West End and Friedrichstraße: Cross-cultural Exchange in Popular Musical Theatre, 1890-1939


The conference 'Cross-cultural Exchange in Popular Musical Theatre, 1890-1939' brings together scholars from a variety of disciplines working on popular musical theatre of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. It is especially interested in instances of cultural exchange in operetta, musical comedy and revue between London, Berlin and other European and non-European cities.

The conference is organized by the research project 'West End and Friedrichstrasse', hosted by Freie Universität Berlin and Goldsmiths, University and London and financed by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft and the Arts and Humanities Research Council.

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Venue
Max-Planck-Gesellschaft
Harnack-Haus
Ihnestraße 16-20
14195 Berlin

How to get there
Subway station
Thielplatz U3
(exit to the left in the direction of travel)
Programme

March 29th 2012

13:30-14.00

Introduction
Paul Nolte & Tobias Becker (Freie Universität Berlin): Introductory Remarks

14.00-16.00

Early Transfers
Chair: Sven Oliver Müller (Max Planck Institute for Human Development Berlin)
Marion Linhardt (Universität Bayreuth): Rethinking Histories of Operetta. European Genre Transfers in the 19th and Early 20th Century
Stefan Frey (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München): How a sweet Viennese girl became a naughty cosmopolitan lady. From operetta to musical comedy: A paradigmatic cross-cultural exchange in the beginning 20th century.
Viv Gardner (University of Manchester): The Sandow Girl and Her Sisters. The construction and performance of the healthy female body in fin de siècle musical comedy

16.00-16.30

Coffee Break

16.30-18.30

Transculturality – Intermediality
Chair: David Linton (Goldsmiths, University of London)
Carolin Stahrnberg (Alpen-Adria-Universität Klagenfurt) & Nils Grosch (Paris-Lodron-Universität Salzburg): The Transculturality of Stage, Song and Other Media. Reflections on Intermediality in Popular Musical Theatre
Robert Gordon (Goldsmiths, University of London): Noël Coward and the Image of "the Modern"

18.30-20.00

Dinner

20.00-21.00

Project Presentation
Len Platt, David Linton (Goldsmiths) & Tobias Becker (FU Berlin): West End and Friedrichstraße. A Comparative Study of Popular Musical Theatre in London and Berlin, 1890-1939

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March, 30th 2012

9.30-11.00
**Atlantic Traffic**
Chair: KLAUS NATHAUS (Universität Bielefeld)
DEREK B. SCOTT (University of Leeds): German Operetta in the West End and on Broadway
PETER BAILEY (University of Manitoba/Indiana University): 'Hullo Ragtime!' The Rise of Revue and the Americanisation of the British Popular Stage

11.00-11.30
Coffee Break

11.30-13.00
**Travelling Artists**
Chair: KERSTIN LANGE (Freie Universität Berlin)
LINDA BRAUN (Johns Hopkins University Baltimore): Between 'Negro Operetta' and Yodeling in Lederhosen. Music Performances of Black Americans in English and German Theaters (1880-1914)
SUSANN LEWERENZ (Universität Hamburg): The Non-Stop Revue ‘Tropical Express’ in Nazi Germany

13.00-14.00
Lunch

14.00-15.30
**Operetta at War**
Chair: HANSJAKOB ZIEMER (Max Planck Institute for the History of Science Berlin)

15.30-16.30
**Plenary**
Rethinking Histories of Operetta.
European Genre Transfers in the 19th and Early 20th Century

Marion Linhardt (University of Bayreuth)

In the 1890s London as well as Berlin saw innovations in the field of popular theatre: in London with the „musical comedy“ a new genre seemed to have been „invented“, in Berlin the beginnings of the development of a theatre and entertainment district could be observed. While at that time London comic operas – and soon afterwards – musical comedies could already be found in continental repertoires, the position of Berlin as an influential centre of popular musical theatre only dated from the 1910s, when the effective production and marketing strategies of the Central European operetta had emerged.

If we look at the last decades of the 19th and the first decades of the 20th centuries, it is obvious that the significance of the European metropolises for processes of transfer in popular theatre varied widely. Vienna and – later on – Berlin were dominant in the transfer of operettas (regardless of how far-reaching the adaptations for the London and New York stages may have been), London and New York gave important impulses for musical style and modes of body presentation. I argue that in dealing with cross cultural exchange in popular theatre one has to consider the respective local context: what was the structural relationship between operetta / musical comedy / revue and other genres of musical theatre and entertainment like opera or variety theatre, and how did these genres reflect the conditions of the modern city?


Her research is focused, among others, on popular theatre and urban studies. Co-editor of Nestroyana – Blätter der Internationalen Nestroy-Gesellschaft.

How a Sweet Viennese Girl Became a Naughty Cosmopolitan Lady.

From Operetta to Musical Comedy: A Paradigmatic Cross-Cultural Exchange in the early 20th Century

Stefan Frey (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München)

When Franz Lehár’s Viennese operetta The Merry Widow arrived London in 1907, it was presented as a "Musical Comedy". This term was established by George Edwardes, the great impresario of Edwardian theatre, for a special form of entertaining light opera. Early examples in the so-called gay nineties of the 19th century were A Gaiety Girl or The shop Girl, not by chance works with a girl in the title. Edwardes called them musical comedies to distinguish them from comic opera in the style of Gilbert and Sullivan or the older burlesque. This special kind of musical theatre revolutionized the London stage not only with its own productions, but also with adaptations of contemporary Viennese operettas such as The Merry Widow. It was Edwardes who produced this for the first time outside continental Europe at his Daily’s Theatre. Without knowing it, Lehár had done much the same with Johann Strauß-style operettas as Edwardes had with comic opera. Both were pioneers in their original field and met later in the new international entertainment business, which had its origins in the early 20th century. And both men influenced each other. Viennese operetta enriched the music of the London stage, specially with its craze for the Viennese Waltz. And the English stage influenced the dramaturgy of central European theatre: in particular the English dance routine with its chorus-girls became a new standard form in Berlin and Vienna. Along with Lehár a new generation of composers propagated the new style on the continent, among others Oscar Straus, Leo Fall and Emmerich Kálmán or Jean Gilbert. All their works made their way successfully to the West End, but transformed their look on the way. Which details were changed and which weren’t? This lecture will compare and contrast the versions in London and Vienna to show how innovation on the part of composers and impressarios lead to changes in popular taste. Were national cultural differences still dominant? Obviously there was a need for new forms of musical theatre, which seemed to be fulfilled in the decade before WWI by transforming operetta into musical comedy. Thus for traditionalists the genre changed from a sweet “Viennese Girl” into an “international Lady”.

Dr. Stefan Frey: Writer, broadcaster, lecturer, dramaturge and director.

Born 1962 in Heilbronn, Germany; read theatre studies, art history and German literature at the Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich (M.A. 1989); 1993 doctorate on operetta composer Franz Lehár under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Dieter Borchmeyer in Heidelberg; Assistant director at the Deutschen Schauspielhaus Hamburg, Landestheater Tübingen, Thüringer Landestheater Rudolstadt, where he directed several productions including Lehár’s Paganini; Founder and artistic director of the „Theater in der Tenne”, Maierhöfen (u. a. Auszug aus Ägypten, Winnetous letzte Fahrt, Helden im Eis); From 2004 to 2006 head of the Studio Theatre of the Institute for Theatre Studies at Munich University; since then lecturer at the Institute and at the BavarianTheater-Akademie "August Everding".

The Sandow Girl and Her Sisters. The Construction and Performance of the Healthy Female Body in Fin de Siècle Musical Comedy

Viv Gardner (University of Manchester)

At present the material for this chapter is centred on one or more London performances. The comparative Berlin text/s have not yet been identified.

The Gibson girl and the Bath Bun girl, All the world has come to know. We like them both and are rather loth to see either of them go. But there’s a type that can crown them all; You need not have looks or wealth, For the girl I mean is the Sandow Queen, The Queen of all English health!

It has been argued that musical comedy, ‘[f]or a fast, new times world ... was a vital, energetic culture which both utilized modern processes in its making and reproduced the modern world in its most compelling disguises’[2] Musical comedy’s contemporaneity was key to its success, paradoxically though, while embracing the modern, it was also inherently conservative (‘familiar, safe and joyful’) - dominated by ‘modern Girls’ who end up in appropriately romantic partnerships.[3] Hugely popular, particularly with female spectators, musical comedy was both influenced by, and influenced, gender discourse in the period.[4] Its women stars (whether protagonist, comedienne or chorus member) became the fashionable and aspirational icons of the day. They exemplify the way/s in which the body of the performer is fashioned by contemporary discourse on the body, which involves ‘the exchange of meanings between the two kinds of bodily experience’ – that of the physical body and the social body – in which the one ‘reinforces the categories of the other.’[5] The real body (the physical) is in a dynamic exchange with the ‘social’ (fashioned and fashionable) body, and, this chapter will argue, a third dimension – the performing body – which both appropriates the ‘social body’ for a public stage and is the real body of a working woman which sings, dances, and overtly ‘earns its money’. The ‘exchange of meanings’ is present both for the ‘performer’ and the spectator, and particularly as new media technologies accelerated the development of a ‘celebrity industry’, is also implicated in the ‘off-stage' body of the actress.

The Edwardian entertainment industry tapped into and exploited contemporary discourses on women’s bodies, and, in the 1900s, the fashion for women’s gymnasia and exercise regimes. This chapter will explore, from performance evidence - the printed (but unpublished) text, performance and publicity photographs, and collateral evidence - how in the performance the body of the female performer was fashioned and understood through contemporary discourse on the female body, and perceptions of the ‘working’ body of the female performer. The performed, fashioned and fashionable body of the musical comedy ‘girl’ will be examined as evidence of the contradictory relationship between vitality and constraint in the performances, on and off stage, of the female stars of musical comedy between 1894 and 1910 which manifested itself most obviously in the emergence of the figure (in both a figurative and physical sense) of the ‘Gaiety Girl’ and her sisters.

The key text will be the 1905/6 musical farce, The Diarymaids, which, with its staging of a female gymnasium, chorus of Sandow Girls, and original star, Carrie Moore - a ‘model of classic grace, ...her movements ...
absolutely beyond praise in their lissomness and their display of beautiful feminine muscularity[6] - ‘truly represented the modern’ for, by 1906, the Sandow Girl had come to represent the ‘figure training mania of the present,’[7] The chapter will look at how the performance engaged wittingly with contemporary discourses on the female body and the performance of ‘English women’s health’ as mediated by the components of the musical comedy (spectacle, narrative, music and dance) and emergent discourses on the healthy, idealised female body, ‘after the New Woman’.

**Viv Gardner:** Professor of Theatre Studies at the University of Manchester.

My current research centres on gender, sexuality and representation in and through performance in the period 1890-1920, developing my original work on the New Woman and the Actresses’ Franchise League. Projects include: an edited edition of the autobiography of musical comedy and music hall performer and suffragette, Kitty Marion (with Diana Atkinson); work on the theatrical and performative lives of the 5th Marquis of Anglesey and a study of the the intersection of radical and popular discourses on gender and sexuality in performance at the fin de siecle (provisionally called 'Staging the New Sex'). This last project covers material on the New Woman and Musical Comedy Girl, 'posing' as performance, hypo- and hyper- masculinity and the court room as a gendered and contested site for performers. I am also working with contemporary dancers/performance artists, Marc Rees ('Gloria Days' on the 5th Marquis of Anglesey) and Liz Aggiss ('Marjorie Irvine') on the development of dance works that renegotiate archival performance material for the contemporary stage.


[3] Paradoxically, in England, the populist musical comedy emerged in the same year – 1894 - as the proto-feminist New Woman was 'named'.


[6] *Photo Bits* July 1906

[7] ‘Paris World of Fashion’, *Weekly Reporter* Iowa, 12 June 1906. *The Dairymaids* was not the only production to introduce a ‘Sandow Girl’. Other productions, some almost certainly picking up on the success of the Sandow Girl in *The Dairymaids* include: a farce by Dudley Powell, *The Sandow Girl* toured by Herbert Darnley’s Company between Summer and Autumn 1907, ‘The Funniest Musical Farce on Tour’ *The Stage* archive), and a character ‘the Sandow Girl’ appeared in *Cinderella* at Camden Theatre, NW (*The Stage* 27 December 1906) and Charles Constant’s Company’s *Blue Beard* (*The Stage* 21 March 1907). Interestingly the borrowed song, ‘The Sandow Girl’ is singled out as not ‘quite hitting the mark’ in Camden’s *Cinderella* perhaps indicating a difference between a suburban and West End audience in 1906. (*The Stage* 3 January 1907) These productions may form part of the discussion.
The Transculturality of Stage, Song and Other Media: 
Reflections on Intermediality in Popular Musical Theatre

Carolin Stahrenberg (Alpen-Adria-Universität Klagenfurt)
Nils Grosch (Paris-Lodron-Universität Salzburg)

(Popular) Musical Theatre is often considered as a primary medium, as the pure act on a stage. It is, however, more complex and unfolds its effects in a context of multimedia, as manifested firstly by a diverse sheet music-industry and as shown by the exploitation of the newly invented gramophone. The notion of popular song, which supposedly overcomes temporal, spatial and social limits of theatre, is crucial for the reception of stage works like musicals or revues in the twentieth century. The audience visited performances with an expectation to hear well-known music, which was then communicated mostly through the mass media. Dramaturgical concepts were thus shaped in response to these challenges, which were caused by mass communication. Showing international profile was crucial in these concepts, especially after the First World War.

This paper will try firstly to unfold popular musical theatre by looking at transculturality as a media dispositif, which was cross-linked with and founded on an increasingly international popular music-industry. Following this, we want to show how the musical shape of German Revues of the Twenties exemplified the medial character of “American” dramaturgical concepts.

Dr. Carolin Stahrenberg: Department for Musicology, Alpen-Adria-Universität Klagenfurt.
Research Interests: Musical theatre; music and gender; music and space; music history during the Weimarer Republic
Selected Publications:

Prof. Dr. Nils Grosch: Professor of Musicology at the Paris-Lodron-Universität Salzburg.
Research Interests: Music and the media; music from the 19th until the 21st century and music of the Early Modern Age; music in Latin America; history of popular music; popular musical theatre; lied studies; jazz
Selected Publications:
Noël Coward and the Invention of „the Modern”

Robert Gordon (Goldsmith, University of London)

The paper will explore Coward’s construction of the persona of “the modern” in songs, revues, plays and performances of the twenties. In the 1920s Coward was the epitome of the ‘bright young thing’ – a new social type that emerged in the wake of the Great War. Yet in reality, Coward fashioned his distinctive personality from a web of contradictory attitudes and beliefs. Socially progressive and politically conservative, Coward was a jingoist who satirised the English class system. With no formal education apart from a somewhat desultory teenage training as an actor, he was a lower middle class boy who by virtue of determination, talent and celebrity had by his twenties begun to move in aristocratic circles which, in spite of his facetious teasing, he loved. Coward expressed his homosexuality by cultivating a public image of himself as witty, frivolous and decadent, while ruthlessly protecting the privacy of his private life, which today would ironically be seen as quite conventional in its cosy domesticity. His attitude to work was puritanical; he worked every day on his plays and songs from 8 am to 1 pm before leaving his home for any appointments. Self-consciously modern in his values and social behaviour, he defined the cosmopolitan identity of “the modern”, representing in plays and songs a life designed to be lived against the interchangeable settings of London, New York, Paris and the French Riviera. By the sixties he appeared to be a diehard member of the British Establishment who counted the Queen Mother as a close personal friend. His ‘serious’ plays and films reflect the sentimental Englishness of his Tory traditionalism; while interesting as sociocultural documents they are not as original as his comedies, songs and revue sketches. Although he publicly denigrated the ‘kitchen sink’ drama of the late fifties, his great admiration for the linguistic sophistication of Harold Pinter’s plays, revealed him as avant-garde and traditional at the same time.

Robert Gordon: Professor of Drama at Goldsmiths University of London where he is the Director of the Pinter Centre for Performance and Creative Writing.

He has worked in the UK, South Africa, Italy, the USA and Ireland as an actor, playwright and director. His plays Red Earth, and Waterloo Road, were presented at the Young Vic. In the USA he has acted Pinter’s Monologue and directed The Lover and Ashes to Ashes, and he has devised and directed Pinter: In Other Rooms, which toured a number of European cities in 2011. He was co-director of Moveable Feast Company in Dublin for whom he directed a number of theatre pieces by Irish poet Anne Hartigan. His production of a site-specific version of Calvino’s Invisible Cities played in over twenty outdoor locations in Rapallo in 2002. He has taught Drama and Theatre at the University of Kent, Royal Holloway, University of London, Duke University, Skidmore College, Colby College and the State University of New York.

German Operetta in the West End and on Broadway

Derek B. Scott (University of Leeds)

After Lehár’s Die lustige Witwe was produced to great acclaim in London and New York in 1907, the appetite for German operetta received an enormous boost in these cities. Although the First World War brought a temporary diminution of opportunities for new productions, the 1920s witnessed an enthusiastic renewal of interest. During that decade, operettas that graced the stages of Berlin theatres (such as the Metropol, the Thalia, and the Theater am Nollendorfplatz) were regularly produced in London’s West End and on Broadway. Among the most admired imports were Gilbert’s Die Frau in Hermelin, Künneke’s Der Vetter von Dingsda, Fall’s Madame Pompadour, Lehár’s Friederike, and Benatzky’s Im weissen Rössl.

In this paper, I consider the changes and adaptations made for the London and New York productions, and I examine audience expectations and the reception accorded these operettas. Beyond a desire to know what it was in German operetta that appealed to British and American audiences, I am also looking for evidence of the musical appeal to German composers of American syncopated dance styles.

Derek B. Scott: Professor of Critical Musicology at the University of Leeds.

Research Interests: Music, Culture, and Society; Music, Cultural History, and Ideology; Popular Music in Europe and North America 1780 to the present; Music in the Metropolis (especially in London, New York, Paris, and Vienna); Music, Nationalism, and Imperialism; Composition.

'Hullo Ragtime!
The Rise of Revue and the Americanisation of the British Popular Stage

Peter Bailey (University of Manitoba/Indiana University)

‘How those foolish melodies bite at one’s heart!’ wrote the poet and ‘neo-pagan’ Rupert Brooke, recalling the rapturous appeal of ‘Hullo, Ragtime!,’ the London Hippodrome revue he saw ten times during its sell out run of 451 performances 1912 to 1913. Parallel hits at other prime London venues - - ‘Everybody’s Doing It’ at the Empire and ‘Kill That Fly!’ at the reconstructed Alhambra - - consolidated the hold of revue as a successful new form of musical theatre while exalting the sensational new song and dance styles of American ragtime. Brooke was as compulsively enamoured of Diaghilev’s Ballet Russe (1911) as he was of ‘coon-shouter’ Ethel Levey, the American star of ‘Hullo, Ragtime!,’ suggesting common properties of a provocative ‘otherness’ that was shaking arts and culture across the board in these years.

Well enough registered in popular histories, this study seeks a fuller reconstruction and analysis of the phenomenal success - - intellectual, fashionable, popular and nationwide - - of ragtime and its revues, relating the specifics of play texts, songs and performance, critical notice and social commentary to the larger historical and cultural moment. Ragtime emerged from a long genealogy of imported American popular music forms and performers from minstrelsy to the cakewalk to black musical theatre, sparking imitations and modifications in the host culture; revue was a mostly indigenous hybrid in its transmutation of native burlesque and variety. Their explosive convergence produced a dramatic discourse that was topically immediate, somatically and sexually expressive, musically infectious and colloquially engaging, features happily appropriated to a more performative style of lived popular modernism. ‘Hullo, Ragtime’, it is argued, spoke to a new leisure public, more consumerist, heterosocial and adventurous. The show offered an edgy, ‘smart’, would-be superior competence in modern living, a matter of language, discourse and manners, together with the liberating physicality of its pelvically driven couples’ dance that triggered a ready social take-up. Here was modern sophistication free from the pitfalls of a class society, an exotic racial sensuality tempered with whiteness. The inspirational ideal was a classless non-discriminatory modern America with a big city urgency to life and its enjoyments.

Commercial promotion and the media were other significant factors in the appeal of revue as stage hit and social model. In the 1910s gramophone recordings generated extra publicity without displacing extensive amateur music making with one in nine households boasting a piano. Leading music publisher Feldmans ran a heavy advertising campaign for the new music, while manufacturers and retailers of a wide range of consumer goods from confectionary to underwear traded on the new sensation. Newspapers and magazines, mass circulation and specialist, stimulated and responded to a popular appetite for glamour and celebrity now more vividly represented in photographic illustration and a bold poster art. The fragmented collage effect of the revue formula channeled something of the quick-cut presentation of news and images of the contemporary newspaper, more attuned to the abbreviated and dispersed attention patterns of modern consciousness than conventional theatrical narrative.
Albeit significantly 'Englished' in many ways, the rise of revue as a new theatrical form marked something of a watershed in the history of musical theatre and the popular stage, hastening the eclipse of native musical comedy while prefiguring the full blown American musical that was to replace it. ‘Hullo, Ragtime!’ and its cousins are ripe for scholarly revitalization and appraisal.

Peter Bailey: Professor Emeritus, University of Manitoba.

Research interests: Social and cultural history of modern Britain, leisure, popular culture and sexuality; Victorian music hall and the twentieth century variety stage; jazz in Britain.

Around the end of the nineteenth century, black American performers could be found weekly on European stages. Usually on a tour through Europe, they performed plays with music and dances that were categorized as operettas or as “American song and dance.” While operettas often depicted plantation life, groups like the Four Black Diamonds achieved their greatest success by marketing themselves as “Tyrolese” by adapting songs of Alpine folklore and dressing up in Lederhosen.

In this presentation, I analyze the representation of race on stage by examining the performances of various black American entertainers. Through an analysis of concert critiques, advertisements, photographs, and archival materials, I compare the similarities and differences in reception of performers and compositions between English and German audiences. For example, in both countries, “Negro operettas” were characterized as “plotless drama.”

In concert reviews, authors usually barely paid attention to the music that was played or how dances were performed. For many members of the audience, watching performances of black American entertainers in Europe seems to have been an “ethnological” undertaking. Particularly in the German press, the artists were objectified. In contrast, English journalists showed, to a greater extent, an interest in the opinions of the performers by conducting interviews.

**Linda Braun:** Ph.D. candidate at the John Hopkins University (M.A. in 2011, Department of History), Magistra artium at the Eberhard Karls University in history and linguistics (2007).


Selected publications:

The Non-Stop Revue “Tropical Express“ in Nazi Germany

Susann Lewerenz (Universität Hamburg)

Research on the revue and revue films in Nazi Germany often investigates the ways in which these genres were adapted to Nazi ideology. In my paper, I will shift focus from German revue and film productions to the transnational show “Doorlay’s Non-Stop Revue ‘Tropical Express’”. On its tours through Europe, Asia, and other continents, this revue gave regular guest performances in 1930s Nazi Germany. In 1938, for example, it was staged at the Scala theatre in Berlin. The three-hour show consisted of over one hundred scenes visualising different and particularly ‘exotic’ regions of the world. Apart from German performers, the revue troupe included a number of artists from other European and non-European countries. The director, Curt William Doorlay, had a Brazilian passport, while the company was based in Switzerland and later in Great Britain.

The aim of my paper is to investigate the staging as well as the advertisement of the revue in 1930s Germany and to analyse the perspectives of the Nazi authorities and the German press on the show. I argue that while the revue itself does not seem to have been reshaped much for the German audience, Doorlay’s presentation of the show in Nazi Germany made use of several strategies of legitimisation. First of all, Doorlay staged himself and the company as German. Secondly, he utilised colonial dichotomies in the advertisement of the show. Thirdly, he declared the foreign artists of the troupe to be agents of German Auslandspropaganda. While focusing on the rather successful guest performances of the “Tropen-Express” in Nazi Germany, I will also investigate how in 1939, the guest performance of Doorlay’s subsequent revue “Wunder-Rakete” at the Scala shipwrecked on the changing political conditions before the outbreak of war.

Susann Lewerenz studied History and English Literature and Culture and is currently working on her PhD at the University of Hamburg. From 2007 to 2010, she was a PhD scholarship holder of the Heinrich Böll Stiftung. In her PhD thesis, she deals with the presence of artists of colour working in the German circus, variety and funfair entertainment between 1920 and 1960. She analyses the show business as a field in which social hierarchies, political and racial power relations and national identities are negotiated and symbolic as well as actual borders are drawn. Combining questions of social and cultural history, she investigates the forms, functions, and effects of visual displays of the ‘exotic’ as well as living and working conditions and the agency of artists of colour in Germany. In her publications, Susann Lewerenz addresses the migration of Africans to Germany, racism in German visual culture, as well as the living conditions and the agency of black people in Nazi Germany. As a member of the exhibition group of the Institute für Migrations- und Rassismusforschung (Hamburg), she curated the exhibition “Bilder verkehren. Postkarten in der visuellen Kultur des deutschen Kolonialismus”, which was shown in Hamburg (2005), Nuremberg (2006), and Berlin (2006/2007). Since 2009, she is a member of the DFG Young Scholars Network “Black Diaspora and Germany"
Selected Publications:


Soldier Boys and Gipsy Princesses: Popular Musical Theatre in European Metropoles during Wartime, 1914-1918

Eva Krivanec (Universität Wien)

At the eve of the First World War, operetta's popularity on the stages all over Europe showed no sign of decrease. On the contrary, after the world success of Franz Lehár's Die lustige Witwe (1905), the genre as a whole underwent a new heyday, and became an international phenomenon with an international mass public. After 1910, besides the famous Viennese operetta composers of that era - Franz Lehár, Emmerich Kálmán, Leo Fall, Oskar Straus -, Berlin as well reclaimed an operetta style on its own and the composers Jean Gilbert and Walter Kollo had their first great successes in 1913 with Die Kinokönigin and Wie einst im Mai respectively.

The beginning of the war in August 1914 took the theatres by surprise but they were quick to adapt to the new situation. In most European metropoles the theatres opened the fall season 1914 with only a slight delay. In Paris, they had to stay close until early 1915 because of the front line that had come threateningly close. The programs of the theatres, however, changed crucially from the peace to the war season. Throughout the belligerant countries, it is hard to find theatres that didn't reopen with a praise of the war. Theatre directors and actors willingly joined the collective cultural war effort and quickly produced patriotic topical operettas, comedies, farces or music hall shows.

Another major change in the theatre's repertories was due to the immediate boycott of all plays from enemy countries, a measure that didn't need any official prescription but was proclaimed from below on one side of the front as well as on the other. For the operetta genre, this meant a decisive break - the international circuits of successful operettas, of singers, musicians or whole companies were suddenly cut off, the Théâtre Apollo in Paris for instance, suspended its successful run of Viennese and Berlin operettas and, once reopened, only staged French war operettas.

War time led to a relatively similar - but separated - development of popular musical theatre productions in all European metropoles: On the one hand a great amount of war related plays with chauvinist rhetorics and an aggressive humour, sometimes keeping the sentimental tone that characterized many operettas of that time. On the other, mostly from 1915 on, operettas that avoided any direct allusion to the war but still contained implicit traces of the current events - some of them had an immense success and are known until today, as Emmerich Kálmán's Csárdásfürstin (the Gipsy Princess) is. The paper will show along examples from different cities how wartime shaped content and form of operettas and other genres of popular musical theatre, as well as their success among the public.
Dr. Eva Krivanec is currently assistant professor at the Institute for Theatre, Film and Media studies at the University of Vienna.

Her research fields are History of Popular Theatre, Theatre and War, Political Theatre, Modernity and Avantgarde, and Intermediality.

Operetta and Propaganda – An Investigation on the Potential Politicalisation of Popular Musical Theatre in the “Third Reich”, Typified by the “Metropoltheater”

Matthias Kauffmann (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München)

If in the “Third Reich” every detail of German culture got occupied by the new propositions of nazistic propaganda, it has to be asked, in which case this politicalisation became manifested in operetta culture since 1933. The claim of the rulers for a genuine national cultural policy had to contrast with the prerequisites of an artistic genre, which has always been influenced by cross-cultural musical, dramaturgical and choreographical trends. Anyhow, many German artists and principals tried to develop new operettas due to the stipulated conditions. Surprisingly, until today, there has been no substantial academic study about those new works. In my paper on Operetta and Propaganda, I am going to focus on the traditional “Metropoltheater” in Berlin, which was one of the leading theatres to play operetta in the first decades of the 20th century, and its principal Heinz Hentschke (1895-1970). Hentschke's biography is apt to demonstrate the intersection of the history of the “Roaring Twenties” and the widely considered era of decadence of popular musical theatre during National Socialism: The taking over of three important theatre houses in Berlin from January 1933 on, and the intense collaboration with Joseph Goebbels’ propaganda department allowed him for influencing the development of German operetta culture during the entire “Third Reich”. Besides that, he has written the librettos for 14 operettas – primarily his work of 1937, “Maske in Blau” (with music by Fred Raymond), received enthusiastic acclaim and has been steadily performed on contemporary stages. Often, Hentschke was suspected to hide propagandistic messages in his stage works, a hypothesis, which has not been revised from the perspective of theatre studies yet. Based on archival material and focusing on Hentschke and the Metropoltheater, I am aiming at taking first steps towards an investigation of the relation between entertainment and (nazistic) propaganda.

Matthias Kauffmann, born in 1984 in Lübeck (Germany), studied theatre studies at Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich, where he has also worked as a lecturer since 2011. He received his Magister Artium with a dissertation on the German opera composer Engelbert Humperdinck. Since 2010, Matthias has researched for his PhD thesis on popular musical theatre (Musiktheater) in the “Third Reich”, supervised by Prof. Dr. Jens Malte Fischer.

He holds a scholarship of the “Studienstiftung des deutschen Volkes” and, in collaboration with Jens Malte Fischer, has curated an exhibition of Gustav Mahler (Theatre Museum Munich, 2010/11).

Besides, Matthias worked as an assistant director with Thalia Theatre (Hamburg), Frankfurt Opera, and Bavarian State Opera.
Conference chairs

**Dr. Sven Oliver Müller:** Research Group Leader for the Max Planck Research Group Felt Communities at the Max Planck Institute for Human Development Berlin.

Research interests: Cultural history of the 19th and 20th century; behaviour of the audience in musical life; history and theory of the nationalism; war of extermination of the Wehrmacht in Eastern Europe, field post letters as communication media.


**Dr. Klaus Nathaus:** Junior Research Group Leader at the Bielefeld Graduate School in History and Sociology.

Research interests: social history of Germany and Britain in the 19th and 20th centuries; history of leisure and sports; cultural industries and cultural production and consumption; production and consumption of popular music in Germany and Britain; relationships between history and sociology.


Research interests: urban history; cultural history of the 19th and 20th century; Franco-German history; history theory.

**Dr. Hansjakob Ziemer:** Research Scholar at the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science.

Research interests: history of emotions, history of concert hall, concert hall architecture, musicology, history of journalistic knowledge in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Project members

Principal Investigators

Prof. Dr. Paul Nolte: Professor of modern history with a special focus on contemporary history and its international relations at Freie Universität Berlin.

Research interests: urban history, comparative history of democracy, modern German history


Prof. Len Platt: Professor of Modern Literatures at Goldsmiths University of London, Head of Goldsmiths Learning Enhancement Unit.

Research interests: modern European literature, James Joyce, popular musical theatre


Research Assistants


Research interests: cultural history of the 19th and 20th century, urban history, history of popular culture, theatre history


Research interests: 19th and 20th century theatre history; historiography, musical theatre, modernisms, class, gender, and race in popular theatre; performance and the formation of national and cultural identities.

Practical work focuses on pre-modern multidisciplinary popular performance forms and their contemporary applications specifically mask/minstrelsy, music hall, pantomime, burlesque/neo burlesque, pierrot, and revue.
Student Assistant


Research interests: dance, dance theatre, theatre and intermediality, theatre, bodies and body language, musical theatre of the 19th and early 20th century, British history.

Practical interests: choreography, stage dance (contemporary, jazz, ballet).