

YOUTH, CAPTIVITY AND VIRTUE IN THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY KINDERTRUPPEN

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ABSTRACT

This article uses Mozart's unfinished singspiel Zaide (K336b, 1780) and its source singspiel Das Serail to reconsider the eighteenth-century Kindertruppen: wandering troupes of young singers, actors and dancers who performed in the court and commercial theatres of Europe. These troupes' repertoire often self-consciously addressed the blend of charm and impropriety that lay behind their controversial appeal. I consider the subgenre of seraglio opera – popular with both youth and adult troupes – and in particular the motifs of the audition scene and the captive's lament as metatheatrical commentaries on the cultural politics of operatic spectatorship. When young actors inhabited the fictional seraglio, their display offered compelling corroboration of contemporary discourse about propriety, naturalness and absorption in the theatre, as well as the new sense of urgency regarding the sheltering of youthful virtue.

The aria 'Trostlos schluchzet Philomele' from Johann Andreas Schachtner and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's unfinished singspiel *Zaide*, K336b, evokes a number of figures who had come to represent the innocent held captive far from home.¹ First is Ovid's heroine, the virgin princess Philomela, violated and maimed in a wooded cabin by her brother-in-law, King Tereus, while en route to visit her sister Procne. Like her mythical forebear, *Zaide* languishes in a harem far from her native land, a captive of Sultan Soliman; in fact, she has just been recaptured after attempting to escape with her fellow prisoner Gomatz (whom she will later discover is her long-lost brother). Her double confinement is reflected in the other subject of *Zaide*'s allegorical lament: Philomela's namesake bird, the nightingale. Philomela was transformed into a nightingale to escape Tereus, but in this bourgeois sequel, the nightingale is now a caged pet, who hops about looking for a way out, her lament a song 'steeped with tears', to paraphrase Spenser:²

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- 1 On the circumstances surrounding the conception and eventual abandonment of *Zaide* see Thomas Betzwieser, 'Mozarts *Zaide* und Das Serail von Friebert. Genese und Datierung von Mozarts Singspiel im Licht neuer Quellen', *Mozart-Jahrbuch* (2006), 279–296; Linda Tyler, "'Zaide' in the Development of Mozart's Operatic Language', *Music & Letters* 72/2 (1991), 218–220; Friedrich-Heinrich Neumann, 'Zur Vorgeschichte der *Zaide*', *Mozart-Jahrbuch* (1962/1963), 216–247; Walter Senn, 'Mozarts "Zaide" und der Verfasser der vermutlichen Textvorlage', in *Festschrift Alfred Orel zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Hellmut Federhofer (Vienna: Rudolf M. Rohrer, 1960), 173–186; and Alfred Einstein, 'Die Text-Vorlage zu Mozarts "Zaide"', *Acta Musicologica* 8/1–2 (1936), 30–37. I will follow convention in referring to this singspiel as *Zaide*, even though its intended title is not known.
- 2 'And Philomele her song with tears doth steepe', from 'November', in Edmund Spenser, *The Shepherdes Calendar, Conteyning twelve Aeglogues proportionable to the twelve monethes* (London: Hugh Singleton, 1579), 46r. See also Marie-Claire Chatelain, 'La figure galante de Philomèle', in *Philomèle: figures du rossignol dans la tradition littéraire et artistique*, ed. Véronique Gély, Jean-Louis Haquette and Anne Tomiche (Clermont-Ferrand: Presses Universitaires Blaise Pascal, 2006), 119–134.



Trostlos schluchzet Philomele,
 in dem Käfig eingeschränkt,
 und beweint mit reger Kehle,
 daß man ihre Freiheit kränkt.
 Tag und Nacht mag sie nicht schlafen,
 hüpfend sucht sie Raum zur Flucht.
 Ach, wer könnte sie wohl strafen,
 wenn sie findet, was sie sucht.

Hopelessly Philomela sobs,
 confined in the cage,
 and bewails with agile throat,
 that someone has violated her freedom.
 Day and night she cannot sleep,
 hopping, she seeks out room for flight.
 Oh, who could really punish her,
 if she finds what she seeks.³

Mozart's setting is a lilting, duple-metre rondo in A major (see Example 1). Birdlike, the melody hovers around the mediant C \sharp , circling back to this plaintive tonal perch as the refrain returns after each of two episodes. The repeating lower-neighbour-note gestures cement the association with birdsong, as does the anempathetic nature of the melody: its lyricism, measured tempo, bright tonality and diatonic purity are at odds with the grief and desperation conveyed in the text (a musical displacement, perhaps, to complement the textual displacements just cited). Nor is Zaide's aria a quiet moment of contemplation. Rather, her 'agile throat' resounds with despair. The phrase 'daß man ihre Freiheit kränkt' is repeated to excess (four times in the first refrain, seven times in the third), and the melodic repetition of the effusive phrase at bars 33–37, which encompasses a leap to the A above the staff (the upper limit of the vocal tessitura in this aria), is immediately recognizable as extravagant. Although we cannot know whether Schachtner and Mozart intended for Zaide to have onstage auditors at this moment (the libretto is lost and, in the autograph score, this aria lacks a preceding line of spoken dialogue as one finds in some of the other numbers), her tune is both piteous and enthralling: both a private expression and a public declaration.

Such was the problematic appeal of caged birds in the eighteenth century: their songs were construed as expressions of their essential liberty, even (for many, especially) when sung from within the confines of a cage.⁴ This is the plight, for instance, of the protagonist of William Blake's poem 'How sweet I roam'd from field to field', caught by the 'prince of love' and shut up 'in his golden cage'. Thereafter,

He loves to sit and hear me sing,
 Then, laughing, sports and plays with me;
 Then stretches out my golden wing
 And mocks my loss of liberty.⁵

3 Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own. I am grateful to Volker Halbach and Benedict Taylor for their assistance with the translations.

4 See Markman Ellis, 'Suffering Things: Lapdogs, Slaves, and Counter-Sensibility', in *The Secret Life of Things: Animals, Objects, and It-Narratives in Eighteenth-Century England*, ed. Mark Blackwell (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2007), 94–96; David Perkins, *Romanticism and Animal Rights* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 136–138; and Richard Leppert, *Music and Image: Domesticity, Ideology and Socio-Cultural Formation in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 188–193.

5 Blake, 'How sweet I roam'd from field to field [1769–1777]', from *Poetical Sketches* (1783), quoted in Perkins, *Romanticism and Animal Rights*, 138.



15 **Andantino**

sotto voce

Trost- los- schluch - zet. Phi-lo - me-le, in_ dem Kä - fig

ein - ge schränkt,... und be weint mit re - ger. Keh - le,

daß man ih - re Frei - heit_ kränkt, daß man ih - re_ Frei-heit

kränkt, daß_ man_ ih - re_ Frei - - - heit

kränkt, daß_ man_ ih - re_ Frei - - - heit kränkt.

Example 1 W. A. Mozart, 'Trostlos schluchzet Philomele', from *Zaide (Das Serail)*, bars 17–41, vocal and bass line only (*Neue Mozart-Ausgabe*, series 2/5, volume 10, ed. Friedrich-Heinrich Neumann (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1957)). Used by permission

As Blake's poem unmistakably illustrates, birds and cages were also poignant symbols of sexual availability, pursuit and conquest. They appear frequently in galant painting, most famously François Boucher's *Les oiseleurs* (The Bird-Catchers, 1748) and Jean-Baptiste Greuze's many gauzy portraits of young girls and their (often dead) birds.⁶ Song, as it had done for centuries, served as both mood music for the act of seduction, and the inevitable lament that followed an act of deflowering. It could even be employed to manipulate actual birdsong, as we find in the *serinette*, a small barrel-organ designed to coax vocalizations from pet

6 On the caged bird in eighteenth-century visual art see Chatelain, 'La figure galante de Philomèle', especially 131; and Kevin Chua, 'Dead Birds, or the Miseducation of the Greuze Girl', in *Performing the 'Everyday': The Culture of Genre in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Alden Cavanaugh (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2007), 75–91.



birds that figures in such paintings as William Hogarth's *The Graham Children* (1742) and Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin's *La Serinette* (1751).⁷ The more sinister, erotic subtexts to the image of the caged bird are surely at play in the many musical works prior to *Zaide* in which the figures of Philomela and the nightingale are employed to evoke love's 'sweet pain'.⁸

One might read yet a further layer of signification to 'Trostlos schluchzet Philomele', however – another downtrodden, charismatic figure to complement the three elided personas of mythical victim, harem slave and caged bird. That figure is the child – or, more specifically, the professional child actor. Mozart and Schachtner based *Zaide* on an anonymous singspiel called *Das Serail* (The Seraglio) that was in the repertoire of the Bernersiche Gesellschaft, one of the most popular and long-lived of the eighteenth-century *Kindertruppen*.⁹ These were wandering companies composed solely or chiefly of young performers, who specialized in adaptations of adult plays, operas, ballets and pantomimes. Like the inhabitants of the fantastical harem of the eighteenth-century imagination, wandering troupes were conspicuously vagabond assemblages of players, all of whom came from 'somewhere else'. Their charismatic, authoritarian impresarios collected, exhibited and replaced performers, just as European readers imagined sultans did. The result was a kind of rootlessness and interchangeability that gained added significance when the recruits were as young as five. The *Kindertruppen* thus recall Alain Grosrichard's description of the child captives of the fictional harem: 'orphans with no natural or cultural roots, no memory', who, like those other personifications of multiplied lack (women, mutes and eunuchs) 'stand negatively for the fragmented body of the despot'.¹⁰

As Grosrichard has argued (echoing Edward Said), the fantastical seraglios of eighteenth-century European literature and drama exerted a voyeuristic appeal, elaborating the 'endoscopic fantasy' of the Orient – affirming Eurocentric values while also providing a carnivalesque outlet for the indulgence of taboo fantasies.¹¹ In this article I argue that a similar contradictory appeal characterized the phenomenon of the

7 See also Arthur W. J. G. Ord-Hume, 'Bird instruments, 1. Bird organ', in *Grove Music Online* <www.oxfordmusiconline.com> (5 July 2011).

8 'Ach, Thyrsis! welchen süßen Schmerz / Singt Philomele mir ins Herz! / Es schmilzt von ihren Klagen.' Christian Felix Weisse, 'Philomele', from *Scherzhafte Lieder* (1758), collected in *Kleine lyrische Gedichte* (Leipzig: Weidmanns Erben und Reich, 1772), volume 1, 141. A copy of the *Kleine lyrische Gedichte* was in Mozart's library at the time of his death, and served as the source for four of his late lieder. For musical evocations of Philomela and the nightingale see Chatelain, 'La figure galante de Philomèle', especially 121–122, and Elizabeth Eva Leach, *Sung Birds: Music, Nature, and Poetry in the Later Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), especially 91–100. Anecdotal evidence abounds of Mozart's fondness for songbirds; in 1787 he even wrote an ode, 'Hier ruht ein lieber Narr', on the death of his beloved pet starling. Mozart, *Briefe und Aufzeichnungen*, volume 4: 1787–1857, ed. Wilhelm A. Bauer and Otto Erich Deutsch (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1963), 49.

9 Anonymous, *Ein musikalisches Singspiel, genannt: Das Serail. Oder: Die unvermuthete Zusammenkunft in der Slavery zwischen Vater, Tochter und Sohn* (Bozen [Bolzano]: Karl Joseph Weiß, 1779). The libretto is reproduced in Friedrich-Heinrich Neumann, 'Kritische Berichte' to *Zaide* (*Das Serail*), *Neue Mozart Ausgabe* series 2/5, volume 10 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1963), 74–91. On the Berner troupe see Gertraude Dieke, *Die Blütezeit des Kindertheaters: Ein Beitrag zur Theatergeschichte des 18. und beginnenden 19. Jahrhunderts* (Emsdetten: Lechte, 1934), 54–118; and Tar Gabriella-Norà, *Gyermek a 18. és 19. századi magyarországon és erdélyi színpadjain* (Child Actors in Hungary and Siebenbürgen in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries) (Koložsvár: Erdélyi Múzeum-Egyesület Kiadása, 2004).

10 Alain Grosrichard, *The Sultan's Court: European Fantasies of the East*, trans. Liz Heron (London: Verso, 1998), 132 and 128.

11 Grosrichard, *The Sultan's Court*, 23. See also Thomas Betzwieser, *Exotismus und Türkenoper in der französischen Musik des Ancien Régime: Studien zu einem ästhetischen Phänomen* (Laaber: Laaber, 1993), and Suzanne Rodin Pucci, 'The Discrete Charms of the Exotic: Fictions of the Harem in Eighteenth-Century France', in *Exoticism in the Enlightenment*, ed. George Sebastian Rousseau and Roy Porter (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), 145–174, and *Ottoman Empire and European Theatre*, volume 1: *The Age of Sultan Selim III and Mozart (1756–1808)*, ed. Michael Hüttler and H. E. Weidinger (Vienna: Hollitzer Wissenschaftsverlag, 2012).



Kindertruppen – particularly when, as in *Das Serail*, young actors portrayed captives in a seraglio. The repertoire and the reception of these troupes were bound up with wider renegotiations regarding theatrical propriety, naturalness and absorption; and in exploiting the incongruity between young performers and adult dramatic situations, the troupes directly confronted the nascent protectionist discourses around age-appropriate literature, youthful virtue and the rights of children.

ADULTHOOD, FORGED AND FEIGNED

That a *Kindertruppe* like Berner’s could perform a singspiel set in a harem might give our twenty-first-century sensibilities pause, but at the time it would have been fairly unremarkable, for a number of reasons. First, although the troupes made the youth of their performers a selling-point – calling themselves ‘Piccoli Hollandesi’, ‘Französische Pantomimische Kinder’ and the like – they generally included a mix of children, adolescents and young adults. ‘Kindertruppe’ is an anachronism, a blanket term invented by historians, and it can be particularly misleading in the case of the Berner troupe, which was most often advertised by Berner himself as a ‘junge Schauspielergesellschaft’ (young person’s theatrical company) and included members ranging in age from four to twenty-eight.¹²

On their first visit to Salzburg in 1766 (about which more below) the court diarist described Berner’s troupe as ‘10 kindern, 6 mädln und 4 knaben’ (ten children: six lasses and four lads).¹³ The actual ages of the performers at this time, according to a memoir by the former Berner troupe member Franz Xaver Garnier, were as follows:¹⁴

Sex of performer	Number of performers	Ages of performers	Average age	Age spread
Male	4	9, 10, 16, 17	13	9
Female	6	6, 8, 10, 11, 13 (age of sixth female unknown) ¹⁵	9.6	8

In 1781, six years before the troupe disbanded, it was described in the Nuremberg press as ‘die Bernerische Gesellschaft . . . , die meist aus Kindern bestand’ (the Berner Company, which consisted mostly of children).¹⁶ In that year, the ages of the documented members of the troupe were as follows:

12 I will use ‘Kindertruppe’ throughout this essay as the simplest, most familiar term, which also reinforces my focus on German-language troupes.

13 Friedrich Pirckmayer, *Ueber Musik und Theater am fürsterzbischöflichen salzburgischen Hofe 1762–1775* (Salzburg: Im Selbstverlage des Verfassers, 1886), 24.

14 F[rantz] X[aver] Garnier, *Nachricht von der im Jahre 1758 von Herrn Felix Berner errichteten jungen Schauspieler-Gesellschaft, von den bis jezt gethanenen Reisen, von der Aufnahme und dem Zuwachse derselben, einigen Anhängen, und vielen am Ende beigefügten Silhouettes von Schauspielern und Schauspielerinnen dieser Gesellschaft. Mit Bewilligung und Beitrag des Herrn Berner*, third edition (Vienna: Johann Joseph Jahn, 1786).

15 The sixth female member joined the troupe some time in the early 1760s at age five, but Garnier does not have the exact date of her engagement, so we cannot calculate her age in 1766.

16 *Historich-diplomatisches Magazin für das Vaterland und angrenzenden Gegenden* 1 (1781), 219; quoted in Dieke, *Die Blütezeit des Kindertheaters*, 66.



Sex of performer	Number of performers	Ages of performers	Average age	Age spread
Male	8	7, 9, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 19	13	13
Female	9	9, 13, 14, 15, 17, 17, 18, 21 (age of ninth female unknown ¹⁷)	15.5	13

The average age of a performer therefore rose from eleven in 1766 to fourteen in 1781, but the age spread widened, from an average of eight and a half to thirteen years.

Such statistics tell us less than we might hope about the way the performers were perceived. Adolescence was certainly a recognized phase of life, but one that, then as now, was flexible and often contradictory in its construction. Johann Heinrich Zedler's *Universal-Lexicon* (1731–1754), for instance, defined 'Mannbar' (full puberty, or readiness to enter the married state) by first citing ancient Roman law that the age of *pubertas* was fourteen for males and twenty for females. He then added the following caveat: 'Nowadays, however, one no longer looks at years, but rather at the outward gifts of nature, strength and dexterity of the body'.¹⁸ Zedler also recognized a period that he called 'near-puberty', lasting from age eleven to twelve in females, thirteen to fourteen in males.¹⁹ In 1792 the Prussian Civil Code initiated under Frederick the Great deemed that 'Minderjährigkeit' – which represented something akin to our modern 'minority', in other words the inability fully to govern one's own affairs – could last until as late as twenty-four.²⁰ And these are just two isolated historical sources; regional, gender, legal and socioeconomic factors could yield very different understandings of the outer limits of childhood, youth and adolescence.²¹

The situation was even murkier with young performers in the German-speaking commercial theatre. Almost every adult *Wandertruppe* – including those of Joseph von Kurz, Karl Theophil Döbbelin and Emanuel Schikaneder – had a handful of young actors on board, usually children of company parents who were being raised in the family business and who from an early age took on small roles in the main

17 This is a comparable situation to that outlined in note 15.

18 'Heut zu Tage aber siehet man nicht mehr auf die Jahre, sondern auf die äusserlichen Gaben der Natur, Stärke und Geschicklichkeit des Leibes.' 'Mannbar', in Zedler, *Grosses vollständiges Universal-Lexicon aller Wissenschaften und Künste* (Halle and Leipzig: Johann Heinrich Zedler, 1731–1754), volume 19, 1016.

19 See 'Nahe (oder Näher) der Pubertät, oder auch der Minderjährigkeit', in Zedler, *Grosses vollständiges Universal-Lexicon*, volume 23, 467–468. Accounts of the biological phases of puberty, for instance, tended to vary: see for example Bénigne de Bacilly, *L'art de bien chanter, Augmenté d'un Discours qui sert de Réponse a la Critique de ce Traité* (Paris: Chez l'Auteur, 1679), 80–81, in which Bacilly observed that men's voices tended to break between the ages of fifteen and twenty. In the following century, Johann Friedrich Agricola's 1757 translation of Pier Francesco Tosi's 1723 *Opinioni de' cantori antichi e moderni* noted that 'the high voice of uncastrated men normally lowers around the fourteenth year'. Agricola, *Introduction to the Art of Singing*, ed. and trans. Julianne C. Baird (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 72. Today, the voice change typically takes place over three to four years between ages twelve and eighteen.

20 An exception was made for aristocrats, who officially came of age at eighteen. See 'Minderjährig', in Johann Christoph Adelung, *Grammatisch-Kritisches Wörterbuch der Hochdeutschen Mundart*, second edition (1793–1801) (Hildesheim: Olms, 1970), volume 3, 213.

21 For two perspectives on French and English attitudes to the durations of childhood and adolescence in the eighteenth century see respectively Colin Heywood, *Growing Up in France: From the Ancien Régime to the Third Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), especially 37–41, and Anna-Christina Giovanopoulos, 'The Legal Status of Children in Eighteenth-Century England', in *Fashioning Childhood in the Eighteenth Century: Age and Identity*, ed. Anja Müller (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 43–52.



works or featured on their own in intermezzos, afterpieces, pantomimes and ballets.²² As Peter Schmitt has shown, the average age of debut for actors in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century German companies was sixteen to eighteen.²³ The eldest members of a *Kindertruppe* were thus often older than fully fledged members of adult companies.

The age of the performers, whether real or perceived, counted for only part of the spectacle of a *Kindertruppe* performance. The other part had to do with the nature of the works being performed: not just their technical difficulty, but the maturity of their content. Over a century earlier, comedies in the Elizabethan boy companies' repertoire frequently made use of provocative, bawdy passages – in part, as Michael Shapiro puts it, to 'encourage the audience to savor the disparity between the actors and their roles'.²⁴ Their eighteenth-century successors traded on the same disparity: a tacit awareness among both spectators and performers that they were witnessing something incongruous, the representation by children of emotions and even acts of which they were not yet supposed to be aware.

Evidence of this cultural perception can be found in the anonymous article 'Von Pantomimen' from the 1746 Frankfurt periodical *Literarischer Briefwechsel*, which describes a pantomime by the earliest known *Kindertruppe* active in the German-speaking lands, Filippo (?) Nicolini's Piccoli Hollandesi. The pantomime includes a fairly explicit love scene in which the hero covers the heroine's face with kisses, after which they become inflamed 'as though they have been infected with the venom of a tarantula', and they 'throw themselves on the ground in a swoon . . . And they would probably have sacrificed themselves to each other completely', were it not for the sudden appearance of the girl's mother, who separates the lovers and locks the daughter up in her room alone.²⁵ The author marvels at the performers' skill in 'the silent presentation of what are usually fantastical impressions to amorous minds'.²⁶

Following her confinement, the frustrated *innamorata* steps forward to sing of her 'bitterest woe' in an aria marked by a 'quite melancholy melody'.²⁷ Piccoli Hollandesi pantomimes frequently included an

22 See Dieke, *Die Blütezeit des Kindertheaters*, chapter 2 ('Kinderaufführungen in den Erwachsenentruppen'), 140–154.

23 Peter Schmitt, *Schauspieler und Theaterbetrieb: Studien zur Sozialgeschichte des Schauspielers in deutschsprachigen Raum 1700–1900* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1990), 45–46. Schmitt surveyed records for two thousand actors who debuted between 1775 and 1850.

24 Michael Shapiro, 'Children's Troupes: Dramatic Illusion and Acting Style', *Comparative Drama* 3/1 (1969), 45. This form of metatheatrical humour is found throughout Shakespeare; consider for instance Beatrice's 'He that hath a beard' speech from *Much Ado about Nothing*, Act 2 Scene 1, or Cleopatra's line 'some squeaking Cleopatra [will] boy my greatness / I' the posture of a whore', from *Antony and Cleopatra*, Act 5 Scene 2. On the Elizabethan boy companies see Edel Lamb, *Performing Childhood in the Early Modern Theatre: The Children's Playing Companies (1599–1613)* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), and Linda Austern, "'No Women Are Indeed": The Boy Actor as Vocal Seductress in Late Sixteenth- and Early Seventeenth-Century English Drama', in *Embodied Voices: Representing Female Vocality in Western Culture*, ed. Leslie C. Dunn and Nancy A. Jones (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 83–102.

25 'als wären sie von dem Gifft einer Tarantul angesteckt . . . wobey sie sich auf die Erde vor Ohnmacht warfen und vor hitziger Liebe fast verschmelzen wolten . . . Und sie würden sich wohl einander gantz und gar aufgeopfert haben; wann nicht . . .' 'H. H'. (author unknown), 'Von Pantomimen', in *Literarischer Briefwechsel, oder, Aufgefangene und curieuse Briefe*, ed. 'Philomusus' (Frankfurt: Johann Adolph Stock, 1746), 256–257, quoted in Dieke, *Die Blütezeit des Kindertheaters*, 32.

26 ' . . . Sie den eigentlichen Grad ihrer bewunders-würdigen Fertigkeit in stummer Vorstellung derer gewöhnlich phantasirenden Eindrücke in ein verliebtes Gehirn.' 'H. H'. 'Von Pantomimen', 248. The paragraph from which this passage is excerpted was omitted in Dieke's reproduction of the article.

27 ' . . . die bittersten Klagen in einer Arie, nach einer recht melancholischen Melodey . . .' 'H. H'. 'Von Pantomimen', 258, quoted in Dieke, *Die Blütezeit des Kindertheaters*, 33.



interpolated aria (usually in Italian or French) for the lovers, often on the theme of captivity to Cupid.²⁸ The account in the *Literarischer Briefwechsel* does not identify this particular aria, but the theme of captivity is already written into the plot, and this moment is described as the sensual apex of the evening's performance for its spectators. Much of its pathetic and even erotic charge came from the 'innocent frankness' ('unschuldsvoller Freymüthigkeit') of the performer, her absorption and her authentic display of pathetic emotions, showing an expertise – and implying a life experience – far beyond her years. The reviewer observed:

one could hardly believe that it was adopted manners, but rather that it was a natural outbreak of imagination, so completely had her heart and thoughts taken on an unaffected manner . . . Thus it is no wonder that each tone from them could arouse an excitation in the hearts of the listeners in the liveliest and most natural way, starting from the most innocent state.²⁹

The latter invocation of the term 'natural' seems calculated to normalize what was evidently an expected arousal on the part of the spectator. But the matter-of-fact tone of the account suggests that this somewhat illicit love-pantomime was not in itself objectionable – at least, not to the Frankfurt reviewer.

This is perhaps to be expected, given early modern Europe's informal attribution of a greater degree of sophistication to the young than we are generally familiar with today. An attitude of benign indulgence toward the *savoir-faire* of children, toward certain forms of sexual expression in their presence and toward the spectacle of the child labourer more generally had not yet fully given way to the ideology of protection, nor to the privatization of virtue as a domestic pedagogical objective.³⁰ At this time, for instance, children were not felt to require a separate literary diet: once they had learned to read, they could theoretically partake of any materials their level of literacy enabled them to comprehend. To elaborate on Philippe Ariès,

28 The interpolated aria in *Les Ruines d'Athène* is 'Amor che nasce' (taken from Metastasio's libretto for *Endimione*), in which the heroine describes Cupid 'tightening his chains' around the foot of her beloved; in *Arlequin in't Graf, of de verrezene Arlequin*, Colombine asks Cupid to take pity on her, for his arrows have rendered her incapable of acting with free will; and in *La preziosa ridicola*, the hero sings 'Mon coeur des vos charmes / est si penetrè, / que soumi à vos armes / rend sà Libertè'. See *Les Ruines d'Athène. Opera Pantomime par Nicolini. Représenté pour la première fois en foire d'hiver 1753 sur le Nouveau Theatre de Bronsvic* (Braunschweig: Keitel, 1753), 30–32; *Vyf Pantomimes, Versiert met vele Konstwerken, Zanden en Dansen; Door de Vermaarde Hollandsche Jonge Kinderen, In verscheidene Hoven van Europa, onder veel toejuiching vertoont* (Alkmaar: Johannis Halfman, 1742), 66; and *La preziosa ridicola. Intermezzo per music da rappresentarsi nel Teatro dell'Opera Pantomima de Piccoli Hollandesi. Sopra la Piazza de Cappuccini* (Vienna, 1747), no page numbers.

29 ' . . . daß man kaum glauben konte, daß es angenommene Manieren seyen, sondern vielmehr daß es ein natürlicher Ausbruch von Vorstellungen wäre, so ihr Hertz und Gedancken ohnverstellter Weise, völlig eingenommen hätte. . . . Daß also kein Wunder, wenn ein jeder Thon von ihnen in den Herten der Zuhörer die Reitzungen von dem Stand der Unschuld auf das lebhaftest- und natürlichste erwecken konte'. 'H. H.', 'Von Pantomimen', 258–259, quoted in Dieke, *Die Blütezeit des Kindertheaters*, 33.

30 Viviana Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), 95. I am grateful to Shauna Vey for this reference. On cultural constructions of childhood sexuality in the Enlightenment see Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, volume 1: *An Introduction* (1976), trans. Robert Hurley (London: Allen Lane, 1978), especially 27–29; Lutz D. H. Sauersteig, 'Sex Education in Germany from the Eighteenth to the Twentieth Century', in *Sexual Cultures in Europe: Themes in Sexuality*, ed. Franz X. Eder, Lesley Hall and Gert Hekma (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 9–33; George Rousseau, Introduction to *Children and Sexuality: From the Greeks to the Great War*, ed. George Rousseau (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 1–40; and Isabel Hull, *Sexuality, State, and Civil Society in Germany, 1700–1815* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996). On reassigning the cultivation of virtue from the civic to the domestic sphere see for instance Dana Harrington, 'Gender, Commerce, and the Transformation of Virtue in Eighteenth-Century Britain', *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 31/3 (2001), 33–52.



while childhood did indeed exist before the Enlightenment, it was not seen as an especially sheltered phase of life.³¹

A more interventionist approach toward all manner of societal ‘primitives’, near and far, began to take hold around mid-century, and, inspired by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the Philanthropinist movement in Germany set about reforming pedagogy and child-rearing.³² The reformers’ concern for limiting (indeed, eliminating) the exposure of children to illicit material was already being felt in theatrical circles, as is apparent from the language with which Nicolini’s successor Franz Joseph Sebastiani promoted his own troupe, the *Französische Pantomimische Kinder*. In 1756 Sebastiani’s application to perform in Frankfurt promised the mayor of that city that his troupe’s performances would not be ‘scandaleuses’, and that they would surpass the pantomimes that were performed at the coronation of Emperor Francis in that same city eleven years earlier – both unmistakable references to the *Piccoli Hollandesi*, who had performed to great acclaim during that festival, including before the emperor himself.³³ Over the course of the 1760s Sebastiani moved away from the semi-improvised, highly physical comedies (*Stegreifkomödie*) of the *Piccoli Hollandesi* towards the more literate, moralizing, ‘regelmäßig’ (literally, ‘rule-bound’) and bourgeois family dramas then gaining favour on the adult stage. Sebastiani was praised, therefore, for achieving ‘an ardently sought end’ to the *Stegreifkomödie*, and with ‘imparting to our German nation a nobler and loftier conception of the German stage’.³⁴ Though obviously loaded with nationalist ideology, these statements were borne out historically: Thomas Betzwieser has demonstrated the important role played by Sebastiani’s and Berner’s troupes in establishing an opéra-comique-based tradition of literate singspiel in German-speaking lands, and the *Piccoli Hollandesi* played an equally important role in disseminating the Neapolitan intermezzo throughout the same region in the 1740s.³⁵ Yet, as Figure 1 illustrates, the roots of the *Kindertruppen* in traditions of farce and *commedia dell’arte* persisted long after the deliberate adoption of loftier, wordier dramas.

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- 31 Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*, trans. Robert Baldick (New York: Knopf, 1962), originally published as *Enfant et la vie familiale sous l’ancien régime* (Paris: Plon, 1960). For summaries of the critical reassessments and refinements of Ariès see Michael Lavalette and Stephen Cunningham, ‘The Sociology of Childhood’, in *Children, Welfare and the State*, ed. Barry Goldson, Michael Lavalette and Jim McKechnie (London: Sage, 2002), 9–28, and Colin Heywood, ‘Centuries of Childhood: An Anniversary – and an Epitaph?’, *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 3/3 (2010), 341–365.
- 32 On the Philanthropinists see Jörn Garber, ed., *‘Die Stammutter aller guten Schulen’: Das Dessauer Philanthropinum und der deutsche Philanthropismus 1774–1793* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2008), and Robert Sumser, ‘“Erziehung,” the Family, and the Regulation of Sexuality in the Late German Enlightenment’, *German Studies Review* 15/3 (1992), 455–474.
- 33 Letter from Sebastiani to the Council of Frankfurt, quoted in Dieke, *Die Blütezeit des Kindertheaters*, 47. On the *Piccoli Hollandesi*’s participation in the coronation festivities of 1745 see Elisabeth Mentzel, *Geschichte der Schauspielkunst in Frankfurt a. M. von ihren Anfängen bis zur Eröffnung des Städtischen Komödienhauses: Ein Beitrag zur deutschen Kultur- und Theatergeschichte* (Frankfurt: K. Th. Völcker, 1882), 197–199.
- 34 Anonymous, ‘Geschichte der Maynzer Bühne’, *Theater-Journal für Deutschland* 1 (1777), 69: ‘Unter ihm [Sebastiani] nahmen die neuen deutschen Operetten, wie sie izt allgemein sind, ihren Anfang, und die Bernardonsstücke ein sehnlich gewünschtes Ende’, and ‘Man muß dieser deutschen Gesellschaft die Gerechtigkeit wiederfahren lassen, daß sie alles beiträgt, um unserer Nation einen edleren und erhabeneren Begriff von der deutschen Bühne bei zu bringen.’ *Mannheimer Zeitung* 65 (15 August 1768), both quoted in Thomas Betzwieser, ‘Zwischen Kinder- und Nationaltheater: die Rezeption der Opéra-comique in Deutschland (1760–1780)’, in *Theater im Kulturwandel des 18. Jahrhunderts: Inszenierung und Wahrnehmung von Körper – Musik – Sprache*, ed. Erika Fischer-Lichte and Jörg Schönert (Göttingen: Wallstein, 1999), 253 and 254 respectively. For more on this transition see Neumann, ‘Zur Vorgeschichte der Zaide’, 237–239.
- 35 Betzwieser, ‘Zwischen Kinder- und Nationaltheater’. On the *Piccoli Hollandesi*’s role in the dissemination of intermezzo see Charles E. Troy and Piero Weiss, ‘Intermezzo’, *Grove Music Online* <www.oxfordmusiconline.com> (4 July 2011).



Figure 1 Detail from engraving in Franz Xaver Garnier, *Nachricht von der Bernerischen jungen Schauspieler Gesellschaft, von der Aufnahme und dem Zuwachse derselben ...* (Bayreuth[?], 1782); reproduced in Gertraude Dieke, *Die Blütezeit des Kindertheaters: Ein Beitrag zur Theatergeschichte des 18. und beginnenden 19. Jahrhunderts* (Emsdetten: Lechte, 1934). Bodleian Library, Oxford. Used by permission



Likewise, the incongruity of the spectacle persisted even as the repertoire's content was purified and elevated. In some of their original works, children's troupes even self-consciously addressed their peculiar blend of charm, absurdity and impropriety from within the repertoire itself, perhaps as a way to forestall any criticism while playing up their novelty appeal. The debut opéra comique of Nicholas-Médard Audinot's Parisian children's troupe, the Théâtre de l'ambigu-comique, was pointedly titled *Il n'y a plus d'enfants* (There Are No More Children, 1769). In it, the older characters constantly marvel at the precocious love intrigues of the 'youngsters'. When the young lovers Lolotte and François wish to practise declaring themselves to Lolotte's mother, Arlequin offers to impersonate the mother, and he plays his role well, remarking with exaggerated maternal disapproval, 'youth at the moment is so libertine!'.³⁶ The authentic mother arrives on the scene, prompting Arlequin to protest that they were merely 'playing a comedy'.³⁷ This meta-theatrical alibi, significantly, is rejected by the mother, who laments the foolishness upon which she has stumbled. In doing so, of course, she delivers the punchline of the work as a whole, given that, like all the other characters, she too is played by a young actor.

A similarly satirical tone characterized a staple of the Berner troupe repertoire, *Die verkehrte Welt, oder: Die Gubernantin nach der Mode* (The World Turned Upside-Down, or: The Fashionable Governess, 1770).³⁸ In this opera buffa, a father exposes the corruption of a household of children at the hands of their self-centred, vacuous governess by going undercover (and in drag) as a rival governess. In one exchange between the disguised father and his son, the child readily admits that he can neither write, read, recognize his letters or pray, but that he can play, dance, sing, jump, fib and swear 'like the Devil'. The father asks, can he cheat as well? The son replies, 'Why not! in time one learns everything'.³⁹ The self-referentiality of this statement, uttered by a child actor who was performing harlequinades and comic operas on alternate nights, would surely not have been lost on the audience.

Even when they did not write their incongruity into the works themselves, the children's troupes could not help but raise questions about verisimilitude. A 1775 review of another Salzburg sojourn by the Berner troupe noted that *Der Deserteur aus Kindesliebe* (The Deserter for the Sake of Filial Love) – a play by Johann Gottlieb Stephanie the Younger – 'was performed entirely by children; it made for some quite comical entrances when very small children playing guards led away giant prisoners'.⁴⁰ Others were more disturbed than amused: two years later, a Viennese review of the Berner troupe found the spectacle of a child impersonating an adult inherently unnatural, and therefore abhorrent:

36 'la jeunesse d'à-présent est si libertine!' Pierre-Jean-Baptiste Nougaret, *Il n'y a plus d'enfants* (Paris: P. R. C. Ballard, 1772), 42; see also James Davis, 'Restif, Nougaret, and the Child Actors', in *The Stage in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. J. D. Browning (New York: Garland, 1981), 156.

37 'C'est que nous étions à jouer une Comédie'. Nougaret, *Il n'y a plus d'enfants*, 45.

38 Anonymous, *Die Verkehrte Welt, oder: die Gubernantin nach der Mode. Ein musikalisches Singspiel, in zweyen Aufzügen. Vorge stellt von denen gelehrten Pernerischen Kindern. Die Musik von der Opera Bouffa ist ganz neu componirt von Herrn Franz Grimmer* ([Vienna, 1770]). Franz Grimmer was a composer with the troupe from 1768 to 1777; see Felix J. Lipowsky, 'Grimmer, Franz', in *Baierisches Musik-Lexikon* (Munich: Jakob Giel, 1811), 100–101, and Gabriella-Nóra, *Gyermek a 18. és 19. századi magyarországon és erdélyi színpadjain*, 34–35. Garnier, on the other hand, lists *Die Gouvernantin* as the work of the librettist 'Decker' and the composer 'Brizzi': Garnier, *Nachricht*, 36. *Die Verkehrte Welt* was in the troupe's repertoire for ten years; documented performances include Penzing, a suburb of Vienna, in 1770, Rechnitz (before the Duke and Duchess of Teschen) in 1774 and Basle in 1780. See Dieke, *Die Blütezeit des Kindertheaters*, 60, 61 and 70.

39 'Warum nicht! mit der Zeit lernt man alles'. Anonymous, *Die Verkehrte Welt*, no page numbers (Act 2 Scene 5).

40 'Der Deserteur aus Kindesliebe werden alle von Kindern vorgestellt; da giebt's manchmal ganz poßierliche Auftritte, wenn ganz kleine Kinder als Wache den großen Arrestanten abführen'. Rudolf von Freisauff, *Zur hundertjährigen Jubelfeier des k. k. Theaters zu Salzburg: eine historische Skizze* (Salzburg, 1875), 11, 13, quoted in Dieke, *Die Blütezeit des Kindertheaters*, 61–62.



It is either unclear or burlesque, when a boy in the role of an old man says things which only a man should know. If these plays are not expressly produced for children, if there is that which only grown people are supposed to portray, then such a play remains supremely unnatural.⁴¹

This reaction conveys not just an allegiance to the laws of theatrical verisimilitude, but a new sense of moral scrutiny attending upon the theatre, one that had emerged in the writings of Johann Christoph Gottsched and coalesced in Friedrich Schiller's famous 1784 manifesto 'Die Schaubühne als eine moralische Anstalt betrachtet' (The Theatre Considered as a Moral Institution).⁴² Questions about the moral role of the theatre became still more fraught when they turned upon the child performer. By the middle of the eighteenth century it was a commonplace that performance required a heightened level of identification with the role, not just the representation of emotion but its active embodiment.⁴³ Johann Gottfried Herder and the psychologist Karl Philipp Moritz were among those who argued that children were inherently sincere, less adept at dissembling than adults – this in turn made them even more vulnerable than adults to internalizing the characters, emotions and morals they portrayed on stage.⁴⁴ But this same 'dual consciousness' could, if the material was age-appropriate, make child actors better equipped than adults to serve the goal of an edifying theatrical experience, as we see in a review of the Berner troupe's 1783 appearance in Gmunden, Austria:

The few pieces that they performed during their stay inspired admiration – innocence and charm combined with genuine art gave every word double emphasis, and the moral, which often left one cold when uttered from the stage by an equivocal flibbertigibbet, warms the hearts of the viewers when spoken by these youthful lips.⁴⁵

41 'Es ist entweder ungeräumt oder burlesk, wenn ein Knabe in der Rolle eines Greises Dinge sagt, die er nur als Mann wissen sollte. Sind diese Schauspiele nicht ausdrücklich für Kinder verfertigt, sind es solche, die nur große Leute spielen sollen, so bleibt ein solches Schauspiel höchst unnatürlich'. Anonymous, *K[aiserlich] K[önigliche] allergnädigst privilegierte Realzeitung* (1777), quoted in Dieke, *Die Blütezeit des Kindertheaters*, 118.

42 Johann Christoph Gottsched, *Versuch einer kritischen Dichtkunst vor die Deutschen* (Leipzig: Breitkopf, 1730). See also Christopher J. Wild, *Theater der Keuschheit – Keuschheit des Theaters: Zu einer Geschichte der (Anti-)Theatralität von Gryphius bis Kleist* (Freiburg: Rombach, 2003).

43 This idea is perhaps most familiar to music historians via the famous Horatian maxim 'si vis me flere...', as rehearsed in Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach's *Versuch*: 'A musician cannot move others unless he himself is moved. Thus he must of necessity be able to immerse himself in all the affects he wishes to arouse in his listeners... This is especially the case in pieces that are highly expressive, be they conceived by the performer himself or by somebody else; in the latter, the performer must feel the same passion within himself that the author of the piece intended at its composition'. C. P. E. Bach, *Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen* (1753), translated and excerpted in *Music and Culture in Eighteenth-Century Europe: A Source Book*, ed. Enrico Fubini (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 294.

44 See Herder, 'On Recent German Literature: First Collection of Fragments [1767]', in *Selected Early Writings, 1764–1767: Addresses, Essays, and Drafts; Fragments on Recent German Literature*, ed. Ernest A. Menze and Karl Menges, trans. Ernest A. Menze with Michael Palma (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992), 105. On Moritz see Anthony Krupp, 'Observing Children in an Early Journal of Psychology: Karl Philipp Moritz's *Gnothi sauton* (Know thyself)', in *Fashioning Childhood in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Müller, 35–36.

45 'Die wenigen Stücke, die sie uns bey ihrer Durchreise gegeben, erweckten Bewunderung – Unschuld und Anmuth vereint mit ächter Kunst, schienen jedem Worte doppelten Nachdruck zu geben und die Moral, die nicht selten von der Bühne aus dem Munde eines zweydeutigen Flattergeists Frost erregte, wirkt von den Lippen der Jugend warm auf die Herzen des Zusehers'. *Linzer Zeitung* 97 (5 December 1783), cited in Fritz Fuhrich, *Theatergeschichte Oberösterreichs im 18. Jahrhundert* (Vienna: Hermann Böhlau, 1968), 76n.



Establishing a sanitized dramatic corpus for children was big business for German publishers in the 1770s, motivated in no small part by the pedagogues' agitation in favour of the anxious surveillance and even pathologizing of children's contact with all forms of sensual expression. In the words of Christian Gotthilf Salzmann, writing in 1785, the danger was 'prematurely sensitiz[ing]' children to 'temptations ... whose enjoyment was intended for them many years hence'.⁴⁶ To expose children to love stories, indeed to any kind of fiction, was believed preemptively to deny them that which was increasingly being essentialized as inherent to childhood: not just chastity, but asexuality. Joachim Heinrich Campe, for instance, published a children's reader, the *Kleine Kinderbibliothek*, whose express goal was providing reading material 'which would be as entertaining as [it was] instructive, and by *any consideration would be completely harmless*'.⁴⁷ Campe divided each volume of his digest into three parts according to the intended age group of the reader (five to seven, eight to ten and eleven to twelve).⁴⁸ Campe's fellow pedagogue, the singspiel librettist Christian Felix Weisse, adapted the French *théâtre d'éducation* and *dialogues pédagogiques* into 'Kinderschauspiele' for his periodical *Der Kinderfreund* (The Child's Friend, 1775–1782). These plays and singspiels were intended for domestic performance, in which middle-class children played not adults, but themselves, and not for money, but for their own edification and that of their immediate family and friends. As in Campe, the ages of the characters were specified and the material was vaunted as morally impeccable.⁴⁹ Weisse even used *Der Kinderfreund* to promote these theatricals as an alternative to the repertoire of the *Kindertruppen*. In one issue, he has one of his fictional avatars lament the shocking performance of 'eine gewisse Schauspielgesellschaft von Kindern' (a certain acting company of children) that had come through Leipzig in the 1770s:

I could not stand it, as I heard them singing and saying the most amatory, I don't want to say, the most rude things, accompanied by the most brazen gestures. O how I pitied the poor innocent victims of cheap profit: for I have already seen what they must soon become, since already the shame of their first youth (many were still children) had been killed, and what they perhaps would already be, had not the paternal eye of God watched over them, and wrested them from perdition in a miraculous way.⁵⁰

46 Christian Gotthilf Salzmann, *Ueber die heimlichen Sünden der Jugend* (1785), fourth edition (1819), 86, quoted in Hull, *Sexuality, State, and Civil Society in Germany*, 266; translation Hull's. On eighteenth-century anxieties about child masturbation see also Colin Heywood, 'Innocence and Experience: Sexuality among Young People in Modern France, c. 1750–1950', *French History* 21/1 (2007), 44–64, especially 49–50 and 55–56, and Simon Richter, 'Wet-Nursing, Onanism, and the Breast in Eighteenth-Century Germany', *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 7/1 (1996), 1–22.

47 'welches eben so unterhaltend, als lehrreich, und in jeder Betrachtung völlig unschädlich für sie wäre'. Campe, 'Vorbericht' to *Kleine Kinderbibliothek*, volume 1 (Hamburg: Heroldschen Buchhandlung, 1778), no page numbers. Original italics.

48 In subsequent editions Campe excised more and more material as indecorous, and in 1785 he renounced the excerpting of literature for children altogether, as inappropriate and contrary to the natural development of the child. See Hains-Heino Ewers, 'Kleine Kinderbibliothek', in *Handbuch zur Kinder- und Jugendliteratur von 1750–1800*, ed. Theodor Brüggemann with Hans-Heino Ewers (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1982), 205.

49 See Weisse's dedicatory letter to 'Meine lieben kleinen Freunde' (my dear little friends), in the guise of his fictional avatar, 'Herr Mentor'; *Der Kinderfreund: Ein Wochenblatt* 1–5 (2–16 October 1775), 3–40. Campe's and Weisse's preference for the infantilizing 'Kinder' over the broader 'Jugend' is telling.

50 'Ich konnte es nicht aushalten, als ich sie die verliebtesten, ich will nicht sagen, die ungezogensten Dinge mit den frechsten Geberden singen und sagen hörte. – O wie jammerten mich die armen unschuldigen Opfer eines feilen Gewinnstes: denn ich sahe vorher, da schon die Schaam ihrer ersten Jugend, (manche waren noch Kinder) getödtet war, was sie in kurzen werden mußten, und vielleicht schon itzt sind, wenn nicht das väterliche Auge Gottes über sie gewacht, und sie dem Verderben auf eine besondere Art entrissen hat'. Weisse, 'Ueber Tanz und Gesang', *Der Kinderfreund* 12/161 (1 August 1778), 75–76. It is difficult to know to which troupe Weisse is referring; Dieke uncovered no evidence of a Leipzig sojourn by Berner's or Nicolini's troupes in the early 1770s, and I can find no evidence of Sebastiani's troupe having passed through the city at this time.



Weisse's vehement antipathy to the exploitation of these actors may have been motivated by more than just noble concern for child welfare. After all, the domestic children's theatricals he published were just as much commercial products, just as much 'for sale', as the other theatricals he sought to discredit. Nevertheless, his condemnation registered the uncomfortable realities of the *Kindertruppen's* intersections with sexuality and commerce, as well as the continuing popularity of their enterprise even after the Philanthropist movements were well underway.

SINGING FROM THE SERAGLIO

Captivity, foreignness, innocence threatened: all converged in the seraglio, that convenient site for Grosrichard's 'endoscopic fantasy', for that marketable combination of titillation, mild auto-critique and self-righteous pity so common to Enlightenment representations of the Orient. Given that *Kindertruppen* usually performed repertoire that was identical to that of their adult counterparts, and given the period's rage for all things Turkish, it should come as no surprise that most had at least one work in their repertoire set in an exoticized 'East' (see Appendix).⁵¹ Many of these seraglio operas feature a female captive from elsewhere, the embodiment of virtue under threat, who performs for her captors in a musical tableau, often as part of her 'audition' either for membership in the harem or for selection by the sultan for his evening's pleasure. Such musical tableaux (to use Tili Boon Cuillé's terminology) often call upon the character to comment on her plight, and their quality of *mise-en-abyme* foregrounds the subject position of the real-world audience in the theatre. Producing '[a] certain tension between virtue and eroticism', they address, if only obliquely, the moral quandaries presented by the staging of the seraglio for the pleasure of a Western audience.⁵² When performed by a *Kindertruppe*, such tableaux blur the persona of the young actor with those other categories of the exotic abject (female, foreigner, captive/slave), as we have seen in 'Trostlos schluchzet Philomele'. The spectacle of a young woman singing both for her fictional captors and for her real-world audience aligned one figure of consumption, objectification and oppression with the other, apparently showing an awareness of the fraught cultural politics of operatic spectatorship, particularly as it intersected with emerging notions of childhood vulnerability.

Audition scenes can be found in two of the most popular seraglio operas of the late eighteenth century, both of which were staples of the Berner troupe repertoire in German translation: Paul-César Gibert and Charles-Simon Favart's 1761 opéra comique *Soliman Second, ou les trois sultanes* and the 1771 *Zémire et Azor* by André-Ernest-Modeste Grétry and Jean-François Marmontel.⁵³ Each of their respective musical tableaux

51 On the seraglio opera tradition more generally see Betzwieser, *Exotismus und 'Türkenoper'*, Mary Hunter, 'The *Alla Turca* Style in the Late Eighteenth Century: Race and Gender in the Symphony and the Seraglio', in *The Exotic in Western Music*, ed. Jonathan Bellman (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998), 43–73; and Nasser al-Tae, *Representations of the Orient in Western Music: Violence and Sensuality* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2010). I follow Hunter in employing the generic identifier 'seraglio opera', though like "'Turkish" opera' and 'harem opera', it is a fraught and inadequate appellation.

52 Tili Boon Cuillé, *Narrative Interludes: Musical Tableaux in Eighteenth-Century French Texts* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 5–6.

53 *Soliman Second*, performed in translation as *Die drei Sultaninnen*, was first staged by Berner's troupe in Dotis (now Tata), Hungary, in 1773, with a new overture and arias by the troupe's choral director, Ignatius Gspan. Gspan's music does not appear to survive, but he presumably modelled his arias closely on the existing music by Gibert. Several German translations of *Soliman Second* were in circulation at this time; see Alfred Iacuzzi, 'The European Vogue of Favart: The Diffusion of the Opéra-Comique' (PhD dissertation, Columbia University, 1932), 362.

Berner's troupe performed *Zémire und Azor* in 1778 in Vienna (at the Leopoldstadttheater) and Nuremberg, in 1781 in Ulm, and in 1782 in Oettingen and Nuremberg again. Margaretha Liskin and Rosalia Renthin, who sang the roles of Zaïde and the slave-girl in *Das Serail*, also played the heroine and her confidante in the two Nuremberg performances of *Zémire und Azor*. *Zémire et Azor* is not strictly speaking a seraglio opera, but rather a conflation of the fairy tale *La belle et la bête* (best known in a version by Jeanne-Marie Le Prince de Beaumont, printed in the *Magasin des enfants* of 1756) and Nivelles de la Chaussée's 1742 Baghdad-set play *Amour pour amour*. See David Charlton, *Grétry and the Growth of Opéra-Comique* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 101–102.



employs bird imagery as a symbol of sexual conquest, especially Zémire's aria 'La fauvette avec ses petits' (The Warbler with Her Children), a parable about a mother bird who lovingly protects her chicks until a bird-catcher appears and ravishes her. A manuscript copy of the score to *Zémire et Azor* was in Mozart's library at the time of his death (possibly in Mozart's own hand), and he probably saw *Soliman Second* when he was in Paris in 1778, suggesting that either or both may have influenced his treatment of Zaïde's bird-aria.⁵⁴

By the late 1770s Mozart had also encountered the seraglio in a number of his own works. One of the entr'acte ballets for his 1772 *Lucio Silla* (K135) at the Regio Ducal Teatro, Milan, was *Le gelosia del serraglio* by Charles le Picq; Mozart's sketch (KV Anh. 109/135a), probably produced for *Lucio Silla*, includes copies of individual numbers from several of le Picq's source ballets by Franz-Anton Hilverding and Jean-George Noverre.⁵⁵ Mozart was also familiar with the 1777 Salzburg revival of Voltaire's 1732 tragedy *Zaïre*, for which Michael Haydn composed incidental music. The revival did not open until 29 September, and Mozart had left the city one week earlier, on 23 September. But the topic doubtless came up in conversation, and Leopold later wrote to Wolfgang on 30 September and 6 October praising Haydn's music.

While these sources and others probably played some role in the conception of *Zaïde*, its most immediate source was *Das Serail*.⁵⁶ The means by which Mozart and Schachtner came by *Das Serail*, and the exact nature of their relationship to Berner, are difficult to pin down. They certainly had a copy of the anonymous libretto, published in Bozen (now Bolzano) in 1779, since the first four numbers of their *Zaïde* bear a close resemblance to the texts of the first four numbers in *Das Serail*.⁵⁷ There is no evidence, however, to confirm whether Mozart or Schachtner had a copy of the *Das Serail* score by Joseph Friebert, who was at the time the music director at the court in Passau.⁵⁸ The first known performance of *Das Serail* by the Berner troupe was in June 1777 in Wels, Austria, and they performed it in Erlangen and Nuremberg in April 1778, so in all likelihood at other stops along the way (see map, Figure 2).⁵⁹

At present while there is no evidence that Mozart or Schachtner witnessed a performance of *Das Serail*, the Berner troupe had passed through Salzburg several times before. Their first sojourn was from December 1766 to February 1767, with their debut taking place one day after Mozart's *licenza* K33i (the tenor concert

54 Otto Erich Deutsch, ed., *Mozart: Die Dokumente seines Lebens* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1961), 499 and 511.

55 These are Hilverding's 1752/1753 *Le gelosie del serraglio*, with music by Joseph Starzer; Noverre's 1758 *Les fêtes du sérail*, with music by François Granier; and Noverre's 1771 revision, *Les cinq sultanes*, with music again by Starzer. See Kathleen Kuzmick Hansell, 'Opera and Ballet at the Regio Ducal Teatro of Milan, 1771–1776: A Musical and Social History' (PhD dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1980), 744 and 748–754. Noverre describes his ballet in the *Lettres sur la danse et sur les ballets* (Lyon: Delaroche, 1760), 419–434.

56 Neumann adds as a possible source the opera buffa *Lo'mbruoglio d'ammore* (music by Michele Falco, libretto by Aniello Piscopo, premiered in Naples in 1717); see Neumann, 'Zur Vorgeschichte zur Zaïde', 228. Although *Das Serail*'s subtitle ('Die unvermuthete Zusammenkunft in der Claverey zwischen Vater, Tochter und Sohn') recalls Gluck's opéra comique *La rencontre imprévue* (premiered in Vienna in 1764), performed in German as *Die unvermuthete Zusammenkunft* (premiered in Vienna in 1781), the differences between the plots outweigh their similarities.

57 At the time, Bolzano was a principality in the Tyrol; the Berner troupe's only documented sojourns here occurred in 1767 and 1784. The libretto thus might have been pirated, or have passed into the repertoire of another *Wandertruppe*, before being printed here. For a comparison of the numbers in *Das Serail* and *Zaïde* see Tyler, "'Zaïde" in the Development of Mozart's Operatic Language', 219–220.

58 *Das Serail, / eine / Teutsche Operette. / Auth: Gius. Friebert. / MDCo in Passavia / 1779*. The lone extant copy of this score, at the Don Juan Archiv in Vienna, is now being prepared for publication in a forthcoming critical edition by Hollitzer Wissenschaftsverlag. See also Gottfried Schäffer, *Das fürstbischöfliche und königliche Theater zu Passau (1783–1883): Beiträge zur Theaterkultur in der fürstbischöflichen Residenzstadt Passau und deren Nachwirkung im 19. Jahrhundert* (Passau: Verlag des Vereins für Ostbairische Heimatforschung, 1973), 43–44.

59 See Garnier, *Nachricht*, 12, and Dieke, *Die Blütezeit des Kindertheaters*, 64–65, 87, 203 and 205.

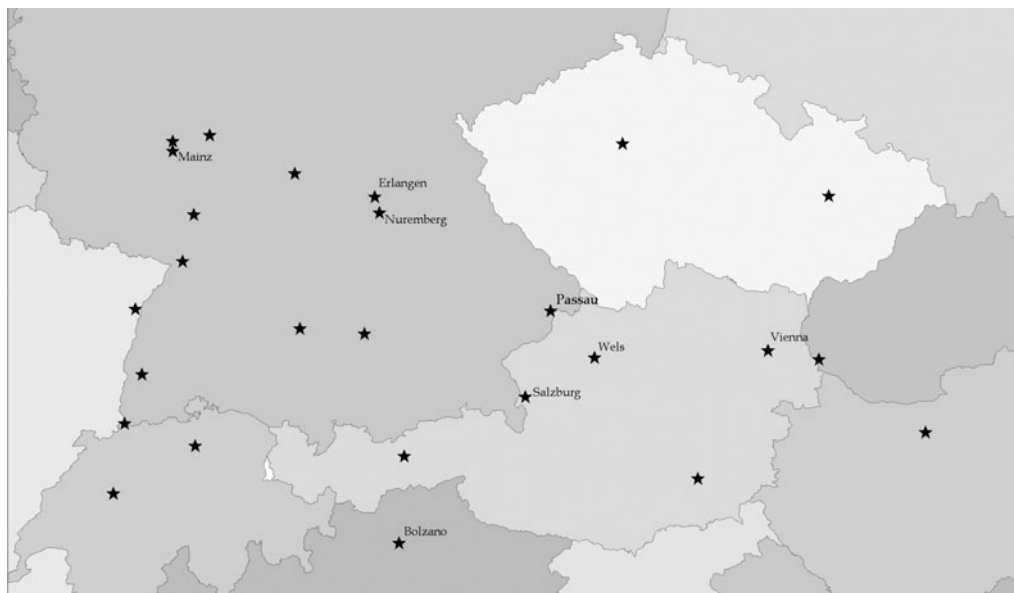


Figure 2 Map showing the principal cities and towns visited by the Berner troupe, 1761–1787, and identifying the cities most closely associated with *Das Serail*

aria ‘Or che il dover / Tali e cotanti sono’) was heard as part of the celebration of the anniversary of Archbishop Schratzenbach’s consecration. Information is lacking about what the Berner troupe performed at their Salzburg debut; but at the time the troupe had a *Bastienne* singspiel in their repertoire, and commentators believe this was the means by which Mozart and Schachtner came to collaborate on their own *Bastien und Bastienne* (K46b), ten years before they took on *Das Serail*.⁶⁰ The Berner troupe returned again to Salzburg in the autumn of 1774, where they performed in the presence of the Archbishop – which also probably meant in the presence of Mozart and Schachtner, who were by this time both employed in the court music.⁶¹ On this occasion, the troupe performed a *Bastienne* singspiel, which may have been their own original version or Schachtner’s adaptation, possibly even with Mozart’s music.

For its part, Berner’s *Das Serail* was probably based at least in part on a singspiel of the same title, now lost, written in 1765 by Franz Joseph Sebastiani for his own *Kindertruppe* and documented as having been performed in Mainz.⁶² Although there appears to have been no direct contact between the Sebastiani troupe and Mozart, they are linked through the librettist Johann Heinrich Friedrich Müller, who also contributed to *Bastien* – and who would eventually produce the replacement to *Zaide* at the Vienna National-Singspiel, Mozart’s *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (K384). Müller had acted as a substitute impresario for

60 On 8 February 1767 Berner’s troupe appeared before the court to perform the singspiel *Der Großsprechender Spanier* and two ballets. Garnier, *Nachricht*, 7. On the creation of *Bastien und Bastienne* see Alfred Loewenberg, ‘*Bastien und Bastienne* Once More’, *Music & Letters* 25/3 (1944), 176–181, and Rudolf Angermüller, ‘Vorwort’ to Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *Bastien und Bastienne*, *Neue Mozart Ausgabe*, series 2/5, volume 3 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1974), ix–x.

61 Schäffer, *Das fürstbischöfliche und königliche Theater zu Passau*, 43, and Garnier, *Nachricht*, 10.

62 While the title correspondence with Berner’s *Das Serail* is suggestive, and one of the three editions of Garnier’s memoir even lists the Berner *Das Serail* as by Sebastiani, Thomas Betzwieser asserts that they are probably not one and the same. See Betzwieser, ‘Mozarts “Zaide” und “Das Serail” von Friebert’, 283–284. Sebastiani’s troupe returned to Mainz in 1768, where *Das Serail* was again performed, to great success. See ‘Geschichte der Maynzer Bühne’, *Theater-Journal für Deutschland* 1 (Gotha: Ettinger, 1777), 67, cited in Dieke, *Die Blütezeit des Kindertheaters*, 51.



Sebastiani's *Kindertruppe* for three months in 1763, and in 1779 – when Mozart and Schachtner were developing *Zaide* – Müller's duties at the National-Singspiel were reduced so that he could establish a 'Theatralpflanzschule' (literally, theatrical nursery) at the Kärntnertheater, intended as a training ground and feeder institution for the National-Singspiel.⁶³ One wonders, therefore, whether *Zaide* might at some point have been intended for Müller's Theatralpflanzschule. For now, this must remain a speculation: the repertoire of the short-lived Theatralpflanzschule does not appear to have included any seraglio operas, and the Mozart family correspondence does not mention Müller's side project.⁶⁴ As for Mozart, he seems to have abandoned *Zaide* on the recommendation of Gottlieb Stephanie the younger, ostensibly because it was too sombre for Vienna, but perhaps also in order to make room for Stephanie's proffered alternative, the libretto to *Die Entführung*.⁶⁵

While there is no exact counterpart in *Das Serail* to *Zaide*'s 'Trostlos schluchzet Philomele', one number may have provided Mozart and Schachtner with inspiration: the arietta 'Ich seh, mit Narrheit gwinnt man mehr' (I see with foolishness one gains more). Like 'Trostlos', 'Ich seh, mit Narrheit' is sung by a European female harem captive. In this case, however, the singer is not the sentimental heroine but the 'second woman': an unnamed *Sclavinn* (slave-girl) who has until now functioned chiefly as comic relief within the drama. A peasant girl from Upper Austria, it is she who enacts *Das Serail*'s audition-scene tableau, singing two light-hearted stage-songs for the sultan, vizier and slave-handler: a shepherd's song and a nonsensical quodlibet in dialect.⁶⁶ Her auditors marvel at her voice and beauty while haggling over her price. Once she is alone, however, she gives voice to her despair and her longed-for liberation.

Coming as it does immediately after those episodes of somewhat degrading appraisal – appraisal in which, by virtue of the stage-songs, the audience has been complicit – the world-weary, even melancholy text of 'Ich seh, mit Narrheit' seems also to address the audience.

Ich seh, mit Narrheit gwinnt man mehr
 Als mit verschmitzten Grillen,
 Ich thu, als ob ich närrisch wär,
 Die Mod werd ich fortspielen.
 Man schwätzt mir vor von Gold und Geld,
 Man will mir geben ein halbe Welt,
 Doch mach ich mir von alln nichts draus,
 Wär ich nur bald bey mir zu Haus.

63 See Johann Heinrich Friedrich Müller, 'Kinderschauspiel des Herrn Müller zu Wien', *Theater-Journal für Deutschland* 17 (Gotha, 1781), 71–74; Müller, *Theatererinnerungen eines alten Burgschauspielers* (1802), ed. Richard Daunicht (Berlin: Henschelverlag, 1958), 34–35; and Dieke, *Die Blütezeit des Kindertheaters*, 156–163. While the only documented performances of Sebastiani's *Das Serail* do not coincide with Müller's time with the troupe, it could already have been in the repertoire when Müller became substitute impresario.

64 The closest the Theatralpflanzschule came is the *Zauberoper* entitled *Zermes und Mirabella, oder: Die vollkommenen Verliebten*, based on Poullain de Saint-Foix's *Les metamorphoses, ou les amants parfaits* (also known as *Les parfaits amants*, premiered at the Comédie-Italienne in Paris, 25 April 1748), which met with great success.

65 See Mozart's letter to Leopold of 18 April 1781: '[wegen dem schachtner seiner operette] ist es nichts. denn – aus der nemlichen ursache, die ich so oft gesagt habe. . . das stück, die langen Dialoguen ausgenommen, welche aber leicht abzuändern sind, sehr gut seye, aber nur für Wienn nicht, wo man lieber Commische stücke sieht'. Mozart, *Briefe und Aufzeichnungen*, volume 3: 1780–1786, ed. Wilhelm A. Bauer and Otto Erich Deutsch (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1963), 107–108.

66 That this second woman does not make it into Mozart and Schachtner's *Zaide* is something of a mystery, especially since it leaves their singspiel with just one female character. Tyler puts the slave-girl's absence from *Zaide* down to her folk roots and the rustic patois of her dialect aria. See Tyler, 'Mozart's *Zaide*', 218.



Jetzt soll ich leben wie ein Hund,
 Ein jeder wird nur schaffen,
 Stets tragen diesen Türkenbund,
 Ich gleiche fast den Affen,
 Hät ich mein Haubn, und meinen Rock,
 Der steht recht wie ä [=ein] Nägelstock,
 Allein! jetzt heißt halt Kleine gusch,
 Daß ich die Sach nicht ganz verpfusch.

I see, with foolishness one gains more
 Than with mischievous whimsies,
 I'll act as though I were foolish,
 I'll play along with the fashion.
 They chatter to me about gold and money,
 They want to give half a world to me,
 Yet I wouldn't care about all these things,
 If I could only be back at home again soon.

Now must I live like a dog,
 [Whom] everyone will only mistreat,
 Always wearing this turban,
 I almost resemble the apes,
 If [only] I had my bonnet, and my skirt,
 That stands up straight like a stake,
 But yet! Now my little trap stays shut,
 So that I don't completely bungle everything.

The slave-girl's expressions of xenophobic disgust for the Turkish 'apes' among whom she must live 'like a dog' seem to welcome in the spectator conspiratorially. She indicts the economy of the seraglio for revering her as a talented performer and simultaneously debasing her as a commodity, and as a buffoon. But the reference to apes might also have reminded certain audiences of Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's famous dismissal of the Piccoli Hollandesi as 'kleine Affen' (an epithet whose staying power is evinced by its reappearance, over a hundred years later, in the *Allgemeine deutsche Biographie* entry on Nicolini).⁶⁷ Thus the arietta might also be read as an auto-critique of the *Kindertruppe* enterprise as a whole.

It may seem improbable that Berner would have subtly undermined the legitimacy of his own company from within one of his singspiels. But in the context of other self-reflexive moments in the *Kindertruppe* repertoire (like *Il n'y a plus d'enfans* and *Die verkehrte Welt*), as well as the equivocal critical assessments of the troupes at this time, it begins to seem less far-fetched. One might consider, too, the music of 'Ich seh', mit Narrheit', whose jaunty contredanse rhythms, typical of the *Singspiellied*, undermine the bitter tone of the words (see Example 2). Its anempathetic quality, in fact, prefigures that of 'Trostlos schluchzet Philomele'.

The metatheatrical critique implied by the slave-girl's arietta takes on further nuance in light of the member of Berner's troupe who took on the role. Cast statistics for the premiere in Wels are not readily

67 Hermann Arthur Lier, 'Nicolini', in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* 23 (1886), 632–635. Lessing wrote about the Piccoli Hollandesi on no fewer than four occasions: 'Zwölfter Brief. An den Herrn A**' (1747); 'Hamburg [review of Carl Samuel Geißler, *Abhandlung von den Pantomimen*]', *Berlin privilegierte Zeitung* 32 (15 March 1749); *Abhandlung von den Pantomimen der Alten* (1750); and 'Versuch einer Beurtheilung der pantomimischen Opern des Hrn. Nicolini, entworfen von Johann Gottlieb Benzin [review]', *Critische Nachrichten* (1751). All in *Gotthold Ephraim Lessing: Werke und Briefe in zwölf Bänden*, ed. Jürgen Stenzel (Frankfurt: Deutscher Klassiker, 1989), volume 1 ('Werke 1743–1750') and volume 2 ('Werke 1751–1753').



Allegretto
vn 1

sop

f

Ich

p

6

seh mit Narr- heit_ gewinnt man mehr Als mit ver-schmitz-ten Gril - len, Ich

f

10

thu als ob ich_ nár-rish wár, Die_ Mod werd ich fort - spiel - en. Man

p *f* *p*

14

schwätzt mir vor von Gold und Geld, Man will mir_ geben ein_ hal - be Welt, Doch

mf *p* *mf* *p*

18

mach ich mir von_ alln nichts draus, Wár ich nur bald bey mir bey_mir zu

22

vn 1
f

Haus, nur bald bey_ mir zu Haus.

mf *f*

26

tr *f*

Example 2 Joseph Frieber, 'Ich seh, mit Narrheit gewinnt man mehr', from *Das Serail, eine Teutsche Operette* (Passau, 1779), voice, first violin and bass lines only. Copyright Don Juan Archiv, Vienna. Used by permission

Table 1 Cast for the Berner troupe's 1782 Nuremberg performance of *Das Serail*

Role	Performer	Age in 1782	Years with troupe
Mahomet Mustapha, Großsultan	Philipp Weis	20	1777–1787
Renegat	Herr Etlinger	unknown	unknown
Komatz	Katharina Schneckenburgerin	14	1780–1787
Zaide	Rosalia Renthin	18	1769–1784
Sclavinn	Margaretha Liskin	15	1772–1786
Osman, Sklavenhändler	Jacob Lessel	18	1770–1787

available, but we do have cast information for one of the 1782 Nuremberg performances (Table 1). There, the slave-girl was played by Margaretha Liskin, who joined the troupe in 1772 at the age of five and was soon one of its most celebrated soubrettes.⁶⁸ If she originated the role of *Das Serail's* slave-girl in 1777, she would have been ten years old at the time.

Liskin was one of the members of the Berner troupe who regularly recited epilogues, particularly when the troupe was taking its leave of a city or town (see Figure 3). One of Liskin's epilogues, reprinted in Garnier's memoir, dates to 1779 in Würzburg, following her lead performance in another theatrical meditation on sexual pursuit and conquest: *Das Milchmädchen und die beiden Jäger* (The Milkmaid and the Two Hunters), a German translation of the 1761 opéra comique by Louis Anseaume and Egidio Duni.⁶⁹ The opera is rife with zoological allegories of seduction, from the two hunters and their elusive bear, to foxes chasing hens and birdcatchers chasing partridges. The most overt image, however, is the milk itself, with the broken jug a well-known symbol of sexual deflowering.⁷⁰ Liskin's epilogue, delivered at age twelve, knowingly employs this suggestive subtext to the opera and her character:

Schon trug ich meine Milch zur Schau,
bot jedem sie zu kaufen an.
Dünke mich in Gedanken Frau,
und hatte den liebsten besten Mann,
den immer ein Mädchen sich wünschen kann.⁷¹

I've now carried my milk to the stage,
offered it for sale to all.
Fancied myself a wife,
and had the dearest, best husband,
that ever a maid could wish for.

There is a long tradition of these kinds of epilogues among child performers, who were, after all, only imitating the bawdy epilogues common among adult troupes.⁷² In 1731, for instance, the debut opéra comique of one of the earliest Parisian children's troupes, the Troupe de Drouin, concluded with the following epilogue delivered by the thirteen-year-old actress who had portrayed the widowed aunt:

68 Liskin is one of just eight members of the troupe accorded a silhouette portrait at the end of the 1786 edition of Garnier's chronicle. See Dieke, *Die Blütezeit des Kindertheaters*, 93–101 and 205.

69 *Das Milchmädchen und die beiden Jäger: eine Operette* (Mannheim: C. F. Schwann, 1771).

70 See Philip Stewart, *Engraven Desire: Eros, Image and Text in the French Eighteenth Century* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1992), especially 'Spilt Milk', 76–78.

71 'Das Milchmädchen an das Parterre, nach der Operette, geschprochen von Mlle. Liskin der ältern in Würzburg', in Garnier, *Nachricht*, 39.

72 See Felicity Nussbaum, *Rival Queens: Actresses, Performance, and the Eighteenth-Century British Theater* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), especially 20–22 and 236–238, and Diana Solomon, 'Tragic Play, Bawdy Epilogue?', in *Prologues, Epilogues, Curtain-Raisers, and Afterpieces: The Rest of the Eighteenth-Century London Stage*, ed. Daniel J. Ennis and Judith Bailey Slagle (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2007), 155–178.



Figure 3 Illustration accompanying the farewell address by an unnamed actress in the Berner Company (Margaretha Liskin?), from a souvenir brochure published in Salzburg in 1783. Stadtarchiv Salzburg, Bibliothek. Used by permission



Messieurs, Si quelqu'un de vous
veut épouser une petite veuve,
je suis à lui, et je vous assure
qu'il trouvera mieux qu'il ne croit.

Gentlemen, if one of you
wishes to marry a little widow,
I am at his disposal, and I assure you
that he will find it better than he can imagine.

The 'little widow' then sings an air in which she boasts:

J'ai, sous des cheveux gris,
L'humeur assez jolie,
...

Vive, fringante & preste,
On me trouve encor des appas,
Et zeste, zeste, zeste,
Bien des jeunes filles n'ont pas
un si beau reste.⁷³

I have, beneath my grey hair,
A rather gay mood,
...

Lively, frisky and nimble,
You will still find charms in me,
And zest, zest, zest,
Many young girls do not have
What I have left.

Even after the introduction of 'regelmäßig' plays into the *Kindertruppen* repertory in the 1760s such double entendres appear to have been stock-in-trade for actresses like Liskin, part of the long-standing erotic subtext of theatrical spectatorship.⁷⁴ These sentiments suggest a further metatheatrical overlay to 'Ich seh', mit Narrheit': like the zesty little widow and the milkmaid, the slave-girl steps outside of her role and addresses her peculiar profession and persona, with its uneasy elision of the chaste and the deflowered, the 'Mädchen' and the 'Frau'.

AGILE THROATS AND RETURNED GAZES

As we have seen, music can act as frame, mediator and irritant in the encounter between subjects and objects of spectatorial desire. Each of these functions is thematized in one of a series of four paintings called

73 *La Nièce vengée, ou La double surprise* (Jean-Claude Gillier and Charles-François Panard, with B.-C. Fagan; premiered at the Opéra-Comique in Paris, 27 August 1731), prologue and epilogue published in Jean-Augustin-Julien Desboulmiers, *Histoire du théâtre de l'opéra comique* (Paris: Lacombe, 1770), volume 2, 153–154. The air on which this text is sung, 'L'amour est un voleur', comes from Marc-Antoine Legrand's *comédie* entitled *Cartouche, ou les voleurs* (premiered at the Théâtre-Français, 14 October 1721). See also Charles Richomme, 'Les Théâtres d'enfants', *Le Monde Dramatique: Histoire des Théâtres Anciens et Modernes* (Paris: Bureau du Monde Dramatique, 1837), 387. For more on the French children's troupes see F. W. J. Hemmings, 'Child Actors on the Paris Stage in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries', *Theatre Research International* 12/1 (1987), 9–22; Robert M. Isherwood, *Farce and Fantasy: Popular Entertainment in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); and Davis, 'Restif, Nougaret, and the Child Actors'.

74 On this subject see Kristina Straub, *Sexual Suspects: Eighteenth-Century Players and Sexual Ideology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).



Figure 4 Carl Henrici, 'Die Sklavin singt', from the series *Das Serail* (1780). Stadtmuseum Bozen. Used by permission

Das Serail, created in 1780 by the Bolzano-based painter Carl Henrici, and loosely based on the Berner troupe's *Das Serail*.⁷⁵ The second painting, known as 'Die Sklavin singt', appears to depict the singspiel's audition-scene tableau rather than the private reflection of 'Ich seh', mit Narrheit' (see Figure 4). But this makes its placement of singer and spectator especially significant: both figures are equally worthy of the viewer's gaze. If anything, the bodily orientations of the accompanying ensemble direct the eye to the forward-facing sultan, who appears almost as though he could be performing to the slave-girl's accompaniment.

There is a confrontational undertone to the frank mutual regard between the two figures. And the bifurcated focal point of the image, not to mention the furtive glances of the secondary figures, leave the viewer unsure with whom to identify. The 'inscribed beholder' in Henrici's painting (to adopt Cuillé's terminology for the musical tableau) is a double for the viewer of the painting – just as 'Ich seh, mit Narrheit' and the episodes of embedded performance found throughout the seraglio-opera repertoire seem to reflect their own bodily commerce in a *mise-en-abyme*.⁷⁶ Such 'thematics of the gaze' can be found throughout pantomime, as John O'Brien has shown.⁷⁷ But when performed by novelty children's troupes, these encounters

75 On this set of paintings see Silvia Spada Pintarelli, 'Una nuova serie orientale di Carl Henrici al Museo di Bolzano', in *Festschrift Nicolò Rasmò: scritti in onore*, ed. Silvia Spada Pintarelli (Bolzano: Comune di Bolzano, Assessorato alla cultura, 1986), 399–407. Luca Scarlini will discuss the paintings in *Ottoman Empire and European Theatre*, volume 3: *Seraglios and Harems in Theatre, Opera, and Poetry*, ed. Michael Hüttler and H. E. Weidinger (Vienna: Hollitzer Wissenschaftsverlag, 2013).

76 Cuillé, *Narrative Interludes*, 15–21.

77 John O'Brien, *Harlequin Britain: Pantomime and Entertainment, 1690–1760* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 19.



have additional connotations, implying both an exoticizing, even voyeuristic attitude toward childhood and a countervailing impulse to preserve, and to venerate, youthful innocence.

The reciprocal nature of the seraglio tableaux explored here is a common theme in current research on the East–West encounter in music and theatre.⁷⁸ Postcolonial theory is also proving increasingly attractive to historians of childhood, many of whom are preoccupied with recuperating the child as a historical agent, a new ‘speaking subaltern’.⁷⁹ The nature of children’s subordination to adults has no analogue in other discourses of alterity, however, and the present study is, by postcolonial standards, still an ‘ideological’ one – that is, one concerned with repertoires created by adults, and the critical reception of those repertoires by other adults. The archival record on historical children’s lived experience with the troupes and their repertoires is frustratingly limited. But as Carolyn Steedman, Jacqueline Rose and Marah Gubar have shown in nineteenth-century contexts, the ideologies themselves were often unusually self-conscious and negotiable.⁸⁰

We must be careful, however, about imputing too much agency to individual performers in the *Kindertruppen*. Lacking even the limited self-determination of the rank-and-file members of adult troupes, young performers – particularly women – were often subjected to abuse and abduction. Nicolini, for instance, was reported to have been a strict disciplinarian whose ‘admonitions came fast, began with slaps on the back, and often ended with kicks’.⁸¹ One female performer in Berner’s troupe was apparently carried off by an enamoured clergyman at age fifteen, with only the intercession of Berner himself securing her return.⁸² Finally, Audinot was described by more than one historian as having used his Théâtre de l’ambigu-comique as a ‘private harem’, even going so far as to pay off the parents of one of his favourites.⁸³

And the lack of agency was as much theoretical as it was historical. More than one children’s troupe had its origins in the marionette theatre, and even those that did not frequently evoked associations with dolls,

⁷⁸ See, for instance, Matthew Head, *Orientalism, Masquerade and Mozart’s Turkish Music* (London: Royal Musical Association, 2000); *Music and Orientalism in the British Empire, 1780s–1940s: Portrayal of the East*, ed. Martin Clayton and Bennett Zon (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007); Julia V. Douthwaite, *Exotic Women: Literary Heroines and Cultural Strategies in Ancien Régime France* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992); and Sarah Colvin, *The Rhetorical Feminine: Gender and Orient on the German Stage, 1647–1742* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1999).

⁷⁹ See, for instance, Daniel Thomas Cook, ‘Editorial: When a Child is Not a Child, and Other Conceptual Hazards of Childhood Studies’, *Childhood* 16/5 (2009), 5–10; Harry Hendrick, ‘The Child as a Social Actor in Historical Sources: Problems of Identification and Interpretation’, in *Research with Children: Perspectives and Practices* (2000), ed. Pia Christensen and Allison James (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), 40–65; and Ludmilla Jordanova, ‘New Worlds for Children in the Eighteenth Century: Problems of Historical Explanation’, *History of the Human Sciences* 3/1 (1990), 69–83.

⁸⁰ Carolyn Steedman, *Strange Dislocations: Childhood and the Idea of Human Interiority, 1780–1930* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995); Jacqueline Rose, *The Case of Peter Pan, or, The Impossibility of Children’s Fiction* (London: Macmillan, 1984); and Marah Gubar, *Artful Dodgers: Reconceiving the Golden Age of Children’s Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

⁸¹ ‘Nicolini führte bei diesen Darstellungen ein sehr strenges Regiment, und der Stock stand bei ihm – nach Sancho Pansa’s Ausdrücke – stets im Winkel, so daß seine Ermahnungen immer auf dem nächsten Wege, mit Karbatschenhieben begannen, und mit Tritten endeten.’ August Klingemann, *Kunst und Natur: Blätter aus meinem Reisetagebuche* (Braunschweig: G. C. E. Meyer, 1821), volume 2, 478–479, quoted in Dieke, *Die Blütezeit des Kindertheaters*, 22. Nicolini, Sebastiani, Audinot and Berner were all rumoured to have abused their charges.

⁸² See Dieke, *Die Blütezeit des Kindertheaters*, 99. To complicate matters, Garnier refers to the girl in question, Katharina Schneckenburgerin, as having a ‘somewhat infamous reputation’ and being a ‘temperamental girl’ – he also admits to having been in love with her himself, and reports Berner having taken a liking to her too, all factors which might affect the reliability of his account. That Schneckenburgerin so often took the male lead roles in the troupes’ performances of sentimental operas suggests another way in which Berner sought to enhance his troupe’s appearance of propriety.

⁸³ See Michèle Root-Bernstein, *Boulevard Theater and Revolution in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1984), 151–152, and Isherwood, *Farce and Fantasy*, 181.



animals and machines. In his autobiography Garnier proudly described his fellow performers as 'living machinery' (*lebendigen Maschinerie*) and 'living marionettes' (*lebendigen Marionetten*); and in 1780s Paris, the repetiteur of the Théâtre des petits comédiens de Beaujolais boasted, 'the children I teach should be no more than little instruments that only I know how to play; ... nothing but little ape imitators'.⁸⁴ Finally, in 1770 the libertine philosopher Nicolas-Edme Restif de la Bretonne, inspired by Audinot's Théâtre de l'ambigu-comique, proposed a utopian *théâtre éphébique* (juvenile theatre) in an effort to purify the acting profession and wed methodical training to unobjectionable, didactic material. In a confirmation of Grosrichard, Bretonne's favoured candidates for this forerunner to Müller's Theatralpflanzschule were orphans, who, as he put it, could most easily be moulded into virtuous 'esclaves publiques' (public slaves).⁸⁵

In the end it was real-world exploitation, rather than any aesthetic scruples, that led to the collapse of the *Kindertruppen*. The Austrian emperor and empress banned all such troupes in 1821 after it was discovered that the son of an imperial foreign minister had been molesting a number of young girls in a popular Viennese *Kinderballett*.⁸⁶ The protection of youthful virtue, it seems, was no longer reconcilable with the commercial display of young bodies. Whether this signalled a new attentiveness to the rights of the young, or simply a wish to sequester them in a sanitized private sphere, is perhaps an irresolvable question. But behind all the dramaturgical debates and moral consternation, there is the still incontrovertible fact of the *Kindertruppen* performers' skill. These were talented and highly disciplined actors, singers and dancers. Jean-Jacques Rousseau himself – from within the pages of *Émile*, no less – praised the Piccoli Hollandesi for possessing as much lightness and precision in their movements as adult dancers.⁸⁷

Marah Gubar interprets the child actors of Victorian England as counterweights to the predominant image of the child as passive, and childhood as a state of passivity:

Perhaps we can read this fascination with precocity as a form of resistance to the growing pressure to conceive of the child as incompetent, weak, and artless, a separate order of being who could not work alongside or enter into intimate relationships with adults.⁸⁸

84 Franz Carnier [Garnier], *Meine Pilgerfahrt aus Mutter Schoos in das Weltgetümmel: Eine wahre Geschichte* (Munich, 1815), 138 and 159, quoted in Dieke, *Die Blütezeit des Kindertheaters*, 113. (See also 'Auszüge aus Briefen: Dünkelsbühl, den 20. Sept. 1778', *Theater-Journal für Deutschland* 8 (1779), 86: 'Genug, ich kann sagen, daß Berner mit seinen lebendigen Marionetten alle Aufmerksamkeit und Achtung verdient'. 'Les enfants que j'ai éduquer, ne doivent être que de petits instruments dont seul je sache jouer; ... que de petits singes imitateurs, plus ou moins bien doués, pour copier et reproduire ce qui leur est enseigné par moi.' M. Dorceval, quoted in Louis Péricaud, *Théâtre des petits comédiens de S. A. S. Monseigneur le Comte de Beaujolais* (Paris: Jorel, 1909), 41–42.

85 Nicolas-Edme Restif de la Bretonne, *La Mimographe, ou Idées d'une honnête-femme pour la réformation du théâtre national* (Amsterdam and The Hague: Changuion, 1770), 431–435 and 449; quoted in David Coward, *The Philosophy of Restif de la Bretonne* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1991), 271–272. See also Davis, 'Restif, Nougaret, and the Child Actors', 152–153.

86 The prince in question, Count Aloys, son of Wenzel Anton, Prince of Kaunitz-Rietberg, was given the equivalent of probation. See W. E. Yates, *Theatre in Vienna: A Critical History, 1776–1995* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 97. On the Kinderballett–Kaunitz case see Daniela Gerstner, 'Das Kinderballett von Friedrich Horschelt: Ein Beitrag zur Wiener Ballettgeschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts' (PhD dissertation, University of Salzburg, 1997), and Susanne Feigl and Christian Lunzer, *Das Mädchen-ballett des Fürsten Kaunitz. Kriminalfälle des Biedermeier* (Vienna: Österreichische Staatsdruckerei, 1988).

87 'Qui est-ce qui n'a pas oui parler en Allemagne et en Italie de la troupe pantomime du célèbre Nicolini? Quelqu'un a-t-il jamais remarqué dans ces enfants des mouvemens moins développés, des attitudes moins gracieuses, une oreille moins juste, une danse moins légère que dans les Danseurs tout formés?' Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Émile, ou de l'éducation* ('Francfort', 1762), volume 1, 199.

88 Gubar, *Artful Dodgers*, 158.



With this thought in mind, the echoes of *Das Serail*'s 'Ich seh' mit Narrheit' in *Zaide*'s 'Trostlos schluchzet Philomele' might resound more clearly. For all that we still don't know about the historical and dramaturgical contexts of Mozart and Schachtner's aria for Zaide, we can still register that apostrophic turn toward the audience: that metatheatrical moment in which, in the absence of any visible cage, the spectator is invited to consider the proscenium, and to acknowledge the captive's limited but persistent degree of agency, even if it is only in demarcating the boundaries of her cell. That more famous 'completion' of *Zaide*, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, registers something of this resistance in Konstanze's aria 'Traurigkeit ward mir zum Lose' (Sorrow Has Become My Lot).⁸⁹ As Konstanze puts it, even the air cannot bear to tell her bitter pain, so it brings all her woes back to her bitter heart.⁹⁰ But of course, the air *does* carry Konstanze's anguished cries to the listener, just as *Zaide*'s Philomela 'bewails with agile throat', or in the case of 'La fauvette avec ses petits', 'all resounds with [Zémire's] pain'.⁹¹ These characters all echo the defiant promise Ovid has Philomela deliver to Tereus, a promise to proclaim the song of her imprisonment and violation, to 'move the very woods and rocks to pity' – a promise she is able to fulfil even after her tongue has been removed from her body.⁹² In Philomela's descendant, *Zaide*, and her sisters in the *Kindertruppen*, the melancholy paradox of the young performer elides with the seraglio nightingale: exiled from herself, at once wronged and revered, sincere and mechanical, voiceless but with 'reger Kehle'.

89 *Die Entführung* eventually made it into the repertoire of a *Kindertruppe*, the one led by Bartolomeo Constantini. Dieke, *Die Blütezeit des Kindertheaters*, 129–130.

90 'Selbst der Luft darf ich nicht sagen / Meiner Seele bitterm Schmerz, / Denn, unwillig ihn zu tragen, / Haucht sie alle meine Klagen / Wieder in mein armes Herz.'

91 'Tout retentit de sa douleur'. Marmontel, *Zémire et Azor, comédie-ballet en quatre actes et en vers* (Paris: Vente, 1772), 33.

92 Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. Rolfe Humphries (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1955), 261.



APPENDIX

Principal eighteenth-century children's troupes active in France and Germany, and some of the Turkish- or seraglio-set works in their repertoire⁹³

Troupe/impresario	Period of activity	Turkish- or seraglio-set works (if any)
Troupe de Drouin	1731–1740s	
Piccoli Hollandesi (Nicolini)	1742–1753	<i>Die türkische Lustbarkeit</i> (ballet)
Franz Joseph Sebastiani	1756–1768	<i>Das Serail</i> (singspiel, Sebastiani)
Les Enfants du Sieur Frédéric	1758–1763	<i>Arlequin esclave par les Turcs</i> (ballet)
Felix Berner	1761–1787	<i>Die drei Sultaninnen</i> (singspiel, after Favart/Gibert, <i>Soliman Second, ou Les trois Sultanes</i>) <i>Zemire und Azor</i> (singspiel, after Grétry/Marmontel) <i>Das Serail</i> (singspiel, Anon./Friebert; also called <i>Der Renegat</i>) <i>Die Pilgrime von Mekka, oder Die unvermuthete Zusammenkunft</i> (singspiel, after Gluck/Dancourt, <i>La rencontre imprévue</i>) <i>Der Kaufmann von Smyrna</i> (Lustspiel, Brahm) <i>Arlequins Sklaverei</i> (ballet) <i>Das Ringen der Türken</i> (ballet) <i>Der prächtige Sultan</i> (ballet) <i>Die Eifersucht im Serail, oder der großmüthige Sultan</i> (ballet, after Noverre, music by Starzer)
Johann Joseph Brunian	1763–1779	<i>Der bezauberte Turban, oder die befreiten Sklaven</i> (komische Zauberoper)
Théâtre de l'ambigu-comique (Nicholas-Médard Audinot)	1769–1784?	<i>Le sérail à l'encan</i> ('pièce turque en un acte', Sedaine de Sarcy) <i>Le bazar ou le marche turc</i> (pantomime) <i>Le sultan généreux</i> (comedy, three acts, Dorvigny)
Theatralpflanzschule (Johann Heinrich Friedrich Müller)	1779–1781	
Mme Fleury	1781–1790	<i>Zémire et Azor</i> (opéra comique, Grétry/Marmontel)
Constantini	1786–1788	<i>Soliman Second</i> (Favart/Gibert) <i>Die Entführung aus dem Serail</i> (Mozart/Stephanie)
Théâtre des petits comédiens (Beaujolais)	1786–1788	<i>Aline et Zamorin, ou l'amour turc</i> (opéra bouffon, Rigel/Dancourt)

93 In addition to primary sources, based chiefly on Dieke, *Die Blütezeit des Kindertheaters*; Garnier, *Nachricht*; Anna de Haas and Jed Wentz, 'Les enfants du Sr. Frederic: The Identities and Performances of a Theatre Family Active in the United Provinces, 1758–1763', in *The Dutchman and the Honeybees: Dance, Dissemination and the Dutch Republic* (Conservatorium van Amsterdam, forthcoming); and *CÉSAR: Calendrier électronique des spectacles sous l'ancien régime et sous la révolution* <<http://cesar.org.uk>> (5 July 2011).