

The Phantom on Film: Guest Editor's Introduction

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What has the Phantom got to do with opera? Music(al) theater sectarians of all denominations might dismiss the very question, but for the opera studies community, at least, it is possible to imagine interesting potential answers. Some are historical, some technical, and some to do with medium and genre. Others are economic, invoking different commercial models and even (in Europe at least) complex arguments surrounding public subsidy. Still others raise, in their turn, further questions about the historical and contemporary identities of theatrical institutions and the productions they mount, even the extent to which particular works and productions may become institutions themselves. All, I suggest, are in one way or another related to opera reception at a particular time in the late nineteenth century: of one work in particular, Gounod's *Faust*, but even more to the development of a set of popular ideas about opera and opera-going.

Gaston Leroux's serialized novel *Le Fantôme de l'Opéra*, set in and around the Palais Garnier, apparently in 1881, certainly explores those ideas in a uniquely productive way.¹ As many (but perhaps not all) readers will recall, it tells the story of the debut in a principal role of Christine Daaé, a young Swedish soprano who is promoted when the Spanish prima donna, Carlotta, is indisposed.² In the course of a gala performance in honor of the outgoing Directors of the Opéra, she is a great success in extracts of works

¹ The novel was serialized in *Le Gaulois* (23 September 1909–8 January 1910) and then published in volume-form: *Le Fantôme de l'Opéra* (Paris: Lafitte, 1910). Some instalments are missing from the editions of *Le Gaulois* available in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (and online via gallica.bnf.fr) and in the preparation of Lafitte's edition some individual paragraphs were cut elsewhere too, so the text exists in a fittingly mysterious non-definitive state. For more on the text, see Raj Shah, "The publication and initial French reception of Gaston Leroux's *Le Fantôme de l'Opéra*," *French Studies Bulletin* 37/138 (2016), 13–16.

² In Cormac Newark, "Vous qui faites l'endormie": The Phantom and the Buried Voices of the Paris Opéra," *19th-Century Music* 33/1 (2009), 62–78, I argue that Christine and Carlotta are versions of Christina [Kristina] Nilsson and Marie Caroline Miolan-Carvalho respectively.

by Gounod, above all *Faust*, so much so that she is feted in reviews as “the new Marguerite.”³ Among the audience that evening is Vicomte Raoul de Chagny, who has recognized her as the same Christine he played with as a child in Brittany; his tender feelings for her having intensified, he takes the opportunity of her success to re-introduce himself to her, but is disturbed to overhear her speaking to a man privately in her dressing-room. The positive mood of the evening is further marred by the discovery of the hanged body of the Chief Machinist in the third basement, and by suspicion that his death was at the hands of a figure of institutional superstition, the Phantom. The new Directors are shown the demands that this individual has added to the *Cahier des charges*, the stipulations of the state regarding management of the Opéra: a monthly payment and exclusive use of Box no. 5. They dismiss them, as they do subsequently a written request, signed by the Phantom himself, that Christine be cast as Marguerite in a full performance of *Faust*. When Carlotta is given the role instead, a loud croak appears to issue from her mouth at a climactic moment of the Act III duet, and then, in the middle of the ensuing consternation, the great chandelier falls into the auditorium, killing a member of the audience. Christine is taken down into the depths of the Opéra by a masked figure whom she recognizes as the physical embodiment of the “Angel of Music,” the voice that her father promised her as a child, and that has been speaking to her and coaching her for some time. Neither an angel nor a Phantom, he is Erik, a mysterious singer, musician and composer who wears a mask and lives by an underground lake beneath the Palais Garnier. He insists that she will remain with him for a while, so as to learn not to fear him, and that she will never see his face. But very soon she tears off the mask to reveal hideous disfigurement. Furious, Erik vows to keep her with him forever, but eventually allows her to return to ground level, and even meet Raoul, on condition she goes back down to him afterward. Brief rendezvous at the Opéra masked ball and on its roof are enough for her to explain everything

³ *The Essential Phantom of the Opera: The Definitive, Annotated Edition of Gaston Leroux's Classic Novel* edited by Leonard Wolf (New York: Plume, 1996), 42 (Chapter 2). Throughout this special double issue, references will be to this edition—which is liberally provided with notes—with the addition of chapter-numbers to facilitate comparison with others.

to Raoul and to arrange to escape, but she is abducted by Erik during the emotional final scene of what she plans will be her last performance, once again of *Faust*. The two are pursued, and after threatening to blow up the Opéra unless she marries him, and torturing Raoul, Erik eventually relents. Disarmed by Christine's kiss, he allows her and Raoul to go free; he will later die of a broken heart in the bowels of the Palais Garnier.

The essence of Leroux's scenario, with its exotic appeal to the international nature of opera, its wryness about the business-orientated (and musically inexpert) management of "la grande boutique,"⁴ and its murderous (but at the same time pitiable) protagonist, is surely familiar. So familiar, indeed, that it is easy to overlook the fact that his characteristic ways of representing both received wisdom about opera and its potential for occasional transcendence derive from a novelistic tradition that was already well established by the time he published his book. In French novels of the nineteenth century, the *soirée à l'Opéra* was an integral feature of many portraits of society, just as it was of the lives of many members of that society.⁵ As a literary set-piece, it functions straightforwardly as a means of accessing a set of cultural references, including particular well-known operas or single numbers, shared by author and reader. But that function is almost always made intermittent, placed in counterpoint with a complex blend of social observation by the author and, often, personal epiphany on the part of the opera-going character. Moreover, in novels by authors as

⁴ This phrase, to describe the systematic, commercial and business-like ethos of the Opéra, was certainly used by Verdi but did not necessarily originate with him. For more on how the struggle between the institution's commercial imperatives and the Phantom's aesthetic judgement is represented in subsequent adaptations, see the essays by Annette Davison and John Snelson in this issue.

⁵ See for example Pierre Michot, "La Soirée à l'Opéra: Étude d'un thème littéraire," in *L'Opéra au XVIIIe siècle: Actes du Colloque organisé à Aix-en-Provence par le Centre aixois d'études et de recherches sur le XVIIIe siècle*, ed. André Bourde (Aix-en-Provence: Université de Provence, 1982), 559-78; Pierre Brunel, "La Scène d'opéra dans le roman," in *Les Écrivains français et l'opéra*, ed. Jean-Paul Capdevielle and Peter-Eckhard Knabe (Cologne: DME Verlag, 1986), 125-38; Joseph-Marc Bailbé, "L'Opéra italien dans l'imagination des écrivains français," in *L'opera tra Venezia e Parigi*, ed. Maria Teresa Muraro (Florence: Olschki, 1988), 133-45; Thierry Santurenne, *L'Opéra dans la fiction narrative française de 1850 à 1914: Enjeux métalittéraires et anthropologiques* (Lille: ANRT, 2003); and Cormac Newark, *Opera in the Novel from Balzac to Proust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011). Although most common in the French novel of the (very) long nineteenth century, there are examples in other traditions of society fiction throughout the period, including especially notable ones by Tolstoy and Wharton.

different as Stendhal, Verne, Maupassant and Proust, such scenes are frequently set at the interface of what is banal (always the same people, places and pieces of music) and what is revelatory (the power of music heard anew, or unheard, or even unheard-of). *Le Fantôme de l'Opéra* offers rich examples of such scenes, sometimes more compelling than those by noted Opéra habitués such Balzac or Dumas. Precisely because Leroux was obviously not at home in this world himself, his descriptions are all the more ethnographically attentive.

The other principal characteristic of Leroux's story, the conviction that the physical magnificence of the Palais Garnier and the pre-eminent artistic status of the Opéra together conceal something troubling, was also far from new. As Margaret Miner has observed, opera house mysteries were serialized in music journals from around the 1840s.⁶ Like the *soirée à l'Opéra* tradition, these mysteries are today an important source of clichés about the institution in the broadest sense, clichés that *Le Fantôme de l'Opéra*, perhaps above all, helped to solidify, and that have since accrued wide currency—even in cultures where opera-going (and indeed opera itself) is something very different. The combination of these two traditions is at the core of the story's appeal: the rich creative mixture of reception, criticism and social observation that seeks to render both the tedium and the transport of the nineteenth-century Parisian experience of opera, especially the unsoundable, even supernatural power of music; and the long cultural reach of the idea that there is something powerfully mysterious, indeed potentially supernatural, literally underneath it all.

It is difficult to overstate that appeal. The novel has been translated into numerous languages and adapted for every imaginable medium numerous times: the version by Andrew Lloyd Webber (by some measures the most prominent example, having now celebrated a record-breaking thirty years in the West End and on Broadway) is, for example, by no means

⁶ Margaret Miner, "Phantoms of Genius: Women and the Fantastic in the Opera House Mystery," *19th-Century Music* 18/2 (1994), 121-35. She examines four in particular, all from the 1840s: *Les Mystères du grand opéra* (1843, by [Napo]Léo[n] Lespès), *Les Petits Mystères de l'Opéra* (1844, by Albéric Second), *Voyage outre-toile à l'Opéra* (1844, by Augustin Perroux and Adrien Robert [Adrien-Charles-Alexandre Basset]) and "Le Pacte de la voix" (1846-7, by Alexis Azevedo).

the only, or even the first, musical theater adaptation.⁷ There are plays and comic strips, ballets and video games; there are spin-off novels by Susan Kay and Frederick Forsyth (to name only two of the best known) and endless sequels, prequels, parodies and mash-ups, as well as references and cameo appearances in otherwise unconnected narrative universes. There has been a good deal of scholarly and not-so-scholarly interest in the book from various disciplines, expressed in forms ranging from psychoanalytic readings to cultural geographies, and also in the rich network of intermedial intertexts created by its burgeoning canon of adaptations.⁸ But the most substantial part of Leroux's legacy, and certainly that which demonstrates most clearly its extraordinarily protean capacity for cultural transfer, is the very large number of adaptations for the screen it has inspired: more than fifty, of widely varying provenance and degrees of fidelity. It is this subset of the Phantom phenomenon, now comprising more than a century of cultural work, that has most to say about changing popular notions of opera and the operatic around the world. It is the dynamic relationship between identifiable traditions within the subset that offers the best longitudinal study of how literary, musical, iconographical and native audiovisual tropes circulate and survive. It is this complex of sources and processes, finally, that forms the object of the collaborative research represented in the rest of this special double issue.

The list of adaptations below, which is just one possible delimitation of the core of the material, gives a sense of the breadth of stylistic contexts

⁷ *Phantom of the Opera* (book and lyrics by Ken Hill) was first staged, in the UK, in 1976, long before *The Phantom of the Opera* (music by Andrew Lloyd Webber, book by Richard Stilgoe and lyrics by Charles Hart and Richard Stilgoe) in 1986. *Phantom* (music and lyrics by Maury Yeston, book by Arthur Kopit) was first staged, in the USA, in 1991.

⁸ See for example Isabelle Casta-Husson, "Les Fortunes paraculturelles du *Fantôme de l'Opéra*," in *De l'écrit à l'écran: Littératures populaires; mutations génératives, mutations médiatiques*, ed. Jacques Migozzi (Limoges: Presses Universitaires de Limoges, 2000), 695-704; Jerrold E. Hogle, *The Undergrounds of "The Phantom of the Opera": Sublimation and the Gothic in Leroux's Novel and its Progeny* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002); John Flynn, *The Phantoms of the Opera: The Face Behind the Mask* (Owings Mills: Galactic Books, 2006; revised and updated ed., first published 1993); Ann C. Hall, *Phantom variations: The Adaptations of Gaston Leroux's "Phantom of the Opera," 1925 to the Present* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., 2009); Timothée Picard, *Sur les traces d'un fantôme: La civilisation de l'Opéra* (Paris: Fayard, 2016). See also Slavoj Žižek, *Enjoy Your Symptom!: Jacques Lacan in Hollywood and out* (New York: Routledge, 1992), Chapter 4, "Why Does the Phallus Appear?."

in which it has developed. Though the Phantom films may be sufficiently numerous as to constitute a genre in themselves, one of the most striking things about them as a corpus is their genre-heterogeneity, their capacity for spreading as it were memetically outwards from their shared origins. A glance at just the three earliest shows this heterogeneity very clearly: the first, dating from only a few years after the publication of the novel and now unfortunately lost, was made in immediately pre-Expressionist Germany by a Hungarian director with Scandinavian actors in the lead roles; the next, and the first to survive, was a big-budget Hollywood feature film that was partially re-shot and re-scored several times in response to the multiple test screenings dictated by the studio system, ultimately using sets from another production entirely;⁹ and the first with integral sound, made in Shanghai, was also the first horror film ever made in China.

1916 *Das Phantom der Opera* or *Das Gespenst im Opernhaus* (*The Phantom of the Opera* or *The Ghost in the Opera House*) starring Nils Olaf Chrisander and Aud Egede-Nissen. Written by Greta Schröder, directed by Ernst Matray. Produced by Greenbaum-Film, Berlin.

1925 *The Phantom of the Opera* starring Lon Chaney, Mary Philbin and Norman Kerry. Written by Raymond L. Schrock et al., directed by Rupert Julian, music by Joseph Carl Breil et al. Produced by Universal Pictures, Los Angeles.

1937 *Yeban gesheng* (*Song at Midnight*) starring Jin Shan, Hu Ping and Shi Chao. Written by Ma-Xu Weibang and Tian Han, directed by Ma-Xu Weibang, music by Xian Xinghai. Produced by Xinhua Yingye Gongsi (New China Film Company), Shanghai.

1941 *Yeban gesheng xuji* (*Song at Midnight, the Sequel*), starring Liu Qiong, Tan Ying and Wang Zhuyou. Written and directed by Ma-Xu Weibang. Produced by Zhongguo Lianhe Yingye Gongsi (China United Film Company), Shanghai.

1943 *Phantom of the Opera* starring Claude Rains, Susanna Foster, Nelson Eddy and Edgar Barrier. Written by Eric Taylor, Samuel Hoffenstein, Hans Jacoby and George Waggener, directed by Arthur Lubin, music by Edward Ward. Produced by Universal Pictures, Los Angeles.

⁹ The revised ending of the 1925 film, in which the Phantom is chased across Paris, features sets from a film in a slightly different genre, Universal's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1923).

1952 *El fantasma de la ópera* (*The Phantom of the Opera*, television mini-series) starring Raissa Bignardi. Directed by Alfredo Laferrière. Produced and broadcast by Canal 7/LR3 Radio Belgrano TV, Buenos Aires.

1955 *El fantasma de la opereta* (*The Phantom of the Operetta*) starring Alfredo Barbieri and Amelia Vargas. Written by René Marcial, Manuel Rey and Alfredo Ruanova, directed by Enrique Carreras, music by Víctor Schlichter [Sclister]. Produced by Cinematográfica General Belgrano, Buenos Aires.

1959 *El fantasma de la opereta* (*The Phantom of the Operetta*) starring Ana Luisa Peluffo and “Tin Tan” [Germán Valdés]. Written by Alfredo Ruanova, Gilberto Martínez Solares and Juan García, directed by Fernando Cortés. Produced by Brooks SA, Óscar J. Brooks and Ernesto Enríquez, Mexico City.

1960 *El fantasma de la ópera* (*The Phantom of the Opera*, nine-episode television mini-series in the context of the long-running series *Obras maestras del terror* or *Masterworks of Terror*) starring Narciso Ibáñez Menta, Beatriz Día Quiroga and José María Langlais. Written by Luis Peñaflor [Narciso Ibáñez Serrador], directed by Martha Reguera. Produced and broadcast by Canal 9, Buenos Aires.

1962 *Yeban gesheng* (*Mid-Nightmare*) starring Chao Lei, Betty Loh Ti, Paul Chang Chung and Fanny Fan. Written by Ma-Xu Weibang, directed by Yuan Qiufeng, music by Wang Fuling. Produced by Shaw Brothers Studio, Hong Kong.

1963 *Yeban gesheng xia ji* (*Mid-Nightmare, the Sequel*) starring Chao Lei, Betty Loh Ti and Paul Chang Chung. Written by Ma-Xu Weibang and Yi Fan, directed by Yuan Qiufeng, music by Wang Fuling. Produced by Shaw Brothers Studio, Hong Kong.

1964 *Il mostro dell'Opera* (*The Monster of the Opera*) starring John McDouglas [Giuseppe Addobbiati], Barbara Hawards and Marc Maryan [Marco Mariani]. Written by Renato Polselli, Ernesto Gastaldi and Giuseppe Pellegrini, directed by Renato Polselli, music by Aldo Piga. Produced by Nord Industrial Film, Biella (Italy).

1970 *Fantom operety* (*Phantom of the Operetta*, five-episode television mini-series) starring Lubomír Lipský, Jiřina Bohdalová, Iva Jančurová and Josef Bláha. Written by Jindřich Švehla and Eduard Fíker (after the latter's novel of the same name), directed by Zdeněk Podskalský, music by František Živný and Zdeněk Procházka. Produced by Krátký Film, Prague, and broadcast by Czechoslovak Television.

1974 *Phantom of the Paradise* starring William Finley, Jessica Harper and Paul Williams. Written and directed by Brian De Palma, music by Paul Williams and George Alceson Tipton. Produced by Harbor Productions and Pressman-Williams Enterprises, USA.

1983 *The Phantom of the Opera* starring Maximilian Schell, Jane Seymour and Michael York. Written by Sherman Yellen, directed by Robert Markowitz, music by Ralph Burns. Produced by RHI [Robert Halmi], New York.

1985 *Yeban gesheng (Song at Midnight)* starring Zhai Naishe, Li Yun and Wang Weiping. Written by Xu Yinhua and Shen Ji, directed by Yang Yanjin, music by Xu Jingxin. Produced by Shanghai Film Studio.

1987 *Opera (Terror at the Opera House)* starring Cristina Marsillach, Ian Charleson and Urbano Barberini. Written by Dario Argento and Franco Ferrini, directed by Dario Argento, music coordinated by Primo Pavan. Produced by ADC, Cecchi Gori Group, Tiger Cinematografica and RAI, Italy.

1987 *The Phantom of the Opera* (animation) starring the voices of Aiden Grennell, Collette Proctor and Daniel Reardon. Written and directed by Al Guest and Jean Mathieson, music by Gerard Victory. Produced by Emerald City Productions, Dun Laoghaire (Ireland).

1989 *The Phantom of the Opera* starring Robert Englund, Jill Schoelen and Alex Hyde-White. Written by Duke Sandefur and Gerry O'Hara, directed by Dwight H. Little, music by Misha Segal. Produced by 21st Century Film, Breton Film, Columbia Pictures and Dee Gee Entertainment, USA.

1990 *The Phantom of the Opera* (two-episode television mini-series) starring Charles Dance, Teri Polo, Adam Storke and Burt Lancaster. Written by Arthur Kopit (after his musical theater book of the same name), directed by Tony Richardson, music supervised by David Sibley. Produced by Hexatel, Saban/Scherick Productions, Saban International NV, TF1, Reteitalia, StarCom, Beta Film (France, USA, Israel, Italy, Germany).

1991 *O Fantasma da Ópera (The Phantom of the Opera)*, 37-episode television mini-series) starring Cláudio Marzo and Carolina Ferraz. Written by Jael Coaracy, Geraldo Vietri and Paulo Afonso de Lima, directed by Del Rangel, Álvaro Fugulin and Atílio Riccó. Produced and broadcast by Rede Manchete, Rio de Janeiro.

1995 *Yeban gesheng* (*Phantom Lover*) starring Leslie Cheung, Wu Chien-Lien, Huang Lei and Liu Lin. Written by Roy Szeto, [Raymond] Bak-Ming Wong and Ronny Yu, directed by Ronny Yu, music by Leslie Cheung, David Wu and Chris Babida. Produced by Mandarin Films, Beijing, and Sil-Metropole, Hong Kong.

1998 *Il fantasma dell'Opera* (*The Phantom of the Opera*) starring Julian Sands, Asia Argento and Andrea Di Stefano. Written by Gérard Brach and Dario Argento, directed by Dario Argento, music by Ennio Morricone. Produced by Medusa Film and Cine 2000, Rome.

1998 *Il fantasma* (*The Phantom*, straight-to-video pornographic film) starring David Perry, Eva Henger and Chris Charming. Written by Donna Dane, directed by Joe d'Amato. Produced by Butterfly Motion Pictures.

2004 *The Phantom of the Opera* starring Gerard Butler, Emmy Rossum and Patrick Wilson. Written by Joel Schumacher and Andrew Lloyd Webber (after the musical theater book by Richard Stilgoe and lyrics by Charles Hart and Richard Stilgoe), directed by Joel Schumacher, music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. Produced by Really Useful Films and Scion Films, London.

2005 *Yeban gesheng* (*Song at Midnight*) starring Huang Lei, Barbie Hsu, Peter Ho, Sun Li and Liu De-kai. Written by Huang Lei and Han Wei, directed by Huang Lei, music by Chen Chih-yuan and Huang Shu-chun. Produced by Huayi Brothers, Beijing.

2014 *Stage Fright* starring Douglas Smith, Allie MacDonald, Minnie Driver and Meat Loaf. Written by Jerome Sable and Eli Batalion, directed by Jerome Sable, music by Jerome Sable and Eli Batalion. Produced by Serendipity Point Films, XYZ Films and Citizen Jones, USA.

Perhaps the most straightforward indication of the screen-genre-mutability of the plot is its capacity to generate spin-offs: *The Phantom of 42nd Street* (directed by Albert Herman in 1945), the legendary (but lost) “exploitation flick” *Phantom of the Cinema* (J. X. Williams, 1969?), *The Phantom of Hollywood* (Gene Levitt, 1974), the slasher films *The Phantom of the Mall: Erik's Revenge* (Richard Friedman, 1989) and *Phantom of the Ritz* (Allen Plone, 1992), and the Disney Channel’s *The Phantom of the Megaplex* (Blair Treu, 2000), to name just a handful of many. Other, potentially more involved evidence lies in the scenario’s availability as an occasional vehicle

for established US television forms and franchises: the Oswald the Lucky Rabbit cartoon *Spooks* (1930), the Woody Woodpecker cartoon *Phantom of the Horse Opera* (1961), the Hardy Boys/Nancy Drew Mysteries episode *The Mystery of the Hollywood Phantom* (1977), the Wonder Woman episodes *Phantom of the Roller Coaster* Parts 1 and 2 (1979), the Knight Rider episode *Phantom of the Studio* (1985), a Scooby-Doo direct-to-DVD full-length “original movie” *Stage Fright* (2013), and so on. Plainly, most of these have little or nothing to do with music; many have not much to do with anything else in Leroux either. But all somehow cash in on the narrative givens of the *Fantôme* construct; whether by exploring high-culture aura; the plot and character possibilities of institutional loyalty, traditions and secrets; or the sublimation of a talented individual’s isolation and rejection. I would suggest, moreover, that via Leroux all thereby partake of the *operatic*.

The precise nature of the operatic in *Wonder Woman* and *Scooby-Doo* is a question for another day; the present issue instead features preliminary studies mainly based on what I have here provisionally defined as the “core” texts of this worldwide audiovisual canon. They represent the initial publications of “Screen Adaptations of *Le Fantôme de l’Opéra*: Routes of Cultural Transfer,” a research project supported by the Leverhulme Trust through its International Networks scheme.¹⁰ This collective enterprise aims to go beyond existing single-author studies in three key respects: its collaborative and interdisciplinary nature, its geographical coverage, and its concentration on a single class of adaptation. Collaborating researchers work in disciplinary contexts ranging from musicology to modern languages, film studies and communication sciences, and are based all over the world, in a distribution that mirrors the concentration of particular “Phantom on Film” traditions in China, Italy, Central and South America and the USA.¹¹

¹⁰ The project website, inevitably a perpetual work in progress, may be found at thephantomfilm.com. It features brief synopses and commentaries on the adaptations, as well as short pieces discussing the themes they present.

¹¹ Scholars involved in the research include Jacqueline Avila (University of Tennessee), Giorgio Biancorosso (University of Hong Kong), Roberto Calabretto (Università degli Studi di Udine), Timmy Chen Chih-Ting (Hong Kong Baptist University), Annette Davison (University of Edinburgh), Charlotte Gleghorn (University of Edinburgh), Clarice Greco (Universidade Paulista, São Paulo), John Snellson (Royal Opera House, London) and Maria Immacolata Vassallo de Lopes (Universidade de São Paulo).

The focus is on cultural transfer, but defined broadly, to include not only nuances of historical and geographical difference in the representation of more or less operatic *mentalités*, but also the productive friction created in the transmission not only to but *between* screen media: commercial feature films, television films, television miniseries, full-length television series or *telenovelas*, and animations, of course, but also content created, developed and discussed online by fans—or, in this case, “phans.” The premise is that all this audiovisual material is part of a larger para-operatic phenomenon, one that is growing in scope as the number of different kinds of screens implicit in the phrase “screen adaptations” grows.

The case-studies that my colleagues and I have derived from this premise show how that phenomenon, in reflecting the different ways cultural transfer could take place at different points in the twentieth century, reflected local political realities too. In the case of the group of essays that follows, this is especially true of the contributions of Jacqueline Avila and Charlotte Gleghorn, who show how in Latin America in the 1950s films based very loosely on *Le Fantôme de l'Opéra* aired then-current questions of national cultural identity—even social and racial purity—and implicitly debated the responses to be found in government and industry policy. Cosmopolitanism, in this particular context, translated not just into genre-mutability but also genre-hybridity. And genre is central, too, to the Phantom films of Brian de Palma and Dario Argento, two of the most famous directors in our list, and here the object of essays by Annette Davison and Roberto Calabretto respectively. For De Palma, Davison argues, various literary and operatic hypertexts inspired musical and cinematic hypertexts in a range of genres whose sheer variety is the most striking aspect of his adaptation—but that together make a coherent point about the entertainment industry under late Capitalism. For Argento, as Calabretto demonstrates, dynamic interplay between operatic excerpts and a mainly non-conventional underscore is central to a play of dramatic genres that vividly renders the uneven richness of the source novel.

As well as benefiting from the wide geographical coverage of the network, the project also aims to use the interdisciplinary range of its

members in order to travel further down paths opened up by earlier concerted research and mapping efforts. We have learned from a notable precedent, not coincidentally also in the area of opera: “Carmen on Film,” led by a team of scholars from Literature, Film Studies and Modern Languages based at Newcastle University and funded by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Board (now Council) 1999–2002.¹² That undertaking involved examination of a corpus of adaptations probably even larger than that of the Phantom, and, similarly, still growing: perhaps only Dracula has been seen on screen more often. And, even more than adaptations of Leroux’s text, versions of *Carmen* almost all carry forward an originary sense of its accrued transmedia identity, “Carmen’s dual and duelling inheritance as text (Prosper Merimée) and music (Georges Bizet).”¹³ Nevertheless, the screen adaptations of *Le Fantôme de l’Opéra* form arguably the more complex group of sources because of how much “stickier” the story is—that capacity for latching onto other stories mentioned above. (Indeed, in the face of the comparison with Dracula, it is worth pointing out that there exists a film in which even he is effortlessly folded into the Phantom scenario.)¹⁴ And quite apart from the nature of those sources, the developments in reception and (re)production media, above all the internet, since the Carmen project have resulted in an exponential increase by both quantitative and qualitative measures in the difficulty of this kind of work: the penetration of the originally literary Phantom of the Opera into international screen traditions is now not only an example of cultural transfer but of a perpetually shifting, laterally self-referential, multi- and transmedia complex.

¹² Published outputs from this work include Christopher Perriam and Ann Davies (eds.), *Carmen: From Silent Film to MTV* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2005); Ann Davies and Phil Powrie, *Carmen on Screen: An Annotated Filmography and Bibliography* (Woodbridge: Tamesis, 2006); and Phil Powrie, Bruce Babington, Ann Davies and Chris Perriam (eds.), *Carmen on Film: A Cultural History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007). For a more recent mapping of Carmen’s progress from theater to theater, see www.carmenabroad.org.

¹³ Paul Julian Smith, “Review of *Carmen on Film: A Cultural History*,” *Screen* 49/4 (2008), 488–90: 489.

¹⁴ In *Il mostro dell’Opera* (*The Monster of the Opera*), directed by Renato Polselli in 1964, the Phantom stalking the theater is a vampire in evening dress.

Accordingly, members of the network have together set out to build on the existing literature that has begun to address the nature (extent, importance, implication for interdisciplinary studies) of the larger field implied by the Phantom on Film phenomenon.¹⁵ My own contribution here has been to reflect on the unique work audiovisual adaptations of the Phantom's story perform on different notions—some historically or geographically determined, some apparently universal—of inspiration, and how that work is enabled by cinematic stagings of musical immanence. Giorgio Biancorosso's essay in this issue instead interrogates the notion of "performance" by returning to the "cinema of attractions" contemporary with the first Phantom screen adaptation in 1916. He explores the questions it poses about the relationship between performance and plot, and the constructive role of the audience, on both sides of the camera. And John Snelson's essay takes, if anything, an even broader view, moving from an examination of what the story can tell us about different musical media and modes of consumption when it is transplanted into less self-consciously elite musical contexts (musical theater, rock'n'roll, and so on) to an assessment of some of the more general cultural tropes evoked in aspects of the adaptations' design, dramatic language and handling of "voice." We have much more such surveying to do, naturally, and further dissemination of our work is planned, but the hope is that these contributions are already the more constructive for having been conceived and discussed collaboratively.

As these brief descriptions of our small case-studies and limited overviews indicate, the sheer size of the task presents obvious methodological challenges, above all to do with its remarkable spread back and forth across different cultures and cinematic contexts. In earlier models of artistic transmission the Phantom screen adaptation phenomenon would already have looked rather convoluted, exhibiting crisscrossing stemmatic relationships as the novel and its early adaptations (the famous 1925 silent film in particular) made their way from continent to continent, not always in

¹⁵ See especially Hogle, *The Undergrounds of "The Phantom of the Opera"* and Picard, *Sur les traces d'un fantôme*.

chronological order, and joined with different aspects of local performance and other traditions, only to be re-exported and to cross-fertilize in their turn. The increasingly digital nature of adaptations, whether one conceives of it as a function of their transmission or as something more intrinsic, has naturally made such inheritances still more complicated. Indeed, this is true of the rise of the non-physical in the management of cultural patrimony in general, loosely defined as the “digital humanities.” For traditional but bravely forward-looking textual scholars such as Jerome McGann, this new complexity of sources makes philology, the science of the “materials that represent and misrepresent, that record and fracture, the cultures we inherit and transmit,” once again the most important humanistic endeavor.¹⁶

No doubt the study attempted here—of the routes and mechanisms by which *Le Fantome de l’Opéra* evolved from a collection of social and narrative clichés about a particular institution at a particular time in the late nineteenth century into a global cultural phenomenon and, especially, a number of substantial but discrete and geographically distant screen traditions in the twentieth—is a philology of a kind. No doubt the complexities of that philology compound, in a sense, the problems of that on which it is based, the fraught textuality of opera itself, with its dynamic and sometimes unpredictable relationship between page and stage, and the waxing and waning significance of the forms of its presentation.¹⁷ The literary tradition of the *soirée à l’Opéra* out of which the novel emerged was always focused on the evocation of performance; its accounts were in a sense also realizations. And these days—now that iconic productions have histories of their own, and individual performances of those productions, delivered in elaborately packaged form by simultaneous HD broadcast, begin

¹⁶ Jerome McGann, *A New Republic of Letters: Memory and Scholarship in the Age of Digital Reproduction* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 2.

¹⁷ See for example Roger Parker, “A Donizetti Critical Edition in the Postmodern World,” in *L’opera teatrale di Gaetano Donizetti: Atti del convegno internazionale di studio, Bergamo, 17-20 settembre 1992*, ed. Francesco Bellotto (Bergamo: Comune di Bergamo, 1993), 57-66; also Roger Parker, *Remaking the Song: Operatic Visions and Revisions from Handel to Berio* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), and Philip Gossett, “Some Thoughts on the Use of Autograph Manuscripts in Editing the Works of Verdi and Puccini,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 66/1 (2013), 103–28, both of which refer to McGann.

to seem much more like enhanced versions of the work than representations or interpretations of it—the sometimes difficult relationship operas have with their status as works seems even more a matter of adaptation than of instantiation. It might not be too far-fetched, in other words, to think of all these different kinds of mediations of opera—from real performances experienced live in the theater all the way to screen versions of performances that were partly fictional to begin with—as lying on the same continuum of adaptation.

Conceiving of the transmission of versions of *Le Fantôme de l'Opéra*, versions of *Faust* within and behind it, and versions of nineteenth-century opera-going as all part of the same rich philology of print, theatrical, screen and digital sources might initially appear to be the kind of attitude McGann is referring to when he talks about “secondary documents [...] and transformations” as being as important as “the authorial manuscripts,” and their connection with their time and place as being of central importance, literature being, after all, nothing other than “cultural memory.”¹⁸ Of course, he really means a rather more selective recollection: his premise is that we already know what is worth expending energy and institutional resources on preserving and, now, reformatting. From this point of view the most fundamental problem with adaptations of *Le Fantôme de l'Opéra*, however celebrated one or two of them may be, is not their genetic complexity but their origins in popular literature. But concentrating on the organic evolution of this operatic paratext in commercial environments, and on the way it changes in different cultures rather than is self-consciously canonized means, among other things, not having to decide where along the continuum we should draw the line defining the sources we frankly might have decided were *not* worth preserving. They have been preserved anyway, in philologically spectacular ways.

What the Phantom has to do with opera, then, is not only contained in the questions with which I began, about the relationship between music(al) theater genres, but also more broadly the relationship between opera and its

¹⁸ McGann, *A New Republic of Letters*, 6.

echoes, however faint: paratexts, mediations and adaptations. Just as *Le Fantôme de l'Opéra* is part of the reception of *Faust*, a record of its presence in nineteenth-century French culture, so, logically, is *Yeban gesheng* part of the reception not only of that opera, despite its not referring to Gounod's score in any way, but of that presence and that culture. The Phantom of the Opera is truly opera's phantom, a low shadow cast by more approved cultural patrimony as it moves forward through time, aptly rendering the grandeur but also the blurring around the edges. And, as in the audiovisual trope shared by almost all the screen adaptations, from 1925 (if not 1916) onward, the shadow leads sooner or later to the voice.

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