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International Conference

Transnational Networks of Operetta in Early Unified and Fin de Siècle Italy

In affiliation with the project "Between Grandeur and Derision: the Evolution of Musical
Dramaturgy in Unified Italy"

14-16 September 2022

University of Bern

Institute of Musicology

UniS, Room S 101

Schanzeneckstrasse 1, CH-3012 Bern

Transnational Networks of Operetta in Early Unified and Fin de Siècle Italy

WEDNESDAY 14 SEPTEMBER 2022

LAURA MOECKLI (Universität Bern)

Networks and Transformations of Viennese Operetta in Post-Unification Naples

The historiography of the reception of German-language opera in late-nineteenth-century Italy has generally been reduced to the consideration of the impact of Richard Wagner's musical and theoretical works in a context of growing nationalism. This focus however has obscured the ongoing presence and circulation of other repertoires throughout Italy in the first decades after the unification. In addition to works of Wagner contemporaries, such as Carl Goldmark's *Die Königin von Saba* and operas belonging to the older repertoire, such as Weber's *Freischütz* and Flotow's *Martha*, the flourishing genre of Viennese operetta took many Italian cities by storm after 1875. Notwithstanding the tense political climate between Italy and the Austro-Hungarian Empire, many works by Johann Strauss II, Franz von Suppé, and Carl Millöcker reached centres such as Naples, Turin, Milan and Venice within two or three years of their premieres, translated into Italian by influential librettists such as Enrico Golisciani, Angelo Zanardini, Antonio Scalvini, and others.

In this paper, I focus on the impacts of this transnational dialogue with a case study of Viennese operetta productions first staged in Naples in the 1870s before traveling to other Italian cities. A prominent example is Strauss' *Die Fledermaus* which was given in June 1875 as *Il pipistrello* in a translation by Golisciani and several years before Scalvini brought it to Milan's 'Teatro dal Verme' under the provocative title *Orgia*. This entry via Naples seems quite typical as confirmed by Suppé's *Fatinitza*, translated by Vincenzo Antonio Bacichi in 1876, and Richard Genée's *Der Seekadett*, presented in August 1879, adapted by Scalvini as *Le Scacchiere della Regina*. On the basis of the surviving libretti and translations, as well as further archival documents and press reviews, I consider the traces of reception of these works between Vienna, Naples and beyond, taking into consideration the cultural, political and artistic networks and transformations this implies, within the complex framework of comic opera creation and dissemination in Italy in the second half of the nineteenth century.

GUILLAUME CASTELLA (Universität Bern)

« *La plus délicieuse trilogie de la musique bouffe depuis l'ère cimariosienne* » :

la réception transnationale d'Une folie à Rome / Una follia a Roma de Federico Ricci

Après un silence de plus de quinze ans, le cadet des frères Ricci reprend la plume pour composer son dernier *opera buffa*, *Una follia a Roma*. La partition complétée en 1868 est finalement exécutée dans une version française au Théâtre des Fantaisies-Parisiennes en 1869. L'opéra obtient très vite

un triomphe dans la capitale française. Le critique Franz De Villars en parle comme de la dernière œuvre constitutive de la « plus délicieuse trilogie de la musique bouffe italienne », composée également du *Barbier de Séville* et de *Don Pasquale*. D'un phénomène français, la Casa Ricordi en fait un phénomène italien en obtenant les droits de publication et d'exécution de l'œuvre de Ricci dans sa version italienne originale.

Au-delà du succès éphémère de l'œuvre, le discours critique français à son sujet s'appuie sur la distinction entre deux genres a priori opposés, l'*opera buffa* italien et l'opérette française. Conditionnée par des lieux-communs esthétiques, philosophiques ou moraux, la réception d'*Una follia a Roma* révèle une perméabilité entre la définition des deux genres. Le processus de traduction et d'adaptation opéré par Ricci pour la représentation parisienne d'*Une folie à Rome* expose certaines attentes du public parisien qui impliquent une « opérétisation » du genre de l'*opera buffa*. D'autre part, l'œuvre représente aux yeux de la critique et du public l'idéal comico-musical incarné par la tradition italienne.

Cette présentation s'appuie sur l'analyse dramaturgique des éditions française et italienne de la partition, respectivement publiées par Escudier et Ricordi, afin de remettre en question la distinction entre opérette et *opera buffa* communément admise par la critique musicale de la deuxième moitié du XIX^e siècle.

ELENA OLIVA (Università degli Studi di Firenze)

Anna Judic in Italia: l'operetta, la Francia e la "foglia di fico"

Nel dicembre del 1884 Anna Judic, una delle massime interpreti di operetta francese e *diseuse* di successo del *café-concert* parigino, intraprende un'intensa e acclamata tournée in Italia che la porterà ad esibirsi sui più importanti palcoscenici del Paese. L'Italia rappresenta la prima e significativa tappa della sua carriera internazionale che si snoderà tra Europa e America per oltre un ventennio. Già fonte di ispirazione per Émile Zola, che la prese a modello per costruire il personaggio di Rose Mignon in *Nana* (1880), Judic incarna un nuovo concetto di diva cui guarderanno future generazioni di cantanti e attrici in diversi paesi, tra queste le celebri Anna Held e Yvette Guilbert. L'intervento, nel ripercorrere alcuni dei momenti cruciali del passaggio italiano di Anna Judic, si concentrerà sull'impatto che tale evento ha avuto sui versanti della ricezione e delle politiche culturali nell'Italia di fine Ottocento.

EMILIEN ROUVIER (Università degli Studi di Trieste)

*Il mercato delle operette francesi in traduzione nell'Italia post-unitaria:
reti di editori e concessionari (1870-1914)*

Chi prova a ricostruire un quadro statistico della diffusione scenica delle operette francesi in Italia tra Ottocento e primo Novecento si imbatte in non pochi problemi. La maggior parte delle cronistorie teatrali finora pubblicate riguarda i teatri maggiori, che spesso non accoglievano compagnie

di operette, o le cui stagioni di operette non sono sistematicamente ricomponibili, per via di una documentazione lacunosa.

Il presente intervento propone un approccio alternativo, focalizzandosi sulla ricezione editoriale anziché scenica, attraverso il censimento delle traduzioni pubblicate e lo studio delle reti editoriali franco-italiane. Rivolgendo lo sguardo al catalogo completo di traduzioni pubblicate (1870-1914) sarà possibile delineare due momenti con modelli commerciali diversi: ai partenariati degli editori francesi proprietari dei diritti con alcuni grandi editori musicali italiani (Sonzogno, Giudici e Strada...), segue a partire della fine degli anni 1890 una fase di cessioni dirette di diritti dagli editori francesi a compagnie e agenti teatrali. Commenteremo poi alcune stipulazioni tratte da contratti di cessione internazionale firmati tra il 1876 e il 1913, e che illustrano evoluzioni e continuità in questi rapporti commerciali: attraverso il mantenimento di un forte controllo sulla circolazione del materiale orchestrale e delle traduzioni in veste musicale (gli spartiti canto e pianoforte, salvo rari casi, non sono pubblicati), gli editori francesi provarono, con l'aiuto dei loro concessionari, a garantire una messa a profitto internazionale a un genere particolarmente sensibile alle contraffazioni e rappresentazioni illecite (per via della sua diffusione ad opera di compagnie girovaghe, e della relativa semplicità della sua orchestrazione).

TIMUR SIJARIC (Hochschule Luzern)

Project Presentation

Die Operettenproduktionen am Stadttheater Sursee als Formen kollektiver Identitätsbildung im 20. Jahrhundert

Das Stadttheater Sursee, ein Theaterbetrieb eines ländlich geprägten Ortes in der Zentralschweiz entwickelte sich während seines über 200-jährigen Bestehens zu einem bemerkenswerten regionalen Schnittpunkt, im Gleichgewicht zwischen Neuem und Traditionellem. Wohl das entscheidende Merkmal des Stadttheaters Sursee in seiner kulturhistorischen Bestimmung stellen die Operettenproduktionen dar, welche in der Surseer Theaterkultur seit dem Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts spielen. Mit diesem zeitlichen Fokus erfasst das an der Hochschule Luzern – Musik angesiedelte Projekt anhand von Operettenproduktionen für den Surseer Theaterbetrieb Strukturen der Ein- und Ausgrenzung in städtische, regionale und nationale Gemeinschaften neu. Mit dem Ziel der vertieften Untersuchung der Surseer Operettenkultur des 20. Jahrhunderts auf Basis der bisher noch nicht gesichteten musikalischen, audiovisuellen sowie interpretatorischen Archivmaterialien setzt sich das forschersche Vorhaben mit der Bildung gemeinschaftlicher Identitäten auseinander (Celestini, 2013). Im Übergang des Projektes in eine neue Phase dient die Präsentation einer Darlegung des Standes der Dinge bisher gesammelter Inhalte sowie dem wissenschaftlichen Diskurs zum Thema als Input für die zukünftige forschersche Arbeit sowie Austausch in diesem Bereich.

THURSDAY 15 SEPTEMBER 2022

EMANUELE D'ANGELO (Accademia di Belle arti di Bari)

«Il balen del tuo sorriso / m'ha trafitta in mezzo al cor». Boito traduce l'operetta:
forma, stile e ironia nella versione italiana delle Cento vergini di Lecocq

Andata in scena a Milano nel 1874, ma pubblicata solo nel 1877, la versione italiana di *Les cent vierges* di Lecocq è l'unica prova di traduzione d'operetta di Boito che si conosca. Il poeta-musicista scapigliato coltivava fin dalla giovinezza una spiccata vena comica e umoristica, negli anni sessanta scrivendo tra l'altro due libretti per privato divertimento, lo spericolato e sperimentalissimo *Canard* e *Don Giovanni di Marana*. Entro il 1873 aveva scritto anche il libretto di *Iràm*, una spumeggiante commedia per musica in versi raffinatissimi, con sofisticati giochi linguistici e smalziate impalcature metriche. Poco dopo si dedicò alla traduzione del libretto dell'«Opéra-Bouffe» di Lecocq. A metà tra il lavoro 'alimentare' e la 'palestra' per allenarsi a nuove prove drammatiche (fino a *Basi e bote* e *Falstaff*), la versione fu l'occasione per applicare anche a questo terreno teatrale la propria poetica dissacrante, carica di sorriso liberatorio ma anche di tutta la ghignante ironia pessimista dell'autore del *Mefistofele*, in bilico tra il rispetto ammirato del passato e la febbrile brama di superamento e innovazione. Non sorprende, dunque, che Boito fa sì che Gabriella, verso la fine dell'operetta, metta in piedi una «scena di passione» citando non uno di «tutti i romanzi che h[a] letto» ma l'incipit del cantabile del Conte di Luna del *Trovatore*, sostituendo all'esperienza di lettrice del personaggio quella di spettatrice d'opera e potenziando la comicità della scena: è solo uno dei tanti riusi librettistici che imperlano, più o meno ironicamente, i suoi drammi per musica.

BIANCA DE MARIO (Università degli Studi di Milano)

Mapping Invisibility: Operetta and Vaudeville at the Teatro Milanese

The so-called *Urban Musicology*, intended as the study of music within the urban environment (Carter 2002), has repeatedly demonstrated how «the edifice of the opera house remains an important marker of opera's politicocultural status» (Aspden 2019). Moreover, recent musicological projects of digital mapping have highlighted the importance of an intense network of social and cultural exchanges for the comprehension of a musical phenomenon. This considered, why has one of the main "secondary" venues in Milan, the Teatro Milanese, completely disappeared from historical maps? How can its role be significant for the comprehension of operetta and musical theatre?

Born in 1869 on the remains of an old dance pavilion behind the Duomo, the Teatro Milanese has a short but vibrant theatrical and musical activity, managed by Carlo Righetti, parliamentary deputy, militant critic and forerunner of the *Scapigliatura* movement. Together with new operettas, like the successful *On sabet grass* (*A Shrove Saturday*, 1872), with original music by Pettenghi and Grandillo, Righetti (aka Cletto Arrighi) writes and stages parodies of operettas, like *Orfee in vioron* (*Orpheus under arrest*, 1870) with music by Casiraghi, inspired by Offenbach's masterpiece, or vaude-

ville comedies adapted from French plays, like *El Barchett de Boffalora* (*Boffalora's Small Boat*, 1870), whose fame survived through the 20th century.

Through an analysis of some musical excerpts, this paper aims at considering the central role of the Teatro Milanese both in the reception and recreation of new genres, such as operetta and vaudeville, and in the creation of essential musical networks in post-unification Milan.

ALBERT GIER (Universität Bamberg)

Italien und die Italiener in der Wiener Operette, und das Echo in der italienischen Presse

Vom 19. bis ins 20. Jahrhundert zählten italienische Städte und Landschaften zu den beliebtesten Schauplätzen französischer, österreichischer und deutscher Operetten. Erwartungsgemäß griffen die Librettisten auf Stereotypen der romantischen Literatur und des Feuilleton-Romans zurück (z.B. Dumas, *Le Comte de Monte-Christo*) und boten so ein verzerrtes Bild des zeitgenössischen Italien: Es wimmelt dort von Räubern (vgl. Suppé, *Banditenstreiche*; Millöcker, *Gasparone*, etc.), die Beamten, die sie verfolgen, sind inkompetent oder bestechlich; die Italiener sind leichtlebig, sie lieben Musik und Tanz (besonders die Tarantella), Höhepunkt des Jahres ist der Karneval (Johann Strauss, *Der Karneval in Rom*, *Eine Nacht in Venedig*), die Hauptfiguren der Operetten sind häufig Maler, Musiker oder Sänger... Alles in allem spiegeln die Libretti die ziemlich oberflächlichen Eindrücke, die österreichische oder deutsche Touristen von einer Italienreise mit nach Hause nehmen mögen.

Wie überall auf der Welt waren Wiener Operetten um 1900 auch in Italien sehr beliebt und erfolgreich. Dem Publikum konnte natürlich nicht entgehen, dass Stücke wie *Der lustige Krieg* (Johann Strauss) oder *Paganini* (Lehár) mit den gegenwärtigen Problemen des geeinten Italiens nichts zu tun hatten. Es soll untersucht werden, wie die italienische Presse anlässlich der Premieren in Wien oder späterer Aufführungen in italienischer Übersetzung diese Stücke beurteilte, und welchen Einfluss sie auf die Entstehung der italienischen Operette hatten.

DONATELLA MELINI (Università degli Studi di Pavia)

PAOLA REDEMAGNI (Museo Scienza e Tecnologia, Milano)

The Unknown Archive of the Operetta Singer Emma Vecla (Adrienne Telmat) at the Museo Nazionale della Scienza e Tecnologia Leonardo da Vinci in Milan

In February 2020, the Museo Nazionale della Scienza e Tecnologia Leonardo da Vinci in Milan acquired the personal archive of Emma Vecla, stage name of Adrienne Telmat (1877–1972), the French opera and operetta singer naturalised Italian and the first Italian performer of Franz Lehár's *Die lustige Witwe*. Much loved as an artist and as a woman, Emma Vecla was the star of the Italian stage in the period 1907–1915. Her personality influenced the fashion and customs of the time and between 1912 and 1916 she appeared in four films: *La locandiera* (1912), *Chi la dura la vince* (1912), *Capriccio di milionaria americana* (1913) and *Amor che tace* (1916). She retired from the stage in 1929

and dedicated the rest of her life to charity work and supporting new projects, including musical ones, such as the one that links her name at the Museo Nazionale della Scienza e Tecnologia in Milan. Since 1956 the Museum had been feeling the need to have a didactically section of musical instruments to illustrate their particular technical evolution, but it was only in 1960 that the idea became possible thanks to the generous financial support of this incomparable woman; the new section, entitled “Emma Vecla”, was thus inaugurated on 22 January 1962.

The Emma Vecla's personal archive preserves heterogeneous material and is now being reorganised. Its documents include engagement contracts with European and non-European theatres; business correspondence (concerning tours and engagements) and private correspondence (for example, with her husband-to-be, Salvatore Cottone who was artistic director of the Casa Musicale Sonzogno, Tito Ricordi, Giacomo Puccini, Ruggero Leoncavallo, etc.). Letters from admirers (which Emma Vecla herself divided by city, country or continent!); stage and private photographic portraits; various reviews of both her successes and her activities as a benefactor. This previously unpublished material, which on this occasion is presented to scholars for the first time, will undoubtedly open up new fields of research and not only on the life and artistic activity of a significant protagonist of the *operetta* world but also into musical and social life at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries.

KARINA ZYBINA (Paris-Lodron-Universität Salzburg)

The Wonderful Adventures of The Cairo Goose

In 1782, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart informed his father about an opera request: to present a brand-new opera to the Italian troupe engaged for the next season. He just started his work, when the entire project had to be abandoned. At the end, only six drafts of various arias and ensembles survived from this endeavour: they came to be known as *L'oca del Cairo* (*The Cairo Goose*). In 1855, the German printer Julius André completed these incomplete scores and published them, thus turning this opera fragment into a perpetual 'work in progress', ever open to any kind of experimentations by the musicians of the next generations. And thence commenced the story of this goose's wonderful European adventures.

The focus of the present paper is on two specific stops of this journey: 1) Victor van Wilder's French *opéra bouffe* *L'oise du Caire*, premiered in 1867 in the Théâtre des Fantaisies-Parisiennes in Paris, and 2) Giovanni Bottesini's Italian operetta with the original title *L'oca del Cairo*, created on its basis in 1870 for the Drury Lane Theatre in London. Working on the borderline of such disciplines as cultural mobility studies, opera studies, librettology, and translatology, the paper traces the 'itineraries' of those material objects that accompanied this *Goose* in its migration flights (printed scores and/or handwritten copies), uncovers the circumstances and the mechanisms of their transfers across the boundaries, and explores issues of translation, adaptation, and transmutation. In doing so, it aims to consider these newly created operettas as analytical tools instrumental for exploring a wider range of social, political, and cultural contexts.

LIVIO MARCALETTI (Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien)

Translating Linguistic Jokes in Johann Strauss II's Der lustige Krieg / La guerra allegra (1881/1884)

One of the most difficult problems in translating comic librettos for opera involves foreign characters trying (without much success) to speak the main language of the libretto. Since their grammatical and phonetic errors are designed to make people laugh in a particular target language, changing the latter requires a rethinking of entire scenes, at the cost of losing many jokes. In Johann Strauss II's *Der lustige Krieg* (premiere in Theater an der Wien, 25.11.1881), Balthasar is a Dutchman who speaks a broken German constantly mixed with his mother tongue, and for this reason he is mocked by the Italian soldiers, who, however, speak German instead of Italian. In the Italian translation officially approved for a performance in Trieste (1884), these comic scenes are extremely difficult to render, as Dutch and Italian are very distant languages; furthermore, there was no established tradition like that of German comic characters speaking Italian, typical of 18th-century Italian *opera buffa*. How are this and other translation issues resolved in the Italian version? This presentation aims to analyze the solutions undertaken in the Italian translation of this Viennese operetta, contextualizing them in the general process of "localization" of the original libretto in a new linguistic and geographical context.

RUBEN VERNAZZA (Università degli Studi di Palermo)

«Operettizzare» Donizetti: il caso della Figlia del reggimento

Sulla scorta di indagini statistiche d'ampio raggio, recenti studi pionieristici sull'operetta nell'Italia del secondo Ottocento hanno dimostrato che il repertorio delle compagnie di giro coinvolte nel processo di diffusione del genere costruirono i loro repertori attingendo a due fonti principali: da un lato, operette importate dalla Francia eseguite in lingua originale o, più frequentemente, tradotte; dall'altro lato, operette nuove composte in lingua italiana da compositori italiani (De Lucca, 2019; Oliva, 2020).

Meno noto è il fatto che nei cartelloni delle compagnie d'operetta facessero talvolta capolino anche titoli del repertorio operistico comico italiano del passato più o meno recente. Questa ri-contestualizzazione all'interno di spazi teatrali e di repertori diversi da quelli originali comportava anche una ri-semantizzazione? In altre parole, quali erano ricadute culturali di quella che potremmo chiamare l'"operettizzazione" di un'opera italiana?

Basandosi anzitutto sui discorsi sviluppati dalla stampa periodica italiana del tempo, il mio intervento tenterà di rispondere a queste domande riflettendo sul caso della circolazione, fra gli anni Settanta e Novanta dell'Ottocento, di un titolo celebre del catalogo donizettiano nei repertori delle compagnie d'operetta italiane: *La figlia del reggimento*.

RICCARDO PECCI (Centro Studi Giacomo Puccini, Lucca)

*Cio-Cio-San e il «pesciolino innamorato» di Sidney Jones: Madama Butterfly,
La geisha e alcune questioni di genere*

«Era della coreografia e dell'operetta»: così il recensore de *Il Tempo* etichettò perplesso le scene iniziali di *Madama Butterfly* in occasione della disastrosa prima rappresentazione scaligera della «tragedia giapponese» di Puccini, Illica e Giacosa (17 febbraio 1904). Come ha suggerito Arthur Groos, tra i motivi di disorientamento di pubblico e critica va probabilmente annoverato l'atteggiamento sperimentale di Puccini verso i generi e le aspettative di genere: atteggiamento che sembrò per alcuni versi rimettere in discussione i «forti [...] scompartimenti stagni» che dividevano l'opera dalla sua ingombrante «sorella minore», l'operetta (Eugenio Montale).

In questo contesto, ad offrire particolari spunti di riflessione è quella sorta di 'anti-*Butterfly*' che è *The Geisha* (1896), indubbiamente il più trascurato dei potenziali ipotesti dell'opera pucciniana. Eppure il *musical play* firmato da Owen Hall, Harry Greenbank e Sidney Jones vanta una storia della ricezione in Italia ben più significativa di quella toccata agli altri esordi del *japonisme* cantato (da *La Princesse jaune* a *The Mikado*, da *Madame Chrysanthème* a *Iris...*): sulle scene e nella testa degli spettatori di opera e operetta, il celeberrimo «pesce rosso» della *Geisha* (*The Amorous Goldfish*) non potrà evitare di intersecare il cammino di Cio-Cio-San.

FRIDAY 16 SEPTEMBER 2022

ALESSANDRA PALIDDA (Oxford Brookes University)

A New Market for a New Genre: Comic Theatre, and the Casa Musicale Sonzogno (1874–1920)

The Sonzogno publishing firm is familiar to opera scholars today primarily due to its promotion of emerging Italian composers in the last decades of the nineteenth century, as well as its importation of a significant range of French operas during this period (Mallach, 2007). Yet the impact of the Casa Musicale Sonzogno (founded 1874) on the Italian musical scene and cultural market more generally throughout the second half of the long nineteenth century extended far beyond this familiar story (Caesar, Romani & Burns, 2011). At the head of the greatest publishing empire of his time (and an active impresario), Edoardo Sonzogno was also an extraordinarily important figure in the history of Italian operetta. On the one hand, he infused the Italian operatic repertoire with new elements, especially via the importation of French operettas and opéra comiques from the 1870s onwards that were swiftly adapted for Italian audiences and developed their own local performance traditions. On the other, Casa Sonzogno also designed large-scale channels for the production and circulation of new musical products: most significantly a competition for three-act Italian operettas launched in 1913, which offered a blatant reworking of the 1883 competition for one-act operas that helped launch the *giovane scuola* thirty years earlier.

Drawing on a wide range of sources published by Casa Sonzogno, including periodicals, bulletins, and visual publicity materials, this paper explores some of the theatrical channels established by

the firm in the decades straddling 1900. These, I argue, constitute a crucial chapter in the early history of operetta on the Italian peninsula and can more broadly illuminate the shifting commercial dynamics of the Italian entertainment industry at this time. The range of Sonzogno's activities moreover highlights the early mobility of Italian operetta and its stylistic features across media and genre, culminating in the "cinematographic operettas" produced by Lorenzo Sonzogno's pioneering Musical Film company in the 1910s. In exploring some of these experiences, this paper thus reassesses Sonzogno's influence on Italy's late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century cultural market more generally, while suggesting its relevance for the further study of the birth and development of Italian operetta.

MARCO LADD (University of Cambridge)

Operetta, Canzonetta: Politics of Light Music in 1920s Italy

In the 1920s, several of Italy's prized culture industries were in crisis. From Italian opera to Italian cinema, what contemporary observers dubbed "la crisi della lirica" and "la crisi dei cinematografi" painted a gloomy picture indeed (Sachs 1987; Brunetta 2008). Yet for a range of novel night-time entertainments—such as cabaret and music hall—the 1920s were a golden era, as ever more urban Italians sought to spend their evenings in pleasurable diversion. Operetta, however, sat uneasily in this divide. Critics typically viewed the genre through the crisis-tinted lenses they applied to opera; accordingly, operetta was said to be in its twilight years, with some questioning whether a distinctly Italian form had ever existed. Belying this pessimism, however, was a constant stream of popular and commercially successful works—successful, in part, because they exploited the increasingly transnational language of popular music.

In this paper I argue that popular music—excitingly up-to-date or insidiously anonymous, depending on one's perspective—became central to critical questioning of operetta's Italianness. In particular, the composer, librettist, impresario and publisher Carlo Lombardo was a key figure in such developments: he routinely published individual numbers from his operettas on the buoyant market for *canzonette* (popular songs in a Tin Pan Alley mould), and his works are studded with trendy American dances of the day—foxtrots, one-steps, and blues. I focus here on one of Lombardo's most commercially successful hits, *Cin-Ci-La* (1925; by Virgilio Ranzato, to Lombardo's libretto). While the operetta's stereotyped Chinese setting can be readily understood within a history of Orientalizing representations on the Italian lyric stage, numbers such as "Le cinesine europeizzate" also clearly responded to the contemporary vogue for *canzonette* that fetishized East-Asian femininity, and were themselves soon published on the song market. The ready fragmentation of works like *Cin-Ci-La* into marketable song foiled elitist frameworks for understanding operetta, poised precariously between art and entertainment, and neatly illustrates the plural (and foreign) influences shaping "Italian" operetta at this time. Contemporary anxieties around the genre's viability, I suggest, are ultimately emblematic of a wider shift in cultural authority towards a growing mass public.

DITLEV RINDOM (King's College London)

Silver Screen Operetta: The Film Industry on the Operetta Stage

Right from the birth of the cinematic medium, Italian operetta enjoyed a close relationship with the emerging film industry. While film adaptations during the early years of the Italian film business concentrated on prestige operatic classics (such as Verdi's *Aida*), by the 1910s efforts were made to film some of the most successful operettistic works, anticipating the full-length operetta films that emerged after 1930 (Thomas, 2016). Yet the Italian stage also incorporated cinematic spectacle within individual theatre works, reflecting a shared historical relationship with sensory excess and display even as the "cinema of attractions" gave way to cinema focused on narrative continuity (Gunning, 1987). Adaptations of Viennese works such as *La signorina del cinematografo* (1915; based on Carl Weinberger) were complemented by original operettas including Leoncavallo's *Pierrot au cinema* (1916), a mixture of pantomime and song that turned a filmmaking scene into the operetta's theatrical heart. And by the late 1920s, the increasing dominance of the Hollywood film industry, combined with the rise of contemporary dance forms and plots in Italian operetta, made cinema-themed operettas especially popular—a development hastened by the transition to sound cinema, which offered new opportunities for musical films while challenging the supremacy of live performance (Baranello, 2020).

This paper explores these developments by focusing on Carlo Lombardo and Virgilio Ranzato's *La duchessa di Hollywood* (1930). Premiered at Milan's Teatro dal Verme, the operetta indulged contemporary fascination via a plot focused on the (fictional) Duchesse de Chantilly's adventures at a Hollywood film studio. What is more, the operetta features Greta Garbo and John Gilbert as central characters, actors known for their romantic entanglement and both key to the transition to sound (a development that occurred gradually in Italy from 1930 onwards). While the operetta's up-to-date plot drew on traditions of musical revue, numbers such as "Il mio cuore è un film sonoro" also flirt with media convergence: cinema's transition to sound and the operetta's Hollywood setting bringing the artforms ever closer. Ultimately, I suggest, sound film would fundamentally recast operetta itself, as both a fading artform and one innately primed for medial reinvention.