

PARISIANA

ARLETTE
DORGÈRE



GENDER, SEXUALITY AND EROTICISM ON THE LYRIC STAGE

International Virtual Conference

28-30 October 2022

CENTRO STUDI
OPERA OMNIA
Luigi Boccherini

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PALAZZETTO
BRU ZANE
CENTRE
DE MUSIQUE
ROMANTIQUE
FRANÇAISE

PRINCESSE DES FLIRTS

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INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

**GENDER, SEXUALITY AND EROTICISM
ON THE LYRIC STAGE**

Organized by

Centro Studi Opera Omnia Luigi Boccherini

Palazzetto Bru Zane – Centre de musique romantique française

Italian Institute for Applied Musicology

Virtual conference

28-30 October 2022

Programme Committee:

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Keynote Speaker

- MARK EVERIST (University of Southampton)
- ANNEGRET FAUSER (University of North Carolina)

FRIDAY 28 OCTOBER

14.45-15.00 **Opening**

- FULVIA MORABITO (Centro Studi Opera Omnia Luigi Boccherini)
- ÉTIENNE JARDIN (Palazzetto Bru Zane – Centre de musique romantique française, Venice)

15.00-16.00 **Keynote Speaker:**

- MARK EVERIST (University of Southampton), *'Opera' off the Stage: Gender and Genre in «opéra de salon»*



16.30-18.30 **Eroticism and Sexuality in 19th- and 20th-Century Operetta**

(Chair: **Mark Everist**, University of Southampton)

- PETER MONDELLI (University of North Texas), *Bordenave's Brothel, or, What Use is Émile Zola to the Operetta Historian?*
- SANDRINE DIVANAC'H (Sorbonne Université), *« Bonheur enivrant, plaisir bien doux » : Oh, M. Hervé !*
- CARL TERTIO DRUML (Universität Wien / MDW), *Dance Craze and Eroticism: Operetta as a Carrier of Zeitgeist*
- EVI NIKITA (University of Crete), *La Femme au sein de l'opérette grecque de l'entre-deux-guerres : genre, identité et sexualité à travers les libretti des œuvres de l'époque*

SATURDAY 29 OCTOBER

10.00-11.00 **Career Paths for Singers on the Lyric Stage: Male and Female**

(Chair: **Roberto Illiano**, Centro Studi Opera Omnia Luigi Boccherini)

- NICOLA BADOLATO (Università di Bologna), *Eroi effeminati e amanti guerriere nella librettistica veneziana tra Sei e Settecento tra «cross-casting» e specializzazione dei ruoli «en travesti»*

- RUHAMA SANTORSA (Università di Firenze), *Il corpo femminile nel «genere non genere» della farsa (Venezia, XVIII secolo)*

11.30-12.30

- LUIS ANTONIO GONZÁLEZ MARÍN (DCH-Musicología, IMF, CSIC), *Women in Men's Costume: Why Hero Roles Were Played by Female Singers in Hispanic Baroque Lyric Theatre*
- LUCÍA MAGÁN ABOLLO (Universidad de Salamanca), *Catalina Pacheco: un'attrice-cantante vestita da uomo nei teatri madrileni nella metà del Settecento*



15.00-16.00 **Keynote Speaker:**

- ANNEGRET FAUSER (University of North Carolina), *Gender, Age, and Sexuality: Performing the Moral on the Musical Stage*



16.30-18.30 **Criticism and Reception**

(Chair: **Annegret Fauser**, University of North Carolina)

- JENNIFER WALKER (West Virginia University), *'Feminine' Charm, 'Masculine' Republic: Jules Massenet and the Paradox of Gendered Reception*
- MARTIN BARRÉ (Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris), *« Ah ! Je n'ose pas ». Les chanteuses et la peur de la scène sous la Monarchie de Juillet*
- JONATHAN MALLADA ÁLVAREZ (Universidad de Oviedo), *Sexualité et érotisme dans le théâtre lyrique espagnol : Une étude de la sensualité scénique à travers l'analyse de la réception critique des premières représentations au théâtre Apolo de Madrid (1900-1910)*
- AGATA KOCHANOWSKA (University of Zielona Góra, Poland), *Richard Wagners «Tannhäuser» by Tobias Kratzer: The Destroying Power of Desire*

SUNDAY 30 OCTOBER

11.00-12.30 **Mozart and Rossini: Sexuality, Gender and Vocality**

(Chair: **Mark Everist**, University of Southampton)

- ORSOLYA GYÁRFÁS (Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest), «*Too Soft and Tender*»: *The Construction and Reception of Sesto in Mozart's «La clemenza di Tito»*
- CARLA GALLARDO (Utrecht University), «*Il barbiere di Siviglia*» (1816): *Characterisation and Sexualisation of Rosina*
- MARIA BIRBILI (Humboldt Universität Berlin/Universität des Saarlandes), *Cross-dressing «en travesti»: Gender Ambiguity, Sexuality, and Vocality in 18th- and 19th-Century Opera: From Mozart to Rossini*



15.00-16.30 **Eroticism, Gender and Sexuality in 19th-Century Popular Theatre**

(Chair: **Étienne Jardin**, Palazzetto Bru Zane)

- SARAH GUTSCHE-MILLER (University of Toronto), *Imagined Eroticism: The Art of Suggestion in Parisian Music-Hall Ballet*
- SONJA JÜSCHKE (Independent Scholar), *Taking Centre Stage: 'Chorus Girls' in Late Victorian Popular Musical Theatre*
- FILIPE GASPAR (CESEM / NOVA FCSH), «*The French Mermaids Were Loudly Applauded...*»: *Feminine Subjects and Male Desire in Lisbon's Café-Concert (1857-1876)*

17.00-18.30 **Eroticism, Gender and Sexuality in 20th-Century Opera**

(Chair: **Fulvia Morabito**, Centro Studi Opera Omnia Luigi Boccherini)

- EWELINA CZARNOWSKA (Pilecki Institute, Warsaw), *Eroticism and Spirituality in Karol Szymanowski's «Król Roger»*
- ONDREJ GIMA (Independent Scholar, London), «*The Little of Divine but Tons of the Orgasmic*»: «*The Fiery Angel*» – *Serge Prokofiev*
- ELENA LUPORINI (Università La Sapienza di Roma), *Non aprire quella porta. Prospettive di genere nel «Castello di Barbablù» di Béla Bartók*

Keynote Speakers

- **MARK EVERIST (University of Southampton), ‘Opera’ off the Stage: Gender and Genre in «opéra de salon»**

The repertories and theatrical cultures encompassed by ‘opera studies’ are closely aligned with the narrow repertory that constitutes ‘mainstream opera’ in the first quarter of the twenty-first century, itself a situation that original librettists and composers would not have remotely recognised. Moving away from the serial re-readings of a smaller and smaller canon opens up a range of engagements between theatre and music, well known to the past and largely ignored by the present. *Opéra de salon* constitutes just such an engagement which, in this case, reveals much about the issues of gendered power in music and drama.

Usually taking the form of an overture and seven to nine compositions with spoken dialogue, *opéras de salon* undertook important cultural work in reorientating the balance of gendered power in theatrical music of nineteenth-century Europe. With their origins in the early 1850s in Paris, *opéras de salon* became available as a generic tool for the display of individual power. Performances were mounted by groups ranging from members of the imperial family, bankers, and other industrialists during the *Second Empire* to the more modest lettered class, members of the medical profession, and musicians. The power displayed in the cultivation of *opéra de salon* paralleled the power over the politics of genre exercised by the state. Music and theatre became an asset that could be paraded in one’s own home, and could sit alongside such other trappings of domestic power as physical opulence, collections of art, dress and deportment.

Opéra de salon played into questions of gender in two important ways and for the benefit of two different female constituencies. The genre became a *locus* of activity in which women could act as entrepreneurs, audiences, librettists and composers in an environment in which commercial imperatives and the powers of the state remained distant. But the genre also circulated in women’s journals — the *Journal des demoiselles* and the *Magasin des demoiselles* — which brought the genre less into alignment with the *salon* and more with the *parloir*, and with young unmarried women for whom *opéra de salon* was an important feature on their intellectual landscape.

- **ANNEGRET FAUSER (University of North Carolina), Gender, Age, and Sexuality: Performing the Moral on the Musical Stage**

When thinking about ‘Gender, Sexuality and Eroticism on the Lyric Stage’ — the topic of this conference — one issue that raises its head is that of normativity and transgression. Works such as Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s *Così fan tutte* (1790), Richard Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde* (1865), Jules Massenet’s *Esclarmonde* (1889) and *Thaïs* (1894), and Richard Strauss’s *Salome* (1905) and *Der Rosenkavalier* (1911) are musically and dramatically transgressive, yet offer also lessons about the role of musical theatre as a moral institution.

This keynote is about exploring questions that relate to the interconnection of gender, age, and sexuality as they are framed in Western opera of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It is deliberately interpretive in its gesture. I am interested in exploring the ways in which even the most daringly erotic and sexual aspects in mainstream opera tend to reinforce, in the end, heteronormative, patriarchal values: a form of entertainment that allows its audience both to revel in the *inouï* and, at the same time, to reaffirm bourgeois ideological apparatus. Besides gender, my focus will also include the way in which the protagonists' age is framed in these works and address the question of what is — and is not — appropriate in terms of staged sexuality.

Contributors

Eroticism and Sexuality in 19th- and 20th-Century Operetta

• PETER MONDELLI (University of North Texas), *Bordenave's Brothel, or, What Use is Émile Zola to the Operetta Historian?*

The presence of courtesans in Second Empire operetta theatres presents a historiographic conundrum. We know that courtesans not only attended, but also performed. Yet the discourse surrounding operetta downplayed their contributions to the image and success of the genre more broadly. It is no surprise that the press emphasized instead both the frivolity and the political resonance of this repertory; the demimonde remained an open secret, the subject of allusions and quiet conversations, not public discussions.

To work around this archival silence, my paper will focus on Émile Zola's *Nana* (1880): a novel that considers at length how a fictional courtesan came to dominate the imaginations of many powerful Parisian men by taking the operetta stage. My interest in this text lies in considering critically whether we can take Zola at his word and treat him like an anthropologist. Do the attitudes espoused by his characters towards courtesans and the sexualization of operetta reflect a reality that was not discussed publicly?

I contend that Zola's perspective on operetta ought to be taken more seriously, with some caveats. *Nana* is one the 'naturalist' novels for which Zola conducted research by attending performances and interviewing key figures. While most scholars now view Zola's supposed objectivity as more of a ruse, we might nevertheless attempt to read through his biases to discover a fictionalized thick description not just of the Théâtre des Variétés, but also of the private conversations and activities that surrounded performances. Zola repeatedly frames operetta as structured around the male gaze and male desire: his fictional theatre director Bordenave insists that he is running a brothel. Every element — music, politics, satire — becomes a way of lending legitimacy to a peep show. While Zola overstates his case to play the moralizer, such a perspective might refocus our perceptions on the central role of the courtesan within the operetta world.

• **SANDRINE DIVANAC'H (Sorbonne Université), « Bonheur enivrant, plaisir bien doux » : Oh, M. Hervé !**

Cette communication montrera comment Hervé (1825-1892) — compositeur français, créateur du genre de l'opérette — procède pour émoustiller et amuser le public.

Dans ses œuvres vocales, il redouble d'inventivité pour que chaque spectateur puisse percevoir les allusions sexuelles pour en rire et/ou s'en délecter : les rythmes et les vocalises musicales, les double sens et sous-entendus du texte, les attentes créées par les rimes et jusqu'aux titres des pièces. Les différents lieux sont le cadre d'événements, de travestissements et autres jeux des artistes, tous au service de l'érotisme.

Hervé aborde l'amour et la sexualité sous de nombreuses facettes : amour naissant, fantasme, acte sexuel, jouissance, multiplication des partenaires, représentation des organes génitaux masculins et féminins. Nous évoquerons les lieux du sexe, variés, les moments, divers, et les désagréments de l'amour, comme les maladies vénériennes.

Nous mesurerons les écarts importants entre les relations amoureuses présentées dans les œuvres légères et les codes sociaux rigides de l'époque. Si Hervé et ses librettistes ne dépassent pas les limites imposées par la censure, ils les contournent et les détournent avec délices.

La comparaison avec d'autres opérettes permettra de mettre au jour des caractéristiques récurrentes ou non chez Hervé dans la représentation de ces thématiques charnelles.

Il existe un décalage de perception des allusions sexuelles entre le XIX^e siècle et aujourd'hui : le public actuel décèle souvent le caractère coquin de cet érotisme désormais dénué de toute subversion ou provocation comme à l'époque Romantique. Néanmoins, certaines références sexuelles de ces œuvres scéniques du XIX^e siècle, trop allusives ou datées, font perdre cette connivence si essentielle entre l'auteur et les spectateurs.

• **CARL TERTIO DRUML (Universität Wien / MDW), Dance Craze and Eroticism: Operetta as a Carrier of Zeitgeist**

Topic of the paper is the connection between modern genres of popular music and eroticism in operetta around the First World War with Emmerich Kalmán's *Csárdásfürstin* (1915) and Eugen d'Albert's *Die Schwarze Orchidee* (1928) as examples. While it is a truism that all operetta plays with popular genres, the emergence of forms such as *Schlager*, *Variété* and later Jazz provided the pieces around the antebellum period with a new approach to musical dramaturgy. The former literally revolves around the tension between traditionalism and *Variété*, while the later follows a more uniform approach and uses a jazz vernacular as its main musical language (SMITH 2017, 2022).

Kalmán's *Csárdásfürstin* can be seen as a paradigmatic example of dialectics between music and eroticism. Its male lead is a Viennese aristocrat who started a relationship with the *Variété* star Sylvia Varescu, and the musical language doubles this relationship: his background is dominated by older dance forms of operetta, i.e. Waltz, while the world of the *Variété* is dominated by new popular genres.

If the *Csárdásfürstin* is at the beginning of the development of new popular music seeping into the structure of operetta, Eugen d'Albert's *Die schwarze Orchidee* (1928) can be seen at the opposite end of the spectrum. Popular dance music — and especially forms that were collectively considered Jazz — started to signify a way of life (KÖBNER 1921), and d'Albert abuses this zeitgeist to tell a story of love and crime set in gangland New York. Early commentators, like Baresel (1925), already noted a connection between Jazz and physical expressions of love.

The influence of romantic — Wagnerian — harmony on operetta's musical language on eroticism has been studied thoroughly (SCHMIDL 2009) yet in the present paper I would like to argue, that the influence of popular music should not be understated.

• **EVI NIKITA (University of Crete), La Femme au sein de l'opérette grecque de l'entre-deux-guerres : genre, identité et sexualité à travers les libretti des œuvres de l'époque**

Pendant les années 1920, le mouvement féministe grec vise à revaloriser son genre : l'accès à l'enseignement supérieur, le travail rémunéré, le droit à voter et l'égalité politique constituent ses revendications significatives. Les féministes aspirent à la reconnaissance progressive et à l'action comparable de faire face aux hommes. Limitée « dans la maison » et directement associée à son rôle de mère, la femme est appelée à se développer au niveau social en vue de son indépendance.

L'impact de ce changement social se reflète dans l'opérette grecque des années 1920, dans laquelle les femmes jouent un rôle primordial. Les créateurs présentent différentes versions de l'identité féminine dans leurs œuvres, établissant progressivement le modèle d'une « Nouvelle Femme » qui s'affronte à la perception prédominante dans une société patriarcale.

La fille pauvre du quartier populaire mais aussi la fille bourgeoise riche brisent les chaînes sociales et le profil de la « bonne fille », afin de vivre l'amour interdit et de libérer leur sexualité opprimée, séduites par le désir de rencontrer un « nouveau monde » inconvenant chez elles jusqu' à ce moment-là. Les femmes du théâtre, les femmes du cabaret ainsi que les prostituées s'ajoutent aux modèles féminins habituels de l'opérette : elles indiquent le modèle d'une femme plus libérée, indépendante et émancipée.

Notre but est de présenter ces différentes versions de l'identité féminine que l'on retrouve dans les libretti. Nous allons discuter de la façon dont ces types féminins sont encadrés au niveau musical et quel est le lien de nouvelles danses que l'opérette introduit à son public par rapport à ces femmes-là. De plus, nous allons examiner l'évolution des rapports de genre et l'empreinte de la domination masculine dans la société patriarcale. Enfin, nous définirons les éléments novateurs que l'opérette introduit dans le contexte théâtral de l'époque dans le pays.

Career Paths for Singers on the Lyric Stage: Male and Female

• **NICOLA BADOLATO (Università di Bologna), Eroi effeminati e amanti guerriere nella librettistica veneziana tra Sei e Settecento tra «cross-casting» e specializzazione dei ruoli «en travesti»**

La consuetudine di ricorrere a interpreti maschili per ruoli vocali femminili è un fenomeno che prende avvio già nel dramma per musica seicentesco, si consolida e perdura fino a Settecento inoltrato. Nel teatro d'opera veneziano i ruoli femminili erano regolarmente assegnati a cantanti donne, giacché i protagonisti maschili erano impersonati da cantanti castrati e non vivevano proibizioni.

La storia dell'opera del primo Settecento è ricca di donne che s'esibiscono in partia virili sia muliebri, e ciò in virtù di peculiarità vocali e attoriali specifiche. Tra gli esempi illustri, la bolognese Diamante Scarabelli 'la Diamantina' (1675-1754) — magnificata per la propria bravura in vesti maschili nella silloge poetica *La miniera del Diamante* (1697) —, o la fiorentina Vittoria Tesi (1701- 1775), le cui esperienze sono sintomo d'una ben nota tendenza verso la specializzazione canora in ruoli *en travesti*.

Antecedenti e prodromi di questo fenomeno si rintracciano già in alcuni melodrammi dati a Venezia e Bologna negli anni '80 del Seicento, accumulati da specifiche caratteristiche: fra tutte, la tendenza a costruire trame incentrate sul topos dell'assunzione d'un'identità simulata attraverso il travestimento con cambio di genere. Un espediente che consente al drammaturgo di annodare quasi all'infinito le fila del plot e di giocare con le tensioni provocate dall'ambivalenza erotica. Il groviglio degli equivoci acuisce la superiorità informativa dello spettatore, che può godere dei fraintendimenti proliferanti in scena, intuendo che saranno presto sciolti.

L'intervento prende in esame alcuni casi di studio che documentano, già nel secondo Seicento, le fasi aurorali d'un fenomeno assai più diffuso nel Settecento. Si considererà la carriera del contralto Laura Spada, la prima interprete documentata in un ruolo maschile nella Venezia di fine XVII secolo: interpretò infatti uno dei due personaggi eponimi nella *Pace fra Tolomeo e Seleuco* di Adriano Morselli e Carlo Francesco Pollarolo al Teatro S. Giovanni Grisostomo (1691); s'era poi già esibita nei panni di eroine guerriere o donne in abito virile: Bradamante in *Carlo il Grande* di Morselli e Domenico Gabrielli (1688); Alvida nell'*Amazzone corsara* di Giulio Cesare Corradi e Carlo Pallavicino (1696); e infine Arsinda nel *Figlio delle selve* di Carlo Sigismondo Capece e Cosimo Bani a Modena (1701). Si considereranno anche le figure di Anna Maria Menarini, interprete del paggio Gilbo nell'*Atide* di Tommaso Stanzani e Giuseppe Felice Tosi al Teatro Formagliari di Bologna (1679); e Francesca Cottini, che fu Valentiniano nel *Talamo preservato dalla fedeltà di Eudossa* di Morselli e Marc'Antonio Ziani a Reggio nell'Emilia (1696).

• **RUHAMA SANTORSA (Università di Firenze), Il corpo femminile nel «genere non genere» della farsa (Venezia, XVIII secolo)**

Nel genere teatrale della farsa, in particolare nel secondo Settecento veneziano, la condizione femminile assume un ruolo centrale. Durante quello che è stato definito il «secolo delle donne» si sviluppa una nuova sensibilità che permette loro di avere maggior

libertà in campo relazionale ed espressivo, uscire dallo spazio privato domestico, essere coinvolte in aspetti mondani e godere di una nuova capacità d'azione e libertà — anche in campo sessuale — impensabile in precedenza.

In questo contesto, le tematiche quotidiane della farsa, i personaggi attuali e le ambientazioni vicine a un pubblico popolare favoriscono una particolare identificazione dello spettatore con quanto accade sulla scena. Proprio nel «genere non genere» della farsa la centralità drammatica e musicale della primadonna comporta un'inevitabile focalizzazione sulla protagonista che riceve una più attenta delineazione psicologica.

Nei soggetti comici — ma soprattutto in quelli sentimentali — troviamo donne segretamente sposate contro il volere della famiglia, ragazze madri, ex prostitute, donne decise a voler scegliere con chi trascorrere il resto della vita e altre figure.

Interessanti i casi di alcune donne presenti nelle farse, in particolare per quanto riguarda il rapporto con il proprio corpo e la libertà di prendere decisioni in merito. Se da un lato c'è Annetta che fa della sua castità una virtù (*Annetta, ossia la virtù trionfa*), dall'altro c'è Cecchina che di mestiere fa la prostituta (*Cecchina suonatrice di ghironda*) o, ancora, Isabella che viene stuprata (*Isabella, ossia il più meritato compenso*); non da ultimo, troviamo donne che vogliono decidere con chi dormire.

Dopo una breve presentazione degli elementi emersi nel corso dell'indagine sulle farse veneziane, e dopo aver messo in luce l'importanza del personaggio femminile, il contributo si concentrerà su alcuni libretti di farse in cui si delinea in maniera più incisiva il rapporto tra i personaggi femminili con il proprio corpo, con particolare attenzione al contesto storico veneziano dell'epoca e al mondo popolare.

• **LUIS ANTONIO GONZÁLEZ MARÍN (DCH-Musicología, IMF, CSIC),**
Women in Men's Costume: Why Hero Roles Were Played by Female Singers in Hispanic Baroque Lyric Theatre

One of the most notable traditions of Hispanic baroque musical theatre is that ordinarily all sung roles, male and female, were played by female singers. Such a custom, which seems to date back to the early sung dramas of Calderón, has musical implications in terms of the compositional treatment of the vocal parts. But it also responds to a series of criteria and moral prejudices and shows remarkable elements of eroticism, to which sometimes the dramatic texts themselves allude in a self-referential way. This paper analyzes these issues on the basis of some works by Calderón, Zamora, Cañizares and González Martínez, set to music by Hidalgo, Durón, Literes and Nebra.

• **LUCÍA MAGÁN ABOLLO (Universidad de Salamanca), Catalina Pacheco:**
un'attrice-cantante vestita da uomo nei teatri madrileni nella metà del Settecento

Catalina Miguel Pacheco, nota semplicemente come 'La Catuja', fu definita nel *Memorial literario, instructivo y curioso de la Corte de Madrid* (1787) come una delle «più brillanti cantanti di quel tempo [...], di temperamento serio e particolare nel suo modo di manifestare i suoi sentimenti». La carriera artistica di questa cantante comincia in età molto giovane, quando rappresenta nel 1739, a dodici anni, la *comedia de magia Duendes*

son alcabuetes del drammaturgo madrileno Antonio de Zamora. Questo primo ruolo, dove si doveva travestire da uomo per dare vita al personaggio del Foletto, segnò senza dubbio tutto il percorso artistico dell'attrice.

Nel giro di trent'anni interpretò i ruoli maschili delle principali opere musicali rappresentate nella capitale spagnola, dando vita per esempio al giovane Colatino nella *zarzuela Donde hay violencia no hay culpa* (1744) di José de Nebra, oppure interpretando il ruolo del Mulattiere nella *tonadilla a dúo* di Luis de Misón *Una mesonera y un arriero* (1757). A causa della preferenza del pubblico spagnolo per le voci femminili, sia i personaggi maschili che i femminili venivano interpretati da attrici-cantanti. Il modo per risolvere questa corrispondenza di genere tra personaggio e artista si affrontava con l'impiego della tipologia teatrale della «mujer vestida de hombre», già usata nella drammaturgia di Lope de Vega e sviluppata per tutto il secolo successivo.

Oltre a servire come risorsa per risolvere questa preferenza per le voci acute, questa tipologia della «mujer vestida de hombre» aveva anche alcune connotazioni erotiche, dovute ai vestiti troppo stretti che le attrici dovevano indossare con l'obiettivo di assumere l'identità maschile. Tuttavia, questa acclamata tipologia teatrale richiamò all'epoca molte critiche e recensioni negative da parte di membri del clero e di moralisti, che consideravano queste pratiche sceniche come amorali.

Criticism and Reception

• **JENNIFER WALKER** (West Virginia University), **'Feminine' Charm, 'Masculine' Republic: Jules Massenet and the Paradox of Gendered Reception**

During the early days of the Third Republic, Jules Massenet built his career on his penchant for crafting memorable female characters through his signature blend of eroticism and religion: while Salomé, Esclarmonde, and Thaïs tempted otherwise upstanding men on the operatic stage, the public's gaze was titillated with sexualized portrayals of Mary Magdalene, Eve, and the Virgin Mary on the concert stage. Amidst an embattled Third Republic that was searching for redemption in the face of humiliating military defeat, power in cultural contexts was directly related to the masculinization of the nation and the morality of its citizens. Massenet's female characters, through their erotically-charged and thus 'immoral' behavior, were well-positioned to endanger the strength and health of the nation itself.

At the turn of the twentieth century, however, Massenet's operas *Grisélidis* and *Le Jongleur de Notre-Dame* reflected an abrupt turn in his portrayals of female characters. *Grisélidis*, a steadfast wife and a devout Catholic, embodied the epitome of bourgeois female behavior; in *Le Jongleur de Notre-Dame*, the Virgin Mary's appearance defied Massenet's reputation and represented Catholicism in its most traditional form.

Critics of Massenet's operas perennially argued that he pandered to the female public to court success and often gendered his music feminine in their reviews. Yet Massenet quickly became the Republic's musical darling. His operas were heralded as the savior of the French musical image, despite frequent indictments of his music as

overly 'female': one critic wrote that his works «captivate[d] the sensitive and nervous without conquering the healthy and strong». Such blatant gendering of composers and operas served not only as subjective markers of musical value, but also as pointed political and cultural referents. In this paper, I examine the complex interactions and the heretofore unexamined incongruities between Massenet's portrayals of female characters, the gendered reception of his music, and his position at the vanguard of the [masculinized] Republic's musical image. While scholars including Annegret Fauser and Clair Rowden have brilliantly examined the interrelation between eroticism, gender, and religion in Massenet's *œuvre*, little has been made of how a composer so closely connected with femininity in various forms could simultaneously be fashioned into the masculine Republic's musical figurehead. I argue that it was Massenet's transformative portrayal of his female characters — from dangerous seductresses to well-behaved Catholics — that set this process in motion. Massenet's engagement with femininity and religion in their idealized forms thereby positioned the nation's most feminized composer at the forefront of the [masculinized] nation's operatic glory.

• **MARTIN BARRÉ (Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris), « Ah ! Je n'ose pas ». Les chanteuses et la peur de la scène sous la Monarchie de Juillet**

Les performance practice studies ont permis de déplacer le regard du musicologue, alors porté uniquement sur le compositeur, vers les interprètes. Ce champ d'étude a permis de renouveler l'interprétation des musiques anciennes tout en restant focalisé sur les questions de notation. Ce n'est que récemment que les musicologues se sont intéressés à la dimension visuelle et corporelle de l'interprétation. Ces travaux portant sur les pratiques scéniques, sur le public ou sur le rapport des artistes à la scène ont permis de s'éloigner du texte pour mettre au jour des usages non notés.

La plupart des ouvrages autour des pratiques scéniques mettent néanmoins de côté la question des émotions éprouvées par les artistes sur scène. Les études historiques sur la peur de la scène, communément appelé le trac, sont quasiment inexistantes alors que, paradoxalement, les ouvrages de psychologie sur cette question prolifèrent depuis quelques années.

La monarchie de Juillet voit émerger de nombreuses revues musicales spécialisées et la nouvelle figure du critique littéraire devient une source inestimable pour notre objet de recherche. La question du genre est centrale lorsqu'on s'intéresse à la peur de la scène. Les chanteuses, en plus de devoir faire leurs preuves d'un point de vue vocal et scénique, doivent également, et surtout, correspondre aux critères physiques attendus par le public masculin.

Nous verrons que, loin d'être condamnée, la peur est souvent encouragée par la critique car elle permet de renforcer l'image d'un idéal féminin alors fortement ancré dans les imaginaires de l'époque. Cette communication permettra de replacer la peur de la scène, si commune aujourd'hui, dans une perspective historique. Nous interrogerons

la perception de cette émotion qui, dès lors qu'on l'analyse à travers le prisme du genre, oscille entre fantasme et condamnation.

• **JONATHAN MALLADA ÁLVAREZ (Universidad de Oviedo), *Sexualité et érotisme dans le théâtre lyrique espagnol : Une étude de la sensualité scénique à travers l'analyse de la réception critique des premières représentations au théâtre Apolo de Madrid (1900-1910)***

Au cours des dernières décennies du XIX^e siècle, le *género chico* pris le monopole de la scène théâtrale madrilène et se consolida en tant qu'un des premiers produits de consommation de masses du panorama espagnol. Pendant la décennie de 1890, la splendeur du *sainete* madrilène représenta le triomphe définitif du *género chico* et offre un vaste héritage d'importantes œuvres qui ont perduré jusqu'à nos jours.

Cependant, au tournant du siècle et lors de la nouvelle situation tant politique, économique que sociale, ce genre musical commence à se transformer et, par conséquent, modifiera aussi l'offre de loisirs de la société madrilène créant une scène théâtrale encore plus riche. Couplets, cinématographes et danseuses — et tout le reste de spectacles qu'engloba l'alors dénommé *género infimo* — intercalent leurs numéros avec des œuvres de petit format où le composant débauché et visuel devient de plus en plus important. Le théâtre Apolo de Madrid fut, à cette époque, témoin des innovations présentes lors de nombreuses sorties en salle et, par conséquent, au tout début du XX^e siècle, eut le privilège de pouvoir encore assister aux *sainetes costumbristas* madrilènes. En même temps, les magazines et opérettes pointaient déjà vers la nouvelle modernité qui finalement s'imposera.

L'objectif de cette étude est d'analyser la réception des premières représentations réalisées au théâtre Apolo de Madrid des œuvres les plus significatives de la période entre 1900 et 1910, en étudiant les arguments, les thèmes et les intrigues des œuvres sélectionnées, ainsi que les personnages et les éléments érotiques présents sur scène lors de ces représentations. La bibliographie existante et les sources hémérogaphiques de l'époque seront le moyen utilisé compte tenu de son importance pour constater l'influence de l'exotisme dans les représentations, mais aussi la présence de la sexualité et de l'érotisme dans le théâtre lyrique espagnol.

• **AGATA KOCHANOWSKA (University of Zielona Góra, Poland), *Richard Wagners «Tannhäuser» by Tobias Kratzer: The Destroying Power of Desire***

There can be many interpretations of Richard Wagner's opera *Tannhäuser*, and one of them would be that it is a story about the destructive power of desire. Generally speaking, the work tells of the eternal dilemma between earthly life and eternity, between faith and desire. Unfortunately, these two areas cannot be reconciled, hence the dilemma of the main character, Tannhäuser. His dilemma in the libretto reflects his inability to decide between the alluring, liberated Venus, symbolizing carnal love, and the pure, innocent, almost saintly Elisabeth — symbolizing courtly love. This discord can also be

noticed on a musical level. It can be traced in the course of the main musical themes, as well as the nuanced leitmotifs for which Wagner is famous. Of course, the way the piece can be interpreted depends not only on the musical and acting performance, but also on the director's vision. Here the realization by Tobias Kratzer of Bayreuth (2019) is particularly meaningful. In this production, the super sexy and provocative Venus is contrasted with the peaceful, modest Elisabeth. The director boldly deepens the work's problematic eroticism and sexuality by adding a scene that doesn't exist in the original work: the despairing Elisabeth, while waiting in vain for Tannhäuser, who had painfully betrayed her earlier, decides to sleep with Wolfram. A moment later the distraught Elisabeth slits her wrists. In the original work, Elisabeth remains innocent and pure and dies to atone for Tannhäuser's guilt — in Kratzer's play she takes her own life out of despair over her unfaithful lover and her own undignified act. In this sense, the destructive power of desire, sexuality and eroticism in *Tannhäuser* can be examined on three levels: first, in the text, by tracing how Wagner writes the roles for his characters and the interpersonal relationships he entangles them in. Secondly, on the level of music, by analyzing what musical means he uses to illustrate it, and thirdly, what Tobias Kratzer makes of it on stage, deepening the problem with new threads. My text would be an analysis of this three-stage issue, at the same time tracing the path from the original idea of the 19th-century composer to the vision of the 21st-century director, who deepens the problem of eroticism and desire with the experiences of our times.

Mozart and Rossini: Sexuality, Gender and Vocality

• **ORSOLYA GYÁRFÁS (Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest), «Too Soft and Tender»: The Construction and Reception of Sesto in Mozart's «La clemenza di Tito»**

«The weak, womanish character of Sesto»: Otto Jahn's criticism of the *primo uomo* role of Mozart's *La clemenza di Tito*, a major component in his negative view of the work, was a complaint that echoed through the highly unfavorable reception of *Tito* (the «romantic critical tradition», in John A. Rice's words). What Jahn deemed «weak and womanish» in 1856 was, however, a common archetype for the young male hero of the 18th-century Metastasian *opera seria*: this criticism of Sesto's character reflected a clear shift in the norms and portrayal of operatic masculinity and heterosexuality. Focusing on the role of Sesto, the presentation aims to examine two topics. In the first half, I want to analyse the constructions of gender and sexuality in Caterino Mazzola's libretto, discussing not only the portrayal of heterosexual love/desire, but also the strong homosocial/homoerotic bond between Sesto and Tito that is (as another Metastasian staple) central to the drama, ripe for queer readings, and for the most, curiously ignored by the 'romantic critical tradition'. In the second half, I want to focus on the *Tito* critiques of Otto Jahn and Alexander Ulibisev. Examining how the core tenets of the 18th-century *seria* male hero (the 'weak' character, the soprano rather than tenor voice) fall short of the 19th-century ideals of maleness and masculinity, I want to point out how the perceived

gender transgression/failing of Sesto's character is then framed as a breach of 'dramatic truth', contributing to the low value of the opera as a whole in these critics' eyes.

• **CARLA GALLARDO (Utrecht University), «Il barbiere di Siviglia» (1816): Characterisation and Sexualisation of Rosina**

Transpositions of roles happen quite often in the operatic world, for example: when castrato roles are sung by other voices, or when a role not only becomes famous but wanted by other voices. Since its premiere in 1816, Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia* has been prone to many changes: the main one being the role of Rosina (originally for contralto) transposed for soprano. This change has permitted many renditions of Rosina in which the ornaments and tessitura have arguably changed her characterisation.

Albeit the global generalisation of nineteenth century operatic heroines, through archetypal voice-to-character affiliations, Rossini's heroines are often mezzo-soprani and contralti — thus not conforming to this generality. Contrarily to typical nineteenth century operatic heroines, Rossini's heroines are vivacious, flirtatious and musically agile — rendering their parts technically demanding. Rossini emphasises on drama and personality rather than the persuasion of the vocal line seen as beautiful: therefore, it comes to no surprise that the role of Rosina was originally meant for contralto. However at the time, the public was used to a completely different portrayal: heroines were sung by soprani and portrayed as young and naïve (e.g. the title role Delibes' opera *Lakmé* (1883)).

My research seeks to answer these four questions: What are the criteria of characterisation within the lyric stage? How does the voice pertain to interpreting a character? What is the meaning behind transposing a character's voice? How does it change its interpretation? For this, I analyse diverse renditions of Rosina's character and look at how differently she is depicted from one rendition to another. Finally, I take a historiographical examination of criteria of characterisation in Rossini's time and societal impact on how the operatic voice is perceived in accordance to its role performed.

• **MARIA BIRBILI (Humboldt Universität Berlin/Universität des Saarlandes), Cross-dressing «en travesti»: Gender Ambiguity, Sexuality, and Vocality in 18th- and 19th-Century Opera: From Mozart to Rossini**

The gender-fluid page on the opera stage, a breeches role, had its most famous case in the repertory with teenager *voyeur* Cherubino in Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro* (Vienna, Burgtheater, 1786). His gender fluidity is transparent when he is taught how to walk and behave like a woman by Susanna and the Countess (aria 'Venite, inginocchiatevi'). In the Finale IV of the opera Cherubino cross-dresses again and hides among the young girls attending Figaro's wedding, ostensibly to evade detection by the Count, but in reality to be able to seduce women while he also manages to disturb the Countess, herself dressed as her maid Susanna.

Mozart's legacy of an ambiguous situation with a cross-dressing page was reutilized in Rossini's *opéra-comique* *Le Comte Ory* (Paris, Opéra-Comique, 1827), in the final trio 'À la faveur de cette nuit obscure'. The sex-obsessed Count Ory (a tenor) secretly enters

Countess Adèle's bedroom with amorous intentions, not realizing that the Countess' lover, the page Isolier (a mezzosoprano *en travesti*) is already in bed with Adèle. In an homage both to Mozart and to the Shakespearean tradition of cross-dressing in comedy (*As you like it*, *Twelfth Night*), Ory ends up making love to the page instead of the Countess before the situation is revealed, while the Countess is simultaneously intimate with the page Isolier.

The legacy of the amorous gender-fluid page resumed in the 19th century in Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots* (Paris Opéra, 1836), with the page Urbain (famously performed by star contralto Marietta Alboni) and (less successfully) with the page Oscar in Auber's *Gustave III, ou Le bal masqué* (Paris Opéra, 1833) and in Verdi's *Un ballo in maschera* (Rome, Teatro Apollo, 1859).

Rossini used the gender-fluid part of the cross-dressing mezzosoprano *en travesti* in his first opera buffa, *L'equivoco stravagante* (Bologna, Teatro del Corso, 1811), in a libretto by Gaetano Gasbarri that brutally makes fun of the castrati tradition. In a part created for star mezzosoprano Marietta Marcolini, the female protagonist is first mistaken for a castrato, then cross-dresses and leads the mens' chorus to battle in her final aria. A very similar comic situation, again with Marcolini cross-dressing as a military leader, was reused in Rossini's next comic opera, *La pietra del paragone* (Milan, Scala, 1812), launching not only Marcolini's career, but also Rossini's gorgeous new *fach* for the mezzosoprano.

Eroticism, Gender and Sexuality in 19th-Century Popular Theatre

• SARAH GUTSCHE-MILLER (University of Toronto), *Imagined Eroticism: The Art of Suggestion in Parisian Music-Hall Ballet*

Beginning in the 1870s, a popular form of ballet flourished in Paris's foremost music halls, first at the Folies-Bergère, and later at the Olympia and the Casino de Paris. Created by the era's leading authors of light theatre and comic opera for audiences of socialites and pleasure-seekers, music-hall ballets were intended to be escapist entertainment. Audiences expected laughter, dreams, and sex, and music halls obliged with love stories in picturesque and exotic locales performed by women in revealing costumes. In the 1890s, music halls raised the stakes, vying with each other for ways to draw ever larger audiences. All three came up with the same strategy: they presented more nudity. Not only did 1890s popular ballets continue to showcase female performers in risqué costumes, productions from these years also began to include at least one overtly erotic scene that put on display the nude female body.

In this paper I explore ballet nudity scenes that masqueraded as art. All nudity scenes were carefully devised to titillate while maintaining the illusion of bourgeois decorum. One of the primary methods of doing so was to allude to high art and popular media — from academic painting and sculpture to press illustrations and commercial reproductions of salon nudes—as well as to society gossip relating to art. In ballets such as *Fleur de Lotus* (1893), *Émilienne aux Quat'z'Arts* (1893), *Un Déjeuner sur l'herbe* (1897), *Phryné* (1897), and *Lorenza* (1901), for example, music-hall authors combined references

to risqué imagery with allusions to recent scandals involving academic nudes. In a clever, paradoxical play of suggested meaning, references to the visual arts and associated scandals served to heighten a ballet's perceived eroticism by evoking images of the naked female body while framing these same scenes with the conventions and trappings of high art to contain and sanitize them.

• **SONJA JÜSCHKE (Independent Scholar), Taking Centre Stage: 'Chorus Girls' in Late Victorian Popular Musical Theatre**

In late nineteenth century London, the so-called 'chorus girls' at the Gaiety Theatre or at Daly's Theatre enjoyed an immense popularity. Evidence of their success can be found in abundance in contemporary newspaper articles, in memoirs, and in the growing number of items featuring their photographic images, which were highly coveted by their countless admirers. Especially their beauty and (sexual) attractiveness are praised, which made critics of the genre raise the question if they were not hired for their singing and acting skills, but rather for their good looks.

Theatres arguably took advantage of these crowd favourites by strategically placing them centre stage as soon as the curtain went up, allowing the audience to gaze upon the 'chorus girls' in their highly fashionably costumes at their leisure right at the beginning of a work, as in Sullivan's *Utopia Limited*. However, Savoy opera and musical comedy alike tried very hard to present itself as a perfectly respectable, safe kind of entertainment, which could comfortably be enjoyed by the whole family. Theatres and (female) performers alike were walking a fine line between socially acceptable respectability and the 'forbidden' pleasures of thrilling sensuality — they were «Naughty but nice», as Peter Bailey phrased it so accurately.

Musical comedy focused on modern fashionable society; therefore, relationships between men and women who were not married (yet) are a must-have for every work. This paper analyses how courtship and flirtation are presented in such a genre in order to explore what was acceptable in late Victorian society — at least on a theatre stage. The lack of censorship concerning this aspect is quite remarkable. Furthermore, this paper examines the performance and (self-)presentation of female choristers, on and off the stage, concerning the considerable conflict between being desirable and respectable at the same time.

• **FILIFE GASPAS (CESEM / NOVA FCSH), «The French Mermaids Were Loudly Applauded...»: Feminine Subjects and Male Desire in Lisbon's Café-Concert (1857-1876)**

In Portuguese historiography, the years between 1851 and 1868 are known as 'Regeneração' (Regeneration). This was a time when the economic and the modernizing goals of the conservative right-wing governments that ascended to power during that period superseded the progressive democratic values at the core of the Portuguese Liberal experiment initiated in 1820. Suffice it to say, this was the scenery in which the bourgeoisie completed its ascension as the ruling class in Portuguese society. Regarding the cultural

panorama, the affirmation of the bourgeois status translated into the emergence of multiple philharmonic societies and numerous businesses dedicated to entertainment. Events like balls, theatrical performances, and concerts, held at public and semi-public venues began pullulating in Lisbon (and other major cities) thus providing alternative leisure spaces to this capital's upper class inhabitants. Between 1857 and 1876, the Café-Concert in downtown Lisbon was one of these cases. Departing from the reception in the printed press and examples of songs presented at this Café-Concert — the first of its kind in Portugal — my paper will focus on representations of women in and around this institution. Deprived from the social and political genealogy of the original Parisian café-concert, the Lisbon's counterpart invested, since its opening, in expressive practices attuned to bourgeois tastes and values. I will approach this matter discussing the idea that the Portuguese appropriation of the French café-concert served as one among many other platforms where male dominance was revalidated in the country's transition to a bourgeois' society. Not only were women subjects appearing in the 'chansonnettes' characterized as objects of male desire, but also the printed press used metaphoric figures such as the mythical 'mermaids' to describe the singers actually working in this hall. While analysing these materials, I will argue that, in this context, women functioned as a prop in staging the masculine identity of the target-spectators of the Café-Concert: bourgeois men.

Eroticism, Gender and Sexuality in 20th-Century Opera

• EWELINA CZARNOWSKA (Pilecki Institute, Warsaw), *Eroticism and Spirituality in Karol Szymanowski's «Król Roger»*

This paper concerns *Król Roger*, the second opera by Karol Szymanowski which had its world premiere in 1926. The model of the scenario is the story of King Roger II of Sicily, at whose court stayed Muhammad al-Idrisi, a great sage of his times, master of people who were initiated to the secrets of 'the whole world'.

The other two main characters are the Shepherd, and Roxana, Roger's wife. Libretto, written by the poet and writer Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz and the composer himself, is full of riddles that can be read on an erotic plane on account of the appearing dyads and multi-faceted systems connected with the psychopathology of royal, priestly and pastoral power, as well as their male and female modes of expression. This opera, relatively rarely staged, has began to be analysed from the gender perspective only long after the Second World War, mainly in Western countries but still requires a deeper research. During the composer's lifetime, it did not gain great popularity in the country — the contemporary authorities demanded a certain political and moral correctness from the creators — those who attempted to break away from the then existing religious, political or ethical patterns of behavior were somehow exposed to ostracism. Only few have attempted to introduce into the cultural circulation a discourse on sexual identities discovered in Europe by psychoanalysis. *Król Roger* provides many erotic messages encoded in the libretto, mainly intersexual and intrasexual motifs, as well as a sublime homoerotic theme and all this takes place against the background of the conflict between two gods: Dionysus and Apollo.

My intention is to display few types of eroticism of Szymanowski's work, their connection with religious and spiritual sphere and possible interpretations of reading them.

• **ONDREJ GIMA (Independent Scholar, London), «The Little of Divine but Tons of the Orgasmic»: «The Fiery Angel» – Serge Prokofiev**

Serge Prokofiev's ill-fated 'supernatural' opera, *The Fiery Angel*, composed in the West after Prokofiev left a revolutionary Russia in 1918, harkens back to the Silver Age, having as its source text a *roman à clef* by the Russian Symbolist writer, Valery Bryusov. The plot (set in sixteenth-century Reformation Cologne) centres on the demonic possession of the main character, Renata — a fictional representation of the poetess, Nina Petrovskaya, who enslaves Ruprecht (Valery Bryusov) in her struggle to materialise the supernatural creature, Madiel (Andrey Bely). This insatiable obsession ends in a horrendous *auto-da-fé* that became Prokofiev's main inspiration (and an obsession of sorts) in his transformation of the novel into opera.

Prokofiev's search for the faultless marriage of libretto and music resulted into abandonment of the original concept of the opera, completed in 1923; his instigation of a thorough revision resulting in the first complete version of the opera in 1927; and a second unrealised attempt to revise the opera once again in 1930. Whilst the fully completed, revised version of the opera has been published and relatively widely performed, the first version of the opera never left the archival depositary.

The purpose of the conference paper is to outline changes in Prokofiev's creative approach and his perception of the subject matter (i.e. Valery Bryusov's novel), by means of reflection on his inter-code translation from a narrative to a dramatic form. I shall explore a different approach to the inclusion of elements of eroticism in the original version and revised version; the changes in psychological picture of Renata (an exploration of female sexuality), her relationship with Ruprecht in both libretti, and its musical representation; and lastly, the impact of Prokofiev's interest in Christian Science on the shaping of the opera in the context of the depiction of eroticism, demonism, and religiousness.

• **ELENA LUPORINI (Università La Sapienza di Roma), Non aprire quella porta. Prospettive di genere nel «Castello di Barbablù» di Béla Bartók**

Pur non essendo mai entrato a far parte del repertorio stabile, l'atto unico di Béla Bartók *A kékszakállú herceg vára*, conosciuto in Italia come *Il castello di Barbablù*, è lavoro ricco di interesse per la ricerca musicologica. Il presente intervento si propone di contribuire a tale ricerca adottando una prospettiva che, in linea con il convegno, diremmo 'di genere'.

Unica opera composta da Bartók, il *Barbablù* recupera la nota fiaba, attestando così la fortuna duratura di un paradigma narrativo che sempre ha posto numerose questioni di genere. Nel far questo, però, il compositore ungherese — assieme al collaboratore Béla Balázs — tinge la storia di ulteriori sfumature e inquietudini specifiche, riconducibili alla sfera personale ma anche a una più ampia 'angoscia affettiva' comune a non pochi uomini

non solo del suo tempo. Barbablù e Judit, archetipi del maschile e del femminile, si sfiorano senza saldarsi, respinti non da un motivo concreto ma da un'incompatibilità di fondo tra i sessi. Nell'opera, la totale mancanza di erotismo e il fallimento emotivo lasciano trapelare una visione della (etero)sessualità segnata da incomprensione e rimpianto.

Questo contributo vuole dunque indagare la rappresentazione delle dinamiche di genere nell'opera di Bartók e le ripercussioni che queste hanno sulla sessualità e affettività dei personaggi, a loro volta intesi come archetipi. Ciò sarà fatto tramite lo studio congiunto di libretto e partitura, ma anche — tangenzialmente — attraverso riferimenti alle fonti dirette (Perrault, Maeterlinck) o solo ideali (il dramma wagneriano), problematizzando come a posizioni musicali rivendicazioniste in senso patriottico non abbia corrisposto, in Bartók, un parallelo scisma dalla tradizione europea nella concezione dei rapporti tra uomo e donna.

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