

Abstracts

Walter Werbeck: »The Greek Teuton«. Greek Antiquity and Mythology in the Work of Richard Strauss – a Provisional Balance

The interpretation of the late Richard Strauss as a »Greek Teuton« (»Griechischer Germane«): is a hint to many of his works with material from Greek mythology, especially his operas (from *Elektra* to *Die Liebe der Danae*), to his awareness of the history of culture and to his private artistic ideology. Ancient Greece was in Strauss' firm belief the foundation of the culture of Western civilization, which had its climax in the German music from Bach to the peak Richard Wagner and the echo Richard Strauss. And it was the historical part of the German composer Strauss to complete and finish in his Greek operas the culture of ancient Greece.

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Günter Schnitzler: Aesthetic Concepts in the »Greek Operas« by Hofmannsthal and Strauss

Not least their common relation to ancient Greece leads to the analogy in topics which Hofmannsthal and Strauss chose for their plays. This analogy is also benefitted by the fact that these well known subject matters – in contrast to newly contrived plots or subjects – do not necessarily require the perceivability of single words. In the three finished »Greek operas« – *Elektra*, *Ariadne auf Naxos* and *Die Ägyptische Helena* – there is not only an interplay between text and music, scene and dancing, set and cultural history, but also a variety of different ancient traditions. Thus, unencumbered understanding cannot always been taken for granted, and diacritical assessment of the different ways of how mythological incidents are transmitted is required. Necessarily, the two artists follow distinctive aesthetic pathways in meeting these complex problems; different concepts are being used in any of those operas by both Hofmannsthal and Strauss and these concepts were still significantly alterable while the respective works were still in progress.

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Michael Walter: *Elektra* – Teutonic Fortissimo and Aesthetic Construction

With *Elektra* Strauss tried to modify his concept of opera realized in *Salome*. Whereas with *Salome* Strauss intended to compose an exotistic opera, he tried to compose an archaic opera with *Elektra*. However, in order to surpass *Salome* musically he wrote an opera consisting of a highly complicated system of *Leitmotivs* which lacks the effect of unmediated presence characteristic for

Salome and could hardly be understood by the audiences. Structurally the dynamic figure of Salome was broken down to two static characters, namely Elektra and Chrysothemis which missed all dialectic features of Hofmannsthal's protagonists. Thus, Elektra represents a conceptional crisis with regard to Strauss's operas which was solved in *Der Rosenkavalier*.

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Bryan Gilliam: »Ich bin ein anderer, als ich war!«: *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Transformation and the Rejection of Greek Tragedy

The motif of transformation features in numerous works by Richard Strauss, particularly in the opera *Ariadne auf Naxos* which he composed in collaboration with Hugo von Hofmannsthal. This essay investigates the genesis of the work, also against the backdrop of Hofmannsthal's friendship with Ottonie von Degenfeld. The focus lies not only on an analysis of the concept of transformation in Strauss and Hofmannsthal, but in particular on an in-depth analysis of its musical and dramatical implementation in *Ariadne auf Naxos*.

(Übersetzung Claudia Brusdeylins)

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Katharina Hottmann: »Wie nie ein Sterblicher sein Weib je sah«. On the Dramaturgy of Looks in *Die Ägyptische Helena*

In *Die Ägyptische Helena*, Strauss und Hofmannsthal realized a new genre concept, the »mythological opera«, in which they focussed on the subject of recent traumatical experiences after World War I. With their figure of Helena they developed the traditional female type of femme fatale: Instead of the dichotomization of body and soul, as symbolized by the stereotypes of the saint and the whore, they create the fiction of a »whole« woman whose contradictory qualities must be borne by the man. The struggle for identity of the individual and the restoration of social reliability crystallize in the motif of the look, a central topic as well as dramaturgical method of the opera: Hofmannsthal's scepticism about language pointed him to the theatrical effect of the gesture; Strauss used musical dramatical means from the repertoire of the »synesthetical« Grand Opera.

(Übersetzung Claudia Brusdeylins)

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Rebekka Sandmeier: *Daphne* – Symbol of the Eternal Work of Art

Daphne is the only mythological opera by Richard Strauss which is not based on a libretto or a scenario by Hugo von Hofmannsthal. Yet according to Hofmannsthal's ideas the poet, Joseph Gregor, and the composer invest the drama with an underlying psychological plot, which shows the inner turmoil of the

characters. In most cases the music underlines this by using leitmotifs; Daphnes conflict, however, comes to her from the outside – from her lovers – and is shown in the formal plan and harmonic layout of her solos. The opera thus shows an overall ambiguity undermining the rustic scenery and happy end.

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Reinhold Schlötterer: Richard Strauss, »The Greek Teuton«, and his Last Mythological Opera *Die Liebe der Danae*

According to Hugo von Hofmannsthal's scenario, »Die Liebe der Danae« (1919) – the last mythological opera by Richard Strauss – was conceived as a »serene mythology«. In the course of the collaboration with the librettist Joseph Gregor, however, it moved increasingly towards the grave and the sentimental, finally dominated as it was by the figure of the god Jupiter added by Gregor. In Strauss' composing, there are two rivaling models of the »Greek Teuton«: Greek serenity – if tempered by ironical and parodistical elements – and the heavy German musical tradition as dominated then by Richard Wagner. In this sense, the third act of *Danae* meant for Strauss »the final unification of German music with the Greek soul«.

(Übersetzung Claudia Brusdeylins)