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# The Antwerp Opera and the Second World War: an exploration of repertoire and language

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The undersigned, Elisabeth Jansen, student of the Master program in Digital Text Analysis at the University of Antwerp, declares that this thesis is completely original and exclusively written by the undersigned. For all information and ideas derived from other sources, the undersigned has referred to the original sources, both explicitly and in detail.

Antwerp, 10th of December 2023

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Elisabeth Jansen".



# The Antwerp Opera and the Second World War: an exploration of repertoire and language

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*This thesis explores the impact of World War II on the Antwerp Opera's repertoire and language dynamics. It builds upon the research done by Mona Allaert, who studied the repertoire and language of the first forty years of the Opera's existence (1893-1934), and continues the research to include the period 1934-1946. Using digitization, annotation, and analysis, the original languages of the performances, the languages of the printed leaflets, the composers, and the works are studied. The results reveal a noticeable change in repertoire, marked by fluctuations in the frequency of French, Dutch, German, and Italian works. Additionally, the analysis of the leaflet languages reveals a significant increase in German leaflets during the occupation, and the examination of the top composers and works uncovers a notable shift, with Giacomo Puccini replacing Richard Wagner as the most frequently performed composer during the war period, illustrating the impact of wartime circumstances.*

## 1. The Antwerp Opera

When a city is occupied by different masters, different customs, you get the same. After the shock, most want to pretend as quickly as possible that it's normal, that life goes on, and that one must adapt [...]. Just continue with what you're doing, and the rest will come naturally. The flags in the city, all those uniforms, and the cafés filled with soldiers. All normal. The yearning for the ordinary, you can almost smell it in that time, and the adaptability of humans is a remarkable trick (Olyslaegers 2022, p. 59-60, own translation).

The Antwerp Opera House has a long and rich history, and is currently located in a highly trafficked and prominent area of the city. Its presence serves as a testament to the cultural significance and the enduring legacy of this cultural institution. The precursor of today's Opera, the Dutch Lyrical Theatre (Het Nederlandsch Lyrisch Tooneel), was founded in 1890. Originally situated at the Flemish Theatre, on corner of Kipdorpbrug and Italiëlei, a growing demand for a new venue led to the construction of a new opera building on the Frankrijklei. In 1907, the organization relocated and to this day, the Opera resides in this monumental building. The opera houses of Ghent and Antwerp merged in 1981 to form The Opera for Flanders (Opera voor Vlaanderen) (Smekens and Metdepenninghen). The latest organizational change was in 2014, when The Royal Ballet of Flanders (Koninklijk Ballet van Vlaanderen) merged with The Flemish Opera and became the Opera Ballet Flanders (Vlaanderen.be).

This thesis explores a part of the Opera's history that is still relatively unexplored: its archival records. These records primarily consist of bound volumes of program leaflets

ranging from 1893 to 1981. It has partially been researched and digitized by Mona Allaert, who explored the first forty years of the archive (1893-1934). This thesis will continue her research by focusing on the years 1933-1946, which will encompass the Second World War. Antwerp was occupied by Nazi Germany from the 18th of May 1940 to the 4th of September 1944 and, as Jeroen Olyslaegers described in his novel *Wil*, life continued even during the occupation (Olyslaegers 2022). Nevertheless, living under occupation has a profoundly altering effect. Hence, the main question to be answered in this thesis is: To which extent did the Antwerp Opera's repertoire change during World War II? This involves examining the repertoire and production language, analysing the language of the leaflets. This thesis also endeavours to connect the findings to historical events, and compares the Antwerp Opera to the Ghent Opera for a broader historical context.

### 1.1 Related research

The Antwerp Opera has been a topic of academic research for years. Many studies focus on the development of The Flemish Opera and its organizational changes (Billiet 1918; Verbruggen 1965; Monet 1939; Pols 1943). The performances at the Opera have also been the subject of many reviews, (newspaper) reports, and journalistic writings (Hallemans 1907; Monet 1939). However, the repertoire of the opera remains relatively unexplored.

As mentioned before, Allaert conducted a quantitative study of the repertoire, scanning the leaflets and applying digital methods to create a dataset. Her methods will be more thoroughly discussed in Section 4. Allaert's study focused on the languages used in the Opera's productions, exploring the influence of the Flemish Movement on the selection of the productions. She researched the possible correlation between the Flemish Movement and the Opera, emphasizing the significance of text and translation. She concluded that there was a trend where Dutch performances were frequent in the early years, aligning with the early heydays of the Flemish Movement and the Opera's purpose to provide a platform for Flemish works and the Dutch language. Despite the Opera's primary goal of promoting Flemish works, the majority of performed works were original German works, with a high frequency of works by Richard Wagner (15% of all opera productions). After World War I, the number of German productions declined rapidly. She also observed that the number of Dutch works steadily decreased throughout the years (Allaert 2023).

Allaert's study covered the repertoire of 1893-1934, and does not include the World War II period. Although, research on WWII in Belgium is extensive, cultural life, especially opera, has received less attention. For example, Jacques de Launay's book on the occupation of Belgium, only briefly mentions opera, and Herman van de Vijver, who discussed the cultural life during WWII, dedicated only two paragraphs to opera: one to opera in Antwerp and one to opera in Ghent (Launay and Offergeld 1983; van de Vijver 1990). Van de Vijver claimed that there was a strong shift away from French pieces during the first season of the war (1940/1941), stating that only three French operas were played, while eight German operas, including works by Wagner, were performed. This would indicate a certain degree of continuity from the pre-war era since Wagner was already quite popular (van de Vijver 1990). However, the shift away from French pieces might not have been as pronounced as Van de Vijver claimed, as French operas were not overly present in the Antwerp Opera's repertoire even before WWII (Allaert 2023; Wauters 1983).

Additionally, Van de Vijver stated that the repertoire included eight Italian operas, most from Giuseppe Verdi, while Flemish works were only sparsely represented (van de

Vijver 1990). Van de Vijver's study did not provide a direct comparison between the pre-war and wartime repertoires, nor did he quantify how often the German, French, Dutch, and Italian operas were performed. It also remains unclear whether the mentioned languages represent original languages or translations. Despite a bibliography in Van de Vijver's book, indicating interviews with relevant people and archive visits, it is not clear from which exact source he extracted the information on the repertoire. In Section 6.3.1, Van de Vijver's statements are discussed and compared with the data collected for this thesis.

Another study discussing Antwerp Opera's repertoire during WWII is from Erik Baeck. He focused entirely on Wagnerian works in the Opera during WWII, even claiming that the 'Wagner cult' flourished during this time. Baeck argued that the Nazi's used music as a tool for propaganda and that Wagner played an essential role in that propaganda due to Hitler's favouritism toward the composer (Baeck 2015). However, his focus on Wagner's operas excludes other well-received productions during WWII. Karel Wauters studied Wagner's reception from 1844 to 1914 and stated that there was a considerable enthusiasm (and criticism) for Wagner in Flanders, particularly in Antwerp. Yet, he emphasized that we should not overestimate this, as Antwerp never experienced a true Wagner craze (Wauters 1983). Additionally, Pamela Potter emphasized that the alleged admiration of Wagner by Hitler is surrounded by myths. Some of these emerged from Nazi-Germany, but most were later developed during postwar debates by German expatriates. She stated that the ideologies of Wagner and Hitler might be related, but that it is challenging to find evidence to directly connect the two and concluded that there is no definitive proof to indicate that Hitler's familiarity with Wagner exceeded a mere fondness for the music (Grey and Potter 2008, p. 237).

## 1.2 Research objectives

As Van de Vijver and Baeck did not describe precisely how they counted the performances, it is meaningful to explore whether the same composers from the pre-war era retained their popularity during the occupation of Antwerp in a more quantitative way. Allaert mentioned in her conclusion that understanding the development of original Dutch works in the repertoire would be valuable. Additionally, she questioned whether the observed decline of Dutch performances continues. She also suggested it is worthwhile to investigate how the popularity of German (and Wagnerian) works developed through WWII, and that it is possible that Dutch works make a comeback after WWII due to possible patriotic feelings (Allaert 2023).

This thesis builds upon the research by Allaert, who studied the archive up until April 1934. The time period covered in this study slightly overlaps, starting in October 1933 and ending in July 1946. WWII and the occupation of Antwerp lasted from May 18th 1940 to respectively September 4th 1945, when most of Antwerp was liberated. Allaert's hypothesis on the possibility of Dutch works making a comeback after WWII may be challenging to determine, as this thesis does not study the period after the war. However, it investigates the wartime impact on the Opera's repertoire choices, specifically focusing on aspects such as the original language of the operas, the selection of composers, the number of performances, and the number of premieres. These factors all indicate potential influences during the wartime period. Moreover, the study examines possible linguistic changes on the leaflets themselves. Furthermore, the research seeks to validate the observations made by Herman van de Vijver and Erik Baeck concerning the changes that occurred at the Antwerp Opera during this particular era. Finally, a comparison is made between the repertoire of the Antwerp Opera and the repertoire

of the Ghent Opera, as the operas are historically connected and have fused in 1981 to become one organisation. It is therefore valuable to discover to which extent the repertoires were similar in these places.

## 2. WWII and the occupation of Belgium

Nazi-Germany invaded Poland on September 1, 1939. In response, the United Kingdom and France declared war on Germany. Despite initial attempts at neutrality, Belgium and The Netherlands were invaded on May 10, 1940. With the horrors of the First World War still fresh, many Antwerp citizens, including mayor Camille Huysmans, fled the city. German forces reached Antwerp on the 18th of May and the city fell without much of a fight (Wouters 2004; antwerpcommemorates.be).<sup>1</sup>

On May 28, 1940, the Belgian army, under command of King Leopold III, surrendered. Belgium was officially occupied and was placed under military administration, the *Militärverwaltung*, which aimed to maintain normalcy in Belgian public life, only intervening in administrative matters when necessary. This allowed occupied Belgium to be governed efficiently with a minimum of German invaders involved. It also meant that large parts of the Belgian elite could remain in their positions and that they had to cooperate with the occupier (Wouters 2004). This strategy involved the *Flamenpolitik*, which had its roots in the occupation of WWI and included the encouragement of Flemish culture, politics, and racial identity, and contributed to the encouragement of Flemish separatism. It also involved giving the Flemish exclusive favours, such as allowing Flemish prisoners of war to return from Germany, a favor denied to Walloon prisoners. The German authorities hoped that this would increase support among the Flemish (Baeck 2015).

In Antwerp, the installation of the German government, administration and police forces happened smoothly. After Huysmans' departure, a temporary mayor was appointed: Leo Delwaide. The town hall and Delwaide established good relations with the German *Stadtkommissar* Walter Delius. Between October and December 1940, the first anti-Jewish measures were implemented. Jews were excluded from certain professions, and all Jews aged 15 years or older had to register with the administration. The town council actively cooperated in the registration process and police officers helped draw up the lists (Wouters 2004; antwerpcommemorates.be).

April 14, 1941, Antwerp experienced its own *Kristallnacht* when, after a screening of the propaganda film *Der ewige Jude*, two hundred people participated in the first pogrom. They left a trail of destruction by breaking windows in the Jewish district and destroying property. The home of a rabbi was wrecked, and the synagogues in Van Den Nestlei and Oostenstraat were pillaged and set on fire (antwerpcommemorates.be). There was a rise of anti-Jewish sentiments and violent actions, reflecting a shift in societal values and attitudes. From June 11, 1942, Jewish people were forced to wear yellow stars, and from mid-July, they were banned from the city's parks, cinemas and theatres. In July and August 1942, raids occurred, with the local police helping with arrests and deportations. Mayor Delwaide and other authorities were formally informed about the raids, but they chose to stay mostly silent. Only in November 1942 did Delwaide release a statement, announcing that he was not aware of the razzias and that it was not his responsibility, as this was a matter for the judicial authorities. It

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<sup>1</sup> Antwerpcommemorates.be is managed by Antwerp's municipal archives. It has diverse information collections and includes a timeline describing the main events of WWII in Antwerp.

was, however, unlikely that Delwaide was not aware of the happenings (Wouters 2004; antwerpcommemorates.be; Goethem 2019).

Besides these societal shifts, there were changes on a more governmental level. Despite the German authorities wanting limited interfering, they still made major changes in the administration. On January 1, 1942, Greater-Antwerp was established. The suburbs of Berchem, Borgerhout, Deurne, Hoboken, Merksem, Mortsel, Wilrijk and part of Ekeren were merged with Antwerp. These places lost their status as municipalities, and the municipal councils were abolished. For Greater-Antwerp, a new city council was created with eight Old Order members of the aldermen and five New Order members. Delwaide stayed mayor of the bigger city (antwerpcommemorates.be).

Throughout the occupation, there had been encouragement for people to go work in Germany, but on the 6th of October 1942 forced labour for all (Belgian) men between 18 and 50 years of age was announced. As a consequence, many eligible men went into hiding and ended up joining into the resistance (Wouters, 2004). The introduction of forced labour increased discontent, leading to violent actions and sabotage from late 1942 to May 1943. March, April and May 1943 were particularly violent, with groups of people marching through the city and leaving trails of destruction (Wouters 2004; antwerpcommemorates.be)

In April 1943 the war intensified as the Allied started bombing the Antwerp area. This continued through June and September. On the 3rd and 4th of September, the last major raids in Antwerp took place (Wouters 2004; antwerpcommemorates.be). Delwaide and many other civil servants felt the end of the occupation approach and started changing their attitudes (Goethem 2019). They refused to provide lists of city employees to the occupiers, and no longer allowed the local police to arrest those who were refusing to work in Germany. Delwaide even resigned in January 1944 and was replaced by Jan Timmermans, a member of the Flemish nationalist group Vlaamsch Nationaal Verbond (VNV), until the war's end. After the liberation in September, mayor Camille Huysmans returned to Antwerp and resumed his position (antwerpcommemorates.be).

D-Day on June 6, 1944, marked the beginning of the end of the occupation. By September 4, aided by the resistance, British tanks liberated most of Antwerp. Though, German soldiers still held positions in the city, leading to armed struggles. From October 4th to 7th, the northern districts were also liberated. However, Antwerp remained a target for Nazi Germany until March 1945. To prevent the Allied from using the port, the bombardment of Antwerp was ordered. In the next six months, citizens lived in constant fear, and it is estimated that between 2,910 and 2,957 civilians were killed in Greater-Antwerp during this time. An additional 600 Allied soldiers died and just over 5,200 people were injured or reported missing. On November 11th a V2 bomb fell on the Breydelstraat and killed 51 people. Two weeks later, on 27 November, a V2 fell on the intersection of de Keyserlei with Frankrijklei and Teniersplaats, near the Opera. A total of 128 civilians and 29 soldiers were killed and 260 people were injured. Finally on May 8th 1945, WWII officially ended with the capitulation of Germany (antwerpcommemorates.be).

## 2.1 Cultural life during WWII

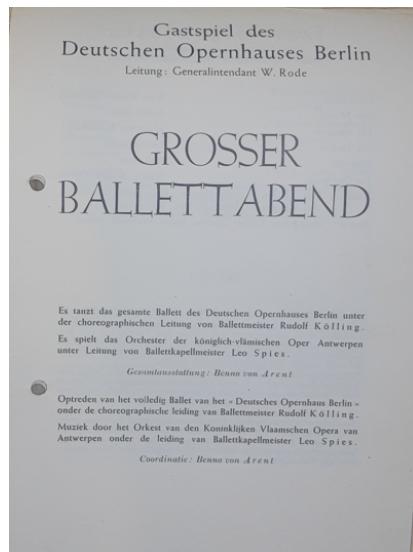
Despite the German occupiers' intention to maintain normalcy, Antwerp and its cultural life underwent significant changes under German control. The creation of Greater-Antwerp influenced educational and cultural institutions, and the German authorities wanted more unification in organizational structures (Jacquemyns 1984). This influenced the Antwerp Opera, where Jef Sterkens assumed daily management responsi-

bilities and Hendrik Diels, a supporter of Flemish and German music and a member of SS-Flanders, was in charge of the artistic direction. A new position was created for Joris Diels, brother of Hendrik Diels, who became Director-General of both the Royal Dutch Theatre (KNS) and the Antwerp Opera (KVO). He assumed the artistic and financial leadership of both institutions and became a general director, a position still held today. Diels had been the director of the KNS before the war, but in May 1940 he fled to France. He was heavily criticized for this, but the city administration and KNS actors wanted him back nonetheless. The appointment of Joris Diels as director of both organizations allowed the Antwerp Opera to establish its own set workshop and extend the performance season, which in turn improved social security for the artists. Despite these improvements, Diels made concessions to protect his Jewish wife, Ida Wasserman, and her family. Wasserman had been a singer at KVO, but was no longer allowed to perform (Baeck 2012; van de Vijver 1990).

Additionally, concessions were made on the repertoire, which is thoroughly discussed in Sections 5 and 6. The authorities censored repertoires and the Nuremberg Laws included a prohibition on collaborations between Aryans and Jews. Consequently, composers of Aryan background and librettos that could be interpreted in an anti-Semitic manner were promoted, while works by Jewish composers were banned. Certain composers, like Jewish composer Jacques Offenbach, faced a complete ban. However, Nazi censorship was often contradictory and ambiguous. Georges Bizet's *Carmen* maintained its popularity in both Germany and Antwerp, despite the fact that the composer was partly Jewish and the libretto was a collaboration involving Ludovic Halévy, who was wholly Jewish. There was never an active campaign to damage the work's reputation, nor was it ever banned. In the case of Richard Strauss, only *The Silent Woman* was banned due to a libretto by Jewish Stefan Zweig. However, *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Elektra* and *Arabella* remained untouched, even though Hugo von Hofmannsthal was half-Jewish (London 2001).

In addition to the German authorities, several other organizations were actively involved in the Belgian cultural field, like the pro-Nazi organization DeVlag (Duitsch Vlaamsche Arbeidsgemeenschap). DeVlag's main mission was to promote German-Flemish relations and during the first two years of the war, DeVlag invited German literary figures, theatre companies, and orchestra's to perform in Belgium (Baeck 2012). Between 1940 and 1941 there were several guest performances in Antwerp by German institutions: Oper der Hansestadt Köln (November 12, 1940), Oper von Düsseldorf (December 19, 1940), Bühnen der Hansestadt Köln (January 17, 1941), Stadtischen Bühnen Düsseldorf (February 27, 1941), and Deutschen Opernhaus Berlin (June 3, 1941) (Figure 1). It is unclear whether the guest performers were invited by DeVlag to perform in the Opera, but it is known that these performances were encouraged and promoted by the German authorities until at least 1942, when cultural exchanges declined. The Germans had other (military) concerns, and the public's interest waned due to the stricter occupation policies and the uncertainties of war (van de Vijver 1990; Baeck 2012). This is also reflected in the repertoire as the last guest performance was in June 1941.

Besides DeVlag, *Kraft durch Freude*, a German government organization that provided leisure activities, organized performances. They were at least active until 1943, until musicians and singers that were part of that organization were sent to the front. From that point on, the opera houses had to organize special events for the *Wehrmacht* themselves, with subsidies from both the city council and German authorities (van de Vijver 1990; Baeck 2012). These events were also regularly organized in Antwerp. This will be further discussed in Section 5.4.2.

**Figure 1**

Leaflet announcing a guest performance by Deutschen Opernhaus Berlin on June 3rd 1941  
(Image: 0601\_19401941 deel 2\_00602-20230303\_161400.jpg).

## 2.2 The Ghent Opera during WWII

Sanne Baeck researched the influence of the German occupiers on the Ghent Opera's repertoire. She investigated whether the German occupation acted as a catalyst for the ongoing process of "Flemishization", the cultural and linguistic promotion of Dutch language and identity, in the context of the Royal Ghent City Opera (Koninklijke Stadsopera, KSO). Baeck's research is valuable for this thesis because the Operas of Antwerp and Ghent have a long-standing relationship. Even before merging, the two Operas frequently worked together. Performers, directors, and staff from both venues often collaborated and participated in guest performances. Additionally, during WWII, many of the regulations imposed by the German authorities applied to both Ghent and Antwerp (Baeck 2012; van de Vijver 1990; Wouters 2004).

When comparing the opera of Ghent and Antwerp, it is important to note a difference between the two. Before WWII, the Ghent opera had had a French orientation and its purpose was not necessarily to promote the Flemish language, unlike the Antwerp Opera. This changed during WWII because the German occupiers preferred a more Flemish-oriented program. Baeck emphasized that this change was catalysed by the occupation but that it was not entirely new, as there were already those who opposed to having a French opera house in a Flemish city before 1940 (Baeck 2012). This distinction is noteworthy because Ghent and Antwerp had different identities and motivations before the war, meaning that the occupation might have impacted the opera houses' repertoires differently.

Baeck studied archival material from the period, consisting of financial records and correspondence letters between important figures in Ghent's cultural field, such as the mayor and the aldermen of Antwerp, and the director of the opera house. To reconstruct the Ghent repertoire, she analysed police and fire brigade reports, which were mandatory for every performance. Such reports are missing for the period before

WWII, but by using season prospectuses, she was able to research the program before WWII. However, she could not determine whether all announced performances made it to the stage and how often they were performed (Baeck 2012). While the city archive and the literature archive Het Letterenhuis in Antwerp have archival records, including personal archive material of Joris Diels, studying this material for the Antwerp Opera was beyond the scope of the present thesis.

According to Baeck, the change from a French oriented opera house to a more Flemish-oriented one started in 1940 with the replacement of director René Coens, who had been director from 1925. He was supposed to continue on as a director in the theatre year 1940/1941, but the German authorities did not accept his re-appointment. He was instead replaced by Hendrik Caspee. This change in leadership contributed to the focus to shift from predominantly performing in French to an increase of Flemish productions (Baeck 2012).

Under Coens' leadership, approximately half of the repertoire consisted of originally French works. Between 1935 and 1939, at least 47% of the repertoire consisted of French works. In 1936/1937 the repertoire peaked with 65.5% French works. German operettas were the second most popular works. Operettas are a lighter form of opera, where song and music are accompanied by elaborate dancing scenes and spoken dialogue (Britannica.com). German operas were less popular, especially compared to Italian operas. The first Flemish works were performed in the season of 1937/1938 and in the next season less than six percent of the repertoire was Flemish (Baeck 2012).

The repertoire changed under Caspee's direction, where the percentage of French works dropped to a maximum of 19% in 1943/1944. French works were then replaced by German works, which constituted about 53% of the repertoire in each season. Flemish works also grew more prominent, making up 24% of the repertoire in the first year and averaging 7.5% in the subsequent war years. Baeck states that this is probably due to a lower attendance for Flemish works. Italian works remained stable in the repertoire, making up about 20% of it under both Coens and Caspee's direction. It should be kept in mind that these figures do not account for the number of times a performance was played. However, it is clear that under Caspee's direction (and more generally during WWII) the repertoire did change appreciably (Baeck 2012).

The occupation did not only influence the repertoire. Caspee also made an agreement with the German authorities that none of the members of the Ghent Opera could be called up to work abroad. Whenever Caspee heard rumours about members of the Ghent Opera who were considering to work elsewhere, he would remind them of this agreement. Leaving would be a risk as they would lose the privilege of not being called up. Yet, German employees could still be called up to join the German army. Orchestra conductor Willfort, who worked for the opera for two seasons, was called up and had to leave the Opera in September 1940 to fight in the German army. The agreement Caspee had was not entirely foolproof, as members would still receive letters calling them up for work in Germany. This resulted in Caspee having to plead directly to the authorities, sometimes visiting them multiple times a day. German guest directors found this practice peculiar, as in Germany, all young male musicians were conscripted for military service without outside interference (Baeck 2012). Whether the same agreements were made in the Antwerp Opera was not researched during this study, but it would be worthwhile to investigate further.

### 3. Musical and linguistic complexities of opera

Operatic works (and performances) are often rich in translations, and texts regularly cross linguistic borders and even literary genres. Not only are operas based on the translations of texts, but they are also transformations of other (literary) works. Operas are transformed through the translation of music and libretto into live performances and through the re-imagination of performances in diverse global settings and across time (Mateo 2014; Serban and Chan 2022).

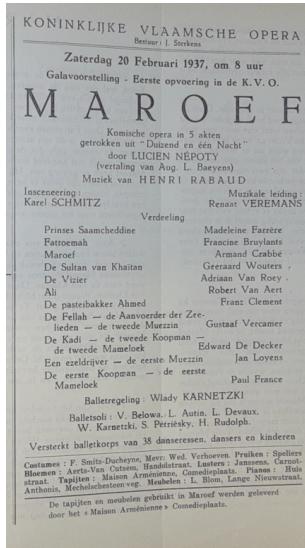
The re-imagining and the translation of opera in multiple ways, makes opera a very complex art form. In discussions about opera, the debate over whether text or music is more important is inevitable. Opera is considered a musical art, but whether music serves language or if language serves music, has been discussed since the beginning of opera as an established art form. The relationship between music and text is complex, ever-changing and difficult to define. Some academics have considered the relationship between the roles played by words and music as complementary. Sandra Corse states that this oversimplifies the dynamic and argues that words and music complement each other, with musical elements reinforcing the understanding of words and text. Language and music convey and create meaning while allowing room for interpretation. This makes opera more definite than music alone and simultaneously more open than language alone (Corse 1987).

Besides the interplay of music and language, language and translation further complicate the matter. In the history of opera, the question of which language(s) to use in texts or productions has evoked many debates. These discussions often centre around translations, a crucial aspect of the art form. It is not common for operas to be monolingual, but they are rather bi- or multilingual. In opera, languages can coexist, and the same performance can be half in one language and half in another language. For example, arias are often sung in Italian, but recitatives (a style of vocal music intermediate between speaking and singing) can be sung or spoken in another language (Mateo 2014; Desblache 2021). This also occurred in Antwerp during the interwar years and the occupation, when German conductors and German guest soloists were invited to perform in the Opera. German soloists often sang in German, while the Flemish soloists and choir performed in Dutch, resulting in bilingual performances (Baeck 2015).

#### 3.1 Identifying languages in the repertoire

Identifying languages used during performances at the Antwerp Opera is a complex task. It is not always clear in which language the opera was performed. Determining the original language of the production is usually straightforward, as the original languages of the works are available on the website of International Music Score Library Project (IMSLP.org). However, some operas that were performed at the Antwerp Opera were translated (Figure 2). We could assume that, in these cases, the opera was performed in the translated language. Yet, not all leaflets specify whether the work was translated or performed in the original language. Due to this challenge, this research will mostly focus on the original language of the productions, following Allaert's example.

Additionally, the language on the leaflets form a second source of information on language-use. Although Allaert did not explore this aspect, the initial exploration of the archive revealed that the language on the leaflets was noteworthy from 1933 to 1946. Until 1940, most of the leaflets are in Dutch, with a few rare exceptions to French, German, and Italian. However, with the start of WWII and the occupation of Antwerp, there was a significant shift, and a considerable number of leaflets in German were



**Figure 2**

Leaflet mentioning translation (Image: 19361937\_0023520230218\_154852.jpg).

added. Some of these leaflets were also bilingual, as they had two languages on the same page. Between 1940 and 1945 there were 25 pages with both Dutch and German text. Lastly, the language of the titles could tell us more about the language-use at the Opera. If a title is spelled in Dutch, like *De Lustige Weduwe* instead of the original title *Die Lustige Witwe*, we can assume this was a Dutch performance. These aspects will be further discussed in Sections 5 and 6.

#### 4. Methodology

##### 4.1 The materials

The archive of the Antwerp Opera is housed in the 'Muziekbibliotheek' of the Ghent Opera (Figure 3).<sup>2</sup> The archive consists (mostly) of bound volumes per operatic season, with printed leaflets of the programs. The first items of the archive stem from 1893 and are folders with leaflets; the more recent ones are often bound into book volumes. The last volume of this archive is from 1981, which is when the Antwerp Opera fused with the Ghent Opera. All seasons appear to be present without significant date gaps (Allaert 2023). Most leaflets at least mention the performed opera's title, date, composer, musical direction, and role distribution.

For this thesis, the archive from October 1933 to July 1946 was studied and digitized. This section consists of fifteen volumes, each volume representing a season. While seasons usually start around September/October and end around April/May, some volumes extended until July. This was not standard and coincided with the appointment of Joris Diels as director of both the KNS and KVO and the subsequent changes within

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<sup>2</sup> This is not a publicly accessible part of the Opera.

**Figure 3**

The archive in the 'Muziekbibliotheek' located in the Ghent Opera.

the opera. Besides the volumes, there are several smaller booklets with special performances from 1937 and a booklet with information about the repertoire of 1939/1940.

Allaert observed that volumes in the early years are shorter than the more recent ones. The section of the archive she studied averaged 350 pages per volume (Allaert 2023). The part of the archive studied in this research averaged 416 pages per volume, which supports Allaert's statement about the more recent volumes being larger.

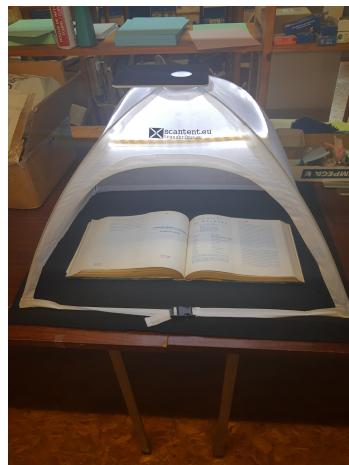
Two volumes are noteworthy to discuss: The seasons 1938/1939 and 1940/1941 each consist of two volumes, which is not usual. The volumes for 1938/1939 season are alike and share similar content. However, the two volumes for the 1940/1941 season are noteworthy as they differ not only from the rest of the volumes, but also from each other. The first volume has German pages added at the back, separated by a page with the text: *Duitsche Teksten* (Figure 4). The pages are not ordered by date, potentially indicating a later addition. The second volume has a different structure from the first. In this volume, the Dutch and German pages are regularly interspersed, instead of only added into the back of the volume. The following volumes up until 1945/1946 all include German pages.

**Figure 4**

Page in the first volume of 1940/1941 with the text: 'Duitsche Teksten' (German texts) (Image: 0284\_19401941\_0028420230303\_124507.jpg).

## 4.2 Digitizing the archive

I followed Allaert's procedure for digitizing the archive to ensure consistency of the annotation standard. For the digitization, a ScanTent was used (Sca 2023) (Figure 5). The ScanTent, using the DocScan application on a mobile phone, allows for photographing in a mobile setup. This results in high-resolution pictures. A total 6.289 pages were photographed for this thesis. Selected information from the photographed pages was manually added into a dataset using a spreadsheet application. Initially, six metadata fields were recorded. The first column is the *Image* column, containing the filename of the image. The second is the *Collection* column, recording the volume to which the image belongs. Each collection corresponds to a single operatic season. The *Production* column holds the title of the performance in the original spelling and language from the leaflet. Occasionally, when there were multiple performance titles on the leaflet, they were added with a '+' marker between them. The *Date* column indicates on which date the production was performed, and the *Occasion* column notes special occasions like galas, parties, or performances for the *Wehrmacht*. N/A was used for unavailable information. While Allaert used five fields for her study, this thesis added a sixth field called *Leaflet\_Language*. This column indicates the language of the page. In cases, with multiple languages on one page, both languages were annotated, separated by a '+' marker (Figure 7).

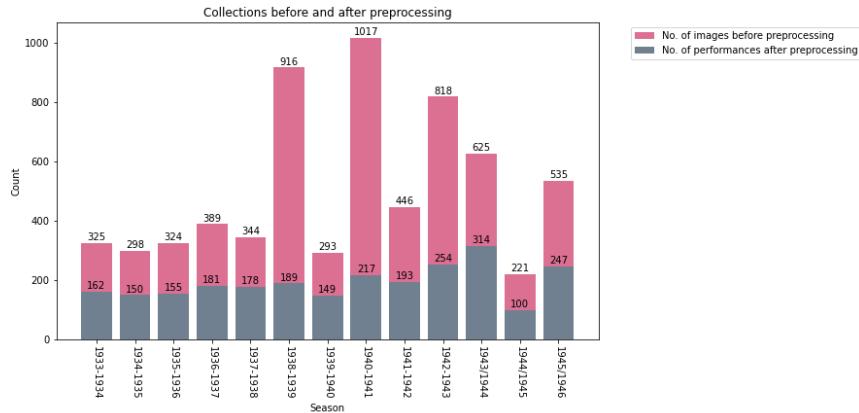


**Figure 5**  
The ScanTent in the archive with one of the leaflet books.

## 4.3 Preprocessing and metadata

The preprocessing of the data followed a similar approach to Allaert's. The *Production* column contained the title of the performance(s) as they were spelled out on the leaflet. However, in some cases there were minor differences in spelling, such as *Aida* or *Aïda*. Additionally, titles were sometimes printed in Dutch and sometimes in another language, like *De Vleidermuis* and *Der Fledermaus* (Figure 7). These are the same works, but because of the spelling differences, they would not be interpreted as such in a computational approach. To ensure correct interpretation, a column with a normalized title was added. For this process, a lookup table was created by Allaert. Performances

that premiered after 1934 were manually added to the table. The next step was to convert the Date column to a standardized format and to remove all images that were blank, did not contain relevant information or were duplicates. This step removed of 4.062 images (Figure 6). There were 14 leaflets containing a performance but no date, these were assigned the performance date January 1st, 2100.



**Figure 6**

Collection before and after preprocessing.

Additional metadata was added with the help of a metadata-file. This included the original language, composer, year of the original world premiere, original title, and language in which the title was printed on the leaflet. Allaert gathered most metadata, except for 39 performances introduced after 1934. The additional information was collected from the International Music Score Library Project (IMSLP.org) and added to the metadata-file. For most titles, the language in which they were written was clear, for example *Het meisje van Zaventem* is obviously Dutch. However, there were ambiguous titles, like *Fidelio*, *Carmen*, and *Faust*. These titles were given an ‘unknown’ label (Unk). After preprocessing and completing the metadata, the new dataset was merged with the existing one.

Finally, the *Leaflet\_Language* field needed preprocessing. The previous method for analysing the original languages of the opera was adjusted and applied to this column. Pages that were blank or only had illustrations on them were removed, but all other pages, including commercial texts, reports, and opera summaries were kept in the analysis, as these pages show what language was more prominent in the volumes. Only the Dutch and German pages were included in the final analysis due to the sparse nature of Italian and French pages. It should also be noted that the *Leaflet\_Language* field was only added for the data from 1933 to 1946, since that is the period this thesis focused on.

Image	Collection	Production	Date	Occasion	Leaflet_Language
0182_1940-1941_deel_2_00182-20230303_140426.jpg	1940-1941	Fidelio	19/12/1940	gastvoorstelling der oper van Düsseldorf	German
0183_1940-1941_deel_2_00183-20230303_140433.jpg	1940-1941	N/A	N/A	N/A	Dutch + German
0184_1940-1941_deel_2_00184-20230303_140521.jpg	1940-1941	Carmen	21/12/1940	N/A	Dutch
0185_1940-1941_deel_2_00185-20230303_140533.jpg	1940-1941	N/A	N/A	N/A	Dutch
0186_1940-1941_deel_2_00186-20230303_140542.jpg	1940-1941	Carmen	21/12/1940	N/A	German
0187_1940-1941_deel_2_00187-20230303_140552.jpg	1940-1941	N/A	N/A	N/A	German
0643_1940-1941_deel_2_00643-20230310_144910.jpg	1940-1941	Madame Butterfly	22/12/1940	N/A	Dutch
0188_1940-1941_deel_2_00188-20230303_140517.jpg	1940-1941	N/A	N/A	N/A	Dutch
0189_1940-1941_deel_2_00189-20230303_140525.jpg	1940-1941	Madame Butterfly	22/12/1940	N/A	German
0190_1940-1941_deel_2_00190-20230303_140536.jpg	1940-1941	N/A	N/A	N/A	Dutch
0191_1940-1941_deel_2_00191-20230303_140654.jpg	1940-1941	De Walkure	22/12/1940	Eerste dag van het Tooneelfeestspel “De Ring Des Nevelings”	Dutch
0192_1940-1941_deel_2_00192-20230303_140705.jpg	1940-1941	N/A	N/A	N/A	Dutch
0193_1940-1941_deel_2_00193-20230303_140713.jpg	1940-1941	De Walkure	22/12/1940	Eerste dag van het Tooneelfeestspel “De Ring Des Nevelings”	German
0194_1940-1941_deel_2_00194-20230303_140725.jpg	1940-1941	N/A	N/A	N/A	German

**Figure 7**

Excerpt of the annotations before preprocessing.

#### **4.4 Hypotheses**

In her conclusion, Allaert wonders how the repertoire, especially the proportion of original Dutch, German, and Wagnerian works, developed after her researched reference period. Therefore, the first hypothesis suggests a noticeable shift in the Antwerp Opera's repertoire during WWII, influenced by the German occupation. Further, we anticipate a decrease in Italian works as the occupiers favoured more Flemish- and Germanic-oriented programs, coinciding with the original agenda of the Antwerp Opera. Another hypothesis is that the number of Italian operas remains stable throughout the war-period, as observed by Sanne Baeck in the Opera Ghent's repertoire. Baeck attributes this trend to the preference of the German authorities for Italian operas that aligned with their ideology (Allaert 2023; Baeck 2012).

In Ghent, the most popular composers were Franz Lehár, Giacomo Puccini, Johan Strauss, and Richard Wagner (Baeck 2012). Wagner enjoyed popularity in Antwerp during the pre-war era (Allaert 2023; Baeck 2015). So, another hypothesis suggests that Wagner becomes even more popular during the war, due to his existing popularity and his connection to Germanic culture. Meanwhile, composers of Jewish descent or operas with a Jewish connection would become less popular, as those works would be forbidden or disapproved by the German authorities.

Lastly, it is hypothesized that the language of the leaflets reflects the societal changes and provides further insights into the impact of the occupation on cultural dynamics during the war. Comparing the language used in the leaflets throughout the years provides insights into cultural developments and potential continuity or changes in linguistic preferences. This analysis extends to the language of the titles as they are written on the leaflets, which may differ from the language of the leaflet (e.g. the title could be *Der Graf von Luxemburg*, but all other information on the leaflet could be in Dutch). The question is whether we can detect differences between the original language of the work and the language in which the title is printed. This aspect will be discussed in Section 5.6.

### **5. Analysis of the results**

Allaert performed a time series analysis, a method commonly used in fields like finance, sociology, and politics. A time series is a set of observations which are sequential in time (Palma 2016). After applying Allaert's code to the merged dataset, we gain insight into the development of the original languages of the performed operas between 1893 and 1946. This section starts with exploratory visualizations focusing on the four major languages in the dataset: German, French, Dutch, and Italian. The graphs include vertical lines marking the opening of the new building in 1907, the start of WWI (during which the opera was closed), and the start of WWII. During WWII, the Opera was closed from December 1944 to April 1945, inevitably influencing the frequencies of the 1944/1945 season.

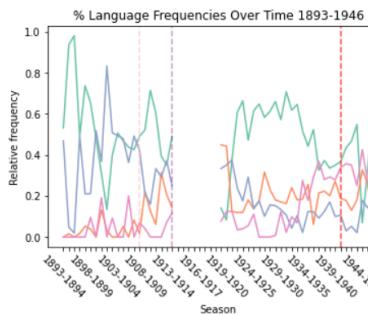
#### **5.1 Languages before WWII**

Allaert observed that German dominated in most of the seasons from 1893 to 1933, peaking at 85 German performances in 1909/1910 (69% of the entire repertoire). During WWI the opera was closed. After reopening, German declined with only three German performances in 1920/1921, but it should be noted that this season had very few performances due to a shortage of musicians. German performances steadily increased,

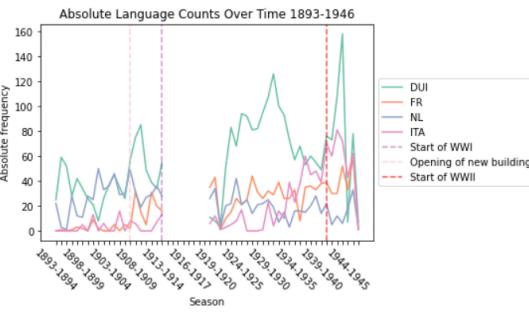
peaking again in 1930/1931 with 126 performances (61% of the repertoire). After this point, the proportion of German performances declined slightly, though the percentage stayed high, rarely falling below 30%.

Unlike German works, Italian works were not consistently featured in the repertoire until 1928/1929. From that season onward, Italian compositions became a regular part of the program. In 1936/1937 they peaked at 38%, surpassing the percentage of German pieces.

Before WWI, Dutch works constituted a large portion of the repertoire, particularly from 1896 to 1907, with a peak in 1901/1902 (74% of the repertoire was Dutch). After this period, Dutch works experienced a decline until just after WWI, where they again made up at least 33% of the repertoire for a few years before further declining. French performances remained somewhat scarce, except for a few seasons of increased frequency in seasons 1918/1919 (43%) and 1919/1920 (42%). The relative and absolute frequencies are visibly represented in Figures 8 and 9, and all percentages and counts are available in the appendix (Tables 1 and 2).



**Figure 8**  
Relative frequencies of languages 1893-1946.

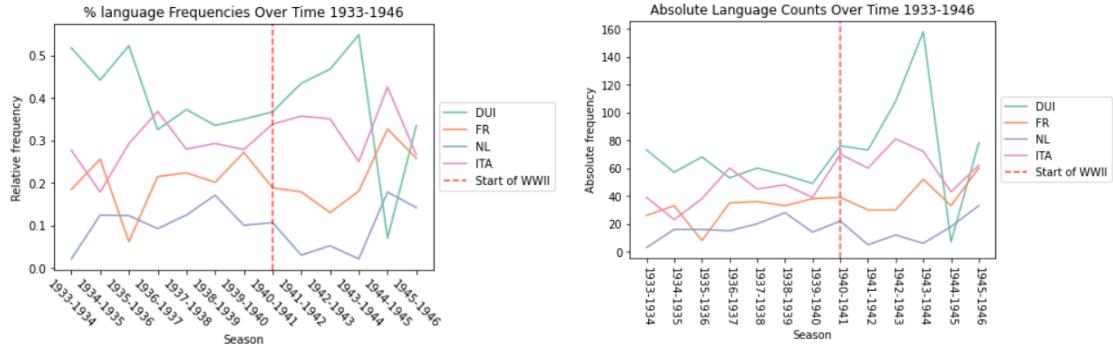


**Figure 9**  
Absolute frequencies of languages 1893-1946.

## 5.2 Languages during the war

Allaert observed that throughout the repertoire, there is a gradual decline in the production of Dutch works, and she wondered how this trend develops after 1933 (Allaert 2023). Figures 10 and 11 show the development of original Dutch works throughout the 1930s, peaking at 17% in 1938/1939. In the following years Dutch works were less popular. From 1941 to 1944, they never made up more than 4.5% of the repertoire. Notably, in the last year of the war, Dutch works constituted 18% of the repertoire.

The start of WWII and the subsequent German occupation in 1940 correlate visibly with the frequency of the German language. From 1940/1941 German works steadily increase until 1943/1944, where German performances made up 61% of the repertoire. The following season shows a change, where only 7% of the works were originally German. However, it should be noted that in the season 1944/1945, the Opera was closed from December 1944 to April 1945. Interestingly, in season 1945/1946, German works again become more frequent (35%). Between 1943 and 1945 the German performances make way in favour of mostly Italian, but also more French, and Dutch performances (Figure 10 and 11, Tables 1 and 2).



**Figure 10**  
Relative frequencies of languages 1933-1946.

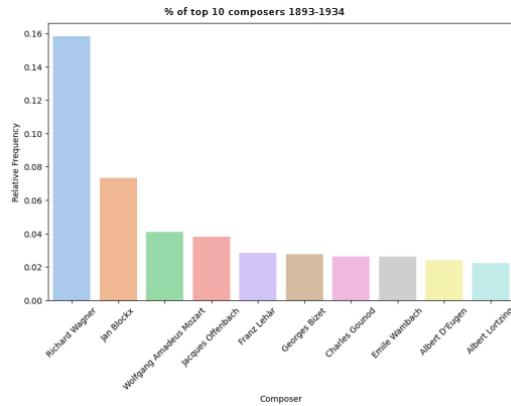
**Figure 11**  
Absolute frequencies of languages 1933-1946.

### 5.2.1 Composers

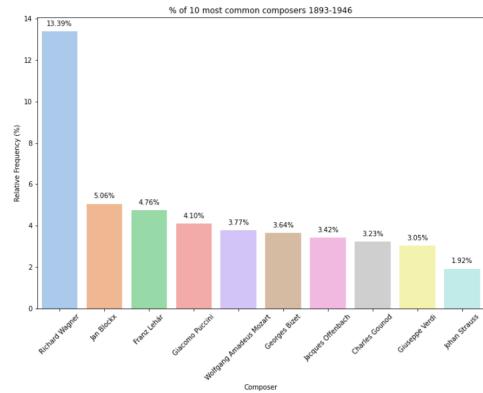
Figure 12 illustrates Allaert's analysis of the top composers in the repertoire. This top was made by calculating the relative frequencies of the composers based on the total number of performances in the dataset. From her analysis of 1893-1934, Richard Wagner emerged as the most popular, followed by Dutch composer Jan Blockx, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, and Jacques Offenbach. When applying the same analysis to the entire dataset (1893-1946), the composition of the top composers changes. Figure 13 shows that Wagner (13.39%) and Blockx (5.06%) still lead the top, but are now followed by Franz Lehár (4.76%) and Giacomo Puccini (4.10%). This change suggests that there is a shift noticeable when adding the period 1934-1946.

Zooming in on the period of 1933-1946, reveals Puccini as the most popular composer, accounting for 10.91% of the performances, with Wagner moving to the second position (9.05%), closely followed by Lehár (8.69%). This shift is surprising considering Wagner's previous top position and popularity. Narrowing focus to the period 1940-1945, Puccini is still the most frequent composer with 12.53%, followed by Wagner (10.21%), Lehár (10.03%), and Giuseppe Verdi (7.15%). Another noteworthy presence in this top is Charles Gounod (4.55%), because of his Jewish descent, his work was officially banned, yet his work *Faust* was performed 49 times in Antwerp during WWII (Figures 14 and 15, Table 3).

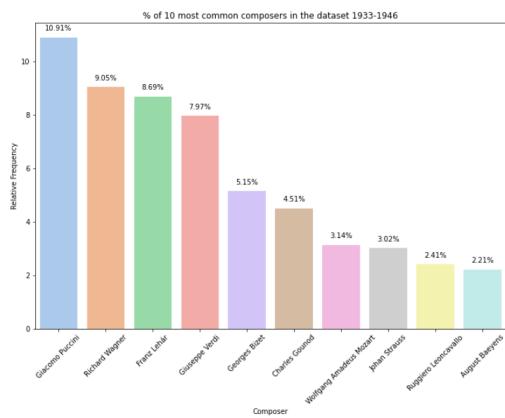
Analysing the works of the top composers in 1940-1945 reveals, that Puccini's most popular works were *Madama Butterfly* (65 performances), *La Bohème* (47 performances), *Tosca* (41 performances), and *Manon Lescaut* (8 performances). Wagner's most popular work was *Lohengrin* (30 performances), followed by *Die Walküre* (17 performances) and Franz Lehár' *Das Land des Lächelns* (54 performances), and his *Die lustige Witwe* (39 performances) were most popular (Table 3).



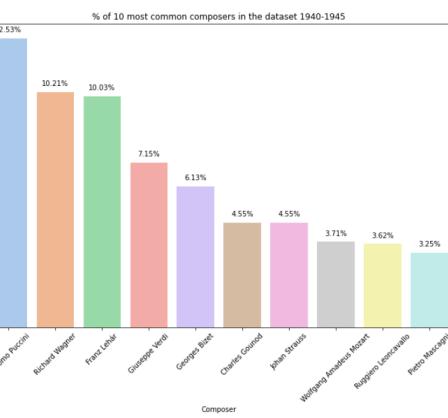
**Figure 12**  
Top composers 1893-1934 (Allaert 2023).



**Figure 13**  
Top composers 1893-1946.



**Figure 14**  
Top composers 1933-1946.



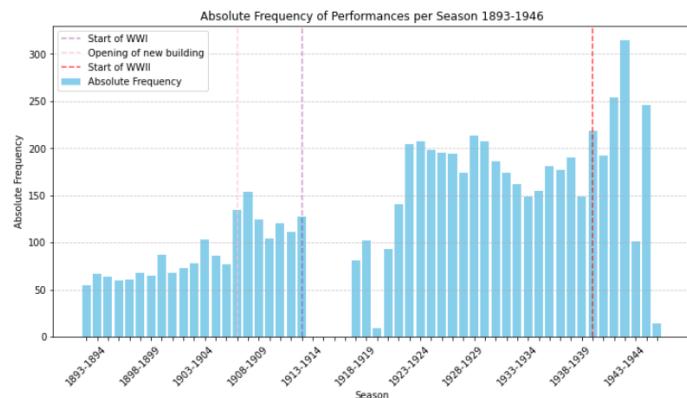
**Figure 15**  
Top composers 1940-1945.

### 5.3 Performances, productions, and premieres

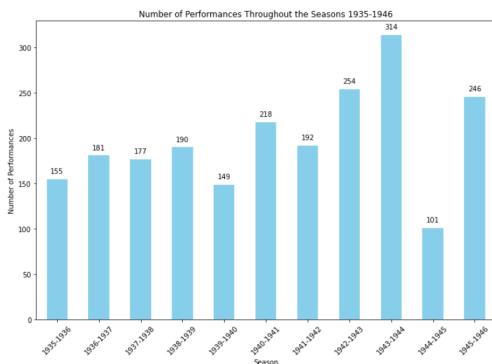
In addition to studying the frequencies of languages and composers, another valuable insight is gained by studying the absolute frequencies of performances, the number of unique performances, and the number of premieres before and during the war. Absolute frequencies of performances teach us whether there were more or fewer performances during WWII compared to the years preceding the war. In Figure 16, we can observe fluctuations throughout the years, with a general incline throughout the Opera's existence. We clearly observe the gap when the Opera was closed during WWI, and when the opera was closed during the season of 1920/1921, because of a shortage of musicians (Allaert 2023). It is also clear that during WWII there is much variation in the number of performances.

Focusing on 1935-1946, the difference becomes more apparent (Figures 17 and 18). There is a noticeable and somewhat consistent increase in the number of performances, peaking at 314 performances in 1943/1944, followed by a drop to 101 in 1944/1945.

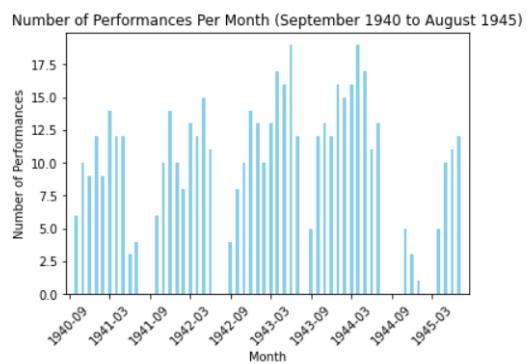
In Figure 18 we can see that a drop in late 1944 and early 1945, which aligns with the closure of the Opera. To make a better comparison, the ratio of performances is calculated between five years before the war (1935 to 1940) and the five years of the war (1940 to 1945). The ratio of the number of performances results in approximately 0.643, indicating a decrease of 64.3% during the war compared to before.



**Figure 16**  
Absolute frequency of performances 1893-1946.



**Figure 17**  
Absolute frequency of performances 1935-1946.



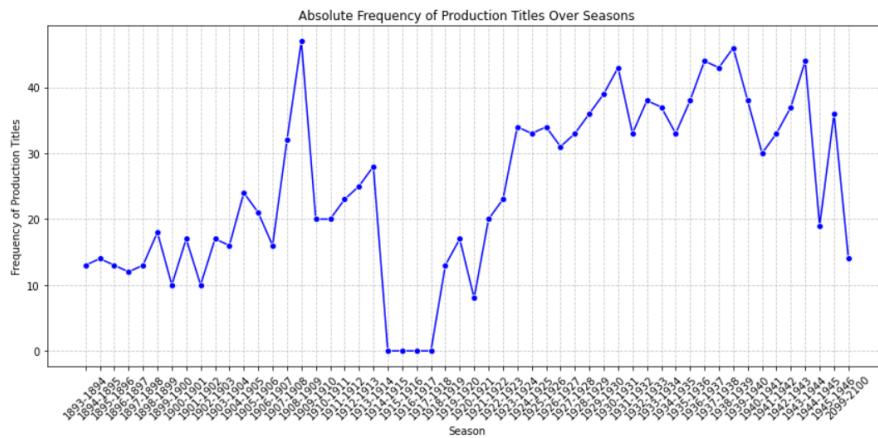
**Figure 18**  
Number of performances per month.

### 5.3.1 Titles and premieres

To determine title variation in the repertoire before and during the war, the absolute frequency of the production titles was analysed. A season with a greater number of unique titles would have a more diverse repertoire. Figure 19 indicates an overall increase in the number of titles throughout seasons, with variations between them. Some seasons feature a greater diversity of titles, while others do not.<sup>3</sup> Comparing the plot of the absolute frequency of performances with titles, we observe similar trends

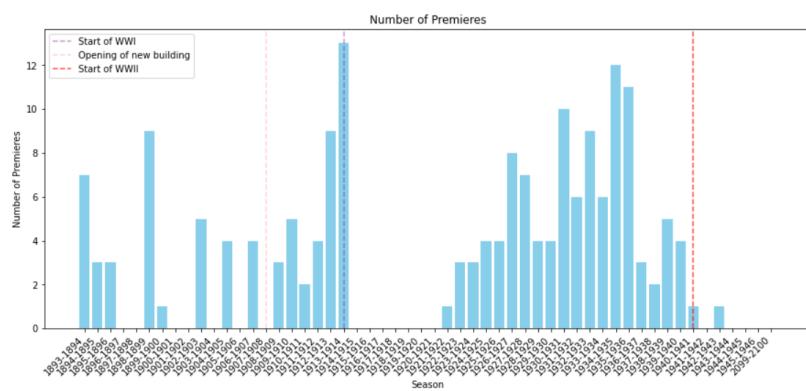
<sup>3</sup> In Figure 19 the season 2099/2100 is visible because of performances with a designated year.

during WWII. The ratio between the five years before the war and the five years during the war remains the same for titles at approximately 64.30%.

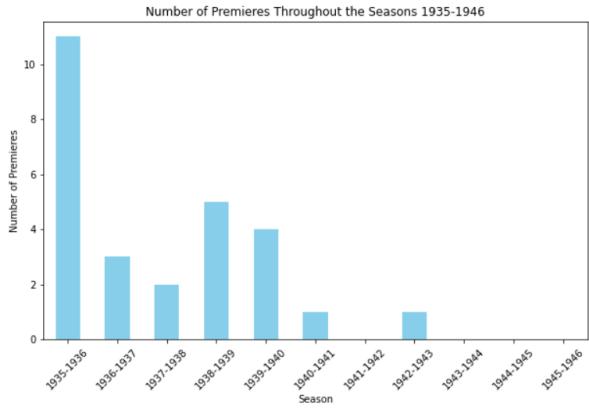


**Figure 19**  
Absolute frequency of unique production titles 1893-1946.

The number of titles shows variations in the repertoire during the war, and the number of premieres will tell us more about how much the Opera was innovating. A premiere in this case is a work that is entirely new to the audience of the Antwerp Opera, so these are performed for the first time ever (a world premiere), performed for the first time in Belgium, or performed for the first time in Antwerp. Across the repertoire from 1893-1946, there were 180 premieres (Figure 20). In the five years before the war, 25 premieres occurred, and during the war there were only two (Figure 21). This signifies a substantial difference between the two time periods, with the ratio indicating a decrease of 92%. The new works presented during the war were: *Romeo en Julia* (1870) by Pyotr Tchaikovsky and *Monika* (1937) by Nico Dostal.



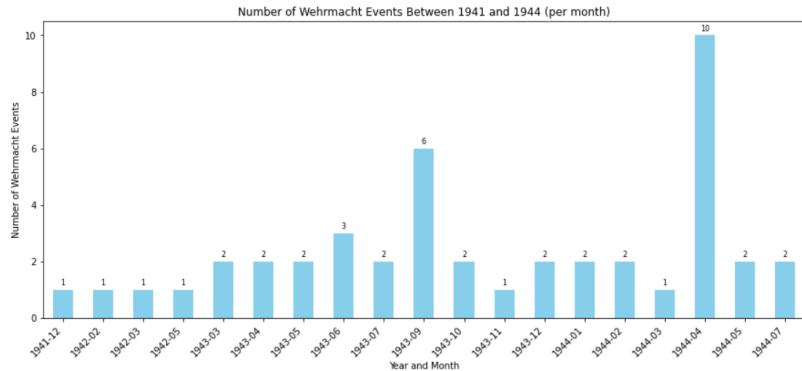
**Figure 20**  
Number of premieres between 1893-1946.



**Figure 21**  
Number of premieres between 1935-1946.

### 5.3.2 Wehrmacht events

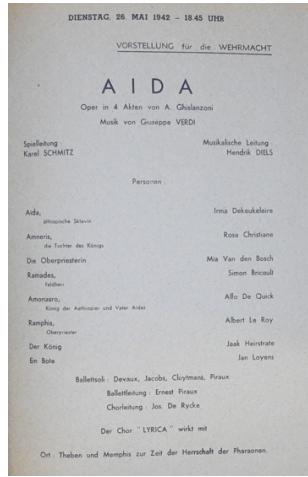
In Figure 22, we observe the number of special events for the *Wehrmacht*. From 1941 to 1944 there were 45 events for the *Wehrmacht*.<sup>4</sup> Most months featured only a few *Wehrmacht* performances, except for September 1943, where six events occurred, and April 1944, where ten performances were organized for the *Wehrmacht*.



**Figure 22**  
Number of *Wehrmacht* events.

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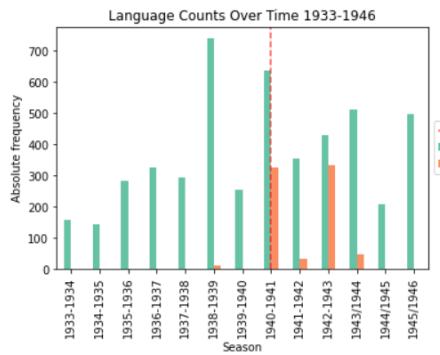
<sup>4</sup> Figure 22 does not include months where no events for the *Wehrmacht* were organised.

**Figure 23**

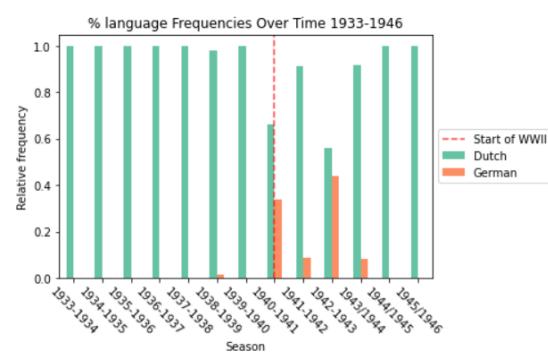
Example of a leaflet for a *Wehrmacht* event (Image: 0357\_19411942\_0035720230306\_115401.jpg).

#### 5.4 Leaflet languages

This section focuses on leaflet languages between 1933 and 1946, as this is the part of the archive where language information was collected. In Figures 24 and 25, the impact of WWII on the language of the leaflets is visible. From 1933 to 1939, the number of German and Dutch pages remained relatively consistent, with the majority in Dutch and few in German. However, with the start of WWII in 1940, there is a notable increase in German leaflets (34% in German and 66% in Dutch). The following year, the proportion of German pages decreases to 9%. In the volume of 1942/1943, there is another surge, with 44% of the pages in German. The last season before the end of the war (1943/1944) has only 8% German pages, and in 1944/1945, there are once again no German pages.

**Figure 24**

Absolute frequency of the leaflet languages.

**Figure 25**

Relative frequency of the leaflet languages.

## 5.5 Language modelling

Allaert developed a statistical model to predict the original language of performances (the language in which the opera was originally composed in). She used a Generalized Linear Model (GLM) from the binomial family, employing logistic regression to analyse the relationship between predictor variables and binary outcomes. The dependent variable implemented had a binary outcome, with Dutch (1) and not Dutch (0) for the original language of the performance (Allaert 2023).

For this thesis, Allaert's analysis was replicated, initially on the entire dataset of 1893-1946 and later focused on 1940-1945. In addition to analysing the original language of the performances, the approach was applied to the language of the production titles as they are written on the leaflets. For instance, a leaflet might announce the performance of the German opera *Der Fledermaus* with the Dutch title *De Vleidermuis*. To categorize the titles, a binary dependent variable was added, also with Dutch (1) or not Dutch (0).

A multivariate model, with the same predictors Allaert used, was initiated. The predictors included Director (ten levels), Multiple Bill (True/False), Original premiere (131 factors), Occasion (like a gala (G), popular performance (P), or neither (N)), and Season (50 levels). The 'drop1()' function was used to remove non-significant predictors, causing the final model to deviate slightly from Allaert's. She originally included Season, Multiple Bill, and Occasion, but Occasion became irrelevant, as there were no more popular displays (*volksvertoning*) after WWI (Allaert 2023). The final model included only Season and Multiple Bill. These predictors were used without interactions, resulting in two models: one estimating the likelihood of Dutch performances and another estimating the likelihood of Dutch titles in each operatic season.

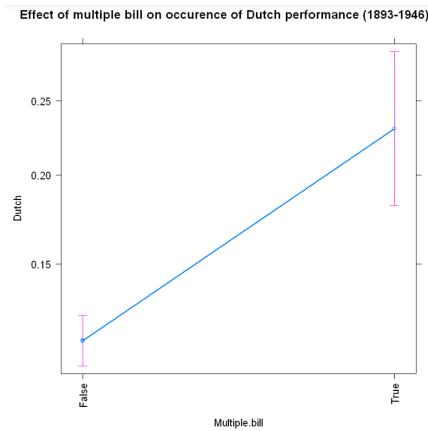
Allaert's code, based on work by Kestemont, was used to create this section. Each predictor (Season and Multiple Bill) was explored through (marginalized) main effect plots. Note that seasons when the opera was closed will be omitted from the plots as they have no values and do not contribute to the analysis (Allaert 2023; Kestemont 2022).

### 5.5.1 Effect of Multiple Bill on Dutch performances and titles

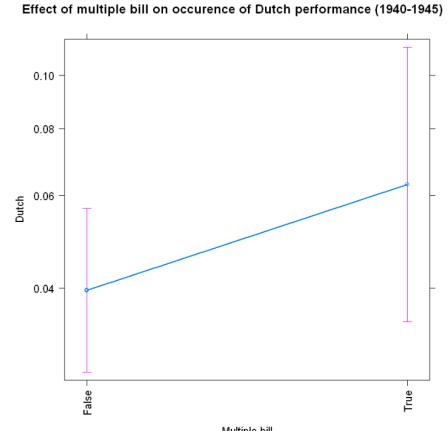
In Figure 26, we examine the effect of multiple bills on original Dutch works performed between 1933 and 1946. The plots reveal that the original language of the performance influences its inclusion in a multiple bill. Consistent with Allaert's observations, original Dutch works are frequently part of multiple bills, suggesting that Dutch performances are often presented alongside others.

Focusing on the WWII period shows a less pronounced impact on the probability of Dutch performances (Figure 27). While there is still a discernible effect, indicating a higher likelihood for an original Dutch work to be performed alongside others, there is also increased uncertainty, as shown by the wider confidence interval.

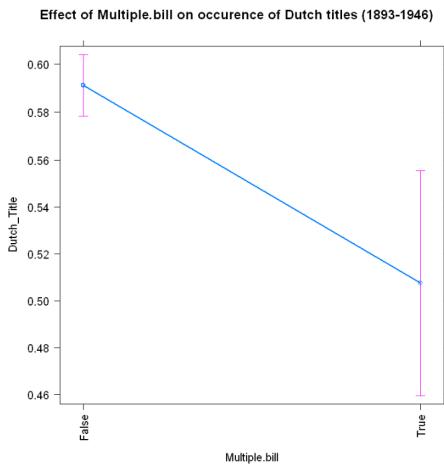
Figure 28 illustrates the effect of multiple bills on the language of the title (i.e., the language in which operas are listed on the leaflets) for 1893-1946. For titles advertised in Dutch, we observe that when a performance is Dutch, there is a likelihood that the title is part of a multiple bill. This contrasts with the effect of multiple bills on the original language of the performance, suggesting that while an original Dutch work is likely to be part of a multiple bill, the title does not necessarily need to be in Dutch. Focusing on the period 1940-1945, we note that although this trend persists, the effect is less prominent (Figure 29).



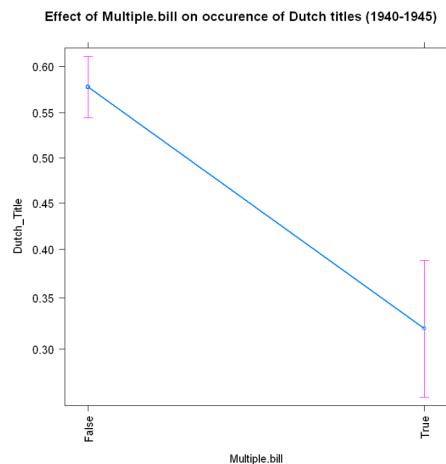
**Figure 26**  
Plot for Multiple Bill of Dutch performances 1893-1946.



**Figure 27**  
Plot for Multiple Bill of Dutch performances 1940-1945.



**Figure 28**  
Plot for Multiple Bill of Dutch titles 1893-1946.

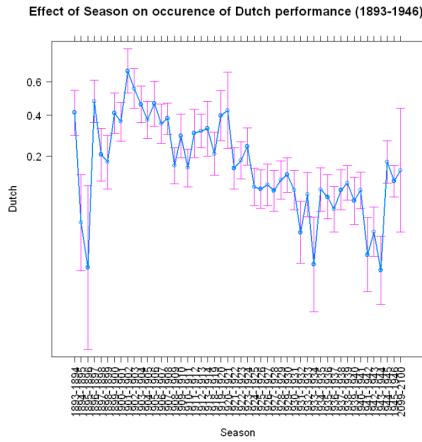


**Figure 29**  
Plot for Multiple Bill of Dutch titles 1940-1945.

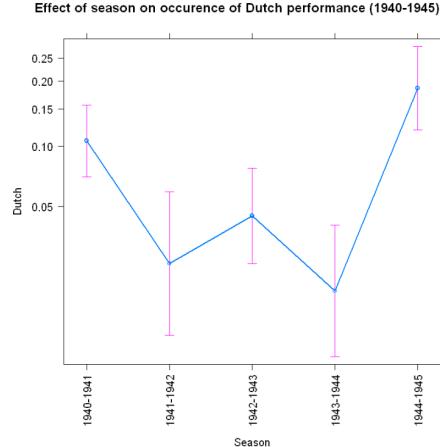
### 5.5.2 Effect of Season on Dutch performances and titles

When examining the effect of Season on Dutch, Allaert notes variations in the number of Dutch performances in the initial seasons, emphasizing the peak in 1902 followed by a slow decline (Allaert 2023). This trend is mirrored in Figure 30, showing a gradual decline with some exceptions in the last seasons. Figure 31 shows a clearer shift, with a decrease in 1943/1944 followed by an increase in the next season. When focusing on the language of the titles, we again observe fluctuations (Figure 32). Zooming in on the period 1940-1945, an elevation is observed in the 1942/1943 and 1944/1945 seasons, indicating a higher number of titles advertised in Dutch during those years.

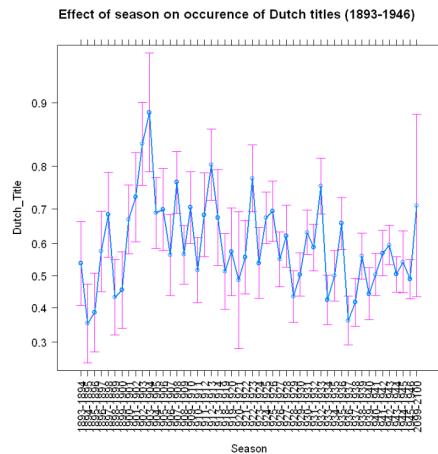
The confidence intervals reflect variability, suggesting considerable differences across seasons (Figure 33).



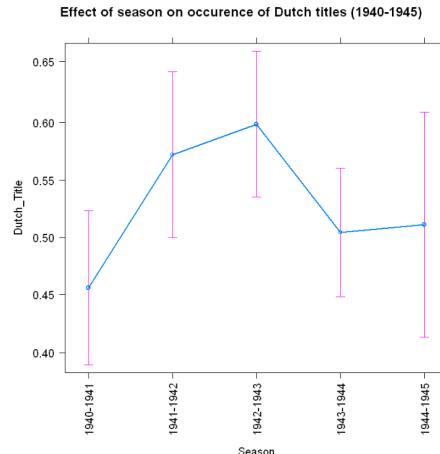
**Figure 30**  
Plot for Season of Dutch performances  
1893-1946.



**Figure 31**  
Plot for Season of Dutch performances  
1940-1945.



**Figure 32**  
Plot for Season of Dutch titles 1893-1946.



**Figure 33**  
Plot for Season of Dutch titles 1940-1945.

## 6. Discussion of the results

### 6.1 Languages before WWII

Allaert noted that the German language dominates much of the repertoire of the Antwerp Opera, peaking in 1909/1910 with 69%. This was attributed to both the Opera's strong German orientation in its early years and the first performance of Wagner's *Ring Cycle* in 1909/1910. Post-WWI, German works experienced a decline, possibly due to the negative association with Germany after the war. During the same

period, French emerged as a prominent language in the Antwerp Opera, comprising 43% of the repertoire in 1918/1919. The surge in French works might have filled the void left by the German operas, and it could have been the result of an increase of Belgian nationalistic sentiments post-WWI. Additionally, the closure of the French-oriented Théâtre Royal for two years after the war could have contributed to an increase in French works. When the Théâtre Royal reopened, the frequency of French works in the Opera declined again to approximately 10-12% between 1921/1922 and 1925/1926 (Allaert 2023) (Tables 1 and 2).

Dutch performances experienced a rise during the 20th century, peaking at 36% in 1907/1908 when the new building opened. During this period, Dutch opera became a culturally significant aspect for the Flemish Movement. However, following WWI, a gradual decline in the Dutch opera is noticeable (Allaert 2023) (Tables 1 and 2).

Between 1932 to just before WWII in 1939, German operas slightly declined in frequency, while Italian and French works surge. The increase of these works might have been caused by the disbanding of the Théâtre Royal in 1933. The city council had decided that it was too expensive to support two opera houses in Antwerp and had stopped financing the theatre, which could not survive without the financial support (Baeck 2015). To cater and attract the Théâtre Royal's regular audience, the Antwerp Opera could have modified the repertoire (Tables 1 and 2).

## 6.2 Languages during WWII

German works surged at the beginning of the occupation going from 36% in 1940/1941 to 61% in 1943/1944. This could be attributed to a deliberate German occupation strategy. Following a successful military campaign, a subsequent cultural campaign unfolded. This campaign aimed to send a message that the Germans were establishing a lasting presence and emphasized that cultural activities, such as opera, was an important part of the Nazi ideology (London 2001).

Another noteworthy shift lies in the popularity of Italian works. In the years preceding the war, Italian works already became more popular, and this trend continued throughout the war. From 1940 to 1945 the average number of original Italian work was 32%. In 1944/1945, when German works accounted for 7% of the repertoire, Italian works constituted 41%. This suggests that near the end of the war, Italian works were a preferred choice. A similar pattern is observed in French and Dutch works. These works averaged on approximately 15% French and 5% Dutch from 1940-1944, but in the last season both languages gained popularity (34% French and 18% Dutch). To understand these changes, we now delve into the composers and the works that enjoyed popularity.

## 6.3 Composers

Throughout the repertoire, Wagner always held a share in the programming and during WWII Wagnerian works consistently made up a respectable 8-10%, peaking in 1943/1944 with 21%. This is unsurprising, as Wagnerian works were favoured by the German authorities (Levi 2001; Baeck 2015). The peak in 1943/1944 coincided with the Opera's fifty-year jubilee, where Joris Diels aimed to conduct Wagner's entire oeuvre. He began this marathon of eleven works on May 13th 1944 with *Rienzi* and planned to finish on July 15th with *Parsival*. He collaborated with the Opera of Cologne, and managed to have a complete company of Wagnerian vocalists. *The Cycle*, however, was never fully performed because some of the German soloists were unable to attend due to difficulties with travel permits. This resulted in several performances being postponed,

or even cancelled. In the end, only eight out of eleven works were performed (Baeck 2015; Jacquemyns 1984).

Despite the jubilee, Wagner moved from first to second place among the top composers for 1940-1945, indicating a shift in popularity during WWII. In the years leading up to the jubilee, Wagner's works were performed less often. In the season after the jubilee (1944/1945) only *Lohengrin* was performed once. This could be attributed to the previous year's high frequency of Wagnerian performances and favouring of other works for variety's sake. Simultaneously, Wagner, once popular in the late nineteenth century in both Germany and Antwerp, might have become less accessible to the general audience that leaned more towards mass culture. In Germany, by 1942/1943, the most favoured operas were by Giacomo Puccini, not Wagner (Grey and Potter 2008).

This trend visible in the Antwerp Opera throughout the period 1940-1945, where the overall most-performed composer was Puccini. Popular works included *Madama Butterfly* by Puccini, followed by Bizet's *Carmen*, Strauss' *Die Fledermaus*, and Lehár's *Das Land des Lächelns*. This trend might be attributed by the inaccessibility of Wagner's work. Wagnerian opera's had an average duration of 3 hours and 45 minutes (Baeck 2015; StageAgent).<sup>5</sup> In Antwerp, Diels conducted Wagner's work without cuts and intermissions. Many people visited the opera for entertainment purposes, and Wagner's operas may not have appealed to them due to their duration (van de Vijver 1990). The more popular works by Puccini, Bizet, and Strauss were generally shorter. *Madama Butterfly*, *Carmen*, and *Die Fledermaus* lasted about two and a half hours. From the top most performed operas, only *Faust* lasted more than three hours. Content-wise, these operas were appealing as they mostly revolved around (tragic) love, comedy, and drama. *Madama Butterfly* is about an officer's ill-fated love for a Japanese courtesan, *Die Fledermaus* has a comic plot about mistaken identities, and *Carmen* is a drama of the scandalous and tragic love of a soldier and a Spanish gypsy (Till 2012). Wagner operas, on the other hand, seemed less appealing to audiences. Eyewitness accounts state that Nazi officials attended Wagner's operas out of a sense of duty but found the works dull, with too few melodies and scenes lacking action. In 1933, so few party loyalists were present during the performance of *Meistersingers* at a rally in Nuremberg that Hitler ordered truant individuals to be pulled from cafés and brothels. The following year, attendance became mandatory, yet it was still common for people to fall asleep during operas and show little interest (Carr 2007). Moreover, in Antwerp there was significant competition from other entertainment venues, like jazz-cafés and cinemas (Jacquemyns 1984).

Finally, there are some other noteworthy results in the analysis. Officially, works by French composers were forbidden by the German authorities, and French opera was generally less popular in Nazi-Germany. However, *Carmen* managed to maintain a consistent presence in German opera houses and in Antwerp. Despite Bizet being partly Jewish, *Carmen* was never banned (Grey 2008). Another noteworthy outcome is the presence of Charles Gounod in the top composers from 1940-1945. Gounod was officially banned, but *Faust* was performed regularly in Antwerp. The same occurred with works by Jacques Offenbach. His works were also banned, yet in several seasons during the occupation, there were still performances. These instances show the inconsistency of German authorities (Levi 2011). In the Ghent Opera, works by Gounod were also performed throughout the occupation. This might have occurred because

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<sup>5</sup> The duration of the opera's depends on the version being played and whether or not there were intermissions. When played slow, Wagner operas could last up to five hours.

director Caspee was never officially notified of the prohibition. High German officials often visited the Opera, but none commented on what was being performed. Besides, censorship was performed both before and after performances and works had to be approved before being played. If the authorities made no objections, there would not be any problem in programming these works (Baeck 2012; London 2001).

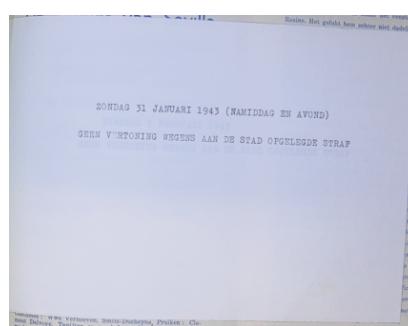
#### 6.4 Performances, productions and premieres during WWII

Comparing the number of performances before and during the war reveals a 64.3% reductions in performances during the war. Wartime conditions, financial challenges, and other developments during the war likely contributed to this shift in activities. Absolute frequencies of performances between 1935 and 1946 show fewer performances in certain months. This is due to the opera's closure between December 1944 and April 1945 and the hard conditions during the war. Antwerp was heavily bombarded from October 1944 to March 1945, leading to many casualties (antwerpcommemorates.be)(Figure 34). Even before this period, there were several occasions where the opera was closed and performances were cancelled, with reason ranging from sudden early closing times to punishments imposed on the city (Figure 35). In April 1943 there were cancellations demanded by the city council, which may have been a consequence of the violent times during that period. Further research is needed to understand the specific context of these cancellations.



**Figure 34**

Pages from volume 1945/1946 with the text: "War events kept the opera closed for over four months. After the reopening, night after night, there was no seat left unoccupied."



**Figure 35**

Page with the text: "No performance due to punishment imposed on the city."

The ratio of titles mirrors the ratio of the number of performances, indicating that there was less variation in the repertoire during WWII compared to the years before the war. This may have been due to a lack of innovation during the war and a preference for classics (London 2001). Only two new works during WWII were Pyotr Tchaikovsky's *Romeo en Julia* in 1941 and Nico Dostal's *Monika* in 1943. These choices may have been influenced by the classic nature of *Romeo en Julia* and *Monika* being a safe operetta due to Dostal's Austrian background, and its appeal to the audience.

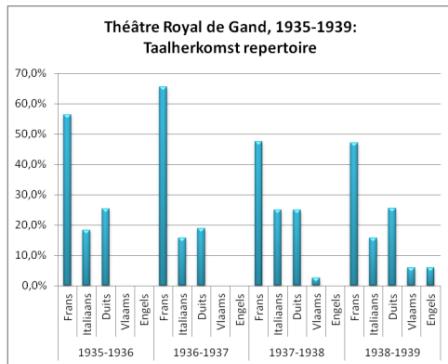
#### 6.4.1 Wehrmacht events

The events for the *Wehrmacht* were noteworthy, because they were heavily subsidized by the German authorities. Sanne Baeck states that in Ghent admission and program booklets were free for these events. Despite the name, these concerts were not exclusively for the German military audience, as members from Flemish and National Socialist movements also attended. Baeck also states that *Kraft durch Freude* was responsible for many German performances in Ghent, Brussels, and in Antwerp (Baeck 2012). It is possible that these events were also financed in Antwerp. *Kraft durch Freude* is only mentioned on one leaflet, but all leaflets for *Wehrmacht* events were printed in German. This supports the possibility of subsidizing in Antwerp. However, further research into the finances of the Opera is needed to ascertain in what capacity they received financial aid..

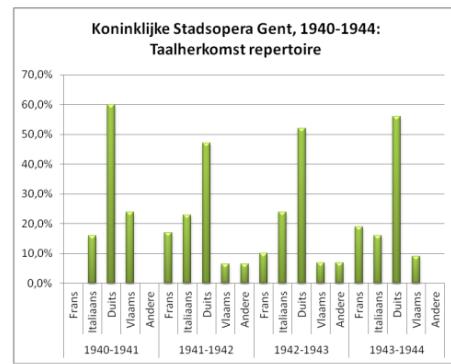
#### 6.5 Comparing the Ghent Opera

Between 1935 and 1939, the Ghent Opera's repertoire featured at least 47% French works, contrasting with Antwerp's averaged 21%. Ghent's French repertoire peaked in 1936/1937 with 65.5%, while Antwerp's repertoire featured 23% French works. German operettas consistently ranked second in popularity in Ghent, but German operas were less prevalent, especially compared to Italian operas. The 1937/1938 season introduced the first Flemish operas in Ghent, with their presence expanding to just under six percent in the following season (Baeck 2012) (Figure 36). In Antwerp, this figure was higher at 17% (Tables 1 and 2).

When Coens was replaced by Caspeelee as director, French works declined. In 1940/1941, there were no French works, while Antwerp maintained a representation of 18%. In 1943/1944, Ghent had only 19% French works, compared to Antwerp's 13%. German works consistently constituted 53% of Ghent's repertoire, often surpassing Antwerp's percentage, except for 1943/1944 where Antwerp's German repertoire was 61%. Flemish works averaged around 7.5%, similar to Antwerp. Italian works consistently held 20% in both Coens and Caspeelee's Ghent repertoires, while in Antwerp that number fluctuated (Baeck 2012) (Figure 37). From these numbers, it is evident that the repertoires of Ghent and Antwerp shared features, yet also differed.



**Figure 36**  
Repertoire languages Ghent Opera  
1935-1939 (Baeck 2012).



**Figure 37**  
Repertoire languages Ghent Opera  
1940-1944 (Baeck 2012).

### 6.5.1 Comparison Herman van de Vijver and Erik Baeck

Van de Vijver briefly discussed the Antwerp Opera's repertoire and solely mentioned the 1940/1941 season. He mentioned a notable shift in French pieces, but our analysis shows that there is not a strong shift away from French works, as they are still well-represented in the repertoire (18% in 1940/1941). When comparing Van de Vijver's counts with the dataset, more differences emerge. Only Italian has the same count, as there were indeed eight works. Van de Vijver stated that Dutch works were vaguely 'sparse', while we count 4 works (van de Vijver 1990) (Table 5).

Erik Baeck also discusses the 1940/1941 season, mentioning a total of eleven German works, three French works, eight Italian works, and four Flemish works. This analysis again shows discrepancies in these counts, as only Italian and Dutch are similar (Baeck 2015). Baeck covers the other seasons as well, in Table 6 in the appendix, we see that Baeck's counts exhibit differences compared to the counts of this thesis, with only six out of twenty counts aligning. This emphasizes the need for careful consideration and verification when assessing historical repertoire data.

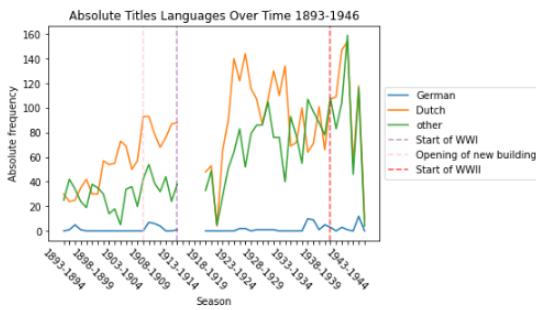
### 6.5.2 Language of the leaflets

The increased presence of the German leaflets in the volumes results from promotion by the German authorities, who financially supported operas and theatres. Sanne Baeck states that, in Ghent, German versions of programs *Wehrmacht* event booklets were available throughout the entire occupation period due to subsidies (Baeck 2012). For this thesis, there was no room to research whether and in what capacities the Antwerp Opera was subsidized. However, the presence of German leaflets suggests the possibility, as the leaflets for 1940/1941 have pages in German added in the back, indicating a later addition. Additionally, the subsequent volumes have these pages regularly interspersed. This continues until the season 1945/1946, where the German pages suddenly disappear, aligning with the end of the war.

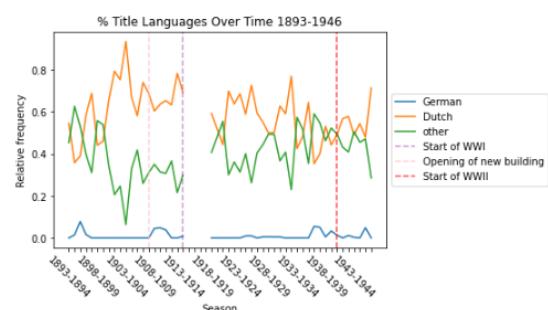
### 6.5.3 Modelling the languages

In the Generalized Linear Model (GLM) analysis, certain patterns emerged. Analysis of the period 1893-1946 shows that when Dutch works were absent, there were many German performances, and vice versa. Allaert proposes that this might have been intentional, with the artistic directors avoiding scheduling Dutch works in competition with German works possibly to emphasize each season's thematic or stylistic focus. Dutch productions were also more likely to be part of a multiple bill, often featuring a short excerpt from a new work before a more well-known opera, much like the previews shown in a cinema (Allaert 2023). Additionally, some operas, like *Cavalleria Rusticana* by Pietro Mascagni, were often paired with another short opera, such as *Pagliacci* by Ruggero Leoncavallo.

The leaflet title's languages raises questions about potential correlations with the actual language of the performance. For example, a leaflet can announce the performance of the German opera *Der Fledermaus* with the Dutch title *De Vleidermuis*. This implies that the opera has been translated to Dutch and that it could have been performed in Dutch, but definitive conclusions are elusive. The complexity of the languages of the titles and works make it challenging to ascertain which language accurately represents the language on stage. These effects are also visualized in Figures 38 and 39.



**Figure 38**  
Absolute frequencies of the title languages.



**Figure 39**  
Relative frequencies of the title languages.

## 7. Conclusion

This thesis explored the impact of World War II on the Antwerp Opera's repertoire and language dynamics, building upon Mona Allaert's work, who studied the Opera's archive from 1893 to 1934. This thesis continued that study by researching the archive from 1933 to 1946. The analysis revealed noticeable shifts in the Antwerp Opera's repertoire during WWII and explored the possible influences of policies and preferences. Noteworthy changes included a decrease of French and Dutch works in the early war years and an increase in the last two seasons (1944/1945 and 1945/1946). In contrast, German works surged until 1943/1944, followed by a decline in 1944/1945, where German pieces were replaced by Italian works. These shifts can be attributed to wartime sentiments, with German works initially gaining popularity at the beginning of the occupation and then declining as the war developed and Antwerp was subsequently liberated.

A shift is also observed in the popularity of composers. Whereas Richard Wagner was the most popular composer before the war, Giacomo Puccini surpassed him during WWII. This can be attributed to the length and content of the works, where Puccini's works were more appealing over Wagner. Notable were the presence of the Jewish Charles Gounod and Jacques Offenbach in the wartime repertoire, as their works were officially banned. The analysis of the languages of the leaflets further highlights the impact of the occupation. The increase of German leaflets during WWII reflect the German authorities' cultural campaigns and was likely a result of the financial support and promotion by the occupiers.

While this study sheds light on wartime influences, there are numerous other possibilities for expanding the current work. Investigating the post-war era and the further development of the repertoire will offer new insights. Additionally, this thesis did not delve into the different genres, themes and other possible trends that may have been popular throughout seasons, likewise there was no room to explore the roles distributions mentioned on the leaflets. Investigating the stories behind members of the operas would provide valuable information about their motives and their lives.

Moreover, this study did not explore archival records of letters, reports, or finances. Delving into these aspects and shedding new light on the decision-making processes of the directors would offer further insights into operational aspects of the Antwerp Opera. Lastly, a deeper understanding of the reception of performances and events would give an interesting insight into the perspectives of both audience and critic. Therefore, I hope there will be further research to enlighten our understanding of this fascinating time period and opera house.

## 8. Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Prof. Dr. Mike Kestemont, my thesis supervisor, for his guidance and insights throughout the process of completing this thesis. I also want to extend a special thanks to Mona Allaert, who laid the groundwork by first studying the archive of the Antwerp Opera and who paved the way for my own research. Building upon her findings has been a privilege, and her insights significantly helped me write my thesis.

Additionally, I am grateful to the Antwerp Opera for providing access to their materials, allowing me to delve into their history. I want to thank Tom Swaak for his assistance in facilitating access to these resources. Finally, I want to thank the employees of the Operas in both Ghent and Antwerp, for always making me feel welcome when I visited.

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**1. Appendix**

Season	Performances Italian	Percentage Italian	Performances German	Percentage German
1893-1894	0	0	25	45.45
1894-1895	0	0	59	88.06
1895-1896	0	0	52	81.25
1896-1897	0	0	28	46.67
1897-1898	0	0	42	68.85
1898-1899	5	7.35	34	50
1899-1900	0	0	26	40
1900-1901	13	14.94	21	24.14
1901-1902	0	0	8	11.76
1902-1903	6	8.22	26	35.62
1903-1904	0	0	37	47.44
1904-1905	0	0	45	43.69
1905-1906	16	18.6	35	40.7
1906-1907	0	0	26	33.77
1907-1908	8	5.93	57	42.22
1908-1909	6	3.9	75	48.7
1909-1910	0	0	85	68.55
1910-1911	0	0	49	47.12
1911-1912	0	0	39	32.5
1912-1913	7	6.31	34	30.63
1913-1914	13	10.24	55	43.31
1918-1919	6	7.41	11	13.58
1919-1920	12	11.76	8	7.84
1920-1921	1	11.11	3	33.33
1921-1922	3	3.23	51	54.84
1922-1923	5	3.55	83	58.87
1923-1924	8	3.92	68	33.33
1924-1925	17	8.21	94	45.41
1925-1926	0	0	92	46.46
1926-1927	0	0	81	41.54
1927-1928	0	0	82	42.27
1928-1929	1	0.57	95	54.6
1929-1930	23	10.8	107	50.23
1930-1931	4	1.93	126	60.87
1931-1932	16	8.6	100	53.76
1932-1933	10	5.75	93	53.45
1933-1934	39	25.66	71	46.71
1934-1935	23	16.91	57	41.91
1935-1936	38	27.74	68	49.64
1936-1937	55	37.93	52	35.86
1937-1938	41	26.8	58	37.91
1938-1939	48	29.63	55	33.95
1939-1940	35	28	49	39.2
1940-1941	66	30.84	76	35.51
1941-1942	52	30.23	73	42.44
1942-1943	73	33.03	108	48.87
1943-1944	61	23.55	158	61
1944-1945	40	40.82	7	7.14
1945-1946	62	27.93	78	35.14
2099-2100	1	7.14	7	50

Table 1

Number of performances and percentages for German and Italian. The period 1914-1917 is excluded from the table.

Season	Performances French	Percentage French	Performance Dutch	Percentage Dutch
1893-1894	0	0	22	40
1894-1895	1	1.49	3	4.48
1895-1896	0	0	1	1.56
1896-1897	1	1.67	28	46.67
1897-1898	3	4.92	12	19.67
1898-1899	2	2.94	11	16.18
1899-1900	0	0	28	43.08
1900-1901	9	10.34	25	28.74
1901-1902	2	2.94	50	73.53
1902-1903	0	0	33	45.21
1903-1904	0	0	36	46.15
1904-1905	5	4.85	46	44.66
1905-1906	0	0	29	33.72
1906-1907	5	6.49	30	38.96
1907-1908	2	1.48	49	36.3
1908-1909	32	20.78	31	20.13
1909-1910	15	12.1	19	15.32
1910-1911	5	4.81	27	25.96
1911-1912	31	25.83	29	24.17
1912-1913	20	18.02	36	32.43
1913-1914	16	12.6	28	22.05
1918-1919	35	43.21	26	32.1
1919-1920	43	42.16	34	33.33
1920-1921	1	11.11	3	33.33
1921-1922	10	10.75	20	21.51
1922-1923	15	10.64	22	15.6
1923-1924	26	12.75	42	20.59
1924-1925	21	10.14	21	10.14
1925-1926	25	12.63	25	12.63
1926-1927	44	22.56	14	7.18
1927-1928	31	15.98	21	10.82
1928-1929	26	14.94	22	12.64
1929-1930	32	15.02	25	11.74
1930-1931	29	14.01	19	9.18
1931-1932	39	20.97	7	3.76
1932-1933	26	14.94	15	8.62
1933-1934	26	17.11	3	1.97
1934-1935	33	24.26	16	11.76
1935-1936	8	5.84	16	11.68
1936-1937	34	23.45	13	8.97
1937-1938	36	23.53	19	12.42
1938-1939	33	20.37	28	17.28
1939-1940	37	29.6	12	9.6
1940-1941	39	18.22	22	10.28
1941-1942	30	17.44	5	2.91
1942-1943	30	13.57	10	4.52
1943-1944	34	13.13	6	2.32
1944-1945	33	33.67	18	18.37
1945-1946	60	27.03	28	12.61
2099-2100	1	7.14	2	14.29

**Table 2**

Number of performances and percentages for French and Dutch. The period 1914-1917 is excluded from the table.

Composer	Normalised title	Count	Percentage
Charles Gounod	Faust	49	3.7
Franz Lehár	De Graaf van Luxemburg	20	1.51
Franz Lehár	De Lustige Weduwe	39	2.94
Franz Lehár	Frederika	5	0.38
Franz Lehár	Het Land van den Glimlach	54	4.08
Georges Bizet	Carmen	55	4.15
Georges Bizet	De Parelvisschers	26	1.96
Giacomo Puccini	Bohème	47	3.55
Giacomo Puccini	Madame Butterfly	65	4.91
Giacomo Puccini	Manon Lescaut	8	0.6
Giacomo Puccini	Tosca	41	3.09
Giuseppe Verdi	Aïda	34	2.57
Giuseppe Verdi	Don Carlos	10	0.75
Giuseppe Verdi	Rigoletto	28	2.11
Giuseppe Verdi	Traviata	33	2.49
Johan Strauss	De Vleidermuis	55	4.15
Richard Wagner	De Meesterzangers van Nurenberg	13	0.98
Richard Wagner	De Vliegende Hollander	9	0.68
Richard Wagner	De Walkure	17	1.28
Richard Wagner	Götterdämmerung	3	0.23
Richard Wagner	Het Rijngoud	3	0.23
Richard Wagner	Lohengrin	30	2.26
Richard Wagner	Parsifal	9	0.68
Richard Wagner	Rienzi	13	0.98
Richard Wagner	Siegfried	3	0.23
Richard Wagner	Tannhauser	11	0.83
Richard Wagner	Tristan en Isolde	10	0.75
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart	De Tooverfluit	26	1.96
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart	Figaro's Bruiloft	13	0.98
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart	Symphonie-concert	1	0.08
Ruggiero Leoncavallo	Paljas	39	2.94
Pietro Mascagni	Cavalleria Rusticana	35	2.64

**Table 3**

Counts and Percentages of the works for the top 10 composers from 1940-1945

Season	Performances_Wagner	Percentage_Wagner	Performances_Puccini	Percentage_Puccini
1893-1894	10	18.18	0	0
1894-1895	15	22.39	0	0
1895-1896	15	23.44	0	0
1896-1897	16	26.67	0	0
1897-1898	8	13.11	0	0
1898-1899	13	19.12	0	0
1899-1900	4	6.15	0	0
1900-1901	5	5.75	0	0
1901-1902	4	5.88	0	0
1902-1903	2	2.74	0	0
1903-1904	17	21.79	0	0
1904-1905	21	20.39	0	0
1905-1906	10	11.63	0	0
1906-1907	8	10.39	0	0
1907-1908	15	11.11	0	0
1908-1909	24	15.58	0	0
1909-1910	45	36.29	0	0
1910-1911	25	24.04	0	0
1911-1912	5	4.17	0	0
1912-1913	11	9.91	0	0
1913-1914	17	13.39	0	0
1918-1919	3	3.7	0	0
1919-1920	0	0	0	0
1920-1921	0	0	0	0
1921-1922	12	12.9	0	0
1922-1923	33	23.4	0	0
1923-1924	48	23.53	0	0
1924-1925	37	17.87	0	0
1925-1926	49	24.75	0	0
1926-1927	36	18.46	0	0
1927-1928	27	13.92	0	0
1928-1929	38	21.84	0	0
1929-1930	38	17.84	0	0
1930-1931	29	14.01	0	0
1931-1932	26	13.98	6	3.23
1932-1933	12	6.9	0	0
1933-1934	19	12.5	25	16.45
1934-1935	9	6.62	6	4.41
1935-1936	15	10.95	18	13.14
1936-1937	14	9.66	19	13.1
1937-1938	19	12.42	10	6.54
1938-1939	17	10.49	16	9.88
1939-1940	11	8.8	16	12.8
1940-1941	20	9.35	30	14.02
1941-1942	17	9.88	19	11.05
1942-1943	18	8.14	32	14.48
1943-1944	54	20.85	32	12.36
1944-1945	1	1.02	22	22.45
1945-1946	11	4.95	26	11.71
2099-2100	2	14.29	0	0

**Table 4**

Number of performances and the percentage of performances per season for Richard Wagner and Giacomo Puccini. The period 1914-1917 is excluded from the table.

Language	Counts by Van de Vijver	Counts by Baeck	Counts from the dataset
French	3	3	4
German	8	11	10
Italian	8	8	8
Dutch	Sparse	4	4
Czech	Not mentioned	Not mentioned	1

**Table 5**  
Comparison of language counts in season 1940/1941.

Language	Season	Counts by Baeck	Counts from the dataset
French	1940/1941	3	4
German	1940/1941	11	10
Italian	1940/1941	8	8
Dutch	1940/1941	4	4
Czech	1940/1941	Not mentioned	1
French	1941/1942	4	5
German	1941/1942	7	11
Italian	1941/1942	9	9
Dutch	1941/1942	3	1
Czech	1941/1942	Not mentioned	1
French	1942/1943	3	3
German	1942/1943	11	15
Italian	1942/1943	8	8
Dutch	1942/1943	4	3
Czech	1942/1943	Not mentioned	0
French	1943/1944	2	7
German	1943/1944	12	19
Italian	1943/1944	8	8
Dutch	1943/1944	2	1
Czech	1943/1944	Not mentioned	0

**Table 6**  
Comparison of the number of works and language counts in the seasons 1940 to 1944.

