

You Took the Words Right Out of My Mouth:
Dislocated Text in Operas by Offenbach, Korngold and Massenet

Wednesday
April 30, 2014
1:00pm
Indiana Memorial Union
Redbud Room

COMMITTEE

Margaret Gray, Chair
French and Italian

Peter Burkholder
Musicology

Rosemary Lloyd
French and Italian

Emmanuel Mickel
French and Italian

If you would like to attend, please
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INDIANA UNIVERSITY

DISSERTATION DEFENSE: CHRIS LYSACK

In any play within a play, audiences and performers must confront the problem of who owns the spoken text: how much of the content is expressed by the actor and how much by the character? When Leoncavallo's *Pagliaccio* accuses Colombina of infidelity, there is a window of uncertainty during which the actors speak for themselves instead of for their stock characters, but the audience remains deliciously unaware. This doubled presentational frame is the starting point of my study; after contrasting the play within a play from *Pagliacci* with the overtly authorial act in Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos*, I proceed to define dislocated text as the fusion of these two paradigms—as text spoken by one character who is the creation of another. In this study, I examine three types of these nested narratives: the literal act of writing and telling tales in Offenbach's adaptation of E. T. A. Hoffmann's fantastical stories, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*; the dream sequence as creative and narrative act in Korngold's *Die tote Stadt*, based on Rodenbach's *Bruges-la-Morte*; Des Grieux's autobiographical account from Prévost's *Histoire du chevalier Des Grieux et de Manon Lescaut* and Massenet's refutation of this authorial agency in his operatic adaptation, *Manon*. Throughout this study, I pay particular attention to instances of dislocation through diegetic musical performance, to the difficulty of attributing ownership of dislocated text when the created object is speaking to its own creator, and finally to what I call positive feedback, defined as the agency that this narrated object assumes in determining its own further narration.