see

Paulina worrying that Leontes’ paranoia may erupt again:

\[\text{LEONTES: O sweet Paulina,}\]
Make me to think so twenty years together.
No settled senses of the world can match
The pleasure of that madness. Let’t alone.
\[\text{PAULINA: I am sorry, sir, I have thus far stirred you (5.3.70-74).}\]

Leontes remarks at Hermione’s statue that he wants to believe that she has been
alive and that nothing in reality will be as pleasurable as this madness. Though
Leontes is most likely in an ecstatic state and not necessary mad in any way, it seems as though, to the word “madness,” Paulina becomes worried that she has stirred Leontes too much. Recalling a moment from Act 2 Scene 3, Paulina had pronounced herself as a physician and counselor, “Myself your loyal servant, your physician, / Your most obedient counselor” (2.3.54-55). Paulina has also been caring for Leontes through the years, thus, it is natural for her to be attentive to his condition and prepare for any potential symptoms.

To finally awaken Hermione’s statue, Paulina calls for music,

PAULINA:
Music, awake her; strike!

[Music]


[HERMIONE comes down]

Start not. Her actions shall be holy as You hear my spell is lawful. do not shun her Until you see her die again, for then You kill her double. Nay, present your hand. When she was young, you woo’d her; now, in age
Is she become the suitor?

LEONTES: O, she’s warm!
If this be magic, let it be an art
Lawful as eating. (5.3.100-111)

Though it is music that is awakening her, Paulina speaks directly to Hermione and tells her to descend, implying that Hermione has been alive all along and is pretending to be a statue. As shown in a mid-19th century painting of this scene, it is implied that Hermione is standing on a pedestal (as expected of a statue) and that the others are looking up to her. Hence, she has to descend from the pedestal as Paulina instructs. Paulina is like a director who cues in the music and the actress (Hermione).
Even assuming that Hermione has been alive, music still has a therapeutic effect as it mentally prepares Hermione to reveal herself to Leontes after all those years and the trauma from the past; the music marks an end to her journey of healing. Without the music, it is possible that Hermione may not feel fully inclined to show herself. It is apparent that Paulina invokes the aid of music as her words alone would not be powerful enough to arouse the feeling of a new beginning (Janowitz). The music is able to give Hermione a sense of consolation as well as
courage. Having been wrongly accused of adultery by her husband, lost her son, and stripped away from her newborn daughter, the trauma and pain, both physical and mental, that Hermione must have experienced is unimaginable. Having given birth in prison where she was physically and mentally distressed, it is possible that she suffered a uterine suffocation in addition to other postpartum pains, which would have caused her to appear dead but then revivified a few days later (Bicks). Uterine suffocation, or also called “wandering womb,” is a type of hysterical illness popularized by doctor Edward Jorden in the early 1600s, characterized by a dislocation of the uterus (Jorden). Throughout the years, Hermione would have slowly recovered from her pains, but Shakespeare demonstrates through this scene that the process of healing cannot be complete without music. A patient cannot fully recover with medical treatment alone, nor can Time alone put an end to her pains. Music has the power to physically stimulate Hermione, the auditory sound activating her brain and the vibrations touching her body, as well as the power to emotionally stimulate her, the sound evoking a feeling of hope and soothing her soul. In the 1999 Royal Shakespeare Company production of *The Winter’s Tale*, the music is a calm yet uplifting music played by a harp-like instrument, which continues until
the very end of the play. The tenderness of the music evokes a feeling of a gentle, graceful awakening and hope for a new beginning. With the music sustaining until the very end, it is as if the music has opened a new world, signifying a transformation in Hermione and Leontes and completing their long journey of healing.

As Hermione begins to move, Paulina speaks to Leontes, “do not shun her / Until you see her die again, for then / You kill her double” (5.3.105-107). Paulina warns Leontes that if he shuns her again in this new life of hers, he would be killing her again. Paulina’s anxiety hints that Leontes may still have some symptoms of paranoia left. She is worried that something will trigger it again and awaken its dormancy. But because of the music, Leontes is also able to partake in the ritual that completes Hermione’s journey of healing, through which Leontes heals as well. Leontes’ first remark upon witnessing the awakening of Hermione by music is, “Oh, she’s warm! / If this be magic, let it be an art / Lawful as eating” (5.3.109-111). He is astounded to see that she is warm and alive. Likely referring to the music, he exclaims that it is like an art as natural as eating. Shakespeare is consistent in his idea that music is like food, whether in *Twelfth Night, Antony and Cleopatra*, and even in *The Winter’s Tale*. Just as music
was the food of love in *Twelfth Night*, herein, music also serves as the food of love, mending the pains of the past and nurturing a new love between Leontes and Hermione. Unlike Paulina’s worry that Leontes may shun Hermione again and reignite his paranoia, the power of music impresses and influences Leontes, covering his feelings of isolation and any remains of his paranoia with a new hope for restoration and love. He acknowledges this new beginning as he says, “As I by thine a wife. This is a match, / And made between’s by vows” as he and Hermione marry anew (5.3.137).

Though the music in the final scene of *The Winter’s Tale* seems to only influence Hermione in awakening her, the music exhibits a powerful effect on both Hermione and Leontes, having understood their conditions more deeply. The music marks an end to Leontes’ paranoia and Hermione’s trauma as it revitalizes the two characters, giving Hermione the courage to appear before Leontes and arousing a new feeling of love between the two. The music restores the life of both Hermione and Leontes.
IV. MUSIC IN PERICLES

Similar to the final scene of The Winter’s Tale, Shakespeare also demonstrates in Pericles a moment in which music is able to restore life.

Thaisa, daughter of King Simonides, falls in love with the knight Pericles. Thaisa gets pregnant on the night she weds Pericles and goes into labor on a ship in the middle of a storm. Similar to Hermione, Thaisa gives birth to her daughter in difficult circumstances. She presumably dies while giving birth and in Act 3 Scene 2, her body washes up in a chest on the shore of Ephesus where a physician named Cerimon finds her:

CERIMON: The rough and woeful music that we have,  
    Cause it to sound, beseech you.  
The vial once more. How thou stirr’st, thou block!  
The music there! [Music sounds] I pray you, give her air.  
    Gentlemen, this queen will live. Nature awakes.  
A warmth breathes out of her. She hath not been entranced  
About five hours. See how she ‘gins to blow  
Into life’s flower again. (3.2.86-93)
In addition to various medicines, warm fire, and cloths, the physician requests for music. In particular, he requests for sad, woeful music. As in *Twelfth Night* where melancholic music cures Orsino’s melancholy, the same method is used here as well. Instead of giving energetic, uplifting music in order to revive the body, Thaisa’s woeful state is treated with woeful music. Shakespeare demonstrates another significant moment in which music serves as medicine.
The use of music is not necessarily due to a lack of medical equipment or methods. Cerimon is a physician and he has medicines with which he treats Thaisa. But medicine alone cannot breathe life into Thaisa’s dying body. Though the medication might restore her bodily functions, her woeful state, whether emotional or psychological, cannot be cured with medicine alone. The music, with its rhythmical qualities, can physically stimulate Thaisa’s breathing, heartbeat, and brain activity. But in particular, the woeful quality of the music has the power to caress her woeful feelings and console her. The music plays her feelings of woe for her, emptying her woe and sorrow and allowing her to breathe in the fresh air of life.
V. MUSIC IN KING LEAR

Similar to Pericles, Shakespeare displays in King Lear, another moment in which music is prescribed by a doctor, making the connection between music and medicine even more visible.

In Act 4 Scene 7, Cordelia, the youngest daughter of King Lear, is reunited with her father who is being treated. The doctor requests for music, “Please you draw near; louder the music there” (4.7.3). Music is ordered as though it is a necessary prescription. Though the doctor may have used medicine alone, he orders music “as a means of restoring shattered nerves and shaken mental powers” (Scholes). Again, music has the power to influence both the body and the mind. Music, with its rhythmical and vibrational qualities, is capable of calming nerves, restoring brain activity, heartbeat, and breathing to a regular beat. With its emotional qualities, music can also soothe or arouse emotion, influencing one’s mental state. Herein, the doctor specifically requests for the music to be played louder. It seems likely that the doctor’s main purpose in prescribing the music in this particular scene is for it to have more of a physical impact on Lear than an emotional one by increasing its volume or vibration. The
doctor clearly knows of music’s therapeutic value, and so does Shakespeare who decides to include music, even if brief, in this play as well.
VI. CONCLUSION

Through his plays, Shakespeare demonstrates numerous moments in which music serves as a cure for the mind and body. The most significant examples are in Twelfth Night and The Winter’s Tale, in which the characters who are influenced by the music are psychologically complex and can be diagnosed with a medical condition.

In Twelfth Night, music serves as the food of love as introduced in the very first line of the play. The music strongly influences Orsino by relieving his melancholy. Orsino initially seems to suffer from a love sickness due to his unrequited love for Countess Olivia, which, in actuality, is not a true love towards Olivia but a symptom of his psychological condition which can be called “The Orsino Complex.” By hunting his own “hart” (heart), Orsino displays a sort of narcissism or self-obsession, which can be understood as trying to love a part of himself that was filled with his mother’s love. Though there is no explicit indication of motherly love in the play, Orsino’s repeated requests for “old and antique” music implies that he yearns for a familiar music to salve his soul, which can be interpreted as a subconscious longing for the music he heard in his youth, likely his mother’s singing. In a patriarchal society, Orsino tries to fill this
lack of motherly love with Olivia, but with his love being unrequited, he seeks music to alleviate his melancholy state. The music, as the food of love, is able to enhance feelings of love between Orsino and Viola, allowing them to recognize their love for each other. Under the influence of music, Orsino is able to realize that his true love is not for Olivia, but for Cesario. Orsino’s recognition of his homoeroticism frees him from his “Orsino Complex” and the melancholy that had initially aroused from a love for Olivia that was not true to him.

In *The Winter’s Tale*, music exerts its healing power on Hermione and Leontes. Leontes’ irrational behavior in the first half of the play is not simply due to jealousy, but a psychological condition, paranoia, which is implied from the very beginning of the play. He values his friendship with Polixenes (possibly a homoerotic relationship) more than his relationship with Queen Hermione. As both Polixenes and Leontes suggest in their speech, Hermione is a disruption to their “innocent” relationship, which is indicative of patriarchal culture. Leontes shows signs of his paranoia such as a stubbornness in wanting Polixenes to stay, taking offense quickly, and being constantly critical and suspicious towards Hermione from early on in the play. He displays a full-blown paranoia, which is apparent both physically and mentally, when Hermione succeeds in persuading
Polixenes to stay, which Leontes had failed. His paranoia leads to a series of horrible events, which involve accusing Hermione of having an affair with Polixenes, the death of his son, the exile of his newborn daughter, and the presumed death of Hermione. After sixteen years of recovering from both physical and mental pains from the past, Hermione returns as a statue and is restored back to life by music. Though it seems as though Hermione has been alive and is pretending to be a statue, the music is influential in its ability to awaken her and encourage her to begin a new life, healing her of her painful past. Leontes, who has also been recovering from his paranoia but still showing potential signs of psychological instability from years of isolation, is also revitalized by the music that awakens Hermione. The music influences him to begin a new love for Hermione, healing the pains of the past for both of them.

Similar to *The Winter's Tale*, music brings back Thaisa to life as the physician prescribes woeful music to cure Thaisa’s woe. Similar to *Pericles*, the doctor in *King Lear* prescribes music, loud music, so that it can help heal Lear as well.

Though Shakespeare utilizes music in various ways and in different situations in his plays, it is important to note these particular moments in *Twelfth*
Night, The Winter’s Tale, Pericles, and King Lear in which music is not simply a means of entertainment, something in the background, or something to flaunt one’s wealth, but can serve as a valuable cure for the mind and body. Shakespeare bridges the gap between music and medicine, conveying that music holds as much therapeutic power as medicine. His positive outlook on the power of music is a message to the audience to recognize and appreciate the influence that music can have on our lives, and even further, allow us to more deeply understand the process of healing.
VII. MUSIC AND MEDICINE IN ACTION

Shakespeare’s positive outlook on the therapeutic value of music persists today, whether in theatrical performance, music performance, film, music therapy, and even in healthcare, though more efforts need to be made to more actively implement the healing power of music in people’s lives in the future.

The connection between music and the human mind and body is profound as seen in Shakespeare’s works, and this connection is made visible and put into action by people today such as the Longwood Symphony Orchestra (LSO). The LSO is a non-profit orchestra founded in 1982 and based in Boston, Massachusetts. The orchestra is entirely composed of medical professionals who have been highly trained in music. The mission of LSO is to “perform concerts of musical diversity and excellence while supporting health related organizations” (LSO program 12/3). Their mission stems from their strong belief in the power of music to heal the human soul and the community. As someone who has attended their concerts and also performed concerts of my own, I have personally experienced the incredible influence that music can have on the audience and community, which I will further elaborate on later. Through their “Healing Art
of Music Program, ” the LSO concerts have been the centerpiece of fundraising events as they have been collaborating with more than 55 nonprofit organizations to raise more than $2,800,000 for underserved communities. Through their “LSO on Call” initiative, members of LSO perform chamber music—music played in small ensembles of two or more people with the quartet (four musicians) being the most common—in hospitals and other healthcare facilities to bring music to patients and put into action the healing power of music. The LSO holds several concerts each year in addition to many other community events and chamber music concerts.

The LSO’s mission to heal the community through music has been inspired by several sources and role models, among which, a source of inspiration is none other than Shakespeare. In one of their 2015 seminars, “Music as Medicine: The impact of healing harmonies,” LSO references Shakespeare twice, acknowledging Shakespeare’s influential perspective on the connection between music and medicine. They mention Orsino’s line from Twelfth Night, “If music be the food of love, play on,” noting the power that music has on human emotion and state of mind. They also refer to an example of a religious application of music, “music of the spheres.” When it comes to healing,
Shakespeare portrays that music is highly influential whether physically, emotionally, mentally, or even religiously.
VIII. A SUPPLEMENTAL REFLECTION ON MUSIC AND MEDICINE

In my own personal life as an avid musician, I have experienced the influential power of music. At each musical event, I personally experienced the power of music as I connected with people, but my most memorable experience was at the Boston Veterans Affairs Hospital.

In hopes of alleviating the gloomy atmosphere in the Boston Veterans Affairs Hospital, I decided to hold concerts in the lobby, playing pieces by Chopin on the piano. Though many of the patients and staff enjoyed my music, I noticed an old man in a wheelchair who still had a deep frown on his face. He was wearing a hat that said “Korea Veteran,” which reminded me of my grandfather who had experienced the Korean War. Wanting to connect with the old man, I worked up the courage to play a traditional Korean song called “Arirang” by memory. Soon after, the old man’s frown slowly transformed into a smile and his eyes became watery as he told me that he loved the song “Arirang” while he served in the Korean War. His son was overjoyed since his father rarely spoke or recalled any past memories due to Alzheimer’s Disease. Even though I’ve been conducting research on Alzheimer’s Disease in a lab, it was not through
science, but through music and communication that I was able to console the man and momentarily revive his memory.

It is moments like these through which I realize that human healing requires so much more than just medical treatment. Given the vast scientific and technological advancements in our world today, we often forget that the core of medicine is human and that our well-being is not only physical, but also mental and emotional. The study of arts and humanities is critical to educating physicians as it allows them to make the most ethical decisions for their patients who are not just bodies, but human beings. It is not that science is not wise, but the humanities and arts can help us apply science wisely.

As Shakespeare conveys through his plays, music holds great therapeutic value, more than most people realize, and understanding this power of music to cure the mind and body can help us improve our methods and approaches to healing.
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