

International Conference
Opera and the City
Technologies of Displacement and Dissemination

June 24-25, 2019
Teatro Nacional de São Carlos
Cinemateca Portuguesa – Museu do Cinema

Organization
PROPERA – The Profanation of Opera: Music and Drama on Film
(Marie- Skłodowska-Curie Action
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CESEM / NOVA FCSH

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Since its inception in Italy around 1600, opera has maintained an intimate relationship with urban space and the public sphere. Most opera houses were erected in city centres and came to be seen both as secular temples and sites of entertainment in which the appreciation of high art coexisted with popular conviviality and the representation of social, political, and economic power. Just as the development of the operatic genre is inextricably linked to the rise of modern cities, it is also certain that much has changed since the inauguration of the first public opera house, the Teatro San Cassiano, in Venice, in 1637.

During the course of the twentieth-century, the emergence and advancement of new technologies of sound and image reproduction have been decisive factors in these transformations. It became possible to listen to and watch opera without attending a live performance. Further, after the introduction of synchronized sound in cinema, nothing prevented opera from being performed and recorded in places other than opera houses. Later, thanks to TV, live audio-visual broadcasts of opera became a reality, one which new digital technologies have enhanced ever since.

This conference seeks to assess technology's impact on opera against the backdrop of its relationship to urbanity. The following question, in which issues of displacement and dissemination are weaved

together, will stand at the centre of our discussions: how and to what extent did the development of audio-visual technologies allow for the visibility and audibility of opera beyond the theatre while at the same time encouraging its migration to other spaces? Many disparate practices invite this interrogation: from the live simulcasts that beam productions from opera houses to movie theatres, to the creation of new operas in town squares, train stations, old factories, swimming pools, and public transportation, not to mention community-oriented projects such as The Bicycle Opera Project or Operndorf Afrika, and open-air festivals, including the Arena di Verona Festival and the "Festival ao Largo" promoted by the National Theatre of São Carlos (Lisbon Opera House).

Despite its widely reputed decline, opera is presently enjoying a moment of surprising vitality. This is true in the fields of reception and production alike, as new forms of staging and creating opera are being experimented with every year. By addressing the link between opera, technology, and the city, this conference will also attempt to draw attention to this very vitality. We hope to stimulate as broad an exchange and as open an inquiry as possible, encompassing issues of dramaturgy, criticism, spectatorship, remediation, technology, and composition, among others.

Monday, June 24

National Theater of São Carlos
Rua Serpa Pinto 9, 1200-442 Lisboa

9:30 Welcome & Introductions

10:00 **Keynote address**

Martha Feldman (University of Chicago), A Castrato at the Opera, circa 1900: Phonography, Loss, and the Production of a Sacred Vernacular in Rome

11:00 Coffee break

11:30 **Panel I: Technological Challenges and Opportunities**
Moderated by Gabriela Cruz

Luísa Cymbron (CESEM / NOVA FCSH), Forms of Displacement and Dissemination of Opera in 19th Century Lisbon: on the S. Carlos Theatre and its Relationship with the City

Cecilia Stinton (University College London), Opera in the Age of Film: the Ballets Russes in 1915

Patrick Becker (University of Arts Berlin), Prognoses, Plans, and Perspectives: Visions of the Future in Bulgarian Late Socialism and the Opera Crisis

13:00 Lunch break

14:30 **Panel II: Opera, Memory, and Urbanity**
Moderated by Paula Gomes Ribeiro

Kathryn Caton (University of Kentucky), Telling Stories: Repetition, Elaboration, and Memory-Making in *Invisible Cities*

Luís Soldado (CESEM / NOVA FCSH), Audio and Visual Technologies in Opera – What about the Music?

Nicholas Stevens (Case Western Reserve University),
Reconstructions: Olga Neuwirth's *American Lulu*
and/in Post-Katrina New Orleans

16:00 Coffee break

16:30 **Keynote address**

Paulo Ferreira de Castro (CESEM / NOVA FCSH),
Opera, Film, and the Poetics of Place

17:30 **Discussion**

21:30 *Juan* (2010)
Screening of Kasper Holten's film adaptation of
Mozart's *Don Giovanni*
Cinamateca Portuguesa
Rua Barata Salgueiro 39, 1250-165 Lisboa

Tuesday, June 25

National Theater of São Carlos
Rua Serpa Pinto, 9, 1200-442 Lisboa

10:00 Keynote address

David J. Levin (University of Chicago), *Something Coming of Nothing: Subtraction and Projection in Patrice Chéreau's Production of *Così fan tutte* (Aix-en-Provence, 2005)*

11:00 Coffee break

11:30 Panel III: Remediation, Performance, and the Future
Moderated by Manuel Deniz Silva

João Pedro Cachopo (CESEM / NOVA FCSH), *The Immiscibility of Media and Its Discontents: Kasper Holten's *Juan* and the Fate of Opera Films*

José Júlio Lopes (CESEM / NOVA FCSH), *Ut-Opera*

Jelena Novak (CESEM / NOVA FCSH), *Opera Beyond the City: Vocaloids, Mixed Realities and Singing Machines*

13:00 Lunch break

14:30 Panel IV: Experiments on Stage and Screen
Moderated by Jelena Novak

Eva Van Daele (Ghent University), *Distorted Characters in Contemporary Opera Creation: Social Displacement in the City on Stage*

Emily Crawford (San Francisco State University), *The Tender Land: The Intimacy of Televised Opera*

Isabel Pires & Filipa Magalhães (CESEM / NOVA FCSH), *Music-Theatre in Gulbenkian's Contemporary Music Meetings: On Two Works by Constança Capdeville*

16:00 Coffee break

16:30 Roundtable: Deterritorializing Opera
Moderated by Gabriela Cruz

Nicholas Till (University of Sussex)

Miguel Azguime (Miso Music / O'culto da Ajuda)

Carlos Vargas (OPART) [to be confirmed]

19:00 Dinner
“Fábulas” Restaurant
Calçada Nova de São Francisco 14, 1200-300 Lisboa