

Music History and Cosmopolitanism / abstract & bio
Belina-Johnson, Anastasia (Royal College of Music, UK)

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German Operetta in Warsaw: Cultural Transfer and Exchange

This paper investigates cultural transfer and exchange in the world of operetta in Poland from 1906 until 1939, a period in which Warsaw saw an explosion in the number of productions of Viennese and German operettas. In his *Encyclopedia of the Musical Theatre* (1994), Kurt Gänzl often refers to Budapest as the first city to stage foreign-language productions outside of Germany, mentioning no Polish cities. However, in many cases it was Warsaw and not Budapest that presented first foreign-language productions: such was the case with Franz Lehár's *Die lustige Witwe* (Vienna 1905, Warsaw 1906) and *Zigeunerliebe* (Vienna 1910, Warsaw 1910), Oscar Straus's *Ein Walzertraum* (Vienna 1907, Warsaw 1907), and Emmerich Kálmán's *Gräfin Mariza* (Vienna 1924, Warsaw 1924), among others. There was a huge market for the cosmopolitan element in operetta, and the urban Viennese waltz, the valse Boston (or English waltz), the tango, and dances to syncopated rhythms, such as the cake walk, the two-step and the foxtrot, were quickly adopted and made popular on the Polish stages. In this paper, I will show how readily and skilfully Polish operetta directors and theatres adapted German-language operetta to cater for the cosmopolitan tastes of their Polish audiences. I will present rare archival materials related to the first Polish performances of *Die lustige Witwe* and Jean Gilbert's *Die keusche Susanne* (Magdeburg 1910, Warsaw 1911), and discuss the changes and adaptations made in the music and the text.

Anastasia Belina-Johnson is Assistant Head of Programmes at the Royal College of Music, and a Senior Research Fellow at the School of Music, University of Leeds, where she is working with Professor Derek Scott on ERC-funded project *German Operetta in London and New York in 1907–37: Cultural Transfer and Transformation*. She is author and editor of *A Musician Divided: André Tchaikowsky in His Own Words* (2013), *Die tägliche Mühe ein Mensch zu sein* (2013), and *Wagner in Russia, Poland and the Czech Lands: Musical, Literary, and Cultural Perspectives* (2013, co-edited edition). She has appeared in a documentary about André Tchaikowsky *Rebel of the Keys*, and several radio programmes on BBC Radio 3. Her current research examines performances and reception of Silver Age operetta in Poland.