

ABSTRACTS

WILLMAR SAUTER

Periods and protagonists.

The turn of the century 1900 in recent research

The two opening, contradictory quotations about the status of Swedish theatre around 1900 illustrate what this chapter is attempting to show: theatre historiography is a matter of values and choices. A first choice relates to the concept of theatre that is employed – is theatre described according to a linear production model or as a circular event model? The historiographic narrative decides, for example, how long a historical period might be or what constitutes a satisfying explanation. With these basic questions in mind, the chapter introduces three Swedish theatre history books which include the period between 1880 and 1925. All the three books were published in the first decade of the twenty-first century.

The comparison between these three books is organised under five headings: *Periods*, i.e. when the period of modernism begins and ends; *Genres* that are included in the various books, alternatively excluded; *Protagonists* refer to the central theatre artists to which each book refers, who more often than not is the director of the stage performance; *Strindbergians* is the section that surveys the role that is attributed to Sweden's 'national dramatist'; finally, *Spectators* are addressed as a desideratum, because none of the books gives much attention to audiences and the public.

In the concluding section, three distinct research positions are identified. Without referring to individual writers, scholars are described as

observing theatre from a specific location. One is staying 'Behind the wings' to watch the rehearsal process, but also to follow negotiations between management and artists, cultural policies, etc. The second position is 'At the footlights', from where the scholars give all their attention to the performance on stage, which they analyse and interpret. The third location can be called 'In the auditorium', amidst all the spectators who watch the performance but also each other with the intensity of collective communication.

KARIN HELANDER

Children in plays, on the stage and in the audience

Children's theatre is a reflection of contemporary views on children and childhood. Adults and parents, as well as playwrights, actors, directors, pedagogues, and critics dictate the underlying purposes of theatre for the youngest audiences. Traditionally, the adult world has insisted on a theatre that serves either serves a purpose or entertains, and preferably does both. During the first decades of the twentieth century Swedish theatres produced new plays written by pioneering playwrights, such as Anna Maria Roos, Anna Wahlenberg and Walter Stenström. Sometimes the cast was mixed with both adults and children. Children were created in the plays, they were present in the auditorium and sometimes also on the stage.

In some typical performances, children are found in opposition to the grown-ups within different social environments and contexts, from fairy tale castles to poverty. Childhood embraces conflicts and challenges and the children represent courage, common sense, faithfulness and love. The critics often praise the frank and charming child actors, but have problems with the valuations of theatre for a young audience. This chapter analyses shifting representations and functions of children and childhood in the works of Roos, Wahlenberg, and Stenström. The focus of the study is on plays themselves, as well as reviews and other archival source material.

LOVISA NÄSLUND

The theatre king and the actors' republic

Stockholm theatre in the early 20th century was largely dominated by two employers: The Royal Dramatic Theatre, and Albert Ranft, who

owned and managed a growing number of theatres in the city. Employment for actors is notoriously precarious, with typically high levels of unemployment, temporary engagements and pronounced status differences, where a few star actors will have more offers than they are able to take, while others struggle to find work. This period of Stockholm theatre allows us to study how the management of the theatre may have affected working conditions for actors. Employment contracts, letters and other documentation from the Royal Dramatic Theatre and Ranft's theatres from 1886–1926 suggest that while it might be assumed that working conditions for actors would be better in a theatre managed by actors (i.e. The Royal Dramatic Theatre during the association period), the position of an actor in the field and their popularity with the paying audience to a much larger extent determines their working conditions. Thus, high status actors were given higher remuneration and better conditions as well as more power, regardless of where they were employed.

LENA HAMMERGREN

From the ballet chorus to modern dance pioneer.

Changes in the dance profession around the turn of the century

The shift between the 19th and 20th century has in Swedish dance history been characterized by a downturn in classical ballet aesthetics, and emerging trends in the early modern dance and the film industry. In this chapter, the focus is set on a rather unknown artistic family who over the generations exemplify some of the changes that took place in the professional development of dancers, however mainly within the popular culture: Axel Kihlberg, his wife Emilia, and their children Helge, Inez and Iris.

Axel began his career at the Royal Opera Ballet in the 1860s, continued as ballet master in operetta venues and in circuses, and ran his own touring dance company. The children continued successful careers, dancing in variety shows and city theatres. Helge also acted in over 60 films, however playing insignificant roles. The family was involved in educational enterprises, establishing their own dance schools.

The role of the dancers within forms of popular culture must be made part of the national dance history and of how we understand 'the modern' during this period. They provide important knowledge about employment circumstances, the role that a family business could play in supporting a dance career, the development of dance schools, and the kind of aesthetics audiences enjoyed at the variety.

MIKAEL STRÖMBERG

Transfers and shifts. The dynamic operetta.

This chapter examines the operetta as part of an intertextual framework and argues that transfers and shifts within this framework are important aspects for understanding the history and the function of the operetta. As primary empirical material, the article uses reviews from Swedish performances of Sidney Jones' *The Geisha*, to discuss how an Asian themed operetta was developed and received in Sweden. The article further argues for the importance of studying how reviewers described the *The Geisha*. There seems to be a recurring theme, or trope, that treats the operetta as something in decline. A problematization of this emphasizes the operetta as part of an intertextual framework, where past, present, and future, becomes part of a dynamic exchange. The chapter also challenges the opposition between operetta and opera by showing how different artistes moved from one genre to another. This opens for a destabilization of the border between operetta as popular culture, and opera as high culture. All of this connects to the aim of the chapter, which is to argue for the importance of including popular culture when revising dominant beliefs about the past.

BIRGITTA JOHANSSON LINDH

*True Women, Emil Hillberg's Pontus Bark and the reviewers.
The reception of Anne Charlotte Leffler's play True Women (1883)
in performances at Nordic theatres and in the daily papers*

In Anne Charlotte Leffler's play *True Women* (1883) women's positions in their families are debated. The play was staged at Nordic theatres in 1883–1885 with the actor Emil Hillberg in the role of Pontus Bark. This family father is in the antagonistic position of the young female heroine of the play. What happened to the gender ideology of the performances when a popular male actor became the focus of attention in such a role? The question is answered by examining reviews and other kind of articles in Nordic daily papers. In accordance with a semiotic approach, the reviewer's construction of a theatrical event is looked upon as a sign of what has taken place on the stage but from a specific perspective and within an ideological frame.

The analysis shows that as a consequence of Hillberg's acting the external plot and the relationship between Mr. Bark and his wife was accentuated while the internal conflicts of the female characters were subordinated. In conclusion, Hillberg's interpretation of the role mod-

erated the radicality of the gender ideology and of the composition of the play. However, this accommodation to theatrical norms made the reviewers praise the quality of the play.

HÉLÈNE OHLSSON

*When the Swedish diva infected Helsinki with fever.
An investigation of Ellen Hartman's guest performance
in Finland 1889*

During the autumn of 1889 Ellen Hartman, the star of the Royal Dramatic theatre in Stockholm, made a guest performance in Helsinki that resulted in a literal 'Hartman fever'. This chapter is an analysis of this event and a contribution to the history of actresses, divas and celebrity studies. What did Ellen Hartman do on stage to create a success that was regarded as unsurpassed? And what expressions of admiration were seen amongst the audience?

The analysis of the sources reveals Hartman's strategy to represent herself as a diva where her performance was to be the focus, rather than the plays or their mise-en-scène. Hartman's acting style was perceived as modern and absolutely "natural" and her embodied femininity, that was a predecessor to the so-called flapper, was a novelty. The sources also show that the audience surrounded her with processes that gave tribute to her as their chosen diva in accordance with contemporary diva codes. I argue that Hartman's guest performance 1889 comprised both a prevision of the next century through her femininity and acting style, and on the same time was founded in a diva tradition that had long roots back in history.

ASTRID VON ROSEN

*Radical empathy in the dance archive.
Caring for the Russian dancer Anna Robenne*

This article draws on Aby Warburg's montage theory to account for the vast and scattered archives and records after the forgotten and rather mysterious Russian migrant and dancer Anna Robenne (one of her names). By employing a feminist ethics of care and radical empathy throughout the archival research process, a web of relations is created that brings together people and scattered materials from across the globe to compose a hybrid image of Robenne's life and work. This has resulted in a knowledge montage, a historiographical method that fun-

ctions as a relational space where differences and inequalities can meet, move and collide, and where known and unknown records can become active agents in the creation of new productive dance histories in our digital age.

RIKARD HOOGLAND

The Attack on Albert Ranft's theatre empire.

The theatre battle field

In 1921 Swedish theatre was accused for its immorality. The central object of the critique was a production of Mikhail Petrovich Artsybashev's play *Jealousy* at the private owned theatre Svenska teatern. The theatre critics had found the play lacking in its composition but praised the production and the main female actor. The accusation did instead come from Christian newspapers and was then taken up by major big city news outlets – and subsequently it discussed in the parliament. Serious proposals was put forward to establish a censorship on theatre performances. The main target was Albert Ranft, at that time the main owner of theatres in Sweden, allegedly being merely interested in gaining as high profits as possible. Also one of the forerunners of modernist theatre, Per Lindberg, engaged in the debate and accused Ranft for low quality. Nevertheless Lindberg had produced the same play in his own theatre.

This chapter analyse the conflict in perspective of the changing role of youngsters in the Swedish society and the attempt to “rescue” them. Furthermore, there is focus on the conflict of how theatre should be funded. Ranft's successful enterprise was used as an example for reducing governmental funding. In this conflict the modernist took the same position as the Christian movement even if the development of modernist staging did have immorality as one of its main components.