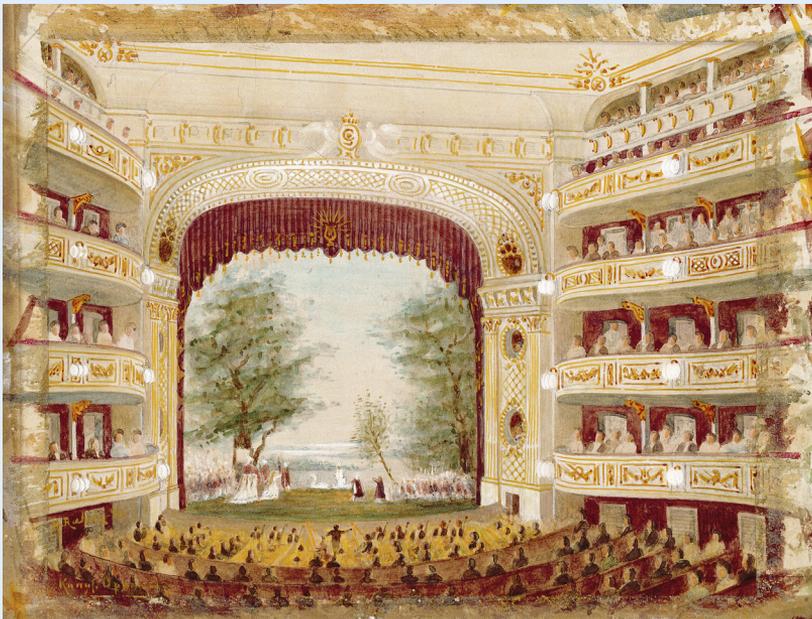


# TRACING OPERATIC PERFORMANCES IN THE LONG NINETEENTH CENTURY

Practices, Performers, Peripheries



*Edited by Anne Kauppala, Ulla-Britta Broman-Kananen  
and Jens Hesselager*



ULLA-BRITTA BROMAN-KANANEN is a university researcher at the Sibelius Academy (University of the Arts Helsinki). In 2010–2013 she worked on the project “The Finnish Opera Company (1873–1879) from a Microhistorical Perspective: Performance Practices, Multiple Narrations and Polyphony of Voice”, and later in “Opera on the Move: Transnational Practices and Touring Artists in the Long 19<sup>th</sup> Century Norden”.

GÖRAN GADEMAN has been since 2006 the dramaturgist and casting coordinator and since 2007 associate professor at the Gothenburg Opera. In his doctoral thesis he studied realism and opera (*Realismen på Operan*, Stockholm University, 1996). His book *Operabögar* (Gay Opera Lovers) appeared in 2004. He also contributed to the *New Swedish Theatre History* (2007). In 2015 Gademan released an international opera history, *Operahistoria* (in Swedish).

ELLEN KAROLINE GJERVAN is an associate professor at Queen Maud University College in Trondheim. She received her PhD in Theatre Studies at the University of Bergen in 2010. The chapter in this collection was written as a part of the research project “Performing arts between dilettantism and professionalism: Music, theatre and dance in the Norwegian public sphere 1770–1850” ([www.ntnu.no/parts/](http://www.ntnu.no/parts/)). She has published also on Henrik Ibsen’s theatrical career, on dramaturgy, and on political theatre and the stagecraft of the long eighteenth century.

JENS HESSELAGER is Associate Professor at Section of Musicology, University of Copenhagen. His research focusses primarily on questions pertaining to music theatre and theatre music in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, including dialogue opera, grand opera, vaudeville, melodrama and incidental music. Within this field, a special interest attaches to transnational aspects: mobility (translation, transformation, reconfiguration) of repertoires, genres, practices and values; inter-urban migration of musicians and singers; relations between cultural centres and peripheries.

ANNE KAUPPALA is a professor of Music Performance Research at the Sibelius Academy (University of the Arts Helsinki). Her research interests are opera and musical semiotics. She has directed two research projects on opera: “The Finnish Opera Company (1873–1879) from a Microhistorical Perspective: Performance Practices, Multiple Narrations and Polyphony of Voice” (2010–2013) and “Opera on the Move: Transnational Practices and Touring Artists in the Long 19<sup>th</sup> Century Norden” (2013–2017). She has co-edited with Owe Ander, Ulla-Britta Broman-Kananen and Jens Hesselager *Opera on the Move in the Nordic Countries during the Long 19<sup>th</sup> Century* (2012).

HANNELE KETOMÄKI received her Doctor of Music degree from the Sibelius Academy in 2012. Her study examines Oskar Merikanto's national ideals and his activities in the music festivals by the Finnish Kansanvalistusseura. She is the manager of Academic Development at the Sibelius Academy (University of the Arts Helsinki).

HILARY PORISS is Associate Dean of Academic and Faculty Affairs, and Associate Professor of Music in the College of Arts, Media and Design at Northeastern University. Her research interests include the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Italian and French opera performance culture and aesthetics. She has authored *Changing the Score: Arias, Prima Donnas, and the Authority of Performance* (2009) and co-edited *Fashions and Legacies of Nineteenth-Century Italian Opera* (2010) and *The Arts of the Prima Donna in the Long Nineteenth Century* (2012). She publishes in *19<sup>th</sup>-Century Music*, *Cambridge Opera Journal*, *Nineteenth-Century Music Review*, *Verdi Forum*, *Journal of British Studies*, *Music & Letters*.

CLAIR ROWDEN is Senior Lecturer and Deputy Head of School in the School of Music, Cardiff University. Her book *Republican Morality and Catholic Tradition at the Opera: Massenet’s Hérodiade and Thaïs* appeared in 2004 and the edited volume *Performing Salome, Revealing Stories* in 2013. She has published on opera and nineteenth-century France in *La Revue de musicologie*, *Cambridge Opera Journal*, *Music in Art*, and *Franco-British Studies*, and regularly contributes to the *Cahiers de l’Esplanade* and writes programme notes for Covent Garden, Wexford Festival Opera and the Salzburg Festival. She has co-edited *Musical Theatre in Europe, 1830–1945* (2017).

RANDI M. SELVIK is professor emerita of musicology of the Department of Music, the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) in Trondheim. She administrated the research project “Performing arts between dilettantism and professionalism: Music, theatre and dance in the Norwegian public sphere 1770–1850” (2012–2016). Her publications deal with musical life in Bergen in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. She is co-editor of the anthology *Lidenskap og levebrød: Utøvende kunst i endring rundt 1800* (2015) and has co-written *Solkongens opera: Den franske tragédie en musique 1673–86* (2015) and contributed to *Harmonien i fire satser: Bergen Filharmoniske Orkester 1765–2015* (2015).

GÖRAN TEGNÉR studied art history and archaeology at Stockholm University. He was a curator at the Museum of National Antiquities in Stockholm for 35 years, his principal field being medieval art. He was a member of the Schola Gregoriana Holmiae (1986–1992) and the Lidingö Chamber Choir (2001–2011). Since his retirement in 2005, Tegnér has devoted himself to the music culture of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, with a focus on Sweden.

*Tracing Operatic Performances in the Long Nineteenth Century:  
Practices, Performers, Peripheries*



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On the cover: Hugo Rahm's watercolor (20.5 x 25cm) from 1892 showing a scene from *Lohengrin* as well as the audience and orchestra in Gustav III's Opera House (Stockholm), demolished in 1892. Scenkonstmuseet (Swedish Museum of Performing Arts), KI396.

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# Introduction

ANNE KAUPPALA, ULLA-BRITTA BROMAN-KANANEN  
AND JENS HESSELAGER

Opera history as well as history in general faces major challenges today. The certainty that the “truth” of history (a buried reality) is hidden in the sources, dependent only upon the historian’s ability to evaluate critically their origin and worth, has turned into a profound insecurity about the possibility of attaining truth at all. Certainty has dissolved into discourses, fragmentary narratives and postmodern constructions.<sup>1</sup> The critical edge points to all kinds of grand narratives about the Nation, Great Men, European civilisation or even eternal progress in the name of Enlightenment with the result that the historiographer’s task has changed into deconstructing grand narratives and uncovering a tendentious plot behind them.

The shift away from a traditional view of history as an objective and neutral science rests on insight into the nature of language: rather than being an innocent mirror of reality, language is the very creator of this reality. This and other realisations have had profound effects on the understanding of history as a science. Basic questions about whether there even is a past somewhere, ready for the historian to “find” and articulate, are being raised.<sup>2</sup> Where the history of opera is concerned, the question of performance itself is being posed in new ways, with the potential of questioning anew what practices, performers and places should be considered worthy of the historian’s attention.

The paradigmatic turns have thus contributed to discussions about the historian’s awareness of chosen perspectives and approaches as well as the kind of narrative he or she is producing. However, since the

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1 See, for instance, Evans 2008.

2 Winberg 2010, 330–348; White 1973; de Certeau 1984; Ricoeur 2004; see also Pikkanen 2012.

first wave of critiques, alternative approaches to the writing of history have been elaborated, such as micro-history,<sup>3</sup> cultural transfer,<sup>4</sup> performance studies, transnationalism, mobility studies<sup>5</sup> and *histoire croisée*.<sup>6</sup> Common features of these approaches are the new perspectives they offer and the heightened awareness of how historians make interpretations, an awareness that provokes a self-reflective way of doing research. For opera history, the new approaches have resulted in a growing interest in a variety of topics and methods, which now seem to replace a previously rather exclusive interest in opera as a decontextualised musical work.<sup>7</sup>

Mary Ann Smart claims that performance studies as an event-centred approach “takes seriously the exchange between performer and audience in a specific place and time, regarding with suspicion the idea of the work – the fixed, notated texts that carry the expectation of being executed the same way time after time, following the directives of a controlling author.”<sup>8</sup> This view seems to require not only new methodologies, which acknowledge opera performances as events, but also an awareness of the specific milieu in which an opera is staged. This in turn calls for a shift in perspective from an observer’s point of view to the viewpoint of the participant, the audience, the performer and other crucial agents. This anthology, *Tracing Operatic Performances in the Long Nineteenth Century: Practices, Performers, Peripheries*, is inspired by such calls for reorientation.<sup>9</sup>

3 Levi 2001, 79–119; Ginzburg 2013; Peltonen 2013, 157–178.

4 Espagne 1999; Espagne 2013, 36–53; Fauser and Everist 2009.

5 Clavin 2005, 421–439; Middell, Aulinas and Roura i Aulinas 2013; Greenblatt 2009.

6 Werner and Zimmermann 2006, 30–50; Marjanen 2009; 239–263.

7 Burke (2001, 2) recognizes a similar tendency in historiography in general. The history of science, once so clear-cut, has exploded into new branches, each of which has sub-branches.

8 Smart 2004, 312.

9 The chapters in this collection grew out of an international conference, “Traces of Performance: Opera, Music Theatre, and Theatre Music in the Long 19th Century” (Sibelius Academy, Helsinki, 11–13 December 2013), organised by the project entitled The Finnish Opera Company (1873–79) from a Micro-historical Perspective: Performance Practices, Multiple Narrations, and Polyphony of Voices (Academy of Finland), the project Opera on the Move (NOS-HS), and the University of the Arts Helsinki (Sibelius Academy/DocMus). This anthology is also an outcome of the research project “Opera on the Move: Transnational Practices and Touring Artists in the Long 19th Century

Live musical performances are often considered radically ephemeral actions. Such actions are physical, to be sure, yet simultaneously strangely immaterial, vanishing into thin air as soon as the piece is over. Often a musical performance will be an organised, staged event, one that begins at a fixed time, announced well in advance. But this fixed temporality does not make the moment of performance any less fleeting or intangible. Rather a performance emphatically seems to belong to that exact, fixed time, the moment at which it actually occurred, and not to posterity. In other words, past musical performances are perceived to be, in their innermost essence, inaccessible to historians in the present. You needed to have been there.

Nevertheless, musical performances do leave traces behind, perhaps more than we may realise, which is why performances of the past also belong to subsequent generations.<sup>10</sup> Performances leave mental traces behind, of course, but also material traces, for instance annotated scores and libretti, *mise-en-scènes* or photographs. There are also traces that fall somewhere in between those categories, including thoughts fixed on paper, written testimonies whether published or not, reviews, recollections, comments in letters, parodies and more.<sup>11</sup> And even though there is very little audio material on opera performances before the beginning of the twentieth century, the importance of voice in opera culture cannot be dismissed. It is the human voice as a sonorous phenomenon that enchants the audience in a performance. Moreover, at an individual level, singers' careers depend on their vocal competence. In our visually-orientated culture with its emphasis on written texts it is all the more challenging to find in the empirical material traces left by voices that are now forever silenced (Poriss; Broman-Kananen; Gademan).

Obviously, opera performances of the past cannot be conjured up in the present. Yet this does not mean that scholars today should consider

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Norden" (NOS-HS, ref. 220112).

10 Schneider 2012, 75–76.

11 On traces (and their destruction) in historiography, see particularly Ricoeur 2006, 166–180, 414–443.

once lively performance traditions to be completely inaccessible and closed to researchers and performers. The temporal distance poses a challenge for the study of historical operatic performances. We can approach operatic performances of the past only with a restricted view, as depicted on the cover of this book, and moreover, without any direct access to their once lively presence in which the sonorous dimension – music – was a central factor. In some fortunate cases, opera houses have preserved abundant historical materials, *mise-en-scènes*, libretti, scores and parts (sometimes with performance markings), as well as the costume and scenery designs used in creating a performance (Gademan; Gjervan; Selvik). Sometimes by a stroke of luck, a visiting opera troupe has even left behind a gold mine of musical materials (Tegnér). Yet more often information needs to be parsed from small details found in private correspondence, newspaper reviews, photographs and memoirs with little help from preserved theatre documents. For an historian the process and outcomes of preserving historical materials are signs of their cultural value. Obviously, well-established theatres with faith in their continued activity into the future took great care to keep materials for future use (Gademan), whereas in more unstable performance venues, it was not so much systematic archiving, but pure luck that accounts for what remains (Broman-Kananen).

In the present collection the performance stages are mostly situated in the Nordic countries with two exceptions, which centre on Paris (Poriss; Rowden). The stages are of various kinds, ranging from those in well-established opera houses in Paris (Rowden), Copenhagen (Gjervan; Selvik) and Stockholm (Gademan; Tegnér) to a more temporary venue for opera (Ketomäki). Opera performances are often not only about art, music and voices, but also about politics; they are nourished by political agendas, and in the nineteenth century the central political issue in Europe was nationalism. Performing opera in the native language of an audience and drawing libretto topics from nationally significant story reserves contributed to the cultural construction of nationhood and national identities in various places. This is reflected in the chapters in the anthology's second part (Broman-Kananen; Gjervan; Ketomäki; Selvik), none of which, however, lose sight of what

is central to this collection: performance. All chapters draw attention to exceptional individuals and opera professionals, mostly singers, without whom there would not have been any performances.

The historiography of performance is still in need of further methodological development and of recognising the potential for expanding its empirical territory further into the “dark ages” before the invention of film and gramophone. Each of the chapters in this volume seeks in its own way to contribute to this development.

The anthology is indebted to the archives that have preserved historical materials and the archivists who have helped us in finding resources. Special thanks go to Patrik Aaltonen and Sanna Jylhä (Svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland), Helena Iggander (Kungliga Operans arkiv), Marina Demina (Musik- och teaterbiblioteket), Marianne Seid (Musik- och teaterbibliotekets arkiv), Sofia Skoglund (Scenkonstmuseet), and Petri Tuovinen (Kansalliskirjasto). Among so many others who have helped in shaping this volume we would like to thank the peer reviewers for their contribution in improving the chapters and especially Glenda Goss for her untiring help in revising the language of the chapters.

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I

ON STAGE



# Pauline Viardot, on rivalry

HILARY PORISS

## Introduction

On Tuesday, 9 May 1848, Pauline Viardot (1820–1921) made her long-anticipated debut to an overflowing audience at the Royal Italian Theatre, Covent Garden, as Amina in Bellini’s *La sonnambula*. Among the various and varied operatic debuts that she had over the course of her career, this one ranked among the most legendary, as raked over by biographers as were her first performances in St Petersburg in 1843 and her initial appearances as Fidès in Meyerbeer’s *Le Prophète* (16 April 1849), Gounod’s *Sapho* (16 April 1851) and Gluck’s *Orphée* (18 November 1859). Distinguishing her Covent Garden debut from these others was the fact that she began the evening a nervous wreck, trembling visibly onstage, singing nearly inaudibly and causing the audience to wonder whether her artistic powers had abandoned her. Over the course of the production, however, Viardot gradually regained her poise and by the end, the audience applauded her wildly, demanding an encore of Amina’s final aria, “Ah! non giunge.” *Fraser’s Magazine* summarised the evening concisely:

Madame Viardot’s first night was extraordinary, – verging, for nearly two acts of *La sonnambula*, on failure, and then in the last act exhibiting a great reputation, saved as if from fire.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Fraser’s Magazine* 8/1848, 230–231. Here and elsewhere throughout this article, I have benefitted from Patrick Waddington’s “A Chronology of the Life of Pauline Viardot-Garcia (1821–1910)”. This unpublished work, over 800 pages in manuscript, documents Viardot’s life and career on a daily basis, including references to hundreds of contemporary reviews. I am deeply indebted to him for allowing me to consult this “Chronology”.

What might account for Viardot's momentary crisis of confidence? This was not her first experience in London, after all, having appeared in concert there as well as in operatic performances at Her Majesty's Theatre as early as 1839, nor was she unaccustomed to performing for audiences filled with luminaries, as this one was.<sup>2</sup>

What might have tipped Viardot over the edge on this occasion was the particularly intense accumulation of rivalries and comparisons that swarmed around the performance. Among the most intimidating was the near simultaneous appearance at Her Majesty's Theatre of Jenny Lind (1820–1887), the world-renowned soprano who, in 1848, was far more beloved than Viardot. Only a few days prior, Lind had performed the role of Amina to enormous acclaim. Viardot did herself no favours, in other words, by courting direct comparison with this popular contemporary. To make matters worse, Mario (1810–1883), the mid-century tenor who was supposed to sing Elvino to Viardot's Amina, announced only a few hours prior to curtain that he was ill and would not be able to fulfil his obligations. Most critics at the time and hence have assumed that he faked a cough and cold at the behest of his lover, the beautiful soprano Giulia Grisi (1811–1869), whose desire to retain her own supremacy at Covent Garden was well known. Whether or not Grisi was to blame, Mario's absence was unquestionably effective: the role of Elvino went instead to the deficient Spanish singer, Marquis Bernardo-Calvo de Puig, alias Flavio, whose poor acting and singing managed to throw Viardot off her game. Perhaps intending to make her even more uncomfortable, moreover, Grisi and a second prima donna, Marietta Alboni (1826–1894), attended the performance, both visible to the stage in their boxes. Lastly, a final rival figure hovered close by, as she did frequently throughout Viardot's career: her older sister and the legendary prima donna Maria Malibran (1808–1836) with whom Viardot was frequently equated. Even though Malibran had passed away over a decade earlier,

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2 Her first appearance on the London operatic stage was on 9 May 1839 at Her Majesty's Theatre as Desdemona in Rossini's *Otello*. According to the *Illustrated London News*, the performance was attended by "a great assemblage of Royalty, rank, fashion, and artistic celebrities" (*Illustrated London News* 13 May 1848, p. 312).

her memory lingered in London where she had once performed the role of Amina, as well as many others, to rapturous acclaim. On the occasion of Viardot's debut, therefore, comparisons were inevitable. J.W. Davison of *The Times*, for example, made this observation:

The great drawback for Madame Viardot lies in the fact that she forcibly recalls her late sister, the unrivalled Malibran, without being exactly Malibran, and the comparison suggested is too often unfavourable.<sup>3</sup>

It is little wonder that Viardot was nervous. Tales of diva comparisons (both negative as well as positive) and rivalries are by no means new, of course. Viardot's near-disastrous evening at Covent Garden is indicative of the types of pressures that women of the stage have faced – and still do face – on a regular basis. As Susan Rutherford and Suzanne Aspden have explored, however, stories of rivalries between star singers of the past are rarely conveyed in unmediated form. Instead, they are frequently enhanced and even manufactured by critics and historians determined to exaggerate negative personality traits and convey to readers lessons of the “self-aggrandizing diva.”<sup>4</sup> The case of Grisi and Mario's alleged attempt to sabotage Viardot's debut at Covent Garden serves as a fine example. The “facts” of Grisi's jealousy and her manipulation of Mario had been reported by the Reverend John E. Cox and Henry F. Chorley, both of whom published their accounts years after Viardot's debut at Covent Garden. Rumours of Grisi's malfeasance in this instance subsequently wove their way into future writings without further question or investigation.<sup>5</sup> As Tom Kaufman has illustrated by consulting media reports written at the time, however, Mario might have genuinely been ill on the evening of 9 May, rendering him

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3 “Royal Italian Opera,” *The Times* 10 May 1848 (p. 5 col. g).

4 Quotation from Aspden 2006, 302; see also Rutherford 2006.

5 Cox 1872 and Chorley 1862, rpt. 1926. Cox and Chorley's reviews are cited, often verbatim, in Rosenthal 1958, 76–78, 82, 90–91 and 98. This information comes from Kaufman 1997, 7.

and Grisi blameless for his absence.<sup>6</sup> In fact, Kaufman concludes that while most accounts of the Grisi-Viarot rivalry place blame squarely on Grisi's shoulders, claiming that she was threatened by Viardot's superior artistry, the catalyst for their bitterness was just as likely grounded in Viardot's "frustration at being unable to break into Grisi's core repertory in London and Paris early in her career."<sup>7</sup>

The nature of diva rivalry, in other words, is complex and stories of antagonism are often shrouded in misinformation. This situation arises, in part, from a lack of sources that speak directly to diva jealousies. In the case of Pauline Viardot, for example, the biographical literature contains some evidence regarding the competitive spirit in which she engaged with a few of her contemporaries. However, while it is clear that she was often the object of envy, these overviews of her life provide only a few examples of her exhibiting unpleasant emotions towards her peers.<sup>8</sup> She frequently emerges, in other words, as too high-minded – too *good* – to harbour ill will.

The new availability of a collection of Viardot's archival materials housed at the Houghton Library, Harvard University, however, opens windows onto her personal feelings towards some of the musicians with whom she worked, not all of which were uniformly positive. This archive, previously owned by Joan Sutherland and Richard Bonyngé, more than doubles the Houghton's already plentiful holdings of Viardot documents, including hundreds of her musical manuscripts (songs – some hitherto unknown, cadenzas and pedagogical materials), costume designs, journals and, most relevant for this study, letters both to and from the singer.<sup>9</sup> Collectively, these materials leave behind traces of

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6 Kaufman 1997, 7–10.

7 Ibid., 21.

8 See, for instance, FitzLyon 1964, Kendall-Davies 2003, and Steen 2007.

9 The complete catalogue of Viardot holdings at Houghton, both older and more recently acquired, are listed here: [http://oasis.lib.harvard.edu/oasis/deliver/deepLink?\\_collection=oasis&uniqueId=hou01978](http://oasis.lib.harvard.edu/oasis/deliver/deepLink?_collection=oasis&uniqueId=hou01978). When Pauline Viardot died, most of her papers, as well as those of her longtime companion Ivan Turgenev, went to her two younger daughters Claudie and Marianne, and from them to their daughters. Claudie's were Jeanne Decugis and Marcelle Maupoil; Marianne's daughter was Suzanne Beaulieu. From there, these

this performer in particular and of nineteenth-century diva culture in general that will continue to yield new findings for years to come. In this essay, I dip into this new collection in order to explore one simple question: how did Viardot negotiate feelings of rivalry and comparison over the course of her career?

Viardot wrote candidly about many musicians in at least two types of documents: letters to her husband, Louis Viardot, and the memoir that she began but neither completed nor published, her “Souvenirs”. In each case, I provide only a partial glimpse of what these documents have to offer, but in doing so I hope to broaden the biographical picture of this diva, focusing on issues of comparison and rivalry and the ways in which they manifested themselves within the private thoughts of one of the nineteenth century’s most important musical and cultural figures.

#### Pauline’s Letters to Louis Viardot

Pauline Garcia married Louis Viardot on 18 April 1840, a few months shy of her nineteenth birthday. Twenty-one years her senior, he has often been depicted as too old and stodgy for the artistic firebrand, someone she could love but with whom she would never find herself truly *in love*.<sup>10</sup> One of Viardot’s biographers, April FitzLyon, for instance, commented that

[f]or a woman the presence of the man whom she does not love is often more intolerable than the absence of the man she loves. Louis Viardot’s

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three collections of Viardot materials had very different destinies. The letters to her husband Louis Viardot (1800–1883) were by no means hidden from Viardot and Turgenev scholars. André Mazon, Gustave Dulong, Thérèse Marix-Spire, April FitzLyon, Alexandre Zviguilsky, Patrick Waddington and Nicholas Zekulin obtained partial or full access, and as a result, a few important excerpts have made their way into books and articles. In the mid to late 1980s, however, after a considerable portion of the letters was purchased by Bonyng and Sutherland, only limited access to the collection was given. I owe an enormous debt of gratitude to Patrick Waddington, who has generously shared his knowledge of the history of this collection with me.

10 For a summary of the manner in which biographers have written about Viardot and Louis, as well as her close relationship with Ivan Turgenev, see Everist 2001–2002, 174–175.

very unhappiness was a reproach to her, and his love must have been unbearable.<sup>11</sup>

Notwithstanding this and other dire pronouncements about their relationship, Pauline and Louis were married for over forty years, and while she might have downplayed the bond she shared with him in the midst of various flirtations, the letters she wrote while they were apart reveal a deeper picture of a relationship in which she clearly relied on him as her closest confidant.

The new Viardot collection contains over fifty letters from Pauline to Louis.<sup>12</sup> Unfortunately, his responses are not preserved here, and relatively few of his letters to his wife are known. Therefore, her missives represent a one-way conversation, albeit a vivid one. Viardot penned these letters between 1841 and 1861 from a variety of locations, including Moscow and St Petersburg where she toured in 1853, and Warsaw and various German cities in 1857–1858. Some of the letters mark singular moments when the couple was apart, mostly during the latter part of her career. The earliest letter, however, was written during Viardot's second professional trip to England on 11 May 1841.<sup>13</sup> Louis had accompanied her for most of this journey, which began in February, but he returned to France for ten days on business in May. Since the couple had been married a little over a year, this may be one

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11 FitzLyon 1964, 199.

12 The shelf number for the letters is MS Mus 264 (76). Viardot's devotion to writing is well known, and many of her letters have been published in part or in full. See, for instance, Sonneck, ed. 1915, 350–80, 526–59 and 1916, 32–60; Marix-Spire 1959; Friang 2008. Since Viardot had hundreds of correspondents who lived throughout Europe and beyond, the full extent and reach of her missives is still not fully understood. Patrick Waddington has compiled a database of most of Viardot's known letters, which includes full transcriptions and introductions providing detailed context for each autograph. These missives are located in archives throughout the world. Both the scope and significance of Waddington's work cannot be exaggerated.

13 Viardot's first trip to London was in the spring of 1839. See FitzLyon 1964, 62–68. During this second trip, in 1841, she performed at Her Majesty's Theatre; her first appearance was as Camilla in Cimarosa's *Gli Orazi ed i Curiazi* on 11 March 1841. Other roles included Rossini's Cenerentola, Tancredi, Arsace (*Semiramide*) and Desdemona (*Otello*), as well as Cimarosa's Fidalma (*Il matrimonio segreto*). She also made a number of concert appearances.

of the first letters, if not the first, that Pauline ever wrote to him. It is also the only communication to Louis in the Houghton collection that records a time before they had children.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, she herself was still something of a child – just a few months shy of twenty – and she opens this missive with a touchingly youthful gesture of empathy towards her new husband, an imaginary account of his travels back to France (see also Figure 1):<sup>15</sup>

My poor friend, what a rough crossing you had and you suffered so much! My heart told me so. I spent all day and evening on Saturday in a terrible anxiety, and I didn't close my eyes all night – I only started to calm down on Sunday around midday, when I said to myself: “whatever type of crossing he has had, whatever delays he had to go through, he has arrived.[”] Finally, praise God, you are now fully recovered from your suffering, and without a doubt, probably already out and about – only, don't push yourself too much I beg you! It's better to stay another day in Paris than it is to expose yourself to being sick due to exhaustion and bowel irritation.<sup>16</sup>

She notes that she too had been physically unwell, referring to a cough that she contracted while he was still in London, but she remarks with some pluck that her voice “will *definitely have to be* back at its

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14 The Viardots had four children: Louise-Marie-Pauline Héritte (1841–1918), Claudie-Pauline-Marie Chamerot (1852–1914), Maria-Anne-Félicité (Marianne) Duvernoy (1854–1919) and Paul-Louis-Joachim Viardot (1857–1941).

15 All transcriptions and translations are my own. I have transcribed Viardot's writings exactly as she penned them, including her mistakes. I have left her small errors (missing accents, omitted hyphens and incorrect punctuation) unmarked; the larger errors (such as spelling mistakes) are noted with a *sic*. The English translations attempt to echo the original as closely as possible.

16 Houghton Library, Harvard, MS Mus 264 (76), 11 May 1841: “Comment, mon pauvre ami, tu as fait une si mauvaise traversée, et tu as tant souffert ! le coeur me le disait. J'ai été toute la journée et la soirée du samedi dans une inquiétude affreuse, et je n'ai pas fermé l'œil de toute la nuit – je n'ai commencé à me calmer que le Dimanche vers midi, quand je me disais : ‘quelque traversée qu'il ait eu, quelque retard qu'il ait éprouvé, il est arrivé.’] Enfin, Dieu soit loué, te voilà bien remis de tes souffrances, et sans doute déjà en courses – seulement ne te fatigue pas trop, je t'en prie ! il vaut mieux rester un jour de plus à Paris, que de t'exposer à être malade par suite d'épuisement et d'irritation d'entrailles.”

London 11 mai 1841

Comment, mon pauvre ami, tu as fait  
 une si mauvaise traversée, et tu as tant  
 souffert! Le cœur me le disait. J'ai été  
 toute la journée et la soirée de Samedi dans  
 une inquiétude affreuse, et je n'ai pu dormir  
 d'œil de toute la nuit - je n'ai commencé à  
 me calmer que le Dimanche vers midi,  
 quand je me disais: "quelque traversée qu'il ait  
 eu, quelque retard qu'il ait éprouvé, il est arrivé  
 enfin, Dieu soit loué, tu voilà bien remis  
 de tes souffrances, et sans doute déjà un  
 Courtes - seulement ne te fatigue pas trop,  
 je t'en prie! il vaut mieux rester un jour  
 de plus à Paris, que de t'exposer à être  
 malade par suite d'épuisement et d'irritation  
 d'entrailles - Quant à moi, nous nous portons  
 parfaitement, excepté quand je tousser fort -  
 alors j'éprouve ces vilaines douleurs que tu sais  
 heureusement elles ne vont pour ainsi dire que  
 momentanément, sans cela elles me feraient souffrir  
 horriblement. Ce suit un peu mieux envoie

Figure 1. Pauline Viardot to Louis Viardot, London, 11 May 1841, p. 1 MS Mus 264 (76), folder 2, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

post tomorrow, standing guard from morning to night, from Madame Caradori's concert until that of Lord Burghersh."<sup>17</sup> Viardot refers here to two professional obligations that she was scheduled to fulfil on 12 May. The first was a grand morning concert given at Her Majesty's Theatre for the benefit of Maria Caradori Allan (1800–1865); the second was an evening event, the sixth of a series of Ancient Concerts directed by Lord Burghersh (1784–1859).<sup>18</sup> Viardot's participation in the first of these events opens an interesting window on her time in London and her interactions with a potential rival.

The soprano Maria Caradori Allan had a unique association with Viardot and her family, for she was the last singer to appear on stage with Maria Malibran. The story of Malibran's death is well known: following a brutal fall from a horse in July 1836, she refused to rest or curtail any of her scheduled performances despite having sustained significant internal injuries. Her final appearance took place in a concert in Manchester, England, and the last piece she sang was the duet "Vanne se alberghi in petto" from Mercadante's opera *Andronico*. Her partner was none other than Caradori Allan. According to Sir George Smart who conducted the performance, Malibran was caught off guard when Caradori Allan improvised a set of ornaments that they had not rehearsed, forcing Malibran to do the same, a stressful competition in front of a live audience. When the spectators demanded an encore, Malibran, past the point of utter exhaustion, opted to perform again rather than rest. It is possible that this contest was staged and that Malibran and Caradori Allan were merely feigning their ornamental rivalry. Regardless, at the conclusion of the encore, Malibran fainted

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17 Houghton Library, Harvard, MS Mus 264 (76), 11 May 1841: "...il *faudra bien* qu'elle soit au poste demain et qu'elle monte la garde du matin au soir, depuis le concert de Mme Caradori, jusqu'à celui de Lord Burghersh."

18 Lord Burghersh, an amateur composer and founder of the Royal Academy of Music, frequently hosted concerts such as the one Viardot describes in this letter. For information on Lord Burghersh, see Garlington 2006, especially 20–27. At this concert, Viardot sang three numbers: the aria "Se cerca, se dice" from Pergolesi's *L'Olimpiade*, the aria "Verdi prati" from Handel's *Alcina* and the duet (with Grisi) "Prenderò quel brunettino" from Mozart's *Così fan tutte*. For a full programme of this concert and a list of the participants, see *Morning Post* 13 May 1841, p. 5.

and was carried offstage, never again to regain full consciousness. She died a few days later in her hotel room.<sup>19</sup>

Given this emotionally charged history and the role that Caradori Allan played during Malibran's final moments, it is fascinating to learn that Viardot contributed willingly, and probably without pay, to this benefit concert. Foremost, her appearance indicates that neither Viardot nor other members of the Garcia clan held Caradori Allan to account for Malibran's untimely demise. Indeed, accompanying Viardot on this trip to London was her mother, Joaquina Garcia (1780–1864). It is highly unlikely that the family matriarch would have allowed Pauline to participate in Caradori Allan's benefit had there been any question of guilt. More interestingly, the choice to perform "Vanne se alberghi in petto" must be interpreted as a deliberate attempt to resurrect Malibran via direct comparison with the voice of her younger sister. The gesture is as macabre as it is compelling, appealing as it would have to a group of spectators for whom the memory of Malibran's death was still fresh and whose beloved voice still resonated throughout London's halls. Indeed, this was not the first time during the season that Viardot had courted comparison with her sister. Only a few days earlier, on 6 May 1841, she did the same as Fidalma in Cimarosa's *Il matrimonio segreto*. As John E. Cox recounted,

[t]hose who remembered Malibran's "make up" for that character were startled by the appearance of the sister upon her entrance upon the scene, and not a few of the oldest *habitués* exclaimed, loudly enough to be heard almost everywhere throughout the house, "Why, what does this mean? It cannot be Malibran."<sup>20</sup>

Comparisons, in other words, could sometimes be useful, enhancing ticket sales as well as Viardot's own reputation. Her casual reference to Caradori Allan in the letter of 11 May stands in stark contrast to the

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19 For a contemporary description of Malibran's final performance, see the first-hand account by Sir George Smart in Cox and Cox (eds.) 1907, 282–283. See also Castle 2012.

20 Cox 1872, vol. 2, 111.

spiteful comments that she made in the same letter about a second musician, the pianist and composer Franz Liszt (1811–1886). The backdrop was a dinner party she attended on 10 May at the home of the conductor Julius Benedict whose guests also included the conductor Michael Costa and the bass Luigi Lablache as well as Liszt. Viardot and Liszt were old friends, having met many years earlier when she studied piano with him following the death of her second piano teacher, Charles Meysenberg.<sup>21</sup> She and Liszt remained close throughout their lives, a friendship that ended only when he passed away.<sup>22</sup> Their relationship had become strained in 1841, however, because Viardot's close friend, George Sand, and Liszt's mistress, Marie d'Agoult (1805–1876), disliked each other intensely, an animosity that rendered interactions between Viardot and Liszt awkward.<sup>23</sup> Owing, perhaps, to this underlying tension, she penned the following to Louis:

We had dinner on Sunday at Benedict's house in the company of Costa, father Lablache, and Liszt. The latter did nothing but spout nonsense for *six hours, six long hours!* Here is one example among others that comes to mind and that I have to tell you: "*a man*" he says "*is not a man if he takes back one word, one single word in his entire life, even if he were a hundred times wrong – a man must never admit to being wrong, neither in actions nor in words. He loses honour the moment that he asks forgiveness.*" What do you think? Isn't this a kind of monstrosity? There you have it, word for word, a sample of the one-sided and monotonous conversation by

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- 21 Both the cause of Meysenberg's death and the precise date are unknown, although his passing occurred around 1829, when he was approximately forty-five years old. Viardot's first piano lessons occurred in Mexico City where she lived with her parents for approximately two years between 1826 and 1828. Her teacher there was Marcos Vega, the organist of the Catedral de la Asunción de María.
- 22 A memento of their long friendship is found in a journal that Viardot kept and that is now housed in Houghton's collection. This document contains eighteen pages of handwritten text in which she recounted a few events that occurred during the 1880s, including a short, yet touching reminiscence of her final encounters with Liszt in 1886. The Houghton Library, Pauline Viardot-García Collection, MS Mus 264 (366).
- 23 FitzLyon 1964, 99–101. Dulong (1987, 51, especially nt 41) also mentions the strain between the two friends, citing a portion of the 11 May letter. For information on the friendship between Viardot and Sand, see Marix-Spire 1959.

that person – you can't imagine the pain that it caused me – everyone's nerves were on edge from listening and *seeing* him talk. Lablache was suffocating, Costa was muttering Neapolitan curses, and making horns at him – it would have been very amusing if it hadn't been [so] painful.<sup>24</sup>

Why does Viardot evince such strong disappointment in Liszt, a man with whom she shared a lifelong friendship and on whom she once had a schoolgirl crush? It is possible that she exaggerated her negative feelings in an attempt to prevent Louis from growing jealous, a technique that biographers have argued Liszt himself employed when he described the evening to Marie d'Agoult.<sup>25</sup> It is just as likely, however, that the disdain Viardot described in this letter was genuine, that she really thought he was acting like a bore. This is Viardot uncensored, in other words, a side of her personality that emerges more often in missives to her husband than to others.

The inclination to pull no punches with Louis is even more pronounced in comments she made about many of the singers with whom she came into contact over the course of her travels. In a letter from September 1860, written in the midst of a tour through the United Kingdom that also included soprano Grisi and Mario, for instance, Viardot records this impression of another one of her co-stars, the soprano Josepha Gassier (1821–1866):

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24 Houghton Library, Harvard, MS Mus 264 (76), 11 May 1841: "Nous avons diné dimanche chez Benedict en compagnie de Costa, du père Lablache et de Liszt. Ce dernier n'a fait que débiter des sottises pendant *six heures*, six *grandes* heures ! en voici une, entr'autres qui me revient à l'esprit et qu'il faut que je te dise, c'est : '*un homme*' dit il '*n'en est pas un, s'il retraite un mot, une parole de sa vie, eut il cent fois tort – un homme ne doit jamais venir de n'avoir pas raison, de faits et de paroles. il perd l'honneur du moment qu'il demande pardon.*' Que t'en semble ? n'est [ce] pas une espèce de monstruosité ? voilà mot à mot un spécimen de la *conversation monologue et monotone* de cet être là – tu ne peux te figurer la peine que cela m'a faite – tout le monde avait mal aux *nerfs* de l'entendre et le *voir* parler. Lablache étouffait, Costa marmottait des imprécations Napolitaines, et lui faisait les cornes – c'eut été très plaisant, si ce n'eut été pénible." I must extend my gratitude to Kimberly Brown, who helped polish the translation of this passage.

25 See Liszt's letter to d'Agoult, 10 May 1841, Ollivier (ed.) 1933, 134. In this letter, Liszt does not mention his monologue, but he does inform d'Agoult that he spoke with Viardot about Sand, warning his friend about Sand's "love of intrigue and gossip and [her] deplorable lack of sincerity." See FitzLyon 1964, 101–102.

Madame Gassier is a spoiled child of the first magnitude. Everything she says, everything she does, and I'll even bet everything she thinks *stinks* of prima donna assolutissima. Nothing is good enough, nothing is beautiful enough for her – she is always sacrificed, etc. She is always complaining on top of everything else – I think that [the impresario Willert] Beale is fed up with her – and that he would pay a big tip to whoever would take her off his hands – .<sup>26</sup>

Later in the letter, her criticism becomes even more withering: “Madame Gassier is cold and stupid on stage.”<sup>27</sup> Viardot's honesty serves as a refreshing counterbalance to much biographical writing depicting her as almost uniformly angelic.

Nowhere is this ambiguity between “good” and “bad” more pronounced than in an outburst regarding one of her most important contemporaries and competitors, Jenny Lind. As noted at the opening of this chapter, Lind and Viardot came into contact with one another in London in 1848 when they both performed the role of Bellini's Amina at competing venues. Despite the awkwardness that this overlap must have generated, there is little evidence that the two divas bore one another ill will. In fact, in a letter to her friend Amalia Wichmann written in December 1847, Lind alluded to potential tensions but dismissed them quickly, adding that she was looking forward to seeing Viardot over the summer:

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26 Houghton Library, Harvard, MS Mus 264 (76), 18 September 1860: “Mme Gassier est un enfant gâté de prima sfera. Tout ce qu'elle dit, tout ce qu'elle fait, et je parie même tout ce qu'elle pense *pue* la prima donna assolutissima. Rien n'est assez bien, ni assez beau pour elle – elle est toujours sacrifiée etc. Elle est très plaignarde avec cela – Je crois que Beale en a par dessus la tête – et qu'il donnerait un fameux pourboire à celui qui l'en débarrasserait –”.

27 Houghton Library, Harvard, MS Mus 264 (76), 18 September 1860: “Mme Gassier est froide et bête en scène.” Viardot's animosity might have stemmed from the fact that Gassier, having recently returned from a successful tour through the United States, was capturing top billing in some of the provincial newspapers advertising the concert tour. See, for instance, the announcements published in *Leamington Spa Courier* 18 August 1860, p. 2, and *Birmingham Post* 29 August 1860, p. 1. Earlier, moreover, Gassier had achieved enormous success as Rosina in Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (one of Viardot's signature roles) at the Théâtre-Italien, Paris. See *Le Ménestrel* 15 October 1854, p. 1, and 17 December 1854, p. 3.

Give my warm greetings to Viardot. Tell her that I have never doubted that she is a splendid and magnificent woman, and that it never occurred to me to compare her with the vast majority of ordinary artists, that is, with most of the women singers of today. I am delighted that we shall see each other in London.<sup>28</sup>

A few months later, moreover, also in a letter to Wichmann, Lind alluded to a subpar performance on Viardot's part: "Well, our friend Pauline Viardot did not do too well with the opera."<sup>29</sup> Lind, in other words, gave voice to minor complaints, but nothing that would indicate serious animosity between the two prima donnas. It is surprising, therefore, to read a very different assessment by Viardot, albeit written many years later, in a letter to Louis from Berlin dated 31 January 1858. Here, she unleashed a tirade of a wholly different magnitude against her rival, as well as against her older brother Manuel Garcia, *fls*, Lind's vocal teacher:

Manuel is happy with his Lind and his never-ending comparison with her career. He imagines that I could do in England what she has done there, and it seems to me that he is strangely deceiving himself. For this to happen, my career would have had to have been built on Piles of *Puff* – and nothing is further from the truth. I never had to be pushed when I felt like going somewhere [...] I have never tried to convert anyone. I was not afraid to get married first, I never wanted to be considered a saint, and therefore I have never deceived anyone. While it is true that I never made 100 £ donations to hospitals, I do not despise mankind – I try to make myself useful to a few people without the accompaniment of trumpets and fanfares, and I try to make myself loved a little, all of this silently and without any show. I rarely read the Bible – I am not humbled by pride – in a word, I don't do a lot of things that she does, and I do a lot of things that she doesn't, what the heck! Everyone pur-

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28 Lind 1966, 55.

29 *Ibid.*, 59. Letter to Amalia Wichmann from London, 21 June 1848.

sues their work in their own way – the work that Jenny Lind does outside of her art is neither within the means nor the tastes of everyone.<sup>30</sup>

This passage is notable for the manner in which Viardot articulates the distance between herself and her rival, a chasm that she digs using a carefully selected collection of dichotomies: Lind carries herself as a saint and therefore she deceives, Viardot does not; Lind attempted to convert others to Christianity, Viardot was not interested in spreading the faith; Lind waited to get married, Viardot made the leap when she was only eighteen; and so on.

One of the most interesting features of this excerpt is that Viardot's complaints are grounded almost entirely in the personal. Despite the fact that Lind was still a major competitor in 1858, she had already retired from the operatic stage, rendering her less threatening on a professional level. National and religious differences might have also helped stoke a sense of rivalry. Although both singers' origins and backgrounds were complex and the customary French/English and Catholic/Protestant dichotomy did not literally apply, Lind's status as an honorary Englishwoman who was well regarded by the royal family and Viardot's strong French alliances were undoubtedly responsible for some fraction of this animosity. There is more than a touch of defensiveness sprinkled throughout Viardot's description, moreover, no doubt heightened by the fact that her brother, the famous vocal ped-

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30 Houghton Library, Harvard, MS Mus 264 (76), 31 January 1858: "Manuel est bon avec sa Lind et son éternelle comparaison avec sa carrière. Il s'imagine que je pourrais faire en Angleterre ce qu'elle y a fait, et il me semble qu'il s'abuse étrangement – Pour cela il faudrait que ma carrière à moi eut été bâtie sur Pilotis de *Puff* – et rien n'y ressemble moins. Je ne me suis jamais fait prier quand j'ai eu envie d'aller quelque part [...] je n'ai jamais essayé de convertir personne, je n'ai pas eu peur de me marier tout d'abord, je n'ai jamais voulu passer pour une sainte, aussi je n'ai trompé personne. Il est vrai que je n'ai jamais donné des 100 £ à des hôpitaux – je ne méprise pas l'humanité – je tâche de me rendre utile à quelques personnes sans accompagnat de trompettes et de fanfares, et de me faire aimer un peu, tout silencieusement et sans démonstrations. Je lis peu la bible – je ne suis pas humble par orgueil – enfin je ne fais pas des tas de choses qu'elle fait, et j'en fais qu'elle ne fait pas que Diable ! Chacun son métier – Le métier que fait Jenny Lind en dehors de son art, n'est pas dans les moyens ni dans les goûts de tout le monde." This excerpt has been quoted previously, although until now, it has been mistaken as having originated in a letter that Viardot wrote to her mother. (See Dulong 1987, 77.)

agogue, was an unwavering supporter and teacher of Lind.<sup>31</sup> That he wanted his sister to emulate Lind, rather than the other way around, must have generated no small amount of tension at the family table.<sup>32</sup>

Despite depicting herself as a sort of anti-saint, there is no mistaking that Viardot also adopted a tone in this letter that is distinctly holier-than-thou. She dismissed Lind's career as having been built on "Piles of *Puff*," for instance, a reference to the adulatory newspaper and periodical articles that rained down on Lind throughout her career, but Viardot was not entirely sheltered from such praise, and she could not have been displeased when puff pieces came her way.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, her reference to charitable work is intriguing, for it provides rare insight into a contemporary's impressions of Lind's famous philanthropic gestures. Although her giving undoubtedly stemmed from a genuine sense of duty towards the poor and infirm, there can be no question that her efforts were also the product of carefully constructed publicity stunts geared to raising her to a saintly status in the eyes of an adoring public. Viardot refers subtly to this possibility in her letter, but she becomes disingenuous when she characterises herself as miserly in contrast, claiming that she "never made 100 £ donations to hospitals." Louis himself must have recognised his wife's insincerity, in part because he helped coordinate their finances, but also because in a letter she had sent to him from Warsaw only a few weeks earlier on 9 January 1858, Viardot admits to a charitable act that would have rivalled any that Lind herself had committed. Describing a concert in which she had performed the previous evening, Viardot first commented on how graciously the women of Polish high society had acted towards her, and then she wrote the following:

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31 Garcia's most important pedagogical accomplishment was the publication of his *Traité complet de l'art du chant* 1840 and 1847. For a compelling perspective on his influence as a teacher, see Bloch 2007, 11–31.

32 I must extend my gratitude to George Biddlecombe and Patrick Waddington, whose thoughts on this passage have helped frame this discussion of Lind.

33 Perhaps the best-known and most highly influential "puff pieces" about Viardot were written by two of her close acquaintances at the earliest stage of her singing career: de Musset (1839, 110–116) and Sand (1840, 580–590).

I took advantage of this fine moment, when the ladies were overwhelming me with kindness, in order to make a small collection to benefit a poor young woman who found herself in profound misery with a dead husband and five small children on her hands. This little collection, made in my little home, produced 63 silver roubles! It's nice, isn't it? I'll bring it to my poor victim tomorrow – it's a surprise that she is certainly not expecting [...]<sup>34</sup>

Ultimately, Viardot's character sketch of Lind, as well as her descriptions of other singers compels one to question how easy it was for her to have liked *any* of her fellow performers. To what extent does Viardot's antipathy indicate a sense of mutual suspicion that permeated the world of all singers during the nineteenth century and how far does this suspicion extend? Although this question might appear nebulous and ultimately unanswerable, it is worth raising because Viardot's letters provide unique descriptions of what life was like on the road for a nineteenth-century prima donna, setting a backdrop against which to ponder this issue and the implications that such nascent animosity might have had for the opera industry in general.<sup>35</sup> Similarly useful in addressing this issue, albeit from a more sedentary perspective, is Viardot's unfinished and unpublished memoir.

#### Viardot's "Souvenirs"

My first memory. A very well-lit salon, many ladies and gentlemen lined up, seated in tight rows – a large, lit chandelier. Under the chandelier, a table; on that table, a small child's chair – on that small chair, a little girl. A play is being performed in a puppet theatre. The characters, at

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34 Houghton Library, Harvard, MS Mus 264 (76), 9 January 1858: "J'ai profité d'un bon moment où ces dames m'accablaient de douceurs pour faire une petite collecte en faveur d'une pauvre jeune femme qui se trouvait dans une profonde misère avec un mari mourant et 5 petits enfants sur les bras. Cette petite quête, faite dans mon petit foyer a produit 63 roubles argent ! C'est joli, n'est ce pas ? je vais les porter dès demain à ma pauvre protégée – C'est une surprise à laquelle elle ne s'attend certainement pas [...]."

35 In Poriss 2015, I speak at greater length about the letters that Viardot wrote to Louis during her trip to Warsaw in 1857–58 and in particular about her life on the road.

least those who make them move, are singing quartets intermingled with dialogue. The artists are: Manuel Garcia *père*, Manuel Garcia *fil*s, Madame Garcia and my sister Maria Félicité Garcia. I am the heroine of the party. I perfectly remember that in the first row of spectators in front of me, one could see heads of the Dukes of Wellington and Cambridge. I was 4 years old.<sup>36</sup>

Thus opens Viardot's memoir. She began writing this official story of her life as an older woman, in December 1879, and continued to work on it at least until 1884. Viardot also kept private diaries, but this project was different—an autobiographical account that she intended to make public. Unfortunately, she never completed her “Souvenirs” and it was not published, but the unfinished document is revealing nevertheless. Over the course of ninety-three, neatly handwritten pages, Viardot initiated what was clearly meant to be a measured history of her whole career beginning with her earliest childhood memories. In it, she deals with painful moments from her past, including the deaths of her father and of Maria Malibran, and she recalled a variety of pleasant vignettes about people who were important to her such as Clara and Robert Schumann, members of the Mendelssohn family and the bass Luigi Lablache. Viardot cut off this reconstruction of her life at a frustratingly early moment in her career: following a discussion of the 1843–44 season when she made her victorious debut in St Petersburg, Russia, she stopped writing. This incomplete autobiography, in other words, covers only a small portion of her life, an uneven story that captures too little and ends too soon.

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36 Houghton Library, Harvard, MS Mus 264 (365). “Mon premier souvenir. Un salon très éclairée, beaucoup de dames et de messieurs, assis en rangs d’oignons presses – un grand lustre allumé. Sous le lustre une table sur cette table, une petite chaise d’enfants – dans cette petite chaise, une petite fille. On joue une pièce sur un théâtre de mario-nettes [sic]. Les personnages, du moins ceux qui les font mouvoir, chantent des quatuors entremelés au dialogue. Les artistes sont : Manuel Garcia père, Manuel Garcia fils, M<sup>me</sup> Garcia et ma sœur Maria Félicité Garcia. L’héroïne de la fête c’est moi. Je me souviens parfaitement qu’au 1er rang du spectateur devant moi [offset : se voyaient], des têtes des Ducs de Wellington et de Cambridge. J’avais 4 ans.” Viardot’s “Souvenirs” is located in a notebook that consists of two parts: in the first, she kept a journal on and off between 1863 and 1878; the second contains her “Souvenirs”.

Nevertheless, Viardot's "Souvenirs" is significant, for not only does it reveal some new details of her life, it also sheds light on her feelings towards a few of her contemporaries. For the purpose of this exploration, I would like to unpack only one passage of the "Souvenirs", the final section where Viardot penned an impressionistic description of the German soprano Henrietta Sontag (1806–1854). In it, one finds a multilayered discussion of a singer who was once closely associated with Maria Malibran and whose influence was clearly felt by Viardot. Tinges of rivalry and strokes of comparison are scattered throughout the discussion, although not all are negative.

Sontag achieved her greatest fame throughout Europe in the 1820s, but she retired prematurely in 1830 because her husband's rank and position in the Sardinian diplomatic service did not permit his wife to appear on the public stage.<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless, she maintained her vocal health throughout retirement, performing in private affairs and practising consistently enough that she was able to return to the stage in 1849 when it became financially necessary for her to do so. According to Viardot's memoir, she encountered Sontag in Berlin in the later part of 1843 when they spent a leisurely afternoon together talking and singing.<sup>38</sup> The five-paragraph description of Sontag, which occasionally reads like an encyclopedia entry, begins with an assessment of her reputation and voice:

The most famous singer, and rightly so, of which Germany can boast. She could be compared in every way to Mme Damoreau. Same type of voice, light soprano [*petit soprano*]. Nice voice but without strength – same precise intonation, same perfection down to the smallest details.

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37 For more on Sontag, see Russell 1964.

38 In the "Souvenirs", Viardot incorrectly dates this meeting as having occurred during the 1841–42 season. This was not the first time the two prima donnas had met. In 1838, when Sontag was on her way to St Petersburg and Viardot (still Pauline Garcia) was on tour in Germany, they performed a duet together in Frankfurt, most likely at a private gathering. According to Ellen Creathorne Clayton, "[p]robably Henrietta recalled the days of her glorious rivalry with the dead sister of Pauline, when they had walked on flowers to receive the ovations offered by Paris and London" (Clayton 1863, 404).

Mme Sontag had, in addition, German “Schwämerei,” that is to say a certain poetic reverie that came over her face as soon as she sang – she could be pathetic at times, never dramatic – and it seems to me that Madame Damoreau could be neither one nor the other.<sup>39</sup>

Although this description is largely complimentary, there are a few turns of phrase that are not entirely kind. While granting Sontag her fame (albeit solely in the context of German singers), and commenting on her “nice voice” and “precise intonation,” for instance, Viardot nevertheless leaves the vague impression that her subject may not have been entirely first-rate. She accomplishes this directly, informing the reader that Sontag was an un-dramatic performer and that her voice lacked strength, as well as indirectly, couching a hint of sarcasm in her comment about poetic reverie overcoming Sontag’s facial expressions. Significantly, moreover, the entire description is predicated on a comparison between Sontag and a second important prima donna, soprano Laure Cinti-Damoreau (1801–1863), whose career flourished in the 1830s. Sontag comes out ahead, but what is interesting is not who wins or loses; it is that Viardot felt compelled to introduce a competition into a context that could just as easily have done without. Her impulse to compare these divas came naturally, a standard manner of thinking and writing about prima donnas that emerged from a world in which singers were continually being held up to (and often against) one another. Just as Viardot was often compared to her predecessors and contemporaries in the press, so too did she adopt this rhetorical technique when describing others in her own writing.

Significantly, the person with whom Sontag was most frequently compared during the early part of her career was none other than

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39 “Souvenirs” (Houghton Library, Harvard Library, MS Mus 264 [365], p. 91). “La plus célèbre cantatrice, et à juste titre, dont l’Allemagne puisse s’enorgueillir. On pourrait la comparer en tous points à Mme Damoreau. Même genre de voix, petit soprano. Voix sympathique mais sans force – même justesse d’intonation, même perfection jusque dans les moindres détails. Mme Sontag avait en plus la ‘Schwämerei’ allemande, c’est-à-dire une certaine rêverie poétique [sic] qui s’emparait de sa physionomie dès qu’elle chantait – elle pouvait être pathétique par moments, dramatique jamais – et il me semble que Mme Damoreau ne pouvait être ni l’un ni l’autre.”

Maria Malibran. Their encounters in Paris in the 1820s began as highly rancorous. According to Ellen Creathorne Clayton, “The rivalry between Malibran and Sontag [...] reached such a height that they would not even meet in the same salon; the partisans of each, as it always happens, contributed to give to this rivalry an aspect of vindictiveness, and on the stage, when they sang in the same opera, their jealousy was scarcely disguised.”<sup>40</sup> In May 1828, however, when Sontag and Malibran were both in London, they were persuaded to perform duets together and, “the effect of the fusion of the two voices, so different in tone, character, and expression, was so fine, that a complete triumph sealed their reconciliation.”<sup>41</sup> From then on, they shared the stage in numerous operas and concerts, their performances of bel canto duets enrapturing spectators throughout Paris and London.<sup>42</sup>

In Viardot’s next paragraph, Sontag’s former relationship with Malibran takes on a special significance:

Together we sang all of the duets that she had sung so often with Maria – and she was continually surprised by the resemblance between my voice and my sister’s, and by our perfect ensemble in those duets even though we had never rehearsed them. I believe that in the andantes she sang the changes and the cadenzas that Maria had taught her, just like Mme Grisi, who had passed them on to me! Ah, but [...] very musical and imaginative, she [Malibran] constantly varied her vocal lines, while Mme Sontag would perform at the end of her life the same way that she had been taught at her debut.<sup>43</sup>

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40 Clayton 1863, 306.

41 Ibid., 307.

42 See Davies 2012, 123–146.

43 “Souvenirs” (Houghton Library, Harvard Library, MS Mus 264 [365], p. 92). “Nous avons chanté ensemble tous les duos qu’elle avait tant chantés avec Maria – et elle [était] toujours étonnée de la ressemblance de ma voix avec celle de ma sœur, et de l’ensemble parfait de ces duos que nous n’avions pourtant jamais répété[s]. Je le crois, elle faisait dans les andantes les changements et les points d’orgue que Maria lui avait enseignés, tout comme Mme Grisi, qui me les avait repassés ! Ah par exemple [...] très musicienne et avec de l’imagination, elle variait sans cesse ses traits, tandis que Mme Sontag faisait à la fin de sa vie les traits qu’on lui avait appris à ses débuts.”

This anecdote is touching as well as reminiscent of Viardot's earlier appearance with Caradori Allan. In both instances, Viardot sang in place of her departed sister, resurrecting her memory by performing Malibran's repertory with her former partners. Tucked into this passage, moreover, is a fascinating clue regarding nineteenth-century diva culture: that Malibran taught Sontag certain ornaments and cadenzas and that Grisi did the same for Viardot indicates that the line between rivalry and pedagogy may have been frequently blurred. While it should come as no surprise that these women learned much from one another, tales of their rivalries are so prevalent that accounts of collaborations have largely been hidden from view. Nevertheless, Viardot's reference to this sort of cooperation quickly morphs once again into a vaguely aspersive sentiment: Malibran, able to creatively alter her ornaments and cadenzas, emerges as superior to Sontag who, Viardot projects, will continue to sing the same alterations to her dying days.

Viardot continues this mixed discourse in her next two paragraphs, weaving together both positive and negative impressions of Sontag:

She was a beautiful woman, blonde, with big beautiful sentimental eyes, a little nose, a little mouth with which she smirked very pleasantly, friendly, benevolent to young artists, she loved them less and less as they grew in talent and success. Such is the *old rat* always nibbling at the heart of artists!

She went regularly to my performances – and just as regularly she would have some sort of *soirée*, which forced her to leave her loge at the moment of the final aria of *Sonnambula* or of the Barbier (Variations from *Cenerentola*).<sup>44</sup>

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44 "Souvenirs" (Houghton Library, Harvard Library, MS Mus 264 [365], pp. 92-93). "Elle était jolie femme, blonde, avec de grands beaux yeux sentimentaux [*sic*], un petit nez[,] une petite bouche avec laquelle elle minaudait fort agréablement[,] aimable, bienveillante pour les jeunes artistes, elle les aimait de moins en moins à mesure qu'ils grandissaient en talent et en succès. Ça, c'est toujours le *vieux rat* qui grignotte [*sic*] le cœur des artistes !

Elle suivait mes représentations régulièrement – et assez régulièrement aussi, elle avait quelque soirée qui l'obligeait à quitter sa loge au moment de l'air final de la *Sonnambula*, ou du Barbier. (Var : de *Cenerentola*.)"

What began as a straightforward description of Sontag's famous good looks modulates, via the diva's mouth, to a generalised statement regarding artistic patronage and jealousy, camaraderie and rivalry, all mingling conspicuously close. According to Viardot, Sontag possessed a Janus-faced personality that emerged most perceptibly in her interactions with young talent. She could be supportive of fledgling artists, but only up to a point—once they began to exhibit gifts that approached her own, niceties would cease. Viardot implies that she, too, experienced Sontag's reprisals, noting that the senior diva would absent herself from the theatre as soon as Viardot's moment to shine at the end of *La Sonnambula* or during the lesson scene in the second act of the *Il barbiere di Siviglia* arrived.

This recollection is fascinating in light of an event that occurred a few years following Viardot and Sontag's meeting in St Petersburg, on 12 July 1849. On this evening, Sontag, who had been in semi-retirement for nineteen years, made her comeback appearance at Her Majesty's Theatre, London. The opera was Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia* and she starred in the role of Rosina. According to press reports, Viardot imitated Sontag's own actions, attending the performance, but leaving midway through the first act, right after Rosina's cavatina, "Una voce poco fa." Whether or not she exited in full view of Sontag, drawing attention to herself, is unknown. What is certain, however, is that Viardot went next to Covent Garden where another important contemporary and rival, Giulia Grisi, was performing in Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots*. It was reported that Grisi "seemed to gather new strength and fire from the fact that Pauline Garcia had arrived in London."<sup>45</sup> On this particular evening in July, in other words, Viardot reversed the tables on her contemporaries – instead of Sontag walking out on her, she walked out on Sontag; instead of Grisi sitting nearby as she did on that fateful night in 1848 when Viardot made her debut at Covent Garden, this time it was Viardot who sat close to Grisi. The meaning of these gestures might have been grounded in rivalry, but they just as easily could have

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<sup>45</sup> Waddington "Chronology," 232. *Musical World* 14 July 1849, p. 433, and 21 July 1849, p. 451; *Examiner* 14 July 1849, p. 438.

been borne in a burst of generosity – one performer doing her best to support two of her most important colleagues on an evening when they happened to be competing against one another. There might be no better illustration of the fluidity with which sentiments such as rivalry were likely felt by Viardot and her contemporaries, a powerful emotion at times and absent at others.

Viardot concludes her assessment of Sontag with a paragraph that is out of character with everything that preceded it, veering into an unfriendly description of Sontag's husband:

Count Rossi, the Italian ambassador to Berlin, was one of the most unpleasant men in the world – false air, sickly sweet, handsome infatuated old man and all too banal. I would not be surprised if there were some truth to the rumours that circulated at the time of the sudden death of his wife. Suddenly dead in Mexico, around the same time as a young tenor with whom she sang at the theatre, they say it was because of iced drinks ... (by Count Rossi) they would add in hushed tones.<sup>46</sup>

In one fell swoop, Viardot depicts Rossi as possessing a highly unpleasant personality, implies that Sontag had an affair with a young tenor, and accuses Rossi of poisoning both his wife and her alleged lover. The fact that Viardot does not mention the cause of Sontag's death as reported by every newspaper and journal at the time (cholera) is odd. She allowed gossip and slander to overtake this brief discussion of her elder rival, and then, just as suddenly as she began, she cut it off. Abruptly and inexplicably, Viardot ceased working not just on this description of Sontag, but also on the memoir itself. What should have been a minor section in the book becomes its final gesture, leaving

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46 "Souvenirs" (Houghton Library, Harvard Library, MS Mus 264 [365], p. 93). "Le Cte Rossi, ministre d'Italie à Berlin, était l'homme du monde le plus désagréable – l'air faux, doucereux, vieux beau fat et tout ce qu'il y a de plus banal. Je ne serais pas étonnée qu'il y eut du vrai dans les bruits qui ont couru lors de la mort subite de sa femme. Morte subitement au Mexique, presque en même temps qu'un jeune ténor avec qui elle chantait au Théâtre[,] on a dit que c'était par suite de boissons glacées ... (par le Comte Rossi) ajoutait-on tout bas."

the reader stranded, deprived of a complete discussion of Viardot's career as singer, composer and teacher. It also leaves the reader with the distinct impression that her feelings towards Sontag were far more adversarial than sympathetic.

Why did Viardot terminate her memoir at this moment? Maybe she became distracted by other activities; maybe the act of recording her life stopped interesting her; or maybe a combination of these and other reasons compelled her to set the document aside. Ultimately, the question of why she stopped is unanswerable, although in this context, it is instructive to speculate on one other possible factor: perhaps Viardot's decision to stop writing had something to do with the nature of her description of Sontag. Maybe Viardot looked over what she had written and was struck by the mixture of disdain and nostalgia with which she described her sister's former rival, a singer whose return to the stage in 1849 meant that she became a direct competitor as well. Perhaps Viardot recognised a side of herself that she viewed as vaguely unpleasant, and more importantly, maybe she saw that this passage exposed a facet of her character that she felt was better left hidden from potential readers. Not moving forward with this memoir, in other words, might have represented an attempt to distance herself from a sense of rivalry and to make amends with the diva competitors of her past. Perhaps she decided it best to rewrite history by leaving this particular history unwritten.

As Pauline Viardot's letters and memoirs illustrate, Franz Liszt, Josepha Gassier, Jenny Lind, Giulia Grisi, Henriette Sontag and a host of others crowded Viardot's thoughts during her career and thereafter, her relationship with each occasionally contentious, sometimes loving, never uncomplicated. There is, perhaps, no better demonstration of the difficult nature of rivalry and comparison than Viardot's relationship with her departed sister. As demonstrated at various moments throughout this chapter, Malibran, who died when Viardot was only fifteen years old, remained a continuous presence. Comparisons between the two sisters saturated the initial stages of Viardot's career, and although they tapered off as the younger sister developed her own unique reputation, they never ceased entirely. Viardot actively courted

this association at the beginning of her career, moreover, and in an interview with the musician Reynaldo Hahn that occurred toward the end of her life – in 1901 or 1902 – she still spoke about her voice in reference to Malibran’s. In particular, she pointed out that Malibran’s voice was deeper than her own and that a pair of notes in her sister’s middle register gave her an enormous amount of trouble. Viardot later attempted to overcome this difficulty in her own voice, for as Hahn wrote, “Viardot still remembers studying these two notes stubbornly and exclaiming ‘Malditas notas!’”<sup>47</sup> There is no doubt that these comparisons and attempts to overcome her sister’s legacy were borne of rivalry, but they were also rooted in admiration and adulation. Indeed, as this example and the others provided above illustrate, prima donna rivalries were by no means cut-and-dried. Rather, their relationships were often an intricate mix of distaste and admiration, distrust and loyalty. In most cases, it is inaccurate to assume that one diva was more pure of heart than another – in most cases, the situation lay somewhere in between.

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<sup>47</sup> Hahn 1933, 7: “Mme Viardot se la rappelle encore étudiant ces deux notes obstinément et s’écriant: ‘Malditas notas!’”

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# Parodying opera in Paris: *Tannhäuser* on the popular stage, 1861

CLAIR ROWDEN

Annegret Fauser's close reading of the Parisian press cabal after the disastrous premiere of Wagner's *Tannhäuser* at the Paris Opéra in March 1861 invites us to take the Parisian critics seriously instead of dismissing their opinions as incompetent, spiteful or reactionary.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, many critics went to great pains to express their concerns about the future of opera, its institutional context and its musical and poetic languages. Fauser argues, as I have argued elsewhere in relation to the Parisian premiere of Richard Strauss's *Salome* in 1907,<sup>2</sup> that this artistic event acted as a prism that turned the spotlight onto deep-seated anxiety about the nature of French opera, and that what was intrinsically a debate about internal aesthetic conflict was then couched in terms of national difference. But of course, written press criticism is not the only form of reception document left to us: my recent work has been dealing with all manner of parodical treatment in the reception of artworks, most notably caricature and later, actual cartoons of whole operas.

Parisian caricatures of Wagner's works have been studied in some detail, not least by John Grand-Carteret, in his early and seminal volume *Richard Wagner en caricatures*.<sup>3</sup> Grand-Carteret defines three stages of parodical reception of Wagner's works, the first in the early

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1 Fauser 2009, 232.

2 Rowden 2011.

3 Grand-Carteret 1892.

1860s, which does not reflect the later preoccupations with symbolism or Prussian militarism. The early parodical reception was more concerned with Wagner's early prose writings, the supposed soporific nature of a long Wagner opera and rather good-humoured scoffing at Wagner's "Germaness" in his manner, language and dress.

Wagner gave three concerts of his music at the Théâtre-Italien in January and February 1860 prior to the long rehearsal period for the Parisian premiere of *Tannhäuser* in March 1861. During this stay in Paris, Wagner made one tactical mistake after another, gambling away any goodwill that might have accrued to the controversial "musician of the future". Dissatisfied with the musical director Louis Dietsch, Wagner tried to impose himself as conductor; he was rude to the musicians and singers and perceived as arrogant by journalists whom he refused to visit. He snubbed the professional claqueurs, but then hastily bought back their services at the last minute.<sup>4</sup> In the wake of the concerts at the Théâtre-Italien, Berlioz helped revive aesthetic debate in *Le Journal des débats* of 9 February, and then in late 1860, three months before the premiere of *Tannhäuser*, Wagner provided further cannon fodder for the critics by publishing another theoretical tract, and this time in French, his *Lettre sur la musique*. But it was the by-now infamous *Zukunftsmusik*, those "three magic words" as they were referred to – *musique de l'avenir* – which pervaded all levels of parodic treatment.

Parodic adaptation of an artwork is a significant cultural phenomenon and one which was prevalent in Paris in the nineteenth century. In this chapter, I attempt to address theatrical parody of Wagner's operas and aesthetic ideas in the wake of the *Tannhäuser* premiere. Hundreds and thousands of ephemeral operatic parodies were performed on the Parisian and regional French stages during the nineteenth century. Hundreds more were performed by Guignol puppet theatres around France, and particularly in important Guignol centres such as Lyon.<sup>5</sup>

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4 Fauser 2009, 239.

5 Guignol theatre was characterised by a stylisation, schematisation and simplification of the original drama, which pared it down to its essential characteristics. See Beauchamp 2006, 205. Many of the Lyon Guignol opera parodies with titles such as *Guignol et Dalila*,

Caricatures and cartoon parodies of opera also abounded in specialist journals and newspapers from the mid-1880s onwards, but I have dealt with some of these in other publications and will not refer to them here.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, Guignol parodies are sidelined in this investigation due to their minimal musical interest. For the purposes of this chapter, I define parody as a parodical show based directly on an original opera, its libretto and/or music or aspects of the libretto or, in the case of the highly politicized Wagner, on aspects of his life, politics and prose works, as well as the French reception of all of these elements.

Perhaps the most famous of staged parodies that followed immediately in the wake of Wagner's 1860 Parisian concerts is the scene from Offenbach's *Le Carnaval des revues*. This was a typical revue spectacle, which generally comprised a large number of scenes, each treating different contemporary issues in a parodical and satirical way. The revues were often produced in December or January as a holiday show which reviewed the topical subjects of the previous year.<sup>7</sup> While they demanded skilful musical and dramaturgical handling in the progression from one scene to another, the scenes were not necessarily linked by subject material in any way. They normally demanded a significant number of actors/singers: two or three characters would likely remain present throughout much of the performance, but many more performers would each take on a number of different roles during the revue, each scene introducing a new character pertinent to the subject being treated. In Offenbach's revue, the character of the "composer of the future" is introduced and put "in dialogue" (inevitably irreconcilable) with Mozart, Grétry, Gluck and Weber. Offenbach also inserted a "Symphonie de l'avenir" in this scene, which showed little knowledge of Wagner's actual music, but rather created a futuristic variation on

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*Guignol et Juliette* or *Guignol Tell* were published in the early twentieth century in collected editions. See Rousset, Chanay, Tardy, Josserand and Avon 1911. These printed versions contain occasional musical cues to simple and popular tunes such as "Au clair de la lune," particularly for "choral finales" at the end of the shows.

6 See Rowden 2009; 2013.

7 For a recent study of the genre of the end of year revue, see Bara, Piana and Yon (eds.), 2015.

a well-known dance tune, “La Quadrille des lanciers”, by means of unusual chromatic melodic turns and harmonic progressions, dissonant harmonies and interrupted phrases with sudden orchestral outbursts. But this work and the way in which the parody operates has been examined by various scholars, which is why I have sidelined it here.<sup>8</sup> And in general, while many of Offenbach’s operettas were indeed parodical of canonical spectacles, they went on to have a canonical reputation themselves. My interest here lies more in the vaudeville and boulevard theatres’ production of more ephemeral and generally aesthetically scorned genres of spectacle that to varying extents parodied an original opera – its dramaturgy, its music, its libretto, its subject material and its conventions – spectacles that dissected all or selected elements of the capital’s notable premieres, and particularly those by Wagner. Discovering and unearthing these spectacles is no easy matter due to a paucity of archival material, but it is precisely their ephemerality that is part of their value in an examination of the social, artistic and cultural context and the economy that gave rise to these spectacles. As reception documents, such ephemera, when placed in dialogue with the original opera, are often instrumental in positioning that opera in the cultural space it occupies.<sup>9</sup> However, all modern theorists of parody agree that it is indeed a process of criticism which transforms, and this transformation, or deformation, creates new meaning. Therefore, these works can also be considered on their own terms. Eugène Ionesco articulated the paradox at the heart of all performance studies when he said that “only the ephemeral is of lasting value”.<sup>10</sup>

Parodical spectacles of opera, therefore, come in all shapes and sizes, from individual scenes in annual revue shows to more thoroughly composed and written “opéra bouffe”, some of which gained canonical status themselves, most notably, Hervé’s *Le petit Faust*, written and performed at the Théâtre des Folies-Dramatiques in April 1869, in the

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8 Willson 2014; Yon 2000; Kracauer 2002; Everist 2009.

9 Rehding 2009, 15.

10 Ionesco 1960, 121.

immediate wake of the Paris Opéra's first production of Gounod's opera in the augmented version with the Walpurgis Night ballet. Authors often worked collaboratively across generations, as well as in a wide range of popular genres.<sup>11</sup> Libretti were often printed, and several have been consulted for this chapter, along with copies of the libretti submitted for censorship<sup>12</sup> and some theatre registers. Yet many of these parodies are lost to the mists of time, figuring merely in press reports, various listings and more recent catalogues, but without leaving behind any archive material such as a printed libretto and/or score. Wagner was perhaps the most parodied of all nineteenth-century opera composers, but Offenbach's works came a close second. The single most often parodied work in Third-Republican Paris was Lecocq's operetta *La Fille de Madame Angot*.<sup>13</sup> Yet from Meyerbeer to Gustave Charpentier, all the successful operas of the nineteenth-century Parisian stages were parodied: indeed a stage parody was a mark of the success of the original work and paid homage to it; failure to spawn a parody (and/or caricature) could be deemed a mark of the failure of the original.<sup>14</sup> Significantly, however, this was not always recognised by authors and composers who either tolerated the phenomenon, found it a downright nuisance or perhaps only derived private pleasure from it, rather than seeing it as a serious indicator of popularity and esteem to boast about. Very few authors and composers made any mention of these works in their correspondence, even if some hearsay can be traced: in reaction to Hervé's *Le petit Faust*, the best (and most sentimental) bits of which were deemed worthy of Gounod himself, Gounod is supposed to have

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11 Cavaignac 2010, 311.

12 Archives nationales, series F18 comprises manuscripts of plays sent to the censors; series F21 contains the censors' reports. See Krakovitch 2003. Manuscripts for only two of the works analysed in this chapter were present in series F18 (*Ya-Mein-Herr*, F<sup>18</sup> 803, and *Il pleut! Il pleut! Bergère*, F<sup>18</sup> 1001).

13 Aron and Espagnon 2009, 23. This repertory is an augmentation of Seymour Travers's seminal catalogue.

14 See the letter from the caricaturist Gill to a peeved Emile Zola of 20 March 1880 where Gill says it was his duty as a caricaturist to parody Zola's work and that he should see it as homage paid, cited in Compère and Dousteysier-Khoze 2008, 18.

“pulled a face” but graciously admitted that musically it was better than the average parody.<sup>15</sup>

Wagner’s operas, of course, shunned historical subjects and realism (as opposed to myth and idealism), which set them largely at odds in the second half of the nineteenth century with the trends in Italian and French opera. Parody of Wagner’s works was a way therefore of reclaiming the subject material, taking it out of the realm of symbolism and German metaphysical obscurantism and putting it back into the world of (French) realism: in some ways, it was the reverse procedure of couching internal aesthetic debate in terms of national difference. In parody, alterity is neutralized and the work is made to conform to or confront French dramatic and lyrical conventions and stereotypes, but the distances and differences encountered are exploited for full comic effect.<sup>16</sup> Despite theories which read parody as a critical, subversive and pedagogical tool,<sup>17</sup> most scholars agree that parody is a self-reflexive genre, a form of inter-art discourse, a type of repetition with critical distance, which mingles filial rejection with respect.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, the parodical spectacles produced in the wake of Wagner’s *Tannhäuser* can actually be read not only as part of a very French method for the probing of French aesthetic and political concerns, but also as a far more accepting voice of the Parisian public and milieu for the work of the German maestro.

But what is left today of these parodic reception documents? Some traces of the most successful ones have found their way into biographies of Wagner and books dealing with his works and their French

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15 Tout-Paris 1908; *Almaviva* 1934.

16 As Timothée Picard has noted in relation to parodic literature inspired by Wagner and his operas – from Jules Laforgue to Henry Céard – mythical Wagnerian characters are confronted with reality, normally to highly comical effect. Picard 2006, 88.

17 For example, Jenny 1982; Gray 2006.

18 Hutcheon 1985, 2, 6. Hutcheon’s text comprises a wide-ranging synthesis of existing literature on parody. In her discussion of the complicated issue of the legitimising authority in parody, she also draws upon what she terms as Harold Bloom’s “psychoanalytical illuminations of parody and imitation” (75) in his monograph *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973).

reception written before 1900 and whose authors were either in attendance at these spectacles or knew them by contemporary renown. For example, Georges Servières in his 1895 account of the *Tannhäuser* premiere makes brief reference to several of these works, and John Grand-Carteret helpfully lists a number of successful parodic spectacles of each of Wagner's works from all around Europe.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, catalogues produced in the twentieth century include many works that were never actually printed.<sup>20</sup> Once you start to scratch the surface and read the contemporary press, you become aware of all sorts of shows, both in Paris and the provinces, that must be dealing parodically in some way or another with Wagner's operas. For the purposes of this chapter, I focus on two relatively accessible, full-blown parodic spectacles, but with reference to other short scenes from revue spectacles, premiered in the immediate wake of Wagner's withdrawal of *Tannhäuser* from the Paris Opéra after its third performance, which continued to be disrupted by adverse audience reactions, not to mention terrible reviews.

## I Parody and Performance Conditions

During the last century, the processes at work in parody have been theorized and explored extensively. In the light of this literature, staged parody can be read not only as a hypertextual process,<sup>21</sup> but also as a hypermedial one. While published literature on intermediality presents a wide range of interdependent definitions, hypermediacy (highlighting of a medium or genre by explicitly evoking its boundaries), intertextuality and a self-conscious reflexivity that displays conventions in performance are recognised components.<sup>22</sup> Operatic parodies thus sit squarely within the definitions of hypermediality, most often presenting no single author or composer, but multiple fragments of plots from

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19 Servières 1895.

20 Travers 1941.

21 Sangsue 1994, 64, based on Genette, *Palimpsestes* (1982).

22 Chapple and Kattenbelt 2006, 11.

a variety of sources.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, the titles of the works are invariably transformations of the original titles and the *péritexte* of the parody – in effect, the paratextual elements of the title – establish the parodic relationship with the readers/spectators and warn them about the content of what they are about to read/see.<sup>24</sup> This has an immediate distancing effect, which continues throughout the parody; language (both musical and textual) is adapted, and a narrator's voice frequently intrudes on the dramatic action when it follows that of the hypotext (the original text). Comedy is then procured through playing with the conventions (dramatic, textual and musical) and the mixing of high and low styles (dramatic, textual and musical).

But what about spectatorship, the audience: how does the parody work for them? In this hypertextual process, parodic communication is satisfied when the audience first recognises, then identifies the hypotext in the hypertext, before measuring the distance/difference between the original and the hypertext.<sup>25</sup> Comedy thus resides in the distance/difference created. When turning opera into parodical spectacle, authors and composers have to fully understand the codes and generic conventions of the hypotext in order to make the hypertext work – there must be an intimate understanding of the original. This remediation, *à la* Bolter and Grusin,<sup>26</sup> this appropriation and refashioning of the techniques, forms and social significance of opera, nevertheless meant that audiences could switch easily from the traditional to the parodic genre, their familiarity with the codes of the former allowing them to easily fulfil the three aspects of spectatorship of parody outlined above.

Pierre Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital as knowledge that equips individuals with a competence in deciphering cultural relations

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23 Chapple 2006, 91.

24 Sangsue 2006, 17–21, referring to Gérard Genette's concept of *péritexte* as developed in *Seuils* (1987).

25 Idt 1972–1973, 147–148.

26 Bolter and Grusin 1999, 65.

and artefacts acquired over a long period of time<sup>27</sup> coincides with theories of reading by Wolfgang Iser and Umberto Eco, which affirm shared interpretative codes between authors and readers. In addition, more modern literature, referring to new media, suggests that “users” remember, activate and supply their own experiences, knowledge, skills, prejudices and backgrounds – all of which are framed and impregnated by socio-cultural discourses.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, it is clear that “successful spectatorship” of parodic spectacle meant a high level of “literacy” with the hypotext, or at least with the genre of the hypotext – in this case, opera – as well as wider artistic, aesthetic and social issues.

Yet as adaptations that create new meaning, opera parodies could also be enjoyed on their own terms. Roberta Montemorra Marvin has argued (after Bakhtin *et al.*) in relation to burlesques of Verdi’s operas in London in the second half of the nineteenth century that the parodical form turns a high art genre into a lowbrow form of entertainment.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, while the Russian formalists are clear that through processes of denunciation and destruction of the hypotext, parody creates a lowbrow genre, this does not necessarily inflect upon the audience which enjoys these spectacles. Parodies act as a form of advertisement, as well as being an opportunistic way of profiting from the success (or renown) of the hypotext; they are criticism in action.<sup>30</sup> They were often produced very quickly after the premiere of the original opera and sometimes ran concurrently, allowing audiences to sample the “real thing” one night and the parody the next.<sup>31</sup>

Although reconstructing the drama and music of these ephemeral shows is difficult, the context of spectatorship in Parisian boulevard theatres in the 1860s can be somewhat elucidated. The theatres in which

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27 Bourdieu 1979.

28 Boenisch 2006, 109, who relies on Crary 1992.

29 Marvin 2003; 2006.

30 Compère and Dousteyssier-Khoze 2008, 12.

31 Sangsue 2004, 84.

they were performed were generally part of the “boulevard bourgeois”,<sup>32</sup> a grouping of theatres with various subcategories of more or less socially exclusive audiences: at theatres such as the Bouffes-Parisiens or the Théâtre de la Gymnase, a rapid renewal of the repertoire to bring in more modest audiences of “quick successes” was likely, whereas at other more exclusive theatres such as the Théâtre de la Porte Saint-Martin, the Théâtre du Vaudeville or the Théâtre des Variétés (especially when occupied by Offenbach and his operettas), more substantial works could remain on the playbill for several months.<sup>33</sup> Some of the shorter revue-type works discussed in this chapter were produced in smaller, popular theatres (650–850 seats), which were licensed to produce only vaudevilles and/or short operettas and pantomimes. Shows were performed every evening, beginning between 7pm and 8pm (matinée performances became common only after 1870),<sup>34</sup> and tickets were generally purchased at the theatre box office in advance or on the day of the performance. Shows ran for a considerable period; François Cavaignac stated that, to be called a success, a vaudeville needed to run for 60–100 performances,<sup>35</sup> although about a month was fairly common. Two (or even three) shorter shows could be given in one evening, and works were generally phased out, i.e. they would be performed less often towards the end of the run until they were taken off the playbill. The lavishness of the production and the existence or size of the orchestra and chorus varied hugely from theatre to theatre; the Variétés, with its long and historic tradition of upper middle-class spectacle, boasted (after 1864) an orchestra of about 25 musicians, a chorus of about 20 singers and a choreographer.<sup>36</sup> The theatre itself often served as an artistic meeting ground for further collaboration, and the foyer of the Théâtre des Folies-Dramatiques in the 1850s and

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32 Charle 2008, 214.

33 Ibid., 215.

34 Yon 2012, 213.

35 Cavaignac 2010, 307.

36 Wild 2012 (1989), 411. Wild lists choreographers (“maîtres de ballet”) for the Théâtre des Variétés but does not mention numbers of resident dancers.

1860s was frequented by many librettists, including those whose works are examined in this chapter, such as Clairville, Lambert Thiboust and Théodore Cogniard.<sup>37</sup>

The production of operatic parodies in the boulevard theatres where lighter entertainment was regularly performed for cheaper ticket prices meant, therefore, a mixed public was in attendance, and a non-operatic public could be drawn to these spectacles, particularly to the shorter, mixed revues where the lampooning of operatic conventions was less an issue than in the longer, more composed shows given in the larger and more prestigious venues. In the latter, audiences no doubt recognised the hypotext, either through having attended the original opera or through the copious amounts of both general and specialised press dedicated to the premiere of a new opera, even if the performance conditions and conventions of the lighter genre were very different from that of the hypotext in terms of scenography, music, singing voices, etc. But there must have been sectors of the audiences who did not have first-hand experience of the hypotext; just as Marvin highlights the diversity of London audiences for operatic burlesques, so Parisian audiences must be seen also as a number of different collections of people of varying socio-economic backgrounds, a number of heterogeneous social bodies. Thus, these parodic spectacles both fed from and fed into the different audiences' operatic literacy; for those with little or no recognition of the hypotext, this was not necessarily their prime function nor the axis along which some of the humour worked. Nevertheless, in the case of Wagner, the parodic transformations of opera traded in controversial contemporary social, cultural and artistic trends and issues, becoming modern, amusing cultural spectacles in their own right.

## II *Panne-Aux-Airs*

The first parody of note hit the boards less than a week after the last performance of *Tannhäuser*: the onomatopoeic pun *Panne-Aux-Airs*, or

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<sup>37</sup> Charle 2008, 176, who cites from Alphonse Lemonnier, *Les Petits mystères de la vie théâtrale, souvenirs d'un homme de théâtre* (Paris: Tresse de Stock, 1895), 126.

“Breakdown in Arias” was given at the Théâtre-Déjazet, a modest and popular theatre of only 850 seats, on 30 March 1861.<sup>38</sup> The text was written by Clairville who was indeed the author of both the main parodies I examine here. Clairville, or Louis François Nicolaïe (1811–1879), was a prolific writer and poet, providing many leading operetta composers – Offenbach, Hervé, Audran, Lecocq, etc. – with skilfully crafted libretti.<sup>39</sup> The original music (now lost, to the best of my knowledge) was provided by [Frédéric] Barbier (1829–1889), a prolific composer of operetta, parodic revue shows, lighter piano repertoire and nearly 300 popular chansons. Scores for such works comprised an intricate inter-textual working of pre-existing musics with small sections of originally composed music to link sections together. *Panne-Aux-Airs* is the story of a pretentious provincial bourgeois, Mr Burck, who adores Wagner’s music. He has heard that the “German maestro” will be passing through town on his way to Paris and has invited him to call on him. His daughter Estelle is in love with a poor local “musician of the present”, but Burck refuses Alcindor’s suit as he thinks only of the “musician of the future”. In this Wagnerian take on the classic vaudeville theme of family and marriage,<sup>40</sup> Alcindor decides to exact revenge on Burck by disguising himself as Wagner, and then presenting himself at Burck’s door with a considerable retinue of fifteen people and fifteen huge trunks containing nothing else but the score of *Panne-Aux-Airs*. As Mrs Burck wonders what she is to do with all the people and packages that have arrived, Burck offers “Wagner” a performance of his opera, with the solo roles to be taken by his family, friends and servants, an orchestra compris-

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38 Kahane and Wild 1983, 154, give the date of the premiere as 29 March 1861. The theatre had been bought in 1859 by the popular actress Virginie Déjazet, who put her son in charge of managing it. The type of repertoire performed was fixed by a licence of 23 April 1861 as “vaudevilles in one, two or three acts and in several tableaux; operettas and spoken pantomimes”. See Wild 2012 (1989), 110.

39 In his biography of Offenbach, Siegfried Kracauer implies that the early parodic revue shows of Clairville (and his collaborators) in the 1840s laid the groundwork for the success of Offenbachian operetta during the Second Empire. Kracauer 2002, 124–125. Charle (2008, 170) affirms that Clairville collaboratively authored over 400 works in various lighter genres.

40 Cavaignac 2010, 311.

ing all the town's musicians in a dilapidated local theatre, all of which assures their presence for at least the next fifteen days! The second tableau opens at the start of the performance, which follows the dramaturgy of Wagner's opera until the Pilgrims' Chorus in Act I, including the role of the shepherd in both the onstage and offstage drama. Then the least contested and most well-loved excerpt from Wagner's work was inserted, the "Romance à l'étoile", Wolfram's traditional Act III aria "O du mein holder Abendstern" or "O douce étoile, feu du Soir" (in French translation), or in this version, sung by Panne-Aux-Airs, "Même à la plus honnête femme". The fifth tableau goes back to the song competition of Act II of *Tannhäuser*, where the hero sings for the hand of Elisabeth, his mounting elation and infringement of moral standards ending in the huge uproar of an ensemble finale, here termed the "scène de la meute" (the pack scene), rather than the "scène de l'émeute" (the riot scene), thus providing the excuse to bring on the performing dogs, an all too common feature of these revue shows. In the end, Burck and Alcindor end up coming to blows at which point Alcindor is unmasked just as the real (yet fictive) Wagner arrives in town: Burck promises Alcindor Estelle's hand if he can catch "Wagner's" coach, which he does, the famous maestro condescending to spend one and three quarter seconds in their company. At this happy conclusion the Pilgrims' March resounds from the *Tannhäuser* overture.

The music and musician of the future epithet is largely emphasized as is cultural difference; the role of Panne-Aux-Airs is directed to be played with a German accent and Alcindor-cum-Wagner is immediately condescending and pretentious, and dressed in a surprising way, his hat, jacket, waistcoat, trousers, boots and watch all eliciting astonishment from the French for being "of the future". Alcindor-cum-Wagner is forward with Estelle, although she insists that she is no "maid of the future", to which "Wagner" responds that he prefers women of the present who are the future of men. All his crass behaviour is excused by Burck by the fact that "he's German". However, this aping of the German composer by a French character immediately creates distance in the criticism of "Germaness": it is not an actual German who is the figure of fun, but a Frenchman portraying a stereotypical German with

whom the French audience are laughing. Moreover, Alcindor-cum-Wagner's first aria, sung to the French patriotic tune "Do not mock the citizen guard" is highly revealing (see Table 1).<sup>41</sup> "Wagner" mocks his own era, but believes his work will find success by 1900 and that he will be immortalized after his death. Yet the central three verses deal less with Wagner's own ego and more with the French press (see Figure 1). Annegret Fauser has even gone as far as to suggest that the self-consciously styled press debate about Wagner's work became performative, the critics auto-validating themselves as arbiters of national taste.<sup>42</sup> Here, Clairville's text takes a clear swipe not only at Parisian audiences, which avidly patronize music hall spectacles (the irony of which is lost on no-one), but also at the critics for being shallow and for confusing public opinion.

Premier tableau, scène VI	First tableau, scene VI
<p>ALCINDOR :</p> <p>Et que m'importe un siècle que je raille, Et qui sera fini dans quarante ans, Non, ce n'est pas pour lui que je travaille, A l'avenir je consacre mon temps.</p> <p>Pour être illustre, il faut savoir attendre; Car l'avenir appartient aux puissants. Ceux qui, demain, n'auront pu me comprendre, Me comprendront, j'espère, en mil neuf cent.</p> <p>Et qu'est-ce donc que le succès vulgaire ? C'est un vain bruit; c'est à peine du vent. Je ne veux pas d'un triomphe éphémère Que je verrais mourir de mon vivant.</p> <p>Voyez comment, dans le monde artistique, Vous acclamez vos chefs-d'œuvre nouveaux. En en faisant plus ou moins la critique, Vous en parlez dans quinze ou vingt journaux.</p>	<p>ALCINDOR:</p> <p>And what do I care for a century which I mock, And which will be over in forty years, No, it's not for now that I strive But to the future that I dedicate my time.</p> <p>To be illustrious, one must know how to wait; For the future belongs to the powerful. Those who, tomorrow, were not able to understand me, will understand me, I hope, in 1900.</p> <p>And what then is vulgar success? It's a worthless sound; it's not even a draught. I do not want a fleeting victory Which I will see die during my lifetime.</p> <p>See how, in the artistic world, You acclaim your new masterpieces. By more or less reviewing them, You talk about them in fifteen or twenty papers.</p>

41 "Ne raillez pas la garde citoyenne", traditional air.

42 Fauser 2009, 240.

Pendant huit jours, les juges de la scène Parlent beaucoup sans rien approfondir; Et le public quelquefois sait à peine S'il doit siffler ou s'il doit applaudir.	For a week, the judges of the stage Say a lot without ever going into the matter; And sometimes the public hardly knows Whether they should boo or applaud.
Et ce public qui ne s'amuse guère, Au grand chef-d'œuvre en réputation, Court une fois à l'œuvre littéraire, Et deux cents fois court au <i>Pied de mouton</i> . <sup>43</sup>	And this audience which rarely enjoys itself At a reputed great masterpiece, Goes once to the literary work, And two hundred times to <i>Pied de mouton</i> .
Me croyez-vous assez peu de génie Pour envier un triomphe pareil? Dois-je verser un torrent d'harmonie Qui, dans un jour, peut tarir au soleil?	Do you think I have little enough genius To envy such a victory? Should I pour forth a flood of harmony Which, in one day, will dry out in the sun?
Non, bien plus loin je porte ma bannière, Et je prétends, satisfait de mon sort, De mon vivant, méconnu sur la terre, Etre immortel lorsque je serai mort.	No, I carry my banner much further And I claim, satisfied by my fate, During my lifetime, underrated on earth, To be immortal once I'm dead.
Car je méprise un siècle que je raille, Et qui sera fini dans quarante ans. Non, ce n'est pas pour lui que je travaille, A l'avenir je consacre mon temps.	For I despise this century which I mock, And which will be over in forty years, No, it's not for now that I strive But to the future that I dedicate my time.

Table 1. Panne-Aux-Airs, Parodie musicale en deux actes et six tableaux. Poème de M. Clairville. Musique de M. Barbier. Représentée pour la première fois, à Paris, sur le Théâtre-Déjazet, le 30 mars 1861.<sup>44</sup>

After two weeks of intensive rehearsals, Burck is less enamoured of the great master. He complains to the audience that Wagner has been costing him a fortune, leading him a merry dance, refers to his dispensing with the claque and decries Wagner's interference without which the work would be in much better shape. He also appeals directly to the audience, thus breaking the fourth wall, a typical ploy of the parodic genre when he says:

43 *Pied de mouton*, grand féerie-revue-ballet en 21 tableaux d'Hippolyte et Théodore Cogniard et Hector Crémieux, musique de Mangeant et Artus. Théâtre de la Porte-Saint-Martin, 8 September 1860.

44 Clairville [1861], 5–6.

**Vivace**

Alcindor

Voyez comment, dans le monde ar-tis-ti-que, vous ac-clam-ez vos chefs-d'œu-vre sou-  
veux. En ex-fri-sant plus ou moins la cri-ti-que, vous en par-lez dans quinze ou vingt jou-rnaux. Pen-dant huit jours, les ju-ges de la  
scène par-lent beau-coup sans rien ap-pre-fon-dir. Et le pu-blic quel-que-fois suit à pei-ne s'il doit sif-fler ou s'il doit ap-plau-  
dir. Et ce pu-blic qui ne s'as-su-re guè-re, Au grand chef-d'œu-vre en ri-é-pu-ta-tion,  
Cent un-e fois à l'œu-ve lit-té-rai-re, et deux cents fois court au Pief de Mou-ses.

Figure 1. *Panne-Aux-Airs*, Parodie musicale en deux actes et six tableaux. Poème de M. Clairville. Musique de M. Barbier. Représentée pour la première fois, à Paris, sur le Théâtre-Déjazet, le 30 mars 1861. Alcindor, “Et que m’importe une siècle que je raille”, Premier tableau, scène VI, newly harmonized version of the popular air “Ne raillez pas la garde citoyenne”, drawn from Jane Sempé (ed.), *France qui chante: Chansons d’histoire au fil du temps* (Paris: Editions Bourrellet et Cie, 1945, 343).

And you gentlemen, please be tolerant. Imagine that you are in 1961. [...] Imagine that all which exists exists today has made way for a new world. Well then, ladies and gentlemen, they are the chords of this new world that you will be hearing... If you do not understand very well, tell yourself: “It’s our fault, we are too young; in a hundred years, it will be magnificent.”<sup>45</sup>

Thus, tolerance of Wagner’s music is evoked by Burck the “Wagnéromane” (despite his annoyance with the man himself), as is the incapacity of the French to comprehend, but this is nevertheless seen as a temporary failing.

Soon the curtain rises on Venus’s grotto, Panne-Aux-Airs taking up his harp to sing Tannhäuser’s Act I aria (in French translation “Reine d’amour, à toi mes chants d’ivresse”, which becomes “Ivre d’amour, ivre de volupté”). Panne-Aux-Airs is then also given Wolfram’s famous romance in which he greets the evening star and exhorts it to shine down on Elisabeth as she passes into heaven. Panne-Aux-Airs, on the other hand, confides directly to the audience his difficulty in wooing “decent” women since he has spent so much time with Venus: he can no longer elevate his language to that worthy an opera libretto, but has descended to the depths of the risqué colloquialisms common to boulevard revue theatre (see Table 2). Once again, the librettist plays with the conventions of genre, drawing humour from the incongruity and discrepancy between the highbrow and the lowbrow. In addition, song – the essential condition of opera itself – is not spared mockery with the onomatopoeic “Turlututu!” added to make the words fit the existing melody.<sup>46</sup>

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45 Clairville [1861], 7: “Et vous, messieurs, soyez indulgents. Supposez que vous êtes en 1961. [...] Supposez que tout ce qui existe aujourd’hui ait fait place à un monde nouveau. Eh bien, messieurs, ce sont les accords de ce nouveau monde que nous allons vous faire entendre... Si vous ne comprenez pas bien, dites-vous: ‘C’est notre faute, nous sommes trop jeunes; dans cent ans, ce sera magnifique.’”

46 Lanson 1895, 279.

Quatrième tableau, scène II	Fourth tableau, scene II
ROMANCE	ROMANCE
<p>Oui, Vénus a régné, a régné sur mon âme;  Je ne sais plus chanter de pudiques amours.  Même à la plus honnête femme,  Je tiens de singuliers discours.  Au lieu de ces mots: “Je vous aime,  Je vous aime d’amour extrême,”  Mots charmants que l’on placera  Toujours dans un grand opéra,  Je lui dis: “Viens ça, ma mignonne,  Et permets que je folichonne.  – Que dites-vous? Et ma vertu?...  – Turlututu! turlututu!”  Oui, Vénus a régné, a régné sur mon âme;  Je ne sais plus chanter de pudiques amours.</p>	<p>Yes, Venus has reigned over my soul;  I can no longer sing modest love songs.  Even to the most decent of women  I make the oddest speeches.  Instead of the words: “I love you,  I love you most intensely,”  Charming words which one would  always place in a grand opera,  I say: “Come here my lovely,  And allow me to be silly with you.  – What do you say? And my virtue?  – Tralalalala! tralalalala!”  Yes, Venus has reigned over my soul;  I can no longer sing modest love songs.</p>

Table 2. *Panne-Aux-Airs*, Parodie musicale en deux actes et six tableaux. Poème de M. Clairville. Musique de M. Barbier. Représentée pour la première fois, à Paris, sur le Théâtre-Déjazet, le 30 mars 1861.<sup>47</sup>

In the fifth tableau, Wagner is completely underwhelmed by Burck’s rendition of the high drama as swords are drawn on *Panne-Aux-Airs* at the end of the song competition: he would have preferred a huge climax “fit to break all the violins and double basses”;<sup>48</sup> Burck admits to modifying the score so as to retain a complete orchestra until the end of the show, but Wagner decries the fact that he has understood nothing, and that he still had the clarinets and trombones left to him! Two other scenes from revue spectacles dwell on these aspects of Wagner’s music: the enormity of the orchestra and the seemingly incoherent sound produced. Even before the premiere of *Tannhäuser*, an end-of-year revue entitled *Il pleut! Il pleut! Bergère* by Henri Thiéry was given

<sup>47</sup> Clairville [1861], 9.

<sup>48</sup> Clairville [1861], 10: “J’avais ordonné qu’à ce moment on brisât tous les violons et toutes les contre-basses.”

at the prestigious Théâtre des Folies-Dramatiques on 22 December 1860, performances running until 1 February.<sup>49</sup> During the first act, the famous musician Richard Vattutter (a pun on “vas-tu te taire”, or “will you be quiet”) is introduced, and once he has sung a polka about his music, all characters take up chair legs, pots and pans to interpret the “la symphonie du Tan”, which could be loosely translated as the “symphony in A-nnoying”.<sup>50</sup> And yet when Vattutter, who speaks with a heavy, seemingly incomprehensible German accent, boasts of his new, innovative music, it seems to be music which no-one has heard or can hear: melody is abolished and harmony destroyed to such an extent that the orchestra and traditional instruments are suppressed; the music remains hermetic to all, including Vattutter himself (see Table 3). Thus, through a complete nonsense text full of *double entendre*, not only is the monumentality and incomprehensibility of Wagner’s music mocked, but also the fact that nobody has heard very much of it! Ironically, Vattutter sings his song to a light-hearted polka composed by the actor himself, Camille Michel, complete with all the trappings of the genre such as simple 2/4 time, repetitive structure, acciaccaturas of octaves or seventh leaps and grace note ornamentation of the melody: this is precisely the sort of music which the text condemns.<sup>51</sup>

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49 From October 1857, the Théâtre des Folies-Dramatiques was licensed to perform “des revues et des féeries” in several tableaux. See Wild 2012 (1989), 148. The 1861 register of receipts consulted (Bibliothèque-Musée de l’Opéra, TH52) refers to *Il pleut! Il pleut! Bergère* by the generic title of “La Revue”, which was always performed with at least one other work in the same evening. The Théâtre des Folies-Dramatiques was one of the theatres expropriated for the urbanisation works of Baron Haussmann on the (former) Boulevard du Temple in July 1862. A new, bigger theatre was built on a new site.

50 Thiéry [1861], 8.

51 Michel [1859]. Michel composed a reasonable number of fashionable lighter piano pieces such as polkas, polka-mazurkas and schottisches. Censorship documents dated 27 November 1860 show that this song was inserted at a late date to replace a short dialogue, thus reinforcing this scene about Wagner. See Archives nationales (France), F18 1001.

<p>Acte premier, premier tableau, scène X</p> <p>AIR: <i>Mirlitonette</i> (Polka de Camille Michel)</p> <p>Musicien de talent,  Mais têtue comme Allemand,  J'ai conçu le projet charmant  De tout changer entièrement.  La musique de nos pères  N'a jamais flatté mon goût;  Ce sont des refrains vulgaires,  Et cela ressemble à tout.  Ma musique est différente,  Vous le remarquerez bien;  Surtout, ce dont je me vante,  Elle ne semble à rien.  Messieurs, plus d'un musicien  A ma musique n'entend rien;  L'auditeur, non plus, n'entend rien;  Et moi-même, enfin,  N'y comprends rien.  J'abolis toute mélodie;  C'est ganache et c'est rococo;  Je détruis encor [sic] l'harmonie  Par mon système nouveau.  Je supprime, dans ma musique,  L'accord, les accompagnements;  Je supprime enfin, chose unique,  Et l'orchestre et les instruments.  Ah! vraiment, c'est charmant!  Messieurs, plus d'un musicien  A ma musique n'entend rien;  L'auditeur, non plus, n'entend rien;  Et moi-même, enfin,  N'y comprends rien.</p>	<p>Act one, first tableau, scene X</p> <p>AIR: <i>Mirlitonette</i> (Polka by Camille Michel)</p> <p>A musician of talent,  But stubborn like a German,  I conceived the charming project  To change everything completely.  The music of our fathers  Was never to my taste;  They are vulgar refrains,  Which don't resemble anything.  My music is different,  You will notice it easily;  Indeed, and this is what I pride myself on,  It resembles nothing else.  Sirs, more than one musician  Understands nothing in my music;  The audience hears nothing either;  And even I myself,  Do not understand it.  I abolish all melody;  Which is old fashioned and antiquated;  I destroy also the harmony  With my new system.  I suppress, in my music,  Chords and the accompaniments;  I suppress also, and this is exceptional,  The orchestra and the instruments.  Ah! truly, it is charming!  Sirs, more than one musician  Understands nothing in my music;  The audience hears nothing either;  And even I myself  Do not understand it.</p>
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Table 3. *Il pleut! Il pleut! Bergère*, Revue de 1860 en trois actes et vingt tableaux, précédée d'un prologue en trois tableaux. Au Rideau! Par M. Henri Thiéry.<sup>52</sup>

52 Thiéry [1861], 8.

The second revue, *Coucou! Ah! La voilà*, was first performed on 1 January 1862 at the modest left-bank Théâtre du Luxembourg<sup>53</sup> and featured not only a Wagnerian scene, but also a following one on the rehousing of the Théâtre-Lyrique. Once more, the size and volume of the Wagnerian orchestra is mocked, the character named simply “the future” desperately searching for a home for his music, which had made oceans roar, wars resound, dogs bark and Parisians boo.<sup>54</sup> To combat this deafening din where cannons would replace the timpani, singers would relay the vocal lines from different points in the theatre.<sup>55</sup> By this time, of course, Wagner’s wish for a purpose-built theatre for his works was no secret, even if the Festspielhaus in Bayreuth was not yet a fixed project.<sup>56</sup> So in both these revue shows, there is a common assumption about the nature and volume of Wagner’s music, which is attacked for being so great that it deafens everyone or so abstruse that no-one understands it, or indeed, in the end, hears it.

Within the genre of revue spectacle, where only one or two scenes would be dedicated to any phenomenon in society of the previous year, these sorts of parodic allusions to a musician/composer and his preoccupations/reception are common. While the subjects broached with regard to Wagner’s music are also present in *Panne-Aux-Airs*, this full parodic spectacle goes beyond these more widespread notions to offer a performance of a version of the opera, even if it does so rather anecdotally, as part of a pretext for broader commentary on Wagner, his national differences, his aesthetic ideas (especially the “music of the future”), commonly held beliefs about the tedious and hermetic nature of his operas, as well as the eroticism of the story, which is linked to

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53 Wild 2012 (1989), 234. Wild states that in 1855, the theatre’s orchestra comprised only 8 musicians.

54 Choler [1862], 5.

55 Willson demonstrates how, in the wake of Wagner’s concerts in January 1860, a similar idea that the number of musicians involved was so great that telegraphic relaying of conducting was needed, was dispelled by the newly converted Wagnerian Champfleury, and that Champfleury’s sketch was no doubt influenced by Berlioz’s *Euphonia ou la ville musicale*, published as a “nouvelle de l’avenir” in 1852. See Willson 2014, 290, 295.

56 Millington 2012, 221-232.

the attention Wagner paid to society ladies. And yet the dramaturgy of the hypotext remains clear in places, both within the given spectacle and without, as even before the arrival of the real (yet fictive) Wagner, Jeanette, the sister of Mr Burck's gardener, watches from the belvedere for the composer's approach and sings the very beginning of what, no doubt, was the shepherd's pastoral song from Act I of *Tannhäuser*. Moreover, *Panne-Aux-Airs* offers a clear criticism of the Parisian press and public, who condemn and then ignore a work before they have had a chance to study and get to know it, while the full-blown parody *Ya-Mein-Herr* went further and proposed a vision of the incongruence of Wagner's operas on Parisian stages and the role his music could play in the renewal of the genre.

### III *Ya-Mein-Herr*

*Ya-Mein-Herr* ("Yes Sir") was premiered at the Théâtre des Variétés just one week later than *Panne-Aux-Airs*, on 6 April 1861. It follows the hypotext more closely and is more concerned with the original dramaturgy of *Tannhäuser* than the previous examples, yet transports the characters to the world of nineteenth-century fair-ground players and attractions. Like *Panne-Aux-Airs*, the title uses an onomatopoeic pun to show its link to the original, in keeping with the militaristic nature of the heroine and her authority over the Tannhäuser character (see below). Moreover, Clairville and his collaborators supplemented the title with the *péritexte* "Cacophony of the future, in three acts without an interval, interspersed with songs, harps and performing dogs". As is frequently the case, this *péritexte* contains humorous details that are an integral part of the identification of the parody with the hypotext:<sup>57</sup> an inexplicable musical language, an over-long spectacle with no respite, harp-accompanied troubadour-like songs. At the same time, all character names undergo onomatopoeic transformations of Wagner's char-

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<sup>57</sup> Sangsue 2006, 25–26.

acters, which flippantly refer to each individual's personality and characteristics in the parodical version (see Table 4).

Tannhäuser	Ya-Mein-Herr
Wolfram	Trois Grammes
Walther	Carther
Biterolf	Bischoff
Landgrave	Note-Grave
Elisabeth	Bébête

Table 4. *Ya-Mein-Herr*, Cacophonie de l'avenir, en trois actes sans entracte, mêlée de chants, de harpes et de chiens savants par MM. Clairville, Delacour et L. Thiboust. Airs nouveaux de M. Victor Chéri. Représentée pour la première fois, à Paris, sur le théâtre des Variétés, le 6 avril 1861.<sup>58</sup>

Musical materials for *Ya-Mein-Herr* remain in the archives – a *répétiteur*, a short score with melodies, vocal lines and some text underlaid, as well as 15 orchestral parts – which provide an excellent overview of the show.<sup>59</sup> A short overture in four sections opens the work; the music is twice interrupted by a narrator figure, typical of parody, here a stage manager who reminds the audience of details in the preamble to the premiere of *Tannhäuser*. The opening major-key musical materials are set to a rapid waltz-like rhythm, but are based around an arpeggic figure with a prominent leap of a sixth, reminiscent of that of the opening motif of the *Tannhäuser* overture. The stage manager interrupts this theme to inform the claqueurs among the audience to keep quiet, that their services will not be needed and the overture proceeds: two sections, the first based on the diminished seventh arpeggiated bass line associated with Venus from Wagner's work, and the second on the popular Viennese tune "Oh du lieber Augustin", follow. As this section draws to a close, no applause is heard, and so the manager comes back

58 Clairville, Delacour and Thiboust 1861, 2.

59 Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Arts du Spectacle, Fonds du Théâtre des Variétés, 4-COL-106 (1068). My thanks to Richard Sherr for locating these parts for me.

on to tell the audience that it might be better if they clap after all, which they do following the closing section, based on the opening materials and underpinned by a militaristic rhythm.

In the second scene, *Ya-Mein-Herr*, a street singer, enters: he affects a German accent once again, insisting on the false liaison between the words “mon” (my) and “harpe” (harp), a common fault made by foreigners, although there should be no liaison due to the aspirated h. Indeed, as “harpe” is a feminine noun, he is also mistaken as to the possessive pronoun he should be using (which should be “ma” to agree with the feminine harp, and not “mon”). The false liaison thus creates a new word, articulated in the libretto as “mon n-harpe”, which is continuously used to mock the grammatically ignorant German and his accent. Nor does the character Bischoff have a meaningful role, but serves only to represent ridiculous Germans, speaking pigeon German, strings of German names and place names or indeed, completely invented Germanic-sounding nonsense. Elisabeth has no need of her father Note-grave (low note, and, of course, a bass in Wagner’s opera) to find her a suitable suitor. She is transformed into Bébête (a diminutive and familiar form of Elisabeth), who is a virile fairground master of arms, brandishes a foil and wears a costume with a large red heart emblazoned on her stomach, invites swordsmen to spar with her and promises her heart to the one who can touch it. The swashbuckling song in which she presents herself was drawn from a recent vaudeville success in the same theatre, *Les Chevaliers du Pince-Nez* from 1859, with music composed by the former conductor of the Variétés, Julien Nargeot, and a libretto by a team of writers, one of whom, the prolific Lambert Thiboust (1826–1867), also worked with Clairville on *Ya-Mein-Herr*.<sup>60</sup> The original text contains a certain degree of garbled prosody, which is even more pronounced in the parody: mute “e” endings are almost completely eclipsed, and central syllables are swallowed in an effort to make this text fit the pre-existing music (see Figure 2). This does not, however, smack of amateurism of prosody, but once again as authors playing with the conventions of the

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60 Lambert Thiboust (catalogued both with and without a hyphen between the two names) was a pseudonym for Pierre Antoine Auguste Thiboust.

Allegro moderato

Bb

*f*

8

*f in chœur*

Ve - nez bour-geois et mi-li - tai - nes, spa-das - uins, bret-teurs for-cés - és! Ve-nez! A l'in-stant et de cent man -

*p* *f* *p*

15

*in chœur*

Bb

ières, par moi vous se - riez bou-ton - nés. Ve-nez! Si je vous pu-rais pro-vo - can - ter, il - lous, fer-rais - leux, ap-pro -

*f* *p*

27

REFRAIN: *in chœur*

Bb

chez! Vez-ce ce cœur que j'vous pré-sente. Il est à vous, si vous l'ou - chez. F'crois qu'on peut sans ef -

*ppp*

37

Bb

fré. ve - nir se m'ou-er a-vec moi. Oui, l'on peut sans ef - fré. ve - nir se m'ou-er a-vec toi.

Figure 2. *Ya-Mein-Herr, Cacophonie de l'Avenir*, en trois actes sans entracte, mêlée de chants, de harpes et de chiens savants par MM. Clairville, Delacour et L. Thiboust. Airs nouveaux de M. Victor Chéri. Représentée pour la première fois, à Paris, sur le théâtre des Variétés, le 6 avril 1861. Bébête, “Venez bourgeois et militaires”, Deuxième tableau, scène VIII, sung to the tune of the *Les Chevaliers du Pince-Nez*, Ronde chantée par Mesdames Alphonsine, Daudoir et M<sup>r</sup>. A. Michel, vaudeville en deux actes, musique de J. Nargeot.

lighter genre, but to a point that almost obscures meaning; it is clear that these men were not above poking fun at their own works.

Nevertheless, a song competition takes place, each contestant singing a different well-known air with an improbable text. Surprisingly, the number is stitched together with recitative, the traditional operatic genre itself once more in the parodic firing line. Ya-Mein-Herr sings his composite yet lyrical song which is interrupted by melodically commonplace onomatopoeia from Venus, before he too sings a light-hearted air in which Venus and the chorus join, imitating (again in onomatopoeia) bird song mentioned in the text. At the start of the third tableau, once more the performing dogs are brought on to the sounds of the Pilgrims' March, crossing the stage on their hind legs, each wearing a travelling player costume and sporting small harps slung across their bodies. But perhaps the most interesting moment is the entrance of the pilgrims in scene eleven. Here it is Venus who watches and waits to see if Ya-Mein-Herr is among the returning pilgrims, who come on stage to the plaintive Caravan Chorus from Félicien David's 1844 ode symphony *Le Désert*. As the pilgrims take their places on stage, Venus sings a chromatically rising stupified recitative enumerating them: Robert le Diable, le Prophète, le Juif Eléazar (from *La Juive*), Le comte Ory, Guillaume Tell, Moïse, Raoul (from *Les Huguenots*) and Verdi's Troubadour (to whose *Miserere* music Ya-Mein-Herr sang his first adieu to Venus in scene 2, and who is alluded to again in comparison to Wagner's troubadour). Thus, the standard repertoire of the Paris Opéra takes its "rightful" place on stage, and Venus despairs, for if all these pilgrims are alive, Ya-Mein-Herr must be dead (in the water). Indeed, this scene recalls Johann Nepomuk Nestroy's Viennese parody of *Tannhäuser* from 1857, where Nestroy used the singing contest as the opportunity to place Tannhäuser in competition with protagonists from other contemporary operas.<sup>61</sup> In *Ya-Mein-Herr*, Venus then sings

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61 Schneider 1996. Schneider demonstrates (261) how *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin* were Wagner's two most parodied works in Germany and Austria, no doubt due to a fashion for such parody during the 1850s. Parodies of *Lohengrin* in France, of course, only arose after its numerous performances all over France in 1891. I am currently working on a chapter that deals with some of these works, where the dramatic emphasis mirrors the

the aria of another troubadour, Blondel's aria from Grétry's *Richard Cœur de Lion*, here as “Ya-Mein-Herr, ô mon roi!”, reinforcing a French operatic heritage and a similar dramatic situation of noble devotion in the face of adversity. The repertoire retains its presence as Venus then sings the melody of Arnold's solo “Ses jours qu'ils ont osé proscrire” from Act II of *Guillaume Tell*. At this point in Rossini's last opera, written for Paris, Arnold has just learnt of the murder of his now-martyred Swiss father Melcthal and, in the following passage, Tell, Arnold and Walter vow to liberate Switzerland from Austrian oppression. Venus, however, refers to Ya-Mein-Herr's music as forbidden, and Wagner's music is thus equated with an oppressed but revolutionary and legitimate regime and state. Venus's lament is interrupted by “bursts of discordant music from the orchestra” – a chromatically tortuous solo violin descending line underpinned briefly by a bitonal chord in the orchestra (see Figure 3) – but which to her ears is “sweet harmony” as Ya-Mein-Herr staggers on stage. Venus asks him from where he comes: from the Opéra, he replies; “Oh unfortunate one”, she retorts, “what were you going to do there?” “Don't ask...” is Ya-Mein-Herr's response. For Venus, Wagner's opera is anathema to the Paris Opéra, as would be *Tannhäuser*'s redemption, which does not take place in this parodic version.



Figure 3. *Ya-Mein-Herr*, *Cacophonie de l'Avenir*, en trois actes sans entracte, mêlée de chants, de harpes et de chiens savants par MM. Clairville, Delacour et L. Thiboust. Airs nouveaux de M. Victor Chéri. Représentée pour la première fois, à Paris, sur le théâtre des Variétés, le 6 avril 1861. The so-called “bursts of discordant music from the orchestra”, reproduced from original orchestral materials held at Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Arts du Spectacle, Fonds du Théâtre des Variétés, 4-COL-106 (1068).

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general changes in parodic Wagner reception in France, including Prussian militarism, symbolism and (artistic and moral) decadence as outlined by Grand-Carteret 1892, and as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter.

Instead, Bébête arrives and excuses Ya-Mein-Herr's previous behaviour; he is argued over by the two women before the stage manager has to break up the scrap. Once again, the distancing technique of the narrator is used to signal to the audience that the ending was changed at the last minute, even if the principal characters – who momentarily step out of role to become themselves, i.e. the actors performing those roles – were unaware of it: a spectacular finale is announced and all the characters and chorus come back on stage, sporting harps, to sing in turn nine different verses to the tune of the *Ronde du Sultan Mustapha*, published in 1860 by the operetta and popular song composer Sylvain Maugeant.<sup>62</sup> The last verse is the only one of real interest: Venus ends the show in typical vaudeville manner by directly addressing the audience and asking for forgiveness for having made fun of *Tannhäuser*;<sup>63</sup> she affirms that the French underrated Weber, Beethoven and even Meyerbeer for a long time, and while *Tannhäuser* waits for grand artistic victory in France, she asks the audience to accord just a small victory to *Ya-Mein-Herr* (see Table 5 and Figure 4). Indeed, Flora Willson explains Parisian embedding of Wagner's "music of the future" in that of the past – through comparisons and references to Grétry, Mozart, Gluck and Weber (as in Offenbach's *Le Carnaval des revues*), or even Beethoven and Meyerbeer – as a way of situating and ultimately accepting it, suggesting that it was "an idea in ever more complex relation to, even symbiosis with, the musical past."<sup>64</sup> Thus in a *Don Giovanni*-esque manner of a moralizing final chorus, the assembled characters, led by Venus, ask for indulgence: despite the biting parody, the show recognizes the weaknesses of the Parisian houses, the opera-going public and press, indeed, the whole Parisian operatic system, but at the same time, it struggles to understand the "music of the future", and predicts a worthy victory for *Tannhäuser* and Wagner: it seems clear that the authors were in little doubt of that.

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62 Varin, Laurencin and Delaporte [1860].

63 Yon 2012, 293.

64 Willson 2014, 307.

Troisième tableau, scène XII, Vaudeville final	Third tableau, scene XII, Final vaudeville chorus
VENUS, au public : Nous plaisantons le <i>Tannhauser</i> [sic]... Pardonnez-nous de tant <i>oser</i> . Longtemps on méconnut Weber, Et Beethoven, et Meyerbeer. En attendant que Tannhauser [sic], En France ait un succès d'enfer, Messieurs, nous vous prions d'en fair' Un tout petit à Ya-Mein-Herr.	VENUS, to the audience: We have made fun of <i>Tannhauser</i> [sic]... Please excuse us for having dared so much. For a long time we underrated Weber, And Beethoven, and Meyerbeer. While we wait for Tannhauser [sic] To have a huge success in France, Gentlemen, please accord A small one to Ya-Mein-Herr.
TOUS. En attendant que Tannhauser [sic], En France ait un succès d'enfer, Messieurs, nous vous prions d'en fair' Un tout petit à Ya-Mein-Herr.	ALL. While we wait for Tannhauser [sic] To have a huge success in France, Gentlemen, please accord A small one to Ya-Mein-Herr.

Table 5. *Ya-Mein-Herr*, Cacophonie de l'avenir, en trois actes sans entracte, mêlée de chants, de harpes et de chiens savants par MM. Clairville, Delacour et L. Thiboust. Airs nouveaux de M. Victor Chéri. Représentée pour la première fois, à Paris, sur le théâtre des Variétés, le 6 avril 1861.<sup>65</sup>

In a song performed as part of the revue *Les Trembleurs* at the Théâtre du Gymnase for the first time on the evening prior to the third and last performance of *Tannhäuser* at the Opéra, similar issues are raised. With a text co-authored once more by Clairville, *Les Trembleurs*, on the subject of the timid, the frightened and the worriers in society, proclaims: “Oh heavens! What will happen? Great Gods! What will become of us?’ it is said... when we’ve just heard the music of the future! Will *Tannhäuser* triumph over the venerated French masters? Auber is still with us, he still sings; do not be frightened, for the future, do not be frightened!”<sup>66</sup> Thus, fear for French musical heritage in the face of

65 Clairville, Delacour and Thiboust 1861, 26.

66 Dumanoir, Clairville and Couder [1861]: “Oh ciel! à quoi faut-il s’attendre ?/Grand Dieu! qu’allons nous devenir?/Se dit-on... quand on vient d’entendre/La musique de l’avenir!/ Des maîtres que la France honore/*Tannhauser* [sic] serait-il vainqueur?../Auber nous reste, il chante encore; N’ayez pas peur!/Pour l’avenir n’ayez pas peur!” The journalist Albert Monnier commented of *Les Trembleurs*: “The public is rebellious, it’s been a long time since it weaned itself off quasi-political vaudeville, and this piece is the expression of its own feelings, its fears, its likes and its loathings” [“Le public est frondeur, il y a

**Allegretto**

Vénus  
 Nous plai-san-tons le Tann-hau-ser... par-don-nez- nous de tant o - ser. Long-temps on mé - con-nut We-ber, et Bee-tho

Vén.  
 ven, et Mey-er-beer. En at - ten-dant que Tann-hau-ser, en France ait un suc-cès d'en - fer, Mes-sieurs, nous vous pri ons... d'en

Vén.  
 faire un tout pe - tit... à Ya-Mein Herz. Mes-sieurs, nous vous pri ons... d'en faire un tout pe - tit... à Ya-Mein Herz.

Figure 4. *Ya-Mein-Herr*, *Cacophonie de l'Avenir*, en trois actes sans entracte, mêlée de chants, de harpes et de chiens savants par MM. Clairville, Delacour et L. Thiboust. Airs nouveaux de M. Victor Chéri. Représentée pour la première fois, à Paris, sur le théâtre des Variétés, le 6 avril 1861. Vénus, Vaudeville final, Troisième tableau, scène XII, sung to the tune of the *Ronde du Sultan Mustapha*, chantée dans *Les 3 Fils de Cadet-Roussel* au Palais-Royal, musique de Sylvain Mangeant.

longtemps qu'il s'est sevré du vaudeville quasi politique, et cette pièce est l'expression de ses propres sentiments, de ses craintes, de ses sympathies et de ses répugnances"]. Monnier 1861, 7.

Wagner is again expressed in a similar way to *Ya-Mein-Herr*, whose story does not resolve, but is cut off by the slap-happy ending, however conciliatory Venus may be. However, I cannot help but read the text of *Les Trembleurs*, with its appeal to the musical classicists (not to say reactionaries), as a rather knowing or tongue-in-cheek recognition of the fact that despite Auber's still active career (including the composition of four works for the Opéra-Comique between this time and his death at the age of 89 in 1871), his music is not that of the future. Here, for me, the acceptance of Wagner, as well as all those contemporary composers of modern music is proclaimed through a vision of a French aesthetic, which displays its vulnerability and yet its openness to permeability: the future of music will surely be assured as much by Wagner as by others.

#### IV Conclusions

Few traces remain today of parodical spectacles. This not only poses methodological questions for such an investigation, but also carries important meaning about the durability and interdependence (or independence) of the parody and its hypotext in a specific cultural context. Libretti were hastily published – that of *Panne-Aux-Airs* presenting inconsistencies that are irreconcilable with the dramatic action – if they were published at all. In published libretti, music cues, or *timbres* are given with titles of the aria/song to which the new words should be sung. These cues range from well-known operetta titles, through folk and popular songs, to newly composed music, sometimes by the composer cited on the title page, other times by someone else, including the performers. But for *Panne-Aux-Airs*, as yet I know only a fraction of the music that must have been performed, and I can only presume that it was accompanied by a standard pit band, the number of musicians depending on the status of the theatre. With the existence of musical materials for *Ya-Mein-Herr*, a better picture can be formed. Biographical details of performers of this genre are equally hard to find, and press reports of ephemeral boulevard spectacles are rare. Yet the popularity of the revues must have been great, with the more substantial works performed in the more prestigious theatres running for

significant periods of time: the revue *Coucou! Ah! La voilà*, performed in January 1862, even includes an air from *Ya-Mein-Herr* (but not in the act which deals with Wagner's music),<sup>67</sup> although I have not been able to identify which excerpt from *Ya-Mein-Herr* corresponds to the passage in Choler's revue.

Similar parodical works exist for many other important premieres, and not just of works by Wagner, although these shows hold a special and prominent position due to the largely antagonistic reception of Wagner and his operas by the French up until the mid-1890s. The heyday of this sort of spectacle is nevertheless from the late 1840s until the turn of the century, with works ranging from another of Clairville's punning texts, *L'Ane à Baptiste ou le berceau du socialisme* ("Baptist's donkey or the cradle of socialism"), an 1849 parody of Meyerbeer's *Le Prophète*, through the well-known 1869 "opéra bouffe" *Le petit Faust* by Hervé,<sup>68</sup> up to and including parodies of Charpentier's *Louise* at the beginning of the twentieth century, when their popularity seems to wane. As long as the original work created enough press interest, for whatever reasons, good or bad, it was worthy of parodic treatment: the parody capitalized on the success of the original to promote its own success. The hypertext both mocked and paid homage to a particular cultural phenomenon, and, in the cases relating to Wagner examined here, the criticism of French mores and the Parisian press serves to counterbalance the nonsensical ridicule of Wagner, his music and all things German. *Ya-Mein-Herr* takes on a more nationalist colour in its presentation of the standard Franco-Italian repertoire of the Opéra and its more strategic use of that musical heritage in its score, but its conclusion is nevertheless that the French just need more time to become acclimatised to Wagner's operas, which will be as much a part of that future as any other music.

Throughout the eighteenth century, parody was derided as a form that degraded cultural and literary heritage; opera parody only came

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67 Choler [1862], 9.

68 See Rowden, forthcoming 2017.

into its own during the nineteenth century, and only gained real artistic legitimacy towards the end of that century when its practices began to collide with those of modernism.<sup>69</sup> At this time, many artists and writers believed innovation impossible, and in the artistic and social climate of decadence at the *fin de siècle*, felt condemned to re-writing and to endless repetition.<sup>70</sup> However, the repetition also laid bare and exposed the illusion of innovation in the contemporaneous *avant-garde*; writers such as Charles Baudelaire, in a proto-modernist vision of literature, sought to instrumentalize this *ré-écriture* by proposing a parodic renewal whereby repetition is openly stated and reclaimed as a condition of a modern aesthetic.<sup>71</sup> Indeed, Umberto Eco reprised this situation when he suggested that

a worn out, alienating form of expression can be negated in one of two ways: one can dismantle the modes of communication on which it is based, or one can exercise them via parody. Parody and irony can thus be seen as viable, subtler alternatives to the more common, revolutionary ardour of the *avant-garde*.<sup>72</sup>

From the beginning of the twentieth century therefore, and into the post-modern era when adaptation became a primary literary convention,<sup>73</sup> parodic forms, including pastiche, abound in literature and drama. These aesthetically “legitimised” parodic forms created a parallel movement to the sorts of light-hearted spectacles presented in this chapter and once more served to sideline these ephemeral shows in maligned genres, both in the public conscience and in scholarly literature, as both reception documents or works in their own right. These parodies which present a complex intertextual, intermedial and hyper-

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69 Dousteyssier-Khoze and Place-Verghnes 2006.

70 Sangsue 2004, 94.

71 Hannoosh 2006, 133.

72 Eco 1989, 266, n. 9.

73 Newman 1985, 129.

medial picture of art and society thus remain on the margins of serious academic and musicological study.

In an article on theatrical parodies (particularly of Victor Hugo's play *Marion Delorme*), published in 1831, the somewhat reactionary king of Parisian theatre critics, Jules Janin, enounced a highly modernist, even post-modernist and intertextual or dialogical view of parody that could have come straight from the mouth of Julia Kristeva or Gérard Genette. He wrote:

Parody is all around you, to the left and to the right, before and behind you, inside and outside; you rub shoulders with it, you are familiar with it, it sits beside you. What is all modern history but parody? Even general history, what else is it but a perpetual parody which begins again every 100 years?<sup>74</sup>

In his 1895 treatise *La Parodie dramatique au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Gustave Lanson also predicted the arguments of the Russian formalists who, reversing the idea of parody as decadence, insisted on parody as a factor of literary "evolution". Lanson, however, viewed parodic spectacle as having ushered in a new era of dramatic realism, liberating classical literature from its conventions, trivializing dramatic action, placing ordinary people in everyday settings on the stage.<sup>75</sup> It is perhaps no surprise then that the rise of parodical spectacle goes hand in hand with dramatic realism on the operatic stage, and that incongruity, difference and distance were particularly highlighted when the parody took aim at Wagner's operas. The formalists saw parody, however, as a denunciation, rather than a liberation, of canonical procedures and genres that had become "legible" due to familiarity. Thus, parody both

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74 Janin 1877, 310: "la parodie est partout autour de vous, à droite et à gauche, par devant et par derrière, dans les murs, hors des murs; elle vous coudoie, elle vous tutoie, elle s'assied à vos côtés. Toute histoire moderne, qu'est-ce autre chose qu'une parodie? L'histoire générale même, qu'est-ce autre chose si ce n'est une parodie perpétuelle, qui recommence tous les cent ans?"

75 Lanson 1895, 270–271.

denounces, renews and re-enacts those very conventions,<sup>76</sup> creating only a momentary reversal of hierarchies, an authorised subversion or transgression of recognizable forms and conventions in which anyone can legitimately participate: it is both revolutionary and conservative at the same time.<sup>77</sup> Indeed, some have argued that in the domain of the fine arts, the “Salons comiques” or “Salons pour rire”, published by Cham (Amédée de Noé) in *Le Charivari* during the 1860s caricaturing the paintings exhibited at the annual Paris salon, contributed to the reinforcement of a traditional and academic aesthetic.<sup>78</sup> Parody mocks, therefore, but the conservative aspect of its nature mocks only so that it might exorcise difference all the better and then accept the hypotext, which in this study is Wagner’s operas. Parisian parody thus created multiple voices and intermedial theatrical experiences for audiences of various social strata. Operatic parodies gave agency to their Parisian audiences who were invited (or left) to find their own paths through the pluri-focal networks of texts, signs, songs and meanings offered to them regarding Wagner and the future of opera, in a truly post-modernist fashion, *avant la lettre*.<sup>79</sup>

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76 Lanson 1895, 277–278.

77 Hutcheon 1985, 2, 6; Harries 2000, 120.

78 Melot 1975, 89; Buchinger-Früh 1996, 343.

79 Boenisch 2006, 115.

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# Tracing *Lohengrin* at the Royal Opera of Sweden, 1874

GÖRAN GADEMAN

In searching for sources to identify, reconstruct and interpret theatre stagings from the past, it is important to bear in mind the types of materials that were used and for what purpose. My own focus in categorizing this kind of material, inspired by the theatre scholar Dietrich Steinbeck, is phenomenological rather than semiotic.<sup>1</sup> Steinbeck divides a theatre performance into three layers:

- *die Schicht der realen Bedeutung* – the layer of real significance
- *die Schicht der intendierten Bedeutung* – the layer of intentional significance
- *die Schicht der vermeinten Bedeutung* – the layer of perceived significance.<sup>2</sup>

The first layer consists of the objective reality that confronts the audience in a play: performers (actors/opera singers), costumes, decor, lighting and so on. The second layer consists of the underlying intentionality, namely the creator's intention to present a series of fictitious events on stage. However, the fictional world in the play does not exist in itself, but is only manifest when the viewer perceives it. Consequently, theatre as a phenomenon is not actualized without the third layer, in which the performance is perceived by a spectator. Steinbeck's definition of "intentionality" is not synonymous with "intentions", however; he attributes the relationship between the creator and the audience to philosophical rather than to psychological aspects. I prefer to use his

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1 Steinbeck 1970, 91.

2 See Martin & Sauter 1995, 55–59, from which the English translation of Steinbeck's layers above is taken.

second layer in a somewhat different sense and choose to consider the intentions instead of the intentionality.

Above all, it will be productive to switch the first two layers, putting the intended layer above the real, to enhance this system further:

- Intention (layer 1)
- Fiction (layer 2)
- Perception (layer 3)

By using these three layers, one can study, for example, the artist as a person, as an exponent of a role or as the idea of a role, and also as perceived by the audience. One can broaden this perspective to include performance itself by studying a particular staging's overall conceptualization (layer 1), its actual design on a fictional level and its fulfilment in a given performance (layer 2) in which the viewer's presence (layer 3) raises it to the level of a theatrical event.

Of course, one can use these three layers to study more than the different realities in theatre according to phenomenological methods. I often use these three levels in a rather robust way in studying historical stagings. Viewed in this way, layer 1 refers to the underlying intentions in the staging as seen in the director's handwritten *mise-en-scène* notes, sketches for set decor, costumes and so on. These intentions are not the same as the concrete reality on the stage, which constitutes the actual performance (layer 2); at times, the intentions can differ significantly from the actual staging. There is an interesting discrepancy between these layers in a given staging, owing to the underlying intentions of the creator, which may not be possible to realize owing to technical or artistic reasons. This discrepancy can extend to layer 3 as well. For example, the discrepancy may involve the interpretation of a role by an artist whose intentions are not always conveyed to the audience as planned, thus preventing the audience from perceiving the role's significance. For the historian, it is mainly through reviews of a performance that the intentions of a given staging can be determined, as well as how the intentions were received or whether they were in fact realized at all.

Historical theatre is of course dependent on the society in which it was created; it is therefore impossible to speak of any objective view

of it. The question is whether objectivity is even worth striving for or whether it is better to see subjective testimony as a precious reflection of the contemporary reception. In his article “Towards a Postpositivist Theatre History”, Bruce A. McConachie states that the positivistically-oriented historian is forced to renounce the use of subjective claims about a performance found in letters, diaries and reviews.<sup>3</sup> This is because the historian lacks evidence of the degree of representation of the claims. Instead, one must turn to historical problems, for which there are verifiable facts. But if the historian rejects the audience as co-creator of the performance due to a lack of “hard evidence” concerning its function, McConachie wonders whether it is even possible to describe and explain a past performance. In contrast, for a phenomenologically-oriented scholar, with regard to the events on the stage, it is the subjective testimonies themselves that contain the only meaningful information that can be accessed.

In interpreting staging materials, I as a researcher must place myself between the audiences of the past and the readers of today to convey something about past stagings. In other words, after putting the staging in its historical context, I must see it with modern eyes to be able to interpret it to contemporary audiences. It is only then that it becomes interesting for modern readers, because it is not possible, nor even desirable, to reconstruct a past audience completely. Willmar Sauter demonstrates this when he applies his phenomenological perspective to Sarah Bernhardt:

We cannot adequately understand the theatrical presentations of historical times, because they were aimed at a historical audience. Our understanding has to focus on the meeting point between historical presentation and historical perception. Therefore, a quotation from a historical spectator tells us more than the finest recording: again, theatre has to be understood as an event, not as a piece of art.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> McConachie 1985, 468.

<sup>4</sup> Sauter 2000, 120.

An eloquent testimony from layer 3 can therefore say much more than a scratchy recording or a blurred photograph from layer 2.

To further tease apart the material in the study of an opera production, the three layers can be cross-linked with another way of partitioning the staging:

- pictorial aspects – decor, costumes and how they are conceived in the whole
- actorial aspects – action and acting style
- musical and vocal aspects

Combining these three new layers with the previous three phenomenological layers results in a grid of nine squares:

	<i>Pictorial</i>	<i>Action/acting style</i>	<i>Musical &amp; vocal aspects</i>
<i>Intention</i>	<b>1</b> Sketches	<b>4</b> <i>Mise-en-scène</i> (book) Artists' testimonies	<b>7</b> Scores with notes from conductors & singers
<i>Fiction</i>	<b>2</b> Photos Ground plans	<b>5</b> Photos Ground plans	<b>8</b> Recordings
<i>Perception</i>	<b>3</b> Drawings Descriptions from reviews	<b>6</b> Reviews Testimonies	<b>9</b> Descriptions Testimonies

Table 1. Nine-layer grid for deciphering the material in the study of opera production.

### ***Lohengrin*, the Swedish premiere in 1874: The material**

In the following section, I present the material available from the staging of Richard Wagner's *Lohengrin*, which premiered at the Royal Opera in Stockholm on 22 January 1874. There are several reasons for choosing this particular staging, the most important of which is that sufficient material has been preserved to construct a meaningful

analysis in the Royal Theaters' Archive.<sup>5</sup> However, the staging itself and the year it premiered are also interesting. *Lohengrin* was the third of Wagner's operas to be performed in Sweden. His previous operas, *Rienzi* (1865) and *Der fliegende Holländer* (1872), were not nearly as successful. And while French operas and to some extent Italian operas reached Sweden only a few years after their world premieres, all of Wagner's music dramas had to wait several decades for their Swedish premieres. The *Lohengrin* production, however, which was a huge success, began to erode the strong opposition to Wagner's music dramas that was prevalent in Sweden at that time. The year 1874 was a significant year for opera for other reasons as well: a few months after the premiere of *Lohengrin*, Ivar Hallström's *Den bergtagna* (*The Mountain King*) – Sweden's most famous nineteenth-century national opera – had its world premiere on the same stage. Viennese operetta also had its breakthrough in Vienna with *Die Fledermaus* by Johann Strauss II, while in Saint Petersburg, after a great deal of effort, Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov* was staged.<sup>6</sup> The next year, Bizet's *Carmen* caused a minor scandal in Paris, and the following year, Wagner inaugurated his Festspielhaus in Bayreuth with *The Ring of the Nibelungen*.

The Swedish premiere of *Lohengrin* was conducted by Ludvig Norman (1831–1885). Frans Hedberg (1828–1908), who was intendent at the Royal Swedish Opera from 1871 to 1881, served as director and took care of all productions, new and old. He was also a successful playwright and it was he who translated the opera into Swedish. The set was designed by Fritz Ahlgrensson (1838–1902), who had had immense success with Meyerbeer's *L'Africaine* some years earlier at the same venue. The cast consisted of the company's biggest stars:

- Lohengrin – Oscar Arnoldson (1830–1881)
- Elsa – Fredrika Stenhammar (1836–1880)
- Telramund – Fritz Arlberg (1830–1896)
- Ortrud – Thérèse Saxenberg (1843–1898)

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<sup>5</sup> Kungliga Teatrarnas arkiv (KTA), in Stockholm.

<sup>6</sup> Gademan 2015, 343.

- the King – Hjalmar Håkansson (1844–1901)
- Herald – Carl Fredrik (“Lunkan”) Lundqvist (1841–1920)

Of these singers, Arlberg and Stenhammar were strong proponents for staging Wagner’s music dramas in Sweden, and later, Lundqvist as well.

First, I will present a description of available material according to the above grid, followed by an analysis of some of the most decisive moments in the staging. Box 1 of the grid refers to pictorial intentions, which typically comprise different kinds of sketches and sometimes models. In the case of *Lohengrin*, however, this kind of material is sparse; what does exist is correspondence between the director Hedberg and the set designer Ahlgrensson, since the latter had simultaneous commitments in Copenhagen. The letters mostly concern various changes in the lighting, which Ahlgrensson wanted to correct.<sup>7</sup>

In the fictive pictorial layer (box 2), the most reliable source is normally the detailed drawing for the scenery made by the opera’s leading engineer so that it would appear identical in every performance. With the arrival in 1869 of Per Lindström, these kinds of drawings became even more detailed. Lindström introduced a system of pre-printed drawings of the empty stage, where the placing of the sets was drawn scene by scene. These arrangements give a far more detailed view of where the sets were placed on the stage than those made before Lindström’s time. Combined with manuscripts of the translated opera or play, lighting notes and lists of costumes, one can get a pretty good idea of what happened on the stage, including in productions that lack a *mise-en-scène* (director’s notations). In 1867, Lindström constructed the machinery for the famous shipwreck in *L’Africaine*. In *Lohengrin*, he faced new challenges, including creating a swan that could tow the hero on a seashell and then ultimately be transformed into a young man. A puppet figure of Lohengrin as well as a miniature swan (Figure 3, p. 94), both of which were created to create the illusion of the assemblage

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7 Letters from Frans Hedberg to Fritz Ahlgrensson, Kungliga biblioteket (National Library of Sweden), Manuscripts, Kempe Collection.

from a distance, has been preserved. These figures also belong to this level (box 2), since they constitute exactly what the audience saw on the stage. This layer also includes photographs of the sets, which were a rarity in those days. In the case of *Lohengrin*, a photograph of the bridal chamber in Act III, scene 1, has been preserved (see Figure 8, p. 104). Usually, more documents survive from the perceptual pictorial material (box 3).

Drawings were often made after major premieres, and we are fortunate that a drawing by Robert Haglund, published in the magazine *Ny Illustrerad Tidning*, has survived (Figure 1, p. 90). There is also a watercolour at the Royal Swedish Opera by Hugo Rahm from the 1880s, a time when this production was still in the repertoire (Figure 2, p. 90). Both depict the same scene: Lohengrin's arrival with the swan in Act I. However, it is important to differentiate between images such as these, which represent perceptions of the performance by members of the audience, and those made by theatre personnel. For example, the depictions mentioned above are not the same type of material as if the set designer, Ahlgrensson, had made a sketch of the exact same scene. The latter are related to the intentional level, while Haglund's drawing is his perception of the scene, regardless of the fact that the pictures could be rather similar. The intermediate level would have consisted of photographs, if one accepts that "the camera never lies". In the perception level can also be placed verbal descriptions of the pictorial material found in reviews.

Turning now to questions of the acting and the style of a play, we begin with the layer of intentions (box 4), and they can be found, at least partly, in the director's *mises-en-scène*. Here there is an important difference from later types of stagings. During this period, the director's task was to realize, insofar as possible, the intentions of the composer, librettist or in-theatre playwright, i.e. the creators. There were no expectations regarding independent interpretations by the director until the 1920s. *Mises-en-scène* from this period chiefly consisted of stage instructions in the libretto and sketches of how the cast was to stand in relation to the set. In his earlier operas, *Der fliegende Holländer* and *Tannhäuser*, Wagner himself supplied separate notes for



Figure 1. Lohengrin's arrival with the swan, Act I of *Lohengrin*, engraving by Robert Haglund. *Ny Illustrerad Tidning* 8/1874 (21 February).

how they should be staged, but from *Lohengrin* onwards, Wagner aban-



Figure 2. Lohengrin's arrival with the swan, Act I of *Lohengrin*, oil painting, Carl Grabow's ateljé, 1880s. Kungliga Operans konstsamling (Art Collection of the Royal Opera), Stockholm.

done this strategy.<sup>8</sup> Only some of the director's notes for Hedberg's stagings of Wagner have been preserved, but these belong to *Der fliegende Holländer*, which was staged two years before *Lohengrin*. Judging by these notes, however – which incidentally were his first for an opera – Hedberg assumed a very dependent position. Consisting mostly of a careful rendering of the existing stage directions, Hedberg's notes neither strengthen nor develop Wagner's ideas. The written instructions are accompanied by drawings which specify the characters' locations in relation to the newly-manufactured sets. Comparisons of Hedberg's *Lohengrin mise-en-scène* with his notes for *Carmen* or *Aida*, for instance, show that his growing experience and routine scarcely changed his way of writing *mises-en-scène*. Although respect for creators' wishes remained a dominant theme overall, individual directors demonstrated their respect in different ways. Hedberg's *mises-en-scènes*, for example, differed greatly from those of his predecessor, Ludvig Josephson, for *La traviata* and *L'Africaine*. Although both directors faithfully followed instructions, Josephson further developed and elaborated on the stage directions, while Hedberg only wrote down the stage directions in translated form.

Hedberg appears to have settled for a rather inconspicuous position in the Wagner stagings. Many aspects, such as the movements of the swan and the dove in *Lohengrin*, were left for Ahlgrensson, the set designer, and Lindström, the lead engineer, to resolve, and indeed, it was their efforts rather than Hedberg's that were highlighted in the reviews. Although machinery and lighting are linked to directing, it appears that Ahlgrensson and Lindström took charge of the arrangements where machinery played an important role. But there was one point where no-one but the director could take credit: the processions. They are plentiful in *Lohengrin*, and even though Hedberg's actual *mise-en-scène* has been lost, it is possible to map the processions through the use of set designs and lists of costumes for the chorus. In fact, had his *mise-en-scène* been found, it would probably not have added much

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8 Wagner [1903a], [1903b].

to the stage directions for the drama and the notes made by the stage manager in the translated manuscript. The director was at this point first and foremost an organizer rather than an interpreter of the piece, especially in the case of Hedberg. The emotional interpretation of the roles was generally left to the artists, which begs the question of just how one can ascertain an artist's intentions. Performers' testimony to that effect is quite scarce from that period and is confined mostly to concise notes in their personal scripts. In the case of *Lohengrin*, however, some information has in fact survived: in a few lines about the role that Fredrika Stenhammar wrote in a letter to her sister and in a newspaper article on the topic of the debate surrounding Wagner and *Lohengrin*, in which Oscar Arnoldson shared his view of the role, which he considered an honour to sing.<sup>9</sup>

Regarding the fictional layer of action and acting style (box 5), available material from this period is also scarce and can only be found in the drawings for the scenery made by the lead engineer and notes in the drama scripts<sup>10</sup> from the intentional layer. The perceptual actorial layer (box 6), in contrast, has more abundant material, with drawings and photographs from box 3, and considerable quantities of testimony and descriptions from reviews of the performance. Musical and vocal aspects in the intentional layer (box 7) are also very difficult to find. Although the full score used in the Swedish premiere of *Lohengrin* has been preserved,<sup>11</sup> it is difficult to use as a source since it has been used by several different conductors, all of whom made their own notations in it. Role copies could sometimes be found, and even if they are often passed on to other singers, it is normally possible to decide which singer made which notation based on the musical interpretation. In the case of *Lohengrin*, however, such role copies from the Swedish premiere do

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9 Fredrika Stenhammar > Elfrida André, 7 May 1877, Stenhammar 1958, 148; *Teater och musik* 13/1876; Rundberg 1952, 177.

10 In this case, it is the printed libretto of *Lohengrin* with annotations made by hand. Kungliga Teatrarnas pjässamlin [the play collection of the Royal Swedish Opera, Stockholm], L 85.

11 Full score of *Lohengrin* used in 1874 (Breitkopf & Härtel). Kungliga Teaterns Musikbibliotek (The Royal Swedish Opera, Music Library, Stockholm), L 5.

not exist. The fictional layer on the musical performance (box 8) does not exist at all for this time, since the only source for such material is recordings, which were impossible in 1874. In contrast, a good bit of material on contemporary perceptions of the opera is found in the form of reviews (box 9). These describe in detail how the performance sounded. Abundant descriptions of the singers' voices are found in other contexts as well. A goldmine of such descriptions is Frans Hedberg's *Svenska operasångare* (Swedish Opera Singers).<sup>12</sup>

### **The 1874 staging of *Lohengrin*: moments and aspects**

#### *Act I*

In 1874, Erik af Edholm (1817–1897) was the director of the Kungliga Teatern [the Royal Theatre] where opera and spoken theatre were under the same roof. Under his direction the company's finances were more balanced than before. There was plenty of money to invest in new stagings, and the need to re-use old sets in new productions was receding. Besides, the new operas demanded new sets, as they were less archetypal in that sense. Three new sets, conceived by Ahlgrensson, were in fact constructed for *Lohengrin*. The opera takes place in Antwerp (in today's Netherlands), in the 900s, shortly after Northern Europe had embraced Christianity, a location stylistically both gloomy and undeveloped. The grey area that still existed between paganism and Christianity also plays a crucial part in the work, which takes place chronologically on the border between the Ottonian and the Romanesque periods. The team was obviously keen to implement the creators' instructions as faithfully as possible with regard to the set design, but perhaps even more with the costumes.

Among the highlights of Ahlgrensson's work are the set for Act I and the second tableau in Act III, the riverfront. A number of cut-out backdrops with trees in the foreground and a lake backdrop created

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<sup>12</sup> Hedberg 1885.

a strong sense of depth on the stage (see Figures 1 and 2) – not far from the theatrical imagery of the 1700s. To enhance the illusion of Lohengrin’s arrival from afar towed by a swan on a seashell, the set designers created swans and boats in two different sizes. A small mannequin of Arnoldson’s Lohengrin was placed on the smaller boat. In the costume department, a minor copy of Arnoldson’s costume was created for the mannequin, with light blue sleeves, fake steel legs, gauntlets, blond hair and a swan helmet (see Figures 3 and 4).



Figure 3. Lohengrin mannequin and the little swan, 1874. Photo: Mats Bäcker, Kungliga Operan (Royal Opera), Stockholm.

The lead engineer, Lindström, constructed two grooves behind the boards that made up part of the lake setting. With the help of winches, the Lohengrin mannequin was pulled along the stage on its miniature swan and boat from stage left to stage right just before the chorus exclaimed, “Ein Schwan.” After crossing the stage, the rig exited stage right, only to reappear shortly thereafter in human form, slightly closer to the audience, via rail. The swan came to a halt behind one of the boards that constituted the lakeshore, where Lohengrin could step through one of the openings in the cut-out forest backdrops.

After Lohengrin had sung his famous farewell to the swan, the bird continued its journey by rail, towing the seashell, and exiting stage left, giving the impression that it was returning home. Throughout this scene the front part of the stage was kept darker, while the rear, that



Figure 4. Oscar Arnoldsson in the role costume of Lohengrin, 1874. Photo: Gösta Florman, Musik- och teaterbiblioteket, Helledays samling, HI 089.

is, the lake, was flooded with limelight, reinforcing the illusion of the supernatural aspects of the scene. A darker downstage and brighter upstage was a time-tested and effective technique, sometimes referred to as diorama technique, with an almost century-long history. Limelight was a slightly newer invention, from 1825. It consisted of a cylinder of quicklime that radiated light when heated with a gas flame and could be directed through optics. It was used to simulate abundant sun- and moonlight and emitted a relatively warm glow. According to Hedberg and several critics, Lohengrin's entrance was greeted with a round of

applause, and even the critics themselves remarked that it was very artfully done.<sup>13</sup> Only one disapproved, calling the constructions “mechanical puppet theatre”.<sup>14</sup>

As previously mentioned, the emotional expression of the character was usually left to the singer, who was responsible for the musical proficiency and the acting, especially as directed by Hedberg. Regarding the musical aspects of the production, Hedberg often fell short, but considering that Wagner’s operas were new to Swedish conditions, they may have presented a problem for any director lacking musical training. *Lohengrin* contains several passages in which the music adds extra dimensions to the text, one of which occurs shortly after Lohengrin has left the swan and addresses Elsa. It may appear that they fall in love rather quickly, but according to Wagner himself, that moment occurs at a specific point in the music. After taking leave of the swan and greeting the king and the people, Lohengrin turns to Elsa and asks whether she would like his protection. Elsa, who, according to the stage directions, has been spellbound, is roused by his words and throws herself at his feet, overwhelmed with joy, exclaiming “Mein Held, mein Retter! Nimm mich hin! Dir geb’ ich alles was ich bin!”<sup>15</sup> This line is followed by the music from Elsa’s theme, which undergoes a fairly advanced modulation to A-flat major. According to Wagner, this modulation represents the expression in her eyes, which goes directly to Lohengrin’s heart and kindles the love in his soul.<sup>16</sup> Lohengrin, who until now has sounded rather deliberate, speaks from the depths of his heart and with, “great warmth” as noted in the instructions, asks, “Wenn ich im Kampfe für dich siege, willst du, daß ich dein Gatte sei?”<sup>17</sup> Such a sequence demands the ability to “read” and feel the music, but if the

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13 Frans Hedberg > Fritz Ahlgrensson, 25 January 1874, Kungliga Biblioteket; Post- och Inrikes Tidningar, 23 January 1874; *Dagens Nyheter*, 23 January 1874; *Aftonbladet*, 23 January 1874.

14 *Stockholms Dagblad*, 27 January 1874.

15 “My knight, my saviour! Take me to you; I give to you all that I am!”

16 Westernhagen 1978, 109–110.

17 “If I win this fight for you, do you wish me to become your husband?”

director is unaccustomed to interpreting the music, he will naturally have difficulties in directing this scene.

It was thus likely that it was Fredrika Stenhammar and Oscar Arnoldson themselves, as Elsa and Lohengrin, who interpreted the music and conveyed it through their acting. Perhaps they could sense through the music exactly what Wagner had intended. Stenhammar at least appears to have been attracted by more profound ways of portraying a role musically, and judging by the reviews, the role seems to have had a liberating effect on her ability to link singing and acting: "A noble musical presentation is what one is accustomed to from her, but seldom has this fused with the acting in such a complete fashion as now."<sup>18</sup> Thus, Wagner, through his many directions and innovative compositional style, brought words and music together in an inseparable symbiosis in which the singing and acting came ever closer to one another in accordance with his ideas of *Gesamtkunstwerk*. This enhanced the illusion in all layers, not just the pictorial, and combined with the music of Wagner, the enhanced illusion should probably be best referred to as suggestive. In the case of Stenhammar, Hedberg talks about the "the inner expression of truth and spirit" which she chose instead of a more gesticulated way of acting, especially in her role as Elsa.<sup>19</sup> Although she was somewhat stereotyped in her scenic technique, with not too prominent mimetic skills and repeated gestures that led to a somewhat monotonous impression, as Hedberg described her, all that was forgotten, owing to her sincerity and spiritual expression.

"Spectator", writing in the newspaper *Aftonbladet*, gave examples of Stenhammar's repeated gestures: "Are there not other ways of expressing emotion than the stereotypical heaving of the breast as if one had been running and was out of breath?"<sup>20</sup> The body language she used, perhaps a little too much, was most likely typical for a female ac-

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18 *Stockholms Dagblad*, 3 February 1874: "Ett ädelt musikaliskt föredrag är man alltid van att få höra af henne, men sällan synes för oss åtminstone detta hos henne hafva sammanmält med spelet till en sådan helgjutenhet som här."

19 Hedberg 1885, 154.

20 *Aftonbladet*, 24 December 1874.



Figures 5 and 6. Fredrika Stenhammar in the role costume of Elsa, 1874. Photo: Gösta Florman, Musik- och teaterbiblioteket, Helledays samling, H7 176–177.

tor depicting outrage. In addition, “Spectator” noted that Stenhammar was the best suited of all the cast for singing Wagner, with her strong passion and almost crazed clarity. Her voice, big and warm in timbre, added to that suitability without doubt, and in that respect, she and Carl Fredrik Lundqvist should be regarded as the first true Wagnerian singers in Sweden. It was to be the beginning of a long and successful tradition.

### *Act II*

As mentioned earlier, Ahlgrensson took a keen interest in the lighting design, and also had definite ideas about how best to portray his scenic imagery. The process was complicated by the fact that he had simultaneous commitments to August Bournonville, director at the

Royal Opera in Copenhagen, at least while the *Lohengrin* staging was being prepared. Ahlgrensson's definite opinions can be explained by his own experiences staging the very same opera in Copenhagen in 1870, and he therefore knew how the scenic imagery would be most impressive. He had been inspired – but unfortunately also thwarted – by Bournonville, who in his turn had seen the staging of *Lohengrin* in Munich in 1869.<sup>21</sup> Ahlgrensson was able to bring all these experiences and knowledge to the staging in Stockholm. According to the lead engineer's journal, the second act set was arranged on the stage on 22 November 1873, one month before the premiere, when Ahlgrensson apparently was in Stockholm.<sup>22</sup> The next day the arrangement was changed at his request, and on 8 January the following year the set of the bridal chamber in Act III was also changed at "his request". What he wanted to change and what he wanted to accomplish with the lighting can be traced in a letter from director Hedberg to Ahlgrensson in Copenhagen, dated only a few days after the Stockholm premiere.<sup>23</sup> The letter is one of the very few documents from this period that provides a clear glimpse of the staging process. Hedberg reports to Ahlgrensson on the implementation of some of the changes he had requested:

Regarding the lights in the castle and the lonely light in the third act, there was not enough time for the changes: but in the 2nd act they are blocked so as to avoid shadows on the backdrops, and Otto Lindström has created a contraption with a mobile lamp that makes the light look lively and vivid.<sup>24</sup>

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21 Heiner 1980, 363–367.

22 Maskinmästarjournal (Lead engineer's journal), Kungliga Teatrarnas arkiv, D3AA vol. 7, 22 December 1873 – 22 January 1874.

23 Frans Hedberg > Fritz Ahlgrensson, 25 January 1874, Kungliga Biblioteket, Kempe Collection.

24 Ibid. "Hvad ljuset i borgen och det ensamma ljuset i tredje akten beträffar så hann der ingen ändring göras; men i 2dra akten är de väl bortmaskerade så att inga skuggspel på fonder förekomma, och till rummet har Otto Lindström gjort en inrättning med en kringgående lampa, som gör att ljuslågan ser rörlig och lefvande ut." Otto Lindström was

The “lights in the castle” refer to the beginning of Act II, where the audience should be able to see into the castle of Antwerp with the palace in the background, with the women’s dwelling on the left and the church on the right. The windows of the castle should be brightly illuminated by lights on the inside and accompanied by sounds of festive music featuring horns and trombones. The festivities should constitute a strong contrast to the darkness on the outside, where Ortrud and Telramund are sitting, dressed in brown, tattered clothing and with gloomy faces after the defeat in Act I. The illuminated windows were achieved by placing lighting screens behind the castle windows, but they seem to have caused problems by casting shadows on the background paintings. The problem was solved by placing smaller masks, depicting the castle and the city walls, on both sides of the entrance gate. The solution is documented in Hedberg’s letters and in the ground plan (Figure 7), which shows the result.

Hedberg’s letter is a response to an earlier missive by Ahlgrensson, which has unfortunately gone missing. The letter reached Hedberg the day before the premiere and probably contained a variety of last-minute instructions and requests, which Hedberg tried to satisfy as much as possible. But Ahlgrensson’s requests regarding the Act II lighting can be traced in another way. In a note to the directors of the Royal Theatre in Copenhagen shortly before the *Lohengrin* premiere in 1870, Ahlgrensson was bitter about the lighting not following his design and about Bournonville’s taking over and messing up the lighting in both Acts II and III. Regarding Act II, Ahlgrensson wrote:

The difficulties of arranging this set for night and morning light are obvious to anyone who understands these things. To compromise and not destroy either of those two effects, one paints something between, which can be lighted with both blue and red lights. Thus, the dawn need not come before the trumpets sound. The dawn light is toned down, so that when the procession arrives, everything is as clear as it can be,

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the lighting designer and should not be confused with Per (Peter Fredrik) Lindström, the lead engineer.

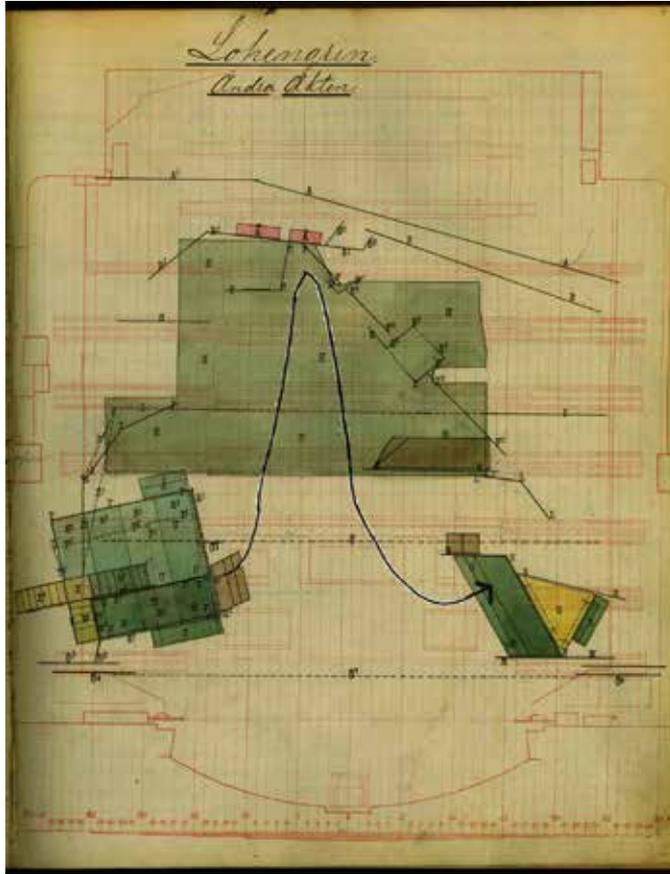


Figure 7. Ground plan for *Lohengrin*, Act II, with the route of procession drawn by Göran Gademan, Kungliga Teatrarnas arkiv, D3BA vol. 11, 45–46.

with only a slight red shimmer. This lighting then stays until the end of the act. The image is now poetic and beautiful, and the characters, in their separate groups, create a pleasing effect in front of the toned-down background.<sup>25</sup>

25 Ahlgrensson's note to the directors of the Royal Theatre in Copenhagen, 2 May 1870, Det Kongelige Teaters Arkiv og Bibliotek, Copenhagen: "Svårigheten af att arrangera denna dekoration både för natt och morgonbelysning inses lätt af den som förstår saken. För att gå en medelväg och icke förstöra någon af effekterna, målar man ett mellanting, som låter sig belysas såväl med blå som röda sken. Här behöfver ej morgonrodnaden komma, förr än trumpeterna höras. Rodnaden häfves så småningom, så att vid processionens an-

Apparently, the collaboration with Hedberg was better than with Bournonville, and Hedberg writes that Ahlgrensson's instructions were obeyed as far as circumstances allowed. Regarding Act II, Hedberg himself tried to monitor the lighting design as much as possible, and in his letter he remarked "it turned out reasonably well".<sup>26</sup> The lighting journal confirms that the crew in Stockholm were more inclined to follow Ahlgrensson's instructions than the crew in Copenhagen.

After dawn has turned into broad daylight, as Ahlgrensson writes in his letter above, the large wedding procession enters in Act II. Hedberg had quite a considerable cast to direct: in addition to the soloists, there were up to 105 persons on stage in some scenes.<sup>27</sup> Leading the procession were four slaves, sixteen noblemen, nine commoners, thirty soldiers, thirteen noble ladies and eight common ladies on stage. At the same time, as four noblemen are trying to hide Telramund among themselves, four pages are seen on the balcony of the women's dwelling. Shortly thereafter, the pages happily come down and assume their positions in front of the palace in the middle of the background. The crowd becomes aware of the boys and moves towards the front. The pages ask the people to make way for Elsa, who is on her way to the church. The pages make the people create a wide passage from the women's dwelling to the church and then they take their places on the church steps. Four more pages exit the women's dwelling and follow the previous ones: they take their places in front of the palace and wait for the procession, which they are to escort to the church.

The grand wedding march commences, and now the first of the bridesmaids are seen at the door to the women's dwelling. At the same time the church gate is opened on the opposite side of the stage. All

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komst allt är så ljusst det kan bli, men med bibehållande af et rödt skär. Denna belysning blifver stående till aktens slut. Taflan gör sig nu poetisk och vacker och figurerna göra, i sina skiljda grupperingar, mot den dämpade bakgrunden, en behaglig verkan."

26 Frans Hedberg > Fritz Ahlgrensson 25 January 1874, Kungliga Biblioteket, Kempe Collection.

27 Lists of costumes for *Lohengrin*, Kungliga Teatrarnas arkiv, F3CD nr. 669.

eight bridesmaids walk towards the palace from where they are escorted to the church by the four pages. (For the route, see Figure 7.) The noblemen who have blocked the passage yield to the pages, and the procession can continue to the church. In front of the church steps, where a bishop is standing to receive the procession, the bridesmaids make way for Elsa. The procession continues, and the audience sees, among other figures, four choirboys with censers. At the end of the procession is Elsa, wearing a white silk dress with gold embroidery, tiara and veil (see Figures 5 and 6). She is greeted by the people, and after yet another group of women in the procession files through, Ortrud arrives. She has exchanged her previous brown beggars' robes for a rich outfit of red and brown velvet. Her face betrays a growing inner wrath, and the women closest to her try in horror to keep a certain distance, while only two or four women follow her. When Elsa puts her foot on the church steps, Ortrud suddenly leaps forward, accompanied by jarring dissonance in the orchestra, and pushes Elsa back by taking her place on the steps.

Ortrud's aggression leads to a violently dramatic showdown between the two women, where Elsa defends herself from Ortrud's accusations that she is hiding the name of the people's hero. The dispute was partly excluded in the Swedish premiere, most likely because some passages in Ortrud's part were too high and too demanding for the mezzo soprano, Thérèse Saxenberg.<sup>28</sup> The argument is disrupted by the opening of the palace doors in the background. The women in the choir call for help, while the trumpets sound the signal for the king's arrival. In the ensuing chaos, men shout to make way for the king, who has been seen in the background. The king and Lohengrin exit the palace, accompanied by nine squires, a standard-bearer, two young men and thirteen knights. The confusion at the church is so enormous that the king and Lohengrin must squeeze through the crowd to find out what has happened. Thus, the procession ends, and the rest of the act consists of a long finale where the main conflict, namely whether Elsa will ask the forbidden question

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28 Swedish libretto for *Lohengrin*, Kungliga Teatrarnas arkiv, KTA Pjäs: L 85, 31–32.

about her bridegroom's background, deepens.

All these scenes build on Wagner's instructions, and the staging documents show that those instructions have been observed down to the last detail – that much can be asserted even though Hedberg's *mise-en-scène* has been lost. Nevertheless, a talented organizer was needed. The processions needed to be arranged, the chorus and extras cast in their roles, the order of the participants in the procession decided, the entrances and exits mapped, and finally, the procession timed according to the music – neither lingering too long nor ending too soon. The reviews and reception show clearly that Hedberg succeeded well in *Lohengrin*, which would not be the case for him five years later in the Swedish premiere of *Tannhäuser*.

### *Act III*

In Act III, the set with the bridal chamber once again presented the audience with an advanced lighting design. According to the lighting journal, the crew used limelight for the moonlight, which filtered in

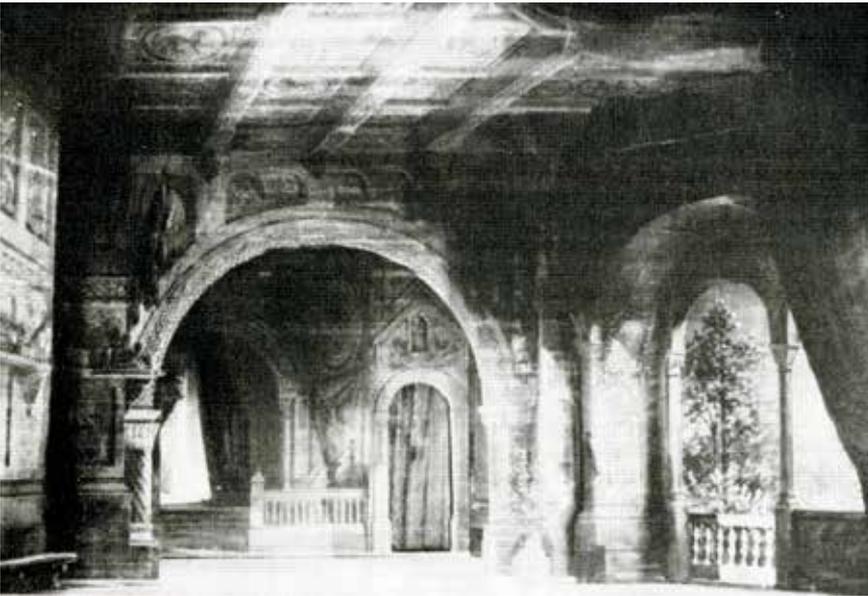


Figure 8. The Bridal Chamber, Act III:1 of *Lohengrin*, photographed scenery by Fritz Ahlgrensson, Scenkonstmuseet.

through the window. In the beginning of the act the light in the room was very faint: one-quarter of the maximum on the white and blue ramps, which was increased to half strength when the pages entered with torches. This was the moment when the famous Bridal Chorus was performed and Elsa and Lohengrin were accompanied in after the marriage ceremony. The “moonlight circle”, i.e. the limelight through the window, was also increased, and after the Bridal March was finished and Elsa was left alone with Lohengrin, the ramp was lowered once again and the moonlight circle turned off.<sup>29</sup> The scene undoubtedly created a poetic feeling, which can be deduced from the photographs of the set (see Figure 8). Hedberg wrote in a letter to Ahlgrensson that “the bridal chamber in particular has met with wide approval and rightly so; because in my view it is something of the best of all the good things you have created”.<sup>30</sup> He also wrote that “your sets are lauded by everyone”, but it seems he had not correctly read the opera director af Edholm’s most private thoughts. One week before the premiere, af Edholm had written in his diary: “At half 6 pm *Lohengrin* is being rehearsed with shoddy sets by Ahlgrensson and a weak cast, with the exception of Arnoldson and Mrs Stenhammar in the leading roles.”<sup>31</sup> Perhaps the stern and often disinterested director changed his mind when he was able to view the scenic images in their final lighting. Or was the entry a sign of a general irritation with Ahlgrensson, whom he viewed as a troublemaker who, since *L’Africaine* seven years earlier, would do anything to push through his ideas? Ahlgrensson’s request that the whole set be assembled so that he could change some details in the lighting was sure to create bad blood. Ahlgrensson argued, often against the opinion of everyone else, about the importance of the lighting for the scenic images to look their best and become an active part of the play. His views were vindicated in a review of *Tannhäuser*

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29 Lightjournal for *Lohengrin*, Kungliga Teatrarnas arkiv, D3C vol. 2, 132.

30 Frans Hedberg > Fritz Ahlgrensson, 25 January 1874, Kungliga Biblioteket, Kempe Collection: “i synnerhet har gemaket slagit an och detta med rätta; ty i mitt tycke är det bland det bästa af det myckna goda du producerat i dina dar”.

31 af Edholm 1948, 27.

in 1878, when he had been replaced by Christian Jansson. The critic in *Dagens Nyheter* presented a different view than af Edholm's: "The Venusberg [...] should have evoked the painters' imagination to create something better. If only they had called for Ahlgrensson's brush!" the critic exclaimed.<sup>32</sup>

But af Edholm's comment may also be read in other ways. It seems as if he had objections to the cast, with the exception of the leading roles of Lohengrin and Elsa, possibly not without reason: Fritz Arlberg, at the time the biggest proponent of Wagner's music dramas and a translator, director, singing instructor and writer, tragically had a voice that was too small. He was regarded as a very talented actor, but Wagner's music demands considerable vocal resources, which Arlberg unfortunately lacked. This was also commented on in reviews of his performance as Telramund, where two of the critics were uncommonly negative about him: "Perhaps it is Mr Arlberg's intention to assume the look and gestures of a somewhat simple, bullied husband. It does not make a romantic impression", wrote the critic for *Post- och Inrikes Tidningar*,<sup>33</sup> while the reviewer for *Dagens Nyheter* commented on his makeup, which should have been "a bit more noble".<sup>34</sup> Arlberg resigned from the Royal Opera during the next season,<sup>35</sup> and his role as Telramund was given to Carl Fredrik Lundqvist, who had previously played the Herald. Lundqvist had a strong voice as demanded by the role.

The fact that Thérèse Saxenberg did not meet the vocal demands as Ortrud was implied above in connection with Act II, where certain passages of her music had to be omitted. A few of the critics also

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32 *Dagens Nyheter*, 5 December 1878: "Venusberget [...] borde ha kunnat elda målarens fantasi till att åstadkomma någonting bättre. Om man dertill hade anmodat Ahlgrenssons pensel!"

33 *Post- och Inrikes Tidningar*, 23 January 1874: "Måhända är det med afsigt som hr Arlberg antagit utseende och uttryck af en något enfaldig, kujonerad äkta man. Romantiskt intryck gör detta icke."

34 *Dagens Nyheter*, 23 January 1874: "något mera nobel".

35 One year later Arlberg went to the opening of the Bayreuth Festival, from where he, as the only Swedish participant, supplied reports to *Nya Dagligt Allehanda* and had the opportunity to meet Wagner in person.



Figure 9. Carl Fredrik Lundqvist as Telramund (or alternatively as Gudmund in *Harald Viking* by Andreas Hallén). Photo: Gösta Florman. Musik- och teaterbiblioteket, Helleysdays samling, H6 026.

noted that her gesticulation for this evil character was over the top. Further, they wrote, she should stop rolling her eyes in Act I, where she was mostly observing and not singing: “If madame Stenhammar heaves with her breast, mademoiselle Saxenberg has chosen to roll her eyes every time she shows emotion. Her apparition is, however, majestic”, “Spectator” wrote in *Aftonbladet*.<sup>36</sup> Unlike the role of Telramund,

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<sup>36</sup> *Aftonbladet*, 24 December 1874: ”Om fru Stenhammar stormar med sin barm, så har fröken Saxenberg valt sina ögon till ständiga rörelseorgan för sina affekter. Hennes apparition är deremot majestätisk.”

it would take several decades before the challenging role of Ortrud would be sung by a singer with the right vocal resources. That af Edholm thought the cast was weak may also have had something to do with the king. Normally, the role would have gone to the leading bass, Anders Willman (1834–1898), but for some unknown reason, it was given to the less experienced Hjalmar Håkansson (1844–1901).

That af Edholm would exclude Oscar Arnoldson and Fredrika Stenhammar from his criticism was natural. Each gave the performance of a lifetime. Neither was regarded as a very good actor, but here they had roles that suited them perfectly. Stenhammar with her immense, warm voice managed to bring the singing, acting and gesticulation into perfect symbiosis, as was pointed out above in connection with Act I. But Oscar Arnoldson also made the title role his own and was associated with it long after his death in 1881. He contributed vastly to the popularity of the work and continued to sing the role for a long time. Despite not having a very strong voice – Lohengrin is often considered Wagner’s most lyrical tenor part – Arnoldson was complimented for his beautiful singing and “noble, calm and worthy acting”, and in the elegiac parts for his “deeply moving performance” where with his noble manner and moderation he met the demands of the role.<sup>37</sup> It is easy to conclude that it was these two, Stenhammar and Arnoldson, who contributed the most to breaking down the antipathy towards Wagner’s music dramas in Sweden. Although the debate concerning Wagner culminated in *Lohengrin* in 1874, it was in the proponents’ favour that the reviews were very positive and the audiences large. Wagner had landed in Sweden, and the Swedish Wagner tradition had begun.

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The conclusions that could be drawn from the discussion above are that a production from a distant time like this could very well be reconstructed without modern recordings or films, which, of course, did

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<sup>37</sup> *Dagens Nyheter*, 30 January 1874; *Aftonbladet*, 3 February 1874: ”ädel hållning, lugnt och värdigt spel” and ”djupt rörande uttryck” respectively.

not then exist. The material that has been preserved, for instance, at the Royal Theaters' Archive in Stockholm, is often very full and detailed. Even if the director's *mise-en-scène* is lacking, that information could be found in other sources such as the lead engineer's plan and the printed libretto with annotations added by hand. All that material could then be combined with information from reviews to determine how the production was received – the perceptual level at that time is almost always found in newspapers.

It is also extremely important to classify the materials – even the pictorial material – to ascertain what material belongs to which level – the intentional, the fictional or the perceptual – because the level determines the purpose for which the material should be used. However, as we can see, the middle layer, the fictional one, turns out to be a rather empty space; through it, the other two layers – intentional and perceptual – are drawn. In itself the middle level is not so interesting, but rather serves as a vehicle for determining whether the intentions of the production team and the artists were effectively conveyed to the audience (most often the testimony for this is in the form of critical reviews). Despite the huge success of *Lohengrin*'s production in 1874, it was not always the effects that the production team was striving for that the reviewers appreciated.

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# The first Swedish performance of a Verdi opera and the Italian Opera Company in Stockholm 1848–1849

GÖRAN TEGNÉR

**Mindre Theatern.**  
 Med Höfvederbörligt tillstånd gifwer het Kungliga Operas  
 Sällskapet från Köpenhamn, i dag Dagblad den 23 denne:  
**Ernani,**  
 Opera Seria i 4 Akter, Musik af Verdi.  
 Personerne:  
 Ernani Sir Francesco Cioffi.  
 Don Carlos, Konung af Spanien " Luigi Della Santa.  
 Don Ray Gomez de Silva " Gian Carlo Casanova  
 Elvira Signora Rosina Penco.  
 Giovanna, hennes Wäntinna " Gudom.  
 Don Riccardo, Kunglig Officer Signor Giuseppe.  
 Zago Vincenzo Galli.  
 Rösware, Middare, Gofdamer, Pajer, Soldater ic.  
 Spektaklet börjas klok. half 8 och slutas omkring klockan  
 10 e. m.  
 Sångskillet till Operan på svenska språket säljes i Biljet.-  
 Kontoret a 8 R. Bk.  
 De som antecknat sig till stället, förde afhämta besamma  
 från kl. 10 till 1 f. m., i Theaterns Biljettkontor, hwareff de  
 öfwerblifna säljas från kl. 9 f. m.

Figure 1. Announcement in *Stockholms Dagblad*, 23 August 1848.

## Introduction

Between July 1848 and the beginning of June 1849, in a privately owned theatre in Stockholm, seven Italian singers staged twelve Italian operas, nine of which had never before been performed in Sweden. These singers and their conductor came from an Italian opera company at the Court Theatre in Copenhagen. They managed to employ an orchestra, a choir and walk-ons, rehearse them all, and stage twelve

different Italian operas. One of these was *Ernani*, the first Verdi opera ever to be performed in Sweden. My aim in this article is to show how all this was possible, demonstrate that the Stockholm performance of *Ernani* can be reconstructed to a certain degree and explore the public and critical reactions to this venture.

On the 23 August 1848 as well as several days earlier, notices appeared in Stockholm newspapers announcing a performance of Verdi's opera *Ernani*, which had premiered in Venice in 1844.<sup>1</sup> This was not only the first performance of *Ernani* in Sweden, it was also the first performance of any Verdi opera in the country. The performance was not, however, taking place at the Kungliga Teatern (the Royal Theatre) featuring Swedish artists, but rather it was staged in a private theatre – Mindre teatern (the Minor Theatre) – using Italian singers (with one exception), or, as the group called themselves, “the Italian Opera Company” (Det Italienska Operasällskapet).<sup>2</sup>

An Italian opera company (Det italienske Operaselskab) at the Court Theatre in Copenhagen had its start in 1841, where it was active until 1854. Its undertakings, and also those of the Italian Opera in Berlin, have been thoroughly investigated by the Danish musicologist Gerhard Schepelern, but sources not known to him broaden – and perhaps complicate – the picture of the activities in Stockholm.<sup>3</sup> The most important source is the archive left in Stockholm by one of the singers, the tenor Francesco Ciaffei (1815–1894). Ciaffei stayed on in Stockholm after the conclusion of the season in early June of 1849, performing at the Royal Theatre and presenting concerts of his own in Stockholm and other Swedish cities. When he departed for London in June of 1851, he left behind some 400 letters, his Italian contracts covering his career from his debut in 1839 until 1847, accounts from 1846 onwards, as well as documents concerning his concerts in Sweden, down to lists of compli-

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1 *Stockholms Dagblad*, 23 August 1848.

2 Schepelern 1976, 268–276.

3 Schepelern 1976; Tegnér 2011, 26–42.

mentary tickets.<sup>4</sup> Another important source is the collection of scores used by the Italian company – all belonging to Ciaffei – which he left at the Royal Theatre on leaving Stockholm in 1851. The scores do not seem to have been previously studied, yet they represent an important source for Italian musical practice in general and for the practices of the Italian Opera Company in Stockholm in particular.<sup>5</sup>

The performances staged in Stockholm by this group of Italian singers must be regarded as impressive undertakings, but the details are not discussed by Schepelern. Letters, receipts and so on among the documents left by Ciaffei shed new light on the company's activities, and there is also much information in contemporary press reports that was not consulted by Schepelern.

I will take the premiere of *Ernani* as my chief example in discussing the company's achievements, as Verdi was the only great contemporary Italian opera composer not to have been introduced into Sweden earlier. Moreover, two of the singers had taken part in early productions in Italy of this very opera.

In addition to the opera's seven characters, the principals being Ernani, Don Carlos, Don Ruy Gomez de Silva and Elvira, there were also "robbers, knights, ladies in waiting, pages, soldiers etc" ("Röfware, Riddare, Hofdamer, Pager, Soldater etc."), performed by members of the chorus and walk-ons. In the newspaper announcement of the performance (Figure 1) the orchestra is not mentioned; neither is the conductor or the stage manager.

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4 Tegnér 2015.

5 Ciaffei's documents are preserved today in two repositories: 1) Musikverket. Teater- och musikbiblioteket (the Archives of the Music and Theatre Library of Sweden; hereafter MTB), Stora utländska klippsamlingen (The Large Collection of Foreign Press Cuttings); and 2) Kungliga Teatrarnas Arkiv (the Royal Opera Archives; hereafter KTA), Ö 1, vols 3–5, Ciaffei (Documents concerning persons employed by the Royal Theatre). Ciaffei's scores, "Ciaffeis samling" (The Ciaffei Collection), are kept in MTB. See also the section *Score and Orchestra* and footnote 64 below. For this article I have had the opportunity to study only one opera in the collection, *L'Elisir d'amore*, in seeking indications of the company's performance practice, but I intend to study the other operas performed by the Italian Opera Company as well. Scores for *Ernani*, which I focus on here, are not found in this collection, with the exception of the choral parts.

The libretto for the premiere in Venice gave the requirements for the characters in detail: the chorus and extras should portray rebel mountaineers and bandits, knights and members of de Silva's household, maids in attendance on Elvira, knights of Don Carlo's suite, members of the "Holy Alliance", as well as Spanish and German nobles and their ladies. There were also walk-on parts: mountaineers and bandits, electors and nobles of the court of the Holy Roman Empire, pages at the imperial court and German soldiers, ladies, and followers, male and female.<sup>6</sup> The announcement also mentions that a programme containing the plot of the opera in Swedish would be available for purchase.<sup>7</sup> In addition there must have been posters distributed around town. (One of the company's posters has been preserved, although not the *Ernani* poster.)

The singers were a group of seven belonging to the Italian Opera Company in residence at the Court Theatre in Copenhagen, and they had arrived with their conductor in the middle of June the summer of 1848. With its performances in Stockholm, the company's aim must have been to compete with the Royal Theatre, despite its vastly superior technical and economic resources.

The Stockholm public was, of course, already familiar with modern Italian opera, given the Royal Theatre's highly varied repertoire, even if the earlier orientation had been towards French opera.<sup>8</sup> Rossini's *Il Turco in Italia* was premiered in 1824, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* in 1825, *Tancredi* in 1829, *La Donna del lago* in 1831, and *La Gazza ladra* in 1843.<sup>9</sup> Of those, only *Il Barbiere* remained in the repertoire.<sup>10</sup> Bellini's *La*

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6 "Montanari ribelli e banditi, Cavalieri, Familiari di Silva, Ancelle di Elvira, Cavalieri del re, Personaggi della Lega, Nobili Spagnoli ed allemanni, Donne spagnole ed alemanne." *Ernani*, libretto for the premiere at La Fenice in Venice in 1844, quoted and translated in Budden 1973, 138.

7 *Ernani*, Opera i Fyra akter, af Maestro Verdi (Stockholm 1848).

8 In the 19th century, this meant Adam, Auber, Boieldieu, Dalayrac, Isouard, Meyerbeer etc; Mozart had a strong position in the repertoire after a late introduction, as did Weber. For details see Strömbeck, Hofsten & Ralf 1974, 90–96.

9 Strömbeck, Hofsten & Ralf 1974, 91–95.

10 *Il Barbiere* was performed almost every season following its premiere. *Il Turco in Italia*

*Straniera* was premiered in 1841, and never revived, followed by *Norma* just a few months later the same year; *La Sonnambula* was premiered in 1843.<sup>11</sup> Of works by Donizetti, *Lucia di Lammermoor* and *L'Elisir d'amore* were finally premiered in 1840, followed by *Anna Bolena* in 1844 and *La Fille du régiment* in 1845.<sup>12</sup> The Donizetti operas especially were quickly established as among the most popular in the repertoire. Jenny Lind starred in the first Swedish performances of several of these Italian operas in the years 1839–1844, often with the Italian baritone Giovanni Belletti. All the Italian operas were sung in Swedish, as were all the operas presented at the Royal Theatre. In the season preceding the visit of the Italian Opera Company to Stockholm, from December 1847 until April 1848, Jenny Lind sang in 24 performances, made up of *La Fille du régiment*, *L'Elisir d'amore*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *La Sonnambula*, *Norma* and *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*.<sup>13</sup> In addition, there were eleven performances of *Il barbiere* and *L'Elisir* by the regular artists of the Royal Theatre, making a total of 35 performances of Italian operas during the season 1847–1848. Plays were also performed on the same stage, meaning that not all performances were operas, and concerts were given as well. In all, performances of Italian operas during that season amounted to 61 per cent of the operas given. There was indeed a demand for Italian opera in Stockholm.

The Italian Opera Company thus started its season in Stockholm just a few months after an Italian-dominated season at the Royal Theatre, and the public must have had, fresh in memory, performances of *Il Barbiere*, *L'Elisir*, and *Lucia di Lammermoor* sung by one of the

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was still performed in the season 1829–30, and had two revivals in the 1840s. *Tancredi* was performed 16 times until the season 1834–35, but not thereafter, whereas *La Donna del lago* was performed 18 times until the season 1836–37. *La Gazza ladra* had 6 performances in 1843, with no revivals. See Strömbeck, Hofsten & Ralf 1974, 91–95.

11 *La straniera* had 9 performances in the year of its premiere, but was never revived. *Norma* was quite popular, with a peak in 1842–1843. *La Sonnambula* was performed 23 times in the year of its premiere and revived for 4 performances in the season 1847–1848. See Strömbeck, Hofsten & Ralf 1974, 92ff.

12 Strömbeck, Hofsten & Ralf 1974, 94–95.

13 Posters preserved in the KTA.

world's most renowned sopranos. The first performance by the company, on 3 July 1848, was Donizetti's *Don Pasquale*, followed a week later by the same composer's *Lucia di Lammermoor*. On the 15th of July, just five days later, there was a third new opera, again by Donizetti, *L'Elisir d'amore*. Two weeks after that, Bellini's *Beatrice di Tenda* followed, and, eleven days later, a fifth premiere, Rossini's *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*. All performances were well received by the press and the public. Thus, the performance of *Ernani* on 23 August 1848 was the company's sixth premiere in some seven weeks and, according to the critic of *Aftonbladet*, after a rehearsal time of about eight days.<sup>14</sup>

For all of these performances preceding *Ernani* there had been sets, an orchestra, a chorus, additional Swedish singers, probably extras, programmes with the plot translated into Swedish (and in some cases Italian/Swedish librettos), announcements in the local newspapers and posters placed around town. Not only did the company perform twelve operas, but it also staged a new opera, one composed in Sweden – *Cristina di Svezia* – by the company's conductor Jacopo Foroni, with a libretto by one of the singers, Gian Carlo Casanova, who was also an experienced librettist.<sup>15</sup>

Here, I begin by presenting short biographies of the singers (and some general opinions of their voices) and the conductor. I then examine the different factors necessary for staging and performing an opera: score and orchestra, sets, costumes and stage direction, chorus, musical direction and prompter. Finally, I summarise the opinions of the critics, who also reported the public's reactions to the performances.

### The singers and conductor

During their stay in Stockholm, the singers in the Italian Opera Company (Det Italienska Operasällskapet), as they called themselves from the beginning, became very popular with the Stockholm public.

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<sup>14</sup> *Aftonbladet*, 24 August 1848.

<sup>15</sup> Schepelern 1976, 267–276.

One important source for gauging the singers' experiences prior to their visit to Stockholm are the short biographies published in one of the so-called theatre calendars (sometimes called almanacs), which were published each year and containing not only facts and figures on the days of the week, the phases of the moon, trade fairs and so on, but also information about the most important theatres in Stockholm and their personnel, as well as biographies of singers and actors. From the titles of these calendars (which made allusions to fashion, jewellery and the like), it can be inferred that they were chiefly intended for a feminine public. In a calendar for 1849 (written in 1848), an anonymous writer published biographical sketches of the Italian Opera Company's singers. The sources for those biographies must have been the singers themselves.<sup>16</sup>

Not only were the biographies of the company's singers available to the Stockholm public, but so were their portraits: in the summer of 1849 a portfolio containing lithographic portraits went on sale in Stockholm bookshops (Figure 2). The portraits were not only available for purchase, but also were given away – a marketing ploy in use a little more than a decade before the arrival of *cartes de visite* photographs, the size of a visiting card. These lithographs – a common feature in this period – were available in bookshops, or, signed by the artists, given to friends and fans.<sup>17</sup>

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16 In Tegnér (2011) I wrongly attributed the biographies to the author F. A. Dahlgren, who later (after 1848) became a dramatist at the Royal Swedish Theatre. In a copy of that calendar at the National Library of Sweden, Stockholm, a librarian (probably G.E. Klemming, before 1878) wrote: The biographies of the foreign actors have been dictated by themselves to Bonnier, I believe. (Biografierna öfver de utländska skådespelarne äro af dem sjelfva dikterade för Bonnier, tror jag.) *Thalia. Theater- och Bijou Almanach för 1849*, published by Albert Bonnier.

17 *Porträtt-galleri af italienska scenens artister. Lithograferade efter naturen.* [1849] (Portrait gallery of artists of the Italian stage.) The artist's signature, C. Biron, appears on the portraits, but nothing seems to be known about him. In 1850 – but not thereafter – a “Charles Biron, artist” was registered in Stockholm (Stadsarkivet, mantalsregister; Stockholm City Archive, census register). In June 1849 Ciaffei paid for “100 ritratti,” probably for marketing purposes, but there is no mention of the artist. KTA, Ö 1, vol. 4, Ciaffei, Räkningar och kvitton (Bills and receipts).

Francesco Ciaffei, who sang the title role in *Ernani*, was the leading tenor in the Italian Opera Company; he was born in Rome in 1815 (and died in Florence 1894).<sup>18</sup> He made his debut in 1839 in Padua to great acclaim. According to the theatre calendar biography just mentioned, by 1848 he had 44 roles in his repertoire. These were mainly leading tenor parts in operas by Donizetti, Rossini and Mercadante, but there were also roles in operas by composers less well known today, such as Pietro Coppola, Giuseppe Persiani and Abramo Basevi. Ciaffei was apparently a very lyrical tenor at the beginning of his career, natural for a tenor in his early twenties – the Italian and German press spoke of his sweet voice.<sup>19</sup> Later he must have developed into more of a *lirico spinto* tenor. In the Rome production of *Ernani* in the Teatro Argentina in May 1844 (the third after its premiere in Venice), Ciaffei sang the bandit Ernani, a role that requires a powerful voice. This was Ciaffei's first Verdi role. According to the theatre calendar biography, Ciaffei was chosen by Verdi personally. This is confirmed in a way by the contract with the impresario Antonio Lanari, which states that Ciaffei was engaged as a “Primo Tenore assoluto per eseguire la parte di Ernani nell' opera del Maestro Verdi,” that is, for the part of Ernani only; normally, engagements were for several different operas in one season.<sup>20</sup> In July Ciaffei sang Ernani at the Teatro Communale in Faenza as part of the same contract. An undated annotation in his archives mentions five performances of *Ernani* in Padua during the Fiera del Santo (the fair on St Frances' day, 3 October); we do not know whether these performance took place.<sup>21</sup> *Ernani* was one of Verdi's greatest early successes;

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18 His birth date is normally given as 1819. According to documents in the Archivio Storico, Firenze, Foglio di Famiglia annullato di CF 13840, the date is 9 April 1815.

19 For instance, *Teatri, arti e letteratura* (1839, 76) writes, “la bella omogenea, spontanea sua voce” (his beautiful, homogenous, natural voice), and the same journal (1840, 163) writes of “la suavità delle corde” (the suavity of his vocal cords); Schepelern, who quotes an article in *Berliner Nachrichten* from 18 October 1841, writes, “hat eine weiche, angenehme Stimme” (has a soft, pleasant voice); Schepelern 1976, 71.

20 “Primo tenore assoluto to perform the part of Ernani in the opera by Maestro Verdi”. Contract with Antonio Lanari, 23 April 1844, KTA, Ö 1, vol. 5, Ciaffei.

21 KTA, Ö 1, vol. 4, Ciaffei; Conati 1987, 211.

it was staged in no fewer than 33 Italian theatres in 1844. In 1846 Ciaffei, who was engaged for the 1846–1848 seasons by the Court Theatre in Copenhagen, sang the role of Ernani there in twelve performances, although none of the other singers who were to perform with Ciaffei in Stockholm took part.

An opera singer in this period when practically all were freelance artists had to perform often, and Ciaffei was no exception. Early in his career signs of wear showed in his voice. In the theatre calendar biography the anonymous author states that his voice was somewhat worn, “but still one cannot avoid admiring the power and timbre it possesses, and you would find few tenors who could surpass Mr Ciaffei in tasteful, dramatic execution.”<sup>22</sup>



Figure 2. Four of the principal singers in the Italian Opera Company. From left to right: The soprano Rosina Pencso, the tenor Francesco Ciaffei, the bass Vincenzo Galli and the baritone Luigi Della Santa. Lithographs, each ca. 36 x 27 cm in size – 1848–1849 by C. Biron. National Library of Sweden, Stockholm.

The baritone Luigi Della Santa sang the part of Don Carlo. According to the biography in the theatre calendar, he was born in Fano, Italy, in 1822 (died 1860), and studied singing with a certain Mililotti. Della Santa made his debut in Pesaro as Ernesto, a bass, in Donizetti’s *Parisina* at the age of 19. (Ciaffei sang in the same produc-

22 “men man kan inte dessmindre undgå att ännu beundra den styrka och klang som den äger, och man torde finna få tenorister, som kunna överträffa Herr Ciaffei i ett smakfullt dramatiskt föredrag” (*Thalia. Theater- och Bijou Almanach för 1849*, 27).

tion, in the Carnival season at Pesaro, in 1840–1841.) Della Santa was soon engaged, for more than a year, as first baritone in Italian theatres in Greece, singing in Corfu, Cephalonia, and Zante (Zakynthos). Back in Italy, he was engaged by the impresario Alessandro Lanari to sing with his troupe for five years.<sup>23</sup> During this period with Lanari, Della Santa performed with many of the best-known singers of the time, including sopranos Sophie Löwe, Marianna Barbieri-Nini, Erminia Frezzolini; tenors Carlo Guasco, Andrea Castellani and Napoleone Moriani; and baritone Achille de Bassini. In 1846, in Livorno, he sang with the Swedish soprano Henriette (Enrichetta) Nissen, who had an international career. After his period with the Lanari troupe, Della Santa was engaged by the Italian company at the Court Theatre in Copenhagen for the 1847–1848 season.

Della Santa sang in *Ernani* in Rome and Faenza with Ciaffei in 1844, and in 1846 at La Fenice in Venice, where he performed with members of the original cast, Sophie Löwe and Carlo Guasco. On this occasion Della Santa sang the part of de Silva, a bass, which, according to Danish newspapers reporting on the performances in Copenhagen in 1848, was too low for his voice. In Stockholm the baritone part of Carlo suited him better, a part he had sung in Livorno in 1845.<sup>24</sup>

The theatre calendar biography describes Della Santa as “a baritone voice of rare beauty” and writes of a “truly dramatic execution,” properties that would make him an ideal “Verdi baritone.”<sup>25</sup> According to Frans Hedberg, Della Santa was “a true Italian bass baritone with a powerful voice of great compass, having a colourful, dark and glow-

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23 *Thalia. Theater- och Bijou Almanach för 1849*, 23f. Kutsch, Riemens & Rost (2004, 1075) gives 1820 as the year of Della Santa's birth, but the information about his Scandinavian activities is not correct. He was engaged by the Court Theatre in Copenhagen in 1847–1848; he did not make a Scandinavian tour, but was a member of the Italian Opera Company residing in Stockholm in 1848–1849. Moreover, he was engaged by the Royal Theatre in Stockholm in 1850–1853. Nor did he sing the role of de Silva in Stockholm, but rather that of Carlo, and with both the Italian Opera Company and at the Royal Theatre, in Italian as well as in Swedish.

24 [www.italianopera.org](http://www.italianopera.org); Schepelern 1976, 258; Conati 1987, 260 and 264.

25 “Della Santas röst är en sällsynt vacker baryton [...] ett sannt dramatiskt föredrag [...]” (*Thalia. Theater- och Bijou Almanach för 1849*, 24).

ing timbre.” His performance of a dramatic moment in Act III, when Carlo, elected emperor, sings *perdona tutti*, “made an impression you could not easily forget.”<sup>26</sup>

Gian Carlo Casanova, bass-baritone, who sang Don de Silva, a role for a *basso cantante*, was born in Genoa in 1817. His career has yet to be fully reconstructed. According to the theatre calendar biographies up to 1848 (for which he must have supplied the facts himself), he made his debut in Turin in 1841, after which he sang with great success in Milan, Padua, Piacenza, Mantua, Verona, Genoa and elsewhere. But there is also evidence that he had already performed in 1840 in Bellini’s *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*, Donizetti’s *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and Luigi Ricci’s *Chiara di Rosembergh*.<sup>27</sup> In addition we know that he sang in Bergamo in *Il Reggente* by Mercadante in 1845, in *Il Ritorno di Columella da Padova* by Vincenzo Fioravanti, and in *I Falsi monetari* (originally called *La Casa disabitata*) by Lauro Rossi in Ferrara in 1846. In 1847 he sang in *I Lombardi* by Verdi, *L’Italiana in Algeri* by Rossini, *Il Giuramento* by Mercadante in Como, and in a new work in Genoa, *La Cantante: melodramma giocoso i tre atti* by Gualterio Sanelli (considered mediocre by *Bazar di novità artistiche, letterarie e teatrali*).<sup>28</sup> There is no record of his performing in *Ernani*.

Casanova was engaged for the season 1847–1848 by the Italian Opera Company at the Court Theatre in Copenhagen, perhaps with Ciaffei as intermediary – letters show that they were close friends. In the theatre calendar biography his voice is described as “a beautiful baritone,

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26 “Della Santa var en äkta italiensk basbaryton med kraftig, omfångsrik stämma och färgrik mörk och glödande timbre...”; [g]jorde ett intryck som man sent glömer” (Hedberg 1885, 285–288).

27 *Glissons, n’appuyons pas*, 1840, 324; according to Kutsch, Riemens & Rost (2004, 748), Casanova made his debut in 1842, which apparently is wrong, as is the information about his Scandinavian activities from 1847 to 1849: he did not take part in a Scandinavian tour, but was engaged at the Court Theatre in Copenhagen in 1847–1848 and then was a member of the Italian Opera Company in Stockholm in 1848–1849. He sang the role of de Silva, not Carlo, in *Ernani*, in Christiania (as the Norwegian capital was then called, nowadays Oslo).

28 *Thalia. Theater- och Bijou Almanach för 1849*, 28; Italianopera.org; WorldCat.org; *Bazar 1847*, 283, says of Sanelli’s *Cantante*, “una vera mediocrità musicale”.

rich in metal [...] with a powerful low register.”<sup>29</sup> He also was a poet: he published a collection of verse in 1839, and as early as 1840, when he was twenty-four, he wrote the libretto for the opera *Il Coscritto*, with music by Alessandro Bielati. In 1842 Casanova published another libretto, this time for the opera *Il re Colomano in Zara*, with music by Luigi Garbato. Thus, he was quite experienced when he wrote the libretto for the last production of the Italian Opera Company in Stockholm, *Cristina di Svezia*, with music by the company’s then conductor, Jacopo Foroni, in 1849.<sup>30</sup>

The soprano Rosina (Rosa) Penco sang Elvira in *Ernani*. Several birth dates have been given for her, spanning the years from 1821 to 1832; generally 1823 is the date given; she died in 1894. Fétis gives the year 1830, as does Dahlgren. The theatre calendar biography cites 1822. Penco arrived in Stockholm on 16 June 1848, chaperoned by her mother. In the police records of arrivals in Stockholm she is noted as “daughter Rosa, 16” (which means a birth date in 1832!).<sup>31</sup>

According to the theatre calendar biography, Penco studied with “Alessandro Marotta, pupil of Crescentini [Girolamo Crescentino, a well-known castrato mezzo soprano and teacher] and Zingarelli, who taught her the art of singing after Crescentini’s method.” She was engaged, perhaps with Ciaffei again as intermediary, as *prima donna assoluta* for the season 1847–1848 by the Italian Company at the Court Theatre in Copenhagen, apparently with no previous experience. Rosina Penco made her debut in *Lucia di Lammermoor* in November 1847 in Copenhagen, followed a week later by a performance in *Don Pasquale*. She was much praised by the Danish press, who reported that she sang bewitchingly and acted with incredible security.<sup>32</sup> The words

29 “en metallrik och vacker baryton, med säkerhet och kraft, synnerligast i de lägre registren” (*Thalia. Theater- och Bijou Almanach för 1849*, 28).

30 Schepelern 1976, 272. The libretto was dedicated to the Queen Mother Desideria, and Foroni’s music was dedicated to the king, Oscar I of Sweden and Norway.

31 Fétis 1860; Dahlgren 1866, 577; *Thalia. Theater- och Bijou Almanach för 1849*, 22; copy of the 1848 police records of arrivals in Stockholm, KTA, Ö 1, vol. 5, Ciaffei (original documents not preserved).

32 “Alessandro Marotta, elev av Zingarelli och Crescentini, som undervisade henne i

“child prodigy” were even mentioned: perhaps she was just 17 years old after all.

In the Copenhagen season she also sang the leading soprano roles in Donizetti’s *L’Elisir d’Amore*, *Linda di Chamounix*, and Rossini’s *Il Barbiere*. In Stockholm the role of Elvira in *Ernani* was the first addition to her repertoire, followed by Donizetti’s *Lucrezia Borgia*, Ricci’s *Chiara di Rosembergh*, Verdi’s *I Lombardi*, and Francesco Gnecco’s *La Prova di un’opera seria*. In the twelve operas performed by the Italian Opera Company in Stockholm, Penco performed all of the leading soprano roles; no performance was ever cancelled because of her. She must have had a very solid technique.<sup>33</sup>

In his book on Verdi’s *Il Trovatore*, Martin Chusid writes: “According to reports, her voice was rich and penetrating, with a real sweetness of timbre. She had a remarkable ability to move easily from roles requiring a light and agile voice to those of a dramatic soprano.” This could also be said of this early period of her career. The theatre calendar biography describes her as follows: “Her voice has a considerable range, and a beautiful timbre, together with softness and flexibility. Her acting is natural, easy, free of all affectation, and warm and emotional, just as can be expected from a woman of the South.”<sup>34</sup>

Of all the singers in *Ernani*, Penco had the most brilliant career: she was chosen by Verdi to sing Leonora in the first performance of *Il Trovatore*. She then performed at the Italian Theatre in Paris, as well as in London, Italy, Spain, St Petersburg and elsewhere. Verdi complained in a letter of 1858 that she had retreated into the *bel canto*

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sångkonsten efter Crescentinis method” (*Thalia. Theater- och Bijou Almanach för 1849*, 22; Schepelern 1976, 255–256). Kutsch, Riemens & Rost (2004, 3593) are poorly informed about her early career: Penco was engaged for the 1847–1848 season at the Court Theatre in Copenhagen and was a member of the Italian Opera Company in Stockholm in 1848–49. She did not take part in a tour in Sweden and Denmark and did not sing in Copenhagen in 1849.

33 Schepelern 1976, 255–256 and 267–276.

34 Chusid 2012, 89; “Hennes röst är af ett icke obetydligt omfång, samt eger en vacker timbre, förenad med mjukhet och böjlighet. Hennes spel är naturligt, ledigt, fritt från all affectation, samt varmt och känslofullt, såsom man kan vänta det af en Söderns qvinna” (*Thalia. Theater- och Bijou Almanach för 1849*, 23).

style “of thirty years ago” instead of moving forward into “the style of thirty years hence.”<sup>35</sup>

The small part of *Jago* was sung by the *basso buffo* Vincenzo Galli, born in Rome in 1793 (died 1858). He was the most famous of the singers in the company, although his older brother Filippo Gallo, also a *buffo* bass, was more famous still. According to the theatre calendar biography, Vincenzo Galli made his debut in Palermo in 1821 and thereafter performed in “all the more important cities of Italy, such as the Scala Theatre in Rome, in Venice, Genoa, Torino and Rome, and outside Italy in London, Vienna, Berlin, Lisbon and Copenhagen.” According to Schepelern, in the years 1824–1837 Galli sang in more than 350 performances at La Scala, in 27 different roles, some of which were expressly written for him, such as Michelotto in Ricci’s *Chiara di Rosembergh*, premiered in 1831. According to Schepelern (who gives no source), Galli was the director of the company from October 1848. Dahlgren and Blanche also have him as the company’s director, without specifying the exact period. Galli signed a contract with the Royal Theatre in September 1848.<sup>36</sup> Thus, he was the director during the whole of the company’s season in Stockholm.

A “Signor Giuseppini” sang the *comprimario* part of Don Riccardo. According to the press announcements, he sang minor roles throughout the company’s season, but his surname is never given. Probably the name was an alias. According to the police records, a singer by the name of Giuseppe Galli was among the singers who arrived in Stockholm in June 1848. A *comprimario* of that name, tenor Giuseppe Galli, was

35 Chusid 2012, 89, footnote 7; Kutsch, Riemens & Rost (2004, 3593) does not mention Penco’s role as Leonora in *Il Trovatore* and is vague about Verdi’s opinion of her, probably on the basis of the letter mentioned above concerning her voice production, and not her interpretation.

36 Kutsch, Riemens & Rost (2004, 1619) does not mention Galli’s activities in Berlin, Copenhagen, and Stockholm 1848–1849; *Thalia. Theater- och Bijou Almanach för 1849*, 27f; Schepelern has the Copenhagen director Egisto Ricci leading the company during July and August, with Galli becoming its director from January 1849 (Schepelern 1976, 270, 376). This was obviously not the case, as Ricci wrote several letters to Ciaffei during the period August to November, and Galli was the one signing the contract with the Royal Theatre on 22 September 1848. Dahlgren (1866, 577) gives 1799 as the year of his birth. See also Blanche 1872, 66; contract dated 22 September 1848, KTA, Ö 1, vol. 5, Ciaffei.

among the singers in Copenhagen. Giuseppe Galli was probably re-named “Signor Giuseppini”, not to be confused with Vincenzo Galli.<sup>37</sup>

Giovanna, “Elviras Weninna”, Elvira’s friend, although in the original libretto the *nutrice* or wet nurse, was sung by Wilhelmina Enbom, a singer born in 1804 (died 1880) who sometimes sang at the Royal Theatre and also sang in the Royal Theatre chorus. At the height of her career she performed roles such as the Queen of the Night in *Die Zauberflöte* and the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro*. In 1829 her voice was much praised; presumably, it had deteriorated somewhat by 1848. In 1834 Enbom sang the contralto part in the first Stockholm performance of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony. She was one of the Swedish singers engaged by the company for *comprimario* roles.<sup>38</sup>

Ettore Caggiati was also one of the singers in the Italian Opera Company, but he did not sing in the Stockholm performances of *Ernani*. He was born in Parma in 1819 and was the company’s second *primo tenore assoluto*. After making his debut in 1839, he spent several years singing in “the best theatres of Spain” and then returned to Italy. He had performed as Ernani in Siena and Pisa in 1845, but never sang the role in Stockholm. After the arrival in Stockholm of Francesco Ciaffei, Caggiati did not sing very much. He did, however, sing Ernani in a performance of the last act in Gothenborg after the termination of the season in Stockholm in June 1849, and again when the whole opera was performed in Christiania in August the same year. He was said to be constantly hoarse, but after this performance a press review said that the tragic seemed to be his province.<sup>39</sup>

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37 Copy of the 1848 police records of arrivals in Stockholm, KTA, Ö 1, vol. 5, Ciaffei. According to a newspaper announcement (*Aftonbladet*, 30 May 1848), a “Signor Galli from Florence” was to sing tenor arias from Italian operas at a concert in Stockholm on 1 June 1848 – another indication that Giuseppe Galli really was in Stockholm.

38 Dahlgren 1866, 473.

39 1816 and 1817 have also been given as the year of his birth. *Thalia. Theater- och Bijou Almanach för 1849*, 28; Schepeleyn 1976, 291 and 359f.; Conati 1984, 264. Kutsch, Riemens & Rost (2004, 681) are poorly informed about his Scandinavian activities in 1848–1849. He was engaged at the Court Theatre in Copenhagen from the spring of 1848, took part in a tour along the south Swedish coast in 1848, from 9 May to 9 June, was then a member of the Italian Opera Company residing in Stockholm 1848–1849. After the season ended in

The company's conductor in the performances in July and August, Paolo Sperati, was born in 1821 in Torino (and died 1884 in Kristiania), and began his musical career at the age of 17 as the second conductor in a small Italian touring opera company. From 1841, he was conducting Italian opera at the Danish Court Theatre in Copenhagen, working during the 1847–1848 season alongside Angelo Mariani (1821–1873), who was already a successful conductor in Italy and would become one of the best conductors of his time. Sperati was regarded as an excellent conductor himself, even if sometimes he was criticised for his “fiery and somewhat violent” way of conducting.<sup>40</sup>

As a conclusion it can be said that although the conductor and most of the singers in the Italian Opera Company were around thirty years of age, they were accomplished artists with considerable experience. Rosina Penco was very accomplished, without much experience.

#### Reasons for the tour

On 20 January 1848 the Danish king, Christian VIII, who was the most important supporter of Italian opera at the Court Theatre in Copenhagen, died. A war between Denmark and the duchies under Danish rule, Schleswig and Holstein, broke out, eventually known as the Three Years' War. The leader of the opera, Egisti Ricci, still had a contract for another two seasons, and the new king, Frederik VII, took over the opera's economic responsibilities.<sup>41</sup> Yet the appetite for Italian opera seemed to have diminished. Ciaffei's contract expired on the 20th of April, as it did for the sisters Fanny and Lidia Stoltz (also members of the Court Theatre ensemble) and possibly for the other singers who went to Stockholm.<sup>42</sup> Perhaps some of the singers doubted their ability

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Stockholm he sang in Christiania.

40 “fyrige og lidt voldsame Maade at dirigere paa,” *Schepelern* 1976, 418–424; Phillips-Matz & Budden 2001.

41 The diaries of Christian VIII are also an important source for showing how the performances were appreciated (*Schepelern* 1976, 263).

42 Ciaffei's undated contract for 28 October 1847 – 20 April 1848. KTA, Ö 1, vol. 5, Ciaffei;

to find opportunities in Copenhagen, and letters in Ciaffei's archives testify to his attempts to find alternatives. There even seemed to be serious plans for performances in Amsterdam, Bremen and Krakow; on the verso of some letters are annotations about possible operas, possible casts, and costs; in one of his letters to Ciaffei the baritone Francesco Fallar in Amsterdam signed himself as *il tuo amico e socio* – “your friend and associate”.<sup>43</sup>

At the same time, there seemed to be serious, if otherwise unrecorded plans for a season in Stockholm. There are invoices, dated in February 1848 in Stockholm and paid by Ciaffei, for copying music from *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *Don Pasquale* and *Ernani*. One of them has annotations that include an address in Stockholm and some Swedish names (without any apparent opera connection). During that February, there were no performances at the Court Theatre, as it was a period of mourning for the king, so performances did not prevent Ciaffei from travelling to Stockholm. However, judging from letters Ciaffei received, he seems to have been in Copenhagen during this period.

Exactly when a Stockholm season was decided cannot be determined. As late as May 1848 letters to Ciaffei show on-going discussions about other possible venues. Members of the Court Theatre, under the leadership of Egisto Ricci, went on tour along the Swedish south coast, no doubt by paddle steamer, performing in a number of cities from Malmö to Karlskrona. This raises the question: Were the singers under contract with the Court Theatre just for the duration of the tour (9 May until 12 June 1848)? For Ciaffei, who did not join the tour and who seems to have preserved every scrap of paper in his possession, there is no contract preserved beyond the season 1847–1848, ending in late

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contemporary copy of letter (24 March 1848) from the Stoltz sisters in KTA, Ö 1, vol. 3 B, Ciaffei. In addition to the singers and the conductor, Sperati, who went to Stockholm, Amalia Ricci and Fanny Stoltz, sopranos, Cesare Vajro, baritone, and the *comprimario* Carcopino Perez, bass, were also engaged for the 1847–1848 season in Copenhagen. Of these, only Amalia Ricci, Carcopino Perez and Sperati returned the following season, and seven new singers were engaged. See Schepeleern 1976, 252 and 277.

43 Francesco Fallar > Francesco Ciaffei, Amsterdam 19 March 1848, KTA, Ö 1, vol. 3 B, Ciaffei.

April. Was there a special company formed by the artists performing in Stockholm, namely Ciaffei, Caggiati, Casanova, Della Santa, and Galli and employing Rosina Penco and “Signor Giuseppini” (perhaps alias Giuseppe Galli)? Neither Rosina Penco nor Giuseppini signed a letter to the king about revoking the company’s contract with the Royal Theatre, but all the other singers did.<sup>44</sup>

After the tour, the singers travelled to Stockholm, while Ciaffei stayed in Copenhagen, preparing the Swedish season. In June and July he paid four bills for the copying of music (the operas *Beatrice di Tenda*, *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and Rossini’s *Otello* are mentioned), another bill for the binding of music (*Beatrice di Tenda*), one bill for the purchase of the *Ernani* score and orchestra parts, and two for packing the music. But before Ciaffei departed for Stockholm by way of Gothenburg, the opera company performed *Don Pasquale*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Beatrice di Tenda* and *L’Elisir d’amore*, all of which had been announced in the press and for which there were printed programmes in Swedish, as well as posters and printed tickets. Someone had also been contacted to be responsible for the formation of an orchestra and a chorus. Who could have arranged all that? The contract with the Royal Theatre, signed on 22 September 1848, mentions the company’s secretary, Alexander Hartkopff. It seems very likely that someone in the company, perhaps already at the end of May, had been in contact with Hartkopff and that it was Hartkopff who made all these arrangements.<sup>45</sup>

### The Theatre

Stockholm’s Mindre teatern, where the opera company performed during July and August of 1848 and from the beginning of January to

44 Schepelern 1976, 267, 273; the company performed at the Royal Theatre in October and November 1848; the contract was revoked on 6 December 1848, KTA, Ö 1, vol. 5, Ciaffei.

45 KTA, Ö 1, vol. 5, Ciaffei. Hartkopff (1822–1877) was a typical entrepreneur. He had a libretto printing business together with Ciaffei, and in the 1860s he was the owner of a famous wax and anatomical museum, which was exhibited on the continent and later sold to a buyer in the United States.

the beginning of June 1849, was a private theatre with a permanent ensemble of actors and an orchestra. It was the first theatre of its kind in Sweden, situated just a few hundred metres away from the Royal Theatre. The theatre was rented to the opera company for the sum of 50 Riksdaler banco per night, but we do not know what that sum included; it probably did not cover the lighting.<sup>46</sup> The theatre had opened in 1842 under the name of *Nya teatern* (the New Theatre). It was not used for opera, but rather for dramas and plays with music, the music composed for the occasion mainly by the theatre's conductor. The building was rebuilt in 1843; originally, it could accommodate an audience of 867, both sitting and standing; afterwards the number was 764, and the stage opening was about 10 metres wide. In 1843 a wing was added to provide dressing rooms, a painter's shop and space for the storage of sets.<sup>47</sup> In 1846 the theatre again underwent minor rebuilding, and its name was changed to *Mindre teatern*.<sup>48</sup> It was lit by candles, gaslight not being installed until 1855. Gaslight had appeared just the year before in the Royal Theatre.<sup>49</sup>

The *Mindre teatern* also had an orchestra, which, in the opening season in 1842, numbered no fewer than 27 musicians. Later the orchestra was diminished in size: for the 1849–1850 season, the theatre calendar for 1849 states that the orchestra consisted of 13 musicians, but in reality only a string quartet was employed on a yearly basis, with

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46 Hallgren 2000, 68; Nordiska muséet, Archives (NMA), Stjärnströmska samlingen, vol. III, recettböcker. (Stjärnström collection, vol. III, account books). 50 riksdaler banco would today be equivalent to SEK 5,648, calculated from the consumer price index (Edvinsson & Söderberg 2011, 270–292). Schepelern (1976, 125) has an interesting excerpt from the Court Theatre accounts, showing expenses for one night in the season 1844–1845, including orchestra, cashier, firemen, lighting, cloakroom attendants, choir, cleaning ladies, doormen, posters and costs of putting up the posters, advertising, cabs for the singers, etc. Similar costs would certainly apply to the company in Stockholm.

47 Hallgren 2000, 51, 183; *Theaterkalender för år 1846*, 22. As to size, there are no theatres that are exactly contemporary, but several new theatres were built in the 1850s and 1860s. In 1845 the Royal Theatre could seat about 950, according to a seating plan in *Theaterkalender för år 1846*.

48 Hallgren 2000, 65.

49 Stribolt 1982, 99.

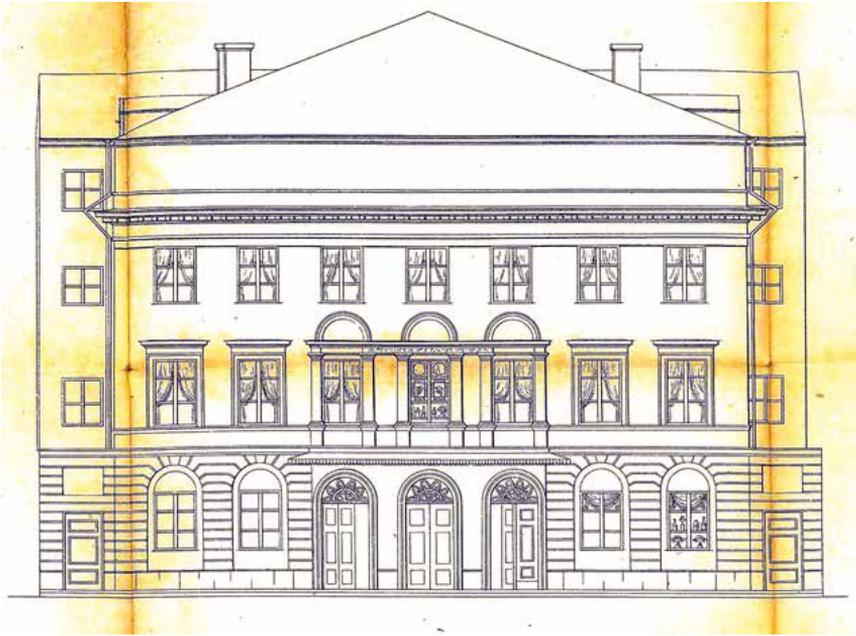


Figure 3 A. Mindre teatern, exterior.

other musicians engaged as needed and paid per evening.<sup>50</sup> The only professional orchestra of the time was the Royal Theatre's. The smaller theatres had small orchestras, their size adapted to the actual need.

The key person in the Mindre teatern's orchestra was the theatre's musical director, Jacob Niclas Ahlström, active from 1842 to 1854. Ahlström composed most of the theatre music performed in the theatre. He was probably also very important for the success of the Italian Opera Company. In a newspaper review of a performance in 1849 Ahlström was mentioned – in passing – as the choirmaster of the Italian company. He may have also filled this position in the summer of 1848 (see below).<sup>51</sup>

50 *Toilett- och Theater Almanach för år 1843*, Stockholm 1842, V, VI; *Thalia. Theater- och Bijou Almanach för 1849*, p. 15; Hallgren 2000, 93, 100. Most theatres, with the exception of the Royal Theatre (the Royal Court Orchestra [Hovkapellet] was the only permanent, professional orchestra in Sweden) employed orchestras that way.

51 Almquist & Boëthius (eds.) 1918, *Svenskt biografiskt lexikon*, Band 1, 323 (s.v. Jacob Niclas

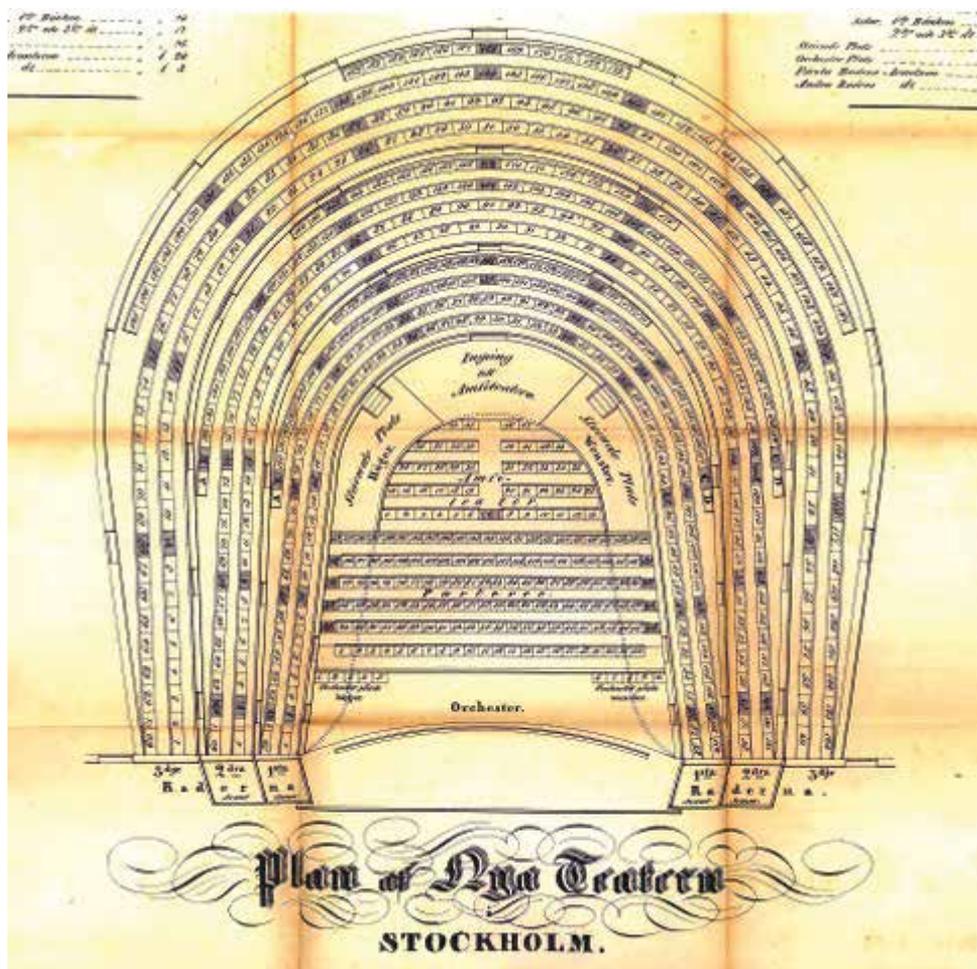


Figure 3 B. Mindre teatern, seating plan, 1842. The Archives of the Music and Theatre Library of Sweden, Teaterbyggnader och tryck.

### Scores and orchestra

The Italian Opera Company started its Swedish campaign with a short tour in the south of Sweden in May 1848, performing *Don Pasquale* and *L'Elisir d'amore*. This means that already then the company needed

scores for these operas, and eventually they needed scores for the further ten operas they would present during the season. In this period Italian scores and orchestra parts were not always printed, but had to be copied out by hand. I have already mentioned that the tenor Ciaffei's accounts show that, in 1848 and 1849, he paid for the copying of a good deal of music, including operas that the company performed or proposed to perform. There are also many invoices from bookbinders for music (e.g. on 26 June 1848 music for *Beatrice di Tenda*; on 27 January 1849 choral parts for *Don Pasquale* and *Il Barbiere*; on 1 February 1849 orchestra parts for *Il Barbiere*, and so on. Some of this material was sent to the Italian Opera Company in Copenhagen).<sup>52</sup>

In the Music and Theatre Library of Sweden there is a collection of opera material (originally from the Royal Theatre) called the Ciaffei Collection. It is comprised of more or less complete material (orchestral scores, orchestral and choral parts, prompter's scores, and so on) for nine of the twelve operas performed by the company in Stockholm, as well as for several other operas, all of them labelled "Proprietà di Francesco Ciaffei." Thus, it turns out that the material for the operas performed by the Italian Opera Company was all Ciaffei's private property. The scores occupy more than five metres of shelf space.

For *Ernani* only the choral parts (see below) are found in the Ciaffei Collection, but neither score nor orchestral parts. Also, according to the catalogue of what was then Musikhistoriska museet (inv. nr 657), seven vocal parts for *Ernani* were acquired by the museum in 1908. They too had been the property of Francesco Ciaffei.<sup>53</sup>

In the Music and Theatre Library there is an early *Ernani* orchestral score in manuscript, which was used for the first time in performances of *Ernani* at the Royal Theatre in 1853 conducted by Jacopo Foroni. In the autumn of 1848, Foroni was summoned by the opera company to be its conductor, and in 1849 he succeeded the Court Kapellmeister, Johan

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52 KTA, Ö 1, vol. 4, Räkningar och kvitton 1846–1851.

53 Choral parts in the Ciaffei Collection, MTB; nr. 657, Inventory catalogue of Musikhistoriska museet, MTB Archives DIA:1. The parts have not yet (as of 29 May 2015) been found.



Figure 4. Part of the Ciaffei Collection in the Music and Theatre Library of Sweden. The scores used by the Italian Opera Company in Stockholm were all the personal property of Francesco Ciaffei. Photograph by the author.

Fredrik Berwald. There are also orchestral parts with this score, but no choral parts. Probably Foroni had the score sent from Italy.<sup>54</sup>

It is a complicated matter to establish a stemma for the orchestral score and instrumental parts used by the opera company for the *Ernani* performances in Stockholm. The Critical Commentary for the Verdi edition states that “During most of Verdi’s life the orchestral score of *Ernani* circulated in manuscript.”<sup>55</sup> Ricordi published a piano and voice reduction already in 1844, but a printed score as late as the end of the nineteenth century; its engraving was begun in 1891. One of the extant manuscript scores consulted for the critical edition belonged

54 Kungliga Teatern (Operor E4), MTB.

55 Gallico (ed.) 1985, *Ernani*, The Works of Giuseppe Verdi, xxiii.

to Ricordi, and, of course, the publishing house wanted to control its use. But in view of the fact that in 1844 alone, the year of the premiere, there were 33 productions of *Ernani* in Italy, three in May (including one in Vienna), three in June, two in July, five in August, and ten (!) in December, there must have been many copies in circulation. The introduction to the Verdi critical edition states that an “unknown number of manuscript copies of the autograph score were prepared by the publisher Ricordi for distribution to those theatres where the opera was to be performed.”<sup>56</sup> But in addition there may have been illegal copies.

Another manuscript score of *Ernani* is found in the Music and Theatre Library in Stockholm: a “pocket score” in small format, containing only the Preludio and the scene with the chorus of rebellious mountaineers and bandits in which Ernani sings his first aria. On the cover are the letters F.C., no doubt meaning Francesco Ciaffeï, and the copy must have been intended for concert use. A comparison of the 1853 score and the “pocket score” shows minor differences, but they are too small to allow any conclusions regarding their origin.

After the dissolution of the Italian Opera Company in June 1849, some of its members headed to Christiania, Norway, by way of Gothenburg. A performance in Gothenburg of *L'Elisir* was followed by the fourth act of *Ernani* (with Ettore Caggiati singing Ernani), while in Christiania there were several performances of the entire *Ernani*. Did these company members bring with them the Ernani score that had been used in Stockholm, ultimately taking it to Denmark? But the Italian opera of the Court Theatre in Copenhagen already possessed a score, as *Ernani* was performed there several times in the season 1848–1849. Among Ciaffeï's accounts, an invoice dated 6 June 1849 for a half-calf binding of the orchestral score of *Ernani* suggests that it was this score (and the accompanying orchestral parts) that was brought to Christiania – and we can thus conclude that we do not know the whereabouts of Ciaffeï's score.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Ibidem xxiii and 7; Conati 1987, 261.

<sup>57</sup> Schepelern 1976, 291; KTA, Ö 1, vol. 4, Ciaffeï. Invoice dated 6 June 1849.

The score from 1853 in the Music and Theatre Library remains interesting, however, as a very early manuscript copy, and it can to some extent be used to assess the orchestra of the *Ernani* Stockholm premiere in 1848. For the critical WGV edition of *Ernani* sixteen of the manuscript copies “scattered in libraries and theatres throughout the world” were studied, but the Stockholm manuscript score was not among them.<sup>58</sup>

This is the normal composition for an Italian opera orchestra in the middle of the nineteenth century. Only the number of strings is not given.

Ottavino	Piccolo
Flauto	Flute
2 Oboi	2 Oboes
2 Clarinetti	2 Clarinets
Clarinetto basso	Bass clarinet
2 Fagotti	2 Bassoons
4 Corni	4 Horns
2 Trombe	2 Trumpets
3 Tromboni	3 Trombones
Cimbasso	Cimbasso
Arpa	Harp
Timpani	Timpani
Cassa	Bass Drum
Tamburo	Snare drum
Banda sul Palco	Banda on the stage
Cassa della Banda	Bass Drum of the Banda
Corno Interno	Off-stage horn
Sei Trombe interne	6 off-stage trumpets
Archi	Strings <sup>59</sup>

Table 1. The instruments of the orchestra which Verdi intended for *Ernani*, as given by the WGV, chiefly based on Verdi's autograph score.

58 Gallico (ed.) 1985, xxiii.

59 Gallico (ed.) 1985, lxiii.

The *clarinetto basso*, the bass clarinet, needs a comment. In Nr 10 of *Ernani*, “Preludio, scena e cavatina”, at the beginning of Act III, Verdi orchestrated the prelude and the scena (88 bars) with Don Carlo and Don Riccardo for bass clarinet, two clarinets in B-flat and two bassoons. In Nr 14, towards the end of the opera, the bass clarinet returns for just seven bars, doubling the clarinets an octave below. Originally, Verdi had written the part for a trumpet, but on learning that a bass clarinet – then not a very common instrument – would be available for the premiere at La Fenice, he chose to use the bass clarinet instead. In performance the bass clarinet was often replaced by another instrument: in the manuscripts examined for the critical edition the part was assigned to a horn in one manuscript, to an oboe in two others, while in the Stockholm score of 1853 it is assigned to a cello.<sup>60</sup>

What instrument played this part in the performance by the Italian Opera Company in 1848 we cannot tell. If there is any connection between the score used in 1848 and the 1853 score, it might have been a cello.

The instrument called *cimbasso* also needs comment. It seems that in the Verdi operas premiered in Italy (from *Oberto* to *Aida*) the lowest brass instrument was called *cimbasso*; in the operas premiered in France (*Don Carlo*, *Jérusalem*, *Les Vêpres siciliennes*), it was called an ophicleide. The term *cimbasso* is rather vague. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the *cimbasso* was a “type of wooden serpent with a large flared bell of brass and between one and four keys”;<sup>61</sup> later the term denoted a valved brass instrument. “After about 1835 the term [*cimbasso*], like the term “ophicleide”, tended to be used generically to describe the lowest orchestral brass instrument.” Today *cimbasso* parts are mostly played by a bass tuba. This is not, however, the place to discuss the nature of the *cimbasso*, but rather to discuss the instruments used in Stockholm in 1848.

In the 1853 *Ernani* score the instruments of each of the 14 numbers of the opera are specified. For the lowest brass instrument part the

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60 Gallico (ed.) 1985, ix and xxviii; manuscript *Ernani* orchestral score, Kungliga Teatern (Operor E4), MTB.

61 Meucci 2001; Meucci 1996 presents a thorough investigation.

word *serpent* (with different spellings – *serpent* and *serpan*, echoing the pronunciation in French, which is not a brass instrument) – alternates with the *cimbasso*; it seems, however, highly improbable that two different instruments were used. Has the score been copied from two sources?

Another question concerns the size of the orchestra playing for the Verdi premiere at Mindre teatern. As mentioned above, the theatre had an orchestra of thirteen under the musical director Jacob Niklas Ahlström: 4 violins, 2 violas, 1 cello, 2 double basses, 2 clarinets and 2 horns. Yet of those, only a string quartet was employed for the entire season, with other instrumentalists engaged as needed.<sup>62</sup> This means that there was only the basis for an orchestra, but extra musicians beyond the number normally used could be hired by

Ahlström, who probably knew every musician and chorister in Stockholm. There was no shortage of musicians in the city; both string players and wind players were in abundance. The fact that the theatre had at its start in 1842 an orchestra of 27 and in 1848 only 17 gives an idea of the availability of musicians. There were six garrisons in Stockholm, each with its own band, and many of the musicians reportedly played several instruments, winds as well as strings. Even in the Royal Court Orchestra there were many musicians who were simultaneously employed as military musicians.<sup>63</sup>

Even without a band playing on stage, not to mention an off-stage horn and six off-stage trumpets, the orchestra would need at least 30 musicians. As a comparison, the number of orchestra members in the Italian Opera Company at the Danish Court Theatre for the season 1847–1848 was 29, according to a contract between the impresario Egisto Ricci and the Marshal of the Court, Joachim von Levetzau.<sup>64</sup> That was probably about the size of the orchestra of the Italian Opera Company in Stockholm during the season 1848–1849. One important

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62 *Thalia, Bijou- och Theater Almanach för år 1849*, 15; Hallgren 2000, 69, 93 and 100.

63 Edenstrand 1992, 165–168.

64 Schepeleern 1976, 341.

factor, of course, is the size of the orchestra pit, which only allowed a limited number of musicians.

If we assume that the company intended to have complete woodwind and brass players, but had to be satisfied with rather fewer string players, the result would be an orchestra with a dominant wind section. This seems to be confirmed by a review in *Dagligt Allehanda*:

The string instruments are few, as opposed to the generally fully equipped wind section; this creates a disproportion, which greatly disturbs the amalgamation of the whole, with the result that most of the time you imagine that the singing is accompanied just by a military band.<sup>65</sup>

Another indication of the few string players is an invoice paid by Ciaffei on 10 October 1848, when the opera company performed at the Royal Theatre. Ciaffei paid A.F. Schwartz (a viola player in the Royal Court Orchestra and also its librarian) for having copied music, as he had “doubled the Quartet parts” of *Ernani*. The Royal Court Orchestra apparently was able to use the opera company’s orchestra parts, but there were not enough string parts.<sup>66</sup>

This makes 31 musicians. Probably neither a harp nor a bass clarinet was used.<sup>67</sup> What instrument was used for the *cimbasso* part? It is difficult to establish how long serpents were used in the military bands, but possibly tubas were already in use around 1850. This would mean that there were probably several military tuba players available for the *cimbasso* part. The review of *Ernani* in Stockholm’s *Dagligt Allehanda* in-

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65 “Stränginstrumenterne äro derför fåtaliga, emot de oftast fullsatta blåsinstrumenterne, hvarigenom en disproportion uppstår, som betydligt stör sammangjutningen af det hela, och förorsakar, att man oftast tror sig hör sången ackompanjerad af endast militär-musik” (*Dagligt Allehanda*, 30 August 1848). There were similar complaints in the Danish press concerning the opera orchestra in Copenhagen (Schepele 1976, 120).

66 KTA, Ö 1, vol. 4, Ciaffei. Bill 10 October 1848.

67 Adaptations of this kind were normal. In the orchestral score of *L’Elisir d’amore* in the Ciaffei Collection (MTB), Nemorino’s aria “Una furtiva lagrima” is not accompanied by a harp, but by the celli.

Piccolo	
Flute	
2 Oboes	
Clarinets	L. T. Wolter
	J. Fr. L. Sjöberg
2 Bassoons	
Horns	P. A. Landborg (probably Landberg)
	C. G. Carlström
	?
	?
2 Trumpets	
3 Trombones	
Tuba/serpent	
Timpani	
Drum	
Snare drum	
Violins	J. Fr. Lundström
	J. B. Holmberg
	F. W. Zimmermann
	C. A. Elert
Violas	F. A. Richter
	J. G. Strömberg
Cellos	J. F. Hjortberg
	?
Double bass	C. J. Myhrman
	G. Schmidt

Table 2. A hypothetical distribution of the instruments in the orchestra employed for the company's *Ernani* performances at the Mindre teatern (with the names of the musicians already employed at the Mindre teatern).<sup>68</sup>

68 *Thalia, Bijou- och Theater Almanach för år 1849*, 15.

dicates that a tuba was employed: “These effects are, of course, not (in his music) the result of ingenious voice leading or piquant orchestration: no, Tuba, bass drum, and all the other thunders must then contribute.”<sup>69</sup>

As to the *banda*, it would certainly have been possible to hire a group of military musicians. During this period, Ahlström was also the music director of the Second Life Guard in Stockholm. However, for economic reasons there was probably no *banda* in the performance.

By comparison with many Italian opera orchestras, 31 musicians is, of course, a very small orchestra, but without doubt many performances, both in Italy and elsewhere, were given with orchestras of this size. Franco Piperno has compared the size of the orchestras around 1845 in selected Italian theatres. Those in Parma, Trieste and Florence each had an average of 50 musicians; Milan had 76, and Naples, 80. The difference lay in the string sections.<sup>70</sup>

If we compare the Italian Opera Company’s orchestra with the Royal Court Orchestra, we find that in 1848 the latter had 44 musicians, with a string section of seventeen players, an important difference. As the *Mindre teatern* was unavailable to the opera company after the beginning of September 1848, there was an agreement with the Royal Theatre that the opera company could perform there with the Royal Court Orchestra and choir. During October and November the opera company performed the same operas at the Royal Theatre as had been performed at the *Mindre teatern*. After the first performance of *Ernani* at the Royal Theatre, the rather severe critic of *Dagligt Allehanda* wrote: “[the opera’s] musical merits became still more apparent through the assistance of our excellent orchestra.” However, several of the instruments required in *Ernani* were lacking: there was no tuba player in the court orchestra until 1894 (when a fourth trombonist was employed, in reality a tuba player), nor did the orchestra have a permanent harpist

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69 “Dessa effekter uppstår naturligtvis ej (i hans musik) genom en snillrik stämföring eller pikant instrumentering: nej, Tuba, bastrumma och alla öfriga dunder skola då hjälpas åt” (*Dagligt Allehanda*, 30 August 1848).

70 Piperno 2008, 48.

The image shows a page from a handwritten musical score titled "Preludio". The score is written for an orchestra and includes the following parts from top to bottom: Violini (Violins), Viola, Flauto (Flute), Clarini (Clarinets), Trombe (Trumpets), Fagotti (Bassoons), Tromboni (Trombones), Serpan (Serpent), Timpani (Timpani), Violoncelli (Violoncello), and Adagio (Adagio). The notation includes clefs, time signatures, and musical notes. The page is aged and shows some wear.

Figure 5. The manuscript orchestral score of *Ernani*, used in the 1853 production of *Ernani* at the Royal Theatre in Stockholm. The term “serpent” alternates with “cimbasso” in the score; the part, however, is marked “tuba.” The Music and Theatre Library of Sweden, Stockholm.

soprano I	3
soprano II	2
soprano II	2
tenor I	3
tenor II	3
bass	4

Table 3. The distribution of the choral parts used by the Italian Opera Company.

until 1852, much less a bass clarinet player.<sup>71</sup> This means that for the performances of *Ernani* at the Royal Theatre, at the very least a tuba player had to be found.

### The chorus

*Thalia, Theater och Bijou Almanach 1849* does not mention any chorus employed by the Mindre teatern, which probably means that the theatre's musical director, Jacob Niclas Ahlström, had to find singers. One critic described the chorus as “a small elite corps from the choral personnel of the Royal Theatre.”<sup>72</sup> This was possible, as the Royal Theatre was closed for the summer. How small was the choir? The choral parts used by the Italian Opera Company, all marked “Proprietà di Francesco Ciaffei,” have been preserved in the Music and Theatre Library with the following distribution (see Table 3).

Fourteen of those parts are bound in the same way, with light blue paper covers. There are also supplementary parts, in different bindings, one for the first sopranos, one for the first tenors and one for the second tenors.<sup>73</sup> Possibly the original set of fourteen was used for the *Ernani* performances in August, with the addition of extra parts for the October performances at the Royal Theatre. But in the Ciaffei Collection there is a mysterious invoice for the copying of a soprano

71 Edenstrand 1992, 165–168; Ander 2008, 515; Dahlgren 1866, 558; “[vi vilja tillägga att] dess musikaliska förtjenster genom vårt utmärkta kapells medverkan ännu mera blefvo framstående” (*Dagligt Allehanda*, 4 October 1848).

72 *Post- och Inrikes Tidningar*, 24 August 1848.

73 MTB, Ciaffei Collection, *Ernani*.

part for *Ernani* in February of 1848 (if the date is correct), five months before Ciaffei's arrival in Stockholm.<sup>74</sup> One must bear in mind, however, that the number of choral parts used only in rehearsal is no proof of the number of choristers in performances.

Thus, the chorus might have consisted of fourteen singers or seventeen or more. The question of whether fourteen would have been sufficient was answered by the Italian conductor Giovanni Impellizzeri, active in Södertälje, who performed *Ernani* in 2010: "Yes, if they are good." As a comparison, the Royal Theatre in 1848 had a choir of 25 – 15 men and 10 ladies (the vocal ranges not specified).<sup>75</sup>

Some of the choral parts contain annotations, mainly names of singers. One of the bass parts has the words "Lemke, corist i Stockholm" ("Lemke, chorister in Stockholm"). This was Frans August Lemke, employed as a chorister at the Royal Theatre in the years 1845–1850.<sup>76</sup> When the company performed *Ernani* at the Royal Theatre in October and November 1848, Lemke, rather than Vincenzo Galli, sang the *comprimario* part of Jago.

The responsibilities of the Mindre teatern's musical director, Jacob Niclas Ahlström, are difficult to establish. Did he seek out choristers and prepare the chorus for all the performances? This might be likely. But a passage in a review of the first performance by the opera company in January 1849, now with Jacopo Foroni as its conductor, seems to indicate that this was not the case:

In the preparation of the chorus, its leader, Mr Ahlström, undeniably has done very meritorious work. If what has been said is true – that he also claims to be able to prepare the chorus in the future for every new opera in three weeks – more can hardly be required.<sup>77</sup>

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74 Invoice dated 2 February 1848, from Aug. Sig. Lindman, Stockholm, KTA, Ö 1, vol. 4, Ciaffei.

75 *Thalia, Theater och Bijou Almanach 1849* (Stockholm 1848), 10–11.

76 KTA, serie F8A, anställningskontrakt, vol. 6.

77 "I chörens inöfning särskildt har dess anförare, Hr Ahlström, onekligen inlagt en verklig förtjenst. Om det är grundadt, hvad som berättas, att han förklarar sig äfven kunna

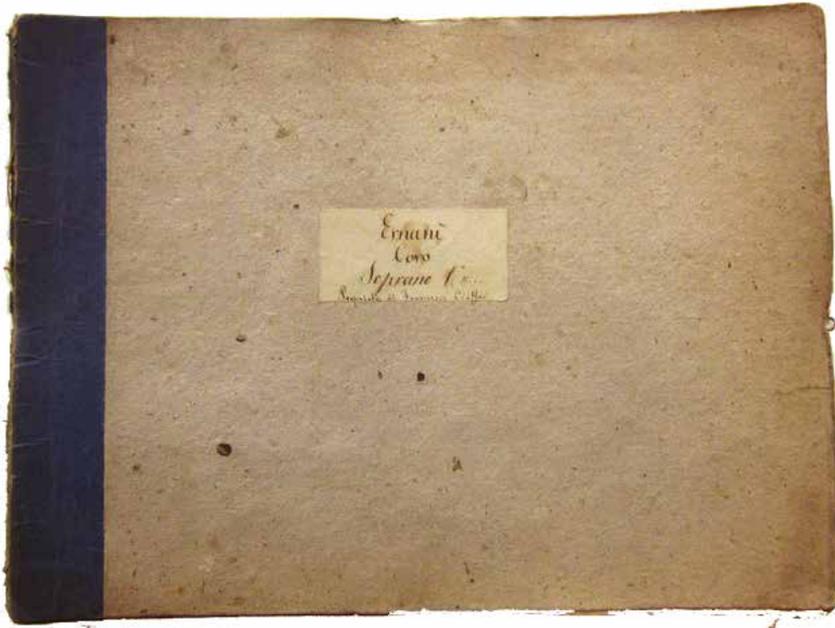


Figure 6. Choral part of *Ernani* in the Ciaffei Collection, the property of Ciaffei and used during the Italian Opera Company's season in Stockholm. Music and Theatre Library of Sweden. Photograph by the author.

Ahlström's biographer reported that the director served as the chorus master of the Italian Opera Company in the spring of 1849, a statement possibly based only on this review.<sup>78</sup> Did in fact Sperati, with his great experience in choral rehearsals, prepare the chorus for every opera performed by the company during July and August, while Foroni delegated the choral preparation to a chorus master? In any case, the chorus which sang with the opera company from January to the beginning of June 1849 was not the same as the preceding summer; the "elite choir" from the Royal Theatre was no longer available, and new choristers had to be found, probably handpicked by Ahlström.

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för framtiden inöfva chören till hvarje ny opera inom tre veckor, så kan svårligen mer begäras" (*Post- och Inrikes Tidningar*, 15 January 1849).

78 Almquist & Boëthius (eds.) 1918, 323.

### Sets, costumes, and stage direction

The underground burial chamber in Aix-la-Chapelle where Charlemagne is buried. On the audience's right is the tomb with its bronze door, above which is written CAROLO MAGNO in huge letters. At the back is a staircase which leads to the main door of the vault. Other small tombs can be seen; on the stage level are other doors which lead to other chambers. A weak light falls on the tombs from two lamps hanging in the centre. Through the main door Don Carlo and Don Riccardo enter warily, wrapped in large dark cloaks. Don Riccardo walks ahead, carrying a torch.<sup>79</sup>

The above is the description of Act III of *Ernani* in the libretto from the opera's premiere at La Fenice in Venice in 1844. It had been taken, more or less literally, from the description of Act IV in Victor Hugo's play *Hernani*, on which *Ernani* is based.<sup>80</sup> This means that it is not a description of sets made expressly for the opera, but rather that the librettist Piave probably followed Hugo's wording.

Verdi apparently had a very clear idea of his dramatic and visual intentions for his operas. A study of several early Verdi libretti reveals that when a set was important to the action, the description is detailed; otherwise it is not: *Sala magnifica*, *Ricche stanze*, *Gran sala*, etc.<sup>81</sup>

There are no production books (contrary to the custom in France)

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79 "Sotterranei sepolcrali che rinserrano la tomba di Carlo Magno in Aquisgrana. A destra dello spettatore avvi il detto monumento con porta di bronzo, sopra la quale leggesi in lettere cubitali l'iscrizione 'KAROLO MAGNO'; in fondo scatea che mette alla maggior porta del sotterraneo, nel quale pur si vedranno altri minori sepolcri; sul piano della scena altre porte che conducono ad altre catacombe. Due lampade pendenti dal mezzo spandono una fioca luce su quegli avelli. Don Carlo e don Riccardo avvolti in ampi mantelli oscuri entrano guardinghi dalla porta principale. Don Riccardo precede con una fiaccola." Description of scene 3, *Ernani*, libretto of the premiere at La Fenice in Venice. Translation after the booklet for *Ernani*, Decca 475 7008.

80 Viale Ferrero 1987, 201.

81 "Magnificent hall," "Richly furnished rooms," "Great hall." Libretti of *Nabucodonosor*, La Scala 1842; *Ernani*, La Fenice 1844; *I Masnadieri*, Teatro Carlo Felice, Genoa 1849; *Attila*, La Scala 1849; *La Battaglia di Legnano*, Teatro Carcano, Milano 1859; *I Lombardi* 1865. Viale Ferrero (2002, 101) writes of Verdi's "habit of visualizing the scenes mentally as he composed the music."

for the early Verdi operas. The first one produced was for *Giovanna de Guzman* in 1856 (based on the premiere of *Les Vêpres siciliennes* in Paris in 1855, *Giovanna de Guzman* being a bowdlerized version of that opera), followed by a production book for *Un ballo in maschera* in 1859. On the other hand, a very detailed description of a libretto could serve as a model for future productions outside Italy.

The set designer for the premiere of *Ernani* was Pietro Venier, assisted by Giuseppe Bertoja, who collaborated with Verdi on a number of occasions. But the premiere was nearly disastrous: some costumes and parts of sets were not delivered (extant sets were used instead), Sophie Löwe sang off-key, and *Ernani*, sung by Carlo Guasco, was hoarse. In spite of these challenges the premiere was a success.<sup>82</sup>

No trace of the drawings for this production has been preserved. But Bertoja had also designed the sets for a production of *Ernani* at Vicenza in 1846, and Romolo Liverani had designed sets for the production in Faenza in June 1844. Sketches for Act III have been preserved from both productions, the description of which is presented above. Viale Ferrero finds “no particular similarities” between the two, but they do have an equestrian statue in common, with Bertoja’s statue loosely modelled on the famous statuette of Charlemagne in the Louvre.<sup>83</sup>

The only Swedish mention of the sets for *Ernani* in Stockholm was by the critic of *Post och Inrikes tidningar*:

Every connoisseur will be very nearly surprised at seeing carried out, in a theatre of such limited means, all the principal demands of historical costumes and elegance, and this with such small resources and in the short time that the mounting of new pieces in this theatre normally allows. We just want to mention the arrangement of the festival hall of Don [de] Silva, with two equestrian statues, and the final scene of Act III, in the vault of Charlemagne [...].<sup>84</sup>

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82 Viale Ferrero 2002, 99; Phillips-Matz 1993, 362–363.

83 Viale Ferrero 1987, 197–199.

84 “Hvarje kännare skall nästan förvånas, att se på en Theater med så inskränkta tillgångar uppfyllas alla de hufvudsakliga fordringar, som historiska kostymen och



Figure 7. Sketch for Act III of *Ernani*, the burial chamber of Charlemagne in Aachen, by Romulo Liverani for Faenza in 1844. After Viale Ferrero 1987.

Our anonymous critic mentioned two equestrian statues in Don de Silva's festival hall in Act II, where (according to the libretto) there should be cavalry armour beside the portraits of ancestors. Was the critic mistaken, meaning instead the sepulchral vault in Act III? Ciaffei and Della Santa both had performed in Faenza with the sets by Liverani (Figure 7) and could have transmitted the idea of an equestrian statue.

Apart from that, nothing is known of the sets. Probably the company had to manage with the *fundus*, the stock of sets, of the *Mindre teatern*, acquired over the years for the great number of productions since 1842.

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elegansen rimligen kunna äska, och detta med så ringa medel och inom den korta tid, som uppsättningen af nya stycken på denna Theater vanligen medger. Vi vilja blott nämna anordningen af Don Silvas fest-sal, med tvenne statues equestres, och tredje aktens slutscen, i Carl den stores graf [...]" (*Post- och Inrikes Tidningar*, 11 April 1849).

Apparently this worked – perhaps with minor additions (a scene painter was employed by the theatre, the very accomplished Emil Roberg, who was appointed stage designer at the Royal Theatre in 1852)<sup>85</sup> – for eleven of the twelve operas performed by the company. The settings ranged from a village with a large tree in *L'Elisir*, a courtyard of the palace in *Binasco* in 1418 in *Beatrice di Tenda*, a street in Sevilla in *Il Barbiere*, to a hall in the palace of the tyrant Acciano in Antioch in *I Lombardi*, set in the time of the first crusade. For *Cristina di Svezia*, with a libretto written by the company's baritone, Casanova, and music by its conductor, Jacopo Foroni, new sets were made, as were period costumes, modelled on famous Swedish seventeenth-century portraits.

The critic also mentioned historical costumes. Costumes were largely the individual singer's responsibility. The stipulations at the Court Theatre in Copenhagen can be found in Ciaffei's contract with Napoleone Torre in Milan for the season 1846–1847:

The artist cannot refuse to use and wear the costumes that the Management assigns him, provided they are decent, and he must pay every deficiency and damage to that costume; as for the so-called *alla francese* costume, he must provide it on his own in a good condition – it is the artist's duty to supply himself with every item pertaining to basic costuming, such as shoes, tights, plumes, gloves and all headgear and accessories, i.e. chains, medallions, medals etc.<sup>86</sup>

In Ciaffei's accounts there is an invoice for a dressing gown in *indienne* for his colleague Luigi Della Santa. On the reverse Ciaffei scribbled names of operas and dates, as well as a list in two columns. The entries

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<sup>85</sup> Öjmyr 2002, 133–136.

<sup>86</sup> “L'artista non potrà rifiutare di usare e servirsi del vestiario che gli verrà assegnate dell' Impresa purché sia decente e dovrà pagare tutti gli ammanchi o guasti che arrecasse al vestiario medesimo – quanto al vestiario così detto alla francese dovrà metterlo del proprio e decentissimo – a carico dell' artista sarà qualunque articolo di basso vestiario come le calzature, maglie, piume, guanti e qualunque ornamento da testa e da corpo cioè catene, medaglioni, decorazioni &c.” (Giuseppe Napoleone Torre, Milano 4 July 1846. KTA, Ö 1, vol 5, Ciaffei.)

on the list have been heavily crossed out, and only a few words can be deciphered: “perruche”; “sciabola col sua [...]” and “capelli.” This must be his packing list. There are also receipts for his costume. One is dated 15 August, just after his arrival, and is for one velvet hat, one shirt and six plumes, with his annotation: “Capello, e Camicia del Barbiere, e piume.” Other receipts were for the repair of “Scarpe d’Ernani” and the washing and mending of tights and gloves.<sup>87</sup>

Along with the costumes each singer had to provide for themselves for the eleven operas (not including *Cristina di Svezia*) during the season, there must have been costumes for the chorus and the walk-ons as well, meaning at least fifteen choral singers and an unknown number of walk-ons. These participants could not reasonably have been expected to provide their own costumes, and thus the company must have brought the items from Copenhagen.

As has been mentioned, the Italian Opera Company performed at the Royal Theatre during October and November in 1848; their contract with the Royal Theatre stipulated that they could use the costumes in the theatre’s wardrobe department, which means that the company’s own wardrobe department had its limitations, although it was rarely commented on by the critics.

Research on stage direction in Italy in the nineteenth century seems to focus especially on Verdi’s staging of his premieres, with interesting interplay among Verdi the composer, his librettists and the impresarios. But the activities in the mid-nineteenth century in the field of Italian opera were incredible: according to the statistics in *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* in 1841, in Italy, in the years 1838–1841, 167 new operas were presented, and 65 new composers introduced.<sup>88</sup> The new composers must have been too inexperienced to have much influence in the staging of their works. Gerardo Guccini points to the difference between the staging of “a new ‘creation’ or a successive production. In

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87 “wigs”; “sabre with its [scabbard?]”; “hats”; “Hat and shirt for the Barber, and plumes”; “Ernani’s shoes” (KTA, Ö 1, vol. 4, Ciaffei. Receipts dated 27 July 1848, 28 August 1848, 16 September 1848).

88 *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung*, Leipzig 1841.

the first case the staging took place directly under the control of the composer, with the librettist providing instructions for the scenes, the costumes and the movement of the masses”; he continues “[F]or later productions [...] all the functions of stage direction were carried out by a specifically appointed individual, a *direttore di scena*, whose professional profile seems to have varied in relation to the importance of the theatre.<sup>89</sup>

Nothing is known of the stage direction of the *Ernani* performances in Stockholm. Of the singers, Ciaffei (Ernani) and Della Santa (Don Carlo) had documented experience singing their roles and had performed together. They had even performed in the first production of *Ernani* in Rome (see above), Ciaffei having been chosen by Verdi, and it would be surprising if that performance did not mirror Verdi’s intentions. Yet Verdi does not appear to have supervised or even seen the Rome production.

As mentioned, there is no record of Gian Carlo Casanova having performed his part elsewhere. The role of Elvira was new to Rosina Penco, who apparently had never appeared in a Verdi opera before. *Ernani* was, of course, new to the chorus as well. So there must have been someone to direct the action and, in Guccini’s words, “the movements of the masses.”

It has been mentioned that the singer Vincenzo Galli was the leader of the group. Ciaffei carried on an extensive correspondence with Egisto Ricci, the director of the Italian Opera Company in Copenhagen; in a letter to Ciaffei written in September 1848, during the period when the company was not performing, Ricci speaks of “la tua compagnia” – your company. Should this be interpreted literally, meaning that Ciaffei in fact served an administrative function, which his activities and archives seem to indicate? And did the leadership of Vincenzo Galli, who was the most experienced artist in the group, mean that he also acted as a

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89 Guccini 2002, 147–148. The *direttore di scena* was often the librettist. Francesco Maria Piave served as *direttore di scena* for a number of Verdi premieres, including *I due Foscari* (1844) and *Stiffelio* (1850). The librettist Salvatore Cammarano served as director of *Luisa Miller*. See Maschi Verdi, Pistacchi & Pizzo 2013, 22–26.

stage director? Or did perhaps Gian Carlo Casanova, the librettist of *Cristina di Svezia*, Foroni's new opera and the company's last production, direct the staging of that opera?

One piece of evidence may be a clue to the practice of smaller opera companies. In a letter to Ciaffei from Gaudenzio Giaccone, probably an impresario, and sent from Königsberg, there is a comment in the margin: "There is a need for one of the singers of the secondary parts to serve as *regisseur*".<sup>90</sup> In the case of *Ernani* this would perhaps have been Vincenzo Galli.

### Musical direction

Paolo Sperati arrived with the other singers on 17 June 1848 and in the police records is identified as "Capellmästare."<sup>91</sup> As already pointed out, he conducted the company's performances in Stockholm in July and August 1848, but in relation to Italian conducting practice of the period, what exactly were his duties?

In Italy in this period, conducting an orchestra normally meant conducting an opera. The mid-nineteenth century was a transition period, which saw the emergence of the modern conductor in Italy. In northern Europe, this had already taken place, and orchestras were normally conducted with a baton. But "Italian direttori whose careers developed outside Italy were more likely to follow the north-European method [...]"<sup>92</sup> In the Italian libretti and other performance documents of the time there is a bewildering array of functions, which often differed between theatres: *Maestro al cembalo* and *Primo violino, capo e direttore d'orchestra*, *Maestro direttore della musica*, *Maestro e direttore dell'opere* and *Capo e direttore di orchestra*. The questions of who did what, how and when are often left unanswered.

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90 "una delle 2.de parti, bisogna che abbia l'obb[igazione] di fare il Regisseur" (Gaudenzio Giaccone > Francesco Ciaffei, Königsberg 20 March 1847. KTA, Ö 1, vol. 3 A, Ciaffei). Did he in fact mean stage manager rather than stage director?

91 Copies of the 1848 police records of arrivals in Stockholm, KTA, Ö 1, vol. 5, Ciaffei.

92 Jensen 1991, 39.

In Italy in the first half of the nineteenth century responsibilities were divided. Opera performances were conducted by the first violinist from a special violin director's part, *violino principale*, with cues for important passages; this musician also played the first violin part. He was the *Primo violino, Capo e direttore di orchestra*, but he did not prepare the performances. That task was undertaken by the *Maestro al cembalo*, the *Maestro direttore della musica* or the *Maestro concertatore*, who was the vocal director (and, in the case of a new opera, this was often the composer), responsible for interpretation, tempi and so on, and the first violinist had to follow his instructions.<sup>93</sup> But in operas with *secco* recitatives it seems probable that the orchestra was directed from the continuo pianoforte (which had long since replaced the harpsichord in the orchestra). Sperati, for instance, probably directed *Il Barbiere* from the pianoforte.<sup>94</sup>

In the 1847–1848 season both Sperati and Angelo Mariani (see above) were engaged as conductors at the Court Opera in Copenhagen. According to the *Bazar di novità artistiche, litterarie e teatrali* of 1847, which announced their engagement in Copenhagen, Paolo Sperati served as the *maestro concertatore* and Angelo Mariani as *direttore d'orchestra*, but this must have been an effort to adapt the facts to Italian custom.<sup>95</sup> Schepelern quotes the newspaper *Flyveposten*, which stated that each conductor would be responsible for certain operas, and in addition Sperati would prepare the chorus.<sup>96</sup> There is no record of Sperati playing the violin. He appears to have been a pianist and organist. Mariani, on the other hand, was a violinist. Jensen, quoting several sources, states that “Mariani continued to lead the orchestra with a

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93 Fairtile 1997, 413f; Chusid 1990, 13f.

94 Katy Romanou, referring to an article by Bacciagaluppi (*Rivista Italiana di Musicologia*, vol. 41), claims that all keyboard instruments had disappeared from the proscenium in Italian theatres by 1830 and that recitatives were accompanied by a cello and/or a double bass. Romanou 2009, 2.

95 *Bazar*, 1847, 224.

96 Schepelern 1976, 252–253.

violin in his hand.”<sup>97</sup> Mariano’s biographer, Mantovani (1921), however, who is quoted by Phillips-Matz, describes a rehearsal with the opera orchestra in Genoa in 1856, where it is evident that Mariano normally conducted with a baton, although in rehearsal he could illustrate passages on the violin. Coaching singers with the violin was still practised at the Stockholm opera in the late 1940s by its then leader, the Italian Giovanni Turicchia (1886–1978).<sup>98</sup>

Schepelern gives two illustrations showing Sperati conducting with a baton. One is a drawing allegedly from 1842, in which Sperati conducts standing immediately behind the prompter’s box (See Figure 8); the other is a caricature, probably from the 1850s. A third drawing shows a rehearsal at the Court Theatre with a female singer and an unidentified conductor with a baton. These sources seem to establish that the orchestras of the Court Theatre in Copenhagen and of the Italian Opera Company in Stockholm were conducted with a baton. As to whether the conductor used a full score in conducting, he probably did not, as that was not the custom at a time when the cues for the orchestra normally were given by a leader. The orchestral score of *L’Elisir d’amore* (performed six times by the opera company in 1848–1849) in the Ciaffei Collection is in pristine condition and seems never to have been used in performance.<sup>99</sup>

#### A missing person: the prompter?

One person who would seem to be indispensable is never mentioned in connection with the performances in Sweden: *il suggeritore*, the prompter. Yet a prompter is mentioned in almost every season at the Court Theatre in Copenhagen. Gaudenzio Giaccone, in the letter quoted above, lists singers and their salaries for performances in Germany

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97 Jensen 1991, 48–49; Phillips-Matz 1993, 362–363.

98 Former stage director Knut Hendrikson, the son of opera singer Arne Hendriksen, who experienced this practice. Personal communication to the author 10 February 2015.

99 Schepelern 1976, 167, 421 and 98; Ciaffei Collection, MTB.

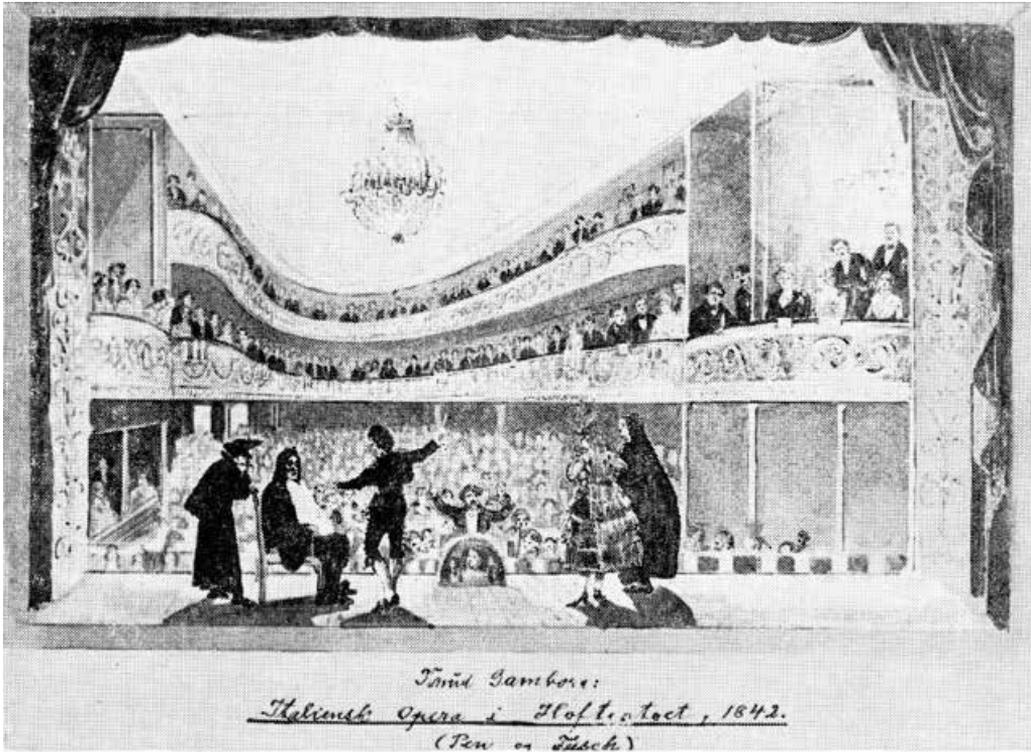


Figure 8. Paolo Sperati (easily recognisable by his moustache) conducting a performance of *Il Barbiere* with a baton in the Court Theatre in Copenhagen (probably in 1846–1847). Ink drawing by Knud Gamborg. The Theatre Museum at the Court Theatre, Copenhagen.

and ends his list with the *suggeritore*.<sup>100</sup> It is not clear whether one of the singers who was not taking part in a particular opera acted as the prompter (although most of the performances required all the singers). Or whether was there a Swede fluent enough in Italian to fulfil this function.

<sup>100</sup> See footnote 90; Schepelern 1976, 183, 205, 237 and 252.

Public and press reception of *Ernani*  
and the Italian Opera Company

Verdi's musical language was new, not only to the Stockholm public, but also to the critics, even if the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* with its regular reports on Italian opera was available in Sweden. None of the Stockholm critics seems to have had first-hand experience with Verdi's music, although by the end of 1848 Verdi had eleven operas to his credit. In Copenhagen five of these, *Nabucco*, *Ernani*, *I due Foscari*, *Attila*, and *I Lombardi*, had been performed by the Italian company at the Court Theatre.<sup>101</sup>

There are several reviews of the *Ernani* premiere in Stockholm newspapers, although most critics were reluctant to give an opinion after hearing just one or two performances. Most of the reviews were anonymous. The critic of *Dagligt Allehanda* attributes to Verdi, "as of late this most prominent meteor of the Italian musical heaven, much merit, and, above all, a very dramatic perception."<sup>102</sup>

The critic of the *Post- och Inrikes Tidningar*, also anonymous, wrote:

As to the music, there were, to be sure, several well thought-out and elaborated pieces of music, above all in the parts for the tenor (*Ernani*) and the baritone (*Don Carlo*), as well as some beautiful and vigorous choruses; in giving an opinion of the totality, however, we must admit, that in the spirit and the colour of the musical composition, we found something "à la Strauss", "à la Vienne" or "à la the battle of Narva" – now rumbling and storming, now again dancing, the fragmentary music of this "Opera Seria" poured out.<sup>103</sup>

101 Schepelern 1976, 222–266.

102 "[...] medgifva [...] denna i sednare tider mest framstående meteor på Italiens musikaliska himmel, många stora förtjänster och framför allt mycken dramatisk uppfattning" (*Dagligt Allehanda*, 30 August 1848).

103 "Hvad musiken beträffar, så förekomma visserligen här flera väl tänkta och utarbetade stycken, förnämligast i Tenorens (*Ernanis*) och Baritonens (*Don Carlos*) partier, äfvensom några vackra och kraftiga körer; men skola vi afgifva ett total-omdöme, så måste vi erkänna, att vi i sjelfva andan och färgen af den musikaliska kompositionen funno något 'à la Strauss', 'à la Vienne' – eller 'à la Slaget vid Narwa', – så ömsom

He also praises the chorus, “a small elite corps” from the Royal Theatre chorus, for having mastered new and rather difficult numbers in a foreign language, performing them with “assurance and dramatic expression.”

Wilhelm Bauck, the critic of *Aftonbladet*, gave a long analysis. He missed

the grand elevation, the tragic dignity, and Mr Verdi does not seem to have been the man to produce it out of nothing. [...] How is the chivalric Charles V represented here? How the proud, hard Silva, the gloomy but fiery Ernani? The chivalry, the pride, is portrayed through blasts on the trombones and thunder from the bass drum, alternating with pretty, pastoral cavatinas – these are generally the lights and shadows that Mr Verdi has. This is an *opera seria* of modern cut; with this, all is said. You cannot call Mr Verdi’s invention very new, neither in the song parts nor – all the thunder notwithstanding – in the somewhat sparse instrumental motifs. [...] However, you find here and there rather beautiful – if not very original – numbers. [...] On the other hand, nearly every number forms a climax with regard to well-calculated scenic and vocal effects generally.[...] When its advantages are used with such excellent ability by the performers – as in this case – it is not without pleasure that you listen to this opera.<sup>104</sup>

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bullrande och stormande, ömsom åter dansant, framvältrade den fragmentariska musiken i denna ‘Opera Seria.’” (*Post- och Inrikes Tidningar*, 24 August 1848.) In the summers during this period, popular outdoor concerts “à la Strauss” and “à la Vienne” were given; “Slaget vid Narva” (The Battle of Narva), a tone poem for military band, by the composer J.M. Rosén, was performed four times in August 1848. See the announcements of concerts in *Aftonbladet*, on 1 August 1848 and other dates.

104 “Den storartade lyftningen, den tragiska värdigheten felas enligt vår åsigt, och hr Verdi synes ej varit den rätta mannen till att framkalla den ur intet. [...] Hur tecknas här den ridderlige Karl V,? Huru den stolte, hårde Silva, den dystre, men eldige Ernani? [...] Ridderligheten, stoltheten, skildras genom basunstötar och dunder från bastrumman, omväxlande med smånäpna, schäferartade cavatinor – detta är huvudsakligen de dagrar och skuggor hr Verdi har... det här är en *opera seria* efter modern snitt; dermed är allt sagt. Man kan ej kalla hr Verdis uppfinning serdeles ny, hvarken i sångpartierna eller i de, allt buller oaktadt, nog glesa instrumentalmotiverna. [...] Dock finner man her och där rätt vackra, om ock ej synnerligen originella satser.[...] Deremot bildar nästan hvarje nummer en glanspunkt, hvad välberäknade sceniska, och vokala effekter i allmänhet

The critic of *Dagligt Allehanda* was concerned about the tessitura of the vocal parts. The loud orchestra “usually forces the poor singers to much overstrain. As to the male parts, they generally lie so high that we hardly believe that a singer, however strongly physically equipped, would be capable of singing many of Verdi’s operas without damage to his instrument.” (This view was not unique – the same concern was voiced in Italy about Verdi’s operas.)

The critic found, however, that the “vocal parts were performed with much credit by Sign. Ciaffei (Ernani), Sign. Della Santa (Don Carlos), and Sign. Casanova,” yet he was critical of their acting skills. Della Santa was particularly praised, while the critic found Penco “an excellent, naïve and pretty singer for the Opera comique and the Opera buffa”, but her voice too thin for dramatic roles.<sup>105</sup>

Wilhelm Bauck in *Aftonbladet* also praised the performance in general: the solos “were generally performed with taste and elegance, the ensembles with the precision that so strongly marks the singing of these artists.” Penco sang with “feeling and power,” Ciaffei displayed “truth and conviction” in his expression in the first Acts, and in Act III he “makes fine nuances of passion.” Della Santa “really triumphs”; Bauck wrote of his “delicate, expressive execution,” his “melodious and yet powerful voice,” and his “energy and fire” in Act III; “Here Sgr Della Santa, as in other parts, combines the vivacity of the southerners with the moderation and consideration that is more typical of the northerner.”<sup>106</sup>

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beträffar. När dess fördelar dertill med så utmärkt hablitet, som nu sker, begagnas af de utförande, så är det naturligt, att man i alla fall icke utan nöje hör denna opera.” (*Aftonbladet*, 30 August 1848.)

105 “tvinga de stackars sångarna vanligen till mycken överansträngning. Hvad karlarnes partier beträffar, så ligga dessa i allmänhet så högt, att vi knappast skulle tro en sångare, om än så kraftigt, fysiskt utrustad, vara i stånd att, utan skada för sitt instrument, uthålla att sjunga många af Verdis Operor. [...] Sångpartierna återgåfvos emedertid med mycken förtjenst af Sig. Ciaffei (Ernani), Sign. Della Santa (Don Carlos) samt Sign. Casanova. [...] [Signora Penco är ju] en utmärkt naiv och täck sångerska för Opera-komiken och Opera-buffan.” (*Dagligt Allehanda*, 30 August 1848.)

106 “Solopartierna utföras oftast med smak och elegans, ensemblerna med den precision, som så mycket utmärker dessa artisters sång.[...] (Penco) känsla och kraft” [...] (Ciaffei) sanning och bestämdhet [...] nyanserar passionen [...] (Della Santa) firar en verklig triumf

The critic of the *Post- och Inrikes Tidningar* concluded: “However, it was executed as usual in a masterly way by the performers, the soloists as well as the choir and orchestra [...]. There was a full house, and the audience was particularly animated – no wonder, as the spirited life manifested on the stage was also electrically transferred to the audience.” According to *Aftonbladet*, flowers were thrown onto the stage – nowadays a very un-Swedish behaviour.<sup>107</sup>

Around 1850, Stockholm’s population numbered around 90,000 inhabitants. It has been estimated that, some years later, the portion of the public attending events in the Royal Theatre numbered about 3,000, and possibly the same persons made up the audiences of the Italian Opera Company during their season in Stockholm in 1848–1849, in July–August 1848 at the Mindre teatern, in October–November at the Royal Theatre, and again at the Mindre teatern January–June 1849.<sup>108</sup>

As the opera company gave more than sixty performances in Stockholm and the theatre could seat 764, sixty full houses (this would not, of course, have been the case) would amount to more than 45,000 spectators. Even with fewer spectators, this would mean that many of the opera-goers in Stockholm attended the company’s performances several times. We know that indeed they did (the company also had a subscription system), and it seems very probable that the visit by the Italian company made a lasting impression on the Stockholm public, presenting a new repertoire in authentic performances and executed with an energy from the singers, chorus, and orchestra which the Stockholm public had never experienced.

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[...] delikata, uttryckfulla föredrag [...]melodiska, likväl kraftfulla stämma” [...]energi och eld” [...] Sgr Della Santa förenar här som i andra roller sydländarnas liflighet med den sans, den omtänksamhet, som mera plägar vara nordbon egen.” (*Aftonbladet*, 30 August 1848.)

107 “Emellertid uppehölls den, såsom vanligt, på ett mästerligt sätt af de medverkande, så solister som kör och orkester... Huset var utsåldt, och publiken särdeles animerad, – ej underligt, ty det friska lif, som på scenen uppenbarar sig, meddelar sig äfven elektriskt åt åhörarne.” (*Post- och Inrikes Tidningar*, 24 August 1848.)

108 Hallgren 2000, 122.

## Conclusion

I have endeavoured to show, based on the evidence of Verdi's *Ernani* as an example, how seven Italian singers and a conductor from Copenhagen – the Italian Opera Company – were able to stage and perform twelve Italian operas in a very short time at the Mindre teatern in Stockholm in 1848–1849. Launching a project such as *Ernani* takes a great deal of administration in the way of negotiations, financial arrangements, marketing, translation of libretti and more. A possible candidate for carrying out these tasks was Alexander Hartkopff, who is mentioned as the company's secretary.

With the aid of contemporary sources I have established the singers' vocal and dramatic qualities. With two exceptions, the young Rosina Penco and the older Vincenzo Galli, the singers were around 30 years of age, and with the exception of Penco, they were all highly experienced; all of those taking part in *Ernani* had good voices.

To establish the size of the orchestra of the *Ernani* performances the score and the orchestra parts used would have been helpful, but these have not been found (only the choral parts have been preserved). With the help of the material in performances of *Ernani* at the Royal Theatre in 1853 and in consideration of the size of orchestra at the Italian Opera Company at the Court Theatre in Copenhagen, it seems very probable that the Italian Opera Company in Stockholm had at its disposal an orchestra of about 30 musicians. However, it seems unlikely that they had a bass clarinet (then a very unusual instrument) as required by Verdi for Don Carlo's Act III Cavatina.

The chorus, according to one critic, was "a small elite corps from the choir personnel of the Royal Theatre" (which was possible, as the opera season there had not yet started). It probably consisted of 14 to 17 singers and was highly praised by the critics. Later the company had to find other singers.

The performers' costumes had probably been brought from Copenhagen, and normally belonged to the individual singers; the singers were obliged by their contracts to supply every item "pertaining to a basic costuming." The sets must have come from the stock owned

by the Mindre teatern, where the Italian Opera Company performed, perhaps with minor additions, given that the theatre had its own scene painter. One critic was surprised to find “all the principal demands of historical costume and elegance” and was impressed by the festival hall of Don de Silva.

We know nothing of the stage direction of the *Ernani* performances, but two of the singers had taken part – together – in early productions of the opera, and they could have passed on their experiences of the staging and the sets from the Italian performances. But we do not know how this was generally handled.

Paolo Sperati, the conductor of the opera, was experienced, despite his youthful age; he had been the conductor at the Royal Court in Copenhagen since 1841 and was regarded as an excellent conductor, although he was sometimes criticised for his “fiery and somewhat violent” way of conducting. He seems to have conducted as was normal in northern Europe, namely with a baton.

There is no mention of a prompter, even if such a function must have been indispensable; as all the singers were normally occupied in every performance, it could hardly have been one of them. To this question I have no answer.

Although Rossini, Bellini and Donizetti were well-known to the Stockholm public, by 1848 no opera by Verdi had been performed in Sweden. The critics were astounded by *Ernani*, and rather critical, but later they became more positive.

Not only was the performance of *Ernani* a success, but also most of the operas performed by the Italian Opera Company were very well received by critics and public alike. Judging by the number of inhabitants in Stockholm who were estimated to attend the Royal Theatre – around 3,000 – and who were also most likely to be interested in the company’s performances, many of them must have attended the same opera several times.

The singers and their performances long stayed in the minds of the Stockholm public. Not only did they present nine operas which had not been previously performed in Stockholm, but they also acquainted the public with Giuseppe Verdi, then the rising star in Italy.

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II

STAGE AND NATION



# Grand opera and Finnish nationalism in Helsinki, 1876–1877

ULLA-BRITTA BROMAN-KANANEN

## I Introduction

During the season 1876–1877, 163 operatic performances were given in Helsinki, averaging about four a week.<sup>1</sup> These took place in two languages and at two theatres: the Finnish and the Swedish Theatres. The operas were staged during what one contemporary actor at the Swedish Theatre called an “opera fury”,<sup>2</sup> a short period during which an unusually large number of operas was performed at the two theatres. The flurry of activity was exceptional; indeed, it was an isolated phenomenon of short duration and without serious recurrences, at least not for three decades. In this article I focus mainly on the Swedish Theatre, with questions about the nature of the *opera fury*, which in the 1870s placed opera at the centre of a political and nationalist struggle in Helsinki; and more concretely about how a grand opera repertoire (especially Rossini’s *Wilhelm Tell* and Auber’s *La Muette de Portici*) was able

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1 This is a huge number in a small town of only 30,000 inhabitants, even allowing for the early start of the season, on 1 July 1876, owing to the Industrial and Arts Exhibition held in Helsinki that summer. The correct name for the Swedish Theatre, which was founded in 1860, is New Theatre (*Nya Teatern*, until 1870 *Nya Theatern*), the name in use until 1887. In this article, I use the theatre’s later name because it is better known in Finland, and also for the sake of clarity with regard to the language used on its stage. See also <http://reprises.uniarts.fi>, the Database for opera and music theatre performances in Finland, c. 1860–1900.

2 Degerholm 1900, 74.

to defend the position and identity of the Swedish Theatre during this time.<sup>3</sup>

In her memoirs the actor Emelie Degerholm (1847–1909) mentions that opera was needed to prevent members of the Finnish Opera company from “infiltrating” the Swedish Theatre.<sup>4</sup> Apparently, the Swedish Theatre felt that its position as the “national theatre” was threatened, which brings up the question of the theatre’s expectations of opera and of the role of opera in ensuring the theatre’s national position. Degerholm also indicates that the opera had the ability to make a statement by means of language, and she simultaneously refers to a complicated and highly politicised question in the 1870s in Helsinki, namely the language struggle and the rise of the Finnish national movement, the Fennoman movement, during that decade.<sup>5</sup> The language issue turned out to be awkward for the Swedish Theatre, as its stage language was Standard Swedish (not even Finland–Swedish), a matter which those in the national movement readily interpreted as a sign of the Swedish-speaking population’s dreams of re-uniting with Sweden, the former “motherland”.<sup>6</sup>

Engman argues that the Fennomans in fact hid other, more disquieting goals behind the veil of language conflict. He explicates the *long durée* of the Finnish–Swedish language conflict as follows:

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3 *Wilhelm Tell* was premiered on 18 October 1876; *La Muette de Portici* on 21 March 1877; and *Robert le diable* (or *Robert from Normandy* as it was renamed in Swedish) had its premiere on 18 May. Along with these grand operas, the theatre staged *Rigoletto* (Verdi) on 27 December 1876; earlier, 17 November 1876, the disreputable performances of the operetta *Die Fledermaus* (Strauss) took place (see below). All information about the repertoire at the Swedish Theatre can be found in Lüchou 1977. During the same season, the Finnish Opera staged two grand operas: *Les Huguenots* and *Robert le diable*, the latter in the same month and even in the same week as the Swedish Theatre’s production. See also <http://reprises.uniarts.fi>.

4 Degerholm 1903, 9.

5 See e.g. Liikanen (1995, 160–179) and Rommi (1964) for an analysis of the 1870s as a breakthrough decade for the Fennomans, who in 1877 achieved the majority in two Estates of the Finnish Diet, namely the Peasants and the Clergy.

6 After the separation from Sweden in 1809, Finnish became the language of the majority in Finland, while the official language, Swedish, was spoken by a minority, which, however, included the nobility, the clergy, the educated and civil servants.

[T]he language conflict, starting in the middle of the nineteenth century, centred around efforts to create a Finnish-language culture and to raise the status of the Finnish language with the ultimate aim of replacing Swedish as the language of administration, higher learning, culture and civilised society.<sup>7</sup>

It is notable here that the ultimate goal of the Fennoman movement was not, according to Engman (as well as Liikanen [1995]) to overthrow the societal order altogether, but rather to change Finland's official language from Swedish to Finnish. Engman's belief that this movement was a cultural project is of crucial importance in this article. It is precisely in and through this project that the Finnish Theatre and the Finnish Opera were able to enter the political arena in the 1870s and challenge the Swedish Theatre and its position as the country's national theatre.<sup>8</sup>

In the spring of 1877, the opera fury escalated as a result of a petition to merge the two theatres, an idea raised in the Finnish Diet. The petition, which suggests that the Finnish Opera and the Swedish Theatre would share the Swedish Theatre's stage, was more or less the result of a political manoeuvre by members of the Finnish national movement. Taken by surprise, the Swedish Theatre Board gathered all its strength to avert such a move, and one of its countermoves can be seen in the theatre's repertoire, with its special emphasis not just on opera, but on French grand opera.

The approach in this article is to examine two, often separate entities and consider them as intertwined: opera performances and the societal context or, in other words, opera and politics. I will take the opera fury seriously, especially its *performative* aspects, which lie behind the very concept of *fury* in relation to opera. In this, I thoroughly agree

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7 Engman 1999, 167.

8 Although the word "national" seems misplaced here, and a product of a "methodological nationalism" of later historiography, this was the very word the Swedish Theatre used about itself during the 1870s. On "methodological nationalism" see Beck 2004 and Kettunen 2008.

with Anselm Gerhard, who warned opera scholars of a certain kind of methodological failure, namely that it is a mistake to regard operas as passive entities used by a society economically or as a political mouth-piece for a nation.<sup>9</sup> This kind of functional view does not actually solve the essential methodological problems inherent in the relation between opera and its contexts. As Werner and Zimmermann state, a “lazy” usage of context should be replaced with an analysis of the manner in which individuals actually connect themselves to the world, the specific construction of the world and the elements of context produced by this activity and finally the uses arising from such constructions.<sup>10</sup>

In order to avoid a functionalist view in this article, I shall therefore focus on the operas’ capability for constructing meanings, symbols and images in and for the societies in which they exist.

Even if the grand operas staged at the Swedish Theatre belonged to a European canon, and even if its singers and materials were predominantly imported from Stockholm, this did not happen as a simplified transfer or adaptation of a certain model, but rather as a process whereby the operas obtained a specific meaning in the local society.<sup>11</sup> *Histoire croisée* emphasises this perspective, and hence it also seems to be closely related to *microhistory*, as it urges the historian to go deeper into how a phenomenon interacts with the culture in which it arrives,

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9 Gerhard 1998, 10; for a discussion about opera in politics, see Fulcher 1987; Hibberd 2009.

10 Werner and Zimmermann 2006, 47.

11 Werner and Zimmermann have introduced *histoire croisée* as a further development of alternative approaches to a methodological nationalism. While a comparative approach as well as transfer studies focus on interconnections between such entities as nations, these methods still seem to re-construct the national borders they endeavour to overcome. Certainly, transfer studies are more aware of national borders being permeable than most comparative approaches, but at the same time the nation comes through the backdoor as a category, especially as both the historicity and instability of the processes are set aside for the sake of investigation. The result is a simplified view of transfer as a linear development, which takes place within somewhat stable categories, e.g. nations. A transformation is regarded as a linear process (introduction, transmission and reception), and it is seldom understood as a “back and forth” movement, or even in terms of intercrossing. (Werner and Zimmermann 2006, 30–50.) While Werner and Zimmermann’s critique of cultural transfer has a point, it has quite rightly been criticised as too simplistic; see e.g. Espagne 2013, 36–53; Marjanen 2009.

and also to be attentive to how this phenomenon is transformed in its new milieu.<sup>12</sup> I shall furthermore combine these approaches with *performance studies*<sup>13</sup> because it seems that the performances of the grand operas during the Helsinki season obtained a societal and symbolic importance far beyond the norm, not least because of their ability to bring alive on stage the history and fate of the people of the local society.<sup>14</sup>

The article begins with an analysis of the institutional turn at the Swedish Theatre, which happened suddenly in April 1876, and resulted in several profound organisational changes affecting the staff and repertoire, among other things. Thereafter, I examine the repertoire as a whole and pay special attention to the historical drama *Daniel Hjort* (by Josef Julius Wecksell) as presenting the *Finnish* people on stage in the Swedish language in order to provide a frame of reference for the representation of the people in *Wilhelm Tell* and *La Muette de Portici*. In the following section I shall analyse how revolutionary heroism was staged with *Wilhelm Tell* and *La Muette de Portici* at the Swedish Theatre in the light of available sources. In the last section, I will answer the main questions posed in the article, namely about the opera fury as an emotional and symbolic tie between the two grand operas and the political situation outside the theatres.

## II The operatic turn at the Swedish Theatre

The Swedish Theatre opened its doors for the first time in 1860. Because of a fire, the theatre had to close in 1863, but it opened for

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12 On microhistory, see Levi 2001, 79–119; Ginzburg 2013; Peltonen 2013, 157–178; Elomaa 2001.

13 Fisher-Lichte (1989) writes about the relation between theatre and society, as follows: “[T]heatre is a communal institution, representing and establishing relationships which fulfil social functions. [...] Theatre historians regularly acknowledge that theatre and society are closely related. [...] Theatre expresses the society in which it occurs through a full range of cultural systems: painting, music, costume, body movements, gestures, language, architectures, commentaries, and so on. All of these systems form an integral part of the culture as a whole, contributing to its norms and rules, expressing its signs and meanings” (Fisher-Lichte 1989, 19–20). See also Suutela 2005.

14 About opera and performance studies, see Smart 2004b, 311–318.

a second time in 1866. The initial idea was that the Swedish Theatre would be a national theatre where performances would be given in Finland's two languages, Finnish and Swedish, but this ideal was never realised. Instead, it became policy to employ educated actors from Sweden and to stress the theatre's cosmopolitan profile, with a repertoire based on European classical spoken dramas by Shakespeare, Schiller, Sir Walter Scott and Eugène Scribe in Swedish translation.<sup>15</sup> Also dramas in Swedish language by such Finnish–Swedish writers as Johan Ludvig Runeberg, Zachris Topelius and Josef Julius Wecksell were frequently staged at the theatre. The role of the theatre's musical repertoire was largely to give the audience a break from this kind of serious programming, although operas such as *Martha* (Flotow), *Der Freischütz* (Weber) and the first opera ever to be written in Swedish, *Kung Carls jagt* (Fredrik Pacius), were regularly staged. This was the policy of the longstanding director, Nikolai Kiseleff (1820–1883), who as early as 1871 explained to an opera singer (Gunnar Fogelholm) that the theatre “has no separate lyrical scene” in order to justify why he could not agree to the remuneration Fogelholm requested.<sup>16</sup> Kiseleff had no intention of excluding opera from the repertoire altogether, so his financially motivated solution was to employ actors with good singing voices in order to be able to stage operas every now and then.

In 1872, the Finnish Theatre was founded, where dramas in the Finnish language were to be staged. A year later the Finnish Opera was established as a separate department of the theatre company. After some years of touring, the Finnish Opera settled down in Helsinki (1875), making the Arcadia Theatre (which the theatre board had bought from the Russians) its home. All of a sudden, the Swedish-speaking upper-class audience could choose between operas in Finnish at the Arcadia Theatre and operas in Swedish at the Swedish Theatre. This fuelled a competition between the Helsinki theatres that gradually escalated into a fury.

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15 Stara 2010, 126–138.

16 Nikolai Kiseleff > Gunnar Fogelholm, 19 July 1870, Swedish Literature Society in Finland, SLSA 1270, Nikolai Kiseleff's Archive.

A clear sign of an *institutional turning point* at the Swedish Theatre was the resignation of director Kiseleff in April of 1876. The theatre board had asked Kiseleff to change his cautious staff policy and employ some of the few domestic opera singers available. But Kiseleff refused, and left the theatre in protest. He did not leave alone, as many of the board members showed solidarity with him and left at the same time, among them the Swedish-born Fredrik Berndtson (1820–1881), the long-standing dramaturge and a member of the board, as well as an author and frequent newspaper critic (for *Finlands Allmänna Tidning*).<sup>17</sup>

The departure was dramatic, because Kiseleff and his colleagues left the theatre in the midst of preparations for the upcoming season, which took off early, starting already in July during the Industrial and Arts Exhibition. The reigning Tsar, Alexander II, and his family were planning to visit Helsinki and attend a festive performance at the theatre. An obviously concerned board hastily appointed five members to take care of the theatre's affairs. Ferdinand Walhberg (1847–1920), a doctor of medicine and a surgeon, served as the board's director during the summer of 1876, while Wilhelm Grefberg (1842–1886), also a doctor of medicine and a surgeon, took over in the autumn. The rest of the board members included the tradesman Carl Emil Göhle (1829–1895), the engineer John Stenberg (1841–1886), the court judge Waldemar Spoo (1845–1894) and, for a short time (until October 1876), the count Gösta Philip Armfelt (1830–1880), who became the theatre's dramaturge, a post that Wilhelm Bolin (1835–1924), the librarian at the university in Helsinki, took over after Armfelt.<sup>18</sup> None of the board members had any experience running a theatre, nor had they shown themselves to be experts on either theatre or opera, as they admitted in a letter to Kiseleff.

The composition of the board confirms both the competitive and the operatic turn of the theatre, which was further underlined in letters of contemporaries: the new board was appointed as a “board of

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17 For information about Berndtson as music critic in *Finlands Allmänna Tidning* in the late 1870s, see Sarjala 1994, 257.

18 Swedish Literature Society in Finland, SLSA 1270, Emelie Degerholm's Collection; Lüchou 1977.

competition”<sup>19</sup> and for the purpose of realising an operatic turn in “the jesting trickery in Bergbom’s spirit”<sup>20</sup> (Bergbom being the director of the Finnish Opera) at the Swedish Theatre. However, the composition of the board clearly emphasised the theatre’s political and linguistic turn. Wilhelm Grefberg, who appears to have been the most active board member, had already shown himself to be a dedicated Svecoman: he was one of the editors for the Swedish-minded newspaper *Wikingen* (published 1870–1874) and the author of the booklet *En blick på Finland’s historia* [A Glance at Finland’s History] in 1866. He was later re-appointed the director of the theatre, from 1880 to 1884. He died relatively young, in 1886 and, according to one of his obituaries, had been “[S]trong as few other were. He ruled the purely Swedish-minded party with an iron rod and his judgement fell relentlessly.”<sup>21</sup> Based on the professions of its members, the board represented a bourgeois audience rather than the nobility.

Even if the five-member board was confused about its new tasks, the members immediately began steering the theatre in a new direction, resulting in major reforms on many levels: 1) a mixed ensemble was hastily created (consisting of opera singers and the theatre’s best

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19 “Den nya direktionen, hvars sammansättning du sannolikt redan känner är en konkurrensens direktion.” (Jakob A. Estlander > Nikolai Kiseleff, “annandag påsk” [Easter Monday] 1876. Swedish Literature Society in Finland, SLSA 1270, Nikolai Kiseleff’s Archive). All translations from Swedish to English in this chapter are by the author.

20 “genom en skojande svindel i Bergboms anda” (Carl Gustaf Estlander > Eliel Aspelin, 17 April 1876. Archives of the Society of Swedish Literature in Finland held in The National Library of Finland, cited in Paavolainen 2012, 145, see also Paavolainen 2016).

21 “Stark, som få. Med järnspira styrde han det rent svensksinnade partiet och obeveklig föll hans dom” (*Figaro*, 6 March 1886). Especially the newspaper *Keski-Suomi* (13 May 1876) examined Grefberg’s and the other board members’ backgrounds thoroughly, and claimed that at least three members were former editors of the Svecoman newspaper *Wikingen* [The Viking], including Grefberg as well as Wilhelm Bolin. The article does not mention the third person. However, Axel Lille (1848–1921), the founder of *Wikingen* and an active publicist and Swedish-minded politician throughout his life, joined the board the following year, 1877; see Luchou 1977, 255. *Keski-Suomi* also reveals that Grefberg had actively distributed the booklet *Finlands historiska ställning* [The historical position of Finland, 1876] by the Swedish historian Rudolf Tengberg in Jyväskylä, a book intended to counter the textbook on the history of Finland by the Finnish professor of history and Fennoman front figure Yrjö Koskinen in 1869. Later Grefberg founded the society Svenska folkskolans vänner [Friends of the Swedish Elementary School] in 1882.

singing actors); 2) the repertoire was changed to include several new operas; 3) the Swedish Theatre's orchestra, *Orkesterbolaget*, was expanded from 16 musicians to 20; and 4) new materials, such as opera scores and libretti, were rapidly acquired from Stockholm. All these reforms were realised within a few months.<sup>22</sup> It seems clear that this rapid turn would not have been possible without a helping hand from Stockholm.

### II.1 The mixed ensemble

Contracts from the spring of 1876 tell their own story about how a mixed operatic ensemble was created. Despite the new board's intention to strengthen the theatre's domestic profile, in the end the prima donna Emma Engdahl (1852–1930) was the only Finnish–Swedish opera singer employed for the upcoming season. As she had a beautiful (albeit small) voice, it mattered less that she did not yet have any proper musical education.<sup>23</sup> Engdahl was re-engaged for the following season and her salary doubled (from 3,000 marks to 6,000 marks). The Swedish tenor Julius Saloman (1838–1893) was the only professional singer engaged for the ensemble. Saloman had made his debut in the title role of *Alessandro Stradella* (Flotow) at the Royal Swedish Theatre.<sup>24</sup> Soon after, the Swedish director Ludvig Josephson engaged him in Christiania for the Norwegian opera company.<sup>25</sup> Saloman had sung Arnold's role

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22 The information about the turning point at the Swedish Theatre is compiled from the following sources: Jakob A. Estlander > Nikolai Kiseleff, 26 March 1876; Jakob A. Estlander > Nikolai Kiseleff, "annandag påsk" [Easter Monday] 1876; Fredrik Wahlberg, C. Göhle, Johan Stenberg, Waldemar Spoo, Vilhelm Grefberg > Nikolai Kiseleff, 12 April 1876, all these letters in Swedish Literature Society in Finland, SLSA 1270, Nikolai Kiseleff's Archive; Emelie Degerholm's Collection as well as SLSA 1270/PE, Contracts with the staff; see also Broman-Kananen 2012, 155–191; Paavolainen 2012, 125–154; Paavolainen 2016; Suutela 2001, 71–93.

23 After the season Engdahl went abroad for voice lessons with Pauline Viardot-Garcia and Mathilde Marchesi and returned to the Theatre with a stronger and even more beautiful voice. Engdahl had made her debut the previous season in Amina's role (*La Sonnambula*) and appeared also as Adina (*L'Elisir d'amour*).

24 Nordensvan 1918.

25 This is why information about Saloman as well as other singers can be found in

(*Wilhelm Tell*) in Christiania, and he might therefore have suggested this opera for his Helsinki debut.<sup>26</sup> As the only professional singer in the ensemble, Saloman might well have been worth the huge salary he was offered at the Swedish Theatre: 12,000 marks – double the amount of Emma Engdahl’s salary.<sup>27</sup>

During the spring, actors with good voices were also employed at slightly higher salaries because of their new operatic obligations. Such actor-singers, all of whom originally came from Sweden, were Algot Lange (1850–1904), Harald Apelbom (1836–1903) and Erik V. Skotte (1851–?).<sup>28</sup> Bentzon-Gyllich (1847– 1899), originally from Denmark, was hired as a bass-baritone for Selva’s role in *La Muette de Portici*, and also for the title role in *Rigoletto*.<sup>29</sup>

## II.2 The orchestra

According to the contracts in the spring of 1876, the Swedish Theatre’s orchestra was increased from 16 musicians to 20 for the coming challenges of the French grand operas and *Rigoletto*. Based on their names, the musicians came either from Germany or the Baltic area.<sup>30</sup> Overall,

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Josephson’s unpublished memoirs. Fifteen volumes of these memoirs – unpublished, handwritten, and partly undated – are preserved at the National Library of Sweden, Ludvig Oskar Josephson’s Archive, RA/12527; KBI/Ep. J 5.

26 Qvamme 2004, 115.

27 And four times bigger than the actors’ salaries.

28 The careers of all these actors later took a sharp turn when all left spoken drama and became opera singers on various stages in the Nordic countries. For example, Algot Lange became a highly appreciated bass at the Royal Danish Theatre and had considerable success there in roles such as Escamillo in *Carmen*. (Engberg 1995, 432, 435; Shepelern 1995, 53 and 95).

29 Bentzon-Gyllich was an interesting personality, as he had no traditional voice training. Originally, he came from Denmark and from an artistic family, and he must have been well known for his good voice in Helsinki. At the time of his engagement at the Swedish Theatre, he was working at the telegraph office in Finland. He too exchanged a conventional career as a telegraphist for a less secure career as an opera singer, first in Stockholm and later in Christiania. (Svanberg 1918, 150–151; Eckhoff Kindem 1941, 59–60; Broman-Kananen 2012, 155–191).

30 Their surnames are Fliege, Krüll, Krausel, Rehnström, Lindqvist, Blomqvist and so on. I have not been able to trace the origin of the orchestra members, and as the orchestra

the French grand operas revolutionised the orchestra both with regard to its size and the variety of instruments, including the introduction of new ones. However, based on the contracts and the orchestral parts, it appears that the Swedish Theatre's orchestra played it safe, because only the basic instruments needed for a decent opera orchestra are represented: three first and two second violinists, one cellist and two contra-bassists, two flutists, two clarinetists, two trumpet players (one with the obligation to play the French horn when necessary), one oboist, one bassoonist, one trombonist, two hornists and one timpanist.<sup>31</sup> Based on the contracts, no one played the ophicleide, which was called for in *La Muette de Portici*, so this part was evidently taken by someone hired from outside, probably a tuba player. However, there is also evidence that the orchestral conductor, Nathan B. Emanuel, hired temporary musicians when necessary, especially for the grand opera performances.<sup>32</sup>

### III An operatic and vernacular repertoire takes form

The first trace of the plans for the season of 1876–1877 was an announcement in *Hufvudstadsbladet* only a few weeks after the appointment of the new board. The newspaper listed the following operas and operettas as being in the theatre's repertoire for the new season: *Rigoletto*, *Le Domino noir*, [Wilhelm] *Tell*, *La Dame blanche*, *Faust*, *Die Fledermaus*, *La Princesse de Trébizonde*, *Les Prés Saint-Gervais*, and *La Petite mademoiselle*.<sup>33</sup>

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members educated some young and talented boys, it is possible that some of the musicians with Swedish-sounding names actually came from Finland. The information is based on the contracts, Swedish Literature Society in Finland SLISA 1270/PE.

31 Ibidem.

32 *Morgonbladet*, 19 October 1876 reveals that some of the best musicians from the Finnish Opera's orchestra were occasionally hired by the Swedish Theatre.

33 *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 23 May 1876.

Comparing this list with the realised repertoire, it is apparent that the plans must have radically changed at some point. Neither *La Muette de Portici* nor *Robert le diable* is mentioned in the newspaper's list, although *Rigoletto* and *Wilhelm Tell* are there as is *Die Fledermaus*.<sup>34</sup> The other six works on the list were at some point excluded from the plans. It might well have been the tenor Julius Saloman who finally turned the repertoire towards grand operas. Performing in three grand operas as well as in *Rigoletto* during one and the same season must have been a dream come true for a high tenor like Saloman, who was just at the beginning of his career.

In connection with the plans for the upcoming season, a journey to Stockholm by one of the board members, Ferdinand Wahlberg, and the stage director Albert Åhman in June 1876 was crucial.<sup>35</sup> The Royal Swedish Opera gave *Wilhelm Tell* in June and, according to the unpublished memoirs of the Swedish director Ludvig Josephson, Stockholm appears to have been something of a meeting place for opera singers, directors and musicians from all the Nordic countries that June.<sup>36</sup> It is reasonable to assume that *Wilhelm Tell* was the reason for Wahlberg and Åhman's journey.<sup>37</sup> As a stage director himself, Åhman presumably went to listen attentively and take note of the staging, the *mise-en-scènes*, the costumes and the scenery. However, if he made notes, these have vanished, as have any plans about the *mise-en-scènes*. Later, in August or September 1876, Wilhelm Grefberg, who, after the summer, took over after Wahlberg as theatre director, made a trip to Stockholm.<sup>38</sup> *La*

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34 Discussed later in this article. The operetta prompted a Fennoman attack and provocation, including a whistling concert meant to disrupt the performance.

35 Kiseleff corresponded regularly with Fredrik Björklund, his contact in Stockholm, about available and suitable performers as well as materials for the theatre, but the correspondence cannot be found in the Swedish Theatre's Archive in this period.

36 Josephson's memoirs, National Library of Sweden, Ludvig Oskar Josephson's Archive, RA/12527; KBl/Ep. J 5.

37 On the operatic repertoire at the Royal Swedish Theatre, see Strömbeck, Hofsten and Ralf 1974.

38 Emilie Bergbom > Betty Elfving, Helsingfors 6 August 1876. The Finnish Literature Society, the Literary Archive (hence FLS/LA), Emelie and Kaarlo Bergbom's Archive, Nr. 45–54.

*Muette de Portici* was in the repertoire at the Royal Swedish Opera, and it is possible that Grefberg attended the première and then acquired the scores and libretto for Helsinki, although this is not known for certain.

The overall goal for the newly appointed five-member board was to put together a repertoire (including spoken dramas) for the upcoming season that would strengthen the theatre's national identity. The Finnish Opera challenged the board to make more room for opera performances, and to do so with vernacular and educated singers. This resulted in a veritable race between the two theatre boards during the spring to employ the few educated domestic singers available in Finland, such as the tenor Bruno Holm (1853–1881) and the mezzo soprano Hortense Synnerberg (1856–1920). The Finnish Opera's prima donna, Emmy Achté (1850–1924), also received a generous offer from the Swedish Theatre's board, as it soon became known that she was about to resign from the Finnish Opera after a disagreement with its director, Kaarlo Bergbom (1843–1906).<sup>39</sup> All of these artists turned down the Swedish Theatre's offers, but a small victory for the Swedish Theatre was that the soprano Alma Fohström (1856–1936), who was engaged at the Finnish Opera for the spring of 1877, had agreed to perform the entr'act music at the Swedish Theatre *before* she came to the Finnish Opera that spring.<sup>40</sup> Given the setbacks in this competition, it is perhaps not surprising that spoken theatre works came to characterise the Swedish Theatre's repertoire more than opera. As it happened, a remarkable number of vernacular dramas was premiered, especially during the spring of 1877: three out of four domestic plays written in Swedish saw their premieres during the spring season, with the fourth having been premiered the previous autumn. One of the authors was the above-mentioned director, Ferdinand Wahlberg, whose play *Ett briljant parti* was given (on 30 April 1877) after the premiere of *La Muette de Portici* in March 1877. In addition, on the 5th of February, the birthday of Finland's national poet Johan Ludvig Runeberg (1804–1877), his com-

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<sup>39</sup> See Broman-Kananen 2014, 5–28.

<sup>40</sup> *Dagens Nyheter*, 26 April 1877.

edy *Kan ej* was staged starring Emma Engdahl in the role of Julie, who delivered her lines in a Finnish-Swedish intonation.<sup>41</sup>

Fredrik Pacius's *Kung Carls jagt*, the first Finnish opera, whose libretto was written by Zacharias Topelius (1818–1898) in Swedish, would perhaps have been a natural choice for the Swedish Theatre's repertoire as the opera fury escalated, but for reasons unknown, the board chose instead to put together a repertoire consisting of French grand operas dealing with Italian (*La Muette*) or Swiss (*Tell*) history or a French medieval legend (*Robert*), evidently in a bid to compete with the Finnish Opera, where *Les Huguenots*, *Robert le diable* (Meyerbeer) and *Die Zauberflöte* (Mozart) were being premiered during the same season along with Verdi's *La traviata* (called *Violetta* in the Swedish translation) and Beethoven's *Fidelio*. The Swedish Theatre's opera repertoire also included "old" operas with the new ensemble, one of which was *Der Freischütz*, in which Engdahl and Saloman sang the roles of Agathe and Max.

In the autumn of 1876 Strauss's operetta *Die Fledermaus* was given between *Wilhelm Tell* and *Rigoletto*, offering an opportunity for the younger Fennomans to pretend indignation over its immoral content. They initiated a whistling concert during one of the operetta's first performances, and the work was withdrawn after only three presentations. The discussion that followed in the press raised questions about the moral character of music theatre, and specifically how opera's moral or immoral content directly affected an audience and how music had the power either to elevate or deprive its listeners. Echoes of this discussion were heard later, during the spring, in the debate about the merger; besides arguments over the singers' native language or their professionalism, there were arguments about the moral content of the theatre's entire repertoire.<sup>42</sup>

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41 Finnish-Swedish intonation was seldom heard on stage, and when it was, the actors were usually performing in lesser roles. However, in this case the critics were all very positive about Engdahl's "lovely and enjoyable" performance, which had overshadowed the shortcomings [sic] in her recitation of the verses; see *Dagens Nyheter*, 6 February 1877; *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 8 February 1877; *Finlands Allmänna Tidning*, 6 February 1877.

42 Broman-Kananen 2012, 155–191; 2015, 69–78; Paavolainen 2012, 125–154.

The board apparently planned the repertoire for the spring of 1877 even more carefully than for the autumn. In part they were encouraged by the incident with *Die Fledermaus*, and in part by knowledge of the Diet's meetings and the graduation ceremonies at the Imperial Alexander University (of Helsinki) in the spring, which attracted new audiences from the countryside to the theatres. Even if the board had not previously heard about the petition for a theatre merger, it could have expected measures by the Fennomans in connection with the theatre and its state funding, based on earlier experiences in meetings of the Diet in 1872.<sup>43</sup>

#### IV *Daniel Hjort* as a vernacular frame of reference for French grand opera

The spoken drama *Daniel Hjort*, written in Swedish by Josef Julius Wecksell, is one of the first plays in Finland to take up a historical theme from a crucial period in the country's history, namely the Club War (*Klubbekriget*), 1596–1597, a time when Finland was still part of Sweden.<sup>44</sup> This play was premiered at the Swedish Theatre in 1862, and was performed regularly at the theatre thereafter.<sup>45</sup> In April of 1877, the Finnish Theatre company, which exceptionally stayed in Helsinki several months during the spring, staged *Daniel Hjort* for the first time in a Finnish translation, while the Swedish Theatre had performed the play in January of 1876 and again in March of 1877, the latter only a month before *La Muette de Portici*.

43 In 1872, a proposal by the Peasant's Estate concerned the Finnish-language theatre in Helsinki, which should be on equal footing with the Swedish-language theatre (Paavolainen 2012, 140).

44 It has been said that Wecksell's model was Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, but Schiller and Hugo had also been on his mind when Wecksell was writing *Daniel Hjort*. Wrede emphasises that Yrjö Koskinen's historiographical interpretation (in his book on the Club War written in Finnish, *Nuijasota*, published in 1857–1859) of the "democratic pathos" in relation to the Club War offered inspiration for Wecksell; see Wrede 1991, 180–183.

45 After its premiere in 1862, the play was revived in 1868, 1869, 1872 and 1875.

The plot of *Daniel Hjort* has much in common with both *Wilhelm Tell* and *La Muette de Portici*, and it seems reasonable to assume that the play was chosen to provide a *Finnish* frame of reference for the people who would be on stage in the *La Muette de Portici* that spring.<sup>46</sup> *Daniel Hjort* is loosely based on events in the aftermath of the Club War. In the play Daniel Hjort has been raised in the castle of Turku by his father's murderer, Klaus Fleming, together with Fleming's two sons, Johan Fleming and Olof Klasson. Daniel's mother, Katri, reveals the name of his real father, Bengt Ilkainen, who was the brother of the leader of the Club War (Jaakko Ilkka). She also assigns him the task of avenging his father's death. Suddenly, Daniel is thrown into a crisis of loyalty between his mother's demands for revenge, his family background and his own upbringing, a crisis reinforced by his love for the noblewoman Sigrid, who was the daughter of Finland's governor Arvid Stålarms.

In the play the castle of Turku turns into a battleground between the "real" Swedish king, the Polish (and Catholic) Sigismund, and the aspiring (and Protestant) king, Duke Charles. Daniel Hjort now sees an opportunity to avenge his father's death, and he creates a conspiracy against Sigismund's allies inside the castle. Hjort succeeds in preparing the way for Duke Charles to take over the castle. However, in the closing scene Fleming's illegitimate son, Olof Klasson, kills Daniel Hjort.

It is not only the historical motives with the peasants and fishermen revolting against an oppressor that connect *Daniel Hjort* with its operatic equivalents, *Wilhelm Tell* and *La Muette de Portici*, but also their main characters, who can easily be compared; not even the love stories in all three dramas, with lovers coming from different social backgrounds, differ very much. Daniel Hjort is as ambivalent a hero as Arnold (*Tell*) and Masaniello (*La Muette de Portici*), and the murdered father's phantom, who demands that his son avenge him, appears in both *Daniel Hjort* and *Tell*. Fenella (*La Muette de Portici*) for her part seems to be a younger variant of the mother Katri (in *Daniel Hjort*) as

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46 The Club War represented a "purely Finnish" phase in the history of Sweden, according to Engman 1999, 173.

the people's protagonist.<sup>47</sup> Yet Katri is a menacing old woman, while the mute Fenella represents what is good and pure in earthly life.

The tragic ending of *La Muette de Portici*, where Masaniello dies of complications of poison administered by his closest friend, Pietro, and where Fenella throws herself into the rumbling volcano, is not very far from the ending in *Daniel Hjort*, where Sigrid throws herself in the sea and Daniel Hjort is killed by his foster brother, Olof Klasson. The happy ending in *Tell* is an exception, but according to Gerhard, *Tell's* happy ending is actually incompatible with the dramaturgy of the first act; rather it seems in fact to have been the librettists' concession to the Wilhelm Tell legend.<sup>48</sup>

In sum, the drama *Daniel Hjort* put the *Finnish* people in the lime-light – the peasants and the fishermen – as did both *Wilhelm Tell* and *La Muette de Portici*. Evidently, the pride that the Swedish Theatre took in Wecksell's historical drama and its symbolic value for the theatre's identity as a national theatre inspired the board to search for an opera repertoire of similar message and substance.

The critic Fredrik Berndtson, who wrote for the newspaper *Finlands Allmänna Tidning*, published an extensive review of *Daniel Hjort* only a few weeks before the Swedish Theatre House Owner Company established a new Warrants Society for the theatre.<sup>49</sup> His review is programmatic in at least two ways. Firstly, he acknowledges that the Swedish Theatre's position as the leading theatre in Helsinki was at stake, but he also states that a great drama like *Daniel Hjort* could easily reclaim this position for the theatre: "Who can see 'Daniel Hjort' on our Swedish stage without experiencing a feeling of pride in connection with a strong desire that this stage could acquire the same importance for our dramatic art as this poem gives our dramatic literature?"<sup>50</sup> There is also

47 On Katri as the protagonist of the people, see Suutela 2005.

48 Gerhard 1998, 104.

49 The task of the Warrants Society was to run the Swedish Theatre company and to employ the actors, singers and other staff. It was also responsible for possible losses (Paavolainen 2012, 137).

50 "Hvem kan skåda 'Daniel Hjort' på vår svenska scène, utan att erfara en känsla af

a slight hint of proprietary rights vis-à-vis the Swedish Theatre here between the lines, perhaps directed at the Finnish Theatre, which was about to stage *Daniel Hjort* in translation.

Secondly, Berndtson states that it is with spoken drama and not opera (“sensually titillating delight to the ear”)<sup>51</sup> that the theatre should maintain its importance. These lines can be interpreted as an argument against staging opera in the Swedish Theatre. The theatre’s first and only task, according to Berndtson, was to give plays like *Daniel Hjort* and nothing else.<sup>52</sup>

The Fennoman movement realised early on that the nation as a common dream, or an “imagined community”, needed to be actively constructed in public, both on a concrete and on a symbolic level.<sup>53</sup> Suutela, for example, has explored the Finnish Theatre’s role in this construction, which involved artists from different fields.<sup>54</sup> For the Finnish Theatre and Opera, this meant creating rituals, traditions and narratives, all of which were aimed at building a specifically *Finnish* identity for its audience.<sup>55</sup> In contrast, the Swedish Theatre might have had a more modest plan for its repertoire in an ideological sense, even during the season of interest here. This modesty notwithstanding, *Daniel Hjort* as well as several other spoken dramas performed throughout the theatre’s entire existence represented the Finnish people and Finland’s history on stage, even if performed in the Swedish language. This is not to say that the theatre did not also stage plays and music theatre in which an upper-class audience could identify itself and its social mores.

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stolthet i förening med en liflig önskan, att denna scène måtte för vår dramatiska konst kunna förvärfva samma betydelse som denna dikt ger för vår dramatiska litteratur?” (*Finlands Allmänna Tidning*, 2 March 1877).

51 “vällustigt kittlande fägnad för örat” (*Finlands Allmänna Tidning*, 2 March 1877).

52 Berndtson belonged among those who disapproved of the operatic turn at the Swedish Theatre. He repeated his opinion in *Dramatiska studier och kritiker* (1879), where he once again stated that opera was expensive and a “rather unfruitful delight for the eye and the ear” (“tämlichen ofruktbar[ä] ögon- och öronfägnad”) (Berndtson 1879, 430).

53 On the nation as an imagined community, see Anderson 2006.

54 Suutela 2001, 71–93; see also Pikkanen 2012, 7; 2010, 209–232.

55 Suutela 2001; 2005, 7–24; Fewster 2006, 19.

However, sometimes the differences in the way the two theatres represented the people were small, and the Fennomans had more or less consciously to make a distinction between them. A reviewer in *Morgonbladet* makes a case for the differences in representations of Katri (as the protagonist for the Finnish people) on the Finnish stage vs on the Swedish Theatre's stage. According to the reviewer, the Katri in the Finnish Theatre's interpretation was "less a witch and more a woman" than Charlotte Raa (Winterhjem) had been almost ten years earlier (1868) at the Swedish Theatre.<sup>56</sup> It is, of course, difficult to judge from the newspaper reviews whether the differences in the interpretations of Katri's role actually existed, but the Swedish Theatre's Katri in 1877 seems to have shown a mixture of feelings on stage: hate, love, sorrow, madness and despair.<sup>57</sup> Presumably, the reviewer in *Morgonbladet* wanted especially to stress that the Swedish Theatre had understood Katri – the representative of the Finnish people – differently: not as a human being or even as an equal to those in the audience, but rather as a demonic and mythical being, with supernatural and frightening powers.

Nevertheless, it is possible to get an inkling of a thematic line running through the whole of the season's repertoire at the Swedish Theatre. Firstly, the domestic identity of the theatre was considerably strengthened, only not with opera, but with spoken drama novelties as well as with *Daniel Hjort*. Secondly, all of the operas were chosen with the new actor, Julius Saloman, and his high tenor voice in mind. Thirdly, the board clearly wanted to respond to the Finnish Opera's programmatic focus on representation of the Finnish people on stage, but now with the Finnish people singing in Swedish. This was also the message the theatre might have wanted to convey to members of the Diet, who came to Helsinki from the countryside and probably sat in the audience. At the same time the theatre wanted to do away with its reputation as a producer of only "light" music theatre repertoire.

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<sup>56</sup> *Morgonbladet*, 11 May 1877.

<sup>57</sup> *Finlands Allmänna Tidning*, 2 March 1877.

## V Vocal and enacted heroism at the Swedish Theatre

As a defence of the theatre's position, the two grand operas in question were both well-suited, yet also ill-suited. Scholars regard these operas as forebodings of the July Revolution in France and interpret their dramas as mirroring the emotional temperature of French society at the time of their premieres. Later, the air of revolution closely followed in the steps of *Tell* and *La Muette de Portici*, and there are tales of how both operas were able to affect their audiences and their performers to such a degree that people rushed out on the streets "to overturn the status quo."<sup>58</sup> According to Walton (who quotes Johnson, 1995), this is an "elusive dream of the modern cultural historian for evidence of opera and life merged, stage action inspiring direct rebellion."<sup>59</sup> No matter how exaggerated these tales may be, they do tell something about the operas' performative power to captivate listeners and to mediate a certain spirit and emotion vis-à-vis an audience, no matter when or where the works were staged. The operas' reputation of having such power over their audiences might certainly have been tempting to a theatre board that felt forced to address the Fennoman nation-building project under way in Helsinki with opera as its flagship.

In this section I will analyse the presentations of *Tell* and *La Muette de Portici* from a performative perspective with a focus on how the revolutionary heroism of these operas was realised both vocally and otherwise at the Swedish Theatre. I will limit the analysis to this theme, mainly because the staging of revolution in voice and deed was of crucial importance for the theatre in its struggle for symbolic advantage both on and off stage. Although my aim is not to take part in any discussion about various vocal schools during the nineteenth century, the

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58 Walton 2003, 129–130; Gerhard 1998, 127–134. Gerhard argues convincingly that the revolutionary message of *La Muette de Portici* should not be sought in its libretto, but rather in its music. See also Hibberd 2009 for a nuanced and thorough analysis of *La Muette de Portici*'s historico-political dimensions.

59 Walton 2003, 130.

voice of the tenor Julius Saloman is such a frequent topic in the newspaper reviews that it has to be commented upon here.

The source material consists of press reviews, the Swedish-language libretti (from Finland as well as from Sweden) and the scores (of *La Muette de Portici*), as well as personal letters written by the seamstress Maria Grape (1834–1912) to her friend and former actress in the Swedish Theatre, Charlotte Winterhjelm, the performer of Katri in 1868. The newspapers were politically divided in those days, although most were published in the Swedish language.<sup>60</sup>

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60 On the newspapers' political opinions, see Landegren 1988, 398–400. The number of sources not found on the opera performances easily outnumber those found; there are no *mise-en-scènes*, machinery lists or other sources left in the Archives dealing with the staging of either spoken dramas or operas. Among the sources that are preserved, posters are quite informative about the casts, the durations of the performances and the ticket prices (which were raised for the grand operas). The scores for *La Muette de Portici* found in the Swedish Theatre's Archive bear clear testimony to their origin in the Royal Swedish Theatre. Two are piano scores published in Germany – one in Leipzig and Berlin by C.F. Peters, while the publisher of the other remains unknown and the cover is missing. However, in this latter score the printed text is in both German and French, as well as in handwritten Swedish. This score is significant, because of the handwritten name of the theatre to which it belonged before it came to the Swedish Theatre: "Kongl. Theatern" (the Royal [Swedish] Theatre), written twice on the title page, at the very top and again at the bottom. In addition to these two piano scores, a French orchestral score, hard bound in two volumes, has been preserved. There are no indications in the score about its use, or its origin, and the music in the volumes is divided at a highly impractical point: in the middle of an act and even in the middle of a scene. If this score was ever used, it was probably bound in hard copy only afterwards, and by someone who did not know where to divide the music appropriately. It is possible that the orchestral parts were copied from this score, and evidently re-arranged as well, as is clear from the missing instruments, e.g. the ophicleide, as well as for other practical reasons. All these scores were apparently used as models for the orchestral parts (which are missing) and for the existing role parts (for Masaniello, Elvire, Alphonse, Selva and Pietro) and the 23 choral parts, copied by the orchestra's oboist, Theodor Krausel. In Masaniello's part, changes have been made with another pen and in another handwriting, presumably by Saloman, who sung Masaniello's role. The Finnish–Swedish versions of the libretti differ slightly from their equivalents published 1876 in Stockholm. A minor difference is that all manner of scene instructions were omitted in the Helsinki score, probably not to keep the audience ignorant about what *should* happen on stage, but rather to save on printing costs. The descriptions of Fenella's gestures were nevertheless included in *La Muette de Portici's* libretto and were available to audiences in Helsinki. The libretti from both Stockholm and Helsinki are important, especially as all kinds of scores from both

### V.1 Vocal heroism

As mentioned above, one of the reasons that the Swedish Theatre chose these particular operas, besides their *grandeur* and revolutionary gist, was clearly to showcase a high tenor like Julius Saloman. The tenor heroes in both works, Arnold and Masaniello, may be weak and indecisive in their deeds, but not in their voices. Both roles were originally performed by the tenor Adolphe Nourrit (1802–1839), who imbued the parts with his extremely high voice and its special quality. According to Smart, Nourrit’s high Cs were “pure, ringing and somehow idealistic”; she continues by quoting the composer Fromental Halévy, who said that Nourrit seemed to want to “turn his voice into a trumpet of the July revolution.”<sup>61</sup> Duprez, who later took over the roles, started a vocal revolution by singing the high Cs in a different way than Nourrit – in a chest voice (*voce di petto*) rather than a head voice. In the 1870s, Duprez’s chest voice became the more popular vocal style.<sup>62</sup> However the roles were sung, they were unquestionably high and demanding, and it was not unusual for the key occasionally to be lowered for the tenor’s sake, at least in *La Muette de Portici*.

It is difficult to make judgements about a singer’s voice from an historical distance. Smart writes that in cases where no recordings were made, a voice is likely to be acknowledged only in its extremes, as a “supra-linguistic cry or scream.”<sup>63</sup> The tendency to acknowledge and comment on the extreme and the unfamiliar also seems to be true in Helsinki with regard to Saloman’s voice. This is in itself interesting, because Saloman, who earlier had sung Arnold’s role in Christiania and studied the role under Ludvig Josephson’s supervision, regularly received positive reviews in the Norwegian press.<sup>64</sup> (Figure 1.) Josephson

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*Wilhelm Tell* and *Robert le diable* are missing.

61 Smart 2003, 119, 121.

62 For an analysis of the differences and struggles between the French vocal school (Nourrit) and the Italian school represented by Duprez, see e.g. Smith, 2011; Sörenson von Gertten 2011; Potter 2009.

63 Smart 2003, 121.

64 Qvamme 2004, 104.

indicates in his *Memoirs* that Saloman needed strong guidance, both vocally and artistically, but an obvious trait in Josephson's autobiographical writing style is to emphasise his own part in the final result on stage.<sup>65</sup> Of course, as one of the first modern directors with a forceful view of the results he wanted, it may be that Josephson did not always exaggerate.



Figure 1. Julius Saloman in Raoul's role (*Les Huguenots*) in Christiania 1876 just before he came to Helsinki. Photo by Ludwik Szacinski De Ravicz, Christiania, Music and Theatre Library in Sweden.

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65 Josephson's memoirs, Vol. XV, 159. National Library of Sweden, Ludvig Oskar Josephson's Archive, RA/12527; KB1/Ep. J 5.

The Fennoman newspaper *Morgonbladet* was the first to label Saloman's voice cautiously as "not really a male voice" in *Tell*.<sup>66</sup> Otherwise, the newspaper had a very positive view of the performance, which should be noted, because after the *Fledermaus* incident all the Fennoman newspapers went more or less silent about opera at the Swedish Theatre with the exception of articles about the merger. Maria Grape probably felt inspired by *Morgonbladet's* review, as she wrote in a letter dated on the same day that "Saloman has a peculiar tenor, more like a female soprano voice."<sup>67</sup>

*Finlands Allmänna Tidning* had the longest reviews of *Wilhelm Tell* and *La Muette de Portici* (although none about *Robert*). The critic Berndtson was downright puzzled on hearing Saloman for the first time and in *Wilhelm Tell*. He compared the voice with a shawm and confessed that he experienced it as both peculiar and disagreeable.<sup>68</sup> Berndtson's comparison indicates that the voice could have been shrill, perhaps too thin in the upper register. After the first shock, Berndtson gradually changed his mind about Saloman, becoming more positive on hearing the tenor perform in both *Rigoletto* and *La Muette de Portici*, although he never seemed to like the voice entirely.

Unlike Berndtson's writings, the reviews in *Hufvudstadsbladet* focussed more on the singers and the music, and there is one especially interesting review after *Wilhelm Tell's* first performances in Helsinki. The anonymous writer was probably the Finnish Theatre's singer Bruno Holm, who occasionally stood in for the regular music critic, Herman Paul.<sup>69</sup> Holm in *Hufvudstadsbladet* and Martin Wegelius in *Finsk Tidskrift* were actually the only critics with a music education, and

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66 *Morgonbladet*, 19 October 1876.

67 Maria Grape > Hedvig Charlotta Winterhjelm, Helsingfors 19 October 1876, The Finnish Literature Society, FLS/LA, Maria Grape's Archive, Nr. 41-44.

68 *Finlands Allmänna Tidning*, 7 November 1876. A shawm (skalmeja in Swedish) is a medieval and renaissance wind instrument, with a timbre that reminds of a bagpipe.

69 The critic left no signature, but Paul is excluded because he always signed his reviews 'P'. Emmy Achté wrote in a letter to a friend that Bruno Holm occasionally wrote reviews in *Hufvudstadsbladet* that year (Emmy Achté > Sigrid Ilmoni, Helsingfors 2 November 1876, the National Library of Finland, Aino Ackté-Jalander's Archive, Coll. 4.27).

they each took a slightly different view of Saloman's voice than the other reviewers.<sup>70</sup> Holm wrote that Saloman had a "lyrical and even over-lyrical voice, but as such, agreeable and light."<sup>71</sup> He advised the singer nonetheless to give his voice more volume and make it rounder, instead of "squeezing it even thinner than it already is." Martin Wegelius, who was one of the founders of the Helsinki Music Institute, today known as the Sibelius Academy, gave Saloman credit for his "beautiful" and "careful and refined delivery."<sup>72</sup>

Based on his personal score, Saloman sang his roles in the original key in Helsinki, which the press acknowledged. The critic of *Dagens Nyheter*, in a kind of defence of Saloman, emphasised that this was an extremely uncommon achievement, even in bigger opera houses than Helsinki's. The writer knew that tenors often transposed their parts at least one step downwards or even more. As an example, he mentioned that the Swedish tenor Carl Fredrik "Lunkan" Lundqvist (1841–1920), who was singing Masaniello's role at the Royal Swedish Opera at that time, sang it in a lower key than Saloman.<sup>73</sup>

A clue to Saloman's voice quality is the description by Bruno Holm (himself a baritone) that the voice was "weak" and that his high A or B did not sound as they usually do for tenors: "It is a shame that Mr Saloman has such a weak voice; the top of the range emerges easily, but does not have the effect an A or B has among tenors."<sup>74</sup> Another clue to the timbre is the comparison made by both Grape and *Morgonbladet* to a female voice. Saloman had studied voice with the Swedish baritone Fritz Arlberg (1830–1896), who was also in Christiania at the same time

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70 The names behind the newspaper reviews reveal that the number of music and drama experts was limited in Helsinki, and those who wrote these reviews had strong ties either to one or the other theatre. The newspapers' affiliations with a certain theatre as well as a political camp are also crucial for analysing their writings.

71 *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 3 November 1876.

72 *Finsk Tidskrift*'s article was reprinted in Wegelius 1919, 13.

73 *Dagens Nyheter*, 6 April 1877.

74 "Skada att hr Saloman skall hafwa en så späd röst, höjden framträder lätt, men gör ej den effekt som ett a och h wanligen hos tenorer brukar framkalla" (*Hufvudstadsbladet*, 4 January 1876).

as Saloman; in fact, Arlberg was singing Tell's role when Saloman was singing Arnold's in the Christiania Theatre's performance of *Wilhelm Tell* (1875). According to Sörenson von Gertten, Arlberg was opposed to the abnormally high chest voice, which he thought caused many problems for a singer and could even damage the voice. Instead, Arlberg taught his pupils to move as smoothly as possible from one register to another, up to a head voice. Saloman, who had learned this technique from Arlberg, obviously did not sing with a chest voice, which was perhaps what Holm and others expected in Helsinki. However, Holm's advice, namely that Saloman should sing his highest tones "rounder" (or Berndtson's comparison of his voice with a shawm) may indicate that, without Arlberg's or even Josephson's guidance, Saloman's voice had become too shrill and thin in the upper register, nothing like Arlberg's preferred sound. *Morgonbladet's* and Grape's comments about the voice as "female" point in the same direction, although it remains an open question whether Saloman lapsed into falsetto in singing his highest parts.

The soprano Emma Engdahl was normally treated with kid gloves by the press. Her "natural voice" was praised, and Berndtson for one argued that this kind of voice was even more enjoyable than an educated voice that had lost its naturalness, obviously a sly reference to the Finnish Opera's boast about their *two* educated prima donnas, Emmy Achté and Ida Basilier (1846–1928). Bruno Holm (in the above-mentioned article in *Hufvudsbladet*) hastened to declare in the introduction to his review that he would be measuring the singers' professional skills in relation to a general standard and not according to any local measure.<sup>75</sup> Hence, Holm made it his task to recommend fleshing out the weaknesses of Engdahl's voice and urging her to get an education as soon as possible to correct her vocal faults, although he also admitted that, "for an amateur", she had a beautiful and pleasant voice. He expressed himself in a pedagogical manner, saying that the worst thing about her voice was her artificially-produced tremolo, which she caused

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<sup>75</sup> *Hufvudsbladet*, 3 November 1876.

by shaking “the instrument” convulsively (her head, evidently), instead of allowing the voice to vibrate in a natural manner.

Despite the fact that Emma Engdahl’s voice was beautiful and enjoyable, she must have sung with a certain lack of technique. So too presumably did the male actor-singers in the other roles. They were still young and inexperienced as opera singers, although many of them (including Engdahl and Lange) later went abroad for voice training. In considering retrospectively the statements made in the press about the peculiarity of Saloman’s voice, we must keep in mind his fellow singers’ “natural” voices. In the soundscape of the operas, there was one educated and extremely high tenor, who perhaps sang with a technique reminiscent of Nourrit’s, and then there were “natural” voices around him, all of which must have been weaker than Saloman’s, whose voice and different technique must have stood out. However, all of these “natural” voices must have been hard for the audience to hear above the 21-member orchestra, which moreover had been supplemented with musicians from the Finnish Opera, as mentioned above.

## V.2 Enacted heroism

Saloman might have reached a certain level of heroism with his high notes, but if Berndtson was telling the truth about his acting skills, their lack might have contradicted all his attempts to maintain a picture of heroism on stage. Berndtson argues that, for example, Masaniello’s role requires a singer who is a skilled actor, someone who is a singer with the ability to express the transformation of his personality from a carefree fisherman into a people’s hero and then transform himself again, this time into a desperate and half insane person. But opera singers are no actors, Berndtson continued, and Julius Saloman was no exception. His gestures were limited to fierce, mechanistic movements of his arms while arching his back. “There was no life, no variation, no passion, no southern temperament in his charac-

ter whatsoever”, Berndtson wrote.<sup>76</sup> Seen through Berndtson’s eyes, Masaniello/Saloman becomes a comic figure rather than a champion of liberty for the oppressed.

Not even the singer-actors who performed the roles of Wilhelm Tell (Lange) or Pietro (Skotte) received any thanks for their acting skills in the operas. As Tell, Lange had not been the kind of hero who liberates his people,<sup>77</sup> and in *La Muette de Portici* both Lange and Skotte had acted stiffly and in a “reserved, matter-of-fact manner”, nor had they performed convincingly as conspirators. The critics acknowledged that their voices were “satisfactory”, but evidently, acting and singing in a new genre made the performers careful and stiff on stage.<sup>78</sup>

With regard to *enacted* heroism, the mute heroine, Fenella in *La Muette de Portici*, is of crucial importance. Smart agrees with Gerhard that Fenella’s muteness is less a physical defect than an “unassailable virtue.”<sup>79</sup> Fenella might have come from a fisherman’s family, but she rises above all the others in the opera: she is nearly a saint and seems to be someone who stands above earthly emotions. Against all odds she is the one who is best able to communicate and relate to both friends and enemies on stage.

Fenella’s role is a pantomime, normally performed either by a ballet dancer or an actor. In Helsinki, the role was played by a young actor, Augusta Nilsson (Figure 2.), who had studied in St Petersburg with the balletmaster Christian Johansson.<sup>80</sup> The visiting Swedish actress

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76 *Finlands Allmänna Tidning*, 3 April 1877.

77 Maria Grape confirms the criticism from most of the press: “Last Wednesday the Swedish Theatre gave ‘Wilhelm Tell’, [which] in my opinion went poorly.” Lange was not at all the kind of “forceful, brave and strong Tell who savours his Switzerland”. Saloman was “stiff and impossible in his movements.” (Maria Grape > Hedvig Charlotta Winterhjelm, Helsingfors 19 October 1876, The Finnish Literature Society, FLS/LA, Maria Grape’s Archive, Nr. 41–44). *Helsingfors Dagblad* was normally very positive about opera at the Swedish Theatre, and the newspaper does not seem to agree at all with either Berndtson or Grape, but instead was full of praise, especially of Lange’s acting in Tell (*Helsingfors Dagblad*, 1 November 1876).

78 *Finlands Allmänna Tidning*, 7 November 1876 and 6 April 1877.

79 Smart 2004a, 39; Gerhard 1998, 145. See also Hibberd 2003, 149–167 and 2009, 20–56.

80 *Helsingfors Dagblad*, 18 April 1877.

Gurli Åberg (1843–1922) had performed the role in her youth when she was studying ballet in Stockholm, and she jumped into the role during the following season, in autumn 1877, when Nilsson left the theatre to be married.<sup>81</sup> However, there are no indications that Åberg instructed Nilsson in the role, although this would have been natural.



Figure 2. Augusta Nilsson as Fenella. Photo by Charles Riis, Helsinki, Swedish Literature Society in Finland.

As Fenella, Augusta Nilsson seems to have outshone everyone else on stage. Berndtson was full of praise, writing that Mademoiselle Nilsson “electrifies the audience”; she is “so constantly absorbed by

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81 *Dagens Nyheter*, 17 October 1877.

her role, feels, suffers everything she expresses dramatically in her mute acting. There is meaning and soul in every gesture.”<sup>82</sup> Given this representation, it could have been a strategic move to choose an opera with a mute central character: among all those better-paid opera singers who were either stiff or just waving their arms around, Fenella might have been a fascinating exception, an actor who communicated with her body.

Some of the local solutions for the realisation of the two grand operas might have diluted the revolutionary emotions on stage more or less by mistake, judging by the available scores and press reviews. Most of the cuts and omissions can be traced to places of agitation in the score or to situations where emotions between different camps clash and the population groups (the choirs) are pitted against each other. The representation of these at full volume would have required special efforts from the board as well as the stage director to hire more choir members or a professional ballet troupe. But for financial reasons these demands were dealt with in the easiest way possible, either by cutting them out altogether or by realising them only partially.

With his background as a former dramaturge at the theatre, Berndtson was a harsh critic in this respect. He must have had the original libretti in his hands (either from Sweden or a French original) to the operas, because he carefully fleshed out every cut and omission made in each. A look at the Helsinki libretti (as well as at the available scores from *La Muette de Portici*) largely confirms his observations, with a few exceptions. According to Berndtson, the following scenes were omitted from *Tell*:

The eighth scene in the first act as a whole, with two large choirs, the three bridal couples' dance and the bowmen's competition: the hunters' chorus and the torchlight procession in the beginning of the second act and part of the seventh scene in the same act, as well as the first and

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<sup>82</sup> *Finlands Allmänna Tidning*, 6 April 1877.

second scenes in the fourth act, with Arnold's big aria and the choirs swearing to take revenge on the tyrant.<sup>88</sup>

Most of these cuts can be confirmed from the Finnish-language libretto with the exception of the choir parts, which are only partially cut. Moreover, there was another omission, not noticed by Berndtson, namely a choir part at the beginning of Act III, where cuts were made mainly in the choral parts, probably because two choirs are needed on stage simultaneously. Apparently, there were not enough *good* singers to bring this off, although the press mentions that there were 60 persons in the choir.<sup>84</sup> However, there is no good explanation for the omission of Arnold's great aria in the beginning of Act IV. Saloman was the only professional singer in the cast and should have been able to execute this aria, not least because he had learned the role earlier in Christiania. It can thus be argued that the omission of these scenes caused the loss of much of the energy that was vital for the opera's revolutionary gist, found especially in scenes with ominous conflict in the foreground (as in the beginning of Act II) or in Arnold's aria, when he sings about taking revenge on the tyrant.

Another, even more crucial omission took place right in the beginning of *La Muette de Portici*: based on the libretto as well as on Alphonse's vocal part, the Swedish Theatre production omitted the opera's first two scenes entirely. It is in these two scenes that Alphonse provides the background to his relationship with Fenella, admitting to his friend Lorenzo that he has both loved and seduced Fenella in disguise. But in the Helsinki production, as the opera begins and Fenella first appears on stage, she is thrown directly into an impossible situation and only slowly realises that her lover is not the person she thought him to be. Alphonse's triple betrayal is gradually revealed: not only is he

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83 “[h]ela åttonde scenen i första akten med tvänne stora körer, de tre brudparens dans och bågskyttarnas täflan: jägarenes kör och fackeltåg i början af andra akten en del af sjunde scēnen i samma akt, samt första och andra scēnerna i fjerde akten, med Arnolds stora aria och de edsvurnas körer då de gå att taga hämnd på tyrannen.” (*Finlands Allmänna Tidning*, 7 November 1876.)

84 *Helsingfors Dagblad*, 16 October 1876.

not her equal, but also Fenella learns that he is the son of the viceroy of Naples and furthermore, that he is betrothed to the Spanish Princess Elvire. Because the first two scenes are cut, the opera begins “brutally” as the critic Berndtson expressed it, and Alphonse appears to be a man without any dignity whatsoever.<sup>85</sup>

It appears that the Swedish Theatre was following an older production of *La Muette de Portici*, which had been staged in Stockholm in 1866. An examination of the Swedish libretto from 1876 shows that the two beginning scenes were cut in the Swedish director Ludvig Josephson’s *mise-en-scène* from 1866.<sup>86</sup> Why this return to an earlier staging in Helsinki? The stage director might have felt the need to shorten an already long opera or perhaps the opera’s conductor made the decision. A weak singer, Sebastian Åberg, sang Alphonse’s role, which was shortened later in Act III, where the entire duet between Alphonse and Elvire was also left out.

As Berndtson pointed out, cutting the two opening scenes had a crucial bearing on understanding Fenella and Alphonse’s relationship. Berndtson argued that it led to a ridiculous mutilation of the drama, completely depriving Alphonse of honour. Without the introductory background story about how Alphonse feels about Fenella, he appears to be a brutal man who takes advantage of a young and innocent girl whenever possible. Berndtson clearly did not want to go into how the omission of the background story affected Fenella as a character, although he was surely aware of how the cut might cast a shadow on her “purity”.

### V.3 Domesticated heroism

In effect, there seems to have been little left of the revolutionary heroes Arnold and Masaniello in Julius Saloman’s hands, or else their

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85 *Finlands Allmänna Tidningar*, 3 April 1877.

86 Cf. Scribe & Delavigne 1876 (1828) and Sceneri till *Den stumma från Portici* [*Mise-en-scène* for *La Muette de Portici*.] Ludvig Josephson. Trol. [Prob.] 1866/1867. KTA Stockholm, *Mise-en-scènes och scenerier*. Vol. 2, 1844–1919, F3D; Jouy and Bis 1876.

ambivalences were exaggerated and turned into comic features. It can be argued that both Arnold and Masaniello are meant to be indecisive in these operas, but according to the press (and Grape), Saloman was unable to transform himself into a hero when necessary. Nor did the young and inexperienced Algot Lange live up to the audience's expectations of the strong and wise leader Wilhelm Tell.

The cuts and omissions seem to have further undermined the operas' rebellious spirit. As a result, both grand operas were domesticated, made even tamer by the lack of stage direction. The operas were evidently held together by the orchestral conductor Emanuel, or the Kapellmeister as he was called. In every newspaper in which the opera was reviewed, the orchestra's conductor was the first to be thanked as the person in charge for staging the opera. As a former board member, Berndtson was presumably well informed about the distribution of work at the theatre, and he gave Emanuel the honour of having been in command of it all as well as responsible for bringing the opera to the stage in the first place. Berndtson mentioned the stage director Albert Åhman as the one to take care of the *mise-en-scène*, the decorations and the costumes. Mr Koch (a violinist in the orchestra) was thanked and acknowledged as the person who had painstakingly rehearsed the chorus. The distribution of work amongst these three main persons might well have been just this way, as in those days the stage director, according to Gademan, assumed the tasks similar to those of a stage manager today.<sup>87</sup> It was up to the soloists to create their roles themselves, and the orchestral conductor was in charge of how it all sounded with the orchestra.

One of the theatre's most obvious strengths with regard to the staging of the resource-demanding grand operas was, besides the orchestra, the theatre building itself. The Swedish Theatre had most of the innovations that a modern theatre of 780 seats could offer: a reasonably generous orchestra pit (about 4 metres wide), and, in connection with the rebuilding of the theatre in 1866, the theatre had invested in

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<sup>87</sup> Gademan 1996, 1–2; 2007, 160.

timely and first-class stage machinery, reminiscent of theatres in St Petersburg. Stage lighting consisted of open gas flames, while colour effects were achieved by hanging thin silk strips in front of them near the footlights.<sup>88</sup> A coloured light on stage could also be made using pieces of coloured glass. Although electricity was purchased for the first time in 1891, the Swedish Theatre had electric lights on the stage in 1876 and 1877, especially for simulating moonlight over the Alps in *Wilhelm Tell* and over the graveyard in *Robert le diable*. The press reported that new decorations had been painted, especially for *La Muette de Portici*, and that everything had been excellent except Vesuvius, which had been “a parody of a fire-spewing volcano.”<sup>89</sup>

## VI The Opera War

Will there be war – or peace?

Will Wilhelm Tell be hanged by Gesler or Faust be embraced by Mephistopheles? Will Pamina be garlanded in the temple of wisdom and The Mute arise speaking from Vesuvius’s lava? For the moment the war is an opera war waged by the two orchestral conductors with their armies. One outbids the other in terrible armour. It is a real auction. One hardly blows in the magic flute, before the other whistles up a fire-breathing mountain. *Indeed, behind the visible generals and armies stand invisible, albeit audible, warfaring powers.*<sup>90</sup>

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88 Schultén 1970, 25, 55.

89 *Kurre*, 31 March 1877.

90 “Blir det krig – eller fred? Skall Wilhelm Tell hängas af Gesler eller Faust anammas af Mefistofeles? Skall Pamina bekransas i wishetens tempel och Den Stumma uppstå talande ur Vesuvii lava? För närvarande är kriget ett operakrig och föres af två kapellmästare med deras arméer. Den ena öfverbjuder den andra i fruktansvärda rustningar. Det är en formlig auktion. Knappt blåser den ena i trollflöjten, innan den andra hwisslar fram ett eldsprutande berg. Wisslerigen stå bakom de synlige fältherrarne och arméerna osynliga, dock ganska hörbara krigförande makter.” (*Hufvudstadsbladet*, 12 April 1877; italics added.)

In the introduction to this article I posed two questions. One was to examine the nature of the *opera fury*, which for a while placed opera at the middle of a political and national struggle in Helsinki during the 1870s. The other was more concrete: how was a theatre's grand opera repertoire (especially *Wilhelm Tell* and *La Muette de Portici*) able to defend the position and identity of the Swedish Theatre during this frenzied time? Below I will answer these questions, starting with the second.

1) In the spring of 1876, the Swedish Theatre underwent a sharp turn, which can be called an *operatic turn*, yet it was also a *linguistic* as well as a *nationalistic* turn. These turns can be traced to profound changes in the composition of the theatre's board members, its staff, the salaries, the theatre's repertoire policy and its orchestra. The number of opera performances was considerably increased, and afterwards the focus was on grand opera (as well as *Rigoletto*). These operas were complemented by four new plays in Swedish (three during the spring of 1877), quite a large number of vernacular novelties in those days, and even later. In addition, performances of the "old" and very popular historical drama *Daniel Hjort* (by Wecksell) were strategically put on in February 1877 at a time before (and during) the meetings of the Finnish Diet. With these activities, the board clearly wanted to transform the theatre's former cosmopolitan identity into both a cosmopolitan *and* a vernacular identity.

The adoption of *Wilhelm Tell* and *La Muette de Portici* along with *Daniel Hjort* into the repertoire illustrates how this double identity was created. *Daniel Hjort* brought the *Finnish* people on stage and also enacted a crucial event in the history of the Finns. It thus formed a Finnish parallel to events both in *Wilhelm Tell* and *La Muette de Portici* in the eyes (and ears) of the audience, although in an associative and metaphorical manner. From a performative point of view, it is crucial that "the people" were represented in all three historical dramas, and that they expressed themselves in Swedish. It would appear that the board was determined not to allow the Finnish nationalist movement to monopolise the concept of the people or of the people's history in the Finnish Theatre and the Finnish Opera in Helsinki. It seems clear that

the directors of the Swedish Theatre, and Wilhelm Grefberg in particular, with his documented interest in writing the history of Finland from a Swedish-minded perspective,<sup>91</sup> wanted to address the ongoing discussion of how to represent the history of Finland with historical dramas performed in Swedish. Engman clarifies the differences between the two concepts of history that had emerged. Both acknowledge the distinctiveness of Finnish history: “The Finnish-nationalists looked at the history of Finland from the viewpoint of Finland and the Finnish-speaking population. The Liberal-Swedish concept also emphasized the distinctiveness of Finnish history, but wanted to see that distinctiveness firmly rooted in the history of the realm as a whole, and denied the teleological aspects of the Finnish nationalist concept.”<sup>92</sup>

2) With the French grand operas in the repertoire, the theatre was able to show off its strengths and play down its weaknesses, namely the lack of native speakers and professional singers on stage. The aim was to convince the audience as well as the members of the Finnish Diet and the Senate that the theatre was able to meet the standards set by the Finnish Opera. The Swedish Theatre’s message was that there was no need for a merger of the theatres, and furthermore, the Swedish Theatre still deserved its place as the only national theatre in Finland, duly funded by the Senate.

3) Given the competition between the two theatres, it is curious that they did not compete by creating *different* repertoires; instead, quite the opposite was the case. It is even hard to know which theatre was the first to pick up a specific opera for their programming. For example, *La Muette de Portici* was considered at the Finnish Opera as early as April 1876. Even earlier, there was a short comment in Maria Grape’s correspondence that alluded to the fact that the Swedish Theatre planned

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91 Grefberg’s efforts to disseminate another view of Finland’s history in the spring of 1876 as opposed to Koskinen’s have been mentioned above. Even more important here is Grefberg’s contribution to the concept of history: *En blick på Finlands historia* [A Look at the History of Finland], 1866, reprinted in 1884.

92 Engman 1999, 169.

to have *La Muette de Portici* in its repertoire.<sup>93</sup> And then there is the case of both *Daniel Hjort* and *Robert le diable*, which were performed at almost the same time: *Robert* was staged at both theatres in the same month and even on the same evening in May of 1877, while *Daniel Hjort* was performed at both theatres only one month apart. In a small town rumours travel fast, and although the theatre boards and their supporters officially might have been hostile to one another, the singers and orchestral musicians were not. In fact, they often co-operated and gave concerts together.<sup>94</sup>

The answer to the second question posed in this article is illustrated in the title of this section, *the opera war*, and the quotation which follows it. The title as well as the quotation is from a letter to the press in *Hufvudstadsbladet*, published on 12 April 1877, only a few days before the Diet voted on the proposed merger of the two theatres. A few days earlier the Swedish Theatre House Owner Company had founded a new Warrants Society for the theatre, with an initial capital of 48,000 marks. This was a clear sign to all parties that the theatre and its supporters were never going to give in to the negotiations. A few days later the Fennomans did the same, establishing a new Shareholders' Company, which meant a new start for the Finnish Theatre.<sup>95</sup>

The letter to the press was signed *åskådaren* ("Spectator"), but the author was known: he was Zacharias Topelius, the rector of the Imperial Alexander University.<sup>96</sup> Topelius's letter is essential from the perspective of this article for several reasons. For one thing, he went one step further than Degerholm, calling the period an "opera war". In so doing, Topelius highlighted an even more emotional dimension of the time than Degerholm had done, namely that the competitive

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93 Naemi Ingman > Emilie Bergbom, Paris 24 April 1876, The Finnish Literature Society, FLS/LA, Emelie and Kaarlo Bergbom's Archive, Nr. 45–54; Maria Grape > Hedvig Charlotta Winterhjelm, Helsingfors 2 February 1876, The Finnish Literature Society, FLS/LA, Maria Grape's Archive, Nr. 41–44.

94 Broman-Kananen 2015, 78.

95 Suutela 2001, 71–93; Paavolainen 2012, 149.

96 Aspelin-Haapkylä 1907, 335.

relationship between the two theatres was not only furious, but also had become a war, which mobilised more and more people as well as public authorities. In the quotation above, Topelius identifies the operas as weapons in this “warfare”, which was being conducted by invisible forces. What kinds of forces was he referring to? Topelius did not answer this question directly; rather, he offers the reader another metaphorical picture for the opera war, namely the ongoing war in Europe between the Ottoman Empire and Montenegro with its repeated and unsuccessful peace negotiations. Topelius’s language overflows with fables and metaphors, but it seems clear that his comparison with a “real” war indicates that the “opera war” was just as highly politicised. Among the operas Topelius names at the beginning of his letter are *Wilhelm Tell* and *La Muette de Portici*; later he refers to *Daniel Hjort* as describing best the honour which both parties wanted to win for themselves.

Topelius illustrated the situation with yet another fable: “The wolf and the lynx fight over their prey, and choose the bear as arbitrator; the bear resolves the dispute with his well-known state wisdom, taking the prey for himself.” In this instance Topelius explained the fable. The “bear” was already there – the Russians – who were building a theatre of their own, the Alexander Theatre at the opposite end of the Boulevard (which ends across from the Swedish Theatre).<sup>97</sup> The Russians’ plans for establishing an opera company were evidently well known to all. The fable also mirrors Finland’s political dilemma at the time, and Topelius – like other liberals of the day – warned of the damage that would be caused by an internal schism between the language groups, a struggle which could easily be overcome through bilingual solutions. This was also the peace agreement that Topelius offered the Finnish and Swedish theatres, namely that the Finnish Opera should welcome the Swedish Theatre, because it had assumed the task of “refin[ing] the [Finnish] language with ‘musical euphony’”. In Topelius’s view, the Swedish Theatre’s emphasis should be on spoken drama, and

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97 *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 12 April 1877: Byckling 2009, 88–102.

after the merger it could focus on what it could do better than opera: staging plays and classical dramas in Swedish.

With the founding of the Finnish Opera, the Fennomans had fingered a weak point at the Swedish Theatre, namely the lack of professional singers, and also the lack of routines for staging operas, while simultaneously offering to fill this need with opera in Finnish. The Swedish Theatre's strategy during this season may have been a reaction to the Fennoman initiatives for the merger, but in due course it became clear to everyone that the theatre was not going to give up its position as the *konsttempel* (temple of art) in Helsinki.<sup>98</sup> The changing composition of the board during the “war” mirrored this, according to Degerholm, who wrote that “*all* somewhat well-heeled men, beginning with senators, professors and doctors, up to [...] ale-brewers, iron mongers and bundle mongers” served their time on the board.<sup>99</sup>

The operetta *Die Fledermaus*, which initially looked like a mistake, proved to be a stroke of good luck for the Swedish Theatre. The Swedish-speaking audience realised that they were participating in a language struggle being fought through opera and that audiences could have an influence on the outcome. In his personal notes Antti Jalava (a member of the Finnish Theatre's board) recorded that after the incident with *Die Fledermaus*, the Swedish audience stopped going to the Finnish Opera.<sup>100</sup>

Degerholm indicated still another conflict going on *within* the Swedish Theatre's circles, between the opera singers and the actors. This conflict escalated slowly but steadily over almost two seasons, after which the actors put an end to it and, in January 1878, staged a “palace revolution”. They demanded the resignation of the temporarily-appointed director, Grefberg, and insisted that operas be withdrawn

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98 “Temple of art” was Yrjö Koskinen's expression in a letter to Emmy Achté, “toisena helluntaipäivänä” [the second Whit Sunday], May 1877 (The National Library of Finland, Aino Achté-Jalander's Archive, Coll. 4. 25).

99 “*alla* något så när penningstarka män, börjande från senatorer, professorer och doktorer, ända till [...] ölbryggare, järnkramhandlare och buntmakare” (Degerholm 1900, 75).

100 Antti Jalava's calendar notes, The Finnish Literature Society, FLS/LA, Antti Jalava's Archive.

altogether or at least relegated to a separately formed department.<sup>101</sup> There were two reasons for the “palace revolution”: the first was financial, because the deficits caused by the operas were threatening the existence of the theatre as a whole. The second reason was jealousy among the actors, who felt discriminated against by the huge salaries paid to the opera singers, a not uncommon situation at theatres where spoken drama and opera shared the same stage. After the “palace revolution” the Swedish Theatre returned to its normal routines, with the former director Nikolai Kiseleff again in charge and with operas staged at a more languid pace. As a result, opera performances slowly died out by 1880.

The Finnish Opera died out even sooner, in the spring of 1879, although in no less painful a way. The immediate reason was financial: the opera department was about to drag the theatre into bankruptcy. However, Eliel Aspelin-Haapkylä’s portrait of the Finnish Opera’s death as heroic is revealing: the Opera had been needed as a mediator of the Finnish language for audiences who were largely Swedish speaking. Once this goal was achieved, it was time for opera to stand aside and make way for spoken drama in Finnish.<sup>102</sup>

In the end, Topelius’s prediction came true: the operatic centre of Helsinki moved from the Swedish and Finnish theatres to the Russian Alexander Theatre, which opened in March of 1880 with *Faust* (Gounod). However, after only two years, this operatic venture also ended in economic catastrophe.<sup>103</sup> Nevertheless, after half a decade of operatic warfare, Helsinki’s musical life slowly recovered: in 1882 Martin Wegelius and others founded the Helsinki Music Institute and Robert Kajanus established the Helsinki Philharmonic Society and its orchestra.

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101 Degerholm 1903, 14.

102 Or as Pikkanen (2012, 269–270) puts it: “However, the depiction of the opera as a preparatory step to the high season of the Finnish-language drama, rather than as the ultimate outcome of the efforts of the Finnish nationalists, was crucial for the inevitable employment of the theatre’s history: its bankruptcy was thus a positive event, the ‘beautiful sunset’ of the Finnish-language operatic culture, promising a ‘new dawn’ for national dramatic art.”

103 Byckling 2009, 105–115.

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# *Høstgildet* by J. P. A. Schulz: A national *Singspiel*?

RANDI M. SELVIK

This chapter deals with an opera by the North German composer Johann Peter Abraham Schulz (1747–1800), namely, the one-act *Singspiel*, *Høstgildet* [The Harvest Festival], composed in 1790 to a libretto by Thomas Thaarup (1749–1821). While Ellen Karoline Gjervan's chapter in this volume deals with the theatrical aspects of *Høstgildet*, the present chapter addresses the work's musical features and assesses the quality of its "national" character.

*Høstgildet* was premiered on 16 September 1790 as part of the festivities honouring the newlywed Danish crown prince Frederik (later Frederik VI) and his bride, Marie, Princess of Hesse-Kassel.<sup>1</sup> The importance of *Høstgildet* far exceeded the occasion for which it was written. It enjoyed many performances, mostly in Denmark, and also in Norway, which, at the time of the opera's composition was part of the dual monarchy Denmark-Norway.<sup>2</sup> *Høstgildet*'s popularity continued well into the nineteenth century. The libretto was published in numerous editions, with textual revisions made according to shifting political situations.<sup>3</sup>

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1 The marriage had taken place at Gottorp Castle in Schleswig earlier that summer.

2 The website *Danske Litteraturpriser* documents 65 performances in Denmark up to 1889, with a further five between 1890 and 1975. In Norway excerpts of the opera were performed in Bergen in 1792, while in Trondheim, the work was performed four times in 1804–1805. See *Efterretninger fra Adresse-Contoiret i Bergen i Norge* no. 52, 1792 and no. 1, 1793, and Jensson 1965, 230–231.

3 The catalogue of the Royal Library in Copenhagen has information about the various editions: The first was printed in 1790. The second appeared in 1791, and its text no longer referred to the royal wedding. The third was made in 1793 and reprinted in 1800. The fourth edition was published in 1819 and included substantial textual revisions, owing to the new political situation after 1814, when Norway declared its independence,

Below, I first want to give an outline of the composer's background, education and career before coming to Denmark, his aesthetics and his connection to the second Berlin school of *Lied* composition, all of which is important in understanding the ideals underlying the music of *Høstgildet*. I will also describe briefly the situation of opera in Copenhagen before Schulz's arrival, analyse certain musical aspects of the work and examine a few characteristics of the genre to which it belongs. The Danish musicologist Nils Schiørring (1910–2001) considered *Høstgildet* to be a national *Singspiel*.<sup>4</sup> Finally, I want to consider critically what this designation might imply in terms of the music.

#### J. P. A. Schulz:

##### Music education, background and influence

In 1787 Johann Peter Abraham Schulz was appointed the music director of the orchestra (Det kongelige Kapel) of Denmark's Royal Theatre. Like most prominent composers in Denmark at the time, Schulz came from Northern Germany. He was born in Lüneburg and educated in Berlin, where he studied counterpoint with the learned and conservative Johann Philipp Kirnberger. But Schulz was also influenced by more modern musical ideals and was acquainted with modern music drama. In 1768 he was appointed accompanist and music teacher to a Polish princess with whom he travelled throughout Europe for three years, thereby coming into contact with the most progressive music of the period. In 1770 he met Johann Friedrich Reichardt (1752–1814) in Danzig, who became a lifelong friend. In Vienna he became acquainted with Christoph Willibald Gluck (1714–1787); at Esterházy, he met Joseph Haydn; and in Paris, he made friends with André E.M. Grétry (1741–1813) – all composers to whom he was later compared. He also spent time in Milan and Venice.<sup>5</sup> Raymond A. Barr writes that

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left the dual monarchy and later the same year was forced into a union with Sweden.

4 Schiørring 1978, 98.

5 Ottenberg 2006, 237.

Gluck especially impressed him.<sup>6</sup> In 1773 Schulz returned to Berlin, and wrote many of the music articles in the second volume of Johann Georg Sulzer's famous encyclopaedia *Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste* (1771–1774). In the years 1776–1778 Schulz served as *maitre de musique* at the Royal French theatre (Französisches Komödienhaus) in Berlin, recently established by Frederick the Great, where works by the most famous French composers of *opéra-comique* were performed. This theatre became a training ground for the later court opera (Hofoper).<sup>7</sup> In 1778 Schulz obtained a similar position at the private theatre of the Prussian crown princess. Both positions gave him excellent opportunities to become acquainted with current tendencies in French *opéra-comique* and with works by leading French composers, who influenced him deeply. He especially admired the works of Grétry.<sup>8</sup> In 1780 he became music director at the court of Frederick's brother, Prince Henry, in Rheinsberg, where he directed operas not only by French composers, but also by Gluck and Italian composers, like Antonio Sacchini and Niccolò Piccinni. Meanwhile, he must have known current trends in German opera quite well.

In these years Schulz began composing operas himself. In his dramatic music he assimilated not only French influences, but also Italian – especially from *opera buffa* – and he was influenced by Gluck's "pathetic new classicism".<sup>9</sup> In the middle of the 1780s conditions in Rheinsberg became unfavourable, and the invitation to Copenhagen in 1787 was most welcome to the "Rheinsberger Gluck' und 'deutsche Grétry".<sup>10</sup> By this time Schulz was not only an experienced composer of incidental theatre music and music drama, but also a leading composer of songs, experiences that were of great importance for his later stage works. In his Danish *Singspiele* the simple song with one or more stanzas is

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6 See Barr, "Schulz, Johann Abraham Peter", accessed 29 August 2014.

7 Ottenberg 2006, 237.

8 See Charlton 1986 which gives an excellent introduction to the genre and to Grétry's works.

9 Krogh 1933–1944, 418.

10 Ottenberg 2006, 237.

the most important and original musical element. It is therefore necessary to take a closer look at Schulz as a song composer, his position as a representative of the second Berlin school of *Lieder* and his views on music education.

### The Berlin *Lied* school and ideas for educational reforms

In 1779 Schulz published his first collection of songs, *Gesänge am Klavier*. These were simple tunes with piano accompaniment, with many of the traits that would be characteristic of his future song collections. These include an almost primitive simplicity of melodic construction and musical accompaniment, together with a simple and natural verse declamation, features that reveal a deliberately popular ideal. With this publication Schulz was immediately associated with the first Berlin school of *Lied* composition (*Berliner Liederschule*). Christian Gottfried Krause's treatise *Von der musikalischen Poesie* (1752) marked the foundation of the group and the beginning of the first Berlin *Lied* school. Krause collaborated with the poet Karl Ramler, with whom he published *Oden mit Melodien* the following year. A second volume appeared in 1755. The melodies were composed by several well-known composers.<sup>11</sup> The basic ideals of this school are found in the preface to Krause and Ramler's *Oden mit Melodien* (1753): The songs should be popular (*volkstümlich*) and have a simple and easy melody. In addition, they ought to function as educational tools for social and moral improvement and as a cultural bond that could unite people belonging to different social classes.<sup>12</sup>

Also influential was the so-called "Göttinger Hainbund", a literary group founded in 1772, whose members advocated strong patriotic feelings and ideals favouring a national German literature.<sup>13</sup> Popular

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11 See Barr, "Krause, Christian Gottfried", accessed 29 August 2014 and Ottenberg 1994, 1486.

12 Krogh 1924, 177–178.

13 Hankeln 2011, 36.

poetry, Ossian's epic poems and the odes of Klopstock orientated towards ancient times were the centre of interest for this group, for whom preoccupation with antiquity was combined with a wave of national German enthusiasm. For the leading poet of the group, Johann Heinrich Voss, there was a connection between the poetry of ancient Greece and Schulz's popular songs, which he described in a letter to Schulz in 1787, as "Solche Stücke, solche Einfalt, Bescheidenheit und Würde des Ausdrucks, dass ich Sie oft mit Homer zusammendenke."<sup>14</sup>

Schulz shared these poets' literary ideals of natural expression and simplicity, which were also guidelines in his own aesthetic writings. He came to be regarded as a main representative of the second Berlin *Lied* school and, as such, an important forerunner of the German romantic *Lied*. His aesthetic ideals and the melodic simplicity and primitive accompaniment of his song compositions are all in accordance with the first Berlin school's basic ideas along with influences from Klopstock, Herder and the young Goethe, who shared the value of the simple, unaccompanied strophic folk song.<sup>15</sup> According to the Danish music and theatre historian Torben Krogh (1895–1970), Schulz was the most important representative among the *Lied* composers associated with the second Berlin school.<sup>16</sup> This view, however, might be interpreted as an expression of a somewhat national-chauvinistic Danish attitude, emphasizing a composer who later became strongly associated with Denmark at the expense of the slightly younger and perhaps still more influential *Lied* composers, Reichardt and Carl Friedrich Zelter (1758–1832).<sup>17</sup>

In 1782 Schulz published the first volume of his most famous work, *Lieder im Volkston*. Roman Hankeln claims that this is the first time the concept of *Volkston* was used in connection with song compositions.<sup>18</sup>

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14 "Those pieces, so much simplicity, modesty and dignity of expression, that I often associate them with Homer." *Ibid.*, 37.

15 Ottenberg 1994, 1488.

16 Krogh 1924, 179.

17 Zelter in particular had a far-reaching impact through his pedagogical activity in Berlin and his close collaboration with Goethe.

18 Hankeln 2011, 11. Hankeln adds that this expression today is regarded as a synonym

Two more volumes followed in 1785 and 1790, all published in Berlin, but the songs of the last volume were composed in Denmark.

Schulz's aim was to create songs in which the music closely followed the form and verse of the poem, with melodies that suited the poem's content and "tone" and with a simplicity that allowed them to be sung by anyone, with or without accompaniment, and without vocal training. These ideals he had found in the timeless qualities of folk tunes.<sup>19</sup> In the preface to his second volume Schulz explained his aesthetics more thoroughly. The simple strophic song with unity between text and music was the ideal. He wanted his melodies to have a distinctive character of familiarity (a *Schein des Bekannten* – the most famous catchphrase in his aesthetics), because he had experienced how important and necessary similarity to the folk tune was in promoting popular singing. The melodic intervals had to be singable (*sangbar*), with an *ambitus* suitable for all voices, and the melodies had to be harmonized with the simplest chords and modulations.

In Denmark Schulz engaged in discussions about educational reforms and tried to convince the state authorities of the importance of music for the education of young people. In 1790 he published a thesis, *Gedanken über den Einfluss der Musik auf die Bildung eines Volks und über deren Einführung in den Schulen der königlich dänischen Staaten*. This was translated into Danish the same year and published in the periodical *Minerva*.<sup>20</sup> Here he criticized the position of music in Danish schools and proposed important reforms. Schulz believed music to have a profound influence on "the formation of the moral character" of human beings.<sup>21</sup> He wanted all school teachers to have basic music education. They should to be able to read music, sing simple songs and

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for the *Lied* production in the period of Goethe and his contemporaries. It is important to bear in mind that Schulz's and similar collections were not intended for the lower classes, but for the educated middle class and upper *bourgeoisie*. *Ibid.*, 12.

19 Ketting 1983, 75.

20 *Tanker over Musikens Virkning paa et Folks Dannelse, og over dens Indførelse i Skolerne i de Kongel. danske Stater*.

21 Selvik 2008, 258.

master elementary instrumental skills. Teachers with this rudimentary musical education ought to teach boys *and* girls all over the country to sing chorales or hymn tunes, including in four-part harmonization. Children with exceptionally good voices should also learn folk tunes, and the more gifted should be allowed to play an instrument. This kind of music education would be beneficial for the whole population, including the lower classes. Schulz's ideas for musical reform were radical for their time. He believed that music was capable of giving the whole nation a minimum of culture and moral character, and he thought that reforms in the educational system would be the most efficient tool for achieving this aim.<sup>22</sup>

#### Opera in Copenhagen at the time of Schulz's arrival and his contributions to the genre

When Schulz arrived at the Danish court in 1787, "serious" Italian opera (*opera seria*) had enjoyed only a relatively brief history in the capital and only occasionally had it been performed by Italian opera companies. When the last company left in 1778, influential court circles wanted Italian opera to be taken up by the Royal Theatre (Det kongelige Teater).<sup>23</sup> In 1784 the theatre's new director, Christian Frederik Numsen, favoured this kind of opera and quickly set about implementing various reforms. Numsen engaged a well-qualified German, Johann Gottlieb Naumann (1741–1801), to be the theatre's music director. Naumann arrived in Denmark in the summer of 1785, reorganized the court orchestra and premiered his new opera *Orpheus og Euridice* with great success on the king's birthday in 1786.<sup>24</sup> According to Krogh, this marked the beginning of "serious" opera on the Danish royal stage.<sup>25</sup> Krogh had obviously not taken into account the great number

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22 Ibid., 259.

23 Schiørring 1978, 88.

24 Krogh 1932, 209–210.

25 The theatre proceedings characterized the work as "the first Danish opera in the Danish language". Krogh 1924, 149.

of Italian *opere serie* composed by Giuseppe Sarti (1729–1802) for the Royal Theatre in the period from 1754 to 1764.<sup>26</sup> In the middle of the eighteenth century Italian *opera seria* was an international phenomenon, but it had problems establishing a strong foothold in Copenhagen. Krogh may have considered Sarti a representative of a genre that appeared to be foreign from the perspective of a later and perhaps more nationally-orientated time. Naumann, however, could not be persuaded to stay in Copenhagen, and Schulz, on Naumann's recommendation, was engaged as his successor. He arrived in the city in October of 1787.

Besides his duties as musical director of the royal orchestra, Schulz's original contract in Copenhagen required the composition of an opera every year for the king's birthday. For the birthday to be celebrated on 29 January 1789 plans were made for an opera to a libretto by Thomas Thaarup (1759–1821), only the libretto was not ready in time. Another libretto by Christen Pram was rejected by Schulz, and the result was the production of one of Schulz's operas previously composed for Rheinsberg in 1787, *Aline, reine de Golconde*. Thaarup translated the libretto by Michel-Jean Sedaine, and Schulz supervised the declamation in Danish. The performance on 30 January 1789 was a great success, and the opera was given regularly in the following years.<sup>27</sup> Later the same year Schulz was given a libretto for another opera, *Erik Eiegod*, by Jens Baggesen. This he felt unable to set to music; he feared that he had lost his ability to compose operas altogether as well as theatrical music in general. He applied for relief from his duties as an opera composer and a reduction in his fee. His application was granted, and he agreed to write an annual piece of church music instead of a yearly opera.

Nevertheless, Schulz's greatest contribution to Danish music was to be in opera, only not in "great" or "serious" Italian opera, which was the main reason he was invited to Copenhagen, but in *Singspiel* – a genre in which he was well experienced thanks to his previous appointments

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26 See Schepeleern 1995, 14–15 and 19, and Pfeiffer 2015, 980–981. As director of the Royal Theatre from 1770 to 1772, Sarti also made the first musical contributions to *opéra-comique* and *Singspiel* in Danish.

27 Krogh 1924, 160–161.

in Germany. Schulz composed three works in that genre: *Høstgildet* (“The Harvest Festival”, 1790), *Indtoget* (“The Procession”, 1793) and *Peters Bryllup* (“Peter’s Wedding”, also 1793) – all of which were highly successful. Schulz remained in Copenhagen until 1795, when he had to resign because of serious health problems. He was granted a pension and returned to Germany where he lived for the rest of his life.

### *Høstgildet*

As mentioned above, this one-act opera was composed as part of the festivities celebrating the return to Copenhagen of the newlywed Danish crown prince and his wife on 16 September 1790. For this occasion the theatre wanted an opera on a theme from Danish history. Numsen suggested *Erik Eiegod*, but Schulz still felt unable to provide the music for this text, and once again time was short.<sup>28</sup> The theatre suggested Naumann as composer, but Schulz was convinced that, for Naumann as well, there was not sufficient time to complete the work.<sup>29</sup> One of the theatre directors (Hans Wilhelm von Warnstedt) pointed out that it would not be appropriate for the national festivity to stage a genre that people would regard as foreign, such as serious Italian opera.<sup>30</sup> In a celebration of this kind

[...] one should neither resort to the art of foreigners, nor give a kind of piece that did not find resonance with the people, but look for clever heads who lived amidst it [the people] [...] to get something that really was national, in such a way that it could be felt by the common man and make him proud of the fact that also in his fatherland there existed a poetic spirit that in a dignified manner could embellish the country’s most glorious feast.<sup>31</sup>

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28 Ibid., 162–163.

29 Overskou 1860, 457.

30 Italian *opera seria* in Copenhagen had for a long period, and still had at that time, active opponents among several leading intellectuals in the city.

31 “[...] burde hverken tage sin Tilflugt til Fremmedes Kunst eller give et Slags Stykker,

Pram was commissioned to write a libretto, and he came up with *Frode og Fingal*. However, this was rejected, mainly because neither the plot nor the characters expressed the nation's happiness with the royal wedding.<sup>32</sup> Warnstedt “missed the theatrical liveliness and a natural expression of the nation's essence and its delight over the royal family's well-being in the plot of the piece and in the characters”.<sup>33</sup> Thaarup then offered to write a suitable piece, a patriotic dramatic idyll in one act, a *Singspiel*, and this was approved by the theatre authorities. A harvest festival, young love in despair and a willingness to consent to a paternal choice of spouse, yet with a happy ending, were regarded as suitable themes for the celebration of the royal household. The scene was to be set in rural surroundings with various groups of people represented, including farmers, soldiers, sailors, young people and old people. Arias, simple songs, ensembles, choruses and dances would be interspersed in the action. It was Warnstedt's suggestion that the three nationalities of the Danish state (Denmark, Holstein and Norway) should be represented in the play.<sup>34</sup> Thaarup took up this idea. Earlier, he had been the poet on several occasions when the “fatherland”<sup>35</sup> was to be celebrated. Schulz was persuaded to compose the music.

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der ikke havde viist sig at have hjemme i Folket, men søge hos gode Hoveder, der levede iblandt det [...], at faae Noget, som virkelig var nationalt, saa at det kunde føles af Menigmand og give ham Stolthed af, at der ogsaa i hans Fædreland var en poetisk Geist, som værdigen kunde forskjønne Landets herligste Høitid.” Citation from Overskou 1860, 457 (source not given). This and other translations are the author's.

- 32 The drama *Frode og Fingal* was nevertheless performed in tandem with *Høstgildet* on 16 September 1790 as well as on several other occasions. See <http://www.litteraturpriser.dk/1850t/tnr856.htm>, accessed 21 August 2014.
- 33 “[...] savnede den theatralske Livlighed og en i Stykkets Handling og Personer fremkommende ret naturlig Expression af Nationens Essensialitet og dens Glæde over sit Kongehuses Velgaaende”. Cited from Overskou 1860, 458 (source not given).
- 34 Krogh 1924, 164. Krogh's reference is Overskou 1860, 458–459. Overskou's and Krogh's concept of the nation was probably based on a later and more romantic view than Warnstedt's in 1790. To him the nations seemed to represent the main parts of the Danish kingdom. For biographical details on Warnstedt, see Neiiendam 2011.
- 35 The concept of “the fatherland” can be found in Tyge Rothe's *Tanker om Kierlighed til Fædrelandet* [Thoughts of Love of the Fatherland] from 1759. It appeared in several other publications after this year, but the meaning of the concept varied with different authors. See Glenthøj 2012, 65–67.

The opera was an immediate and unusual success. According to Krogh, its success cannot be fully understood without reference to the political situation in Denmark at the time.<sup>36</sup> Especially important were the social and agricultural reforms and the freedoms granted to Danish farmers in 1788 together with the abolition of serfdom, which was strongly supported by the crown prince. These are the events celebrated in *Høstgildet*, and even if the gratitude of the kingdom's different nationalities is expressed to the *king*, everyone knew that the crown prince was the real addressee of the homage paid by the characters in the play. Although the work did not express great dramatic feelings, it was regarded as appropriate for the nation's combined celebration – the royal wedding and the land reforms. In Krogh's opinion the libretto probably suited Schulz's own political and aesthetic ideas. The composer socialized with some of the most prominent Danish reform politicians and civil servants of the time, such as C.D.F. Rewentlow, C. Colbjørnsen and A.P. Bernstorff, and the above-mentioned pamphlet with his views on educational and musical reforms in Denmark was published in Danish in the same year as *Høstgildet's* premiere. In the new work he could now express his own musical ideas in the songs, choruses and dances.

The opera's success from its very first performance on 16 September 1790 was due not only to the play and the composer, but also to the singers and actors. A contemporary critic characterized the work as “the best *Singspiel* in Danish literature”.<sup>37</sup> Among the reasons was the topic of freedom and the land reforms, but the opera also contained moral qualities of a more general nature. The poet was given credit for expressing homage to the sovereign in an unusually attractive manner, and the characters were convincingly created.

Both text and music soon came to be regarded as national cultural property by the bourgeois public. The aristocracy, on the other hand, regarded the work with mistrust from the beginning, given its “revolu-

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36 Krogh 1924, 164–166.

37 “das beste Singspiel der dänischen Literatur”, *ibid.*, 166. Krogh refers to Abrahamson in *Lærde Efterretninger* 1794, no. 30, 465, etc.

tionary” ideas and the current international political situation.<sup>38</sup> Even the crown prince, after his initial enthusiasm, had second thoughts and is reported to have said that a serious opera would have been more fitting than a *Singspiel* for the occasion of a royal wedding.<sup>39</sup>

*Høstgildet* was written for a theatre that had rich musical resources: an excellent orchestra with competent players and actors with educated voices and good singing abilities. The members of the choir, however, did not have special vocal training or the same professional skills as the soloists, even if choruses were very important in this opera. The influence of Grétry and French *opéra-comique*, Neapolitan opera and Gluck is evident, as in earlier operas by Schulz. The strophic song is the basic musical unit – songs with simple melodies and an almost primitive musical accompaniment, which correspond to the aesthetics of Schulz’s song collections. Unlike the songs with piano accompaniment he had composed for domestic music-practice by amateurs, Schulz now had a theatre orchestra at his disposal. When he arrived in Copenhagen, the regular orchestra consisted of 21 strings (12 violins, 4 violas, 2 celli and 3 double basses), and pairs of oboes, flutes, bassoons and horns.<sup>40</sup>

The songs in *Høstgildet* were constructed in the same way as Schulz’s other songs, and Thaarup’s text declamation was easily followed. Many songs from the opera later became popular in their own right and were printed and sung independent of the original dramatic context. After hearing the work, the librettist Baggesen is supposed to have said of Schulz: “This German has given us the first Danish music, and from such a deep source that no Dane will be able to bring us a second in so pure a manner.”<sup>41</sup>

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38 See Ellen Karoline Gjervan’s chapter in this volume.

39 Krogh 1924, 167.

40 Ibid., 155.

41 “Dieser Deutsche hat uns die erste dänische Musik gebracht und zwar so tief vom Grund der Quelle, dass kein Däne da sein wird, der uns die zweite so rein zu bringen imstande ist.” Cited in *ibid.*, 182.

### The distribution of musical numbers

My analysis of *Høstgildet* is based on the manuscript score from 1790, the first version of the printed libretto from the same year, and the piano score. The opera is a typical one-act *Singspiel* in that it has spoken dialogue and no recitatives. There are 18 scenes, and given the organization of the musical numbers in each, it is natural to regard the work as consisting of two main parts, the first comprising scenes I–VI, and the second scenes VII–XVIII. Scenes VI and XVIII function as finales similar to Italian *opera buffa* or French *opéra-comique*. These scenes each consist of several consecutive musical numbers, with almost no spoken lines and no dialogue.<sup>42</sup> Krogh regarded the ensemble scenes as the core of the work.<sup>43</sup> The musical numbers are also more varied here than in the other scenes. The ensembles are the only places with dances, and they have almost all the choral singing. Only a few scenes are completely without music: nos. III, X–XIII and XVI. The distribution of the musical numbers is as follows:

Overture		<i>Sinfonia</i>
Scene I.	No. 1	<i>Romance</i> (Anna. “Nys fyldte skjøn Sired det attende Aar”)
Scene II.	No. 2	Solo song (Grethe. “Førstkommende Maidag vort bryllup skal staae”)
Scene III.		No music
Scene IV.	No. 3	Solo song (Grethe, “Eene dig min Sjel begierte”)
Scene V.	No. 4	Solo song and duet (Anna and Grethe, “Nei Fader, nei Fader, aldrig kan du glemme”)
Scene VI.	No. 5	Choruses, solos, duets, trio and dance (more details below)
Scene VII.	No. 6	Solo song (Halvor, “Himmel, hvad ligner min Lykke”)

42 In scene VI the libretto has no spoken lines. In scene XVIII, by far the longest in the play, the spoken part includes just one statement.

43 Krogh 1924, 186.

Scene VIII.	No. 7	Duet (Halvor and Anna, “Tag beste Smykke, elskte Brud”)
Scene IX.	No. 8	Solo song (Halvor, “Hvor Krigstorden dæmper de Døendes Skrig”)
Scene X–III.		No music
Scene XIV.	No. 9	Solo song (Hans [score: Henrik], “En Time før Middag, Madamen opstaaer”)
Scene XV.	No. 10	Solo song (Peter, “Min hele Sjæl for Grethe brændte”) <sup>44</sup>
Scene XVI.		No music
Scene XVII.	No. 11	Solo song (Hans, “Jeg fremmed her til Stædet kom”)
Scene XVII cont.	No. 12	Solo song (4 stanzas; Halvor, Anna, Peter and Grethe, “Navnløs Salighed jeg finder”,
Scene XVII cont.		solos, duets and chorus (Children and Fathers, “Os/Jer er Fadernavnet Ære”
Scene XVIII.		(to be discussed below)

The development of the plot means that female voices predominate in the first part. After the introductory overture, scenes I, II and IV each have a single solo song, while scene V has both a solo song and a duet. The musical interest culminates in the first “finale” (scene VI), which is introduced by the first stanza of a chorus of male voices (the soldiers). This is followed by a chorus of female voices, the second stanza of the male chorus with new music, repetition of the female chorus, a duet (a mother and a father), the first stanza of the male chorus sung in unison by both men and women and a dance, which is not indicated in the libretto. This dance divides the scene into two parts. The second part starts with a male trio followed by a varied repetition of its two last verse lines by a mixed chorus, a tenor solo (a boy), the mixed chorus, a soprano solo (a girl), the mixed chorus, and a baritone

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44 In the manuscript score there are two numbers designated 9. From the second “no. 9” onwards all numbers have been crossed out in a different pen and replaced with the succeeding number, which are the numbers used here.

solo (a smith), whose two last verse lines are repeated by the male chorus. The whole scene ends with the return of the introductory chorus, which gives it a rounded form.

In the second part of the opera male voices dominate. Five of the eleven scenes in this part have only a single musical number: in four cases, a solo song and in one case, a duet. Towards the end of the opera there is a gradual increase in the quantity of musical numbers. Scene XVII is like a “mini finale”. This is where the complications of the plot are resolved. The scene has three musical numbers: one male solo song (baritone), one solo song with four stanzas sung in turn by the four young people, i.e. the two happy couples, and finally, a number comprised of a short solo song, two short duets and an ensemble of mixed voices (three fathers, two sons and two daughters).

Scene XVIII is the really big finale (more about this below). This is where the festivities take place, with the celebration of the happy betrothals, the harvest, the royal wedding, including homage to the crown prince and his bride, as well as to the king and the whole kingdom represented by the free farmers from Zeeland (i.e. Denmark), Holstein and Norway. While solo songs and small ensembles predominate in the other parts, this scene contains a great diversity of musical forms, the scale of musical events in this single scene underscoring the importance of the occasion. Schulz thereby clearly differentiated between the dramatic action of the plot and the acts of patriotic homage. The simple songs and duets belong to the first of these and the choruses and dances to the second.

### Musical style

Stylistically, Schulz’s music has much in common with early classicism and with the sentimental style of Northern Germany (*empfindsamer Stil*). Many songs have expressive syllabic melodies supported by light and transparent accompaniment. The melodies are often based on combinations of broken triads and stepwise movement and have few complicated or technically demanding leaps. The part-writing is homophonic, and melodic phrases are usually periodic, often based on

four-bar units combined into units of eight and sixteen bars. The harmony is generally quite simple.

The general musical and formal simplicity is counterbalanced by more subtle nuances in sound and instrumentation, showing a compositional craftsmanship on a level similar to the music of several contemporary or later composers in this field, such as F.L.Æ. Kunzen (1761–1817) and J.E. Hartmann (1726–1793) in Denmark and Grétry in France. The latter clearly inspired Schulz’s instrumentation, as did composers such as Gluck and Mozart. The relatively new clarinet is used once in combination with flutes, horns and muted violins in Anna’s melancholy song, in which she expresses her fear of marrying a man she does not love: “O Fader! aldrig kan du glemme / hvor høit din datter elsker dig” (no. 4, scene V).<sup>45</sup> The expressive character is enhanced by the slow tempo (*lento*), the *dolce* articulation and the vocal coloratura, which emphasized the singing abilities of the original Anna, who was known to have an excellent voice (see Figure 1).<sup>46</sup>

The image shows a musical score for a Basso part. It consists of two staves: a vocal line in treble clef and a bass line in bass clef. The time signature is 3/4 and the key signature has two flats. The vocal line begins with a quarter rest, followed by a half note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The bass line begins with a quarter rest, followed by a half note G3, a quarter note A3, and a quarter note B3. The lyrics are: "skal ta le i dit Bryst for mig".

Figure 1. J.P.A Schulz, *Høstgildet*, scene V, no. 4, reduced orchestral score, pp. 79–80.

Many of Schulz’s musical characteristics can be heard in the overture (*Sinfonia*), which begins with a fairly slow introduction (*Poco allegretto*) in D major and 6/8 metre, its fanfare-like melody made up of broken triads in flutes and first violins. The theme is periodic with a rather static harmonization. Later, this introduction returns as the march opening the very last scene. The “pastoral” 6/8 time signature is unusual for a march, but in scene XVIII this music is revealed to be

<sup>45</sup> “O father! you never can forget / How deeply your daughter loves you.”

<sup>46</sup> Her name was Madame Berthelsen. See Krogh 1924, 166.

not a military march, but a more “rustic” march accompanying the farmers’ arrival on the stage.

In the overture the moderately paced *allegretto* introduction is followed by a lively *allegro for tutti* orchestra and in the same 6/8 time signature. The *allegro* follows a simple sonata form, although without a proper development section: It has a main theme in the tonic, a second theme in the dominant and a recapitulation with both themes in the tonic. With the exception of some modulatory sequential passages the harmony is extremely simple, especially that of the second subject, which is harmonized with just one long pedal chord on the dominant. The introduction is repeated at the end of the *Sinfonia*. As Krogh observed, Schulz’s model for this kind of overture, with aspects of the music pointing to forthcoming events in the opera, is taken from a widespread practice in French *opéra-comique*.<sup>47</sup>

A representative example of Schulz’s melodic style is the opening song “Nys fylgte skøn Sired det attende Aar” (See Figure 2).<sup>48</sup> The song has six stanzas, each with 16 bars of music.

Figure 2. J.P.A Schulz, *Høstgildet*, scene I, no. 1, piano score, p. 6.

47 Krogh 1924, 186.

48 “Beautiful Sired recently celebrated her eighteenth birthday.”

The first eight-bar period is harmonized with only two chords: tonic and dominant, while the second has slightly more harmonic variety. Simple changes in the accompaniment reflect corresponding changes in the text. In the third and fourth stanzas, for instance, the quavers in the second violin are turned into semiquavers and demisemiquavers respectively, as the third stanza is about singing and dancing and the fourth is about briskly riding farmers (“Rask ride de Bønder”). Similarly, in the last stanza, there is a small variation in tempo and rhythm, and the melodic line is altered to include chromatic intervals. These changes correspond to a shift in perspective and affect in the text, as Anna compares the girl in the song to herself. She is openly expressing her love for Halvor and her conflicting emotions of hope and fear.

The song quickly became a favourite among audiences and was often performed on its own.<sup>49</sup> It has been considered almost a folk tune in Denmark. Krogh regarded the chromatic changes in the last stanza as a deviation from the traditional ideal of folk melody, which permeates the rest of the song, a small outburst of sentimentalism (of which he did not seem to approve), and he viewed the tempo changes at the end as more evidence of the influence of French style.<sup>50</sup> To me, however, these variations demonstrate Schulz’s sensitivity to essential nuances in the text. This was a *Singspiel*, not a collection of *Lieder* in the style of folk tunes, and the composer adapted his musical means to the requirements of the libretto and the dramatic situation. Still, an overall simplicity is maintained throughout the song. Triadic and stepwise melodic movement dominates, and leaps are kept within the intervals of the triad.

If a theatrical style informs subtle nuances in Anna’s song and its accompaniment, it seems to be part of the very structure of Halvor’s

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49 It became widely popular in social circles, both high and low, and the melody was even set to other texts. It was also printed in many song collections, among them *Danmarks Melodier*, and, with a new text from 1870, “Jeg ved hvor der findes en have så skøn”, in the still popular *Højskolesangbogen*, where it has survived down to the latest edition (no. 361 in the 18th edition, 2006). In other words, the song has become part of what can be called the canon of Danish songs. See also Krogh 1924, 187–188.

50 *Ibid.*, 187.

“Himmel! hvad ligner min Lykke”<sup>51</sup> (no. 6, scene VII; see Figure 3). This is one of the few songs accompanied by strings alone, with the first violin part doubling the voice. The text consists of a single stanza with eleven verse lines. The first four lines and their music are repeated at the end, giving the song a ternary ABA or simple *da capo* form. Harmonically, this song is more complex than most of the others, and the music reflects the text in a quite distinct and direct manner. Its music is in A major, and when in the middle section the text refers to old age, lost beauty, everlasting love and fidelity, the music turns to A minor without modulation, halting on the dominant, then takes an unexpected turn to a C-major chord before an E-major chord prepares the two first lines of the opening section in the main key.

Krogh called this number an *aria* rather than a song, but an aria with a songlike character.<sup>52</sup> To my mind, it is more of a song than an *aria* owing to its simplicity; even if the text has only one stanza, it is a song in which textual nuances are reflected both in melodic construction and in harmony.

In the two extensive ensemble scenes (nos. VI and XVIII) the musical numbers are arranged as a series of solos, choruses and dances. Especially in scene VI the numbers are worked out in such a way that the first part of the scene is considerably expanded compared to the sequence of text units in the libretto, giving the whole scene greater musical weight and diversity. The extension is mainly the result of using choruses – a soldiers’ chorus with new instrumentation for each stanza and repetition, and a women’s chorus with different music. Careful use of wind instruments is essential to creating a varied sound picture. The scene also contains a lively instrumental dance in G major and 3/8 time (an English dance [*anglaise*]) with a contrasting trio in E

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51 “Heaven! what does my happiness resemble.”

52 Krogh 1924, 189. He also mentions the term *ariette* in connection with this piece. Presumably, Krogh did not mean the kind of ornamental vocal virtuosic *aria* that was included in French opera early in the eighteenth century as an emulation of the Italian *da capo aria*, but rather a more general type of newly composed vocal solo for one or more voices (and never strophic) included in *opéra-comiques* from the middle of the century. See Charlton, “Ariette”, accessed 5 June 2015.

Her- lig-ste blant mi- ne Da - ge! O naar din Skjøn-hed for-gaar, troe-fast du

9

Hal-vor skal fin - de: Dig skal jeg kal- de Ven - in - de, Dig skal jeg el-ske med

18

sne-hvi-de Haar; Dig skal jeg el-ske med sne-hvi-de Haar! Dig!

Figure 3. J.P.A Schulz, *Høstgildet*, scene VII, no. 6, piano score, p. 25.

minor and 3/4 time for flutes and strings, before the repeat of the first dance (as in a symphony's minuet; see Figure 4). This interpolated trio – one of only two numbers in the opera in a minor key – resembles a Norwegian *pols* or a Swedish *polska*. It is hard to differentiate between the two as they have several musical traits in common. In Norway *pols* was a traditional dance in the Røros region and other regions not far from the Swedish border. A typical feature of both *pols* and *polska* is the 3/4 metre with its emphasis on the second beat and two repeated eight-bar phrases as found in this trio. Whether or not the trio can be interpreted as a conscious attempt to imitate a specific national style will be discussed below.

The dance divides scene VI into two main parts. In the second part Schulz follows the text closely. C major is the main key. Here, for the first time, homage is paid to the king for having abolished serfdom, expressed in a series of choruses alternating with soloists in a rondo-like structure: a male (tenor) and a female (soprano) who represent the farmers, and a smith (baritone) who provides ploughs for the farmers and swords for the soldiers. The characters are thus symbols of the cultivation of the land and the defence of the country. In this song repetitive quavers in the orchestral accompaniment illustrate the sound of the hammer striking the anvil. By concluding scene VI with the first

**Poco lento**

The image shows a page of an orchestral score for the opera *Høstgildet*. The score is for scene VI, number 5, and is marked *Poco lento*. It is in 3/4 time and C major. The score is for four instruments: Flauto (Flute), Violini (Violins), Viola, and Basso (Bass). The Flauto part starts with a melodic line in the right hand. The Violini part features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The Viola part has a similar rhythmic pattern. The Basso part has a simple bass line. Dynamics include *p* (piano) and *mf* (mezzo-forte). The score is in C major and 3/4 time.

Figure 4. J.P.A Schulz, *Høstgildet*, scene VI, no. 5, orchestral score, p. 116.

stanza of the soldiers' introductory chorus, Schulz gave the scene – as noted above – a rounded, partially symmetrical form.

Although the opera has only one act, its scene VI, as mentioned, contributes to the feeling of a two-act structure. The scene might be regarded as the finale of a “first act”. Krogh viewed this construction as another result of Grétry's influence.<sup>53</sup> Scene XVIII concludes the work and is the real finale. It is also the longest scene, having no fewer than 18 musical numbers, beginning with the (new) number 13:

- No. 13 Orchestral introduction (the same as in the overture)
- No. 14 Chorus of mixed voices, made up of farmers, soldiers and seamen; a song by male voices (old men); repetition of the chorus
- No. 15 A short dance, *bourrée*
- No. 16 Duet by two married women; repeated, this time by two farmers
- No. 17 A short dance, a varied version of the *bourrée*, no. 15
- No. 18 Male chorus with baritone and bass solos, followed by mixed chorus
- No. 19 A short dance, *bourrée* or *gavotte*
- No. 20 Two solo songs by Halvor and Peter; in both, the chorus joins in on their last lines
- No. 21 Solo song, Anna
- No. 22 Solo song, Grethe
- No. 23 Mixed chorus
- No. 24 A long dance, the longest orchestral piece after the overture, English dance (*anglaise*)
- No. 25 Solo song, Hans
- No. 26 Solo song, Halvor
- No. 27 Solo song, Tord (Hans, Halvor and Tord are representatives from Denmark, Holstein and Norway in the Danish kingdom)
- No. 28 Vocal trio by Hans, Halvor, and Tord, concluding with the male chorus
- No. 29 Male chorus and duet by Halvor and Peter; female chorus and duet by Anna and Grethe
- No. 30 Solo song, Tord and concluding chorus

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<sup>53</sup> Krogh 1924, 191.

Scene XVIII is almost completely through-composed, with only one spoken line. It is where patriotic feelings are expressed most abundantly, with thanksgiving to the king and the royal house and expressions of gratitude for the harvest and the newly-given freedom to farmers. Loyalty to king and country is expressed by farmers and military men on land and sea, and by representatives from the different parts of the kingdom (Denmark, Norway and Holstein). The opera ends by paying homage to crown prince Frederik and his bride, and the comprehensive and diversified scene creates a festive musical and artistic “crescendo” befitting the royal festivities.

This scene can also be divided into two main parts. The first ends with the chorus expressing gratitude to the king and the crown prince for their prosperity, freedom and peace (no. 23). Thereafter, the long dance number is played, constructed of musical motives heard in the chorus and functioning as a transition to the second part (as in scene VI above). This starts with the three solo songs sung by the farmers representing the main parts of the kingdom,<sup>54</sup> and continues with the trio sung by the same three farmers expressing brotherhood, unity and agreement, even if they belong to different “nations”.<sup>55</sup> Tellingly, the melody of this trio is the same as the Danish farmer’s solo, which makes it a strong unifying symbol. The chorus that joins the trio emphasizes the unity among all inhabitants of the kingdom and their loyalty to king and country.

### Which genre?

Even though *Høstgildet* is in one act, scene VI is constructed as a “mini-finale”, making the opera a kind of concealed two-act work. The musical culmination, however, is the real “finale” in scene XVIII. These finales with their several ensembles are characteristic of both French *opéra-comique* and Italian *opera buffa* and were also essential in *Singspiel*.

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54 Cf. Ellen Gjervan’s discussion of these solo songs in this volume.

55 The term “nations” is used both by Overskou 1860, 459–460 and Krogh 1924, 164, but it is not written in the libretto.

At the time of its composition *Høstgildet* was called a play with songs (*Syngespil*) – a Danish translation of the German word *Singspiel*.<sup>56</sup> In his study *North German Opera in the Age of Goethe* (1985) Thomas Bauman discusses this genre, which, however, he finds problematic. Since Schulz was a North German composer from the period Bauman writes about, I think it is relevant to outline Bauman's view on the genre. He makes a case for avoiding the term *Singspiel* altogether, claiming that it had no precise meaning in the eighteenth century and that later scholarship gave the term the modern meaning of *Singspiel* as “a German comic opera with spoken dialogue – ‘a play with singing’ rather than a ‘sung play’”.<sup>57</sup>

The reason Bauman denounces the term is the way it was used in eighteenth-century terminology and repertoire. According to his investigations, the most popular expression in the period was *komische Oper*. In 1773 Christoph Martin Wieland (1733–1813) introduced the term *Singspiel* for the first time with his opera libretto *Alceste*, which had no spoken dialogue, but rather sung recitatives. In the last decade of the century *Singspiel* became usual for many different kinds of German works, both comic and serious, and with or without recitatives. It appears that the word came to be used more frequently in connection with through-composed works in these years, which in Bauman's opinion corresponded to a new phase in German opera when the values of Italian opera – *seria* or *buffa* with sung recitatives throughout – became more influential than before. (In Italian opera the words were subordinate to the music, and Italian spoken drama had a weaker position than in France and Germany.) Yet the terminology was by no means consistent, and the many works in question show great variety in the relationship between words and music. Authors were not consistent either. Johann Friedrich Reichardt, for example, did not use the term

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56 The title page of the first edition of the libretto as well as that of the piano score have the following text: “*Høst-Gildet*. Et Syngespil i een Act ved Thomas Thaarup”. The orchestral score has only the title “*Høstgildet*. Partitur”.

57 Bauman 1985, 9. The following description is based on the chapter in Bauman's book entitled “The problem of genre”, 9–14.

*Singspiel* in his book from 1774, which he called *Über die deutsche comische Oper*. To avoid using a label that does not cover the diversity of the genre, Bauman prefers the designation “German opera”. When, according to him, could a work be called an opera and when should it not? “A plausible answer is at the point where the omission of the music would make the drama a fundamentally different work.”<sup>58</sup> The libretto must give the composer ample opportunity to express the characters’ personalities and emotions. “The main characters ought to sing, and sing where it counts.”<sup>59</sup> This loose definition seems to be a somewhat imprecise analytical tool for distinguishing between opera and drama. Nevertheless, the alternation of spoken dialogue and sung numbers became a characteristic trait of North German opera towards the end of the eighteenth century, notwithstanding the great diversity this mix might include, as was the case in much French operatic music as well.

*Høstgildet* has a mixture of spoken lines and closed musical numbers: songs, small ensembles, choruses and dances. It has no sung recitatives. Without the music it would certainly be quite a different piece. If Bauman’s arguments were to be accepted, then *Høstgildet* might be classified as an opera rather than a *Singspiel*. However, more recent authors have not adopted his view. In *German Opera: From the Beginnings to Wagner* (2001) John Warrack uses the term *Singspiel*, but does not discuss its definition, which he takes for granted; he has a separate chapter on “The Viennese *Singspiel*”. One might expect Stefano Castelvechi to analyse the term in his book *Sentimental Opera: Questions of Genre in the Age of Bourgeois Drama* (2013), but that is not the case. To Castelvechi, genres are dependent on practices and processes, production and reception; in short, on context.<sup>60</sup> They are not defined by formal qualities. Castelvechi sees genres as “families” and individual works as “family members” related by resemblances or similar traits, but he does not apply this analytical tool to the German-language *Singspiel*.

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58 Ibid., 12.

59 Ibid.

60 Castelvechi 2013, 4–5.

Carolyn Abbate and Roger Parker on the other hand examine the relationship between text and music with special reference to German opera in the chapter “Singing and speaking before 1800” in *A History of Opera: The Last 400 Years* (2012). German-language opera was from the start associated with comedy and had no serious tradition. It always stood in close interplay with French *opéra-comique* and was clearly felt to be inferior to “serious” opera. Wieland, for example, argued for through-composed opera in *Versuch über das deutsche Singspiel* in 1775. Abbate and Rogers prefer to call the *Singspiel* a “dialogue opera” in an attempt to cover a broad genre without reference to the “comic”, especially because they want “to keep in mind the flow between the French and German varieties”. In many German operas with spoken dialogue the comic gave way to other themes, such as the serious or the sentimental, which was a French influence.<sup>61</sup> Nevertheless, Abbate and Parker still use the term *Singspiel* for the genre. The crucial moments in these operas were when the spoken dialogue stopped and the music took over. This generated what they call “the acoustic shock”, and they show how the *Singspiel* and several other genres have “had to negotiate the border between talking and singing”.<sup>62</sup> It was a problematic moment in this kind of hybrid genre – a question that occupied the minds of several contemporary authors – and they refer to a “debate about dramatic reasons for music in *Singspiel*”.<sup>63</sup> This debate took place mainly in the north and not in the south (Vienna), where the genre was more influenced by Italian *opera buffa* (i.e. Mozart).

*Høstgildet*, composed to honour the newlywed crown prince and his bride, can also be described as a kind of *festa teatrale* or what was called on North German stages a *Vorspiel*:

[...] a play, usually in one act specially written and composed for the birthday of a sovereign, a wedding, coronation, or a similar event. Many

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61 Abbate and Parker 2012, 148.

62 Ibid.

63 Ibid., 151.

of these are little more than miniature comic or pastoral operas. They tend to [...] work some manifestation of adulation of the personage honored by the occasion into their close.<sup>64</sup>

Events like this were quite normal throughout Europe, and not only on German stages. Even though the *festa teatrale* can be considered a specific genre, several such works became popular in the ordinary repertoires when the most obvious references to the occasion in question were removed, and this is what happened to *Høstgildet*.

### A national *Singspiel*?

As mentioned in the introduction, Nils Schiørring characterized *Høstgildet* as a national work, one of “a few idyllic national *Singspiele*”.<sup>65</sup> The last topic I want to discuss is the meaning of the term “national” in this context. Was the work perceived as national at the time it was composed or has this characteristic been assigned to it in retrospect? Based on more recent literature on nationalism in the Danish state around 1800, it seems more relevant to regard this opera as a patriotic rather than a national *Singspiel*.

The Danish historian Rasmus Glenthøj analyses the two terms in his book *Skilsmissen: Dansk og norsk identitet før og efter 1814* (2012).<sup>66</sup> His investigation is based on a thorough discussion of the prevailing international literature on the subject. According to Glenthøj, the patriotic and the national have often been mixed. He defines patriotism as “a feeling of devotion to one’s state, a willingness to defend and reform it and to be loyal to its institutions” (my translation).<sup>67</sup> Patriotism is based on the state or social community and not on the idea of a common language, culture and heritage. Glenthøj believes the seed of

64 Bauman 1985, 13. A *festa teatrale* could be divided into acts, but could also be undivided or divided into two parts; see Talbot 2015.

65 “[...] et par idylliske nationale syngespil”, Schiørring 1978, 98.

66 [The divorce: Danish and Norwegian identity before and after 1814] (my translation).

67 “en følelse af kærlighed til ens stat, vilje til at forsvare og reformere den samt en loyalitet

nationalism is to be found in patriotism, and nationalism is regarded as a multivalent idea with a wealth of definitions. He claims that one of its most typical characteristics is “a modern feeling, which connects belief in the sovereignty of the people with an emotional attachment to the nation”.<sup>68</sup> He also regards parts of pre-modern patriotism, such as loyalty to the king, as building blocks in later nationalism. This was the case in Denmark–Norway, where we find a gradual transition between the concepts. A special version of patriotism is that which Glenthøj defines as “state patriotism”:

State patriotism is to be understood as a centralistic ideology, which cultivated, acclaimed and served the state, the institutions of the state and the centre of the state, the Dano-Norwegian monarch and the common citizenship of the native country. It was an ideology that was used to combine Danes, Norwegians and Holsteinians and other inhabitants of the Danish “empire” in a community with common civil rights.<sup>69</sup>

A closer look at the libretto of *Høstgildet* in its version from 1790 reveals the text and plot to be expressions of state patriotism as defined above rather than expressions of nationalism. The opera celebrates a royal wedding, but also the agricultural reforms that freed Danish farmers from the bonds of serfdom. Therefore, the scene is set in rural environments (a “pastoral” trait), and the plot revolves around idealized farmers and soldiers defending king and country. A rustic setting with characters of humble descent and in which young love triumphs over paternal opposition were usual themes in many Rousseau-inspired *opéra-comiques* and in German *Singspiele* influenced by the French tra-

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over for dens institutioner”. Glenthøj 2012, 27.

68 “[...] en moderne følelse, der kobler troen på folkesuveræniteten og en følelsesmæssig tilknytning til nationen sammen”. Ibid., 29.

69 “Statspatriotisme skal forstås som en centralistisk ideologi, der dyrkede, hyldede og tjente staten, statens institutioner og statens centrum, den dansk-norske monark og det fælles statsborgerlige fædreland. Det var en ideologi, der blev brugt til at samle danskere, nordmænd, holstenere og det danske ‘imperiums’ andre indbyggere i et statsborgerligt fællesskab.” Ibid., 28.

dition. But the rural environment and the farmers – at least in the light of later nationalistic ideals – can easily lead one to think of the work as an expression of nationalism, and certain aspects of the music may contribute to this assumption.

The emphasis on simple songs testifies to a folk song ideal – pieces that anyone can sing and that do not require specialized vocal training. Schulz's famous collection of *Lieder im Volkston* represents the folk song ideal, which would later be strongly associated with nineteenth-century nationalism. Generally, the music in *Høstgildet* has an overall simplicity, with strophic songs, syllabic, natural and expressive text declamation and well-balanced vocal lines. The music appealed to a wide public. Several melodies, such as that of the very first song, became popular Danish songs and continued to be so long after the opera had disappeared from the stage. The choruses and dances also betray a popular folk idiom. However, the music is not national in the sense of imitating or using “real” folk music, with the possible exception of one or two numbers, and it does not seem to pretend to be “Danish”, but rather has a more neutral, popular expression. If the music is understood as national Danish, I believe this is a result of the identification with Denmark of the music, characters, language, scenery and songs through long-time use, especially in those songs that were detached from the opera and became popular in their own right. A nationalist interpretation seems to be a retrospective construct based on the all-pervading nationalism that characterized the performing arts in many European countries from the middle of the nineteenth century and was also found in the writings of authors such as Overskou, Krogh and even Schiørring.

However, there is one fascinating aspect to the music in which the three different parts of the kingdom are represented. The song of the Norwegian farmer Tord is quite different from the songs of the two other farmers in melody, key, rhythm and instrumentation. The Dane is accompanied by the oboe (traditionally a “rustic” instrument; see Figure 5), horn and strings, and the German is accompanied by violin and viola solo, two bassoons and two double basses. But the Norwegian is accompanied only by strings with a cello doubling the bass voice. This definitely gives another sound picture than the other farmers' songs.

**Andante, un poco allegretto**

Violini *mf* *pizzic* *arco*

Viola *mf*

Tord  
Malm-ri - ke Fiel-ler aa koin -ri-ke Da - ler, Sko-ger taa Biörk aa taa Fu-ruaa Gran,

Un Violoncello *colla Voce*

Basso *mf*

Figure 5. J.P.A. Schulz, *Høstgildet*, scene XVIII, no. 27, orchestral score, p. 304.

In addition this is the only song in the opera in a minor key, and it has a characteristic 3/4 metre, common to several traditional Norwegian folk dances. Whether or not Schulz had an idea of Norwegian folk music as something distinctly different from that of Denmark and Northern Germany and thus tried to strike a special Norwegian “tone” is difficult to say. It is an intriguing idea, and perhaps not altogether improbable. At the time Schulz was residing in Copenhagen, many Norwegian students lived in the city. With his keen interest in popular song, Schulz might have paid attention to traditional Norwegian songs and dances. Tord’s melody seems to have a distinct “Norwegian” flavour, which is also evoked by the nature imagery in the text and the extraordinary use of dialect.<sup>70</sup> Glenthøj points to a traditional Danish concept of

<sup>70</sup> See Gjervan’s chapter in this volume.

“Norwegianness” to which the text of this song corresponds closely: a country consisting of a courageous, brave and loyal population of free farmers formed by a rough and mountainous terrain, completely different from the “Danishness” formed by the undulating and fertile fields of Denmark.<sup>71</sup> In fact, the song is a variation of the E-minor trio in the dance from scene VI mentioned above and it has the same key and metre (see Figures 4 and 5).

As with the previous dance, it is not possible to claim that this song has a specifically Norwegian melody based on its musical properties alone. However, given that the song is used in the opera to characterize a Norwegian farmer in marked contrast to the farmers from Denmark and Holstein and in tandem with a text with such a strong national “flavour”, it is tempting to interpret it as an attempt to represent “Norwegianness” on stage in both text and music.

#### Concluding remarks

There seems to be a kind of inherent ambiguity in *Høstgildet* between the patriotic occasion for which it was composed, with homage paid to king and country by its characters, and the national rural setting in which the farmers sing simple melodies and strike a different tone. The opera has been regarded as an early example of national *Singspiel* in Denmark. The setting, the characters and the music all contribute to this view, but perhaps Schulz’s musical style and the ideology of his song compositions are the most important factors, not least because they represented aesthetic ideals that later became associated with nationalism. However, even if the music generally has a “neutral” expression, there are a few attempts to distinguish among the different “nations” of the Danish kingdom through specific musical means. From a later Danish point of view – and in retrospect – the Norwegian farmer stands out as typically “Norwegian”. In 1790 this number might have been regarded as something very different and not necessarily national

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71 See Glenthøj 2012, 235.

in the later sense of the term, but simply as a kind of contrast or “otherness”. Both the dialect and the music may have been interpreted as suitable tools to distinguish a representative from one main part of the Danish state from the other two.

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# Staging state patriotism: *Høstgildet* of 1790

ELLEN KAROLINE GJERVAN

The big social event of 1790 in the Danish state was the wedding of Frederik, the Prince Regent, to his cousin Marie, Princess of Hesse-Kassel, on the 31 July. The wedding took place at Gottorp Castle in Schleswig. The newlyweds did not return to Copenhagen until September that year. To celebrate the marriage and the return of the *de facto* ruling couple, the Royal Theatre commissioned a play by Christen Henriksen Pram to mark the occasion. However, the theatre board was not entirely satisfied with Pram's work, a historical drama entitled *Frode og Fingal* [Frode and Fingal], as they found it lacking in patriotic fervour.<sup>1</sup> Thomas Thaarup (1759–1821) then offered to write a play with patriotic feelings at its core, an offer that was rapidly accepted. At the time Thaarup was a well-known poet, but the resulting theatrical work marked his debut as a full-fledged playwright. Thaarup's one-act *Singspiel* entitled *Høstgildet* [The Harvest Festival] opened at the Royal Theatre on 16 September 1790, in tandem with the originally commissioned *Frode og Fingal*. Thaarup's *Singspiel*, with original music composed by the theatre's German Kapellmeister Johann Abraham Peter Schulz, was an instant success and would remain in the theatre's repertoire well into the 1800s, revived and rewritten on several occasions.

Whereas musical aspects of *Høstgildet* are discussed by Randi M. Selvik in her chapter elsewhere in this volume, my concern here is with the political content of this *Singspiel*. In my chapter I will explore how *Høstgildet* can be understood as a political play that stages state pat-

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1 Rønning 1903, 156. See also Randi M. Selvik's chapter in this volume.

riotism. I will do so by looking at what state patriotism was. I will also examine the play's content and historical context, and consider how it was staged in 1790.<sup>2</sup>

*Høstgildet* (1790) unfolds in a village on Zealand, the largest island in Denmark.<sup>3</sup> The setting remains the same throughout the 18 scenes. The action takes place on the day the harvest was celebrated, which coincides with the day of the newlywed royals' return to Copenhagen. The plot revolves around two brothers, Hans and Henrik, and their plans for the wedding of their children Peter and Anna. Unbeknownst to them, Peter is already engaged to Grethe, Anna's sister, and Anna is engaged to Halvor, a Norwegian soldier. Although the girls quietly accept their father's decision out of love for and deference to him, Peter insists on freedom of choice in matters of the heart. His uncle Hans, the girls' father, agrees: young hearts should not be traded like common goods. This statement convinces his daughters to confess their true loves. And so the play ends with the celebration of two engagements, the return of the royal couple and the announced harvest festival.

### I *Høstgildet* – a political play?

To the modern reader, *Høstgildet* might be perceived as a sorry excuse for a play. The plot of four lovers wanting to marry their sweethearts instead of partners chosen by their fathers is easily resolved. The play, however, ends on a different note – with a tribute to fathers, both familial and the father of the state, namely the king. As part of the play's final celebration, all characters take turns singing the praises of king and country, which seem to be very much the same thing. The joy of

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2 This is to some extent a novel perspective. Although the play is considered as a mere bagatelle in some scholarly works (see Andersen 1992, 155), elsewhere it has been discussed as a political play (see for instance Kjærgaard 1994, 241–242). The novelty of my chapter is to view the *Singspiel* as a political play about state patriotism. The text has previously been referred to as patriotic, for instance by Damsholt 2000, but as far as I know this is the first detailed discussion of how Thaarup's piece can be understood as a patriotic script as well as how this patriotism could be staged in the production of the piece.

3 Thaarup 1790, 2: "Scenen er en Landsbye i Sieland".

the forthcoming union of four of the characters is likened to the joy of the recent union between the Prince Regent and his future queen, as well as the joy of the union between the king and his people.

The end of the play was typical of court festival plays known all over Europe from the time of the Renaissance. This kind of play was usually produced for state occasions, such as royal weddings, and was concerned with the glorification of the ruling monarch. An example of a Danish court festival play is the allegorical ballet performed in 1634 as part of King Christian IV's grand celebration of the wedding between his son Christian and the princess Magdalena Sibylla of Saxony. The overture

[...] saluted the sea god Neptune (Christian IV) for having cleansed his realms of all monsters and having silenced the fierce goddess of war, Bellona. (The compliment alluded to the Danish king's role as a peace broker in the Thirty years' War.)<sup>4</sup>

This opening was followed by the death of Orpheus at the hands of the Bacchae, leading to a new world and love being created from his ashes in the form of a union between Neptune's son and the goddess Pallas. The play ended with diverse Greek gods arriving on a cloud to bless the union and join in the final dance.<sup>5</sup>

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4 Marker and Marker 1996, 32. Neptune as the allegorical representation of King Christian IV, as pointed out by Marker and Marker, was not because he danced the part himself, as other Renaissance lords did (see Urup 2007, 52). An eyewitness in fact places the king in the audience, and an impatient audience member at that: as the final dance began to unfold after the two-hour long ballet, the king's mouth was very dry, and he left to indulge in some drinking (Krogh 1939, 15). The use of Neptune as an allegorical representation of the king, however, was of an older date than the wedding. In the first decades of the 1600s, the king commissioned a fountain with Neptune as its centrepiece, erected no later than 1621 at the Frederiksborg Castle, and symbolising Denmark as a leading sea power.

5 Risum 1992, 52–53. Similar to Marker and Marker, she understands Neptune as an allegorical representation of the king, and Neptune's son and Pallas as allegorical representations of the newlyweds (*ibid.*) The royals could have danced these parts themselves, but according to a chronicle of the wedding, only one of the royal family participated in the dance: King Christian IV's illegitimate son Christian Ulrik Gyldenløve (see Urup 2007, 51).

The plots of court festival plays have been understood, both by contemporaries and in hindsight, as allegories for the power and status of the ruler, rather than as autonomous works of art.<sup>6</sup> While in many ways *Høstgildet* fits this description, it is something else altogether. In contrast to traditional court festival plays *Høstgildet* was performed on a public stage – and by professional actors for paying spectators. The play was written and produced by citizens belonging to the bourgeoisie for a largely bourgeois audience. Moreover, the glorification and allegory of power in the play are not exclusively concerned with the monarch.

The Danish monarch ruled over what can be described as a composite state. In addition to the two kingdoms of Denmark and Norway, this state consisted of the two duchies Schleswig and Holstein, as well as Iceland, the Faroe Islands, Greenland and overseas colonies on three continents.<sup>7</sup> In 1790 the governance of the state was autocratic, shaped by the theory of the Divine Right of Kings. As elsewhere in Europe, this system of government began to make less sense to the bourgeoisie in the latter half of the 1700s, especially when the king in question was mad, as was the case in the Danish state.<sup>8</sup> Although autocracy would be the form of governance in Denmark until 1848, King Christian VII had upon his accession to the throne in 1766 outmanoeuvred the old, aristocratic elite by replacing almost all cabinet members, leaving a reform-minded and anti-aristocratic Council to govern in his stead.<sup>9</sup> The play's references to king and country are therefore perhaps better understood in reference to political theories other than those of strict autocracy.

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6 See for instance Orgel 1975 and Strong 1984.

7 Glenthøj and Ottosen 2014, 3. For a broader discussion of how the Danish state of 1790 see for instance Bull and Maliks 2014, 10–14.

8 Glenthøj 2012, 62. King Christian VII, who reigned from 1766 to 1808, would prove to be suffering from a serious mental illness. From 1784 onwards his son Frederik would act as Prince Regent, just as Frederik's British cousin – the later King George IV – would do between 1811 and 1820.

9 Kjærgaard 1994, 240.

## II The play's political context and content

*Høstgildet* received nine performances during its very first season, and would remain in the repertoire for many years, achieving a total of 70 performances.<sup>10</sup> Its success had to do both with the reason and the occasion for which it was written.

As mentioned above, the play was performed as part of the celebration of the return of the newlywed royals to Copenhagen in September 1790. This event generated widespread elation and festivities throughout the kingdom. The feelings of joy arose from a sense of gratitude to the Prince Regent, owing to his role in the abolition of serfdom in 1788. Below I will argue that it is this political action, rather than the royal wedding, that holds the key both to the play's success and to its political content.

### II.1 The abolition of serfdom

The abolition of serfdom came about in Denmark with an ordinance issued on 20 June 1788. Until then, all male peasants born on a farm in Denmark were compelled to stay on the estate of their birth, thereby providing a cheap and reliable workforce.<sup>11</sup> Inspired by Enlightenment ideals, the bourgeoisie had championed farmers' freedom of choice in where they could live and work. In this matter they had found Chief Minister Peter Andreas Bernstorff to be an eager champion of the cause and the Prince Regent to be sympathetic.

This political event is visually embedded in the play. In the stage directions a "liberty column" is listed as part of the sets.<sup>12</sup> Just such a pillar, bearing the same designation and commemorating the abolition of serfdom, was erected in Copenhagen between 1792 and 1797.<sup>13</sup> As the

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<sup>10</sup> See the database *Danske Litteraturpriser*.

<sup>11</sup> Damsholt 2000, 12–13.

<sup>12</sup> See Thaarup 1790, 42: "Hans [...] nærmer sig Friheds-Støtten".

<sup>13</sup> The monument, called *Frihedsstøtten*, which literally translates as "liberty column", is still standing by the main railway station in Copenhagen. It is made of Danish sandstone placed on a base of Norwegian marble. Thaarup composed its inscription.

characters in the *Singspiel* approach this on-stage monument to the abolition of serfdom, they call out blessings on King Christian, a friend to the farmers, who granted their freedom.<sup>14</sup> This is the most explicit reference to the abolition of serfdom in the text. Other references are less overt.

The play ends with a tribute to fathers, both familial ones and the father of the state, the king. The Norwegian theatre scholar Anette Storli Andersen points to a contemporary analogy between the familial father and the king. When the sisters in the play must decide whether to obey their father or follow their hearts, Andersen sees the real conflict as between being a faithful, subservient subject or a virtuous citizen with responsibilities to your own heart.<sup>15</sup> Given this imagery, I think it is no coincidence that Peter is the character who protests against the pre-arranged nuptials. Peter is a farmer's son, who, with the abolition of serfdom, was able to choose his career freely. Peter went to sea and quickly rose to the rank of captain. Based on his successful experience of freedom of choice in his occupation, Peter argues for the freedom to choose a spouse according to the dictates of his heart. He argues for a changed relationship between fathers and offspring, between a king and his subjects; in other words, he argues for the benefits of the abolition of serfdom.<sup>16</sup>

Thaarup situated his plot in the Zealand countryside, and his characters were mostly farmers and farmhands. This was no novelty, as the Danish farmer had appeared on the stage before – in Ludvig Holberg's comedy *Jeppe på Bjerget* (1722). Thaarup's rural characters are not made fun of, however; they are quite idealized, and the real-life farmer is nowhere to be seen.<sup>17</sup> The three farmers in Thaarup's play are Hans, the local Danish farmer; his brother Henrik, from Holstein; and Tord, a

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14 Thaarup 1790, 42: "O Gud velsigne Christian; Thi Frihed, Frihed skjænkte han!".

15 Andersen 2014, 32.

16 As the royal wedding of 1790 seemingly was an affair of the heart rather than an affair of the state and the marriage took place against the will of both the current government and the royal advisors, the Prince Regent's free choice of spouse is possibly mirrored and celebrated in the play as well.

17 Krogh 1932, 140.

Norwegian.<sup>18</sup> In the course of the play, all three comment on their specific experiences as farmers in those respective regions. The *Singspiel* sets up the Norwegian farmer, who had always been a hereditary freeholder, as an example for the recently emancipated Danish farmers.<sup>19</sup> Although the Norwegian farmer is free, his freedom is presented as carrying responsibilities – to remain loyal to the king and to defend the state. In the play the abolition of serfdom is presented as an effective means of generating patriotic citizens rather than revolutionary plebeians.

These patriotic sentiments still caused unease amongst the nobility. After the premiere there was a nervous response in the aristocratic audience over sentiments expressed in the play – sentiments that stoked fears of revolt or maybe even a revolution on Danish soil.<sup>20</sup> *Høstgildet* was believed to contain seeds of revolt, as exemplified by a troublesome line early in the play. The line in question is delivered by Grethe, who says, “Noble is he who noble does”.<sup>21</sup> This was an unsettling sentiment, implying a transgression of the current world order. Moreover, the brand of patriotism expressed in the play was of a new variety.

## II.2 State patriotism

Thaarup allegedly wrote *Høstgildet* to remedy the lack of patriotic fervour in the original play commissioned to mark the occasion of the royal wedding and the newlyweds’ return to the homeland. With what brand of patriotism did he imbue his artistic creation?

The Danish historian Rasmus Glenthøj claims that artistic, patriotic

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18 Tord is the father of Halvor, Anna’s Norwegian fiancé, who has come to Denmark to witness the return of the royal couple. The old Norseman has brought all his savings to give to the Prince Regent as a wedding present, but as the play ends with his own son engaged to be married, he decides that Halvor is to have the money instead – as a king’s best gift is the love of his people (Thaarup 1790, 38).

19 See Kjærgaard 1994, 242. Kjærgaard claims that the Norwegian farmer became the ideal farmer in the Danish state in the latter half of the 1700s, leading to a mania for everything Norwegian. The grandest manifestation of this mania was the 55 statues of Norwegian farmers erected in Nordmandsdalen (ibid.).

20 Engberg 1995, 129.

21 Thaarup 1790, 6: “At den, som ædelt gjør, kun han er Adel”.

tributes were invariably aimed at the royal family until the mid-1700s.<sup>22</sup> In the latter half of the century this type of patriotism would gradually shift, and noticeably in artworks, where royals were now placed on the same level of importance as the state – or even below it.<sup>23</sup> The change took place as a new brand of patriotism gained ground in the last quarter of the 1700s. The new variety, state patriotism, was advocated by the current government and won support amongst the bourgeoisie owing to the reform policies of the government.

The Act of Citizenship (*Forordning om indfødsret for embedsmænd*), introduced in 1776, proved instrumental in establishing this new patriotic ideal, as by constitutional right the act reserved all government offices for citizens of the state.<sup>24</sup> Citizenship depended upon being born within the borders of the state. This requirement alienated much of the German-born and German-bred aristocracy, who often found themselves in opposition to the reforms supported by the bourgeoisie and advocated by the Council that was ruling on behalf of the king. Through state patriotism an alliance was made between royal power and native citizens to the exclusion of the imported nobility.<sup>25</sup>

State patriotism was founded on the idea of a contract between a king and his citizens, whereby the latter – in return for certain liberties and rights – were expected to set aside their own interests and act for the common good.<sup>26</sup> Patriotic acts encompassed both ordinary and extraordinary displays of civic duty, and could be carried out by

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22 Glenthøj 2012, 61. A noticeable portion of these artistic patriotic tributes was instigated and paid for by the royals themselves (see Kryger 1991, 255).

23 Glenthøj 2012, 62. The shift in royal importance can also be found reflected in contemporary historical events. On 14 July 1790, the first anniversary of the storming of the Bastille was celebrated on Champ de Mars, outside Paris. The event, *Fête de la Fédération*, involved a meeting of the National Assembly at which the king swore allegiance to the constitution. This celebration of the short-lived constitutional monarchy pointed to a form of governance whereby the state – represented by the constitution – was more important than the king.

24 Glenthøj and Ottosen 2014, 10.

25 The Danish historian Uffe Østergård points out that, although a council ruled the state, the governance of the state was still very much autocratic (Østergård 2014, 134). The alliance between the council and the native bourgeoisie was consequently operating under an umbrella of autocracy.

26 Østergård 2014, 145.

“[...] people from all regions of the state, from all classes and by both sexes”.<sup>27</sup>

State patriotism also focused on loyalty to the state, to state institutions – such as the king – and to the centre of the state: Copenhagen. What was best for Copenhagen was best for the whole state, and concern for the primacy and well-being of Copenhagen was at the centre of any political, administrative and financial initiative.<sup>28</sup> This policy of centralisation meant, for instance, that the government in Copenhagen downsized and/or demolished any remaining central institutions in Norway.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, Norway was not governed as one area, but divided into four regions – the so-called *stiftsamt*. These regions each developed different relationships with Copenhagen.<sup>30</sup> Hence, one side effect of the policy of centralisation was an increased regionalisation of the state.<sup>31</sup>

As an ideology, state patriotism was actively used by the government to promote a sense of patriotic fellowship between the various citizens and between the regions.<sup>32</sup> This fellowship is put on stage in *Høstgildet*, through representatives from Denmark, Norway and Holstein. The latter region had previously been overlooked in artworks, but as a consequence of state patriotism, it was now allegorically represented on an equal footing with Denmark and Norway.<sup>33</sup> In the 1700s, all over Europe, the family was used as a metaphor for the relationship between a people and their ruler, with the ruling monarch understood as the father/mother of this family. The Danish ethnologist Tine Damsholt points out how Denmark, Norway and Holstein were often metaphor-

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27 Damsholt 1998: “[...] folk fra alle rigets dele, fra alle stænder og fra begge køn.”

28 Bull and Maliks 2014, 14.

29 Bull and Maliks 2014, 15.

30 See Bull and Maliks 2014, 25.

31 Bull and Maliks 2014, 14.

32 Glenthøj 2012, 28.

33 Glenthøj and Ottosen 2014, 11. “This calculated construction of a state identity can be compared to the creation of the British identity in which the various nations within the state’s territory were theoretically equal and governed from a common centre.” (ibid.)

ically referred to as brothers of the same father – the king – and that this imagery was used in Thaarup’s play.<sup>34</sup> In the last scene the three farmers sing of their regional differences before singing together “Enige Brødre” – “Brothers in Accord”. This song focuses on what they have in common: king and country, and equal loyalty to both.<sup>35</sup>

### III Traces of performance: staging state patriotism

Although state patriotism can arguably be found in relation to the context and the content of the play, did it also appear in the staging? The staging was documented in sources available today, such as the accounts of the Royal Theatre, the theatre’s inventory and two stage renderings by Thomas Bruun – the theatre painter at the time. The stage renderings, i.e. an illustration of the proposed stage setting for a theatre production, are both drawings made in pencil. One of these drawings is a close-up of a church; the other one (see Figure 1) depicts the entire stage setting.

According to the Danish theatre historian Torben Krogh, we can confirm that these renderings by Bruun were in fact made for *Høstgildet* by consulting the accounts and inventory of the Royal Theatre.<sup>36</sup> Bruun’s personal records listed the following set pieces, i.e. two- or three-dimensional scenery units made to stand independently on stage, as having been constructed for the production: one depicting a church with some trees, another presenting parts of a village, and finally two set pieces both depicting farmhouses.<sup>37</sup> The remainder of the setting

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34 Damsholt 2000, 113.

35 See Thaarup 1790, 46: “Een er vor Konge, og een er vor Ære, [...] Ære sin Øvrighed, elske sin Lige, Trofast mod Land, og mod Konge og Møe! Saa tænker alle, og før vi skal svige, Før skal vi døe!”. See also Randi M. Selvik’s chapter in this volume.

36 Krogh 1932, 140.

37 See Krogh 1932, 140–142. These set pieces can be identified in the illustration featured in this chapter: the church set piece is at stage centre, the set piece of the partial village is placed to the left and the set pieces of the two farmhouses are standing to the right. Set pieces could be made by painting the motif on wood or on canvas, which was mounted on



Figure 1. Thomas Bruun, rendering of the stage setting for *Høstgildet*, pencil and ink, 1790. Gentofte church in the background. Det Kongelige Teaters Arkiv og Bibliotek, Statens Museum for Kunst, KKS2012-46.

would be created by using elements of scenery already in the theatre's possession, although Bruun would repaint some of these, giving them a fresh look for the premiere. Bruun also reported making a set piece depicting a monument commemorating the abolition of serfdom, painted on wood. This monument does not appear in any of the stage renderings, but Bruun described it as made to look as if it were of stone, with a bundle of straws affixed on top.<sup>38</sup>

Thanks to this play, Thaarup was credited with discovering the idyllic, Arcadian qualities of the Danish countryside.<sup>39</sup> Bruun's stage picture was, however, not a generalized, Danish pastoral scene. Instead, it localized the action specifically in the fields by the church at Gentofte.

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a wooden frame.

<sup>38</sup> See Krogh 1932, 142.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 140.

How can we be so certain that this is the place Bruun depicted in his picture? Krogh argues that the characteristic appearance of the church at Gentofte, namely the stepped gables of its tower, makes it a sure fit for the church featured in Bruun's rendering of the stage setting for *Høstgildet*.<sup>40</sup> Because stepped gables are not exclusive to this church, Krogh's line of reasoning is perhaps not the best of arguments. However, the inventory of the Royal Theatre lists a set piece originally made for *Høstgildet* that depicts the Gentofte Church.<sup>41</sup> The church and its surrounding fields were familiar sights to most members of the theatre-going public, as these were en route to *Dyrehavsbakken* [The Deer Garden]. This pleasure garden within walking distance of Copenhagen provided entertainments during the annual midsummer fair.<sup>42</sup>

The choice of localizing the events and setting of the play just outside Copenhagen must have been made either by Bruun or by the theatre, because Thaarup's stage directions state only 'a village on Zealand'. By presenting this non-specified village as the village of Gentofte, the producers were perhaps encouraging the audience to identify a familiar sight. In theatres from around 1760, "[...] the passion for the real and the actual was taking the place of delight in the theatrically splendid [...]"<sup>43</sup> Efforts to localize dramatic action, to place it in an actual milieu, were made in order to provide the setting and the play in question with an aura of authenticity. The recognition of real-life places would add a sense of reality to the play, as may well have been the case in the production of *Høstgildet*.

The theatre's choice of setting possibly accentuated the play's political content as well: the fields that figure so prominently in Bruun's pencil drawing were the property of Chief Minister Bernstorff. By placing the action of the *Singspiel* there, the producers could allude to a

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40 Ibid., 143.

41 See Krogh 1932, 143.

42 Nystrøm 1913, 17–18.

43 Nicoll 1966, 200.

key player in the abolition of serfdom.<sup>44</sup> The chosen setting combined with the use of the “librety column” thereby underlined the panegyric themes in praise of the state in the staging of the play. In effect, the choice of setting was a way to stage state patriotism.

### III.1 Patriotic ideals – regional expressions

The setting and the scenery are not the sole aspects of staging in which patriotic ideals could be embedded. Patriotism could also be enacted through the use of music, dance and costume. One way to present the “ideal” farmer was by the choice of costume. The theatre’s wardrobe book itemizes the attire used in the production, such as yellow flannel trousers, brown vest, long woollen socks and so-called farmer’s shoes.<sup>45</sup> The farmers in the play were thus dressed in their Sunday best, put on stage to serve as a bourgeois ideal of the free, patriotic citizen.

The clothing listed in the documents of the Royal Theatre also conjures up an image akin to what we associate today with national costumes.<sup>46</sup> National costumes were not, however, established as such in 1790. Based on folk costumes, or the current manner of dress, the national costume is an invented tradition born out of national romanticism in the 1800s.<sup>47</sup> Thus, a national reading of the costumes used in the production would be ahistorical.

National interpretations of the play and its staging still occur, however, owing to the prevalence of nationalism as an ideology guiding the writing of history all over Europe from the 1800s onwards.<sup>48</sup> An example is Andersen’s description of *Høstgildet* as a national *syngespil*

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44 Krogh 1932, 144.

45 Garderobebog, Det kongelige teaters arkiv og bibliotek.

46 See for instance how the farmers are portrayed in C.W. Eckerberg’s 1844 painting *Christian VII ved Frihedsstøtten*, where the king meets some grateful peasants by the “librety column” outside Copenhagen.

47 I use Eric Hobsbawm’s concept of invented traditions in the meaning of “[...] a set of practices [...], which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past” (Hobsbawm 1983, 1).

48 Østergård 2014, 146.

(*Singspiel*).<sup>49</sup> One way of understanding her classification of the theatrical piece as “national” is simply as an original ballad opera composed in Danish by subjects of the state whose plot unfolds in Denmark. Andersen points out the use of folk dances and folk tunes and concludes that the play’s production was “[...] as national as the theatre with its cosmopolitan resources could manage”.<sup>50</sup>

Andersen’s comments point to a national reading of the play and its staging, rather than to a patriotic reading. The two phenomena – nationalism and patriotism – are often confused, but there are important distinctions. Whereas patriotism is an ideology that can be traced back to the Renaissance, nationalism was born in the last quarter of the 1700s.<sup>51</sup> Patriotism is concerned with love of and loyalty to the state and its institutions, and is not necessarily connected with a common perception of nationality – here understood as a common culture, language and origins.<sup>52</sup> Patriotism was thus not restricted to or defined by a geographical area, as it would become within the phenomenon of nationalism, but rather it was defined by both ordinary and extraordinary displays of civic duty.<sup>53</sup> State patriotism was consequently an inherently different ideology from the perception of an ethnically-based nationalism of the nineteenth century. Elements such as costume, folk music and

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49 See Andersen 1992, 155.

50 Ibid.: “[...] så nationalt som teatret med sine kosmopolitisk farvede kræfter kunne garantere det.” An Italian balletmaster gave instruction in the dances, and a German composer wrote the music – according to French ideals (ibid.). The possible “national” nature of the music and dances in the play is for others to discuss; see for instance Randi Selvik’s chapter in this volume.

51 See Østergård 2014, 133.

52 Glenthøj 2012, 27. Glenthøj is far from alone in arguing the importance of making this distinction. Other Danish scholars, such as Tine Damsholt (1998) and Uffe Østergaard (2014), have also argued the issue and its importance for discussions of identity and patriotism in the Danish state around 1800. Østergård, Damsholt and Glenthøj all point out the co-existence of three diverse brands of patriotism towards the end of the 1700s in Denmark: a cosmopolitan variety, a national patriotic variety and the prevailing state patriotism, which is the focus of this chapter. These three were not, at that point, mutually exclusive (see for instance Østergård 2014, 140–143 and Glenthøj 2012, 67).

53 See Damsholt 1998.

dance, which later would become ingrained expressions of national identity, should therefore not necessarily be understood in the same way in this context.

The Danish state of 1790, referred to in *Høstgildet*, was not a nation state, with a common language and culture, but a composite state united by a king.<sup>54</sup> To my mind, it is this composite – with its different cultures and languages – that is put on stage in Thaarup’s play. As mentioned earlier, the government actively used the ideology of state patriotism to promote a patriotic fellowship amongst its heterogeneous subjects. In Thaarup’s theatrical piece this fellowship is staged by presenting a patriotic blend of its characters who hail from three distinct regions of the state: Denmark, Holstein and Norway. Through this blended fellowship the theatrical work presents the state as the sum of its parts and shows how the parts are unified to form a whole. The use of costume, music and dance could therefore be understood as regional rather than national expressions. These regional markers would be given new and national content as the 1800s progressed, but in 1790, I argue, they are used to express state patriotism. Most conspicuous in this vein is Thaarup’s use of languages.

As mentioned above, there are three farmers in the play, each from a different region of the Danish state. Until page 44 of the script, they speak to each other in Danish. On this page, however, Hans the Danish farmer says: “Now, Brothers! We agree in our hearts, and yet differ in language and customs”.<sup>55</sup> He then encourages them to sing, each in his own way. He himself begins, singing a verse in Danish about the landscape and the patriotic feelings of his fellow Danes. His brother Henrik continues with a verse in German on nature in Holstein and the patriotism of its farmers. Finally, it is the Norwegian’s turn, and Tord sings about nature in Norway and its freehold, patriotic farmers. Tord sings his part in Norwegian, but more than that – he sings it in a Norwegian

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54 Damsholt 1998.

55 Thaarup 1790, 44: “Nu Brødre! Vi er eenige i Hjertet, / og dog forskjællige i Sprog og Sæder [...]”.

dialect. This was probably the first time a Norwegian dialect was ever heard in the theatre.<sup>56</sup>

Exactly which dialect he sings, however, has been a point of disagreement amongst Norwegian scholars. The historian Halvdan Koht claims, based on the grammar and vocabulary of Tord's verse, that the dialect has to be from *nordafjells*, meaning north of Dovre.<sup>57</sup> The Norwegian theatre historian Eli Ansteinsson, however, claims that the dialect is from Vågå, in the north end of Gudbrandsdalen, just south of Dovre. Her argument is that the poet Edvard Storm, born and raised in Vågå, was a friend of Thaarup, and thus she finds it virtually beyond doubt that it was Storm who actually wrote the song verse.<sup>58</sup> Another likely candidate for writing this verse, if it is indeed in the dialect from Gudbrandsdalen as Ansteinsson surmises, is Christen Henriksen Pram. The playwright of *Frode og Fingal*, which opened together with *Høstgildet*, was from Lesja in Gudbrandsdalen.

Ansteinsson's insistence that the dialect was from Gudbrandsdalen might be based on the 1793 version of the play. In the scene of VIII of this version, Halvor explicitly states that he, as well as his father, come from this valley – he is a “Gudbrandsdøl”.<sup>59</sup> This identification, however, is nowhere to be found in the original version. I would therefore like to draw attention to a third possibility, whose point of departure is Koht's suggestion that the verse is in a dialect from north of Dovre.

The dialect in Thaarup's original version of 1790 has many linguistic features in common with the dialect spoken at Røros, in the present-day county of South Trøndelag. Could Thaarup have been familiar with this dialect? Michael Rosing, the leading actor in the Royal Theatre in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, spent most of his childhood in this Norwegian mining village. At *Høstgildet*'s premiere Rosing played

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56 Koht 1933, 123.

57 Koht 1933, 124.

58 Ansteinsson 1967, 292. Ansteinsson does not divulge her reasons for this conclusion other than the friendship.

59 Thaarup 1793, 20. I would like to thank my colleague Cecilie Stensrud for drawing my attention to this change in the 1793 version.

the Norwegian soldier Halvor, the son of the farmer Tord. As one of the Royal Theatre's instructors, Rosing would likely have advised his colleague Hans Christian Knudsen, who played Tord, on how to pronounce the words in the verse. Because Thaarup allegedly wrote most of the play under voluntary house arrest in Rosing's home, the verse might even have been written under Rosing's supervision.<sup>60</sup>

There appears to have been little contemporary interest in identifying the dialect in which Tord sang. Prior to 1814 there was discussion about whether Norwegian and Danish were different languages or just different dialects, with most Danes arguing for the latter.<sup>61</sup> Norwegian was not discussed as a spoken language in its own right until after 1814. The Norwegian dialect used in the play was therefore not worthy of note to contemporaries of the time, as Norwegian was itself considered a Danish dialect.<sup>62</sup>

However, by having each farmer sing in his own tongue, the various regions that comprised the Danish state could be enacted. The play's trilingual section points to an understanding of the Danish state as a heterogeneous entity consisting of different languages, different topologies and different customs. The glue that binds, the play suggests, consists of patriotic feelings as well as the duties to king and country. Hence, state patriotism is also staged through the use of regional features, displaying the various parts of the state as a whole, united by patriotism.

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60 Allegedly, Thaarup was quick to propose writing the play, but slow at producing it. As the event approached and no play was in sight, the actress Johanne Cathrine Rosing – Michael Rosing's wife – apparently took it upon herself to remedy the situation. She decided on the title and made the play come to fruition by placing the playwright under house arrest, having prepared Thaarup's confinement by putting paper, pen and ink in an empty room in her home (Drewsen 1916, 152). After leading Thaarup to this room when he came for a visit, she then locked the door and promised to bring food and drink to fuel his writing. During the first day enough of the play had come into being to convince Mrs. Rosing to allow the playwright to finish his work in liberty (ibid.).

61 Ibid., 288.

62 The German philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder first introduced the idea of language as a national symbol in the 1770s (Glenthøj 2012, 287). He argued that languages mirrored a nation's unique characteristics and traditions, whereas previously language had been viewed purely as a means of communication.

#### IV Staging state patriotism: final comments

Thaarup's theatrical piece would be rewritten on several occasions, with the first emendation published as early as 1791. In the third version, from 1793, the information that the Norwegians hail from Gudbrandsdalen is added, along with other changes. Whereas the 1790 version ended with a tribute to the newlyweds, the 1793 version ends with a tribute to the king who set the farmers free.<sup>63</sup> In this manner, the play was refocused to be an explicit celebration of the abolition of serfdom. Later versions, such as those made after the Danish state lost Norway in 1814 and Holstein in 1864, had to reframe the state itself, which had changed geographically. The first character to disappear was the Norwegian farmer, followed by the Holstein farmer. The song "Brothers in Accord", which originally celebrated the brotherhood of Denmark, Holstein and Norway, was transmuted into a song solely about the Danes.

In this chapter I have explored how *Høstgildet* can be understood as a political play that stages state patriotism. The ideology of state patriotism was founded on the idea of a contract between a king and his citizens, whereby the latter – in return for certain liberties and rights – were expected to set aside their own interests and act for the common good. These rights included, for example, the Act of Citizenship (1776), which reserved all government offices for citizens of the state, whereas the abolition of serfdom can serve as an example of the liberties. The latter is, to my mind, the political action that propelled the play into existence. It is visually embedded both in the play and in its staging by the presence of a "liberty column" on the page as well as on the stage. The abolition of serfdom is also commented upon in the play, both implicitly and explicitly – when the farmers thank the king for their freedom. In the 1790 production, the localization of the setting could well have been a reference to abolition, as the Chief Minister who advanced it owned the fields that featured so prominently in the staging. Such a setting would have underlined the play's panegyrical content.

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<sup>63</sup> Thaarup 1793, 47.

In return for liberties and rights, citizens were supposed to act selflessly for the greater good – the state. The expected loyalty to the state, its institutions and its centre made it essential for the government to promote a sense of patriotic fellowship amongst its subjects. Patriotism was the glue that bound the far-reaching state, its various regions and its citizens together. This fellowship is staged in *Høstgildet* through a patriotic blend of characters hailing from Denmark, Norway and Holstein. Despite their differences, these characters nevertheless focus on what they have in common: king and country, and equal loyalty to both. Each represented his or her region via regional markers, and they were contrasted to urban dwellers as well as to each other. Through the use of elements such as costume and language, a multifaceted, patriotic fellowship was staged, encompassing the many regional differences within the state as well as minimizing these differences. The important thing was the loyalties and responsibilities they all shared; as the song “Brothers in Accord” [“Enige Brødre”] put it, to be “Faithful to country, king and wife” – and in that order.<sup>64</sup>

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# The premiere of *Pohjan neiti* at the Vyborg Song Festival, 1908

HANNELE KETOMÄKI

## Introduction

The first opera to be written to a Finnish-language libretto was *Pohjan neiti*<sup>1</sup> (*The Maiden of the North*), a *Kalevala*-based work composed by Oskar Merikanto (1868–1924). Merikanto was one of Finland’s most versatile musicians, an important figure in the country’s music education, an extremely accomplished accompanist, organist and composer<sup>2</sup>. Merikanto’s stimulus for composing the opera was a competition organized by the Finnish Literature Society in 1898. Ten years later the work was premiered in the town of Vyborg (in Finnish Viipuri).

The birth of this *Kalevala* opera came when Finland’s autonomous Grand Duchy was going through the period of russification.<sup>3</sup> Anti-russification activities were sparked in the Fennoman movement, where the central objectives were to promote Finnish language and culture, as well as establishing Finland as an independent republic. Artists, architects, writers and composers were highly influenced by Karelianism and romantic nationalism. One of the most important Finnish mani-

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1 The opera’s title as it appears on the score (Merikanto 1899). Later the opera was called both *Pohjan neiti* and *Pohjan neito*; e.g. the libretto read “*Pohjan neito. Ooppera III:ssa näytöksessä (IV kuvaelmaa)*”; Rytkönen 1908.

2 Suomalainen 1950; Heikinheimo 1995.

3 Finland was as part of the Russian Empire 1809–1917. Russia wished to strengthen its governmental unity, for instance by reorganizing the preparation of decrees on Finland by the late 19th–early 20th century. The years of oppression were 1899–1905 and 1908–1917. About Russification, see Polvinen 1995.

festations of these influences was the *Kalevala* itself,<sup>4</sup> a compilation of oral poetry collected by Elias Lönnrot on journeys through the region known as Karelia. This landmark work, first published in 1835, became a Finnish literary classic and helped to construct a Finnish consciousness, though it was not generally believed to portray a very truthful version of the origin of Finnish people, or their beliefs.<sup>5</sup>

The purpose of this article is to examine how Merikanto's opera was performed at the Vyborg Song Festival, an event organised by the "Kansanvalistusseura,"<sup>6</sup> and explore how the audience responded to its premiere and its subsequent performances at the festival. I will examine the topic in its societal context, a time of Russification in Finland when preserving the Finnish language and Finnish culture became paramount and functioned to unite the Finnish people.<sup>7</sup>

Essential sources on the origins, production and performance of *Pohjan neiti* can be found in newspapers of the time. Beginning in the 1860s, the number of Finland's newspapers in both Finnish and Swedish rose sharply, and grew in influence.<sup>8</sup> Because newspapers also printed a wide range of pieces on cultural issues, they were key means for distributing nationalist publicity and shaping public opinion. As both a cultural and a linguistic landmark, *Pohjan neiti* as well as its production and eventual performance were reported to the public in great detail by the national press.

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4 Salmenhaara 1996, 41–43. The roots of Karelianism go back to the mid-19th century, but it peaked in the 1890s and the beginning of the 20th century (Piela 2008, 36).

5 Karkama 2008, 166–167, 169; *Kalevala*, <http://neba.finlit.fi>; accessed 2 May 2015.

6 "Kansanvalistusseura" established in 1874, has its roots in the Fennoman project of nation building. The organization, whose name means the "Society for the Enlightenment of the People", supported learning and building a society of learners by offering expertise and services. Today the "Kansanvalistusseura" uses "the Finnish Lifelong Learning Foundation" as its English name and co-operates with a wide variety of adult education stakeholders in Finland and internationally. See [www.kansanvalistusseura.fi](http://www.kansanvalistusseura.fi); accessed 24 April 2015.

7 Sulkunen 2004; Ketomäki 2012, 27–39.

8 In 1860 there were nine Finnish language and eight Swedish language newspapers that were printed in Finland. In 1910, 95 Finnish language and 27 Swedish language newspapers being printed (Tommila and Salokangas 1998, 77).

Other material related to the performance of *Pohjan neiti* are its libretto, photographs of the stage and the performers, as well as letters written by Oskar Merikanto during this period. Based on all these sources conclusions can be made about the costuming and staging, about the singers' performances and the prevailing atmosphere there.

According to Erika Fischer-Lichte the historical performance is not available to the researcher as an aesthetic experience, but rather as a historical event to be examined on the basis of sources, such as those mentioned above. Therefore, a decisive difference between performance analysis and historical research is the researcher's opportunity to interconnect directly with the subject matter. Sources that touch upon *Pohjan neiti* performance are traces that have been left behind and can now be analyzed by means of historical research.<sup>9</sup>

### The Origin of *Pohjan neiti*

The figures crucial to the origin of *Pohjan neiti* were businessman Johan Daniel Stenberg (1809–1880) and his wife Mathilda Stenberg (1817–1891), who had been supporters of Finnish arts and culture. Although both were deceased at the time of the opera's birth, they had left sufficient money in their will to fund a composition competition for an opera in the Finnish language. According to the stipulations of the will, the Finnish Literature Society was to arrange a competition, and the prize money would go to the Finnish composer who created the best opera dealing either Finnish mythology or history.<sup>10</sup>

In the initial round, not a single entry was submitted. And so the Finnish Literature Society was forced to arrange the competition a second time. The first competition had been launched in 1891.<sup>11</sup> There

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9 Fischer-Lichte 2005, 114–115.

10 Minutes of the Finnish Literature Society's Monthly Meeting, 8 April 1891, Finnish Literature Society, Literary Archives.

11 Kilpapalkinto (Advertisement of the Competition). *Päivälehti*, 25 January 1891.

was a period of five years where compositions could be submitted. Even though the competition was widely publicized in several newspapers, the Society had to face the fact that not a single composer responded to the challenge. Yet it had an obligation to fulfil, thanks to the Stenberg bequest, and so another competition was announced with the same rules and awards. This time participants had to submit their contributions by the end of 1898; the entrants would have less than two years to come up with a full opera.<sup>12</sup>

At that point there were several composers in Finland that could have taken part in the competition, such as Jean Sibelius (1865–1957). Yet there was only one submission: Oskar Merikanto's *Pohjan neiti*.

At the beginning of the first competition (1891–1896), Oskar Merikanto had just completed his studies at the Leipzig Conservatory.<sup>13</sup> By the time of the second competition Merikanto had secured his position in Finnish music life as an organist, pianist, teacher and composer. Now the problem was, that owing to his other commitments, he had very limited time to compose an epic work. On deciding to take part in the competition, he took a summer leave of absence from his post as organist, and travelled to Taipalsaari to a rented summerhouse where he could compose in peace.

The libretto for *Pohjan neiti* was arranged in three acts and written by two different people. The opera singer and composer Lorenz Nikolai Achté (1835–1900) who was also the head of the Helsinki Church Music School, had earlier written a script based on the *Kalevala*, entitled *Ilmarinen, Opera i fem akter med tio tablåer*.<sup>14</sup> It tells the story of how Väinämöinen and Ilmarinen competed for the affections of the

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12 Minutes of the Finnish Literature Society's Monthly Meeting, 20 January 1897, Finnish Literature Society, Literary Archives.

13 The Report. Das Königliches Konservatorium der Musik zu Leipzig, 10 April 1889. The National Library of Finland, Oskar Merikanto's Archive.

14 *Ilmarinen*, an opera in five acts and ten scenes. The National Library of Finland, Aino Aekté-Jalander's Archive. This work (no date) had remained essentially forgotten until I turned up the text in the National Archives in the course of working on my doctoral dissertation.

Maiden of the North. Achté had written the opera's story as a narration into which he incorporated the Kalevala poems VII–XXV into the plot structure. The main characters in Achté's narrative are Louhi, Väinämöinen and Ilmarinen, with minor roles given to Annikki, Tuonetar and Vipunen.<sup>15</sup>

Merikanto had trouble finding a writer for the libretto. There were numerous authors then writing in Finnish, but none who was familiar with opera as an art form. Merikanto offered the text to several authors before Antti Rytkönen (1870–1930) agreed to take on the task of librettist in June of 1898. By this time only about six months remained before the opera would have to be submitted to competition jury. Thus, Merikanto began composing before the libretto was finished. Antti Rytkönen sent sections of the libretto to the composer as soon as he finished them, and Merikanto started composing as soon as he received them.<sup>16</sup>

In January 1899, it was announced at the Finnish Literature Society's monthly meeting that a Finnish opera in three acts, entitled *Pohjan neiti*, had been submitted for consideration. At the same meeting it was decided that an awards jury would be named, which included Professor Arvid Genetz (1848–1915), the theatre director Kaarlo Bergbom (1843–1906), the organist and composer Richard Faltin (1835–1918), the conductor and composer Robert Kajanus (1856–1933) and the composer Jean Sibelius.<sup>17</sup>

The jury's statement was taken up in the Finnish Literature Society's annual meeting in March of 1899. The view of Merikanto's submission was extremely critical. The jury described the opera as, amongst other things, simple and the music as innocent and natural. However, the jury felt that the opera's national character was a positive aspect of the work. Because it met the basic requirements of the competition, the jury decided to approve it, even though it is clear

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15 Ketomäki 2012, 154, 156.

16 "Libreton tekijän luona," *Helsingin Sanomat*, 29 November 1908.

17 Minutes of the Finnish Literature Society's Monthly Meeting, 25 January 1899, Finnish Literature Society.

from their statement that the composition was not up to the jurors' expectations.<sup>18</sup>

Immediately after the competition Merikanto and *Pohjan neiti* received a great deal of publicity. Numerous reviews of the opera appeared and its libretto was illustrated. The competition also garnered recognition around the country after it was announced that Oskar Merikanto had composed the winning entry.<sup>19</sup> Reading audiences believed that surely *Pohjan neiti* would be performed at the Finnish National Theatre, especially since it was widely known that the theatre's director, Kaarlo Bergbom, had been a member of the competition jury. Moreover, the Finnish Literature Society competition rules had stipulated that the Finnish National Theatre in Helsinki had the right to stage the winning work free of charge, but only for a year after the results were announced. However, the premiere was delayed for many years.<sup>20</sup>

In earlier research on Merikanto, it was suggested that the Finnish National Theatre did not have the financial resources to perform the opera.<sup>21</sup> However, in my doctoral research I showed that *Pohjan neiti* was postponed because of the jury's negative attitude to the opera. Its members did not want to endorse such a simplistic work as *Pohjan neiti*. Yet they had been forced to announce Merikanto as the winner of a competition. The Finnish Literature Society was thus obligated to carry out the task set by the patrons, Mr and Mrs Stenberg and their estate, and the winner had to be declared. Only the jury did not want the opera to be staged.<sup>22</sup>

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18 Minutes of the Finnish Literature Society's Monthly Meeting, 13 March 1899 (appendix 65), Finnish Literature Society, Literary Archives; Ketomäki 2012, 160–166.

19 *Wiipuri*, 19.11.1898; *Päivälehti*, 1 January 1899; *Wasa Nyheter*, 20 January 1899; *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 18 March 1899; *Oulun Ilmoituslehti*, 22 March 1899.

20 *Aamulehti*, 14 April 1899; *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 17 March 1899.

21 Salmenhaara 1996, 359–360.

22 Ketomäki 2012, 160–166.

*Pohjan neiti* performances in Vyborg

*Pohjan neiti* received its long-delayed premiere in 1908 at the “Kansanvalistusseura’s” nationwide Song Festival in Vyborg and was conducted by Oskar Merikanto himself. Since the 1880s, the “Kansanvalistusseura” had been organizing nationwide music festivals. Through these musical activities the Fennoman movement, which promoted use of the Finnish language and awareness of Finnish culture, hoped to achieve the educational and unifying goals of their association: music festivals fostered the development of public education and reinforced national pride amongst the Finnish people.<sup>23</sup> The festival programme featured patriotic speeches and performances by amateur choirs and brass bands.<sup>24</sup> The Vyborg festival programme also included the unveiling of a Mikael Agricola statue, as well as visits to Adolf Ivar Arwidsson’s and Otto von Fieandt’s gravesites.<sup>25</sup>

The staging of the first Finnish language opera and its *Kalevala* theme fit in well with the rest of the three-day festival’s patriotic programme.

The Vyborg Song Festival was a much-publicized national event, covered by journalists for their respective newspapers. The texts of the festival speeches and commemorative poems were published, and journalistic reports captured the mood of the audience for readers around the country. The festival audience was comprised of both ordinary people as well as members of the intelligentsia. Music professionals, singers, musicians and composers came to give concerts and to serve as judges of chorus and band competitions.<sup>26</sup>

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23 About the goals of the “Kansanvalistusseura,” see *Suomen Kansanvalistus-seura* 1874, 3.

24 Kuusi 1946, 227–228.

25 Adolf Ivar Arwidsson (1791–1858) was a Finnish poet, historian and “the first Finnish nationalist”. His well-known phrase is “Swedes we are not, Russians we don’t want to become, let us therefore be Finns.” Tommila (ed.) 1989, 54. Otto Henrik von Fieandt (1762–1823) was in Vyborg died lieutenant colonel who participated in the Finnish War. von Fieandt is also one of the figures in Finnish author Johan Ludvig Runeberg’s (1804–1877) epic poem *Fänrik Ståls sägner* (*The Tales of Ensign Stål*).

26 *Opas Kansanvalistusseuran yleiseen laulu-, soitto- ja urheilujuhlaan Viipurissa 1908* [Guide to the Vyborg Song, Music and Sports Festival, Vyborg 1908].

Both the opera's premiere and its second performance were held at the Vyborg Theatre. Built in 1832, the theatre boasted a salon, eight heated rooms, a 17-metre long stage and a 401-seat auditorium.<sup>27</sup> The third performance was held out of doors, on a temporary stage, which was a large, roofed construction. Outdoor stages had been main venues for music festival events since the festivals began. As early as the 1880s, ceilings were constructed on such stages, and most had pillars at both ends. The roof of the stage and other components were designed to amplify the performers' voices. Plentiful decorations, flags and patriotic oratory added to the festive atmosphere.<sup>28</sup>

Tickets to the performance in the Vyborg Theatre had been advertised beforehand. Audience members ordered their tickets via post from Vyborg. This method was used in order to avoid overcrowding during the festival, as well as to distribute audience seating evenly. Ticket prices were divided into seven tiers (20, 15, 10, 8, 6, 5 and 3 FIM). The expensive prices were justified in newspaper advertisements, which explained how costly an undertaking it was to stage an opera.<sup>29</sup>

The third performance followed the anniversary concert that was part of the festival programme.<sup>30</sup> This ensured that all festival guests would be able to attend the opera.

Joint rehearsals for *Pohjan neiti* began in Vyborg two weeks before the premiere, when Oskar Merikanto arrived in the town and began working with soloists and the chorus.<sup>31</sup>

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27 Veistäjä 1957, 12.

28 Smeds 1984, 30–31, 41, 56.

29 *Otava*, 22 May 1908; *Uusi Suometar*, 22 May 1908. The most expensive ticket was more expensive than the annual volume of *Uusi Suometar* (18 FIM). These newspaper advertisements did not offer tickets for the third, *en plein air* performance. Nor were tickets to this performance mentioned in the festival guidebook, which lists ticket prices for all other festival events. However, according to other newspaper sources, tickets were in fact sold to the third performance as well, i.e. as stated in *Otava*, 24 June 1908.

30 *Opas Kansanvalistusseuran yleiseen laulu-, soitto- ja urheilujuhlaan Viipurissa 1908*, 2.

31 Oskar Merikanto > Liisa Merikanto 10 June 1908. The National Library of Finland, Oskar Merikanto's Archive; *Wiipuri*, 11 June 1908.

Louhi, Queen of Pohjola ( mezzo-soprano) — Alexandra Ahnger
Pohjan neiti, the Maiden, daughter of Louhi (soprano) — Mally Burjam-Borga
Väinämöinen, the Maiden's suitor (baritone) — Abraham Ojanperä
Ilmarinen, another suitor (tenor) — Wäinö Sola
Annikki, sister of Väinämöinen and Ilmarinen (soprano) — Aino Halonen
Ghost of Vipunen (bass) — Oskari Kaakonkalvo
Tuonetar (alto) — Liisi Gussander
Pellervoinen (baritone) — Ferdinand Taberman
Shepherd boy (tenor)
1 <sup>st</sup> woman — Dagi Jansson
2 <sup>nd</sup> woman — Riikka Pakarinen
1 <sup>st</sup> man — G. A. Enqvist
2 <sup>nd</sup> man — Eino Hartman
3 <sup>rd</sup> man — Evert Konttinen

Table 1. The operatic cast of *Pohjan Neiti* in the Vyborg performances. Additional cast members included the People of the North and Ilmarinen's men.<sup>32</sup>

The person responsible for staging *Pohjan neiti* was the composer Emil Sivori (1854–1929), who served as the chairman of the festival organising committee. Sivori was an experienced coordinator, having previously arranged numerous cultural events. He wanted to stage the performance in co-operation with Merikanto, with a view to recruiting the best possible singers, musicians and professional<sup>32</sup> stage crew.<sup>33</sup>

Because the programme for *Pohjan neiti*'s premiere has not survived, details about the singers, chorus and orchestra members have to be gleaned from newspaper accounts. One newspaper advertisement for

<sup>32</sup> *Opas Kansanvalistusseuran yleiseen laulu-, soitto- ja urheilujuhlaan Viipurissa 1908*, 4–5.

<sup>33</sup> Oskar Merikanto > Edvard Fazer 16 August 1908. The Sibelius Museum, Edvard Fazer's Archive; Rytönen 1908.

the opera did mention a “text booklet”, which was apparently sold.<sup>34</sup> In the autumn of that same year, a performance of *Pohjan neiti* in Helsinki had a printed programme containing details about the performers (including the names of the choir members) as well as the opera’s libretto.<sup>35</sup> It is clear that this programme is an updated version of the “text booklet” at the Vyborg festival.

Professional sang the opera’s leading roles. Mally Burjam-Borga (1874–1919, the Maiden) was a soprano from Vyborg, and had studied voice in Paris. She had a career abroad at opera houses in places such as in Monte Carlo and Paris.<sup>36</sup> Louhi, sang by mezzo-soprano Alexandra Ahnger (1859–1940), was born in Kuopio. She first studied privately and later at the Helsinki Music Institute, the Dresden Conservatoire and Paris. Ahnger had performed as an oratorio and opera singer, and also taught at the Helsinki Music Institute, among other places.<sup>37</sup> Wäinö Sola (1883–1961), who sang the role of Ilmarinen, was a Helsinki-born tenor. He began his artistic career in the theatre, including singing roles. Following *Pohjan neiti*’s premiere, Sola had such great success as a singer that he resigned from the Vyborg Theatre and began working full-time as a concert and opera singer. Later, he performed at the Finnish National Opera and sang many operatic roles abroad.<sup>38</sup> The bass Abraham Ojanperä (1856–1916), who sang the role of Väinämöinen, was born in Liminka. Ojanperä was graduated from the Teacher Seminary at Jyväskylä in 1878. Afterwards, while working as a teacher, he studied voice in Helsinki and then at the Dresden Royal Conservatoire. Ojanperä served as the cantor at St John’s Church in Helsinki (a colleague of Merikanto). He also taught singing in Helsinki, both at the Music Institute and at the Imperial Alexander University. Ojanperä fre-

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34 *Wiipuri*, 18 June 1908; *Wiborgs Nyheter*, 19 June 1908.

35 Rytönen 1908.

36 Lille 1958, 362–367.

37 The National Archives of Finland, Alexandra Ahnger’s Archive.

38 Sola 1951; Sola 1952.

quently performed in operas and oratorios, giving recitals both in Finland and abroad.<sup>39</sup>

To make up the opera's orchestra, the Vyborg Orchestra hired 35 musicians from the Helsinki Philharmonic. An operatic chorus of 150 members was put together with singers from local amateur choirs, who had rehearsed their parts during the previous winter. The chorus also included students from the Vyborg Church Music School.<sup>40</sup> As the school's director and organist, Emil Sivori trained the chorus together with the help of the cantor Oskari Tilli and the conductor Juho Leino.<sup>41</sup> Conducting a large amateur choir and directing soloists in a theatre, especially for a vocal music stage performance, required solid professionalism. For this task Emil Sivori had recruited theatre director Eino Salmela.<sup>42</sup>

Oskar Merikanto began his operatic rehearsals by working with the soloists for one week, with the orchestra arriving the following week. At this stage, one week before the performance, the chorus, orchestra and soloists began joint rehearsals. Oskar Merikanto described the rehearsals in letters and cards to his wife, Liisa. He was happy with the soloists who had been cast for the production and was especially excited about the skills of the operatic chorus:

It's fun to see and hear the passion of the 150-person choir. Almost all the singers are from amongst the townpeople, and they have had to learn those difficult choral numbers by ear. The result is better than I could have imagined.<sup>43</sup>

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39 Abraham Ojanperä. [www.kansallisbiografia.fi](http://www.kansallisbiografia.fi) > accessed 3 March 2015.

40 *Wiipurin Sanomat Supistus*, 16 May 1908.

41 Rytkönen 1908.

42 Rytkönen 1908.

43 "Hauska oli nähdä ja kuulla, millä innostuksella tuo 150-henkinen kuoro suoritti tehtävänsä. Laulajat ovat melkein kaikki kansan syvistä riveistä ja korvakuulon mukaan on heidän täytynyt oppia nuo monet vaikeat kuoronumerot. Tulos oli parempi kuin uskalsin odottaa." (Oskar Merikanto > Liisa Merikanto 10 June 1908. The National Library of Finland, Oskar Merikanto's Archive.)

The following day Merikanto again wrote to his wife, describing the previous day's rehearsals:

Yesterday was the first stage rehearsal (Act I). Only part of the choir can fit onstage. Space is certainly limited. The rest of them sing from behind the stage. This evening we shall take on Act II. – Today I had a four-hour rehearsal with the soloists onstage (the full opera).<sup>44</sup>

Three days later he was writing:

We are working in extreme heat. Having two rehearsals a day is quite tiring. Last night we ran through the entire opera for the first time with stage and props. There really are a thousand things that must be managed at one time. In the end something good will transpire from the many tantrums, I assume. The performance is four hours long, but it shall speed up once the cast is used to the change in scene and set.<sup>45</sup>

The opera's set design adhered to a Finnish-*Kalevala* theme. The sides of the stage were decorated with birches.<sup>46</sup> Parts of the set were changed according to the opera. Three sets were constructed for the performance: Nordic courtyard, birch grove and a landscape of mountain. The effects were achieved through large pictures painted on the stage backdrop.<sup>47</sup> In addition to the pictures, the Nordic courtyard view

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44 "Eilen oli ensimmäinen näyttämöharjoitus (I näytös). Kuorosta ei mahdu kuin osa näyttämölle. Kovin on ahtaat paikat. Muut laulavat näyttämön takana. Tänä iltana otetaan II näytös. – Tänä päivällä oli minulla 4 tunnin harjoitus solistien kanssa (koko ooppera) näyttämöllä." (Oskar Merikanto > Liisa Merikanto 11 June 1908. The National Library of Finland, Oskar Merikanto's Archive.)

45 "Kovassa kuumuudessa täällä työtä tehdään. Kahdet harjoitukset päivässä väsyttävät aikalaila. Eilen illalla otettiin ensi kerran koko ooppera lävitse kulissien kanssa. Kyllä siinä on tuhat asiaa koossapidettävä. Kai siitä sentään hyvä tulee monen suuttumuksen perästä. Neljä tuntia kesti esitys. Kyllä se pikemmin menee sitten kun miehet tottuvat kulissimuutoksiin." (Oskar Merikanto > Liisa Merikanto 14 June 1908. The National Library of Finland, Oskar Merikanto's Archive.)

46 A Photograph of the performance. Liminka Regional Archives, Abraham Ojanperä's Archive.

47 Oskar Merikanto > Aino Ackté 23 July 1912. The National Library of Finland, Oskar



Photograph 1. *Pohjan neiti* and *Väinämöinen*. Liminka Regional Archives, Abraham Ojanperä's Archive.

incorporated a timber wall and large stones, which placed on the side of the stage.<sup>48</sup>

At the beginning of every act in the score, the composer had written descriptions of the scenes in which the action was to take place. For example, at the beginning of Act I, the description reads as follows: "A Northern house and courtyard. In the background is a forest and a glimpse of a lake. People of the North are doing their chores. *Väinämöinen's* dirge can be heard coming from the lake".<sup>49</sup>

The soloists and chorus performed in *Kalevala*-style costumes, which were borrowed from the Helsinki National Theatre and the Vyborg Regional Theatre.<sup>50</sup> The costumes were based on designs pub-

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Merikanto's Archive.

48 A Photograph of the performance. Liminka Regional Archives, Abraham Ojanperä's Archive.

49 "Pohjolan talo ja pihamaa. Taaempänä näkyy metsää ja hiukan järveä. Pohjolan väki askareissaan. *Väinämöisen* valituslaulu kuuluu järveltä" (Merikanto 1898, 1).

50 *Wiipurin Sanomat Supistus*, 16 May 1908.



Photograph 2. The soloists of *Pohjan neiti* as well as the chorus performed in *Kalevala*-style costumes. Liminka Regional Archives, Abraham Ojanperä's Archive.

lished in ethnological studies of historical dress, which illuminated aspects of Finnish history and served a national purpose. The woman's dress that was unveiled in 1893 was called the "Aino" dress, and its popularity was at its peak between 1900 and 1910. Sewing instructions for the dress were also issued, including suggestions for transforming the pattern into a formal dress. The costume included a white shirt, a light blue woollen dress with shoulder straps and an embroidered red apron.<sup>51</sup>

Based on black and white photographs, we can ascertain that at least Louhi and the Maiden wore the Aino outfit, with its light-coloured dress and darker apron. Most of the women had a ribbon tied around their heads. Louhi wore a light-coloured scarf on her head, and Ilmarinen and Väinämöinen wore skullcaps, which have come to symbolize being Finnish, and specifically of being from Karelia.<sup>52</sup>

51 See, among other sources, Kaukonen 1984.

52 A Photograph of the performance. Liminka Regional Archives, Abraham Ojanperä's Archives.

Written reports of the performances did not compare the theatre and the outdoor stage as venues. Audibility and visibility were probably better in the theatre building. Yet according to the newspaper *Aamulehti*, the performance out in the festival grounds could be heard as far away as the nearby parks because of the calm, still weather. And according to the accounts of the time, the performance for all the festival guests during that lovely summer evening gained even more fervent applause from the audience of thousands, in comparison to the performance in the theatre. *Aamulehti* described the audience reaction as follows:

Audience members rejoiced. They related to the patriotic spirit of the opera. At the end of the performance great applause echoed, and thousands of cheers were heard. The performers were called back onstage several times. The audience only calmed down when the national anthem, 'Maamme'-laulu, began to be sung on stage, which the audience joined in with enthusiasm."<sup>53</sup>

During the period of Russification, festivals, concerts and other events were often closed out with the national anthem.<sup>54</sup> This was also the case at the end of the first Finnish language opera performance.

### Conclusions

For years after the result of the Finnish Literature Society's opera competition was announced in 1899, the staging of *Pohjan neiti* was discussed in newspaper columns. For that reason, its eventual staging in Vyborg – ten years after the opera's completion – drew widespread press attention.

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53 "Kuulijat riemuitsivat. He löysivät tästä sävelluomasta oman kansansa syvimpiä tunteita, palasen itseään. Ja siksi lopussa suosionosoitukset niin mahtavina, niin loppumatomina kaikuivat ja eläköön monen monta kertaa tuhansista suista kajahteli. Esiintyjät huudettiin esille kerta toisensa jälkeen. Mieliala rauhoittui vasta, kun lavalla alettiin laulaa 'Maamme'-laulua, johon yleisö innostuneena yhtyi." (*Aamulehti* 20 June 1908.)

54 For an example of this practice, see *Päivälehti*, 19 February 1899.

Both before and after the Vyborg Song Festival, depictions and reviews of the *Pohjan neiti* performance were published in several newspapers. Many journalists recounted the plot and its structure, and wrote about the performers.<sup>55</sup> The extensive coverage was no doubt because the festival itself was a large-scale national event. Yet it is also clear that the reportage represented a measure of passive resistance by Finns against the Russian authorities. – The ancient attires and the Maiden of the North as a figure had been the means of representing Finland, the Finnish people and Finnishness especially during the era of oppression.<sup>56</sup> At the same time (in 1908), the newspapers were also reporting on the parliamentary elections which were to take place in July, right after the festival. The elections had been arranged immediately after Tsar Nikolai II dissolved the parliament earlier that spring. But as had happened during the first phase of Russification (1899–1905), cultural activities were used to reinforce Finnish national pride. *Pohjan neiti* was an appropriate vehicle for this as well.

The audience happily soaked in its atmosphere. The sold-out theatre performances had an audience of around 800 people, while the third performance on the outdoor stage attracted some 8,000. Oskar Merikanto and the music critics were unanimous in their opinions of the success of the performers. Merikanto had even proclaimed before the performances that Mally Burjam-Borga, who sang the part of the Maiden, had a fantastic command of her part. Merikanto praised tenor Wäinö Sola, whose voice he described as having become stronger and more developed as he gravitated towards vocal roles. Merikanto also applauded Sola's gifts as an actor.<sup>57</sup> Sola, who sang the role of Ilmarinen, was a member of the Vyborg Theatre Company and his

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55 *Wiborgs Nyheter*, 15 June 1908; *Östra Finland*, 15 June 1908; *Wiipurin Sanomat. Supistus*, 11 June 1908; *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 14 June 1908; *Karjala*, 19 June 1908; *Nya Pressen*, 19 June 1908; *Uusi Suometar*, 27 June 1908; *Laatokka*, 30 June 1908.

56 Reitala 1983; About the ideological background of the Maiden of the North figure, see Hautsalo 2013.

57 Oskar Merikanto > Liisa Merikanto 10 June 1908. The National Library of Finland, Oskar Merikanto's Archive; Oskar Merikanto > Emmy Achté 16 December 1908. The National Library of Finland, Aino Ackté-Jalander's Archive.

presence attracted the Vyborg townspeople, who came specifically to see and hear him perform. Sola was able to master the high tenor part and thus assure the audience of his skills as an opera singer. His operatic career progressed quickly thereafter, thanks to his popularity as Ilmarinen.<sup>58</sup> In addition, the opera chorus received special recognition from Merikanto for their proficiency and enthusiasm. The amateur choral singers and the Vyborg church music students had done a thorough job of learning their parts.<sup>59</sup> Merikanto did not lavish particular praise on Abraham Ojanperä, probably because the bass was an experienced singer with whom Merikanto was already familiar.

After the performances Merikanto was extremely happy with Eino Salmela's direction: "[He] carried out his work as director in Vyborg excellently. He was assisted by Mr Keihäs from the Finnish theatre."<sup>60</sup> According to Oskar Merikanto, the initial length of the opera during the first rehearsals was about four hours, as the scene changes took time. However, Merikanto explained that the running time became shorter "as the men get used to scene changes."<sup>61</sup> There are no other records detailing with the length of the performance.<sup>62</sup>

The "Kansanvalistusseura's" ideals of developing public education and patriotism had been successfully implemented in the *Pohjan neiti* performances. Under the leadership of Emil Sivori, the committee for the Vyborg Song Festival had justified including the premiere in the festival on the basis of giving audiences an opportunity to become acquainted with classical music, which, according to the committee, was still a rare prospect in Finland at that time.<sup>63</sup>

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58 Sola 1957, 108–109.

59 Oskar Merikanto > Liisa Merikanto 10 June 1908. The National Library of Finland, Oskar Merikanto's Archive.

60 "[han] gjorde sin sak som regissör i Wiborg alldeles utmärkt. Herr Keihäs från finska teatern hjälpte med" (Oskar Merikanto > Edvard Fazer 16 August 1908. The Sibelius Museum, Edvard Fazer's Archive).

61 Oskar Merikanto > Liisa Merikanto 11 June 1908. The National Library of Finland, Oskar Merikanto's Archive.

62 The length of the Score (manuscript) is 540 pages. Oskar Merikanto, 1898.

63 *Opas Kansanvalistusseuran yleiseen laulu-, soitto- ja urheilujuhlaan Viipurissa 1908*, 4.

Only a fraction of festival-goers could fit into the town's theatre. This is why the *plein air* performance on an outdoor stage was arranged, so that everyone who wished to hear and see the opera could do so. It was no surprise that performing such a Fennomantic work as part of the Vyborg Song Festival stirred up emotions of national pride. The opera itself, its composer and its performers were celebrated to such an extent that its performances became manifestations of patriotism. The *Kalevala* theme of *Pohjan neiti*, Merikanto's beautiful music and the successful performances fuelled excitement in the audiences, excitement which peaked during the performance at Vyborg on the outdoor stage of its Song Festival.<sup>64</sup>

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Ulla-Britta Broman-Kananen  
**Grand opera and Finnish nationalism in Helsinki, 1876–1877**

During the season 1876–1877, 163 opera performances were given in Helsinki, averaging about four performances a week. These took place in two theatres and in two languages, the Finnish and the Swedish theatres. The operas were staged during what a contemporary actor at the Swedish Theatre called an “opera fury” (*operaraseri*). In this chapter I focus mainly on the Swedish Theatre, with questions about the nature of this *opera fury*, which in the 1870s placed opera at the centre of a political and nationalist struggle in Helsinki; and more concretely about how a grand opera repertoire (especially Rossini’s *Wilhelm Tell* and Auber’s *La muette de Portici*) was able to defend the position and identity of the Swedish Theatre during this time. The Swedish Theatre’s strategy during the opera fury can be summarised as follows:

1) To transform the theatre’s mainly cosmopolitan identity into a dual cosmopolitan and domestic identity. The presence in the repertoire of *Wilhelm Tell* and *La muette de Portici* in combination with the domestic historical drama *Daniel Hjort* (by Josef Julius Wecksell) illustrates the creation of this double identity: *Daniel Hjort* brought the *Finnish* people revolting and conspiring against a ruler on stage, and thus provided a Finnish parallel to *Tell* and *La muette* in the eyes (and ears) of the audience, albeit in the Swedish language.

2) To prevent the Finnish national movement from monopolising the concept of “the people” or Finnish history at the Finnish Opera in Helsinki. As it turned out, the theatres did not compete in creating *different* repertoire profiles, but rather staged some of the same works.

3) To show off the strengths of the Swedish Theatre and play down its weaknesses, namely a lack of domestic and professional singers on stage.

It can be argued that the opera fury mirrored Finland’s geopolitical dilemma of the time, and liberals such as the influential author Zacharias Topelius (1818–1898) warned of the damage that would arise

from an internal schism between the language groups, a schism that could easily be overcome by bilingual solutions. The main reason that Topelius suggested peace between the warring theatres was that a third theatre group in Helsinki, sponsored by the Russians, were ambitious to present opera in their new Alexander Theatre.

Göran Gademan

### **Tracing *Lohengrin* at the Royal Opera of Sweden, 1874**

The purpose of the chapter is to identify and discuss various materials for operatic reconstructions by giving a concrete example of a performance, namely the Swedish premiere of Wagner's *Lohengrin* at the Royal Opera in Stockholm in 1874. The material is treated in a phenomenological way, inspired by such scholars as Dietrich Steinbeck, and is categorised according to intentional, fictional and perceptual layers. The first layer includes material that shows how the intentions of the stage director, the scenographers, the artists and others were formulated. The last layer contains material on how a performance was received, consisting mostly of reviews, but also drawings and pictures. The layer in between is "neutral" and contains the fictional world encountered onstage by the audience. These materials are then filtered through three different aspects: pictorial (sets, costumes), actorial (action and acting style) and musical/vocal aspects. The result is a grid of nine different squares. After presenting a possible performance reconstruction of *Lohengrin* in 1874, act by act and from various aspects, the author concludes that a production from that time could be well recreated despite the lack of modern recordings, provided there is sufficient material, including a director's *mise-en-scène*, ground plans, reviews, testimonies, costume lists and so on. However, it is important to sort the documents into the right category in order to determine the purpose for which the material was used. The middle, fictional, layer turns out to be rather empty; through it, the other two layers – intentional and perceptual – are drawn. Although not so

interesting in itself, this layer nevertheless serves as a vehicle for verifying whether the intentions of the production team and the artists reached the audience.

Ellen Karoline Gjervan  
**Staging state patriotism: *Høstgildet* of 1790**

The grand social event of 1790 in Denmark–Norway was the wedding of Frederik, the Prince Regent, to his cousin Marie, Princess of Hesse–Kassel. The Royal Theatre in Copenhagen celebrated the newly-weds on the 16th of September 1790. On this evening a new *Singspiel*, commissioned for the occasion, was premiered. The one-act play was titled *Høstgildet* (The Harvest Festival). In this chapter, I explore how *Høstgildet* can be understood as a political play that stages state patriotism. I will do so by looking into state patriotism. I will also examine the play's content and historical context, and consider how it was staged in 1790.

*Høstgildet* unfolds among farmers on Zealand, Denmark's largest island. The plot of four lovers wanting to marry their sweethearts rather than the men their fathers have chosen is easily resolved. The play, however, ends as a panegyric to king and country. Although *Høstgildet* is considered as a mere bagatelle in some scholarly works, elsewhere it has been discussed as a political play. The novelty of this chapter is to view *Høstgildet* as a political play about state patriotism and to discuss how this patriotism could have been staged at the opening of the work in 1790.

The ideology of state patriotism was founded on the idea of a contract between a king and his subjects, whereby the latter – in return for certain liberties and rights – were expected to set aside their own interests and act for the greater good of the state. The expected loyalty to the state, its institutions and its centre made it essential for the government to promote a sense of patriotic fellowship amongst its subjects. This fellowship is staged in *Høstgildet* through a patriotic blend of characters

hailing from Zealand, Norway and Holstein. Despite their differences, these characters nevertheless focus on what they have in common: king and country, and equal loyalty to both. Each character represents his or her region via regional markers. Through the use of elements such as costume and language, a patriotic fellowship was staged.

Hannele Ketomäki

### **The premiere of *Pohjan neiti* at the Vyborg Song Festival, 1908**

In 1898 Oskar Merikanto (1868–1924) composed the first Finnish language opera, *Pohjan neiti*, for a competition held by the Finnish Literature Society. Author Antti Rytkönen (1870–1930) wrote the opera's *Kalevala*-based libretto. Yet the opera premiered only ten years later – under the baton of the composer at a nationwide song and instrumental music festival in Vyborg sponsored by the Kansanvalistusseura. This chapter examines how the opera performance was realised at that festival and how the audience responded to the premiere. My approach focuses on the societal context of this cultural event, which took place at a time when Finland was not an independent state, but rather an autonomous Grand Duchy that belonged to Russia. Through music festivals organised by the Kansanvalistusseura, the Fennoman movement aspired to achieve their political goals by means of culture: music festivals fortified the development of public education and reinforced national pride among the people.

*Pohjan neiti* attracted widespread press publicity during its birth and premiere. The opera was not seen as a masterpiece either musically or in terms of the libretto. It was a romantic, *Kalevala*-themed work, appropriate to the end of the previous century, and was to be understood in terms of the surroundings of its inception. The ideals of the Kansanvalistusseura, namely to support public education and patriotism, were implemented in the *Pohjan neiti* performance. It was no surprise that a Fennophilic opera stirred emotions of national pride at the festival. The work itself, its composer and its performers were

celebrated to such an extent that performances became manifestations of patriotism.

Randi M. Selvik

***Høstgildet* by J. P. A. Schulz: a national *Singspiel*?**

This chapter deals with the one-act opera *Høstgildet* (The Harvest Festival) by J. P. A. Schulz (1747–1800), with a libretto by Thomas Thaarup (1749–1821), composed in Copenhagen in 1790 for the festivities of the wedding of the crown prince. The opera became immensely popular over the years and was also performed in Norway, which before 1814 was united with Denmark in a twin monarchy. At the time of the opera's composition Schulz was music director at the royal court and theatre in Copenhagen. The chapter briefly considers Schulz's musical background, his contribution to the first Berlin Lied school, his ideas of educational reforms, the situation of opera in Copenhagen around the time of his arrival there and his contributions to the genre, before turning to an analysis of certain aspects of *Høstgildet*. The distribution of musical numbers is discussed, and special emphasis is placed on instrumentation and musical style. Towards the end of the chapter I discuss the matter of genre – whether *Høstgildet* should be regarded as a *Singspiel* or an opera – and how ideas of patriotism or nationalism are reflected in the work.

Hilary Poriss

**Pauline Viardot, on rivalry**

If the discovery of a previously unknown letter or document revealing new information about a nineteenth-century performer's life and career is a relatively rare occurrence, then it is somewhat shocking when an entirely new archive of materials becomes available. The scope of

Pauline Viardot studies shifted markedly at the beginning of 2011, when Harvard University's Houghton Library purchased a huge cache of materials concerning the famous nineteenth-century prima donna. This new archive, which more than doubles Houghton's already plentiful holdings of Viardot documents, includes hundreds of her musical manuscripts (songs—some hitherto unknown—cadenzas, pedagogical materials), original costume designs, journals, and most relevant for this study, letters both to and from the singer. Collectively, these materials leave behind traces of this performer in particular and of nineteenth-century diva culture in general that will continue to yield new findings for years to come. In this essay, I dip into this new collection in order to explore one fairly simple question: what did Pauline Viardot (1821–1910) think about some of her fellow performers?

Viardot wrote candidly about many musicians in at least two types of documents now housed at Houghton: letters to her husband, Louis Viardot (1800–1883), and the memoir of her life and career that she began but neither completed nor published. In each case, I provide only a partial glimpse of what these documents have to offer, but in doing so I hope to broaden the biographical picture of this diva, focusing on the issue of rivalry and its manifestation within the private life and thoughts of one of the nineteenth century's most important cultural figures.

Clair Rowden

**Parodying opera in Paris:**

***Tannhäuser* on the popular stage, 1861**

The debacle surrounding Wagner's *Tannhäuser* in Paris in March 1861 is well known: 163 rehearsals for three performances, a lousy conductor, a new ballet (in the wrong place), a riotous Jockey Club and Wagner withdrew his work. This chapter explores the traces left by these performances, but not in the press or archives, rather in highly popular yet ephemeral parodic spectacles which followed in the immediate wake of Wagner's opera in Paris. There may have been any

number of these which are now lost in the mists of time, but apart from Offenbach's short parody of 'Le compositeur de l'Avenir' as part of *Le Carnaval des revues* in February 1860 (but which was still running when *Tannhäuser* opened), none of these 'reception documents' have yet been unearthed.

Several other revues containing scenes pertaining to Wagner, and two full-blown parodic spectacles given in March and April 1861 will be examined in this chapter. Both parodies were written by the same renowned parodist Clairville, or Louis François Nicolaïe (1811–1879), in collaboration with other writers and composers: *Ya-Mein-Herr, Cacophonie de l'avenir, en trois actes sans entr'acte mêlée de chants, de harpes et de chiens savants* and *Panne-aux-Airs, Parodie musicale en deux actes et six tableaux*. As printed libretto exist for these shows, parody as a hypertextual process can be explored in terms of Kristevian intertextuality and Genettian transtextuality with regard to these documents. In terms of performance, the hypermedial aspects of these shows are also explored, in tandem with theories of reading and remediation in determining how diverse audiences might perceive such spectacles.

Using slim archival sources, this chapter tries to a modest extent to reconstruct the dramatic and musical aspects of these shows which relied not just on Wagner's original work, but on many contextual issues, particularly the general perception of Wagner and his prose works in Paris, the conventions of popular theatre and well-known operatic arias and popular songs. This research then allows a reinterpretation of these performances: their reading of Wagner reception in Paris and Wagner's impact on the 'Music of the Future'; the intertextual/inter-medial markers used to communicate meaning to audiences; their dependence on/independence from Wagner's original opera; the distance/difference created from the original genres of opera and operetta, and how it was exploited for comic effect.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, parodical music theatre was at the height of its popularity and aesthetic acceptance before the onset of the Modernist era, when its procedures and practices collided with and, to some extent, were superseded by those of

Modernism. Thus, this chapter is an attempt to piece together a complex picture of an ephemeral yet valuable genre which remains on the margins of serious musicological study.

Göran Tegnér

**The first Swedish performance of a Verdi opera  
and the Italian Opera Company in Stockholm 1848–1849**

Between July 1848 and the beginning of June 1849 seven Italian singers staged twelve Italian operas in a privately-owned theatre in Stockholm. Nine of these operas had never been performed in Sweden. The Italian singers and their conductor came from an Italian opera company at the Court Theatre in Copenhagen. They rented a theatre in Stockholm, Mindre teatern, and managed to employ an orchestra, additional Swedish singers, a chorus and walk-ons and rehearse them in putting on twelve different Italian operas. One of the operas was Verdi's *Ernani*, the first Verdi opera ever to be performed in Sweden. This chapter shows how such an extravagant event was possible and demonstrates that that performance of *Ernani* can, to a certain extent, be reconstructed. The singers and the conductor are introduced, the score and orchestral materials are discussed and the size of the orchestra and the chorus are estimated. Along with a discussion of sets and costumes, stage direction and musical direction, quotations from the Stockholm press show the critics' ambivalent reactions to Verdi and the public's great appreciation of the performances.

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The chapters in this anthology concern a number of operatic performances from the long nineteenth century and seek to interpret them in their cultural and political contexts. Nineteenth-century performances, of course, cannot be studied directly nor through the medium of audio or video recordings. Yet they did sometimes leave significant traces of various kinds, the interpretation of which is still in need of methodological development. The present collection, *Tracing Operatic Performances in the Long Nineteenth Century: Practices, Performers, Peripheries*, is inspired by the challenges that face opera studies today when the question of performance is constantly being posed in new ways, with the potential of questioning anew what practices, performers and places should be considered worthy of the historian's attention. Its chapters bring into focus exceptional individuals – mostly singers, but also some theatre directors. Geographically, the emphasis is on the Nordic countries, although two articles are concerned with Parisian contexts.

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