

Hesselager, Jens & Jeanneret, Christine & Østenlund, Nicolai (University of Copenhagen, DK)

Commentator: Lars Berglund (University of Uppsala)

Panel 1a / Wednesday June 1, 4:30–6:30 pm

Music Migration in Scandinavia – Between Cosmopolitanism and Transnationalism (1750–1850)

The cultural transfer of Italian opera to Scandinavia is a largely ignored field until now. The rare studies that exist tend to focus on the narrow framework of national music historiographies. This panel wishes to address the issues of transfer studies and shared history in a transnational perspective. Copenhagen functions as a gateway from Germany and southern Europe to the rest of Scandinavia due to its geographical and cultural position. The northern migration of Italian is a phenomenon that stands in a reciprocal relation with the Grand Tour. Italy represented a geographical, mental and imagined space, embodying the idea of a classical and cosmopolitan treasury of inspiration in matters of arts and music. The study of opera in migration is first and foremost the history of the adaptation of a foreign genre to a new space and a new cultural context. Italian opera was associated with the aristocratic culture and the courts of Copenhagen and Stockholm. The city and the theater are spaces where cosmopolitan, national and socio-cultural interests are staged. The relationships and the conflicts between an aristocratic Italianate identity and a national bourgeois culture evolve and change during the 18th and 19th centuries. The theater represents a privileged space where these relationships can be investigated.

Giuseppe Siboni and Danish Ways with Italian Opera (Copenhagen 1820)

Jens Hesselager, University of Copenhagen

By the time the Italian *primo tenore*, Giuseppe Siboni arrived in Copenhagen in 1819, aged 39, he had a rather illustrious European career behind him, performing with many of the foremost singers and composers of his age: He'd been engaged at the Tyl-theatre in Prague as a young man, 1800–1805, he'd been at La Scala, Milan (1805–6), then at King's Theatre, London 1806–9, including a tour to Ireland in 1808. After a spell in Italy, he joined the Italian company at the *Kärntnerthor Theatre* in Vienna, 1810–14, then traveling in Italy again for two years, during which period he also became connected to the political movement, *I Carbonari*. So, when he decided to go north in 1817, motivations were, it seems, not purely professional: He was on the run. An engagement to establish an Italian Opera company in St Petersburg came to nothing, so via Stockholm, he continued to Copenhagen in 1819, gave a concert there, and was soon hired as singing master at the Royal Danish Theatre – a position he held until his death in 1839.

This paper will focus on his first season in Copenhagen, particularly the Danish stagings of Rossini's *Tancredi* and Paër's *Sargino*. The paper will seek to address the question of how, and also to what extent, Siboni's extensive professional experience with Italian

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opera came to inform these Danish performances. At the same time it will be concerned with the local practices, and audience reactions that Siboni encountered in Copenhagen.

Migration and Misunderstanding: Italian Opera in 18th-Century Copenhagen

Christine Jeanneret, University of Copenhagen

Italian opera in the 18th century represents the cosmopolitan genre *par excellence*. Its roots in the national Italian culture have become the embodiment of ideals of a common artistic language throughout Europe, strongly linked to court society, urban spaces and cosmopolitan values. However, cultural transfer of opera did not always go smoothly. Giuseppe Sarti joined Mingotti's troupe in 1753 first as *kapelmester* and then as music director. In 1762 he penned a letter to the board of directors of the Royal Theater in Copenhagen to explain what he needed in order to perform Italian opera: from the translation of the libretto to the music rehearsals, actors, extras, scenery, machines and especially costumes. This exceptional document, recently discovered in the National Archives of Copenhagen, brings to light several issues linked to cultural transfer, migration and the misunderstanding between a Danish cultural identity and a cosmopolitan, transnational genre. Theater in Copenhagen represents an interesting place to study the relationships between a court society oriented towards a European culture (mostly focused on France and Germany with a recent interest for Italy) and a national bourgeois culture. From the letter, we deduce that the 1761 opera season was a complete disaster due to incomprehension, incompetence and lack of technical skills. The most detailed segments are devoted to costumes and scenery. Visual cues were crucial since the operas were performed in Italian for a Danish audience. Even if each opera was translated in Danish and published in a bilingual libretto, the audience could not pick up the nuances of the text or the way that music related to it. Therefore costumes and accessories were crucial in transmitting immediate information on the characters, their feelings, their social status and represent a visual marker for the audience.

Royal Amusements and Public Spectacles: Italian Opera and Urbanization in 18th-century Copenhagen

Nicolai Østenlund, University of Copenhagen

This paper explores issues of cultural transfer, migration and the formation of a national identity in confrontation with a cosmopolitan culture, by focusing on archival study. Italian opera has been performed within the city walls of Copenhagen since the beginning of the 18th century. Opera was, however, not performed regularly every year until Pietro Mingotti's troupe entered the city in 1747. He brought with him the composer and *kapelmester* Paolo Scalabrini who from 1753 was replaced by Giuseppe Sarti as a composer of *opera seria*. The two composers, the singers of the opera troupes and the

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continually expanding orchestra performed Italian opera from 1749 at the newly built Royal Theatre, one of the first national theatres in Europe, thus having a deep impact in the social and aesthetic formations of the Copenhagen audience.

Documents in the National Archives show that the Italian opera company was much favoured by the court and received heavy funding, privileges and attention both officially and through personal loans from the monarch in order to keep them in Copenhagen despite its costs and its declining popularity in the public. By analysing documents such as letters, contracts and accounts, we see how the Copenhagen court like other courts in Europe uses the Italian opera as a means to demonstrate power and wealth, and to show the court's position within a national as well as a European context. The Copenhagen opera life was not an isolated, insular affair but was continuously confronted with artists within the field of opera through travels, import of material like librettos and scores and immigration of musicians and singers.

Lars Berglund is Professor of Musicology at Uppsala University, Head of the Department of Musicology, and chair of the Swedish Society for Musicology. His research is mainly focused on the early modern period, with particular interests in cultural history, music analysis and aesthetics. His doctoral dissertation was a study of the vocal music by Christian Geist, a singer and composer from Mecklenburg active at the Swedish court in the 1670s. After that, he has specialized in sacred vocal music in the Jesuit circles in Rome, and the reception of Roman music in Northern Europe. He has edited a collection of motets by Bonifacio Graziani for A-R Editions (2011) and published a number of articles on related topics. A particular interest of his is cultural transfer and cultural exchange, and he is project leader of the network “Musical-Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe”, a collaboration between Uppsala, Royal Holloway, London and Bach-Archiv, University of Leipzig. He is also a member of the TRADIMUS study group at the Fondazione Ugo e Olga Levi (Venice), tracking the dissemination and reception of Italian music in Europe.

Jens Hesselager is Associate Professor of Musicology at the University of Copenhagen. He received his Ph.D. in 2002. Publications and current research interests concern, primarily, opera, melodrama and incidental music in the nineteenth century, opera culture in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Copenhagen, and music in processes of cultural transfer.

Christine Jeanneret is assistant professor in musicology at the University of Copenhagen. She focuses her research on the history, philology and performance practice of Italian music of the Renaissance and Baroque. She published one book on the manuscript sources of Frescobaldi's music, *L'Œuvre en filigrane* (Olschki, 2009), she co-

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edited three volumes of Frescobaldi's Complete Works for Suvini-Zerboni, and has published articles on keyboard music, the Roman cantata, the late madrigal, opera and gender studies. She is particularly interested in the performance and staging of early music, the body on stage, as well as the cultural transmission of repertoires. She is currently a Fellow at the Italian Academy of Columbia University in New York (2015–2016) working on singers, body and the expression of passions in early Florentine opera.

Nicolai Østenlund is a PhD-student in musicology at the University of Copenhagen, working on *Giuseppe Sarti and the Italian Opera in Copenhagen in 1748–75*. He focuses his interests and research on Danish music drama in a European context and is especially interested in music migrations in a historical perspective, investigating the roles of travelling musicians, singers and composers in 18th century Europe.