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W.A. Mozart's *opera buffa* fragments then and now: From (re)consideration to (re)construction

A workshop

Uppsala University, 5-7 September 2024

Call for participants

In December 1782, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart informed his father about an opera request from the Court Theatre Director Count Franz Xaver Orsini-Rosenberg: to present a brand-new opera to the Italian troupe engaged for the next season. Immensely enthusiastic about the idea of being able to introduce himself in Vienna with an Italian comic opera, Mozart 'launched' two projects at the nearly same time: *L'oca del Cairo* (The Cairo Goose) and *Lo sposo deluso* (The Deluded Bridegroom). After having drafted several arias and ensembles as well as an overture, he seemed all at once to have lost interest in these projects, however. In February 1784, he concluded: "The music I have written is lying and sleeping well."

In the mid-19th century, the managing director of the Offenbach publishing house André awakened this music from its deep slumber. He completed the incomplete scores and brought them out, laying the ground for a continuous series of attempts to bring these operas on stage. The list of successful theatrical productions includes Victor van Wilder's *opéra bouffe en deux actes L'oie du Caire* (Paris, 1867), Virgilio Mortari's reconstruction *L'oca del Cairo* (Salzburg, 1936), Mireille Larroche's and Béatrice Cramoix's *Fantaisie en deux actes sur deux opéras inachevés de Mozart Quoi de neuf, Monsieur Mozart ?* (Paris, 2006). Acting in line with the expectations of their audience, they mixed the existing opera fragments up in a way convenient in the then-modern theatre.

The workshop *W.A. Mozart's opera buffa fragments: then and now* seeks to develop an alternative way. It turns these unfinished works into effective tools for exploring Viennese opera buffa in all its facets, aiming at "deepening and nuancing the understanding of 18th-century theatre practice" (Tessing Schneider/Wagner 2023). The available source materials – both with and without music – will provide, first, a forum for discussion focused on the principal aspects of opera buffa in the late Theresian and Josephine eras and, second, transform the newly acquired knowledge into a basis for a unique modern reconstruction of Mozart's buffa fragments.

We invite both music and theatre scholars and artists to participate in (re)creating Mozart's opera fragments by reconstructing its broad historical-theoretical framework. We welcome proposals for a 20-minute conference paper or a 30-minute lecture recital focused on one of the following areas:

- 1) topography, chronology, and repertory;
- 2) text, musical forms, and *topoi*;
- 3) plot and character (arche)types;
- 4) social tasks and politics;
- 5) costumes and staging;
- 6) theatre architecture and acoustics;
- 7) singing and acting.

Since the workshop will be held in cooperation with the Royal College of Music (Stockholm), we especially welcome proposals from the field of artistic research.

Please send your **proposal** with an **abstract (max. 250 words)** in **English** and a short bio by **January 31st, 2024** to Karina Zybina (karina.zybina@musik.uu.se). All participants will be notified by February 29th, 2024. **All travel and accommodation costs will be covered by the organizing committee.**