

Olive Baldwin, Thelma Wilson  
Essex

### Places for Dancing: Assembly Rooms in 18<sup>th</sup>-Century Essex

The 18<sup>th</sup> century saw a marked increase in the provision of leisure activities for the comfortably-off in provincial towns – theatres, concert rooms, booksellers and circulating- libraries and, not least, assembly rooms for dancing. The leading inns in urban centres and on coaching routes were enlarged by the addition of long rooms, and buildings were erected to provide new and attractive dancing rooms with the necessary card rooms and refreshment facilities. There were subscription series of assemblies, balls put on for their own benefit by dancing masters and musicians and balls on occasions when members of county gentry families came to town for races week, assizes week or a Handel festival. Assembly rooms were erected and run either as a commercial proposition by inn keepers and the developers of spas or by committees of local gentry intent on improving the facilities in their neighbourhood. The provision of assembly rooms in Essex illustrates the general popularity of social dancing at this period and the variety of venues adapted or erected for the purpose.

**Olive Baldwin and Thelma Wilson** have written extensively on 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>-century singers and theatre performers for musical periodicals and for *New Grove* and the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. They edited facsimile editions of the complete songs of Richard Leveridge (1997) and of *The Monthly Mask of Vocal Music, 1702-1711* (2007). Recent articles and papers include 'Nancy Dawson, her hornpipe and her posthumous reputation' (*RECTR*, 2015), 'Dancing the Hornpipe in *The Beggar's Opera*' (Oxford, April, 2018), 'Reading the Accounts: Dancers at Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre in the season of 1726-7' (Oxford, April 2019), *Watching the Maskers: Masquerade Dances in the London Theatre* (Oxford, via Zoom, 2020), 'A Hundred Years of the Funeral Procession and Dirge in *Romeo and Juliet* (*Theatre Notebook*, forthcoming, 2022) and 'Mistresses of Dancing-schools in Edinburgh, 1755 to 1814 (*Historical Dance*, forthcoming).

**Julia Bührlé**  
**Université Sorbonne Nouvelle Paris 3/ German Centre for Venetian Studies**

### **Dance in Venice Before and After the Fall of the Republic**

According to the dance scholar José Sasportes, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, more ballets were performed in Venice than in any other city. Unlike Naples or Milan, for example, Venice did not become a stronghold either of Noverre's French or Angiolini's Italian style. Venetian theatres showed works by both masters and their followers, including Charles LePicq, Louis Henry, Francesco Clerico, and, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Gaetano Gioia, Salvatore Viganó and Filippo Taglioni. Which subjects did they choose for their ballets, how did they treat them, and what contribution did these works make to European ballet history and the cultural history of Venice? In my paper, I will provide some answers to these questions by analysing a number of literature-inspired ballets created in Venice in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century. I will situate them in the context of Venetian cultural history, especially by establishing links between developments in ballet, opera and theatre, and assess their contribution to the development of the *ballet d'action*.

**I. Julia Bührlé** (Université Sorbonne Nouvelle Paris 3/ German Centre for Venetian Studies) studied Comparative Literature, History of Art, and International Relations in Stuttgart, Paris, and Oxford. In 2014, she completed her Franco-German PhD entitled *Literature and Dance: the Choreographic Adaptation of Works of Literature in Germany and France from the Eighteenth Century to the Present Day* (published in 2014). She also authored a biography of the dancer Robert Tewsley (*Robert Tewsley: Dancing beyond Borders / Tanz über alle Grenzen*, bilingual English-German, 2011). Besides, she has worked for UNESCO, the Munich Ballet and the Paris Opera, and she took part in the BBC documentary *The King Who Invented Ballet: Louis XIV and the Noble Art of Dance* (2015). Following a Leverhulme Early Career Fellowship at New College, Oxford, she is currently writing the first global history of ballet adaptations of Shakespeare's works.

Michael Burden  
New College, Oxford

### A London Season: Dancing at the King's Theatre in 1832

The London season of 1832 was quite remarkable in the history of the London Italian opera. The season was managed by Thomas Monck Mason, an imaginative man, but with little financial acumen and no experience in opera or, indeed, theatre management. After the season ended, he was made bankrupt and the conduct of his season became a matter for the Dramatic Committee. As well as the usual stresses of an opera season, Monck Mason had to contend with the arrival of cholera in the capital and the public response to the Reform Bill.

Mason's imagination, however, moved the opera house beyond its single mission to stage and promote Italian opera in Italian, and imported German opera in German performed by Germans, and French opera in French performed by French singers. Both of these things were firsts. The repertory was equally unusual; the German company brought the first staging in London of *Die Freischutz* in German and the first staging of Beethoven's *Fidelio*, which the French company brought the new *Robert le Diable* with its composer Meyerbeer, snatched by Monck Mason from under the nose of Henry Bishop of Covent Garden.

As always, the opera was backed up – financially - by dance which had by now moved decisively from theatre dance to narrative ballet. In the 1831-32 season London had the advantage of the fall-out from an internecine war at the Paris Opéra, which saw Albert - the dancer and ballet master François-Ferdinand Decombe ousted from the company - clearing the way for the appointment of Jean Coralli as *premier maître de ballet*, and Filippo Taglioni, whose première of *La Sylphide* took place on 12 March 1832. This paper will explore Albert's work for the 1831-32 London season, including a consideration of the images which recorded this remarkable season.

**Michael Burden** is Professor in Opera Studies at the University of Oxford; he is also Fellow in Music at New College, where he is Dean. His published research is on the stage music of Henry Purcell, and on aspects of dance and theatre in the London theatres of the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. These include a five-volume collection of opera documents, *London Opera Observed*, and a study of the London years of the soprano Regina Mingotti, and – edited with Jennifer Thorp – *The Works of Monsieur Noverre Translated from the French*.

Keith Cavers  
Independent Scholar

**Before the Planet of the Apes. Marvellous Mazurier; or, Monkey-Business at  
Covent Garden in 1825**

So many great dancers have made the journey from Paris to London in search of many different things - whether they sought artistic freedom from the vice-like grip of Gardel at the Opera or simply came for the adulation and (most probably) for the money - London managements were always prepared to pay for the best of whatever was available. Also there were so many French resident in London that it must have seemed almost like home. So it came to pass that Charles-Francois Mazurier accepted the offer to play a season in England's Capital. He was taking a risk, despite his celebrity and 'puffing' in the press there was some xenophobic hissing during his debut.

Today Mazurier makes hardly a footnote in the wider studies of dance - mainly as model for, and teacher of, the young Jules Perrot, but in his lifetime he was as celebrated as any dancer in Europe. Was he giving London anything new? - long before this Master Menage and others had essayed the taxing (and dangerous) simian roles chimpanxsee or Jocko. Just what made the audiences of the Theatres Royal accept from Mazurier what they would have been happy to watch in other performers in performances at the minor theatres or at the circuses?

**Keith Cavers** is an independent curator, scholar and consulting iconographer. He studied Stage Management at RADA and the History of Drawing and Printmaking at Camberwell. His M. Phil thesis at the university of Surrey was on the dancer and choreographer James Harvey D'Egville. This led to a visiting research fellowship at Harvard in 1996 where he returned to pursue research in both 2015 and 2016. He was Slide Librarian and a Visiting Lecturer at Camberwell for twenty years and Information Officer at the National Gallery for twelve. In 2018 he printed illustrated versions of George Chaffee's Catalogues of English and American dance prints. During lockdown he assembled a chronological sourcebook of late Georgian published sources now over 450,000 words, with a matching Iconography. He is currently working on an historical study: "Ballet in Late Georgian London 1776 - 1836."

Mary Collins, Royal Academy of Music and Royal College of Music  
Joanna Jarvis, Birmingham City University

### The Duchess, Cummings and the Butchers' Daughters

*Town* and *Country* are two states or concepts which largely remain clearly distinct but often, indeed, overlap. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, although dancing and entertainments were placed firmly within each context they in fact inhabited a spectrum bridging these two worlds.

This paper focuses upon the 18<sup>th</sup>-century Kingdom of Ireland examining the flexible medium in which dances, performers and audiences occupied these two spheres and the way in which the social calendar followed by the Dublin aristocracy permitted genres and styles which were, in many cases, transposable. As the aristocracy moved back and forth between their town houses and country estates we will explore the way in which members of these two realms were affected. Actors and dancers, who were often dependent upon the aristocracy, also found their lives impacted by a relationship which inevitably held benefits for those patrons.

Contemporary accounts will be used to demonstrate this phenomenon in the lives of notable theatrical artists working in 18<sup>th</sup>-century Dublin, contributing to a greater understanding of the relationship between audiences and performers at this time.

**Mary Collins** is an Early Dance specialist whose research and teaching approach has inspired musicians to look afresh at the dance music that is at the heart of the baroque repertoire bringing, in turn, a fresh perspective on the great composers of the baroque era. A practitioner and researcher, Mary has worked with music, dance, theatre and TV companies as adviser, choreographer, dancer and actress, touring regularly to give master-classes, concerts, lecture-recitals and workshops. Mary teaches at the *Royal Academy of Music* and *Royal College of Music* in London and receives frequent invitations from conservatoires throughout Europe. Summer Course faculty positions include the *Ringve International Summer Course* in Norway, *Aestas Musica* in Croatia, *Austria Barokakademie* and, in 2022, the *Cambridge Early Music Summer Course (Baroque week)*. Through collaboration with many of the world's leading exponents of early music, Mary's radical impact upon historical performance-practice is widely acknowledged.

**Joanna Jarvis** is a senior lecturer in Design for Performance at Birmingham City University, and is a practicing designer and maker of period costume for Renaissance and Baroque dance. She has a long working relationship with the researcher and choreographer Mary Collins. Joanna's doctoral thesis examined the relationship between costume for dance on the stage, the women in the audience, and fashionable dress, in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Anne Daye  
Historical Dance Society

**A Medley of Madness: Characters from Contemporary Life in the Jacobean Masque 1613 and 1614**

Following the introduction of professionals as dancers into the elite English court masque in 1609, dubbed 'the antimasque', the king and his government could animate political messages in a fresh and vivid manner. The antimasque section presented the antithesis to the thesis of good government in the main masque by the nobility. Following the presentation of supernatural figures of witches and satyrs, from 1613 a range of town and country characters were frequently to be seen.

Through discussion of the mad people of *The Lords' Masque*, the country folk in *The Masque of Grays Inn and Lincoln's Inn*, both of 1613 the Irish footmen of *The Irish Masque at Court* and the sailors of *The Somerset Masque* of 1614, this paper will trace how they were represented in music, dance and costume and the multiple layers of political symbolism deployed in the entries. Two of the character-types belonged to the world of early 17<sup>th</sup>-century London: mariners on the Thames, Irish footmen employed as messengers, and each of the mad people representing social types. The country folk were a bizarre mix of human and animal types. Antimasque dancers were also establishing a new profession of dancer, drawn from the profession of players, not that of musician as in France, leading, I argue, to a significant emphasis on verisimilitude in representation.

**Anne Daye** is a teacher, researcher and writer on historical dance, primarily of social and theatre dance of England within the European Renaissance. Her doctoral thesis 2008 broke new ground by discussing the performance and dance of the Jacobean masque. Investigating the vernacular forms of morris and country dance is central to her studies. Anne publishes widely, most recently an article on Shakespeare's use of masque for *The Oxford Handbook of Shakespeare and the Dance* 2019 and on court dancing for *Performances at Court in the Age of Shakespeare* for Cambridge University Press 2019. Following a career as lecturer in Dance History in HE Dance Departments, Anne continues to research in retirement and is Director of Education and Research for the Historical Dance Society.

**Joseph Fort**  
**Kings College London**

**From Beer Houses to Palaces: Dance Venues in Late 18<sup>th</sup>-Century  
Vienna and its Suburbs**

In 1789, the travel writer Philipp Röder counted 460 dance venues in Vienna and its suburbs. While this may be something of an overestimate, it speaks to the proliferation of such institutions over the final decades of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. (Indeed, changing legislation contributed to this state of affairs, with various drinking houses reclassifying themselves as dance halls in order to escape more stringent legal restrictions.) Using Maximilian von Grimm's 1797 map of Vienna, this paper will plot the locations of some of these dance venues, considering them in the context of the city's rapidly changing demographics, with the growth of the middle class. It will explore ways in which venues in particular areas of the city catered towards attendees from their immediate localities, and how they adapted their activities according to the class of the attendees. In so doing, the paper will paint a picture of the vast range of dancing options available to Viennese citizens at the end of the century.

**Joseph Fort** joined King's in September 2015, upon completing a PhD at Harvard University. (Previously, he studied at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, and the Royal Academy of Music.) He is active as a musicologist and conductor. His research focuses on 18<sup>th</sup>-century music, with particular interests in: dance-music relationships; the music of Haydn; arrangements and adaptations; performance issues; and phenomenological approaches to musical analysis. He is currently working on a monograph that explores minuet dancing in late-18<sup>th</sup>-century Vienna, and its implications for analysis of Haydn's symphonic minuets. His teaching covers historical and analytical topics in 18<sup>th</sup>- and 19<sup>th</sup>-century music, and musical performance. As the Music Department's Director of Performance, he oversees the undergraduate instrumental/vocal tuition through the link between King's and the Royal Academy of Music.



Gerrit Berenike Heiter  
University of Salzburg

### The Motif of Village Weddings in French (Court) Ballets of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries Continuities and Variations

Village Weddings are a popular motif in French (court) ballets and mascarades of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Many incarnations focus completely on this setting with its meeting of a variety of characters in the wedding party, such as in *Le Ballet des Noces de l'Épousée de Massy* (1654), *Les Noces de village* (1663), *Les Noces de Village – Mascarade de Monseigneur le Dauphin* (1683), *Le Mariage de la grosse Cathos* (1688). The diptych *Les Noces de village* and *Le Lendemain de la noce de village* (1700) expands this to a two day experience. There are also a number of topical *entrées de ballet* within larger works, such as the third entrée of the second part of *Le Balet du Roy où La Vieille cour et les habitants des rives de la Seine viennent danser pour les triomphes de sa Majesté* (1638), the last entrée of *Le Ballet de l'Amour malade* (1657) or the fifth entrée for *L'Inconnu* (1720 as well as 1728).

My paper analyses the recurring theme of the village wedding party. The use of this basic narrative was subject to many continuities as well as variations, but hardly any fundamental changes. We encounter it in many different media and preserved source types. The motif allows for the assemblage on stage of certain stereotypical roles from different social classes with their specific characterization in costume, pantomime and dance. The peasants are often represented in a grotesque or at least 'exotized' manner, which provides insights into the 'othering' of the lower classes by the French aristocratic and bourgeois elite.

**Gerrit Berenike Heiter** is a PhD student and performer specialising in commedia dell'arte, baroque theatre and historical dance. Her thesis in theatre studies at the University of Vienna focuses on French ballet publications from 1573 to 1651 in a comparative study also encompassing ballet at the courts of the Austrian Habsburgs. From July 2017 to March 2020 she worked as a research assistant in the Emmy Noether Research Group "*Ritual Design for the Ballet Stage: Constructions of Popular Culture in European Theatrical Dance (1650-1760)*" under the direction of Dr. Hanna Walsdorf at the University of Leipzig. Currently, she is part of the research team of the FWF-funded project "*Border Dancing across Time. The (Forgotten) Parisian Choreographer Nyota Inyoka, her Œuvre, and Questions of Choreographing Créolité*" (P 31958-G) at the University of Salzburg. Moreover, she teaches dance history at the Mannheim University of Music and Performing Arts.



Joe Lockwood  
New College, University of Oxford

### Images of Philip Astley and the Amphitheatre: Equestrian Dance and London's Illegitimate Theatre

During his lifetime Philip Astley (1742-1814) was probably the best-known theatrical figure in Britain. This fame came as an equestrian performer – dancer and acrobat on horseback – and as an impresario of a theatre, the Amphitheatre, which hosted such performances. The amphitheatre and its imitators are widely perceived as the origins of the modern circus tradition. Yet the image record for Astley is strikingly sparse, particularly compared with that of contemporary dancers and actors of comparable renown; the situation is made odder by the fact that his career coincided with a boom in theatrical portraiture in paint and print. The paper (based on a recently published chapter) will explore what images do survive, and make the case that the position of the Amphitheatre at the margins of legitimate London theatrical life – financially, legally, geographically, socially – can be thought of both as part of the amphitheatre's immense appeal and the patchy image record. The nature of the entertainments at Astley's – equestrian dance, acrobatics and drama – will be explored in the light of these images to draw out some broader reflections on the nature of dance and theatre history in general.

**Joe Lockwood** is a Teaching Assistant and DPhil candidate at New College Oxford. His Arts and Humanities Research Council-funded research explores the reception of Handel's music in Revolutionary North America. His chapter on the American reception of Handel's music is forthcoming in Annette Landgraf and Helen Coffey (eds.), *Handel in Context* (Cambridge University Press) and his chapter on the equestrian performer Philip Astley, in Michael Burden and Jennifer Thorp (eds.), *With a Grace Not to Be Captured: Representing the Georgian Theatrical Dancer, 1760-1830* (Brepols, 2021) has just been published.

Margaret McGowan  
University of Sussex

**Dancing: Town and Country Characters in 17<sup>th</sup>-Century French  
Court Ballet**

This lecture seeks to explore the rich collection of characters who performed in Court Ballet in France in the Early Modern period. It will show how these roles offered significant opportunities for virtuoso performances by major professional dancers who displayed varied and complex steps and movements. A traditional view of the countryside was used to emphasize the value of freedom from want, from toil and from war in contrast to life in the city where multi-layered social groups performed, satirizing both peasant and courtier who, through their dancing simulated disguisings, make-believe, metamorphosis and deception. The role of costume design provides an important contribution to this analysis.

**Margaret M. McGowan** CBE, FBA, Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres, is Research Professor at the University of Sussex. Her research interests centre on intellectual, cultural and artistic concerns in Early Modern Europe. Her first publication on dance was *L'Art du Ballet de Cour* (1964), followed by *Ideal Forms in the Age of Ronsard* (1985), *The Court Ballet of Louis XIII* (1986) and *Dance in the Renaissance* (2008).

**Pilar Montoya Chica**  
**Universidad Autónoma de Madrid UAM**

### **The Presence of *Villano* Dance in Spanish Historical Sources**

The dance called *Villano* whose name means “man who lives in towns or villages” is widely cited in Spain throughout the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Danced by a single gentleman, he shows an amazing virtuosity through the use of turns, jumps, kicks, stomps and other technical displays. In theatrical sources, there are many references that clarify the concept of this *danza* or *baile* according to the popular or courtly way of performing it. On the other hand, the musical compilations collect a significant number of pieces called *villano*, many of them with texts that sometimes can be replaced by versions *a lo divino* (that is, intended for religious contexts). Likewise, there is also enough data on how to perform this dance in the main choreographic sources, information that alludes to types of steps, bows, characteristic movements, and even complete choreographies, which shows the repercussion of this dance in the different social classes of Spanish society at that time. Nowadays the *villano* endures in the traditional music and dance that are still in use in the Iberian Peninsula, constituting a paradigmatic example of a live repertoire transmitted by oral tradition. What does it keep of that *villano* from previous centuries?

**Pilar Montoya Chica.** Multifaceted artist born in Zaragoza. She commenced her studies of Early Music with J. L. González Uriol achieving the Higher Certificate of Harpsichord and Organ with Honours. Also she graduated in Orchestra Conducting at the Royal School of Music in London. With a grant from the Provincial Council of Zaragoza and later from the Swiss Government, she furthered her studies at the "Schola Cantorum Basiliensis" in Thorough Bass, Chamber Music, Singing, Historical Dance and Baroque Gesture. She studied Harpsichord and Clavichord with I. Wjuniski in Paris, getting the First Prize. Professor of Harpsichord, Historical Dance and Head of Department of Early Music at Conservatorio Superior de Castilla y León, she is working on her Doctoral Thesis "La Danza Teatral en la Corte de Felipe V" under the direction of B. Lolo (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid) and is invited to give concerts, courses and lectures in Universities, Congresses and other Institutions.

Béatrice Pfister  
Sorbonne Nouvelle

### Country Characters in 18-Century Pantomime Ballets: From the Grotesque Genre to a more Noble Approach

During the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the defenders of the new genre of pantomime ballet endeavoured to prove that dance was capable of embracing all kinds of subjects, from grotesque to those of the most famous tragedies, and as such deserved to be recognised as an art on par with literature. In this specific context, what was the evolution of country characters, from pantomime ballets by precursors like Dehesse to famous ones by ballet masters of the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century like Noverre, Angiolini and Dauberval? The roots of pantomime ballet are to be found in the tradition of popular shows largely influenced by *commedia dell'arte*: very simple subjects with peasants and villagers are the first ones to evolve into real stories with an exposition, peripeteia and dénouement. But the desire to prove that dance was not limited to grotesque subjects and the rise of the half-character genre – an intermediary kind of dance between the comic and the tragic genres – opened new possibilities for country characters which could become more complex and subtle. Stories like that of *Ninette à la cour* by Noverre or *La fille mal gardée* and *Le page inconstant* by Dauberval would achieve lasting success, probably even more so than tragic ballets: in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, country characters will quickly tend to prevail over tragic heroes and heroines like Medea and her likes. In this paper, we will rely on a variety of libretti taken from French and Italian ballet masters to explore this evolution.

**Béatrice Pfister** is a specialist of ballet theory from the age of court ballet to the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. She completed her PhD in comparative literature at Sorbonne Nouvelle University in Paris in 2020. Its subject was "Dance trying to conquer the status of art: apology and theory of ballet in French and Italian texts from the end of the sixteenth century to the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century". Her research interests include dance history and theory, performing arts from the 16<sup>th</sup> century to the present and 17<sup>th</sup> - and 18<sup>th</sup>-century European literatures. She has been teaching French and comparative literature since 2013 and she also taught performance arts for a year. She currently teaches at Sorbonne Nouvelle in comparative literature.

Sharon Phelan  
Munster Technological University

### Dance in Ireland during the Colonial Era: An Absence of Dominion

Sometimes, collective identities simplify the past, and this was evident, when the British colonised Ireland. Then they were considered “colonisers” and the Irish were the “colonised”. This implied a negative relationship, where politically, the British occupied a hierarchical position. However, this paper identifies a different relationship, in dance. During this time, British travellers, toured Ireland gathering notes for British aristocracy. These notes reflected a genuine respect for Irish folk dance. They also referred to occasions when British Landlords and Irish natives danced together. The paper also identifies a cross fertilisation process, where the British and the Irish adopted and adapted each other’s dance types; these included country dances, court dances and pantomimic dances. Finally, the paper addresses the introduction of the British dance master system, into Ireland in the early 1700s. Then, British Landlords needed to prepare their children for British and European social gatherings. Subsequently, this introduction led to the establishment of a native dance master system, where the Irish also adopted the role of dance master, inside and outside the houses of the landed gentry. In conclusion, although the British were considered “colonisers”, and the Irish were the “colonised” a different relationship existed in dance during the colonial era. There, the mutual respect led to the preservation and development of dance in both countries.

**Sharon Phelan** has lectured in Dance and Cultural Theory at graduate and post-graduate levels in the Munster Technological University in Ireland for over twenty years. She has also performed professionally with *Siamsa Tíre*, the National Folk Theatre of Ireland, as National Facilitator in Dance with the Department of Education in Ireland and as Artistic Director of the ‘Ionad Culturtha’ (cultural centre) in County Cork. Sharon has delivered and published internationally on dance, and she has written an academic book titled: ‘Dance in Ireland: Steps, Stages and Stories’. Current areas of interest include supervision of arts research at masters and at doctoral levels and the use of distance learning in the teaching of dance in third level. She is also writing another book, which will focus on dance in Ireland during the colonial era.

Jennifer Thorp  
New College, Oxford

**Here Today, Gone Tomorrow (until next week): The Curious Life of  
Mr Christopher Towle, Dancing-Master**

Christopher Towle (1741 - 1786) followed his father's profession as a dancing-master but did so along a quite different trajectory, leaving his native county of Staffordshire to set up boarding schools for 'genteel young ladies' in Coventry's High Street and Oxford's Pennyfarthing Street, the latter establishment being run by his elder sister Hannah. For parts of the year however he abandoned his own school and took to the road for circuits of dance tuition, assemblies and balls held in a swathe of market towns from Warwickshire to Bedfordshire, sometimes advertising the events beforehand in the local press. This paper looks in particular at two of his advertisements and the context in which they were issued: one for 1770 which outlines an exhausting round of public assemblies in local halls and inns; and another for 1783 which lists and attempts to justify the vast curriculum on offer at his Coventry school. Its outrageous claims were described by the poet William Cowper as 'extravagantly ludicrous' and worthy of a lunatic, while Towle himself was later referred to by one journalist as 'that eccentric though rather illiterate artist'.

**Jennifer Thorp** has a particular interest in the dance of royal court and public theatre in England from the late-seventeenth to the late-18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Her publications have included studies of dance in London opera 1673-1685, and of Anthony L'Abbé's early London years, 1698-1715. She has contributed to, and co-edited with Michael Burden, a study of *The Works of Monsieur Noverre translated from the French, 1783* (Pendragon Press, 2014), and *With a Grace not to be Captured: Representing the Georgian Theatrical Dancer* (Brepols, 2021).



**Cornelis Vanistendael**  
Leuven, Belgium

### **The Circulating Waltz**

The story about the origin of many a popular ballroom dance - like the Polka (Paris) or the Tango (Buenos Aires) - are firmly rooted in an urban environment. The place generally linked to the identity of the waltz today, happens to be the city of Vienna. By opposition, the narrative about the place and circumstances of birth of the eternally revolving dance, is rooted in the countryside and pastoral traditions.

By the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century - when the waltz was first mentioned - most West-European town folks already could look back on a long tradition depicting peasants and their dances as savage, grotesque and primitive, but at the same time idyllic and endearing. There clearly was an appropriation of some kind going on that deserves our attention.

My research is about early forms of waltz-like stage dances as well as the transnational urban networks of immigrant musicians from the German Cultural room working in cities abroad. I will try to illustrate that they largely defined what a waltz was or could be. Moreover they also underpinned how it moved on, around the globe, onwards from 1767 when a first melody ever properly called a waltz was printed in London.

**Cornelis Vanistendael** graduated as a master in East-European Languages & Cultures (University of Ghent, 1995), PhD in History of Art (University of Ghent, 2020). He worked for 8 years as a HR Consultant & head hunter, of which 5 years were spent with Deloitte Human Capital Division. He thereafter dedicated his career to cultural heritage. This choice was inspired by his - until then - private archive research regarding various aspects of musical culture, which he eventually made into a PhD during his spare time. Currently he works full time for Erfgoed Noorderkempen, a small cultural heritage organisation in the North of Belgium as a database administrator (museum collections and archives).

Hanna Walsdorf  
University of Basel

**Of Mountain Ghosts and Waltzing Spirits: Dancing in Louis Spohr's Romantic Opera *Der Berggeist* (1824)**

As Alpine summits were progressively conquered, from the 1780s onwards, the Alpine region exerted an increasing fascination on the urban-bourgeois population living in the largely flat landscape of Central Europe. The cultural practices and mythical sagas of the Alpine inhabitants became the subject of travel reports, novels, and aesthetic treatises; the Ländler became a popular dance in urban ballrooms, fancied by famous composers such as Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven; and last but not least, the Alps, along with their human and mythical inhabitants, became the subject of ballet and opera productions. Among them was *Der Berggeist* (*The Mountain Spirit*) by Louis Spohr, a romantic opera that was first performed in Kassel in 1825. This paper examines the progression of a dance of the country folk – the Ländler – climbing down the mountains and up the social ladder. By illuminating the relationship between the Ländler and the waltz, the lecture will also shed new light on the dramaturgical use of these dances in opera, and specifically in Spohr's *Berggeist* – including a surprise element.

**Hanna Walsdorf** received her M.A. in Musicology from the University of Bonn (Germany) in 2006 and her Ph.D. in Musicology and Dance Studies from the University of Salzburg (Austria) in 2009. From 2009–2013, Hanna was a postdoctoral research fellow at the Collaborative Research Center 619 "Ritual Dynamics" at Heidelberg University (Germany). She was awarded the *Tanzwissenschaftspreis NRW* in 2011. From 2014 to 2020, she directed the Emmy Noether Research Group *Ritual Design for the Ballet Stage: Constructions of Popular Culture in European Theatrical Dance (1650–1760)*, granted by the German Research Foundation (DFG). In 2020–2021, she was a guest lecturer at the University of Music and Theatre "Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy" Leipzig, and at the University of Salzburg. In autumn 2021 she was appointed Assistant Professor for Musicology at the University of Basel (Switzerland) where she is now based.