14 Operetta in Italy

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The question of the origins and generic characteristics of operetta has always been contentious, but it assumed particularly heated tones in Italy, a country that prided itself on having invented most forms of musical theatre. After all, it is undeniable that the very word 'operetta' comes from the Italian 'opera'. The relationship between operetta and Italian opera – not only *buffa* but also *seria* – was central to the critical discourses about Italian music and culture between the 1860s and the 1920s, becoming closely intertwined with the debate about the position of musical theatre between entertainment and art. More broadly, the critical response to operetta in Italy reveals concerns and anxiety on the new role the middle classes were acquiring as taste makers, especially with regard to emerging concepts of social decorum and propriety. Inevitably, discussions of operetta took also strong nationalistic undertones in a country that was struggling to find a unifying national identity and that recognized operetta as a foreign import, one that could contaminate opera or illegitimately undermine its primacy on the Italian stage.

Regardless of its complex origins, operetta as we know it today was in Italy first and foremost an imported foreign genre. Starting in the 1860s, it was the French works of Offenbach, Hervé and Lecocq and later the so-called 'Viennese' imports of Suppé, Strauss Jr and Lehár that conquered the Italian stages, at first with little response from Italian composers that could undermine the foreign monopoly on operetta. These years, after all, encompassed not only Verdi's most resounding triumphs but also the consolidation of a canon that included a number of serious and comic operas by Rossini, Donizetti and Bellini. As Bruno Traversetti remarked, '[Italian] *melodramma* . . . is the only tradition that is common to the entire Italian social universe during the "bourgeois period": a model that is so voracious and comprehensive that it leaves almost no emotional residues that can be used with dignity.'[1]

If for a long time Italian composers refused to acknowledge the increasing success of French and Viennese operettas, critics and audiences were drawn to the popular foreign genre that was attracting unprecedented crowds to theatres all over the country, across large cities and small towns. While some more conservative critics looked at operetta with

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suspiciousness and from the superior standpoint of the time-honoured Italian operatic tradition, an increasingly voracious audience welcomed operetta as a breath of fresh air. Arguably, the success and widespread popularity of foreign operetta in Italy reached its climax at the turn of the century, particularly with the extraordinary success of *La vedova allegra*, which premiered in Milan in 1907. The Italian adaptation of Lehár's *Die lustige Witwe* took Milan and subsequently the entire peninsula by storm, stirring new interest and encouraging more Italian composers to engage with a genre that was now acquiring higher status and increasing popularity even among critics.

Production and Reception of Operetta in Nineteenth-Century Italy

From the 1860s, French touring companies, such as the much celebrated Grégoire brothers, as well as Italian troupes began to adapt, produce and perform French operettas – in French as well as in Italian – in Italy. That Italian critics found these early imports difficult to define in regard to their generic characteristics and perceived quality is immediately clear if we consider the terminology they used to discuss them. When Lecocq's *opéra bouffe Les cent vierges* premiered in Paris in 1872, an Italian critic for the *Gazzetta musicale di Milano* called it 'an opera buffa', whereas when the same work opened at the Teatro Manzoni in Milan in 1874 it was called a 'vaudeville'. Another extremely successful *opéra comique* by Lecocq, *La fille de Madame Angot*, was dismissed as 'a French buffoonerie', a 'parody that came from France . . . the most French if not the most ungraceful of all'.[2] However, when Lecocq's *opéra comique Les prés Saint-Gervais* was performed in London in 1874, an Italian critic wrote that this was 'overall, an operetta that belongs more to the elegant genre of the *opéra comique*'.[3] While the presence of dialogue was clearly a strong defining element, it seems clear also that the perceived quality of the work could contribute to a definition. Only a few selected French imports could aspire, in fact, to be compared to Italian genres. Offenbach's *Madame l'archiduc*, for example, is praised by a critic for the *Gazzetta musicale di Milano* as 'a jewel', its music really worthy of an *opera buffa*.[4]

Examining the rise of operetta in Italy, Carlotta Sorba argued that 'Italian versions of French operettas developed immediately both their own more comic side as well as a greater emphasis on word and mime compared to music, thus distancing themselves from the Italian operatic tradition, with which it was particularly difficult to compete'.[5] The distinct nature of French operetta in Italy was reflected in the system of production.

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Venues for *spettacoli d'arti varie*, variety shows, began to be purpose-built during the 1870s, attracting large crowds of paying audiences, who sought varied and light-hearted forms of entertainment at low prices. The Teatro dal Verme, which would see the Italian premiere of *La vedova allegra* in 1907, could host also clown and circus acts, acrobatic and equestrian displays and magic shows, and later the French import 'cabaret' as well as operetta, *opera buffa* and 'main stream' opera. La Scala, on the other hand, the temple where the increasingly codified operatic canon was consecrated, remained impermeable to the charms of operetta. And the same differentiation of venues according to repertory can be observed in other Italian cities.

The audiences of operetta in Italy during the 1860s and 1870s are often described as rowdy and loud, responding to silly gags with 'guffaws'. Even a bolt of lightning that hit the stage during one of the performances of *La figlia di Madame Angot* at the Teatro dal Verme was received with laughter, prompting a critic to comment that 'the audience, used to the school of the daughter of Madame Angot, does not have respect for anything anymore and started laughing even at lightning. This is definitely the century of parody.' The same critic seems amused and surprised to learn that at the Teatro dal Verme, 'the *clients*' (not *il pubblico* but *gli avventori,* italics in the source!) could not only smoke but also drink beer during the shows. Operetta, after all, was considered pure entertainment and could not aspire to be considered art. Therefore, the audience was encouraged to attend operettas only if 'they wanted to be amused for a couple of hours'.[6]

The audience's misbehaviour was apparently caused by what some critics considered as an extremely lascivious kind of theatre that relied on easy, vulgar and often sexual, innuendos. Again describing Lecocq's *Les cent vierges* in Paris in 1872, a critic for the *Gazzetta musicale di Milano* argues that 'honest women don't dare go to the theatre anymore' since the French librettos of these days had become so obscene that they caused them to blush.[7] When *Le cento vergini* finally arrived in Milan in 1874, another critic confirmed: 'it was said that it was immoral: let us actually say it is lewd, which is something else. It does not corrupt anything, but at times it can become nauseating.'[8] It was not only the lasciviousness of the story but also the apparently nonsensical nature of many operettas that offended the critics' good taste, as a critic observed about Offenbach's *Le corsaire noir*:

> This whole *pasticcio* is too much for one night. Incoherence merrily follows incoherence; inverisimilitude follows inverismilitude; scenes and tableaux follow more scenes and more tableaux without a logical link between them; fantasy and reality, history and fairy tale alternate without any connection between each other and without creating a harmonious whole that would fit the action.

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As for the music, if in some cases critics were generally positive about two or three key numbers, usually dances like cancan, csárdás and waltzes, some operettas received harsh reviews, as for example Offenbach's aforementioned *Le corsaire noir* in the *Gazzetta di Milano* in 1872:

> Shame on a society, who would take as its daily musical nourishment what Offenbach is producing! Shame on an audience that would take pleasure in this nonsense, which could better suit a tavern, but is absolutely not worthy of a theatre that aims to be a temple dedicated to the arts![9]

Part of the reason for the uncompromising criticism had to do with the quality of the translations, very often deemed inadequate to convey the true verve of the original, as well as of the performances, which were described as having a very 'distinct flavour' compared to those of *opera seria*: 'the chorus sang out of tune, Chambéry, great artist, went off board with his gags in utter bad taste . . . Signora Faivre did very well, and has a more robust voice that is more in tune than what we are used to hear in French theatre.'[10] According to many critics, the only redeeming feature of many French operettas was that they were increasingly staged by Italian companies who could afford performers 'born and bred in the Milanese musical entourage', therefore delivering a more reliable result. According to Sorba, it is in this context that we have to understand Friedrich Nietzsche's well-known comments on the lack of elegance of French operettas when they were performed in Italy:

> Moral: not Italy, old friend! Here where I can see the leading light-opera company in Italy, I say to myself, at the sight of each movement of the pretty, all-too-pretty little women, that they make a living caricature of every light opera. They have no *esprit* in their little legs not to speak of their little heads . . . Offenbach is just as sombre (I mean thoroughly vulgar) in Italy as in Leipzig.[11]

Thus, operetta in Italy prompted very contrasting reactions: while audiences of the final few decades of the nineteenth century voraciously consumed the adaptations of French operettas and the increasing number of Viennese operettas that followed, taking great pleasure in the light, overly licentious and seemingly nonsensical plots, some critics condemned the genre as an attack on propriety and moral decorum.

But there were also those who took a different stand, such as the Italian intellectuals known as *Scapigliati* (literally 'dishevelled').[12] The movement, inspired by the ideals of German Romanticism and the French *vie bohème*, sought a renovation and rejuvenation of Italian culture starting from a refusal of tradition and rules that represented in their eyes the old and tired culture of the pre-Risorgimento upper classes. Antonio Ghislanzoni, intellectual, music critic, author of librettos and member of the *Scapigliatura*, writing in the *Gazzetta musicale di Milano* about Offenbach's *La bella Elena*

in 1866, remarked on the conservatism of Italian audiences as well as of poets and composers, suggesting that operetta could in fact become the vehicle for a profound social renovation, if only Italians were open to the possibilities offered by this genre:

> I even happened to notice in our theatres that, after having laughed their hearts out during the performance of a comedy or a farce, the audience, as the curtain goes down, feels obliged to get revenge on the author and the actors who made them laugh, booing without mercy. These are contradictions that one notices every day – and in truth, they do not make our public spirit shine. Alas! If we were less pedantic, who could prevent us, too, from being called the funniest nation of Europe? Do you believe that this genre of the *opera-parodia* or even better *opera buffona*, could not be created in Italy as elsewhere, if we too had theatres consecrated to this, and if the audience did not intervene with the purpose of philosophising and judging at all costs what the Parisians make an effort to enjoy and laugh at? After all, this *genre* of 'opera-parodia' was an Italian creation of the first half of the last century, and our Scaramuccias taught it to the wigged courts of the 'Louis' who had the good sense to host and replicate it. But to do gracious parodies and jaunty and elegant music one needs poets with *esprit* and *maestri* gifted with verve and culture. Here, those who are called literati and *maestri* would feel they are degrading themselves treating such light subjects.[13]

Crossing the Generic Boundary: Critics' Responses to 'Silver-Age' Operetta

As French and Viennese operettas became increasingly successful in Italy, audiences, theatres, impresarios and a number of companies began to specialize in productions of the genre. In what many saw as an attempt to compete with opera and cross the generic boundaries that separated the two, foreign operetta productions became progressively more lavish and expensive to produce, causing a critic in 1909 to complain that prices were now as high in the venues for operetta as those to attend operas at La Scala: 'This [Teatro dal Verme] cannot be called a theatre for the people since daily *commendator* Sidoli promises *soirées élite* or at least *high life* . . . to the poor mob there is nothing left now but . . . La Scala, at least on the evenings at reduced prices . . . This is more than ever the world upside-down.'[14] This trend reached a climax with the arrival of so-called 'silver-age operetta' and in particular with the premiere of the Italian adaptation of Lehár's *Die lustige Witwe* in Milan in 1907. The undisputed success and immediate popularity of *La vedova allegra* – which received over 500 performances on its first run – sparked lively discussions among critics on the nature of operetta. Writing soon

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after the premiere of *La vedova allegra*, critic Marco Ramperti expressed his concerns: 'This art form is nearing its end . . . It has become comic opera, choreographic review, musical comedy, *féerie*, anything but operetta. Actors' spontaneity is extinct like authors' originality. Terrasse is the successor of Audran and Lecocq. Dall'Argine is all the riot in Italy. Lehár is acclaimed in the land of Strauss.'[15] When Ramperti published the long article that included this extract in the *Gazzetta teatrale italiana*, operetta in Italy was certainly not dead. The article was published in June 1907 and *La vedova allegra* had opened just a few weeks before at the Teatro dal Verme in Milan, taking the city by storm. Indeed, after a slow start and a somewhat lukewarm critical reception, *La vedova allegra* was to become one of the most successful operettas ever performed in Italy, reviving enthusiasm for the genre, creating expectation for more Viennese operettas and infusing energy in a new generation of Italian composers. Around the same time, the adaptations of works from the previous decades were still going strong, with Sidney Jones's *The Geisha* and Franz von Suppé's *Donna Juanita* attracting large crowds.

To be sure, Ramperti did not argue that operetta was approaching the end of its journey in Italy. In fact, operetta – both foreign and Italian – was to maintain its levels of popularity well into the 1910s and 1920s. Instead, the article reveals a profound anxiety about the transformation that operetta was undergoing at that moment, particularly the transition from 'golden-age' to 'silver-age' operetta, as critics already defined it at the time. Operetta was, according to Ramperti, going through an identity crisis because it had lost two fundamental characteristics that kept it always fresh and light-hearted: actors' spontaneity and authors' originality. In his argument, the names of Lecocq, Audran and Strauss represent the golden age and appear in sharp contrast to those of Claude Terrasse, Lehár and the Italian Luigi Dall'Argine, whose 1904 'grandiose operetta-féerie' *Dall'ago al milione* garnered great audience approval.

It is clear that in Ramperti's view, operetta had lost its comic verve, the caricature effects of the variety show, the improvisation and naturalness of the performers that characterized French and Viennese operettas in Italy during the last quarter of the century. It had, to use an image widely popular at the time, reached its phase of decline, its silver age. Ramperti emphasizes the 'vulgarity' of operetta – in the original sense as the entertainment of 'common people' – with a heavily gendered comparison with a young licentious girl, dressed in rags and charming just because of her energy and joy:

> Daughter of whim and joy, since good old Offenbach has been her baptismal godfather, she [operetta] was just a light-hearted girl, shabby and carefree. Her skirt was made of rags; she used critical rebuke as leather for her soles. But as

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> soon as she gave in to a dance, without too much fear of revealing her legs, or as soon as she sang a little song, all *boulevardière*, smiling with her wide and sincere smile, nobody would dare reproach her for her undignified clothes, for the licentious innuendos. She did not know, at that time, of good and proper behaviour: two fast legs and two lively eyes were enough.

Golden-age operetta was not concerned, Ramperti argues, with morality and proper behaviour until it was transformed by the 'censors' of the bourgeoisie into a grand dame, clad in fake jewels, rich fabrics and the most fashionable dresses. The effect was devastating for the young girl, now 'unrecognizable'. That Ramperti was thinking about early French operetta is clear also from his next comparison, this time between operetta and the two '*gamins de Paris*' Friquet and Gavroche:

> Is it not true that we love Gavroche also because he is corrupt? And we love him just because he is Gavroche; that is, the child of the street, of sin and vice. But Friquet, raised in a palace, would not be Friquet anymore. Operetta, this Gavroche, this Friquet of the arts, educated by the censors, dressed by Caramba, ceased to be operetta. And so it dies, ostentatiously like a matron, wrapped in brocade like a *dogaressa*.

By wanting to appropriate, tame and 'moralize' operetta, the bourgeoisie was now depriving it of its freshness and replacing it by 'artistic dignity and human propriety' and the rich and luxurious costumes of one of the most influential men of theatre of the time whose vision changed the history of operetta in Italy, Luigi Sapelli, known as Caramba. Bourgeois values, sentimentality and lack of spontaneity were making operetta dangerously similar to opera, at this time in search of a new identity itself, and this meant the death or at least the decline of the genre.

Some critics, however, did not share Ramperti's fatalistic position. Giovanni Borelli, writing in *Teatro illustrato* in March 1907, just weeks before the premiere of *La vedova allegra*, welcomed the creation of the 'Compagnia Stabile d'operette' of Milan that would produce *La vedova* as the sign of the beginning of a new phase for musical theatre in Italy. 'La Scala', he argues, 'could not give us anything better than this', referring to the beauty of costumes and sets.[16] What Ramperti saw as the sign of the inevitable decline of operetta – its loss of peculiar characteristics and desire to assimilate elements from the high-opera tradition – was actually for Borelli a reflection of the increasing importance operetta was acquiring on the Italian musical theatrical scene. Among the elements operetta was borrowing from opera, in addition to magnificent costumes and sets, were also an increasing number of singers who were inexorably migrating 'from the lyric scene to the much disrespected operetta', 'a warm and much livelier place'.

And in what seems like a direct response to criticism on the lines of Ramperti's, Borelli argues that:

> Operetta should not be deprived of its natural function as amusing entertainment, but it is not true that it could not open the field to very legitimate expressions of art. Because [operetta] has its own style, its aims, its logic content, and its intellectual expression. To be sure, it can become the vehicle for musical satire with the wonderful elegance with which Lecocq and Offenbach, who founded it, sent it out into the world.

Despite their differences, Ramperti and Borelli agree on a fundamental point: the repertory of operetta needed to find a new path if it wanted to survive. 'One should rather wish that the repertory', argues Borelli, 'little by little, could be purified, renewing and aligning itself with a propriety that, in the genre, would not exclude art.' 'Neither Paris nor Vienna give us a viable author anymore. Originality, what is that? The simple sparkle of the composers of operetta is something of lost times', writes Ramperti, pointing to the anxiety that if Paris and Vienna could not offer anything new, operetta was destined to disappear from the Italian stage, thus assuming that Italians would not be able to fill the gap that the demise of French and Viennese operetta would leave. The two articles are emblematic of the two main critical stances around operetta that brewed in the intellectual circles of the late nineteenth century and came to the forefront at the beginning of the so-called 'silver age' of operetta. Both articles seem to point to a moment of transition and the need for a renewal for the genre. And a new generation of Italian composers was to take on the task.

Italian Operetta

Not everyone in the early twentieth century saw operetta as a dying genre and *La vedova allegra* as its swansong. Mascagni, writing in July 1918 about his future plans, reflected on the status of musical theatre in Italy and on the impact *La vedova allegra* had on the Italian musical scene:

> I have also had in my mind, for a couple of years, the idea of an operetta; because I have a feeling that in the tastes of our audience, the *merry widows* have remained fixed like a big nail and I fear that after the war Viennese operetta will return with the violence of an overflowing river to fill our theatres.[17]

The arrival of a more sensual, romantic, decadent and refined style of operetta towards the end of the nineteenth century, combined with increasingly sumptuous and sophisticated productions and a more established group of singers who specialized in the genre, posed a challenge to the world of opera in Italy, which was undergoing some major shifts in its

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post-Verdian phase. This opened a new path for the development of Italian operetta. Many opera composers of Mascagni's generation, including Puccini, Leoncavallo, Giordano and Mascagni himself, had to come to terms with the fact that operetta was no longer the 'Gavroche' of the Italian musical theatrical world. But most importantly, they had to come to terms with the fact that the worlds of opera and operetta were sharing more and more characteristics, also as an effect of many of the reforms of opera brought about by the popular *verismo* movement.[18]

One should only think about Puccini's *La rondine*, a work that premiered at the theatre of Monaco in 1917 and that divided Italian critics and audiences because of its perceived hybrid nature between opera and operetta, for its apparently light plot and a profusion of 'international' dance rhythms including waltz, foxtrot and polka.[19] Or, consider Ruggero Leoncavallo's *Zazà* (1900), 'a mix of opera and operetta', after which he wrote a number of other similarly experimental works between 1910 and 1919. Looking back at the model of Offenbach's mythological plots, Umberto Giordano wrote *Giove a Pompei* in 1921, and, after an early, unsuccessful attempt in 1885 with *Il re a Napoli*, in 1920 Mascagni wrote the operetta *Sì*, a more accomplished work on a libretto by Carlo Lombardo. By venturing – more or less convincingly and with more or less conviction – into the world of operetta, Italian composers were now recognizing it as a legitimate product of the Italian musical theatrical tradition.

To be sure, starting in the 1860s, translations of French works had already stimulated an early production of Italian operettas. These combined elements of the French model – frivolous and at times absurd plots, licentious innuendos, the integration of dance rhythms and numbers – with local elements, and particularly the use of dialects, a fair amount of *couleur locale*, sources inspired by Italian literature and elements of the *canzone popolare*, relying greatly on the acting and improvisatory skills of its interpreters. In addition to *opera buffa* and foreign operettas, therefore, Italian audiences could also enjoy works such as *El Granduca de Gerolstein* by Enrico Bernardi and Cletto Arrighi (1879), a parody of Offenbach's *La Grande-Duchesse de Gérolstein* in Milanese dialect, *Er Marchese der Grillo* (1889) by Giovanni Mascetti in Roman dialect, and *Funicolì Funicolà* (1921) by Arturo De Cecco in Neapolitan dialect, to mention only a few.

But it was not until the early twentieth century that Italian composers decided to engage with operetta on a more systematic basis. After 1910, companies of operetta proliferated around Italy and also began to export operettas in the Italian language abroad, especially to Latin America, where Italian immigration had already created a market. At this time the number of theatres and venues devoted mostly to operettas – particularly in Milan,

Turin, Rome, Naples and Palermo but reaching also smaller centres and provinces – increased and a few periodicals dealing exclusively with operetta were founded. Milanese publishing houses such as Ricordi, Suvini-Zerboni, Sonzogno and Lombardo and the Neapolitan Curci began to sense an appealing financial advantage in supporting the market for operettas. Giulio Ricordi himself – who had played such a fundamental role in the Italian operatic world of the previous years, publishing and promoting the music of Giuseppe Verdi, among others – tried his luck with the composition of an operetta, *La secchia rapita* (1910), under the pseudonym of Jules Burgneim.

Some of the most successful operettas performed in Italy between the 1910s and 1930s were not truly and completely Italian. At this time of increasing nationalistic and anti-Austrian feeling, many reputedly Italian works were artful adaptations of operettas in the German language, among which were many operettas by Lehár and Kálmán, made more palatable for the audience by disguising them as Italian. Carlo Lombardo, composer, librettist, publisher, impresario, producer but most importantly translator and author of adaptations, owed much of his fortunate and controversial career to his adaptations of such works, which at times were sent on to the Italian stages under his own name, with little or no effort to clearly establish their authorship. 'Lombardo's' *La Signorina del cinematografo* (1915) was an adaptation of an operetta by Carl Weinberger, and Bruno Granichstadten's *Majestät Mimi* became the quite successful *La Duchessa del Bal Tabarin* (1915) by Léon Bard, one of the pseudonyms used by Lombardo.[20]

Despite the persistence of Mitteleuropean works and Italian operettas that continued to use them as models, the years during and immediately following World War I saw also the production of arguably the most original and successful Italian operettas. Following upon the successes of *verismo* operas, these works showed an attempt to return to more realistic and sincere plots, still relying on the *couleur locale* that had characterized the first Italian operettas of the 1860s. Among them, the works of Giuseppe Pietri, particularly his *Addio giovinezza* (1915) and *Acqua cheta* (1920), were hailed as the heralds of the new-born genre of Italian operetta. Together with others such as *Il re di Chez Maxim* (1919) and *Scugnizza* (1922) by Lombardo and Mario Costa, and Virginio Ranzato and Lombardo's *Il paese dei campanelli* (1923), this strand of operetta 'forgets champagne, cocottes and viveurs, paillettes and glitter, and talks about seamstresses, students, youngsters full of life, strong and resilient mothers, fathers with a heart full of goodness' against the backdrop of small and picturesque Italian towns or cities such as Turin, in *Addio giovinezza*, or Naples, in *Scugnizza*, vividly painted through the use of Neapolitan melodies.[21] And, as

'paillettes and glitter' and 'cocottes and viveurs' are replaced by everyday men and women struggling with mundane reality and honest and simple feelings, the waltzes and csárdás leave room for the more fashionable rhythms of foxtrot, jazz and tango, but also for the melodies and art songs with folk inflections that gave this music a distinctively 'Italian' flavour for a nation in need of a new musical tradition and cultural identity.

The decline of Italian operetta coincided with the rise of the *rivista*, or revue, brought about by those extraordinary performers, in particular the tenors and soubrettes, who had been the main agents responsible for the continued popularity of operettas during the years immediately following World War I. Now able to negotiate more remunerative new positions, first in a growing light-entertainment industry and later on radio and television, many featured also in film versions of the most successful Italian operettas. If Italian audiences also kept a memory of many of these works, thanks to the adaptations that reached their home through the screens of their televisions, Italian critics and musicologists, such as Fausto Torrefranca, continued to dismiss operetta as *the* inferior form of musical theatre in Italy. The negative connotation of the term operetta became so predominant that during the 1930s and still today the expression '*da operetta*' is used figuratively to indicate a 'ridiculous institution, event or personage lacking credibility'.[22]

And yet, today this neglect seems utterly unjustified. Operetta played a particularly meaningful role in the Italian cultural arena at a juncture of profound social, political and cultural transformations for the nation, from the creation of a unified Italian state well into the inception of fascism. During these decades, which also encompassed very significant changes in the long-standing Italian operatic tradition, foreign as well as Italian operetta created a stimulating terrain for the articulation of critical discourses about music and national identity, in addition to offering broad strata of society welcome entertainment and an alternative to the increasingly codified operatic canon.

Notes

1. Bruno Traversetti, *L'operetta* (Milan: Mondadori, 1985), 122.
2. *Gazzetta musicale di Milano*, 29, no. 31 (2 August 1874), 252–3.
3. *Gazzetta musicale di Milano*, 30, no. 52 (27 December 1874), 425.
4. *Gazzetta musicale di Milano*, 29, no. 45 (8 November 1874), 366.
5. Carlotta Sorba, 'The Origins of the Entertainment Industry: The Operetta in Late Nineteenth-Century Italy'. *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 11, no.3 (2006): 282–302, at 295.
6. *Gazzetta musicale di Milano*, 29, no. 31 (2 August 1874), 252–3.
7. *Gazzetta musicale di Milano*, 27, no. 20 (19 May 1872), 171.
8. *Gazzetta musicale di Milano*, 29, no. 16 (19 April 1874), 124.
9. Both quotations are from *Gazzetta musicale di Milano*, 27, no. 3 (29 September 1872), 326.
10. *Gazzetta musicale di Milano*, 29, no. 16 (19 April 1874), 124.

11. Nietzsche to Heinrich Köselitz in Berlin (from Turin), 18 November 1888, www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB/BVN-1888,1148 (accessed 9 May 2019). Quoted in Sorba, 'The Origins', 293.
12. Emilio Sala, 'L'umorismo scapigliato e Rossini: "Ilbarbiere di siviglia" di Costartino Dall 'Argine (1868)', in Ilaria Narici, Emilio Sala, Emanuele senici and Ben Walton (eds.), *Gioachino Rossini, 1868–2018. La musica e il mondo* (Pesaro: Fondazione Rossini, 2018), 283-309.
13. *Gazzetta musicale di Milano*, 21, no. 12 (17 June 1866): 89–92, at 90.
14. *Gazzetta teatrale italiana*, 31, no. 11 (20 April 1909), 1.
15. All quotations are from Marco Ramperti, 'Da Offenbach a Caramba', *Gazzetta teatrale italiana*, 36, no. 17 (20 June 1907), 1, and 36, no. 18 (1 July 1907), 1.
16. All quotations are from Borelli's untitled article in *Il teatro illustrato* 39 (15–31 March 1907), unpaginated supplement.
17. Letter by Mascagni to Giovanni Orsini, 21 July 1918. Quoted in Mariella Busnelli, 'Sì, l'operetta di Pietro Mascagni', *Rassegna musicale Curci*, 41 (1988): 13–18, at 14.
18. See Andreas Giger, 'Verismo: Origin, Corruption, and Redemption of an Operatic Term', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 60 (2007): 271–315.
19. Alexandra Wilson, *The Puccini problem: Opera, Nationalism, and Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 172–7.
20. See Roberto Piano, *Addio giovinezza: l'operetta a Torino* (Turin: Beppe Grande editore, 2002), 35.
21. Ernesto Oppicelli, *Operetta. Da Hervé al Musical Hall* (Genoa: Sagep Editrice, 1985), 186.
22. *Dizionario della lingua italiana Treccani*, www.treccani.it/vocabolario/operetta/ (accessed 25 Sept. 2017).

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