The Operatic Century: European Opera in Latin America during the Long Nineteenth Century (1789-1914)

Clare College, University of Cambridge, 25 June 2019; supported by the Royal Musical Association and Clare College, University of Cambridge
Registration and coffee, 9:00-9:30; opening remarks (Ditlev Rindom), 9:30-9:40

Session One, 9:40-11:10

Opera, Civilisation and Beyond (chair: Charlotte Bentley, University of Cambridge)

José Manuel Izquierdo de König (Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Chile): “Arts of death and dying: opera and bullfighting in mid nineteenth-century Lima”

Rosie McMahon (University of Oxford, UK): “Manaus’s Teatro Amazonas: The Opera House in the Jungle?”

Ditlev Rindom (University of Cambridge, UK): “Boom and Bust: Teresa Carreño’s Venezuelan opera company, and the beginnings of Pan-American opera”

Session Two, 11:10-13:00

Transatlantic Economies (chair: Susan Rutherford, University of Manchester)

Matteo Paoletti (Università di Genova, Italy): “The musical trade as a trans-Atlantic business: the case of Walter Mocchi”

Coffee and tea break, 11:40-12:00

Kristen McCleary (James Madison University, USA): “High, Middle and Lowbrow: Opera and the Construction of Social Class Identities in Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1860 – 1910”

Mahima Macchione (Oxford Brookes University, UK): “The ‘global’ reception of Puccini’s Il Trittico (1918) and the operatic culture of the post-war period”

Lunch, 13:00-14:00

Session Three, 14:00-15:30

After Europe (chair: Benjamin Walton, University of Cambridge)

Francesco Milella (University of Cambridge, UK): “Este ídolo del mundo músico: Rossini in independent Mexico”


Rondy F. Torres (Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá, Colombia): “The Operatic Adventure in Bogota: When the European Opera became a National Celebration”

Coffee and tea break, 15:30-16:00
Session Four, 16:00-17:00

Political Subversions (chair: Katharine Ellis, University of Cambridge)


Anibal E. Cetrangolo (Ca’Foscari, Italy/Universidad de San Martin, Buenos Aires): “Opera and the South American rivers”

Concluding open discussion, 17:00-17:30
ABSTRACTS AND BIOGRAPHIES

José Manuel Izquierdo König

Arts of death and dying: opera and bullfighting in mid nineteenth-century Lima

The final scene of Bizet's Carmen might be one of the most studied and discussed ones in the entire operatic repertoire, both by audiences and scholars. The compelling mixture of death and passion inside and outside the bullfighting arena has become a veritable caricature of the tragedies of nineteenth-century operas and the fate of their (mostly female) protagonists. But barely any research has been done on the even more striking competition between bullfighting and opera as real forms of art and entertainment in the Spanish-speaking world during the same period. The comparison, however, came often to the fore not only in Spain, but also in Mexico and Peru, countries that were fighting to secure a place in the world and define their own culture against ideas of civilization, modernity and taste that were increasingly in direct opposition to what bullfighting was and still is today.

In this paper, I will use mid nineteenth-century Lima as a study case for the ways in which Italian opera and bullfighting were discussed as part of a complex duality: either as two competing forms of entertainment, or as two opposing forces representing, respectively, civilization and barbarism. While bullfighting and opera had sustained a healthy relationship, without being confronted as opposites, during the entire eighteenth century, the arrival of “romantic” Italian opera in the 1840s transformed that relation. The same social groups assisted to both venues, and what was expected of audiences and the entertainment itself was largely similar: a voyeuristic physical distance accompanied by alternating bouts of silence and collective noise. Italian romantic opera, however, changed the way the theatre as a place was perceived by local audiences, and created an aesthetic and social rift in the perceptions of what people could or should experience in a modern urban context. This was a fight that engaged people in Lima in complex ways that still have consequences in our own times, and that carefully looked upon, can also reflect on the impositions opera forced onto Latin American nineteenth-century audiences, who rightfully asked: Who has the right to determine what is good in aesthetic, moral and social terms? Why should opera – a foreign gambit – be considered to have the upper hand?

José Manuel Izquierdo is a musicologist based at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Chile. He completed his PhD at the University of Cambridge in 2017, and has published several books and peer-reviewed articles, with his main interest being composers and music-making in the long Latin American nineteenth century. He has developed various projects on the musical heritage of Latin America, including concerts and the organization of new music archives and collections from Chile, Peru and Bolivia. For his patrimonial and scholarly work, he has received multiple awards, including the 2015 Otto Mayer-Serra Competition (awarded by the University of California, Riverside) for the best essay on Iberian and Latin American Music, in either historical musicology or ethnomusicology.

Rosie McMahon

Manaus’s Teatro Amazonas: The Opera House in the Jungle?

The Teatro Amazonas is an iconic Belle Époque opera house in Manaus, Brazil. After opening at the end of 1896 amid a welter of affluence, urbanisation, and European
immigration, it was swiftly filled with Italian opera. Allusions to absurdity or exoticism often surface in discourse about the Teatro, owing to its location in the heart of Amazonia, and it is often referred to as ‘the opera house in the jungle’. In fiction, the award-winning novelist Ann Patchett portrays the Teatro as a bastion of civilisation jarring with the nature that surrounds it; in musicology, Holly Rogers claims that, ‘culture and human history are what the forest is not’. Challenging such assertions, Amazonian historian Mário Ypiranga Monteiro argues that the opera house’s construction was not incongruous, but rather completely in keeping with Manaus’s developments in the years leading up to it.

This paper explores the ‘opera house in the jungle’ epithet often assigned to the Teatro Amazonas, by examining the historical context out of which it came to be built. I contextualise the urban development of Manaus in the late nineteenth century, explaining how and when it came to be a city capable of constructing an opera house. I also discuss early performance venues in Manaus, and what we might call the materiality of the Teatro. By identifying specific features of theatres that preceded the Teatro, I map a changing attitude towards the role of such buildings in urbanising Manaus, particularly in terms of their relationship with the surrounding rainforest. Throughout, the ‘opera house in the jungle’ label is considered in light of the historical context presented.

Rosie McMahon is a DPhil candidate in Musicology at the University of Oxford. Her research focuses on the music and history of Brazil, and her PhD thesis presents a historical and ethnographic study of the opera house at Manaus, in the Brazilian Amazon. She recently translated (from Portuguese into English) Vinicius Mariano de Carvalho's 2018 book Military Music in the War of the Triple Alliance (published by Editora PUC Minas).

Ditlev Rindom

Teresa Carreño’s 1887 operatic season in Caracas is a notorious episode in Venezuelan musical history: an attempt to launch an opera company by the country’s most celebrated pianist, which ended in dismal failure. Invited by President Guzman in 1885 to give a series of recitals – and subsequently to start a permanent opera company – Carreño was by then in the early glory years of her career, after having emigrated to New York as a child prodigy. Her two seasons in Caracas marked her only return to Venezuela during her sixty-year career. Studies of Carreño by Mario Milanco Guzman and others have long emphasised the symbolic importance of Carreño’s time in Caracas in the 1880s, highlighted by her composition of a “Himno a Bolivar” during the visit. Less frequently discussed, however, is that the majority of the operatic troupe were in fact recruited from New York, where Carreño had settled in the previous decade, and from where she had pursued concert tours across the USA.

This paper re-assesses Carreño’s failed operatic experiment through the lens of her North American networks, and the shifting relations between New York, Venezuela and Italy at this time. If the early 1920s are typically seen as the crucial moment in Venezuela’s explosion onto the world stage – most obviously in the astonishing discovery of the oil deposits at La Rosa – Carreño’s tour offers an alternative lens to examine US speculation on the Venezuelan market already by the 1880s. As such, it can both provide a more nuanced framework to account for later experiments by the US gramophone industry, and underline the problematic status of opera’s “civilising” ambitions for local Venezuelan elites.

Ditlev Rindom has recently completed his PhD at the University of Cambridge, with a dissertation entitled “Bygone Modernity: Re-imaging Italian opera in Milan, New York and Buenos Aires, 1887-1914”. His research focuses on opera and urban culture, staging,
singers, transnationalism, auditory and visual cultures, with a particular focus on Italy and its operatic history. He has articles forthcoming in the Journal of the Royal Musical Association and the Cambridge Opera Journal, and in September 2019 will start a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship at King’s College London.

Matteo Paoletti

The musical trade as a trans-Atlantic business: the case of Walter Mocchi

Starting from 1907, the Italian impresario Walter Mocchi became the leading figure of the theatrical and musical trade between Italy and South America. A former politician converted to the operatic business following the steps of his wife – the famed soprano Emma Carelli – Mocchi conquered his leading position through the financial support of relevant parts of the Argentine and Italian economy, that the impresario managed to gather into several joint-stock companies. The large financial ground of these companies (e.g. the Sociedad Teatral Italo-Argentina, the Società Teatrale Internazionale, La Teatral) was defined ‘a huge revolution of theatrical commerce’ and allowed Mocchi to create a network of venues (including the new Colon) for the circulation of his companies and artists, exclusively engaged by the trust ruled by the former politician.

Mocchi’s progress bloomed until the 1920s, when the evolution of taste – as well as political changes – broke these companies down, and pushed the impresario to focus on his activity as theatrical agent.

My paper focuses on the sudden appearance of Mocchi’s trust and its impact on the South American market, and reconstructs his role in the development of the taste through some of the lavish world premieres he produced, from the most renowned (Mascagni’s Isabeau, 1911) to the less known efforts of renewing the musical style (Marinuzzi’s Jacquerie; De Campos’ A Bela Adormecida).

Kristen McCleary

High, Middle and Lowbrow: Opera and the Construction of Social Class Identities in Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1860 - 1910

This paper analyzes the ways in which opera houses and operatic entertainment Buenos Aires, Argentina contributed to the formation of urban social class identities from 1860 to 1910. In Argentina, European opera was considered the epitome of elite identification and values. The two opera houses named Teatro Colon --the first operated from 1857 to 1888 and the second from 1908 to the present-- became the city’s most recognized institutions related to high culture. As such, the Teatro Colon was frequently invoked in urban chronicles and narratives set in the nation’s capital. Drawing from these urban narratives, as well as images, caricatures, and statistical data, I explore the emergence of a middle class identity circa 1910. This timeframe of my paper corresponds to one of
massive immigration, urbanization, and political democratization in Buenos Aires, Argentina’s capital.

The paper is organized chronologically in order to illustrate how discussion about social class evolves over time. The first Teatro Colon reveals a society that had a two-tiered system during an era where theater attendance was largely masculine. I show how the city press focused on narratives of antagonism, separation and masculinity when describing audience behaviors. In particular, moments of conflict between those who sat or stood in the economical sections of the theater were often blamed for rowdy behaviors targeted at those in the box seats. Social class behaviors were clearly articulated from the outset. This first opera house received a great deal of criticism for its lack of safety during an era where theater houses burned down globally with audience members inside.

Despite this and the fact that there was a more elegant opera house, the original Colon played an important role for identification as a member of the nation’s political elites. Estanislao del Campo (1834-1880) parodies opera as an identification of European elite culture in his gauchesque poem, Fausto, which he wrote after seeing the eponymous opera in the Teatro Colon in 1866. In del Campo’s poem a gaucho accidentally gets pulled into the city’s opera house on the opening night of Fausto, resulting in a comedic tour de force about the differences between high and low culture.

For two decades, between 1888 and 1908, there was no Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires. This twenty-year period reveals much about the ways in which other theaters that staged operatic performances, attempted to fill in the gap of elite entertainment. Both the Teatro de la Opera and the Politeama tried to position themselves as elite theaters primarily by petitioning for tax relief from the national government. Tax codes of the time also reveal the transformation of theaters from a two to a three-tier system. The petitions reveal what opera meant to the elites in Argentina. Taxes were based on seating capacity of theater houses and opera houses were the largest and were taxed in a separate category from the second and third tier theaters.

Finally, I discuss the new Teatro Colon that opened in 1908, and recently underwent an extensive remodel from 2005 to 2010. Urban chroniclers continued to use the opera house as a foil for their discussion of social class identities in the aftermath of the theater’s inauguration. In particular, I discuss the narratives centered on the bombing that occurred within the theater in 1910. Through a further analysis of plays, newspaper articles, and short stories, I show how middle class journalists and playwrights continue to evoke the Colon as a symbol of elite identity from which they identified against. Thus, opera and opera houses in Buenos Aires provide an important lens into the formation of social class identities.

Kristen McCleary is an Associate Professor of history at James Madison University. Her book manuscript, “All the City’s a Stage: Theater and Society in Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1810-1920,” is under consideration with Brill Publishers. She has published a number of articles about popular culture in Argentina. These articles investigate the rise of mass culture with the Spanish zarzuela on Buenos Aires stages in the 1890s, the transformation of carnival celebrations there as a result of the late nineteenth century urbanization process, and the performance of masculinity on the city’s stages, among other topics. She has co-directed a study abroad program to Buenos Aires, Argentina since 2008.

Mahima Macchione

The ‘global’ reception of Puccini’s Il Trittico (1918) and the operatic culture of the post-war period
Reception studies tend to be limited by national boundaries, even if at times the focus is transnational (see Pasler 1987, Randall & Davis 2004, Wilson 2007, Kreuzer 2010). Taking a slightly different approach, this study traces the ‘global’ reception of Puccini’s last completed work, Il Trittico (1918), by following in the footsteps of its first national premieres, thus mapping the main operatic centres for Italian opera at the time and bringing to the surface operatic culture and practice of the post-war period. In the late 1910s, opera found itself within a global system: opera houses, on which premieres of works were dependent, were not locally distinct and isolated institutions, but formed part of an early and developing international market with their respective and correlated ecosystems of impresarios, performances (and thus performers), audiences and critics, resulting in a number of associations across countries and continents. This paper explores the fortunes of Il Trittico from the world premiere at the Metropolitan Opera in New York through the two years that followed, paying particular attention to the role played by Buenos Aires. It examines the music criticism that emerged across borders, confirming that the ‘darling of the opera-going public’ continued to provoke extreme reactions from critics around the world. Equally, it uncovers both the international dealings behind the world premiere and a number of connections between the various operatic centres involved, while numerous early twentieth-century phenomena expose a burgeoning global operatic market: opera house rivalries, nationalistic claques, unconventional casting practices, and soaring singer fees.

Mahima Macchione has recently completed an MA in Music (Opera) at Oxford Brookes University. She has acted as Research Assistant both within the OBERTO opera research unit and for the Youtube channel Opera Show. She is also a regular contributor to Opera Today.

Francesco Milella

Este ídolo del mundo músico: Rossini in independent Mexico.

The first performance of Rossini’s Il Barbiere di Siviglia in Mexico City in 1823, a few years after the declaration of independence from Spain, marked a pivotal moment for the cultural development of the Latin American Nation. For the following fifteen years (1823 – 1838), the Rossinian operatic repertoire became an essential actor in the renovation of the local theatrical life, with his operas frequently performed by outstanding European singers, including Manuel García and Filippo Galli. Beyond actual performances, however this operatic fever also helped to shape post-revolutionary urban narratives (in newspapers, sketches and pamphlets) and to spread the Italian operatic sounds through the streets and homes of the Mexican middle classes. By means of a thorough analysis of such sources, my paper will seek a deep understanding of the ways through which Rossini laid the foundations of the nineteenth-century theatrical life in Mexico City by leading Mexican society towards new cultural horizons. As an eminent representative of the Restoration cultural milieu, he thus turned out to be much more than a fashionable composer capable of creating catchy melodies. Instead, Rossini’s music became the bearer of modern and post-revolutionary values that led to a radical change in musical and cultural tastes, employed both to help rid Mexico of its Spanish Bourbonic past and to achieve a new modernity through an appeal to international cultural prestige.

Francesco Milella is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Cambridge (Jesus College) under the supervision of Dr Benjamin Walton. Francesco studied Modern Literature, Cultural Politics and Musicology focusing on the musical connections between Europe and Mexico. He then examined Italian operatic cultures of Gioachino Rossini and the late bel canto.
period stressing the social and political role they played in Latin America at the dawn of the nineteenth century. His doctoral research analyses the musical dialogues between Early National Mexico and the European operatic cultures through the international activity of the Spanish tenor and composer Manuel García (1775-1832).

Leonardo Manzino

The Rise of 19th Century Uruguayan Opera: Syncretism of Italian Musical Gusto and the Uruguayan Search for Identity in a Cosmopolitan Era

This paper details the results of ongoing research concerning the emergence of Uruguayan opera in the last quarter of the 19th century, a period when the Uruguayan Government (in pursuit of national identity) supported European opera companies in Montevideo in return for world premieres of Uruguayan operas. The principal areas addressed are opera antecedents in Uruguay, the involvement of European and Uruguayan opera associates (composers, librettists, singers, editors and impresarios), controversies over aesthetic matters, stylistic inclinations, patronage practices including the role of the government, and the preferences that Uruguayan audiences had for different trends of European opera. The paper sheds light upon the contribution that 19th century Uruguayan operas made to the western opera repertoire. European opera reached Uruguay when the Casa de Comedias—the first theatre in Montevideo—opened in 1793, offering Spanish Tonadilla Escénica during the colonial period. The arrival of Italian opera in Montevideo in 1830 led in 1856 to the opening of the Teatro Solís—a typical 18th century style Italian opera house. The thriving generation of Uruguayan composers born around the middle of the 19th century stimulated the rise of Uruguayan opera in the latter part of that century at a time of great demographic change, when the country was becoming increasingly cosmopolitan due to continuous European immigration that boosted the population of Montevideo by a staggering 72% between 1873 and 1889. The world premieres of four Uruguayan operas between 1878 and 1912—namely La Parisina (1878) and Manfredi di Svevia (1882) by Tomás Giribaldi, and Colón (1892) and Liropeya (1912) by León Ribeiro—reveal the syncretism that joined local forces with their European counterparts. These operas combined Italian musical fervour with a national quest for identity in a cosmopolitan environment. Their productions also show government policy on opera patronage. Music historiography considers Giribaldi’s La Parisina the first extant Uruguayan opera—the musical counterpart of Uruguayan contemporary paintings, sculptures and literary works conceived to promote awareness of national identity. Giribaldi´s operas and Ribeiro’s Liropeya use librettos in Italian, with the latter inspired by a dramatic piece in Spanish published in 1853 on native ethnicity—El Charrúa by Uruguayan playwright Pedro P. Bermúdez. The Uruguayan Government commissioned Ribeiro´s Colón in 1892 to commemorate the fourth centenary of Columbus’s first voyage to the New World. It remains the only extant 19th century opera with a Spanish libretto composed in the Western Hemisphere to celebrate that occasion. The rise of Uruguayan opera in the late 19th century witnessed the dawn of musical criticism in Montevideo. Newspaper and music magazine articles provide contemporary assessments of the issues previously outlined. These sources illustrate Uruguayan Government policy on opera performances associated with patriotic festivities promoted on occasions such as Independence Day or Constitution Day. Correspondence between composers and librettists—in particular the Italian librettist Luigi D. Desteffanis who established himself in Montevideo around 1866—provides valuable information about their cooperation in the choice of subject matters and
dramatic action in their works. All these sources also provide information on tours by European opera companies on the Atlantic Brazilian coast and the River Plate area that were pivotal to the development of opera business in Uruguay. The music manuscript excerpts from these four operas, edited by this author in 2018 and 2019, provide the music source of study for considering stylistic trends. The list of published works that follows shows the pioneering contribution that the author has made in this area of research over the last 25 years. In addition to editing music manuscript excerpts from these four operas, he has contributed to a series on Uruguayan music since 2004, which has included books on León Ribeiro, Tomás Giribaldi and Uruguayan 19th century opera.

Leonardo Manzino has been Professor of Music History at the Escuela Universitaria de Música, Universidad de la República, Uruguay since 1995. He obtained the degrees of Licentiate in Musicology (1985) at the Universidad de la República, Uruguay, Master of Music (Piano Performance, 1989) and Ph.D. (Musicology, 1993) at The Catholic University of America in Washington D.C. He edited Volume 20 of Composers of the Americas, contributed articles on Uruguay, 19th century Uruguayan composers, and 20th century Latin American composers to The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians (2001), and published several books and music editions on Uruguayan Romantic Music.

Rondy Torres

The Operatic Adventure in Bogota: When the European Opera became a National Celebration

During the nineteenth century, Italian, French and Spanish travelling companies visited America and strengthened the passion for opera across the continent. Opera became synonym of modernity, progress, bon goût: the ideal of civilization pursued by the newborn American republics. Because of geographical location – the journey from Europe to Bogota could last three months – the lyrical companies didn’t reach the city until the second half of the century. But then, it was an operatic boom: Bogota finally enjoyed staged operas of Rossini, Donizetti, Bellini, Verdi, a repertoire already known by the elite through piano transcriptions and the literature.

The objectives of this paper are to draw the attention to the little-known history of the nineteenth-century opera in Colombia. I would like to share with the academic community the results of my research: what do we know about the touring opera companies that visited Bogota (repertoire, musicians….?) and their performances? The case of Ponce de León allows for understanding how the Italian repertoire was assimilated by a local composer. The Colombian composer José María Ponce de León (1845-1882) grew up in the blooming of the Italian opera in Bogota. After the performance of his first works, he travelled to Paris to accomplish his musical education. Back in Bogotá, he wrote the operas Ester (1874), Florinda (1880) and the zarzuela El castillo misterioso (1876): Colombian opera was born.

The study of the opera in Bogota must be completed by other considerations to help us to answer those questions: what was the relation between the lettered city and the sounding city? Was it possible to define national opera in a political and social context that was defining a
new identity? How was a *cosmopolitanism* style supposed to sound *national*? Was the European opera a national celebration for the elite?

*Rondy Torres is a Colombian musicologist and conductor. Rondy Torres earned his Ph.D. in musicology from the Université Paris IV - Sorbonne and graduated from the Conservatoire Supérieur de Paris. Presently he is associated professor in the Music department of the Universidad de los Andes. He has been invited professor in the Music Department in the UESS of in Guayaquil and the Cuenca University in Ecuador. Rondy Torres has focused his work on the recovery of the forgotten Colombian opera. Thanks to the critical editions of the scores and the librettos, the performances and recordings of those operas, that repertoire can now be heard in Colombia. With several publications and his participation in international colloquiums, he promotes the knowledge of Colombian nineteenth-century music. Currently, Rondy Torres is working on an unexplored archive: the 19th century collection from the Bogota’s Cathedral musical archive.*

**Vera Wolkowicz**

*Love, Treason and Fatherland: Italian opera and local politics in mid-nineteenth-century Buenos Aires*

In 1848 a troupe of Italian singers travelling from Brazil arrived in Buenos Aires to stage a season of Italian opera. Buenos Aires audiences had not heard performances of full operas in almost twenty years, ever since Governor Juan Manuel de Rosas’s rise to power brought a political and social instability that precluded regular festivities. Rosas’s regime was known for its political violence and society was divided into two factions: the federalists (*federales*) and the unitarians (*unitarios*). Opponents to the government (i.e. unitarians) were ruthlessly persecuted and murdered, and many of them sought refuge in neighbouring countries.

While Rosas’s regime has always been understood as an artistic wasteland, little to no attention has been paid to the reinstatement of opera and other artistic practices towards the end of his government, during a period of comparative political and economic stability. Despite the rampant governmental censorship, I argue that audiences invested these performances with political meaning. In this paper I will examine in particular how critics and audiences based their judgment of the quality of operatic performances on perceived political differences, through the readings of reviews and letters published in two official newspapers: *El Diario de la Tarde* and *El Diario de Avisos*. In the columns of their pages we can find, for example, accusations of an impresario being an “unitarian” or traitor to the fatherland if critics believed his artistic judgments undermined the expectations of a federalist audience. In this manner, I intend to rethink how Italian opera can also be understood and reinterpreted in political contexts outside Europe.

*Vera Wolkowicz holds a Ph.D. and an M.Phil. in Music from the University of Cambridge and a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Buenos Aires. Her research focuses on Italian opera in mid-nineteenth-century Buenos Aires, and Latin American musical nationalisms during the first decades of the twentieth century. She is the author of *Música de América. Estudio preliminar y edición crítica* (2012) and co-author of *Carlos Guastavino. Músicas Inéditas* (2012) published by the National Institute of Musicology (Argentina). She is currently*
An Early Career Fellow at the Institute of Musical Research (Royal Holloway, University of London).

Aníbal Cetrangolo

Opera and the South American rivers

This paper studies the dissemination of opera in the Americas through the rivers of South America. Xoan Manuel Carreira has already studied the penetration of Italian opera in the Iberian peninsula during the eighteenth century via the navigation of rivers. Rivers were of course not the only means of operatic movement, and in other contexts studying the relationships between operatic movement and the development of train networks in urban environments (and the great economic developments that accompanied them) would also be significant. The aim here is instead simply to highlight the overlooked importance of rivers in these broader processes, uncovering connections between theatres built along the Paraná and Uruguay Rivers. In particular, these theatres emerged in connection with significant business routes during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Although local documentation is scarce, attention to advertisements, local accounts and photographs can help us to reconstruct this crucial element of operatic history in South America.

Aníbal Cetrangolo is the director of IMLA (Instituto per lo studio della musica Latinoamericano) and RIIA (“Italo-Ibero-American Relationships”), the study group of the International Musicological Society, and former professor at several Italian conservatories and universities, as well as in Argentina. He received his PhD from the University of Valladolid, and is the author of several monographs, including Opera, Barcos y Banderas (2015), the recently published Dentro e fuori il teatro (2019) and several studies of Giacomo Facco. He was awarded the prize by the Fundación Konex in 1999 for his musicological contributions.