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Imagining Opera: Ideas of Western Opera in the British India, Singapore and Shanghai (1860s-1920s)

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Abstract

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The focus of this thesis is on how "opera" as an idea was received and adapted beyond the Western world, in particular in these Asian regions: the British India, Singapore, and China. The thesis includes four topics: the relationship between travelling opera troupes and the European community in Singapore, opera burlesques in black face minstrelsy in the British India, Malay opera Bangsawan in Singapore and Li Jinhui's children's musical drama in Shanghai. This research attempts to answer three groups of questions: 1. In colonial cities in Asia, how did overseas Westerners and natives understand European opera as a cultural import? Was the opera culture in Asian colonies the replication of that in Europe? Moreover, was this culture transplanted directly from Europe? How did opera become an icon of colonial culture and stimulate the overseas Westerners' collective imagination to it? 2. What is the relationship between canonic opera, including opera works and operatic conventions, and theatres derived from the canonic opera but belonging to popular culture, for instance, opera burlesques by minstrel actors? 3. Further the thesis attempts to investigate: how did Western opera influence native theatrical practices in Asia? And how did natives react and adapt the new ideas of musical theatre imported from the West and backed by Western powers? These questions are important not only for understanding the reception history of Western opera in Asia but also for inquiring how has "opera" become a global musical concept.

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Research Thesis: Declaration of Authorship

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I declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

I confirm that:

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Chapter 0. Introduction

The focus of this thesis is less on how European opera as operatic works circulated in Asia between 1860s to 1920s than on how "opera" as an idea was received and adapted beyond the Western world, in particular in these Asian regions: the British India, the British Malaya, and China. The following chapters unfold around the following groups of questions: 1. In colonial cities in Asia, how did overseas Westerners and natives understand European opera as a cultural import? Was the opera culture in Asian colonies the replication of that in Europe? Moreover, was this culture transplanted directly from Europe? How did opera become an icon of colonial culture and stimulate the overseas Westerners' collective imagination to it? 2. What is the relationship between canonic opera, including opera works and operatic conventions, and theatres derived from the canonic opera but belonging to popular culture, for instance, opera burlesques by minstrel actors? 3. Further the thesis attempts to investigate: how did Western opera influence native theatrical practices in Asia? And how did natives react and adapt the new ideas of musical theatre imported from the West and backed by Western powers? These three groups of questions are important not only for understanding the reception history of Western opera in Asia but also for inquiring how has "opera" become a global musical concept.

Western musical historians, in particular in Anglophone institutions, have paid increasing attention in recent decades to the history of the circulation of European opera outside of the traditional West including Europe and the United States. Colonial cities dominated by European powers from the nineteenth century across the globe have become the primary focus of these new attempts, which have included cities such as Manila,

Batavia, Cape Town, Melbourne, Calcutta, Hanoi, Macao, Shanghai and Tokyo.[1] Except Tokyo, all of them were colonial cities of varied types. The list can further extend to Cairo, which underwent "self-westernisation" under European pressure in 1860s under Khedive Ismail's rule, and South America, in which most countries became independent states during the nineteenth century but still kept close cultural affiliation with Europe.[2] This geographical expansion of opera study highlights two facts, first, that the world during the long-nineteenth century, commonly regarded as ending by the First World War, was predominantly operated in the frame of European Empires;[3] second, that the circulation of

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[1] Here are some of the works: William John Summers, "Forty-Eight Nights at the Opera: *La compañia lyrica Frances in Manila* in 1865", in *Qui musicam in se habit: Studies in honour of Alejandro Enrique Planchart*, ed. Anna Zayaruznaya et al (Middleton: American Institute of Musicology), 315-346; Akiko Sugiyama, "Maritime journeys of European opera in the Indonesian archipelago, 1835-1869," *The International Journal of Maritime History* 31, no.2 (2019): 248-267; Frederick Hale, "Italian Grand Opera at the Cape of Good hope: The 1875 and 1876 Cagli Seasons," *South African Journal of Cultural History* 29, no.1 (2015): 58-73; Harold Love, *The Golden Age of Australian Opera: W.S.Lyster and his companies (1861-1880)*, (Sydney: Currency Press, 1981); Esmeralda Monique Antonia Rocha, "Imperial Opera: The Nexus between opera and imperialism in Victorian Calcutta and Melbourne, 1833-1901" (PhD diss., University of Western Australia, 2012); Michael McClellan, "Performing Empire: Opera in Colonial Hanoi," *Journal of Musicological Research* 22, no.1-2 (2003): 135-166; Akiko Sugiyama, "Macao's Two Opera Seasons in 1833 and 1865: A Study of Travelling Musicians and Maritime Connections in the 19th-century World," *Review of Culture*, no.42 (2013): 141-150; Chun-Zen Huang, "Travelling Opera Troupes in Shanghai, 1842-1949" (PhD diss., The Catholic University of America, 1997); Yvonne Liao, "Empires in Rivalry: Opera Concerts and Foreign Territoriality in Shanghai, 1930-1945," in *Operatic Geographies: The Place of Opera and the Opera House*, ed. Suzanne Aspden (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2019), 148-161; Naomi Matsumoto, "Giovanni Vittorio Rosi's Musical Theatre: Opera, Operetta and the Westernisation of Modern Japan," in *Musical Theatre in Europe: 1830-1945*, ed. Michela Niccolai and Clair Rowden (Turnhout: Brepols, 2017), 351-385; Brooke McCorkle, "Was ist Japanisch; Wagnerism and Dreams of Nationhood in Modern Japan," in *Dreams of Germany: Musical imaginaries from the concert hall to the dance floor*, ed. Neil Gregor and Thomas Irvine (New York: Berghahn Books, 2019), 169-193.

[2] For Cairo's reception of European opera from Paris in the reign of the Khedive Ismail, see Adam Mestyan, *Arab Patriotism: The Ideology and Culture of Power in Late Ottoman Egypt* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 89-105; For the situation in South America, see Benjamin Walton, "Canons of Real and Imagined Opera: Buenos Aires and Montevideo, 1810-1860," *The Oxford Handbook of the Operatic Canons*, ed.Cormar Newark and William Weber (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 271-289.

[3] Jürgen Osterhammel, *The Transformation of the World: A Global History of the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Patrick Camiller (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2014), 466.

opera around the world in this period was closely bound to the expansion of Western colonial powers.

In addition to these achievements, the inquiries into the global history of opera so far have uncovered several features deserving our attention. Although the three aspects discussed below may not apply to all colonial cities around the world, they are typical in Asia.

First, Italian-French operas were in fact not the majority of Western theatrical music heard in Asian theatres from the 1860s to the end of the century. Table 0.1 displays the major opera troupes performing on Asian stages. The table demonstrates, first, that from 1863 to 1871 business of opera touring was dominated by three directors, the French Alfred Maugard, and two Italians, Augusto Cagli and Giovanni Pompei. From 1863 to 1865 Maugard's French Opera Company spent most of the time in Batavia, the capital of Dutch East Indies and also stayed for months in Manila, the headquarter of Spanish Empire in Asia.[4] The company also travelled to Singapore, Macao and Hong Kong, though staying for much shorter time - normally no longer than two weeks. Giovanni Pompei came to Batavia in 1869 when Maugard had left. Unlike Maugard's French troupe, his singers were from Italy, which made him less popular in Batavia than Maugard in Batavia where the Dutch felt a close mental affiliation with French culture,[5] but needed in Calcutta where an opera committee consisting of high-class Britons had asked Cagli to recruit Italian singers and give opera seasons every year since 1867. The turning point was in 1872.[6] The Britons in Calcutta ceased cooperation with Cagli because they were enraged when Cagli drew his best singers out to Australia, the new market he and Pompei were ready to explore.[7] Italian

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[4] Summers, "Forty-Eight Nights at the Opera: *La compañia lyrica Frances in Manila* in 1865", 318.

[5] For the French community in Batavia before the nineteenth century, see Denys Lombard, "Vogageurs français dans l'archipel insulindien Xviième, XVIIIème et XIXémes", *Archipel* 1 (1971): 141-168; For the Netherland's close affiliation with French culture and opera, see William Osmond, [in progress], "The Reception of French Opera in Amsterdam 1830-1848," (PhD diss., University of Southampton).

[6] Rocha, "Imperial Opera: The Nexus between opera and imperialism in Victorian Calcutta and Melbourne, 1833-1901", 98

[7]Ibid.,, 113.

opera in Asia since then became silent. Although the opera committee in Calcutta continued to recruit other impresarios and Cagli returned in 1878, regular Italian opera seasons of Italian opera never revived in Calcutta and in other East Asian cities until 1920s, nearly forty years later.

The second thread this table shows is the coming of troupes specialising in light musical theatre genres since the mid-1870s. In 1875 and 1876 Calcutta opera house was occupied by Alice May's English opera company and Pillo's French opera company. Alice May's repertory was a mixture of a few Italian operas and many French *opérettes,* both of which were probably sung in English. She returned to England where she was born, and later became the prima donna in many premiers of Gilbert and Sullivan's English operettas.[8] Pillo's programme, similarly, was exclusively made up of *opérettes* by Offenbach and Lecocq, but contained no "serious and grand opera", such as those by Meyerbeer, Gounod and Bizet that elite Britons expected.[9]

The thriving of light musical theatre genres in Asia also impacted cities such as Shanghai that started to be visited operatic troupes only from mid-1870s. The first eight rows in table 0.2 overlap the tail of the last column in table 0.1 and show the ephemeral appearance of Italian opera troupes in Shanghai from 1879 to 1882. Since then and up until 1905 operas staged in Shanghai largely referred to operetta, comedies, and even burlesques brought by many groups performing in English and mostly coming from Australia. The decade afterwards until the First World War witnessed the annual visit of Maurice Bandmann's "opera companies"; their "opera" became Anglo-American musical comedies in fashion in Europe and America at the turn of the twentieth century. [10]

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[8] Simpson, *Alice May: Gilbert and Sullivan's First Prima Donna* (New York & London: Routledge, 2003), 53-68 and 83-102.

[9] Rocha, "Imperial Opera: The Nexus between opera and imperialism in Victorian Calcutta and Melbourne, 1833-1901", 140.

[10] For Bandmann's global theatrical business, see Christopher Balme, "The Bandmann Circuit: Theatrical Networks in the First Age of Globalisation, *Theatre Research International* 40, no.1 (2015): 19-36.

Table 0.1 Opera companies in Asian colonial cities (1863-1882)

	Macao and Hong Kong	Singapore	Calcutta	Batavia and the Dutch East Indies	Manila	Shanghai
1863		Alfred Maugard's French opera company		Maugard's French Opera Company		
1865	Maugard	Maugard		Maugard	Maugard	
1867			Augusto Cagli's Italian Opera Company			
1868			Cagli			
1869	Giovanni Pompei's Italian opera company	Pompei	Cagli	Pompei	Pompei	
1870		Pompei	Cagli	Pompei	Pompei	
1871			Cagli and Pompei			
1873			Massa's Italian Opera Company			
1874			Wyndham's Italian opera			
1875			Alice May's English opera company			
1876			Pillo's French opera company			French Open Comique Troupe; Elcia May's English Opera Company
1877			Massa			
1878			Cagli			
1879	Cagli; Vernon's English Opera Company	Cagli; Vernon				Cagli; Vernon
1880			Clara Stanley's English opera company			

	Macao and Hong Kong	Singapore	Calcutta	Batavia and the Dutch East Indies	Manila	Shanghai
1881	Cagli	Cagli & Corti?				Cagli; Corti's Italian opera company
1882						Corti

Table 0.2 Opera companies to Shanghai (1876-1936) (Source: (1) Chun-Zen Huang. *Traveling Opera Troupes in Shanghai: 1842-1949*,16; (2) *The China Press*, 16 and 20 January, 30 May 1933, 3 January 1936.)

Opera Company	***Month***	***Year***
French Opera Comique Troupe	April	1876
Elcia May's Opera Bouffe Co. (Elcia May)	June-July	1876
H. Vernon's Royal English and bouffe opera company. (H, Vernon)	Feb-May	1879
Royal Italian Opera Co. (Augusto Cagli)	Dec-Feb	1879-80
Doriani's French Opera Comique Co.	April-June	1880
Royal Italian Opera Co. (Augusto Cagli)	Jan-Feb	1881
Verme Italian Opera Co. (Ettore Corti)	Dec-Jan	1881-2
Royal Italian Opera Co. (Ettore Corti)	Nov-Dec	1882
Loftus Troupe	Aug-Sept	1883
Mascotte Company	July-Aug, Nov-Jan	1885-86
Melville Opera Co. (Emelie Melville)	Oct	1885
French Comic Opera Co.	Nov	1886
French Opera Co.	Feb-Mar	1887
Salinger's English Opera Bouffe Co.	Mar	1887
French Opera Bouffe Co.	Jan	1888
Willard and Sheridan's Troupe	Aug-Sept	1888
Amy Sherwin's Troupe	April-May	1889
Stanley Opera Co. (Harry Stanley)	July-Aug, Oct-Nov	1890
Willard Opera Co.	Aug-Sept	1891
Stanley Opera Co.	Aug-Sept	1892

New Willard Opera Co.	July-Sept	1895
Willard Opera Co.	April-May	1896
Pollard's Lilliputian Opera Co.	May-July	1897
Dallas Musical Comedy Co.	Feb	1901
Dallas Musical Comedy Co.	Feb	1902
Pollard's Lilliputian Opera Co.	April	1903
Dallas Musical Comedy Co.	Mar-April	1904
The Stanley Opera Co.	May-June	1904
Pollard's Lilliputian Opera Co.	Nov-Dec	1904
Dallas-Bandmann Opera Co.	April	1905
Bandmann Opera Co.	Aug	1905
Bandmann opera Co.	Mar	1906
New Bandmann Opera Co.	Feb	1907
Pollard's Lilliputians Opera Co.	Jan	1908
Bandmann Opera Opera Co.	April	1908
Bandmann Opera Opera Co.	June	1909
Bandmann Opera Opera Co.	May	1910
Bandmann Opera Opera Co.	May	1911
Bandmann Opera Opera Co.	May	1912
Bandmann Opera Opera Co.	May	1914
Italian Grand Opera Co. (The Gonzalez Company)	Jan-Feb	1915
Russian Grand Opera Co.	Oct-Nov	1919
Italian Grand Opera Co. (Adolfo Carpi)	Jan	1923
Italian Grand Opera Co. (Adolfo Carpi)	Dec-Jan	1923-24
Gonsalez Brother's Italian Opera Co. (Adolfo Carpi)	Nov-Dec	1925
Italian Grand Opera Co. (Adolfo Carpi)	Jan-Feb	1927
Italian Grand opera Co. (Adolfo Carpi)	Feb-Mar	1929
San Carlos Italian Grand Opera Company	Jan, May-June	1933
San Carlos Italian Grand Opera Company	Jan	1936

The last part of Table 0.2 shows the return of Italian opera to Shanghai after 1915. The Gonzalez Opera Company from Milan toured in Russia a year before, but was

stranded in the mid of the way due to the break up of the World War I. The troupe decided to travel eastward across Siberia to find a ship in Vladivostok. China had not been in their travel plan, but their performances were received enthusiastically in Harbin, a Chinese city under Russian control, which encouraged them to tour on Chinese coast and to visit Beijing, Tianjin and Shanghai. [11] Verdi's *Otello*, Gounod's *Faust* and Bizet's *Carmen* performed by the troupe deeply impressed Chinese art critic Fu Yanchang who regarded these performances were his enlightenment of Western orchestral music. [12] If Gonzalez's Asian tour from 1914 just happened coincidentally because of the World War I, Adolfo Carpi's "Grand Italian Opera Company"'s four visits of China from 1923 were the result of the impresario's intent to exploit East Asian music market.[13] Moreover, Carpi's tours in Shanghai effectively impacted the native music life in this city. The troupe's performances attracted a wide of range of Chinese musicians and music critics who played significant roles of reforming Chinese modern music. The audiences included, among others, Xiao Youmei, a composer who gained a music PhD in Germany and was the first president of the National Conservatory; Zhao Yuanren who was not only a linguist and the advocator of modern Chinese language *baihuawen*, but also a renowned composer; Zhang Rougu, a musical critic who was largely responsible for spreading knowledge of Western art music to Chinese public through newspaper and was the author of *Gejü ABC* (Opera ABC), a pamphlet published in 1929 and evidently stimulated by Carpi's opera seasons; and Tan Shuzhen, a violinist and the first Chinese musician joining the Shanghai Municipal Orchestra which was then made up of only foreign musicians.[14] Indeed, Carpi's opera

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[11] After leaving Shanghai, the troupe toured extensively in Southeast Asia and even further. They visited Hong Kong, Manila, Singapore, Batavia and other several cities in the Dutch East Indies, Rangoon, Calcutta and Bombay. Then they traveled to Australia where some of the troupe members stayed. This marked the end of the amazing tour which had lasted for four years. See Thomas Kaufman, "Gonsalez [Gonzalez], Giuseppe", Grove Music Online, https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.O007178.

[12] Ruogu Zhang, *Dao Yinyuehui qü* (Shanghai: Liangyou tushu yinshua gongsi, 1927), 2-5.

[13] Carpi was viewed by Shanghai newspaper as a "Shanghailander." Huang, *Traveling Opera Troupes in Shanghai: 1842-1949*,

[14] Shen Bao, 21 December 1929.

seasons must be regarded as one of numerous events that represent the burgeoning musical life and Chinese musician circle in Shanghai around 1927. [15]

Table 0.2 is picked from Chun-Zen Huang's PhD Thesis "Travelling Opera Troupes in Shanghai, 1842-1949" completed in 1997, but the troupes that Huang reviews cover a much narrower time frame from 1876 to 1929. A problem easy to be neglected is that although the impact of the return of Italian opera troupes in 1920s on native music life in Shanghai was larger than any foreign opera troupe before, it happened only within the last seven years in the roughly fifty years that Huang's investigates. The earlier period from 1876 up to the eve of the WWI (the periodisation of Eric Hobsbawm's *The Age of Empire*, the third volume of his world history) shows Italian opera's thin impact in Shanghai and constant visits of English opera companies connected to the provincial Melbourne or Sydney but not London, the imperial metropolis of the British Empire. The repertory of these companies reflect a widely spread understanding in the late-nineteenth century anglosphere, but nearly forgotten today, to the question of what genres might be thought as "operatic".

Consider example 0.3, the programme of Harry Stanley's English Opera Company in Shanghai in 1890, also from Huang's thesis. Among the forty-six performances, sixteen are English versions of French *opérettes*, nine are Gilbert & Sullivan's operettas, the rest twenty include a variety of theatrical forms from musical comedies, spoken dramas to pantomimes and others. Another example that went further in transforming opera into a mass entertainment is opera burlesque. (I will explore Dave Carson's opera parodies in his minstrel shows in India and East Asia in Chapter 2.) The first difficulty regarding troupes similar to Stanley's and Carson's and their programmes is to posit them in conventional opera history and to explain their generic "impurities". Huang in his thesis chose to get

[15] Luo Qin analysis these events as the background of the establishment of the National Conservatory in 1927, see Qin Luo, "Yinyue 1927 xushi, Guoli yinyueyuan dansheng zhong de Zhongguo lishi, shehui ji qi ren", *Yinyue yishu* no. 1 (2013): 6-28.

around this problem.[16] Esmeralda Rocha's PhD Thesis that explores Western opera companies in nineteenth-century Calcutta regards the absence of Italian opera troupes after 1875 and the popularity of English troupes specialising in light genres as signalling the decline of opera culture in Calcutta.[17] Avoiding generic complexities and simply equating popular theatre music forms with low art value are not satisfactory in reconstructing a comprehensive theatrical scape based on the reality of Asian colonial port cities, and are also impossible to help clarify how directors and singers specialising in "serious" or "light" genres might understand "what opera is" differently.

Example 0.3 Programmes of the Stanley Opera Company in Shanghai, 1890 (Source: Huang, "Travelling Opera Troupes in Shanghai", 108.)

July: 26th, *Paul Johns* (Planquette); 28th, *Les Cloches de Cornelle* (Planquette) ; 30th, *Les Noces d'Olivette* (Audran) ; 31st, *H.M.S. Pinafore* (Gilbert&Sullivan) ;

August: 2nd, *She-e*; 4th, *She-e*; 5th, *Les Cloches de Corneville* ; 6th, Grand Varieties; 7th, *East Lynne*; 8th, *The Yeoman of the Guard* (Gilbert & Sullivan); 9th, *The Colleen Bawn*; 11st, *La Mascotte* (Audran); 12th, *Patience* (Gilbert & Sullivan); 13th, *The Pirates of Penzance* (Gilbert & Sullivan); 14th, *La Mascotte*; 15th, *H.M.S. Pinafore*; 16th, *Lalla Rookh*;

October: 18th *The Mikado* (Gilbert&Sullivan); 20th, *Giroflé-Girofla* (Lecocq); 21st, *Lalla Rookh*; 22nd, *La Grand-Duchess de Gérolstein* (Offenbach), 23rd, *Les Cloches de Corneville*; 24th, *La Fille de Madame Angot* (Lecocq); 25th, *Harbour Lights*; 27th, *La Mascotte*; 28th, *Les Noces d'Olivette* (Audran); 29th, *She-e*; 30th, *La Fille du tambour-major* (Offenbach); 31st, *The Mikado*;

[16] I was kindly allowed by Professor Huang in Taipei to examine all newspaper clips that he collected for his PhD thesis. Among them there is one programme of Dave Carson's minstrel show in Shanghai in 1878 in which Offenbach's *Les Deux Aveugles* was advertised as "The Blind Beggars". However, this material does not appear in Prof. Huang's thesis. Why it was left aside is intriguing.

[17] Rocha, "Imperial Opera: The Nexus between opera and imperialism in Victorian Calcutta and Melbourne, 1833-1901", 150-151.

November: 1st, *Held by the Enemy*; 3rd, *Sleeping Beauty*; 5th, *Harbour Lights*; 6th Grand military entertainment; 7th, *Blue Beard*; 8th, *Sleeping Beauty*; 10th, *Harbour Lights*; 11, *East Lynne*; 12th *Paul Jones*; 13th, *Mikado*; 14th, *H.M.S. Pinafore*; 15th, *Boccaccio* (von Suppé); 17th, *Struck Oil*; 19th, *Harbour Lights*; 20th, *Giroflé-Girofla*; 21st, *Struck Oil*.

Second, the sources that can be used to write Western opera history has expanded to include not only those serving formal performances in theatres such as libretti, scores, composer and librettist's documents, advertisements, and so forth. And what serves to write about opera's reception has not been limited to critic's reviews. For instance, famous operas were often implanted in key scenes in nineteenth-century Western novels to structure plots and to deliver symbolic meanings, as illustrated by the relationships between Dumas le Père's Le *Conte de Monte-Cristo* and Rossini's *Guillaume Tell*, Gaston Leroux's *Le Fantôme de l'Opéra* and Gounod's *Faust*.[18] Putting opera in fictional literature also became a special means for musical criticism. One of the earliest examples is E.T.A.Hoffman's "Don Juan: Eine fabelhafte Begebenheit, die sich mit einem reisendem Enthusiasten zugetragen" (Don Juan: A Fabulous Incident which befell a travelling enthusiast), which is about an imaginary performance of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. Since 1870s such imagination to Western opera embodied in various types of writings appeared in colonial cities in Asia too and reflected the reality of opera culture in local colonial contexts.[19] Opera burlesques in Asia, in particular those by Dave Carson's minstrels, I argue, is a special form of criticism to the opera culture in Asia, although opera burlesque was also a Western importation. Burlesque actors parodied not only plot and music in canonic operas but also canonic conventions in European opera practices. The meanings that burlesques convey, such as actors' critiques or fantasies on opera as "high culture", their political allusions, racial ideologies and so forth, are not to be found in opera works

[18] Cormac Newark, *Opera in the Novel from Balzac to Proust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

[19] See chapter 1.

themselves; rather, I borrow Carolyn Abbate's observation, opera work is an agent "pointing towards" these "other" meanings. [20]

Third, investigating the reception of Western opera in non-Western societies cannot avoid the question of what is the relationship between Western opera and native theatrical traditions and how they might affect each other. There are at least three approaches:

1. It is possible to discuss the power differentials between Western opera and non-European theatres in colonial context. The last chapter of Rocha's thesis concerns the Cantonese opera in Melbourne and its negatively twisted image in Westerners' observations driven by orientalist ideologies.[21] However, juxtaposing non-European theatres with Western opera only as a comparison runs the risk of European centrism that makes Asian theatres subject to their Western counterpart and thus marginalises their own stories of being there.

2. It should be acknowledged that the transmission of Chinese opera to the West - the most important case is the Cantonese Opera that had been highly popular in Chinese communities in South East Asia and North America - carries no less cultural significance than the movement of Western opera in reverse direction.[22] Seeking the commonality between Western opera and Asian theatres in their operational mechanisms that made such transnational businesses possible and treating the two-way transmissions as an entirety would help modify the Eurocentric perspective on Western-Asian theatrical encounters.

3. Modifying Eurocentrism in the study of the reception of Western opera in Asia can be deepened by asking whether there were mutual impacts between European opera and

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[20] Abbate's object is "music that is not present, rather implied", music "that is there as a pointer toward this other." Carolyn Abbate, *In Search of Opera* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 1.

[21] Rocha, "Imperial Opera: The Nexus between opera and imperialism in Victorian Calcutta and Melbourne, 1833-1901", 301-313.

[22] On circulation of Cantonese Opera in South East Asia and North America, see Wing Chung Ng, *The Rise of Cantonese Opera* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2015); Nancy Yunhwa Rao, *Chinatown Opera Theatre in North America* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2017).

Asian theatres in artistic means. Sooi Beng Tan and Matthew Isaac Cohen, who studied Bangsawan and Komedie Stamboel, two Malay theatres that emerged in 1880s, demonstrate that the creation of these genres could not be completed without adopting foreign influences including Western opera, with consequence that a high level of hybridity in music, plot, acting and theatre design became their most significant character.[23] The "operatic" nature in Bangsawan and Komedie Stamboel, highlights the genres' paradoxical relationship with opera as a transcultural concept. On the one hand, as a commercial strategy to please local colonial authorities which would give better conditions to European troupes, the stakeholders of the two genres called their performances as "opera" and claimed their "operas" were similar to the European counterpart; on the other hand, by the early twentieth century, Malay opera, in particular Bangsawan in Malaya, which cannot be more distant from Malay's indigenous culture, began to be regarded as a native tradition by both foreign observers and natives, and was treated as a national legacy after Malaysia achieved independency. [24] The case of Malay opera illustrates the nuance between the traditional and the indigenous. This idea is further advanced in Catherine Vance Yeh's article on the interaction between Mei Lanfang's modernised Peking Opera, the modernised Japanese Kabuki theatre and the Denishawn's dance troupe from the USA.[25] All these researches has contributed to updating our knowledge about the integration of a theatrical globe in which many theatres across countries, regions, and continents should no longer be thought as having emerged and developed in isolation from each other.

I attempt in this thesis to consider the three issues raised above around recent studies on the reception history of Western opera in Asia as an integrated entirety. The tours of Western opera troupes in Asian port cities, as overviewed in the first issue, is the departure point of my study. The varied characters of the repertories that these troupes engaged, however, made the answer to the question of what opera meant to these troupes insecure.

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[23] Sooi Beng Tan, *Bangsawan: A Social and Stylistic history of Popular Malay Opera* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Matthew Issac Cohen, *The Komedie Stamboel: Popular Theatre in Colonial Indonesia, 1891-1903* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2006).

[24] See Chapter 3.

[25] Catherine Vance Yeh, "Experimenting with Dance Drama: Peking Kabuki Theatre Reform and the Denishawn's Tour of the Far East," *Journal of Global Theatre History* 1, no.2 (2016): 28-37.

The canonic opera works, namely the Italian and French operas (not including *opérettes*), were apparently much less frequently staged in Asia than in other regions outside of Europe, for instance, the South America. The second issue about the Westerners' imagining canonic opera performances through writings and parodies in Asia port cities, however, indicates that people could be affected by the ideas of canonic opera even when there was little opportunity to attend actual performance, and thus suggests a distinction between opera spread across the globe as a cluster of canonic works, and as a cluster of canonic ideas. This latter aspect is clearly explained by James Parakilas in his article "The Operatic Canon" in *The Oxford Hand of Opera*:

> To say that opera is a canonic art form is also to say that *within that art form the entire system of production and consumption, not just the repertory, is canonic*. The canonic repertory fits, for example, with the canonic opera house. That oversized theatre with its oversized spaces (auditorium, pit, stage, and backstage) and oversized performing forces (the full orchestra, the large chorus and ballet corps, along with the stentorian soloists) is made for the characteristically grandiose scenes in the standard repertory - the Triumphant Scene, the Prize Song Competition, the Coronation Scene - and not for the sights and sounds of early opera or the traditional Broadway show or almost any spoken drama. Likewise, the canonic repertory, performed in its canonic home, demands and relies on a canonic style of vocal production… The experience of the opera-goers is a correspondingly canonic affair. They know the high C is coming at the end of "Di quella pira," and they respond according to how it compares to others they remember. The most knowing among them even know that that note does not appear in the canonic score of *Il Trovatore*, but they rejoice in it as a gift from the canonic performing tradition.[26]

Parakilas concludes that "The operatic canon, then, is among other things a system of cultural upbringing for opera-goers and performers alike."[27] Among the many aspects of operatic canon he mentioned above, Parakilas' interest is obviously not on repertory but on opera conventions, as he made the point at the very beginning (Emphasis added). Clearly,

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[26] James Parakilas, "The Operatic Canon", in *The Oxford Handbook of Opera*, 861-862.

[27] Ibid.

most Asian colonial cities were unable to replicate even one such canonic performance that Parakilas defined.[28] On the one hand, writings of imagined opera performance or fictitious operatic tours in Asia by Western expatriates in South East Asia (two cases will be examined in chapter 1) allude to such embarrassment, and the thriving of operetta, musical comedy, opera burlesque and other "marginal" forms of opera on Asian stages from 1870s to 1910s indicates that operatic practices here were apparently counter-canonic. On the other hand, as Chapter 2 will show, the burlesque actors' target in their operatic parodies were mostly these canonic (Italian) conventions and the question of whether parody simply joked on these conventions or meanwhile paid perhaps envious homage to them is an open question. Thus the lack of actual performance of canonic opera did not prevent the notion of canonic opera from being respected by those singers, actors, directors specialising even in lighter musical theatre genres and by their audiences.

The impact of opera as canonic conventions, is equally visible in the third issue that concerns the reception of "opera" as a transcultural concept in Asian theatres. By 1900s in the Malay South East Asia, directors of Bangsawan and Komedie Stamboel had called these two types of Malay-language musical theatres as "opera" in advertisements. They did this most probably for commercial motivation. But what cannot be neglected is that the opportunities that the directors and actors of the so called Malay opera had to get some ideas of Western opera was in the light genres of musical theatres such as operetta, musical comedy and burlesque by some of the English troupes visiting South East Asia since 1880s, rather than in canonic performances of canonic works; it is these non-canonic experiences that shaped the native actors and directors understandings to "opera".[29] This thesis argues that it is the "opera" as a cluster of ideas and practices, rather than specific works, that achieved real triumph in Asia since the mid-nineteenth century. The title of this thesis does not avoid using the word "opera" to refer to its main subject, although it is true that terms such as "theatre music", "stage music" or "musical theatre" would be more accurate to accommodate the generic complexities of the form, than the ambiguous term like "opera". The point is that the imperfect term "opera" having been commonly accepted,

[28] Hanoi, the Asian capital of the French Empire, was no exception. McClellan Michael McClellan, "Performing Empire: Opera in Colonial Hanoi", 158-160.

[29] See Chapter 3.

correctly or mistakenly, since the nineteenth century across the globe is the result of the word itself having become a canon.

Similar scenario can be found in Shanghai in the 1920s. *Opera ABC* by the Shanghai music critic Zhang Rougu mentioned earlier emerged after the New Cultural Movement, a Western-oriented cultural reform, when Chinese intellectuals who were identified with it, Zhang among them, all agreed that Western art music is the most sophisticated model that Chinese music should imitate. By introducing European opera's genres, structure, libretti, music, history, aesthetic values and so on, Zhang Ruogu expected that his handbook would implant a correct - thus canonic - understanding of what opera is in the Chinese public's mind. But what most interests me in this book is that Zhang Ruogu used this standard to critique Li Jinhui, China's first popular song composer, for his abusing the meaning of "opera" to promote his children's musical dramas and misdirecting the public's understanding to "this highest achievement of Western art".[30] However, Zhang's attack did not prevent Li Jinhui from being one of the best selling Chinese composers from the late 1920s to 1940s. Moreover, the debate upon whether Li's Children's musical drama is qualified to be called opera, initiated by Zhang Ruogu, persisted up to the twentieth-first century, when Li has been reevaluated as the pioneer of Chinese modern opera by political authorities as well as by academia. This dramatic shift indicates, among other things, that "opera" has been accepted in China as a superior idea and as much as a universal ruler to assess the country's accomplishments in its own national music from the early twentieth century.

This thesis proposes an alternative perspective to opera history outside of Europe. The three theatrical forms explored in Chapter two to four could not be more remote from the canonic opera described by Parakilas; nonetheless, these genres all reflect their stakeholders' understandings to "opera" as a canonic idea relying on their own varied conditions. Chapter two discusses the minstrel actor Dave Carson's opera burlesques among his other operatic engagements in in the British India. Besides opera burlesques, Carson's programmes was a kaleidoscopic mixture of English music hall songs, spoken comedies, English versions of Offenbach's operettas and excerpts from canonic operas.

[30] See Chapter 4.

Thus the exact nature of Carson's performance is hard for being categorised. Fully understanding Western opera in Asia requires accommodating such generic "impurities" and considering its interaction with the quasi-canonic practices such as the Italian opera troupes in Calcutta. Chapter three and four inquiry how "opera" as a canonic idea was practiced in non-European cultures: in the Malay South East Asia, it derived Bangsawan and Komdie Stamboel, and in Shanghai, it inspired Li Jinhui to create the Children's Musical Drama. These two cases of native operatic attempts suggest that opera was a successful transcultural art in terms of its idea, not of its repertory. All examples of 'informal' operas must be preceded by an account of how the absence of the canonic opera (repertory and practices) in Asia, stimulated the Western expatriates' imagination to it, which will be undertaken by chapter one.

Chapter 1. Operatic imaginaries (Singapore, 1863-1874)

1.1 *Don Giovanni* on a tropical Island

I walked into Labuan the other evening, and seeing an immense crowd streaming into the theatre, I joined them, and was soon ensconced in a stall. It was illumined by gas and splendid chandeliers. The boxes were filled with Europeans in full dress and brightly-clad natives, male and female, of the Flowery Land; and in the stalls near me were gorgeously-robed Pangherans. A grand orchestra performed the overture to Don Giovanni; and when the opera began I was surprised at the admirable appointments of the performers and the effective and well-trained chorus. Soon after Patti and Mario appeared amidst thunders of applause, and, ere long, ravished my ears with the exquisite duet *Là ci darem la mano*, of which a repetition was enthusiastically demanded. Feeling the heat overpowering at that moment, I pushed my way out…

The Straits Times, 18 July 1874

The author of this excerpt signed B.A.C. under his piece for the Singapore newspaper *The Straits Times*. His identity, except that he is a briton, is unknown. Stating that he was inhabiting on a small island in the South China Sea, which is Labuan, a British colony since 1848, the writer could be a colonial officer, a trader, a military man, or just a tourist. The excerpt is one small episode of a dreamed nocturnal tour in the colonial city of Labuan and an adventure in the island's wild nature; the entire dream is the last section of a series of descriptions of the island, entitled "Jottings from a tropical island" that was divided into eight sections published in *The Straits Times* from May to July of 1874.[1]

The dream begins with the author walking into a theatre and encountering Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. He gives some basic information: Two most well-known excerpts in the opera, which are the overture and the duet *Là ci darem la mano* of Don Giovanni and

[1] The entire series of "Jottings from a tropical island" are printed on these *The Straits Times* issues in 1874: episode one on 23 May, two on 30 May, three on 6 June, four on 20 June, five on 4 July, six on 11 July, seven and eight on 18 July.

Zerlina, Patti and Mario who sung the duet, and the dreamer and the audience's impression to the performance. He is surprised by the grand orchestra and excellent standard of the singers and the chorus; Patti and Mario received "thunders of applause" and were required an encore for the duet. Apart from the opera performance, the author pays attention to who is in the theatre. In his dream, there are not only Europeans but also natives, distinguished by their native dressing style.

Leaving the theatre in the middle of Mozart's opera, he walked into a café nearby which was decorated by a "magnificent marble portico", observing the customers, "of various nationalities", all "gentlemen" of both "European and Oriental" "reading newspapers and the telegrams from all parts of the globe". The last scene in the city takes place in a social dance in the governor's house that the dreamer described as a "festive scene".

Going inside he finds:

> The saloons were crowded with the *élite* of the society of L[abuan]. Numberless lamps "shone o'er fair women and brave men." Military men, in splendid uniforms, and breasts glittering with orders, imparted additional brilliancy to the scene. The high officials and dignitaries of the Colony were also *en grande tenue*, adding effectively to the *tout ensemble*; while numerous servants, in powder and gorgeous liveries, glided noiselessly about. Lovely women, in exquisite toilets, floated like fairies in the dance, encircled by the gold-laced arms of dashing *militaires* and naval men, to the music of a splendid military band stationed in an elevated orchestra at one end of the ball-room. Celestials also mingled in the crowd, agreeable in shiny silk attire, bowing profoundly, and with mouths agape from ear to ear. Elderly Europeans were seated at tables in the verandah, their noses glow over strong whiskey punch, while engaged at the same time in the inevitable game of whist.[2]

[2] *The Straits Times*, 18 July 1874.

This depiction, full of colours and sounds, is a more deliberate version of what he had seen in the theatre: Europeans and the 'Celestials', the Chinese. The distinction between them is the same – their dress, even if it is described in a more caricatured way. Furthermore, colonial hierarchy is highlighted here through sonic depiction: while Europeans are playing the music, dancing and making sound, Asians, the colonised, stand out for their silence: servants "[glide] noiselessly about" and celestials [Chinese] smile mysteriously ear to ear, incomprehensible to Europeans. In terms of demonstrating colonial order, both opera and social dance play the same role. Other features typical to a colonial society are detectable in people's activities in the café. There they are reading newspapers – the waiter hands the dreaming protagonist an issue of *The Straits Times*, and telegrams from distant places. Both of the two objects are emblems in any colonial port city in the reality.

The dream develops into a totally different direction after the ball. Hearing the scream of a train whistle, the dreamer slips away from the ball and hastens to the railway station. On the way back to his home somewhere on the island, the train runs off the railway and falls into the sea. After struggling in the water overnight and his life threatened by frightening marine creatures, he is saved by an indigenous tribe, only to find out he is to be taken as a sacrifice in a rite. At this moment, the dream ends. The narrator reveals at last that the dream is the effect of opium.

The previous seven sections review the objects on the island. Most of them then enter into the narrator's dream in the eighth section. For example, in the first section, the author introduces the marine creatures around the island; In the third section, he witnesses an indigenous tribe's ceremony for rice-harvest, and finds the music and dance in the rite similar to that of Ancient Greeks; Native ethnic groups are also described in the fifth section; and in the sixth section, he reports on the flora and fauna of the island.

On the one hand, the dream at the end of the entire report appears to be a review of the exotic nature and human society that had appeared in the first seven sections; on the other hand, the dream appropriates these exotics into nightmarish images such as the dangerous marine creatures and human-sacrifice, implying the narrator's desire to escape

the "wild and gigantic nature"[3] of the island and return to the civilised England. At the very beginning of the series, the author describes the life on Labuan as "inexpressibly dull and wearisome", while England is a world of "thought and action", where railway trains rush along", "steamers plough the rivers", and "thought is flashed with lightning speed."[4] Labuan symbolises the disenchanted Asia where Europeans find nothing similar to the "Arabian Nights". The first part of the dream, the nocturnal wandering in the city of Labuan, combines the narrator's two fascinations: first, the modern Western civilisation, embodied by the opera theatre, coffee house, newspaper, telegraph, and social dance; second, the "Arabian Nights" subject to Western domination, embodied by Asians appearing in the Westerner's socialising activities.

The double allusions of the dream in the whole text by this B.A.C. lead to the question why it begins with an opera. This curious scene generates a couple of questions: if the whole dream is deliberately designed by the writer, did this performance also ever exist in the reality? Or, if the performance is also imagined, what is the writer's intention to place an European opera in such an unlikely place, as he wrote, an island "no bigger than a pin's head", far from the centre of European culture and on the periphery of the British colonial network? Why does he emphasise the presence of natives in the opera and in the social dance? What is the relationship between the dream and the real existence of Western opera in colonial cities such as Singapore, Batavia and Calcutta? Last but not least, why does the writer chose certain opera, *Don Giovanni*, and certain singers, Mario and Patti, in this fictitious performance?

"Jottings from a tropical island" is surely not the only nineteenth-century text that creates a relationship between opera and the natural or human exotics. Indeed it includes all the elements found so often in such texts, where opera usually appears as a reference to scenes and environments that European writers saw from distance or participated in. Benjamin Walton raises two such examples. The first text was written by Charles Darwin during his travels to Rio de Janeiro. He describes the forest near the city:

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[3] This is how Alexander von Humboldt described South America. See Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, (Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2008), 118.

[4] *The Straits Times*, 23 May 1874.

At this elevation the landscape has attained its most brilliant tint. – I do not know what epithet such scenery deserves: beautiful is much too tame; every form, every colour is such a complete exaggeration of what one has ever beheld before. – If it may be so compared, it is like one of the gayest scenes in the Opera House or Theatre.[5]

Emily Eden, another English traveller cited by Walton, describes her experience at a dinner hosted by the Governor-General in Calcutta. Here opera plays another role:

> All the halls were lighted up; the steps of the portico leading to them were covered with all the turbaned attendants in their white muslin dresses, the native guards galloping before us, and this enormous building looking more like a real palace, a palace in the "Arabian nights," than anything I have been able to dream on the subject. It is something like what I expected, and yet not the least, at present, as far as externals go: it seems to me that we are acting a long opera.[6]

Walton argues that in both texts opera is used to describe something indescribable. It becomes one of the "imaginative resources of foreign description." [7] Eden's letter was written in 1872, only two years before B.A.C.'s "Jottings". The British Palace in India, in particular the multi-racial activities in her description, are similar to B.A.C.'s dreamer's observation and participation in the ball at the governor's house. That his dream starts with a theatre scene from *Don Giovanni* enhances the resemblance between the two texts. The whole dream appears as if designed as an opera. Eden, more straightforwardly, writes that all the people she observes are performing a long opera in which she, undoubtedly, is the prima donna. Similarly, it is also not difficult to feel that the protagonist in B.A.C's dream

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[5] R.D.Keynes, ed., *Charles Darwin's Beagle Diary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 69-70. Quoted in Benjamin Walton, "L'italiana in Calcutta", in *Operatic Geographies: The Place of Opera and the Opera House*, ed. Suzanne Aspden (Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press, 2019), 119.

[6] Emily Eden, *Letters from India*, 2 vols. (London: Richard Bentley, 1872), 1:28; Quoted in Benjamin Walton, "L'italiana in Calcutta", 121.

[7]Ibid..

feels himself is acting a hero in an opera when drifting from theatre to café, to ball, always in an elegant manner, and ending with an adventure in the wild.

B.A.C.'s text, though nearly four decades later, echoes Darwin's in another way. He also contrasts the wild nature in the colony with modern European civilisation. In the distant colonial island, modern life in England is appealing not only for its technological superiority and material comfort, but also for its culture, as B.A.C. writes: "The "Arabian Nights" are the flattest prosaic realities compared with the wonders for life in London. I can well understand the inspiring effect which its streets exerted on such men as Johnson, Charles Lamb, and Charles Dickens."[8] Darwin's thoughts of returning home of modern civilisation from nature is exactly analogous. For Darwin, the difference between indigenous nature and modern civilisation is expressed through a particular object, opera. After comparing forest to an operatic scene, Darwin changed his attitude: "When I return to England, you must take me in hand with respect to the fine arts… How delightful to go to some good concert or fine opera."[9] Perhaps it is a coincidence that the "Jottings" published in 1874 in the *Straits Times*, used similar literary metaphor in Eden's and Darwin's texts, but what is not coincidence is that opera in the nineteenth century had a special meaning for Westerners in non-Western regions.

The opera that B.A.C. "dreamed" is a special one. Mozart's *Don Giovanni* has inspired a number of writings in Western literature that took this work as an icon of opera art. The German music critic E.T.A. Hoffman called it *Die Oper aller Opern*, the opera of operas, in his "Don Juan: Eine fabelhafte Begebenheit, die sich mit einem reisendem Euthusiasten zugetragen" (Don Juan: A Fabulous Incident which befell a travelling enthusiast) that marked the start of the legend making of this opera.[10] Similar to the clear but inexplicable textual similarities between B .A.C., Darwin and Eden's texts, it is equally difficult to figure out whether the writer of the opera dream in Labuan ever read E.T.A.

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[8] *The Straits Times,* 23 May 1874.

[9] Letter of 23 July 1834 to Charles Whitley; National Library of Australia, Canberra, MS 4260; Quoted in Benjamin Walton, "L'italiana in Calcutta", 120.

[10] The piece is well known in English world.The translation I referenced here, is from R.Murray Schafer,*E.T.A.Hoffmann and Music*, (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1975), 63-73.

Hoffmann's piece or any other literature inspired by *Don Giovanni*. Despite of these uncertainties that hinder us to inquiry what is behind this apparent connection, the common features in the *Don Giovanni* in Labuan and, for instance, E.T.A. Hoffman's "Don Juan: A Fabulous Incident" is not less remarkable to be noticed: Both fictional protagonists in the two pieces are travellers; Both encounter *Don Giovanni* by chance instead of looking for it; Both are struck by the unexpectedly excellent quality of the performance; Both pay attention to the illuminated and well decorated theatre where opera takes place[11]. However, all these commonalities shared by both texts indicate a more fundamental one, that the *Don Giovanni* in both contexts described by the authors could only happen in fantasy. If in Hoffmann's story, *Don Giovanni* is staged in a packed theatre located in a moderate-sized German town where the protagonist was visiting, it is even less possible to encounter it on a marginal British colony in Asia.

However, what made "Jotting" differ from Hoffmann's text is that the mentioning of *Don Giovanni* in the tropical island dream is not entirely without any real basis. The dreamer recognises the two singers in the famous duet *Là ci darem la mano* as Patti and Mario. There were two singers called Patti living in the author's time: Adelina Patti (1843-1919) and her elder sister Carlotta (1835-1889). Both of them started the stage career in the United States, before becoming renowned also in Europe, notably in London and Paris. Adelina Patti started her London début in the Covent Garden on 24 November 1859 as the dream walker in *La Sonnambula*.[12] Just one year earlier, the tenor Mario, the stage name of Giovanni Mateo de Candia (1810-1883), appeared for the second time in *Don Giovanni* in the Covent Garden but quite unusually took the role of Don Juan, a baritone, instead of Ottavio, the only figure that fits his tenor voice in this opera that he had taken in 1843.[13] Thus Mario and Adelina Patti could not have sung together in Mozart' opera. Adelina's sister Carlotta Patti, however, got this opportunity. Mario announced

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[11] An analysis of the relationship between Hoffmann's text and George Bernard Shaw's "Don Giovanni Explains", also a fictitious essay based on Mozart's opera can be found in Mark Everist, *Mozart's Ghosts: Haunting the halls of musical culture*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 218-232.

[12] F. Forster Buffen, *Musical Celebrities* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1893), 266.

[13] Godfrey Pearse and Frank Hird, *The Romance of a Great Singer: A Memoir of Mario* (London: Smith, Elder & Company, 1910), 306.

retirement and in 1872 visited the United States accompanied by Carlotta Patti.[14] They toured the country and their programme included *Don Giovanni*. After Mario's retirement, Patti stayed on stage for around another decade and toured more extensively around the world including Asia. She came to Calcutta in 1880 but that has been six years after B.A.C conceived the dream in which she sang with Mario.

Carlotta Patti left little impression to Calcutta audience to whom she performed in no complete opera but just concerts and the attendance was reported as bad.[15] Nor did *Don Giovanni* succeed in fascinating Calcutta audience more than other operas. The only record of *Don Giovanni* being staged in its completeness in Calcutta was by Augusto Cagli's Italian opera company in 1868. It was staged four times as the only Mozart's opera in the company's repertory. Hence it simply disappeared from Cagli's list in following years. There is little information suggesting why; however, we know that when Cagli's troupe mounted *Don Giovanni* again in Melbourne in 1871, it was reported as banal.[16]

The Briton B.A.C's opera dream thus seemed to piece together *Don Giovanni*, Mario, Patti (Adelina or Carlotta) and Asia which have never assembled together in the reality. This is perhaps homesickness, but it could also be a fantasy to opera and opera singers that many European overseas had. One did not have to adore singers as celebrated as Mario and Adelina Patti by really hearing them in the opera house, they could be felt through other mediums thanks to the global network of news.

The third text which can be read against B.A.C's opera dream is given by Jan de Man in his travelogue about Manila, wherein he gave the second common impression of Europeans to Western opera in colonies: the imitation to European high culture but poorly

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[14] Carlotta Patti had probably come to England around 1865. This can be confirmed from the dates of her photos taken in the United States and England, now kept in the Library of Congress and the National Portrait Gallery (UK). See *Carlotta Patti*, [Between 1855 and 1865] Photograph, Library of Congress, https: //www. loc.gov/item/2017896895/.; *Carlotta Patti* by Southwell Brothers [mid-late 1860s], National Portrait Gallery, NPG Ax25075, and her portraits dated after this one.

[15] Rocha, *"Imperial opera: the nexus between opera and imperialism in Victorian Calcutta and Melbourne, 1833-1901",* 149.

[16]Ibid., 113.

implemented. For instance, Jan de Man's comments on the opera house in the 1870s Manila, with mocking manner:

> There are three theatres [in Manila]: an opera house, a large building where people play national dramas, and an arena for cock fighting. The opera theatre looks no more than a useless luxury when staying there, only to prove that if needed people are able to stage opera in Manila. From time to time people make urgent repairs to the building in order to prevent it from falling down into ruin.[17]

Saying that the opera house in Manila is a pure decoration may not tell the fact. From 1865 to 1870 Manila was visited by three opera companies on average every year. In 1865, Alfred M. Maugard's French opera company based in Batavia, arrived in Manila, called *La compañia lirica francesa* in the local newspapers, after having stopped in Singapore.[18] The following year, Don Federico Stringer, impresario of *Compañia de la Opera*, took residence at the Teatro de Tondo. Between 1867 and 1868, the Italian impresario Giovanni Pompei brought the Royal Batavia Italian Opera Company to Manila, after a long residency in Batavia and tour to Hong Kong and Singapore, and the same company could have returned in 1870 for another season. Yamomo's study asserts that up until the end of 1880s, Western opera troupes arrived in Manila without being interrupted. The trend led to the emergence of local Western opera groups in 1887 and even stimulated the booming of theatrical business of the colonised communities, for instance, the Chinese theatres.[19] Manila was regarded as equal significant a stop as Batavia. Travelling opera troupes usually took residency here for four or six months, much longer than the time they

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[17] "Il y trois théâtre, une salle d'opéra, un grand édifice ou l'on joue des drames nationaux, puis une arène pour les combats de coqs. Le théâtre d'opéra semble n'être là que comme un luxe inutile et pour prouver qu'au besoin on pourrait représenter des opéra à Manila ; de temps en temps on y fait des réparations urgentes afin d'empêcher que l'édifice ne tombe en ruines." Jan de Man, *Souvenirs D'un Voyage Aux Îles Philippines*, *Par J. de Man* (Anvers : impr. De Stockmans et Moerincs, 1875), 121.

[18] William John Summers, "Forty-Eight nights at the Opera: La compañía lirica francesa in Manila in 1865", in *Qui musicam in se habet: Studies in Honor of Alejandro Enrique Planchart*, ed. Anna Zayaruznaya, Bonnie Blackburn and Stanley Boorman (Middleton, American Institute of Musicology, 2015), 315-346.

[19] MeLê Yamomo, *Theatre and Music in Manila and the Asia Pacific 1869-1946,* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 99-106.

spent in other cities such as Singapore and Hong Kong where they rarely stayed for more than a couple of weeks.[20]

Given that Manila had not operatic shortages compared to other colonial cities close to it, then how to understand de Man's ironic tone on opera in Manila? We might draw two assumptions from it. Firstly, it implies that Western opera in Asia in his time was a luxury and its availability relied heavily on opera troupes from outside. The second and more significant point is that various ethnic groups in Manila, not just Spanish colonisers, but also Filipinos of high social status were enthusiastic for it. That is why de Man added a fictitious anecdote into his introduction to Manila theatres:

> Since people [in Manila] are fond of jests, some gallants… took it into their heads to announce the imminent arrival of an Italian opera company, and in order to make their announcement credible, one of them became the supposed correspondent of an impresario in Italy. He published letters from Italy giving an imposing list of names of more or less famous artists; then he opened an office for subscriptions payable in advance. The joke was kept up for several months with announcements of the troupe's arrival being delayed because of the illness of performers who had to be disembarked en route; next, because the Red Sea had practically dried up, making navigation impossible; then again, because a giant balloon was being built in Egypt to transport the opera company. At last the subscribes, fine fellows who had allowed themselves to be taken in, started muttering; the jesting correspondent then announced that on account of the Franco-Prussian War the troupe would not be able to come and that he was

[20] Ibid.

prepared to return the amounts already collected from the subscribers. Thus ended the subscription drive.[21]

Under the surface of this joke, de Man tells a hidden fact about how Manila was connected much more closely to Europe because of the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. De Man was a Belgian traveller. He was one of the first tourists to South-East Asia via the canal. *Souvenirs d'un voyage aux îles Philippines* in which he introduced the theatres in Manila, was published in 1874, when the opening of the new sea route was still fresh in his memory. Opera companies travelling directly from Europe was one of the many novelties as well as excitements that the canal could bring. But this anecdote also delivers the information that the canal was still unreliable for navigation, and although sea travel has been improved a lot compared to the past, it was still unpredictable, time-costing and dangerous. However, the story also implicates how rapidly the news about opera company

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[21] Jan de Man, *Recollections of a Voyage to the Philippines*, tras. E. Aguilar Cruz (Manila: National Historical Institute, 1984), 51; Cited in mêLe Yamomo, "Global Currents, Musical Streams; European Opera in Colonial Southeast Asia," *Nineteenth Century Theatre and Film* 444, no.1 (2017): 54-55. Original publication: Jan de Man, *Souvenirs D'un Voyage Aux Îles Philippines*, *Par J. de Man* (Anvers : impr. De Stockmans et Moerincs, 1875), 121-122 : "Comme on aime beaucoup à plaisanter ici, quelques Caballeros, mettant à profit les dernières réparations faites au théâtre, ont imaginé d'annoncer la prochaine arrivée d'une troupe d'opéra italien, et afin de donner toute l'apparance du sérieux à leur annonce, l'un d'eux s'est fait sensément la correspondant d'un impresario d'Italie. Ce correspondant publiait des lettres d'iItalie, donnant une liste pompeuse de noms d'artistes plus ou moins célèbres, puis ouvrait un bureau d'abonnement payable par anticipation. Cette plaisanterie a été soutenue pendant plusieurs mois, au moyen d'announces de la prochaine arrivée de la troupe, retardée par des artistes malades qu'on avait dû débarquer en route, puis parce que la Mer Rouge s'était presque complètement desséchée, ce qui empêchait la navigation, puis encore parce qu'on construisait un ballon monstre en Égypte pour transporter la troupe d'opéra. Finalement les abonnés, bons diables qui s'y étaient laissé prendre, se sont mis à murmurer; alors le correspondant loustic a announcé qu'à cause de la guerre franco-prussienne, la troupe n'arriverait pas et qu'il était prêt à rendre le montant déjà perçu des abonnements. C'est ainsi que cette campagne théatrale a pris fin."

travelled and was circulated in early 1870s thanks to the improved transport and communication network.

We can read De Man's anecdote, behind its fictitious surface, as reflecting precisely the excitement of expecting an opera company from Europe, how a subscription is initiated by local stakeholders in a colony, and how they kept in touch with troupe far away via communication networks. Someone takes the responsibility to advertise troupe's arrival; correspondent is asked to get in touch with the opera company and to send back information about the singers; then a subscription plan is driven and payment is collected by an agent. De Man described the carnival-like excitement stimulated by opera company, but he did not say who the gallants he addressed exactly are, and who are at behind initiating the opera craze in Manila.

Perhaps de Man felt Manila's enthusiasm to European opera through local daily newspapers such as *Diario de Manila,* if he read Spanish, the colonial language in the Philippines.[22] Newspaper editors reserved space for opera advertisements, wrote reviews, and kept on concerning if there was any opera company that had intention to stop at the city and give some performances. The same behaviours were not only seen in Manila when Maugard's and Pompei's companies travelled between Batavia and Calcutta, but also were replicated in other port cities along the troupes' routes. Singapore is another site to perceive operatic enthusiasm stimulated by these troupes because of its significant location between India and Manila as well as Batavia. Although Singapore was not as significant a destination for opera troupes as the Dutch and Spanish colonial capitals, the excitement aroused by opera that de Man observed in Manila existed in this British entrepôt too.

1.2 Singapore and two Batavian opera companies

It is a curious fact that Alfred Maugard's company visited Singapore for the first time in August 1863, before heading to Batavia in September, and two years earlier than the troupe

[22] *Diario de Manila* was one of few direct sources for William John Summers to know about Alfred Maugard's visit to the city in 1865. William John Summers, "Forty-Eight Nights at the Opera: *La compañía lirica francesa* in Manila in 1865", in *Iui musicam in se habet: Studies in honor of Alejandro Enrique Planchart*, (ed.) Anna Zayaruznaya et al., (Middleton: American Institute of Musicology, 2015), 315-346.

coming to Manila in 1865. This visit however seemed a coincidence for Singapore if we have a glance at how the Singapore press reported it: "The Batavia Opera Company from Mauritius on their way to Java, have been detained here; and have improved their time by giving these entertainments", while another review saying that the company will terminate the performances "as soon as the Messageries mail comes in".[23] It is therefore apparent that stopping at Singapore had not been included in Maugard's plan on his route from Europe to Batavia; rather, for unknown reason, the company seems to have been stranded in Singapore.

Although Maugard's arrival could have been a surprise for Singapore in 1863, he did not disappoint his subscribers. Six pieces of various genres, were mounted in five nights (See table 1.1): Robert Massé's *opéra-comique Galathée* staged in the same night with the *vaudeville Les erreurs du Bel Age*, Donizetti's *dramma tragico Lucie de Lammermoor* and *grand opéra La Favorite*, Flotow's *romantische-komische Oper Martha* and another unknown piece, the performance of which was mentioned but no review has been left.

A common feature connecting these pieces together, despite the different genres and national origins, is the language. Maugard's company presented all these operas in French.[24] Table 1.2 shows an overview of operatic works premiered in Batavia throughout the nineteenth century, based on Loewenberg's *Annals of Opera*. The section between the years of 1863 and 1866 is a record of operas given by Maugard's company. Although this

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[23] *The Straits Times*, 22 August 1863.

[24] The large portion of French operas in Maugard's residency in Manila confused William John Summers who interpreted the reason of placing French pieces as "to provide dramatic relief from the resolutely tragic nature of the most often performed Italian operas, *Lucia*, *La Favorita, Il Trovatore*, and *Norma*." See Summers, "Forty-Eight Nights at the Opera", 324. This misreading is understandable if one just focuses on the information given by Manila press that translated all title of operas into Spanish, which erases any clues suggesting the possible language in which the piece could be mounted. Moreover, Spanish-speaking sphere, in which Manila was included, had preference to Italian operas, and had the convention of translating non-Italian operas into Italian for performance. Therefore, Summers presumed that Maugard might have received suggestion from the theatre manager in Manila to often repeat Italian operas that audience in Manila was keen on. This however further obscures the truth that Maugard's troupe's repertory relied heavily on French works and French translations. How Maugard reconciled the special needs from Manila audience with the character of his troupe is not addressed in Summer's study due to the non-existence of any reviews and the loss of any other types of materials regarding Maugard's business in Manila.

record obviously does not represent the whole repertory that Maugard would run through in the four-year residency in Batavia, it is sufficient to indicate that all operas were performed in French as shown in the right column. It means that the company mounted not only French operatic pieces in French, but also French versions of Italian works which had been familiar in Paris. In the section of Maugard's residency in Batavia such pieces include Rossini's *Le barbier de Séville* (the well-known French version of *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*), Flotow's *Martha*, Verdi's *Ernani* and *Le Trouvère* (*Il Trovatore*).[25]

The facts that Maugard was French, that his company was called in Batavia as Het Fransche operagezelschp te Batavia and that most of his singers were probably recruited in France just explain why the company's repertory were all sung in French, but do not answer why a French opera company stayed in Batavia and toured around South-East Asia for years. Other portions in table 1.2 shed a light in this question. Loewenberg's work reveals that before Maugard's company, Batavia had been visited by at least three different troupes which had French background in 1836, 1842 and between 1850 and 1851. The capital of the Dutch East Indies is the key to the constant existence of French opera troupes in the city. Dutch expatriates in Dutch East Indies were familiar with French opera and Italian operas translated into French. This is because, first, back in the Netherlands, French cultural products – including literature, music and the French language itself, were widely spread among well-educated Dutch people since late-eighteenth. Dutch diplomats and expatriates for other purposes brought French fashions to Batavia. This movement demonstrates direct cultural transmission from the imperial capital to the colonial capital of a European imperial power.[26] Moreover, this mobility is complemented by another human and cultural transmission. French fashion could have been brought to Dutch East Indies directly by French people who were active in South-East Asia for colonial missions in the

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[25] Rossini's *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* was translated into French in 1819 by Castil-Blaze; Flotow's *Martha* had an French translation from Brussel in 1858; Verdi's *Ernani* was premiered in Brussel in 1845, based on a French translation by M. and L. Escudier; His *Il Trovatore* was translated into French as *Le Trouvère* when mounted in Paris Opéra in 1857. See these composers' entries in Grove Music Online and entries for these pieces in Loewenberg, *Annuals of opera*, (London: John Calder, 1978).

[26] About the popularity of French language and French theatre music in Amsterdam in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, see William Osmond, [in progress], 'The Reception of French Opera in Amsterdam 1830-1848', (PhD diss., University of Southampton).

early age when the region came to be controlled by Europeans, and they formed a community alongside the Dutch in Java since the eighteenth century.[27] Thus the cultural transmission between France and the Dutch East Indies went in parallel with its counterpart in Europe between France and the Netherlands.

Table 1.1 Operas produced by Alfred Maugard's Batavia Opera Company in Singapore (1863 and 1865)

Date	Title (Composer)	Genre (premiere); translation
14 August 1863	*Galathée* (R. Massé) *Les erreurs du Bel Age* (Xavier, Victor Varin, L. Dumoustier)	*Opéra comique* (1852) *Vaudeville* (1854)
?	No review	
?	*Lucie de Lammermoor* (Donizetti)	*Dramma tragico* (1835); French translation Paris 1839
24 August 1863	*La Favorite* (Donizetti)	Opéra (1840)
28 August 1863	*Martha* (Flotow)	*Romantische-komische Oper* (1847); French translation Brussels 1858
10 April 1865	*La Fille du Régiment* (Dozinetti)	*opéra comique* (1840)
12 April 1865	*Don Pasquale*	Dramma buffo (1843); French translation Brussels 1843
?	*Le Caïd* (Thomas)	Opéra comique (1849)
18 April 1865(?)	No review	?

Source: *The Straits Times*; Everist, "Cosmopolitanism and music for the theatre", 17; Grove Music Online; Loewenberg, *Annals of Opera*.

[27] For the constant existence of French existence in the archipelago of Indonesia, see Denys Lombard, "Vogageurs français dans l'archipel insulindien Xviième, XVIIIème et XIXémes", in *Archipel,* vol.1, 1971, 141-168.

Table 1.2 European opera premiered in Batavia[28]

Title	World Premiere	Premiere in Batavia	Language
Auber *La Muette de Portici*	29 February 1828 Paris, O.	Autumn 1836	In French
Donizetti *Lucie de Lammermoor*	26 September 1835	1 October 1842	In French
Meyerbeer *Robert le diable*	21 November 1831 Paris, O.	Autumn 1850	In French
Meyerbeer *Les Huguenots*	29 February 1836 Paris, O.	24 May 1851	In French
Rossini *Le barbier de Séville*	20 February 1816 Rome, Arg	11 September 1863	In French
Flotow *Martha*	25 November 1847 Vienna, Kä.	15 January 1864	In French
A. Thomas *Le Caïd*	3 January 1849 Paris, O.C.	18 March 1864	In French
Verdi *Ernani*	9 March 1844 Venice-Teatro la Fenice	31 Aug. 1865	In French
Verdi *Le Trouvère* (*Il Trovatore*)	19 January 1853 Rome, Ap.	29 Sep. 1865 3 March 1866 11 June 1869	In French In Italian
Halévy *Les Mousquetaires de la Reine*	3 February 1846 Paris, O.C.	12 February 1866	In French
Halévy *Charles VI*	15 March 1843 Paris, O.	27 April 1866	In French

[28] The information in this table is gathered from Lowenberg, *Annuals of Opera* and Thomas Kaufman, and Marion Kaufman, *Verdi and his major contemporaries: A selected chronology of performances with casts* (New York and London: Garland Publishing inc., 1990). Loewenberg's work, shown in the table by 1866, cannot be regarded as covering all operas ever mounted in Batavia; in particular, the list must have missed a number of other operas out in Maugard's residencies in the city from 1863 to 1866, given that Maugard's troupe stayed in Batavia for such a long period. It will therefore be helpful to look at what the troupe staged in Manila where Maugard also stayed for nearly half year in 1865. Summers offers a much more comprehensive list showing day by day the troupe's repertory during the Manila residency. It is perfectly reasonable to assume that these works must also have been mounted in Batavia at the same time. See Summers, "Forty-Eight nights at the Opera", 330-343.

Gounod *Faust*	19 March 1859 Paris, Th. L.	20 July 1866	In French
Verdi *Rigoletto*	11 Mar. 1851 Venice-Teatro La Fenice	14 June 1869	In Italian
Verdi *La Traviata*	6 March 1853 Teatro La Fenice	21 June 1869	In Italian
Verdi *Ernani*	9 March 1844 Venice-Teatro la Fenice	12 July 1869	In Italian
Verdi *Un Ballo in Maschera*	17 Feb. 1859 Rome-Teatro Apollo	6 Aug. 1869	In Italian
Verdi *Nabucco*	9 March 1842 Milan-Teatro alla Scala	20 June 1870	In Italian
Verdi *I Due Foscari*	3 Nov. 1844 Rome-Teatro Argentina	15 July 1870	In Italian
Verdi *Attila*	17 Mar. 1846 Venice-Teatro La Fenice	15 Aug. 1870	In Italian
Verdi *La Forza del Destino*	10 Nov. 1862 St. Petersburg-Imperial Theatre	22 Oct. 1880	In Italian
Verdi *Aida*	24 Dec. 1871 Cairo-Khedivial Theatre	3 Apr. 1882	In Italian
Donizeti *Linda di Chamounix*	19 May 1842 Vienna, Kä.	1892	In Italian
Massenet *Manon*	19 January 1884 Paris, O.C.	Autumn 1896	In French
Verdi *Otello*	5 Feb. 1887 Milan-Teatro alla Scala	25 June 1915	In Italian

Source: Loewenberg, *Annals of Opera*; Kaufmann, *Verdi and his major contemporaries: A selected chronology of performances with casts.*

Batavia was at the centre of the route for opera companies with French affiliation roughly from 1821 to 1866, as the first half of table 1.2 implies. From Batavia, the route also

connected northward up to Singapore, Manila, Macao and Hong Kong.[29] Mark Everist argued that troupes with French background during this period encircled a region that shared the same opera products and had no overlap with India or South America. This self-containing region turned to be permeable soon. From June to August in 1869 and 1870, Giovanni Pompei's Italian opera company took the place of French troupes to perform operas in Italian in the *Bataviasche Schouwburg*. He shuttled annually between Batavia and Calcutta where he recruited his company members, thus connecting the colonial capitals of the British and Dutch Empires that had staged operas relying on their own resources. Until the end of the nineteenth century, Italian influence seems to have overtaken French one on the Batavian stage, as suggested by the lower part in table 1.2.[30]

Table 1.3 Operas produced by Giovanni Pompei's Royal Batavia Opera Company in Singapore (1869 and 1870)

Date	Title (Composer)	Premiere	Remark
3 May 1869 (?)	*Norma* (Bellini)	1831	
? May 1869	*Lucrezie Borgia* (Donizetti)	1833	
10 May 1869	*La Traviata* (Verdi)	1853	
12 May 1869?	*Lucrezia Borgia?*		Only announcement but no review
May 1870?			The opera company was in the passenger list, but no performance review was given.

[29] Summers traced Maugard's post-Manila travel, finding that the company was shuttling between Macao and Hong Kong in a short period in 1866. See Summers, "Forty-Eight Nights at the Opera", 322-323. For Maugard's visit to Macao, see Akiko Sugiyama, "Macao's Two Opera Seasons in 1833 and 1865: A Study of Travelling Musicians and Maritime Connections in the 19th-Century World", in *Review of Culture* (2013), 141-150.

[30] What was the context of the premiere of Massenet's *Manon* in Batavia in 1896 is unclear. Nevertheless, French influence still existed evidently in Batavia in the mid-1870s. In the short period from 1 October 1875 and to 25 February 1876, a French-language Gazette entitled *La Lorgnette* was realised in Batavia. Its most essential function was to give information about a French opera company staying in the city at the time. The collection of the gazette, claimed by Denys Lombard, is located in *La Bibliothèque du Musée*, but unfortunately it is not clear what and where this institution is. See Denys Lombard, "Une Gazette en français à Batavia: 'La Lorgnette', 1875-1876", in *Archipel*, vol.9, (1975), 129-134.

18 November 1870	*Lucia de Lammermoor* (Donizetti)	1835	No more reviews after this.

Source: *The Straits Times*; *Grove Music Online*; Loewenberg, *Annals of Opera*

Back to Maugard's company's tour beyond Batavia, the linguistic question around its repertory appears not so ambiguous in Singapore as in Manila if we read how the opera titles were mentioned by Singapore newspapers. Table 1.1 shows the operas that Maugard's company mounted in Singapore in 1863 and 1865. Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* when reviewed by the *Straits Times* was called *Lucie de Lammermoor*, which is clearly a French translation, probably the one premiered in Paris in 1839. The same situation probably also applies to *Don Pasquale* that had generated a French version produced in Brussels in 1843. Flotow's *Martha* can be ascertained to be the same French production that Maugard would mount in Batavia in 1864.

How did Singapore newspaper reflect on this repertory which was completely French rather than Italian? The *Straits Times* reviewed two performances: the first is the opening night when the company mounted Robert Massé's *Galatheé* and a vaudeville, the second review was devoted to Donizetti's *La Favorite*. *The Straits Times* review on the first night tells two things: first, Maugard's French Opera Company was the first opera troupe ever coming to Singapore; and second, the Frenchness of Maugard's company posed linguistic and generic challenge for the Britons in Singapore.

It is obvious that the level of Maugard company shown in Massé's *Galathée*, an *opéra-comique* with which the troupe opened the season on 14 August, left the reporter of the *Straits Times* so deep impression that he commented the performance as "the finest professional entertainment that has been given in Singapore". He described the singers:

> The singing and acting of Madame Maugard were exceedingly fine, and the piece was, evidently, one well adapted to display her powers. Mr Maugard as Midas was most amusing, and rendered his part intelligible even to those who could not

> understand his language. We must however give the palm as far as singing is concerned to Mr. Merglet whose fine baritone voice would make him conspicuous in any character. [31]

While this British reviewer could make comments on the singing part as they did for Italian operas, the *opéra-comique* exposed his ignorance on the spoken sections, that, as he implied, was intelligible even without understanding French. *Opéra-comique* to him was a real unfamiliar genre, and more so was the vaudeville, the problem of which to the reviewer was not only about language, but also about taste and even the length of the piece:

> *Vaudeville*… are purely French, and do not suit English taste even if rendered in the English language. Another circumstance that disposed us against the *Vaudeville* was the length to which it prolonged the entertainment, which, commencing at 8, ended at 11.30 P.M.[32]

Following the report by the *Straits Times*'s own editor a more detailed comment written by a local French in his own language was attached. First, the French writer wrote that *Galathée* was not a good enough piece despite of its popularity on the stage, that artistically, it is not as good as other masterpieces of *opéra comiques* like *La Dame Blanche*[33] and *Le Domino Noir*[34]; and that its success in the theatre was mainly due to the well trained prima donna and the opera's reaction to the public taste at the time.[35] Second, unlike the British critic, he did not think that the singers in Maugard's company are equally

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[31] *The Straits Times*, 15 August 1863.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Libretto by Scribe and music by Boieldieu, premiered on 10 December 1825.

[34] Libretto by Scribe and music by Auber, premiered on 2 December 1837.

[35] Here is the original text: "Galatheé fut réprésentée pour la premiere fois sur le théâtre impérial de l'Opera comique vers la fin de 1855. Bien que cette piece suit en des opera comiques qui aient eu le plus de succès, on ne saurait lui donner place à côté de la Dame Blanche, du Domino noir et autres chefs d'œuvre. Sans vouloir déprécier les talent, incontestables, de son ameur, Mr. Victor Maseé, nous croyons que le grand succès de Galatheé est dû en partie à une femme pleine d'entrain et fast à la mode dans ce temps-là."*The Straits Times*, 15 August 1863.

good, and not all of them can cope with singing and spoken part equally good: whereas Mme Maugard "has an easy voice", and Midas personified by Maugard "deserved the most admiration", the other figures were weaker. For instance, Merglet, the baritone who played Pygmalion, despite had enough voice to portray the role, was criticised of being too cold and neglecting the expressions in the dialogue.[36]

This voice from a French writer in this review mirrors what is missing in the text by the British newspaper editor because of his limited capacity to understand a foreign genre of theatre music. While the French writer recognised three excerpts from *Guillaume Tell*, *Robert le Diable,* and *La Juive*, the English writer, who failed to distinguish between *grand opéra, opéra comique*, and *vaudeville,* simply called them "songs". Nonetheless, like his French co-author, he did not find the programming in Maugard's opening night satisfactory either, but for a completely different reason. He wrote at the end:

> It should have been remembered, we think, by the Managers that the company under their charge professes to be and was advertised as an *opera company*, and that the subscribers here, not unnaturally, expected this to have been borne out by the character of the performances. And besides, when the corps is stated to number over 30 individuals, it would have been but fair, to have shown something of this strength, and not confined their selection to pieces in which no more than 5 persons appear from first to last.[37]

This remark is not just complaint to the troupe for hiding the real strength; in the British critic's opinion, *Galathée* and the *Vaudeville* are not opera at all, because of the spoken sections, the exceeding length and the moderate performing force, all of which caused considerable confusion to Britons who were not sensitive to the complexity of French theatre music. Maugard seems to have reacted to the negative opinions quickly and

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[36] "Mme. Maugard a une voix facile qu'elle conduit fort bien, et nous avons admiré ses roulades qui ont eu le bon goût de n'être pas surchargées. Midas après Galathée est le personnage qui mérite le plus de sympathie, Monsieur Maugard sait jouer et chanter. Les deux autres personnages sont plus faibles ; monsieur Merglet a largement assez de voix pour chanter le rôle important de Pygmalion, mais il est trop froid et négligé trop l'expression dans le dialogue." Ibid.

[37] Ibid.

managed to make up for them by mounting another four pieces: *Lucie de Lamemoor*, *La Favorite*, *Le Caïd* and *Martha*. The first two avoided any spoken sections, while in Flotow *Martha* the well-known English air *The Last Rose of Summer* introduced into several parts in the piece as a show-piece for the protagonist, was reported to be "the most captivating to an English audience".

Maugard's company visited Singapore for the second time two years later and performed *La Fille du Regiment*, *Don Pasquale* and *Le Caïd* (See Table 1.1). All operas were accompanied by an amateur pianist and a professional violinist instead of an orchestra that was available in Manila.[38] It was evident that since this visit, both Maugard and the Singapore press could have felt that Singapore was not an ideal place to stage opera. During the tour, the company had to move out from the Town Hall theatre and to find another venue, for which the critic complained the poor condition in the Town Hall for operatic performance: "the present stage [is] neither height, depth or length sufficient for scenic effect." He appealed that efforts be made to build a proper place for dramatic performances and even proposed "an iron theatre capable of holding five hundred people" be constructed in England with scenes and be moved to Singapore "at a moderate expense".[39]

Maugard's extensive touring in other port cities around Asian-Pacific regions, in particular in Manila and Batavia, undoubtedly let Britons in Singapore compare the city with the other two. Such comparison partly was done by the correspondents of Singapore presses based in other cities, who reported back opera companies which was about to arrive or just left Singapore. For instance, in 1865, except passing a few weeks in Singapore, Maugard's company spent a half year in Manila. In November, Singapore readers knew, via a correspondent based in Manila, the operatic craze in the near Spanish colony where two performances took place in the theatre each week. The Singapore public also heard that Maugard, in a conflict with his audience, was sent to jail and fined 150 dollars; the correspondent thus fancied that Maugard's troupe "will have a more grateful recollection of the barbarous English, so far as music is concerned, than the natives of

[38] *Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*, 20 April 1865.

[39] Ibid.

musical Spain'. This fancy and the desire to have a new theatre for opera had never come true, but it is clear that European opera company is something that colonial cities in South East Asia all scrambled for. Indeed, overland correspondent functioned in informing his city with the news of touring company in remote or near regions and in predicting the probability of the troupe's future visit to his city. This means that journalists are important agents who participated into the network between touring companies and port cities, like the fictitious correspondent in de Man's anecdote did.

Giovanni Pompei's two visits to Singapore with his Royal Italian Batavia opera company in 1869 and 1870 are such examples that can be read as the reflection of de Man's imagined anecdote in the reality. The biographical information about Pompei's career is scattered fragmentarily in a few scholars' works on opera histories in particular countries or regions.[40] Pompei travelled extensively between the early 1860s to 1880. Before becoming an opera impresario, in 1862 he had toured around East Asia, including Manila, as an oboe soloist and "basso buffo singer". Such career as an independent touring musician may have lasted for some years until 1867 when he ventured into the new role as opera impresario and toured with his troupe to Hong Kong and Manila again. In October 1868, from Manila the troupe arrived in Batavia and gave a concert of opera arias, which was assisted by local musicians and amateurs.[41] Thereafter in early 1869 Pompei travelled to Calcutta to recruit more singers. This triggered the rivalry between him and Augusto Cagli, who was in Calcutta and viewed the British India as his domain, and the hostility intensified especially when Pompei employed many singers formerly in Cagli's troupe. Pompei returned to Batavia with this strengthened troupe consisting of around twenty members on 21 May 1869, and mounted complete Donizetti's *Lucrezia Borgia,* Verdi's *Il*

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[40] For Pompei's activities in India and Australia, see Rocha, "Imperial Opera". His activities in Manila were mentioned in Summers, "Forty-Eight nights at the Opera"; A brief introduction of Pompei's touring routes as opera impresario is given in Thomas Kaufman, "Pompei, Giovanni", Grove Music Online, https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.O903785.

[41] Akiko Sugiyama, "Maritime Journeys of European opera in the Indonisian Archipelago," *The International Journal of Maritime History* 31, no.2 (2019), 255. Given that only concerts of opera arias rather than complete operas were given, it is reasonable to assume that Pompei's troupe in Manila and Batavia in 1868 only had a very small number of singers. However, how Pompei found them is difficult to know.

Trovatore and *Rigoletto*.[42] They probably stayed in Batavia for around six months until early 1870 and then Pompei travelled back to Calcutta again for organising another troupe. The scramble between Cagli and Pompei for market as well as for singers ended up late that year by the two impresarios coming to an agreement that Cagli would keep India while Pompei would monopolise South-East Asia.[43] Pompei's shuttles between Calcutta and Batavia and between Batavia and Manila involved Singapore, a city which cannot be passed around in both routes, into his business network, and an opera performance here was just something to be expected.

Pompei's troupe's first tour to Singapore took place in April 1869, when it was on the way to Batavia and was just supplemented by singers from Calcutta. The earliest news about the troupe's potential coming to Singapore was realised in March when Pompei was still in Calcutta. The announcement of *The Straits Times* told several things. First, Pompei had succeeded in organising a full Italian opera and ballet company and was about to go to Batavia. Second, the announcement described the unusually strong force of the company that consisted of three sopranos, two contraltos, two *coriste donne*, two tenors, one baritone, one basso, one altro-basso and one buffo, in addition to four ballet dancers and four instrumentalists. Finally the reporter expected the troupe would probably stop in Singapore.[44] The news seemed to be real by the beginning of April when the newspaper publicised the programme which would be *La Traviata*, *Norma* and *La Sonnambula* and the price 10 dollars for all three performances.[45]

The first performance featuring *Norma* took place on 3 May 1869, nearly half month later than planned. Its review, published both on *The Straits Times* and its overseas version, was remarkably longer than those for Maugard's French opera company four years earlier.

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[42] Akiko Sugiyama, "Maritime Journeys of European opera in the Indonisian Archipelago," *The International Journal of Maritime History* 31, no.2 (2019), 255.

[43] Another decision in the agreement is that they would move their main business to Australasia. For details about Pompei and Cagli's tours in Australia, see Rocha "Imperial Opera", and Harold Love, *The Golden Age of Australian Opera*: *W.S. Lyster and His Companies, 1861-1880*, (Sydney: Currency Press, 1981).

[44] *The Straits Times*, 13 March 1869.

[45] *The Straits Times*, 10 April 1869.

Moreover the writer did not just give brief and often superficial comments on singers' performance, as so many Western journalists in Asia would do, but showed considerable familiarity to the opera itself, which is exemplified in his comments on Signora Villa's personification of the heroine:

> The great tragic force required to give effect to such a character as Bellini's Norma cannot of course be expected from any opera company in the East. The whole part is so full of deep pathos and excited feeling, that only a talented actress like Grisi can hope to give a true reading such a character. In the scenes where Norma learns the perfidy of her husband, and in her jealous rage threatens the destruction of himself and of his Roman legions, and again when she accuses herself before her father's eyes of having broken her sacred vows, which by the laws of the Druids must condemn her to death, only the deepest tragic acting can impress the audience with the magnificence of the composition.[46]

Here the writer shifted from singer-centred comment to analysing the dramatic figures, which had been rarely seen in opera reviews by British journalists in Calcutta and any other British colony in Asia. The second review on Donizetti's *Lucrezia Borgia*, which was very likely written by the same author, showed similar interest to the work itself by giving act-by-act introduction to the plot. *Lucrezia Borgia* was not in the troupe's original plan but seems to have been a substitution for *La Sonnambula*. This was regarded by the reviewer as a correct choice and the reason he gave shows his attempt to give some critical opinion rather than just a plain report:

> *Lucrecia Borgia* is, as our readers doubtless know, a tragedy, but it does not contain the poetical and impassioned emotion so characteristic of Bellini's Opera of *Norma* – and consequently is better suited to the capacities of a provincial company. In this respect the opera passed off with much greater success than *Norma* did, for Signora Villa, who could not be expected to fill such a part as the

[46] *The Straits Times*, 8 May 1869.

great priestess, appeared to much greater advantage in the less passionate role of the Duchess of Ferrara.[47]

The writer's opinion that *Lucrecia Borgia* suits better than *Norma* for the "capacities of a provincial company," is in fact a high comment to the troupe, and he confirmed in the last review on *La Traviata*: "As a whole the company is a very good one, fully equal to most of the provincial opera companies in Europe." [48] It implies that the writer may have had experiences of attending opera back in Europe, perhaps in London, before being a newspaper journalist in Singapore. For him, Pompei's company, the singer of which were all found in Calcutta, surpassed his expectation to a touring company in non-European regions in all respects, as he wrote, "throughout the opera there was certainly very little with which the most musical or fastidious ear could find fault."[49]

Whereas the singers might be the best ever heard in Singapore, the critic was disappointed by other aspects that the troupe could not control. The first problem for Pompei was that he could not find suitable backdrops for his operas. So in *Norma* any backdrops available in the Town Hall theatre were taken as ad hoc alternatives: the ancient Gallic forest was replaced by a view of the St. Paul's Cathedral, and the indoor scenes took place in a modern library. In the second performance, the writer found the problem on scenery and costumes had been much improved. Nonetheless, as he continued, "evident pains had been taken by Signor Pompei to make as effective an appearance as possible with the very scanty means supplied in the theatre." Unprovided with scenery and costumes, Pompei had to prepare them at his own expense, which meant a big loss for the company, and made the company stranded in Singapore for another two weeks than anticipated. What made the situation worse was the low attendance to the opera. While in *Norma* the writer attributed the poor attendance to the Singapore public being interested in a troupe only when its reputation had been widely known, in *Lucrezia Borgia* there was still not enough audience that the writer had hoped. He appealed the public to support the company because "the expense which all this entails is very considerable" and warned:

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[47] *The Straits Times*, 8 May 1869.

[48] *The Straits Times,* 15 May 1869.

[49] *The Straits Times*, 8 May 1869.

"unless our community are willing to support Signor Pompei more freely and generously than they have hitherto done, we fear we shall never have another operatic performance in Singapore."[50]

The *Straits Times*'s writer's anticipation shortly became true the next year when Pompei travelled again between Batavia and Calcutta. From March to November of 1870, Pompei stopped by Singapore four times, travelling alone or with his company, giving performances, dealing with business or just in transfer to another city. Table 1.4 is a summary of all news from *The Straits Times* about Pompei in 1870. Although there are many ambiguities about this travelling list, the newspaper evidently kept track on Pompei's activities from different sources. In the third column reflecting what Pompei could be actually doing at certain place and time, the news on 5 March 1870 was probably achieved from the passenger list. Pompei could have merely passed by Singapore without staying. Nevertheless, he must have released the news that he would bring back an opera company from Calcutta on his return. In April the news about Pompei's successful recruitment of new troupe was sent back to Singapore, with the name list of major singers attached. The news could be either sent back from the press's own correspondent in Calcutta or picked up from Calcutta newspaper brought by mail ships. And it is also possible that it was the impresario Pompei himself who wrote to the Singapore newspaper at every point. Not all announcements appear to have been fulfilled. The advertisement that the company would arrive on late April 1870 seems to be true, and it did arrive in early May, but it is uncertain whether the company really stayed to perform due to the absence of review in any Singapore press. Except a simple mentioning in one sentence in July about Pompei's plan to travel to Manila, the company was absent from any Singapore newspaper until November 1870 when another opportunity of having it coming to the city emerged.

Table 1.4 Giovanni Pompei's travel route in 1870, reported by Singapore newspapers

Batavia – Singapore (March) – Calcutta (April) – Singapore (May) – Manila (July) – Singapore (October) – Samarang (November) – Singapore (November)…

[50] Ibid.

Press/Date	Where he is?	Activity	How Pompei was related to Singapore?
The Straits Times/5 March 1870	Singapore	Travelled from Batavia, on a Dutch steamer to Calcutta to recruit another opera company	On his return, he announced his intention to give a series performance in Singapore.
*The Straits Times/*23 April 1870	Calcutta or on return to South East Asia	Managed to recruit a new company	Expected to be in Singapore around 27 April and perform. Name list of singers is given.
The Straits Times/6 May 1870	Singapore	Arrived with his troupe	
The Straits Times Overland Journal/16 July 1870	To Manila	About to visit Manila	
The Straits Times/5 November 1870	?		Pompei proposed to give a series of performances and tickets are at low price.
The Straits Times Overland Journal/8 November 1870	Singapore	Pompei was making arrangements for five performances	The company was expected to arrive about 13 November from Samarang in Java.
The Straits Times/12 November 1870	Java-Singapore?	On travel	The press appealed for subscription to the company
The Straits Times/19 November 1870	Singapore	Staged *Lucia de Lammermoor*	Review published on the press

Pompei returned to Singapore at the end of October to arrange another visit for which he decided to mount five operas and the main body of the company that he recruited from Calcutta in the early year would be remained. He promised to offer a low price that "will place these performances within the reach of every one."[51] But this time, perhaps taking the lesson from his last visit, he required a subscription to be made before his arrival

[51] *The Straits Times*, 5 November 1870.

in order to decide how many performances he would give, or whether he should come or not. Until 12 November, the subscription plan was carried out and *The Straits Times* reminded, in panic tone: "The entertainment offered is such as we seldom have an opportunity of enjoying, and it would indeed be a pity were such a rare treat allowed to be lost through lack of sufficient subscriptions to warrant the undertaking."[52]

It is unclear how the subscription went on, but the fact that only one review on *Lucia de Lammermoor* has existed hints the probability that Pompei's original plan was abandoned, most likely due to insufficient subscription, as the reviewer observed in this only performance: "The attendance, though very fair, was by no means so large as the talent of the company deserves." Given that in both Pompei's opera visits, low attendance remained a consistent problem that discouraged the troupe, and that even reduction of entry fees appeared not as effective as it did in Manila, we tend to think that the problem was on the colonial Singapore itself, in particular its British community.

1.3 Opera, a British Problem

Thus, it has to be asked: whether opera was really needed in the colonial Singapore? To answer this question it is informative to go back to the years between 1855 and 1866 to inquiry the successive tours to Singapore of three singers, the renowned Catherine Hayes (1818- 1861) and Anna Bishop (1810-1884) in the outer years, and a Mr Simonson of whom we know very little in between.

The famous Irish soprano Catherine Hayes came to Singapore in March 1855, at nearly the end of a long tour, which had lasted for four years, to the United Sates, the South America, the Australasia, and Asia. *The Straits Times* celebrated her arrival, and reprinted a biographical introduction entitled "Sketch of the Life of Catherine Hayes", originally published in the Calcutta newspaper *Englishman.*[53] The writer, citing other critics, declared that Hayes was the one "second only to Jenny Lind", the more famous Swedish singer who was nicknamed the "Swedish Nightingale" (1820-1887), and delivered the impression that

[52] *The Straits Times,* 12 November 1870.

[53] *The Straits Times*, 13 March 1855 and *Englishman*, 6 January.

Hayes was following in Lind's footprints, although they were almost exact contemporaries. For instance, he mentioned that in 1844 Hayes came to Paris from Ireland to study with Manuel Garcia, "in every respect the greatest teacher of singing at present living", who also had tutored Lind three years earlier. Hayes was also mentioned as Lind's immediate successor in Covent Garden, the London theatre for staging Italian opera, after the Swedish prima donna had just retired completely from opera stage in 1849. Such stories recurred when "the most tempting offers were made to induce [Hayes] to visit the Western Hemisphere, where Jenny Lind was then singing to crowed audiences." Lind set off to the United States in 1850, immediately after retirement, and gave concerts not only in coastal big cities but also in inland. 'Lind in America' became a public topic on both sides of the Atlantic, but the so called "Jenny Lind's Effect" refers not just to this; its most significant effect worked on other leading opera singers in Europe who, inspired by Lind, came to realise that touring in non-European regions could be both respectable and lucrative.[54] Its effect on Hayes was that she launched her own American tour only one year later.[55]

But Hayes surpassed her model in terms that she travelled much farther: From the east coast she crossed the continent to California, which was just acquired by the United States for about ten years, then moved down to South America, then crossed the Pacific to Australia and India. Never had any individual opera singer toured such extensively as Hayes. As a consequence, the "Jenny Lind's Effect", from 1851 to 1855 Hayes being its practitioner, gained a further layer of meaning about the alleged universality of European opera as well as Western music. Such notion was clearly expressed in the biography as the writer commented on Hayes' effect on the Spanish-speaking audiences in South America:

> …. although, in a land that differs so widely from her own, and among a people whose manners, language, and prejudices vary necessarily so much from the Anglo Saxon or the Celt, still Music, that language of the feelings

[54] Rocha, "Imperial Opera", 279-280.

[55] Hayes's letters in which she referred to Lind's tour and the huge profits from it credited her decision to travel to America. Ibid.

> in all lands, created a link of sympathy that won her a path into their hearts.[56]

In this remark the biographer not only regarded music as a universal language that connected Anglo-Celtics to South Americans, but also viewed Hayes as a missionary who brought music to them. The paradox in this remark is that if Italian opera had been foreign for Spaniards in South America (which was not true), so was it for the British and Irish (which, we will see, was true to a large extent). Hayes was the only person - "Catherine Hayes stands alone," the writer declared - that British could find to prove that their country could also produce someone who are "capable of interpreting, with success, the highest order of dramatic music." Her global tour, which had been never attempted by any individuals even Lind, reinforced her image as a national pride to overseas Britons.

But how was Hayes and opera received by her countrymen in the concerts? The reaction of the British in Calcutta, for whom this biography was originally written, can already answer the question. After her first concert in Calcutta, a reader, calling himself "a lover of music", wrote to *Englishman* that Hayes' programme consisted "chiefly of operatic pieces", and almost no English songs except "Rule Britannia". He suggested that Hayes should entertain the audience's taste and sang more English songs - he recommended "The Landing of the Pilgrim Fathers in New England", because opera, "however attractive in themselves, will not certainly be understood by the majority of those who will be present."[57] Hayes did not consider this idea and left Calcutta for Singapore after the second concert. So the objective of Hayes' biography in *Englishman*, which was to impress her countrymen with her operatic talent, failed to be achieved. Neither did the biography make any substantial effect in Singapore where it was reprinted. In his review on Hayes' first concert (probably as well as her last since no further report followed), the journalist for *The Singapore Free Press*, the competitor of *The Straits Times*, obviously showed more interest in his own "national" genres than in Italian-French opera arias, as he put:

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[56] *The Straits Times*, 13 March 1855, reprinted from *Englishman*, 6 January 1855.

[57] Basil F. Walsh, *Catherine Hayes, 1818-1861: the Hibernian prima donna* (Ballsbridge: Irish Academic Press, 2000), 255.

> While her execution of the *scena* and air from Bellini and Meyerbeer displayed her perfect musical science and the wonderful powers of her voice, her singing of the ballads, English, Scotch and Irish, delighted and charmed all & drew forth rapturous applause. The good nature of Mr Lavenu in occupying the intervals between Miss Hayes' appearances with his comic songs requires special notice, and the spirit and drollery with which he gave them contributed greatly to the amusement of the audience.[58]

What the writer drew here is the distinction between the effect on the British audience (him included) of Italian-French operas and that of their own music. While Italian and French opera arias are spectaculars executed by Hayes' "perfect musical science", it was ballad and comic song, two British-peculiarly genres, that really "charmed" and touched them. The same comparison was made again when a tenor Mr Simonsen gave a concert in Singapore the next year and suffered poor attendance. The reviewer for *The Straits Times* diagnosed and prescribed:

> The performance of Mr. Simonsen is of the highest order, his execution perfect and complete… [But] Opera music, like opera performances in general, is not suited to the popular taste; few of the largest cities of the world can maintain an opera company for an entire year and restrict their performances to short seasons, whilst melo-drama performers can secure crowded houses every night. In a small community Mr Simonsen cannot expect to find the same encouragement as his high talents would obviously command in populous towns, and in traveling through Asia Mr. Simonsen would do well to give his audience more of the simple, heart-touching music of real life.[59]

Hayes and Simonson's cases show that what they intended to impress the colonial British audience with and what the audience took from them were quite different things.

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[58] *Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser,* 22 March 1855.

[59] *The Straits Times*, 24 March 1856.

One tends to take for granted that in an opera concert opera excerpts were naturally at the centre in the programme. Singer whose political identity was affiliated to Britain such as Hayes may have organised concert programme, as Rocha summarised, into "a blend of operatic music, lighter opera, British ballads and the traditional 'folk' songs", but this group indicates by no means a hierarchy in which opera was more significant than the musics put after it. The reactions from Calcutta and Singapore newspapers imply the opposite, that Ballad and folk songs were not, as Rocha defined, "interspersed thought" in a concert; on the contrary, in views of the contemporary reviewers, they were central in a programme, and opera excerpts were interspersed with them.

To provide a further evidence for this point, let us have a glimpse of Anna Bishop's concert programme in Singapore in 1866. The complete programme of her first concert is nowhere to be found and that shown in table 1.5 is incomplete, showing only the pieces that are mentioned by the reviewers, thus it largely reflects where his interest is. The preoccupation that this is an opera concert and the generic hierarchy from opera aria to folk song make little sense in this reviewer's version of the programme, because nearly all opera arias are missed out or ignored. The only opera excerpt to which the reviewer gave a comment is the famous "Casta diva" from *Norma*, an aria that, as the reviewer remarked, exhibited Bishop's outstanding "cultivation" that had been rarely seen in her "countrywomen".

Table 1.5 The programme of Anna Bishops first concert in Singapore (1866) (*The Singapore Free Press*, 20 December 1866)

Part I

Piano solo, *The Spirit of the Storm*, Mr. Lascelles

Bellini, "Casta diva," Anna Bishop

Vocal duet, "Robin, Ruff", Mr. Lascelles

…

Henry Bishop, *Home Sweet Home*, Anna Bishop

Song, "O Mother Dear"

Scottish song, "Gin a body", Anna Bishop

Song, "Dashing White Sergeant", Anna Bishop

Hubbard, “Robin Red-breast”, Anna Bishop

Mexican song, “La Catabumba”, “La Naranjera”

Duets, “Sunset”

Part II

Duetto from *Elisir d’Amore*

Song, “Molly Bawn”, Mr. Lascelles

Three encores

“God save the Queen”

It is clear in the programme that unlike Hayes’ insistence on operatic excerpts and unwillingness to cater to the British’s popular taste, Bishop, perhaps feeling obliged to do so as an English native, sang a number of English songs in the concert especially in the first part. “Home Sweet Home” was undoubtedly the most popular of all. The reviewer noted: “It was given in a manner that added intensity to the sentiment aroused by the pathos of that beautiful melody,” and “was rapturously encored,” and in a preview, the song was given an expectation that “no doubt will create a sympathetic feeling in every heart carrying their thoughts back to the dear old land.”[60] But this song alone did not give enough comfort to the reviewer. Since “Home Sweet Home” has proved to be so successful, he asked: “why do not artists singing before an almost exclusively English audience more frequently confine themselves to English songs?” He continued to paraphrase, more deliberately, the same prescription that had been suggested to Hayes and Simonson ten years ago:

> It is indeed pardonable nay almost natural, that an artiste who has filled the position of prima donna at Naples, Rome, Florence, St. Petersburg and other noteworthy schools of art, should cling to the music and the text that has already earned for her so many laurels… If we may take experience as a guide, we can positively assert that that class of song that comes fully within the comprehension of the audience - whatever that musical comprehension may amount to - will ever prove the most gratifying and consequently the

[60] *The Singapore Free Press*, 13 December 1866.

> most successful….we feel confident that had she gone through the entire marching scena in the Daughter of the Regiment, with Italian text, she would not have created any thing like the furore that seized upon her auditory last night.[61]

Thus putting opera in opposition to British songs, and suggesting that British singers should sing more British songs to British audience as this would be a mutually beneficial choice, became a leitmotif raised by journalists in Calcutta and Singapore and apparently representing the public's voice. The overseas Briton's uneasiness to opera reflects several opposing views on the deeds of music: Does music express exclusively local, native and national sentiments of a community, or, as suggested in the introduction to Hayes' operatic career by the Calcutta press *Englishman*, is music universal? The discourse around the national and the cosmopolitan aspects of music also divides audience. Does national music reflect the taste of the mass, and correspondingly, is musical cosmopolitanism related to elite taste? The reception to the three singers in the British colonies also generated the question as to what audience may get from artist's performance. To use the expressions in their reviews by Calcutta and Singapore newspapers, was music to display the artist's as well as the listener's good "cultivation", or is it more essential for music to convey "sympathetic feeling", to be "heart touching" and to be "within comprehension"?

Certainly, the problem of the reception to opera in British colonies had its root in London, which William Galloway's *The Operatic Problem* addressed in 1902. "England alone in civilised Europe remained indifferent, and took no active part either in fostering or patronising the new form of art," as Galloway lamented the country having failed "to create a body of art" - works, composers, singers, institutions, audience and so forth - "comparable with that in Germany, Italy and France."[62] Not that England had no operatic market and culture, but it was "satisfied to import spectacles and performers from abroad"; "For over a century this country has been the happy dumping-ground of Italian opera and

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[61] *The Singapore Free Press*, 20 December 1866.

[62] William Galloway, *The Operatic Problem* (London: John Long, 1902), 11-12.

Italian singers and dancers."[63] Galloway's proposal for encouraging opera works in English by native composers and performed by native singers is to build a national opera theatre, so that opera could "be placed within the reach of those whose purses are not able to bear the strain of the high prices charged in England" and consequently, could assist "the higher education of the community." But musicologist Paul Rodmell argued that "the idea that a nation opera house, on its own, would have transformed the British into a country of opera enthusiasts was, however, clearly fallacious."[64] Only professional musicians would be interested in and benefit from the institution, Rodmell explains, but it would help little to change the majority of population's attitude to opera as a foreign form, and more probably, an opera house for native works might be developed into another site for elitism alongside the Covent Garden, the home for foreign opera in London.[65] The failure of opera being "democratised" first by transforming it into a native genre in London made the same process in British colonies like Calcutta more difficult. Rocha attributes the failure of Italian opera seasons to be continued in Calcutta after the ephemeral and illusive opera craze from 1869 to 1872 in Calcutta to the colonial high-class's elitist sentiment that hindered opera to be democratised to wider audience.[66] However, the musical nativism uttered in the British's reviewers to Hayes, Simonsen and Bishop has clearly put the effect of such operatic democracy under skepticism. Culture elitism, vis à vis cultural democracy, has always bound to cultural cosmopolitanism, as the history of European opera has always demonstrated.

This chapter has reviewed the reception history of European opera (especially French and Italian works) in Singapore from the mid-nineteenth century to 1870. It shows that during this period Singapore was by no means an island lacking opera performance either by famous European opera singers or by opera troupes, because of its key position close to colonial capitals such as Calcutta and in particular Batavia where opera culture was being

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[63] Ibid.

[64] Paul Rodmell, *Opera in the British Isles, 1875-1919* (Farnham: Taylor & Francis Group, 2013), 219.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Rocha, "Imperial Opera", 153-156.

developed better. Not that the operatic canon defined by Parakilas is found no where in Singapore, but it was replicated in the city imperfectly. The visits of Catherine Hayes and Anna Bishop were the few occasions in which one of the aspects of the canon, star effect, was realised, though the audience showed indifference to the hallowed operatic talent that was so important for the singer's careers. More often operatic canon pervaded the colonial Britons in form of ideas. For instance, the reviewer was dissatisfied with Maugard's French opera company's limited size ("no more than five persons appear from first to last") in opéra-comique, nor did he admire vaudeville that "are purely French." "The dream of *Don Giovanni* in Labuan" is a remarkable, but contrasting example showing most aspects of Parakila's canon: venue (luxury opera house), celebrity (Patti and Mario), performing force (grand orchestra and chorus), canonic work (*Don Giovanni*), and linguistic authenticity (Italian).

But how to explain such disparate attitudes to opera, shown in a number of examples in this chapter, that there were Britons who resisted opera to support English songs on the one hand, and those who strove for a troupe and opera stars, and even imagined opera into a dream on the other hand? Perhaps the answer to this question has to be found in the equally disparate society of the British colony that shaped the public's choices to music. Such society produced the environment for operatic burlesque, a popular genre not only making fun on Italian opera but also on the society divided by wealth, race and ethnicity. And after the mid-1870s, English versions of French opérette, because it balanced foreignness and accessibility to British audience, became the most successful theatrical genre across the Empire. Opera burlesque and opérette would impact deeply the life of Dave Carson, an American minstrel actor in Asia and the protagonist in the next chapter.

Chapter 2. Opera in burlesque and black minstrelsy (From Calcutta to Shanghai, 1875-1884)

A big part of real theatre-scapes can be detected from the newspapers published in colonial port cities such as Calcutta, Singapore and Shanghai. Advertisements on press indicate that even in Calcutta where Italian opera was one of the cultural symbols of colonialism, it did not dominate in the city's theatre-scape. This chapter explores one product of the operatic imagination that have been raised in the previous chapter. My example is opera burlesques, in particular those by the Calcutta-based Dave Carson's minstrel company.

2.1 Theatre-scape in Calcutta (1873)

To figure out the real theatre-scape from the newspaper we need to revisit the scene described by the anonymous writer in his dream of the night tour in Labuan. Going to opera theatre and reading newspaper were highlighted in the dream as two emblems for European's daily life in the colony. By examining some newspaper samples I want to explore first in this chapter how theatrical activities was advertised and reported in colonial newspapers. The objectives of this inquiry are, first, to have a comprehensive understanding of the actual theatre-scape in colonial port cities, and second, to understand how opera was advertised as commodity, one of the most significant features of opera and other type of theatrical performances in port cities.

Before examining theatrical news appearing in port city newspapers, we need to figure out where we can find it. This can easily be done because press editors generally arranged theatrical advertisements on the first page of each issue in which various notices were assembled, as figure 2.1 and 2.2 show. A danger of this arrangement is that these miscellaneous notices surrounding theatrical notices are so distracting that they might draw our attention from our theatrical target. However, ignoring them similarly risks missing the context that supported the existence of theatrical performances in colonial port cities. Therefore, to read theatrical performances as commodities is to avoid distinguishing them as special artistic activities and to follow the ideology of press editors, for whom selling the space to advertisers was one of the businesses of newspaper; in their view,

advertisements for theatrical and musical performances were actually not so different from those for other goods.

From these notices, including the theatrical ones, we could tell the most significant concerns of the readers that made up the port city communities. The first page would normally include notices of the arrival and departure of shipping in the most conspicuous position, followed by advertisements for European goods just arriving with vessels or native goods ready to be transported to Europe. This pattern of goods-exchange between Europe and Asian port cities appeared to be similar both in *Englishman*, the leading English paper in Calcutta and *North China Daily News*, its counterpart in Shanghai, as shown in the two opening pages in figures 2.1 and 2.2 , five years apart.

Figure 2.1 *Englishman*, 30 December 1873

TOWN EDITION.

REGISTERED NO. 18.

The Englishman.

VOL. XXXV. CALCUTTA, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 30, 1873. No. 316

Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company.

Notice to Passengers per "Delhi."

THE S. S. Delhi, Capt. G. Lees, will leave her Moorings at Garden Reach on Thursday, the 1st January, at 11 A.M. precisely.

H. P. LOVELL,
Superintendent.

Calcutta, 29th December, 1873.

N.B.—All heavy Baggage must be sent to the Wharf, Garden Reach, on Wednesday, the 31st December, before 4 P.M., for the purpose of being weighed, &c. 3677

Messageries Maritimes de France.

OVERLAND FRENCH MAIL STEAMER.

Via Suez Canal.

From CALCUTTA to NAPLES and MARSEILLES, calling at intermediate Ports.

From CALCUTTA to CHINA, JAPAN, BATAVIA, MAURITIUS, and REUNION.

Important.

The Company's Steamers now call at Naples on their way to and from Marseilles.

Rates of Passage,

Inclusive of everything, Wines, Spirits, &c., &c.,
To Naples or Marseilles.

1st Class ... ... Rs. 600
2d Cabin ... ... ,, 450
3d Deck ... ... ,, 300

Each Passenger for Naples and Marseilles is entitled to have his Baggage conveyed free of charge to London.

Further particulars can be had on application at the Office of the Company, No. 4, Dalhousie Square.

For London via Suez Canal,

To leave on the 3rd January.

MESSRS. GEORGE'S CALCUTTA AND PENINSULAR STEAMER "VICEROY,"

2,377 Tons, 1,200 H. P. (nominal), J. H. Taylor, R.N.R., Commander.

For Freight and Place of Cabin, apply to

F. W. HEYLIGER & CO.,
Agents.

Red Cross Line of Steamers.

THE well-known R.C.S. Steamer Benlo, 1,300 tons, Captain Burkitt, will leave early in January. For Freight or Passage, apply to

CARLISLE, NEPEAN & CO.

CITY LINE OF STEAMERS.

For London, Direct, via Suez Canal.

"City of Oxford," ... 2,319 Tons, Captain Bruce.
"City of Calcutta," ... 2,319 ,, ,, Hall.
"City of Rome," ... 2,295 ,, ,, Mitchell.
"City of Manchester," ... 2,295 ,, ,, Hamilton.
"City of Canterbury," Building ... ,, ,, Smith.

The City of Rome will leave early in January, and will be followed by the City of Florence about a fortnight later. For Freight, apply to

GLADSTONE, WYLLIE & CO.

STAR LINE OF STEAMERS.

Calcutta to London via Suez Canal.

"Arabian" ... ... 2,500 Tons Register.
"Hydaspes" ... ... 2,500 ,,
"Pera" ... ... 2,500 ,,
"Pleiades" (Building) ... ... 1,600 ,,

Intending Passengers can see Plans, Cabins, &c., at the Office, and be provided as above early in January. She has accommodation for a limited number for Saloon Passengers only, and has very moderate rates. Passengers booked to all parts of the world at the lowest rates.

Also a few Steamers of 1,000 to 2,000, and chartered vessels are wanted for the Coasting Trade.

The rate of freight to Rs. 12 per ton for all other ports. Apply to

HOARE, MILLER & CO.

Passenger Season 1873-74.

PASSAGES booked *without charge* for commission, and direct information obtained, respecting the accommodation, fares, and time of departure of Mail Packets and other Steamers, from the Passenger Steam Ship Company of London, for sailings from Calcutta to London, via Suez Canal.

Also Passages booked to and from the Continent, Cape and Penal settlements and Australia.

Circular Letters of Credit, issued on Bankers of England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, and Branches, and Agencies supplied.

Full particulars may be obtained of Messrs. Mackillop & Co., London, at the current rate of Exchange.

Also Passages by Steamers of any Circle of passenger steamers to Australia and Madras, can be secured at par.

GRINDLAY, GOODDE & CO.,
Bankers.

DUDAL LINE.

Calcutta to London via Suez Canal.

Vessels.	Tons.	H.P.	Captain.
* Duke of Argyll"	4,000	tons	Sir Charles Lamb
* Duke of Sutherland"	4,200	,,	400 Wm. Elwood.
* Duke of Devon"	4,200	,,	400 John Whalley.
* Duke of Rutland"	4,200	,,	400 ,,
* Duke of Buccleuch"	4,200	,,	400 ,,

These magnificent full-powered Steamships have been built expressly for the Calcutta Trade, and will be found on inspection as fine and substantial vessels as have ever left England.

The Cabins are light, elegant, and commodious, with every convenience for comfort, including Bath-rooms and Lavatories, where there is the best water and ventilation.

The special appliances are of the latest character, and each Steamer is provided with Refrigerator, that will hold cooked and frozen, and also with a Distiller.

The Table is unusually spacious, well lighted and ventilated, and under the immediate charge of the Steward.

The Steamers have superior accommodation for sixty first-class Passengers, and are intended to sail as follows:—

From London.	From Calcutta.
* Duke of Devonshire" about 9th Jan.	about 9th Feb.
* Duke of Sutherland" ,, 16th Jan.	,, 16th Feb.
* Duke of Argyll" ,, 30th Jan.	,, 2nd March.
* Duke of Rutland" ,, 20th Feb.	,, 16th April.
* Duke of Buccleuch" ,, 6th March.	,, 4th May.
* Duke of Leicester" ,, April.	,,

The "Duke of Devonshire."

Leaves from Colombo,

Will sail from Colombo about the 8th February, and is expected to reach London about 23rd March.

Terms of Passage-money—Forty, Fifty, and Fifty-five Guineas, according to the position of the Cabin. No Passengers having the same privileges in the Saloon.

These are the finest Steamers yet built, and without Wines and Liquors, which can be obtained on board.

Parcels, Specie, and Packages, according to size and value, are received at the Agents' Office here, till 3 P.M. of the day before sailing.

COX, STEEL & CO.,
Agents.
5, Mission Row.

Eastern Bengal Railway Company.

Fortnightly Service to Sahibganj and Goalundo.

A STEAMER and Flats, going in connection with the Mail Train, leaves Sealdah every Tuesday and Saturday Morning, and Goalundo every Thursday, instead of every third week, as formerly, commencing from Saturday, the 1st September, 1873.

Goods for despatch by this route will be received at the Sealdah Terminus.

Rates of Freight, to be those of Agriculture, value and Bullion Rates, as per Scheme of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, and Notification, or of the District Agent at Dumka and Sahibganj.

FRANKLIN PRESTAGE,
Agent.

Agent's Office,
Mint House, No. 1. 3231

PHOTOGRAPHY.

HOWARD & SHEPHERD,
Photographers,
No. 6, Chowringhee Road,
Calcutta.

Studio & Reading Room

Studio open daily from 9 a.m. till 4 p.m.

Parte Exhibitions—Bronze Medal.
Madras Exhibition—Bronze Medal.
Agricultural Exhibition—Silver Medal.
Society of Arts, London—Two Silver Medals and two Bronze Medals.
The Viceroy's Gold Medals for the best Photos. in the Bengal Photographic Society's Exhibition of 1867 and 1868.
Gold Medals of the Photographic Society for the Exhibitions of 1869, 1870, and 1871.
Also various Medals have been awarded to Messrs. HOWARD & SHEPHERD for their really splendid collection of Indian Photographs, comprising Scenes in Bengal, Behar, Benares, Allahabad, the principal Hill Stations, the North-West Provinces, Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, and Ceylon.
Travellers and the Public generally are respectfully invited to inspect these Photographs before purchasing elsewhere.
N.B.—A new Series of Views, Groups, and Characters in British India and Burmah, are in preparation, and will shortly be ready.

Colouring.

Photographs coloured in the best manner, from the smallest Miniature up to the size of Life. 3562

To Let,

OFFICES & GODOWNS,
At No. 7, Mission Row. 3491

Extensive range, suitable for Bankers' Offices, or as a Depôt for the Upper Provinces or Bombay.
Apply to MESSRS. HOSKEN, KIRKMAN & CO. 1776

Williams' Hotel, Ranecoongunge.

THE above commodious double-storied House, situated about 120 miles by road from Calcutta, now established for upwards of nine years, affords a favourable opportunity to Travellers and Families en route to Calcutta or Darjeeling, of either breaking their stay, or obtaining the use of rooms, for which endeavours are solicited.

Conveyance is much resorted to on account of its adjacency to the Grand Trunk Road, and its commercial importance in Upper India, being one of the healthiest stations in India.

R. WILLIAMS,
Proprietor.

Manooria School.

THIS School will re-open Monday 1st, 1874, All Applications for admission to be made to Rev. Jenkin Mee, Head Master, Manooria School, Manooria. 3419

Mrs. Rowe,

ACCOUCHEUSE.

HOLDING Certificates from the British Hospital for Mothers, London, has just arrived from England. Address 10 Wellington Square. 3551

WANTED by a Gentleman, a Housekeeper to look after a couple of young children. Any person requiring such a Situation, and fitness, may call on Mrs. Rowe, No. 2, K. L. 3552

Notice.

THE usual mailed Service will be held in the Union Chapel, Bhowanipore, on New Year's Day, 1874. The Service will commence at 10½ A.M. The Sacrament will be celebrated by the Rev. Nesbit. The Rev. G. H. Rouse will preside at the Communion.

After the Service a collection will be made on behalf of the City Mission. 3562

P. Company,
C. V. R.

THE Annual Ball of the above Company will be held in the Town Hall, on the 23rd of January, 1874.

R. C. BREWSTER,
Secretary and Treasurer. 3559

New Beerbhoom Coal Company, Limited.

NOTICE is hereby given that the First Half-yearly General Meeting of the Shareholders of the above Company will be held at the Office of the Company, No. 5, Clive Row, on Saturday, the 10th January, 1874, at 3 P.M.

The Share Transfer Books of the Company are closed for 15 days from the 31st instant.

STEEL, MUNTOSH & CO.,
Managing Agents.

Calcutta, 23rd Dec., 1873. 3511

Port-Glasgow Jute Manufacturing Company, Limited.

CALCUTTA, 30TH DECEMBER, 1873.

A dividend of Ten per cent. has been declared for the half-year ended 30th November 1873, at the rate of Eighteen per Cent. per Annum, and a bonus of Ten per Cent., will be payable, at the Office of the Company, on and after the 1st January next.

The Transfer Books will be closed from the 1st to the 15th proximo, both days inclusive.

Warrants will be issued by the undersigned on presentation of Scrip.

By order of the Board,
R. ELLIOTT DAVIES & CO.,
Managing Agents.

NOTICE.

Orth and Schilkaul Railway Co., Ld.

Transfer of Stock and Shares.

THE Transfer Register will be closed from 16th to 31st December 1873, both days inclusive.

HENRY SHAKESPEAR,
Deputy Agent,
Bank of Bengal.

Lucknow, 6th December 1873. 3520

PERSONS indebted to or having claims against the Estate of the late Reginald Mathew Treacy, F. W. Heyliger, are requested to address themselves to the undersigned within one (1) month from this date, after which no claims will be admitted.

GRIFFITH TUCKER JONES,
Bengal Infantry,
President, Committee of Administration.

Fort William,
December 24th, 1873. 3518

A PUBLIC SALE OF INDIGO will be held at the Old Mint Mart, this day, Tuesday, the 30th instant, at 1 o'clock precisely, including the following well-known marks:—

100	Rhimpore,	Turbot.
W & B	Jumeerdhoon,	Turnsol.
100	Mayaveram,	Dido.
100	Hasenpore,	Dido.
100	Goolsenna,	Dido.
100	Nathpore,	Turbot.
100	Sutter Dooba,	Dido.
100	Sutter Dooba,	Dido.
G P & Co.	Gopeepore,	Dido.
100	Cutchowra,	Dido.
100	Cutchowra,	Dido.
G P & Co.	Gopeepore,	Dido.
A & Co.	Ameenah,	J. THOMAS & CO., Brokers.

A PUBLIC SALE OF TEA will be held at the New Mart, Muston Row, on Monday next, the 5th proximo, at 2 o'clock p.m. precisely, including the following well-known marks:—

100	Rhimpore,	Burdwan.
W & B	Jumeerdhoon,	Turnsol.
100	Mayaveram,	Dido.
100	Hasenpore,	Dido.
100	Goolsenna,	Dido.
100	Nathpore,	Turbot.
100	Sutter Dooba,	Dido.
100	Sutter Dooba,	Dido.
G P & Co.	Gopeepore,	Dido.
100	Cutchowra,	Dido.
100	Cutchowra,	Dido.
G P & Co.	Gopeepore,	Dido.
A & Co.	Ameenah,	J. THOMAS & CO., Brokers.

WE have a superior collection of Real Windsor Soap, Lavender Water, Eau de Cologne, Hair Oil, Brush, Sponge, and suggest to large shippers to inspect our stock.

MANOHEY & CO. 3473

Notice.

NOTICE is hereby given that about 30½ Cuddies of Sal Timber, the property of Baboo Jadoo Chunder Mookerjee, will be sold by Public Auction, by the undersigned Auctioneers, on Saturday, the 3rd January, 1874, at 12 o'clock noon, at Kidderpore Timber Yard, near the Kidderpore Bridge, and the balance on or before 31st March, 1874.

For Conditions of Sale, apply to

For Conditions of Sale,
GOODE & CO.,
Auctioneers.

Gloucester Tea Plant Mixture.

For prices and particulars, apply to the AGENT,
No. 2, Pacca Pore Chatta.

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FOR SALE, with immediate possession, in the Port-South District, the well-known, healthy and well-situated Garden Residence, "Ashtabandha," with Bungalow, Stables, Godowns, &c., &c. It has been made the subject of Indigo, when it was in working order, for many years past. For particulars, enquire of "George Walker, Portland." 3179

Indigo Seed.

WE are prepared to contract for the supply, of good pure, cleaned Up-country Indigo Seed, of approved 1874, for Spring Sowings.

SIMPSON & CO.,
32, Strand. 3533

FOR SALE—The Hampers and Dunnebaskets (Indigo Packers), situated in the Gharamtolla Quadrant. For particulars, apply to Messrs. Schilling, Kilgour & Co. 3534

Cock & Co.'s

CELEBRATED LIVERSEE PORT AND SHERRY.

Trade Mark, Lion rampant.

Cock & Co.'s

CLARET FOR HOUSE.

Price, Rs. 1 per quart bottle, cash before delivery.

COOK & CO.,
VETERINARY SURGEONS,
LIVERY STABLE-KEEPERS, COMMISSION AGENTS & AUCTIONEERS,
Have been landed at Kidderpore, from Western Australia, a batch of

40 Fresh Australian Horses.

Which they have arranged for trial and inspection in their Stables until sold, when they intend, after the usual interval, to offer them by Auction.

Intending purchasers can rely on the whole of the Horses being sound, quiet to ride or drive, and warranted.

Horses can be selected from the Stables at any time, by private contract, before the day of Auction.

SALES ON AN EARLY DAY.

Great Sale of Nine Horses

(PROPERTY OF MR. PITT AND MR. FROST).

COOK & CO.

Have been favoured with instruction to SELL TO THE HIGHEST BIDDERS, at Sealdah, on

SATURDAY NEXT,

After the Calcutta Sent Meeting,

Property of Mr. Pitt, proceeding to England.

1.—Bay Gelding, by T. B. Hall's Hero, 4 years old, by "Calicot" dam "Bessy" (Captain's Jane) by "Lapwing" out of "Bessy" by "Tomboy."

2.—*Property of Mr. Frost, leaving E. B. English Horse by "Tomboy" dam "Bessy" 4 years old.*

3.—Bay Gelding, by Mr. Kinloch's Golding by "Lapwing" dam "Queen of Trumps" by "Harold."

4.—Bay Gelding, by Mr. Golding, Pedigree unknown.

Property of Dr. Frost.

5.—Dark Chestnut Gelding, by English Mare by "Chanel" dam "Sly Fox," 4 years old, a winner in Bengal.

6.—Bay Gelding, by D. by Golding, 4 years old, by Sir John out of a good mare.

7.—Bay Gelding, by T. B. Wale Mare.

8.—"Gustave," Bay Gelding, a good match to Phaeton or Buggy, by Gustave out of Mare by Sir John, a very fine pair of well-bred Black Horses. 3560

NOTICE.

Thursday, New Year's day, being a close holiday, we will hold our usual

Weekly Highest Bidder Sale

TO-MORROW, WEDNESDAY.

Account sales of Messrs. Carruthers, Harrison, Jas. &c., as well as other Consignments.

1.—Bay Gelding, by Golding, 15-3 high, perfectly quiet to Saddle and Harness, and warranted ready to carry a lady.

2.—Bay Arab, 14-3 high, a Borough Charger, and quiet in Harness.

3.—Chestnut Waler Gelding, 5 years old, about 15-3 high, a good Hack, and would make a fine Draughter in Harness.

4.—Bay Gelding, by Golding, 5 years old, about 15-3 high, a good Hack, and would make a fine Draughter in Harness.

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172.—Bay

Figure 2.2, *North-China Daily News*, 10 June 1878

THE
North-China Daily News.
PUBLISHED EVERY MORNING.

NEW SERIES,—VOL. XXI., NO. 4308. SHANGHAI, MONDAY, 10TH JUNE, 1878.—5TH MOON, 10TH DAY. PRICE—TEN DOLLARS PER ANNUM—DUE SIX MONTHLY IN ADVANCE.

THERMOMETER.—In the open air shaded situation, on *Saturday*—Min. 66. Max. 73. *Yesterday*—Min. 68. Max. 75. Same date last year,—Min. 72. Max. 82. Min. 65. Max. 77.

ARRIVALS.

DATE	SHIP'S NAME	CAPTAIN	FLAG & RIG	TONNAGE	WHERE FROM	DATE LEFT PORT	CARGO	WHERE ARRIVED	CONSIGNEES
June 7	Kiangping	Wills	Chi str	358	Ningpo	June 6	General		C. M. S. N. Co.
" 8	Chino	Ackermann	Ger str	645	Hongkong	" 3	Do	SHEW	Siemssen and Co
" 8	Kwang-tung	Andrews	Chi str	1079	Ningpo	" 7	Do		C. M. S. N. Co
" 8	Hoo-shin	Pratt	Chi str	763	Tientsin	" 4	Do		C. M. S. N. Co
" 8	Hoo-on	Bonett	Chi str	710	Tientsin	" 5	Do		C. M. S. N. Co
" 8	Kiang-kwan	Russell	Chi str	838	Tientsin	" 6	Do		C. M. S. N. Co
" 8	Ping-on	McCallin	Am str	477	Tientsin	" 5	Do		C. M. S. N. Co
" 8	Haldokat	Gundry	Am bq	377	New York	Dec 24	Do		Frazar and Co
" 8	S. Mendi-li	Obeng	Sp bq	385	Tientsin	May 31	Ballast		Nile Mellor
" 9	Kiangping	Wills	Chi str	358	Ningpo	June 8	General	KLYW	C. M. S. N. Co
" 9	Kiangching	Peel	Chi str	1084	Hankow	" 6	Do		C. M. S. N. Co
" 9	Achilles	Anderson	Br str	1440	Liverpool	Apr 19	Mails, &c.		Butterfield and Swire

DEPARTURES—FROM WOOSUNG OUTWARD.

June 8.—*Hankow*, for Yangtsze Ports; *Ningpo*, for Hongkong and Canton; *Lecyuen*, for Tientsin; *Kiangtsze*, for Ningpo. 9.—*Kiangtse*, for Yangtsze Ports; *Thibet*, for Europe; *Hiroshima Maru*, for Japan.

VESSELS AT WOOSUNG.—*Chuck Hee*, Chi. str.; *Wei Ching*, Chi. str.

DEPARTURES.
FROM THE ANCHORAGE.

DATE	SHIP'S NAME	CAPTAIN	FLAG & RIG	TONNAGE	DESTINATION	CARGO	DESPATCHED BY
June 8	Haskow	McQueen	Br str	1382	Hankow & Forts	Sundries	Butterfield and Swire
" 8	Lee Yuen	Tisdall	Chi str	744	Tientsin	Do	C. M. S. N. Co
" 8	Ningpo	Carr	Br str	761	H'kong & Canton	Do	Siemssen and Co
" 8	Kiang-tsze	Andrews	Chi str	1079	Ningpo	Do	C. M. S. N. Co
" 9	Hiroshima Maru	Hardie	Jap str	1158	N'asaki, Hiogo, &c.	Do	M. M. S. S. S. Co
" 9	Ning-po	Simmons	Chi str	837	Hankow and Forts	Do	C. M. S. N. Co
" 9	Thibet	Turbock	Br str	1071	Hongkong, &c.	Mails, &c.	P. & O. S. N. Co

ARRIVED

Per str. *Haean*, from Tientsin—Mr. Marshall and Captain Hamlin.
Per str. *Hiroshima Maru*, from Chefoo—Mr. Foster; 50 Chinese in steerage.
Treasure—Tls. 45,000.
Per str. *Haskwang*, from Tientsin—Mr. Crockson; 12 Chinese in steerage.
Per str. *China*, from Hongkong—Miss Reasion and Mr. Carl Sinclair; 12 Chinese in steerage. Treasure—$64,000.
Per str. *Kiangching*, from Hankow—Mrs. A. Whiting.

DEPARTED.

For str. *Thibet*, for Vendee—Mr. J. Fraser. For Hongkong—Mr. G. G. Hopkins. Silk—317 bales. Tea—799 chests.
For str. *Hiroshima Maru*, for Nagasaki—Messrs. Thompson, U.S.N., J. J. Hall, U.S.N., Rawson, and Yakuda. For Hiogo—Count Marscalchi and suite, and Mr. J. J. Bolton. For Yokohama—Messrs. C. E. Thurston, U.S.N., R. Schwabe, E. Kingdon and J. Rinch. Silk—34 bales for New York and 2 bales for San Francisco. Tea—694 chests and 49 boxes for New York, and 300 ½-chests and 10 boxes for Boston.

ENTRIES.

June 8.—*China*, from Hongkong; *Kiangtsze*, from Ningpo; *Hankkard*, from New York.

CLEARANCES.

June 8.—*Prusia*, for Tientsin; *Kiangtsze*, for Ningpo; *Hiroshima Maru*, for Japan; *Hattie N. Bangs*, for Tientsin; *Kiangtse*, for Yangtsze Ports; *Thibet*, for Europe.

DESPATCHES TO CLOSE TO-DAY.

Local Post Office.—For Ningpo.—The Kiang-ping Letters till 3 P.M. ... For Chinkiang, Wuhu, Nanking, Kiukiang, Hankow & Ichang.—The Kiang-yuen. Letters till 6 P.M. ... For Take, Tientsin and Peking.—The Hae-shin. Letters till 6 P.M. ... For Chefoo, Take, Tientsin and Peking.—The Hae-an. Letters till 6 P.M. ... *J. McMillan, Local Postmaster.*

A Mail will close for Amoy and Swatow, per Chefoo, To-morrow, the 11th instant, at 5 P.M. ... A Mail will close for Hongkong and Canton, per China, To-morrow, the 11th instant, at 5 P.M. ... *G. S. da Silva, Act. Postmaster.*

A Mail will close for Hongkong, the United Kingdom, United States and British North America, per M. M. str. Yang-Tsi, on Saturday, 15th inst., at 6 P.M., with a supplementary receipt from 8 to 10 A.M. on Sunday, 16th inst. Correspondence should be superscribed "Per French Mail." Money Orders, on the United Kingdom and Hongkong only, are issued as follows:—On days preceding the departures of the Homeward Mails, 10 to 3. The Office is then closed till Eleven on the following day. Saturdays, 10 to 1, or if Mail day, 11 to 1. Other days, except Sundays and Holidays, 10 to 3. Stamps sold and Registration effected, up to 8 P.M. of the days of closing the Contract Packet Mails ... *G. S. S. da Silva, Act. Postmaster.*

The Mail for the Southern Ports, the Straits, India, Mauritius, Europe and America, per Contract Packet Yang-Tsi, will close on Saturday, the 15th inst., at 10 P.M., with a supplementary receipt from 8 to 10 A.M. on Sunday, the 16th inst. ... *H. Richard.*

For Amoy and Swatow.—The Chefoo. Letters till 6 P.M. To-morrow, 11th instant ... For Chinkiang, Wuhu, Nanking, Kiukiang, Hankow & Ichang.—The Shanghai. Letters till 6 P.M. To-morrow, 11th instant ... For Chefoo, Take, Tientsin and Peking.—The Hae-kwang. Letters till 9 P.M. To-morrow, 11th instant. ... *J. McMillan, Local Postmaster.*

FOR COAST PORTS OR JAPAN

For Ningpo.—The Steamer Kiang-ping will leave the Kin-Fong-Tsong Wharf this Afternoon, at 3.30 o'clock. For Freight or Passage, apply to ... *C. M. S. N. Co.* 2335 o

For Hankow and Forts, taking through Cargo for Ichang.—The Steamer Kiang-yuen (late *Plymouth Rock*) will leave on Tuesday morning, the 11th inst. For Freight or Passage, apply to ... *C. M. S. N. Co.* 2335 o

For Hankow and Forts, taking through Cargo for Ichang.—The C. S. Co.'s Steamer Shanghai will leave on Wednesday morning next. For Freight or Passage, apply at the Office of the Company, French Bund ... *Butterfield & Swire, Agents.* 2020 11ju

For Chefoo and Tientsin.—The Steamer Hae-an (late *Shingking*) will leave on Tuesday morning, the 11th inst. For Freight or Passage, apply to ... *C. M. S. N. Co.* 2335 o

For Tientsin direct.—The Steamer Hae-shin (late *Chihli*) will leave on Tuesday morning, the 11th instant. For Freight or Passage, apply to ... *C. M. S. N. Co.* 2335 o

FOR COAST PORTS OR JAPAN.

For Tientsin and Chefoo.—The Steamer Hae-kwang will leave on Wednesday morning, the 12th instant. For Freight or Passage, apply to ... *C. M. S. N. Co.* 2335 11ju

For Swatow.—The str. Hwa-yuen (late *Calchas*) will have quick dispatch. For Freight or Passage, apply to ... *C. M. S. N. Co.* 2335 tf

For Amoy and Swatow.—The Steamer Chefoo will leave on Wednesday morning next. For Freight or Passage, apply at the Offices of the Company, French Bund, to ... *Butterfield & Swire, Agents.* 3077 11ju

For Hongkong and Canton.—The Steamer China will be despatched on Wednesday, the 12th instant, at daylight. For Freight or Passage, apply to ... *Siemssen & Co., Agents.* 3082 11ju

Compagnie des Messageries Maritimes.—The M. M. Co.'s Steamship Yang-Tsé, Capt. Espitel, is de V., will be despatched from Shanghai on Sunday, the 16th June, at Noon, with Mails, Passengers, and Cargo, for conveyance to Europe, &c., viâ Hongkong (without transhipment.) Cargo will be received on board up to 5 P.M., and Parcels at this Office until Noon of 15th June. Rate for Tea to London, £3 10s. per ton of 40 feet ... *A. Heungquin, Agent.* 2574 15ju

FOR FOREIGN PORTS.

For London viâ Suez Canal.—The s.s. Orestes will be despatched at daylight on the 14th instant. Rate for Tea, £3 5s.; for General Cargo, £3 10s. per 40 cubic feet. Silk, Tea, 2½ per Bale. Tea, to New York, £4 15s. Rates accepted on behalf of the British and Foreign Insurance Co., on Rad Hill of Lading at ¾ % on Tea; at 1½ % on Silk all risks, on Tea, dis., f.p.a. 1½ per cent. less 10 % discount. For Freight or Passage, apply to ... 3069 13ju *Butterfield & Swire, Agents.*

For New York.—The favourite Clipper Ship John R. Worcester. For Freight, apply to ... *Siemssen & Co., Agents.* 3043 tf

For London.—The Aberdeen Clipper Star of China, having room for 150 Tons, will be despatched shortly ... *Adamson, Bell & Co., Agents.* 2918 tf

For London.—The 51 Clipper Ship Titania, Capt. England, will load New Season's Teas and have quick despatch. For Freight or Passage, apply to ... 3068 tf *Jardine, Matheson & Co., Agents.*

For London.—The Taitsing will load New Season's Teas, granting through Bills of Lading from Hankow. For Freight, apply to ... *Meiss & Co.* 2008 tf

For New York.—The 51 Clipper Barque Commerce will have quick despatch. For Freight, apply to ... *Russell & Co., Agents.* 2969 tf

Cargo ex Indus, from London, has been brought here by the M. M. s.s. Yang-Tsé, and is now being discharged at the Shanghai & Hongkew and Jardine's Associated Wharves. Consignees will oblige by sending in their Bills of Lading for Countersignature, and taking immediate delivery of their Goods. All Rice of Tare on Wharf to be borne by Consignees ... *A. Heungquin, Agent.* 2574 11ju

AUCTION SALE.—THIS DAY, at 5.30 P.M., Griffin; Barnes Dallas.—*(See Advt.)*

NEW ADVERTISEMENTS.

REPETITION OF THIS PAGE, 5 MARCH FOR 10 LINES.

IN HER BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S SUPREME COURT FOR CHINA AND JAPAN.

In the matter of HENRY TRYER GILLESPIE SAYLE, deceased.

NOTICE is hereby given that payment of all monies due, and delivery of all property belonging, to the Estate of the above-named, must be forthwith made to the Registrar of this Court, to whom also all claims against the said Estate should be presented on or before the 10th instant.

BY ORDER.
H.B.M.'s Supreme Court, 10ju
Shanghai, 10th June, 1878. 10ju 3074

WHIT-MONDAY HOLIDAY.

THE BANKS will be CLOSED TO-DAY, the 10th instant.
Shanghai, 10th June, 1878.

For the Oriental Bank Corporation,
D. A. J. CROMBIE,
Acting Manager.

For the Chartered Mercantile Bank of India, London & China,
JAS. A. TAYLOR,
Manager.

For the Comptoir d'Escompte de Paris,
H. VINAY,
Manager.

For the Chartered Bank of India, Australia & China,
THOMAS FORREST,
Manager.

For the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation,
JOHN WALTER,
Acting Manager.

For the Agra Bank (Limited),
F. W. LEMARCHAND,
Manager.

For the National Bank of India (Limited),
JAS. CAMPBELL,
Manager.
o 3076

SHANGHAI BASE BALL CLUB.

A MATCH GAME of BALL will be played THIS AFTERNOON at 4 o'clock, sharp. All Comers are invited.
HENRY SYLVA,
Hon. Secretary.
o 3078 Shanghai, 10th June, 1878.

MUNICIPAL NOTIFICATION.
No. 569.

NOTICE is hereby given that application has been made by Mr. F. O'TOOLE for a license to open a second-class Hotel at No. 800 in the YUEN-FONG ROAD, HONGKEW.

Any person having any objection to offer to the license being granted, will please communicate with the undersigned not later than 12 Noon of SATURDAY, the 22nd instant.

By order,
R. F. THORBURN,
Secretary.
Cornell Room,
17, Kiangse Road,
Shanghai, 10th June, 1878. 22ju 3075

WANTED

A S Partner, to share the management and profits of a first-class Hotel at Chefoo; a married gentleman whose wife would be willing to superintend the household department, would find this a good opening.
Address, J. PIGNATEL.
6ju 3073 Chefoo, 6th June, 1878.
—n 5-3-s—

GRIFFINS.

THE undersigned will sell, by PUBLIC AUCTION, TO DAY (MONDAY), 10th, at 5.30 P.M., near the GRAND STAND,

11 PONIES,

Just arrived Overland, A very superior lot; several of them having very appearance of turning out racers.

BARNES DALLAS.
o 3079 Shanghai, 10th June, 1878.

FOR SALE.

OREGON CHAMPAGNE CIDER, in Cases of 2 dozen Pints.
Assorted Flavoring Syrups for Fancy Drinks.
Burnett's Flavoring Extracts.
Shaaker Or Tongues.
Dried Prunes, Gelatine, &c.
Preston's Sugar of Lemons.
Stone Ores Rose, in Bottles.
American Whiskey—Rye and Bourbon.

MUSTARD & Co.
21ju 3036 n.s. Shanghai, 19th June, 1878
—n 3 ss—

LANE, CRAWFORD & CO.

HAVE JUST RECEIVED
A VARIETY OF
CHANDELIERS
WITH
TWO AND THREE BURNERS,
IN
BRONZE AND GILT,
WHICH ARE BEING SOLD
AT
VERY LOW PRICES.

LANE, CRAWFORD & CO.
n 2-s-w 3-1-s-w
o.s. 161 Shanghai, 10th June, 1878.

FOR SALE.

A DESIRABLE PROPERTY situated in HONGKEW, the Houses on which have been lately built, and are now all leased until February, 1880, at a rental (secured) showing a net return of 15 per cent. per annum on the price asked for the Property.

For particulars, apply to
FRANCIS A. GROOM,
Land and Estate Agent,
TA-LAY CHAMBERS, FRENCH BUND.
tf 3069 Shanghai, 10th June, 1878.
—M W & F—

TO LET
(With Immediate Possession),

A LARGE and convenient OFFICE on the English BUND, close to the Shanghai Club.

Also,

A SUITE of THREE ROOMS (Furnished or Unfurnished), consisting of Two Bed Rooms and a Sitting-Room, with Bath-Rooms, Servant's Offices, and Kitchen, situated in the Building known as "TA-LAY CHAMBERS," FRENCH BUND.

GODOWN accommodation if required.

FRANCIS A. GROOM,
Land and Estate Agent,
TA-LAY CHAMBERS, FRENCH BUND.
tf 3081 Shanghai, 10th June, 1878.
—M W & F—

SHANGHAI, CHINA, 1st June, 1878.

Estate of EDWARD COE TAINTOR (deceased.)

ALL persons indebted to the above Estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned, and those having claims against it to present the same in duplicate with vouchers on or before the 30th instant.

JOHN H. WISNER,
Administrator.
26ju 3028—n 3, 5, 10, 12, 17, 19, 24, 26—

North-China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society.

A GENERAL MEETING of the above Society will be held in the Society's Rooms TO-DAY, the 10th instant, when the following Papers will be read:—

1.—"Periodical Changes of Terrestrial Magnetism," by F. W. SCHULTZE, Esq.

2.—"Supplementary Notes on the Periodicity of Typhoons in China and their connexion with Sunspots," by ALEX. HOSIE, M.A., of H.B.M.'s China Consular Service.

3.—"The Fixing of some of the most Prominent Localities of Shanghai by Triangulation," by Lieut. KREITNER.

JOSEPH HAAS,
Hon. Sec.
10ju 3049 Shanghai, 10th June, 1878.

FOR SALE,
IN LOTS TO SUIT.

AN Invoice of AMERICAN BLEACHED COTTONS, consisting of CALICOES, SHIRTINGS—Double Warp; SHEETINGS—Plain, Twilled, and Double Warp of various lengths and widths, &c., &c. The manufacture of the WAMSUTTA MILLS, NEW BEDFORD, MASS.

The Goods are specially adapted for Foreign wants, and the whole will be sold cheap.

N.B.—The productions of the WAMSUTTA MILLS are now largely exported to GREAT BRITAIN, where their purity and general excellence commands for them a ready market.

Apply to
n 2-s-w P. MACLEAN & Co.
10ju 3002 Shanghai, 28th May, 1878.

H. G. BRIDGES,
CHINA AND JAPAN AGENT,
21, LIME ST., E.C., LONDON.
—s o s s—M 22ju 234 22nd July, 1877.

FOR SALE.

APOLLINARIS WATER.
Tls. 5.50—per 3 doz. Soda Quarts.
MELCHERS & Co.
3ne 3069 Shanghai, 6th June, 1878.
—n o s—

APARTMENTS.

UNFURNISHED APARTMENTS, with Board, also Board without Apartments, at
Mrs. LANG'S,
18, KIANGSE ROAD.
21ap 2959 Shanghai, 6th May, 1878.

PRIVATE
BOARDING HOUSE.

GENTLEMEN can be accommodated with furnished APARTMENTS and BOARD; also, BOARD without APARTMENTS. Good Stabling and Coach House attached.—For terms, apply at No. 9, CANTON ROAD.
21oc 2725 Shanghai, 22nd April, 1878.

LYCEUM THEATRE.

DAVE CARSON'S COMPANY,

Previous to their departure from Shanghai, will have the honor of giving

ONE OF THEIR UNIQUE ENTERTAINMENTS,

THIS EVENING, MONDAY, 10th June, 1878

The Performance will commence with Offenbach's Popular Comic Opera I

"Le Charme Rompu,"

Translated from the Original, by H. B. Farnie Esq.

CHARACTERS.

Peter Bloom (A Gardener)...*Mr. Geo. Norville.*
Col Mathew (A Cheltenham Pensioner).....*Mr. J. B. Ferrell.*
Jenny (Maid of the Inn) ...*Mrs. Carson.*
Time—1796.

An Interval of Ten Minutes.

PART SECOND.

VARIETY!!

Pianiste .....*Mrs. Carson.*
Violinist.....*Mr. Frank Stewart.*

"BETTA,"
IN HER
Champion American Prize Jig.

Vocal Duet—"LOVE AND WAR"—*Braham.*
MESSRS. NORVILLE AND ARNOLD.

MESSRS. STEWART AND FERRELL,
AS
"The Mad Paganinis."

Song—"THE MESSAGE," *Blumenthal.*
MR. GEO. NORVILLE.

To be followed by
DAVE CARSON,
Who will appear for the Last Time in Shanghai in his
LIVING PHOTOGRAPH
of
The Original Bengalee Baboo
(Cock-par-nuncio, Good Time Coming.)

Song—"LET BROTHERLY LOVE CONTINUE"
C. D'Arc.
MR. J. R. ARNOLD.

"ETTA,"
In her Original Song and Dance,
"DANDY MOE."

An Interval of Five Minutes.

PART THIRD.

The Evening's entertainment will Terminate with a Burlesque Dramatic, Operatic, Negrotic, Hindostanic Olla-Podrida entitled

"VERY ILL TROVATORE."
DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Signora (Oyster) Patti.....*Mademoiselle Forcellini.*
Senor Maurice Elvino.....*Monsieur Norville.*
Don Juan Fernandez.....*Signor Arnoldini.*
Darejos Carambleup.....*Donzel Carsono.*

Introducing the Southern Plantation Walk Round,

"The Apple of My Eye."

PRICES OF ADMISSION.

Private Boxes to hold four $10.00
Dress Circle & Orchestra Stalls..$ 2.00
Gallery ..... $ 1.00
Children under twelve years of age, half-price to Dress Circle and Orchestra Stalls only.
Children in Arms ..... Gratis.

Seats may be secured at Messrs. LANE, CRAWFORD & Co.'s, where a Plan of the Theatre may be seen.

Doors open at 8 P.M.—Trouble begins at 9.

Ladies unaccompanied by Gentlemen cannot be admitted.—Smoking strictly prohibited.

Carriages may be ordered at 11.15.
10ju 3061 Shanghai, 10th June, 1878.

North-China Insurance Company.

TENDERS for the purchase of One Share in the Company, with suitable bonus promis attaching thereto, not exceeding Tels 100, will be received by the Secretary until MONDAY, the 17th instant.

Tenders to be sealed and marked "Tender for Share No. 803."

By order of the Court of Directors,
HENBERT S. MORRIS,
Secretary.
n 17ju 3065 Shanghai, 7th June, 1878.

The Gatling Gun Company, Hartford, Conn. U.S.A.

THE undersigned have been appointed Sole and Exclusive Agents of the above-named Company for China, Japan and the East.

OLYPHANT & Co.
n 13ju 3039 Shanghai, 6th June, 1878.

NEW SEASON'S CONGOU.

EXTRA CHOICEST MINGCHOW, In Boxes of 10 Catties, at Tls. 7.50.

Apply to
OVERBECK & CO.
n 27ju 3004 Shanghai, 24th May, 1878.

FOR SALE.

CHARLES HEIDSIECK'S CHAMPAGNE,
WHITE SEAL,
VINTAGE 1874.

Tls. 12.00 .....per 1 doz. Quarts.
" 12.50 ..... " 2 " Pints.

OVERBECK & CO.
n 14ju 1935 Shanghai, 9th Jan., 1878.
—n 2-w o n—

TO BE LET.

NO. 4, LAOU MA KA LEETERRACE; also the 5-roomed House in the same compound formerly occupied by E. MACKINTOSH, Esq. Stabling, if required.—Rents moderate.

Apply to
KIDNER & CORY,
13, YUEN-MING-YUEN ROAD.
n tf 3055 Shanghai, 6th June, 1878.

TO BE LET.

THE PREMISES No. 1, BARROW ROAD, comprising Silk-House, Tea-Room, Offices, Godown and Dwelling House.

Apply to
MAITLAND & Co.,
YUEN-FONG HONG.
tf 2631 Shanghai, 3rd May, 1878.
n M & Th

GENTLEMEN'S OUTFITTING DEPARTMENT.

PREVIOUS TO STOCK-TAKING.

SAYLE & CO.

ARE OFFERING THE REMAINDER OF THEIR LAST SEASON'S STOCK OF THE UNDERMENTIONED GOODS AT

REDUCED PRICES.

WHITE SHIRTS	...	...	...	...	...$15.00 per doz.
LINEN COLLARS	...	...	...	...	...$ 1.75 " "
FANCY SILK SCARFS	...	...	...	...	...$ 0.80 each.
CANVAS SHOES	...	...	...	...	...$ 2.00 pair.
CALF and KID SHOES	...	...	...	...	...$ 2.00 "
BOOTS (ELASTIC-SIDES)	...	...	...	...	...$ 2.00 "
DRAB FELT HATS...	...	...	...	...	...$ 1.00 each.

ALSO,
A LARGE ASSORTMENT OF
STRAW and LEGHORN HATS, at 75 cents each.

Nanking and Seoulsen Roads,
Shanghai, 10th June, 1878. tf 127 c.s.

JUST PUBLISHED,
Size, 9 Vols. Demy, $4.50; or, in 1 Vol. Cloth, $6.00.

THE
CONCISE DICTIONARY OF CHINESE,
A Revision and Phonetic Arrangement of
K'ANG-HI'S IMPERIAL DICTIONARY,
By J. CHALMERS, LL.D.

SHANGHAI ... KELLY & WALSH.
HONGKONG ...LANE, CRAWFORD & Co.
CANTON ..... E. SHING.
17ju 2980 Shanghai, 13th May, 1878.

PIC-NIC PARTIES.

PARTIES desirous of enjoying a first-rate Picnic will find at

THE POINT,

all the necessaries of the KITCHEN and TABLE at their service.

Also, Sportsmen can be accommodated with Pigeon Traps.

A. SILVERTHORNE,
Proprietor.
n16ju 2921 Shanghai, 17th May, 1878.

NOTICE.

FILTERED WATER.

THE SHANGHAI WATERWORKS COMPANY is now prepared to supply FILTERED WATER, the absolute purity of which is guaranteed, on the following terms:—

Per Cart, containing 100 gallons (or about 20 buckets), *if delivered within the Foreign Settlements*, 20 Mex. cents. Special contracts will be made with consumers residing outside the Settlements.

Water Tickets and full particulars can be obtained from the Agent of the Company,

Mr. D. C. JANSEN,
AT THE
"ASTOR HOUSE."
n tf 2590 Shanghai, 1st April, 1878.

TO LET

(With Immediate Possession),

NO. 3, YUEN-MING-YUEN BUILDINGS.

Apply to
JOHN WILSON,
—n 2-s-w— LANE, CRAWFORD & Co's.
tf 2566 Shanghai, 21st Oct., 1876.

TA-HSING MIXTURE.

SEASON 1878-79.

OUR FIRST SHIPMENT of NEW SEASON TEA was dispatched per s.s. "*Anderson*;" the SECOND leaves by an early Steamer.

Orders for this shipment should be sent in at once.

We deliver a Ten-Catty Box to any address in the United Kingdom for $13; and larger Boxes in proportion.

Prices delivered in Shanghai:—

Box of Five Catties	$4.00
" Ten "	8.00
Tin of One lb.	0.75
" Two lbs.	1.50

LANE, CRAWFORD & CO.
tf 2959 Shanghai, 7th June, 1878.
n 3-s-s-w

Ex LATE ARRIVALS.

CONFITURES au Gelée:—Fraises, Groseilles, Abricots, Cerises.
FRENCH CAPERS.
SYRUPS, assorted.
RASPBERRY SYRUP.
RASPBERRY VINEGAR.
ORIENTAL PICKLES.
INDIAN MANGOES.
SPICES, assorted.
TIN OPENING KNIVES.
BAY LEAVES.
MOSCOW CAVIARE.
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DANISH BUTTER.
SWISS MILK.

Also,
SPIRIT POCKET COOKING STOVES.
KEROSINE OIL COOKING STOVES,
And
COCKBURN & CAMPBELL'S SCOTCH WHISKEY.

KNOOP & Co.
s.s. 30ju Shanghai, 31st May, 1878.
n 2-s-w tf 1990

CUTLER, PALMER & CO.'S
CELEBRATED
WINES and SPIRITS.
Apply to
JARDINE, MATHESON & Co.
Agents for China and Japan.
n s-s-w Shanghai, 15th Jan., 1877.
31mr79 2270

There can be no doubt that drawing conclusions just from one newspaper page runs the risk of partiality, of missing details crucial to understand the place. But port city newspapers within imperial networks did mostly follow a similar format that corresponds with the structure of the mercantile societies they reported on. The point of reading a panoramic selection of the newspaper cover pages from just two days in Calcutta and Shanghai is not to take everything into account, but learn something about the structures of the mercantile society in Calcutta and Shanghai. Such structures can be said to correspond to the layouts of the cities' respective newspapers. To attend to the characteristic objects and events on such pages from the two cities in 1870s is to find both similarities, differences and links between them. The same approach will be applied to analysing both "commerce-scape" in general and the "theatre-scape" in particular.

Let us compare the first page of *Englishman* on 30 December 1873, and *North China Daily News* on 10 June 1878 (Figure 2.1-2.2). It is possible to read both pages according to the types of notice: shipping notices, sales and auctions, community activities such as theatrical performances, land policies, municipal management and relations with natives.

The first column on the first page of *Englishman* on 30 December 1873 (Figure 2.1) is packed with notices of shipping companies. The Suez Canal, opened in 1869, was still a novelty in 1873. Seven shipping lines including one French and six British announce the route via the canal. From the preponderance of British lines, all London-bound, one can conclude that the canal significantly reinforced the connection between Calcutta, the empire's colonial capital and London, the imperial capital. But the British Empire was not the canal's only beneficiary. It also revived ports along the Mediterranean coast in France and Italy such as Marseille, Naples, and Brindisi, as shown in the notice of the *Messageries Maritimes de France*. The canal thus also reinforced France's position arising as a major colonial power in East Asia alongside Britain. It also made a difference to the circulation of European opera. The direct connection between the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean

enabled a substantial increase of opera tours east of the canal undertaken by many Italian and French singers after 1869.[1]

In contrast to Calcutta's connection to overseas, its connection to Indian hinterland relied not on marine transport but exclusively on railways. The Eastern Bengal Railway Company, a notice of which is printed below shipping news, connected Sylhet and Cachar, two cities in the Northern region of Bengal. As this indicates, only two services were in operation every fortnight to the hinterland from Calcutta. Indeed, hinterland railway services were far outnumbered by overseas marine lines. The steady connection of colonial Calcutta with its imperial metropolis was closer than the uneven one with the Indian hinterland. Western opera, brought to India by Italian troupes, thus hardly travelled beyond Calcutta in which the most wealthy colonial elites who could afford opera resided.

The rest of the page is occupied by advertisements for commodities of various kinds. The goods on offer illustrate the consumption habits of Calcutta's elites and India's significant role as the supplier of raw materials for manufacturing luxury commodities: Indigo seeds were exported for cloths colouring; horses were imported for race and drawing riding carriages; wine, tea, and cigars were popular refreshments. There were also goods such as portraits of members of the British royal family and almanacs listing the Raj's substantial political figures, both reminding that Calcutta was not only a merchant city but also a political capital within the British imperial system.

Theatrical advertisements are not difficult to locate. They are conspicuously on the top middle of the page. *Englishman* on 30 December 1873 includes theatrical notices for the Italian Opera Company in the Opera House on Lindsey Street, the Lewis's Theatre Royal's Christmas pantomimes and Dave Carson's Minstrels at the Town Hall. The fact that the three types of performances took place at the same night suggests competition for audience between them. But that would hardly happen because the strictly-divided society of Calcutta between the colonial British elites which included civil and military officials and others, not only including native Indians, but also lower-class Europeans, had pre-determined that each genre would target at their specific audiences, thus Italian opera

[1] The story of the fictitious Italian opera planning a trip to Manila (see chapter 1) alluded to this event.

became such a tool to perceive the social-class division in Calcutta. Jürgen Osterhammel saw social segregation in Calcutta the most significant feature for its being the model of a typical colonial city, primarily through spatial division that separated the “white town" in which Europeans lived from the “black town” in which natives were the majority.[2] Theatrical space also reflects such social segregation more in Calcutta than in London. Whereas in London people from high level class could go to Covent Garden for opera one day while not shying away from visiting a lower-class theatre for burlesque another day, in Calcutta the difference artificially set between high art such as Italian opera and low genres such as minstrel burlesque and consequently, between elite Britons and lower-class Europeans and natives is remarkable.[3]

In Calcutta Italian opera in the late 1860s and early 1870s was operated by a small number of colonial elites who formed the city’s opera committee, which not only commissioned impresarios, but also decided how seats were to be sold. According to the earliest plan, in 1866, “audience are limited to subscription only”, which means that only subscribers were to be admitted and they were asked to pay for the entire opera season in advance. [4] Although the price for each night was not much more than other types of entertainments, subscribing the whole season would be unaffordable for most ordinary Calcuttans. The plan, on the one hand, effectively transformed the opera house in Calcutta from a public venue into an elite club catering exclusively to the richest minority. For all of its connections with wealth, the prospects for Italian opera in Calcutta were insecure. On the side of the opera company, a series actions were taken to attract broader audience and secure more incomes. In the 1868-1869 season, the company director Augusto Cagli introduced extra public nights, mounting the same opera that had been staged in the previous day for non-subscribers. However, the admission price, a seat in stall for eight

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[2] Jürgen Osterhammel, *The Transformation of the World*, trans. Patrick Camiller (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2014), 283.

[3] For opera burlesque in London, see Roberta Montemora Marvin, “Verdian Opera Burlesqued”, *Cambridge Opera Journal* 15, no.2 (2003): 42.

[4] Esmeralda Monique Antonia Rocha, *Imperial Opera : The nexus between opera and imperialism in Victorian Calcutta and Melbourne, 1833-1901*, (PhD diss., The University of Western Australia, 2012), 92-93.

rupees, was still too high for ordinary audience to afford.[5] In order to make opera reach broader audience in Calcutta, in 1870-1871 season Cagli reduced the admission fee of public performances to five rupees for a single stall seat. This price remained unchanged in Cagli's last season that started in the winter of 1871. However, the opera committee and elite opera subscribers objected to reducing the ticket price and the extra public performances, because they assumed that compromise to the admission barrier would mean compromise to quality of performance and to the eliteness of opera and opera attenders.[6] In 1872, a successful tour in Melbourne led Cagli to send two troupes to Melbourne and Calcutta simultaneously, but he drew some of his best singers from Calcutta to Melbourne and left the former the inferior ones. Cagli kept this arrangement in secret until in the season 1871-1872 Calcuttan audience noticed that their favourite singers were not present. They were enraged by Cagli's "treachery" and vowed to not support him anymore.[7] Moreover, the biggest supporter and patron of Italian opera in Calcutta, Richard Southwell Bourke, the Earl of Mayo and the Viceroy of India, was assassinated in February 1872, which forced all entertainments to stop for mourning. The double disasters plagued Cagli's business in Calcutta severely and drove the opera committee into debt. The result was that no one volunteered to lead the Committee into the next opera season.[8] No opera troupe came to Calcutta in the winter of 1872.

Nonetheless Italian opera resumed in the winter of 1873, after one-year absence, but with a contract with a new impresario, Alessandro Massa. Massa maintained most significant strategies that had been taken by Cagli to let opera more accessible to the wider public. He arranged public performances alongside those only for subscribers, and kept the single ticket price at five rupees (See the advertisement for Flotow's *Martha* in Figure 2.3). However, these measures did not succeed in bringing in better attendance, because, as the *Englishman* editor presumed, the time arranged for the opera performance clashed with

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[5] *Englishman*, 5 November 1868.

[6] Rocha, *Imperial Opera : The nexus between opera and imperialism in Victorian Calcutta and Melbourne, 1833-1901*, 108.

[7] Rocha, *Imperial Opera : The nexus between opera and imperialism in Victorian Calcutta and Melbourne, 1833-1901*, 115-118.

[8] Rocha, *Imperial Opera : The nexus between opera and imperialism in Victorian Calcutta and Melbourne, 1833-1901*, 119-120.

that for other social activities such as balls, dinners, and parties and the potential opera goers chose to go for the latter, which resulted in, as the editor observed, that "on non-subscription nights the music of Verdi or Donizetti or Gounod [was] played to principally empty chairs."[9] This could also have been the real situation of *Martha* advertised in the *Englishman* page in figure 2.1, though it was given such a significance location, right at the middle top of the opening page. The prestige that Italian opera enjoyed on the surface thus contrasted the reality that it was unaffordable for most people in Calcutta, while it was not most needed by other group of people who had more options of enjoying nightlife. Later we will see how this paradox, having been turned into a social issue in Calcutta from the mid-1860s to the 1870s, was used by minstrelsy groups to create their operatic parodies.

Figure 2.3 *Martha* (Flotow) staged in Calcutta by Alessandro Massa's Italian Opera Company (*Englishman*, 30 December 1873.)

ITALIAN OPERA.

THIS EVENING,
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 30TH, 1873.
SUBSCRIPTION NIGHT.

Marta.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Lady Enrichetta ... ... *Signora Carpati—Vita.*
Nancy, sua Confidente ... ... „ *Ribaldi.*
Lionello ... ... *Signor Lendinara.*
Plunkett ... ... „ *Gambetti.*
Sir Tristano ... ... „ *Tessada.*
Sceriffo di Richmond ... ... „ *Krei.*
Chorus of Ladies, Gentlemen, Attendants, and Peasants.

Programme for the Week.

Wednesday, December 31st ... *Marta.*
Friday, January 2nd ... *Maria di Rohan.*
Saturday, „ 3rd ... *Marta.*

Tickets and Libretti to be had at the Calcutta Musical Establishment, and, in the Evening, at the Door.
Doors open at half-past 8. Performance to begin exactly at 9 o'clock.

ITALIAN OPERA.

TO-MORROW EVENING,
WEDNESDAY, 31ST DECEMBER,
NON-SUBSCRIPTION NIGHT.
MARTA.
Benefit of Signor Giovanni Gambetti.
1ST BARITONE.

Prices of Admission:

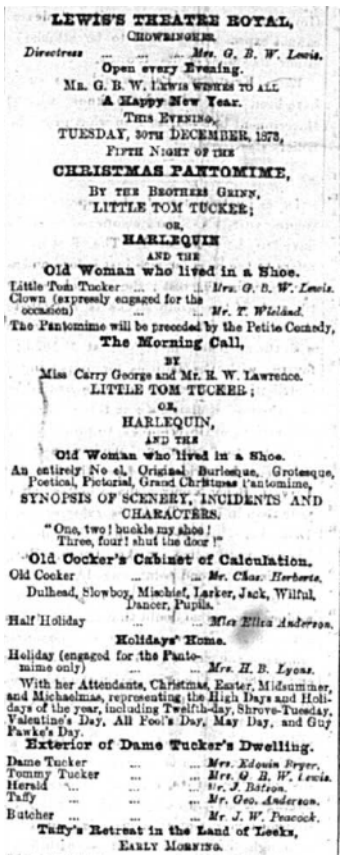
Boxes, to admit four	Rs.	20 0
Single Tickets	„	5 0
Double „	„	8 0
Family „	„	11 0

3019

[9] *Englishman*, 31 December 1873, quoted in Rocha, *Imperial Opera : The nexus between opera and imperialism in Victorian Calcutta and Melbourne, 1833-1901*, 123.

There were theatrical performances cheaper than Italian opera at the same time. In figure 2.1, next to the notice of the opera *Martha* and contrasting to its short length, the advertisement featuring a Christmas pantomime of the Lewis's Theatre Royal, occupied nearly two-third of the entire column. (Figure 2.4) The length of advertisement bears another meaning. Although the troupes offering lighter entertainments could not compete with Italian opera for a more superior location on the newspaper page, they spared no small money in buying large space on the page to forecast their programmes in detail. This was a show on the press before the actual performance happened.

Figure 2.4 Christmas Pantomime of Lewis's Theatre Royal (*Englishman*, 30 December 1873).



LEWIS'S THEATRE ROYAL,
CHOWBENT.
Directress ... ... Mrs. G. B. W. Lewis.
Open every Evening.
Mr. G. B. W. Lewis wishes to all
A Happy New Year.
This Evening,
TUESDAY, 30TH DECEMBER, 1873,
Fifth Night of the
CHRISTMAS PANTOMIME,
By the Brothers Grinn,
LITTLE TOM TUCKER;
OR,
HARLEQUIN
AND THE
Old Woman who lived in a Shoe.
Little Tom Tucker ... ... *Mrs. G. B. W. Lewis.*
Clown (expressly engaged for the occasion) ... ... *Mr. T. Wieland.*
The Pantomime will be preceded by the Petite Comedy,
The Morning Call,
BY
Miss Carry George and Mr. H. W. Lawrence.
LITTLE TOM TUCKER;
OR,
HARLEQUIN,
AND THE
Old Woman who lived in a Shoe.
An entirely New el. Original Burlesque, Grotesque, Poetical, Pictorial, Grand Christmas Pantomime,
SYNOPSIS OF SCENERY, INCIDENTS AND CHARACTERS.
"One, two! buckle my shoe!
Three, four! shut the door!"
Old Cocker's Cabinet of Calculation.
Old Cocker ... ... *Mr. Chas. Herberte.*
Dullhead, Slowboy, Mischief, Larker, Jack, Wilful, Dancer, Pupils.
Half Holiday ... ... *Miss Ellen Anderson.*
Holidays' Home.
Holiday (engaged for the Pantomime only) ... ... *Mrs. H. B. Lyons.*
With her Attendants, Christmas, Easter, Midsummer, and Michaelmas, representing the High Days and Holidays of the year, including Twelfth-day, Shrove-Tuesday, Valentine's Day, All Fool's Day, May Day, and Guy Fawke's Day.
Exterior of Dame Tucker's Dwelling.
Dame Tucker ... ... *Mrs. Edouin Fryer.*
Tommy Tucker ... ... *Mrs. G. B. W. Lewis.*
Herald ... ... *Mr. J. Batson.*
Taffy ... ... *Mr. Geo. Anderson.*
Butcher ... ... *Mr. J. W. Peacock.*
Taffy's Retreat in the Land of Leeks,
Early Morning.

Pantomime was just a special programme that Lewis's Theatre Royal mounted during the days around Christmas. The major programme of the troupe included English spoken and musical plays, and English burlesques. The troupe was directed by Rose

Edouin (1844-1925), born in Brighton, Sussex, usually called by newspapers as Mrs G.B.W. Lewis.[10] The earliest appearance of this company in East Asia can be traced back to 1864 and 1865 when George Benjamin William Lewis (1818-1906) led it, named Lewis Australian Drama Company, to Shanghai for twice. Rose Edouin toured with the troupe as a major actress. She played, among others, the title role in *Camille*, an English adaptation of Alexandre Dumas' novel *La Dame aux Camélias*, the source of Piave and Verdi's opera *La Traviata*. Rose Edouin was not alone in this travel but accompanied by at least three members from her family who also performed in the troupe: her younger sister Julia and elder brother John Edouin were "capital" dancers; the younger brother William wrote a Christmas pantomime for the troupe.[11] In 1864, Rose Edouin married Lewis in Shanghai. By 1867, the Lewises arrived in Calcutta, rent a theatre in Maidan and renamed it as the Lewis's Lyceum Theatre, and ran seasonal performances until March 1870 when they announced to sell the theatre. In September it was taken over by William B.Gill, a former member of Lewis's troupe and was renamed as the Olympic Theatre.[12] A local newspaper in Shanghai described Gill as a "capital low comedy actor.[13]

Gill operated a theatrical season in Calcutta from the winter of 1870 to the spring of the following year while Lewis and Edouin were away. With regard to the programme, Gill followed the pattern initiated by Lewis but appeared to show more interest in burlesques, in particular those adapted from opera. By the winter of 1871, Edouin was back. She did

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[10] Remarked in the company's advertisement in *Englishman,* 5 November 1868. A very brief biographical introduction about Rose Edouin and G.B.W. Lewis can be found in Sudipto Chatterjee, *The Colonial Staged: Theatre in Colonial Calcutta* (London, New York and Calcutta, Seagull Books, 2007), 130-131; For more detailed biography about the actress-impresario and her tours in Australia and Asia, see Mimi Colligan, *Circus and Stage: The Theatrical Adventures of Rose Edouin and GBW Lewis* (Melbourne: Monash university, 2013).

[11] Many of the advertisements and reviews were published on *North China Daily News* from 15 November to 10 December 1864, and from 11 March to 5 May 1865. These materials were gathered by J.H.Haan in *Thalia and Terpsichore on the Yangtze: Foreign Theatre and Music in Shanghai 1850-1865*, (Amsterdam, 1993).

[12] *Englishman,* 20 September 1870.

[13] Haan, *Thalia and Terpsichore on the Yangtze: Foreign Theatre and Music in Shanghai 1850-1865, A Survey and A Calendar of Performances,* 2nd edition (Amsterdam, 1993), 71; For Gill's biography, see Kurt Gänzl, *William B. Gill: From the Goldfields to Broadway* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

not take back her old theatre in Maidan but found another one in Chowringhee, still naming it as Lewis's Lyceum Theatre. The programme shown in figure 2.4 is among the third season after her return. A review of Louis's company's route from Shanghai to Calcutta shows the important role of familial and marriage ties in forming and supporting many travelling theatrical troupes in this period.

Right to Lewis's troupe's advertisement in Figure 2.1, skipping one column, there is the performance by the "Dave Carson's Minstrels" in the Town Hall. The same troupe's advertisement also appears in Figure 2.2, printed in the middle of the first page of the Shanghai Newspaper *North China Daily* on 10 June 1878. (Both programmes are magnified in Figure 2.5) In the Calcutta programme, the last part of the performance begins with "a Burlesque Italian Operatic Oolta Poolta, entitled THE BANDIT BRIDE". In the Shanghai programme, similar description is also given to the last piece "VERY ILL TROVATORE". And the first piece in this performance was a "popular Comic Opera" "Le Charme Rompu" credited to Offenbach. How are these pieces related to opera? Where were their origins? How was Offenbach's operetta brought into a minstrel group's repertory? These are questions the rest of this chapter concerns.

Figure 2.5 Advertisements of Dave Carson's Minstrels (Left: *Englishman,* 30 December 1873; Right: *North China Daily News*, 10 June 1878)

TOWN HALL.

DAVE CARSON'S MINSTRELS.

THIS EVENING,

TUESDAY, 30TH DECEMBER, 1873.

Second appearance of

DAVE CARSON.

Great Success of his New Polyglot Song,

The Language of Love

AND THE

CALCUTTA PALKEE-WALLAHS,

With Comical Imitation.

GO AND HEAR

His New Anglo-Indian Impersonation,

THE BABOO'S RETURN.

Second time of the New Local Sketch,

The Bow Bazaar Police Court,

In which Mr. Harry Leslie will appear

AS A MEMBER OF THE CALCUTTA BAR.

New Songs, Glees, Quartettes,

INSTRUMENTAL SOLOS,

Burlesques, Dances, &c.

Programme.

PART FIRST.

Introductory Instrumental Overture	*Dave Carson's Minstrels.*
Opening Chorus "The Night is advancing" (Rossini)	*Company.*
Ballad—All like Faded Flowers are gone	*Mr. W. Hogarth.*
Polyglot Song, the Language of Love	*Dave Carson.*
Ballad—I'm weary to-night, Mother	*Mr. G. H. Henri.*
Vocal Quartette (Orpheus)	*Messrs. Norville, Henri, Pierce, and Hogarth.*
Comic—Hold your Horses, as arranged and originally sung by	*Mr. Harry Leslie.*
Ballad—The Bird on the Tree	*Mr. G. Norville.*
Solo and Quintette—Dreaming of Angels	*Mr. J. C. Talbot and Company.*

The Calcutta Palkee Wallahs,

DAVE CARSON.

Interval of 10 Minutes.

PART SECOND.

Eccentric Ethiopian Song and Dance *Dar's Music in dese Shoes*	*Mr. Harry Leslie.*
Burlesque Banjo Solo	*Mr. G. H. Henri.*
Musical Selections	*Mr. & Mrs. J. O. Pierce.*

ANGLO-INDIAN SKETCH

The Baboo's Return,

DAVE CARSON.

Song—The Stirrup Cup ... *Mr. W. Hogarth.*

The Bow Bazaar Police Court.

SAM.—Always in Trouble, and without discrimination as regards Meum and Tuum	*Dave Carson.*
Magistrate "deeply versed in Legal Lore"	*Mr. G. Norville.*
Old Spriggins, who is made aware of the glorious uncertainty of the Law	*Mr. G. H. Henri.*
Lawyer Draper—A shining light of the Calcutta Bar	*Mr. Harry Leslie.*

Interval of 5 Minutes.

The Evening's Entertainment to conclude with a Burlesque Italian Operatic Oolta Poolta, entitled

THE BANDIT BRIDE;

OR,

First she would, and then she wouldn't.

Prices of Admission:

First Class	Rs. 5
Family Ticket, to admit three	" 12
Second Class	" 2

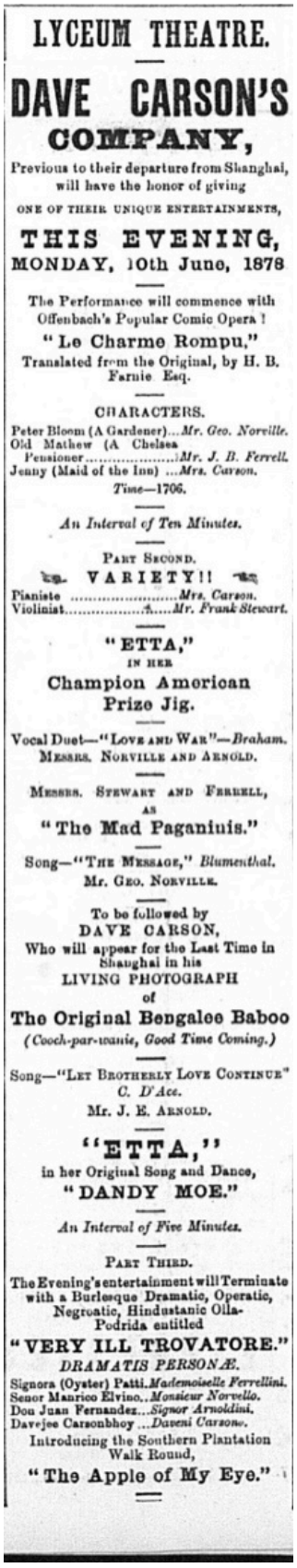
Reserved Seats can be secured at the Great Eastern Hotel, where a plan of the Hall may be seen.

Doors open at 7-30. To commence at 8-30.

Stage Manager ... *Mr. Harry Leslie.*

Musical Director ... *Mr. J. O. Pierce.*

Dave Carson's United Minstrel and Burlesque Album containing the Bengalee Baboo and 24 other popular Songs and Choruses, with Pianoforte accompaniments, can be obtained at the doors. Price, Rs. 2. 3140



LYCEUM THEATRE.

DAVE CARSON'S COMPANY,

Previous to their departure from Shanghai, will have the honor of giving

ONE OF THEIR UNIQUE ENTERTAINMENTS,

THIS EVENING,

MONDAY, 10th June, 1878

The Performance will commence with Offenbach's Popular Comic Opera !

"Le Charme Rompu,"

Translated from the Original, by H. B. Farnie Esq.

CHARACTERS.

Peter Bloom (A Gardener)...*Mr. Geo. Norville.*
Old Mathew (A Chelsea Pensioner.....*Mr. J. B. Ferrell.*
Jenny (Maid of the Inn) ...*Mrs. Carson.*

Time—1706.

An Interval of Ten Minutes.

PART SECOND.

VARIETY!!

Pianiste .....*Mrs. Carson.*
Violiniat.....*Mr. Frank Stewart.*

"ETTA,"

IN HER

Champion American Prize Jig.

Vocal Duet—"LOVE AND WAR"—*Braham.*
MESSRS. NORVILLE AND ARNOLD.

MESSRS. STEWART AND FERRELL,

AS

"The Mad Paganiuis."

Song—"THE MESSAGE," *Blumenthal.*
Mr. GEO. NORVILLE.

To be followed by

DAVE CARSON,

Who will appear for the Last Time in Shanghai in his

LIVING PHOTOGRAPH

of

The Original Bengalee Baboo

(Cooch-par-wanie, Good Time Coming.)

Song—"LET BROTHERLY LOVE CONTINUE"
C. D'Ace.
Mr. J. E. ARNOLD.

"ETTA,"

in her Original Song and Dance,

"DANDY MOE."

An Interval of Five Minutes.

PART THIRD.

The Evening's entertainment will Terminate with a Burlesque Dramatic, Operatic, Negroatic, Hindustanic Olla-Podrida entitled

"VERY ILL TROVATORE."

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Signora (Oyster) Patti..*Mademoiselle Ferrellini.*
Senor Manrico Elvino..*Monsieur Norvello.*
Don Juan Fernandez....*Signor Arnoldini.*
Davejee Carsonbhoy ...*Davani Carsono.*

Introducing the Southern Plantation Walk Round,

"The Apple of My Eye."

We know not much about how Dave Carson became a minstrel impresario. One of the few sources about his life and theatrical career is his obituary published on the Singapore-based press *Mid-day Herald* (reprinted from the Calcutta *Englishman*) after he died in 1896 in the capital of the British India.[14] From this obituary, we know that Dave Carson, whose proper name was David Nunez Cardoz, was born in America to a Jewish father and a Spanish mother. In 1853, he moved to Australia for gold rush, then became a minstrel impresario, having partnership with the San Francisco Minstrels from America.[15] In 1864, Carson took a troupe called the Original San Francisco Minstrels to British India, though it is unclear whether this troupe was the same one that Carson met in Australia. During the following decade, Carson took Calcutta as his base while touring in other Indian cities, in particular Bombay.[16] From 1874, Carson brought the troupe around East Asia. Approximate routes of the troupe's two tours can be figured out through the fragmented information from newspapers in Calcutta, Singapore and Shanghai. In 1875, the troupe visited Shanghai for the first time, afterwards it was "en route for Philadelphia", to attend the World's Fair in 1876 that celebrated the 100th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.[17] Carson's second tour passing on East Asia was in 1878 and was apparently also launched from India. The Singapore press reported that it had stayed in Ceylon before arriving in Singapore in February. Afterwards, the troupe went to Japan which was their furthest stop in this tour. On their way back, Carson's troupe visited Shanghai again, and revisited Singapore where they stayed for another two weeks, cooperated with three French opera singers from Paris and staged Victor Masse's *Les Noces de Jeannette*, an one-act comic opera premiered in the Opéra-Comique in 1853 in Paris. After that, as the Singapore press reported, the troupe headed to Europe.[18] News about Carson's troupe from then on is rare.

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[14] *Mid-day Herald,* 18 March 1896.

[15]"Dave Carson," Australian Variety Theatre Archive, accessed 18 February 2022, https://ozvta.com/practitioners-c/.; Naresh Fernandes, *Taj Mahal Foxtrot: The Story of Bombay's Jazz Age* (New Delhi: Roli Books, 2012), 42-43.

[16] Fernandes, *Taj Mahal Foxtrot*, 42-43.

[17] *North China Daily News*, 2 October 1875.

[18] *Straits Times Overland Journal*, 24 August 1878

Carson's troupe was not the only minstrel company coming to Calcutta but was no doubt the most successful one in the long run. For instance, the Original Christy's Minstrels stayed in Calcutta from January to February in 1864, which was immediately followed by the arrival of Carson's San Francisco Minstrels from March. That Carson stayed longer than the Christy Minstrel in Calcutta was probably one reason for his being remembered. But the main reason for Carson being accepted by Calcutta britons as their favourite minstrel group probably lay in the pieces that he designed for the city to which he was a newcomer. Compare the two sets of programmes given by The Original Christy's Minstrels and Dave Carson's The Original San Francisco Minstrels:

The Original Christy's minstrels
The Town Hall, To-morrow Evening, Tuesday, January 12th, 1864
Programmes
Part 1
Overture (Fra Diavolo)
Drain the Cup of Pleasure (From Lurline)
I Long for my home in Kentucky
The Hen Convention (Original)
Do they think of me at home (Original)
Tapioca (Original)
Sunny Days will come again (new)
Going Home to Dixie (Original)
Come where my love lies dreaming (original)
Sleigh Polka
Part 2
Burlesque Polka
Hutchinson Family (Burlesque)
Silver Belt Prize jig
Ballad, Sweet Spirit hear Prayer
The Negro Comes (original)
Part 3

The Burlesque Italian Opera

The Englishman, 14 January 1864

The Original San Francisco Minstrels

Town Hall, This Evening, Monday, March 14th

Part 1

Overture

Darkies' Holiday (Chorus)

Under the Cypress

Why did my Sarah sell me?

The Nightingale (Composed by J.O.Pierce)

I see her still in my dreams

Boo woo woo

Fair fair with golden hair

Merry is the Minstrel's Life

Part 2

Solo Concertina

Grand Shak[e]sperian, Operatic, Serio-Comic, oriental, Venetian, musical Burlesque of Othello by Dave Carson

Ballad

Blue Tail Fly

Solo, Rock harmonicon

Benares Giant

Part 3

Comic Sketch "The Delhi Mummy or 1,000 Years Dead'

The Englishman, 12 March 1864

The two programmes in the performances taking place just two months apart appear similar in many respects. They display what a typical mid-nineteenth century commercial American black-face minstrel show might have looked like when being just imported to India. They are identical in structure, both divided into three parts.[19] They start with an overture, usually chosen from a popular Italian or French opera such as *Fra Diavolo,* a *grand opéra* by the French composer Daniel Auber, as shown in the Christy's programme; then they go through a series of songs which feature the white men's sentiments to the

[19] The three-part structure as a standard format came to existence when minstrel performance entered into commercial theatres in 1840s, most actively in New York. See Renee Lapp Norris, " 'Black Opera': Antebellum Blackface Minstrelsy and European Opera", (PhD Diss., University of Maryland, 2001), 2.

antebellum United States plantations.[20] The second parts of both programmes begin with a small burlesque, which is followed by more songs, usually ballads. The whole performance is concluded in the third part of the programme with another longer burlesque, or a comic sketch, a play generically similar to burlesque, in Carson's case.

The Christy's Minstrels promoted the "originality" of its performance by simply bringing the whole set of American minstrel show from its birth land to India. Opera overtures, plantation songs, ballads and operatic burlesques were what had existed in the commercial black-face minstrelsy theatres in US cities such as New York. The troupe's name, the Original Christy's Minstrels, bore the implication that it inherited the authentic styles of the first Christy's Minstrels that was found by Edwin P. Christy (1815-62) in New York in 1842 but had been dissolved in 1854. This decade witnessed the summit of the commercial minstrel shows in New York and there were a competition between the Christy's minstrels and the Virginia Minstrels, another minstrel group in the city, for the title of the "originator of negro minstrelsy."[21] The problem of originality – who could represent the real American minstrel shows – thus became the utmost concern as much of the creators of the genre as of the impresarios who brought it from the US to abroad. Dave Carson's initial idea, indicated in the title for his company – the Original San Francisco Minstrels, was similar to the Christy's, his competitor in Calcutta by promoting originality. However, he changed this strategy very soon.

Even in some of the first performances that Carson's minstrels gave in India , some pieces had abandoned the tradition of the "original" minstrelsy but bearing Carson's own experience achieved when he was traveling across the subcontinent from Calcutta to Bombay, such as "The Delhi Mummy or 1,000 Years Dead", the last "comic sketch" in the programme on 12 March 1864 (see the programme above). By creating a kind of "Hindustanee" black-face minstrelsy soon after he arrived in India, Carson made his troupe distinguished from its competitor, the Christy's minstrels, whose director insisted the

[20] Blackface minstrelsy was initiated by white working-class Americans who engaged with black culture. Norris, " 'Black Opera': Antebellum Blackface Minstrelsy and European Opera", 2.

[21] Renee Lapp Norris, "Opera and the Mainstreaming of Blackface Minstrelsy", *Journal of the Society for American Music* 1, no. 3 (2007): 341-342.

genre's originality, particularly in advertising. Consider one Carson's programme in 1873, when his personal style has been firmly established:[22]

Town Hall, Dave Carson's Minstrels, This Evening, Tuesday, 30th December, 1873.
Programme

Part First. Introductory Instrumental Overture – *Dave Carson's Minstrels*; Opening Chorus "The night is advancing" (Rossini) – *Company*; Ballad: All like Faded Flowers are gone – *Mr. W. Hogarth*; Polyglot Song, the Language of Love – Dave Carson; Ballad: I'm weary tonight, Mother – *Mr. G.H. Henri*; Vocal Quartette (Orpheus) – *Messrs. Norville, Henri, Pierce, and Hogarth*; Comic: Hold your Horses, as arranged and originally sung by – *Mr. Harry Leslie*; Ballad: The Bird on the Tree - *Mr. G. Norville*; Solo and Quintette: Dreaming of Angels – *Mr. J.C. Talbot and Company*; **The Calcutta Palkee Wallahs** – *Dave Carson*.[23]

Part Second. Eccentric Ethiopian Song and Dance – *Mr. & Mrs. J.O.Pierre*; Anglo-Indian Sketch: **The Baboo's Return** – *Dave Carson*; Song; The Stirrup Cup – *Mr. W. Hogarth*; **The Bow Basaar Police Court**: Sam, always in Trouble, and without discrimination as regards Meum and Tuum – *Dave Carson*, Magistrate "deeply versed in Legal Lore" – *Mr. G. Norville*, Old Spriggins, who is made aware of the glorious uncertainty of the law – *Mr. G. H. Henri*; Lawyer Gasper, a shining light of the Calcutta Bar – *Mr. Harry Leslie*;

Part Third. A Burlesque Italian Operatic Oolta Poolta, entitled, The Bandit Bride; Or, First she would, and then she wouldn't.

The pieces displayed in bold in the programme, all performed by Carson, show what Carson's Indian blackface minstrelsy means. The Anglo-Indian Sketch "The Baboo's Return" would have reminded the audience of Carson's well-known parody song *Bengalee Baboo*, which created a stereotypical anglicised Bengal businessman who learns clumsily European refinement.[24] Another stereotypical figure created by Carson based on racial difference was Davejee Carsonbhoy, a Parsi variation of Carson's name. The Parsi community was an economically powerful minor group in Bombay through the trade between British India and China from the early nineteenth century, and it was very likely

[22] An extract of this programme has been shown in Figure 2.5. *Englishman,* 30 December 1873.

[23] The titles emphasised in bold were originally printed in bold in the newspaper.

[24] Bradley G. Shope, *American Popular Music in Britain's Raj*, (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2016), 37.

that Carson once rent theatre from Parsee agents. But it would be simplistic to presume that Carson's parody to the Parsi community must have been racially offensive. What Carson did was not just parodying one specific group, but parodying many who themselves would held stereotypical impressions to each other, so that he made "the Parsi laugh at his caricature of the Hindoo, while the Hindoo is convulsed at his clever skits of the Parsee, " as a British traveler in Calcutta observed.[25]

Although Carson became famous for parodying native Indians, the subjects in his burlesques expanded when he toured around East Asia, in particular to Shanghai in 1875 and 1878. The Shanghai International Settlement, a quasi-colony ruled by the British, must have appeared to be similar to the British Raj that Carson had been familiar with. Following the burlesque *The Bow Basaar Police Court* that had been staged in India (See Figure 2.5), Carson copied the legal topic to Shanghai. The outcome was "an original local vocal sketch, entitled *Shanghai Police Court*, in which [Carson] will impersonate An Irishman, a Scotchman, a Frenchman, a Chinaman, an unprotected female, a mild Hindoo, and Hennessey, Exshaw, Culler, Palmer & Co, etc."[26] Although some Europeans indeed felt offended by Carson's burlesque, a reviewer on *North China Daily News* defended that Carson "manages to hold mirror up to Shanghai Nature which shows us our peculiarities" and it was difficult for "a stranger" to do so.[27] A Singapore newspaper made the same observation that Carson was "an acute observer of local eccentricities…, delineated from the short experience of character he has had since his arrival here."[28] Thus Carson's performance appealed to his European audience in Shanghai and Singapore not because he let them imagine the remote plantation in Southern United States, but rather he used the form of minstrelsy to depict the society they were familiar with, as one reviewed that the typical musical instruments for minstrelsy such as the banjo, the fiddle and the bones were

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[25] Joseph Charles Parinson, *The Ocean Telegraph to India: A narrative and a Diary,* (Edinburgh: W. Blackwood, 1870), 58; Quoted in Shope, *American Popular Music in Britain's Raj*, 36.

[26] *North China Daily News*, 8 October 1875.

[27] *North China Daily News*, 11 October 1875.

[28] *The Straits Times*, 7 August 1875.

just to deliver an "Ethiopian feeling on the European crisis."[29] Sticking to the original American blackface minstrel tradition, as the Christy's minstrels did, seemed to have lost its attractiveness after its first ephemeral success. A reviewer for the *Straits Times,* putting Carson's troupe over the Christy's, wrote: "Carson's entertainment is far beyond the fun of the generality of Christy minstrel and in other respects is greatly superior"[30] These preferential commentaries by local British presses redefined the originality of Blackface minstrelsy, detaching it from its American origin and reattaching it to a colonial context dominated by the British Empire. The last paragraph of Carson's obituary concluding Carson's accomplishment indicates the change of the word's meaning:

> One secret of his great reputation was undoubtedly the fact that he was the discoverer of the peculiar vein of humour in native life, the interpretation of which he carried to the height of a fine art. As an actor he was distinctively original, and although he had a host of imitators he was without a rival especially in his delineation of the Bengali Babu.[31]

To be sure, making his minstrelsy be English or Indian was part of Carson's business strategies, as implicated by the changes of names of the company. He gave up "The Original San Francisco Minstrels" in 1865, altering it with "Dave Carson's Minstrels". In 1868 he used "Dave Carson's Varieties" shortly and in 1878 once called it "Variety and Comedy Company". How Carson hoped his troupe to be known reflects how he would change the content of his programmes.

One may argue that perhaps Carson did not change too much to the blackface minstrel tradition because the purpose of minstrel shows was to display folklore filtered through racist eyes and Carson merely shifted his targets of parodying from African-Americans to the colonisers and the colonised in Asia. For example minstrels in the US parodied not only blacks but also Irish and Chinese.[32] They were the ethnic groups who played significant role

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[29] *The Straits Times*, 28 September 1878

[30] *Straits Observer*, 30 July 1875

[31] "The Late 'Dave' Carson': Calcutta Englishman", *Mid-day Herald,* 18 March 1896.

[32] Norris, "Black Opera: Antebellum Blackface Minstrelsy and European Opera", 4.

in American culture before the civil war but were in lower social status. Carson did the same to the British India by parodying the Bengali and the Parsi, which suggests that he did not go far away from the blackface minstrelsy conventions. However, it also attests that minstrelsy might not have existed without constant interplay with social issues from news, gossips and mass imagination, which were taken as minstrels' resource and inspiration. Humorous effects of performance depended on immediate response to these issues. Social context thus comes to the fore from the background if we are to understand this non-self-sufficient genre.

The absence of Italian opera between 1872 and 1873 gave Carson an opportunity to perform in the Calcutta opera house which should have been reserved for Cagli's company. This was regarded by *Englishman* editor as an absurd disruption of the city's "foremost artistic and social experience", making "the places which once rang with the silvery notes of Bosisio and Coy' [be] overtaken by 'Dave Carson's 'gooks'".[33] Rocha thus regards this episode as signalling the failure of Italian opera in Calcutta in the winter of 1872 and as symbolising the irreconcilability between the high and low arts. The problem, however, is that Carson's minstrel opera parody was not just an ephemeral footnote but a constant background to Italian opera companies in Calcutta, not just to Cagli's troupe. As I have shown in this section, since 1864, Carson's minstrels, so did the Lewis's company, stayed in the British colonial capital longer than any single opera company. Both of their programmes included large portion of opera burlesques. The Italian operas staged in the opera house and operatic burlesques staged in other Calcuttan theatres formed an interdependent relationship for the most of the decade – for example, operatic burlesque made the original opera more well-known and it offered an alternative for those who could not afford Italian opera. But if Italian opera companies left, as happened in Calcutta after 1875, opera burlesque would also lose its meaning and attractiveness which could not be separated from its source.

2.2 Opera parodies as informal opera

Adapting famous opera, in particular Italian opera, into burlesque had been a usual practice in popular theatres in anglosphere. Carson, to be sure, followed the tradition. In England, the operas that generated most burlesques were in fact small number. By 1890, there have

[33] Rocha, *Imperial Opera : The nexus between opera and imperialism in Victorian Calcutta and Melbourne, 1833-1901*, 121.

been four burlesques derived from Bellini's *La Sonnambula*, four from Bizet's *Carmen*, three from Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, three from Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman*, and three from Weber's *Der Freischütz*;[34] Verdi had three pieces that most often inspired burlesque writers, *Il Trovatore*, *La Traviata*, and *Ernani*.[35] These operas, with the exception of Wagner's, were most frequently staged not only in London, but also in British India and East Asian port cities by touring companies. Some of the most popular opera burlesques, such as Henry James Byron's *Ill-treated Il Trovatore* derived from *Il Trovatore* and *La! Sonnambula! or the Supper, the Sleeper, and the Merry Swiss Boy* from Bellini's *La Sonnambula,* were brought to Calcutta and further to East Asian cities from Singapore to Shanghai by Louis's troupe.

Operatic parodying in the American blackface minstrelsy developed in another way. Unlike the English burlesque writers, American blackface minstrels were not very keen on parodying an entire opera, as Byron did with *Ill-Treated Il Trovatore* which resembled a retelling of Verdi's original work. Instead blackface minstrels were interested in caricaturing operatic conventions, in particular the operatic singing manner. A considerable amount of opera parodying songs had no melodic connection with any existing opera arias. Renee Lapp Norris shows several examples in which the tunes could be new but mimicked operatic characters such as Rossinian *cresensdo* and *bel canto*.[36] Moreover, Norris pointed out that opera burlesque in blackface minstrelsy had another allusion that its English counterpart did not have. Whereas most Anglo-American opera burlesques took up the major function of caricaturing foreignness, the eliteness and the exclusivity of Italian opera, American minstrels, wearing blackface masks when singing melodies from Italian operas or showing Italian operatic gestures, conveyed double criticisms not only upwards to opera performers and consumers as social elites, but also downwards to the black Americans.[37] The former allusion was about class, the latter about race.

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[34] For details of these burlesques, including their titles and authors, see Roberta Montemora Marvin, "Verdian Opera Burlesqued", *Cambridge Opera Journal* 15, no.2 (2003): 65.

[35] Ibid, 37.

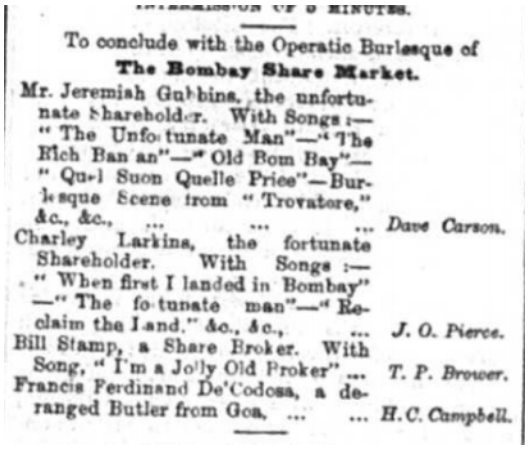
[36] Renee Lapp Norris, "Black Opera", 185-186.

[37] Norris, "Black Opera", 128.

Were Carson's operatic parodies replications of those in London and New York? Whereas such assumption may apply to Louis's company because it imported a large amount of English operatic burlesques by English authors to India, which can be observed from its programmes, and to Christy's company as it represented, at least as the advertisements claimed, the original Antebellum minstrel tradition, Carson's operatic parodies were much more complex. It is only partly true that Carson's troupe and his American competitor did the same thing of bringing minstrel opera parodies to India. But the advantage that only Carson had is that he caught up the opera craze arising in Calcutta in 1866 due to the coming of Cagli's Italian opera company. And he reacted to it quickly.

The opera burlesque *The Bombay Share Market*, staged in one of Carson's performances in January 1866, is not a piece that would have appeared in any American minstrel theatre (See figure 2.6). Although it did not change the blackface minstrel's conventional interest in parodying stereotypical figure - the four characters in the piece might include British and a Goan Portuguese, the background of the story was however set in the commercial society of Bombay of which the share market was a niche. The piece's link to opera is suggested in introduction to the four figures, each of whom had a series of songs to sing. The most obvious operatic allusion is at the last song of Dave Carson's role, "a burlesque scene from 'Trovatore'".

Figure 2.6. Operatic Burlesque, "The Bombay Share Market". (*Englishman*, 12 January 1866)



To conclude with the Operatic Burlesque of
The Bombay Share Market.

Mr. Jeremiah Gubbins, the unfortunate Shareholder. With Songs :— "The Unfortunate Man"—"The Rich Banian"—"Old Bom Bay"—"Qui Suon Quelle Price"—Burlesque Scene from "Trovatore," &c., &c., ... *Dave Carson.*

Charley Larkins, the fortunate Shareholder. With Songs :— "When first I landed in Bombay"—"The fortunate man"—"Reclaim the Land," &c., &c., ... *J. O. Pierce.*

Bill Stamp, a Share Broker. With Song, "I'm a Jolly Old Broker" ... *T. P. Brower.*

Francis Ferdinand De'Codosa, a deranged Butler from Goa, ... *H. C. Campbell.*

But the most explicit evidence indicating that Carson intended to use this piece as response to Cagli's arrival appears in an earlier notice for the same piece:

> The Royal Italian Opera not having arrived, through fear of Cholera, has caused considerable disappointment to the Indian Public. But musical Enthusiasts should bear in mind that the great modern Tenori Buster, the Bengal Mario, the Pet and Pride of the renowned Oriental lyric Drama, Dave Carsoni, is here, and will appear in his admired character of Jeremiah Gubbins, and sing his grand Scena, Recitative, Andante, and Slow Movement, in the truly amusing Operatic Burlesque of the "Bombay Share Market", at the Town Hall, Next Friday Evening.[38]

Carson's mentioning the Italian opera company in his advertisement suggests that Cagli's company should have arrived in Calcutta in January, but failed to meet the plan. Cagli's troupe finally arrived in April, marking the return of a complete Italian opera group to Calcutta after two decades. Despite the belated arrival, the public's enthusiasm was aroused. The fact that the performance took place in the repainted Town Hall instead of an opera theatre, and the company mounted no full-dressed opera but one opera recital and two operas in concert form did not discourage women from dressing themselves with "new gowns mantles and gloves" and men with "new dress coats", many of which were bought on credit, as *Englishman* reported.[39] This observation convinced that the expenses for opera going were not only on entrance admission, but also included contingent items such as right costume which was regarded as a default necessity. And from the report it was evident that a large number of Calcuttan opera goers in 1866 were not truly wealthy enough to afford opera. They got the tickets because the plan that audience "limited to subscription only" was not introduced by the Opera Committee until 1868. After that, opera attendance became more exclusive and these people who needed to rent their dressings would effectively be barred from the opera house. Carson should have known that there was an opera bubble in the city. Italian opera was not really needed. While wealthy colonial and military officers just took it as one of the handful ways of socialising

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[38] *Englishman*, 8 January 1866.

[39] Rocha, *Imperial Opera*, 92.

with people with equal status, less wealthy Britons followed the suit. They were probably not musical connoisseurs and had not much knowledge about opera works, but they knew who were renowned singers in the world. There might have been not many, but Carlotta Patti, her sister Adelina, and Giovanni Matteo de Candia were undoubtedly the most familiar opera singers to Britons in Calcutta.[40] The last, whose pseudonym was Mario, was referred by Carson who called himself the "Bengal Mario".

By 1875 when Carson toured to Shanghai for the first time, not only opera parodies but also other opera-related programmes had become a remarkable part in his repertory (Table 2.1). In Table 2.1, I divide Carson's operatic pieces into two groups, opera excerpts and operatic burlesques. My investigation starts from the right column.

Table 2.1 Dave Carson's minstrels's opera-related pieces at the Shanghai Lyceum Theatre (1875)[41]

Date	Opera overture, chorus and arias	Opera burlesques
30 September 1875	Overture from *La Sonnambula;* Operatic Scena (Mrs Carson)	Humorous Trifle, "An operatic rehearsal": Signora Nunez Cardozo-Mr. J.C. Talbot; Her Gig-Brudder-Dave Carson; Impressario-Mr. G.H.Henri
6 October 1875	Bararole, *On voulez vous aller* (Mrs. Carson)	"Our" Italian Opera in which Dave Carson will again appear as "the Parsee Heavy Father"; Burlesque, *La Prima Donna d'Afrique* (Mr. J.C.Talbot); Operatic Burlesque, *The Bandit's Bride or First she would and then she wouldn't* (Mdlle. Oyster Patty – Signora Talbotini; Senor Elvino Manrico – Mons Henrioni; Don Juan Fernandez- Signor Obreyani; Davejee Carsonbhoy-Daveni Carsono

[40] Patti and Mario were widely known across British colonies in Asia. They appeared in the fictional operatic scene in "Jottings from a tropical island", written by a British expatriate and published by *The Straits Times*. See Chapter 1.

[41] All advertisements were published on *North China Daily News*.

8 October 1875	*Serenade* (Victor Hugo/Charles Gounod, sung by Mrs. Carson)	*A Grand Burlesque* operatic scena "A la Conservatoire du Putoong
11 October 1875	Romanza in *La Fille du Regiment* ; *Chanson Bohemienne* (Offenbach, sung by Mrs. Carson)	Burlesque, *La Prima Donna d'Afrique* (acted by Mr. J.C.Talbot)
12 October 1875	Cavatina from *Robert le Diable* (Sung by Mrs. Carson)	A Burlesque on "The Anvil Chorus" from *Il Trovatore*
15 October 1875	Introductory overture, *La Sonnambula*; Romance from *Les noces de Figaro* (Sung by Mrs. Carson)	
18 October 1875		Patti let loose (Mr. J.C. Talbot)
19 October 1875	Couplets de la Fauvette from *Le Caid*	

The influence of the American opera parody songs is still detectable in Carson's burlesque. For instance, the "Humorous Trifle, 'An operatic rehearsal'", the personae of which consisted of a prima donna acted by cross-dressed man, a male singer and an opera manager, appeared to caricatures the European operatic conventions, a favourite subject to American minstrels and similar in its setting of characters with the Christy's minstrels' "10 minutes at La Scala, A Sonnambulic-Trovatorean-Traviatian sketch".[42] The situation of *La Prima Donna d'Afrique* is slightly different. Although the title of the piece could have appeared in an American minstrel theatre – the double ironic allusion to opera singer and

[42] Its personae had "Signora Donna Palliasso de Matrasso (crossing-dressing); Signor Muchahentyfuego; Director of the opera." Published in *Englishman,* 19 January 1864.

Blacks is just too obvious – this parody was probably from Carson's own idea.[43] The other opera burlesque mounted on the same day, described as '"Our" Italian Opera in which Dave Carson will appear as "the Parsee Heavy Father"' showed his turning away from the authentic American minstrel conventions and combined his imitation to Parsi figures with opera parody. And another one called '*A Grand Burlesque* operatic scena "à la Conservatoire du Putoong"' might have been inspired during Carson's stay in Shanghai[44], attesting to the commentary by *North China Daily News* journalist that Carson "manages to hold mirror up to Shanghai nature".

One opera which was taken twice as the source for being parodied in Carson's 1875 tour to Shanghai was Verdi's *Il Trovatore*. The source of the burlesque on "The Anvil Chorus" was obvious, but the situation of "The Bandit's Bride, or first she would and then she wouldn't" was more obscured because it has in its personae only one figure from the Verdian opera, Manrico, the trovatore. In Carson's second tour to Shanghai, this burlesque was repeated with the same four roles but with a new title, "Very Ill Trovatore", to make its relationship with Verdi's opera more explicit.

Carson's interest to *Il Trovatore* had been suggested a decade earlier in the previously mentioned opera burlesque "Bombay Share Market", in a song of his role. Indeed, the Verdian opera had been one of the favourites for burlesque arrangers since 1850s. In England, its popularity was followed by *La Traviata* and *Ernani*. From 1853 when *Il Trovatore* was premiered by the Royal Italian Opera in the Covent Garden up to 1880, the opera had generated one adapted English opera and six burlesques in London, two of

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[43] Which opera inspired this piece is unclear. One possibility is the Parisian composer Giacomo Meyerbeer's *grand opéra L'Africaine*. However, in his PhD dissertation on opera parody songs before the American Civil War, Renee Lapp Norris gathered a wide range of song titles from 1850 and figured out their operatic origins. Meyerbeer's *L'Africaine*, however, is not in the list. Only one Meyerbeer's work, *Robert le Diable,* was appropriated into parody songs and generated more than one version, which indicates the opera's particular popularity to minstrels. Such popularity might explain why contrast to a number of minstrel songs based on opera, the operas from which these songs were derived were a small amount. See Renee Lapp Norris, "Black Opera: Antebellum Blackface minstrelsy and European Opera", 250-271.

[44] The exact meaning of "Putoong" is unclear, but could it refer to *Pudong*, the land of Shanghai on the east bank of the Huangpu River?

which were by Henry J. Byron.[45] In the pre-Civil War United States, there were one complete burlesque by the Buckley's Serenaders, at least three burlesqued versions of the "Anvil Chorus", and a minstrel song entitled "I'l Trovatore" which rephrases the plot of the opera but borrowed the melody from an English song popular in the United States between 1856 and 1857.[46] These parodying adaptations did not go beyond the setting of plot in the original opera. Humorous effects were derived from allusions to the English and American societies but were avoided to affect the original operatic story lying underneath. In Byron's *Ill-Treated Il Trovatore*, satires targeted careers such as opera singers, actors, photographers, and street musicians and political issues such as labourers and prisoners' treatment, gender issues, and lives of aristocracies.[47]

That Byron's burlesque *Ill-Treated Il Trovatore*, as well as the author's other pieces could travel across the British Empire in Asia was largely thanks to Rose Edouin's troupe. In 1870 William B.Gill, who ran his seasonal theatre when Edouin's troupe was away, staged *Ill-Treated Il Trovatore*, among other burlesques and extravaganzas by Byron in the Olympic Theatre at Maidan in Calcutta.[48] Moreover, this piece appeared to have crossed the Atlantic Ocean and have influenced American minstrels. The *Witmark Minstrel Guide* targeting at amateur minstrel groups, published in 1899, includes a synonymous burlesque piece.[49] Nevertheless, nothing in this piece was close to Byron's burlesque except the title. The adapter remained only three characters in Verdi's opera, Manrico, Leonora and the Count di Luna, but cutting Azucena out. The burlesque thus essentially dismissed the central plot of its operatic source, the vengeance of a gipsy; rather the story begins right in the dungeon where Manrico the troubadour was prisoned and would be executed in the

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[45] According to Marvin's work in the British library of gathering burlesque libretti arranged from Verdi's three operas, six were derived from *Il Trovatore*, four from *La Traviata* and two from *Ernani*. For complete list see Marvin, "Victorian Opera Burlesqued", 37-39.

[46] Norris, "Black Opera", 228-241;

[47] Marvin, "Victorian Opera Burlesqued", 52-63.

[48] *Englishman*, 3 December 1870.

[49] Frank Dumont, "*Ill-Treated Il Trovatore"*, in *The Witmark Minstrel Guide*. Chicago, (M. Witmark & Sons, 1899), 133-139. The exact date of this work being composed was not indicated in the published libretto.

final act of the opera. [50] Although there is no resemblance between the plots of the two burlesques, the Witmark's version of *Ill-Treated Il Trovatore* that borrowed the title of Byron's work indicates that the latter was probably a "classical" burlesque in its own right, and that other American minstrel corps would have followed the instructions in the book when rehearsing it.

Contrary to that *Il Trovatore* generated its burlesque versions in London, in Calcutta this process reversed. The opera was produced in its completeness in Calcutta on 27 February 1868 by Cagli's troupe – thirteen years after the opera's London premiere, but four years earlier, its "Anvil Chorus" had been used to open a minstrel show by the Christy's company and a burlesque adapted from it was arranged as the last piece. The American minstrel version thus came to Calcutta before the formal staging of this opera and also before any import from Italy and London. The same process of receiving *Il Trovatore* – first the burlesqued version, then the original work – was repeated in Shanghai. As early as in 1864, a Shanghai Amateur Burlesque Company, apparently a self-organised local group, staged twice Byron's *Ill-Treated Il Trovatore* in Shanghai's Olympic Theatre. It was only in April 1879 that the Royal English Opera Company from Australia, led by the Australian tenor and impresario, Howard Vernon, visited Shanghai and mounted this opera, though very probably sung in English, in the Shanghai Lyceum Theatre.[51] The Italian version *Il Trovatore* was the last to arrive in Shanghai in 1879 with Cagli's newly recruited Italian opera company.

The fact that the burlesqued and translated versions of the *Il Trovatore* arrived in Calcutta and Shanghai earlier than the 'authentic' one illustrates how Italian opera travelled to the British colonial port cities filtered through English-speaking agents. The four versions of *Il Trovatore* – Verdi's Italian version, the English translation, Byron's burlesque and the blackface minstrel burlesque travelled to Calcutta and Shanghai via different

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[50]Ibid.

[51] The majority of operas given by Vernon's troupe were operettas by French, English and Irish composers such as Offenbach, Lecocq, Sullivan and Balfe. *Il Trovatore* and Donizetti's *La Fille du régiment* were the only two Italian operas, which suggests the special position of these two works in the English-speaking world. For the complete programme of Vernon's Shanghai season, see Chun-Zen Huang, "Travelling Opera Troupes in Shanghai: 1842-1949), (PhD diss., The Catholic University of America, 1997), 71.

routes. Despite being an Italian, Cagli's whole business was backed by the British Empire. He recruited his singers from Italy, but his touring focused from the beginning exclusively on British colonies ranging from Cape Town, to Calcutta, to Singapore and Shanghai, and to Melbourne. His success and failure in these cities relied on negotiations, successful or failed, with local British community.[52] Vernon troupe's English translations of Italian operas might have been staged in London, but the people in the troupe, both manager and singers, came from Melbourne. Byron's burlesque *Ill-Treated Il Trovatore* was first performed by the "Shanghai Amateur Burlesque Company" which made up of British theatrical amateurs in Shanghai, while its premiere in Calcutta was carried out by Rose Edouin's troupe which was still of Australian origin.[53] Despite the European origins of these musical products, their disseminations to Indian-Pacific region relied on local agents. In addition to the above three versions of *Il Trovatore* there were the American minstrel versions. Dave Carson's *Very Ill Trovatore* – as the piece was called when performed in Shanghai in 1878, still earlier than any original versions of the opera being heard in the city, had been in Carson's repertory since 1873 and had had another title, *The Bandit's Bride* (Figure 2.7-2.8) . Why Carson changed the title? Was it also an imitation to Byron's famous burlesque? If it were the case, then it was a parody of a parody.

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[52] From 1875 to 1877, after he was no longer hired by the Opera Committee in Calcutta and before he began an East Asian tour, Cagli explored into Cape Town. Similar to the situation Calcutta, after an ephemeral success at the beginning of the first season, Cagli found it being difficult to attract sufficient audience to sustain his stay in the city. See Frederick Hale, "Italian Grand Opera at the Cape of Good Hope: The 1875 and 1876 Cagli seasons," *South African Journal of Cultural History* 29, no. 1 (2015): 58-73; Frederick Hale, "From a comedy of errors to tragedy: The cessation of Italian opera in Cape Town in 1877," *South African Journal of Cultural History* 30, no. 1 (2016), 105-118.

[53] Local theatrical performances in the Shanghai International Settlement were largely contributed by amateur groups such as the Shanghai Amateur Burlesque Company". The venue where they rehearsed and performed, the Olympic Theatre, despite its high-sounding name, was actually a refurbished warehouse. See Haan, *Thalia and Terpsichore on the Yangtze: Foreign Theatre and Music in Shanghai 1850-1865*, 16. It was until 1867 that Shanghai had a theatre built specifically for theatrical purpose, the Lyceum Theatre as the base for another long-lasting amateur organisation in Shanghai, the Amateur Dramatic Club (ADC). It was a group made up elite British Shanghailanders. Robert Little, once the chairman of the Shanghai Municipal Council and later the chief editor of the *North China Daily News,* the mouthpiece of the International Settlement, was a member of it as well as a merchant of his own company in his early years in Shanghai.

Figure 2.7 Dave Carson's burlesque "Very Ill Trovatore". (*North China Daily News*, 10 June 1878)

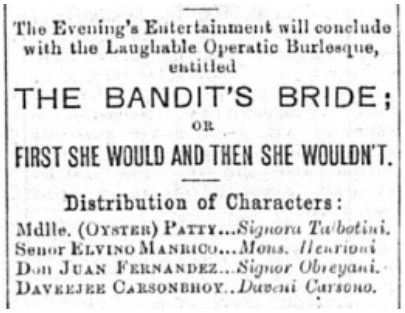

The Evening's entertainment will Terminate with a Burlesque Dramatic, Operatic, Negroatic, Hindustanic Olla-Podrida entitled

"VERY ILL TROVATORE."

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Signora (Oyster) Patti.*Mademoiselle Ferrellini.*
Senor Manrico Elvino..*Monsieur Norvello.*
Don Juan Fernandez....*Signor Arnoldini.*
Davejee Carsonbhoy ...*Daveni Carsono.*

Figure 2.8 "The Bandit's Bride". (*North China Daily News*, 6 October 1875)


The Evening's Entertainment will conclude with the Laughable Operatic Burlesque, entitled

THE BANDIT'S BRIDE;

OR

FIRST SHE WOULD AND THEN SHE WOULDN'T.

Distribution of Characters:

Mdlle. (Oyster) Patty...*Signora Talbotini.*
Senor Elvino Manrico....*Mons. Hearioni*
Don Juan Fernandez...*Signor Obreyani.*
Daveejee Carsonbhoy..*Daveni Carsono.*

2.3 Leaning on operetta

One type in Carson's programmes that did not appear in those of other minstrel companies were opera arias and other vocal excerpts, (shown in the middle column of table 2.1), which were sung by Semiladis who was advertised as Mrs. Carson. Semiladis was the only true opera singer in Carson's minstrel group, and was said to be an experienced pianist. This was too big an advantage for Carson not to grasp to enrich his repertory and to lift the respectability for his troupe. However, the opera arias in Carson's programme cannot be only understood as the consequence of ad hoc familial cooperation. How do we understand the effects of hearing arias from Meyerbeer's *Robert le Diable* and Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro* sung by an opera singer, and parody songs to opera by minstrel actors all in one performance? Such contrast complicates the relationship between blackface minstrel's

ironic depictions of European opera in burlesques and Carson's personal approach to this elite art form in a non-ironic way beginning in the 1870s.

A suggestive evidence of Carson's welcoming gesture to opera emerged as he took over Cagli's opera house in the winter of 1872 when the opera season paused that year. His first advertisement to introduce the troupe's members emphasised in particular their musical talents and their exceptional positions in renowned European theatrical or musical institutions. The advertisement announced:

> First appearance in India of Mr. and Mrs. John L. Hall, The celebrated Comedians, from the principal Theatres of America, Australia, and New Zealand; Mr. H. Norman, Principal Tenor from the Christy Minstrels, St. James's Hall, Piccadilly, London; Mr. Frank Gerard, Principal Baritone from the Christy Minstrels, St. James's Hall, Piccadilly, London; Mr. Victor Semiladis, The eminent violinist and composer, late of the leading musical societies of France; Manter Horace, The wonderful boy-singer, from the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, London and Her Majesty's private chapel, Windsor.[54]

No minstrel group before Carson ever promoted itself in this way. By emphasising the institutional origins of his new people, in particular the singers and musicians from the prestigious institutions in London and Paris, Carson conveyed a clear signal that he also had access to high art, and that he has managed to bridge the gap between serious musicians and minstrel actors.

Other evidence that might suggest that the style of Carson's troupe was becoming more operatic comes from newspaper reviewer's interest to the male singers' singing instead of their acting. The songs – American songs, English ballads, and opera parody songs – in Carson's repertory were performed by a few actors. They used their voices to act male and more female roles, among others, such as prima donna Patti by J.C.Talbot and J.B. Ferrer. What needed to be cross-dressed was not only their visual images, but also their voices. Talbot was heard singing in a falsetto voice in opera parody song and in

[54] *Englishman*, 18 November 1872.

minstrel ballads, while Ferrer had an "uncommon alto voice".[55] As to actors who played male roles such as G. H. Henri who once acted Manrico and J.E. Arnorld who acted Don Juan – perhaps a parodied role to Don Giovanni in Mozart's opera, in *Very Ill Trovatore*, the former were said to be a "pleasing tenor", and the latter a "fine Baritone".[56] These comments were made in 1875 and 1878 during Carson's tour to Singapore and Shanghai by local reporters. How minstrel actors sang had not been a major concern for spectators, but these local reporters in East Asia lent their ears to singing quality of a minstrel group and made commentaries in a way similar to those usually for opera singers. Why was that?

Perhaps one reason is that Carson might have hoped the audience to regard his performances as not too far away from an operatic one. For this he had made large updates to his programme in his second tour to East Asia in 1878. Figure 2.2 shows all opera-related pieces of the company in Shanghai, in which, among others, three Offenbach's *operettes*, *Le Charme Rompu, The Blind Beggars* (*Les Deux Aveugles*)*, The Rose of Auvergne* (*La rose de Saint-Flour*) and one pastiche *Forty Winks* derived from the composer's *opéra-comique Une Nuit Blanche* were performed by Carson's own singers, Norville, Ferrell and Semiladies.[57] Yet the limits of Carson to stage a real opera, even an operetta are obvious. All four Offenbach's pieces that Carson's people did were English translations by Henry Brougham Farnie. Despite being renowned as a translator of Offenbach's *operettes*, his works in England were regarded that "few were of very high literary" and "[most] were chiefly furnished for ephemeral public taste [58] Moreover, all four pieces were in tiny length and size, having just one act and requiring no more than three singers on the stage. For Carson's opera ambition, these works touched the roof of his capability.

Table 2.2 Dave Carson's minstrels's opera-related pieces at the Shanghai Lyceum Theatre (1878)

[55] *North China Daily News,* 2 October 1875.

[56] *North China Daily News*, 2 October 1875; *Straits Times Overland Journal*, 20 February 1878.

[57] *Le Charme Rompu*, however, cannot be found in Offenbach's operetta output.

[58] "Obituary: Henry Brougham Farnie", *The musical Times and Singing Class Circular* 30, no. 560 (Oct. 1, 1889): 603.

Date	Opera overture, chorus and arias	Opera burlesques	Operettas
10 June 1878		*Very Ill Trovatore*	Le Charme Rompu (trans. Farnie/Offenbach)
12 June 1878		Burlesque Tragic Opera, *Bombastes Furioso*	
14 June 1878	Cavatina from *Robert le Diable* (Meyerbeer, sung by Mrs Carson, accompanied on the Pianoforte by Mr. G.B. Fentum		*The Blind Beggars* (Offenbach)
17 June 1878	Opening chorus (Verdi)		*The Rose of Auvergne* (Offenbach, Accompanied by G.B. Fentum on the piano) 19 June 1878
19 June 1878	Vocal duet, "Money! Money!!", from G.W.Macfarren's Opera di Camera, "Jessie Lea"		*Forty Winks* (Henry Farnie/Offenbach, accompanied by G.B. Fentum on the piano)

Although Carson was not able to mount any more ambitious opera relying on the resource of his own minstrels, he sought to cooperate with other opera companies. When the troupe was in Singapore in 1878, he encountered the French Opera Company led by two Parisians, Berge Deplace and Henri Perrier who were also touring in the city. Carson invited them to stage an opera in their minstrel shows.[59] The piece selected was Victor Masse's opéra comique *Les noces de Jeannette*, premiered in Paris in 1853. This work stood firmly in repertory of the Opéra-Comique theatre and was performed every year, but in 1877, before the Deplace and Perrier's company coming to East Asia, there were the most thriving reproductions of this opera in its history, counting to 50 performances, next

[59] *The Straits Times*, 17 August 1878.

to the 70 performances in the season of its premiere.[60] That this work was being a Parisian opera *à la mode* explains why it was brought to East Asia by a Parisian company. Moreover, it was performed in French, which excited the reviewer in Singapore:

> After the usual interval came the piece of the evening *Les notes de Jeannette*, by M. Victor Masse, which was played in French, it being one of those light, sparkling pieces which only the ready wit and rollicking drollery of a Frenchman can produce, and which always lose a portion of their charm in translation.[61]

Les notes de Jeannette became the centre of the night, and shadowed Carson's own minstrel programme - the reviewer observed that though Carson's performance was well known, the interest of the evening fell on the "French *Artistes*". They were praised by the reviewer as representing the Parisian standard: "This vivacious and accomplished artiste (Perrier) went through his role in a manner which one might see in a Parisian theatre, but seldom out of it", and "even those who are unable quite to follow them in the idioms of their own expressive language cannot fail to be struck with the excellence of their acting."[62]

Whether this performance implicated Carson's personal business success of finding cooperation with an opera company or it meant diminished success of blackface minstrelsy can be interpreted in either way. One thing for sure is that it was very different from the minstrelsy that Carson brought to India ten years ago, and even farther away from the so called original minstrel tradition promoted by the Christy's minstrels. From Carson's perspective, his decision to break the convention of minstrelsy may be explained by the commercial motive to let his performance more various in genre and style. The gate for touring theatrical troupes of various types to the British Asian colonies was wide, as long as the impresarios knew how to adapt themselves to audience's aspiration for variety. Even in 1917, an anonymous European theatrical manager still alerted:

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[60] Catherine Ellis & Mark Everist, France: Musiques, Cultures, 1879-1918, accessed 1 September 2020, http://fmc.ac.uk/.

[61] *Straits Times Overland Journa*l, 24 August 1878.

[62] *Straits Times Overland Journal*, 24 August 1878.

> There is no type of play most acceptable [to Eastern audiences]. Any and every species of entertainment is welcomed and freely patronised, provided it is good of its kind… He may prefer a musical comedy to a melodrama, or a melodrama to a farce, but provided the play is entertaining, and not too appalling for words, he will come not once, but many times… Generally speaking.., the standard of criticism is not severe, and, provided the artists are good in their line, there is no need to suppose you have got to specialise in any particular type of play to ensure success. I believe a certain Grand Opera company recently scored one of the greatest financial successes ever recorded in the East, but this is not to say that the East wants operas exclusively or even that it would rather have operas than anything else. They tire quickly in those parts. Variety and contrast are very nearly as important there as they are over here.[63]

After 1875 Italian opera was undergoing a decline in Calcutta, operetta companies took over its place.[64] A series of companies, including Allan and Alice May's English Opera Company (1875-76), Howard Vernon's Royal English Opera and Opera Bouffe Company (1878-189), Emelie Melville English Opera Company (1883-1885), Harry Stanley's Dramatic, Operatic and Pantomime Company (1888), and more, departed from Australia, to Singapore, Manila, Hong Kong, Shanghai and Tokyo. All of them headed further to the British India before going back to Australia.[65] French and English operetta thus became a more deeply explored nexus between the two big British colonies than Italian opera. Dave Carson attempted to cooperate with several of them, some with success. In 1880, the Clara Stanley Opera Company, led by the manager Rolling and the company's first soprano, Clara Stanley, arrived in British India after a long tour via Singapore, Hong Kong and Shanghai.[66] As he had done before with the French company, Carson asked Rolling and Stanley to mount a piece to start his new season. The young soprano agreed and chose the French composer Robert Planquette's *Les cloches de*

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[63] Anon, 'Theatrical touring in the Far East by one who has tried it', *The Stage Yearbook* (1917); 47.

[64] Rocha, "Imperial Opera", 136.

[65] Ibid., 150-152.

[66] Before arriving in India, Clara Stanley had been the prima donna in Howard Vernon's company.

Corneville, a new opéra comique just premiered in Paris in 1877. On 24 April 1880, the three-act Parisian opera was the highlight in the show. The only minstrel element in the performance was signalled trivially at the bottom of the programme: “Between acts second and third Dave Carson will appear as the Bengalee Baboo in England” (Figure 2.9). Finally, Minstrel song became operetta’s interlude.

Figure 2. 9 “Dave Carson & Miss Clara Stanley’s Combined Opera Company” (*Times of India*, 4 April 1880)

URBS PRIMUS IN INDIS.

GAIETY THEATRE.

LESSEE.....DAVE CARSON.

DAVE CARSON AND MISS CLARA STANLEY'S
COMBINED OPERA COMPANY,
FOR A SHORT SEASON.

POPULAR PRICES. POPULAR PRICES.

MR. CARSON takes great pleasure in announcing to his Friends and Patrons in Bombay, that after an absence of two and a half years he has returned with a company,

CONSISTING OF NINETEEN ARTISTES,

whose talents and inexhaustible reportoire exceeds anything ever seen in India,

EACH ARTIST BEING A VERSATILE STAR.

During the Season there will be produced,

ETHIOPIAN MINSTRELSY.
OPERA BOUFFE.
AND A GREAT VARIETY OF SPECIALITIES.

GRAND OPENING NIGHT,

SATURDAY EVENING, APRIL 24TH, 1880.

THE PERFORMANCE WILL CONSIST OF
(Robert Planquette's and MM. Clairville et Ch. Gabet.)
OPERA COMIQUE IN THREE ACTS,
ENTITLED
LES CLOCHES DE CORNEVILLE.

Performed with the greatest Success for upwards of 300 Nights at the Theatre Des Folies Dramatiques, Paris, also at the Globe and Folly Theatres, London,

and honored in Calcutta by the distinguished patronage of
HIS EXCELLENCY
LORD LYTTON, G.M.S.I.,
VICEROY AND GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF INDIA.

BETWEEN ACTS SECOND AND THIRD
DAVE CARSON
will appear as
THE BENGALLEE BABOO IN ENGLAND.

This chapter has reviewed the minstrel Dave Carson’s activities in Asia. My departure point has been a shift of focus from Italian opera staged in Calcutta to opera burlesques produced by dramatic and minstrel companies in the same city roughly during the decade between 1865 and 1875. Opera burlesques were derived from two things, opera works and opera culture in a certain place, without which they could not have existed at all. That is the reason why opera burlesques were not “works”. Paradoxically, operas and opera burlesques staged in Calcutta were both brought in from Europe and America and were replicated in the new place, in this sense they were sophisticated commodities, or “works”. Verdi’s *Il Trovatore* and Byron’s burlesque *Ill-Treated Il Trovatore* fell into this category. Only Carson’s opera parodies formed real interplay with local opera craze in Calcutta initiated by Cagli’s Italian opera company. Moreover, a keen sense to commercial

opportunity was bound to Carson's use of opera, which was evident when he cooperated with operetta companies. From 1875 to the end of the century, Western opera in Calcutta, Singapore, Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Hanoi and Manila, meant French and English operetta rather than Italian opera. This was all what theatrical agents loosely attached to the British Empire could really offer.

Chapter 3. The natives' opera dream: Malay Opera (The British Malaya and the Dutch East Indies, 1900 - 1930)

3.1 Hesse's opinion on Malay music and others'

In September 1911, the German writer Hermann Hesse boarded a steamer to Asia. He departed from Genoa, sailed to the toe of Italy, then east to Port Said, through the Suez Canal into the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. After crossing the north of the Indian Ocean, his ship entered the Malacca Straits. There on two sides were the destinations Hesse was to explore: on the left (from his perspective) lay the Malay Peninsula where the Straits Settlements had been set up by the British in Penang, Malacca and Singapore from North to South. On the right was the island of Sumatra, part of the Dutch East Indies. Despite the region having been divided by two European colonial powers, Hesse came here with a dream that he could find here an ideal spiritual life that Europe had lost, that kept its authenticity, uninfluenced by the materialism of the West. Hesse believed that what he was looking for was both unique and universal for the world. He wrote: "Asia was not an area of the world but rather a very specific but mysterious place somewhere between India and China. That is where the various peoples and their teachings and their religions had come from, there lay the roots of all humanity and the source of all life, there stood the images of the gods and the tables of the law."[1] Much of Hesse's experience of the journey was published in German in 1913 as *Aus Indien: Aufzeichnungen von einer indischen Reise* (although he never stopped in India).[2] This journey would have great impact on his later writings, much inspired by Indian and Chinese philosophy. The inspiration of Eastern philosophy on Hesse's writing was later recognised by the Nobel Prize committee, who

[1] Hermann Hesse, *Singapore Dream and other adventures: Travel writings from an Asian Journey*, (Boulder: Shambhala Publications, 2018), 28.

[2] For the first edition, see Hermann Hesse, *Aus Indien* (Berlin: S. Fischer, 1913); For modern edition in German, see Hermann Hesse, *Aus Indien: Aufzeichnungen, Tagebücher, Gedichte, Betrachtungen und Erzählungen*, (Berlin: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2013); This chapter is based on the modern translation in English, see Hermann Hesse, *Singapore Dream and other adventures: Travel writings from an Asian Journey*, trans. Sherab Chödzin Kohn (Boulder: Shambhala Publications, 2018).

awarded him the 1946 literature prize "for his inspired writings which, exemplify the classical humanitarian ideals and high qualities of style." [3]

The Malay peninsula was apparently an ideal place that Hesse's was looking for. It had cultivated, in his expression, "the roots of the teachings and laws for all humanities". As Hesse wrote of Asia as the region "between India and China", then the Malay peninsula is in the middle. Even before Europeans arrived, it has been the place where various Asian diasporic communities encountered: Tamils from South India, Parsees from Bombay, Arabs from Hadramaut (now in Yemen), Chinese from coastal provinces of the South China and Japanese from further east.[4] Together with the indigenous Malays, they made up the basic demography of two independent states that would be established in the late 1950s, Malaysia and Singapore. Cities such as Penang and Singapore that Hesse visited were thus ideal contact zones in which he could observe various Asian peoples displaying their cultures in temples, commercial streets, shops, residential houses, and theatres. For Hesse, these cultural sites of different ethnic groups were juxtaposed as if the whole Malay Peninsula was a giant museum of ethnology. Hesse's first experience in Penang took place in a Chinese theatre and then a Malay theatre and was written into his *Aus Indien*.

Before investigating Hesse's description of the two theatres, we need to have a glimpse of the landscape of the cities he visited, in particular the architectures in his eyes, because he observed the architectures and the theatres in actually the same way. The landscapes of cities of the Straits Settlements in which cultures of different ethnic groups came together but remained clearly distinct from each other were not formed naturally. They were designed by the colonial administrator. Singapore was typical in this respect. Stamford Raffles, the founder of the Settlement, designed the city in 1823 and relocated local ethnic groups into designated districts. The city, located at the south shore of the Singapore Island and separated by the Singapore River into north and south part, was

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[3] In his remark for receiving the Nobel Prize, Hesse wrote: "Of the Western philosophers, I have been influenced most by Plato, Spinoza, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche as well as the historian Jacob Burckhardt. But they did not influence me as much as Indian and, later Chinese philosophy." Accessed 11 May 2020, https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/1946/hesse/biographical/.

[4] A basic reading for Hadrami community in Singapore is Ameen Ali Talib, "Hadramis in Singapore," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 17, no. 1 (1997): 89-96.

divided into areas for government-reserved land, commercial district, wharfs and residential areas for Europeans, Chinese, Bugis, Arabians, Indians and Malays.[5] Furthermore, Raffles also separated the city into specific zones based on social classes and occupations. He reserved the best pieces of land by the sea and river for commercial activities, whereas Malays, who were mostly fishermen, were relocated to the larger unsettled space outside the city.[6] This social division reflected in space had taken shape firmly when Hesse arrived nearly a century later. He observed that Chinese type of street architecture dominated the landscape in the city, "featuring connected rows of small houses of two, or three stories, of which the front rooms on the upper floor rest on pillars, which results in a colonnade on both sides of every street", while Malay fisherman's houses and farmhouses, constructed on stilts, were "relegated to the suburbs". Bungalows, a type of European building adapted to the needs of tropical climate, retaining "the general qualities of the archetypal Malay house," were built "in the well-to-do residential suburbs."[7] Some Chinese, for instance the wealthy businessmen from Zhangzhou and Quanzhou, were distinguished by the coloniser from the Chinese of other provincial origin who were artisans and heavy labours.[8] They enjoyed the top tier in the social hierarchy alongside European merchants. Hesse observed: "The rich Chinese have country houses in fancy residential districts, luxurious and for the most part exhibiting European influence."[9]

But the European influence on local architecture was not appealing to Hesse at all. That "the Europeans have now entirely redesigned all the cities, and that has brought lots of hygiene and convenience but little beauty" could be read as what he might have thought of Raffles's urban planning. Beautiful architecture should also be original and authentic, so bungalow was the only type of European building Hesse found beautiful, because it adopted the features of native Malay houses that suited local climate, whereas "everything

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[5] Xiao-Sheng Lin, *Xinjiapo Huashe yu Huashang* (The Chinese community and merchants in Singapore), (Singapore: Xinjiapo yazhou yanjiu xuehui, 1991),12.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Herman Hesse, , *Singapore Dream and other adventures: Travel Writings from an Asian Journey*, 22-24.

[8] Xiao-Sheng Lin, *Xinjiapo huashe yu huashang*, 17.

[9] Hermann Hesse, *Singapore Dream and other adventures: Travel Writings from an Asian Journey*, 22-24.

else that the whites have built, and are building here, Hesse mocked, would have been quite nicely suited to a German railroad-station avenue". The rich Asians' country houses, modelled on European style, were boring: "Japanese dentists and Chinese usurers build houses for themselves that would fit in perfectly on the most tasteless streets of German midsize town. Bridges, fountains, and monuments are similar."[10] Aesthetically, the Westernisation of the city made only mediocre effects and erased cultural authenticity, the quality that Hesse valued most. If one of the features of Orientalism that Edward Said criticised refers to seeing Asia as a cluster of ancient civilisations but showing no interest to its reality, then Hesse's imagination of an spiritual East versus the material West is not exempt from Said's criticism. Having seen the native houses and shops, the peoples, the religious architectures and the theatres, he summed up: "Though [Asia] may be beset from all sides, stolen, undercut, violated, maybe already seriously weakened, and maybe already fighting for its life, even so it is richer and more multifaceted than anything we in the West could even dreamed of."[11]

The impression that Hesse received from local architectures and other cultural sites in the British Malaya echoed his views on two theatres in Penang. First he stepped into a Chinese theatre, an old type that not only staged plays but also served tea. Hesse noticed that the audience's area was overwhelmed by a calm atmosphere: the men sitting "quietly smoking", the women "quietly sipping tea", and the tea lady moving "athletically back and forth with her huge copper kettle." The audience's movements delivered the same sort of artfulness as that displayed on the stage where "in old costumes an old play was being presented". Although he understood little what was going on in the play, he felt that "every thing was measured, studied, ordered in accordance with ancient, sacred laws, and carried out with rhythmic, stylised ceremony. Every gesture was exact and performed with calm devotion, each studied movement was prescribed and full of meaning and accompanied by expressive music."[12] The faultless, precise and harmonious combination of the actors' movements and music so fascinated Hesse that he thought there is nothing comparable in any opera house in Europe.

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[10]Ibid..

[11] Hesse, *Singapore Dream*, 18.

[12] Hesse, *Singapore Dream,* 7-8.

Next Hesse described the music:

> A beautiful, simple melody returned frequently, a short, monotonous tune in a minor key, which in spite of all my efforts I was unable to imprint on my mind, though later I heard it a thousand times again. It was not, as I thought, always the same sequence of notes, but rather it was the Chinese fundamental melody, whose innumerable variations we are to some extent incapable of perceiving, since the Chinese scale has much more finely differentiated tones than ours does. What disturbs us in this music is the all too abundant use of bass drum and gong. However, aside from that, the music is so fine and ... sounds so full of joie de vivre, and is often so passionate, so voluptuous, as only the best of our music at home can be. There was nothing European and foreign in the whole theatre... An ancient, thoroughly stylised art was continuing here along its ancient sacred way.[13]

In these words Hesse showed his exceptional attitude to Chinese music among the Westerners in his time and in earlier centuries. The simplicity of Chinese music had become the primary concern for Western intellectuals since the eighteenth century because it is the best antithesis to the complex, or "well-developed" Western music. Their value judgements to simple music split. Hesse belonged to the minority who saw the simplicity of Chinese music positively and among them there is his countryman John Christian Hüttner, a German emigrant in England who travelled to China in the Macartney's mission in 1793 and heard Chinese music many times. Like Hesse Hüttner also found the simple melody in Chinese music pleasant. Hesse's commentary that "the music is so fine and sounds so full of joie de vivre..., and only the best of our music at home can be" is similar to Hüttner's more elaborate one as he heard the Emperor Qianlong's ritual music - "the gentle sound, the simple melody, the clear succession of tones, the solemn procession of a slow hymn gave my soul...the kind of élan that propels the sensitive enthusiast into

[13] Hesse, *Singapore dream*, 7-8.

unknown regions but can never be described to the cold analyst."[14] However, the century between Hüttner and Hesse was one when European's attitude to the simplicity of Chinese music has radically turned into negative, relating it to the backwardness of the late Qing China in science, technology, society and politics.

Hesse moved on to a Malay theatre immediately after finishing describing the Chinese theatre, as if to provide an antithesis to illustrate what a culture would become if its uniqueness were lost:

> Unfortunately, after that I let myself be persuaded to visit a Malay theatre. On show here were lurid, mad, grotesquely ugly sets... It was a parody of all the worst of European art. It lent the whole theatre such an air of ludicrous drollery and hopelessness that after a short period of forcing oneself to laugh, it became intolerable. In shoddy costumes, Malay mimes acted, sang, and danced the story of Ali Baba in a kind of variety-show style. Here as later on, everywhere I saw the poor Malays - lovable, feeble children- hopelessly hung up on the basest European influences. They acted and sang with superficial skill, with Neapolitan-style heavy-handedness, sometimes improvising; and with it all a modern mechanical harmonium was playing.[15]

Hesse's disappointment to the Malay theatre that displayed so ubiquitous European influence is understandable, since he made similar comments to local cultural sites such as architectures. Comparing with the Chinese theatre, he had reason to view the Malay's as another proof of disappearance of indigenous culture caused by the Western colonialism and by its further consequence, the natives' self-westernisation.

Hesse's judgment had been and would be contested mainly by two sides from his contemporaries. First, his contemporary Chinese intellectuals who were identified with the New Cultural Movement held pragmatic attitude to the nation's cultural originality, as Lu

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[14] Thomas Irvine, *Listening to China* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2020), 127.

[15] Hesse, *Singapore Dream*, 8-9.

Xun, one of the most important writers of the movement wrote in 1918: "Surviving is indeed the first objective. We just need to ask whether it has the power to make us survive but disregard whether it is national quintessence or not."[16] Similar practical attitude applied to Chinese opera is seen in an article advocating its reform by the dramatist Song Chunfang. In Song's view, a theatrical reform in China is utterly needed because theatre is not only to entertain people; it should also have "the capacity of reforming the society", a function that old Chinese opera has lost and its audience did not care.[17]

The second entirely different voice against Hesse's preference for the authentic Chinese music over the hybrid Malay music came from several Britons. Jonas Daniel Vaughan opined in 1858 that Malay melodies were "exceedingly pleasing and excel in sweetness the Chinese and Indian melodies" and "[the abundance of semitones] are not numerous enough to destroy all traces of a regular melody as is so remarkable in Chinese music." [18] The diplomat Frederick Arthur Neale agreed, praising the singing of Malay sailors in the same year: "these Malays struck up as pretty and melodious a chorus as ever I heard in any port of East," though "oriental music is notoriously vile".[19] Such distinction made between Malay music that was pleasant to the ears of Europeans and other Asian musics that were regarded as "unmusical" and difficult to understand, as David Irving remarked, was a trope in nineteenth-century British literatures.[20]

Regarding specific musical characters, what the British writers admired is exactly what Hesse opposed. Neale went on to describe the Malay sailors' song: "The Malay language is the Italian of the East, and their music may be said to be the same. Often in

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[16] Xun Lu, "Suiganlu XXXV", *Luxun quanji*, Vol.1 (Beijing, Renming wenxue chubanshe,2005), 322.

[17] Chunfang Song, "Reforming Chinese opera", in Chunfang Song, *Song Chunfang Lunjü* (Shanghai: Zhonghua Shujü, 1930), 275.

[18] Jonas Daniel Vaughan, "Notes on the Malays of Pinang and Province Wellesley", *Journal of the Indian Archipelago and Eastern Asia* 2 (1858), 116-75; Quoted in David Irving "Hybridity and Harmony", 204-205.

[19] Frederick Arthur Neale, 'Twenty-seven years of a cosmopolite's life', *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* (1858), 153. Quoted in David Irving, "Hybridity and Harmony", 203.

[20] Frederick Arthur Neale, 'Twenty-seven years of a cosmopolite's life', *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* (1858), 153. Quoted in David Irving, "Hybridity and Harmony", 203.

after times I listened to this roundelay, or Malayan barcarole, with intense pleasure. The words and the music are both familiar to me."[21] Hesse compared, but in critical tone, the Malay children's singing in the theatre to the "Neapolitan-style", which, as he had suggested before, was one of the "worst European influences" and sounded even worse when imitated "superficially" and "heavy-handedly" by the natives. Both writers made analogies between the Malay's music, in particular their songs, and those of the Italian despite their contradictory value judgments to the former's resemblance to the latter. Besides these two examples, writings by Britons making analogies between the Malay language/Malay music and Italian/Italian music had appeared as early as in 1810s. Edward Moor, an East India Company official, even expanded the parallels of Malaya and Italy to their similar peninsula environments, smooth climates, and music-loving peoples.[22]

There is not any direct evidence, however, to indicate that the affiliation between Malay music and Italian music had any foundation in the reality. The Malay people did receive European musical influence but from the earlier colonisers, especially Portuguese. Texts by Britons attributing the European characteristics in Malay music - its harmony and cantabile style - to local Portuguese musicians, emerged since 1830s in parallel with those relating them to Italian music. Since the late twentieth century, investigations by ethnomusicologists such as Margaret Karomi to the Portuguese influence on Malay music have found solid evidences in this direction and made the Malay-Italian affiliation obsolete.[23]

Nonetheless the Malay-Italian affiliation mentioned by Neal and Hesse, among others, is good example for being considered with Jürgen Osterhammel's observation that "historical texts made by European travellers in Asia are both projections of the European imagination and attempts to grasp reality with the epistemic toolkit of the time."[24] For

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[21] Frederick Arthur Neale, 'Twenty-seven years of a cosmopolite's life', *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* (1858), 153. Quoted in David Irving, "Hybridity and Harmony", 203.

[22] David Irving, "Hybridity and Harmony", 202.

[23] David Irving, "Hybridity and Harmony", 206.

[24] Jürgen Osterhammel, *Unfabling the East*, trans. Robert Savage (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018), 17.

scholars today, these texts relating Malay music to Italian music may hinder us to get reliable knowledge about the real genesis of Malay theatre music; as Irving argued, the Malay music's illusive Italian feature rather reflects European's own imagination to Italy as the "musical land".[25] But I argue that the impressionistic comparison by Westerners between Italian music that in the nineteenth century was in fact referred to as being little more than opera, and Malay music that cannot be discussed without also considering its theatrical environment, is still a useful departure point to explore the question of how Malay musical theatres might have interacted with Western opera. The rest of this chapter will unpack this point in the case of Bangsawan, a Malay-language theatre created in the Malay Peninsula and Singapore in the late nineteenth century.

3.2 Seeking Western opera in Bangsawan

By around 1900, Bangsawan has been commonly recognised by Europeans as the "Malay opera". A Briton reported on the genre for *The Straits Times* in 1903:

> The Bangsawan is an opera of Indian origin conducted in the Malay language. The tunes are mostly borrowed from European operas and songs which at first seems a little odd to the listener, but the Malay – a born improvisator – makes the best of them and seems to adapt these in a truly wonderful manner to his own tongue.[26]

This statement is remarkable because it makes a further step to link Bangsawan with a factual European origin: the Malay not just sung like the Italian, but most of the tunes in Bangsawan were indeed come from European operas. This observation also differs from earlier epistemic toolkit simply ascribing the European character in Malay music to a single Portuguese influence centuries ago; rather it suggests that hybridisation of Malay music was still going on by 1900 through absorbing latest European music particularly opera excerpts, which, consequently, made a clear and stable style of Malay music suspend to take shape and thus complicated to be defined. On the other hand, the information given

[25] David Irving, "Hybridity and Harmony", 202-203.

[26] Anon, "The Wayang Kassim: Origin had development", *The Straits Times*, 4 July 1903.

by this writer regarding the genesis of Bangsawan generates more puzzles instead of reaching a certain answer. The difficulty is that there are two strands of musical transition to be dealt with. The first one, whereby the Malay Bangsawan was generated from an Indian model, linked India and the Malay world which had had frequent cultural exchanges long before Europeans intervened. The second transition, whereby European opera became a critical source in Bangsawan, was an undercurrent interacting with the Indian-Malay cultural exchange on the surface.

It becomes even less optimistic when one attempts to find evidences in contemporary witnesses' writings that can bridge the Malay opera Bangsawan to European opera. Although the British writer claimed that Bangsawan music borrowed materials from the Western opera, and other Europeans, including Hesse, noticed the same or that it borrowed at least the European performance style, it is peculiar that they rarely mentioned the operatic sources if they could ever identify. Another problem emerges from the continuing accumulation of musical hybridity of Bangsawan from the 1900s to the 1930s. The Malay music scholar Tan Sooi-Beng demonstrated six types of Bangsawan tunes during the three decades and the genres of stories in which the tunes were correspondingly and conventionally used.[27] By 1900, European waltz and march music from operetta troupes, military and circus bands have entered Bangsawan and were used in "classical", which meant Western, and "Arabic" stories. *Irama Hindustan*, literally referring to Hindustani rhythm, was adopted to accompany Hindustani stories from Parsi theatre which originated in Bombay and was brought by troupes to Malaya since the 1880s. During the 1910s to the 1920s, the musical sources of Malay opera shifted to the Americas: Ragtime and Foxtrot musical elements from the United States, and Tango from the Latin America. And Tango and Foxtrot joined the musical toolbox for the "classical" and "Arabic" plays, which had had only European music before. Three native song types of Malay origin, *Asli*, *Inang* and *Joget*, only made up a part, but not the most significant, of all musical types in Malay opera. They were first used as *lagu extra* – extra songs in interludes between scenes by around 1900 but did not attend the plot until the 1920s when there was increasing demand

[27] Sooi-Beng Tan, *Bangsawan: A social and stylistic history of popular Malay opera* (Singapore: Oxford University Press,1993), 83-96, 131-163.

to mount Malay stories.[28] Tan's study suggests that the Bangsawan in the 1930s was very different from that in the 1900s. The adoption of music from the Americas since the 1920s may have considerably updated the music in two main dramatic types, "Classic", or Western, and "Arabian" stories. Consequently, although the existing 78 r.p.m. recordings exclusively produced in the 1930s that Tan's analysis relied on can tell how far the genre has developed before the Japanese invasion in 1941 that temporarily disrupted its musical hybridity, it cannot be securely used to resume how the earlier Bangsawan, for instance as early as in the 1910s when European's writings on it appeared, may have sounded like. Thus a recording-based analysis to verify the musical affiliation between Bangsawan and European opera is not very promising.

Despite these difficulties, it does not mean that further discussions around the relationship between Bangsawan and European opera has to stop here. Bangsawan was not the only Malay-language theatre advertised and reviewed as the Malay version of European opera; it shared this reputation with the Komedie Stamboel, which was mainly popular in Java and was usually regarded as the counterpart of Bangsawan in Malaya and Singapore. Although scholars such as Tan Sooi-Beng and Matthew Issac Cohen supposed that the two Malay-language theatres were independently created in the 1880s in Penang and Surabaya by Parsi, Chinese and Eurasian businessmen, they were actually similar in many aspects: both emerged by adapting the late-nineteenth century European musical theatre and Parsi theatre;[29] both featured numerous Western theatrical conventions such as "the proscenium stage, wing-and-drop set, focused stage lighting, emotive character-based acting, musical orchestra accompaniment, division of plays into scenes and acts, makeup and costumes, and many of the plots".[30] The two theatres encountered when a Bangsawan troupe travelled to Batavia in 1893 and subsequent imitations and competitions between them further blurred their already close styles and repertories. By 1900 no distinction was

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[28] Sooi-Beng Tan, *Bangsawan Malaysia: Staging Cultural Diversity & Change,* (Pulau Pinang: Nusantara Performing Arts Centre: 2011), 131-163.

[29] See Tan, *Bangsawan: A social and stylistic history of popular Malay opera,*16; Matthew Isaac Cohen, *Komedie Stamboel: Popular Theater in Colonial Indonesia, 1891-1903*, (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2006), 40-42.

[30] Cohen, *Komedie Stamboel: Popular Theatre in Colonial Indonesia,1891-1903*, 40-41.

regarded as having still existed between them.[31] The merging of Bangsawan and Komedie Stamboel after only two decades of their being invented since the early 1880s is helpful for considering the two Malay theatres as a whole in relation to the European influence they received.

Matthew Isaac Cohen found two more evidences that bound Komedie Stamboel to European opera but are distinguished from the Westerner's vague impression based on singers' "Italian" performing manners. First, he identified five Komedie plays that were adapted from European operas: *Normadi* (1893) from Bellini's *Norma*, *The Somnambulist* (1894) from the same composer's *La Sonnambula*, *La nyonya blanca* (no later than 1897) from Boieldieu's *La dame blanche*,[32] *Fathul Achmat, or the Faust of Arabia* (1893) from Gounod's *Faust*, and *Adiama* (1901) from Verdi's *Aida*.[33] Another two pieces that Cohen did not mention but were obviously adapted from opera are *Genoveva of Brabant* from Offenbach's operetta *Genevieve de Brabant* and *Abu Hassan the Sculptor, or The Galatea of the East* from Robert Massé's *Galathée*.[34] Cohen's second example revealed that Komedie Stamboel's being advertised and reported as "opera" was the result of a legal effort operated by a troupe director Auguste Mahieu in 1893 in Batavia, to defend his troupe from paying performance tax imposed on all native theatres but not applying to foreign troupes. Mahieu won the favour of the Batavia's high court by claiming that "the Komedie Stamboel was neither a native nor a Chinese troupe, but rather a form of opera akin to European troupes", so it should not be subject to the tax.[35]

The transition of Komedie Stamboel from a native *wayang* - its meaning does not completely correspond to "theatre" in European languages - to the westernised "opera"

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[31] Ibid., 112.

[32] A Dutch Justus van Maurik described this piece in *Indrukken van een 'totok': Indische typen en schetsen*, published in Amsterdam, 1897, as "a Malay opera, a so called Komédie Bangsawan", but it was in fact a Bangsawan performed by a troupe from the Malay Peninsula. This misreading illustrates that the two genres were so close that Europeans were unable to recognise their nuances. Ibid., 412.

[33] Ibid., 175.

[34] Both pieces are listed in the appendix of Cohen's book. Ibid., 381-390.

[35] Ibid., 174-176.

also happened to Bangsawan around 1900. By this time "opera" replaced formerly various terms printed on advertisements such as "Wayang Parsi", "Tiruan wayang Parsi" and "Komedi Melayu".[36] Cohen made it clear that the change of the term in advertising to "opera" was probably unrelated to any real change to the Malay theatre itself; rather it was resulted from the troupe director's commercial operation which, in the case of the Komedie Stamboel, negotiated with the Dutch high court's need to sustain European opera's political and economic prestiges over other native theatres in the capital of the Dutch East Indies. As to the actual performing style, however, the so called Malay opera could not be farther away from the "opera" commonly understood by European reviewers. What confused Western audience was the actual disconnectedness between the Malay adaptations and the origin operas. For instance, one was disappointed by that the Malay adaptation of *Faust* turned out to be a parody which "there is next to nothing of the plot left... of the famous opera". Another reviewer noticed that the music in Boieldieu's opéra-comique *La dame blanche* was replaced by English music hall songs in a Bangsawan adaptation.[37]

Malay opera directors were certainly not the first to adapt European operas into parodies. Anglo-American theatrical companies, such as Carson's minstrels which have been investigated in Chapter 2, had performed opera burlesques in various forms since 1860s in Calcutta, Singapore and Shanghai theatres. I have not found any straight evidence to prove that Malay opera directors and singers were imitating opera burlesques by Western theatrical troupes, yet their similar way of dealing with classical opera is enlightening enough to make two further presumptions.

First, it is probable that Malay opera troupes were led to European opera through the intermediary of Western theatrical companies engaging in light operatic genres that dominated Asian stages from around 1880 to 1910[38], rather than through Italian opera companies like Augusto Cagli's and Giovanni Pompei's. This presumption is based on three reasons. First, as the introduction has laid out, the power of Italian opera companies

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[36] Tan, *Bangsawan: A social and stylistic history of popular Malay opera,*16.

[37] Cohen, *Komedie Stamboel: Popular Theatre in Colonial indonesia,1891-1903*, 139 and 176.

[38] See discussion around Table 0.1-0.2 in the introduction.

in 1890s when Bangsawan and Komedie Stamboel appeared was particularly weak and was unlikely to be able to impact Malay theatre directors and singers too much. The question remained is how Malay opera director had been familiar with opera such as Verdi's *Aida* in 1890s if not through live performance - its complete staging in Asia did not come until 1915[39]. Second, among the seven operas that are ascertained to have been adapted into Malay drama, Bellini's *La Sonnambula,* Gounod's *Faust* and Offenbach's operetta, at least, should not be regarded as the exclusive property of Italian and French troupes only; rather, both were also in the repertory of many anglophone companies. French opera companies were still coming to South East Asia after the 1870s though much less frequently than in the 1860s, which may explain the origins of two French opéra-comiques adapted by Bangsawan and Komedie Stamboel companies.[40] Last but not least, *Faust*, similar to other famous "serious" operas, had already prompted several burlesque versions in Europe.[41] It is not unusual for Malay opera directors to imitate if they ever had a chance to see any of these.

Second, the disparity between the Malay's adaptation and original opera is mainly resulted from local dramatic conventions, a set of performing codes, that both Malay opera actors and their audience, mainly natives, were familiar with. Tan Sooi-Beng's explanation to how Bangsawan actors adapted Shakespeare's plays should also be applicable to Malay treatments to all foreign sources including opera. She reveals that actors would not read Shakespeare's original works; instead, their only knowledge about his dramas was from the

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[39] *Aida* was premiered in Shanghai in 1915 by an Italian group, the Gonzalez Open Company that was stranded in Asia due to the WWI. See Huang, "Travelling Opera Companies in Shanghai", 142-153; But Loewenberg's opera chronology attributes *Aida's* Shanghai premiere to a Russian company three years later, which is also the only record he made about the opera's premiere in Asia. See Alfred Loewenberg, *Annals of Opera, 1597-1940*, 1020. To be sure, a complete and more accurate chronology of *Aida's* performances in Asia is yet to be done.

[40] Denys Lombard, "Une Gazette en français à Batavia: 'La Lorgnette', 1875-1876", in *Archipel*, vol.9 (1975), 129-134.

[41] Hervé's *opérette* based on Gounod's *Faust* and also a burlesque of it, *Le Petit Faust*, was staged in Shanghai, and probably also in other Asian cities by the Doriani's Opera Comique Company in 1880. Huang, "Travelling Opera Troupes in Shanghai: 1842-1949", 134. For Hervé's *Le Petit Faust,* a burlesque version of Gounod's opera on Parisian stage, see Clair Rowden, "Du Grand au Petit: Faust on Parisian stage in 1869", in *Musical Theatre in Europe*, ed. Michela Niccolai and Clair Rowden (Turnhout: Brepols, 2017), 117-138.

occasional performances by visiting troupes and they needed only to be told by their director of the outline of the plot, upon which they could improvise according to their own performing codes, including "scene types, stock characters with their stereotyped behaviour, costumes, facial expressions, and gestures."[42] The actors' method of learning a new play relying on memory and improvisation - Malay musicians did the same when learning Western music - suggests that live performances of foreign troupes, rather than textual publications, are the first inspiration of their adaptations. Besides, Tan concludes that these conventions "helped the audience to follow the play and the performer to organise materials for recollection."[43] The last word is crucial. It explains why the existence of these conventions was reasonable, because they enabled both actors and (native) audience, who mutually contended and understood these codes, to understand and enjoy a new play through memorising and referencing older plays, which could be Java, Parsi, European, Arabian, Chinese and others.

For outsiders, it would be difficult to comprehend and enjoy these conventions like the natives. The European reporters' comments on the Malay versions of *Faust* and *La Dame Blanche* prove this. Nonetheless the critic's comment on *Faust* that it was in fact a parody reveals a key aspect of the conventions of Malay theatre.

Following this thread, this chapter will be ended by a review of the parody convention in Malay theatre in the writings by four observers - I have touched on two of them, Hesse's and *The Straits Times* reporter's, earlier in this chapter.[44] They are all Europeans and all spoke no Malay so they could not understand too clearly what was happening on the stage. In this sense they were outsiders to the Malay conventions. But it did not become an obstacle for them to detect their existence. Reading the four texts spanning from 1903 to 1932 as a whole will make it clear that in contrast to the constantly changing musical components, the dramatic elements and styles of Bangsawan were remarkably consistent over the three decades because of these performing codes.

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[42] Sooi Beng Tan, *Bangsawan*, 125. Sooi-Ben Tan, *Bangsawan Malaysia: Staging Cultural Diversity & Change*, 6-7.

[43] Sooi Beng Tan, *Bangsawan Malaysia: Staging Cultural Diversity & Change*, 6-7.

[44] The other two writings are Anon, "Shakespeare in Malaya", *The Times,* May 1923; Anon, "Opera in Malay", *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*, 23 August 1932.

3.3 The singing king and the mute clown

Hesse wrote *in Aus Indien* of a second visit to a Malay theatre after he arrived in Singapore. Compared to his comments on the previous one, this performance left him much better impression and he took a whole section to describe it. The focus of Hesse's description is a mute female clown moving about among actors and actresses who were singing, in Hesse's words, "Italian arias":

> The most noteworthy player, however, was a slender young actress in the bizarre role of a female clown. This very sensitive, super-intelligent woman, infinitely superior to all the others, was clothed in a black sack, wore a pale-blond wig of coarse hemp over her black sack, and had her face smeared with chalk with a big black splotch on her right cheek. In this fantastically ugly beggar's getup, this high-strung, supple person moved about playing a minor part that had only a very cursory relationship to the play but kept her always onstage, for her role was that of a vulgar clown. She grinned and ate bananas in an ape-like manner, she got in the way of the other players and the orchestra, interrupted the action with pranks, or accompanied it with mute parodying mimes. Then she sat on the floor for ten minutes in an apathetic indifference, with her arms crossed and gazing with an indifferent, morbid, cold, superior stare into space, or peering at us onlookers in the front row with an air of cool criticism. In her all of apartness, she no longer looked grotesque but tragic instead, with her narrow, glowing red mouth indifferently unmoving, tired of all the laughing, the cool eyes gazing sadly out of the weirdly painted face, alone and hopeless. One might have chosen to speak to her either as to a Shakespearean fool or as to Hamlet. Until the gesture of one of the actors aroused her - then she stood up, full of life, and parodied this gesture exerting the least possible effort but with such

devastatingly hopeless, abject exaggeration that the actor had to have been driven to despair.[45]

The story of the drama Hesse viewed, as he told, is about "a marriage in Batavia that the playwright had dramatised on the basis of newspaper and court reports." This is the so called "modern play" imported from Java, which, according to *The Straits Times* reporter in 1903, "give[s] one an excellent insight into native character and the relationships existing between the European and native population in that country."[46] But the comic mime, played by either male or female actors, was put not only in Java stories which was regarded as a later importation, but also in the so called "old plays", the stories that were staged earliest in Bangsawan and preserved the influence from Parsi Theatre. Such stories were "of Persian, Arabic and Indian origin", "similar in structure to tales from the *Arabian Nights*, such as Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves."[47] By 1900, this type of stories had been a trademark for Bangsawan and was what Hesse viewed in his first visit to the Malay theatre. Although he disliked it, he reported the parody feature in the show: "It was a parody of all the worst of European art…after a short period of forcing oneself to laugh, it became intolerable. In shoddy costumes, Malay mimes acted, sang, and danced the story of Ali Baba in a kind of variety-show style."[48]

Similar comic roles appeared in Bangsawan stories of Western origin too. In 1923 a *Times* reporter viewed a Malay adaptation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, a popular Western play that had prompted at least four Malay versions by the early twentieth century.[49] In this performance, the writer was struck to find that the parodied figure was assigned to the most unlikely one in the drama, the dead Denmark King : "The ghost turned out to be comic character, introducing a scene of excellent burlesque," and "after Hamlet leaves the country, he reappeared in an admirable interlude of a white *tuan* (master) engaging a

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[45] Hesse, *Singapore Dream and Other Adventures*, 20-21.

[46] Anon, "The Wayang Kassim: Origin had development", *The Straits Times*, 4 July 1903.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Hesse, *Dreams of Singapore*, 8-9.

[49] For the comparison of their structures and plots, see Sooi Beng Tan, *Bangsawan*, 219-228.

dhobie (washerman)."[50] The fact that clown in parody appeared in trans-national stories for decades indicates that they had become Bangsawan's fixed convention.

What can also be read from the four texts is the answer of where parody scenes were located in a Malay opera and the dramatic relationship between comic actors and the main figures that were aristocrats in most cases. "In order to gain time for scenic arrangements," the writer for *The Straits Times* writer wrote, "the plays are interwoven with comical scenes and turns which sometimes mar the effect of the serious scene." This is the case also for the 1923 *Hamlet* in which the two burlesques were treated as interludes detached from the main plot. Into the 1930s, the practice of inserting comic interludes between scenes or acts had changed little, as attested in an article entitled "Opera in Malay" published in 1932, the latest of the four texts I am inquiring. The author did not describe any specific plays but summarised a convention of plot that most Bangsawan plays would follow whatever their titles are: After the first scene in which the protagonist, usually a king, has laid out the story outline, " a drop curtain is let down and the ladies of court, tying little bells to their ankles, entertain us by stamping their feet in time to the music"; This dance episode "will be followed by the clowns," whose "powers of mimicry" and jokes in Malay are "always clever and welcome" and usually "bring the house down."[51]

Clowns not only appeared in burlesque interludes; they acted also on the stage, always playing usurers, with royal protagonists. The clown Hesse witnessed, who "got in the way of the other players and the orchestra, interrupted the action with banks, or accompanied it with mute parodying mimes", and "had only a very cursory relationship to the play", is such a case. But a paradox for clowns in Bangsawan is that although they are unrelated to the dramatic progress, they are at the same time placed in the hierarchy of the royal court that was explicitly demonstrated on stage. This is perceivable in the text in 1932 and is regarded by the author as a conventional part of Bangsawan operas:

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[50] Anon, "Shakespeare in Malaya", *The Times*, May 1923; collected in *Travellers' Tales of Old Singapore*, ed. Michael Wise (Singapore: Marshall Cavendish Editions, 2018), 243-245.

[51] Anon, "Opera in Malay", *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*, 23 August 1932.

> The first scene invariably shows the court of a king. The king, dressed in magnificent satin robes with knee breeches and silk stockings…and wearing a large black moustache, is seated on his throne in the centre of the stage. Around the dais stand a bevy of what some might call "beautiful' ladies… Seated on chairs so as to half face the audience, and dressed also in satin robes and knee breeches, are the courtiers. Last but not least we have the usurers of the court. These are invariably two clowns who, seated on the floor at the front of the stage, are probably found playing an imaginary game of cards.[52]

Furthermore, hierarchy of the roles from king to clown in Bangsawan is defined as much by visual elements such as their locations, costumes, gestures, movements as by their voices. Singing was the privilege of the aristocratic roles, as the writer described how an opera was usually unfolded:

> The King usually has a grievance against another royal ruler and, while asking the advice of his courtiers, unfolds the plot. Then he comes to the front of the stage and sings about it. He is accompanied by quite a good orchestra of seven or eight European instruments playing old Dutch music. That he very often sings out of tune does not seem to make him less popular.[53]

This description of a "serious" scene may correct the vague impression of earlier Western observations, for instance the one on *Faust*, that Malay opera is entirely parody. The text written in 1932 reveals that singing was taken as a means by Bangsawan actors to differentiate serious or tragic scenes from parody episodes, and to distinguish main roles who could impact the plot from "marginal" roles, such as crown, whose main job is mime. Thus Bangsawan should not be simply compared to Western parody tradition without also acknowledging that the alternations between serious and comic interludes in a play,

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[52] Ibid.

[53] Ibid.

delivered respectively by singing and music and by parodying and joking, had been one of the local conventions of this theatre.

The two photographs below, amongst few existing visual evidences of Bangsawan performance in the 1920s, demonstrate further what convention means. The actors standing on the stage in two pictures attest in many respects the descriptions of the four writers I have discussed. In the first picture (figure 3.1), we may get how Bangsawan displays social hierarchy on the stage, while in the second, more types of roles enter into the frame and are recognisable as kings, courtiers and clowns.

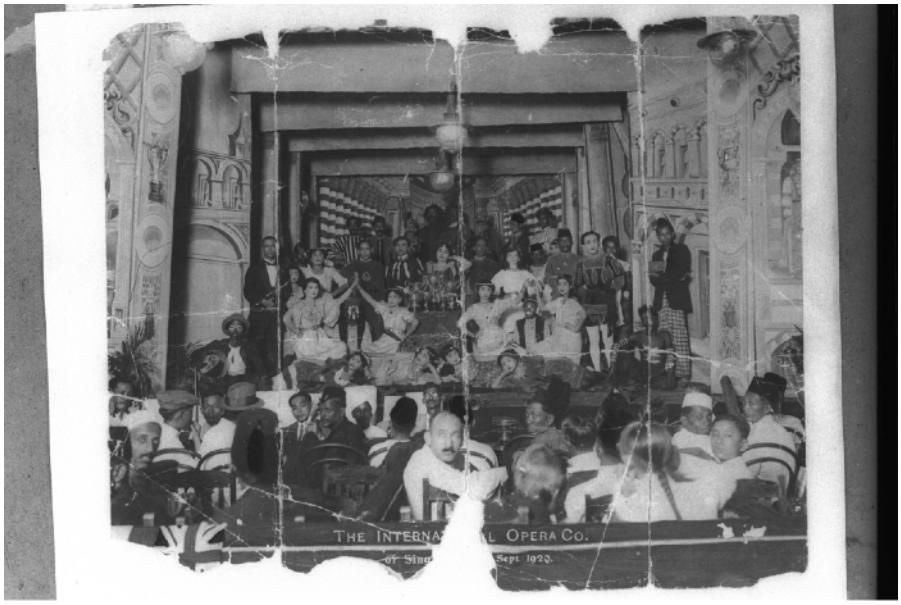
But the most remarkable feature, when we put these two pictures together, is that the backdrops of the two performances follow a same pattern, namely the classical European theatres in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, marked by their similar uses of perspective, pillars and arches. But this homogenous design, as the photographs show, is being used in two different types of stories: the scene in the first picture may be in a Malay story, while the second seems to be a European one. More strikingly, they are used in different types of theatres. Whereas the first was a formal theatre built in the 1920s in Singapore, the second is just an opera tent, temporarily built in open air despite its name "Empire Theatre". If there is no annotation with the photographs made by archivist, the similarity between the two backdrops would easily deceive our eyes. Finally, one would not miss the titles of the companies close to the bottoms of the pictures: the first is "Union Star Opera" and the second is "The National Opera Company of Singapore". This is to be sure also convention. Malay "opera" had interacted with European opera in very complex ways, and, we may conclude that without the participation of the Italian, in the 1920s, "opera", as a trans-cultural concept, had clearly become a native culture contributed by multi-ethnic impresarios, actors, dancers and musicians in Malaya and Indonesia.

Figure 3.1 One Bangsawan scene by Union Star Opera, operated from mid-1920s to 1930s, Mohd Amin Bin Kadarisman Collection, courtesy of National Archives of Singapore.

"The Union Star Opera", No. 128480, National Archive of Singapore

(Picture removed for copyright reasons)

Figure 3.2, Performance by the International Opera Company of Singapore at the open-air Empire Theatre, September 1920, Alwee Alkaff Collection, courtesy of National Archives of Singapore.



Chapter 4. Li Jinhui's children's musical drama and Zhang Rouge's *Gejü ABC* (Shanghai, 1925-1929)

In the same way that Malay theatre impresarios invented *Komedi Stamboel* and *Bangsawan* and spread them across the Malay world, Li Jinhui was experimenting his own theatrical genre in Shanghai in the 1920s. Having engaged since 1916 in promoting vernacular Chinese (*Baihuawen*) which was one of the cultural objectives of the May-Fourth Movement, and having written the first Chinese-language textbook that taught primary school children vernacular Chinese instead of Classical Chinese, Li also had the idea of applying vernacular language to their musical education.[1] The output was the *Ertong Gewujü* (兒童歌舞劇), or children's musical drama. A typical Li's musical drama combines three elements: a story, songs that absorb Chinese folk tunes and Western tunes, and dances that imitate various types of Western social dance.[2]

Li's second children's musical drama *Putao xianzi* (葡萄仙子), or *The Grape Fairy*, written and set to music in 1922 and achieving great popularities throughout the 1920s, had included major features that he retained in later dramas. The story of the play is simple, describing the growth of grape (personified by the grape fairy) from sprouts to fruits. The story itself, Li declares in the preface of the published version, is responsible for the opera's "function of delivering knowledge" that tries to illustrate the grape's needs for natural elements such as snow, rain, sunshine, wind and dew, and the bird, beast and insect's needs for the plant.[3] The lesson of the piece is articulated in the lyrics of the final song: "Although the world is big, can we depart from each other? In the natural world, animals and plants are linked to each other as in a family." Delivering the knowledge, in Li's opinion, has to be cooperated by the function of delivering beauty" of the musical for which songs and dances, neither too easy nor too complex but approachable to children, are responsible. The third function of the piece is to deliver emotional education. Through

[1] Jinan Sun, *Li Jinhui Pingzhuan* [The biobliography of Li Jinhui], (Beijing: Renmin yinyue chubanshe, 1993), 94-96.

[2] Jinhui Li, "Huiyi 'Zhonghua' he 'Mingyue' liangge gewutuan de wudao" [Review of the dances of 'Zhonghua' and 'Mingyue' troupes], in Jinan Sun, *Li Jinhui Pingzhuan*, 120.

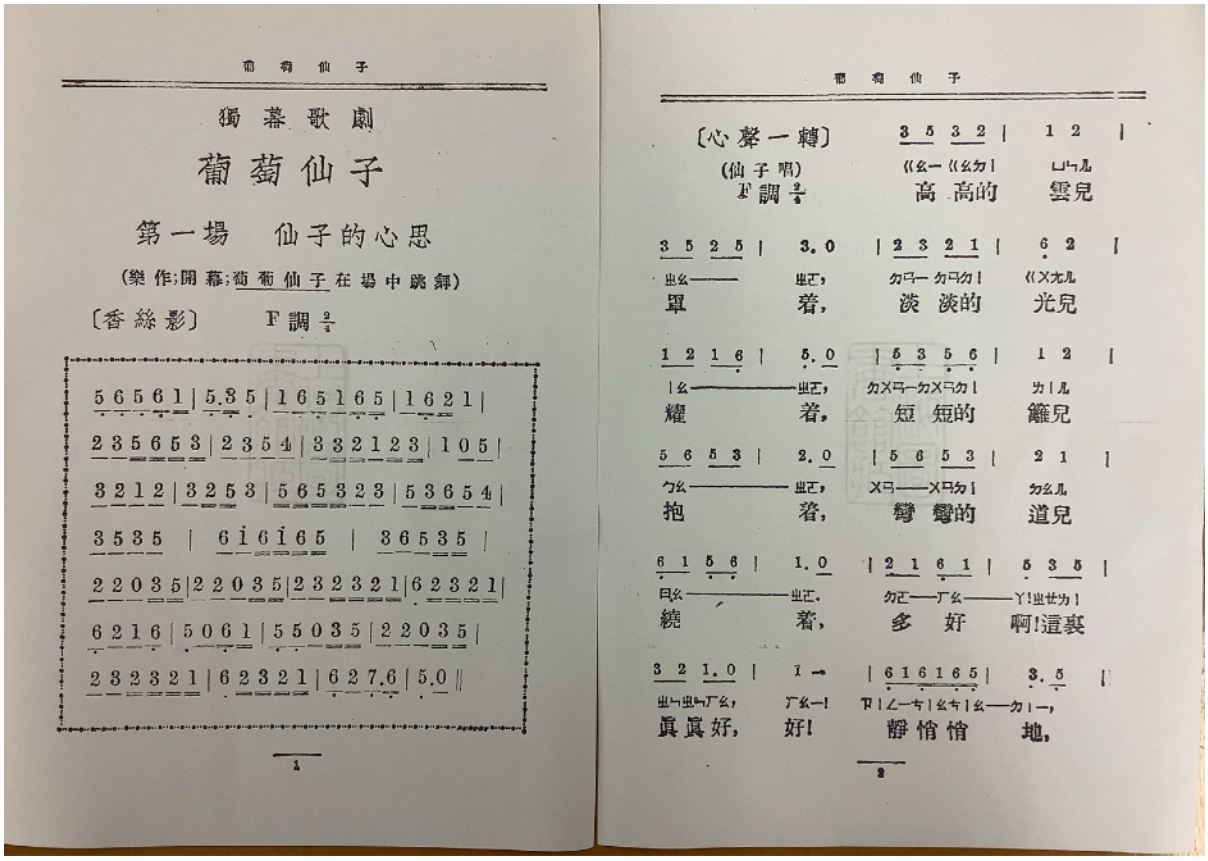
[3] Jinhui Li, *Putao xianzi* (Shanghai: Zhonghua shujü, 1927), 1.

performance by children, the natural world in which natural elements, plants and animals are interdependent to each other reflects the ideal human society in Li's mind: "Throughout the opera, it shows the emotions of love, mercy, courtesy and joyfulness, but no hatred, sadness, conflict and bullying."[4] Certainly the musical is also the extension of Li's commitment to the spread of a standard national spoken language in school. He intentionally annotated the text with phonetic symbols (see figure 4.1) and required performers to "make their best to articulate each word in the national tone and avoid mixing dialects which could badly change the meaning of the words."[5] Involving various slogans of the New Cultural Movement starting from the late 1910s such as intellectual enlightenment, art education, and spreading standard national spoken language, *Putao Xianzi* was a remarkable example of its accomplishments in the 1920s.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

Figure 4.1 The opening pages of *The Grape Fairy*. When singing part begins on the right page, phonetic symbols appear between the music and text. Reproduced with permission by the Shanghai Library.



Perhaps the most intriguing phenomenon around Li Jinhui's children's musical drama is that although he created the genre initially as a means for school education as the name suggests, it subsequently became a commercial entertainment. It was not only performed in schools but also more often in commercial theatres, its main audience became adults and its performers, despite juveniles, were not ordinary school pupils but professional performers in Li Jinhui's own troupe. One advertisement of a performance in 1925 well illustrates the transition of the context of children's musical drama from schools to the public:

> At 7 p.m. on 24th, Thursday, the Qixian College will give an opera concert at the Central Hall at the junction of North Sichuan Road and Hengbang Qiao. The main programme will include *Yueming zhi ye* (Night of Moonlight), *Putao xianzi*

(Grape Fairy), *Qi jiemei you huayuan* (Seven sisters playing in the Garden), *Maque yu xiaohai* (The Magpie and the Child). and famous ancient music, Cantonese music, Qunqü Opera, fire stick acrobatics, and songs by ladies Li Minghui, Li Zhixuan and Hu Meilun. The school is experienced in *gejü*. *The Grape Fairy* is admired by gentlemen and ladies in Shanghai, but it has been heard that *The Night of Moonlight* is even better.[6]

That *Grape Fairy* had been popular among *Haishang Shinü*, the gentlemen and ladies in Shanghai, suggests the drama's another effect of entertaining the public alongside that of serving language and music pedagogy in school. Although Li Jinhui's original intention to make his musicals reach out to the public is resulted from the idea of extending art education from school to society - as he remarked in his first musical, *The Magpie and the Child,* that "we can use this opportunity to gradually train the mass to cultivate the habit of upholding public order and to attend theatre in a proper manner" and "[to] gradually create from scratch a feeling of respect for art itself within the people" - the difference between education and entertainment is easy to blur once art enters the public.[7] Public display of voices and images of female performers, such as the three ladies mentioned in this advertisement, stimulated public curiosity because traditional Chinese stage had been dominated by male performers. As Andrew Jones pointed out, consumption of female voices and images was on the one hand correspondent with the New Cultural Movement rhetorics such as modernity, anti-feudalism and nationalism; on the other hand criticism upon its moral problem flourished between 1927 and 1929 when Li's music was at the peak of its popularity in the public.[8] Contrary to Li Jinhui's good will that school musicals could work for public goods, Li's critics thought that it would only result in the public's mania on "bad music". One declared that the period of "children's opera", beginning from the birth of *The Grape Fairy*, "is an unfortunate time for music" because it not only "have polluted the pure hearts of primary school students, but also spread bad seeds in the public." He continued: "Although [Li's songs] are not music at all, and lack

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[6] *Shenbao*, 7 December 1925.

[7] Jinhui Li, *Maque yu xiaohai* (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1927), 9-10.

[8] Andrew F. Jones, *Yellow Music*, 90; Jinan Sun, *Li Jinhui yu Lipai yinyue,* (Shanghai: Shanghai yinyue xueyuan chubanshe, 2007), 236-237.

any value inherent in music, they have still managed to monopolise the masses, as if the people are unaware that there is such a thing as great music, and know only these salacious and decadent sounds."[9] *Yinyue* (淫乐), the Chinese idiom for sexually-suggestive and morally decadent music, and pronounced similar to "music" *yinyue* (音乐), is the very word used when many critics described Li Jinhui's music.[10] The synonym of it is *Huangse Yinyue,* or pornographic music, which was how the communist authority defined Li Jinhui's music after 1959 in *The History of Chinese Modern Music from 1840 to 1949*, the first music history written for this period.

Apart from its moral problem, another reason for dismissing Li's children's music drama is that Li's advertised his dramas as *gejü* (歌劇), a new word referring to opera in China and Japan. This was deemed by the critic Zhang Ruogu as a misuse of the word, for which Zhang criticised in a harsh tone in his book *Gejü ABC* :

> Although *Gejü* has been a novelty and a word in fashion recently in China, in fact, the opera we have had now is made by some ignorant individuals who cater to people's degenerate tastes and cheat them with tricks. They don't know anything about music, and even have no common knowledge about the form of music. They arranged many songs, which cannot be classified to anything, to teach children and accompanied these songs with a few dances and backdrop. They should call these things as opera! Even somebody call something which has not been like formal children's musical as "grand opera". Nonetheless, they are wise to escape a joke by putting "operetta" instead of "opera" on their advertisement and playbill.[11]

Although Zhang Ruo-Gu did not mention Li's name, his contemporaries would have had no problem to detect whom the target was. It is clear that Zhang wrote *Gejü ABC* for two reasons. The first one, as he claimed in the book introduction, was to enable ordinary

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[9] Qing Qing, "Women de yinyuejie", in *Kaiming* 1, no.4 (1928): 176; Quoted in Jinan Sun, *Lijinhui yu lip yinyue* (Shanghai: Shanghai yinyue xueyuan chubanshe, 2007), 205

[10] Ibid.

[11] Zhang, *Gejü ABC,* 3.

people to understand the basic concepts of opera and to improve the situation that only a few publications about opera in Chinese were available.[12] Zhang's second purpose of writing the book, which was addressed in most of the introduction, was to draw a line between the real opera and the fake operas, Li's musical drama being at the forefront, that he thought were emerging in China, especially in Shanghai.

Li Jin-Hui's children's musical drama was not the only object that Zhang regarded as misusing the concept of opera. After firing at Li's music in the introduction of *Gejü ABC*, he immediately turned to his second target, *jingjü,* or the Peking Opera. He argued that it was misleading for some defenders of Peking Opera to say that "old Chinese drama has no difference with European opera" supported by poor reason that "it also combines singing and speaking, despite their music is simpler". For example, some writers liked to relate pieces of Peking Opera to particular genres of Western opera – "*Liling bei, Kongchen Ji, Erjinggong* were serious opera, *Heifengpa* and *Meilong zheng* were opera buffa, and *Xiong shangfen* and *Xiaofangniu,* which combines singing and spoken dialogues, were operetta." "These are ridiculous analogies!" Zhang wrote, "in fact people who said this only have superficial knowledge about Western drama, but they are ignorant of what Western opera really is. To be frank, it is not easy for people who don't go to opera house very often to understand this."[13] Another voice that Zhang objected was made by the drama theorist Song Chunfang who suggested that Peking Opera should be improved, and the Chinese should also develop their own spoken drama to replace opera, because opera, an product derived from romanticism in the past, had no reason to exist in its own right when realism had become the main stream.[14] Against this voice, Zhang continued: "The main reason that they made such ambiguous advice, is that they have no idea at all of what opera actually is. Wearing coloured glasses to observe China, they believe the East and the West are comparable," Zhang concluded, "Although people who study Western music do no need to exclude traditional Chinese drama, it has been completely decayed."[15]

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[12] Zhang, *Gejü ABC,* 8-9.

[13] Zhang, *Gejü ABC*, 4-5.

[14] Chunfang Song, "Reforming Chinese opera", in Chunfang Song, *Song Chunfang Lunjü* (Shanghai: Zhonghua Shujü, 1930), 280.

[15] Zhang, *Gejü ABC*, 6-7.

Zhang Ruo-Gu's criticism to the analogy between Western opera and Chinese traditional drama by some scholars – we do not know whom he meant - may be too harsh. For the Chinese who first came across Western opera, introducing this foreign object by relating it to native theatre with which ordinary people was already familiar was probably a strategy rather than being ignorant of what opera is. The music scholar Wang Guangqi, who studied music in the West longer than any Chinese musicians in his time – in Germany from 1922 until he died in Bonn in 1936, was the first to make such comparison.[16] In his book *Xiyang yinyue yu xijü* (Western music and drama), Wang wrote: "The European Drama can be classified into two types: the first is *gejü* (opera), of which the libretto is written in poetic verses, and is set to music to be sung on the stage; It is similar to *kunqü* (*Kun* Opera) and *jingxi* (Peking Opera) in our country."[17] When talking about the structure of Western opera, he also illustrated the scenic setting in Peking Opera as an analogy.

For Zhang Ruo-Gu, the problem is thus probably not about whether Peking Opera was comparable with Western opera as a convenient reference, but about Zhang's own negative feeling to Peking Opera. It is not a coincidence that apart from in *Gejü ABC*, he critiqued Li's children's music drama and Peking Opera together in the fiction *Duhui Jiaoxiangqü* (The Symphony of the Metropolis) published in 1929. Zhang's opinion was made through a figure in the fiction:

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[16] Wang Guangqi has now been regarded in China as the first Chinese musicologist in modern sense. He went to Germany in 1920, first studying politics in Frankfurt but quickly turning to music in 1922. He got a PhD in musicology in Bonn University and stayed in Germany until he died in 1936. All of his writings about music were sent to China to get published. However, unlike Xiao Youmei, Wang Guangqi did not agree that Western music is more superior than Chinese music, nor did he intend to defend Chinese traditional music; rather, he attempted to made objective comparison between musics of the two civilisations in respects from musical languages, performance practices to music cultures. The origin of this thought was evidently from the "comparative musicology" (*vergleichende Musikwissenschaft*) that profoundly shaped Wang's research methodology when he studied in Berlin. See Weixi Wu, *Liyueyue yu guoyue: yishixingtai yujing zhong de zhongguo jinxiandai yinyue sichao* [Ritual Music and National Music: The Chinese Modern Musical Thoughts in the Ideological Context], (Shanghai: Huangdong shifan dauxue chubanshe, 2019), 72-73.

[17] Guangqi Wang, *Xiyang yinyue yu xiju* (Western Music and Drama) (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1925), 1.

> Tian Xiaohong was in the mood for talking: "The Bubbling Well Road is my favourite Road in Shanghai. The only pity is that the Nanking Road connecting it in the East is too noisy. Not only the roses by the road would sting pedestrians, but also the building surfaces painted in red and blue, the flags announcing reductions, the blinding light from the electric bulbs and the deafening sound from drums and trumpets, all will wash away the beautiful memories we just have got in the concert. How can we let our ear drums onto which the butterflies of music just have left their pollen be destroyed by the tunes of *Putao Xianzi* sounding like a crow, and the piercing sound made by the strings of *Jinghu*?"[18]

The fiction protagonist made this comment just after she attended a symphony concert in the Town Hall. *Putao Xianzi*,"The fairies of grapes", and Peking Opera music played on the *Jinghü* pierced through other street sounds. If symphony music is contained within the concert hall, inaudible to people outside the wall, Li Jinhui's music and Peking Opera is the mass's music. Tian Xiaohong's dislike of them, if we consider Zhang Ruogu's comments in *Gejü ABC* discussed before, reflects the author's taste.

The soundscape of the city described in Zhang's novel might be imaginary, but the musics that Tian Xiaohong, or Zhang's ego mentioned – Li's musical drama, Peking Opera, Jazz music and symphony concert - constituted the real musical-scape in the late-1920s Shanghai. In the short period between 1925 to 1930, notably in 1927, music life in Shanghai was developing actively in all niches, ranging from Western music to Chinese music, from new music to tradition music. This is the essential condition for Zhang's musical writings. The following six events sum up a musical Shanghai in the late 1920s:

1. In 1927, the first institution in China to cultivate professional musicians, the National Conservatory (the predecessor of the Shanghai Music Conservatory as it is known today) was found with the support of the new-established Nationalist Party Government established in the same year in Nanjing; 2. Between 1927 and 1929, Chinese attendance at the Shanghai Municipal Orchestra's concert increased significantly. By 1931, nearly

[18] Ruo-Gu Zhang, *Duhui Jiaoxiangqu* (The Symphony of the Metropolis) (Shanghai: Zhenshanmei shudian, 1929), 6.

twenty-percent of the audience in the indoor concerts of the SMO was Chinese.[19] 3. Between 1923 to 1929, Adolfo Carpi's Italian opera company presented four seasons in Shanghai. The size of Carpi's companies was much bigger than Cagli's troupe fifty years ago. Carpi had more singers and carried his own orchestra;[20] 4. In January 1927, the *Datong yuehui*, a group of Chinese music instrumentalists who attempted to revive Chinese ancient instrumental music, performed in the Town Hall of Shanghai.[21] 5. In February 1927, Li Jinhui organised the *Zhonghua gewu zhuanmen xuexiao* - the semi-professional School of Song and Dance of China in which he trained Children to perform his musical drama. After its immediate popularity in Shanghai, in 1928 Li reconfigured the school into the *Zhonghua gewutuan*, the Company of song and dance of China that toured extensively in South East Asia as far as to Batavia;[22] 6. From the second half of 1920s to early 1930s, Mei Lan-Fang, to be sure the most renown Peking Opera artist beyond China, assisted by his advisor Qi Rushan, reformed the Peking Opera by raising dance to the equal level of importance as singing. Mei took this reformed Peking Opera to the United States in 1928 and to the Soviet Union in 1931.[23]

These musical events that took place simultaneously over a short period of time can be read in two ways. Firstly, the first three events indicate that Western art music since late 1920s has been deeply identified with by the Chinese elite society and the nation's authority. The establishment of the National Conservatory was one of the accomplishments in education of the newly found Chinese Nationalist Party Government in Nanjing that just

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[19] Bickers, "The Great Cultural Asset East of Suez: the History and Politics of the Shanghai Municipal Orchestra and Public Band, 1881-1946", in *China and the world in the twentieth century: selected essays*, vol.2 (Nankang: Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, 2001), 856.

[20] For details about Carpi's four opera seasons in Shanghai, see Huang, "Travelling Opera Troupes in Shanghai: 1842-1949", 172-223.

[21] Established by Zheng Jin-Wen in 1920, the *Datong Yuehui* is said to be the first Chinese musical community transformed from an amateur group to a professional one. See Qin Luo, "Yinyue 1927 xushi, Guoli yinyueyuan dansheng zhong de Zhongguo lishi, shehui ji qi ren", *Yinyue yishu* no. 1 (2013): 6-28.

[22] Jinan Sun, *Lijinhui Pingzhuan*, 99.

[23] For detailed account of Mei Lan-Fang's 1930 tour to New York and his reception by American audience, see Nancy Yunhwa Rao's "Racial essences and historical invisibility: Chinese opera in New York, 1930", *Cambridge Opera Journal*, 12:2 (2000), 137-146.

namely unified the whole China. The political unification marked an impetus of the nation's musically turning to the West, notably to Germany.[24] Supported by the government, Cai Yuanpei, the new government's educational minister and an advocator of art education, co-found the National Conservatory with the composer Xiao You-Mei – both of them studied in Germany. Shanghai was regarded by Xiao You-Mei as the most ideal place for the conservatory, primarily because he was very much impressed by the weekly concert of the Shanghai Municipal Orchestra in the Town Hall and the Italian opera troupes that visited Shanghai regularly throughout the 1920s.[25] Cai Yuan-Pei, though not a professional musician, was close to Xiao You-Mei on opinion to music. He agreed that the Western art music was more "advanced" than Chinese music, as he articulated this view in a poem:

> My nation's music is too simple and plain,
> Shocking a Western friend on his first hearing.
> I love the sophisticated [symphony] of Beethoven,
> Engaging profound aspirations with exquisite grandeur.[26]

Cai's judgement was both musical and political. He believed that music of different characteristics could shape different personalities of their listeners - in Cai's context, the national citizens. According to this logic, Beethoven's grandeur was obviously what Chinese citizens needed when the nation was in crisis. To reshape a new citizenship was the central target of his proposal for art education. [27]

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[24] Wu, *Liyueyue yu guoyue: yishixingtai yujing zhong de zhongguo jinxiandai yinyue sichao*, 87.

[25] Qin Luo, "Yinyue 1927 xushi, Guoli yinyueyuan dansheng zhong de Zhongguo lishi, shehui ji qi ren", 12.

[26] The Chinese original text is in poetic form; Quoted in Joys H.Y.Cheung, "Riding the wind with Mozart's 'Jupiter' symphony: The Kantian and Daoist sublimes in Chinese Musical Modernity", in *Music & Letters* 96, no.4 (2015): 534.

[27] A brief introduction to Cai Yuanpei's musical idea in the context of the New Cultural Movement is seen in Wu, *Liyueyue yu guoyue: yishixingtai yujing zhong de zhongguo jinxiandai yinyue sichao,* 60-63.

The next three musical events taking place around 1927 in Shanghai can be deemed as the resistance to the dominant tendency of musical westernisation, one of the consequences of the May-Fourth Movement. The work of *Datong Yuehui* and Li Jinhui both explored the possibility of reviving Chinese music but in two directions; while the former tried to preserve past of Chinese music, the culture of *Liyue* or rituals and music, Li was interested in music of his time and of the grassroots, which was found in various local music dramas - not just Peking Opera - and Chinese folk songs. However, both attempts were irreconcilable with the norm of musical westernisation that was overwhelming among elite Chinese intellectuals as an authoritative voice. Xiao Youmei, the founder of the National Conservatory, saw no hope in reviving Chinese ancient music. He wrote: "Rather than reviving old Chinese music, it is more interesting to reconfigure Chinese music, which means that we pick up its good part and abandon its bad part, and express it in a new form. All techniques and tools should be picked up from the West, but the Chinese spirit shall be preserved so our national character would not get lost."[28] Zhang Ruo-Gu agreed that "even nobody overturn ancient music, there is no reason for it to exist anymore"; he made an analogy between the Chinese *Liyue* and the European medieval liturgical music: "it was just a subordinative decoration for ritual process… to conduct people's mind and spirit," he wrote: "the so-called Chinese ancient music is enjoyed by a few people for self-entertaining, but it can never do anything beyond moral functions such as purifying our mind and constraining our erotic thoughts, which was not what music is created for: to arouse and empathise with our private feelings"[29] Xiao You-Mei, on the other hand, pointed out the technical weaknesses of Chinese music: "The first [shortcoming] of our own music is that our musicians did not invent keyboard instruments and staff notation to record music. " [30]

Xiao Youmei's remark that Chinese music did not have its own staff notation so that it could not be accurately recorded, touched the problem why Chinese music failed to be recorded like Western art music, to produce its own canon, and to be admitted into the elite

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[28] Weixi Wu, *Liyueyue yu guoyue*, 66.

[29] Ruo-Gu Zhang, "Guyue?", in *Yishujie Zhoukan* no. 2 (1927).

[30] Weixi Wu, *Liyueyue yu guoyue*, 65-66.

part of Chinese cultural system.[31] That Western art music had finished the course of being recorded as text and canonised while Chinese music had not – with the exception of *Guqin* music – is perhaps the main reason why Chinese intellectuals thought the Western art music more "advanced" compared to Chinese music and other non-European musics.[32] Chinese classical literature, in particular Chinese poems that by contrast had long become the most significant component of the Chinese elite culture, was taken as an equal analogy to Western art music. This explained why Huang Zi, a music graduate from Yale, once compared the second movement of Mozart's *Jupiter* symphony to a Chinese poem, finding a lofty poetic feeling existed in both pieces.[33]

The framework into which the May-Fourth Movement intellectuals tried to assimilate Western musical objects was therefore one that reserves position only for canonic works in Chinese elite culture such as poem but had no place for Chinese music. It was also a system of value judgement that dismissed not only Chinese grass-root folk music that was deemed as mere artefact but also non-Western art music, some of which was critiqued as "bad music"; The composer Qing Zhu, despite being a firm supporter of musical westernisation, wrote that "not all Western music is good," "the erotic sound played in the low-level theatre, cinema and cafe" serves only to "dull our nerves and just fulfil ephemeral pleasure."[34] This very elite judgement would clearly dismiss a large number of music that embodied the modern Shanghai - Chinese popular songs, including those featured in Li Jin-Hui's children's "opera", Jazz music, and all kinds of dance music heard in Shanghai cabarets. As we shall see, the May-Fourth intellectuals narrow focus on Western art music also impacted their vision of Western opera.

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[31] Weixi Wu, "Zai wenren chuantong yu yinyue xixue de jiafeng zhijian: Qing Zhu yinyueguan de sixiangshi yiyi" [Between the Literati Tradition and Western Learning: The Meanings of Intellectual History as Reflected in Qing Zhu's Music Concept], *The Art of Music*, no.4 (2015): 68.

[32] Ibid, 68.

[33] A student of Huang Zi recalled: "When he [Huang Zi] taught us [the second movement of] Mozart's 'Jupiter' Symphony, he would say the music manifests a lofty whole, like being in the poetic occasion of Su Shi's *ci* poem 'To the Tune, "Water Melody"'. See Cheung, "Riding the wind with Mozart's 'Jupiter' symphony: The Kantian and Daoist sublimes in Chinese Musical Modernity", 534.

[34] Weixi Wu, "Zai wenren chuantong yu yinyue xixue de jiafeng zhijian: Qing Zhu yinyueguan de sixiangshi yiyi", 67.

Most of Zhang's writings on European opera was published in a short period of time, between 1927 and 1928, including *Gejü ABC* (The ABC of Opera), *Gejü de Yueshi* (The forms of opera), an article partly overlapping the chapters in *Geju ABC*; Apart from these pieces, he wrote introductory pieces on opera works including Gounod's *Faust,* Verdi's *Il Trovatore* and others that the Italian opera companies staged in Shanghai over the years, all of which were published on a special column called "The Circle of Art" on the *Shen Bao* - the most significant Chinese newspaper in Shanghai since the late Qing.[35] But after 1929, Zhang shifted his focus to literature criticism and translating French literature and stopped writing about music completely.[36] Before these works on music got published, Zhang had never been to abroad; It was until 1933, when he had stopped writing on music, that he got a chance to have a two-year trip in Europe. This is apparently peculiar. On the one hand, Zhang was distinguished from people in the National Conservatory, Xiao Youmei, Cai Yuanpei, Huang Zi and Qing Zhu, whose similar views on music were all shaped when studying in the West. But Zhang never got any professional music training, nor did he see what the West was really like during the years when he wrote about Western music. He became a supporter of the Western art music completely because of the impact he received in Shanghai. How was it possible? Here we need to investigate the resources that were accessible to Zhang Ruogu when he was writing *Gejü ABC* and other pieces about the Western opera.

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[35] Apart from writings of opera, Zhang also had publications for other Western art music. See Ruo-Gu Zhang, *Yinyue ABC* [Music ABC] (Shanghai, ABC Congshu She, 1929); Zhang, *Dao yinyuehui qü* [Go to the concert] (Shanghai: Liangyou Tushu Yinshua Gongsi, 1927); Zhang, "Xiyang Yinjie Kao" [An investigation to the Western scales], *Yishu* (100), 1925.

[36] In 1929, Zhang wrote to Zhu Ying-Peng, the editor of the "Art Circle": "The "Art Circle" which had been sustained for three years can be divided for three phases: At the beginning there were only art criticisms; alongside introducing general knowledge of art, the column also paid attention to news and critisisms of music, painting and dance, and I was undertaking to write for music and opera; In the second phase, An column for introducing new publications was added, especially commited to new-realised literature magazines. By then, I was enthusiastic to read late published Western literature works in our country." Ruogu Zhang, *Kafei Zuotan*, (Shanghai: *Zhenshanmei Shudian*, 1929), 5.

The opera seasons given by Italian operas between 1923 and 1929 in the city was an obvious stimulation of Zhang's writings on opera; In particular in 1925, he wrote introductory articles for every opera work that the Gonzalez Company staged.[37] But a longer sustained and more affordable chance for Chinese public to hear Italian opera was concerts of the Shanghai Municipal Orchestra throughout 1920s.[38] Since 1919 the orchestra director Mario Paci introduced operatic concerts into the regular symphony concert seasons that usually took place between October and March every year.[39] In such concerts Paci chose to present opera selections rather than complete operas. He invited guest singers either from European opera houses or those who resided in Shanghai; after 1931, when the Japanese army occupied the whole Manchuria, more émigré Russian musicians who travelled down to Shanghai joined.[40] Zhang Ruogu should have attended many such opera concerts and he did report one of these.[41]

However, contrast to the opera reviews written by Western reporters who focused mainly on opera singers, Zhang was only interested in opera works themselves: plots, music, forms, genre, composers, and other aspects centring around the work itself. His report of the opera concert by the Shanghai Municipal Orchestra is such a case. Chun-Zen

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[37] Huang, "Travelling Opera Troupes in Shanghai: 1842-1949", 239.

[38] Archive of Shanghai Symphony Orchestra; Since 1919 when Paci became the music director of the SMO, he made regular operatic concerts alongside symphony music concerts. Zhang Ruogu report one in "*Shanghai Shenzhenting Zhi Yinyuehui*" [The concert in the Town Hall of Shanghai], in *Yishu sanjiayan,* (Shanghai: Liangyou tushu yinshua gongsi, 1927), 216-222.This approach extended into 1930s. See also Yvonne Liao, "Empires in Rivalry: Opera Concerts and Foreign Territoriality in Shanghai, 1930-1945", in *Operatic Geographies: The Place of Opera and the Opera House*, ed. Suzanne Aspden, (Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press, 2019), 148-161.

[39] The archive of the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra keeps a small amount of programme pamphlets of operatic concerts in 1919 and 1922.

[40] Yvonne Liao, "Empires in Rivalry: Opera Concerts and Foreign Territoriality in Shanghai, 1930-1945", 154.

[41] The programme that Zhang recorded includes the overture of Rossini's *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, the aria "Credo in un Dio crudel" in Verdi's *Otello*, excerpts from Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari's *I Gioielli della Madonna* and from Mascagni's rarely performed *I Rantzau*, the cavatina from Gounod's *Faust,* an aria from Bizet's *Carmen*, and the march from Verdi's *Aida.* See Zhang, "Shanghai shizhenting zhi yinyuehui"[Concert in the Town Hall of Shanghai], in *Yishu Sanjia Yan*, (Shanghai: Liangyou tushu yingshua gongsi, 1927), 216-222.

Huang assumed that this is because "the general public's knowledge of western opera at that time had not reached a level that demanded real criticism."[42] This is certainly true but not the reason for Zhang's only paying attention to opera works while having no word to singers' performance. On the one hand, reviewer's comments on singer's performance cannot be deemed as equal to opera criticism. Penned by Western editors of the *North China Daily News,* most opera reviews that reported on audience's attendance and the reporter's rather superficial impressions to singers were hardly criticism. On the other hand, Zhang's vision to opera works did not include operetta which was, however, once the most frequently staged opera genre in Shanghai in the late nineteenth century. In *Gejü ABC* he translated operetta as *Gewujü*, or drama with songs and dance, a less embarrassing analogy he thought to Li's children's musical drama; He did not even mention Offenbach and Gilbert & Sullivan in the book.[43] Zhang's decision to what works be written into his book is his personal view to the question of what opera is. This is musical criticism too.

Zhang's knowledge of the Western opera had inaccuracies. For instance, he claimed that in Italian opera buffa, spoken dialogue and singing part alternate in a piece and music rarely goes throughout.[44] This is certainly not the truth for Mozart and Rossini's compositions in which dialogues were set into recitative. He was also wrong about German opera as he wrote: "German opera has two types, grand opera which is ordinary opera and comic opera, the scale of which is smaller." However, this is probably not Zhang's own mistake. *Gejü ABC* did not reflect Zhang's original thought on the Western opera; rather the book is his retelling of the operatic knowledge that he learned from other books. His bibliography for *Gejü ABC* contained thirty-two English, Japanese and Chinese books about opera that Zhang was able to get in Shanghai. While Zhang achieved most of his understanding to opera from these books, he might also have taken mistakes from them.

The twenty-four books published in Western language that Zhang read were exclusively by Anglo-American authors. Most were guide books to opera plots such as Charles Annesley's *The Standard Opera Glass* and Esther Singleton's *A guide to the Opera*

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[42] Huang, "Travelling Opera Troupes in Shanghai: 1842-1949", 243.

[43] Zhang, *Gejü ABC*, 23.

[44] Ibid., 27.

, and books on history of opera schools, works and composers such as William Foster Apthorp's *The Opera Past and Present*, and Arthur Elson's *A Critical History of Opera*.[45] Apthorp's and Elson's book which shared similar chronological structures clearly had a clear impact on Zhang's structuring his own section of opera history: for instance, Zhang traced the origin of the European opera far back to the ancient greek tragedies, and he distinguished Mozart, Gluck and Wagner from other composers who were classified into their national schools, notably Italian, French and German. The Western writers of these books that Zhang read followed a standard approach that emerged in the late nineteenth century, of treating opera as concrete work of music and narrowing their vision down to canonic opera composers and their canonic works. Zhang accepted this norm without questioning.

Five of the eight Chinese publications that Zhang took reference in his book were written by Fu Yan-Chang whom Zhang befriended. Like Zhang, Fu Yanchang's first experience of the Western art music and opera happened in Shanghai and about decade earlier than Zhang did. His prologue to Zhang Ruo-Gu's essay collection, *Dao yinyuehui qu* (Going to the concert) recalls this experience as an enlightenment.[46] "The first time I know important works of Western music was in the 4 March of the third year of the Republican (1914)", he wrote: "on that day I bought Gounod's *Faust* for one dollar at the [music shop] Moutrie and it is a vocal score only consisting of arias. I had read a Western novel called *Yalüxing* that mentioned *Faust* and it was the only opera I knew by then." Two months later, Fu Yanchang "went to a concert held by the British" in which he heard English songs that he called *xiaodiao* (song in light-hearted style) and was confused. He had assumed that all Western music should be good but later figured out that "it was just a meeting of hooligans and had nothing to do with concert." In January 1915, soon after this probable amateur concert, the Gonzalez Italian Opera Company arrived in Shanghai. It was

[45] These books had been republished many times before Zhang wrote his book. It is for sure that some copies were brought to Shanghai in different periods and for different reasons.

[46] See Yan-Chang Fu's introduction in Ruo-Gu Zhang, *Dao Yinyuehui Qu* (Shanghai: Liangyou tushu yinshua gongsi, 1927), 2-5.

a big troupe, consisting of fourty members and having its own chorus and orchestra.[47] Fu recalled: "In the programme what caught my notice most is *Faust* on the eighteenth. So on the day I went to the Victoria Theatre but the cheapest one dollar ticket had been sold out." Nonetheless, he watched *Otello* and *Carmen*, and caught up on his favourite *Faust* when it was repeated, for which Fu wrote: "It was only after *Otello* that I got to know what symphony orchestra is." He also recalled his "first formal experience of concert going" soon after, a piano and violin duet given by two Russian soloists in the Lyceum theatre, writing: "I was shocked by this first impression of sitting in the concert and my heart is full of gratitude!" When reviewing these concert going experience that made up his musical enlightenments, Fu concluded: "My experience [of understanding Western music] encountered many mistakes. But how those unexperienced could avoid them? My advice is that as a serious music lover you should stay away from the popular music in entertainment parks."[48]

The lesson learned by Fu from his self-education in Western music echoes the distinction made by Qing Zhu between good Western music - the art music, and bad one. Moreover the purpose of identifying the good Western music was relevant to the common concern of the May-Fourth intellectuals: what should Chinese musicians learn from it? Qing Zhu's solution is extreme: "When I addressed the problem of native music, the distinction between *native* and *Western* always appeared unnatural to me, because in my view, there is in the world only one music art that combine the true, the good and the beauty but no difference between national music and Western music," he concluded: "if the Chinese can perform the so-called Western music with excellently, then it is also our national music; by contrast, if the music we play sounds ugly, even if it is the so-called

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[47] The route taken by the Gonzalez company was extraordinary. In the decade prior to its Shanghai visit, the troupe made some extensive tours in Russia, reaching as far as Vladivostok. In 1914 the war broke out and the company was stranded in Russia. Some of the members decided to travel across the country to Vladivostok where they could find ships back to Europe. When their performances were well received in Vladivostok and in the Chinese city Harbin, they decided to continue their travel to Beijing, Tianjin and eventually to Shanghai. See Huang, "Travelling Opera Troupes in Shanghai: 1842-1949", 144.

[48] Yan-Chang Fu, Introduction, in Zhang, *Dao Yinyuehui Qu* (Shanghai: Liangyou tushu yinshua gongsi, 1927), 2-5.

national music, it is our shame."[49] This proposal of cancelling the distinction between national music and Western music clearly could not make any reconciliation between the two musics but just meant letting one to replace the other, as Qing Zhu continued: "we can have either Western music or Chinese native music but not both."[50]

Qing Zhu's solution came to be realised in music by composers in the National Conservatory such as Xiao You-Mei, Huang Zi and Qing Zhu himself. But whereas they would feel comfortable to use Western musical idioms and forms in concert hall music, it will be difficult to do so in theatrical genres. Even Huangzi, one of the exceptionally few Chinese composers in 1930s who managed to command a wide range of forms including orchestral music, solo instrumental music, Chinese art songs, choral music and oratorios, did not compose any opera.[51] It is understandable that if modern Chinese opera was to tell original Chinese story, then Chinese composers had to seek a proper type of music from their own musical resources up to their time. It was an extremely difficult task to establish another type of musical drama alongside Chinese *xiqü.* Zhang Ruo-Gu cited the point of view in Feng Zi-Kai's *The Common Knowledge of Music*: Although both Western opera and Peking Opera looks similar in that both combine instrumental music, singing, dance and spoken dialogue, in Western opera, however, "music is as equally important as acting, whereas in Peking Opera, "music assists drama".[52] Further, Zhang cited again from Zhao Tai-Mou's *Guojü* (The National Drama), argued that the success of any kind of dramatic work was contributed by its most sophisticated component, for example, "the fully developed literature generated Western spoken drama, while the sophisticated music made modern Western opera possible."[53] Zhang thus interpreted the music in Western opera as being a kind of absolute music like German symphonic music that could exist in its own

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[49] Weixi Wu, "Zai wenren chuantong yu yinyue xixue de jiafeng zhijian: Qing Zhu yinyueguan de sixiangshi yiyi," 69.

[50] Ibid, 70.

[51] Huang Zi's *Huaijiu* (Nostalgia), an orchestral overture completed in Yale to memorize his deceased lover, was regarded as the first Chinese symphonic music. This piece from which one can detect Brahms' idiom was highly praised by Xiao You-Mei. See *ShenBao,* 18 November 1930.

[52] Zhang, *Geju ABC*, 10-14.

[53] Ibid.

right, while *Qüpai,,* the fixed melodic patterns that could be played in different dramatic occasions in Chinese opera, was far from originality and sophistication.

The music for the new Chinese opera that the May-Fourth intellectuals imagined therefore should neither be taken from old *xiqü* in which music was subject to drama, nor from the ancient elite's music Zhang Ruogu regarded as being subject to ritual ceremony. And despite Qing Zhu's radical proposal of abandoning all native music, no Chinese composer ever used Western musical idiom entirely in composition. So where could the music of modern Chinese opera come from? Zhang Ruo-Gu in an article entitled "The common people's music in China" advocated to abolish the elite Chinese ancient music and support "ordinary people's music".[54] This statement corresponded to his previous criticism to *Datong Yuehui'*s attempt to revive the Confucius musical practice but contradicted his criticism of Li Jinhui's children's musical drama in which Chinese folk tunes are everywhere.

Zhang's two collaborators in the *Shenbao* press, Fu Yanchang and Zhu Ying-Peng, with whom he shared close view on music, voiced a clearer attitude to Chinese folk music and regarded it as plausible for the new Chinese opera. Fu Yanchang wrote: "The first step we can do is to collect our folk music and make effort on pure music. When we have had considerable accomplishments on pure music, and good literary works for opera libretti, at that time, we don't have to worry that there is no figure like Wagner and Bizet in our nation." [55] The particular kind of folk music that Fu thought exceptionally suitable in the new Chinese opera was *Da Gushu,* a genre in the North China which was performed by just one actor singing story and meanwhile playing a small drum, and accompanied by a few instrumentalists, among whom the most crucial one was the *sanxian* (a three-string plucked lute) player. Fu Yanchang found curious comparability between the singing style of *Da Gushu* and Western opera recitative. To depict the plot, *Da Gushu* singer used many techniques to play the drum – "Tremolo, Pizzicato and many others", while singing or speaking, which Fu thought, was close to recitative in opera. However, he found this

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[54] Ruo-Gu Zhang, "*Zhongguo minzhong yinyue*" [Ordinary people's music of China], in *Yishu sanjiayan* (Shanghai: Liangyou tushu yinshua gongsi, 1927): 805-811.

[55] Yan-Chang Fu, "The construction on spoken play and opera," *Yishu sanjiayan*, 35.

recitative-like Chinese singing did not exist in *Kunqü*, the Kun Opera, or *Jingxi,* the Peking Opera.[56]

Da Gushu, as well as *Tanci,* its counterpart in the South China, are at once music, literature as well as a form of performance. As literature, they were vernacular instead of elite, to be listened but not read, facing to grass-root audience rather than commanded only by intellectuals. These characteristics made them different from Chinese poem, which were regarded by Zhang Ruo-Gu as not suitable for opera libretto – old poems written in classical Chinese are "only valuable in their metrics but cannot be set into music" while "the new poems composed in vernacular Chinese are still unsophisticated."[57] Zhang could hardly find a type of Chinese literature that was close to the ideal form he had in mind for opera text that he got from the Greek epics, *Illiad* and *Odyssey,* the two masterpieces at the beginning of the Western literature, which, he believed, prepared for the later operatic text in terms of form. Zhu Yingpeng, friend of Zhang, thought that *Dagu* and *Tanci* were qualified to be juxtaposed with *Illiad* and *Odyssey*, for they were also vernacular literature to be sung out, and they were "true art" which spoke for human's emotions.[58] In Zhu's view, the reason Chinese folk literature and music failed to be treated as classic like *Illiad* and *Odyssey* in the West is because first, "the authority of Chinese art has been dominated by Confucius scholars who held the view that art is to discipline people's emotions," and second, only written literature was considered by intellectuals as classic. Zhu Yingpeng made an example: Love songs in *Shijin* – an anthology of poems said to be gathered by Confucius – were admired as masterpieces; however, love songs by courtesan would be criticised as vulgarity. "My task", he said, "is to break the prejudice and the hierarchy imposed on our scholarship to Chinese literature and music… we need to correct our perspective to study more folk music genres such as *xiaodiao*, *tanhuang* and *huaguxi*."[59]

Here Li Jinhui's children's music drama comes back. Zhu Yingpeng commented that Li's works such as *Putao Xianzi* which used the music in *Huagudiao* and *Tanhuang,*

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[56] Yan-Chang Fu, "*Ouzhou de Geju*", in *Yishu sanjia yan*, 89-90.

[57] Zhang, *Gejü ABC*, 50.

[58] Ying-Peng Zhu, "*Tanci yu dagui*", in *Yishu sanjia yan*, 158-160.

[59] Ibid.

opened the gate to the "people's art."[60] It also met Fu Yan-Chang's expectation of creating "our own opera" that is neither Chinese old drama such as Peking Opera, nor the imported Western opera, but is based on the silenced folk tradition. Whereas Zhang Ruogu tried to explain the idea of the original opera in *Gejü ABC* and attacked Li's musical drama as "fake opera", it is ironic that to Zhang's contemporaries this question was of little importance in practice. The immense popularity of *Putao Xianzi* in Chinese public and Zhang's effort to enlighten them with the "real" Western opera did not affect against each other.

For the state's authorities, the Nationalist government before 1949 and the communists' afterwards, Li Jinhui's bad reputation as the composer of "degenerated" music, or "yellow music", did not change until the end of the twentieth century when the mainland Chinese public has heard enough popular songs from the West, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan and Chinese mainland from 1980s when the policy of "reform and opening" was launched. The "sins" of Li Jinhui's music naturally vanished with this economic and cultural transformation. Another equally dramatic change in reevaluating Li Jinhui and his music is about the nature of his children's musical dramas. Such change had started shortly after the CCP has stabilised the new regime and was initiated by its highest authority. In 1956, the national vice-chairman Liu Shaoqi said in a meeting with the cultural department: "Do we have history of opera? Yes we have: *Putao Xianzi* and *Maque yu xiaohai* are good examples. We imitated Japan to establish Western schools where pupils had singing lessons. It was Li Jinhui who first absorbed their songs into opera. We should not overlook his music."[61] This became the official conclusion that was written into the textbook of Chinese modern music history in 1959. Whereas the book still criticised Li Jinhui's "yellow music", his children's musical drama was admitted as "an innovation in Chinese music history and as the earliest attempt of Chinese 'new opera'."[62] The

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[60] Ibid.

[61] Jinan Sun, *Li Jinhui yu Lipai yinyue,* (Shanghai: Shanghai yinyue xueyuan chubanshe, 2007), 227.

[62] Ibid.

conclusion that Li Jinhui initiated Chinese modern opera has been accepted by numerous textbooks, recordings, academic works and other publications.[63]

To close this chapter I want to review a special voice amongst the comments in retrospect on Li Jinhui's contributions to Chinese modern opera. The opera singer and scholar Man Xinying, in his monograph *History of Modern Chinese Opera* published in 2012, wrote that Li Jinhui's children's musical dramas were the earliest real Chinese modern operas. Although he seems to just repeat the trope that has existed for decades, the reasons Man Xinying gathered to support it are his own. First, in Li's musical dramas, most music and libretti are original and thus distinguish the genre from old *xiqü* in which musicians are only responsible for arranging pre-existed tunes into correct places. Second, Li Jinhui structured his own works by acts and scenes. And third, the figures in Li's dramas sing throughout instead of shifting between singing and speaking. Then Man Xinying concludes that the above points are evidences of Li Jinhui's understanding of the "operatic idioms" that his contemporary composers rarely had at their command.[64]

Man Xinying's summary of the features of Western opera is largely inaccurate: not all music and libretti are original, and not all operas require singers to always sing but speak little. This is not my concern. What worth paying attention is Man's similar notion with Zhang Ruogu that there is a clear cluster of standards, formal or aesthetic, to explain what opera is, even though when both of them used Li's Jinhui's music to test these standards, they got wholly contradictory outcomes. These principles would also remind us

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[63] Here is just a few examples published after 2000: Yingshi Chen and Linqun Chen, *Zhongguo yinyue jianshi* (Beijing: Gaodeng jiaoyu chubanshe, 2006), 276-277; Lan Jing "Zhongguo gejü de menya: ertong gewujü", in Lan Jing (ed.), *Zhongguo gejüshi* (Beijing: wenhua yishu chubanshe, 2012). Chen Linqun, the historian of Chinese modern history, remarked in "Li Jinhui, the father of Chinese modern *gewujü*" in 1985 that Li's musical is a new genre of theatre music Chinese musicians ever created, differing both from traditional *xiqü* for its recitative passages and from the Western opera recitative passages for its beautiful expression of Chinese language. See Lingqun Chen, "Li Jinhui: zhongguo jindai gewujü de bizu", in *Zhongguo jinxiandai yinyueshi yanjiu zai ershi shiji* (Shanghai: Shanghai yinyue xueyuan chubanshe, 2004), 148.

[64] Xinyin Man, *Zhongguo jingxiandai gejüshi* (Beijing: Zhongguo wenlian chubanshe, 2012), 247.

of Parakila's definition to opera canon I have laid out in the introduction, which forces opera producers and spectators to obey in order to be admitted into the circle of professionals and connoisseurs. But this canonic understanding of opera that strongly persists in the twenty-first century, of course, would be too foreign to Li Jinhui.

Conclusion

About from the 1860s to the 1930s, “opera” was a word and an idea scrambled for by various types of performing groups in Asia. Chapter two to four have examined three of them: Dave Carsons’ minstrelsy in the British India from the 1860s to the 1870s, Malay opera companies in British Malaya and Singapore from the 1890s to the 1930s, and Li Jinhui with his children’s musical drama in Shanghai in the 1920s. All of them claimed that they were making “opera”, but all of their outcomes were hugely different, at least in appearance, from the opera that has been generally thought today as the musical dramas composed by “great” European classical composer. This thesis explored what caused the emergences of these informal “operas” and what are their relationships with European opera not just as musical works but also as a global idea.

In the first chapter, we have got three critical observations that would serve to explain the features of “operatic forms” discussed in following chapters. First, although most of part of Asia has been interwoven into the imperial system dominated by Europeans, the operatic canon described by Parakilas was very imperfectly replicated in colonial Asia in the late nineteenth century. Second and within the European communities, opera, especially Italian and French, was controlled by the British elites as a cultural capital that was not to be shared with Europeans on lower social levels and Asian natives; third, despite opera’s foreignness to Britons in the Empire, they saw the art as a universal one. A number of writings depicting non-Europeans attending opera, real or imagined, indicate opera to be a vehicle for European’s colonial ambitions.

In chapter two, Dave Carson’s operatic engagements in his minstrel group was based on the first and second observations laid out in chapter one. In India and South East Asia, Carson associated himself with two groups of opera companies but in very different ways: he reacted to Italian opera companies sponsored by elite Britons in Calcutta by staging opera burlesques in the lower-ranked Town Hall compared to the Calcutta Opera House; But later when he encountered English opera companies touring in Asia and engaging in operetta and light musical theatres, he chose to merge his own minstrels with them. His

attempts of staging the English versions of Offenbach's opérettes in his own troupe was also never thought of by any traditional minstrelsy directors in America. Carson's different relationships with Italian opera and English-French operetta would serve to construct a theatrical-scape close to the reality, from the perspective of a Westerner not belonging to the elites.

The third observation in chapter one that the ideology "opera" was imagined by Europeans as symbolising the universal and superior Western culture had a trans-cultural impact. Chapter 3 and 4 concerned how "opera" has become a global norm (mis)understood and (mis)used by non-Westerners. In Chapter 3, I preliminarily explored the Malay Opera Bangsawan, a hybrid musical theatre that received foreign dramatic and musical influences of various origins. My focus was on just one question: what did the "opera" mean in the so called Malay opera? I concluded that while the operatic inspiration of Malay actors was probably from Western troupes specialising in light operatic genres such as operetta, musical comedies, and opera burlesques, their adoption of European singing style - misinterpreted by Europeans as Italian - into Bangsawan conventions, which were consistently maintained from the 1900s to the 1930s, indicates that it was the idea of Western opera that mostly succeeded in Asia.

The same observation was further attested in Chapter four which discussed the dramatic reception history of Li Jinhui's children's musical dramas that the composer advertised as "opera". One of the main discourses on these pieces, having stretched from the 1920s to the 2000s, was around whether they are opera. Although opinions on this question differed radically between the scholars in the 1920s and those in 2000, they all evaluated Li Jinhui's theatre music based on their understandings of European opera as a solid, homogenous, self-evident form that cannot be abused. Li Jinhui's musicals, together with opera burlesque and Malay opera examined in this thesis, have proved that this hope is just a myth that helps little to understand how opera, as a widespread idea, was actually practiced by most theatrical stakeholders in the period this thesis covered.

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