Moving scenes

the circulation of music and theatre in Europe, 1700-1815

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In eighteenth-century Europe, artistic production was characterised by significant geographical and cultural transfer. For innumerable musicians, composers, singers, actors, authors, dramatists and translators – and the works they produced – state borders were less important than style, genre and canon. Through a series of multinational case studies a team of authors examines the mechanisms and characteristics of cultural and artistic adaptability to demonstrate the complexity and flexibility of theatrical and musical exchanges during this period.

By exploring questions of national taste, so-called cultural appropriation and literary preference, contributors examine the influence of the French canon on the European stage – as well as its eventual rejection –, probe how and why musical and dramatic materials became such prized objects of exchange, and analyse the double processes of transmission and literary cross-breeding in translations and adaptations. Examining patterns of circulation in England, France, the Netherlands, Germany, Scandinavia, Russia, Bohemia, Austria, Italy and the United States, authors highlight:

• the role of migrant musicians in breaching national boundaries and creating a ‘musical cosmopolitanism’;
• the emergence of a specialised market in which theatre agents and local authorities negotiated contracts and productions, and recruited actors and musicians;
• the translations and rewritings of major plays such as Sheridan’s The School for scandal, Schiller’s Die Räuber and Kotzebue’s Menschenhass und Reue;
• the refashioning of indigenous and ‘national’ dramas in Europe under French Revolutionary and imperial rule.

Pierre-yves Beaurepaire and Charlotta Wolff, Introduction
I. National taste and cultural domination
Domestic versus foreign composers at the Opéra and the King’s Theatre in the eighteenth century, William Weber
Non-French music and foreign musicians at the Musique du roi, Versailles, c.1760-1792, Youri Carbonnier
French and German theatre troupes in Aachen and Trier during the French occupation (1794-1814), Fanny Platelle
The revolution of Jommelli’s *objets d’art*: Bernard Sarrette’s requests for the Bibliothèque du Conservatoire, Rebecca Dowd Geoffroy-Schwinden
French administrators and local dramatic repertoires in the annexed *départements*: censorship in an occupation context, Rahul Markovits
The limits of cultural imperialism: French theatre in Napoleonic Europe, Philippe Bourdin
II. Actors and patterns of circulation
‘Il faut du nouveau’: functions and issues of international drama and music news in *Le Courrier d’Avignon* (1733-1793), Magali Soulatges
The adaptation of French performance as shown in Favart’s correspondence, Flora Mele
Lyrical diplomacy: Count Gustav Philip Creutz (1731-1785) and the opera, Charlotta Wolff
Figaro mania in Europe: the circulation and appropriation of Beaumarchais’s plays in the eighteenth century, Virginie Yvernault
Circulation and social mobility: Lorenzo Da Ponte’s career from Gorizia to New York (c.1780-c.1830), David Do Paço
Hiram at the playhouse: Masonic and theatrical travel in Europe, Pierre-Yves Beaurepaire
From the theatre box to the salon: music and theatre as elements of an aristocratic language in the Habsburg monarchy at the turn of the nineteenth century, Matthieu Magne
From archive boxes to cardboard screens: the diffusion of French theatre in Russia at the end of the eighteenth century, Nathalie Rizzoni
When dances circulated on paper: European dancing masters and the art of dancing ‘by characters and demonstrative figures’, Marie Glon
III. Translations and adaptations in revolution
Youth theatre and family theatre: translation and cultural transfer, Marie-Emmanuelle Plagnol-Diéval
The *Teatro moderno applaudito* (1796-1801): Italian translations of French plays in Venice, Paola Roman
Jean-Jacques Ampère and the translation of *Artaxerxes*, Julie Johnson
The creation of an amateur theatre in Mainz under the occupation of General Custine, Marita Gilli
The evolution of French adaptations of Richard Sheridan’s *The School for Scandal* during the French Revolution and the First Empire, Valérie Maffre
‘Imitations’ at the Théâtre des Variétés-Etrangères: a subversive circumlocution?, Françoise Le Borgne
Conclusion, Philippe Bourdin
Summaries
Biographies of contributors
Selected bibliography
Index

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