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On the cover: Interior of the Municipal Theatre at Olomouc (A. Rohn, 1830).

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Nikoleta Bartošová

Na Szkle Malowane: An Analysis of the Historical Origin of This Musical Phenomenon¹

Abstract | The study examines a musical work *Na szkle malowane* [Painted on Glass], composed by Polish composer Katarzyna Gärtner in 1970s. The musical has been staged in different countries, but the most significant legacy it has left in its domestic country Poland, Czech and Slovak Republic, where it has achieved an exceptional popularity. The aim of the following text is to evaluate the historical reception of the piece in those places and give an in-depth examination of the evolution of musical *Na szkle malowane*. Each ideas in text are based on contextualisation of events and phenomena that influenced a transformation of the piece in period of time of almost a half century.

Keywords | musical – Painted on Glass – *Na szkle malowane* – Katarzyna Gärtner – Jánošík – Ernest Byll – musical theatre – Slovak National Theatre – history of musical – folklore-rock music

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Introduction

The musical as such is most frequently connected with the Broadway stages of New York or the London West End. These theatres stage world-renowned musical works, but the musical is not unfamiliar even to audiences in Central and Eastern Europe. *Na Szkle Malowane* [Painted on Glass] is an original “spevohra” – a play with songs, created by the Polish composer Katarzyna Gärtner and the Polish author Ernest Bryll. Almost immediately after its premiere in Wrocław at the beginning of the 1970s, this work exceeded the borders and achieved extraordinary success; it became a certain phenomenon especially in Slovakia and the Czech Republic up until the present day. This study focuses on the development of *Na Szkle Malowane* on theatre stages and elsewhere in its entire historical context. It will describe the individual specific features that formed and influenced it throughout its almost fifty-years’ existence, particularly in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. The study primarily aims to provide a historical overview of the *spevohra* and emphasise the most important events related to this composition. The artistic piece also receives a dual label in this study – a *spevohra* and a musical, because it underwent a natural transformation into a full-fledged musical. Prior to the composition itself, however, the study focuses on its composer, because information and a general awareness of her personality and her work in present-day musicology are surprisingly scarce. Until now, there has been no summarizing work of her personality, although *Na Szkle Malowane* is by no means her only work deserving of deeper expert analysis.

¹ This contribution has been supported by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports; an IGA grant IGA_FF_2018_010 (Limits of Popularity in Music of the 19th to 21st Century).

The Composer Profile of Katarzyna Gärtner

Katarzyna Gärtner, who has been engaged in composing since the age of fourteen, ranks among the leading figures in Polish music, particularly popular music, but her activities also frequently incorporate composing music for theatre plays or musicals. Apart from classical music, the Średnią Szkoła Muzyczną she studied in Krakow also introduced her to jazz.² As a sixteen-year-old, she was already a piano player in various jazz groups, and also participated in festivals in Poland.³ Apart from studies in her homeland, she also received a music education in Switzerland and Great Britain.⁴ She cooperated with prominent figures of the Polish music scene, such as Andrzej Dąbrowski, Jerzy Matuszkiewicz, Mieczysław Fogg, Helena Majdaniec, Anna German, Maryla Rodowicz, Czesław Niemen, Ryszard Riedl, Kazimierz Gréskowiak, Marek Grechuta, Jerzy Grundwald, as well as bands such as 2 plus Jeden, Czerwono-Czarny and many others.⁵ It was for the last-mentioned that she created one of her most esteemed compositions – the rock mass *Msza Beatowa* “*Pan Przyjacielem Moim*,” which was played not only in churches, but also by philharmonic orchestras.⁶ Its premiere took place in 1968 in a church in Podkowa Leśna near Warsaw. This composition is the first one in Poland and one of the first in the world to combine rock music, in some parts including even psychedelic elements, jazz, and echoes of chorale and polyphony with words of a religious nature. Apart from its homeland, it was also performed in Switzerland, the former GDR, the USA, as well as the Czech Republic. The composition was recently (2018) reworked by Gärtner and performed once again at the venue of its premiere.⁷

Another important composition by this composer is undoubtedly the work *Zagrajcie Nam Dzisiaj, Wszystkie Srebrne Dzwony*. Its form is commonly described as a blend of oratory and rock opera.⁸ It was created in 1975 on the occasion of the thirty-year anniversary of the Victory over Fascism for a text by Ernest Bryll, a prominent writer, who collaborated with Gärtner on multiple projects. Its premiere took place in Warsaw in a large circus tent, and the work was performed by a sixty-member orchestra and an eighty-member choir. It was subsequently released as an LP; Gärtner cooperated on it with prominent personalities of Polish popular music (Maryla Rodowicz, Czesław Niemen, Marek Grechuta, Jerzy Grundwald, etc.). This work raised outrage in the governing circles due to both its libretto which failed to sufficiently represent the constructionist ideas of contemporary socialism, and its rock basis with a significant addition of elements from folklore music, echoes of the chorale, dissonant chord successions in contrast with

² Ryszard Wolański, “Katarzyna Gaertner,” in *Leksykon polskiej muzyki rozrywkowej* (Warsaw: Agencja Wydawnicza MOREX, 1995), 55.

³ Ibid.; Waclaw Panek, “Polskie stowarzyszenie jazzowe,” in *Mały słownik muzyki rozrywkowej* (Warsaw: ZAKR, 1986), 88; Mirek Drożdż, “JAZZ CAMPING Kalatówki 1959 – film dokumentalny WFDiF,” a YouTube video, 9:07, published in April 2014, <http://youtube.com/watch?v=v2icRUxgeFU>.

⁴ Wolański, “Katarzyna Gaertner,” 55; Janusz Kędracki, “Mój największy przebój? Jak mnie zmuszają, to mówię, że ‘Małgośka,’” *Gazeta Wyborcza (Kielce)*, no. 170, 2016, 4. The study of Gärtner’s abroad is, however, only addressed by few resources, and almost nothing is known about it.

⁵ Wolański, “Katarzyna Gaertner,” 55.

⁶ The playbill for the symphonic concert of Państwowa filharmonia in Wrocław; October 29 and 30, 1971, 71 Pm, Państwowa Filharmonia we Wrocławiu, Archiwum Śląskiej Kultury Muzycznej, Katowice, Poland.

⁷ Beskidnews.tv, “Podkowa Leśna – fragmenty mszy beatowej 15. 04. 2018r.,” filmed in April 2018, a YouTube video, 21:33, published in May 2018, <http://youtube.com/watch?v=HWgQ4IjSWrQ>; Artur Tusinski, “Msza beatowa po 50 latach,” Artur Tusinski-Podkowa, accessed March 22, 2019, <http://arturtusinski-podkowa.pl/msza-beatowa-50-latach/>.

⁸ Dariusz Michalski, *Czesław Niemen: Czy go jeszcze pamiętasz?* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo MG, 2009), 267.

a clear cadence composition, etc.⁹ It is for these features that the work is at present considered timeless, despite the contemporary negative attitude of the officials. As with *Msza Beatowa*, in-depth musicology research, both past and present, is also entirely missing in the case of this work.

Apart from the greater forms mentioned above, the composer's work was focused on creating popular songs and music for musicals and theatre plays. The former brought Gärtner the greatest popularity. *Tańczące Eurydyki* is a song Gärtner wrote for Anna German, which opened the door to the music world for both the singer and the composer.¹⁰ An important Gärtner collaboration was that with Maryla Rodowicz, who ranks among the greatest personages of the Polish popular branch. The song *Małgoška* from 1973 became a hit not only in Poland, but also in the Czech Republic, where it was sung by Marie Rottrová in a Czech translation under the name *Markétka*.¹¹ This is not the only song whose translated version became successful in the Czech environment. A search of internet databases revealed that Gärtner's compositions were adopted especially by Czech, but also by Slovak artists. Few people realize that her music is permanently preserved even in the repertoire of Yveta Simonová, Milan Chladil, Hana Talpová, Věra Špinarová, Karel Černoch, Jana Kratochvílová, Hana Zagorová, Marcela Laiferová, and many others. Apart from the Czech Republic and Slovakia, her songs and other works crossed the borders even to Germany, Russia, Bulgaria, etc.¹²

An analysis of Gärtner's compositions makes it apparent that apart from popular songs, it was particularly the theatre environment where she was engaged the most. Together with the music for a number of theatre plays, her domain as a music composer is the musical in particular. Her best-known music-dramatic works include a family musical called *Krasnoludki*, *Krasnoludki*, and especially *Przygody Rozbójnika Rumcajsa* created based on a book by the Czech writer Václav Čtvrtek, which was, among other things, performed for decades even in the Czech Republic and Slovakia.¹³ The greatest and most memorable work created by Gärtner is undoubtedly, how-

⁹ Roman Radoszewski, *Czesław Niemen: kiedy się dziwić przestaną: monografia artystyczna* (Warsaw: Iskry, 2004), 216; information bulletin for the theatre performance *Malované na skle aneb Jánošík* in the theatre ABC, November 9, 1977, K11547P, Section Prague City Theatres 50, The Arts and Theatre Institute, Prague, the Czech Republic; "Various – Zagrajcie Nam Dzisiaj Wszystkie Srebrne Dzwony," Discogs, accessed May 9, 2018, <https://www.discogs.com/VariouS-Zagrajcie-Nam-Dzisiaj-Wszystkie-Srebrne-Dzwony/release/3714308>; "Various – Zagrajcie Nam Dzisiaj Wszystkie Srebrne Dzwony," Discogs, accessed May 9, 2018, <https://www.discogs.com/VariouS-Zagrajcie-Nam-Dzisiaj-Wszystkie-Srebrne-Dzwony/release/2802860>; Krzysztof Wiczorek, "Kolej na muzykę... 'Zagrajcie nam dzisiaj wszystkie srebrne dzwony' (1975)," *Wolna droga*, accessed May 10, 2018, <http://wolnadroga.pl/index.php?s=7&n=320054>.

¹⁰ Mariola Pryzwan, *Anna German o sobie* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo MG, 2012), 44; Agnieszka Hryniewicz, "Tańczące Eurydyki czyli Festiwal im. Anny German w Zielonej Górze," *Piosenka*, no. 2 (2007): 78.

¹¹ Wolański, "Katarzyna Gaertner," 55; "Nejenom Polskem," *G: noviny ze světa hudby a zvuku*, no. 8, 1974. Rodowicz even sang the same song in German with the name *Marja*.

¹² In this case, only the general names of resources are stated; the information can be found according to the artist/song/authors. These are the music media database Discogs.com and the webpage of the music publishing house Supraphon Supraphononline.cz, which even includes records of Gärtner's songs sung by the individual artists. Another source is of course the largest video portal Youtube.com.

¹³ At present, the musical *Krasnoludki*, *Krasnoludki* is most often staged under the name *Zaczarowany Bal*. The latter work mentioned is also known under the shortened name *Rumcajs*. The libretto was written, as with *Na szkle malowane*, by Ernest Bryll. The Czechoslovak premiere of the play *Przygody Rozbójnika Rumcajsa* took place in 1975 in the State Theatre Brno. Information bulletin for the theatre performance *Dobrodružství loupežníka Rumcajse* in the State Theatre Brno, June 5, 1975, K7222P, Section State Theatre Brno, 48–90 Drama of the State Theatre Brno, The Arts and Theatre Institute, Prague, the Czech Republic; "Autorzy: Ernest Bryll," *Encyklopedia Teatru Polskiego*, accessed May 10, 2018, <http://encyklopediateatru.pl/autorzy/186/ernest-bryll>; Irena T. Sławińska, "Krasnoludki dla nowej generacji," *Hypatia*, accessed March 3, 2019, <http://www.hypatia.pl/web/pageFiles/attachments/2859/trybuna-robotnicza-nr-191-25-26-sierpnia-1979.pdf>.

ever, the one addressed in this study. From the musicology perspective, *Na Szkle Malowane* is a blend of the folklore music of the Podhale region with rock music typical for the early 1970s. Contemporary reviews do not perceive this blend, however, as a simple mixture of these two music styles, but as an original, sophisticated music composition. The composer is still active at present, and is artistically engaged in multiple projects.¹⁴

This list of the most important and best-known works by the Polish composer is only a brief overview of her rich, almost sixty-year-long, music career. Even this brief example clearly demonstrates, however, that her works are important not only for Poland but for other countries as well, especially for Slovakia and the Czech Republic, which have been frequently influenced by her artistic work. Since musicology (even Polish musicology) pays almost no professional attention to Katarzyna Gärtner and her work, my intention was to introduce the readers to her importance and contribution to music art. The following part of the text focuses on her musical *Na Szkle Malowane*, which has become a true phenomenon, and which is perhaps the best illustration of the author's composition style.

***Na Szkle Malowane* – The Musical**

Na Szkle Malowane is an almost fifty-year-old work. Its genre classification has been the subject of discussion in the past. Over the course of its long staging tradition, and through its oscillation towards the musical, this original *spevohra*, as labelled by one of its authors, or perhaps more aptly described as a folklore-inspired theatre play with songs, was naturally transformed into the music-dramatic genre of the musical as such. Analysis of contemporary articles and reviews demonstrates that even though Ernest Bryll advocated his opinion that the composition was a *spevohra*, expert critics and the public tended to perceive *Na Szkle Malowane* as a musical, which the work remained labelled as up until the present.¹⁵ The fact that the individual dance or music elements were updated meant that the work may without any hesitation be compared to the musical genre; which is why even this text labels the composition as a musical.

The Jánošík Legend as the Compositional Starting Point

The story is divided into three acts and the libretto is written in rhymed verse. The main character is Juraj Jánošík with his desire for a highwayman-like way of living and interest in women. Bryll – the author of the lyrics, uses this highwayman character as well as supernatural characters and elements (an angel, a devil) to point out in a humorous, sometimes even satirical tone, a multitude of topics such as love for a woman, the struggle between good and evil, religion, politics, folklore, the issue of actual freedom, etc. Based on the main topic of the piece, or its main character, Juraj Jánošík, the musical is set in the Tatra Mountains, depicting the life of common people, so it is a musical with strong folk motifs, prevalently the traditional style of Slavic village life of the early 1700s.¹⁶ Although the content may suggest that it is a musical with an

¹⁴ At present, Gärtner engages in organizing various commemorative debates and concerts. Also, together with her husband, she leads the group *Blustrada* (Intermedialny Teatr Muzyczny), for which she composes new songs and shoots video clips.

¹⁵ Bryll himself called his work a “*spevohra*” – a play with songs, in an attempt to replace the word “musical” with a domestic term. Information bulletin for the theatre performance *Jánošík abo Na skle maľované* in the Regional Theatre Nitra, October 27, 1973, Section 961, *Na skle maľované*, The Public Specialized Archive of the Theatre Institute, Bratislava, Slovakia.

¹⁶ Ernest Bryll, *Maľované na skle*, trans. Halina Ivaničková (Bratislava: LITA, 1971), 60.

uncomplicated plot, it was particularly this fact that facilitated, among other things, the musical's great popularity with the audience. In the reviews and articles from contemporary magazines, critics often praised the libretto; the praise also indirectly led to the idea of regarding the lyrics of *Na Szkle Malowane* as a timeless musical piece. This is undoubtedly to the merit of Bryll's original combination of the above-mentioned motifs that remain topical and are applicable even to present-day life.

It may seem that the Jánošík topic is only intrinsic to the Slovak nation, as he is the Slovak national hero. The logic behind a Polish writer choosing a seemingly Slovak motif is that the highwayman Jánošík used to wander through various Slavic lands (Slovakia, Poland, the Czech Republic, etc.) and in each of them left certain marks that are linked to his personality until the present. What mattered to Bryll was especially the tradition of highwaymanship as such, which has its own history in these lands and is in many cases related particularly to Jánošík. Bryll made use of the fact that for many nations, the character of Jánošík represents a symbol of a collective hero.¹⁷ He did not depict him, however, as a typical romantic hero who took from the rich and gave to the poor, and even the story itself is not a philosophical drama with a tragic ending. On the contrary, apart from his typical "charity activity" targeted at the poor inhabitants, which brought Jánošík fame and which was also how he probably earned a living, the author depicts him as a youngster who likes enjoying himself and seeks out pleasure from this world.¹⁸ In addition, Bryll approached the folklore as the source of all the artistic activities of the national ethnic – i.e., as a universal language of Slavic cultures of the Carpathian region.¹⁹ The musical piece paraphrases the tradition and presents the folk nature in an almost archetypal form as an eternal struggle between good and evil, love and hatred, freedom and seclusion, honesty and hypocrisy. It is therefore not a representation of authentic folklore, but an expression of Bryll's own theatrical reality.²⁰

It was this universal language that contributed to the Jánošík story being perceived not only in Slovakia, but also in the other above-mentioned Slavic cultures as a simple (but not primitive), entertaining, and clear story with folk elements presenting not a particular individual, but rather a collective hero which is used by the author to point out a multitude of daily-life issues of common people, thus blurring any national identity of the main character. The undoubtedly high-quality libretto of *Na Szkle Malowane* also contributed to the great popularity of the work. Moreover, Gärtner's folklore-rock music contributed to the modern perception of the hero highwayman, as intended by Bryll.

A specific aspect is the historical development of the musical. Throughout its long existence, the work has developed its own history and theatrical tradition. It is remarkable that it has received top popularity not in its homeland, but beyond the borders, in particular in present-day Slovakia and the Czech Republic. The following text focuses, among other things, on these particular countries.

¹⁷ Milada Písková, *Zbojnícke variácie* (Opava: Silesian University, Faculty of Philosophy and Science, 1997), 6–7, 11; Andrej Melicherčík, *Jánošík junošík: Juraj Jánošík v ľudových piesňach a povestiach* (Bratislava: Slovenské vydavateľstvo krásnej literatúry, 1963), 211.

¹⁸ Information bulletin for the theatre performance *Na skle maľované* in Jonáš Záborský Theatre Prešov, November 19, 1993, Section 962, *Na skle maľované*, The Public Specialized Archive of the Theatre Institute, Bratislava, Slovakia.

¹⁹ Information bulletin for the theatre performance *Na skle maľované* in the Slovak National Theatre, October 19, 1974, Section 187, *Na skle maľované*, The Archive of the Slovak National Theatre, Bratislava, Slovakia.

²⁰ Information bulletin for the theatre performance *Na skle maľované* in the State Theatre Košice – Drama, December 12, 2014, Section 11303, *Na skle maľované*, The Public Specialized Archive of the Theatre Institute, Bratislava, Slovakia.

The Emergence and Development of the Musical in Poland

The world premiere of *Na Szkle Malowane* took place on March 6, 1970, in Lower Silesian Operetta in Wrocław under the director Jan Skotnicki, who also staged this work in the theatre in Łódź in July of the same year, and in October also in Krakow. The music element of the staging was directed by Gärtner herself. Her music and arrangement were then performed by a rock band Bumerang.²¹

In the same year (1970), this composition was premiered once more, on November 27 in the Polish Theatre in Warsaw, but this staging had a different director.²² It was this Warsaw performance that reached the record number of 650 reprises.²³ There was an interesting phenomenon occurring already with the first stagings of *Na Szkle Malowane*: it used to happen quite frequently with the Polish performances that the same directors returned to the work multiple times over the years. Jan Skotnicki staged it once more at the theatre in Szczecin, Krystyna Janda staged it four times in total, and Jan Uryga engaged in staging the work as a director and choreographer for as many as six times in thirteen years.²⁴ A positive finding is the fact that particularly Polish stagings are among the few that used live music. In 1993, in Powszechny Theatre, Gärtner's music was performed by the band Kryvań from Zakopane, and in the Musical Theatre in Gdynia, there was even an entire orchestra including a harp, a guitar and bass guitar.²⁵ While live music is perceived as some kind of added value on drama stages, it should be taken for granted for the musical ones. In the case of foreign performances of *Na Szkle Malowane*, however, live music was not included all that frequently; the majority of the directors preferred musical recordings for their stagings.

The original name of Bryll's play is *Na Szkle Malowane*; however, in Poland it was also often introduced under the name *Janosik czyli Na Szkle Malowane*, or simply *Janosik*.²⁶

The art piece appeared on Polish theatre stages at a time when music theatre of the socialist era preferred domestic or socialist production over American.²⁷ It was therefore created at a very "convenient" time when domestic pieces were preferred over foreign ones. In addition, at the beginning of the 1970s, the musical was not very widespread in Poland, so the infrequent grand performances from the West did not represent strong competition for the average domestic production, frequently in the form of theatre plays with songs, operetta, or vaudeville rather than

²¹ Information bulletin for the theatre performance *Na szkle malowane (Opowieść o Janosiku)* in Lower-Silesian Operetta Wrocław, March 6, 1970, *Na szkle malowane*, Zbigniew Raszewski Theatre Institute, Warsaw, Poland; "Przedstawienia: Na szkle malowane," Encyklopedia Teatru Polskiego, accessed February 5, 2019, <http://encyklopediateatru.pl/sztuki/3189/na-szkle-malowane>; Bigbeatowiec, "Bumerang (łódzki)," Polski bigbit i nie tylko [blog], published September 23, 2012, accessed February 5, 2019, <http://polskibigbitinietylko.blogspot.com/search/label/Bumerang%20%28C5%82%C3%B3dski%29>.

²² "Przedstawienia: Na szkle malowane," Encyklopedia Teatru Polskiego, accessed February 5, 2019, <http://encyklopediateatru.pl/sztuki/3189/na-szkle-malowane>.

²³ Ernest Bryll, *Na szkle malowane* (Warsaw: Pax, 2000), 91.

²⁴ "Przedstawienia: Na szkle malowane," Encyklopedia Teatru Polskiego, accessed February 5, 2019, <http://encyklopediateatru.pl/sztuki/3189/na-szkle-malowane>.

²⁵ The review *Nie zmógł go czas* of the theatre performance *Na szkle malowane* in Powszechny Theatre Warsaw, September 22, 1993, Section 665–28, *Na szkle malowane*, Zbigniew Raszewski Theatre Institute, Warsaw, Poland; information bulletin for the theatre performance *Janosik czyli Na szkle malowane* in Musical Theatre Gdynia, January 29, 1983, *Na szkle malowane*, Zbigniew Raszewski Theatre Institute, Warsaw, Poland.

²⁶ "Przedstawienia: Na szkle malowane," Encyklopedia Teatru Polskiego, accessed February 5, 2019, <http://encyklopediateatru.pl/sztuki/3189/na-szkle-malowane>.

²⁷ Helmut Bez, Jürgen Degenhardt, and Heinz Peter Hofmann, *Muzikál* (Bratislava: OPUS, 1987), 97.

a musical.²⁸ It was also thanks to its folk motif that there were exceptionally good conditions for *Na Szkle Malowane* to become established in the dramaturgy of theatres and receive a chance to become popular with large audiences. The rock music combined with the Podhale folklore and a mythological motif attracted a wide range of theatre-goers, from the youngest ones to the elderly.²⁹ This may be one of the reasons why *Na Szkle Malowane* appeared almost annually in programmes of theatres, both dramatic and music ones, throughout the 1970s. In the 1980s, the well-developed statistics began to strongly decrease. The most significant pause in stagings of this musical piece came between 1983 and 1993, when it was not performed by any professional theatre company.³⁰ The reasons may be various, but the one I consider most important are political prohibitions due to Bryll's openly stated disapproval of the contemporary regime.³¹ Based on statistics, prior to this period the musical piece had had a successful lifetime: within thirteen years it had been presented to Polish audiences in various locations throughout Poland seventeen times in total. The question remains as to whether its success would continue even if there had not been this forced pause. As already mentioned, *Na Szkle Malowane* returned to the stages as late as 1993 – i.e., after a ten-year break – in Warsaw, and subsequently also in Chorzów and Częstochowa. The latest staging so far took place in 2004 in the renowned music theatre Teatr Muzyczny in Gdynia.³² No new premieres of this musical piece at professional theatres in Poland have been recorded since then.

Period reviews published in Czechoslovakia were mostly created by teatrologists and opinion journalists, informing about the individual aspects of the art piece in the particular theatres. The frequently analysed aspects are naturally the performances of the individual actors and actresses, but also the dramatic art itself and the content of the play. Gärtner's music is generally assessed in a positive way. In an extensive article published in 1971, Irena Kellner states a prophetic view that the music, i.e., the individual songs from the *spevohra*, are even functional independently and therefore have great potential for becoming hits.³³ Her words were partly proven true and some of the songs actually became hits that people recognise even today, and not only in Poland. At the end of her text, Kellner also comes to the conclusion that Gärtner's music is so original that it is, in her opinion, better than the libretto of the piece, and she follows with a question as to whether it would be more appropriate to attribute *Na Szkle Malowane* as a work of art to Gärtner as opposed to Bryll.³⁴ Kellner was not the only one who voiced this opinion;³⁵ a different

²⁸ Marta Fik, *Encyklopedia kultury polskiej XX wieku. Teatr – widowisko* (Warsaw: Instytut Kultury, 2000), 68, 84–85, 298–299.

²⁹ The review *Predstavenie, ktoré prináša radosť* reflecting on the theatre performance *Na skle malované* in the Slovak National Theatre, February 19, Section 965, *Na skle malované*, the Public Specialized Archive of the Theatre Institute, Bratislava, Slovakia.

³⁰ “Przedstawienia: Na szkle malowane,” *Encyklopedia Teatru Polskiego*, accessed February 5, 2019, <http://encyklopediateatru.pl/sztuki/3189/na-szkle-malowane>.

³¹ Alexander Balogh, “Úspech znásobuje blízosť hôr,” *Sme*, no. 10, 2002, 25.

³² “Przedstawienia: Na szkle malowane,” *Encyklopedia Teatru Polskiego*, accessed February 5, 2019, <http://encyklopediateatru.pl/sztuki/3189/na-szkle-malowane>.

³³ The review *Śladami Janosika czyli próba pisania poważnie o niepoważnych sprawach* of the theatre performance *Na szkle malowane* in Polish Theatre Warsaw, March 15, 1971, Section 268–5, *Na szkle malowane*, Zbigniew Raszewski Theatre Institute, Warsaw, Poland.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ The review *Szkoło jest śliskie* of the theatre performance *Janosik czyli Na szkle malowane* in Wybrzeże Theatre Gdańsk, June 26, 1971, Section 218–1213, *Na szkle malowane*, Zbigniew Raszewski Theatre Institute, Warszawa, Polsko; a review *Na szkle malowane – Znów oklaskiwane* of the theatre performance *Na szkle malowane* in Zygmunt Hübner Powszechny Theatre Warszawa, November 12–14, 1993, Section 665–220, *Na szkle malowane*, Zbigniew Raszewski Theatre Institute, Warsaw, Poland.

review from the end of 1970 states a similar opinion of Gärtner's music, which its author Andrzej Markiewicz perceives as better than Bryll's lyrics.³⁶ In general, Polish critics and reviewers appreciated the way in which the composer blended, or transformed the Podhale folklore music into contemporary rock music.³⁷ Another aspect that received very positive feedback was the overall connection between the music and the lyrics. In this regard, the critics praised both authors, valuing both Bryll's song lyrics and Gärtner's ability to find a suitable melody and rhythm for them. These opinion journalism texts play an important role in the analysis of the musical piece, since they are one of the scarce resources providing information about its historical context and concerning the quality of the individual stagings in Poland. For instance, those focusing on the Polish Stage of the Český Tešín theatre are the only ones mentioning its Czechoslovakia tour with the performance *Na Szkle Malowane* in the second half of the 1970s. In contrast, neither Czech reviews nor other collected resources include any similar information about such tours of the Český Tešín theatre, although from the geographic perspective the theatre is located on the Czech side of the border. According to the above-mentioned articles, the Polish Stage went on tour around the territory of present-day Slovakia and the Czech Republic, and despite the language barrier, played guest performances in Žilina, Svit, Trenčín, Dubnica nad Váhom, Nitra, Púchov, Martin, Nové Mesto nad Váhom, Istebné, Šaľa, Bojnice, Piešťany, as well as at festivals in Svidník and Prešov, and also in Brno, Prague, etc.³⁸ The staging of *Na Szkle Malowane* was presented in their mother tongue – Polish. All of the above stated data comes from reviews from 1977 and 1979; the premiere of the musical piece in Český Tešín on the Polish Stage took place in 1976.³⁹ What is remarkable is the determination of the theatre ensemble to perform in front of foreign audiences, although ones speaking related languages, and to perform the theatre play even if it should remain uncomprehended. The reception of the Polish performance in Czechoslovakia is not recorded, but *Na Szkle Malowane* was at that time already well known to both the Czech and Slovak audiences in their own languages, and one regularly performed on their stages. This was also possible thanks to an initiative from the Polish, in particular the Krakow Juliusz Słowacki Theatre's guest performance with this play in Bratislava in May 1972, when it was performed in Czechoslovakia for the first time, and its gradual spreading to the stages of local theatres in Czech and Slovak translations.⁴⁰ It could be this very fact that caused the success of the Polish ensemble in front of the Czechoslovak audiences. The success may have been also caused by the universal character of the musical piece's plot and the musical language, and even by the curiosity of the audiences, as well as a unique opportunity for theatre-goers to see a foreign

³⁶ The Review *Ballada o Janosiku* of the theatre performance *Na szkle malowane* in the Polish Theatre Warsaw, December 12 and 13, 1970, Section 218–296, *Na szkle malowane*, Zbigniew Raszewski Theatre Institute, Warsaw, Poland.

³⁷ The review *Tatrzańska ballada pięknie malowana* of the theatre performance *Na szkle malowane* in the Polish Theatre Warsaw, December 7, 1970, Section 218–290, *Na szkle malowane*, Zbigniew Raszewski Theatre Institute, Warsaw, Poland.

³⁸ The review *100 razy "Na szkle malowane," Mariaż zaolziańskiego Janosika z nadwiślańską Syreną, Przyjeżdżają Scena Polska z CSRS* of the theatre performance *Janosik czyli Na szkle malowane* in the Regional Theatre Český Tešín – Section Scena Polska, 665, *Na szkle malowane*, Zbigniew Raszewski Theatre Institute, Warsaw, Poland.

³⁹ "Przedstawienia: Na szkle malowane," Encyklopedia Teatru Polskiego, accessed February 6, 2019, <http://encyklopediateatru.pl/sztuki/3189/na-szkle-malowane>.

⁴⁰ The review *Šantenie okolo Jánošíka* of the theatre performance *Na skle malované* in the Slovak National Theatre, October 23, 1974, Section 963, *Na skle malované*, The Public Specialized Archive of the Theatre Institute, Bratislava, Slovakia; the review *Na skle malované po pražsky* of the theatre performance *Malované na skle aneb Jánošík* in the theatre ABC, January 23, 1978, K11547P, Section Prague City Theatres 50, The Arts and Theatre Institute, Prague, the Czech Republic.

performance in their local theatre.⁴¹ At present, such an approach under such conditions is quite rare. The Polish Stage of the Těšín theatre, however, promoted its performance and the domestic production abroad, and therefore contributed to raising the awareness of this particular musical piece in Czechoslovakia. Other resources and archives available provide us with information about other guest performances of Polish theatres abroad with this play; more detailed information is, however, scarce and hard to verify. The archive of the Warsaw Theatre Institute includes a German-language programme of the eighteenth festival Berliner Festtage from the year 1974. Unfortunately, the only information it provides is the fact that it is a bulletin for this event and that the performance of the spevohra, in German *Auf Glas gemalt*, was performed by the Polish Theatre from Warsaw. The date of the performance or any other detailed information about the event is not included.⁴² A similar case is another programme, written in Romanian. This one includes at least the information as to when the performance took place. It states that Ludwik Solski Theatre from Tarnów performed its version of *Na Szkle Malowane* between June 23 and 28, 1978, in Sibiu, Romania. The bulletin does not state, however, if it was a guest performance or another kind of event, nor does it include the number of performances.⁴³ The available resources do not include any other information related to Polish theatres performing this play abroad.

Introduction to Czechoslovakia

As already mentioned, an important point in the history of this Bryll and Gärtner musical piece is its spreading and establishment on foreign stages, especially in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. The historical development of the stagings of this spevohra is extremely interesting. It is particularly in these, then united, countries that *Na Szkle Malowane* achieved great success lasting up until the present day. The Czechoslovak premiere, as well as the first performance of this musical piece abroad, took place in Brno in 1972.⁴⁴ It was performed under the name *Zbojníci a Žandáři* [Highwaymen and Gendarmerie or Jánošík] in Reduta of the Brno State Theatre.⁴⁵ This Brno performance was even attended by the well-known musicologist Jiří Fukač; in his review published in *Hudební rozhledy* [Music Insights], he especially praised the musical aspect of the spevohra. Although the music was not played live, this performance used the music recorded by Gärtner herself, playing harpsichord, together with Jan Rokyta playing cimbalom, and the music group Bukanyři. It was this particular record that was used for the other Czech stagings. As with Poland, Czechoslovakia did not have a fully developed tradition of the musical, compared to the West. It was common that such music-dramatic pieces began to be performed,

⁴¹ Reviews state that the Piešťany performance of the Těšín theatre company was attended by a record number of 1,200 spectators. They inform about the company's overall success in Czechoslovakia, but do not provide any further information. The review *Mariaž zaolziańskiego Janosika z nadwiślańską Syreną* of the theatre performance *Janosik czyli Na szkle malowane* in the Regional Theatre Český Těšín – Section Scena Polska, 665, *Na szkle malowane*, Zbigniew Raszewski Theatre Institute, Warsaw, Poland.

⁴² The information bulletin for the theatre performance *Auf Glas gemalt* of the Polish Theatre Warsaw at the XVIII. Berliner Festtage 1974, *Na szkle malowane*, Zbigniew Raszewski Theatre Institute, Warsaw, Poland.

⁴³ The information bulletin for the theatre performance *Ianosik de Ernest Bryll* of the theatre Teatrul Ludwik Solski Tarnow in Sibiu, Romania, June 23–28, 1978, *Na szkle malowane*, Zbigniew Raszewski Theatre Institute, Warsaw, Poland.

⁴⁴ The review *Výborné provedení* of the theatre performance *Zbojníci a Žandáři aneb Jánošík* of the State Theatre Brno, October 3, 1972, K5046P, Section State Theatre Brno, 48–90 Drama of the State Theatre Brno, The Arts and Theatre Institute, Prague, the Czech Republic.

⁴⁵ The information bulletin for the theatre performance *Zbojníci a Žandáři aneb Jánošík* of the State Theatre Brno, September 24, 1972, K5046P, Section State Theatre Brno, 48–90 Drama of the State Theatre Brno, The Arts and Theatre Institute, Prague, the Czech Republic.

apart from professionally educated opera singers, by drama actors at drama theatres, since at that time secondary or higher education in musical acting had not come into existence.⁴⁶ This was the also the case with this performance. In his review, Fukač focuses on the interpretation of the musical piece only marginally; the target of his attention and the emphasised aspect is the music itself. He states that the composer aims at emphasizing the relevance of the topic for a present-day audience despite its historical motif, and therefore chooses the rock sound in combination with folklore music. In the 1970s, this blend was already relatively common composition practice, but according to Fukač, Gärtner went even further:

[Gärtner] multiplies the layers and accumulates the individual musical means, and at the very next moment reinvents them and displays them in their simplest form; she emphasises dramatic moments with clusters obviously exceeding the borders of the genre, but immediately returns in order to once again raise the interest of the listeners, and engage and draw them into the sphere of emotions corresponding to the nature of the actions taking place on stage. Even the simplest passages cannot be regarded as deliberately and knowingly primitive.⁴⁷

Fukač literally recommended that the musical piece, and particularly the sophisticated music arrangement chosen by Gärtner, should be taken as inspiration for playwrights and composers for similar music-entertainment theatre forms. He was in all probability aware of the benefit it would bring to domestic theatre production.

At the beginning of the 1970s, when *Na Szkle Malowane* came to the Czechoslovak stages, the audience was gradually growing acquainted with the Anglo-American production of musicals. Czechoslovakia was, however, ruled by communism, thus the entire cultural branch was influenced by the totalitarian regime.⁴⁸ In spite of this fact, it was possible for several musical pieces to be performed in Czechoslovakia, such as *Kiss Me, Kate!* (1963), *My Fair Lady* (1964), *Hello, Dolly* (1966), *Fiddler on the Roof* (1968), or *West Side Story* (1970). Domestic production involved prevalently musical pieces from the so-called theatres of small stages, such as Semafor and Rokoko, as well as musical evergreens such as *Starci na chmelu* [The Hop Pickers] (1964), *Dáma na kolejích* [Lady On The Tracks] (1966), *Gentleman* [Gentlemen] (1967), etc.⁴⁹ In Slovakia, there was an ongoing trend of domestic operetta production; there being only limited attempts at a musical.⁵⁰ Here, the best example of the approach taken by the theatres of small stages was the Radošina Naive Theatre with its premiere of *Jááánošíík* from 1970, a play whose

⁴⁶ Pavel Bár, *Od operety k muzikálu: zábavněhudební divadlo v Československu po roce 1945* (Prague: KANT, 2013), 236, 243–244.

⁴⁷ The information bulletin for the theatre performance *Zbojníci a Žandáři aneb Jánošík* of the State Theatre Brno, September 24, 1972, K5046P, Section State Theatre Brno, 48–90 Drama of the State Theatre Brno, The Arts and Theatre Institute, Prague, the Czech Republic.

⁴⁸ Dagmar Inštorisová, Peter Oravec, and Miroslav Ballay, *Tváre súčasného slovenského divadla* (Nitra: Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, 2006), 254–255.

⁴⁹ Jan J. Vaněk, *Muzikál v Čechách aneb Velký svět v malé zemi* (Prague: První Nakladatelství Knižcentrum, a. s., 1998), 24–25; Bár, *Od operety k muzikálu*, 145, 147, 160, 172, 198, 201; Elena Knopová, *Súčasný slovenský divadlo v dobe spoločenských premiér: pohľady na slovenské divadlo 1989–2015* (Bratislava: VEDA, Slovak Academy Of Sciences Publishing, 2017), 42.

⁵⁰ In 1966, the premiere of *Komorán* by Teodor Šebo–Martinský took place in Prešov; it emphasised the music aspect of this music–dramatic genre. Already in 1973, the premiere of *Revízor* took place at the New Stage Theatre; this musical piece is called “the first Slovak musical” and, as is obvious from the name, is based on Gogol’s novel. A musical that gained great popularity, especially with the young audience, was by Pavol Hammel and Marián Varga entitled *Cyrano z predmestia* with music written in the contemporary rock style characteristic for these authors. Miloš Mistrík, *Slovenské divadlo v 20. storočí* (Bratislava: VEDA, Slovak Academy Of Sciences Publishing, 1999), 366–367.

theme is the same as that of *Na Szkle Malowane*.⁵¹ The audience as well as critics thus had an opportunity to compare the individual productions, even the top-quality ones coming from the West. As already stated above, although the original form of *Na Szkle Malowane* is not a musical, it is very close to this genre, partly thanks to the distinctive nature of its music. From this perspective, this musical piece was labelled as a musical not only in the Czech Republic, but also in Slovakia, and was classified within a similar line of music-dramatic theatre production. This is another reason why this study mentions it in relation to the musical. The communist regime followed a general directive for all the countries of the Soviet Union to have a preference for domestic and socialist authors over those from the West in the arts.⁵² While this fact created an unfavourable situation for Anglo-American musicals and resulted in an almost uniform artistic production in the country, it did help the analysed musical piece become successful on professional Czechoslovak stages, where it has remained until the present.

The Climax in Slovakia

The evolution of stagings of *Na Szkle Malowane* within the territory of former Czechoslovakia is very original, and even ground-breaking for the musical piece itself. It was here that several important events took place, transforming a “common” *spevohra* into an iconic performance popular with the audience as well as critics up until the present day. After the already mentioned Czechoslovak premiere in 1972, *Na Szkle Malowane* appeared in Slovakia for the second time in the following year in the Regional Theatre in Nitra under the name *Jánošík abo Na skle malované*.⁵³ Contemporary reviews indicate that professional critics viewed this performance rather negatively, but did praise the music. Although the performance made use of a recording (the above-mentioned record created by the band *Bukanýři* with the author Katarzyna Gärtner herself), the critics praised the way in which she managed to blend the old and the new – to transform folklore music into the music language of the rock genre.⁵⁴ Only several months after the Nitra premiere, *Na Szkle Malowane* moved to the East of Slovakia, in particular to the Jonáš Záborský Theatre in Prešov. As with Nitra, the performance did not meet with the praise of critics, although in this case the music was played live. According to the theatre critic Gizela Mačugová, the author of a review of the Prešov performance, the director Ján Šilan made too many cuts in the libretto, and therefore failed to respect the poetic tendencies of Bryll’s libretto that was created in verse. The director decided to emphasise the visual grandeur in the form of pyrotechnic effects, phony props, and pantomime. In her opinion, all these elements did not correspond with the nature of the musical piece and were therefore unnecessary.⁵⁵ From this review, one can assume that the director preferred the magnificence over the artistic qualities, and tried to shift the *spevohra* onto the plane of the musical, where the music, dancing and visual interpretation are more important than the lyrics. In spite of this fact, the Prešov theatre managed

⁵¹ Písková, *Zbojnícke variácie variácie*, 52.

⁵² Bár, *Od operety k muzikálu*, 222.

⁵³ Present-day Andrej Bagar Theatre Nitra. Information bulletin for the theatre performance *Jánošík abo Na skle malované* in Regional Theatre Nitra, October 27, 1973, Section 961, *Na skle malované*, The Public Specialized Archive of the Theatre Institute, Bratislava, Slovakia.

⁵⁴ The review of the theatre performance *Jánošík abo Na skle malované* in Regional Theatre Nitra, October 27, 1973, Section 961, *Na skle malované*, The Public Specialized Archive of the Theatre Institute, Bratislava, Slovakia.

⁵⁵ The review *Malované – zo skla zotreté* of the theatre performance *Na skle malované* in Jonáš Záborský Theatre Prešov, November 1974, Section 962, *Na skle malované*, The Public Specialized Archive of the Theatre Institute, Bratislava, Slovakia.

to have a remarkable 408 performances of this musical piece up until 2007, which documents its popularity with the audience.⁵⁶

Perhaps the most important event in the history of *Na Szkle Malowane* was its performance in Pavol Orszagh Hviezdoslav Theatre Bratislava on October 19, 1974.⁵⁷ The performance was directed by Karol L. Zachar along with Štefan Nosál, a prominent Slovak choreographer, and the scenographer Vladimír Suchánek who built a very solid basis for the entire historical development of the musical piece in Slovakia.⁵⁸ This theatre staging broke all records and became the most popular staging of this Polish musical piece in all Slovakia and the Czech Republic. It reached a record number of 647 reprises, which is only three reprises less than the Warsaw staging.⁵⁹ The Bratislava stage of the National Theatre performed this spevohra with certain pauses for almost thirty years, which is an entirely unique phenomenon in Slovak theatre art, and all the more in the musical branch. The musical piece became the most successful performance of the Slovak National Theatre and was always played in front of a sell-out crowd. Throughout its long existence, it even maintained the majority of the original actors, who were loyal to the performance over the entire period, most notably Michal Dočolomanský in the main character of Juraj Jánošík. The premiere was renewed two times – in 1981 and 1991. The last performance took place in 2004.⁶⁰

A great benefit for the musical piece, and thus also its authors, was that the Slovak National Theatre enabled and promoted a tour with this performance including not only Slovakia, but also foreign countries. After the Czechoslovak premiere in 1972, the Czech audience could see the play for the second time as late as 1975 thanks to this staging that was performed two times in Prague.⁶¹ It was also performed in Yerevan (Armenia, 1976), Tampere, Turku (Finland, 1977), and Budapest (Hungary, 1993).⁶² From the domestic guest performances, a remarkable one is the performance at the Folklore Festival Východná in 2000. The performance was even attended by the author of the libretto Ernest Bryll, who considered it an exceptional one, because it was attended by a record number of (almost) 15,000 spectators, who requested several encores.⁶³

⁵⁶ The review *Na skle malované sa vrátilo vo veľkom štýle* of the theatre performance *Na skle malované* in Jonáš Záborský Theatre Prešov, November 19, 1993, Section 962, *Na skle malované*, The Public Specialized Archive of the Theatre Institute, Bratislava, Slovakia.

⁵⁷ Pavol Orszagh Hviezdoslav Theatre was part of the Dramatic Department of the Slovak National Theatre until 2009. Information bulletin for the theatre performance *Na skle malované* in the Slovak National Theatre, October 19, 1974, Section 124, *Na skle malované*, The Archive of the Slovak National Theatre, Bratislava, Slovakia.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ The review *Moje milované “Na skle malované”* of the theatre performance *Na skle malované* in the theatre Nová scéna, Section 968, *Na skle malované*, The Public Specialized Archive of the Theatre Institute, Bratislava, Slovakia.

⁶⁰ Information bulletin for the theatre performance *Na skle malované* in the Slovak National Theatre, October 31, 1981, Section 151, *Na skle malované*, The Archive of the Slovak National Theatre, Bratislava, Slovakia; information bulletin for the theatre performance *Na skle malované* in the Slovak National Theatre, June 8 and 9, 1991, Section 187, *Na skle malované*, The Archive of the Slovak National Theatre, Bratislava, Slovakia; “Na skle malované sa vracia,” *Sme*, July 8, 2004, <https://www.sme.sk/c/1662830/na-skle-malovane-sa-vracia.html>; Knopová, *Súčasný slovenský divadlo*, 42.

⁶¹ The review *Tři inscenace, Ve znamení herecké tvorby, Třikrát hosté* for the theatre performance *Na skle malované* in the Slovak National Theatre, Section 963, *Na skle malované*, The Public Specialized Archive of the Theatre Institute, Bratislava, Slovakia.

⁶² The list of foreign guest performances of the Slovak National Theatre with the performance *Na skle malované*, September 20, 2004, Section 187, *Na skle malované*, The Archive of the Slovak National Theatre, Bratislava, Slovakia.

⁶³ The precise numbers vary. Various available resources, mostly reviews, state 12,000–15,000. Bryll believes the correct number is 15,000. Information bulletin for the theatre performance *Malované na skle* in the City

Over the course of its long existence, *Na Szkle Malowane*, performed in the Slovak translation as *Na skle maľované*, became a huge phenomenon. Thousands of spectators came to the capital city to see the performance, and tickets had to be booked several months in advance.⁶⁴ Karol L. Zachar admitted in an interview that one of the main reasons why he decided for this particular musical piece was the music, because he visited a Krakow performance in 1972. Gärtner's music influenced him the most and he saw great potential in it.⁶⁵ The performance of the Slovak National Theatre simply outperformed every expectation. It literally became a spectator magnet and created a part of history, even with regard to the music aspect. The song *Lipová lyžka* [Basswood Spoon] (originally *Lipowa tyżka*) became an iconic hit known to almost every Slovak. As of 1974, when Dočolomanský first sang it to the audience, it became one of the most important and prominent songs of this spevohra, as regarded by the Slovak audience, and subsequently even the critics. It became the musical piece's central song characterizing the spevohra up until the present. The song itself has become so popular that it is broadcast daily on the radio even today. In addition, it has been covered by numerous Slovak artists, many including it in their repertoire and performing the song publicly on various occasions: anniversaries, celebrations, on TV, etc.⁶⁶ To a great extent, the popularity of the song is related to the personality of Michal Dočolomanský, for whom the role of Jánošík in *Na skle maľované* was the role of a lifetime; he performed it for almost thirty years, starring in every single reprise, i.e., the already mentioned 647 performances.⁶⁷ The audience as well as critics praised him for the role to such an extent that he often presented it outside theatre stages. His performance of *Lipová lyžka*, even today considered legendary by many people, has left an indelible impression on Slovak people. The melody of this song has become extremely popular and is an inherent part of the music awareness of the Slovak nation. Being connected particularly with the personality of Dočolomanský, who popularized it, the song's connection to the spevohra itself is not as strong. Few people actually realize that neither this, nor any other song from the spevohra, belong to the Slovak nation, but that their origin has to be sought in neighbouring Poland. *Na Szkle Malowane* has become

Theatre Zlín, April 25, 2015, K32917P, Section City Theatre Zlín since 1991, The Arts and Theatre Institute, Prague, the Czech Republic.

⁶⁴ The review *Maľované trochu inak* of the theatre performance *Na skle maľované* in the Slovak National Theatre, January 30, 1996, Section 187, *Na skle maľované*, The Archive of the Slovak National Theatre, Bratislava, Slovakia.

⁶⁵ The review *Predstavenie, ktoré prináša radosť* of the theatre performance *Na skle maľované* in the Slovak National Theatre, February 19, 1994, Section 965, *Na skle maľované*, The Public Specialized Archive of the Theatre Institute, Bratislava, Slovakia; the review *Na skle maľované* of the theatre performance *Na skle maľované* in the Slovak National Theatre, November 22, 1974, Section 963, *Na skle maľované*, The Public Specialized Archive of the Theatre Institute, Bratislava, Slovakia.

⁶⁶ The song *Lipová lyžka* appeared for instance in the programme Chart Show sung by Juraj Slezák (considered "the second Slovak Jánošík" after Dočolomanský), where it was also included in several hit charts created within the show. It was also presented in the programme *Milujem Slovensko* by Samuel Tomeček, a young pop-rock singer, who included it in his album entitled *IKONY*. In the show *Tvoja tvár znie povedome* it was presented by the actor René Štúr, who also presents it in his projects in the same arrangement. The perhaps most interesting version is that created by the young Slovak singer-songwriter Sima Martausová, who reworked even the lyrics and inserted it in an interesting way in her own song called *Goralú*. The most curious version of *Lipova lyžay* and in general almost all songs from the spevohra *Na szkle malowane* was recorded by Martin Jakubec. He is known as a performer of hits for the older age category. His arrangement is based on the same principle we can see on the currently popular *Šláger TV*. All the aforementioned versions are freely available at the video portal Youtube.com. This is not an exhaustive list of all the existing cover versions of *Lipová lyžka*, only a brief selection of the most well-known ones.

⁶⁷ The review *Moje milované "Na skle maľované"* of the theatre performance *Na skle maľované* in the New Stage Theatre, Section 968, *Na skle maľované*, The Public Specialized Archive of the Theatre Institute, Bratislava, Slovakia.

a unique phenomenon in Slovakia: the music (and the entire musical piece) has become a popular one, and Slovaks literally made it their own.⁶⁸ Even Bryll himself admits in one interview that he does not understand the enormous success the *spevohra* achieved in Slovakia, and calls for sociological research to clarify this phenomenon in greater detail.⁶⁹ In my opinion, the answer incorporates several levels. Firstly, the musical piece appeared on stages at a time when interest in the musical was increasing, but was somewhat artificially suppressed due to the regime's directives.⁷⁰ In such a situation, a Polish *spevohra*, with its strong music characteristics, provided a great alternative. In addition, regular attendance of cultural events was simply part of every family's life; it was a certain unwritten principle of that time. These factors were combined with a high-quality libretto, the Jánošík topic echoing Slovak traditions and history, a subtle and witty text, and the top-level acting of the Slovak acting elite that drew the audience into the story and made them feel like its integral part created a great platform for a successful theatre production. Another important element was the songs based on folklore motifs, but updated into modern language and having a melody and rhythm that impacted the spectators. As stated by Bryll – these are songs about a freedom that was painfully missing during the time of the communist government, so they can become a certain metaphor for the struggle for freedom. The combination of all these layers, whether historical, dramatic, music, or psycho-social, could have significantly contributed to the popularity of the *spevohra* in Slovakia.

Apart from the Slovak National Theatre which gained its dominant position among Slovak stages thanks to the enormous success of its performance with the audience, the *spevohra* was performed between 1974 and 2003 only in one theatre – the already mentioned Prešov theatre. As late as 2004, it was included in the theatre production plan of the City Theatre in Žilina under the name *Maľované na skle: Balada o našom hrdinovi* [Painted On Glass: The Ballad Of Our Hero].⁷¹ The performance remained in the programme for ten years. The exceptional character of this staging lies particularly in the music, despite the fact that the contemporary reviews did not assess it positively in relation to the utilization of an outdated translation with almost archaic expressions.⁷² The main character of Jánošík was played by the lead singer of the rock band Arzén Jaroslav Gažo. The music arrangement was therefore created by the entire band, and they transformed Gärtner's music into a more up-to-date form. The output of their work was a harder, more rock-like sound of the individual songs; these were released on a CD and subsequently promoted at their performances outside the theatre. This topic, however, deserves more space, so it will be addressed later.

As already mentioned above, in Slovakia *Na Szkle Malowane* created its own history which was crucial for the durability of this musical piece. The *spevohra* was newly staged in the New Stage Theatre even before the death of Dočolomanský; the premiere took place in 2005, i.e., one year after the last performance of this play in the Slovak National Theatre.⁷³ This staging is, among

⁶⁸ The review *Slovenské divadlo si podmanil komerčný muzikál* of the theatre performance *Na skle maľované* in the Slovak National Theatre, July 15, 2002, Section 965, The Public Specialized Archive of the Theatre Institute, Bratislava, Slovakia.

⁶⁹ Balogh, "Úspech z násobuje blízkosť hôr," 25.

⁷⁰ Inštitorisová, Oravec, and Ballay, *Tváre súčasného slovenského divadla*, 254–255.

⁷¹ Information bulletin for the theatre performance *Maľované na skle alebo Balada o našom hrdinovi* in the City Theatre Žilina, October 14, 2004, Section 967, *Na skle maľované*, The Public Specialized Archive of the Theatre Institute, Bratislava, Slovakia; TV Fenix, "Derniera Na skle maľované," a YouTube video, 4:02, published in December 2014, <http://youtube.com/watch?v=6W8rXV3Z-14>.

⁷² Oleg Dlouhý, "Zradná jánošíkovská legenda," *Domino fórum*, no. 42, 19.

⁷³ Information bulletin for the performance *Na skle maľované* in the New Stage Theatre, September 22, 2005, Section 968, *Na skle maľované*, The Public Specialized Archive of the Theatre Institute, Bratislava, Slovakia.

other things, also one of those not based on the rhapsodized version by Emília Štercová. She actually updated the original translation by Halina Ivaničková, so she should receive the credit for the present-day form of (not only) *Lipová lyžka*. Her reworking and arrangement of Ivaničková's language into a more euphonic form was praised by the critics, especially with regard to the song lyrics.⁷⁴ The new translation for the New Stage was made by a celebrated Slovak poet and writer Lubomír Feldek.⁷⁵ His rhapsodizing is undoubtedly successful particularly from the perspective of the modern lexicon that was used, but at the same time it meant a change to the already deeply established Slovak version of lyrics for songs created by Bryll and Gärtner. The audience and the critics regarded it a successful staging, but it did not, in their view, outperform Štercová's version. The play was staged at the New Stage under the same name as the one performed in 1974. In the case of the more recent version, it can be said that it was included in the theatre production plans primarily for commercial reasons. Its successful history and the termination of performances on one stage opened the door for a new beginning on another one, which could benefit from the well-established tradition of the previous staging. The inventive approach of the production team to the original form of the musical piece, particularly the director and choreographer Ján Ďurovčík, turned the original *spevohra* into the equivalent of a musical. His innovative approach to the musical piece meant that the original ensemble of seventeen characters was extended by a professional dance folklore group SLUK [The Slovak Folk And Art Collective]. As a result, the staging was transformed into the level of the musical, with its dance choreography becoming more impressive and professional. The music arrangement was created by the music composer Henrich Leško, who updated the 1970s' rock music into the form of popular music of the twenty-first century. He specifically included more electronic sounds, more drums and other musical instruments, and in general directed it towards a harder rock sound than that of the original version. In addition, he composed new instrumental passages that clearly softened the transfers between the sung and the spoken parts of the musical piece and provided space for independent dance acts.⁷⁶ Since the New Stage is a theatre performing mostly musicals, it engages artists with appropriate training for this genre. The quality of the complex interpretation of the art was thus moved to a significantly higher level. These specific changes resulted in the modification of the *spevohra* into a musical. While Zachar's version had prominent dramatic passages enhanced with the music and dancing, Ďurovčík's version is its complete opposite.⁷⁷ The New Stage Theatre even presented it as a musical from the very beginning. All the promotion materials, as well as the subsequent reviews regard *Na Skle Malované* as a musical. It could be considered quite natural

⁷⁴ Out of all the Slovak professional stages, the translation by Halina Ivaničková was only used for the Žilina performance. The songs were, however, sung with lyrics by Emília Štercová, as Ivaničková's translation was not considered a good one. The review *Ach tá naša clivota...* of the theatre performance *Na skle malované* in the Slovak National Theatre, November 1, 1974, Section 963, *Na skle malované*, The Public Specialized Archive of the Theatre Institute, Bratislava, Slovakia; Dlouhý, "Zradná jánošíkovská legenda," 19; Jano Rác, "Košícké Na skle malované," *Literárny týždenník*, no. 1, 2015, 5.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*; information bulletin for the performance *Na skle malované* in the New Stage Theatre, September 22, 2005, Section 968, *Na skle malované*, The Public Specialized Archive of the Theatre Institute, Bratislava, Slovakia.

⁷⁶ The author of the study even obtained information from the performance *Na skle malované* of the theatre Tower Stage directed by Ján Ďurovčík she attended on November 24, 2017, in the Sports Arena in Trenčín. SLUK, *Na skle malované: pesničky z muzikálu*, Forza Music s. r. o., 8588003334053, 2005, a CD. The individual songs from the CD are freely available online on Youtube.com. Information bulletin for the theatre performance *Na skle malované* in the New Stage, September 22, 2005, Section 968, *Na skle malované*, The Public Specialized Archive of the Theatre Institute, Bratislava, Slovakia.

⁷⁷ The review *Druhé Na skle malované* of the theatre performance *Na skle malované* in the New Stage Theatre, October 19, 2005, Section 968, *Na skle malované*, The Public Specialized Archive of the Theatre Institute, Bratislava, Slovakia.

in this specific case, but the original *spevohra* received this label not only in Slovakia, but also in the Czech Republic and in Poland, the country of its origin, even earlier. Why this happened is a question. Although Ďurovčik's staging of *Na Szkle Malowane* did not have as many reprises as the staging at the National Theatre, there was a renewed premiere of this musical piece in 2014 – this time in the new space of the Tower Stage Theatre. The musical piece was performed in Slovakia up until the end of 2017, mostly outside this particular theatre, because the production team arranged a tour of Slovakia with the musical.⁷⁸

One of the last professional theatre performances of *Na Szkle Malowane* in Slovakia thus far is the staging at the State Theatre Košice in 2014. This performance provided an opportunity for students of the Košice conservatory who performed along with dramatic artists from the Košice stage. Even this staging had its specific features, but its position within the history of the musical piece is not as prominent, which is why this study does not deal with it in greater detail.⁷⁹ This performance of *Na Szkle Malowane* by the Košice theatre is, however, one of the few that is performed even to this day (2019).

The Evolution Process of *Na Szkle Malowane* in the Czech Republic

The importance of the *spevohra* in the Czech Republic is different from that in Slovakia. It may seem that its popularity was not as enormous as with Slovaks, but even in this country the musical piece had specific conditions and gained a certain position and popularity with people that remains until the present. The number of theatre productions in the Czech Republic significantly exceeds those of Poland, Slovakia, or any other country. From the statistical point of view, from the first premiere in 1972 until 2015, there was a total number of twenty-seven stagings in Czech, one of which was produced by the Polish Stage of the Těšín theatre; this performance was played in Polish.⁸⁰ Apart from Těšín, the *spevohra* was introduced at four theatres in Prague, as well as three times in Brno, two times in Liberec, and two times in Karlovy Vary, where one of the premieres was eventually cancelled for political reasons. The remaining performances took place in theatres located all around the Czech Republic – Hradec Králové, Olomouc, Šumperk, Uherské Hradiště, Opava, Plzeň, Most, České Budějovice, Kladno, Jihlava, Pardubice, Příbram, Ostrava, and Mladá Boleslav. At the beginning of 2008, there were two premieres of the musical piece taking place in Brno on one single day, performed by two different theatres. It was a coincidence, but in the end the production teams decided that the different approaches they had taken enabled them to play both performances although their premieres were scheduled for the same day.⁸¹ In contrast, in Poland *Na Szkle Malowane* was only staged by twenty theatres (apart from the already mentioned Polish Stage from Český Těšín).⁸² Slovakia staged the performance in only six professional theatres, but the musical piece became enormously popular there, thus

⁷⁸ “Na skle malované,” Ján Ďurovčik, accessed February 11, 2019, <http://www.jandurovcik.com/tvorba/muzikal>.

⁷⁹ Information bulletin for the theatre performance *Na skle malované* in the State Theatre Košice – Drama, December 12, 2014, Section 11303, *Na skle malované*, The Public Specialized Archive of the Theatre Institute, Bratislava, Slovakia.

⁸⁰ Information bulletin for the theatre performance *Janosik czyli Na szkle malowane* in the Regional Theatre Český Těšín, January 25, 1976, K7575P, Section Regional Theatre Český Těšín 69–83, the Polish Stage Český Těšín, The Arts and Theatre Institute, Prague, the Czech Republic; information bulletin for the theatre performance *Malované na skle* in the City Theatre Zlín, April 25, 2015, K32917P, Section City Theatre Zlín since 1991, The Arts and Theatre Institute, Prague, the Czech Republic.

⁸¹ Jan Trojan, “Jeden titul ve dvou divadlech,” *PRÁVO*, no. 44, 2008, 20.

⁸² “Przedstawienia: Na szkle malowane,” *Encyklopedia Teatru Polskiego* accessed February 11, 2019, <http://encyklopediateatru.pl/sztuki/3189/na-szkle-malowane>.

the number only documents that the quantity is not necessarily the crucial factor influencing the lifetime of the musical piece as a whole, nor its musical element. The City Theatre in Zlín, similarly to the Košice theatre, performs the play even today.⁸³ While in Slovakia *Na Szkle Malowane* began to be intensively staged after the Czechoslovak premiere in 1972, the second Czech staging only took place four years later on the already mentioned Polish Stage of the Těšín theatre as *Janosik czyli Na Szkle Malowane*. While it was produced by a Czech director František Kordula, the name clearly indicates that it was not played in Czech.⁸⁴ The next staging took place as late as 1977 in the North-Moravian Theatre in Šumperk under the name *Malováno na skle* and with the sub-heading *Jánošík*.⁸⁵ This was the most frequent Czech version, along with *Malované na skle* or the literal translation *Na skle malované*.⁸⁶ Since then, the musical piece has appeared relatively regularly on Czech stages. Of particular interest is the fact that the production teams only began to choose it frequently in the new millennium. Almost half of all the Czech stagings of *Na Szkle Malowane* are dated within one decade after 2000, which is very unusual for an almost thirty-year-old musical piece. An important reason could have been the new translation by the singer-songwriter Jaromír Nohavica, who rhapsodized the original Bryll libretto for the theatre Divadlo Na Fidlovačce, coincidentally at the time of the thirty-year anniversary of the literary original. Until that time, the stagings had used the translation by Mojmirá Janišová with song lyrics by Václav Čort. It was this innovative Nohavica translation that transformed the legendary hero Juraj Jánošík from Terchová into a fictional Wallachian outlaw Janík from Těšín. He modernized the language of Janišová and Čort and provided his own specific type of humour. This alternative helped transform and update the story for the Czech environment and bring the main hero closer to the local audience. The new translation received positive feedback from both the audience and critics, which may be the reason it became popular with theatre productions and was staged at multiple theatres.⁸⁷ The thirty-year-old original in translation, that used to work well at the time of its creation but which was already obsolete at that time, suddenly became relevant again.

None of the Czech stagings of *Na Szkle Malowane* had such an impact, however, as that of the Slovak National Theatre. The performance with Michal Dočolomanský starring as Jánošík exceeded the borders of the theatre branch and even appeared on TV and the radio, and has remained there up until the present. In the Czech Republic, the musical piece stayed only on theatre stages and in several cases also on CDs,⁸⁸ but unlike in Slovakia, it did not manage to cross the border and move beyond the theatre world. Nevertheless, as documented by contemporary

⁸³ The author of the study attended the performance *Malované na skle* in the City Theatre Zlín directed by Hana Mikolášková on March 5, 2019.

⁸⁴ Information bulletin for the theatre performance *Janosik czyli Na szkle malowane* in the Regional Theatre Český Těšín, January 25, 1976, K7575P, Section Regional Theatre Český Těšín 69–83, the Polish Stage Český Těšín, The Arts and Theatre Institute, Prague, the Czech Republic.

⁸⁵ Information bulletin for the theatre performance *Malováno na skle (Jánošík)* in the North-Moravian Theatre Šumperk, January 22, 1977, K10376P, Section North-Moravian Theatre Šumperk 63–01, The Arts and Theatre Institute, Prague, the Czech Republic.

⁸⁶ Information bulletin for the theatre performance *Malované na skle* in the City Theatre Zlín, April 25, 2015, K32917P, Section City Theatre Zlín since 91, The Arts and Theatre Institute, Prague, the Czech Republic.

⁸⁷ Information bulletin for the theatre performance *Malované na skle* in Divadlo Na Fidlovačce, September 7, 2000, A2535P, Section Divadlo Na Fidlovačce Prague since 98, The Arts and Theatre Institute, Prague, the Czech Republic; “Na skle malované Jarkom Nohavicom,” *Sme*, no. 35, 2004, 9.

⁸⁸ One article from the 1972 *Brněnský večerník* states that the central song of the spevohra was often played by the radio broadcasting station Hvězda (the contemporary news reporting station of the Czechoslovak Radio Broadcasting). It is, however, the only resource available, where such information is present, so I do not regard it as relevant and important for this study. A clip from the magazine *Brněnský večerník*, September 25, 1972,

reviews, it was very popular with the audience since the very beginning with the Czechoslovak premiere. The proof may be various awards received by Czech professional stages based on spectator voting and attendance statistics. The City Theatre in Most received, for example, the “Spectators’ Award” based on the number of spectators who visited its staging of *Na Szkle Malowane* in 2000. Unfortunately, the particular resource does not state the exact number.⁸⁹ František Dáňa, former director of F. X. Šalda Theatre in Liberec, confirmed in 2003 to the daily *Mladá fronta DNES* that the average number of reprises of a performance in the Šalda Theatre equaled seventy. The high attendance of *Malované na skle* meant that its closing night only took place after a record number of one hundred reprises, and according to Dáňa, the reason was the termination of the copyright authorization.⁹⁰ The popularity of the original musical piece as well as its stagings are confirmed by other theatres. In the season 2005/2006, the Horácké Theatre Jihlava received a diploma for the most spectator-popular staging in the category of drama theatre at the XI exhibition of professional theatres of the Czech Republic for its staging of *Na skle malované*.⁹¹ Similarly, in 2008 the originally Polish musical piece became the most frequently attended performance of the East Bohemian Theatre Pardubice.⁹² Popularity with the audience did not fade even in the more recent history. In the spectator survey *Aplaus*, the Zlín staging of *Malované na skle* was ranked by spectators as the best performance of the season 2014/2015.⁹³ The above-mentioned awards are not the only ones achieved by Czech theatres with the particular musical piece; in this place, I only wanted to emphasise the most prominent ones and those most relevant to the particular topic, because these awards prove that the Polish *Na Szkle Malowane*, despite not being an iconic Broadway musical, and despite not receiving a wide popularization campaign among the general public, is an musical piece that is extremely popular. The exact reason – whether it be the high-quality music, the original literary musical piece, the original staging, the combination of all the previous factors, or other ones – is, however, a topic for more extensive scholarly research.

As with the Slovak theatres, the Czech ones also organized several tours abroad. The primary aim was undoubtedly to demonstrate their own abilities and present their work, but at the same time they provided an opportunity for Bryll and Gärtner’s artistic work to be introduced in other foreign countries. The available resources, however, indicate that the most faraway venue was Turkey. Graduates of the music-dramatic department of the Prague conservatory engaged in the Žižkov theatre (at that time T. G. Masaryk Theatre, at present Žižkov Theatre of Jára Cimrman) regularly reprised their graduation performance *Malované na skle aneb Jánošík*, and even performed it at an international festival in Ankara.⁹⁴ Other foreign performances usually took place in Slovakia or Poland – i.e., countries where *Na Szkle Malowane* was already known.

K5046P, Section State Theatre Brno 48–90 Drama of the State Theatre Brno, The Arts and Theatre Institute, Prague, the Czech Republic.

⁸⁹ The review *Malováno na skle má Cenu diváka* of the theatre performance *Malováno na skle* in the City Theatre Most, November 13, 2000, K24989P, Section City Theatre Most since 1990, Drama Most, The Arts and Theatre Institute, Prague, the Czech Republic.

⁹⁰ “Divadlo se dnes loučí s muzikálem,” *Mladá fronta DNES – Liberecký kraj*, no. 152, 2007, 2.

⁹¹ “Muzikál Na skle malované má cenu,” *Mladá fronta DNES – Českomoravská vrchovina*, no. 19, 2007, 5.

⁹² “Kunětická hora po roce ožije divadlem,” *Scena*, May 5, 2008, <http://www.scena.cz/index.php?o=1&d=1&t=2&c=7734>.

⁹³ “Milovníci Malovaného na skle se radují: Vyšlo CD s písničkami z muzikálu,” City Theatre Zlín, accessed February 2, 2019, <https://www.divadlozlin.cz/cs/novinky/milovnici-malovaneho-na-skle-se-raduji-vyslo-cd-s-pisnickami-z-muzikalu>.

⁹⁴ Information bulletin for the performance *Malované na skle divadla DIK – Divadlo konzervatoře Praha v Turecku*, K20612P, Section DIK – The Prague Conservatory Theatre until 2010, The Arts and Theatre Institute, Prague, the Czech Republic; “Jánošík v Turecku,” *Mladá fronta DNES*, no. 137, 1993, 11.

An important factor in the history of the musical piece in the Czech Republic is the music aspect of the musical. Similarly to Polish and Slovak reviews, the Czech ones also address Gärtner's music in superlatives. The available resources from the Czech lands do not include any review or statement that would criticize the music in any way or include any negative evaluation. Although the original *spevohra* is assessed mostly as a theatre performance or rather as a musical – i.e., from the teatrology perspective, the critics did not realize the importance and exceptional nature of the musical piece's music element. Nevertheless, there is enough information regarding the music, although the majority takes a rather general perspective, not an analytical one. Apart from Fukač's review, another example of the positive assessment of the music is an article by the theatre critic and opinion journalist Jan Kolář from 1978, who reviewed one of the Prague performances of *Na Szkle Malowane*. In his article, he praises Gärtner's composition work in relation to this musical piece, and describes in a positive fashion the manner in which she connected the folklore tradition with rock music: "The music [...] perfectly captures the uniqueness of the libretto. We may hear there authentic folklore motifs as well as 'artificial' music elements of world popular music. The folklore aptly dressed in the rock sound creates a distinctive music form."⁹⁵ What he probably meant was the utilization of the pentatonic scale, which is used in both folk music and blues – the music styles the author based her work on. In the songs of *Na szkle malowane*, Gärtner used this similarity and blended the styles coherently. This above-mentioned statement of the opinion journalist also confirms the views of Czech music scholars regarding the composing practice in Gärtner's work.

For the occasion of the Czechoslovak premiere, Gärtner and the music group *Bukanýři* made a music record that was to become binding for all other performances. In the Czech Republic, it was, however, only used by some professional theatres.⁹⁶ In the remaining performances, the recording was replaced by various instrumental combinations. In Plzeň, it was performed by an entire operetta orchestra, in the Puppet Theatre Ostrava it was played by a trio – piano, cello, and violin, along with other additional minor instruments.⁹⁷ A very progressive and creative approach to the music arrangement was taken at the City Theatre Zlín. The original rock background was transformed into a mix of various updated genres of popular music. A modification of rhythm and added characteristic features of the individual genres changed Gärtner's songs into country, ska, blues and rock'n'roll. An innovative aspect that had a major influence on this creative process may be also the rich selection of musical instruments used by production teams and also actively used in the performance by the actors themselves. The very infrequently used playback was combined with electric and acoustic guitars, bass guitar, ukulele, banjo, drums, cimbalom, violin, flute, clarinet, tambourine, etc. The sharpening of the scythe in the performance was also incorporated as a musical instrument.⁹⁸ Such creative adjustments to the music original are proof

⁹⁵ The review *O rockovém Jánošíkovi* of the theatre performance *Malované na skle aneb Jánošík* in the theatre ABC, March 2, 1978, K11547P, Section Prague City Theatres 50, The Arts and Theatre Institute, Prague, the Czech Republic.

⁹⁶ Among them for instance the North-Moravian Theatre Šumperk, Jaroslav Průcha Theatre in Kladno, The Victorious February Theatre Hradec Králové, or Vítězslav Nezval Theatre in Karlovy Vary.

⁹⁷ Information bulletin for the theatre performance *Malováno na skle* in the Josef Kajetán Tyl Theatre Plzeň, May 30, 1998, K23826P, Section Josef Kajetán Tyl Theatre Plzeň 55 – operetta/musical Plzeň, The Arts and Theatre Institute, Prague, the Czech Republic; information bulletin for the theatre performance *Malované na skle* in the Puppet Theatre Ostrava, April 11, 2008, K28783P, Section Puppet Theatre Ostrava since 1990, The Arts and Theatre Institute, Prague, the Czech Republic.

⁹⁸ Information bulletin for the theatre performance *Malované na skle* in the City Theatre Zlín, April 25, 2015, K32917P, Section City Theatre Zlín since 1991, The Arts and Theatre Institute, Prague, the Czech Republic. The author of the study attended the performance of *Malované na skle* in the City Theatre Zlín directed by Hana Mikolášková on March 5, 2019, from which she draws her findings.

of the creative activity of producers, but depend on multiple factors, many of which cannot be influenced. Moreover, such factors may be so extensive that the initial intention of the authors can be transformed according to their own goals, such as in this case, where the only part of the original music was the melody. All the remaining elements were entirely omitted or adjusted. In my opinion, this may also be one possible way to enhance the role of music in a spevohra and thus transform it into, or at least bring it closer to, a musical, as in many cases, including the City Theatre Zlín's staging, there is only a thin line between these two types of music theatre.

Czech articles commenting on this musical piece include interesting comparisons of *Na Szkle Malowane* with the musical *Balada Pro Banditu* [A Ballad For A Bandit] written by Milan Uhde with music by Miloš Štědroň,⁹⁹ since the Czech and the Polish musicals are both based on similar topics. Both use the motif of a hero who was at the same time “a robber.” *Balada pro banditu* deals with the life of Nikola Šuhaj, who fights for justice, similarly to Jánošík.¹⁰⁰ In addition, the authors of the period articles emphasise the similarity of the songs of the aforementioned musical pieces. In my opinion, however, it is impossible to talk about a genre similarity of their music, as Štědroň's songs do not have the rock background like those by Gärtner; they are instead traditional popular songs appropriate for the period of the 1970s, sometimes even blended with so-called tramp songs. Nevertheless, this topic may also become a suitable area for further research. Apart from this comparison to a particular musical, the music composed for the spevohra brought Gärtner other comparisons to Czech artists, such as F. E. Burian, Karel Svoboda, or Petr Ulrych.¹⁰¹ When seeking for a comparison of Gärtner's composition activities to a Czech representative of the music composition branch, my personal choice would be Karel Svoboda, because the music production of both these authors can be, with certain exceptions, defined as so-called hit production, although Gärtner used the harder rock sound more frequently than Svoboda. Gärtner is therefore the one to take a great part of the credit for the fact that the original spevohra *Na Szkle Malowane* began to be called “East Side Story.”¹⁰² The director of the 2008 Brno performance Stanislav Slovák used the label “Hair Of The Eastern Bloc.”¹⁰³

⁹⁹ Information bulletin for the theatre performance *Malováno na skle* in F. X. Šalda Theatre Liberec, March 14, 2003, K26610P, Section F. X. Šalda Theatre Liberec since 1993, drama Liberec, The Arts and Theatre Institute, Prague, the Czech Republic; Jiří P. Kříž, “Výlet na Slovensko,” *Hospodářské noviny. Příloha HN na víkend*, no. 155, 2000, 8; Jaroslav Pokorný, “Malované na skle potěši,” *Mladá fronta DNES – Pardubický kraj*, no. 32, 2007, 5; “Kunětická hora ožije divadlem Malované na skle,” *Scena*, July 9, 2007, <http://www.scena.cz/index.php?o=1&d=1&r=2&c=6676>.

¹⁰⁰ Bár, *Od operety k muzikálu*, 239.

¹⁰¹ The review *Pozoruhodný umělecký čin* of the theatre performance *Zbojníci a Žandáři aneb Jánošík* in the State Theatre Brno, October 3, 1972, K5046P, Section State Theatre Brno, 48–90, Drama of the State Theatre Brno, The Arts and Theatre Institute, Prague, the Czech Republic; the review *O rockovém Jánošíkovi* of the theatre performance *Malované na skle aneb Jánošík* in the theatre ABC, March 2, 1978, K11547P, Section Prague City Theatres 50, The Arts and Theatre Institute, Prague, the Czech Republic; the review *Malováno na skle možná trochu pozdě* of the theatre performance *Malováno na skle* in the J. K. Tyl Theatre Plzeň, June 5, 1998, K23826P, Section J. K. Tyl Theatre Plzeň 55 – operetta/musical Plzeň, The Arts and Theatre Institute, Prague, the Czech Republic.

¹⁰² The review *Jánošík s apetítom tinedžerov* of the theatre performance *Na skle malované* in the State Theatre Košice – drama, April 27, 2015, Section 11303, *Na skle malované*, The Public Specialized Archive of the Theatre Institute, Bratislava, Slovakia; the review *Jánošík Ďurko na dedinskej párty alebo ako sa Ďurovčík Janko o režisérске remeslo pokúšal...* of the theatre performance *Na skle malované* in the New Stage Theatre, Section 968, *Na skle malované*, The Public Specialized Archive of the Theatre Institute, Bratislava, Slovakia.

¹⁰³ Jan Trojan, “Jeden titul ve dvou divadlech,” *PRÁVO*, no. 44, 2008, 20.

Political Manipulation

Politics is an integral part of the history of this musical piece. *Na Szkle Malowane* was created at a time when the communist regime very strongly interfered with cultural life and art in general. Its relationship to Gärtner's work was, however, ambivalent. On the one hand, the establishment posed various problems, while, on the other hand, it was partially due to a certain approach on the part of the socialist government that the musical piece was supported and received better opportunities to be staged than foreign ones. Political representatives did not officially take issue with the libretto or the music. Even Bryll's dialogues, where certain passages addressed the tough government and restrictions on the nation's freedom, and rock music which was not always approved of by the regime, were not considered problematic. Without any difficulties, the musical was performed up until the time Bryll began to actively speak out against the communist regime. This issue was already mentioned earlier in relation to the development of the musical piece in Poland – during this period, the musical piece was not performed for ten years. The unfavourable political time was not only reflected in the stagings of *Na Szkle Malowane* in Poland, but in Czechoslovakia as well. The Slovak National Theatre had to remove it from the repertoire twice: the first time less than three years after the premiere, based on a recommendation from the Polish. The reason was that Bryll remained loyal to Charter 77, which resulted in the supervisory bodies restricting the dissemination of all his works. This situation lasted until 1981, when the performance was introduced once again. Two years later, however, Bryll left the communist party and emigrated to the West.¹⁰⁴ This second “problem” even led to a cancellation of the 1983 premiere of the spevohra in Vítězslav Nezval Theatre in Karlovy Vary. The information bulletin of the performance that eventually took place seven years later provides the information that one day before the planned premiere, that had been prepared for six weeks, the Secretary for Ideology of the Regional Committee of the Communist Party forbade the performance based on pressure from Poland.¹⁰⁵ Due to these events, *Na Szkle Malowane* only appeared on stages after the fall of the regime. In Czechoslovakia, it was performed even during the “prohibition period” in 1986 by Divadlo Akabal of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague, but under the name *Džezinbed*. This staging was only based on the motifs from the particular musical, so it in all probability did not have to deal with any impediments from the political bodies.¹⁰⁶ Even this example of one particular musical piece clearly demonstrates how much the government of the former regime interfered with art, and how it systematically controlled the entire culture life in all socialist countries. Ironically, however, it was particularly these restrictions, with regard to the preference of domestic and socialist production, which provided *Na Szkle Malowane* with the opportunity to succeed in socialist countries, where the competition was weakened by the regime.

¹⁰⁴ Svetozár Okrucký, “Na skle malované a zajtrajšia päťstovka,” *Práca*, no. 301, 1996, 4; Balogh, “Úspech znásobuje blízosť hôr,” 25; Jozef Švolík, “Deväť zjavení Jánošíka,” *Pravda*, no. 177, 2000, 9; the review *Malovánky a pomalovánky* of the theatre performance *Na skle malované* in the Slovak National Theatre, March 1997, Section 965, *Na skle malované*, The Public Specialized Archive of the Theatre Institute, Bratislava, Slovakia.

¹⁰⁵ Information bulletin for the theatre performance *Malováno na skle* in Vítězslav Nezval theatre Karlovy Vary, October 20, 1990, K20020P, Section Vítězslav Nezval theatre Karlovy Vary 58–98, The Arts and Theatre Institute, Prague, the Czech Republic.

¹⁰⁶ The exact date is not available and is not even stated on the website of the Arts Institute. Information bulletin for the theatre performance *Džezinbed* in the Akabal Theatre Prague and a review thereof, A555, Section Akabal Theatre Prague, The Arts and Theatre Institute, Prague, the Czech Republic.

Na Szkle Malowane Outside the Theatre and Musical Environment

Na Szkle Malowane as a spevohra or a musical did not only remain conserved on theatre stages. Its historical development is also closely related to TV broadcasting, while its music has been recorded in the music media. There were initially two video recordings, which were subsequently presented on TV – one in Slovakia, the other in Poland. Both of them were recordings of theatre performances. The Slovak recording was made in 1980, capturing the “legendary” staging of the Slovak National Theatre with Michal Dočolomanský in the lead role.¹⁰⁷ The video is broadcast from time to time on public service TV, and is also freely available on the largest internet video database YouTube.¹⁰⁸ Somewhat later, the performance also began to be sold on DVD.¹⁰⁹ A video recording of the performance in its motherland was consequently created. It was a digitized 1993 performance by the director Krystyna Janda in Powszechny Theatre in Warsaw. The recording was, however, processed and officially released one year later.¹¹⁰ As with the Slovak video recording, the Polish recording was also broadcast by the Polish TV company TVP. Obviously, any type of extension of the impact on the audience is positive not only for the musical piece itself, but for the authors and all the people involved. In addition, it may also serve as archive material for future researchers. In connection with the appearance of *Na Szkle Malowane* on TV, Bryll mentioned several times that the Germans even created a film script based on the motifs of his play. Unfortunately, the resources available do not provide any information supporting this claim.

Apart from video recordings capturing the particular theatre performances, there are also various types of music media capturing only the music element. These include both the particular arrangements of Gärtner’s music from the individual theatre stagings, and recordings independent of theatre performances. The first and extremely important milestone exceeding the borders of theatre and the musical, which remains functional up until the present even as an independent music product, is the LP released under the name of the musical. The record was created in Poland, where it was released in 1971, i.e., one year after the musical piece’s premiere.¹¹¹ Of particular interest about this record is the fact that it included all the prominent Polish artists of contemporary popular music: Czesław Niemen, Maryla Roodwicz, Halina Frąckowiak, Andrzej Rybiński, Jerzy Grundwald, Edward Hulewicz, and Andrzej and Jacek Zieliński. Gärtner brought these artists together and gave them complete freedom with the music arrangement, so they did not need to stick to the original and mechanically record a set of genre-united songs. This gave rise to the complete opposite. Every song is different, has its own characteristics and arrangement, and the only hint of Gärtner and Bryll’s work are the melody and the lyrics. The most progressive tracks from this album are in all probability those sung by the Polish music icon Czesław Niemen.¹¹² With their art rock sound and psychedelic elements, his *Lipowa Łyzka*

¹⁰⁷ “Na skle malované (TV film),” Česko-slovenská filmová databáze, accessed February 20, 2019, <https://www.csfd.cz/film/221296-na-skle-malovane/prehled/>.

¹⁰⁸ K K, “Na skle malované,” a YouTube video, 1:44:41, published in October 2016, <http://youtube.com/watch?v=EmieU-KeYo0>.

¹⁰⁹ *Na skle malované*, directed by Karol L. Zachar (1980), Slovakia, Plus Production, 2006, a DVD; the review *Vyšlo zreštaurované Na skle malované* of the theatre performance *Na skle malované* in the New Stage Theatre, Section 968, *Na skle malované*, The Public Specialized Archive of the Theatre Institute, Bratislava, Slovakia.

¹¹⁰ “Przedstawienia: Na szkle malowane,” Encyklopedia Teatru Polskiego, accessed February 21, 2019, <http://encyklopediateatru.pl/przedstawienie/4035/na-szkle-malowane>.

¹¹¹ Ernest Bryll and Katarzyna Gärtner, *Na szkle malowane*, Polskie Nagrania Muza, XL 0666, SXL 0666, 1971, an LP; “Various – Na szkle malowane,” Discogs, accessed February 22, 2019, <https://www.discogs.com/Variou-Na-Szkle-Malowane/release/5273248>.

¹¹² Lubomír Dorůžka, *Panoráma populární hudby 1918/1978, aneb Nevšední písničkáři všedních dní* (Prague: Mladá fronta, 1981), 249–250.

and *Pożegnanie Harnasia* differ the most from the original. While Niemen's reworking is the most distinctive one, every participating artist contributed to the album becoming an independent musical piece that does not need to be connected exclusively to the theatre environment and the particular plot. Such a practice was already known from Webber and Rice's *Jesus Christ Superstar*, where the LP was released even before the musical piece was introduced on theatre stages, as well as the musical *Hair*, and many others.¹¹³ In the case of *Na Szkle Malowane*, unlike with the two musicals mentioned above, the songs were not recorded in the arrangement from the original score. In addition, the original musical piece was a *spevohra*, not a musical, and it is uncommon for the music from a *spevohra* to resonate so significantly that it would deserve a music record. The fact that the songs from *Na Szkle Malowane* were recorded by many well-known Polish artists, who even included them in their repertoires, significantly helped its popularity – at least with the Polish audience. The LP also documents the work of the individual artists who transformed the music from a *spevohra* into independent songs. In my opinion, the music from this album could be a great incentive for further and more in-depth research. It is perhaps due to its artistic quality that there has been no other record of this musical in Poland – the standard set by Gärtner and her project with Polish stars is simply so high that it cannot be bested.

While Poland was satisfied with one record of top artistic quality, the situation in Slovakia was different. The first LP, released in 1978 in the record publishing house OPUS, contained songs from the legendary staging in the Slovak National Theatre including Dočolomanský's *Lipová Lyžka*.¹¹⁴ It has been re-edited several times even as a CD by other music distributors.¹¹⁵ Ďurovčík's musical arrangement of the *spevohra* also received its music record. In 2005, a CD was released under the same name as the 1978 album – *Na skle maľované*;¹¹⁶ it was recorded in collaboration with SEUK. The distinctive features of this record were a different casting of the vocal parts, a significantly harder rock sound, and a different translation of the songs – i.e., the one by Ľubomír Feldek. The record also includes a significantly greater amount of inserted instrumental passages than the previous record with Dočolomanský which was based on the arrangement created by the already mentioned Polish rock band Bumerang. One year later, another version with an even harder rock sound was released, recorded by the band Arzén; in some passages, their sound even approached the hard rock genre. Since the frontman of this Terchová-and-Žilina-based band Jaroslav Gažo also played the lead role in the staging of the musical piece in the Žilina theatre, all the band members participated in its musical arrangement. This collaboration thus gave rise to songs that were used both for the staging and the CD. Unlike with the previous records, however, the album carries not only the name of the musical, but also the band name, which indicates that they naturally intended to sell it even independently under their own brand, not only under the brand of the theatre performance.¹¹⁷ Arzén commonly plays these songs at their concerts. In addition, *Lipová Lyžka* is the only one of the seventeen

¹¹³ Bez, Degenhardt, and Hofmann, *Muzikál*, 64, 72.

¹¹⁴ Ernest Bryll and Katarzyna Gärtnerová, *Na skle maľované*, OPUS, 9116 0562, 1978, an LP; "Ernest Bryll, Katarzyna Gärtnerová – Na skle maľované," Discogs, accessed February 22, 2019, <https://www.discogs.com/Ernest-Bryll-Katarzyna-Gärtnerová-Na-Skle-Maľované/release/9412667>.

¹¹⁵ Ľubica Suballyová, "Maľované aj na CD – platni," *Pravda*, no. 250, 1994, 9; Katarína Hojová, "Najoblúbenejší muzikál na CD," *Národná obroda*, no. 271, 1996, 14; "Herci pri muzike," *Teatro*, no. 6, 1997, 42; "Na skle maľované," Discogs, accessed February 22, 2019, <https://www.discogs.com/search/?q=na+skle+malovane&type=all>.

¹¹⁶ SEUK, *Na skle maľované: pesničky z muzikálu*, Forza Music s. r. o., 8588003334053, 2005, a CD.

¹¹⁷ ARZÉN, *Na skle maľované*, Creaomedia s. r. o., CT 0007-2-631, 2006, a CD. The individual songs from the CD are also freely available on Youtube.com.

songs that received its own official video clip starring Michal Dočolomanský in the main role.¹¹⁸ In contrast, the music from *Na Szkle Malowane* was not considered so important in the Czech Republic. There have been, however, several records released. The first one was created by the City Theatre in Most in 2000, at that time still with the translation by Čort and Janišová, and in the same year there was also a record by Divadlo Na Fidlovačce. In 2003, F. X. Šalda Theatre in Liberec released a record of the performance directed by Ďurovčík, and the latest record from 2015 was created by the City Theatre in Zlín.¹¹⁹ The older Czech translation was also used, apart from the theatre in Most, for Ďurovčík's staging, while the other two records use Nohavica's Janík from Wallachia. All these theatres released a CD – these are, however, not freely available; they may be purchased only at the particular theatres. This fact and the copyright may be the reason why internet portals do not include any record presenting these albums to the public, in contrast to the Slovak ones. As a consequence, their impact was not as great as in other countries, which also means that the popularity of the musical in the Czech Republic did not spread as strongly. This is unfortunate because the Zlín theatre, in particular, has a high-quality music arrangement that would work even apart from the theatre performance, and that would certainly deserve greater professional attention. In the present situation, it unfortunately only remains conserved. In any case, some of the records, with their interesting versions and innovative and original music arrangement, shifted the original concept of *Na Szkle Malowane* as a *spevohra* one level higher.

A Final Contemplation of the Musical Piece's Historical Transformations

All the above stated facts and historical events related to the *spevohra Na Szkle Malowane* are proof that Bryll and Gärtner are the authors of a musical piece that has been attracting audiences for almost fifty years. It is a work that has achieved considerable popularity in its homeland, partially due to the fact that the songs from the original *spevohra* were popularized by leading figures such as Czesław Niemen, Maryla Rodowicz, Halina Frąckowiak, or Andrzej Rybiński. Since the folklore character of both the topic and the music do not make it all that suitable for staging in world theatres, there would be the logical assumption that such a *spevohra* would have a limited lifetime only in its country of origin. As already explained, however, this was not the case for several reasons. It was surprising even for the authors themselves that the musical piece achieved perhaps greater success outside Poland. Especially in Slovakia, its popularity was and continues to be exceptional. It literally became an unparalleled phenomenon of the music-entertainment theatre. The popularity of *Na Szkle Malowane* with the audience has not even been beaten by original Slovak plays of a similar kind. It established a certain distinctive tradition that reached its peak in the past century when the contemporary political situation enabled the musical piece to find its way to this country. In this period, however, it did not need to compete

¹¹⁸ Arzén, "Arzén – Lipová lyžka," a YouTube video, 3:22, published in October 2007, <http://youtube.com/watch?v=gdPQLYuj7-w>.

¹¹⁹ A review *Malované hlasy na CD, Muzikál Malováno na skle se brzy objeví také na cédéčku*, November 11, 2000, K24989P, Section City Theatre Most since 90, Drama Most, The Arts and Theatre Institute, Prague, the Czech Republic; a review *Úspěšný muzikál Malované na skle* of the theatre performance *Malované na skle* in Divadlo Na Fidlovačce, January 4, 2001, A2535P, Section Divadlo Na Fidlovačce Prague since 98, The Arts and Theatre Institute, Prague, the Czech Republic; the review *Michal Dočolomanský křtil v divadle pod Ještědem* of the theatre performance *Malováno na skle* in F. X. Šalda Theatre Liberec, March 14, 2003, K26610P, Section F. X. Šalda Theatre Liberec since 1993, Drama Liberec, The Arts and Theatre Institute, Prague, the Czech Republic; a press release from April 15, 2016, concerning the theatre performance *Malované na skle* in the City Theatre Zlín, April 15, 2016, K32917P, Section City Theatre Zlín since 91, The Arts and Theatre Institute, Prague, the Czech Republic.

with a huge number of other musical pieces, sometimes of even better artistic quality, which arrived with the internet and online availability. Since there was no such option at that time, the only way to hear the popular songs again and enjoy Bryll's humour was to attend a theatre performance. In this fashion, thousands of spectators from all over Slovakia came to see *Na Szkle Malowane*. The situation has changed, of course, since then. After the fall of the communist regime and with technological development, certain changes have occurred, but the popularity with the public remains. This may be documented with the continuation of performances and the release of albums with songs from the musical. The greatest phenomenon is *Lipová Lyžka*, which has become literally a popular song. Gärtner's music has become the Slovaks' own piece, and as Bryll once said, it remains for researchers to find out why. In my opinion, there are several reasons, as stated in the study, whether it be the phenomenon of the main character Jánošík played by Dočolomanský (as it was undoubtedly his role of a lifetime) and the identification of the audience with the main character and the entire story, or the strength of the theatre staging directed by Karol L. Zachar, which became deeply rooted, or simply the specific energy and the flawless synthesis of the lyrics and the music. This topic deserves an interdisciplinary approach and a more in-depth research.

As is obvious from the previous text, compared to Slovakia and even Poland, Czech has had significantly more premieres. Based on various awards and rankings of spectator attendance, the popularity of the musical piece cannot be doubted. Additional evidence is the fact that it has remained on Czech stages up until the present day. In my opinion, Nohavica's innovative translation brought the main hero as well as the settings of the story closer to the audience and supported the musical's popularity. There is, however, a difference in the popularity in these formerly unified countries. Based on my own experience, I would argue that in Slovakia, there is a general awareness of *Na Szkle Malowane*, but few people know that it is not an original Slovak musical piece. Younger generations are aware of the song *Lipová Lyžka*, because it is still included on the playlists of Slovak radios. In contrast, in the Czech Republic the musical piece is only familiar to interested spectators, frequently theatre enthusiasts, so only the "theatre community" is aware of it. I admit, however, that research into this issue could prove my assumptions wrong. Moreover, with regard to the music element, the awareness is even smaller, which is naturally caused by the fact that the musical recordings of the songs from the performance are not freely available and are not presented publicly, in contrast to Slovakia.

From the perspective of the historical development of *Na Szkle Malowane*, it is interesting that Bryll's original concept of a *spevohra* is not the only one. The existence of such a type of musical piece is dependent on its staging by a theatre production, which is naturally influenced by the options available to the particular theatre. The authors did not enforce an adherence to the original form of their musical piece, which is a common practice in the case of big Broadway musicals, thus the production teams had relative creative freedom in arranging the musical piece; so in many cases the original *spevohra* was transformed into a musical. This fact, together with an incorrect assessment of its genre, caused that it more often appears and is known as a musical than a *spevohra*.

Another integral part of the musical piece's history that is equally important, even though capturing only its music element, is the release of various music media. In this case, the music recorded on LPs, CDs, or other media functions independently, which is uncommon for a *spevohra*. These media are proof that Gärtner composed music that works even without any link to the story. She created songs that are autonomous and have their own clear composition, but at the same time can acquaint the listener with the entire plot without any need for spoken words. In contrast, the music material is similar and distinctive; they may be classified within the same category, so there is a certain internal coherence among the individual songs. Thanks to Gärtner's

composition principle, several extremely valuable recordings could be made that work outside theatre stages, for instance the one sung by Polish music stars from the 1970s.

The aim of this text was to point out a certain uniqueness of the musical piece *Na Szkle Malowane*. Although it perhaps did not achieve the worldwide success of Broadway or other Western musical pieces of the kind, it does not deserve underestimation, because it has never had any such ambition. It is intended for theatre stages of Slavic nations, because for them it is easier to identify with a folk hero and the folklore music element. Folklore is the language of this musical piece. This historical overview documents the variety of approaches to the musical piece itself, and the importance of the stagings that have given it its distinctive character. *Na Szkle Malowane* is undoubtedly one of the few compositions by Katarzyna Gärtner that has achieved such a great success even beyond the Polish borders. Her compositional work reached there a certain versatility of music language which obviously works well on multiple fronts.

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Péter Bozó

Der Fall Wagner: Hans Richter and the Composer's Reception in the Hungarian Satirical Magazin

*Borsszem Jankó*¹

“Manches, was in der Zeitung steht, ist dann doch wahr – wenn auch nicht alles”
(Bismarck)

Abstract | The period when Hans Richter was active as conductor at the Budapest National Theatre (1871–1875) was the heyday of political satirical magazines in Hungary. One of them, *Borsszem Jankó*, edited by Adolf Ágai, regularly published fake news and caricatures concerning the reception of Richard Wagner, whose music was more intensively cultivated in Budapest under Richter's conductorship than earlier. In my study I attempt to contextualize and interpret the articles published in *Borsszem Jankó* about Wagner and Wagnerians in order to demonstrate some characteristics of the composer's Hungarian reception. I argue that the partly ideological opposition between Richter and Hungarian Wagnerians might have played a significant role in Richter's departure from Budapest.

Keywords | Hans Richter – parody and caricature – press history – reception history – Richard Wagner

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Introduction

Studying the Hungarian reception of Richard Wagner's works, it seems to be suitable to make a distinction between several groups of recipients. As a working hypothesis, one can assume that different groups of recipients reacted in different ways to Wagner's works and views. The perspective of the opera audience, comprising individuals of very different intellectual and musical gifts, was in all likelihood other than that of the critics judging his works in music magazines; musicians playing in the pit for their livelihood did not have the same opinion about his romantic operas and music dramas as the composer looking for his individual style and studying ardently his full scores.²

In this study, I deal with a quite particular group of recipients and writings: those dedicated to Wagner and published in the Hungarian magazine entitled *Borsszem Jankó* (Johnny Pepper-

¹ The present study was written as part of a larger project exploring Richard Wagner's reception in Hungary between 1862 and 1918, and was supported by a postdoctoral scholarship of the Hungarian National Research, Development and Innovation Office (PD 124 089). The author is a research fellow of the Budapest Institute for Musicology (Research Centre for the Humanities, Hungarian Academy of Sciences). The following abbreviations are used: *BJ* = *Borsszem Jankó*; *FL* = *Fővárosi Lapok*; *ZszL* = *Zenészeti Lapok*.

² Concerning Wagner's compositional reception by Bartók, see Tibor Tallián, “Richard Wagner Magyarországon. Reflexek és reflexiók,” *Magyar Tudomány* 175, no. 1 (January 2014): 16–31.

corn) between 1869 and 1875, largely in the period, when Hans Richter was active in Budapest.³ *Borsszem Jankó* belonged to the family of the satirical magazines – it was something similar to contemporary Viennese newspapers such as *Kikeriki*, *Figaro*, *Der Humorist*, *Die Bombe*, and *Der Floh*;⁴ the Munich *Fliegende Blätter*; the Berlin *Kladderadatsch*;⁵ or the Paris *Le Journal amusant* and *Le Charivari*.⁶ A common characteristic of these magazines is that they did not publish genuine news, serious reviews and reports, but jokes and funny fake news of a topical content, sometimes in prose sometimes in verses. Apart from written texts, caricatures and satirical cartoons also played a significant role.

Needless to say, magazines of this kind cannot be regarded as reliable sources as the more objective (but likewise not always impartial) articles of a serious daily newspaper. Nevertheless, in my opinion, they can be used as sources in another way: jokes, if they are interpreted in the right context – to put it simply, if we understand them –, can serve to inform us about the popular image of a historical figure (for instance, a composer). Thus, in my article, I deal with the less than serious aspects of nineteenth-century Wagner reception. Although in an international context, namely in the German and Anglo-American secondary literature,⁷ this approach to the subject is not completely new, in connection with the composer's Hungarian reception I do not know any attempt of this kind.⁸ In Part 2, I introduce *Borsszem Jankó* in the wider context of the contemporary Hungarian press, while in the remaining parts of my study, I attempt to contextualize and interpret the articles published in the magazine about Wagner and Wagnerians in order to demonstrate some characteristics of the composer's reception in Austro-Hungarian Budapest of the 1860s and 1870s.

***Borsszem Jankó* in the Context of the Contemporary Budapest Press**

Borsszem Jankó, a magazine published once a week, first appeared in 1868, the year following the Austro-Hungarian Compromise. It was a product of the period which was called “the heyday of political satirical magazines in Hungary” in an earlier volume about the history of the press.⁹ Its founder and first Editor-in-Chief was Adolf Ágai (Rosenzweig; 1836–1916), an assimilated

³ During most of the nineteenth century, Buda and Pest were two separate cities. They were united as Budapest only in 1873. For the sake of simplicity, I use here the name “Budapest” also for the period before 1873.

⁴ The Viennese magazines in question are available in ANNO, the digital newspaper archive of the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek: <http://anno.onb.ac.at/>.

⁵ Both *Fliegende Blätter* and *Kladderadatsch* can be consulted in the digital library of the Universität Heidelberg: <https://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/fb>.

⁶ Available online in the digital collection of the Paris Bibliothèque Nationale (Gallica): <https://gallica.bnf.fr>.

⁷ Ernst Kreowski–Eduard Fuchs, *Richard Wagner in der Karikatur* (Berlin: Behr, 1907); Hermann Hakel, ed., *Richard der Einzige. Satire, Parodie, Karikatur* (Wien–Hannover: Forum, 1963); Wolfgang W. Parth, ed., *Der Ring der nie gelungen. Richard Wagner in Parodie, Satire und Karikatur* (München: Heyne, 1983); Manfred Eger, “Richard Wagner in Parodie und Karikatur,” in *Richard-Wagner-Handbuch*, ed. Ulrich Müller–Peter Wapnewski (Kröner: Stuttgart 1986), 760–776; Lydia Goehr, “Wagner through Other Eyes: Parody and the Wit of Brevity in Theodor W. Adorno and Mark Twain,” *New German Critique* 43, no. 3 (November 2016): 27–52.

⁸ For detailed, book-length studies of Wagner's Hungarian reception, see Emil Haraszti, *Wagner Richard és Magyarországa* (Budapest: MTA, 1916) and Ildikó Varga, *Richard Wagner, Magyarországa és a magyarok, 1842–1924* (Pécs: author's edition, 2018), which is based on her PhD dissertation written in English: “Richard Wagner, Hungary, and the Nineteenth Century. Aspects of the Reception of Wagner's Operas and Music Dramas” (PhD diss., Graz: University of Music and Dramatic Arts, 2014). Although both Haraszti and Varga's books are well documented and based on extensive research, their interpretation of the sources is not always convincing.

⁹ Géza Buzinkay, “Élclapok, 1867–1875,” in *A magyar sajtó története*, vol. II/2: 1867–1892, ed. Miklós Szabolcsi (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1985), 169–196. For another survey on *Borsszem Jankó* and Hungarian satirical

Jewish Hungarian medical doctor, writer, journalist and humorist, who edited the magazine until 1910, and published his writings under the pen names “Csicseri Bors” or “Spitzig Iczig.”¹⁰ The Editorial Board consisted mainly of young and gifted bourgeois intellectuals, habitués of the café called “Kávéforrás” – the group included among others the playwright Árpád Berczik (1842–1919), the translator of Goethe’s poems, Lajos Dóczy (1845–1919), as well as the later director of the Budapest Népszínház (Folk Theater) and Editor-in-Chief of the daily newspaper *Budapesti Hírlap*, Jenő Rákosi (Kremsner; 1842–1929).¹¹ Caricatures and cartoons were drawn by the Czech Karel Klič (1841–1926; he arrived from Brno, (his name was sometimes spelled as Karl Klietzsch) and the Hungarian János Jankó (1833–1896).¹²

Contemporary Hungarian satirical political magazines such as *Üstökös*, *Bolond Miska*, *Ludas Matyi*, and *Mátyás deák* were mostly the organs of different political interest groups, and usually functioned in association with serious daily newspapers. Only a small part of the articles were written by professional journalists and members of the Editorial Board – most of the publications were sent to the editorial office by the readers (that means, by followers of the political direction represented by the magazine). Since the editorial correspondence was normally anonymous, in most cases the identity of the authors cannot be investigated.¹³ Basically, *Borsszem Jankó* did not differ from the other political satirical magazines of the period: it functioned as the funny pair of the daily newspaper *Reform*, and represented the views of the “Deák-párt,” the political party governing Hungary between 1867 and 1875.¹⁴ Led by Ferenc Deák (1803–1876), this political party came into existence in 1861 and lasted until 1875, when it fused with its own opposition, the “Balközép Párt” (Middle-Left Party) led by Kálmán Tisza (1830–1902), under the name “Szabadelvű Párt” (Liberal Party).¹⁵

According to the media historian Géza Buzinkay, *Borsszem Jankó* represented a far higher standard than the other Budapest organs of this kind: “it aspired for characterization and dissemination of knowledge even in its political writings.”¹⁶ In addition, it also paid significant attention to the events of cultural life.¹⁷ In the columns of the journal, some recurring fictive figures can be found who represent specific social types: Berci Mokány is a dissolute provincial nobleman who is behind the times; Monocles Szent-szivari belongs to the higher aristocracy (the word “szivar” in his name means cigar); while Zirzabella Lengenádfalvy Kotlik is an ugly but busty extreme left-wing patriotic girl.

The popularity of the magazine is evidenced by the growing number of readers: at the very beginning *Borsszem Jankó* had 500–600 subscribers, with this figure increasing, however, to over 2,800 within one year. In 1870, the number of subscribers was already 4,000, which was a significant quantity under contemporary conditions, what is more, 500 further copies were

newspapers, see *ibid.*, *Borsszem Jankó és társai. Magyar élclapok és karikatúráik a XIX. század második felében* (Budapest: Corvina, 1983).

¹⁰ For Ágai’s personality, see József Szinnyei, *Magyar írók élete és munkái*, vol. 1 (Budapest: Hornyánszky, 1891), 74–78.

¹¹ Buzinkay, *A magyar sajtó története*, vol. II/2, 197.

¹² *Ibid.*, 172.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 171.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 169 and 195.

¹⁵ László Csorba, “A dualizmus rendszerének kiépülése és konszolidált időszaka (1867–1890),” in *Magyarország története a 19. században*, ed. András Gergely (Budapest: Osiris, 2005), 368–370.

¹⁶ Buzinkay, *A magyar sajtó története*, vol. II/2, 169.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 204–205.

regularly sold by the news vendors.¹⁸ *Borsszem Jankó* appeared right up until the 1930s, it should be noted, however, that after World War I it was not able to maintain its earlier popularity.¹⁹

Hans Richter and the Budapest Wagnerians

In the columns of *Borsszem Jankó*, three persons are mentioned who played a significant role in the Budapest reception of Wagner's works: Franz Liszt, Kornél Ábrányi and Hans Richter.

As is well known, Liszt was not only the conductor of the Weimar world premiere of *Lohengrin* (28 August 1850) but did a great deal for Wagner in general, both through his personal contacts and through his writings analyzing and popularizing Wagner's works.²⁰ Ábrányi (Eördögh; 1822–1903), a pianist, composer and music writer, translated two of the composer's librettos into Hungarian (*Tannhäuser* and *Der fliegende Holländer*), furthermore, as the Editor-in-Chief of the music magazine *Zenészet* *Lapok*, he published a series of important articles – among others reviews of the Budapest Wagner premieres that took place between 1866 and 1874 (see Table 1). His music magazine propagated Wagner's music so much so that Tibor Tallián characterized it as “a kind of *Revue Wagnérienne*.”²¹ Two of the four Wagner premieres that took place at the Budapest National Theatre between 1866 and 1874 were conducted by Hans Richter, who from 1866 was Wagner's personal acquaintance and copyist. Before his Budapest activity, he already successfully propagated the composer's works in Munich and Brussels and later it was he who conducted the world premiere of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* on the occasion of the opening of the Bayreuth Festspielhaus.

Table 1: Wagner premieres at the Budapest National Theater, 1866–1874

Date	Piece	Conductor	Ábrányi's Review in <i>ZszL</i>
1 Dec 1866 (first perf.)	<i>Lohengrin</i>	Karl Huber	7/10 (Dec 9, 1866), [146]–149; 7/11 (Dec 16, 1866), [162]–166
7 Oct 1871 (revival)	<i>Lohengrin</i>	Hans Richter	12/3 (Oct 15, 1871), 33–41
11 March 1871 (first perf.)	<i>Tannhäuser</i>	Hans Richter	11/22 (March 19, 1871), [338]–343; 349–351
10 May 1873 (first perf.)	<i>A bolygó hollandi</i> [= <i>Der fliegende Holländer</i>]	Hans Richter	13/19 (May 18, 1873), [145]–147
24 Nov 1874 (first perf.)	<i>Rienzi, az utolsó tribun</i> [= <i>Rienzi, der letzte</i> <i>der Tribunen</i>]	Hans Richter	14/29 (Nov 29 1874), [229]–232

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 172 and 195.

¹⁹ The majority of the issues published between 1868 and 1919 are digitally available in Arcanum Digitális Tudománytár accessed 13 May 2019, <https://adplus.arcanum.hu/hu/collection/Borsszemjanko/>.

²⁰ See *Franz Liszt: Sämtliche Schriften*, Bd. 4: *Lohengrin und Tannhäuser von Richard Wagner*, ed. Detlef Altenburg (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1989), furthermore “Wagner's fliegende Holländer” and “Richard Wagner's Rheingold,” in *Franz Liszt: Sämtliche Schriften*, Bd. 5: *Dramaturgische Blätter*, eds. Dorothea Redepenning und Britta Schilling (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1989), 68–114 and 115–117. See also Liszt's correspondence with Wagner: *Franz Liszt – Richard Wagner Briefwechsel*, ed. Hanjo Kesting (Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 1988).

²¹ Tibor Tallián, “Pest (die unmusikalisches Stadt). Wagner Richárd Pestén,” *Muzsika* 56, no. 7 (July 2013): 15–19.



Figure 1: Hans Richter, Wagner and Liszt on the title page of *Borsszem Jankó* (24 December 1871)

It was with Liszt's support that Richter was contracted as second conductor of the orchestra to the Budapest National Theatre at the beginning of the season 1871/1872.²² The cover caricature

²² For details on Richter's Budapest activity, see Christopher Fifield, "Chapter 5: 1871-1874: Budapest," and "Chapter 6: 1874-1875: Budapest and Bayreuth," in *ibid.*, *Hans Richter* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2016), 51-62 and 63-81.

of the 1871 Christmas issue of *Borsszem Jankó* (Plate 1) expressively characterises his situation: he can be seen turning his back on the audience and conducting the orchestra; he is attended by Wagner, whose profile can be seen in the middle of Richter's back; Liszt is applauding the new conductor in the bottom right corner of the picture.²³ This title page is all the more worthy of attention because it was published only three months after Richter was contracted to Budapest in September 1871. Already in this short early period of his activity, he successfully revived Wagner's *Lohengrin* (this was his debut at the National Theatre) and in each of the first three concerts of the Budapest Philharmonic Society in the Redoute (Vigadó) he conducted some parts of Wagner's stage works (for the Wagner pieces performed in Richter's Budapest concerts, see Table 2).²⁴

Table 2: Wagner's works conducted by Richter in the concerts of the Budapest Philharmonic Society, 1871-1873

Date	Work
8 Nov 1871	<i>Der fliegende Holländer</i> , Prelude
22 Nov 1871	<i>Tristan und Isolde</i> , Prelude and Isolde's Love Death
13 Dec 1871	<i>Tristan und Isolde</i> , Prelude and Isolde's Love Death
28 Feb 1872	<i>Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg</i> , Prelude, Prelude to Act 3, Quintet; <i>Huldigungsmarsch</i>
13 March 1872	<i>Liebesmahl der Apostel</i>
27 March 1872	-
13 Nov 1872	-
27 Nov 1872	Gluck: <i>Iphigenia in Aulis</i> (Wagner's arrangement)
11 Dec 1872	<i>Eine Faust-Ouvertüre</i>
5 March 1873	-
19 March 1873	-
9 Apr 1873	<i>Tristan und Isolde</i> , Prelude

Hence it is not surprising that the Budapest press regarded him as the composer's follower and ideal performer, already after a short time like this. An anonymous review published in *Fővárosi Lapok* claimed already after the revival of *Lohengrin* that the new conductor introduced himself with "sparkling success;" that he knew "the spirit and combinations of Wagner's operas all over;" that "he was applauded already after the prelude;" and that "he was called onto the stage several times after each of the acts."²⁵ This is of even greater interest because one year before Richter's arrival, in September 1870, a performance of *Lohengrin* by the Budapest opera company was criticised in *Borsszem Jankó* as being scandalous. "It has a splendid effect (unknown even for Wagner) when a duet is performed by three people: two singers and a prompter."²⁶ If the report, illustrated with a grotesque music example (see Plate 2), can be taken at face value, the following dialogue took place on the stage of the National Theatre during the performance in question:

²³ BJ 4/208 (24 December 1871), title page.

²⁴ The data are taken from Richter's own Conducting Book, published in Fifield, *Hans Richter*, 469-746.

²⁵ FL 8/232 (10 October 1871), 1063.

²⁶ BJ 3/142 (18 September 1870), 407.

Borsszem Jankó a színházban.



Ez a Molnár! Hogy ismeri a publikumát. Mind felültet a kritikusokat. Játsszik két jelenetet jól; ezzel megnyeri a jó kritikusokat; játszik tizet rosszul, ezért dicséri Asbóth és — a kollegák.

Marci. Jó gyerek az a Gyuri — kitünő mint szalon-színész, csak hőszerepekbe ne kapna. Jajajaj! ezekben irtóztató! Hiányzik belőle az a szent, az a magasztos ihlet. Azt a jégenkopogó miatyánkját!

Kálmán. No hálá Isten, legalább van hős színész. Marci mekképe kezd kiállhatatlan lenni. Hanem Gyurinak táncsolni fogom, ne kapjon szalon-szerepbe. Az a frakk úgy áll rajta, mint egy marqueurön. Fi done! Hjab, erre születni kell.

Miklós. Hiszen nem volna rossz az a Molnár, különösen mint hős- és szalonszínész. Ha meggondolom, hogy Marcinak és Kálmánnak mennyire megnőtt a szarva. Isten engem, örülök, hogy ide szerződötték. Csak attól félek, hogy karakter szerepekre csábítja magát. Jaj, azokban megbukik!

Ede (a kisebbik.) No, most már nem bánom, ha itt van. Ennek legalább szólhatok, mert az a Marci, Kálmán és Miklós olyan pökhendiek; miattok lehetnék rendező a garderóában, de a színpadon nem hederítenek rám. Molnár egy kicsit le fogja törni a szarvukat. Csak attól félek, hogy a rendezésbe is bele akar szólni — no, ahoz nem ért, — ahoz igazán nem ért.

Ede (a nagyobbik.) Nem rossz az a Molnár, igazán nem rossz. Jól deklamál, a színpadon otthon van, van hangja, alakja; csak a fölfogáshoz nem ért. Jaj, scenirozni ne próbáljon — abba bele törnek a kése.

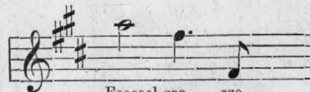
Molnár. A hős szerepeket játszani fogom; de mit ér, ha a szalon-szerepeket nem kapom hozzá? Hisz mindennap nem adhatunk tragédiát. Aztán a karakter szerepeket mégis csak reám fogják bízni. Az a szegény Feleki nem bírja. A rendezés sem megy tovább így, — jó ember az az Edus, de nincs leleményessége. Jaj, meg a scenirozás — hisz egyetlen tableaut sem tud kihozni, ez a Szigligeti is a javát mindig kitérül. Azt rám kell bízni. Intrikus meg egyáltalán nincs — vagyis mindenki az. Éu is az leszek. Van jövője a nemzeti színháznak!

Ez a Neszveda k. a. nem volna rossz még „Lohengrin“-ben sem; csak az kár, hogy bármit énekeljen, mindig az „Alvajárót“ játsza.

Hanem adott neki Ellinger — akkora három gixert, hogy szegény Elsa rögtön — fölébredt. — A publikum félt, hogy e rendkívüli állapotban valami baja esik, de szerencsére azon módon újra elaludt.

Gyönyörű, és még Wagner által sem ismert effektus az, mikor egy duetben hárman vesznek részt: két énekes, meg egy sugó. A nemzeti színházban hallható volt ily formán:

Lohengrin



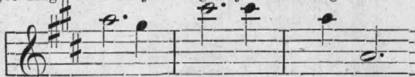
Eeeeeel-saa sze -



ret-lek! (A sugóhoz.) Ne ka - ja - bál - jon úgy!

Sugó. Maga ne kiabáljon. Meghallja a közönség!

Elsa



Ooooooh u - raam meg - mentőőöm!



(ppp) Jaj, - - leesik a köpönyegem, fogja meg.

Sugó (Lohengrinnek, pianissimo.) Soha meg ne kérdjed . . .

Lohengrin (con dolore.)



(A sugóhoz)

Oda ved le térded! Hol Sie der Teufel, redens doch lauter!

Sugó. Sie sein eine Grobian! Ik Ihnen werde aufschreiben lassen.

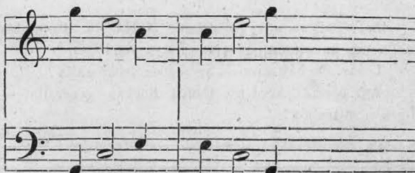
Lohengrin (éneki félhalkan Elsának más vég hiányában.)



Gro - bi - an, Gro - bi - an

(A sugónak) * = pedál, azaz = lábával megrugja a sugót)

Tutti



Ez istenitélet! Ez istenitélet!

(A kaszinóban.) * * * Kricsi. Te Bódog, igaz-e, hogy te léssz az intendans?

Bódog. Annyira még nem bódogultam meg.

Figure 2: Music example characterizing a *Lohengrin* performance of the Budapest National Theatre from *Borsszem Jankó* (18 Sept 1870)

LOHENGRIN: Eeeeeelsa, I love you! (to the Prompter): Don't shout so loudly!

PROMPTER: It's you who shouldn't shout! The audience will overhear it!

ELSA: Ooooooh my lord and rescuer! (ppp) Poor me, my cloak has fallen down, take it.

PROMPTER: (to Lohengrin, *pianissimo*) "Never shall you ask me..."

LOHENGRIN: (to the Prompter, *con dolore*) Kneel down there! *Hol Sie der Teufel, redens* [= *reden Sie*] *doch lauter!*

PROMPTER: *Sie sein eine Grobian!* [recte: *Sie sind ein Grobian!*] *Ik* [= *ich*] *Ihnen werde* [*werde Ihnen*] *aufschreiben lassen.*

LOHENGRIN: (he sings semi-softly to Elsa, in the lack of another cue): Grobian! Grobian! (He gives the Prompter a kick with his foot.)

TUTTI: This is an ordeal! This is an ordeal!²⁷

Beyond the shared principles, there were, however, certain conflicts among the members of the “*musikalische Fortschrittspartei*,” and the articles published in *Borsszem Jankó* reacted with sharp eyes and tongue to these conflicts. At least this consequence can be drawn from an anonymous article entitled “Liszt banquet,” published in May 1869. In this account a certain Wöhler (probably Gottfried Wöhler, organist of the Pest Jewish community and reviewer of the daily newspaper *Pester Lloyd*)²⁸ states the following: “Liszt, Wagner und Ábrányi, das ist der Einklang im Dreiklang” (Liszt, Wagner, and Ábrányi: this is the concord in the triad).²⁹ The sentence attributed to Wöhler has ironic overtones: the concord was emphasized at a moment when the earlier harmony was disturbed between Liszt and Wagner by the “augmented triad.” By November 1868 at the latest, it was obvious even for Liszt that his daughter Cosima wanted to divorce Hans von Bülow, and wished to continue her life as Wagner’s companion, with whom she had a liaison from the summer of 1864 (in 1865, she also gave birth to a child, who received the name Isolde Bülow).³⁰ Not surprisingly, the affair caused a severe conflict in the relationship between Liszt and Wagner, and the disagreement became even more intense on the occasion of the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-1871.³¹

Another writing entitled “Ányi-ényi,” published in *Borsszem Jankó* on 3 March 1872, also attests to the conflicts between the Budapest Wagnerians.³² This article, which is, according to its subtitle, “A great conspiracy against the Wagner Association,” is a dialogue between Ábrányi, the violin virtuoso Ede Reményi (1828-1898), and Reményi’s violinist pupil, Nándor Plotényi (1844-1933). The three musicians decide to establish its own association, which is called “Ányi-ényi Association” after the ending of their names. The fictional dialogue is a reaction to the fact that certain Budapest Wagnerians felt an aversion to Richter’s activity and were jealous of him, particularly when at the beginning of 1872 the idea of a Budapest Wagner Association (following the example of the German *Wagnervereine*) occurred, and on February 25 a gathering was held in the Hungaria Hotel in order to establish the new organisation:

ÁBRÁNYI: Well, my friend, we don’t do anything against this Wagner Association?

REMÉNYI: For Wagner, it cannot be forbidden...³³

PLOTÉNYI: But for Richter, it can be!

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Szinnyei, “Wöhler Gottfried,” in id., *Magyar írók élete*, vol. 14 (1914), 1654.

²⁹ *BJ* 2/71 (May 9, 1869), 188.

³⁰ For the story of the love triangle, see Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt*, vol. 3: *The Final Years, 1861-1886* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997), 106-146.

³¹ For Liszt and the German unification movement, see Dana Gooley, *The Virtuoso Liszt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); furthermore Péter Bozó, “A kaméleon és a nacionalizmusok: Liszt és a német egység” [The Chameleon and the Nationalisms: Liszt and German Unification], in id., *A dalszerző Liszt* [The Song Composer Liszt] (Budapest: Rózsavölgyi, 2017), 87-102.

³² *BJ* 5/218 (3 March 1872), 8.

³³ The text attributed to Reményi paraphrases the title and first verse of a poem by Sándor Petőfi: *A virágnak megtiltani nem lehet...* (For the flower, it cannot be forbidden...).

ÁBRÁNYI: Richter? Richter!... Actually, what kind of right does this man have to exist? I can't remember whether I read his name in the *Gazette* among the appointments when the judges were appointed.³⁴

REMÉNYI: You're right! Maybe, he's not appointed at all, he only usurps the title "Richter."

ÁBRÁNYI: I've got to investigate this! I'll unveil the deceit. Because this Richter is almost a true Scharfrich[t]er!³⁵ He cuts out Reményi with Beethoven, and cuts me out with Wagner. It's a scandal! If at least Beethoven were Beethovényi, and Wagner were Wágnényi, and Hungarian music were rescued due to the fermatas of the composer's names!³⁶

Although the polemics concerning the Wagner Association were mentioned both by Haraszti³⁷ and Varga,³⁸ they failed to explain the hidden motives behind the phenomenon. In my opinion, the debate revealed the (partly professional, partly ideological) controversy that occurred among the Budapest Wagnerians following Richter's appearance and initial successes. The tension is already evident in Ábrányi's music magazine, *Zenészet* *Lapok*, at the turn of November and December 1871. It can be regarded as a sign of this that in the November 26 issue, Ábrányi republished Wagner's letter on Hungarian music, written to him nine years earlier, what is more, he even added a polemic commentary, in which he warned of the dangers of Germanization in connection with the Wagner cult:

Since in our country, and particularly in the capital city, every kind of Germanization began to spread, so much so that it resulted in the categorical resistance and reaction of the entire Hungarian press and public opinion, we sadly experience that in the field of the arts, the opponents of Hungarian artistic efforts also began to appear in a more and more audacious, pitiless and provocative way, and they detract and despise everywhere even the most honorable representatives of Hungarian art, and overtly and secretly emphasize that Hungarian artistic efforts should be terminated, because they are useless obstacles, and they only hinder the great German civilization in this field! Sinful agitations of this kind are all the more dangerous and harmful, because their powerful impact and influence can be felt even within the walls of the most prestigious artistic circles and institutions, and through the power of authority and influence they attempt to annihilate, underplay and control every small result, which already belong to Hungarian national culture.³⁹

Although in the writing I quoted above neither Richter's name, nor the National Theatre is mentioned, the reference that "Richard Wagner's name, his working and his omnipotent German direction are always emphasized and propagated by these anti-Hungarian agitations,"⁴⁰ leaves no doubt whom the critics meant.

One week later the reader of *Zenészet* *Lapok* could learn that the concertmaster of the National Theatre orchestra, Reményi, resigned from his post, what is more, the magazine published in full length his letter of resignation written to the intendant Bódog Orczy, in which he gave the following reason for his decision:

[...] I have experienced and I am always experiencing that in our theatre national culture is not the main goal, but there are much more visible and invisible agents at work (which do not take into consideration in our artistic conditions) [...] - after these regrettable experiences, however sadly, I am obliged to

³⁴ This is word play: *Richter* means "judge" in German.

³⁵ Continuation of the word play: *Scharfrichter* means "executioner" in German.

³⁶ *BJ* 5/218 (3 March 1872), 8.

³⁷ Haraszti, *Wagner Richard és Magyarország*, 359–367.

³⁸ Varga, *Wagner, Hungary and the Nineteenth Century*, 215–217.

³⁹ *ZszL* 12/9 (26 November 1871), 134.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

leave the institution, whose flourishing for the sake of our national culture was and remains the ideal of my heart.⁴¹

At the end of the year, in the New Year's Eve issue of the magazine, an article evaluating the musical life of the past year appeared, criticizing the intendant Orczy in the following way:

He made the National Theatre a true Germany colony, where reverence of Hungarian art is tolerated and always profaned. Hungarian artists were either expelled or discouraged, and instead of them, Germanizing and Bohemianizing people are sitting now on the throne!⁴²

It was after such antecedents that the idea of a Wagner Association occurred to Richter. On 2 January 1872, he informed the composer that, following German models, he also wanted to establish a *Patronatsverein* in Budapest, in order to support financially the construction of the Bayreuth Festspielhaus. This is attested to by Wagner's letter to Theodor Kafka, the organiser of the Vienna Wagner-Verein (Richter's letter addressed to Wagner does not survive):

Today I received a letter from my young friend Hans Richter in Pest, in which he reports that as soon as the Viennese association will be launched, a subsidiary association will also be established there.⁴³

Thereafter, *Zenészet* criticized Richter directly, mentioning him by name. In an anonymous article published in the January 28 issue, the author denied his intention to offer the entire income of the next Philharmonic Concert for the benefit of the future Bayreuth Festspielhaus.⁴⁴ However, on March 3, reporting on the inaugural meeting of the Wagner Association, the anonymous author of the leading article (probably Ábrányi) wrote that it is not so much the support of the Bayreuth Festspielhaus that he objected to, but the other main goal of the Wagner Association, pertaining to Hungarian musical life:

During the meeting it became clear that they want no less than to establish a so-called Hungarian Wagner Association in Hungary under the composer's banner, for influencing the inland musical movements, and secondly, to achieve the sale of the 300-coins patronage certificates [*Patronatsscheine*] and their draw among the stockholders, in order to support the construction of the Bayreuth Wagner Theatre.⁴⁵

From other contemporary press reports it is clear that the sentences criticizing Richter, attributed to the Ábrányi-Reményi-Plotényi triad in *Zenészet*, were not completely fictitious. From a report published in *Fővárosi Lapok* on the inaugural meeting of the Wagner Association, it turns out that Ábrányi (he was also present) – despite being a Wagnerian – expressed his reservations about the Wagner cult. He also used a deliberately nationalistic rhetoric: “he protested against incorporating foreign elements, until our own music is undeveloped, and suggested that

⁴¹ *ZszL* 12/10 (3 December 1871), 151.

⁴² *ZszL* 12/11 (31 December 1871), 212.

⁴³ “Heute empfangen ich einen Brief meines jungen Freundes, Hans Richter, aus Pest, in welchem mir gemeldet wird, dass dort, ‘sobald der Wiener Verein in das Leben getreten sein werde,’ ein Zweigverein gegründet werden solle.” *Richard Wagner: Sämtliche Briefe*, Bd. 24: *Briefe des Jahres 1872*, ed. Martin Dürer (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 2015), 33.

⁴⁴ *ZszL* 13/18 (28 January 1872), 273–277.

⁴⁵ *ZszL* 12/23 (3 March 1872), 355.

the Association should focus particularly on participating in the Bayreuth Wagner Festival,”⁴⁶ furthermore, “he declared that the improvement of native music is a more urgent task.”⁴⁷

It should be noted that Ábrányi also took part in the creation of the statutes of the Budapest Wagner Association and his objections proved to be in a certain measure effective. The reference to the Hungarian music historical mission (“influencing the inland musical movements”) was left out of the document, what is more, it was included that “the Association will be established only for the period until the epochal Bayreuth Music Festival and after that it will dissolve itself.”⁴⁸

The Ábrányi–Richter Opposition in Historical Context

As we have seen, the main argument of *Zenészet* against Richter and intendant Orczy was the charge of Germanization. In order to understand this, we have to know that in the period in question, Budapest was a multi-ethnic city and had more German speakers than Hungarian. It should be noted, however, that significant changes began to take place in the theatrical life and landscape of the capital city in the years following the Austro-Hungarian Compromise (that is, shortly before Richter came to Budapest).

In 1870, the Pest German Theater closed down and German performances in Buda were prohibited by the authorities: the Buda Summer Theater (Budai Nyári Színkör) and Castle Theatre (Várszínház) became Hungarian theatres. Yet, for a long time, it remained a problem for Hungarian theatres to attract a mostly German-speaking theatre-going public. Although a new German theatre opened in 1869 in Pest’s Gapjú utca, this Deutsches Theater in der Wollgasse was to be the last German theatre in the capital and burnt down in 1889. Nevertheless, as late as 1876, there stood a German theatre in the same place where now the Hungarian State Opera House is to be found.⁴⁹ Under such circumstances, it is not surprising that the cult of the emphatically German Wagner was a tender spot. This is even less surprising because the European status quo changed dramatically following the 1870/1871 Franco-Prussian War: the unified German state came into existence, what is more, it became a great power by inflicting a humiliating defeat on France.

In this historical context, it is particularly interesting that *Borsszem Jankó* made fun of Wagner’s fondness for German mythology exactly on the day following the French declaration of war against Germany. On 17 July 1870, a fictional scholarly paper entitled “On the Epopée” appeared in the magazine, which was allegedly held on the general meeting of the Kisfaludy Society (a literary society) by a certain “Deák F. (not [F]erenc but [F]arkas).” According to the article, “the modern epopée began with the Nibelungs of the Germans; the author of this epic poem is Richard Wagner, who used as source the work of Károly Szász, a respectable member of our Society.”⁵⁰ Concerning the “authorship,” it should be noted that Farkas Deák (1832–1888) was not only councillor at the Ministry of Justice and a prolific journalist, but also a scholar: he was a corresponding member from 1876, an ordinary member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences from 1885, and played a significant role in the foundation of the Hungarian Historical Society (Magyar Történelmi Társulat).⁵¹ It is all the more amusing that the article published in *Borsszem*

⁴⁶ *FL* 9/46 (27 February 1872), 199.

⁴⁷ *FL* 9/47 (28 February 1872), 203.

⁴⁸ *ZszL* 12/24 (10 March 1872), 376.

⁴⁹ For changes in the nineteenth-century Budapest theatrical landscape, see Péter Bozó, “Theatrical Landscape: Intersections between the Reception of Wagner and Offenbach in Nineteenth-Century Budapest,” *Studia Musicologica* 58, no. 3–4 (December 2017): 329–339.

⁵⁰ *BJ* 3/133 (17 July 1870), 301.

⁵¹ Szinnyei, “Deák Farkas,” in *Magyar írók*, vol. 2 (1893), 667–671.

Jankó attributes to him a text, in which the order of historical antecedents and consequences is deliberately reversed. The Middle High German *Nibelungenlied* is of course not a modern but a Medieval epic poem, and, needless to say, it is not Wagner's creation. The article cannot be taken seriously, even less because the *Nibelungenlied* was not the only source, not even the main source for Wagner's own Nibelung tetralogy: for him, Old Icelandic literary works, such as the *Völsunga Saga*, the Poetic Edda, and the Prose Edda were much more important.⁵² The other comically false claim concerns Károly Szász (1829–1905), who is mentioned as the source of the composer. He is of course not the author of the *Nibelungenlied*, but instead its translator. It was he who prepared the Hungarian translation of the complete Middle High German epic poem, which was published two years before that the article in question appeared in *Borsszem Jankó*.⁵³

Wagner versus Offenbach

Wagner was regarded in Hungary as a par excellence German composer already well before the Franco-Prussian War. It is of particular interest that his name was frequently mentioned together with that of Offenbach, and the two musicians were often measured against one other in the nineteenth-century Budapest press.⁵⁴ Both their problematic relationship⁵⁵ and Wagner's un concealed antisemitism might have contributed to this cliché of the reception. The Wagner–Offenbach opposition is even less surprising, because Wagner's stage works and Offenbach's Europe-wide popular operettas appeared in Budapest approximately at the same time.⁵⁶ What is more, within two years both Offenbach's company and Wagner gave guest performances at the National Theatre (the former in July 1861, the latter in July 1863).

The Wagner–Offenbach opposition also appears in *Borsszem Jankó*. In December 1869, an anonymous article was published in the magazine under the title “Urváry as Bluebeard,”⁵⁷ which is obviously a reference to Offenbach's opéra-bouffe *Barbe-bleue* (first perf. 1866), already known in Budapest at that time. The Hungarian premiere of *Barbe-bleue* (entitled *Kékszakáll*) took place on 26 December 1867 in Košice/Kassa/Kaschau, and shortly after, in January 1868 it was also premiered at the Pester Stadttheater (in German, as *Blaubart*).⁵⁸

The target of the parody is Lajos Urváry (1841–1890), a journalist, who from 1869 was editor of the daily newspaper *Századunk*, then between 1869 and 1887 that of another daily newspaper, *Pesti Napló*. The timeliness of the article is due to the fact that in the year of its appearance Urváry became a deputy of the Hungarian parliament.⁵⁹ The journalist, who is mentioned by the author

⁵² For the literary sources of Wagner's *Ring*, see Stanley R. Hauer, “Wagner and the *Völospá*,” *19th-Century Music* 15 no. 1 (Summer 1991): 52–63.

⁵³ *A Nibelung-ének. Ó-német hősköltemény*, trans. Károly Szász (Pest: Ráth, 1868; reprint Máriabesnyő–Gödöllő: Attraktor, 2008).

⁵⁴ For a more detailed survey on Wagner versus Offenbach in the nineteenth-century Budapest press, see Bozó, “Theatrical Landscape.”

⁵⁵ For the relationship between Wagner and Offenbach, see Peter Ackermann, “Eine Kapitulation. Zum Verhältnis Offenbach–Wagner,” in *Jacques Offenbach. Komponist und Weltbürger*, ed. Winfried Kirsch–Ronny Dietrich (Mainz: Schott's Söhne, 1985), 135–148.

⁵⁶ The first known performance of an Offenbach operetta in Budapest took place on 24 May 1859 at the Buda Summer Theatre (Budai Nyári Színkör) during a guest performance of Karl Treumann from the Viennese Carl-Theater. Wagner's first stage work played in Budapest was *Tannhäuser*, whose German-language premiere took place on 6 March 1862 at the Pest German Theatre.

⁵⁷ *BJ* 2/103 (19 December 1869), 502.

⁵⁸ *Blätter für Musik, Theater und Kunst* 14/4 (10 January 1868), 15.

⁵⁹ Szinnyei, “Urváry Lajos,” in id., *Magyar írók élete és munkái*, vol. 14, 685–686.

as “Luigi” (which is the Italian equivalent of the Hungarian Lajos), appears in the article at the deathbed of his fifth wife. It should be noted that his biography mentions only one spouse, the actress Laura Helvey (1852–1931). They only married each other, however, in 1885,⁶⁰ that is, two decades after the article in question appeared in *Borsszem Jankó*. Thus, it can be assumed that the article either referred to another (perhaps extramarital) relationship of his, or it is simply an attempt to discredit Urváry by mentioning fictitious love affairs. The dying woman, mentioned in the title of the article, is called “Századunkhild,” which is an interesting combination of the title of Urváry’s newspaper (*Századunk*) and the name of Wagner’s Brünnhilde. In her delirium, she sings a song whose text is quite reminiscent to that of the mermaids’ song from *Das Rheingold*: “Weyala, weyala, wagala, weya! Wagala, weyala, weyala, wey!” According to the article, Urváry reacts in the following way: “I don’t understand, said Luigi, the Bluebeard, fingering his blond sideboards. Be an ordinary R[hinemaidein] if I understand this. For this is Wagner, and I am from Offenbach.”⁶¹

The allusion to *Das Rheingold* (rather an allusion than an exact quotation) is made reference to in a magazine issue published in 1869, regarding the fact that Wagner’s work was premiered in Budapest only two decades later: the German-language premiere of the piece (and that of the complete tetralogy) took place at the Gyapjú Street German Theatre, when Angelo Neumann’s company gave a guest performance there in May 1883; the Hungarian premiere was conducted by Gustav Mahler in the Opera House on 26 January 1889. Even its world premiere took place on 22 September 1869 at the Munich Königliches Hof- und Nationaltheater, that is, only some months before the article in question appeared in *Borsszem Jankó*. Of course, the libretto was already available earlier, since Wagner published his text in 1853 in Zürich, even if this version slightly differed from the definitive one;⁶² new prints appeared in 1863 and 1869, furthermore, the printed vocal score of the piece also became available in 1861.⁶³ In my opinion, the allusion to Wagner’s work premiered in Munich only some months before, and the mention of the Offenbach(ian) origin can be regarded as deliberate references to Urváry’s German birth, whose grandfather named Herrenröther migrated to Hungary from Bavaria, according to his biographer.⁶⁴ It is also worth mentioning, concerning the article in question, that in 1864 a German romantic opera by Offenbach was performed in Vienna under the title *Die Rheinnixen* (The Rhine Nixies).

The Failure of *Rienzi*

Turning back to Richter’s activity, in my opinion, the resentment of Ábrányi and other Hungarian Wagnerians might have played a significant role in his early departure from Budapest. Another event, namely the failure of *Rienzi* at the National Theatre, might also have contributed to his decision. The premiere of Wagner’s historical grand opera was conducted by Richter, but it had only four performances – this is attested to not only by the contemporary almanacs of the National Theatre, but also by the extant performance material of the piece, preserved now at the

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ *BJ* 2/103 (19 December 1869), 502.

⁶² Among others, in this version *Götterdämmerung* still bears the title *Siegfrieds Tod*.

⁶³ For a detailed description of the printed editions of *Das Rheingold* published between 1853 and 1869, see John Deathridge, Martin Geck, and Egon Voss, *Wagner Werk-Verzeichnis (WWV). Verzeichnis der musikalischen Werke Richard Wagners und ihrer Quellen* (Mainz: Schott, 1986), 352–359.

⁶⁴ Szinnyei, *Magyar írók élete és munkái*, vol. 14, 685.

Music Department of the Budapest Széchényi National Library.⁶⁵ Wagner's work (and Richter's choice) was heavily criticized in a satirical review published in *Borsszem Jankó*, which characterised the work in the following way:

It is a crunching and terrible trumpeting, a bombastic drumming, an inflated Meyerbeer, a fat Berlioz, an elephant embryo – with lion's claws, an attenuated Bellini. It is like Hercules strangling a worm in its cradle instead of a snake; a Hindu magician filtering sweets and measuring out lukewarm sugar water. Sometimes it is like an ululating nightingale, sometimes like a yearning hippopotamus. It is doubtful whether Zubovics can sing like Ellinger; but it is certain that Ellinger cannot ride a horse like Zubovics.⁶⁶

Fedor Zubovics (1848–1920) was a Hussar captain and a famous rider.⁶⁷ The reference to him is in all likelihood a not-too-flattering allusion to the acting of the tenor József Ellinger (1820–1821), who sung the title role in the Budapest premiere of the piece. (According to Wagner's scenic instruction, Rienzi and the Roman senators have to appear on horseback in Act 3). The mention of the “inflated Meyerbeer” is correct, so far as Wagner's youthful work was written at the end of the 1830s in the hope of a Paris premiere, and emulates the genre of French historical grand opéra. In its Budapest failure it might have played a significant role that compared with *Lohengrin*, *Tannhäuser*, and *Der fliegende Holländer*, pieces already known also in Budapest at that time, it might have seemed to be bombastic, and a pale imitation.

Although the sequence of the Budapest Wagner premieres was quite unfortunate, Richter cannot be condemned because of programming this piece. It is a question as to what kind of Wagner opera could be staged at that time: the full score of *Götterdämmerung* was only finished in November 1874, and the composer insisted on staging the complete tetralogy. (It should be noted that Richter left Munich in 1869 because he did not want to assist in the separate first performance of *Das Rheingold*, whose staging he considered as inadequate as Wagner.) With its emphatically German historical milieu, *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* was not ideally suited for the Budapest audience – it is characteristic that one decade later the Hungarian premiere of the piece (8 September 1883) was a great failure, it had only five performances. I assume that in 1874 neither the opera company nor the Budapest audience were ready for the premiere of *Tristan und Isolde* (it was premiered only three decades later, on 28 November 1901, with great success with Karel Burian and Italia Vasquez-Molina in the title roles).

All in all it can be argued that the Editorial Board of *Borsszem Jankó* followed Richter's Budapest activity and the development of the Hungarian Wagner cult with attention. In its funny and ironic style, the magazine reacted sensitively not only to the local Wagner premieres, but also to the personal conflicts, as well as the political and cultural contexts affecting the composer's reception in Hungary.

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⁶⁵ The following sources survive: a manuscript promptbook (shelf mark: MM 13.896); the manuscript performing full score with printed additions (ZBK 280/a); several printed piano vocal scores (ZBK 280/b); as well as the manuscript orchestral parts with some printed additions and with numerous handwritten entries by the musicians (ZBK 280/c).

⁶⁶ *BJ* 7/361 (29 November 1874), 7.

⁶⁷ *A Pallas nagy lexikona*, vol. 16, ed. Lajos Gerő (Budapest: Pallas, 1897), 1184.

Jiří Kopecký, Lenka Křupková

The Position of Italian Opera Repertoire in Austrian Province Theatres: The Case of the Olomouc Theatre (1830–1920)¹

Abstract | Throughout the nineteenth century, operas by Italian composers were part of the basic repertoire of all European and non-European theatre ensembles, which also included opera singers. The example of the Olomouc theatre demonstrates how the relationship to Italian opera was changing in the Austrian, and later Austro-Hungarian, monarchy. The Central European space long sought to create a national musical style. Before, however, the German and Czech authors, on the other side, were able to develop a repertoire which could fill up a large part of the performance days, it was specifically Italian opera which was used in order to master the opera form within the space delimited by a dense network of Habsburg theaters. The process thereby involved initial admiration followed by eventual complete rejection of Italian operas.

Keywords | Italian opera repertoire – Theatre in Olomouc – 1830–1920

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Introduction

The first to disrupt the dominance of Italian opera was the French repertoire, followed since the last third of the 1700s by German singspiel. The advent of Rossini, Bellini and Donizetti at the beginning of the 1800s could only be compared, apart from Boieldieu's comic opera, with Weber's romantic opera and Lortzing's *spieloper*. Quantitatively, Italians maintained their prevalence and, in addition, while French opera comique in German translations supported the development of German "national" opera,² the Italian opera kept its own distinct position, and the audience clearly distinguished between the belcanto tradition and the emerging German opera which was based on a close connection between the libretto and music. French grand opera, which demonstrated that Italians might not be able to maintain their prominent position in the opera world "forever", became a serious rival for the Italian opera since the 1830s. The primacy of the Italian repertoire was maintained for several decades by Giuseppe Verdi. As of the 1860s, however, his position began to be threatened by Richard Wagner, especially in German theatres.

The opening of a new theatre building in Olomouc in 1830 provides an opportunity to observe the example of one Austrian provincial theatre where Italian operas strengthened their position as the core repertoire and subsequently lost it, particularly because they were ubiquitous

¹ The study was supported by the Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, projects IGA_FF_2017_038 (Theory, History and Editing of Music from the 19th to the 21st Century) and IGA_FF_2019_006 (Distinctive aspects of Czech musical culture in the 19th, 20th and 21st century).

² See Giroud, Vincent, *French Opera, A Short History* (Yale University Press, New Haven and London 2010), p. 117.

and somewhat overplayed. In spite of continuous criticism, the Italian opera proved its vitality and capacity for revival in the 1890s.

The Establishment of the Theatre and its Repertoire under the Directors Leopold Hoch and Karl Burghauser (1830–1847)

Following the opening of a theatre on the Upper Square, one of the most difficult tasks was to apparently establish a reliable base of a cultivated audience. While the information about some seasons is only fragmentary, other seasons were filled with a remarkable repertoire thanks to a quality ensemble. In 1839, an intellectual reviewer B. R. Leitner perceived the Olomouc audience to be in its own shadow, “der Embryo eines Publikums” [the embryo of an audience].³ The repertory was primarily filled with drama and farce, so the “hunger” for opera was manifested all the more, if the theatre director offered it to the audience.

The conditions were favourable for opera for instance in the season 1839–1840. Already at its beginning, a strong opera ensemble introduced itself in the operas *Norma* and *Der Liebestrank* [The Elixir of Love]. The drama was also of good quality, but it “[...] wegen der in dieser Stadt herrschenden entschiedenen Vorliebe für Opern einen schweren Stand hat.” [had a difficult position due to the clear popularity of opera in this city].⁴ Between September 1839 and January 1840 alone, there were 12 operas played at 27 evening performances along with 16 farces.⁵ In August 1839, premieres of demanding works were promised. The sources indicate that they took place later, but still demonstrate the strong and self-confident position of the director of the Olomouc theatre. These included Meyerbeer’s *Die Ghibellinen in Pisa* [The Ghibellines in Pisa], Mercadante’s *Das Gelübde* [The Oath], and Donizetti’s *Lucrezia Borgia*, as well as older operas, such as Bellini’s *Die Puritaner* [The Puritans], Auber’s *Die Ballnacht* [Gustavus III or the Masked Ball] and Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*. The Italian repertoire clearly prevailed, and was rather weakly competed with by a triad of German works *Der Freischütz* [The Freeshooter] – *Das Nachtlager in Granada* [A Night in Granada] – *Don Giovanni*.

The season 23 September 1843 to 30 March 1844 involved 183 performances, 44 of them being new ones. Opera premieres mostly involved works by G. Donizetti: four of his operas were performed for the first time, namely *Linda di Chamounix*, *Die Regimentstochter* [The Daughter of the Regiment], *Poliuto* [The Martyrs], and *Lucrezia Borgia*.⁶ The well-coordinated ensemble, supported with a rich theatre library and a wide collection of costumes, was praised in an enthusiastic commentary from the author of *Oesterreich und seine Staatsmänner* (Leipzig, 1844): “Unter allen kleineren Bühnen Oesterreichs, die ich auf meiner Reise durch diesen Staat hin und wieder kennen gelernt, ist, offen gestanden, jene zu Olmütz (unter Burghausers Directions) eine der ersten, wenn nicht die erste.” [Among all the smaller Austrian theatres which I have got to know during my travels around this country, the Olomouc theatre (under the leadership of Burghauser) is, as openly admitted, one of the best, if not the best one].⁷

³ Leitner, B. R., Theaterzustände in Olmütz, in: *Moravia*, 2. Jhrg., Nr. 93, 17. 1. 1839, p. 372.

⁴ Leitner, B. R., Olmütz (Theater), in: *Moravia*, 2. Jhrg., Nr. 169, 10. 10. 1839, p. 676.

⁵ Ludvová, Jitka et al., *Hudební divadlo v českých zemích. Osobnosti 19. století* [Music Theatre in the Czech Lands. Personages of the 1800s] (Divadelní ústav [The Theatre Institute] – Academia, Prague 2006), p. 89.

⁶ The emphasis on Donizetti’s works subtly points out the influx of easy-to-remember melodies at the expense of Bellini’s finely elaborated melodic ideas.

⁷ Cited according to d’Elvert, Christian, *Geschichte des Theaters in Mähren und Oesterreichisch Schlesien* (Schriften der historisch-statistischen Sekton der k. k. schles. Gesellschaft des Ackerbaues, der Natur- und Landeskunde, IV. Heft, Brünn 1852), p. 148.

The Universal Utilization of Italian Operas under the Director Friedrich Blum

Italian operas, which achieved the position of the core opera repertoire in the 1840s, were used to serve a wide range of purposes in the 1850s. One of their characteristic features is that they could face the conditions of being placed into the role of the all-purpose repertoire without any greater detriment. Italian works could be used for representation on important anniversaries and blended with politicised interpretations. The Italian works were also used for assessment of other parts of the repertoire. Italians assured entertainment, were underestimated, as well as tolerated. It was not exceptional that an evening performance consisted of popular acts, so the program could be as follows: a farce – act two of Donizetti's opera *Lucrezia Borgia* – a farce. A benefit performance of a singer could end with an act where the celebrated sextet from Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* was performed as a panopticon of automated puppets. In contrast, the splendour of Italian opera was enhanced by performances of above-standard interpretation quality with guest singers that were attended by the Viennese nobility.⁸

The critical perception of Italian opera was to a large extent influenced by the prima donna and it always took a great effort for the director to ensure reliable performers for lead characters. In the season 1852/1853, Donizetti's *Linda di Chamounix* left a positive impression, while in the following season, Bellini's *Die Nachtwandlerin* ranked among the worst performances presented by the theatre thus far. Not only skilful heroines, but all the singers had to face the Italian opera as a touchstone when applying for employment, because it was a repertoire that was familiar to everyone and that everyone kept returning to. It was the role of the Duke in Verdi's *Rigoletto*, performed in a masterful way by Jan Ludevít Lukes, that made František Škroup come to Olomouc and visit the performance before offering Lukes a guest engagement in Prague at the end of 1853.⁹ The arrivals and departures of singers corresponded to the ongoing succession of both quality and inferior performances. Standardized forms of Italian arias and ensembles resulted in an oversaturation and even aversion. Bellini's *Die Puritaner* was popular with the audience in the season 1849/1850 thanks to appealing melodies, but critics claimed the opera lacked a strong concept and inner strength. The standards established by the Italian opera could not be circumvented, however, and continued to return as the main criteria for all the repertoire.

During the period when the theatre was led by Blum, an entirely exceptional position among the Italians was occupied by Gioacchino Rossini. The repertoire – apart from occasional performances of opera seria – included only repeated opera buffa *Der Barbier von Sevilla* [The Barber of Seville] and the opera *Wilhelm Tell* [William Tell], which was part of the magnificent line of

⁸ E.g. the performance of Donizetti's *Lucrezia Borgia* with the "favourite" of the Viennese Theresia Schwarz (Die neue Zeit, 19 October 1848) or the performance of Donizetti's *Linda di Chamounix* visited by Archduke Franz Karl and Archduchess Sophie (Die neue Zeit, 11 May 1849; once again starring Theresia Schwarz as a guest singer). The study is based on the monographs Kopecký, Jiří, *Německá operní scéna v Olomouci 1770–1878 I* [German Opera in Olomouc 1770–1878 I] (Palacký University Olomouc, Olomouc 2012), and Křupková, Lenka, *Německá operní scéna v Olomouci 1878–1920 II* [German Opera in Olomouc 1770–1878 I] (Palacký University Olomouc, Olomouc 2012). Bibliographical references to Olomouc periodicals are used in accordance with these monographs; we only include the date of publication of the particular issue, as it is the most reliable manner of reference.

⁹ Following the study of law in Vienna and private study of singing, Jan Ludevít Lukes (1824–1906) debuted as a tenor in Olomouc. His exceptional talent soon led Lukes to Prague where he was engaged until 1857. Lukes became famous as Tannhäuser in the Viennese Thalia Theater (1857), but began to be interested in brewing and also had several engagements abroad. Lukes's bond with the Provisional Theatre was created by Bedřich Smetana, who also employed him in the singing school at the Provisional Theatre (see Ludvová, et al., *Hudební divadlo v českých zemích. Osobnosti 19. století* [Music Theatre in the Czech Lands. Personages of the 1800s], p. 310–312).

French grand opera. Thanks to its different typological classification, Rossini's last opera was an exception even to the usual assessment of Italian operas that seemed to steer away from contemporary political events. Rossini's sweet idleness and funny comments continued to raise the interest of the readers of the daily press, thus despite his composing silence, Rossini remained a popular personality, almost a prototype of an Italian whose personality combined the natural genius with an optimistic perception of the world. In contrast, the perception of Bellini was entirely different. As late as the mid-1800s, he was still one of the audience's favourite composers, but his music gradually disappeared from the repertoire, and at the end of the century, all that was left of him was a weak ephemeral figure that was only remembered with a certain amount of sentiment. A similar case was that of G. Donizetti. Giuseppe Verdi remained trapped in the clutches of the disunited perception of Italian opera. Despite the unflattering assessment, Verdi remained an unattainable idol for his apparently average Italian contemporaries. In the 1850s, Verdi strengthened the position of his greatest competitor Donizetti by the same means – the abundance of melodies. Verdi was immediately understood as a follower of the Rossinists – once again, the label “divino maestro” was used – even though his style seemed bizarre and less original. After the success of young Lukes in *Rigoletto* in 1853, it was only a step to a certain small Olomouc Verdi festival: 13 November 1855 – *Ernani*, 17 November 1855 – *Nabucco*, 20 November 1855 – *Rigoletto*. The events taking place at the Olomouc opera therefore document a general trend in criticism of Verdi's operas in the 1850s and 1860s, prevalently involving steady reservations, based especially on *Rigoletto* and *Der Troubadour* [The Troubadour]: trivial melodies, robust theatricality and spectacularism of overstretched instrumentation means. Towards the end of the 1850s, it was also increasingly widely believed that Verdi wrote dance melodies whose rhythms amused the audience even in entirely serious scenes – the result was amusing music.



Figure 1: Singers from Vienna Court Theatre often appeared as guests by important state negotiations which took place in Olomouc (Gaetano Donizetti, *Don Pasquale*, May 28 1851; Olomouc municipal archive, C 1851/1)

The Obligatory Italian Repertoire under the Directors Carl Haag and Carl König (1859–1868)

Due to its universal utilization, the Italian repertoire began to be indissolubly blended. At the beginning of the season 1861/1862, a performance of *Lucrezia Borgia* could be announced, while in fact, *Der Troubadour* was played. Well-known operas did not require frequent rehearsals. Italian operas mostly ranked among those which were played at the beginning of the season, which was particularly true for *Der Troubadour*, *Ernani*, *Lucrezia Borgia* or *Lucia di Lammermoor*. Bellini's *Norma* was dependent on an excellent female performer. Donizetti was manageable even for performing dilettantes, but at the same time required competent singers; he was valued as well as criticized master.¹⁰ Rossini's opera masterpiece *Wilhelm Tell* was an evergreen thanks to the brilliant orchestration and "beautiful" melodies. Verdi's *Rigoletto* provided a convenient opportunity for extending the repertoire of barytones; this opera became one of the most popular with the audience. *Der Troubadour* succeeded at both French and German theatres, although it had to face criticism regarding the lack of musical ideas and insufficient emotional depth. The Olomouc premiere of *La Traviata* (23 February 1867) did not work out well, because the theatre director failed to procure a performer of sufficient quality for the extraordinarily difficult lead role.

The Fading Glory of Rossinists and the Favourite Verdi under the Director Ignatz Czernits (1868–1872)

The awareness of Rossini increased immediately after his death in 1868, when the newspapers were flooded with extensive obituaries describing the splendid career of "the Swan of Pesaro". *Der Barbier von Sevilla* was regarded as Rossini's most genial composition that had to sparkle like champagne;¹¹ it also became common practice that as part of her music performance, Rossini sang other Rossini arias or compositions by other authors (e.g. at the end of the season 1871/1872, Hermine Epstein included *Mandolinata* by E. Paladilhe in the second act). Donizetti was only interesting if the theatre performed an opera that was once famous and had not been performed for a long time, such as in the case of *Dom Sébastien*, where the audience could be reminded of the entire plot of the work (at the beginning of season 1871/1872). In the case of *Lucrezia Borgia*, there were frequently cuts in the cast. Even Bellini, who evoked sympathy for his life's hardships, could not avoid slight mockery. His *Norma* seemed to be an instrumental template, but nevertheless received long-term appreciation.

The perception of Verdi was entirely different. The audience immediately reacted to his work, but he was a common target of intellectual attacks. *Der Troubadour* was suitable to begin the season with, as well as for the debuts of novice singers. It was definitely one of the most frequently played operas, and its melodic richness was satisfying. For instance, when *Rigoletto* had to be cancelled in the season 1868/1869 due to the illness of a singer, *Der Troubadour* was close at hand all the time.

¹⁰ *Lucrezia Borgia* was regarded as one of the best compositions by G. Donizetti, but was also one of those which underwent frequent cuts and shortenings.

¹¹ See Rappelkopf, 18 October 1868.

Director Czernits justifiably expected the Olomouc premiere of *Der Maskenball* to be successful, because it created a sensation on all the European stages. Significant feedback actually occurred but the critics, although appreciating that there were no mainstream opera patterns and stereotypes present in the work (for instance cadences at the end of the arias), claimed that it lacked a richness of melodies. A list of the individual music acts also included a number of common clichés, such as the diminished seventh, the drumrolls, brass instruments in the witch Ulrica act, etc. The climax of the third act seemed trivial compared to *Rigoletto*, although it had an exceptional impact.¹² In the printed debates, Verdi began to be included in the context of grand opera or Wagner’s reformation ideas. In the direct operation, however, his new opera had to compete with *Blaubart* and *Die Grossherzogin von Geroltstein*. The attack made by *Die neue Zeit* on operetta and Italian opera represented by *Der Maskenball* was brought to an end by the audience themselves. The reviewer, who wanted to promote the most serious German branch of the art, was prejudiced against the most evil weed in music (operetta) and the operas composed by Italians, “diesen Solopiecen und fraglichen Pardestückchen mit grauenhafter szenischer und musikalischer Verbindung.” [“these solo pieces and doubtful fancy pieces with terrifying scenic and music accompaniment.”].¹³ In contrast, the audience publicly demanded that the director include the Italian repertoire, which was willingly done by the theatre management.

Laying Bellini to Rest under Director Julius Schwabe (1872–1874) and the Deterioration of the Italian Repertoire under the Director Carl Joseph von Bertalan (1874–1878)

The staging of *Romeo und Julia* [Romeo and Juliet] by Charles Gounod replaced for a long time Bellini’s 1830 opera addressing the same topic, *Die Capulets und die Montague* [The Capulets and the Montagues], which seemed a complete lapsus by a sentimental and delirious composer. Gounod’s composition was already not “all sobbing and tears”. What was perceived positively was the instrumentation and music characteristics of the main roles, and the reminiscences of Wagner and Mendelssohn were not viewed negatively either.¹⁴ Bellini was a fixed star of the repertoire only thanks to *Norma*. Rossini’s *Der Barbier von Sevilla* commonly had arias by different authors inserted in the composition. Donizetti’s works were criticized for imitating other authors. Verdi was regularly criticised for the overplayed *Der Troubadour*. Apart from operetta, the 1870s already belonged to Wagner and Meybeer’s *Die Africanerin* [The African Woman].

The Premiere of Aida under the Director Julius Fritzsche: A Return to Verdi (1878–1880)

By staging Verdi’s *Aida*, Julius Fritzsche undoubtedly intended to get on the right side of the local audience in his new place of residence. The Olomouc audience could enjoy the opera for the first time at the end of 1878, seven years after its world premiere in Cairo. Fritzsche did not hesitate to risk high expenses on opulent staging, despite the rather negative experience from the first months at the new workplace. When the turnout at the performance of Donizetti’s *Lucia di Lammermoor* was once again very low, the Olomouc press claimed the opera stage could be discontinued, despite a very good ensemble for the season, because none of the opera evenings

¹² Die neue Zeit, 14 March 1869.

¹³ Die neue Zeit, 25 January 1871.

¹⁴ Die neue Zeit, 21 March 1873.

in the season covered the daily expenses.¹⁵ What raised greater interest than music was the visual aspect of the performance, since he took inspiration from the Viennese Hofoper and the stage scenery and costumes were made in accordance with the Viennese performance. The usual level of provincial stages was reportedly exceeded not only by the magnificent sets, but also by the performance of the soloists and the choir.¹⁶ *Aida* was repeated many times and soon became a performance where guest stars from Hofoper could present themselves. In the following season, the role of Amonasro was performed by Louis von Bignio of the Viennese Hofoper.¹⁷ *Aida* became a favourite target in the traditional comparison of Verdi and Wagner. This Verdi opera was proof of the clear victory of Wagner's inspirational influence, used by the Italian composer to bid farewell to the characteristic forms in Italian opera. Although the leitmotifs were treated in a different way by him, he still used recitatives and arias, and thus could not live up to his epitome of Wagner. In this respect, he also did not go beyond Meyerbeer: his muster affected the great ensemble acts.¹⁸ Despite its great success, the opera became the cause of the gradual business failure of Julius Fritzsche, since the performances did not manage to cover the expenses invested into the opera, which eventually led Fritzsche to leaving Olomouc after two years.

Mahler's Staging of Italian Operas under the Director Emanuel Raul (1880–1883)

Fritzsche's successor at the post of theatre director in Olomouc, Emanuel Raul, reintroduced *Aida*, in new stage sets depicting the Nile landscape and an Egyptian temple created in the studio of Ghilbert Lehner, towards the end of the season 1881/82. Raul avoided staging older Italian operas. He was already apparently aware of the aversion of the local audience to them, which can even be perceived from the statement of critics following the performance of Donizetti's opera. In previous decades, *Lucrezia Borgia* was the "hit of the repertoire", while at this time, it only ranked among operas that were very short-lived on stage.¹⁹ Verdi's *Der Troubadour*, which kept opening almost every season even in the 1880s, became the ground for the manifestation of vocal creativity of an experienced singer, when the guest Hofoper tenor, Gustav Walter²⁰ added his own encores to the arias that were reviewed as finer than the original, having been "improved" in this way.²¹ At the very end of Raul's Olomouc directorship, this provincial theatre facing financial problems and low artistic quality became the workplace of Gustav Mahler. His fine staging of Verdi's *Der Maskenball* received favourable perception by the local critics, which claimed *Der Maskenball* was the most successful opera performance of the season, despite the

¹⁵ Die neue Zeit, 8 November 1878

¹⁶ Die neue Zeit, 28 November 1878.

¹⁷ Louis von Bignio (1839–1907) began as a barytone in the German theatre in Pest. He joined the Viennese Hofoper in 1863. Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, *Österreichisches Biographisches Lexikon 1815–1950 Online-Edition und Österreichisches Biographisches Lexikon ab 1815* (2. überarbeitete Auflage), Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften 2003–2018. Available at: http://www.biographien.ac.at/oeb1/oeb1_B/Bignio_Louis_1839_1907.xml?frames=yes.

¹⁸ Die neue Zeit, 28 November 1878.

¹⁹ Mährisches Tagblatt, 4 December 1880.

²⁰ Gustav Walter (1834–1910) was employed at the Viennese Hofoper in 1856 and sang here as the lead tenor for more than thirty years. Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, *Österreichisches Biographisches Lexikon 1815–1950 Online-Edition und Österreichisches Biographisches Lexikon ab 1815* (2. überarbeitete Auflage), Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften 2003–2018. Available at: https://www.biographien.ac.at/oeb1/oeb1_W/Walter_Gustav_1834_1910.xml;internal&action=hilite.action&Parameter=Walter*.

²¹ Mährisches Tagblatt, 21 and 22 February 1881.

obvious antipathy regarding the composition and its author. It was recommended to the theatre directorate that the next time they had better stage Auber's *Die Ballnacht*, an opera based on the same theme, which is not so spectacular, but much more elegant and spirited than Verdi's composition.²² Mahler ended his brief activity in Olomouc with a staging of two of Verdi's operas – *Rigoletto* and *Der Troubadour*. The first one was Mahler's benefit performance, and it is a question whether the choice of this opera was Mahler's or if he simply conformed to the local operational conditions.

Königl. städt. Theater in Olmütz.
Unter der Direction des Julius Fritzsche.
 Mittwoch den 27. November 1878.

Abonnement suspendu. Ungerader Tag.

**Mit grossartiger Ausstattung
 und durchaus neuen Costümen.**
 Zum ersten Male:

Aida.

Große Oper in 4 Acten von G. Verdi. Text von Antonio Ghislanzoni, für die deutsche Bühne bearbeitet von Julius Schanz.
 (Die Arrangements und die Scenirung von Director Julius Fritzsche. — Dirigent: Herr Kapellmeister Federmann.)

Personen:

Der König	—	—	—	—	—	Herr Schüneggh.
Amneris, seine Tochter	—	—	—	—	—	Hr. Fritsche-Wagner u. G.
Aida, äthiopische Skelvin	—	—	—	—	—	Hr. Walling.
Nababek, Feldherr	—	—	—	—	—	Herr Drey.
Ramsis, Oberpriester	—	—	—	—	—	Herr Wilhelm.
Amnastor, König von Nethopien und Vater Aida's	—	—	—	—	—	Herr Weiger.
Eine Priesterin	—	—	—	—	—	Hr. Grala.
Ein Vize	—	—	—	—	—	Herr Weisba.

Priester, Priesterinnen, Minister, Hauptleute, Soldaten, Sklaven, Gefangene Nethopier, Volk.
 Die Handlung spielt in Theben und Memphis zur Zeit der Herrschaft der Pharaonen.

Die neuen Decorationen: 1. Act: Saal im Königspalaste zu Memphis. — Der Tempel des Ptah (magische Beleuchtung). 2. Act: Prunkgemach bei Amneris. — Theben mit Triumphsporten geschmückt. 3. Act: Am Ufer des Nil (Mondlandschaft). 4. Act: Vorhalle des Gerichtes (Doppelbeleuchtung). — Strahlentempel des Ptah und unterirdisches Grabgewölbe, gemalt nach Wiener Skizzen und nach eigener Composition vom Decorationsmaler Herrn Eduard von Kilanyi.

Die neuen Costüme genau nach Wiener Figurinen sind vom Ubergarderobier Herrn Johann Schleißer angefertigt. Die Gasharbeiten sind von Herrn Emanuel Inger, Bronze-, Schuh- und Wirtwaaren theilweise von hiesigen und auswärtigen Firmen.

Die P. T. Abonnenten werden höflichst erucht, ihre Willensmeinung wegen Beibehaltung der Logen und Sperrtische bis längstens **10 Uhr** Vormittags kund zu geben.

Preise der Plätze in österr. Währung.

Eine Loge im I. Rang oder Parterre **5 fl.** — Eine Loge im II. Rang **4 fl.** — Ein Sperrtisch im Parterre **1 fl.**
 Ein Sperrtisch auf der Gallerie **40 fr.** — Eintritt ins Parterre **60 fr.** — Garnisons-Karten **40 fr.**
 Gallerie-Entrée **25 fr.** — (Studenten-Karten à **40 fr.** sind nur an der Abendkassa zu haben.)

Billets sind in der Theaterkassa im Theatergebäude von 9–12 Uhr Vor- und von 3–5 Uhr Nachmittags zu haben. — Ein Theaterzettel kostet 5 fr.

Kassa-Eröffnung **halb 7 Uhr**, Anfang **7 Uhr.**

In Vorbereitung: Die neueste Sensationsposse des Wiener Carl-Theaters:
NINICHE
 und das Preislustspiel der Prinzessin Anale von Sachsen:
DER MAJORATSERBE.

Figure 2: The first performance of Verdi's *Aida* by Julius Fritzsche (Olmützer Zwischen-Akt: Lokalblatt für Theater, Musik, bildende Kunst und Literatur, 27 November 1878)

²² Die neue Zeit, 5 February 1883.

Königl. städt. Theater in Olmütz.
 Direktion Em. Raul.
 14. Vorstellung. Abonnement suspendu. Gerader Tag.
Dienstag den 7. März 1882.
 Gastvorstellung des Frl.
Mathilde Mayer.
 Mit vollständig neuer Ausstattung.
AIDA.
 Große Oper in 5 Akten von Antonio Ghislanzoni. Für die deutsche Bühne bearbeitet von Juli u. S.
 Schanz. Musik von **G. Verdi.**
 Die neuen Decorationen, Requisiten und Chorchirarbeiten aus dem Atelier von **Gilbert Lehner** in Wien.
 Regie: Herr Glesinger. — Dirigent Herr Kapellmeister Fischer.

Personen:

Der König	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Herr Hennig.
König'scher Tochter	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Mathilde Mayer.
Aida, Aethiopische Skavin	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Hrn. Nicolai.
Rakote, Feldherr	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Herr Schmalzer.
Memphis, Oberpriester	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Herr Schmalzer.
Amnasto, König von Aethiopien und Vater Aida's	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Herr Schmalzer.
Ein Pate	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Herr Schmalzer.
Ein Priesterin	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Herr Schmalzer.
Ärzt	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Herr Schmalzer.
Zweiter	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Herr Schmalzer.
Dritter	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Herr Schmalzer.
Vierter	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Herr Schmalzer.

Preise der Plätze:

Loge im Parterre und I. Rang (für 4 Personen) 3 fl. 60 kr. — Loge im II. Rang (für 4 Personen) 3 fl. — kr. — Sperrig im Parterre 70 kr. — Ein Galleriepl. 20 kr.
 Eintritt in 4 Parterre 50 kr. — Sinkerarten im Parterre 25 kr. — Galleriearten 30 kr. Gallerie-Entrée 20 kr.
 Plätze sind in der Theaterkassette im Theatergebäude von 9—12 Uhr Per- und von 3—5 Uhr Nachmittag zu haben. — Ein Theaterstetle kostet 5 kr.

Figure 3: The performance of *Aida* by Emanuel Raul (Olmützer Zwischen-Akt: Lokalblatt für Theater, Musik, bildende Kunst und Literatur, 7 March 1882)

The Stagnation of the Italian Repertoire and the Deterioration of Operatic Operations in the 1880s under the Directors Emil Schönerstädt, Robert Müller, Emanuel Westen and Carl Stick (1883–1890)

The 1880s do not rank among the happiest periods in the history of the Olomouc theatre. Theatre entrepreneurs had to face a low turnout and low subsidies from the municipality, which was reflected especially in the continuously deteriorating quality of the opera stage. The directors, coming and leaving in quick succession, maintained the Italian opera repertoire but failed to further expand on it.

The absence of certain vocal types, only one orchestra conductor, and especially the catastrophic quality of the choir did not prevent the director Emil Schönerstädt (1883–1884) from

performing the vocally demanding *Der Barbier von Sevilla* at the beginning of the season after only one rehearsal of the newly established ensemble.²³ The miserable operatic operations of Schönherstädt's only season in Olomouc were briefly interrupted by the guest engagement of a vocal star of the Viennese Hofoper Rosa Papier, who chose the role of Azucena in Verdi's *Der Troubadour* for her performance, although the originally promised one was Ortrud in *Lohengrin*. While the local critics, traditionally opposed to the Italian composer, perceived this change rather negatively, the audience was thrilled with the Hofoper star's perfect interpretation which was in stark contrast with the imperfection of the Olomouc singers in the remaining roles. Two days later, Rosa Papier also sang the role of Maffio Orsini in Donizetti's opera *Lucrezia Borgia*. Her performance was once again described in superlatives, and the critics only regretted that the singer could not manifest her exceptional vocal skills in a better role.²⁴ Director Robert Müller (1884–1887) drew his attention particularly to operetta, and worked towards the discontinuation of the loss-making operatic operations, which was, however, not approved by the Olomouc city council. Müller reintroduced Verdi's *Ernani*, which was played in Olomouc after a rather long time, but the opera did not raise any interest in the local audience.²⁵ His staging of Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* met with a surge of criticism for offering the audience an old-fashioned composition.²⁶ Emanuel Westen (1887–1888) established a large vocal ensemble and the opera performances received positive feedback. The high-quality ensemble proved itself already in the season-opening of Verdi's *Der Troubadour*. The critics remarked that even larger theatres struggled not to perform a caricature of the composer's intention due to the vocal incompetence of the singers, and that director Westen was doing his best to prevent the Olomouc audience from such performances.²⁷ The attention of the Olomouc audience at this time shifted away from the theatre, which resulted in the deterioration of Westen's interest in opera, a decreasing frequency of opera performances, and Westen's eventual withdrawal from Olomouc after a single season. According to the contemporary description, the performances of the ensemble under director Carl Stick (1888–1890), where many vocal parts were not engaged at all as well as his personality as a singer and a director, fulfilled the concept of provincial theatre "trash". The impulse for a fatal conflict between Carl Stick on the one side a number of the music journalists and the theatre board of the city council on the other came at the beginning of Stick's second season in Olomouc with the scandalous staging of Donizetti's opera *Lucrezia Borgia*. A crushing review of the performance in *Mährisches Tagblatt* illustrates what the performances at provincial theatres could have looked like.²⁸

The Discovery of Italian Verismo under the Director Carl Berghof (1890–1896)

Carl Berghof, an experienced theatre director and opera bandmaster, succeeded in uplifting the musical aspect of the theatre. With the help of musicians from the local military troop, he could perform the much-desired Wagner, and extended the Wagnerian repertoire with *Die Walküre* [The Valkyrie]. Similarly to other directors of provincial theatres, Berghof monitored the current production and the changing taste on the Viennese metropolitan stage. He offered several

²³ *Mährisches Tagblatt*, 19 October 1883.

²⁴ *Mährisches Tagblatt*, *Die neue Zeit*, 12 February 1884.

²⁵ *Mährisches Tagblatt*, 17 December 1886.

²⁶ *Mährisches Tagblatt*, 2 April 1886.

²⁷ *Mährisches Tagblatt*, 24 September 1887.

²⁸ *Mährisches Tagblatt*, 10. October 1889.

premieres, including two works very popular on German stages at the time – Humperdinck's *Hänsel und Grätel* [Hansel and Gretel] and *Trompeter von Säckingen* [The Trumpeter of Säckingen] by Victor Nessler. Moreover, for the first time at the Olomouc theatre, he also staged compositions by Czech authors: Blodek's *Im Brunnen* [In the Well] and Smetana's *Die verkaufte Braut* [The Bartered Bride], which was requested by the German audience. His merits also included the introduction of Italian verismo operas to which the Olomouc audience formed a strong relationship.²⁹ Berghof succeeded in staging Mascagni's opera *Sizilianische Bauernehre* [Rustic Chivalry] in Olomouc only several months following its premiere at the Viennese Hofoper, in a German reworking by O. Berggruen.³⁰ The one-act opera was received with enthusiasm and was repeated fifteen times in Olomouc in the season 1891/1892 alone. The reason for the success of this opera was apparently the passionate and gripping plot which was claimed not to include anything unnatural or improbable, as it depicted true life with its ups and downs. Another appealing aspect was the "southern" music of the rustic work which seemed as passionate as the plot, and entirely original, despite being reminiscent of something already familiar.³¹ Two years later, on 5 January 1894, Berghof and his wife Johanna staged the other one of the two most popular verismo compositions, Leoncavallo's *Der Bajazzo* [Clowns], again inspired by the Viennese staging, where it was successfully performed in the season 1893/94.³² *Der Bajazzo* could not avoid a comparison with Mascagni's one-act work, which was perceived as musically more interesting. It is characteristic that the reason for the success of both verismo operas was seen in the particular influences of German music. Wagner's style was identified in the work with the orchestra, the harmony, the connection between the music and the plot, and *Der Bajazzo* was also claimed to

²⁹ The influence of Vienna is apparent even when comparing the contemporary Olomouc opera repertoire for instance to the repertoire of the city theatre in Pressburg, led at that time by the former Olomouc director Emanuel Raul; both contain similar titles. See Laslavíková, Jana. *Mestské divadlo v Prešporku (1886–1899) v kontexte dobovej divadelnej praxe. Pôsobenie riaditeľov Maxa Kmentta a Emanuela Raula* [The City Theatre of Pressburg (1886–1899) in the Context of Contemporary Theatre Practice. The Activities of the Directors Max Kmentt and Emanuel Raul]. Bratislava: Ars Musica in collaboration with the Department of Musicology of FiFUK and the Institute of Theatre and Film Science of the CV USAV in Bratislava, 2018.

³⁰ The Viennese premiere of Mascagni's opera was on 20 March 1891, see Hadamowsky, Franz, *Die Wiener Hoftheater (Staatstheater), 1811–1974: Ein Verzeichnis der aufgeführten und eingereichten Stücke mit Bestandsnachweisen und Ausführungsdaten*, Teil 2 (Verlag Brüder Hollinek, Wien 1975), p. 72. In Brno, the director Adolf Maumann introduced Mascagni's opera only nine days after the Viennese premiere. See Zatloukalová, Jarmila, *Brněnské divadlo, repertoár v letech 1848–1914* [The Brno Theatre, the Repertoire in the years 1848–1914], Bd. II. (1882–1914) (Brno City Archives, Brno 2002), p. 42; and Raul introduced it in Pressburg in December of the same year. This opera also became the greatest opera event of the season. (Laslavíková, *Mestské divadlo v Prešporku (1886–1899) v kontexte dobovej divadelnej praxe. Pôsobenie riaditeľov Maxa Kmentta a Emanuela Raula* [The City Theatre of Pressburg (1886–1899) in the Context of Contemporary Theatre Practice. The Activities of the Directors Max Kmentt and Emanuel Raul], p. 71).

³¹ Die neue Zeit, Mährisches Tagblatt, 26 November 1891.

³² In the Viennese Hofoper, this opera was premiered on 19 November 1893 (Hadamowsky, *Die Wiener Hoftheater (Staatstheater), 1811–1974: Ein Verzeichnis der aufgeführten und eingereichten Stücke mit Bestandsnachweisen und Ausführungsdaten*, p. 34). The National Theatre in Prague introduced this opera conducted by Mořic Anger as early as 10 February 1893 (The National Theatre, *Soupis repertoáru do roku 1883* [The Repertoire List until 1883], National Theatre 2019. Available at: <http://archiv.narodni-divadlo.cz/default.aspx?jz=cs&dk=Inscenace.aspx&ic=2205&pn=256affcc-f002-2000-15af-c913k3315dpc>). The Brno premiere was on 2 April of the same year (Zatloukalová, *Brněnské divadlo, repertoár v letech 1848–1914* [The Brno Theatre, Repertoire in the years 1848–1914, p. 52) and in Bratislava, the opera was introduced towards the end of the year 1893 (Laslavíková, *Mestské divadlo v Prešporku (1886–1899) v kontexte dobovej divadelnej praxe. Pôsobenie riaditeľov Maxa Kmentta a Emanuela Raula* [The City Theatre of Pressburg (1886–1899) in the Context of the Contemporary Theatre Practice. The Activities of the Directors Max Kmentt and Emanuel Raul], p. 78).

be reminiscent of *Tristan und Isolde*.³³ Berghof made use of the surge of enthusiasm for this type of verismo Italian opera and in the same season, included Mascagni's *Sizilianische Bauernehre* in the repertoire once again. Both operas belonged to the opera compositions played in Olomouc most frequently, and appeared in almost every season until 1920.³⁴

Königlich städtisches Theater in Olmütz.

Direction: **Carl Berghof.**

Mittwoch, den 25. November 1891.

7. Vorstellung. Abonnement suspendu. Ungerader Tag.
Novität! Zum ersten Male. Novität!

Cavalleria Rusticana.
(**Sizilianische Bauernehre.**)

Oper in einem Aufzuge nach dem gleichnamigen Volksstück von G. Verga, G. Targioni-Tozzetti und G. Menasci. Nach der deutschen Bearbeitung von D. Berggren. Einrichtung des k. k. Hofopertheaters — Musik von Pietro Mascagni.

Dirigent: **Carl Berghof.** Regie: **Rudolf Reineke.**

Personen:

Santuzza, eine junge Bäuerin	Clara Delmot a. G.	Alfo, ein Fuhrmann	— Hans Kneff.
Turiddu, ein junger Bauer	— Wolfgang Wagner.	Paola, seine Frau	— Helio Friedberg.
Lucia, seine Mutter	— Gabriele v. Arner.	—	— Emilente, Kinder.

Ort der Handlung: Ein sizilianisches Dorf.

Neue Costüme nach den Originalfigurinen verfertigt von Obergarderobier Egidius Mucha. Die neue Decoration (Sizilianisches Dorf) aus dem Atelier des k. k. Hoftheatermalers H. Burghart.

Den Anfang macht:

Novität! Zum ersten Male. Novität!

Ich heirathe meine Tochter.

Lustspiel in einem Aufzuge von A. J. Grosz von Trochan.

Regie: **Eduard Heller.**

Personen:

Baronin von Saffen	— Marie Palmere.	Alice von Saffen	— Gisa Ritter.
Ottmar von Saffen, Rittmeister, deren Sohn	— Julius Gredenber.	Johann, des Rittmeisters Diener	— Josef Göttinger.
—	—	Ein Kofferträger	— Carl Perlinger.

Wegen Aufbau der Decorationen 15 Minuten Pause.

Erhöhte Preise:

Loge im Parterre und I. Rang 5 fl. Loge im II. Rang 4 fl. — Kant.-Stg 1 fl. 10 kr. Sperrstg 1 fl. Stchparterre 60 kr. — Garnisons- und Studentenarten 40 kr. — Gallerie-Stchplatz 40 kr. Gallerie-Stchplatz 20 kr.

Die Tageskasse ist geöffnet Vormittag 9–12 Uhr, Nachmittag 3–5 Uhr.

Donnerstag, den 26. Nov. 8. Vorstellung. Abon. suspendu. Gerader Tag. „Cavalleria rusticana.“
Oper in einem Aufzuge von Pietro Mascagni. — Den Anfang macht: „Ein Wert an den Minister.“
Genreübel in einem Aufzuge von Anton Sangner. — Erhöhte Preise.

Cassa-Eröffnung $\frac{1}{2}$ 7 Uhr. — Anfang 7 Uhr. — Ende $\frac{1}{2}$ 10 Uhr.

Druck von Josef Oswald in Olmütz.

Figure 4: The first performance of Mascagni's *Sizilianische Bauernehre* by Carl Berghof (Olmützer Zwischen-Akt: Lokalblatt für Theater, Musik, bildende Kunst und Literatur, 25 November 1891)

³³ Mährisches Tagblatt, Die neue Zeit, 8 January 1894.

³⁴ Between its Olomouc premiere in 1891 and the year 1920, Mascagni's *Sizilianische Bauernehre* was performed seventy-six times, and Leoncavallo's *Der Bajazzo* were performed fifty-eight times between 1894 and 1920.

Freitag den 5. Jänner 1894.

3. Vorstellung Abonnement suspendu Gerader Tag.
 Novität! Zum ersten Male. Novität!

Bajazzi.

Musikalisches Drama in 2 Acten und einem Prolog. — Dichtung und Musik von U. Leoncavallo. — Deutsch von Ludwig Hartmann.

Dirigent: **Carl Berghof.** Regie: **Johanna Berghof.**

Personen:

Ganio, Haupt einer Dorf-Komödiantentruppe	} Operanten	Bajazzo — — — — —	Blabimir Skryloun.
Nedda, sein Weib	} Komödianten	Colombine — — — — —	Elia Prossi, a. Gast.
Lenio, Komödiant	} Singende	Taddeo — — — — —	P. Motowinkel, a. G.
Verpo, Komödiant	} Tänzer	Floretin — — — — —	Gmersch Mäiter.
Elina, ein junger Bauer	} Chor		Christian Sandroff.

Dauern und Bäuerinnen. Knaben. Ein Dufelschpieler. Zwei Querspielfestler. Drei Tänzer. — Zeit und Ort der wahren Begebenheit: Bei Montalto in Casabrian am 15. August (Festtag) 1865.

Hierauf:

Eine Vereinsschwester.

Posse mit Gesang in 1 Act von Langer.

Dirigent: **Friedrich Korolany.** Regie: **Engelbert Adam.**

Personen:

Emigunde v. Reichel — — — — —	Marie Perlinger.
Edward v. Stern, ihr Neffe — — — — —	Julius Brandt.
Dr. Nesser, Notar — — — — —	Wilhelm Popp.
Ignaz, Haushofmeister — — — — —	Carl Augustin.

Ort der Handlung: Wien.

Preise der Plätze wie gewöhnlich.

Die Tagescassa ist geöffnet Vormittag 9—12 Uhr, Nachmittag 3—5 Uhr.

Cassa - Eröffnung 1/2 7 Uhr. Anfang 7 Uhr. Ende 1/2 10 Uhr

Krank: Louise Jerwig.

Wochen-Spielplan:

Samstag den 6. Jänner 105. Vorst. Im Abenn. Ung. Tag. „s Mutter“, (Mull-Mull — Carl Augustin.) —
 Sonntag den 7. Jänner 106. Vorst. Im Abenn. Ger. Tag. „Der lustige Krieg“.

NB. Für sämtliche am Spielplan angegebenen Vorstellungen werden jetzt schon Karten von den nicht
 abonnierten Plätzen an der Tagescassa abgegeben.

Abgang derzüge von Olmütz nach:
 Pörsch 9 Uhr 50 Min., 12 Uhr 48 Min. — Sternberg 10 Uhr 40 Min. — Prohnitz 10 Uhr 50 Min.
 Littau 11 Uhr 38 Min.

— Durch von Josef Gressl in Olmütz.

Figure 5: The first performance of Leoncavallo's *Der Bajazzo* (on the poster mistakenly stated *Bajazzi*) by Carl Berghof (Olmützer Zwischen-Akt: Lokalblatt für Theater, Musik, bildende Kunst und Literatur, 5 January 1894)

Older Italian Operas as an Archival Rarity under the Director Stanislaus Lesser (1896–1904)

Stanislaus Lesser did not expand on the repertoire of the Italian operas. He followed the traditional order of Verdi's works staged until then in Olomouc, which would indicate the vocal qualities of the ensemble established anew for every season. *Der Troubadour* still appeared at the beginning of the season, despite frequent reservations that there were less boring works that could serve as a touchstone for singers.³⁵ The first weeks of the season also included both verismo operas. In contrast to the previous decade, the audience showed a greater appreciation for older Italian operas. At the end of the 1800s, Donizetti's *Lucrezia Borgia* did not evoke boredom throughout the audience, unlike most of the other older operas,³⁶ and the staging of Bellini's *Norma* was regarded as a well-intentioned attempt at reintroducing a work which already appeared on provincial stages fairly rarely at that time. This Bellini opera suffered from

³⁵ Die neue Zeit, 7 October 1897.

³⁶ Die neue Zeit, 3 December 1896.

the fact that provincial theatres usually did not have any female singer for the lead role able to manage coloratura parts as well as the dramatic vocal acts. After the performance of *Norma* in November 1899, the critics stated, however, that this time with Rosa Duce starring Norma, the ideal of Bellini's heroine still remained unattained.³⁷

Echoes of Verismo and the Discovery of Puccini in the Era of the Directors Carl Rübsam, Leopold Schmid and Robert Schlismann-Brandt (1904–1917)

The directors Carl Rübsam and Leopold Schmid (1904–1908), and later Leopold Schmid alone (he managed the theatre independently 1908–1917) received support from the city council in exchange for contributing through a suitably selected repertoire to strengthening the sense of nationalism in German citizens in a situation where the Czech citizens were growing stronger. It was requested that contemporary German or Austrian opera works be included (represented e.g. by Kienzl – *Der Kuhreigen* [The Cow Round], *Der Evangelimann* [The Evangelist], d'Albert – *Tiefland* [The Lowlands], Humperdinck – *Königskinder* [Royal Children]), and the Wagnerian repertoire be further extended. What primarily helped fulfil the economic interests of the theatre directors, however, was the Italian repertoire that was popular with the audience. Its traditional core that had been maintained for years in Olomouc was enriched by new, recent opera works by Italian composers. Already in the first season the position, they introduced *La Bohème* by Giacomo Puccini, who was completely unknown in Olomouc until then. Similarly to their predecessors, they adopted the model of the Viennese performance of *La Bohème* staged by Antonio Brioschi which they were familiar with.³⁸ Critics regarded Puccini's opera positively almost without exception. It was said to be a "treat" for a cultivated musician, and they found links in Puccini's musical style to that of Massenet and to Leoncavallo's composition of the same name, which was also created based on the novel by Henry Murger.³⁹ The popularity of *Madam Butterfly* was overshadowed by d'Alarbert's *Tiefland*, which also premiered in Olomouc in the season 1908/1909 and which showed the strong influence of Italian verismo and Puccini in particular.⁴⁰ In the same year, Leopold Schmid staged *Tosca*, "a true drama, an absolute tragedy in bloody colours,"⁴¹ which became Puccini's last work played on the German stage in Olomouc.

The continuing popularity of Italian verismo led Leopold Schmid to introduce extremely popular at the time operas by the Italian-German composer Ermann Wolf-Ferrari – comic one-act works *Susannens Geheimnis* [Susan's Secret] and the opera *Der Schmuck der Madonna* [The Jewels of the Madonna]. The first of them found its way to Olomouc already one year after its Munich premiere in 1909, and although it introduced a pleasant atmosphere to the audience, it

³⁷ Die neue Zeit. 2 November 1899.

³⁸ The local press informed about the study travels of Carl Rübsam to Vienna for a performance of *La Bohème* (Mährisches Tagblatt, 9 December 1904). Puccini's opera was part of the repertoire of the Viennese Hofoper since November 1903 (Hadamowsky, *Die Wiener Hoftheater (Staatstheater), 1811–1974: Ein Verzeichnis der aufgeführten und eingereichten Stücke mit Bestandsnachweisen und Ausführungsdaten*, p. 56). The Brno theatre premiered *La Bohème* on 27 December 1903 (Zatloukalová, *Brněnské divadlo, repertoár v letech 1848–1914* [The Brno Theatre, Repertoire in the years 1848–1914], p. 131), while the Prague National Theatre included it in its repertoire already two years after its Turin premiere 1896 (The National Theatre, *Soupis repertoáru do roku 1883* [The Repertoire List until 1883], National Theatre 2019. Available at: <http://archiv.narodni-divadlo.cz/default.aspx?jz=cs&dk=Inscenace.aspx&ic=2866&pn=256affcc-f002-2000-15af-c913k3315dpc>).

³⁹ Mährisches Tagblatt, 20 December 1904.

⁴⁰ Mährisches Tagblatt, 28 December 1908.

⁴¹ Mährisches Tagblatt, 27 December 1909.

was removed from the repertoire after four performances.⁴² The durability of the second work by Wolf-Ferrari in Olomouc was even shorter; the critics disliked the modern German way of creating a complex network of vocal parts which suppressed the original rhythm and melodies, and the conservative audience seemingly regarded it as too modern.⁴³ The enthusiasm for the Italian verismo gradually faded in Olomouc. After the first staging of *Der Kuhreigen*, an opera by the Austrian composer Wilhelm Kienzl with a libretto by Richard Batka, an exalted review by the local critics stated that at last there was a pure, clear art, being an actual refreshment after all the muddy waters of Italian and unfortunately also German verismo.⁴⁴ In the season 1919/1920, the last season of the independent German theatre in Olomouc, the director Robert Schlismann-Brandt, returned again to the tested and tried verismo couple *Sizilianische Bauernehre* and *Der Bajazzo*.

After the definitive prohibition of Czech productions in 1884, the city theatre changed into a stage of a strongly nationalist nature, which was enhanced by the German representatives of the municipality, and which its tenants, theatre directors, were bound to support through the conditions determined in theatre contracts. The core of the opera programme at the time contained the most frequently performed opera works, mostly German ones. The second most frequent group were French operas, and only the third position was occupied by Italian opera. The discovery of Italian verismo essentially changed, however, the preferences and taste of the audience and the depiction of “real” life met with positive feedback in the environment of this provincial city for a rather long period of time. While the unartistic performances of Wagner were excused and accepted for the sake of higher nationalist ideas, every other unsatisfying interpretation of a notoriously known opera by Donizetti or Verdi was unacceptable.

Conclusion

With the assessment of the repertoire from a nationalist or even political-ideological perspective, the previously almost obligatory Italian repertoire was limited in the programmes of both German and Czech opera ensembles. The interwar development only contributed to this trend, but unlike the French opera production, the Italian works were not eliminated completely from opera stages, whether it be for economic reasons (few singers could ensure an entire successful evening performance), or due to the irresistible charm of belcanto. The increased interest in 1800s Italian opera after World War II clearly demonstrated that the constant presence of Italians in the opera repertoire of the 1800s was not a mere temporary historical phenomenon. It even returned seemingly lost prestige to Italian composers, very significantly for instance in the case of Bellini’s *Norma*. Italian operas thus continued to fulfil the function of the core repertoire where it is clearly demonstrated whether a singer is worthy of performing on stage.

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⁴² Mährisches Tagblatt, 14 November 1910

⁴³ Mährisches Tagblatt, 31 March 1913

⁴⁴ Mährisches Tagblatt, 14 January 1913

Šárka Havlíčková Kysová

Czech Theatrical Imagination in Teatro alla Scala: František Tröster and Miloš Wasserbauer's Production of *Katerina Izmailova* (1964)

Abstract | The article is focused on Miloš Wasserbauer and František Tröster's two productions of Dmitri Shostakovich's opera *Katerina Izmailova* in State Theatre in Brno and Teatro alla Scala in 1964. The author deals with the interpretation of the opera, the direction-scenography concept, and the reception and historical context of the productions. Theatre director Wasserbauer and scenographer Tröster represented an operatic staging practice that substantially relied on progressive tendencies in direction and scenography in former Czechoslovakia in the 1960s. The author analyses the direction-scenography concept of the productions which represent the shift in theatrical imagination of operatic staging practice of the era.

Keywords | Dmitri Shostakovich – *Katerina Izmailova* – Miloš Wasserbauer – František Tröster – State Theatre in Brno – Teatro alla Scala – Theatre – Scenography

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Introduction

Two outstanding Czech scenographers, František Tröster (1904–1968) and Josef Svoboda (1920–2002), made their debut in 1964 on the most prominent European operatic stage – in Teatro alla Scala, Milan. Both scenographers were representatives of new Czech staging practice. The 1960s in former Czechoslovakia can be considered a period of changes in staging practice, especially in scenography. After the Social Realist period, which substantially influence stage design of the first half of the 1950s, theatre practitioners began – partially as a reaction to the Realist and especially to the Social Realist style – to seek out new means of expression.¹ In the 1960s, by steering away from the Social Realist doctrine, scenographers tended to avoid even traces of descriptive realism in displaying the dramatic space of the play. Even today the period is considered formative for later and contemporary scenography, especially in opera productions. Outstanding scenographers, practitioners of both spoken drama and opera theatre, collaborated on several exceptional operatic productions. To mention only the most notable, František Tröster, Ladislav Vychodil (1920–2005), and Josef Svoboda designed stages for truly renowned productions. Among them, Josef Svoboda, is probably the best known Czech scenographer worldwide.²

¹ See e.g., Šárka Havlíčková Kysová, *Režisér jako koncept* (Prague: Karolinum, 2019).

² Over his long career, he worked on stage designs of more than 700 opera and spoken drama theatre productions in former Czechoslovakia and abroad. He was a prominent personality of the Communist era, and his career primarily evolved during the period.

Svoboda often collaborated³ with the Czech opera director Václav Kašlík (1917–1989), with whom he created several of his finest productions mostly in Prague, but also in other Czech and foreign theatres.⁴ In the 1960s, the phenomenon of tandem collaboration of director and scenographer was considered significant. Svoboda's scenographer's debut in Teatro alla Scala was a 1964 production of Paul Hindemith's *Cardillac*,⁵ directed by Václav Kašlík.

At that time, scenography substantially contributed to the concepts of staging and direction of a play or an operatic work.⁶ I would like to focus on Svoboda's less famous world-wide, but still important figure of František Tröster. Tröster was an architect, painter and scenographer. He is known today as an “artist of light and space;”⁷ he influenced several contemporary stage designers and is also known for several innovative concepts in the area of scenography. Tröster brought the legacy of the avant-garde theatre of the period between the two World Wars to the stage. As an artist trained in this kind of theatre, he understood how to work with means of expression such as light technique or image, and later video projection. In the 1960s, Tröster also contributed to changes in staging practice. Having an architectural background,⁸ he often created complex and sophisticated stage constructions that were meant to make the theatrical space more dramatic and alter the kinetic potential of scenic action (including the actors' motion). He understood scenography as a complex discipline not as “mere” decorating or designing sets for a play. One of his innovative concepts was, for example, the term “dramatic planes.” This concept – Tröster used the term quite loosely – can be understood as referring to material reality, that is geometrical shape created as part of a stage design which has a metaphorical meaning.⁹ It is a way of expressing various thoughts, attitudes, points of view, or approaches to the topic of the situation or play. It can be seen as a tri-dimensional “construct(ion)” from which the attempted meaning and expressed contexts of the production spring.¹⁰ This approach to designing a stage influenced the relationship between direction and scenography: scenography became a very important element in interpretation of a work of (music) theatre.

For several productions, František Tröster found his theatre “tandem-partner” in the opera director Miloš Wasserbauer (1907–1970) who mostly worked for the National Theatre (former State Theatre) in Brno.¹¹ Together, they created several outstanding productions, especially of operas composed by Leoš Janáček. In this article I focus on their two productions of Shostakovich's *Katerina Izmailova* in State Theatre in Brno and Teatro alla Scala in Milan in 1964 which shared a direction-scenography concept. Based on archival materials (including the artists' notes and pictures from the performances) and reviews published in contemporary periodicals, I in-

³ In the twentieth century, especially in the 1960s, scenography became a very important, formative element of operatic productions in Czechoslovakia.

⁴ For a list of Josef Svoboda's stagings, see Helena Albertová, *Josef Svoboda Scenographer* (Prague: Theatre Institute, 2000).

⁵ Svoboda cooperated with Teatro alla Scala several times.

⁶ See, e.g., Havlíčková Kysová, *Režisér jako koncept*.

⁷ As Vlasta Koubská, a Czech scholar who focuses on Tröster's work, puts it. She calls him a “poet” (“of light and space”) in Czech. See Vlasta Koubská, *František Tröster. Básník světla a prostoru* (Prague: Theatre Institute, 2007).

⁸ Josef Svoboda was also an architect.

⁹ Vlasta Koubská writes: “Tröster's concept of the dramatic or spatial ‘projection plane’ meant in essence a chosen point of view on the whole dramatic work. It was therefore first necessary to reveal and choose the dramatic projection plane or basic point of view which subsequently determined the form of direction and design.” (In Koubská, *František Tröster*, 15.)

¹⁰ The definition is based on several sources (e.g., Koubská, *František Tröster*, 15) including my interview with V. Koubská (February 27, 2019).

¹¹ For more information on Wasserbauer's work, see e.g., Havlíčková Kysová, *Režisér jako koncept*.

tend to examine Miloš Wasserbauer and František Tröster's interpretation of the opera, their direction-scenography concept, and the reception and historical context of the two productions.

***Katerina Izmailova* in a Czechoslovak Context**

Just to briefly recall the history of the work, Shostakovich's opera originally, in its first version, premiered in January 1934 in Leningrad and Moscow, the USSR.¹² Shostakovich based his work¹³ on the novel *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* (Rus. *Леди Макбет Мценского уезда*) written by Nikolai Leskov in 1865. Two years later, after Stalin and his henchmen (including Zhdanov and Molotov) attended a performance in Bolshoi Theatre, the opera was highly criticised and discredited in the notorious unsigned article "Muddle Instead of Music: On the Opera *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*" in the Soviet propagandist newspaper *Pravda*.¹⁴ The opera was mostly criticised for "naturalistic," "formalist," "bourgeois," "coarse," and "vulgar" elements, partially for explicit erotic scenes, for "a wilderness of musical chaos," and for not providing Soviet people with "good" music and songs which help to develop Soviet socialist culture. Overall, Stalin condemned the work for not respecting the Social Realism style of art – the official doctrine.

Almost 30 years later, it finally became possible to criticize Soviet censorship of art of that time. The political and theatrical environments finally became freer more than ten years after Stalin's death, with the end of Stalin's cult of personality, its denouncement at the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956 by Nikita Khrushchev, and with the following de-Stalinization and Thaw. In Czechoslovakia, Brno artists tried to contribute to the rehabilitation of the infamous opera: for example, the dramaturg Václav Nosek (1921–2000) translated the libretto for the 1964 production and Miloš Wasserbauer directed the performance. Although they staged the second version of the opera,¹⁵ they analysed and compared both versions. Their thoughts and remarks were published in the production booklet,¹⁶ and some manuscripts can also be found in Wasserbauer's papers.¹⁷ In the context of earlier criticism connected with Zhdanov aesthetics, Nosek and Wasserbauer mostly tried to disprove accusations of "vulgar naturalism" of the opera. They based their defence of Shostakovich's work on several topics that were included in the first version (op. 29) and evolved in the second (op. 114). Most of all, they commented on the psychology of the main character. They relied on Shostakovich's decision to change the title of the opera, emphasising the focus on the main character as a human being: Shostakovich changed the more metaphorical title "Lady Macbeth..." to a simpler female name "Katerina Ismailova." Nosek's article in the booklet and the archive documents provide the reader with a comprehensive analysis of Katerina's character done by the director and dramaturg. They viewed Katerina as a lonely passionate woman who wanted to live a full life and has no opportunity to do so. With regards to the overall style of the work, the dramaturg Nosek¹⁸ and conductor František Jílek comment on the naturalism of the work, since this feature of Shostakovich's style (both in the music and in the libretto) was one of the most serious objections in the former "Stalinist" critique. The term "naturalistic," often con-

¹² The opera was also staged in Brno in 1936.

¹³ The libretto was co-authored with Alexander Preis (1905–1942).

¹⁴ "Muddle Instead of Music: On the Opera 'Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District,'" *Pravda*, 28 January 1936, 3.

¹⁵ The first version was entitled *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* (op. 29, 1930–1932), the second version *Katerina Izmailova* (op. 114, 1955–1963). See Edwin Neeleman, "Dmitri Shostakovich Works," last modified 19 April 2008, accessed 16 September 2019, <http://shostakovich.hilwin.nl/work.html>.

¹⁶ Václav Nosek, "Šostakovičova Katěrina Izmajlova se vrací na operní jeviště," in *Katěrina Izmajlova* (Brno: Státní divadlo v Brně, 1964), 3–7.

¹⁷ Stored in Moravian Museum, Department of Theatre History, box 280.

¹⁸ Nosek was also a conductor by profession.

nected to the notion “formalist,” was a frequent means for expressing dislike, used to denounce a work of art in Social Realistic criticism, which culminated in the 1950s in Czechoslovakia. Nosek admits that *Katerina Izmailova* bears some “naturalist” features but rejects the critique of vulgar naturalism.¹⁹ He claims that the means of expression that are connected to naturalism as an artistic style can only be found in Leskov’s novel. Nosek characterizes the latter as a work that recounts a story from the merchant community: the main female character is a cold-blooded, rational serial killer. According to Nosek, Shostakovich and Alexander Preis’s librettos describe *Katerina* differently. Nosek emphasizes that Shostakovich (and Preis) “leads his heroine [...] on the path of defence of her love, a defence that is unscrupulous but self-sacrificing at the same time.”²⁰ Nosek claims that Shostakovich’s work emphasizes the protagonist’s being under pressure because of the society she lives in. Her deeds (murders) are therefore motivated by self-defence. According to Nosek, Shostakovich frees the main character from the most cruel deeds, such as cool-blooded murder, and leaves out one of her motivations, the connection to the society where she grew up, i.e., leaving out the desire for material wealth as a motive.²¹ Nosek also admires the richness of Shostakovich’s music for the opera. Most of all, he emphasizes that the music expresses deeply human feelings and emotions.²² Nosek adds that all these features make up the main difference between the two versions, since they are developed more in the second version of the work (op. 114), that is in *Katerina Izmailova*.

Two Productions of *Katerina Izmailova*

At the end of the 1950s and in the first half of the 1960s, Miloš Wasserbauer was also permitted (by the communist regime) to work in theatres abroad – to give a guest performance or to create a new production. In the season 1963/1964, he directed Verdi’s *The Force of Destiny* in Leipzig, Janáček’s *Jenůfa* in the National Theatre in Ankara, and was invited to Teatro alla Scala to stage an opera in the spring of 1964. According to some sources,²³ the director of Teatro alla Scala attended Wasserbauer’s production of Janáček’s opera *From the House of the Dead* in Perugia in the autumn of 1963²⁴ and was so impressed that he invited the director and the scenographer František Tröster²⁵ to work in Teatro alla Scala the following year.

A choice was made in favour of Shostakovich’s *Katerina Izmailova* and on 16 May 1964, with the premiere in Teatro alla Scala.²⁶ About a month prior to the opening night in Milan, however,

¹⁹ Nosek, “Šostakovičova Katěrina Izmajlova se vrací na operní jeviště,” 4.

²⁰ Ibid., 5.

²¹ Nosek refers to the omission of the murder of the young nephew in Leskov’s novel. See *ibid.*, 4.

²² Ibid., 7.

²³ See Eugenie Poledňáková [Dufková], “Režisér Miloš Wasserbauer,” *Program státního divadla v Brně*, May, 1965, 4–5.

²⁴ The production of Janáček’s opera was originally created for the National Theatre in Brno in 1958 (premiered on 26 June 1958) and was renewed ten years later (1968). It is worth noting that in 1968 the opera was also staged in Teatro alla Scala. According to the archive documents (especially photos – see M. Wasserbauer’s papers stored in the Department of Theatre History of Moravian Museum Brno and Teatro alla Scala Archive), the scenography concept was very similar to the original 1958 Brno production. In the Teatro alla Scala archive records, we can find Tröster’s name as scenographer, but the director of the production was Wasserbauer’s Czech colleague Karel Jernek. See also “Da una casa di morti,” Teatro alla Scala, L’Archivio Storico, accessed 3 September 2019, <http://www.teatroallascala.org/archivio/ricerca.aspx>.

²⁵ Tröster created both the stage and costume design.

²⁶ With the conductor Nino Sanzogno. It was the first staging in Teatro alla Scala ever. See Eugenio Montale, “Una musica feroce per mimare il vero,” *Corriere dell’Informazione*, terza, 18 May 1964, 3. During the season 1965/1966 the production was also shown in Teatro Comunale, Florence (opening on 7 December 1965). Paul

another production by the two collaborators was shown in Brno on April 19. It is worth mentioning that apart from the director (Wasserbauer) and scenographer (Tröster) the two productions had different artistic teams. In Brno the costume design was created by Wasserbauer's collaborator from Leipzig, Eleonore Kleiber (1925–1997), but in Milan, the author of both the stage and costume design was Tröster. The overall concept of the costume design remained, however, identical. Both orchestras were led by “local” conductors František Jílek (1913–1993) in Brno and Nino Sanzogno (1911–1983) in Milan. From the point of view of dramaturgy, Shostakovich's *Katerina Izmailova* was a remarkable opera. At the time of the openings, the importance of the title was highly discussed in print media – both in Brno and Milan.

In 1964, both in Brno and Milan the artistic team based their production mostly on the interpretation introduced by Nosek and Wasserbauer in their notes to the production.²⁷ Most of the reviewers agreed with Nosek's (and Wasserbauer's) explanations and views.²⁸ The interpretation was highly supported by the direction-scenography concept of the production. Tröster's scenography was based on a large austere construction with several entrances and passageways placed on the revolving stage during acts 1–3. On the stage, this big merchant house appeared to be made mostly of stone. There were real props and objects in the surroundings of the building: steps, wooden boxes, barrels and other items. At the first glance, “realistic” style sets were applied. Yet, as was common with Tröster's approach, the realistic sets were transformed into a special concept of reality. Tröster used tulle cloth to construct the walls of the building. The translucent cloth – when trans-illuminated by the spotlight(s) – enabled a display of the rooms inside the building. For example, at the right side (from the spectator's view) of the construction, there was Katerina's bedroom with a balcony approximately two metres above the floor.²⁹ The bedroom was hidden behind the cloth displaying the austere wall of the building most of the time. In several scenes (e.g., with Sergei), the bedroom was “revealed” by the spotlight penetrating the “wall.” Taken metaphorically, the scenography primarily portrayed an unwelcoming place, which in the scenes of Katerina's expression of feelings and emotions was transformed to unveil (literally) more of inner space(s). Of course, there was a pragmatic purpose as well: the scenery allowed the spectators to observe some other important events of the story hidden from other characters: for example, what was happening in the cellar. In fact, the director shifted some crucial scenes that were originally meant to be performed inside the house to the area in front of the Izmailovs' house. In the scene with Katerina facing Boris and Zinovy Izmailovs, for example, the characters act around the table with a samovar (a tea urn). Taking this scene out of the building, the main scenographic element, the director displays the core of the conflict and makes the audience focus on it. This principle contributes to the overall direction-scenography

Strauss was the conductor in both performances. Otherwise, Wasserbauer had different artistic teams in both performances, including the majority of the singers. Only three main male singers Dino Dondi as Boris Izmailov, Augusto Vicentini as Zinovy Izmailov, and Giovanni Gibin as Sergei performed in both productions.

²⁷ See Wasserbauer's papers stored in the Moravian Museum in Brno, box 280.

²⁸ See for example: Vladimír Bor, “Šostakovičova opera zase v Brně,” *Lidová demokracie*, 23 April 1964, 3; Jiří Fukač, “Slavný návrat Katěřiny Izmajlové,” *Rovnost*, 30 April 1964, 5; Bohumil Karásek, “Katěřina Izmajlova opět u nás,” *Rudé právo*, 3 May 1964, 2; Bohumil Karásek, “Katěřina Izmajlová u nás,” *Hudební rozhledy* 17, no. 10 (1964): 408–410; Bohumír Štědroň, “Oneskorená rehabilitácia,” *Slovenská hudba* 8, no. 6 (1964): 181–182; Miloš Štědroň, “Katěřina Izmajlova – oběť nedorozumění,” *Mladá fronta*, 6 June 1964, 4; Jaroslav Volek, “Šostakovič a Janáček,” *Kulturní tvorba*, 7 May 1964, 13.

²⁹ Katerina's appearance on the balcony in dim light could (intentionally – by the artists) refer to the “balcony scene” from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*.

concept of the production which is based on “zooming” in particular features of the story.³⁰ The principle enables the artists to emphasize the interpretation they chose.

In the fourth act when the action moves to Siberia, the direction concept, supported by the scenography, develops the principle described above: the light and space arrangement determine the dramatic space. In the scenes of Siberian exile, the scenography consists of two main wooden pavements: one on the left leading from the front of the stage to the rear and one leading from the left side to the right side of the stage, being slightly elevated. These elements were also used in the scenography for previous acts. In the fourth act they are used, however, as the “bare base” of the construction (the building is now gone) and serve as a reminder of previous dramatic space and actions. This interpretation is supported by the telegraph poles which are placed on both sides of the pavements.³¹ Moreover, according to the archive materials from the Milan production,³² Tröster and Wasserbauer used light once again as a specific means of expression: lampposts were the only source of (dim) light in specific areas. In this way, the source of light became “objectivised,” that is displayed to the audience as a “visible” part of the scenography (not being hidden as a technical device). Tröster emphasizes the lampposts as a means of scenography which create an essential part of the (dramatic) space.

This approach to the direction and scenography, and overall to the interpretation of the opera work was refreshing after the years of Social Realism doctrine dominance. This new kind of “realism” was very different from the styles previously used on the theatrical stage.³³ The realistic objects and materials (e.g., wooden pavements, barrels, lamps, etc.) are mixed with fake realistic objects and materials. The most significant example is the building of the Izmailovs’ homestead itself as I have already described. The concept of “seeing through the walls” of a seemingly solid building, “a fortress,” supports substantially the interpretation the director and his team intended to emphasize. The symbolic value of the house is further supported by another, no less symbolic element. In both productions, Tröster used one of his “visual signatures”: a big branch with leaves hanging diagonally over and in front of the stage. This element modifies – both literally and metaphorically – the spectators’ perspective. The spectators are watching the action on the stage through the branch of a tree as if they are hidden observers. If we focus more carefully on the geometry of Tröster’s dramatic space, a modified theatrical perspective can be seen created by diagonals, the tilted edges of the materials (e.g., the canvas depicting the walls of the building), skewed platforms and other elements. It can be interpreted as Tröster’s concept of “dramatic planes” mentioned earlier.

Although similar in some respects, the two productions also differed in some of the elements. Overall, archive photos show sharper and more emphasized scenery (out)lines in the Milan production compared to the Brno production. The left-facing wooden pavement (in the last scene) is directed, for example, towards a vanishing-point, reminiscent of Italian Renaissance theatre.

Some differences can be found in the costume design of both productions. The costumes differed in the way they were stylized. Costumes for Scala were designed in a more modern style while the costumes for the Brno production were more austere. Interestingly, neither of

³⁰ This “zooming” principle, i.e., arranging the space and action to bring the situation closer to the audience, is typically regarded as one of Miloš Wasserbauer’s favourite directing methods.

³¹ In Teatro alla Scala the telegraph poles were placed only on one (left) side of the pavement.

³² Unfortunately, there is no proof that the lamp(s) was also used in the Brno production. See “Katerina Ismailova,” Teatro alla Scala, *L’Archivio Storico*, accessed 3 September 2019, <http://www.teatroallascala.org/archivio/ricerca.aspx>.

³³ I mostly refer to historical realism and Social Realism.

the productions used realistic “Russian” costumes of Leskov’s era, nor realistic details.³⁴ In Brno, a place familiar with Russian (or Soviet) culture at that time, the costume design was based on the previous convention of staging practice based on the concept of a “Russian-like” costume: The costumes designed by Eleonore Kleiber were based on a realistic design but were depicted only by the signs of reality they were meant to refer to. The costume design for the Milan production (made by Tröster) merged different staging traditions and a symbolic representation of the “Russian costume.” Moreover, the “Russian costumes” had to be adjusted to the fashion trends of Italian artists and spectators.

According to the photos from the performances, the director and dramaturg’s notes and the reviews, the directing and acting style were mostly realistic. In the 1960s, the term “realistic” staging style referred to a complex phenomenon. Most of all, the aim was to reveal the psychology of the character by a style of acting that was close to everyday life behaviour. The so-called “realistic style” of acting was derived from the staging and acting practice of spoken drama theatre of contemporary and previous eras. The application of the style in the opera productions was more complicated, since there were special, mostly physical requirements for singers, not mentioning the singing as a stylized way of verbal performance. One can therefore characterize the acting and directing style as realistic stylization emphasizing the psychological motivations of the characters and attempting to express thoroughly the logic of the characters’ actions. The tendency was also based on Stanislavsky’s system of acting and the reception of its operatic modifications that were imported in a Czech translation (in the first half of the 1950s in Czechoslovak periodicals such as the *Soviet Theatre*)³⁵ to the Czechoslovak opera staging practice and evolved further in the Czechoslovak acting practice.

According to Dana Toncrová,³⁶ Wasserbauer’s direction emphasized “realistic” style mostly in acting to appropriately express the struggle of “a young women for their right to a free life and emotion.” Wasserbauer based his interpretations of the main characters both on Shostakovich’s libretto and Leskov’s novel.³⁷ He emphasized the psychological motivation of both authors. In accordance with Stanislavsky’s system/method, he also tried to “reconstruct” the biographies of the characters. Wasserbauer’s notes about the main character imply, however, that the director understood Katerina as a special kind of “victim” of the situation she lives in:

A pretty woman, approximately 24 years old, bright black eyes, raven black hair with an almost bluish tint. As a girl, she was free as a bird. Because of the poverty, she couldn’t choose [a partner – ŠHK]. She married Izmailov not for love, but for his wealth, despite the fact that he was [...] much older and a childless widower. The marriage was unhappy. After five years of their marriage, she did not have a baby, although she was longing for a child, because she was bored. She had nothing to do – she couldn’t read, and she did not have much to do. She spent her time walking through empty rooms, dozing off for one or two hours, or looking out of the window onto the courtyard, to the granary in the garden. Her husband spent most of his time away doing business. Her father-in-law watched her, mistrusted her, and reproached her for her infertility. The sadness and boredom of the trade milieu burdened this young woman full of life.

³⁴ Some differences, however, can be found. The Brno production excluded, for example, the typical full-beards while in Milan the Izmailovs wore them.

³⁵ See e.g., the articles by Grigori Kristi, “Stanislavského systém v opeře,” *Sovětské divadlo*, vol. IV, n. 6, 1954, 580–587; “Stanislavského ‘Evžen Oněgin,’” *Sovětské divadlo* 5, no. 1 (1955): 82–97; and works by Konkordija Antarova, *Besedy se Stanislavským. Třicet besed K. S. Stanislavského o systému a zásadách tvorby zapsala zasloužila umělkyně RSFSR K. J. Antarova* (Prague: Nakladatelství Svoboda, 1949); and Nikolai Abalkin, *Systém Stanislavského a sovětské divadlo* (Prague: Československý spisovatel, 1952).

³⁶ Dana Toncrová, “Miloš Wasserbauer a jeho hledání realistické interpretace v opeře. Tvorba Miloše Wasserbauera ve Státním divadle Brno v letech 1958–1970” (MA thesis, Masaryk University Brno, 2000), 55.

³⁷ See the notes in M. Wasserbauer’s papers, Moravian Museum in Brno, box 280.

This initially submissive and indifferent woman changes at once when she meets Sergei and gives in to his charm and sexual attractiveness. Her mental and physical powers are now awakened. She is full of energy, determination, and her affection for Sergei turns into a monstrous obsession [underlined by MW]. She follows her affections violently, unscrupulously, at all costs. She goes all in.³⁸

It seems that Shostakovich wanted to make her character more pleasant than in Leskov's novel [...]. Katerina's tragic end, although connected with her last crime [...], seems to have some features of human greatness. When she loses the love of the man she loved so wildly and passionately, she also loses the sense of her life and kills herself by jumping into the water taking her rival with her.³⁹

Wasserbauer commented on Sergei very briefly in comparison with the characteristics he provided the title role with. In his notes, he interpreted Sergei as a sensuous man, with sex-appeal, but also clever and competent.⁴⁰

In general, the archive documents imply that the emphasis was placed on Katerina as a victim of the situation she lives in. This interpretation is supported by the reviews of the production. The interpretation, based on a defence of Katerina's deeds, may have been connected to the attempt at "rehabilitation" of Shostakovich's work itself that was expressed in several documents, including the texts written by the members of the artistic team (Nosek, Wasserbauer) and by the reviewers⁴¹ – both from Brno and Milan.

The overall artistic style of the production mixed the principles of realism, psychological realism mostly in the acting, directing style, and stylized elements provided by the scenography. The psychological aspects of the acting were supported substantially by the scenography that was based on the creation of a "realistic" illusion, but at the same time enabled a metaphorical reading. This attempt, based on a mixture of "realisms" and metaphors, allowed the artistic team to present Shostakovich's opera through a new way of staging an opera at that time.

The Reception of Tröster and Wasserbauer's Production of *Katerina Izmailova*

Czech and Italian reviewers commented on the importance of the production mostly from the point of view of the dramaturgy and complicated staging history of the work.⁴² The productions received mostly very good reviews – emphasizing the quality of the singers' and orchestra's performances. The reception of the topic, style of the work, and the style of the production was different, however, again mostly from the point of dramaturgy.

³⁸ Wasserbauer uses the idiom "jde přes mrtvolu" in Czech which means "to reach someone's goal by stepping over dead bodies."

³⁹ Wasserbauer's papers, box 280.

⁴⁰ See Wasserbauer's papers, box 280.

⁴¹ See e.g., Jiří Bajer, "Nejde o rekriminaci," *Divadelní noviny*, 6 May 1964, 4. Bor, "Šostakovičova opera zase v Brně." (ep) "K uvedení Katěry Izmajlové," *Lidová demokracie*, 10 April 1964, 3; Fukač, "Slavný návrat Katěry Izmajlové;" Karásek, "Katěrina Izmajlova opět u nás;" Karásek, "Katěrina Izmajlová u nás;" Ivan Petřelka, "Úspěšná premiéra sovětské opery. Šostakovičova Katěrina Izmajlova v Janáčkově opeře," *Svobodné slovo*, 28 April 1964; B. Štědroň, "Oneskorená rehabilitácia;" M. Štědroň, "Katěrina Izmajlova – oběť nedorozumění;" Montale, "Una musica feroce per mimare il vero;" 3; Mario Pasi, "Katerina Ismailova," *Corriere dell'Informazione*, 16–17 May 1964, 13; Mario Pasi, "Di Stefano 'Rienzi' alla Scala," *Corriere dell'Informazione*, *Quarta*, 8–9 May 1964, 13; "Stasera alla Scala 'Katerina Ismailova,'" *Corriere della sera*, May 17, 1964, 10; etc.

⁴² See e.g., Fukač, "Slavný návrat Katěry Izmajlové;" Karásek, "Katěrina Izmajlova u nás;" M. Štědroň, "Katěrina Izmajlova – oběť nedorozumění;" Montale, "Una musica feroce per mimare;" Pasi, "Katerina Ismailova;" Pasi, "Si Stefano 'Rienzi' alla Scala."

In Brno, the production of *Katerina Izmailova* raised discussions in connection with other operatic works based on “Russian” topic(s). Shostakovich’s heroine was compared to the main character of Janáček’s opera *Katya Kabanova* (with the libretto based on Ostrovsky’s *The Storm*). Janáček’s opera *From the House of the Dead* (with a libretto based on Dostoevsky’s novel) was also considered to be related. More importantly, the latter opera was staged by the same artistic team (Wasserbauer, Tröster, Jílek) in 1958 in Brno and the production was very successful. Some comments⁴³ were focused on the connection between both “Siberian” dramatic spaces created by Tröster. Some reviewers (and also Wasserbauer in his notes) focused on the possible similarities between both “Katyas.” The discussion was focused on similar elements of the stories. Most of all, the oppressive situation and tragic end including the suicide of both heroines were considered. The reviewers agreed that Janáček’s heroine was closer to the concept of “the pure Russian soul,” as Jiří Bajer put it.⁴⁴ Wasserbauer supported this view in his notes by praising Kabanova’s character as more moral and humane than Izmailova’s.⁴⁵ Both Katyas find themselves in oppressive situations, both long for love and freedom. But suffice to say, Izmailova tries to achieve her goal through crime, whereas Kabanova “only” destroys herself.

With regard to the Brno production, some reviewers (but not the majority of them) criticized Naděžda Kniplová⁴⁶ as the lead actress. Jiří Bajer⁴⁷ expressed the opinion, for example, that Kniplová’s Katerina was closer to Leskov’s main character than to Shostakovich’s. Bajer also accused Wasserbauer of not being consistent in the realisation of his (proclaimed) directorial concept and of being too submissive to Kniplová’s self-confident acting style and the excellent quality of her singing. Bajer described Kniplová’s performance as raising doubts about Katerina’s moral qualities almost at first sight. According to him, Kniplová’s “female and actress’ energy, supported by her excellent singing performance, raised the suspicion that her Katerina was morally ready for any sexual affair that comes by.” Furthermore, Bajer interpreted Sergei as her victim.⁴⁸ Despite the fact that Bajer’s criticism probably represents the most extreme critical opinion, additional complaints can be found about the imperfections of the acting and directing style of the production.

Conclusion

The remarks in the Italian reviews did not focus on the quality of the acting or directing. As I have already mentioned, most of the reviewers commented on the staging history of the work, the quality of the singers and the performance of the orchestra. Some of the reviewers mentioned, however, the high quality of the direction and scenography carried out by the foreign artists.⁴⁹ Unfortunately, the reviewers’ comments on the topic are quite short. In my opinion, the fact that two Slavic, but not Russian, artists were asked to present the Russian work to the Italian audience also mattered. Wasserbauer and Tröster represented an operatic staging practice that substantially relied on progressive tendencies in direction and scenography abandoning descriptive realism and two dimensional “illusionism” far behind. The audience of Teatro alla Scala could – with

⁴³ Both, some of the above mentioned reviewers and M. Wasserbauer (see Wasserbauer’s papers, box 280), commented on the connection.

⁴⁴ Bajer, “Nejde o rekriminaci.” Some of the reviewers rejected the connection – see Bor, “Šostakovičova opera zase v Brně.”

⁴⁵ Wasserbauer’s papers, box 280.

⁴⁶ Born in 1932. She was 32 at the time of the production.

⁴⁷ Bajer, “Nejde o rekriminaci.”

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Montale, “Una musica feroce per mimare il vero,” 3; Pasi, “Di Stefano ‘Rienzi’ alla Scala,” 13.

Shostakovich's work and the modern staging style of the Czech(oslovak) artists – experience the shift in the theatrical imagination of the operatic staging practice of the era coming out of Czechoslovakia.

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European Musical Theatre in the Context of Theatrical Life in Pressburg from the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century to the End of the Nineteenth Century

Abstract | The theatrical space has always represented a space full of thoughts, stories and ideas communicated to the audience. The relationship between the artists and the audience was conditioned not only by the theatrical content but also by the theatrical forms and the theatre building itself. Two theatre buildings, both called the Municipal Theatre, played a major role in the history of Pressburg. The first one was erected in 1776 and the second in 1886. This study examines the main determinants involved in operating a theatre in Pressburg from the second half of the eighteenth century to the end of the nineteenth century, analyses the influence of the urban elite on the development of artistic life, and looks at the specificities that characterized the staging of European musical-dramatic repertoire in the Municipal Theatre. The findings also add information to the knowledge we have about the work of the painters of scenic designs active in Pressburg in the nineteenth century.

Keywords | European musical-dramatic repertoire – Municipal Theatre – Opera – Pressburg – Scenic designs – Viennese operetta

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The theatrical space has always represented a space full of thoughts, stories and ideas communicated to the audience. The relationship between the artists and the audience was conditioned not only by the theatrical content but also by the theatrical forms and the theatre building itself. The institutionalization of the theatrical art with a boom of theatre buildings from the second half of the eighteenth century created the conditions for its continuous cultivation and contributed to building its tradition. The audience “wanted to see” and “wanted to be seen.” Urban theatres, sharing the same features in Central and South-Eastern Europe, were specific places for presentations.¹ The urban elite, among whom the bourgeoisie began to prevail after the transformation of society in the early nineteenth century, was the main actor of cultural and social developments. In cultivating musical theatre, the urban elite adopted models from the aristocratic theatre, modified its contents and created its own version with shared codes.²

When examining the programmes of the municipal theatres within the former Austrian, or Austro-Hungarian, Empire, their connections and interactions are evident. The reason was

¹ Moritz Csáky, *Das Gedächtnis der Städte. Kulturelle Verflechtungen – Wien und die urbanen Milieus in Zentral-europa* (Wien; Köln; Weimar: Böhlau Verlag, 2010), 21.

² Vladimír Zvara, “Auf der Suche nach dem Sinn der Oper: Die untote Kunstgattung in der Stadt Bratislava,” in *Musiktheater in Raum und Zeit. Beiträge zur Geschichte der Theaterpraxis in Mitteleuropa in 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Vladimír Zvara (Bratislava: Asociácia Corpus v spolupráci s NM Code, 2015), 220–221.

a similar system of operating the theatre, used, with minor deviations, in all the cities that had their own theatre. The theatre buildings designed by the architects Ferdinand Fellner Jr. and Hermann Helmer, forming the “topographical network of Central Europe” at the turn of the twentieth century, also contributed to the distribution of theatre with a German repertoire. The buildings shared several characteristics, including being grounded in the cultural history of the cities and, at the same time, defining new contents for a wide stratum of the bourgeoisie.³

One of the “products” of Fellner & Helmer’s office was the present-day Historical Building of the Slovak National Theatre (SND) on Hviezdoslav Square in Bratislava. In 2020, SND will celebrate its hundredth anniversary. The *Year of Slovak Theatre* has been declared for this jubilee to emphasize the significance of this flagship institution in Slovakia. The building, in which the long journey of the formation of professional Slovak theatre began with Smetana’s opera *Hubička* on 1 March 1920, has a longer history though. It was built in 1886 as the Municipal Theatre (Stadttheater in German, Városi Színház in Hungarian). The construction was primarily initiated by the inhabitants of Pressburg who viewed this new abode of Thalia as the embodiment of the cultural traditions of the former celebrated coronation city. The theatre had had a firm place in Pressburg ever since the Middle Ages. Its real boom began in 1776 when the first brick-and-mortar theatre was built.

This study looks at the main determinants of running a theatre in Pressburg from the second half of the eighteenth century to the end of the nineteenth century, how the members of the urban elite influenced the development of artistic life, and what specificities the staging of European musical-dramatic repertoire at the Municipal Theatre had.

The Theatrical Topography of Pressburg at the Time

Two theatre buildings, both called the Municipal Theatre, played a major role in the history of Pressburg. The first one was erected in 1776 and the second in 1886. Their emergence and development was determined by the socio-cultural situation. The first theatre was formed by the enlightened aristocracy whereas the second one was shaped by the ideals of the educated bourgeoisie. The erection of the first building of the Municipal Theatre in 1776 can be viewed as the culmination of the institutionalization process of theatrical life in the city. The merit goes to Count Juraj (György) Csáky de Körösszegh IV who funded the major part of the construction of the new theatre building on the city’s plot. The theatre was situated roughly on the site of the present-day Historical Building of the Slovak National Theatre and was opened on 9 November 1776. The programme of the ceremonial evening was J. Ch. Brandes’s play *Die Medizäer*. Apart from the theatre hall, Count Csáky promised to build a Redoute (finished in 1793) next to the theatre for concerts and dances. Pressburg was proud to have its own brick-and-mortar theatre, which was not only comfortable but safe as well.⁴

From the aspect of organizing the operations of the theatre, it was an interesting combination of the aristocratic and the urban culture since, for constructing the building, Count Csáky demanded life-long free use of a box and the right to lease the theatre for the first twenty years to lessees (i.e., theatre directors) and their companies.⁵ Afterwards, the administration of the

³ Ferdinand Fellner, *Die Entwicklung des Theaterbaues in den letzten fünfzig Jahren. Ein Vortrag, gehalten am 26. November 1909 in der Zentralvereinigung der Architekten der im Reichsrate vertretenen Königreiche und Länder in Wien* (Wien: im Selbstverlag des Verfassers, 1909), 5.

⁴ “Theatral-Neuigkeiten,” *Preßburger Zeitung*, 13 November 1776, vol. 12, no. 91, 6–7.

⁵ Municipal Archive of Bratislava (MAB), Magistrate of Bratislava, Municipal Establishments XI/5 – Theatre, documents from 1776–1840, box no. 2936.

building was to pass on to the city. Other aristocrats who contributed to the construction of the theatre could also enjoy life-long free use of boxes.⁶ Since this right was hereditary, the theatre was usually in debt. The main revenue came from the sale of tickets (after the construction of the Redoute, the lessee of the theatre was entitled to revenues from the lease of the hall and of the municipal casino) but, since the aristocrats did not pay for the tickets, it was difficult for the directors to keep the theatre running. Apart from paying remuneration, they had to pay rent as well. Most of the directors consequently worked alternately in the Municipal Theatre and in an aristocratic residence in the city or its vicinity, which resulted in lively interactions and the mutual influence of the theatres. The most prominent aristocratic families with palaces in Pressburg at that time and supporting the musical and theatrical culture in the city were the Batthyánys, the Erdődys, the Esterházys, the Grassalkoviches, and the Pálffys. The repertoire of the Municipal Theatre consisted of several genres and forms, depending on the funds of the directors and the artistic potentials of the companies.

The Csáky theatre existed until 1884 when it was demolished and the construction of the new Municipal Theatre was started in its place according to the plans of the above-mentioned architects Ferdinand Fellner Jr. and Hermann Helmer. The invitation of these architects from Vienna can be viewed as a manifestation of the close connection of Pressburg to the artistic environment of Vienna and, at the same time, as an effort to integrate the “Western bastion of Hungarians” into the wider cultural environment of the Empire.⁷ The architects designed the new theatre in accordance with state-of-the-art safety aspects in a historical Neo-Renaissance style with an elaborate Neo-Baroque interior and a seating capacity of approximately 1,170. The placement of the new theatre in roughly the same place where the old theatre had stood pointed to the continuity of the theatrical tradition. At the same time, this theatre was situated away from the historical centre of the city and, consequently, a new cultural hub was created. The only shortcoming of the new building was the absence of a Redoute hall, whose construction was initially approved by the city but, after the calculation of the total budget, was finally omitted from the project.⁸ Compared to the previous theatre building, no rent was paid for the new theatre but the director did not receive anything from the revenues from the lease of the Redoute and the casino. The building only had a café and the director was entitled to part of the profit made by private entertainment establishments in the city, such as the Orfeum, tingl-tangl or the circus.

A summer theatre called Arena on the right bank of the Danube (today's Petržalka borough of Bratislava) was an indispensable part of the theatrical topography of Pressburg in the nineteenth century. The Arena was built in 1828 by the theatre director Johann August Stöger (Johann August Althaller by his true name), well-known for the construction and renovation of theatre buildings in several cities. It was a theatre of the Italian type (amphitheatre), with a natural scenery. In 1842, the Arena was reopened after much-needed renovation. It was alternately owned

⁶ The original fifteen owners of boxes were: Count Anton Grassalkovich, Count Johann Illésházy, Count Emerich Csáky, Count Ludwig Csáky, Baron Franz Balassa, Count Christof Erdődy, Count Johann Nepomuk Erdődy, Countess Clara Castiglioni, Count Leopold Pálffy, Count Franz Zichy, Count Georg Apponyi, Count Carl Andrásy, Count Franz Esterházy, Count Nicolaus Forgách, Count Johann Herberstein. MAB, Bratislava City Collection, Accounting Materials from 1873–1912, box no. 2823 and “Aufruf,” *Preßburger Zeitung*, 24 August 1884, vol. 121, no. 234, 2.

⁷ Jozef Tancer, “Obraz nie je odraz. Repräsentácie mesta ako výskumný problém,” [“An Image is not a Reflection. Representations of the Town as a Research Problem,”] in *Medzi provinciou a metropolou. Obraz Bratislavy v 19. a 20. storočí*, ed. Gabriela Dudeková (Bratislava: Institute of History of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, 2012), 39.

⁸ MAB, Magistrate of Bratislava, Municipal Establishments XI/5 – Theatre, documents from 1881–1885, box no. 2939.

by the city and other owners who leased it out mostly to German-speaking directors. In the first years, its repertoire consisted of higher-quality (costlier) productions with guest performers from Vienna and other significant cities. The theatre playbills reveal that the operation of the Arena was closely connected to that of the Municipal Theatre by having the same director.⁹ With the gradual wear and tear of the open-air place, its repertoire changed to financially less demanding entertainment productions, such as farces with magic (Zauberposse), stories with songs, farces with songs and dances, and local farces (Lokalposse) on daily life. The most popular authors were Johann Nestroy and Friedrich Raimund. After the erection of the new Municipal Theatre, discussions took place about the compulsory takeover of the Arena with its director overseeing the performances in the theatre. In the end, this did not occur because the city realized that the performances in the Arena brought limited income. The situation was solved in 1899 when the city decided to build a new, covered Arena in place of the old one. After its renovation in 1906, it became a sought-after place by theatre troupes from Vienna and the nearby areas.

There was also another theatre in Pressburg, dating back to the early eighteenth century. It was situated in the premises of the Pálffy's garden. Initially, it was part of the extensive Pálffy estate at the foot of the castle hill. In the early nineteenth century, this theatre became a public area in which various cultural events were held. In-depth research on its connection with the Municipal Theatre has not been conducted yet but we know that, in 1884–1886, i.e., during the construction of the new Municipal Theatre, the city established a temporary theatre, a so-called Interimstheater there. Adjustments to the premises for the needs of a theatre were designed by the chief engineer of Pressburg, Anton Sendlein, one of the main actors in the construction of the new Municipal Theatre. It was leased by the director Ludwig Zwerenz for two years who staged there a repertoire consisting of various genres and forms.

The Main Determinants of Theatre Operations in Pressburg

When comparing the functioning of the old and the new Municipal Theatre, several characteristics come to the forefront which shaped the theatre operations in both the buildings. One of these was the lively contacts between the artistic life in the city and the arts cultivated in the aristocratic residences. This can be evidenced by the activities of Carl Maurer (1761/62–1844), a theatre painter at the court of Nikolaus II Esterházy in Eisenstadt, who worked in Pressburg from 1810. This was not a unique case. In the 1770s, the companies of two prominent theatre directors, Karl Wahr and Christoph Ludwig Seipp, worked in the theatre in Pressburg and in the Esterházy's residence. Wahr and Seipp worked in Hainburg as well, in Phillip Bathyány's residence.¹⁰

At the turn of the eighteenth century, the Municipal Theatre of Pressburg gained significant momentum thanks to the operations of the opera company of Count Johann Nepomuk Erdődy in 1783–1789. The members of this company were guest performers in the Municipal Theatre at the turn of 1787, in the summer of 1787 and then in 1788. Their repertoire, sung in German, consisted of works such as Karl Ditters von Dittersdorf's *Der Doktor und Apotheker* and *Betrug durch Aberglauben*, Joseph Haydn's *Der Sieg der Beständigkeit* and *Roland der Pfalzgraf* and Giovanni Paisiello's *Il re Teodore in Venezia*. The company was led by the tenor Hubert Kumpf, a former member of Emanuel Schikaneder's company. Prior to his arrival in Bratislava, Kumpf performed in Schikaneder's company in the Kärtnertheater in Vienna (apart from other

⁹ MAB, Theatre Documentation Collection, theatre playbills from 1796–1936 (1941).

¹⁰ Geza Staud, *Adelstheater in Ungarn. 18. und 19. Jahrhundert* (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1977), 93, 99.

works, the company performed Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*), from which he brought his rich artistic experience to the Erdődy Theatre. The existence of this company undoubtedly contributed to the popularization of the opera in Pressburg.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, contacts strengthened through the regular visits of Archduke Friedrich, Duke of Teschen, and his wife Isabella in the new Municipal Theatre. The theatre artists were in turn invited to their residence in the Grassalkovich Palace where musical and theatrical performances were held for the members of the Grassalkovich family and their guests. Local dailies highlighted the visits of the archducal couple at the performances of the Municipal Theatre as an acknowledgement of the educational standards of the urban elite participating in theatrical life. According to the reports in the dailies, the Archduke enjoyed watching comedy performances more than classical dramatic pieces, which points to the entertaining function of the theatre. Throughout the nineteenth century, charity performances were held in the theatre under the aegis of the aristocracy who took an active part in them. The stagings of the works of local authors, mostly local aristocrats, were festive events.¹¹

Highlighting the cultural contacts between Pressburg and Vienna in specialist as well as populist literature can be labelled as iconic. The presence of Albert Casimir of Saxony, Duke of Teschen, and his wife Maria Christina in the city in the second half of the eighteenth century provided a good reason for the frequent visits of Empress Maria Theresa, Maria Christina's mother. The performances of the imperial orchestra at coronation ceremonies and at important political meetings promoted the cultural transfers between the cities. After the erection of the first Municipal Theatre, Pressburg became a sought-after destination for theatre directors from Vienna, since the new theatre provided a year-round background for artistic companies. The above-mentioned Emanuel Schikaneder, librettist of *Die Zauberflöte*, actor, singer, and director of the Theater an der Wien in Vienna, spent the years 1782–1784 in Pressburg and had a significant influence on the theatrical life of the city. From the later years, the composer, conductor, and translator Julius Hopp is worth mentioning, whose activities as the Kapellmeister of the Municipal Theatre in the 1850s preceded his subsequent success in theatres in Vienna (Theater an der Wien, Theater in der Josefstadt). Additional personalities active in Pressburg include the composer and conductor Franz von Suppé, who was the Kapellmeister of the Municipal Theatre led by director Franz Pokorny's company in 1841–1844.

After the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867, the relationship between Pressburg and Vienna gained a new socio-political dimension. Due to the Hungarianization process of Upper Hungary, it was decided when opening the new Municipal Theatre in 1886 that the season would be divided into a German and a Hungarian part, with their respective directors. Vienna had been viewed by the inhabitants of Pressburg as the centre of theatrical life and inviting guests from Viennese theatres had an important cultural and social aspect. At a time when pro-Hungarian circles, supported by the Hungarian Government, enforced Hungarian performances in the theatre, local German press repeatedly highlighted the musical and theatrical traditions of Vienna and contrasted it with the artistic life in Budapest. From the viewpoint of critics from Pressburg, the repertoire performed in Vienna was a guarantee of quality and its performance in Pressburg added a touch of noblesse to the city. Consequently, the guest appearances of Bernhard Baumeister, Maria Pospischil, Friedrich Mitterwurz, Ernst Hartmann, Adolf Sonnenthal and other actors of the Viennese Hofburgtheater were highly valued social events every year.

¹¹ Jana Laslavíková and Beatrix Gómez-Pablos, "Prenikanie dramatického diela Josého Echegaraya El gran Galeoto na európsku scénu a jeho recepcia v Bratislave na sklonku 19. storočia" [Conveyance of the Dramatic Work El Gran Galeoto by José Echegaray on the European Scene and His Reception in Bratislava at the End of the Nineteenth Century], *Slovenské divadlo: revue dramatických umení* 66, no. 4 (December 2018): 343.

The beginnings of the careers of young artists, later active in Vienna or in other prominent theatres, were an equally important element of the theatrical history of Pressburg. These artists included Max Reinhardt, actor, director, and world-class theatre entrepreneur, who performed in the Arena in the summer of 1893.¹² Reinhardt came to Pressburg from the artistically rich environment of Vienna at the time of the last years of the old Arena whose lessees frequently alternated. During his stay, he learnt a “lesson for a lifetime” about how a theatre should not function.¹³ He subsequently went to Salzburg and then to Berlin where his collaboration with Otto Brahm opened up new artistic possibilities for him. His ensemble from the Theater in der Josefstadt in Vienna returned to Pressburg/Bratislava in the interwar period.

The conductor Bruno Walter also spent a season (1897/1898) in Pressburg and, after many years, recalled the commitment of everybody (performers as well as the audience) to the theatre and to the artistic life in the city.¹⁴ Walter’s efforts to stage opera performances were commented on in detail by Gustav Mauthner in the *Westungarischer Grenzboten* daily in Pressburg, who labelled the young artist as a “hypermodern, hot-blooded conductor,” whose certain opera performances did not end before eleven at night.¹⁵ For Walter, Pressburg was a conservative provincial city. He accepted the position mainly because of its proximity to Vienna, where Gustav Mahler worked who soon appointed Walter as his assistant. At the time of Walter’s activities in Pressburg, the city changed to one of the industrially most developed towns of Hungary. In the field of theatrical art, however, traditional attitudes and trends prevailed.

Musicians’ and Singers’ Associations in Pressburg and their Participation in Theatrical Life

The building of the cultural memory of the city was strengthened by sectionalism, to which artists’ associations contributed to a large extent. Their participation in theatrical life has been mapped so far primarily from the aspect of the personalities and the repertoire. In the nineteenth century, the most well-known music association in Pressburg was undoubtedly the Church Music Association of St. Martin’s Cathedral (hereinafter referred to as CMA; *Kirchenmusikverein bei der Dom-, Kollegiats- und Stadtpfarrkirche zu St. Martin* in German, *Szent Márton Pozsonyi Egyházi Zeneegylet* in Hungarian), headed by accomplished conductors such as Jozef Kumlik, Karl Mayrberger, Josef Thiard-Laforest and Ludwig Burger.¹⁶ The last-mentioned also conducted the orchestra in the old Municipal Theatre. The performances of the other conductors in the theatre were sporadic and were connected to the concert activities of the CMA in the premises of the new Municipal Theatre (after the demolition of the Redoute, the association did not have a proper concert hall, so the city amended the lease agreement of the theatre by adding an annual free use of the building for the concert of the CMA on Palm Sundays).

As concerns the participation of the members of the CMA in theatrical performances, recent research reveals that the members of the CMA orchestra were, at the same time, members of the

¹² Miloš Mistrík, “Reinhardts Sommerspielzeit 1893 in Preßburg,” in *Max Reinhardt a Bratislava/Preßburg*, ed. Miloš Mistrík (Bratislava: VEDA; Wien: Theatermuseum, 2019), 98–125.

¹³ Max Reinhardt, *Leben für das Theater. Briefe, Reden, Aufsätze, Interviews, Gespräche, Auszüge aus Regienbüchern* (Berlin: Argon Verlag, 1991), 28–29.

¹⁴ Bruno Walter, *Téma s variacemi* [Theme and Variations] (Prague: SHV, 1965), 118.

¹⁵ “Mauthner: Der Schluss der deutschen Theatersaison 1897–1898,” *Westungarischer Grenzboten*, 1 February 1898, vol. 27, no. 8715, 4.

¹⁶ Jana Lengová, “Pressburg im letzten Drittel des 19. Jahrhunderts – das Musikmilieu der Jugendjahre Franz Schmidts,” in *Franz Schmidt und Pressburg*, ed. Carmen Ottner (Wien: Doblinger, 1999), 11.

theatre orchestra (Pressburg did not have its own orchestra until 1906, so the theatre director used to hire local musicians, primarily from among the musicians of the CMA). Ján Batka, senior secretary of the CMA, municipal archivist and prominent music critic in Pressburg, regularly mentioned the participation of the members of the CMA in the Municipal Theatre in his opera critiques in the *Preßburger Zeitung* daily. As a member of the theatre committee, he had an influence on running the theatre and, thanks to his extensive contacts with the greatest figures of artistic life, mediated a number of guest performances in the theatre (his friends from the theatrical community included the Viennese actors Bernhard Baumeister and Rudolf Tyrolt, the barytonist Joseph Beck and many other musical figures). Since he was well aware of the importance of the theatre director, he tried to obtain artistic authorities for Pressburg who managed to bring high-quality ensembles and offer an interesting repertoire to the city.

Apart from sacred compositions, the repertoire of the CMA included musical-dramatic pieces such as instrumental opera preludes, choirs and arias composed by nineteenth-century composers. The CMA performed them in its concerts, often in chronological proximity to their performance in the theatre. In this way, the audience in Pressburg could hear the new musical-dramatic repertoire and respond to the premieres in the theatre positively. One such example is the performance of Wagner's *Parsifal* at the CMA's concert on 29 October 1893. According to Ján Batka, the CMA was the first music association in Hungary to have performed this work. In his concert critique, he underlined Wagner's work in connection with the performance of *Der fliegende Holländer* in the Municipal Theatre, which Raul scheduled for a day before the concert of the CMA (on 28 October 1893).¹⁷ Although, in this case, the sequence was changed (the opera performance preceded the concert), Batka's words point to the connections between the repertoire of the CMA and that of the Municipal Theatre.

Another association in Pressburg, that performed in the theatre, was the mixed Pressburg Singers' Association (Pressburger Singverein in German, Pozsonyi Dalegylet, or Pozsonyi Dalegyesület in Hungarian). The association took part in the activities of the CMA regularly and helped out at opera performances occasionally. It played a major role in the premiere of Saint-Saëns's opera *Samson et Dalila* in 1902; without its presence, the premiere could not have taken place since the number of choir singers was very low at that time.¹⁸ The *Preßburger Zeitung* daily reported the participation of the Typografia (Typographenbund in German, Pozsonyi Dalkör in Hungarian) singers' association in the premiere of Nessler's opera *Der Trompeter von Säckingen* in 1886.¹⁹ This formation, originally a male labourers' association, transformed itself into a mixed choir in a short time and participated in the performance of several operas.

The Art Ensemble, the Repertoire and the Audience in the Municipal Theatre

As mentioned above, musicians' and singers' associations in Pressburg played a significant role in the theatrical life of Pressburg. In the wider sense of the word, they were one of the major pillars supporting the operations of the municipal theatres, whereas the other pillars were the artists' ensemble, the repertoire and the audience. The Art Ensemble of the Theatre (also called the Theatre Society) came to the city under the guidance of the theatre director who was also a theatre entrepreneur in the first half of the nineteenth century. The lease agreement of the theatre did not rule out the directors' activities in other places because it was evident that the

¹⁷ J. B., "Das Parsifal-Konzert," *Preßburger Zeitung*, 30 October 1893, vol. 130, no. 300, 3.

¹⁸ Mauthner, "Samson und Dalila," *Westungarischer Grenzbote*, 12 January 1902, vol. 31, no. 10099, 4.

¹⁹ E., "Der Trompeter von Säckingen," *Preßburger Zeitung*, 31 December 1886, vol. 127, no. 361, 5.

Pressburg theatre did not generate enough profit. Simultaneously with managing the operations of the Municipal Theatre, directors therefore tried to secure opportunities for their company in the nearby towns and aristocratic residences. Most of the directors active in Pressburg in the first half of the nineteenth century rented theatres in Vienna (Theater in der Josefstadt, Theater an der Wien) or the theatre in Baden. This kind of operation was not possible in the new Municipal Theatre, as the director and the company had to be present in the city throughout the season. Apart from the performers, conductor(s) and Kapellmeister(s) were also involved in the society. The technicians were locals and most of them worked in the old as well as the new theatre, which ensured the continuity of the technical operations of the building. Directors arriving in Pressburg in the first half of the nineteenth century were mostly well-known singers, composers or conductors. In the second half of the nineteenth century, most directors were actors and held the post of the main stage director in the ensemble. Directors came to Pressburg from the entire German-speaking area (today's Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary). Good contacts with contemporaneous artists and agencies were indispensable for gaining a quality ensemble. In the old Municipal Theatre, names such as Karl Wahr, Emanuel Schikaneder, Christoph Ludwig Seipp, Johann Christoph Kunz, Carl Friedrich Hensler, Johann August Stöger, Franz Pokorný, or Ignatz Czernitz, are mentioned regarding their successful activities (mostly connected to opera productions). Two directors of the new Municipal Theatre, Max Kmentt and Emanuel Raul, staged musical-dramatic repertoire from the opening of the theatre in 1886 to the end of the nineteenth century. Hungarian directors active in Pressburg at the time only staged operettas; at the time of Ignác Krecsányi's presence, the performances were on a high level, with elaborate costumes.

The size of the art ensemble and its composition were regulated by a contract between the city of Pressburg and the lessee of the theatre. One of the few preserved contracts from the 1840s stated that at least one prima donna and two other female singers, one first bass and one second bass, one first tenor and one second tenor, a choir, a Kapellmeister, a music director, and a 26-member orchestra had to be engaged for the staging of an opera.²⁰ Moreover, the contract imposed an obligation on the director to engage an opera and drama company during the regional assembly and have them perform daily in the theatre during the winter and the summer seasons. Outside the time of the assembly, the director had to engage an opera company for a minimum of three months and, on the remaining days of the year, had to have his own opera singers in the ensemble. From 1835, the theatre was leased by Franz Pokorný who took it over in a very bad financial situation. Due to being the owner of a theatre in Baden and in Vienna (Theater in der Josefstadt), he was able to lead the Pressburg theatre out of the crisis and offer an interesting repertoire to the audience. He was familiar with the artistic environment of Pressburg because, from 1822, he was a member and, later, director of the theatre orchestra in the city; from 1830, he worked as the master of the trumpeters. Apart from operas, his theatre repertoire consisted of a wide range of light farces, parodies and comedies, tragedies and narrative plays.²¹

The lease agreement of the Municipal Theatre of Pressburg from the turn of the 1890s stated that the director had to engage a company which would be able to perform plays, comedies, folk plays, farces and operettas at the standard of the artistic preferences of the city and in conformity to the demands of the audience.²² The choir had to have 16 members. The agreement

²⁰ MAB, Magistrate of Bratislava, Municipal Establishments XI/5 – Theatre, documents from 1841–1850, box no. 2937.

²¹ Milena Cesnaková-Michalcová, *Premeny divadla. Inonárodné divadlá na Slovensku do roku 1918* [Transformations of the Theatre. Theatres of Other Ethnicities in Slovakia Before 1918] (Bratislava: Veda, 1981), 48.

²² MAB, Magistrate of Bratislava, Municipal Establishments XI/5 – Theatre, documents from 1886–1898, box no. 2940.

also specified the members of the orchestra which had to consist of at least 30 musicians. This number was, at the same time, the maximum number and sometimes even decreased; the conductor Bruno Walter commented on this fact when he talked about the necessity of modifying the instrumentation in all the large operas.²³

It follows, therefore, that the agreement from the turn of the 1890s did not impose an obligation to perform operas but only operettas. Ján Batka's words suggest, however, that the director Max Kmentt succeeded at the 1886 competition partly because he promised that operas would be regularly staged. Nevertheless, it turned out that there were not enough opera soloists in the ensemble. He consequently invited ensembles from Vienna and the nearby towns at the end of the season. Batka referred to this as guile and did not support Kmentt. After the arrival of Emanuel Raul in 1890, who made it to Pressburg thanks to Batka, the situation changed significantly. Raul engaged several opera soloists in the ensemble who later became famous singers. When choosing the opera repertoire, he collaborated with Batka and tried to stage the latest operas. These included less significant pieces such as *Rose von Pontevedra* (J. Forster, 24 January 1894, premiered with the participation of the composer), *Der Weise von Cordoba* (Oscar Strauss, 1 December 1894, it was a world premiere), *Enoch Arden* (Viktor Hausmann, 19 January 1895, it was its first presentation in the entire Austro-Hungarian Empire), *Der Streik der Schmiede* (M. J. Beer, 27 November 1898), and *Griselda* (G. Cottrau, 29 December 1898), but Raul presented these as an opportunity to "become noticed by the empire." During Raul's directorship in Pressburg, the most successful premieres included *Cavalleria Rusticana* (P. Mascagni, 18 December 1891), *Mala vita* (U. Giordano, 4 November 1893), *Il Pagliacci* (R. Leoncavallo, 30 December 1893), *Hänsel und Gretel* (E. Humperdinck, 25 December 1894), *Prodaná nevěsta* (B. Smetana, 9 November 1895), *Mignon* (A. Thomas, 1 January 1896), *Das Heimchen am Herd* (K. Goldmark, 5 December 1896), *Der Evangelimann* (W. Kienzl, 9 January 1897), *Djamileh* (G. Bizet, 20 November 1897), and *La bohème* (R. Leoncavallo, 8 January 1898). The local composer August Norgauer's opera *Jadwiga*, whose world premiere took place on 10 January 1893, was brought to Pressburg by the ensemble of František Lacina from Brno in 1905 during their guest performance in the city.

Raul staged most of the premieres without guest soloists, i.e., exclusively with the members of his own ensemble. Their high quality is documented by the fact that, during Raul's activities in Pressburg, the former members of his ensemble, working in theatres in Vienna, came as guest performers to Pressburg. They included Minna Baviera-Zichy, Betty Stojan, Marie Seiffert, Rudolf del Zopp, Alois Penarini and Anton Passy-Cornet.

An equally important factor determining the performances of the musical theatre was its audience. A well-established system of season tickets functioning in the old as well as in the new Municipal Theatre enabled the theatre to strengthen a base of regular audience who considered the daily attendance of theatre performances to be part of the social life. The owners of season tickets included members of the aristocracy, the bourgeoisie, higher officials, urban intelligentsia consisting of factory owners, school directors and professors, bankers, lawyers, physicians and officers, and members of the local musicians' and singers' associations.²⁴ Theatre directors were aware of the fact that, despite the constant growth of the population, the composition of the regular audience had not changed. They therefore counted on the owners of the season tickets and adjusted the daily repertoire to their preferences. In the nineteenth century, when the theatre became a conveyor of national ideas, a specific situation developed in Pressburg. The

²³ Bruno Walter, *Téma s variacemi* [Theme and Variations] (Prague: SHV, 1965), 120.

²⁴ On the composition of the opera audience in municipal theatres in the nineteenth century, see Jiří Kopecký and Lenka Křupková, *Provincial Theater and Its Opera: the German Opera Scene in Olomouc, 1770–1920* (Olomouc: Palacký University, 2015), 313–315.

Hungarian Government viewed the new Municipal Theatre as a means to spread the Hungarian language and culture. German-speaking inhabitants prevailed in Pressburg, however, even after the Austro-Hungarian Compromise. Under the pressure of socio-political circumstances, they learnt the Hungarian language in public life but preferred German in the theatre. They attended Hungarian performances primarily when an exceptional guest performed or when Hungarian holidays were celebrated. Although the supporters of Hungarian theatre tried to create an impression of a double (German and Hungarian) audience, the reality was different. The same audience attended (and, consequently, supported) the German as well as the Hungarian performances, as can be seen from the critics' statements about a *single* theatre audience.²⁵ The Hungarian performances therefore suffered from a lack of interest for a long time, even by members of pro-Hungarian circles. This changed only in the first decade of the twentieth century when the city acquired a strongly Hungarian character.

European Opera and Operetta Repertoire Performed in Pressburg in the Nineteenth Century

A look at the daily programme of the old and the new Municipal Theatre reveals that it was similar to the repertoire of other provincial cities at the time. Opera and operetta performances were accompanied by several facts. Firstly, artists and artistic ensembles from Vienna and the nearby towns came as guest performers. This long-standing practice followed from the close connection of Pressburg to Vienna on the one hand and from several practical reasons, such as the need to enrich the daily programme schedules, on the other. The works were performed repeatedly several times a season, so the director looked for ways to make the repeats special. Another reason was the need to supplement the local ensemble which lacked high-quality opera and operetta soloists. Last but not least, the directors wanted to attract audiences by staging new shows that the guests had in their repertoire.

Prominent opera soloists of the Vienna Court Opera, guest performing in Pressburg in the second half of the nineteenth century included Theodor Reichmann, Anna Baier, Ida Liebhardt-Baier, Caroline Tellheim, Antonie Schläger, Minna Walter, Rosa Papier and Louise von Ehrenstein. The guests appeared in earlier operas as well as in the latest ones, with a prevalence of Italian and French works, such as *Un ballo in maschera*, *La traviata*, *Il trovatore*, *Rigoletto*, *Aida* (G. Verdi), *Faust* (Ch. Gounod), *Carmen* (G. Bizet), *La Juive* (F. Halévy), *Les Huguenots*, *L'Africaine* (G. Meyerbeer). German romantic operas, such as *Das Nachtlager in Granada* (C. Kreutzer), *Hans Heiling* (H. Marschner), *Marta* (F. von Flotow), *Zar und Zimmermann*, *Undine*, *Der Waffenschmied* (A. Lortzing), *Das goldene Kreuz* (I. Brüll), were also staged frequently. The Pressburg audience welcomed each staging of an opera by W. A. Mozart (*Die Zauberflöte*, *Don Giovanni*), and L. V. Beethoven (*Fidelio*) as representatives of the classical musical tradition. Richard Wagner's works (*Lohengrin*, *Der fliegende Holländer*, *Tannhäuser*) also made it to the repertoire, and they were almost exclusively performed with the participation of guests from the Vienna Court Opera or another opera stage. In the first half of the nineteenth century, Aubert's operas *Le maçon*, *La Neige ou Le Nouvel Eginard*, *Gustave III. ou Le bal masqué*, *La muette de Portici*, Rossini's operas *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *ossia L'inutile precauzione*, *Le siège de Corinthe*, *La donna de lago*, *Otello*, *ossia Il moro di Venezia* *Othello*, and Bellini's operas *Norma*, *La sonnambula*, *La straniera* were very popular.

As concerns the guest appearances in operettas, most of the operetta soloists came to Pressburg from Vienna theatres in which they sang the main characters in the latest operettas. These

²⁵ Derra, "Die verfllossene deutsche Theatersaison," *Preßburger Zeitung*, February 1, 1895, vol. 132, no. 32, 3.

overlapped with characters in comedies and farces containing songs and dances. The most celebrated guests included Alexander Girardi, Therese Biedermann, Gusti Zimmermann, Wilhelm Knaack and Josefine (Pepi) Glöckner. Operetta composers whose works were most frequently staged included Johann Strauß (*Die Fledermaus*, *Der Zigeunerbaron*, *Eine Nacht in Venedig*, *Der Karneval in Rom*, *Simplicius*), Karl Millöcker (*Der Bettelstudent*, *Der Vice-Admiral*, *Der arme Jonathan*, *Gasparone*), and Franz von Suppé (*Boccaccio*, *Donna Juanita*, *Flotte Bursche*, *Die schöne Galathée*, *Fatinitza*, *Das Modell*). Viennese authors were supplemented by the operettas of Jacques Offenbach (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, *La belle Hélène*, *Orphée aux Enfers*). As for comedies and farces, the old Municipal Theatre liked to stage the works of Johann Nestroy, in which the composer himself often participated (*Der böse Geist Lumpacivagabundus*, *Einen Jux will er sich machen*, *Das Mädel aus der Vorstadt*, *Talizman*), and Friedrich Raimund (*Der verwunschene Schloss*, *Der Bauer als Millionär*, *Der Verschwender*). The most frequently performed works in the new Municipal Theatre were *Im weissen Rössl*, *Als ich wieder kam*, *Auf der Sonnenseite*, *Die strengen Herren*, *Zwei Wappen* (O. Blumenthal – G. Kadelburg) and *Goldene Eva*, *Comtesse Guckerl*, *Renaissance* (F. v. Schönthan – F. v. Koppel-Ellfeldt). Apart from German and Austrian composers, the French dramatists Alexandre Bisson (*Le Contrôleur des wagons-lits*, *Monsieur le directeur*, *La famille Pont-Biquet*, *Les surprises du divorce*) and Edouard Pailleron (*Les Cabotons*, *La souris*) were very popular.

Charity shows provided special opportunities to invite guests because the participation of famous stars ensured higher revenues from the tickets. According to the lease agreement of the old Municipal Theatre, the director had to organize four charity shows annually, two of them for the municipal fund for the poor (one of them had to be an opera), one night to raise funds for the Catholic Civic Hospital and one for the Lutheran Hospital.²⁶ The agreement also stipulated two charity shows annually to raise funds for the pension institute of independent artists. The new Municipal Theatre had to give three compulsory charity shows: one for the Civic Catholic Hospital, one for the Lutheran Hospital and one for the fund for the poor. At the end of the nineteenth century, charity shows for the Lutheran Hospital were associated with the name of Bernhard Baumeister who participated in these events in Pressburg every year.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, presentations of the latest works were typically announced as “Repertoirestück des k. (k). Hofburgtheaters in Wien” (a piece from the repertoire of the Vienna Court Theatre) or “mit Erfolg an Wiener Theatern aufgeführt” (successfully presented in theatres in Vienna). This always attracted the attention and eager anticipation of the Pressburg audience and contributed to the good reception of the performances.

The participation of native Pressburgers, who had made it to the stages of prominent theatres, was another drawing force. Such artists included Irma Spányik, a world-famous mezzo-soprano. She gained recognition by singing characters from the operas of G. Verdi, J. Massenet, G. Bizet, C. Saint-Saëns, and, especially, R. Wagner. In her career, she performed in England (London – Covent Garden, Drury Lane Theatre), Italy (Genoa, Bologna, Naples, Turin, Parma), France (Paris, Versailles), Austria, Germany, Bohemia, Romania (Bucharest) and Russia (Saint Petersburg, Moscow). She was a regular guest performer in the Municipal Theatre in Pressburg from 1892 when she debuted as Amneris in Verdi's *Aida*. Subsequently, in 1894, she sang in Bizet's *Carmen* (the role of Carmen) and again in Verdi's *Aida* (the role of Amneris); in 1898, she portrayed Ortrud in Wagner's *Lohengrin*.²⁷ In 1896, Spányik performed in the Pressburg

²⁶ Ingrid Kušniráková, “Sociálna a zdravotnícka starostlivosť v Uhorsku v prvej polovici 19. storočia” [Social Care and Healthcare in Hungary in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century], *Historický časopis* 64, no. 3 (September 2016): 406.

²⁷ Jana Lengová, “Zur Frage der Genderforschung: Frauen im Opernbetrieb des Pressburger Stadttheaters (1880 – 1920),” in *Musiktheater in Raum und Zeit. Beiträge zur Geschichte der Theaterpraxis in Mitteleuropa*

premiere of Thomas's opera *Mignon* (the role of Mignon) along with the baritone Joseph Beck, one of the most significant solo singers in the second half of the nineteenth century who settled in Pressburg for a few years because of his ill father. Batka made use of his presence in the city and arranged for his meeting with the director Raul. Beck subsequently worked in the Municipal Theatre as the chief opera director and a soloist for two seasons (1895/1896 and 1896/1897). He became famous for his portrayal of Hans Heiling in Marschner's eponymous opera, *Rigoletto* in Verdi's eponymous opera, *Don Pizarro* in Beethoven's *Fidelio* and *Holländer* in Wagner's *Der fliegende Holländer*.

Scenic Designs in the Municipal Theatre

Scenic designs undoubtedly played an important role in the successful reception of the latest musical-dramatic works. The contemporary press and theatre playbills, which are often the only preserved sources, provided news about them. In line with contemporary practice, theatre painters designed standardized scenic decorations that were used for several dramatic musical and literary performances. These included so-called decoration types such as a middle-class room, a forest, a prison, a castle hall, etc. Original scenic designs were costly affairs. The city of Pressburg therefore procured new standardized designs at the beginning when the old and the new theatre were built. In the old theatre, the scenic designs were created by the painter and inspector of the Liechtenstein Gallery Vinzenz Anton Joseph Fanti, who passed away a month before opening the theatre. The designs were finally completed by the local painter Franz Anton Hoffmann.²⁸ In the new theatre, the standardized designs were created by the painters and scenic designers Brioschi and Burghart.²⁹ Pressburg subsequently demanded two new decorations to be painted every year from each lessee. After their agreement in the old theatre expired, or at the end of a season under the agreement in the new theatre, they had to leave the decorations to the city. They also had to have two older decorations repainted at their own cost, by which the city secured the regular restoration of worn away decorations. A major disadvantage of the new theatre was its gas lighting which did not enable the decorations to stand out fully. The city nevertheless insisted on the requirement of procuring new decorations and regularly maintaining the old ones. We know of several nineteenth-century painters and scenic designers, some of them being local painters holding various positions in the theatre. Others were invited to Pressburg by the director who then ordered the designs from them for his company.

A sketchbook of Carl Maurer³⁰ (1761/1762–1844) and a collection of scenic designs demonstrating the prolific work of a scenic painter and designer for the aristocratic and the municipal theatre³¹ have been preserved from the first half of the nineteenth century in Čaplovič's Library in Dolný Kubín. Maurer was in all probability a member of the Viennese Circle (School) producing scenic designs for the Vienna Court Theatre. Its main representatives were Lorenzo Sacchetti, Anton de Pian, and Anton Arrigoni, and specialist literature points out interactions

in *19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Vladimír Zvara (Bratislava: Asociácia Corpus v spolupráci s NM Code, 2015), 124–125.

²⁸ Mária Kniesová, Filip Lašut, Tea Leixnerová, Iva Mojžišová and Katarína Zavadová, *Čaplovičová knižnica: Návrhy divadelných dekorácií a grafika* [Čaplovič's Library: Scenic Designs and Graphics] (Martin: Osveta, 1989), 29.

²⁹ Otto Fabricius, *Das neue Theater in Preßburg* (Preßburg: Druckerei des Westungarischer Grenzbote, 1886), 20.

³⁰ Orava Museum of P. O. Hviezdoslav in Dolný Kubín, *Čaplovič's Library*, shelfmark C3/76.

³¹ Iva Mojžišová, "Divadelní dekoráteri v Bratislave medzi barokom a romantizmom" [Stage Designers in Bratislava between the Baroque and Romantism], *ARS. Kapitoly z dejín výtvarného umenia* 22, no. 2 (1989): 81.

between the work of contemporary painters/scenic designers.³² Their older counterparts were Josef Platzer and Pietro Travaglio, the latter working in the Esterházy Residence in Esterháza and in Eisenstadt at the turn of the nineteenth century.³³ From Maurer's works in Eisenstadt, where he came after Travaglio left, the designs for Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* have been preserved from 1804 which are still considered the earliest preserved designs for this opera.³⁴ After his arrival in Pressburg, information about his activities can be found in the contemporary press and on theatre playbills. They reveal that Maurer created scenic designs for the old Municipal Theatre at the order of the directors Hensler, Stöger and Pokorny. He also created designs for the Arena. In his sketchbook, three designs entitled "Arena," "Caffehaus in der Au," and "Wiener Tivoli" have been preserved which Maurer created for Benedict Freiherr von Püchler's farce *Klucks Reise von Berlin über Preßburg nach Wien*.³⁵ In 1829, he took part in the renovation of the ceiling of the Redoute as part of the restoration work of the old theatre. Anton Arrigoni also participated in the renovation of the theatre building, whose major part took place in 1825.³⁶

In the Bratislava City Gallery, there are albums with scenic designs from the second half of the nineteenth century, several of them signed by Gustav Wintersteiner (1876–1950),³⁷ the son of Otto Wintersteiner (1839–1894) who came to Pressburg with his family from Graz in 1889. Apart from Gustav, his son Alfons was also active in the field of the arts. He worked in the new Municipal Theatre in Pressburg after the death of his father, Gustav Wintersteiner. His works share certain characteristics with the scenic designs of the painters Carlo and Anton Brioschi, Hermann Burghart, and Johann (Jan Václav) Kautský, all working for the Vienna Court Theatre and Court Opera in the late nineteenth century. Theatre playbills reveal that Raul ordered scenic designs from Brioschi for the premiere of the opera *Heimchen am Herd* in 1896 and had scenic designs created in the Viennese fashion for the premiere of the opera *Der Evangelimann* in 1897. Gustav Wintersteiner was working for Raul at that time, so he could have been inspired by these designs. As concerns his own scenic designs, *Preßburger Zeitung* makes mention of the new designs of a "winter garden" created by Wintersteiner in 1895 for the premiere of Louis Roth's operetta *Lieutenant zur See*.³⁸ Wintersteiner's further artistic activities in Pressburg are documented by his works deposited in the Bratislava City Gallery, mostly images of the city and its surrounding landscape.

³² Hedwig Belistka-Scholtz and Károlyné A. Berczeli, *Barokk, klasszicista es romantikus díszlettervek Magyarországon* [Baroque, Classicist and Romantic Scenic Designs in Hungary] (Budapest: Magyar Színházi Intézet Budapest, 1976), 42. See also Rudi Risatti's paper "Kein Tag gehe dahin, ohne daß er etwas erdacht habe. Einblicke in die Wiener Bühnenkunst bis 1869" in a publication issued on the occasion of the 150 anniversary of the Vienna Opera. *Geschichte der Oper in Wien. Band 1: Von den Anfängen bis 1869* (Wien: Molden Verlag, 2019), 308–349.

³³ Mathias Horányi, *Carl Maurer díszlettervei* [Carl Maurer's Scenic Designs] (Budapest: Színháztudományi és Filmtudományi Intézet Országház Színháztörténeti Múzeum), 5.

³⁴ Mathias Horányi, *Das Esterhazysche Feereich. Beitrag zur ungarländischen Theatergeschichte des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1959), 180.

³⁵ The farce was premiered on 26 July 1833 and theatrical newspapers in Vienna reported about Maurer's new scenic designs. F. R., "Buntes aus der Theaterwelt," *Allgemeine Theaterzeitung*, 6 August 1833, vol. 26, no. 157, 632.

³⁶ MAB, Bratislava City Collection, Accounting Materials from 1873–1912, box no. 1266.

³⁷ Bratislava City Gallery (BCG), Gustav Wintersteiner, Album I. (A 2518–A 2561), Album II. (A 2562–A 2583), Album III. (A 2634–A 2636). The album was first introduced to the public at an exhibition about the Municipal Theatre organized by the BCG in 2016. Martina Vyskupová, Jana Laslavíková, and Martina Vyskupová, *Mestské divadlo v Prešporku. Katalóg z výstavy* [The Municipal Theatre in Pressburg. Catalogue from the Exhibition] (Bratislava: BCG, 2016), 12.

³⁸ E., "Lieutenant zur See," *Preßburger Zeitung*, November 29, 1895, vol. 132, no. 328, 5.

Conclusion

Mention was made in the introduction of the institutionalization of theatrical life by the construction of the first and the second building of the Municipal Theatre which contributed to the development and establishment of the theatre in the life of Pressburg, its inhabitants and their cultural life. The theatre stood at the centre of the cultural developments and its regular attendance was part of the everyday life of the inhabitants of the city. The operational model of the theatre, and the social contexts and structures determined it, co-created its image and participated in creating its value. In 1776, the building of the theatre was constructed by an aristocrat whereas, in 1886, the construction of the theatre was initiated by the bourgeoisie. The Municipal Theatre of Pressburg became the first among the provincial theatres in Hungary thanks to its proximity to Vienna and the efforts of the inhabitants of Pressburg to resemble this metropolis and, especially, thanks to the sectionalism of all those who wanted to secure a prominent place in the eyes of Hungary. Although the Municipal Theatre had its regular audience which attended the theatre regularly and which even went for older works, no director ever underestimated the power of advertising. They often advertised the repertoire by adding references to Vienna theatres which were a “guarantee of quality.” Similar motives were behind the guest performances of artists from the Vienna Court Opera who brought ready-made roles to Pressburg and whom the inhabitants of Pressburg regarded as models in artistic portrayal set as an example before the local ensemble. The cultivation of a musical theatre added prestige to Pressburg and an air of importance to the theatregoers. The fact that musical-dramatic productions were staged continuously throughout the period traced in this study, and that they took place at a standard well above that of a provincial theatre, points to the cultural refinement of Pressburg and to the establishment of theatrical life into its history.³⁹

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³⁹ This study came into being as part of the VEGA Grant No. 2/0040/18 *Musical Theatre in Bratislava from the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century to the First Half of the Twentieth Century. (Personalities, Institutions, Repertoire, Reflections)* research conducted at the Institute of History of the Slovak Academy of Sciences and was written as part of the APVV-17-0398 *Towards Modern Society. Three Centuries of the Modern Period* research project carried out at the Institute of History of the Slovak Academy of Sciences.

Tatjana Marković

Transforming Torment into “Happiness”: Ironic National Self-portrayal in the Rap-opera *Zemlja sreće* (“Land of Happiness,” 2007)

Abstract | The paper is focused on the first Serbian rap-opera *Zemlja sreće* (“Land of Happiness,” 2007) by Dušanka Stojanović (libretto) and Vladimir Pejković (composer). The work provides a sharp critique expressed via self-irony and satire in the wider socio-political, economic and cultural context of the transitional period in Serbia in the 1990s. The narrative of a love story of an “ideal couple” of a criminal and a woman of easy virtue becoming the presidential couple, envisioned as a counterpoint of rapping and opera singing, depicts a deeply corrupt Serbian society, devastated by the disintegration of Yugoslavia, international sanctions, hyper-inflation, isolation, media demonization, extensive emigration, and a lack of social and moral values.

Keywords | Disintegration of Yugoslavia – Serbia in the 1990s – Rap-opera – Self-irony – Vladimir Pejković

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The process of disintegration of Yugoslavia, followed by wars, extreme nationalism, ethnic cleansing, deep political and economical crises in the region, as well as the establishment of six new independent countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Croatia, the Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, the Republic of Serbia, the Republic of Slovenia, and also the partially recognized Republic of Kosovo), has been the subject of numerous literary, theatre, visual and music works. Among them is the first Serbian rap/hip-hop opera *Zemlja sreće* (“Land of Happiness,” Belgrade, 2007) by the librettist Dušanka Stojanović and the composer Vladimir Pejkovic. More precisely, I am going to provide the wider political, socio-economic and cultural context of the post-1989 period of transition in Yugoslavia/Serbia to which the librettist and the composer refer to.

After Josip Broz Tito’s death in 1980, relations between the six Yugoslav republics grew weaker and weaker, and there was no a consensus concerning the future of the country: on the one hand, there was a plan for a loosely united Yugoslavia, based on the Swiss model of independent yet confederated cantons, and on the other, nationalist or hegemonic aspirations. Over the next decade, Yugoslavia broke apart in a tragic fashion. Serbian society lived in a kind of schizophrenia – its president, Slobodan Milošević, claimed that the country was not participating in the war for the succession of Yugoslavia,¹ because it was not conducted within the Serbian terri-

¹ These were often incorrectly called the Balkan wars, although it was related to only one country, the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia. See, among others: Christopher Merrill, *Only the Nails Remain: Scenes from the Balkan Wars* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1999); Paul Hockenos, *Homeland Calling: Exile Patriotism & the Balkan Wars* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003); Jeffrey S. Morton et al., eds., *Reflections on the Balkan Wars: Ten Years After the Break-Up of Yugoslavia* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004).

tory, but there was a mobilization of men sent to the battlefields, along with the Yugoslav Army and criminals to struggle for territorial extension of Serbia. Those citizens who did not support the government's politics and protested for months, became hostages of sorts to both their own government and the international media, which deeply demonized Serbia, proclaiming the collective responsibility and guilt of the entire Serbian society. The United Nations Security Council imposed broad trade, financial, and political sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro for their role in the war in Bosnia from 1992 to 1995. These sanctions deeply damaged Serbian society and its consequences can still be seen at the present day. Later on, in 1999 NATO bombed Yugoslavia for 78 days in the operation called "Merciful Angel" as support for the human rights of Albanians in Kosovo. The legitimacy of this so-called "humanitarian" bombing was later questioned. The main victims were again civilians. Ethnic cleansing in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as struggles in Kosovo, resulted in around 900,000 refugees, ethnic Serbs who came to an already ruined country. They did not meet with actual support but were misused by Milošević's regime. This was a time when hyper-inflation in Serbia resulted in a deep division of society into poor and extremely rich groups, with the former including the majority of intellectuals and artists. The regime supported the new rich elite, their own, mainly uneducated, supporters, with this being most apparent precisely in popular music, since the genre of so-called turbo folk songs became the main repertoire on TV, radio programmes, and in large halls reserved for their spectacles, which coincided with the entire Balkan region.

Specifically these fears of exploitation, repression, state violence, war, genocide, ecocide, one-sided world politics, depression, and a deep cultural deterioration produced a dystopian narrative.² It expresses a rejection of modern society and is theoretically defined as "the critical dystopia" of the 1980s and 1990s,³ bearing in mind its strong social criticism. I would agree with those theoreticians who challenge the definition of dystopia as the opposite of utopia; rather, it is a utopia that has gone wrong, or a utopia that functions only for a particular segment of society.⁴ As such, both utopias and dystopias are history of the present.⁵

The Yugoslav or Serbian dystopia during the 1990s resulted in several waves of extensive migration, including a brain-drain, estimated between 300,000 during the first two years of the war, and in total c. 700,000.

After mass-demonstrations during the so-called October Revolution (5 October 2000), caused by Slobodan Milošević's refusal to recognize the election results, he accepted his loss and democratic opposition representatives formed a new government.⁶ The deep economic and social problems from the 1990s were not, however, solved – quite the opposite: new enthusiasm and a hint of optimism after a hard period marked by the above-mentioned challenges was interrupted by the assassination of the Prime Minister Zoran Djindjić on 18 March 2003. He was

² The dystopia emerged as a literary form in its own right in the early 1900s. Thomas Moylan, *Scraps of the Untainted Sky: Science Fiction, Utopia, Dystopia* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2000), xi–xii.

³ *Ibid.*, xv–xvi.

⁴ Michael D. Gordin, Helen Tilley, and Gyan Prakash, eds., *Utopia/Dystopia: Conditions of Historical Possibility* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2011), 1. First coined by Thomas More in his book in Latin, *Utopia* (1516), "utopia" has become more than a word or a culture-specific term; it is not limited to Europe or Eurocentric writing and thought. Cf. Barnita Bagchi, ed., *The Politics of the (Im)Possible: Utopia and Dystopia Reconsidered* (Los Angeles, London: SAGE Publications, 2012), 2.

⁵ Gordin et al., *Utopia/Dystopia*, 1.

⁶ The new President of Serbia was Vojislav Koštunica and the Prime Minister Zoran Djindjić. On 1 April 2000 Milošević was arrested because of abuse of power and corruption and on 28 June was extradicted to the United Nations' court, the International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia. He did not survive the trial and was found dead in his cell in Hague prison on 11 March 2006, which was followed by numerous controversies.

a victim of the organized mafia criminals, who remained involved in the state system, political life and social devastation of Serbia.

A brief insight into the general context of the dissolution of Yugoslavia is a necessary framework for understanding the radical transformation of Serbian cultural life, as well as the circumstances under which the rap opera *Land of Happiness* was conceptualized.

In accordance with the deep economic and social crises, there was a rapid erosion of ethical values, as well as the appearance of new social models as representatives of the new popular music scene focused around the official and hidden governing so-called leftist party (SPS – Socialist Party of Serbia, JUL – Yugoslav Left). The new Serbian "jet set" was mobilized out of the party's voters, including numerous turbo folk singers, recognizable due to their obscene iconography, lack of musical skill, and the rather vulgar and often misogynist lyrics. This phenomenon marked the entire Balkan musical scene during the transition and is still very popular.⁷

Under such circumstances, when education and employment began to be devalued because of the difficulty of providing support for life, the new path to a lifestyle based on the idea of "a short but intensive and luxury life," was discovered under the wing of powerful mafia clans, including members of paramilitary groups known for their cruelty in the war. Numerous young men chose to join criminals as an alternative to education and poverty, as it was presented in the several times awarded documentary directed by Janko Baljak *Vidimo se u čitulji* ("See You in the Obituary," 1995), based on the book *Kriminal koji je izmenio Srbiju* ("The Crime that Changed Serbia," 1995) by the journalists Aleksandar Knežević and Vojislav Tufegdžić. The documentary contains numerous interviews with direct (some of them still active) representatives of the Serbian/Yugoslav underground in the international context: their often shocking testimonies related to murders ordered by state officials, networks of criminal clans, brutal activities during the Yugoslav wars shed light on the – until then not publicly well-known – scenes of the crimes.

One of the survival strategies against the brutal reality of the transition period in the 1990s in isolated and devastated Serbia was, as many times before, humour. As a matter of fact, self-irony has already been recognized as a phenomenon appearing in various media and arts in Serbia, and also in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as an identity signifier. The entire crisis in Yugoslavia, that is, in the successor states, from the late 1980s, during the 1990s and further on up until the present day, was experienced, commented on, and expressed first of all in numerous theatre plays, films, TV shows through various forms of humour. The black humour, (self-)irony, parody and satire fulfilled their multiple functions "to attack, criticize, educate, conciliate, and/or entertain – and also provide important clues as to why these modes have been employed so frequently. As responses to lived experience, they can help artists and their public come to terms with difficult new social circumstances."⁸

Self-irony and sharp satire were introduced into the rap opera production by Dušanka Stojanović and in Vladimir Pejković's stage work *The Land of Happiness*, directed by Djurdja Tesic in 2007. The very fact that the composer decided to write an opera in hip-hop style, which is first of all related to the margins of society and is mainly focused on a sharp critique of Serbian society, speaks for itself. Rap, or hip-hop music in Serbia, began to develop in 1984, and flourished during the 1990s and after 2000, continuously counterpointing the time of transition. The libretto is

⁷ See Donna A. Buchanan, ed., *Balkan Popular Culture and the Ottoman Ecumene. Music, Image, and Regional Political Discourse (Europea: ethnomusicologies and modernities)*, no. 6 (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2007).

⁸ Jill E. Twark, *Humour, Satire, and Identity: Eastern German Literature in the 1990s* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 2.

written in verse and rhyme with a metric precision, which made him set the words of the main character in rap.

The Land of Happiness ranks among the rich (chamber) opera productions of different genres of Serbian composers at the beginning of the twenty-first century, due to commissions from large festivals both in the country and abroad. Among them are Isidora Žebeljan (b. 1967), Anja Đorđević (b. 1970), Tatjana Milošević (b. 1970), Aleksandra Vrebalov (b. 1970), Jasna Veličković (b. 1974) and Branka Popović (b. 1977).⁹ The composer Vladimir Pejšković¹⁰ introduced the image of the current political situation into contemporary Serbian opera life, as well as the use of rapping. Moreover, his stage work depicts not only the political circumstances in the country during the 1990s, but also criticizes it in an ironic and satirical way, which reaches at some points the ferocity of reality. Additionally, in spite of the fact that the stage work has been designated as “opera,” it goes beyond the (traditional) meaning of the word indicating a dot to its poly-genre synthesis, uniting theatre, opera, concert and performance art.

The “silicon melodrama” was premiered in July 2007 in Belgrade, at the *BELEF – Beogradski letnji festival 07* (“Belgrade Summer Festival”).¹¹ The festival’s title that year was “tu i tamo je ovde” (*Now And Then Is Here*) and was dedicated to the topical question of whether to leave the country or not:

To leave, to stay, to survive, to win, to succeed in Serbia, to compete, to accept the absurd competition of the political life that has become an irreplaceable part of the life of each of us at a time of low criteria, bad taste, a wrong system of values, a fear of being eliminated from the competition and of finishing up on a rubbish dump, the struggle with localisms and globalisms in ourselves.¹² (This was a motto of the festival.)

The Land of Happiness, or as it was called by the main character, Baja, *The Land of Wars, Strives, and Happiness* provides rather ironic and satirical answers to the posted question about perspectives of life in Serbia, confirming Helmut Arntzen’s observations about satire: it is “often used as a literary form in transitional times such as during or after wars or when political systems change, to root out antiquated institutions and behaviors while ushering in the new [...] In releasing their emotions while criticizing society, artists and their public aspire to speed up the process of coming to terms with the past.”¹³

⁹ Gorica Pilipović, “The Tradition of Opera and New Music Stage Works by Young Serbian Composers” in *Rethinking Musical Modernism / Muzički modernizam – nova tumačenja*, eds. Dejan Despić and Melita Milin (Belgrade: Muzikološki institute SANU, 2008), 291–298.

¹⁰ Pejšković was born in 1976, studied composition at the Faculty of Music, University of Belgrade with Zoran Erić. Music for theatre and film held a central place in his opus: he composed music for more than a hundred theatre plays and several films, including the first Serbian featured film *Karadjordje* (1910). For the latter project, he was awarded by the Fifth Biennale of Stage Design. He is also active as a theatre sound designer and producer. Pejšković also cooperates with different bands and performs piano, (bass) guitar and live electronics.

¹¹ *The Beogradski letnji festival – BELEF* (“Belgrade Summer Festival”) is an international art festival, including (art, popular, alternative) music, theatre, dance and visual events. It was founded in 1991 under the auspices of the City of Belgrade.

¹² “Otići, ostatei, pobediti, uspeti u Srbiji, takmičiti se, pristajati na apsurdnu utakmicu političkog života koji je postao nezamenljivi deo života svakoga od nas u vremenu niskih kriterijuma, lošeg ukusa, pogrešnog sistema vrednosti, strah da iz te utakmice ne ispadnemo i da ne završimo na dubristu, borba sa lokalizmima i globalizmima u nama samima.” The word “utakmica” appears two times and has been translated as “competition.” It is noteworthy that it also means “a (sport) match,” for the stage is set as a football pitch.

¹³ Cf. Helmut Arntzen, *Satire in der deutschen Literatur: Geschichte und Theorie*, vol. 1 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1989), 5.

There are two characters in the opera, a young man prone to crime Baja (pronounced as Baya) and a modern lady of easy virtue Cica.¹⁴ The love story between them is commented on by the choir through their songs. The choir consists of five characteristic representatives of public and everyday life in Serbia. Baja comes from a poor family and, being very ambitious to improve his social status, joins the criminal milieu, which allows him to become rich. Cica's background, in contrast, is quite different. She is a refined young woman from a respected rich family and, as she explains in her aria, she is determined to listen to the advice given by her mother to find a rich husband, for that would be the only way to secure a decent life and future in Serbia. Together, they try to fulfill their greatest ambition and become the presidential couple. The librettist Dušanka Stojanović demonstrated the usual model of a successful couple and the way of life in the given context. Namely, the jet-set in Serbia is represented by the richest social groups, such as politicians, criminals, and turbo folk singers, sometimes without too strict a borderline between them. Hence, through a false love story between a criminal and an "easy woman" the reality in post-war Serbia is presented in a sharp satirical way.

The two protagonists are envisioned in different ways, in accordance with their background and social contexts: Baja's part is composed as rapping and Cica's as traditional opera singing.

The main dramatic points are two dialogues between Cica and Baja, which strongly differ from each other by depicting their way of communication during his courtship and after the wedding. As mentioned, Baja, a boy from the suburbs of Belgrade who became very rich in a short time due to the illegal drug trade cannot resist his thirst to become more rich and powerful, although this is a certain path to death. Such a biography of almost entire generations of young men in Serbia is not a fiction. Placing one of the young criminals specifically into the centre of the opera, the composer demonstrated that "satire and humour can be used as emotional and intellectual crutches or weapons in any fight for survival."¹⁵ Opposite to Baja, Cica is a reasonable young woman, who is aware of the situation in Serbia and precisely because of that, accepts a model of a "successful" women in Serbian society, who only needs to be beautiful and find a wealthy husband. In spite of her wish to leave the country, she decides to stay with her husband as his faithful wife. After his inevitable assassination, commented on by the choir as "one more case," she is desperate because her marriage-project failed, and she is forced to start again from the beginning.

Generally speaking, the composer followed the structure of an opera with numbers in the framework of the one-act (c. 46 minutes) and with two parts, demonstrating that contemporary opera includes the reconstruction and deconstruction of traditional opera in different respects.¹⁶ The two parts are related to a sport (football) match symbolizing life – short but intensive, where the most important thing is to know how to avoid a bullet, as the main hero emphasized at the beginning of the opera. To stress this fact, the members of the chorus wear football jerseys.

¹⁴ The very names of the main characters are sexist expressions for a certain type of man and woman in the Serbo-Croatian jargon, in use in Yugoslavia, that is, in Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and North Macedonia, so-called *šatrovački govor*. "Baja" is referring to a capable man, who shows off and is noticeable in any group of men, a handsome, experienced delinquent. "Cica" designates a woman's breasts, an "easy" seducing woman, and also a kind of prostitute. See Dragoslav Andrić, *Rečnik žargona* (Belgrade: BIGZ, 1976); Tomislav Sabljak, *Rječnik šatrovačkog govora* (Zagreb: Globus, 1981).

¹⁵ Twark, *Humour, Satire, and Identity*, 13.

¹⁶ In this way, "the well-rehearsed contrasts between 'number' and 'symphonic' opera, so significant before 1900 (though never absolute), also remain issues through the twentieth century. It might plausibly be claimed that opera as both a genre and institution survived into the twenty-first century at least in part because it did not abandon the most fundamental qualities which made contemporary opera in the later nineteenth century so successful." Arnold Whittal, "Opera in Transition," in *The Cambridge Companion to Twentieth-Century Opera*, ed. Mervyn Cooke (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 13.

In accordance with the definition of opera in the post-industrial age, or the age of mass-media, the scenery assumes new technologies, digitalized or electronic reproduction, or the screen as part of the scenery, which is also the case with *The Land of Happiness*.

Throughout the opera, certain specific conventional narratives in 1990s Serbia are recognizable, and through them the librettist and the composer presented social and political satire of the society. Although this manner of self-representation is not only typical for Serbian society, it has a long tradition of self-irony, this being characteristic for Serbian identity expressed in different media.

The following topoi can be defined as the objects of irony or satire as clichés of Serbian (Balkan) life in the 1990s:

1. The Yugo car is referred to as a false symbol of the successful Yugoslav and then Serbian industry and economy: the film from the screen on the stage shows the process of production of the car called Yugo in Kragujevac. The ironic symbol of the Yugoslav unsuccessful economy, the Yugo was evaluated by auto critics as more of a toy than a car. The opera begins with the national anthem and, during this a film on the screen is followed by a transformed national anthem which is suddenly also interrupted by a broken record. At the end, the president of Serbia, Baja, is killed precisely by that car. It is undoubtedly very ironic, since the image of criminals assume without exception a representative and very expensive car like a Mercedes Benz or an Audi.
2. Increasing racism is recognizable in Baja's words when he points out that he is searching for a perfect woman/wife, saying that he is not satisfied with "attractive Ukrainian prostitutes" or "cheap Asian lovers," not to mention "dirty juvenile Gypsy girls." In the president's speech in the opera, Baja promises to fulfil one more wish of his voters. He will clean the country of homosexuals, intellectuals, and "other garbage" in order to enable himself, his party and his voters to enjoy the fruits of his work.
3. A chauvinistic approach to women, related to the previous point, is revealed when Baja explains why he fell in love with Cica; as the reasons, he mentions her long legs, perfect make-up, shampoo and the hair balsam she uses. This not only stands for her beauty and care, but for such high-quality products, as well as many others, which were not accessible to the majority during the extreme inflation in the 1990s. Additionally, Baja proves his love to Cica with his presents, which should make her happy, with these including a small plane, a theatre, the city Opera, a foundation for young talents and a license to control the Miss Serbia competition. He calls her "stupid", however, when she is less than delighted by his idea to enter politics and becomes a "Czar."
4. False respect for the national tradition by criminals, presenting themselves as nationalists and guardians of tradition (especially the tradition of the Serbian Orthodox Church) without any knowledge about it: this is obvious through the parody of the wedding ceremony in the Orthodox church.
5. Politics as the best possible "career," which is far from being characteristic only for Serbia and for the 1990s. Being president is discussed as the same as being a "Czar." In his pre-election campaign and speech as a president of the country, Baja promises to conquer "our" territories, meaning all the territories where Serbs live, reviving the myth of a Great Serbia. During the 1990s, one of the right-wing nationalist politicians, Vojislav Šešelj, promoted his Radical party with the motto "Kosovo je Srbija, Srbija do Tokija" ("Kosovo is Serbia, Serbia to Tokyo"). Baja also promises his citizens the possibility of eating meat sometimes, referring to the poverty of the majority of citizens and their financial inability even to buy food.

6. The isolation of Serbia had fatal results, existing up until today. Namely, the sanctions in Yugoslavia, created hyperinflation of 3.6 million percent a year of the Yugoslav dinar, which had never been seen previously.¹⁷

Musically speaking, the ironic aspect of the presentation of Serbia in the 1990s includes different "voices," including rapping and opera singing. Bearing in mind the political resistance often related to rap music, this was the choice of the composer to make the entire "criminal narrative" ironic. As Adam Krims points out: "the sonic organization of rap music – both the rapping itself and the musical tracks that accompany it – are directly and profoundly implicated in rap's cultural workings (resistant or otherwise), especially in the formation of identities."¹⁸ Irony in music is used to express disapproval of greed, hypocrisy and arrogance. The ironic effect of music is also reached in the only lyrical moment in the opera, the only short "love duet" of Cica and Baja *Ti i ja i Srbija* ("You and Me and Serbia"), explicating that what unifies them is their wish to survive in the brutal transitional context by fulfilling the ambition to become the president and first lady of the country.

As Konrad H. Jarausch has stated, "identity issues not only relate to individuals, but also to how these individuals relate to each other within groups, how nations define themselves internally and within the world community and how individual and/or group identities are manifested in cultural products."¹⁹ In other words, "cultural identity" is not a tie with some "pure" idealized and distant past, so much as it is a matter of continual appropriation, revision, and creation in the present, with an eye toward the future.²⁰

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¹⁷ This was the period when the economic output of Yugoslavia dropped 70% from 1990 to 1994. The government tried to compensate by printing more money and passing laws making it illegal for businesses to lay off employees. In addition, and the worst thing were the UN sanctions making it more difficult to manage the economy. The result was an inflation rate that peaked at 313,563,558 % per month which comes to 851 with 78 zeros behind it. The inflation exceeded that experienced in the Great Depression of 1929.

¹⁸ Adam Krims, *Rap Music and the Poetics of Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 2.

¹⁹ Konrad H. Jarausch and Volker Krasnow, *After Unity. Reconfiguring German Identities* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 1997), 5

²⁰ James Clifford, *The Predicament of Unity. Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 94.

Appendix

Structure of the opera:

01:00 Introduction (National anthem)
02:30 Baja: Aria
05:46 Chorus
07:42 Baja
(08:15 Cica appears, Chorus)
8:40 Cica: Aria
10:50 Chorus
11:46 Cica (and Baja)
14:10 Chorus
14:42 Baja
15:53 Cica and Baja (first conversation)
24:04 Chorus
25:07 Cica and Baja
27:25 Chorus

(break)

28:20 Cica and Baja (second conversation)
37:02 Cica and Baja: Duet
38:44 Chorus (pre-election campaign)
39:50 Baja (President's political speech)
43:30 Assassination of President Baja
44:57 Chorus (45:56)

Melita Milin

Cultural Transfer and the Writing of National Operas and Ballets in the Twentieth Century: The Case of Serbia

Abstract | The issue of the cultural (in this case musical) transfer of the genres of opera and ballet, as products of Western art music, to Serbia as a country liberated from Turkish rule in the early nineteenth century is discussed in the paper. It has been pointed out that the transfer process proceeded in four phases that usually overlapped: 1. the activities of foreign, mainly Czech musicians in Serbia and in Serbian institutions in the Habsburg Empire, starting from the 1830s; 2. guest performances of popular operas by foreign opera companies since the late nineteenth century; 3. staging of foreign operas by domestic opera ensembles as an important step forward; 4. staging of the first operas composed by domestic composers in the Belgrade and Novi Sad National Theatres at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Keywords | Cultural transfer – Czech musicians in Serbia (nineteenth and early twentieth centuries) – Serbian opera and ballet – Westernization/Europeanization in the field of music

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The aim of this article is to examine the strategies used by twentieth century composers from the European periphery, in this case Serbian, to appropriate the genres of opera and ballet with the aim of creating works of a national character. Although there were many similarities between the programmes and the aesthetic approaches of composers belonging to different nations who wished to distinguish themselves from the mainstream of Western music, they all possessed specific features depending on their historical background and traditions. The focus of this article will be on Serbia's main contributions to genres for the musical stage and the enduring tendency to produce works of at least a discreet national character, although cosmopolitan trends have also been present. The ways in which Western models chosen by Serbian opera and ballet composers were transferred into their works will be investigated, in other words: what was the reception of European opera and ballet like among Serbian composers.

Introduction

Having begun the process of freeing itself from the Ottoman oppressor at the beginning of the nineteenth century and having succeeded in obtaining, first, partial autonomy (1816) and, later, independence (1878), Serbia invested a great deal of its energy into becoming a relevant part of Europe, and thus left behind the long dark ages when its people were cut off from developments in the west and north of the continent. Modernization (which could be equated here with Europeanization) was a process that was widely supported among the Serbian population, although there were debates about the pace of that process – whether it should be quick at all costs

or more moderate, in accordance with the many negative circumstances, such as the low budget resulting from economic difficulties. During the several decades preceding the performance of the first Serbian opera (1903), small steps were being made towards that goal, as was the case with the strivings on a much wider scale towards assimilating and adapting Western technology and other apparatuses of knowledge and culture in general. As in opera and ballet, the other genres of art music were also regarded as important achievements of Western art music, loaded with symbolic cultural significance. Creating national works based on the Western art music tradition and at the same time possessing recognizable features of domestic, Serbian music, involved belonging to Western culture and contributing to it with something of its own, usually folkloric in essence. In the nineteenth century, such a path was common with certain other nations who wanted to emancipate themselves from the hegemonic position of nations who were richest in art music traditions and achievements (Italians, Austrians, Germans and French).

When addressing the question of musical nationalism in central and south-central Europe, an important line of differentiation should be signalled between those nations who developed within the Austrian (later Austro-Hungarian) empire and those who had lived in the frame of the Ottoman empire, since the former had the necessary musical knowledge and institutions, whereas the latter had been separated for centuries from the main currents of Western developments and therefore first needed to create the basic conditions for attaining their goals, primarily institutions of music education and performing bodies. Serbian composers were naturally inspired by the examples of nineteenth century Slavic national schools of music, primarily the Czech school, to which they were most exposed due to the mediating role of the many Czech musicians who were active in Serbia and among the Serbs in the Habsburg Empire as kapelmeisters, composers and teachers.¹

The founding of essential institutions included the building of the National Theatre in Belgrade (1868) that would later become not only the home of Serbian drama theatre but also of opera and ballet. The case of Serbia was certainly not a unique one since at that time there were several other European countries that had been liberated more or less at the same time from centuries-long occupation by foreign powers and that wished to affirm their national cultural values, both traditional and newly created. There had been, however, certain specific features in Serbian history that made its reception of European art genres, including music, and modernization in general relatively fast. For Serbs living in their independent nation state, the well-integrated Serbian population in neighbouring Austro-Hungary provided an important link (bridge) with the rich art tradition of that empire. Serbs from both sides of the border consequently worked together at creating a modern national identity at all levels, including that of culture. They were aware of the many obstacles that were in their way, but were determined to accomplish their goal. Although the social circumstances required for a musical life of a European kind were far from satisfactory, members of the Serbian political and intellectual elite who had been educated at different universities throughout Europe, mainly in Austro-Hungary and Germany, regarded the appreciation of Western culture and music as a necessary condition for the progress of Serbian society as a whole, a sign of belonging to European cultural spaces.

The possibility of seeing the first performance of a Serbian opera on stage – Stanislav Binički's *Na uranku* (At Dawn; Belgrade, National Theatre, 1903) – was prepared during the second half of the nineteenth century with compositions of so-called “pieces with music,” a genre similar to

¹ See more about Czech musicians in Serbian music in Milica Gajić, “Doprinos čeških muzičara srpskoj muzičkoj sceni do Prvog svetskog rata” [Contribution of Czech Musicians to the Serbian Music Stage up Until WW 1], in *Srpska muzička scena*, ed. Nadežda Mosusova (Belgrade: Institute of Musicology SASA, 1995), 114–128; Katarina Tomašević, “Contribution of Czech Musicians to Serbian music in the Nineteenth Century,” *Muzikološki zbornik* 42 no. 1 (2006): 127–137.

Singspiel. Although there was a reference in a Serbian newspaper to a piece entitled *Ženidba cara Dušana* [the Marriage of Czar Dušan] by Josif Šlezinger, composed “in the form of an Italian opera” and performed in Kragujevac (then the capital of Serbia) in 1840; it was certainly quite a modest presentation performed by amateurs.² Šlezinger also composed a number of potpourris using arias from mainly Italian operas, including Halévy’s *La juive*, Bellini’s *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* and *Norma*.³ The opera arias themselves were heard for the first time in Belgrade only in 1848, at a concert of an opera singer from Krakow.⁴ Such concerts grew in number in the later decades of the century, with the many opera overtures, orchestral numbers and arias performed by the small orchestra of the National Theatre and by domestic singers during the breaks between acts of plays being especially worthy of mention. The performers were usually gifted actors and actresses, but there were also very good musicians, educated in the best Austrian and German conservatories. Fragments from Italian operas were by far the most frequent programmes, but there were also operas by Carl Maria Weber, Giacomo Meyerbeer, Richard Wagner, Charles Gounod, Peter Tchaikovsky, Bedřich Smetana, Antonín Dvořák, and others.⁵ During the 1880s and 1890s, audiences in Belgrade were growing accustomed to domestic performances of operettas, as well as scenes and individual acts from operas (not yet complete operas) from the international repertoire. It is worth mentioning that the first Serbian operetta *Vračara* (The Sorceress), 1882, was composed by the Slovenian composer Davorin Jenko (1835–1914), long-time conductor of the Belgrade National Theatre. It should be noted that operettas were not admired by everybody in Serbia and that there were protests against their performances. Even some directors of theatres were opposed to operettas, claiming that the genre was unworthy of the high ideals they were pursuing. The truth was, however, that they did not want to have any music in the theatre, just dramas. As a consequence of such debates, the first complete opera performed by the ensemble of the National Theatre in Belgrade after Binički’s *Na uranku* was Pietro Mascagni’s *Cavalleria rusticana*, as late as in 1906. This was followed by Ruggero Leoncavallo’s *Pagliaci* in 1908 and Bedřich Smetana’s *The Bartered Bride* in 1909; the latter was also staged in the private *Opera na bulevaru* [Opera on the Boulevard] several months later, followed soon by Engelbert Humperdinck’s *Hänsel und Gretel*, Verdi’s *Il Trovatore* and Gounod’s *Faust*.

For a variety of reasons there had been no guest performances of foreign opera companies in Belgrade before 1895, when an Italian company directed by E. Massini and R. De Giorgio stayed for six weeks performing major Italian operas (*Il Trovatore*, *Cavalleria rusticana*, *Norma*, *Rigoletto*, *Nabucco*, etc.) and one French opera (*Carmen*). More than a decade later (1908), Belgrade became a stop on the tours of two Italian opera companies; three years later it welcomed performances of the Zagreb Opera and the following year operas brought by the *Great Italian Opera Company*, directed by J. Castellani.⁶

Not far from Belgrade, the Serbian National Theatre in Novi Sad (then in Austro-Hungary) followed the same goals as its sister institution in Belgrade. Since its founding (1861), it not only cultivated a repertoire of dramas but also pieces with music and operettas. Operas of foreign

² The score has not been preserved. The “opera” was performed in a Belgrade theatre two years later. Josif Šlezinger (1794–1870) was a Czech Jew, born in Sombor, then a town in the Habsburg monarchy, today in Serbia. At the invitation of Prince Miloš, he moved to Kragujevac in 1831 where he founded and conducted an orchestra. He composed music for plays, marches and potpourris.

³ Slobodan Turlakov, *Istorija Opere i Baleta Narodnog pozorišta u Beogradu (do 1941)* [The History of Opera and Ballet of the National Theatre in Belgrade (until 1941)] (Belgrade: Slobodan Turlakov and Čigoja štampa, 2005), 14.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 16–20.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 36–41.

composers were staged there earlier than in Belgrade (Victor Massé: *Les Noces de Jeannette*, 1896; Ivan Zajc: *Nikola Šubić Zrinjski*, 1899; K. M. Weber: *Der Freischütz*, 1900).

I. Operas

1. Thematization of Ottoman Turks as Historical Oppressors

Although Serbia had already been an independent country for a quarter of a century when Stanislav Binički's one-act opera *Na uranku* had its first performance (1903), its plot showed that the trauma left by the four century rule of the Ottomans needed more time to heal. In fact, the hostilities between Serbia and Turkey still persisted at that time because a large number of the Serbian population lived outside the country, in regions still under Ottoman rule. The plot was built on the antagonism between the Turks as oppressors and the Serbs as a mistreated population. The libretto with veristic overtones was written by Branislav Nušić, a distinguished Serbian contemporary playwright. The dramatic events are set in a Serbian village during the Ottoman rule (an indefinite period between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries). Stanka, a Serbian girl, rejects the declaration of love by the Turk Redžep-aga, the local representative of the empire, because she loves Rade, to whom she is about to be married. In desperation, Redžep-aga tells the girl that nobody knows who Rade's father was. The young man was raised by his mother alone, who had told him that his father had died when he was small, and is extremely offended when he hears the accusation regarding his father. His mother, who is also present, however, confirms the story. Emotionally distressed, Rade takes his gun and kills her.⁷ The negative *dramatis persona* here is a Turk, an "Eastern Other," although it could easily have been a Serb, as Redžep-aga is not portrayed as somebody who abuses his power but as a jealous man who wants to hurt his opponent.⁸

After *Na uranku*, the Belgrade audience had to wait several years before it could see some other domestic operas – Jovan (Jan) Urban's *Majka* [Mother] in 1910,⁹ and Isidor Bajić's *Knez Ivo od Semberije* [Prince Ivo of Semberija] in 1911. The score of the former has not been preserved, but it is known that the libretto by Rad. Kosmajac (alias of Mihailo Stepanović) was inspired by a short story by Čedomilj Mijatović, a distinguished economist and historian, but an unsuccessful writer. The plot is simple; Janissaries take a Serbian boy from his parents. In his adult years, he becomes a Turkish pasha and on one of his travels stays by chance in the Belgrade home where he had been raised. When his mother recognises him, he starts remembering things from his childhood and kisses her. A Turk from pasha's environment then kills him, who is afterwards killed by the mother. In the press reviews of the opera, there were references to "agreeable and charming melodies" based on Serbian and Turkish musical motifs.¹⁰ The same opposition of motifs is present in Isidor Bajić's score, based on another libretto by Branislav Nušić, who was inspired to write it by a real event. On one side is Kulin-Beg who does not want to release a Serbian girl Stanka from captivity, and on the other is Ivo (whose title "prince" designates him as head of the local Serbian population). When Ivo finally offers the Turk his most precious

⁷ In later performances of the opera (1968, 1999), the directors omitted such a brutal act.

⁸ See more in Melita Milin, "Images of Eastern Other in Serbian Art Music," in *Beyond the East-West Divide. Balkan Music and Its Poles of Attraction*, eds. Ivana Medić and Katarina Tomašević (Belgrade: Institute of Musicology, SASA and Department of Fine Arts and Music SASA, 2015), 85–86.

⁹ Jovan (Jan) Urban (Prague, 1875 – Valjevo/Serbia, 1952) studied at the conservatory in his home town. He moved to Serbia in 1899 where he conducted military bands and choirs in several towns and was also engaged in theatres. Apart from the opera *Majka*, he composed operettas, music for orchestra and chamber music.

¹⁰ Turlakov, *Istorija Opere*, 35.

belongings, which are strong symbols of Serbian national and religious identity (an icon of the family patron saint and the cresset – candle), he agrees to release the girl, but her mother dies exhausted by the events.

Even after WWI, when Serbia became part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, later renamed Yugoslavia (1918–1941), the long Turkish rule was thematised in a number of operas. Milenko Paunović's opera *Čengić-aga* (1923) has been left unorchestrated. The author of the libretto was the composer himself, who created it without relying on any source. The main characters are a Turkish lord, his Serbian slave Anđelija and a young Serbian man in love with the girl. Svetomir Nastasijević composed two operas whose plots are set in different epochs but both deal with the Ottoman Turks as invaders. In *Đurađ Branković* (1938), the theme is found in the events of the last decades of the existence of the Serbian Medieval state, when the despot Stefan Lazarević named Đurađ Branković, who engaged in several battles against the Turks, as his heir (1427). In the opera *Prvi ustanak* [The First Uprising] (1954), Nastasijević turns to a major, early nineteenth century, event in Serbian history when a successful insurrection against the Turkish rule took place. Both of Nastasijević's operas were composed on libretti written by his brother Momčilo who was a very gifted and well known poet.

After WWII, in the socialist period, there was only one composer who was still attracted by similar themes (leaving apart those who were inspired by epic poems) – a composer of a conservative profile, Ljubomir Bošnjaković composed *Robinja* [Slave girl] (1964) – again a love story, this time about a Serbian couple about to marry and the girl's imprisonment by the Turkish lord Rašid beg, but with a happy ending.

Looking at the plots of those operas, it is apparent that with the passing of time they tended to be less tragic and conflicting, which can be understood as a reflection of the changed political and social circumstances. Prominent roles were given to male characters, representatives of the Ottoman ruling order, who were usually ruthless (Kulin-ban in *Knez Ivo od Semberije*; Rašid-beg in *Robinja*) or just malicious (Redžep-aga in *Na uranku*). On the other hand, as expected, Serbs are portrayed as generous and ready to sacrifice themselves for national and personal dignity (Knez Ivo, Rade in *Robinja*); they are also emotional and sometimes violent (Rade in *Na uranku*). Serbian female characters are mostly passive and suffering (in *Na uranku* and *Knez Ivo od Semberije*), but sometimes active and ready to take risks.

Although from the musical point of view none of the above-mentioned operas could be considered an outstanding achievement, they were, at least, professionally written and were important for national self-respect and new tradition building. Their styles were different, basically romantic and late romantic, belonging more to the nineteenth century than to their own. In musical portrayals of the Ottoman Turks or Muslim Slavs, stereotypical procedures were usually used, their main signifier being the marked presence of augmented seconds in melodies, mainly as a raised fourth degree of the minor scale. As was the case in the West, Serbian composers employed “spiced-up major-minor tonality rather than music based on a different ethnic scale pattern – unorthodox augmented seconds, but an orthodox modulation.”¹¹ The elements of modal harmony were functional in suggesting the archaic atmosphere of the works.

2. Serbian Epic Poems Transposed on Stage

Some Serbian composers found inspiration for their operas of a national character in Serbian epic poems, more precisely in dramatic plays based on them. It is of interest that two composers worked at almost the same time on their first operas based on the same play inspired by the epic

¹¹ Derek Scott, “Orientalism and Musical Style,” *Critical Musicology Journal. A Virtual Journal on the Internet*, 1997, <http://leeds.ac.uk/music/Info/crtimus/articles/1997/02/01.html>.

poem *Marko Kraljević i vila* [Marko Kraljević and the Fairy], written by Dragutin Ilić, *Ženidba Miloša Obilića* [The Marriage of Miloš Obilić]. Božidar Joksimović completed his opera in 1902 and Petar Konjović a year later.¹² Since, however, these works were not performed at the time, Binički's *Na uranku* is still considered the first Serbian opera.¹³ The plot on which Joksimović's and Konjović's operas were based is a suitable one indeed as it contains, among others, the theme of a singing contest between Marko, Miloš's friend, and the Fairy.

Petar Konjović later became the most important Serbian opera composer. His *Knez od Zete* [Prince of Zeta] (1926) is an outstanding music drama based on Laza Kostić's drama *Maksim Crnojević*, which was itself inspired by the epic poem *Ženidba Maksima Crnojevića* [The Marriage of Maksim Crnojević]. The composer masterfully confronted the high political milieu of fifteenth century Zeta (situated in the territory of today's Montenegro, but smaller) and Venice, where a tragic love story took place. Konjović's music was in a recognisable style of his own with appropriated elements from Janáček's operas, which led some critics to name his style "Slavic expressionism,"¹⁴ bearing in mind however that his style also contained post-impressionist features.¹⁵

Petar Krstić's *Ženidba Stojana Jankovića* [The Wedding of Stojan Janković] (1948), inspired by an epic folk poem about the love between a Muslim girl whose family is against her marrying the Serbian hero, but with a happy ending, was another contribution to this category of Serbian operas. The opera is rather conventional and has never been staged.

In his last creative period, Petar Konjović composed another valuable contribution to transpositions of Serbian epic poetry into opera. It was *Otadžbina* [The Fatherland] (1960), a double transposition of the epic poem *Smrt majke Jugovića* [Death of the Mother of the Jugović Brothers], since the composer used Ivo Vojnović's "dramatic song" based on the epic poem for his libretto. Konjović knew that the opera would be static, with few events taking place on the stage, so it was primarily a series of reflections of the catastrophe resulting from the Kosovo battle (1389). The opera has a Wagnerian-styled subtitle "Solemn Dedicatory Presentation" and is a poignant and noble theatrical depiction of tragedy that is individual and collective at the same time. Almost twenty years after Konjović, a younger Serbian composer, Dušan Radić, composed an opera using the same literary basis, Vojnović's *Smrt majke Jugovića* [Death of the Mother of the Jugović Brothers] (1988). The work is much shorter than Konjović's, aiming at producing more drama and contrasts, and avoids the exalted emotions of the former work, creating instead a more distanced approach. Both of Konjović's works inspired by Serbian epic songs rank among the highest achievements of Serbian national operas and operas in general.

3. Away from History and Epics: *Koštana* and *The Peasants*

Petar Konjović is also the author of two very different operas that both belong to the body of Serbian national operas. The first was *Koštana* (1929), composed from a libretto written by the composer himself after a popular play with the same title by Bora Stanković, a great figure of

¹² Konjović wrote his first opera in a hurry as he wished to have it finished for his presentation at the Prague Conservatory where he then studied composition with Karel Stecker from 1904 to 1906.

¹³ Konjović later revised his *Ženidba Miloša Obilića*, which had its premiere in Zagreb in 1917 under the new title *Vilin veo* [The Fairy's Veil].

¹⁴ Miloje Milojević, "Tri opera Petra Konjovića" [Three Operas by Petar Konjović], in *Muzičke studije i članci* [a selection of Milojević's articles prepared by himself], book II (Belgrade: Izdavačka knjižarnica Gece Kona, 1933), 67.

¹⁵ Nadežda Mosusova, "Knez od Zete Petra Konjovića" [Prince of Zeta by Petar Konjović], *Muzikologija* 8 (2008): 157.

Serbian literature. There is no thematization of Serbo-Turkish antagonism in it, the focus being on the unhappy fate of a young Roma girl in a Serbian provincial town whose youth, beauty and wonderful singing provoke unrest in the patriarchal milieu. The opera is a realistic psychological drama with the leading motif of longing for youth, with well integrated folklore elements of contrasting character. It was the second opera from a Serbian composer (after Stevan Hristić's *Suton* [The Twilight, 1925])¹⁶ to be staged abroad: *Koštana* was staged in Brno (1932) and Prague (1935). The initiator of those stagings was Zdeněk Chalabala, then conductor of the Brno Opera of the National Theatre, whose suggestions for some changes in the score were accepted by the composer.¹⁷ After the war, Konjović composed the comic opera *Seljaci* [The Peasants] (1951), another contribution to Serbian national opera. He did not hide the fact that he was inspired by Smetana's *Prodaná nevěsta*, a work that he held in high esteem.

II. Ballets

Before the establishment of the Belgrade Ballet within the National Theatre in 1922, classical ballet could not be seen in Belgrade. It is paradoxical that avant-garde dance came first. After having learned modern dance in Germany and Switzerland, Marija–Maga Magazinović opened a school for rhythmic and “plastic” dance in Belgrade (1911), which gave public performances. After the war, Belgrade saw the Dadaist ballet *Sobareva metla/ Le ballet du valet* [The Valet's Broom] (1923), composed by Miloje Milojević from the text of the poet Marko Ristić. Only three weeks before, the newly created ensemble of the National Theatre performed Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker*, the first classical ballet in Belgrade which had a significant development in the inter-war period thanks to the many excellent Russian ballet dancers and choreographers who had come as emigrants from the USSR.

As in the case of opera, Serbian composers aimed at composing a national ballet. It was the same with Croatian composers whose three ballets of the same genre were successfully staged in the Belgrade National Theatre between the two world wars. One should not be surprised at the success of the first Serbian national ballet – Stevan Hristić's *Ohridska legenda* [The Legend of Ohrid] (1933; definitive version 1947). It was Aleksandar Fortunato, a gifted Russian emigrant dancer, who instigated the creation of this ballet and, bearing that in mind, was engaged in field research of Serbian and Macedonian folk dance.¹⁸ Since Fortunato left Belgrade in 1927, another Russian dancer produced the choreography for this ballet – and it was again a Russian emigrant: Nina Kirsanova. It was therefore the Russians who decisively helped create this national ballet, the most significant in Serbian music. The plot of the ballet contains elements of folk fairy tales and has common features with Russian nineteenth century ballet stories. The peasant pair Biljana and Marko are desperate because her father wishes to marry her to a rich boy whom she does not like. During the wedding, janissaries arrive, kill the bridegroom and take Biljana away. Fairies whom Marko meets by Lake Ohrid give him a magical sword and a flower that will help him free Biljana. The music is romantic with bright colours and attractive folk motifs skilfully interwoven into the texture of the work. The ballet was performed hundreds of times all over

¹⁶ *Suton* was staged in Bratislava in 1929.

¹⁷ The correspondence between Konjović and Chalabala from the period of the preparations for staging *Koštana* in Brno has been researched and published. See Nadežda Mosusova, “Korespondencija između Petra Konjovića i Zdenjeka Halabale” [Correspondence between Petar Konjović and Zdeněk Chalabala], *Muzikologija* 2 (2002): 57–104, <http://www.doiserbia.nb.rs/img/doi/1450-9814/2002/1450-98140202057M.pdf>.

¹⁸ Nadežda Mosusova, “Izvori inspiracije *Ohridske legende* Stevana Hristića” [The Sources of Inspiration for Stevan Hristić's *Legend of Ohrid*], *Muzikološki zbornik* 25 (1989): 67–68.

Serbia, Yugoslavia and Europe. It was also staged by home ensembles in Pilsen, Moscow, Bytom and Moravská Ostrava.

Inspired by Hristić, two other composers contributed to the genre of national ballet: Alfred Pordes (a Bosnian Jew who lived in Sarajevo, Cetinje and Belgrade) with *Oganj u planini* [Ingle in the Mountains] (1941) and Svetomir Nastasijević with *U dolini Morave* [In the Morava Valley] (1942), but Hristić's work remained a much higher accomplishment.

Although *Ohridska legenda* proved to be a lasting success, Serbian composers did not show an interest in continuing that line of ballet after WWII. There were in fact ballets with libretti based on events from national history but the romantic national ideology was not included in them, except for Vitomir Trifunović's *Kosovka devojka* [The Maiden from Kosovo] (1989), a work that has not yet been performed.

Conclusion

The examination of the case of Serbian twentieth century musicians' adoption of Western art music techniques, specifically those essential to the genres of opera and ballet, should serve as a small contribution to the research of culture transfer processes, an independent branch of research since the 1980s.¹⁹ It should be made mention of here that the capacities of European music to be "exported" to other continents and its appropriation there comprise a major part of that research. Contrary to such a transcontinental transfer, the same process was radically different in Serbia as a Balkan state that shared a border with the Habsburg Empire in the decisive period of the beginning of Westernization after the Ottoman rule came to an end. Because of its geographical location and its cultural contacts in the past – mainly through the activities of the Serbs in the Habsburg Empire – Serbia was culturally much closer to the West than some more distant cultures, those further to the East for instance. The importance of the Serbian population in Austria, in the first place its urban educated layer, who were the main carriers of that process, cannot be overestimated. They were also, of course, deeply engaged as cultural mediators in other fields, not only music. It is important, however, to note that, as in far-away countries, "the relatively quick adoption of foreign music was originally due to politically motivated readiness to change the indigenous by taking on the foreign."²⁰ The programme of modernization was indeed political in essence and widely considered necessary in the young Serbian state.

It is also important to point out that the Western forms and techniques of composing (transmitted first from foreign musicians who came to work in Serbia, later assimilated by young Serbs when studying at conservatories abroad, with both categories of musicians belonging to crucially important cultural mediators) soon became regarded as their own. It is possible to present that transfer process in a schematic way: 1. activities of foreign, mainly Czech, musicians (kapellmeisters, singers, players, teachers, etc.) in Serbia and in Serbian institutions in the Habsburg Empire, starting from the 1830s; 2. guest performances of popular operas by foreign opera companies since the late nineteenth century; 3. staging of foreign operas by domestic opera ensembles; 4. creation of the first domestic operas that are staged in the Belgrade and Novi Sad National Theatres.

It was to be expected that the first Serbian operas would be rather simple and thematize important events from Serbian history, with plots often taken from epic poems or imagined

¹⁹ "Introduction" in *Cultural Mediation in Europe 1800–1950*, eds. Reine Meylaerts, Lieven D'hulst, and Tom Verschaffel (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2017), 10–22.

²⁰ Jin–Ah Kim, "Cultural Transfer as a Branch of Research for Music Sociology and Music Anthropology," *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 46 (2015): 50.

ones relying on works of fiction from Serbian writers. In doing so, Serbian composers followed the examples of nineteenth century “national schools,” primarily those of the Czechs and Russians; in this way they applied strategies that accelerated their integration into European musical developments. It is remarkable that very soon after the first contributions to national opera and ballet were made (at the beginning of the twentieth century), two composers of the next generation, born in the 1880s (Petar Konjović and Stevan Hristić) produced excellent national operas and a ballet that could be compared to the main body of works composed between the two world wars. Their qualities were proved when they were performed at the National Theatre tours in Europe, as well as by staging some of them in foreign opera houses. Although some Serbian composers continued to compose along those lines after WWII using a more modern language, there were few outstanding achievements. By that time, however, musical modernism had imposed new goals so that operas of that kind almost disappeared until the last decades of the twentieth century, in the times of strong political crises and wars in Yugoslavia.

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Running an Opera Season from Politeama Ciscutti to Teatro Bonda during the Late Habsburg Empire

Abstract | Who were the protagonists of the operatic organisation during the late Habsburg Empire? Where did they come from? What strategies were applied to manage a season in the theatres of the Eastern Adriatic coast? This study reconstructs the steps necessary for the preparation and administration of an opera season from the stage of the impresario's proposal to the directions of the theatres until the arrival of the companies, mainly Italian, in the analysed territory.

Keywords | Opera Business – Theatres – Impresarios – Late Habsburg Empire

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Themes related to the diffusion and organisation of opera on the eastern Adriatic coast, still so little investigated by musicology, deserve further in-depth study considering the wealth of ideas they bring in relation to the territory and the social fabric in which they are integrated. In the fifty years between the end of the Austrian Empire, the subsequent formation of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the outbreak of the First World War, the territory between Pula and Dubrovnik presented interesting peculiarities in terms of the multi-ethnicity and multiculturalism of the population. With the administration being Austrian, Italians and Croats lived together for a long time in Istria and Dalmatia. While the population – however used they were to understanding and speaking more than one language – was mostly constituted by Croats, the culture related to opera in this region was mainly Italian. In 1861, the theatres of the coastal areas were still included in the list of “Theatres of Italy” by the *Gazzetta musicale di Milano*,¹ and only in the following years became part of the “Estero” (“International”) section. The proposed operatic repertoire consisted for the most part of Italian opera, although the cases of Šibenik and Split represented an interesting exception for some years: it is here that the first attempts were made to introduce Czech and Russian operas by impresarios from Central Europe.²

Tracing and reconstructing the activity of an impresario on the eastern Adriatic coast at the turn of the twentieth century allows us to better understand the production and organisation processes of the opera in this region. Being able to study in detail the work of the protagonists of the production system behind the performances reveals the dense network of underlying relationships between theatre management, publishers, singers, and the musicians who were dealing with the theatres analysed.

¹ “Prospetto del movimento musicale nei teatri d’Italia nella stagione di primavera 1861,” *Gazzetta musicale di Milano*, April 28, 1861, Year XIX, N. 17, 69.

² On this question, see also the paper “The Management of Opera in Istria and Dalmatia (1861–1918): A First Survey,” published in the journal *Arti Musices*. These issues have also been discussed in the report “What archival documents tell us about Eastern Adriatic theatres and the operatic production system at the dawn of the XX Century,” presented at the conference *The role of national opera houses in the 20th and 21st centuries: on the 100th anniversary of the opening of the National Opera in Ljubljana*, (Lubiana, April 16–18, 2018) whose proceedings were recently published.

The impresario of opera from the second half of the nineteenth century onwards was still one who maintained close correspondence with theatre management in order to propose an opera season. He would make his way among numerous competitors, who could potentially become impresarios of a theatre. He was still one who proposed an artistic cast “di primo cartello,” possibly showing off his numerous contacts in the opera world and proclaiming his solvency, even when it clearly was not guaranteed. As with a hundred years earlier, he could have come from musical practice, being a musician, a singer or, at that time, also a conductor; but even a dancer, a choreographer as well as a journalist or lawyer could act as an impresario, at the end of their career or even apart from their main occupation.³ Who, then, were the impresarios operating in the area in question? Where did they come from? What strategies did they adopt to ensure one or more seasons in coastal theatres?

Some impresarios hailed from the Istrian and Dalmatian territory and also worked there, while many others came from outside. The non-local impresarios were in fact the majority.⁴ Most of the impresarios who were eventually hired, speaking in percentage terms, were from Milan or in any case were based in Milan when they corresponded with theatre managements on the coast. This fact is not surprising, as Milan was considered the stronghold of opera in Italy at that time. The archives between Rijeka and Split also include various names of impresarios and agents who were based in and negotiated from one city such as Trieste (see Giuseppe Ullmann, Giovanni Simonetti, or Enrico Gallina among the most important, simultaneously active in several theatres). In smaller percentages, we count correspondences with impresarios from Rome, Venice, Bologna, Florence or Naples. There were impresarios who wrote and negotiated from apparently distant cities such as Bari or Ancona, but which were in fact much closer thanks to the steamboat. If orchestra musicians were needed in Dubrovnik or Split, they were sometimes hired directly from Bari and therefore arrived by sea.⁵

³ On the figure of the impresario, see John Rosselli, *L'impresario d'opera* (Torino: EDT, 1985). This book is now considered the first volume that systematically studies the figures of impresarios and agents as a “category.”

⁴ The consideration arises from a cross-check of the origins of hundreds of impresarios' letters addressed to the directors of coastal theatres in the period between 1861 and 1918, found in the archives between Rijeka and Split. It should be said that sometimes the place of provenance of the letter did not necessarily identify the impresario's residence, but rather the place where the impresario was working, perhaps temporarily, during a given period of time. Some impresarios travelled frequently and wrote directly from the place where they were managing an opera season. The author of this article is preparing a register of impresarios and agents active in local theatres – or who in any case entered into correspondence with the management of the theatres on the coast. At the moment, there are over 250 people registered. The lists of impresarios of the Italian area in our possession, the one provided in the 1980s by John Rosselli (*Elenco provvisorio degli impresari e agenti teatrali italiani dal 1770 al 1890*, kept in the library of the Department of Arts of the University of Bologna) and the bio-bibliographical dictionary compiled by Livia Cavaglieri, *Tra arte e mercato. Agenti e agenzie teatrali nel XIX secolo* (Rome, Bulzoni, 2006) contribute only in a very small part to the knowledge about the people who worked in Istria and Dalmatia, either for chronological reasons (the impresarios surveyed here are those who worked during a historical period that stretches to the end of the First World War) and for the different sources from which the materials were drawn. For most of them it is currently very difficult to retrieve biographical information. There is no literature on these individuals and if something has remained, it should be identified mainly in primary sources.

⁵ Epidemics could dissuade singers and musicians from travelling: in Dubrovnik, for example, people dreaded the arrival of artists from Bari in the years 1910 and 1911, precisely because of the cholera epidemic that had broken out there. Even earlier, in 1886, artists' baggage was subjected to disinfection procedures in Zadar, and this naturally had a cost that could discourage the arrival of artists from abroad. See letter from the mayor of Zadar to the theatre management, Zadar, 31 August 1886, HR-DAZD-252: Kazalište “Verdi” u Zadru 1863–1936, envelope 25.

Some came from the theatres of Osijek and Zagreb – Croatian impresarios – but they were the minority and only very few of them organised Italian opera performances.⁶ There were also those who came from Brno with their own company, such as Johann Pistek, director of the city theatre, offering operas by Smetana and Tchaikovsky, but also some Verdi titles. In this case, having organised a season in the theatre of Split after the change of the municipal administration from Italian to Croatian, the impresario would have had to ensure that the performances were held in Croatian instead of Italian.⁷ Opera performances by Croatian companies were also held in Šibenik in the beginning of the twentieth century, although in this theatre, operas also continued to be presented in Italian.⁸ In Rijeka, however, it was mandatory to use the Italian language and this obligation was also laid down in the tender specifications.⁹ Performances were also given in Italian in Pula and Zadar,¹⁰ although there was no obligation in the tender specifications and in the contracts found so far between theatre managements and impresarios.

It is assumed that a season did not necessarily only involve opera, but also prose, and by the end of the century also *operetta* and the music hall. Therefore, any agencies founded by impresarios were, so to speak, “multi-specialized.” As was customary at the time, some of them also owned music periodicals, which were the organ of the theatre agency, and turned to the theatres of the coast to request a subscription to a periodical or the renewal of the same subscription. Among the various agencies active in the area, the theatre agency Curiel with “La Frusta,” the agency of Francesco Lamperti with “La Rivista teatrale,” or Giovanni Simonetti with the periodical “L’Arte,” to name just a few can be identified.

Writing to theatres in Istria and Dalmatia, agents and impresarios tried to secure operatic seasons in some theatres in the region – more than one. Since the journey was long, they tried to organise a complete tour of the coast, not a single appointment. Those who had already secured the Politeama Ciscutti of Pula tried to reach Zadar. Those who had already secured Zadar, tried to go down at least to Split. Usually, the journey was made from north to south and to a lesser extent the opposite way, or at least this is the current documentary evidence. These trips cost impresarios on average more than running Italian companies within the Italian peninsula, and given that often the price of admission to the theatre could not be increased, they certainly represented a risk. The benefits were not proportionate to the high risk of financial loss.

The companies wanted to be guaranteed or paid for a considerable number of representations. At the end of the century, companies of a certain importance did not move to Istria and

⁶ See correspondence in HR-DAŠI-103, Kazalište i kino “Mazzoleni” – Šibenik (1863–1945), envelope 1, and the contract between Teatro Mazzoleni and Leon Dragutinović, manager of the Hrvatsko Narodno Kazalište u Osijeku, HR-DAŠI-103, envelopes 4 and 10.

⁷ In Split, the Italian municipal administration gave way to the Croatian in 1882. The new mayor, Gajo Filomen Bulat, was also the director of the theatre, as was the case with the previous Italian mayor, Antonio Bajamonti. See the contract between the theatre management of Split and Johann Pistek, letter “m” of the article 1, Split, January 1896, HR-MGS: Kazalište, 1/I–XII.

⁸ See the opera season proposed by the Royal National theatre of Zagreb in 1910 or the one organised by Leon Dragutinović in 1914 with the Croatian opera and operetta company of Osijek, directed by Mihajlo Marković, HR-DAŠI-103, envelope 7.

⁹ See for example art. 1 of the tender documents for the operation of the Teatro Comunale in the three-year period from 1 January 1909 to 31 December 1911, and art. 1 of the tender documents for the operation of the Teatro Comunale in the three-year period from 1 January 1912 to 31 December 1914, HR-DARI, Opcinsko kazalište “G. Verdi,” DS 60.

¹⁰ Zadar could count on two theatres between 1867 and 1882: the Teatro Nobile and the Teatro Nuovo. This article always refers to the entrepreneurial activity carried out at the Teatro Nuovo, where the opera season was held, then named after “Verdi” in 1901, following the death of the composer.

Dalmatia if they were not paid in lire, the more modest ones and the music hall artists accepted contracts with payment of half or two thirds of the sum in lire and the remainder in crowns as legal tender. For engagements, the companies needed advances in lire that some theatre management could only make by changing their crowns into Italian lire.¹¹

The many expenses of impresarios (or theatre managers that formed companies themselves) could have been reduced if there had been a close network between theatre managers, a dialogue which was strongly needed, as early as 1870, as is shown by these lines sent to Paolo Mazzoleni, theatre manager of Šibenik, from a not yet identified colleague:

[...] and we will always go from bad to worse, while lacking the union between the various Presidents of the Theatres, we will never ever have anything good and, always waiting until the last moment, we will have to pay damaged merchandise as if it were good, and always discredit poor Dalmatia. "Unity creates strength" and we are disunited. All the worse for us.¹²

In 1884, there was an attempt by Pietro Ciscutti, founder of the Politeama of Pula (which was subsequently named after him) to create a common agreement between the theatres of Pula, Rijeka, and Zadar covering the hiring of productions. "The proposals that would be made to us," wrote Ciscutti to the theatre management of Zadar, "would be made to you, too, so by the same token someone could say, after Zadar, you could combine Pula and then the immense costs of travel and transport would decrease."¹³ These would not have been new stagings, so the rehearsals would have been quick. The idea was in large part accepted by the theatre management of Zadar. A first practical test was attempted with the *operetta* company "Meridionale" that would have passed in October 1884 coming from Pula to then continue the following November to Zadar, on the occasion of the reopening of the theatre (the theatre had been temporarily closed by ministerial decision: modifications to the theatre building and furniture were being carried out for fire safety reasons).¹⁴ Dubrovnik and Šibenik also agreed to the idea of creating a network. Ciscutti had repeatedly pointed out the difficulties of many impresarios in going to Pula for a series of performances; these difficulties would be alleviated if the companies had been able to perform in more than one theatre. There would have been actual savings on travel and transport costs. Unfortunately, however, the necessary conditions for this system to work were missing and in any case the death of Ciscutti in 1890 prevented the continuation of the project. The impresarios were perfectly aware of the risks of the situation, which by then had become generally unfavourable; despite this, they continued to be proactive, repeatedly applying to the theatre managements.

¹¹ See the report of the theatre management of Šibenik at the Headquarters of the Šibenik Presidium, Šibenik, 5 September 1919, HR-DAŠI-103, envelope 4. On issues related to the currencies of the time in relation to the operatic environment, see Michael Walter, "Geld und Münzen" in *Oper. Geschichte einer Institution*, (Springer, 2016), 13–36.

¹² "[...] e sempre andremo di male in peggio, mentre mancando l'unione fra i vari corpi Presidenziali dei Teatri, mai e poi mai avremo alcunchè di buono e sempre riducendoci agli ultimi momenti dovremo pagare per buona, mercanzia avariata, e screditare sempre più la povera Dalmazia. 'L'unione forma la forza' e noi siamo disuniti. Dunque peggio per noi," letter from [Antonio Feoli] to Paolo Mazzoleni. Split, 6 October 1870, HR-DAŠI-103, envelope 1.

¹³ "Le proposte che verrebbero fatte a noi, noi le faremmo anche a loro, così a viceversa loro nel carteggio potrebbero dire, dopo Zara, potreste combinare Pola che allora le immense spese di viaggio e trasporti sarebbero diminuite," letter from Pietro Ciscutti to the theatre management of Zadar, Pula, 3 May, 1884, HR-DAZD-252, envelope 5.

¹⁴ See letter from the theatre management of Zadar to Francesco Lucerna, Zadar, 28 July 1884, HR-DAZD-252, envelope 5.

Even if it is true that “to be an opera impresario was becoming less of a profession and more of a disease” – to quote John Rosselli –,¹⁵ many impresarios still ventured to organise seasons. The impresario wrote to the theatre management to present himself and above all, if he came into contact with a new management for the first time, he would have to be very careful to properly structure the request, making it sound as appealing as possible. From the analysis of the many letters in the archives of the Istrian and Dalmatian coasts, some common points stand out. There were recurring requests made to the managements. Those who still had doubts about whether to give *opera seria*¹⁶ or something else asked for information on what kind of show would have a greater audience – after all, the impresario should also try to please the public. Some impresarios immediately proposed some operas in their first letter of negotiations, only to then perhaps add “and if they should not please you, please let me know what would be more acceptable if the repertoire were changed.”¹⁷ They were therefore willing to modify the repertoire in order to win the contract. Some requested tender specifications that they may not have found published in the newspapers or at the agencies.

The main requests for information obviously concerned the best time to give a series of performances and the duration of the season, together with what the number of possible performances was and how many performances could be given per week. Turning to the economic side, in addition to knowing the amount of the deposit that was required to guarantee the contract between the theatre management and contractor (a contract without a deposit was not valid) and the amount of the governmental and industrial tax, it was necessary to know the amount of the endowment; in the final contract with the impresario, the endowment could still be granted together with the sale of a certain number of boxes. If the boxes were owned or could be rented by the impresario was another necessary piece of information. The amount of evening expenses of the theatre, with or without the orchestra, was also required, and what proceeds could be achieved if the theatre was full, obtaining the quota perhaps from the *bordereaux* of previous years; moreover, how much the members of the local orchestra cost (such as the *cachet* for *opera seria* and *operetta* – a distinction was made) and what were the modalities for paying the theatre staff.

It was essential to know how many members the local orchestra had and what the staff was, so as to know eventually whether it was necessary to call in external musicians as adjuncts. There was an interest in knowing the number of choristers for *opera seria* (usually for the *operetta* the choir arrived already formed), if there was a stage technician (with the corresponding material), choir conductor, prompter, etc., what the dimensions of the theatre were (height, bottom, width of the building, proscenium, stage, etc.) and the size of the stages.

With the information obtained in the first contact, the impresario could then proceed with the preparation of the formal project. The meeting and negotiations (possibly) in person were reserved for a later time. The first phase consisted of sending a letter with a simple proposal for a season. Usually the performances were proposed from one season to another, for example in May negotiations could start for the autumn season. Some proposed an opera season from one month to the next (or an even shorter time frame), for personal organisational delays, or in the implicit hope – or certainty – that things did not go well with the impresario who signed

¹⁵ John Rosselli, *L'impresario d'opera* (Torino: EDT, 1985), 36.

¹⁶ The wording “opera seria” remained in the correspondence and in all the documents of the time, to distinguish it from “opera buffa,” for which a different type of budget was envisaged.

¹⁷ “e se non le piacesse, la S. V. dica quali sarebbero più accette cambiando repertorio,” letter from the Ceruso Theatre Agency of Milan to the theatre director of Split, Milan, 9 January 1898, HR-MGS: Kazalište 4/I–XVII.

a contract in the same theatre and for the same season, so that a replacement would become necessary.¹⁸

What did the impresarios assert in these letters? Basically their own list of artists and operas. The operas were then agreed upon with the theatre management. At some theatres on the coast, the choice of the management required the approval of the shareholders summoned to an assembly. And if there were 48 shareholders, as was the case in Zadar, one can appreciate why the decisions took longer and were more difficult, since an agreement had to be found between a considerable number of people.¹⁹

Some impresarios prepared a brochure to be sent to the theatre management, without having to rewrite the same type of letter dozens and dozens of times by hand. Some of these were more, some less, elaborated pre-printed forms: on the first page there would be a very brief request for information to the theatre, on the second page the list of operas and the complete list of the cast (for those who already had a complete artistic list), the amount of orchestra musicians and choristers and the ownership of music, costumes, scenery, and equipment. The third page was a sheet to be detached and returned to the sender, on which all the months of the year were listed: the management was supposed to indicate next to each month the days on which the theatre would have been free.²⁰

With the advent of photography, there were also those who directly sent photos of the company as advertising material, as in the case of the famous Compagnia Lillipuziana, directed by Ernesto Guerra.²¹ It was a company of children that Guerra had assembled in the late nineteenth century. In some cases, these were children coming from difficult situations who had then been educated in music.²² In the theatrical collections of the State archives of Šibenik and Zadar their pictures with stage costumes for individual operas are still preserved. This advertising operation naturally involved a cost, but allowed the theatre management to have an idea of what was

¹⁸ See, for example, the letter from impresario Vecchi to the theatre management of Zadar, sent from Milan on 27 March, 1885 for the upcoming spring season, HR-DAZD-252, envelope 5.

¹⁹ The actionists paid for the opera seasons and therefore wanted to have a say in the matter. We have cases of actionists who, not satisfied with operas proposed by the impresario, following a bad season, even required the return of the fee paid for the opera season. Innocente Monass asked it from the theatre director of Zadar:

Esteemed Direction! On behalf of my wife as owner of the stage of I order n. 10, years ago I paid the canon of crowns 40 for the opera season 1906. Now, considering that, following the failure of Rigoletto, it was also desisted from staging the performance of Lucia di Lammermoor, and that therefore the whole opera season was reduced to the mere representation of the Mefistofele, and certain that the impresario will have been denied any subsidy not having corresponded to his contractual obligations, I beg You, esteemed Direction, to refund the aforesaid fee, considering that also other actionists refused with full right their contribution.

Zadar, 17 November, 1906, HR-DAZD-252, envelope 22.

²⁰ This model was, for example, prepared by the Compagnia Internazionale di Opere, owned by Samuel Lewis and Wilhem Tom. Pietro Minciotti, was its director and administrator, HR-DAZD-252, envelope 5.

²¹ On the company, see what was reported by Enrico Paganuzzi and Pierpaolo Brugnoli, *La musica a Verona* (Verona: Banca mutua popolare di Verona, 1976), 358. It was not the first time that a company of children had performed at the theatre of Zadar. In 1870, a Triestine singing and dancing company entirely made up of children and directed by Giovanni Pascucci had passed through there. The prima donna was 16, the tenor 12.

²² In the *Rivista di Roma*, on the occasion of some performances of this company at the Teatro Biondo in Palermo, it was written: "From November 3 to 10, delightful representations of the famous Compagnia Lillipuziana, directed by the valiant maestro Ernesto Guerra, took place at the Teatro Biondo in Palermo; with his rare competence and patience, he was able to transform a good number of children gathered from poverty into genuine and small wonderful artists" [Dal 3 al 10 novembre hanno avuto luogo al Teatro Biondo di Palermo delle rappresentazioni deliziosissime della celebre Compagnia lillipuziana diretta dal valoroso maestro Ernesto Guerra, che con la sua rara abilità e pazienza ha saputo fare di un buon numero di bambini raccolti sul lastrico, dei veri e piccoli meravigliosi artisti], see *Rivista di Roma*, [s.d.] 1904, 698.

being proposed with greater immediacy. The Compagnia Lillipuziana, which had a very large repertoire, proposed to Zadar something like seven operas in the spring season of 1906 alone. How could this be achieved in times of crisis? Being a company made up of children between the ages of ten and fourteen, the cachets were certainly not those of adult singers, and this made it possible to save on what was usually the item that most influenced the budget, namely the artists' cachets. Their director, Ernesto Guerra, had managed to obtain the first performances in Dalmatia in the early twentieth century thanks to the agent Enrico Gallina from Trieste. Later on, Guerra would deal directly with theatre managements, thus circumventing the agent's assistance. This approach could be practiced at the time, but naturally created much discontent with the agents, who were thus excluded from the negotiations. At first, the contractor relied on the services of an agency. Then, once he knew the staff of the local theatre managements, he turned directly to them. This meant saving on the percentage owed to the agent.

As one can imagine, most of the trips from Italy to the coast were made by steamboat, for obvious geographical reasons. The fact that most of the singers and set designs arrived by sea involved major organisational problems in the presence of adverse weather conditions. It meant that when the bora wind was blowing, the steamboat from Trieste did not leave resulting in possible delays for arrivals at the theatres. This also happened when the steamboats had to leave from Rijeka. "Unable to continue journey due to bad sea will be delayed" telegraphed the baritone Silveti to the theatre management of Šibenik;²³ the agent Gallina telegraphed "Choristers leave tomorrow due to the weather accessory spotlights leave on Thursday."²⁴ This caused delays in the beginning of rehearsals or even in going on stage.

Shipments of materials could also be delayed. The sets, which normally arrived from Milan, along with other goods, such as equipment or scores, were shipped directly by train to Trieste; the artists' personal luggage could be sent via the Gondrand transport company.²⁵ From Trieste, they then reached the cities on the coast using a steamboat, such as the Lloyd Thetis. Various shipping companies were available at the time: in addition to the Austrian Lloyd, there were also the Hungarian-Croatian company or the Ragusea. Complications and shipping errors were possible, as was the case when materials expected at the theatre in Šibenik, instead of being embarked with Lloyd, had been sent via the steamboat *Montenegro* of the Navigazione Generale Italiana which did not call at Dalmatian ports. Therefore, the trunks, as the director of the Mazzoleni theatre declared, consisted of "a long pleasure trip" to Turkey and Greece instead of arriving at the destination on time.²⁶

Among the materials that were shipped, there were also stage costumes. The costume shops, mindful of increasingly frequent cases of seizure of props due to the impresario's lack of solvency, preferred to protect themselves by making known who owned the materials.

This was done by the famous Antonio De Caro costume shop which in 1895 served the theatre of Split. The company was keen to point out that the costumes were its property and that it had rented it out to the impresario. No seizure could therefore be exercised on this material: "[...] I therefore inform the esteemed Theatre Management that the aforementioned clothing as well as that which will be sent later to represent the other operas is *my exclusive property*, rented

²³ "Impossibilitato proseguire viaggio causa mare pessimo ritarderò," telegram from the baritone Silveti to the theatre management of Šibenik, HR-DAŠI-103, envelope 9.

²⁴ "Coristi partono domani causa tempo orribile [sic] giovedì partono riflettori accessori," telegram from the agent Gallina to the theatre management of Šibenik, HR-DAŠI-103, envelope 9.

²⁵ The Milanese company Gondrand (national and international transport and removal services, founded in 1866) still exists today. It opened branches in 19 Italian cities.

²⁶ Letter from Mazzoleni to Paolo Rocca, [Šibenik], 6 February [1909], HR-DAŠI-103, envelope 9.

out to Mr. Vecchi, and no seizure or other act can be exercised on said goods for any reason.”²⁷ Some even requested a deposit to guarantee the return of the costumes, as was the case with the Bonaventura & Hofstätter costume shop in Trieste, which rented costumes out to the theatre of Šibenik. The director of the Mazzoleni theatre, however, writing to the impresario Giuseppe Ponzio, declared that he should not have paid a deposit as a matter of principle and that this request was unheard of in the theatre business. It would also have set a precedent.²⁸

As for the singers and the orchestra, they were requested by theatre managements or impresarios from publishers or their representatives. Some requests from the Adriatic coast were made to Carlo Schmidl, representative of Casa Ricordi in Trieste.²⁹ The theatre management or the impresario sent a list of the necessary parts (instruments and voices). If he could not provide some parts, Schmidl would have brought them in directly from Milan. Other requests could also be made to Antonio Gallo, representative of Ricordi “for Veneto and Illyricum,” or to the company Francesco Lucca. A rental contract was then stipulated which varied from publisher to publisher.³⁰ In some cases, the scores were not transported by steamboat, but by ordinary mail. The transport costs of the music were borne by the impresario, which should have left a deposit

²⁷ “[...] informo perciò codesta on.le Direzione che tanto il sud[detto] vestiario come quello che in seguito si spedirà per rappresentare le altre opere è mia esclusiva proprietà, noleggiato al sig. Vecchi, e sulla detta merce non può quindi esercitarsi alcun atto di sequestro od altro per nessuna ragione,” letter from Antonio De Caro to Filomeno Bulat, director of the theatre of Split. Milan, 24 October 1895, HR-MGS: Kazalište 4 / I-XVII.

²⁸ Write to that Signor Bonaventura that if the Theatre Management of Šibenik has trusted you in reserving the theatre for you without making you pay a deposit, which is customary in the theatre business, the costume shop of Trieste can also trust you and rent out those few costumes to you without need of guarantees which do not exist in the theatre business and which the theatre management by principle and by not setting precedents towards the costume shops cannot grant. An impresario such as yourself and no newcomer but someone who can call on the theatre management of the Theatre of Lošinj for references has the right to this trust from a costume shop. I have never done any business with this one, knowing it was very expensive, but no one else ever had requests of this kind. A guarantee could be required from a theatre of first rank, but not from the following theatres, as you can never know what requirements Mr. Bonaventura might have when returning the costumes. When it comes to theatre management, they are playing it safe, creating a thousand problems, and these gentlemen have all kinds of needs

[Scriva a quel Signor Bonaventura che se la Direzione del teatro di Sebenico si è fidata di riservarle il teatro senza farLe versare una cauzione cosa che è nelle consuetudini teatrali, anche la sartoria di Trieste può fidarsi di noleggiarLe quei pochi vestiti senza bisogno di garanzie che non esistono nelle consuetudini teatrali e che la Direzione per principio e per non crear precedenti verso la sartoria non può concedere. Un impresario come Lei non più persona nuova ma della quale può dar referenze la direzione del Teatro di Lussino ha il diritto di questo poco di fiducia da parte di una sartoria teatrale. Colla stessa io non ho fatto mai affari sapendola molto cara, ma mai da nessun altra vennero richieste di questo genere. Poteva andare una garanzia richiesta da una prima piazza, ma non dalle piazze successive, inquantochè non si può mai sapere che esigenze può avere più tardi il Signor Bonaventura alla restituzione dei vestiti. Quando si tratta di direzioni sapendo di andare su sicuro creano mille noie e hanno esigenze d’ogni genere questi signori fornitori]

Letter from Mazzoleni to the impresario Giuseppe Ponzio, April 8, 1911, HR-DAŠI-103, envelope 10.

²⁹ See, for example, the correspondence relating to the rental of the *Poliuto* in Zadar in 1914, HR-DAZD-252, envelope 24; or the requests of Giovanni Mazzoleni from Šibenik for *Trovatore* and *Traviata* in 1909, HR-DAŠI-103, envelope 9. In 1889, Carlo Schmidl founded the company Carlo Schmidl & Co., which he later sold to Ricordi in 1902. On behalf of Ricordi, he opened a branch in Leipzig in 1901, managing it until 1906, cf. the entry “Carlo Schmidl” in *Dizionario Enciclopedico Universale della Musica e dei Musicisti*, 7 vol., 5.

³⁰ Antonio Gallo, although a member of Ricordi, had his own form for the hiring agreement of an opera score, different from the one Casa Ricordi used, and of course different from the one formulated by the Lucca publishing house. The agreement established the start and end dates of the period in which the parts would be used, together with the price for the hire. There was a penalty for the late return of the parts, and the amount would be increased from week to week. See, for example, the score hiring agreement drawn up between the company Francesco Lucca and the impresario Carlo Vianello in Zadar in 1875, HR-DAZD-252, envelope 27.

as a guarantee of the obligations assumed.³¹ The impresario would also have had to insert an indication of ownership of the scores in the billboards, under threat of a fine.³² The music was then sent and the delivery of the parts was accompanied by a list of items.

A further expense that had to be covered by the impresario was the payment of external artistic masses. Not everything was available in situ, indeed it must be said that in this region – as well as in other theatres on the Italian peninsula – the orchestras were semi-professional, so there was a constant need for external artists.³³ There was also a shortage of choristers: it may seem strange, but in 1884 the theatre of Zadar recorded only three male singers and not even one female singer. Over the following decade, there was not even one chorister in Split and only twelve orchestra musicians could be counted, excluding the *prime parti*.³⁴ Therefore, an impresario who wanted to guarantee a season of *opera seria* there would have had to procure the entire choral group and add at least 18 other orchestra musicians to the local musicians. The tender specifications for the theatre of Zadar included around 40 orchestra musicians, and the same number was officially requested in Rijeka in 1876, together with 30 choristers. Subsequent tender specifications, also in Rijeka, saw an increase in this number: 50 orchestra musicians and 50 choristers in 1901, 60 orchestra musicians and 60 choristers in 1909 and the following years, an increase justified by the evolution of the contemporary repertoire.³⁵ The same was true for the *corps de ballet*: while the theatre of Zadar provided the usual 12 dancers (“12 ballerine distinte di fila”),³⁶ Rijeka required 30 dancers in the early twentieth century. It could happen that the most sought-after dancers were recruited for *tournées* in America, and locally – as the impresario Giorgio Trauner had to complain –, remained only the “ugly, old and pretentious.”³⁷ Zadar’s theatre management itself admitted that out of six dancers, “four can’t dance. [...] The two who know how to dance are old.”³⁸ What was referred to as the “poor *corps de ballet*” (“misero corpo di ballo”) would have done its part to make the public unhappy. The management pointed out that the impresario would absolutely have to bring in new dancers (“that even if they don’t know how to dance they will at least be more presentable than these,” was written with regret to the

³¹ In 1909, Mazzoleni (who in the year in question acted as impresario) paid Schmidl 100 lire as a deposit for the rental of the parts of *Trovatore* and *Traviata*, which cost 400 lire.

³² According to the clauses, a fine would also have been imposed on those who had copied the music both integrally and partially. It was understood that if the composer had made additions to his music for a given performance, they should have been given to the publisher. Libretti were purchased directly from the publisher and could not be printed on site.

³³ For a comparison with the opera orchestras of the Italian peninsula, see for example Franco Piperno and Antonio Rostagno, “The Orchestra in Nineteenth-Century Italian Opera Houses” in *The Opera Orchestra in 18th- and 19th-Century Europe*, eds. Niels Martin Jensen and Franco Piperno (BWV, 2008), 15–62. Renato Meucci has also dedicated various essays to the development of orchestras and orchestral sound between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, see for instance “La trasformazione dell’orchestra in Italia al tempo di Rossini,” in *Gioacchino Rossini, 1792–1992: il testo e la scena*, ed. Paolo Fabbri (Pesaro: Fondazione Rossini, 1994), 431–464; or “Produzione e diffusione degli strumenti a fiato nell’Italia dell’Ottocento,” in *Accademie e società filarmoniche*, ed. Antonio Carlini (Trento: Provincia Autonoma – Società Filarmonica, 1998), 107–134.

³⁴ See letter from Antonio Lana to the theatre presidency of Split, Split, 2 February 1895, HR-MGS: Kazalište, 3, I–XII.

³⁵ See the Municipal Theatre in the three-year period from 1 January, 1909 to 31 December, 1911, and tender documents for the operation of the Municipal Theatre in the three-year period from 1 January 1912 to 31 December 1914, HR- DARI, Općinsko kazalište “G. Verdi,” DS 60.

³⁶ Tender specifications for the Teatro Nuovo of Zadar, Zadar, s.d., HR-DAZD-252, envelope 4.

³⁷ “brutte, vecchie e piene di pretese,” letter from Giorgio Trauner to the theatre management of Zadar, Milan, 12 July 1906, HR-DAZD-252, envelope 26.

³⁸ “quattro non sanno ballare. [...] Le due che sanno ballare sono vecchie.”

agent Gallina).³⁹ Hence the additional need to also find elements for the *corps de ballet*. New elements for the ballet also meant of course new expenses.

It is only with a careful analysis of the costs to be incurred in relation to the presumed income that it is possible to explain the planning and the course of the opera seasons, besides what today would be called “the artistic intentions” of the client. An attempt at initiating a global discourse on the artistic programming of coastal theatres – and this represents another important step in the work undertaken – cannot ignore an understanding of the underlying economic mechanisms. Also important is an understanding that it was not the amount of the endowment itself that convinced the impresario to organise the season, but a complex series of factors. These included the relationship between the endowment and the deposit, or understanding that it was the genuine possibility of liquidity from the impresario combined with the reputation of solvency. These were amongst the main reasons for success in the competition with other colleagues: all this is the basis for a correct reading of the documents and offers a deeper understanding of the mechanisms of opera management and production.

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³⁹ “che se anche non sapranno ballare saranno almeno più presentabili di queste,” letter from the theatre management of Zadar to the agent Enrico Gallina, [Zadar, 1906], HR-DAZD-252, envelope 21.

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