

Operetta:
A Sourcebook

Operetta:
A Sourcebook,
Volume I

By

Robert Ignatius Letellier

**CAMBRIDGE
SCHOLARS**

P U B L I S H I N G

Operetta: A Sourcebook, Volume I,
by Robert Ignatius Letellier

This book first published 2015

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

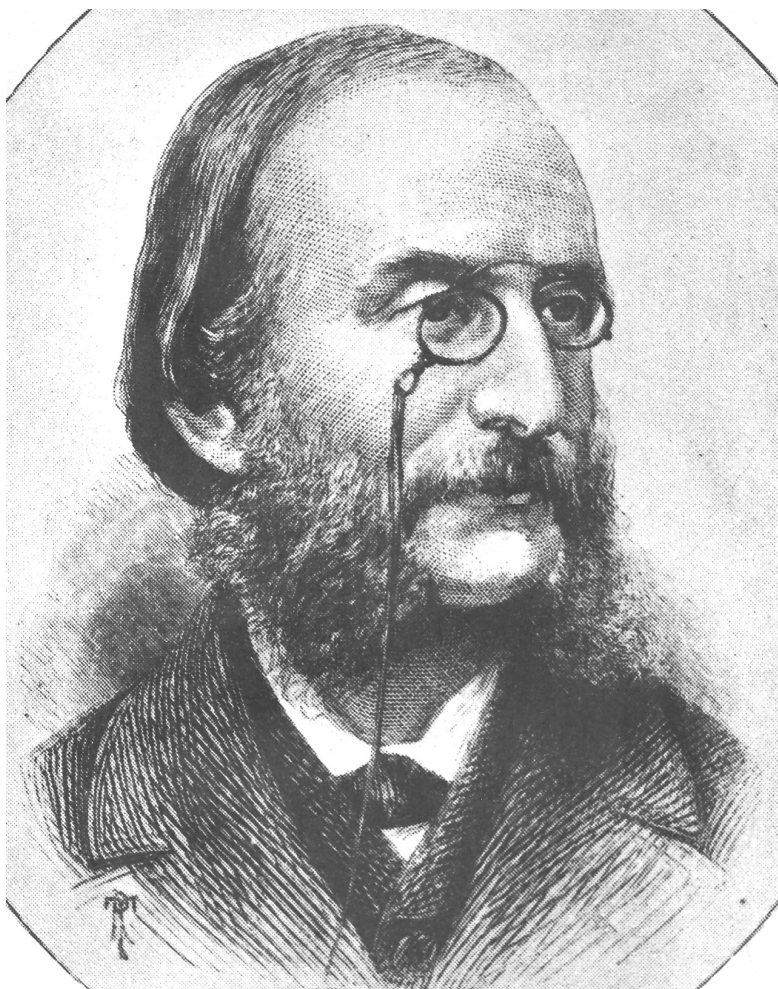
British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2015 by Robert Ignatius Letellier

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN (10): 1-4438-6690-3, ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-6690-3

As a two volume set: ISBN (10): 1-4438-7708-5 ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-7708-4



Jacques Offenbach in middle age

Wer hat die Liebe uns ins Herz gesenkt?
(Who put [this] love into our hearts?)
—Fritz Löhner-Beda, *Das Land des Lächelns*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

VOLUME 1

Introduction	xvii
Acknowledgements	xxxiv
Illustrations	xxxv
Chronology	1
1. French Operetta.....	83
The Imperial Operetta (1855-1870)	
Jacques Offenbach (1819).....	84
Florimond Rongé (Hervé) (1825)	218
The Bourgeois Operetta (1870–1890)	
Alexandre-Charles Lecocq (1832)	240
Clément Philibert Léo Delibes (1836)	271
Paul Lacôme (1838).....	274
Claude-Firman Bernicat (1842)	277
Edmond Audran (1842)	281
Léon Vasseur (1844).....	293
Louis Varney (1844).....	304
Gaston Serpette (1846)	318
Jean-Robert Planquette (1848).....	327
Victor Roger (1853).....	337
Operetta of the Belle-Epoque (1890-1914)	
André-Charles-Prosper Messager (1853).....	342
Louis-Gaston Ganne (1862).....	350
Claude-Antoine Terrasse (1867).....	356
French Operetta in the Twentieth Century	
The Comédie Musicale (1918-1930)	
Henri Christiné (1867).....	361
Reynaldo Hahn (1875).....	366
Charles Cuvillier (1877)	368

L'Opérette Marseillaise (1930-1939) & L'Après-Guerre (1945-1960)

Vincent Scotto (1874)	372
József Zygmunt Szulc (1875)	386
Gaston Gabaroché (1884)	389
Henri Goublier (1888)	391
Maurice Yvain (1891)	393
Raoul Moretti (1893)	399
Louis Beydts (1895)	400
Werner Richard Heymann (1896)	401
Roger Dumas (1897)	403
Jean Boyer (1901)	405
Marguerite Monnot (1903)	405
Francis Lopez (1916)	406
Claude-Michel Schönberg (1944)	416

2. Austro-Hungarian Operetta 417**The Golden Age (1845-1900)**

Adolf Müller, Sr. (1801)	418
Heinrich Proch (1809)	419
Carl Binder (1816)	420
Franz von Suppé (1819)	421
Franz Friedrich Richard Genée (1823)	466
Johann Strauss II (1825)	471
Adolf Müller, Jr. (1839)	517
Carl Joseph Millöcker (1842)	518
Alphons Czibulka (1842)	531
Carl Johann Nepomuck Adam Zeller (1842)	533
Karl Michael Ziehrer (1843)	537
Richard Heuberger (1850)	552
Alfred Grünfeld (1852)	554
Joseph Hellmesberger (1855)	555
Heinrich Berté (1858)	556
Karl Rudolf Michael "Charles" Weinberger (1861)	557
Johann Strauss III (1866)	558

The Silver Age (1900-1930)

Heinrich Reinhardt (1865)	560
Hugo Felix (1866)	563
Georg Jarno (1868)	564
Oscar Straus (1870)	567
Franz Lehár (1870)	579
Leo Fall (1873)	609

Edmund Eysler (1874)	622
Oskar Nedbal (1874)	626
Fritz Kreisler (1875)	629
Anselm Götzl (1876)	632
Emmerich Kálmán (1882)	632
The Revue-Operetta (1920-1960)	
Leo Ascher (1880)	645
Robert Stolz (1880)	647
Ludwig Rochlitzer (1880)	657
Oskar Jascha (1881)	658
Rudi Gfaller (1882)	659
Heinrich Strecker (1893)	660
Jara Beneš (1897)	661
Hanns Jelinek (1901)	663
Frank Fox (1902)	664
Franz Josef Reinl (1903)	665
Josef Beer (1908)	665
Hans Lang (1908)	668
Franz Ferdinand (Ferry) Zelwecker (1911)	668
Igo Hofstetter (1926)	669
Charles Kálmán (1929)	670
Udo Jürgens (1934)	670

VOLUME 2**3. German Operetta..... 671****The Berlin Operetta (1900-1920)**

Bernhard Triebel (1847)	671
Hermann Zumpe (1850).....	672
Rudolf Dellinger (1857).....	673
Paul Lincke (1866).....	676
Léon Jessel (1871)	678
Leo Blech (1871)	684
Franz Wickenhauser (1872).....	686
Walter Kollo (1878).....	686
Jean Gilbert (Max Winterfeld) (1879)	691

The Revue-Operetta (1920-1980)

Rudolf Nelson (1878)	703
Bruno Granichstaedten (1879).....	705
Walter Wilhelm Goetze (1883).....	710
Hugo Hirsch (1884)	713
Robert Winterberg (1884).....	714
Ralph Benatzky (1884)	715
Eduard Künneke (1885).....	720
Walter Bromme (1885)	729
Edmund Nick (1891).....	731
Paul Ábrahám (1892).....	732
Rudolf Kattnigg (1895).....	738
Nico Dostal (1895).....	739
Will Meisel (1897).....	744
Kurt Julian Weill (1900)	745
Fred Raymond (1900).....	749
Willy Richartz (1900)	759
Willy Czernik (1901).....	759
Josef Rixner (1902).....	759
Just Scheu (1903).....	759
Günther Schwenn (1903)	761
Arno Vetterling (1903)	762
Ludwig Schmidseder (1904).....	762
Gerhard Winkler (1906).....	763
Eberhard Schmidt (1907).....	764
Franz Grothe (1908).....	766
Fritz Ihlau (1909).....	766
Hans Friedrich August Carste (1909)	767

Friedrich Schröder (1910).....	768
Hans-Martin Majewski (1911).....	772
Norbert Arnold Wilhelm Richard Schultze (1911).....	772
Gerhard Jussenhoven (1911).....	774
Ralph Maria Siegel (1911).....	775
Hans Moltkau (1911).....	776
Paul Burkhard (1911).....	777
Werner Stamm (1912).....	778
Franz Josef Breuer (1914).....	778
Guido Masanetz (1914).....	779
Hans-Hendrik Wehding (1915).....	780
Erwin Halletz (1921).....	781
Siegfried Köhler (1923).....	781
Gerhard Kneifel (1927).....	784
Gerd Natschinski (1928).....	784
Reiner Bredemeyer (1929).....	786
4. Spanish Operetta (Zarzuela)	787
Mariano Soriano Fuertes (1817)	790
Joaquin Gaztambide (1822)	791
Rafael Hernando (1822).....	794
Francisco Asenjo Barbieri (1823).....	797
Pascual Juan Emilio Arrieta (1823)	808
Cristobal Oudrid (1825).....	810
Manuel Fernández Caballero (1834).....	814
Pedro Miguel Marqués (1843).....	825
Joaquín Valverde (1846).....	826
Federico Chueca (1846).....	826
Tomás Bretón (1850).....	831
Ruperto Chapí (1851)	835
Jerónimo Giménez (1854).....	845
Tomás López Torregrosa (1868).....	851
Amadeu Vives (1871)	854
Vicente Lleó (1873)	861
José Serrano (1873)	864
Pablo Luna (1879)	869
Reveriano Soutullo (1880).....	876
Juan Vert (1890)	876
Manuel Penella (1880).....	879
Jesús Guridi (1886).....	882
José Maria Usandizaga Soraluze (1887).....	884

Francesco Alonso (1887)	885
José Padillo Sanchez (1889)	888
Federico Moreno Torroba (1891)	888
Rafael Millán (1893)	891
Jacinto Guerrero (1895)	892
Pablo Sorozabal (1897)	894
5. English Operetta	898
Wilhelm Meyer Lutz (1829)	898
Frederick Clay (1838)	899
Arthur Seymour Sullivan (1842)	900
Alfred Cellier (1844)	941
Arthur Goring Thomas (1850)	943
Edward Solomon (1855)	945
John Henry Maunders (1858)	952
Sidney Jones (1861)	953
Edward German (1862)	961
Howard Talbot (1865)	964
Paul Alfred Rubens (1875)	964
Montague Phillips (1885)	965
Lionel John Alexander Monckton (1861)	966
George Frederick Norton (1869)	970
Harold Fraser-Simson (1872)	972
Ivor Novello (1893)	975
Noël Pierce Coward (1899)	978
Vivian Ellis (1904)	981
Walter Leigh (1905)	984
David Heneker (1906)	985
Benjamin Britten (1913)	986
Alexander Galbraith ‘Sandy’ Wilson (1924)	986
Richard Morton Sherman (1928)	988
Julian Penkivil Slade (1930)	990
Lionel Bart (1930)	991
Richard O’Brien (1942)	993
Claude-Michel Schönberg (1944)	994
Timothy Miles Bindon “Tim” Rice (1944)	998
Andrew Lloyd Webber (1948)	1001

6. American Operetta.....	1010
Calixa Lavallée (1842).....	1012
Adolf Heinrich Anton Magnus Neuendorff (1842).....	1013
Ludwig Engländer (1853).....	1014
John Philip Sousa (1854).....	1017
Oscar Ferdinand Telgmann (1855).....	1022
Gustave Adolph Kerker (1857).....	1025
Henry Louis Reginald de Koven (1859).....	1029
Victor Herbert (1859).....	1032
Ivan Caryll (1861).....	1040
Gustav Luders (1865).....	1044
Viktor Holländer (1866).....	1046
J. Rosamond Johnson (1873).....	1046
Karl Hoschna (1876).....	1047
Paul Tietjens (1877).....	1049
George Michael Cohan (1878).....	1052
Rudolf Friml (1879).....	1055
Jerome David Kern (1885).....	1062
Sigmund Romberg (1887).....	1069
Irving Berlin (1888).....	1077
Cole Albert Porter (1891).....	1081
Ray Henderson (1896).....	1086
George Gershwin (1898).....	1088
Vincent Millie Youmans (1898).....	1098
Kurt Julian Weill (1900).....	1100
Frederick Loewe (1901).....	1103
Robert Meredith Willson (1902).....	1109
Vernon Duke (1903).....	1111
Richard Charles Rodgers (1902).....	1113
Jule Styne (1905).....	1123
Harold Jacob Rome (1908).....	1127
Frank Henry Loesser (1910).....	1130
Burton Lane (1912).....	1132
Benjamin Britten (1913).....	1133
Leonard Bernstein (1918).....	1136
Albert Hague (1920).....	1144
Richard Adler (1921).....	1146
John Kander (1927).....	1149
Charles Strouse (1928).....	1153
Richard Morton Sherman (1928).....	1156
Jerrold Lewis (Jerry Bock) (1928).....	1156

Cy Coleman (1929).....	1159
Stephen Joshua Sondheim (1930).....	1160
Jerry Herman (1931).....	1162
Marvin Frederick Hamlisch (1944).....	1165
Stephen Lawrence Schwartz (1948)	1168
Alan Irwin Menken (1949)	1172
7. Yiddish Operetta	1173
Sigmund Mogulesko (1858)	1173
Lev Pulver (1883).....	1173
8. Russian Operetta	1175
Isaak Iosifovich Dunayevsky (1900)	1175
Yury Sergeyevich Milyutin (1903).....	1177
Dmitri Dmitriyevich Shostakovich (1906).....	1179
9. Croatian and Serbian Operetta.....	1183
Ivan Zajc (1832).....	1183
Petar Stojanović (1877).....	1187
10. Hungarian Operetta	1189
Ede Donáth (1865).....	1189
Pongrác Kacsóh (1873).....	1189
Zsigmond Vincze (1874)	1192
Jeno Huszka (1875)	1193
Albert Szirmai (1880)	1196
Victor Jacobi (1883)	1198
László Lajtha (1892).....	1199
Mihályi Erdélyi (1895)	1199
Ferenc Farkas (1905).....	1200
11. Czech Operetta	1202
Eduard Ingriš (1905).....	1202
12. Danish Operetta.....	1203
Emil Reesen (1887)	1203

13. Italian Operetta	1204
Vincenzo Valente (1855)	1204
Ruggero Leoncavallo (1857)	1204
Pasquale Mario Costa (1858)	1206
Giacomo Puccini (1858)	1211
Pietro Mascagni (1863)	1213
Carlo Lombardo (1869)	1215
Enrico Toselli (1883)	1247
Virgilio Ranzato (1883)	1248
Giuseppe Pietri (1886)	1252
Vito Lo Re (1906)	1255
 14. Greek Operetta	 1258
Spyridon Samaras (1861)	1259
Theophrastos Sakellaridis (1883)	1261
Nikos Xatziapostolou (1884)	1264
Kostas Giannidis (1903)	1265
 Conclusion	 1266
 Discography	 1268
 Index	 1280
1) General Index	1280
2) Index of Singers	1432
3) Index of Theatres	1445

INTRODUCTION

OPÉRA-BOUFFE/ OPERETTA/ LIGHT OPERA/ MUSICAL COMEDY

Operetta and its Origins

Operetta (It., diminutive of ‘opera’; Fr. *opérette*; Ger. *Operette*; Sp. *opereta*), refers to a light opera with spoken dialogue interspersed with songs and dances. In the 17th and 18th centuries the term ‘operetta’ had been applied in a more general way to a variety of stage works which were shorter or otherwise less ambitious than opera, such as *vaudeville*, *Singspiel* and ballad opera. The mainstream form of operetta flourished in Europe and the USA during the second half of the 19th and much of the 20th centuries. The term is still in use on the Continent for new works akin to the Musical Comedy, which evolved from operetta in English-speaking countries.

Operetta developed in the second half of the 19th century from very similar antecedents in different countries: the *opera-comique* of France and the more light-hearted *Singspiel* of German-speaking lands. As the century progressed, the serious concerns of mainstream opera were sustained and intensified. In Paris, the policy of the Théâtre de l’Opéra-Comique tended also to favour works of more serious pretensions, leaving a gap between *opera-comique* and *vaudeville*, a gap which the operetta filled. Jacques Offenbach, son of a Cologne synagogue cantor, established himself in Paris with his series of *operas-bouffes*. The success, indeed popular acclaim, accorded this new form of entertainment led to the operetta becoming established as a separate genre. Operetta increased in stature until it was considered to be an artform of its own, and no longer simply a “little opera”. Attempts to emulate Offenbach’s success abroad generated other national schools of operetta and helped to establish the genre internationally.

Performances of the *operas-bouffes* in Vienna introduced a vogue there, inspiring work by Franz von Suppé and by Johann Strauss, whom Offenbach encouraged. Viennese operetta was in essence coterminous

with the Habsburg Empire. After 1918 Berlin assumed the position once held by Vienna, and as popular musical tastes diverged more and more with the advent of new influences, like modern dance music and the cinema, the genre took on new guises, especially in the form of the musical comedy of Broadway and its imitators.

Operetta: Nature and Structure

Operetta is commonly described as a theatrical performance consisting of singing alternating with the spoken word and dancing. Operetta is the daughter of the French *opera-comique*, although the boundaries between the two are not always easily defined. The same could be said of the many genres that grew out of this same origin, such as the ‘musical farce’ or vaudeville, up to the emergence of the musical. The difficulty in describing operetta is that it is often explained ambiguously, focusing on only one element or another; but in spite of this, it has its own characteristics distinguishing it from all these other forms.

Operetta has a unique nature in the theatrical world. The composer can choose to tell some of the story like a play, in spoken words only, but can then, like opera, make significant use of music. Music informs the structure of operetta, indicating emotions, taking the place of speech, commenting on the action, and helping the audience to cue in to character and plot. Music overlaps with the verbal expression of the characters, transmuting the fiction of the stage into a reality for the audience through the composer’s message. Music also has the capability of revealing the characters’ motivations, expressing their inner life and spiritual feelings.

Quite often, in order to expose the inner emotion of a character, the composer will use a solo instrument to delineate the characterization. In the score there are often musical reminiscences and recurring motifs. Reminiscences recall earlier scenes in the work, and tend to be recreated verbatim. On the other hand, recurring motifs symbolize persons or abstract concepts, and can appear at different times in different guises.

Operetta is usually divided into three acts. The first act presents the story and introduces the characters; the second act develops the plot, with complications and unexpected events; and the third act is the final solution of the story, often with a happy ending.

Usually there are four principal actors: the tenor, the soprano, the soubrette and the fool (who is sometimes a bass, but often a comic tenor). Sometimes there are two other subordinate actors. All together they express themselves in trios, quartets, quintets, and in solos throughout the three acts. They each sing a ballad, an aria or a song as a duet, often in

unison, and without the sometimes harrowing concerns and conflicts of opera. Actors can appear alone on stage, in couples or with the chorus. The chorus is often incorporated with the *corps de ballet*. The ballads tend to express feelings shared with the majority of the characters, and appear mainly in the last two acts, often after some recitative, as a commentary, or with a characterizing function.

Formal Matters

The structure of operetta most clearly indicates its origins in the vaudevilles of the early fair shows, and the *opéra-comique* and *Singspiel* that were the formal popular derivatives. The short songs, ariettas and especially the strophic couplets were at the heart of these types, with duets and some other occasional concerted pieces reserved for moments of intrigue and emotional intensity. The first and especially second act finales are more extended concerted pieces, where the denouement of the action is usually reached. The last act is invariably much shorter, and often anti-climactic: the intrigue is resolved, with fewer musical numbers and a brief, sometimes almost perfunctory finale. The style of the music is light, elegant, sometimes folksy. The emphasis is on the intrigue, the unfolding of scenario through dialogue, often with great play on the social dynamics of linguistics: demotic tone, regional accents, with puns, jokes and verbal dexterity playing a crucial and often satirical part. The use of dialogue emphasizes the immediate relationship with *opéra-comique* and *Singspiel*, a situation that would intensify in the 20th century, where the term ‘musical play’ gains in popularity, until it becomes simply a ‘musical’.

Satire, Sex and Sybaritism

The subject matter of operetta is invariably comedic, with an emphasis on romance, sentiment and wish-fulfilment, whether the chosen setting is ancient, mythological, royal or demotic and work-a-day. Invariably the stories will involve the mixing of social elements, a subversive crossing of classes, with the success of a protagonist of the lower classes achieving love, power or status through ingenuity, skill and good fortune. The fundamental formal and thematic situation is established in the very first ballad play, *The Beggar's Opera* (1728) by John Pepusch and John Gay, and the first of all comic operas, Pergolesi's *La serva padrona* (1733). The blueprint, the more developed scenario and archetypical elements, characters and styles, are already present in Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (1782): two noble lovers who must find each other (soprano

and tenor), shadowed by two socially inferior types (also soprano and tenor). The secondary couple are servants or retainers, who echo the experiences of the noble characters. Further comedy is vested principally in a bass comedian (the *basso buffo* of *opera buffa*) who is sometimes a comic tenor (deriving from the French *Trilby* tradition, after Antoine Trilby, 1736-1795). Social status is reflected in the style and genre of the musical numbers, and the vaudeville finale is classic.

The archetypal operetta is Offenbach's *Orphée aux enfers* (1858), which of course is directly related to the very first operas (Peri's *Euridice*, 1600, Monteverdi's *Orfeo*, 1607), and to the mythology of Ancient Greece. Offenbach's work, and the myth of Orpheus, are the key symbols of this genre of musical theatre and the power of song. Offenbach's story turns the sacred on its head in a satirical process that uses the topicalities of its times, the bourgeois affluence, values and politics of the Second Empire, and the formal structures of operatic music and melody, to create a reflection on many sacrosanct or venerated elements of culture and society. *Opéra-comique*, as in the works of Daniel-François-Esprit Auber (1782-1871), is again ever-present in the prevalence of dance-forms as a recurring feature of rhythmic construction. Some operettas in fact are characterised by suites of popular dance types (particularly in the vibrant Spanish operetta, the *zarzuela*). This also emerged in the 1840s-1850s, derived from both Italian and French comic influences. This vivid topicality and satirical dimension is a constant feature of some forms of operetta, preeminently in the early works of Offenbach and Gilbert & Sullivan, and found the highpoint of its musical expression in the so-called 'can-can', the whirling dance finale of *Orphée aux enfers*. Another seminal operetta is Hervé's *Madame Nitouche* (1883) where the emphasis is altogether lighter and more superficial, and the intrigue is centred on social and amorous inversion and subversion. It typifies the tone for the unfolding of French Operetta throughout the rest of the 19th and into the 20th centuries, with a growing emphasis on somewhat ludicrous scenarios of a barely concealed erotic and often scabrous nature, invariably using older men and younger women, disguise and gender-crossing as the vectors of action.

Sentiment and Wonderful Cities ("Du Himmel auf Erden")

In the Belle Époque the focus of attention passed to a general adoration of the city of Paris, in particular as expressed in its growing and glittering nightlife, and most especially in its dance halls and nightclubs, epitomized

in the legendary Folies Bergère, with its serried ranks of can-can revues. The great operatic focus on romantic love and song is also the chief concern of operetta, and in the great Viennese School with its Gold and Silver Ages, the elements of satire and subversive eroticism give way to a more sentimental view of life, producing, in the greatest works by Johann Strauss, Carl Millöcker, Carl Zeller, Franz Lehár and Emmerich Kálmán, some of the most beautiful love music in the lyric repertory. This was without ever losing the essentially comedic spirit of operetta, and while adhering to all the conventional expectations of the genre. The city of Vienna (with its mythical Blue Danube) is of central importance in the whole history of drama, opera and operetta, and for more than a century was the only German-speaking city to sustain a theatrical life comparable to that of Paris or London. In the later 19th century, the city was the focal point of a vast cultural hegemony, where the various nations of the Habsburg lands found their true international centre, and the city itself became the progenitor of so much of modern culture. This city of dreams and song, the vibrant heart of the ubiquitous waltz, became an intellectual and spiritual icon in itself, celebrated in music and literature, a veritable 'heaven on earth'. This would also happen in varying degrees in other national operettas, with huge emotional and symbolic focus on the cities of Paris (*Gaieté Parisienne*), Berlin (with its *Berliner Luft*), Madrid (with a *génera chica* celebrating its own stereotypes and foibles), even Moscow (reflecting wryly on Soviet urban development, *Moskva Cheremushki*). Eventually the trend would be approximated by the mystique and the magnetic appeal of New York City (the Big Apple, with its *West Side Story*).

Lost Worlds and Cabaret

The fundamentals of the Offenbachian operetta were still the structural determinants, but with a greater emotional *impegno*, and increasingly influenced by the revue mentality of Paris, and the new indigenous elements of American popular culture: pilgrim, cowboy, negro and jazz. This growing trans-Atlantic influence was evident before 1914, and had already been broached in Leo Fall's *Die Dollarprinzessin* (1907), where the title alone sums up the new pull between a brash new mercantilism and the enduring allure of the aristocratic Old World. After the First World War, with the advent of American troops in Europe, the collapse of the Habsburg Empire, and growing economic crisis and political threats, the operetta became a new mode of social escape, especially in the years before the cinema took over as the universal medium of popular culture.

The Parisian *folies* and American jazz influences were channelled into the new Revue Operettas, where a more flagrant sentimentality, in the context of an élite living in a world of grand hotels, cabarets and nightclubs, saw the return of a different type of social satire, with an overwhelming preoccupation with status (especially aristocratic and royal), wealth (preferably of millions), the attainment of legitimacy (after the unfair losses and deprivations of war) and the overwhelming desire for marriage (as the answer to all searches for lost worlds of order, empire, nobility, societal structure and urban idylls). Hidden identities, disguise, restitution, entitlement and ennoblement, using the basic tropes of fairy and folk tales, coupled with topical social realities, became the stuff of all operetta plots, and in turn passed imperceptibly into the new generic variant of the musical play. The preoccupation with wealth, entitlement, inheritance and legitimacy is now couched in the language of modern 20th-century dance and the general milieu of the cabaret.

The Rise of the Songwriter, the Heirs of Orpheus

Attached to the rise of revue and cabaret was the phenomenal rise of the popular songwriter. Operetta itself, with its modality of set numbers embedded in dialogue, was always dependent primarily on the couplet. As the genre itself became more and more susceptible to boulevard entertainment, there was a corresponding increase in the number of composers whose first and principle fame claim to fame came not through their dramatic apprehension and setting of musical plays, but rather through their extraordinary capacity for turning out songs independent of any particular scenario. In Italy the rise of the Neapolitan art of *canzone*, represented by Pasquale Costa, was the harbinger of this trend, and was repeated in Austria where the idolatry of the city of Vienna led to the rise of the *Schramml* and its imitation in the songs of Heinrich Strecker, and, preeminently and on a wider scale, in the huge creativity of Robert Stolz. In America the representatives par excellence of the trend were Jerome Kern, Cole Porter and Irving Berlin, who wrote hundreds of songs, as solo entities, or for inclusion in the stage works of others. Both Kern and Berlin would, of course, find their greatest fame in the landmark works of *Show Boat* (1927) and *Annie Get Your Gun* (1946), both of which provided songs that have endured in a form detached from any formal dramatic context (like “There’s No Business Like Show Business”). This tendency, startlingly apparent in the post-war era of the 1920s, fed into the shape and style of operetta across the national board, which laid less emphasis on the lyrical structure of comic opera, and more on the spoken drama punctuated

by the odd song or setpiece. By the time of the later 1940s, an operetta like Fred Raymond's *Flieder aus Wien* (1949) would still be dreaming of the lost paradise of Old Vienna, still realized in terms of the stock types of the operetta stage, but with the sung numbers reduced to a meagre few. The emphasis was on comedy discourse in heavy dialect (of different types), with the odd 'hit' number (or *Schläger*) to capture a mood, but hardly to carry action. Interestingly, as the musical itself developed in this period, the opposite would take place in the 1970s and 1980s: the verbal dimension of the drama was increasingly phased out, with a resumption of an almost unbroken *durchkomponiert* flow of music, as in the benchmark musicals of Bernstein, Sondheim, Lloyd Webber and Schönberg.

Searching for the Dream

The 'Ruritanian' dimension of operetta is a particularly notorious characteristic of the genre, and one that took on a pointedly nostalgic quality with the demise of an old world order and four empires after the First World War. But this is just another guise of the recurring concerns for promise, longing and wish-fulfilment that have always characterized the operetta. These elements are given a complete re-shaping in the American manifestation of the medium. The late 19th-century form of operetta in New York was a European transplant written by migrant European authors. Only with John Phillip Sousa did a native-born American take on the tradition. The emergence of *The Wizard of Oz* (1903) by Paul Tietjens and Baldwin Sloane provides what is both a confirmation of a tradition, and the prophetic discernment of something new. The use of an American tale with characters, that would soon become part of a new mythology, spoke of a different kind of wish-fulfilment, one vested in the so-called 'American Dream'. The allegorical implications of the story, with the 'Yellow Brick Road' leading into a liberated future, would achieve legendary status when the film version of the musical appeared in 1939, featuring Judy Garland singing Harold Arlen's song "Somewhere over the Rainbow". While the Viennese-themed 'English Romantic' operetta continued, and came to a regional highpoint in Sigmund Romberg's *The Student Prince* (1924), the very epitome of Ruritanian longing, a decisive new direction was taken by Jerome Kern with *Show Boat* (1927). Kern, perhaps more than anyone, is responsible for forging a new direction, for transforming the New York operetta into the Broadway musical, different from anything that had ever come before. It broke away entirely from European traditions, implicitly tackling deeply serious and contentious social and racial issues in the story, and creating a

style of singable melody that has come to be known as ‘American’, forming a source that inspired 20th-century songwriters as never before. *Show Boat* (with lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein) was ground-breaking in its integration of music and story, and some of its songs such as “Ol’ Man River” (Kern’s own favourite) and “Can’t Help Lovin’ That Man” became international classics. A few years later in 1930, lyricist E. Y. ‘Yip’ Harburg and composer Jay Gorney created the legendary “Brother, can you spare me a Dime” (part of the 1932 revue *Americana*, the melody based on a Russian-Jewish lullaby Gorney’s mother had sung to him as a child). This song captured inimitably the sorrows of the Great Depression Years, depicting the way in which prosperous society can dissolve into bankruptcy and food queues. During this period the American musical came to assume an authentic expression of the deep yearning and aspirations of operetta for safety, prosperity and fulfilment, a new take on the musical play which speaks of the American Dream. Benjamin Britten’s first stage work *Paul Bunyan* (1941) uses the mythological being who embodies the American spirit of manifest providence, while Leonard Bernstein would conclude his *Candide* (1956), contemplating the Voltarian concept of “the best of all possible worlds”, by a vision of cultivating one’s own garden of fulfilment. In *West Side Story* (1957), using Shakespeare’s universal message of reconciliation, he provided an American musical play for the whole world.

The New Challenge of Film/ The Cinema

Operetta has always responded almost immediately to the emergence of new trends in society. This has been the case in the continual adaptation of new dance forms, in the flourishing of songwriting and the appearance of cabaret and revue in the decades following the First World War. While the universal appeal of opera and operetta was seriously curtailed by the development of the film during this period, operetta composers also responded to this revolutionary medium, with many theatre composers also contributing to this novel form of dramatic experience. The Russian composer Isaak Dunayevsky is a good example of the trend, since composing for both the live stage and the celluloid screen was to feature in parallel mode throughout his artistic life. From 1929 to 1941 he was music director of the Leningrad Music Hall, a variety theatre, and in 1934 wrote the score for the first notable Soviet film musical *Vesolye rebyata* (Merry Fellows), the first of some 30 sound tracks, as well as pioneering a vigorous contribution to Soviet operetta in 12 works. Alert to the outreach and propaganda potential of the various media, Dunayevsky provided one

of the most famous operettas of the era in *Vol'nij veter* (Wild Wind/The Wind of Liberty) (Moscow 1947), with its message of proletarian solidarity in the face of social oppression, and also the scores for some of the most successful films of the Stalinist period (*Circus* and *Volga-Volga*). By the mid-century operetta composers were almost inevitably also writers of popular songs, light entertainment music and film scores (the Germans Hans-Hendrik Wehding and Siegfried Köhler are good examples; Norbert Schultze wrote “Lili Marleen” which became the anthem of the Second World War).

Some operettas transferred effortlessly from the stage to the screen, where in particular cases the film version introduced the work to a huge audience and secured a global popularity in the cinema unthinkable for the live production. Mario Lanza’s appearance in the 1954 film version of *The Student Prince* is a good example of the generic cross-over and the renown won by the singer-actor. This was even more the case with works like *The King and I* (1956), *West Side Story* (1961), *My Fair Lady* (1965) and *The Sound of Music* (1965) which became vastly famous through the cinema, as did Yul Brunner, Natalie Wood, Audrey Hepburn and Julie Andrews. In more recent years musicals such as *Cabaret* (1972), *Chicago* (2002), and *Sweeney Todd* (2007) have similarly become better known as films rather than stage works. More recently the trend has been for films to be translated to the stage as musicals. The two most notable creations of Richard and Robert Sherman, *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* (2003) and *Mary Poppins* (2004), are notable instances.

A Jewish Story

One of the most interesting and puzzling aspects of the history of the operetta is the fact that virtually all the creators, composers and librettists, from Jacques Offenbach to Claude-Michel Schönberg, have been Jewish. Even the Strauss family, although Catholics, were of immediate Jewish ancestry. Why should this be so? Offenbach worked in freedom, with all the appurtenances of the French state, whether royal, imperial or republican, behind him. His followers in Vienna were also free to operate at the heart of an empire of tolerance and unity. Lehár’s second work, *Der Rastelbinder*, features the typical situation of Slovakian Jews under Habsburg rule, while his librettists and most famous star, Richard Tauber, were all Jewish. So was Emmerich Kálmán, the other great composer of the Silver Era. The cabaret era of the 1920s was entirely run by Jews, beginning with the famous entrepreneur Rudolf Nelson, and Kurt Weill’s most notable creations after *Die Dreigroschen Oper* (1928) were songs for

theatre and club entertainment. The presence of Jews in operetta and musical theatre generally emerged like the results of the litmus test after the Nazi rise to power. So many Jewish composers had to flee; some, like Leo Ascher, were arrested in the Kristall Nacht pogrom; some were incarcerated, like Eberhard Schmidt in Sachsenhausen; others were murdered, like Leon Jessel who died after being tortured by the Gestapo, or the librettist of *The Land of Smiles*, Fritz Löhner-Beda, murdered in Auschwitz III Monowitz concentration camp and nearly forgotten, although many of his songs remain popular to this day. Some were allowed to escape, like Oscar Straus, who was saved through the actions of a sympathetic German officer on his train to Switzerland, or Leo Blech, who was allowed to leave Riga on the politic orders of Göring. Others risked their lives to save their Jewish colleagues, like Leo Rochlitzer in Vienna. Many ordinary musicians of the period of the Revue Operetta were victims of the Holocaust. Cabaret was played in ghettos, camps and concentration camps, in Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen, in Mauthausen and Westerbork, in Börgermör and Esterwegen.

Volker Kühn (1997) has drawn attention to the play *Ghetto* by the Israeli author Joshua Sobol, performed in Berlin and Hamburg several years ago. This was not fiction brought onto the stage, but a re-enactment of the horrible reality of the year 1943: in the Ghetto of Vilna, where amidst tens of thousands of Jews, crowded together in the most cramped of spaces and guarded by the SS, dreading being taken away and killed, theatre was played. “Listen to me! The Germans do not want to destroy only our bodies, no! They want our soul! Do you understand? They try to enter into our soul. They are determined to let their bullets enter our bodies and their spirit our souls. Do you understand? Our fight against them must be a spiritual fight. We won’t defeat them with our fists, but with our mind!’ Suddenly, one hears songs in Yiddish, people dance and sing. The SS men in their black skull-uniforms appear to be amused, some inmates turn their backs, others clap and join in. A poster is rolled up on stage. ‘One does not play theatre in a cemetery!’ is written on it.”

Cabaret was used as an atmospheric drug to keep those destined for death quiet. It was first tolerated by the guarding troops, and later on ordered; cabaret was an opportunity for survival, a means of encouragement and an act of resistance, performed by masters in the craft, on the programme at Auschwitz, Sobibor and Treblinka until the bitter end.

The terrible series of pogroms in the Russia Empire (1881, 1903, 1905) also have their role to play in this strange history. Waves of Jewish emigrants arrived in the United States, among them the Gershowits family whose sons Jacob and Israel would achieve legendary fame as George and

Ira Gershwin, the very arbiters of the Golden Age of New York musical theatre in the 1920s and 1930s. The story of Broadway is a further extension of the history of operetta and its symbiotic involvement with Jewish creativity and enterprise. Nearly all the great composers and librettists of this brilliant era, from Jerome Kern, through Irving Berlin, Rogers & Hammerstein, Lerner & Lowe, Leonard Bernstein to Stephen Sondheim and Stephen Schwartz, have continued and developed this rich cultural association.

Ruth HaCohen (2012) has revealed how an age old Gentile prejudice, from the first centuries of the Christian era, has associated Jews with noise, a ‘musical libel’—a variation on the Passion story that recurs in various forms and cultures in which an innocent Christian boy is killed by a Jew in order to silence his ‘harmonious musicality’. She has shown how entrenched aesthetic-theological assumptions have persistently defined European culture and its internal moral and political orientations, and traced the tensions between Jewish ‘noise’ and idealized Christian ‘harmony’ and their artistic manifestations. The idea is implicitly sustained with further variation in the thesis earlier expounded by Richard Wagner in his pamphlet *Das Judentum in der Musik* (1850) where he maintained that the restless Jews, being of an ancient and alien racial origin, could not possibly write an authentically ‘European’ music. The irony is deepened when the manifold beauties and universal popular appeal of operetta, understood as a quintessential expression of mainstream European culture, is brought into this equation, and the musical libel turned on its head. It must not be forgotten that Adolf Hitler’s favourite theatrical work was not any opera by Richard Wagner, but rather Franz Lehár’s *Die lustige Witwe*—an extraordinary situation which conveniently overlooked the fact that the librettists of this universally loved work were Victor Léon and Leo Stein.

Whatever the history, the question remains why so many operetta composers and poets were Jewish, and what this means (if anything)? The outreach of this type of musical theatre to social community, the capacity for sharp even satirical observation of society so apparently friendly, yet able to turn overnight into denouncers, persecutors and killers, underlies the history of the Jewish people, their long centuries of exclusion, excoriation and massacre. Their wandering and homeless sensibilities, yearning for transformation, acceptance, restoration and earthly fulfilment, surely has something to do with the very Jewish perception of operetta as a metonym for a pastoral heritage restored and an eschatological hope reaffirmed.

Operetta Now

Modern operetta has enjoyed popularity in many countries; after its glittering birth in mid-19th century France, it was the Viennese operetta that became most admired and popular. Even today, although overwhelmed by the directly derived musical, operetta is widely accepted and enjoyed. In many countries there is a growing “rediscovery”, and operetta is very enthusiastically performed in Austria, Germany, Hungary, France, Italy, and Spain.

The legendary world of operetta has always attracted all kinds of audiences: those longing for amusement, for escape from the reality of everyday life, and for partaking in not only the lofty peaks of “serious” music, but also the kind of music that amuses in a gay, comic, and sentimental way, yet is sometimes suffused with a very real melancholy.

The aim of this book is to provide an overview of operetta and its derivatives, by looking at the most representative composers in the national schools of Europe and America, providing some detail about their lives and achievements, listing their main stage works, and the librettists with whom they worked. The composers are gathered under their national schools, and are arranged chronologically in their respective sections by date of birth. The inclusion of information concerning the singers and the theatres associated with their works entails a huge survey of the cultural life of Europe and America for some 150 years, and is a rich source of reference. The records of some composers are very detailed, while others are hardly remembered, and some have only the briefest of records. In many instances the achievement or popularity of the composer and his works is reflected in the presence of plot synopses, or at least some indication of the content of the story, some detail of the musico-dramatic nature of the piece, and the extent of its reception. These details have been found in many different places and from all available sources. The great studies and surveys of opera and operetta, especially the 19th century work of Clément & Larousse, and the more recent achievements of Anton Würz, Mark Lubbock, Kurt Gänzl and Andrew Lamb, as well as Amanda Holden and the *Grove Dictionary of Opera*, remain the touchstones of research and information.

The national groupings are laid out according to chronological criteria, with the founding French Operetta first (Offenbach, Hervé, Lecocq), followed by the great Austro-Hungarian (Suppé, Johann Strauss II,

Millöcker) and German Schools (Dellinger, Zumpe, Lincke), originating as they did in the immediate wake of the example of Offenbach. The vibrant Spanish Operetta was also active from the 1840-1850s (Fuertes, Oudrid, Barbieri, Gatzambide), while the English Operetta began emerging in the 1860s (Clay, Sullivan), and the American in the 1880s (Sousa, Engländer). The smaller national schools are then given in roughly regional and chronological association (Yiddish, Russian, Croatian, Hungarian, Czech, Danish, Italian, Greek operetta). While the aim has been to be as comprehensive as possible, such intentions will always have to remain aspirational in the amount of information and detail available and presented, within the limits and the understanding of genre. This is especially the case with the Spanish zarzuela and with the American/British musical since the Second World War, where only a selection of works has been provided.

Some composers, whose work covers many different types of musical theatre over a long period, are important figures for establishing benchmarks and giving an idea of the vigour, variety and generic fluidity of this type of music. In some cases a full chronology of their theatrical works has been provided, followed by a more selected listing of pieces overtly designated operettas (as with Franz von Suppé, Robert Stolz, Walter Kollo and Jean Gilbert). These figures demonstrate a phenomenal creative prodigality, and the record of their oeuvre over decades illustrates the impact of social history in the evolution and transformation of genre.

Bibliography

History and Synopses

- Clément, Félix and Larousse, Pierre. *Dictionnaire des opéras* (1897, rev. 1905) (rev. Arthur Pougin). New York: Da Capo Press Music Reprint Series, 1969.
- Eisenmann, Alexander. *Das grosse Opernbuch*. Stuttgart and Berlin: Deutsche Verlags Anstalt, 1922, 1925.
- Gänzl, Kurt and Lamb, Andrew. *Gänzl's Book of the Musical Theatre*. New York: Schirmer Books, 1989.
- Gänzl, Kurt. *The Musical. A Concise History*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1997.
- . *Musicals. The Complete Illustrated Story of the World's Most Popular Live Entertainment*. London: Carlton Books, 2001.
- . *The Encyclopedia of the Musical Theatre*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1994;

- New York: Schirmer, 2001.
- Kobbé, Gustave. *Kobbé's Complete Opera Book* (1919). Edited and Revised by the Earl of Harewood. 9th edition. London: Putnam, 1976. Reprinted Emereo Publishing, 2013.
- Lubbock, Mark and Ewen, David. *The Complete Book of Light Opera*. London: Putnam, 1962.
- Melitz, Leo. *Führer durch die Operetten*. Berlin: Globus-Verlag, 1917.
- Webber, Christopher. *The Zarzuela Companion*. Scarecrow Press, 2002.
- Würz, Anton and Zenter, W. (eds). *Reclams Opern- und Operettenführer*. Stuttgart, 1955.
- Würz, Anton. *Reclams Operettenführer*. 23. Auflage. Stuttgart: Reclam, 2002.

General

- Baker, in *The Musical Quarterly*, vol. 6, no. 1 (January 1920), pp. 98–117.
- Bernauer R., *Das Theater meines Lebens*. Berlin 1955.
- Beaumont Wicks, C.. *The Parisian Stage*. Alabama, 1950-79.
- Delamarche, Claire (ed.). *L'Opéra pour les Nuls*. Paris: Éditions Générales First, 2006.
- Eisenmann, Alexander. *Das grosse Opernbuch*. Stuttgart and Berlin: Deutsche Verlags Anstalt, 1922, 1925.
- Fischer, Michael; Jansen, Wolfgang; Widmaier, Tobias (eds). *Lied und populäre Kultur - Song and Popular Culture 58* (2013): *Song und populäres Musiktheater: Symbiosen und Korrespondenzen. Song and Popular Musical Theatre: Symbioses and Correspondences*. Germany: Waxmann Verlag GmbH, 2013.
- Grun, B. *Kulturgeschichte der Operette*. Munich, 1961.
- HaCohen, Ruth. *The Music Libel Against the Jews*. Yale University Press, 2012.
- Holden, Amanda (ed.). *The New Penguin Opera Guide*. New York: Penguin Putnam, 2001.
- Holden, Amanda (ed.). *The Penguin Concise Guide to Opera*. London: Penguin Books, 2005
- Hughes, Gervaise. *Composers of Operetta*. London: Macmillan, 1962.
- Jacob, Walter (ed.). *La opera*. Buenos Aires: Claridad, 1944.
- Jambou, Louis (ed.). *Dictionnaire chronologique de l'Opéra de 1597 à nos jours*, 1994. Le Livre de Poche 7861.
- Keller O., *Die Operette*. Vienna 1926.
- . *Die Operette in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung*. Leipzig, 1926.
- Klotz, Volker. *Bürgerliches Lachtheater Komödie – Posse – Schwank –*