



panel, subtexts that had underpinned earlier individual presentations came to the fore. The discussion quickly organized itself across a continuum defined at one end by those who believed in the interpretative act and the central importance of historical sources (whether they be period instruments, treatises or early recordings) as guiding mechanisms for that act, versus those at the other end who approached the performance of pre-composed music as a purely creative matter and believed it should be freed of any attempts at re-creation, however imagined. To me, there was an unspoken sense that perhaps we have reached a post-Historically Informed Performance era, in which history and historical materials could no longer inform interpretation in any obvious way, and that the performer's persona ought to be celebrated as the focus of any act of performance.

It did strike me, however, that the manner in which 'interpretation' was evoked by some members of the panel was simplistic. It could become a blanket term that denoted a kind of subservience to (and in turn, reverence for) texts, the availability of some verifiable 'truth' and the ever-looming pitfall of believing in the possibilities of 'authenticity'. It should be possible to reach some reconciliation of these differences if the notion of interpretation were expanded beyond the sense that there might be a 'right' and a 'wrong', or a historically valid and a historically invalid, interpretation. As Richard Taruskin had already pointed out at the height of the HIP movement, whatever the internal underlying motivation may be – whether it be exegetic/interpretive or purely creative – performers can and have produced highly creative artistic results that reflect contemporary aesthetics even when they profess to have alternative goals in mind. It is possible, then, to argue that 'interpretation' can be framed without recourse to blind reverence. The difficulty, as implicitly acknowledged by those who wish to move past the notion, lies in erecting frameworks that can serve to regulate the creative act of performing pre-composed music. Perhaps the argument should hinge not on whether one ought to be for or against the notion of interpretation, but rather on what kinds of frameworks one brings to bear on what is by its very definition a creative act, and to move towards refining and expanding what these frameworks might be. Some of these thoughts emerged during the panel, such as framing a performance as a response to a work's cumulative performance history, or to play for/against modern critical values, or to condition one's performance choices on one's physical capacities (since no two persons are the same), or to understand a performance not as the end point but rather as a mid- or starting-point within an ongoing artistic process.

Finally, much credit is due to conference director Olivia Sham, who framed a coherent set of concerns at the intersection between the functions of history and the contemporary goals and aesthetics of performance. One hopes for a continuation of the dialogues that took place at this event.

*This report was compiled with the help of Olivia Sham for the portions of the conference-festival that I could not attend.*

MIKE CHENG-YU LEE  
<[mikechengyulee@gmail.com](mailto:mikechengyulee@gmail.com)>



doi:10.1017/S1478570616000531

'DAS SERAIL' (1778) BY JOSEPH FRIEBERT IN HISTORICAL, SOCIO-POLITICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT(S)

UNIVERSITÄT MOZARTEUM SALZBURG, 19–21 MAY 2016

Until recently, the singspiel *Das Serail* by Joseph Friebert (1724–1799) was known mainly because of its libretto, published in 1779 in Bozen (Bolzano). As Alfred Einstein demonstrated in a 1936 article ('Die Text-Vorlage zu Mozarts *Zaide*', *Acta musicologica* 8/1–2, 30–37), the opera, written while Friebert served as the music director in Passau, inspired Mozart and his friend Johann Andreas Schachtner in Salzburg to



collaborate on *Zaide*, Mozart's unfinished attempt at a serious German opera. In the symposium's opening lecture, Michael Hüttler (Hollitzer Wissenschaftsverlag) explained that in 2006 a copy of Friebert's score, dated to 1779, was rediscovered and purchased (together with two other of Friebert's singspiels) by the Don Juan Archiv in Vienna through its founder, Hans Weidinger. The Archiv will publish a critical edition of *Das Serail* in 2017, together with the facsimile of the original manuscript and the collected essays from the symposium.

Hüttler also explained the history of the singspiel and the manuscript. The libretto might be credited to Franz Joseph Sebastiani (1722–after 1778) because of a 1777 reference to an 'Operette' entitled *Serail* in the repertoire of Sebastiani's children's theatre troupe and a 1786 ascription of the work to Sebastiani in a repertoire list of another children's troupe, that directed by Felix Berner (1738–1787). Hüttler collected numerous references, most often in the form of theatre posters, for the performances of *Das Serail* in southern Germany and Austria between 1778 and 1782, but also questioned the supposed 1777 production of the singspiel in Wels, Austria, which is often mentioned in scholarly literature.

After Hüttler's introduction, the symposium participants were treated to a recital of excerpts from *Das Serail*, *Zaide* and Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* by the students of the Universität Mozarteum under the direction of Josef Wallnig. The opportunity to hear Mozart's famous arias together with the newly recovered compositions by Friebert was rewarding, and enhanced the spirit of singspiel enthusiasm that lasted throughout the whole symposium. Participants were particularly delighted to hear the arias for the character Die Sklavin from *Das Serail*. Die Sklavin no longer appears in Mozart's *Zaide*, but shares some traits with Blonde in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*. Whereas Blonde is a freedom-loving English woman, *Das Serail*'s slave girl hails from Upper Austria and speaks in a dialect that must have greatly appealed to the audiences in southern Germany for whom the singspiel was no doubt written. The recital was just a foretaste of the full production of the rediscovered opera in a modern world premiere that will take place in Salzburg's Schloss Leopoldskron on 24 June 2017.

The opening panel turned to the world of wandering troupes, the theatrical environment in which *Das Serail* was most likely created. Adeline Mueller (Mount Holyoke College) used Berner's children's troupe to explain some of the complex aesthetics surrounding eighteenth-century performances by children. For example, critics and audiences mixed the seemingly incongruous ideas that children were more natural than adults yet gave performances filled with artifice. Similarly, child performers were admired for their easy submission to directorial control, yet this submission might have sometimes been perceived to have negative associations with slavery, particularly in harem operas. Mueller also discussed the individual child stars of Berner's troupe, especially those who participated in performances of *Das Serail*, and traced their travels across southern Germany and Austria. Bärbel Rudin (Universität Dortmund) also focused on the relationship between *Das Serail* and eighteenth-century traditions of German itinerant theatre. She showed that the elusive nature of travelling troupes makes it difficult to acquire a precise understanding of works such as *Das Serail*. The most important uncertainties concerning *Das Serail* in this respect are the libretto's authorship, how a text supposedly written by Sebastiani got into the hands of Berner and Friebert several years after Sebastiani's death, and how the libretto ultimately made its way to Mozart in Salzburg.

The following panel turned away from singspiel and focused on Friebert and his career in Passau. Käthe Springer-Dissmann (Don Juan Archiv, Vienna) discussed the importance of the archbishop Joseph Maria, Count Thun-Hohenstein. Known in musicological circles mainly from Leopold Mozart's negative report about his son's 1762 visit to Passau, the archbishop was in fact an important Enlightenment reformer and a strong supporter of theatre. Markus Eberhardt (Consortium musicum Passau) demonstrated that during the Friebert era (1763–1795) Passau achieved great prominence as a musical centre. One of Friebert's most significant accomplishments in Passau was organizing some of the earliest productions of Mozart's operas in Germany: in 1789 he produced singspiel versions of *Le nozze di Figaro* and *Don Giovanni*, and in 1793, *Die Zauberflöte*.

The largest group of papers at the symposium discussed *Das Serail*'s musical and theatrical context. Julia Ackermann (Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien) examined *Nanerl bey Hof*, one of the other



two Friebert singspiels purchased by the Don Juan Archiv. Unlike *Das Serail*, *Nanerl* was an adaptation of a pre-existing opéra comique, which makes it a perfect window into the processes of cultural transfer between France and Germany, and among individual German-speaking regions. Ackermann discussed the varied approaches by German dramatists and composers to the original Favart opera, *Ninette à la Court*, showing that, as with *Das Serail*, Friebert's *Nanerl* was probably associated with Berner's child troupe. Christian Moritz-Bauer (Universität Wien) focused on Michael Haydn's incidental music to Voltaire's *Zayre*, which was performed in Salzburg in 1777. Voltaire's play and Haydn's music are particularly important in connection with *Das Serail* because *Zayre*'s plot is similar to that of Friebert's singspiel. Reinhard Eisendle (Don Juan Archiv, Vienna) explored the relationship between the plot of *Das Serail* and the principles of dramaturgy as preached and practised by the associates of the Viennese Nationaltheater around 1780. He showed that the plot of *Das Serail* does not fit into the archetypes favoured by the Nationaltheater administrators, because its unexpected outcome and sentimental leanings contradict the Nationaltheater repertoire's focus on rationality. Hans-Peter Kellner (Don Juan Archiv, Vienna) discussed dramaturgical aspects of abduction stories in relation to both eighteenth-century staging and twentieth- and twenty-first-century popular culture. Kellner will serve as the stage director for the 2017 production of *Das Serail* in Salzburg.

Two papers dealt with the subject of exoticism. Jen-yen Chen (National Taiwan University) focused on eighteenth-century operatic representations of the 'Far' East. To illustrate the political nature of Habsburg representations of China, Chen compared Metastasio's 1752 libretto *L'eroe cinese* (first set to music by Giuseppe Bonno) to the famous presentation of the same tale in the thirteenth-century work *Zhaoshi gu'er*. He showed that Europeans transformed the Chinese tale not only to fit their preconceived notions about far-away places, but also to express their own political and dynastic agendas. The use of exotic plots for expressing ideas about European culture and society, in other words the 'endotic' (as opposed to exotic) meanings of eighteenth-century theatrical works, was also the subject of my own paper (Martin Nedbal, University of Kansas). I examined numerous 'Turkish' operas and plays (especially those derived from Favart's *Soliman second*) performed in Vienna during the eighteenth century. These works gradually, from the 1750s to the 1790s, suppressed and transformed the scenes in which a sultan throws a handkerchief to his chosen concubine. My conclusion was that these adaptations were to a large extent endotic because they reflected not the Austrian prejudices about oriental 'others', but commonly held ideas about Habsburg emperors and their subjects in relation to other European nations.

Three presentations focused on the musical aspects of *Das Serail*. Adrian Kuhl (Universität Heidelberg) discussed musical tropes through which exotic singspiels differentiated the national and social backgrounds of their characters. Kuhl stressed the idiosyncratic position of Die Sklavin in *Das Serail* and her Upper Austrian origin. Also interesting was his suggestion that eighteenth-century exotic singspiels used opera seria style to express the nationality of Italian inhabitants of harems. Tatjana Marković (Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien) pointed out the ways in which the music of *Das Serail* upholds the conventions of the south German singspiel. She noted the structural similarity between *Das Serail* and Gottlieb Stephanie the Younger's principles of singspiel composition (published in 1792). At the same time, Marković mentioned several highly unusual musical aspects of *Das Serail*, especially the music associated, once again, with the slave girl. Walter Kreyszg (University of Saskatchewan) examined Friebert's instrumentation in *Das Serail* based on surviving wind parts (two horns plus two oboes alternating with flutes). He showed that Friebert was emulating orchestral practices in contemporary Vienna and Mannheim, and that his use of wind instruments was mainly colouristic and decorative.

It is unusual for a symposium to be devoted solely to the singspiel, which made the few days in Salzburg particularly special for everyone involved. That the symposium represented a scholarly introduction to a newly discovered eighteenth-century opera was also extremely stimulating.

MARTIN NEDBAL  
[mnedbal@ku.edu](mailto:mnedbal@ku.edu)

