

## EDITORIAL

We are delighted to welcome readers to this first issue of *TheMA: Open Access Research Journal for Theatre, Music, Arts*. This new journal grew mostly from the multifarious activities of DON JUAN ARCHIV WIEN, a non-governmental research and documentation centre in Vienna whose international symposia and publications helped generate an interesting network of scholars working on the history of theatre and other forms of cultural production in Central and Mediterranean Europe, and STVDIVM FÆSVLANVM, a non-governmental research centre dedicated to the artistic and intellectual relevance of Central Tuscany around Florence and her Etruscan ‘mother’ Fiesole in the history of culture; the home of the first ‘villa’ of modern times and the birthplace of what we know as ‘opera’.

*TheMA* is launched by these two research institutions in collaboration with the HOLLITZER WISSENSCHAFTSVERLAG to spin further what has turned out to be an exciting exchange of ideas that often transgressed the traditional borders of the various academic disciplines instituted to research the history of the performing and visual arts. In much the same vein, *TheMA* is launched with the goal of becoming a permanent platform for such exchanges. It welcomes contributions in its core area – the arts in Central and Mediterranean Europe from the seventeenth through the early twentieth century – in much the same way as it is open to papers beyond this focus. *TheMA* particularly invites contributions that go beyond the customary divisions in the study of theatre, music, architecture, painting, and other arts.

*TheMA*’s first issue presents three research papers, a note (which *TheMA* refers to as a “fragment”), and a book review. The papers all address the subject of trans-cultural encounters as imagined in drama and opera from the last quarter of the eighteenth century – a time of incisive cultural and social change in many a place, including Europe east of the Alps.

MATTHEW HEAD (King’s College, London) writes about a ‘seraglio opera’ by the Austrian composer Joseph Haydn (1732–1809): *L’incontro improvviso* (‘The unexpected encounter’) premiered at the palace of Eszterház in western Hungary as part of the celebrations of one Habsburg court’s visit in 1775. Yet, Head finds that it frustrates current understandings for the genre: its ‘politics’, he writes, are not those of ‘East-meets-West,’ but those of enlightening absolutism in general – in the opera embodied by an Ottoman lady.

GABRIELE C. PFEIFFER (University of Vienna) introduces us to three dramas by the Bavarian playwright Franz Kratter (1758–1830) who took up the job of theatre

director in the distant capital of Habsburg Galicia, Lemberg/Lviv. Here, sharp on the borders with the Russian and Ottoman empires, he wrote in the 1790s three plays set one century earlier, in the time of Tsar Peter I (r.1682–1725). Pfeiffer, who has excavated these dramas from the collection known as Komplex Mauerbach in the DON JUAN ARCHIV WIEN, also discusses their author's links with contemporaries like Mozart, Goethe, Schiller and Vulpius in this context and also in the Komplex Mauerbach, she discovers a yet unpublished commentary by Emanuel Schikaneder on his *Zauberflöte* ('The magic flute', re-edition 1795).

After this journey from western Hungary across the Carpathians to Galicia, Tatjana Marković (Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna; University of Arts in Belgrade) drives us to St. Petersburg to witness an opera, set in distant Siberia and based on a libretto authored by nobody less than Russian empress Catherine II (r.1762–1796): *Fevej* (1786). Marković explores with us a curious case of self-orientalizing in this first Russian 'oriental' opera.

The three research papers on theatre and opera are followed by a brief note in architectural history: MAXIMILIAN HARTMUTH (Turkish Cultural Foundation, Istanbul) discusses how the design of mosques came to be seen as one potential task of Central European architects in the late nineteenth century, most probably due the occupation of Bosnia-Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary in 1878. Hartmuth sees this reflected in a rather forgotten manual by Ludwig Klasen, a Viennese architect, published one decade later.

*TheMA's* first issue concludes with a book review, also by HARTMUTH, of a recent work by the Bulgarian-born historian Martina Baleva. The monograph deals with the question of image-production in, and about, the Balkans in a nineteenth-century context. The stress is on history painting and the international illustrated press – and the hitherto little-noticed links between the two.

We hope you will appreciate these contributions. Please share with us your observations by sending an email at [thema@hollitzer.at](mailto:thema@hollitzer.at). We also encourage qualified responses to papers written in the form of notes ("fragments"). Prospective contributors should be able to find all necessary information on our website [www.thema-journal.eu](http://www.thema-journal.eu), where approximately every six months a new issue of *TheMA* will be published. If you would like to be reminded of new issues, please subscribe to the newsletter at the aforementioned address.

The editors.

Michael Hüttler, HOLLITZER WISSENSCHAFTSVERLAG, Vienna.

Matthias J. Pernerstorfer, DON JUAN ARCHIV WIEN, Vienna.

H. E. Weidinger, STVDIVM FÆSVLANVM, Vienna / Florence.