Concealed Sound and the Phantasmagoria of the Late 19th-Century Salon

Tamsin Alexander
Goldsmiths, University of London

Guests at 7 Chesterfield Gardens in the 1890s found themselves in a world of impossibilities: lights without flame, exotic plants flourishing indoors, and a superabundance of mirrors and marble. The *tableaux vivants*, opera and concerts performed there during Rachel Sassoon Beer's 'at homes' presented a further curiosity: voices without bodies. On more than one occasion, Beer concealed her musicians behind drapes, beyond ferns, in adjoining rooms, or even in darkness. I argue that these entertainments resonated with a particular goal for the late-nineteenth-century home of hiding the machinery behind aesthetic effects – a form of consumption that was, to borrow Marx's term, phantasmagoric. In place of visible servants, women presided over a space in which comfort was achieved as if by magic. The luxuries of 7 Chesterfield Gardens relied upon ample material consumption and labour, which audiences were saved the discomfort of witnessing. Hidden voices likewise allowed Beer's guests to fantasise about labourless, bodiless sound. This paper explores the sensorium at Beer's, considering how scent, touch, light and sound worked to generate musico-theatrical effects unique to the salon. In so doing, I draw attention to a decidedly feminine configuration of the London stage, situated in an increasingly technologized world.

Tamsin Alexander is Senior Lecturer and Head of the Centre for Russian Music at Goldsmiths, University of London, and editor of the *RMA Research Chronicle*. She completed her PhD on an AHRC-funded scholarship at the University of Cambridge, where she explored the transnational spread of Russian opera in the nineteenth century. Her findings have been published most recently in *Musiktheorie, Cambridge Opera Journal* and *Nineteenth-Century Music Review*. She is currently investigating music's sensory histories, with a focus on the ways in which changing lighting technologies shaped musical culture in nineteenth-century London.

From Folklore to Historical Subject: Adapting Rossini's *Guillaume Tell* for the London Stage

Francis Bertschinger
Magdalen College, Oxford

Even within the increasingly internationalising operatic environment of the early nineteenth century, Rossini's *Guillaume Tell* is notable for its transnational nature. Written by an Italian composer for the Paris Opéra in 1829, and based on a Swiss subject mediated through the work of Friedrich Schiller, the opera was adapted further upon its premiere in England. When brought to the London stage for the 1829/1830 season at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, Rossini's opera was adapted primarily through the substitution of the story of William Tell for that of the revolutionary Andreas Hofer, who had led the Tyrolean Rebellion in 1809. This paper explores this adaptation and its reception, focussing on the dramatic implications of the substitution of fifteenth-century folklore for a nineteenth-century historical narrative. In particular, I explore the extent to which the revolutionary nature of the two subjects may have led to their coalescing within the English public consciousness, as well as the degree to which the adaptation intersected with debates of national character and style circulating in London's press.

Francis Bertschinger is a doctoral student at Magdalen College, Oxford, where his interests in the history of opera are balanced alongside his thesis on music and nature in sixteenth-century Italy.

The Failure of the 'Opera Bill'; The Crisis in London Opera in 1853

Michael Burden, New College, University of Oxford

The Opera House in the Haymarket, London's exclusive home for all-sung foreign opera and elite dance was, in 1853, engulfed by a financial disaster. The manager, Benjamin Lumley, had a swashbuckling approach to running a theatrical enterprise that caused the resignation in 1846 of the opera's conductor Michael Costa. As the situation deteriorated, Lumley decided to turn to the Crown and to Parliament to attempt a rescue package. Lumley's stratagem was to promote a private parliamentary bill, the 'Her Majesty's Theatre Association Bill' (colloquially called the Opera Bill) the object of which 'was to vest in a large number of noblemen and gentlemen, who took a deep interest in the promotion of the fine arts, the powers and privileges of a corporate body, to enable them to carry on Her Majesty's Opera House in a conjoint capacity.' The bill, however, failed to get its second parliamentary reading on 22 February 1853, and the creditors closed in to auction the theatre's contents. This paper explores these events and argues that if the draft Limited Liability Act (not passed until 1855) had been in force, London's Italian Opera House would have been rescued from the financial mire into which it had fallen.

Michael Burden, FAHA, is Professor of Opera Studies at Oxford University; he is also Dean and Fellow in Music at New College. His published research is on the music of Henry Purcell, and on aspects of dance and theatre in the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries. He has served on numerous academic and editorial boards and is currently the Chair of The Society for Theatre Research. Publications include a collection of opera documents, the five-volumed *London Opera Observed 1711-1843* and a study of the London years of the soprano Regina Mingotti. He and Jennifer Thorp have worked on three volumes: *Le Ballet de la Nuit*; *The Works of Monsieur* Noverre; and *With a grace not to be captured*; this last volume shared the 2021 Claire Brook Award for Music Iconography from The Brook Centre at CUNY. His main on-going research project is the online calendar, *The London Stage 1800-1844*, https://londonstage.bodleian.ox.ac.uk.

Undressing the Infant Hercules; D'Egville, Ducrow, and the Exhibition of Male Physique on the London Stage

Keith Cavers
Independent Scholar

Anyone who has had the misfortune to stroll through Covent Garden or Leicester Square recently will have been confronted by a plethora of ingenious beggars taking the form of living statues – either standing still in outrageous costume or apparently hovering in the air with the aid of cantilevered steelwork. The origins of these phenomena lie much farther back and their predecessors include a number of well known names in theatrical history of which perhaps the most celebrated was the equestrian performer Andrew Ducrow himself the son of the celebrated "Flemish Hercules." The erotic element of female performers in similar mode are well discussed, from Lady Hamilton's Attitudes to the Windmill Girls of the 1940s but is there any detectable hint of erotification in the male performers? Other questions immediately arise – what (and how little) did they wear? and would a pose have been immediately recognisable or was a playbill listing a necessary pointer to their classical (or other) origins? Did they pose in silence? And how long were they expected to hold the pose? This paper looks for some of the answers.

Keith Cavers is an independent curator, scholar and consulting iconographer. He studied Stage Management at RADA and History of Drawing and Printmaking at Camberwell. His thesis on James Harvey D'Egville (Surrey) led to a visiting research fellowship at Harvard in 1996 where he returned in both 2015 and 2016. He was Slide Librarian and a Visiting Lecturer at Camberwell for twenty years and Information Officer at the National Gallery London for twelve. During lockdown he assembled a chronological sourcebook of late Georgian published sources (now well over 570,000 words), with a matching Iconography (460+). In 2021 he contributed a chapter on D'Egville to '*With a Grace Not to Be Captured: Representing the Georgian Theatrical Dancer, 1760-1830*', and on Clarissa Wybrow for the Queen's University Belfast '*Dance Biographies*' blog. He is currently working on an historical study: "Ballet in Late Georgian London 1776 – 1836."

From the Classical to Caricature: Visual Traces of British Private and Amateur Theatricals in the Long Nineteenth Century

David Coates
University of Warwick

In Britain, in the early nineteenth century, the popularity of private and amateur theatricals were rapidly increasing. The first amateur dramatic clubs and societies were founded in this period and a number of establishments emerged in London and key regional centres to enable amateur enthusiasts to come together to produce theatrical events for semi-public audiences in purpose-designed venues. The amateur theatre 'movement' was beginning - a century earlier than has been previously thought. This paper analyses an array of visual materials relating to private and amateur theatricals in London and the regions from the long nineteenth century. These images have been gathered from public and private collections across Britain and the USA over the last 15 years. This paper will consider what these visual traces can tell us about the practices of amateur theatre and their most enthusiastic practitioners both in London and beyond. It will reveal amateur theatre participants having agency over how their endeavours were captured in visual images, drawing attention to key tropes in their choice of emblems and methods of recording their activities, for example. In contrast, it will show how these same activities were depicted by those on the 'outside', including in widely circulated satirical caricatures.

David Coates is an Assistant Professor in Theatre and Performance Studies at the University of Warwick in the UK. He is a cultural historian with a particular interest in theatre and performance in the long nineteenth century. Between January 2022 and January 2027 David is co-investigator on the European Research Council (ERC) funded project 'Performing Citizenship: Social and Political Agency in Non-Professional Theatre Practice in Germany, France, Britain, Sweden and Switzerland (1780-1850)'. David has been a longstanding member of the International Federation for Theatre Research (IFTR), the Society for Theatre Research (STR) and an occasional member of the British Association of Victorian Studies (BAVS). He is also a member of the Theatre and Performance Research Association (TaPRA), serves on its Executive Committee, is Co-Convenor of the 'Theatre and Performance Histories' working group (2022-2025) and will host TaPRA 2025 at Warwick.

'The Independent Theatre Society, where art, not money or long runs, is the cry, has stepped in to free the London stage from the taunt of inartistic orthodoxy': J. T. Grein's campaign for avant-garde theatre as an NPO

Anna Farkas
Independent Scholar

In the Victorian theatre a play's success was measured through the number of its consecutive performances. This purely commercial model was being criticized as artistically stultifying from as early as the 1870s, but public funding for the theatre in Britain, was not established until the mid-twentieth century. In 1890, the Dutch theatre enthusiast J. T. Grein, therefore, looked to the continent for inspiration, specifically the *Théâtre Libre* in Paris, and founded the Independent Theatre Society as a subscription society, whose members paid a fee in order to enable productions of plays that were shut out from the contemporary London stage either because of their lack of commercial appeal or the objections of the censor. In this paper, I will be taking a closer look at a series of articles Grein published in the lead-up to the society's inaugural production. These pieces strike a delicate balance between the combative rhetoric of an anti-establishment manifesto and nods to the realities of a high-cost medium like the theatre, mapping the challenging terrain for the establishment of an avant-garde art theatre in fin-de-siecle London.

Anna Farkas is an independent scholar, who has taken a career break to care for her four young children. She received her DPhil from Magdalen College, Oxford in 2010. Until 2020, she was Assistant Professor of British Literature and Culture at the University of Regensburg, Germany. Anna's first book, *Women's Playwriting and the Women's Movement, 1890-1918*, was published by Routledge in 2019. She is currently at work on a book on J. M. Barrie, provisionally titled *J. M. Barrie's Popular Politics: Class, Gender, and the Great War*.

Homesick Highlanders: Harriet Wainewright Stewart's *Comàla* in London and Bengal

Matthew Head
Kings College, London

Harriet Wainewright Stewart's English-language opera, *Comàla* (c. 1788-90) never made it to the London opera stage – around 1790 it was declined for Drury Lane by R. B. Sheridan. A foundational study by Porter (2021), recaps the composer's own story of its one-off concert performance in Hanover Square Gardens in 1792 – an *Ersatz* London theatre – and publication of the score by subscription from Calcutta around 1800, following the composer's move their (from 1797). This paper explores the migration of *Comàla* to Calcutta where the opera enjoyed fleeting popularity. The British community around the East India Company embraced the opera and its composer as part of its own displaced identity. The absence of an opera stage and professional troupe hardly mattered – the (so-called) 'White City' was always and already a theatrical recreation – a sort of London stage. In this mimetic context, senior members of the Company's administration and military found in *Comàla* an ancestral fantasy. Drawn from Ossian, the legendary Highland bard, *Comàla* mediated ancient Scotland in a Handelian language. Many subscribers were Scottish – the land of the tiger was home to the thistle (Buddell 1999). Ossian offered homesick Highlanders an image of Scotland at once bardic and bellicose, eminently suited for a frontier community poised between rapacious trade and imperial governance. For Stewart, the 'India' offered the patronage, the celebrity, and the finance that the London opera houses deny her still.

Matthew Head is Professor of Music at King's College London. He works on the cultural history of music in the long eighteenth century. His most recent book is the co-edited *Cambridge Companion to Women Composers* (2024). He is currently working on a metabiography of the composer and singer Harriet Wainewright Stewart – a life and works tempered by the theory and cultural wars of the late twentieth century.

Hyperfunctional Spectacle

Joanna Hofer-Robinson
University of Warwick

This paper examines infrastructural spectacle in, and in relation to, mid-nineteenth-century sensation dramas. In the burgeoning field of the infrastructural humanities, it is a cliché to state that infrastructure remains invisible until it ceases to function *as* infrastructure. Despite their frequently enormous scale, infrastructures such as roads, railways, shipping, and warehouses typically become the taken-for-granted background of everyday life, so long as they facilitate the frictionless circulation and exchange of people, goods, and capital. This does not hold true on the nineteenth century stage. Theatres used infrastructural spectacle for various effects and species of entertainment. For instance, Augustin Daly's 1867 sensation drama, *Under the Gaslight*, features impressive built-out scenery representing New York's docklands, as well as its famously suspenseful railway scene. The docklands, by contrast, offer a stand-alone visual spectacle, which draws on the picturesque tradition, as well as functioning a story-telling mechanism. Drawing on the concept of 'infrastructural hyperfunctionality', advanced by John Seberger and Geoffrey Bowker (2021), this paper will explore how stage spectacle can disrupt and redirect the political meanings of infrastructure, because it challenges the ease by which infrastructure is reconstituted as boring, and because it foregrounds the movement and interaction of actors within the spectacle. Consequently, I argue, attending to theatrical representations of infrastructural hyperfunctionality reverses the typically objectival view of infrastructural spectacle, and instead emphasises those subjective, affective, and experiential flows which constitute infrastructure itself.

Joanna Hofer-Robinson is an Assistant Professor in the English and Comparative Literary Studies department at the University of Warwick. Her publications include *Dickens and Demolition* (Edinburgh UP, 2018), *Sensation Drama, 1860-1880: An Anthology* (co-edited with Beth Palmer; Edinburgh UP, 2019), and *The Plays of Charles Dickens* (co-edited with Pete Orford; Edinburgh UP, 2025). She is currently working on her second monograph, tentatively titled *Infraculture*, which is under consideration at Cambridge University Press.

"In order categorical": Genre, Classification Theory and the Works of Gilbert and Sullivan

Deborah Lee
University College London

The collaborative works of Gilbert and Sullivan present some interesting generic issues, within the already complex world of musical-theatrical genres. On one level, there is a rich question around how Gilbert and Sullivan's collaborative works interplay with other musical-theatrical genres of the time, as seen, for example, in the multiple generic titles assigned to them such as Savoy opera, light opera and operetta to name but a few; at a narrower level, there is also scholarly, performer and enthusiast interest in categorisation *within* the works of Gilbert and Sullivan, such as main versus periphery works, the boundaries of the Gilbert and Sullivan "canon", and how performer classification can influence the categorisation of individual works. This paper explores and analyses these genre classification questions from the perspective of knowledge organisation, which is a sub-discipline of information studies. First, the paper considers the category of Gilbert and Sullivan's works from a classification theory perspective, with a dissection of their position in hierarchies of operatic/theatrical genres and a classificatory analysis of arguments that they are a separate subgenre. This section utilises knowledge organisation ideas such as grouping, labelling of categories, and hierarchies. Second, the paper contemplates the organisation and categorisation *within* Gilbert and Sullivan's collaborative oeuvre, drawing on Gilbert and Sullivan's own creative generic titles and the classification evident in how the works have been performed and received. Here, classification theory ideas will be employed such as "characteristics of division" (factors that divide subjects), and wider genre classification ideas will be briefly introduced such as (sub-)sub-subgenres and "mono-genres". Ultimately, this paper aims to demonstrate the value of enfolding classification theory ideas within explorations of musical-theatrical genre.

Deborah Lee is a Lecturer in Library and Information Studies at University College London (UCL) and Programme Director for the MA in Library and Information Studies. Deborah was awarded her PhD in Library and Information Science in 2017 from City, University of London, and her thesis is a deep analysis of the classification of Western art music. Her primary research interests are in music classification and theories of knowledge organisation systems, and her other interests include cataloguing ethics, knowledge organisation in art and performing arts, and cataloguing education. She has published her research in major information studies journals, including Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology (JASIST), Journal of Information Science, Journal of Documentation, Knowledge Organization, Information Research, among others. Deborah holds a BA in music (University of Oxford), an MMusic in historical musicology/opera studies (Royal Holloway, University of London), and an MA in Information Services Management (London Metropolitan University).

Rudolph Cabanel and the Progress of Romantic Spectacle

Henry Mason
Queen Mary University of London

In this paper I will discuss the career of German-born theatrical machinist and architect Rudolph Cabanel, whose growing influence on London's theatre infrastructure in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries demonstrates the progress of technological ingenuity on the capital's stages, and of the Romantic spectacle for which this machinery was required. The influence of dramatic forms born in London's minor playhouses on the city's wider theatrical culture is exemplified by Cabanel's journey from Astley's circus, where his earliest known credit as a machinist came in 1789, to working as architect for multiple London theatres. In 1792, Cabanel was employed by architect Henry Holland as 'Mechanist to the stage' of the new theatre at Drury Lane, designing the basic machinery of the stage and working as machinist for the theatre's first performance, John Kemble's spectacular production of *Macbeth*. Cabanel would go on to serve as architect of the Royal Circus and the Coburg theatre, both known for their spectacular melodramatic productions. I will focus on some of the shows, such as Drury Lane's *Lodoiska* (1794) and the Royal Circus' *The Cloud King* (1806), for which Cabanel designed new machinery, demonstrating the mechanical knowledge required to produce these Romantic spectacles.

Henry Mason is a PhD candidate in Drama at Queen Mary University of London, currently completing the project: 'Gothic Machinery: Romantic Spectacle and the Industrial Stage'. This project investigates the spectacular productions performed in London's major theatres in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, exploring connections between changes in theatrical production methods and technologies during the period and the mechanical and industrial developments taking place outside the playhouse. He has presented papers at the British Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies annual conference and the British Association of Romantic Studies international conference.

The London Stage in the Indian Ocean

Sarah Meer
University of Cambridge

I would like to present some very early-stage research about the dissemination of London's popular plays through imperial networks, particularly in India and South Africa. I shall focus on the plays of Dion Boucicault (c. 1820-1890). Boucicault's career exemplified the transnationality of the nineteenth-century theatre. Consider his infamous facility for adapting French dramas; his success in multiple cities across the Atlantic world; his tour of Australia and New Zealand in 1885. But I shall sketch out some ways in which Boucicault's plays travelled even further. During the 1860s and 70s, Boucicault dramas were staged across the Indian Ocean, throughout South Asia and the Cape. The paper will suggest some of the different ways in which these plays travelled. Many featured in the repertoires of travelling theatre companies which originated in London. They were also taken up by Australian companies, which themselves toured Asia. At least one was adapted into Gujarati for Bombay's Parsi theatres (which also toured the region). And many Boucicault dramas were attempted in amateur performance, both by civilian troupes and regimental theatres. Tentatively, the paper will suggest some ways in which such stagings represented their own distinct relationships to the London stage, as well as generating new meanings in their new contexts.

Sarah Meer is Professor of Nineteenth-Century Literature at the University of Cambridge. She is the author of *Uncle Tom Mania: Slavery, Minstrelsy, and Transatlantic Culture in the 1850s*, and *American Claimants: The Transatlantic Romance, c. 1820-1920*. She also co-edited *Transatlantic Stowe: Harriet Beecher Stowe and European Culture*. Most recently, she edited a special issue of *Nineteenth Century Theatre and Film* on Dion Boucicault. This included the first modern edition of a long-overlooked comedy, set in Dublin but first performed in Boston: *Andy Blake; or, the Irish Diamond*. In 2024, she also joined the editorial team of *NCTF*.

Melodrama and Immersion on the 19th-Century London Stage

Kate Newey
University of Exeter

In this paper, I want to think about the nineteenth-century melodrama stage as an experimental three-dimensional space, where managers, playwrights, scenic artists and technicians, and actors collaborated to create a new theatrical language. I am interested in the way we can see melodrama at the forefront of British aesthetic modernity in the nineteenth century, and in the way that melodrama and the melodramatic becomes an epistemology – a kind of knowledge or way of knowing. Melodrama was the single most important generic innovation of the early nineteenth century theatre, and worked aesthetically and ideologically to resituate human subjectivity within a structure of feeling, seeing, and understanding which was radically altered from preceding classical modes. However, historians often forget just how revolutionary this apparently trashy theatre form was, and just how much global popular culture still swims in its legacy. While there's been a tendency to locate melodrama within a broadly textual field, linked to Romanticism (for example in Peter Brooks' influential *The Melodramatic Imagination*) in this paper I want to explore the consequences of placing melodrama in its emergent visual and material culture, and with it, a new kind of affective economy. I am interested in the ways we can interpret the three-dimensional *mise-en-scene* of early melodramas from the archival record, and find ways to read that record with a focus on the embodied, sensory environment physically created on the boards of the theatre stage. This starts from the question I've asked elsewhere: what happens when we consider the theatre of the nineteenth century existing not just in parallel to the visual arts, but as a part of visual culture?

Kate Newey is Professor of Theatre History at the University of Exeter. Her work focuses on women's writing and nineteenth century British popular theatre. Kate has published widely on nineteenth century theatre and popular culture, including *Politics, Performance and Popular Culture* (2016), *Women's Theatre Writing in Victorian Britain* (2005), and *John Ruskin and the Victorian Theatre* co-authored with cultural historian, Jeffrey Richards (2010). She has led several Arts and Humanities Research Council-funded projects, most recently a collaboration with the late Jim Davis on 'Theatre and Visual Culture in the Long Nineteenth-Century.' From 2024 to 2028, Kate is leading a large-scale project funded by the European Research Council, 'Women's Transnational Theatre Networks, 1789-1914.' She has held research Fellowships at Harvard University, the Folger Shakespeare Library, (Washington DC), and the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Centre, (University of Texas at Austin), and has just held the S. W. Brooks Fellowship in English Literature at the University of Queensland.

'One More Unfortunate': Deathly Spectatorship and Suicide as Stage Sensation[1]

Janice Norwood, University of Hertfordshire
Hayley Bradley, University of Manchester

At the 2022 The London Stage and the Nineteenth Century World IV conference we introduced research from our collaborative project on deathly spectatorship in which we analyse the presentation and remediation of nineteenth-century visual, literary, theatrical and filmic representations of death. On that occasion our focus was the death bed. For the 2025 meeting we present the most recent material from our project, continuing our examination of the spectacle of the dead or dying body, this time in relation to self-destruction. The many artistic, journalistic and dramatic depictions of suicide attest to the nineteenth-century fascination with acts of self-slaughter. In this joint paper, we map stage performances of suicide in relation to changing social attitudes: from being regarded early in the nineteenth century as a criminal action that was also against religious belief (*felo de se*), to an increasingly compassionate understanding of self-murder that recognised it as a response to mental health crises or social factors, as exemplified by Emile Durkheim's *Suicide: A Study in Sociology* (1897). While acknowledging the oft-studied and recurrent leitmotif of suicide by drowning as it appeared on stage and in fine art, our paper expands the survey by analysing a broader spectrum of modes of self-harm in plays such as Thomas Noon Talfourd's *Ion* (Covent Garden, 1836), Henry Arthur Jones and Wilson Barrett's *Hoodman Blind* (Princess's, 1885), Henrik Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler* (Vaudeville, 1891) and Sydney Grundy's *A Debt of Honour* (St James's, 1900). By examining gendered representations of suicide across a range of examples, we consider the circumstances in which it had to be presented offstage and counter the erroneous idea that self-murder was predominantly a female act. We also analyse the vogue for the acting performance of poisoning, which akin to that of delirium tremens, featured as spectacular and sensational death on stage and in early film.

Janice Norwood is Visiting Research Fellow in English Literature at the University of Hertfordshire. She has published widely on nineteenth-century theatre and popular culture including *Victorian Touring Actresses: Crossing Boundaries and Negotiating the Cultural Landscape* (Manchester University Press, 2020), *Lucia Elizabeth Vestris,* Lives of Shakespearian Actors IV, 2 (Pickering & Chatto, 2011) and work on Victorian pantomime, Wilkie Collins's drama, actress iconology, protest drama, playwright Colin Hazlewood and the Britannia Theatre in Hoxton. Her most recent publication is 'Stage Echoes: Tracing the Pantomime Harlequinade through Comic Ballet, Trap Work, and Silent Film', *Theatre Survey* 65:3 (2024). She is currently editing a volume of nineteenth-century theatrical documents for Routledge, writing a history of the Britannia Theatre and collaborating with Dr Hayley Bradley on a project on the representation of death in theatrical and visual culture during the long nineteenth century. Janice co-edits the journal *Nineteenth Century Theatre and Film*.

Hayley Bradley is the Research Associate for the Vice Dean for Research at the University of Manchester where she is currently developing a project on late 19th– mid-20th Century Popular Theatre, Film and Performance. Her research interests span Victorian/Edwardian creative

[1] Thomas Hood, 'The Bridge of Sighs' (1844).

industries with particular focus on stage machinery, technology, collaboration, adaptation and film. Hayley has published work on Ouida (Marie Louise de la Ramée) and *Moths*, theatrical artisan Henry Hamilton, autumn dramas at Theatre Royal Drury Lane, Edwardian fashions, and 'Stagecraft, Spectacle and Sensation' in Carolyn Williams (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to English Melodrama,* (2018). Forthcoming publications include: 'Historicising the Nineteenth Century Entrepreneurial Theatrical Artisan,' *Journal of Victorian Culture* (2024/2025) and 'Dangerous Performance and Injury to the Illusion: Spectacle, Risk and Legislation,' in Kate Newey, Jim Davis, Patricia Smyth, and Kate Holmes (eds), *Theatre and Visual Culture in the Long Nineteenth Century: A Collection of Essays* (Boydell & Brewer, 2025).

From Ghostly Echoes to Horror Soundscapes: Music and Sound in Early Gothic Representation of the Supernatural

Anna Ricke
Paderborn University

From the 1790s onwards, Gothic tropes gained significant prominence in London operas, melodramas and plays, including the depiction of ghosts, phantoms or other supernatural beings. At least since M. G. Lewis's landmark play *The Castle Spectre* (1797, music by Michael Kelly), which featured a popular ghost scene accompanied by music, supernatural apparitions proliferated on stage, despite the long-standing objections to representing the supernatural in serious drama. In several scenes featuring ghosts, phantoms, or other supernatural beings, music and specific sets of sounds were employed to heighten the effect and suspense. Similar sound effects and musical means were also used in depictions of feigned ghosts or mysterious apparitions that were eventually rationally explained. Later examples, such as M.G. Lewis's *One O'Clock or the Knight and the Wood Dæmon* (1811, music by Michael Kelly and Matthew Peter King), demonstrate how a repertoire of sound effects and musical means associated with the supernatural had emerged from approximately two decades of experimentation. This paper examines the sounding representations of explained and unexplained supernatural apparitions in the first decade of the nineteenth century as a foundational stage in the development of later horror sounds and music.

Anna Ricke has been a research associate at the Department of Musicology Detmold/Paderborn (Germany) since 2019. Since 2023, she has been leading her DFG-funded research project on music and sound in London Gothic plays around 1800. She studied Music Theatre Studies at the University of Bayreuth (B.A.) and Musicology at the HfMT Cologne (M.A.). In 2020, she completed her doctorate in Cologne on the musician Smaragda Eger-Berg (1886–1954) and the conditions of artistic emancipation in Viennese modernism, for which she received a doctoral scholarship from the Research Centre for Music and Gender (fmg) in Hanover. She serves on the advisory board of the *Jahrbuch Musik und Gender* and acts as a spokesperson for the *Fachgruppe Frauen- und Genderstudien* of the German Musicological Society (GfM).

The Mysterious Marriage of Nancy and Sikes

Laurence Senelick
Tufts University

Of all the fallen women on the Victorian stage, Nancy in adaptations of Dickens' *Oliver Twist* is the lowest. Specifically deemed a "prostitute" by the author, she is also the abused mistress of a thuggish burglar who murders her. In the innumerable dramatisations of the novel, Nancy might seem appealing as an exercise in character acting, but she presents a hurdle to actresses chary of risking their hard-won respectability. How could such a debased woman be made palatable to the audiences of Charlotte Cushman, Lucille Western, Rose Eytinge? So an offstage marriage ceremony took place in which she became "Nancy Sykes" (the name invariably misspelt). This paper will examine how the interpretation of Nancy and her profession were ameliorated and bowdlerized to suit changes in social attitudes and how these alterations were accommodated in playwriting, staging and publicity. It will consequently place her within the dramatic conventions of melodrama's fallen woman over the course of a century, demonstrating where she fits on the scale of the adulteress (as in *The Stranger*), the courtesan (as in *The Lady of the Camellias*) and the "woman with a past" (as in the plays of Pinero).

Laurence Senelick is Fletcher Professor Emeritus of Drama and Oratory at Tufts University and Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. His many books include *The Chekhov Theatre*, *The Changing Room: Sex, Drag and Theatre*, *Jacques Offenbach and the Making of Modern Culture* and *The Final Curtain: The Art of Dying on Stage.* His articles have appeared in *Nineteenth Century Theatre and Film, The Dickensian, Dickens Studies, New Theatre Quarterly, Theatre Survey* and other journals. He is co-author of the volume on clowns in the forthcoming Routledge Documentary History of Circus.

Disabled Bodies in the London Street and on the London Stage

Mary L. Shannon
University of Roehampton

In periodicals of the 1820s and 1830s, the 'King of the Beggars' was a disabled man: first William 'Billy' Waters, a Black disabled sailor with a wooden prosthetic leg; then Andrew Whiston or 'Little Jemmy', a white man born with physical disabilities.
This paper will take two recently-discovered images of Waters and Whiston - one a caricature of a London street performance, and other a magic lanthorn slide of a scene from a play set in London which featured them as characters – to consider how nineteenth-century visions of what Rosemary Garland-Thompson famously calls 'Extraordinary Bodies' were shaped by ideas about performance and theatricality both on and off the stage. In the process it will argue that visual images of performance have an important part to play both in the construction of disability representation in the nineteenth-century, and in our contemporary deconstruction of disability history.

Mary L. Shannon is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Roehampton, London. Her second monograph about Billy Waters and popular print and visual culture (*Billy Waters is Dancing: How One Black Sailor Found Fame in Regency and Victorian Britain,* Yale 2024) was funded by Leverhulme and Linda H. Peterson Fellowships. Her first monograph, *Dickens, Reynolds and Mayhew on Wellington Street: The Print Culture of a London Street*, won the 2016 Colby Prize. She is co-editor of *Romanticism and Illustration* (CUP, 2019, with Ian Haywood and Susan Matthews) and *GWM Reynolds Reimagined: Studies in Authorship, Radicalism, and Genre, 1830-1870* (Routledge, 2023, with Jennifer Conary).

From Blythe House to Storehouse: 100 Years of Theatre & Performance at the V&A

Simon Sladen
Victoria & Albert Museum

The V&A is currently undergoing its most intense period of transformation since being founded as the Museum of Manufacture in 1852. 2023 saw the opening of Young V&A (formerly the Museum of Childhood), 2024 marked the Theatre and Performance Collections' centenary with refurbishment of the permanent galleries at South Kensington and 2025 heralds the much-anticipated opening of V&A East, comprising a new museum, new research and collections centre 'Storehouse' and the establishment of the David Bowie Centre for the Study of Performing Arts.
This paper will reflect on the position of Theatre and Performance at the V&A as it moves to a family of sites a hundred years on since Gabrielle Enthoven's gift of 80,000 playbills, programmes and other theatrical ephemera in 1924. It will introduce and consider what researchers can expect from the new experience of Storehouse, set to open on 31 May this year, and explore the ways in which researching at and with the V&A will be different to the days of Blythe House, with its barbed wire turnstile entrance and glazed brick interiors.

Simon Sladen is Senior Curator of Modern and Contemporary Theatre and Performance at the Victoria and Albert Museum and Senior Tutor (Performance) on the V&A / RCA's History of Design MA. He recently co-chaired a museum-wide initiative about the future of curatorial practice at the V&A and helped create the museum's new Curatorial Training Programme. Recent exhibitions for the museum include *Enthoven Unboxed: 100 Years of Collecting Performance*, *Re:Imagining Musicals* and *Laughing Matters: The State of a Nation*. Contributions to V&A publications include *Calling the Shots: A Queer History of Photography*, *Alice: Curiouser and Curiouser* and *The Story of Scottish Design*. His chapter 'Carry on Curating: Collecting Comedy at the V&A' was published earlier this year in Routledge's *Researching Popular Entertainment*.

Simultaneous Settings and Audience Affect

Patricia Smyth
University of Exeter

This paper considers the role of 'multiple settings', consisting of two or more rooms seen in cross-section and incorporating simultaneous actions. Edward Fitzball's *Jonathan Bradford* (Surrey Theatre, 1833) is often cited as the first production to use this configuration (although there were, in fact, precedents), and it remained a familiar device throughout the century. While multiple scenes have frequently been employed in twentieth- and twenty-first-century staging, nineteenth-century examples have tended to be overlooked. In an essay on 'Simultaneity in Modern Stage Design', Tom Postlewait referred to them as isolated instances that were limited in number because, as he writes, 'the principle of causality' in melodrama worked against 'a complex idea of simultaneity'. He further defines them as 'without any telling purpose except commercial gimmickry'. I argue that these settings were much more prevalent in the nineteenth century than Postlewait acknowledges. Moreover, their presentation of significant events through isolated, but simultaneous, actions represented more than mere gimmickry, instilling a sense of unease in the spectator that speaks to what Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison refer to as 'epistemic anxiety' about the nature of objective truth in this period. This paper examines a range of examples, looking at how they worked on stage and considering their appeal to spectators.

Patricia Smyth is an art historian and theatre historian, based at the University of Exeter (from January 2025). Her research interests are in nineteenth-century art, theatre, transmediality, and popular spectatorship. Her book *Paul Delaroche: Painting and Popular Spectacle* was published by Liverpool University Press in 2022. She is co-editor of the journal *Nineteenth Century Theatre and Film*.

3-paper session:

D'Oyly Carte and the Savoy: Past Traditions and Present Practicalities

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Strange Adventure! The Madrigal on the Savoy Stage

Benedict Taylor
University of Edinburgh

In Act II of *The Mikado* (1885), W. S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan introduced what might seem to us an incongruous musical genre within the ostensibly Japanese setting of the comic opera: a madrigal, in mock English Elizabethan style, complete with 'fa la la' refrain. Yet it is conspicuous that contemporary reviews found the inclusion quite unremarkable; indeed the two creators would go on to include a madrigal in their following production, *Ruddigore* (1887), as well as it featuring in Sullivan's later works for the Savoy, *Haddon Hall* (1892) and *The Rose of Persia* (1899). What is a madrigal doing on stage, and what role – musical, dramaturgical, aesthetic – do these pieces play in these works? This paper examines the madrigals (and madrigal-like unaccompanied part-songs) found over Sullivan's operatic output, paying particular attention to their dramaturgical function and temporality, specifically their ability to convey a paradoxical fusion of stasis and tension.

Benedict Taylor is Professor of the Analysis and Philosophy of Music at the University of Edinburgh and part-time dilettante in G&S scholarship. Amongst his more ostensibly respectable publications are *Music, Subjectivity, and Schumann* (Cambridge, 2022), *Hensel: String Quartet in E flat* (Cambridge 2023), and *Coleridge-Taylor: Hiawatha* (Oxford, forthcoming 2025). He is currently working on a large-scale collaborative project on sonata form in the nineteenth century, and occupies much of his time spoiling the work of more accomplished and successful writers in his role as co-editor of *Music & Letters*, associate editor of *19th-Century Music*, and series editor for Cambridge University Press's *Music in Context* series.

Is Parody a Thing of the Pastiche?

Martyn Strachan
Independent Scholar

Throughout the history of literature the use of parody has been widespread at almost all times and in most cultures. It can serve a number of functions and these have tended to change with the times. More modern usage has tended to equate parody with satire and the connection is undeniable. The nineteenth century British theatre is rich in examples of parody and the ballad opera tradition, beginning in the eighteenth century, owed its origin almost entirely to a reaction to the artificiality of *opera seria*. The joint works of Gilbert and Sullivan are very much a part of this tradition and it is arguable that in them, parody reached its most developed and refined form, both in the libretto and Sullivan's score. This paper explores the various techniques used by the collaborators and the forms that they took as well as the purposes which they served. It will also suggest an explanation as to why the technique appeared to fall out of favour by the end of the century.

Martyn Strachan was born in Kent and educated at Napier College of Commerce & Technology and St Andrews University. He studied organ with W O Minay and Philip Sawyer and piano with Sandra Brown. In 1983 he became an administrator with the Law Society of Scotland (later the Scottish Legal Aid Board). In 1999 he decided to make music his full-time occupation and he divided his time between teaching piano and organ and acting as an accompanist, repetiteur and organist. In 2003 he became Organist and Choirmaster of Craiglockhart Parish Church in Edinburgh, moving in 2012 to the Reid Memorial Church. Between 2013 and 2019 he was an administrator for Forth Pipe Organs Ltd and in 2018 he was awarded a doctorate by the Open University for research on the music of Arthur Sullivan.

Richard D'Oyly Carte and the Challenges (and Consequences) of Casting

James Brooks Kuykendall
University of Mary Washington

The impresario Richard D'Oyly Carte was a pioneer in the long-running show—seeking to produce works that could run nightly for a year or more. This he managed with the Savoy Operas—and he failed abysmally with Sullivan's *Ivanhoe* (1891), when he attempted a similar nightly schedule when there simply was not an audience to support it. But the long-running show made grueling demands on the performers, and it is evident that Carte had a hard time maintaining a cast at the fees he was willing to pay. In particular, the lead soprano and the lead tenor roles (so central in the operatic stage otherwise) were like revolving doors in the original productions, with actors leaving mid-run to be replaced by others. The Savoy Operas were not conceived to be performed in repertory, but Carte also implemented a repertory system with his touring companies—and ultimately, after his death, the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company became a repertory touring troupe (albeit with sometimes months-long residencies in central London). To what extent is the "family likeness" of the Savoy Operas a consequence of Carte's production system, to which the creative collaborators Gilbert and Sullivan acquiesced? Moreover, have subsequent audiences come to have an exaggerated sense of such similarities between the Savoy operas because they came to be heard in repertory, with the same actors appearing in every show? The relationship between company management and creative product proves to be complex.

James Brooks Kuykendall is chair of the Department of Music at the University of Mary Washington, in Fredericksburg, Virginia, USA. Much of his published research has focused on British music *c*. 1860-1960. He edited two volumes of OUP's *William Walton Edition*, as well as a volume of Stanford's orchestral song cycles for A-R Editions. Although he has worked on a variety of topics, and despite a lot of interests that he has not found time for, he keeps coming back to Gilbert & Sullivan. Beyond British music, his work has concentrated on musical philology and the nature of musical text, including a blog *Settling Scores*, which aims to present such issues in the least daunting terms possible. He is currently synthesizing some of his papers from the previous New College conferences into a book, *In Two Minds: Gilbert, Sullivan, and the writing of opera*.

General Sir George White Goes to the Hippodrome: film, theatre, and the cultivation of a wartime public sphere in late-Victorian London

Peter Yeandle
Loughborough University

This paper begins with analysis of a recently digitised Warwick Trading Company film: *Sir George White Leaving the London Hippodrome*.* Originally filmed on 23 April 1900, the footage depicts cheering crowds surrounding White, the hero of the Siege of Ladysmith, as he departed the Hippodrome accompanied by the theatre proprietor. Crowd patriotism, evident in this footage, was to be witnessed on a much larger scale a month later during the so-called Mafeking fever of the weekend commencing May 18th. That weekend, the West End – according to the press – had become 'an orgie of patriotism'. The theatres played a crucial role in stoking and sustaining Mafeking Fever: theatre managers declared the news from the stage; artists adapted play script, song, and skit to the moment; audiences spilled from auditorium to street; music hall songs became the soundtrack of patriotic celebration. Amidst the celebrations, the cheering crowds of May were shown footage of the cheering crowds of April. This paper explores how film footage, broadcast inside the mega halls of Leicester Square and onto the external walls of other central London venues, might be used to consider crowd patriotism as part of a broader theatrical public sphere. Film formed an integral component of late-Victorian theatrical entertainment and, by extension, of wartime news broadcasting. Moreover, film was crucial for the cultivation of military celebrity. If the wartime public sphere was theatrical, then that theatricality included film.

* The footage can be seen here: https://player.bfi.org.uk/free/film/watch-sir-george-white-leaving-the-london-hippodrome-1900-online

Peter Yeandle is Senior Lecturer in History at Loughborough University. His research focuses on the ways in which imperialism and militarism were presented to nineteenth-century British audiences through a variety of popular culture genres. With Kate Newey and Jeffrey Richards, he edited *Politics, Performance and Popular Culture* (MUP, 2016). Recent/forthcoming articles/chapters examine zoological gardens as imperial performance space, the West End during the second Boer War, pantomime imperialism, and music-hall ballet. He is currently at work on a book-length project provisionally entitled: *Theatres of Empire: popular imperialism and performance culture in Britain, 1851-1926.*