

Operetta in Motion: Networks, Adaptations, and Transnational Circulation during the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries

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From the second half of the nineteenth century through the early decades of the twentieth, operetta had a significant impact on artistic production and consumption in many European and non-European cities, where it contributed to the development of the mass entertainment industry. Rooted in urban popular performance cultures and in constant dialogues with the operatic tradition, operetta holds a liminal position at the crossroads between popular music and so-called “art music”. This position long excluded operetta from any sort of canonic status and reduced it to a mere social or cultural phenomenon.

In recent years, however, operetta has increasingly been reconsidered as a complex phenomenon. Its hybrid nature proves to be its most productive feature and the key to its remarkable capacity to adapt to different cultural and geographical contexts. Processes of translation, rewriting and adaptation, together with an extensive production network, shaped operetta into a dynamic and fluid genre that proved capable of anticipating organisational and production models that would characterise the twentieth-century cultural industry.

This special issue aims to examine operetta as a theatrical system in motion, focusing on the processes of mobility, adaptation and remediation that enabled its global dissemination. The objective is to investigate operetta as a space of intersection between performance practices, production infrastructures, related national styles (e.g., zarzuela, opérette and Savoy opera) and different reception histories. The volume aims to draw on research perspectives that include not only musicology but also performance, media and cultural studies. We anticipate the volume to be published online in late 2026.

Possible topics (not an exclusive list)

- **Translational and transcultural processes:** practices of adaptation, rewriting and recontextualisation of repertoires in national and transnational contexts.
- **Geography and dynamics of mobility:** circulation of works; movements of companies and artists between centres and peripheries along transnational routes.
- **Production infrastructures:** networks, circuits, venues, organisational and managerial models.
- **Genre fluidity and transmediality:** dialogues with other musical and entertainment genres and processes of migration into other media (e.g., recordings, salon music, cinema).

Submission guidelines

The deadline for the submission of articles is **29 May 2026**. Contributions in **Italian or English** are welcomed.

Articles must comply with the editorial guidelines available on the journal's website and be between 4,000 and 12,000 words in length, including notes and references. Submissions must be accompanied by an abstract (in Italian or English) of 300 words and sent to the following address: glispazidellamusica.studium@unito.it. Please include the words "Operetta 2026" in the subject line. Submissions will go through a double-blind peer review process, and authors will be notified of the status of their submissions by 15 August 2026.