

# WHAT IS AN OPERA TRANSLATION?

Singing translations

Reading translations

Surtitles/Supertitles

Listening accompaniments

#### **READING TRANSLATIONS**

<a href="http://www.leyerlepublications.com/">http://www.leyerlepublications.com/</a><a href="Libretti">Libretti</a> with translations by Nico Castel

http://store.doverpublications.com/index.html
The Dover Opera Libretto Collection

http://books.wwnorton.com

Garland Publications: The Librettos of Mozart's Operas

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<a href="http://www.pocketopera.org/">http://www.pocketopera.org/</a><a href="Libretti">Libretti</a> with translations by Donald Pippin

English National Opera Guide Series

#### **SUPERTITLES**

Elektra, Canadian Opera Company, 21 January 1983
Translation by Sonya Friedman

http://www.surtitles.com/

Supertitles by Gunta Dreifelds

http://operasupertitles.com/

Supertitles by Michael Chadwick

http://www.operatitles.net/

Supertitles by Sonya Friedman

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http://figaro-systems.com/

Wireless Electronic Libretto System

#### LISTENING ACCOMPANIMENTS

http://www.emiclassics.com/

http://www.deutschegrammophon.com/

http://www.harmoniamundi.com

http://www.workman.com/blackdogandleventhal/ Black Dog Opera Library

1690:

Lully's Armide performed in Italy

1695:

Lully's *Acis et Galathea* performed in German Pallavicino's *La Gierusalemme liberata* performed in German

1706-1728: Bononcini's Camilla performed in London

1733:

Samuel Humphreys translates Handel's Poro, Rinaldo (1731 version), Ezio, Sosarme and Orlando

Pergolesi's La serva padrona Opéras Comiques of Grétry & others

1780s: Translated opera rises to popularity

Mozart's operas were translated & performed regularly

Le nozze di Figaro, Don Giovanni, La finta giardiniera, Die Zauberflöte

#### Rossini:

Il barbiere di Siviglia translated & performed in English, German, and French

## Meyerbeer:

Les Huguenots translated & performed in German and Italian

#### Verdi:

1853: Rigoletto performed in German

1864: Rigoletto performed in Czech

1869: Breitkopf publishes Le nozze di Figaro with text in Italian and German

1892: Janacek's The Bartered Bride translated to German by Max Kalbeck

## Composers participated in the translation of their operas

1861: French version of Wagner's Tannhäuser in Paris

1864: English version of Gounod's Faust in London

1892: German version of Massenet's Werther in Vienna (world premiere)

1894: French version of Verdi's Otello in Paris

Donizetti's La fille du régiment and Betly

1919: Tannhäuser performed in Latvian

Composer – Translator collaborations Strauss, Prokoviev, Britten

European mainland vs. Britain and United States

#### WRITINGS EXAMINED

## **Historical**

Translating to Music S. Spaeth (1915)

The Tribulations of a Translator
A. Kalisch (1915)

Some Observations on Translation H. Peyser (1922)

The Translation of Operas

E. J. Dent (1935)

# Contemporary

Questions of Quantity R. Apter (1989)

The Translation of Opera as Multimedia Text C. Cluver (2008)

> Auden and Opera K. Rugoff (1992)

Musical Rhetoric: the Translator's Dilemma M. Tråvén

Music Linked Translation and Mozart's Operas H. Golomb

#### ALFRED KALISCH

(b London, 13 March 1863; d London, 17 May 1933).

Strauss: Der Rosenkavalier (1912, Birmingham); Strauss: Salome (1912, Hull);

Strauss: Elektra (1912, Hull); Strauss: Ariadne auf Naxos (1934, New York). J.

Strauss: Die Fledermaus (1910, London); De Lara: Les trois mousquetaires (1924,

Newcastle upon Tyne and London).

## EDWARD J. DENT

(b Ribston, Yorks., 16 July 1876; d London, 22 Aug 1957)

#### Translations:

Auber: Fra Diavolo (1944); Beethoven: Fidelio (1938); Berlioz: Les Troyens (1935), Benvenuto Cellini (1936); Busoni: Doktor Faust (1937), Turandot (1937), Arlecchino (1939); Donizetti: Don Pasquale (1946); Flotow: Martha (1941); Gluck: Orfeo ed Euridice (1941); Handel: Deidamia (1955); Kodály: Háry János (1950); Mozart: Die Zauberflöte (1911), Le nozze di Figaro (1937), Don Giovanni (1937), Die Entführung aus dem Serail (1952); Rossini: Il barbiere di Siviglia (1941); Tchaikovsky: Yevgeny Onegin (1946); Verdi: Il trovatore (1939), Rigoletto (1939), La traviata (1944), Un ballo in maschera (1952); Wagner: Das Liebesverbot (1922); Weber: Der Freischütz (1948); Wolf-Ferrari: I quatro rusteghi (1946)

#### W. H. AUDEN & C. KALLMAN

Auden: (b York, 21 Feb 1907; d Vienna, 29 Sept 1973)

Kallman: (b Brooklyn, NY, 7 Jan 1921; d Athens, 18 Jan 1975)

#### Collaborative libretti:

The Rake's Progress, Stravinsky, 1951; Elegy for Young Lovers, Henze, 1961; The Bassarids, Henze, 1966; Love's Labour's Lost, Nabokov, 1973; The Entertainment of the Senses, John Gardner, 1974

#### Collaborative translations:

Mozart (Die Zauberflöte, 1956; Don Giovanni, 1960), Weill (Die sieben Todsünden, 1958; Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny, 1960) and Dittersdorf (Arcifanfano, 1965)

#### **ANDREW PORTER**

(b Cape Town, 1928)

Translations include:

Verdi: Otello, Falstaff, Don Carlos, Rigoletto

Wagner: Der Ring des Nibelungen

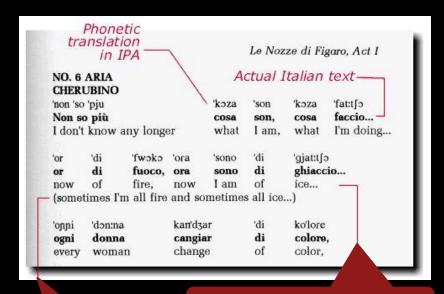
### WHY TRANSLATION?

# Access

"what is unintelligible to people does not exist to them"

- H. Peyser

#### PRINCIPLES OF TRANSLATION



Word-for-word translation

Poetic translation

"Versione ritmica" vs. "Traduzione" "English version by" vs. "Translated by"

## Compromise

## Principles:

- 1. Declamation is recognized either explicitly or implicitly
- 2. Compatibility with the musical phrase
- 3. Suitability for the voice, fidelity to the original meaning, appropriate sense of period & genre
- 4. Use a "good literary style" when possible

Standards?

# PROBLEMS SPECIFIC TO TRANSLATION INTO ENGLISH

# Problems for the operatic translator arise from:

- The nature of the English language as it is perceived in song by Englishspeakers
- The language's differences from other languages in vowel-values, accent & other measurable qualities
- The traditions which have been inherited by the English-language stage
- The apprehension of the correct "tone" as an English-speaking audience would perceive it demands sensitivity on the translator's part

"Poetic" vs. "commonplace" words

Rhyme

# IDEAL CHARACTERISTICS OF A TRANSLATOR

Sigmund Spaeth: (1915)

Poetical insight, understanding of the intentions of the composer and librettist, and ability to imitate the "salient features" of the original combination that determines the skill of a translator

Alfred Kalisch: (1915)

A thorough musician, one with a keen literary sense and a great command of his own language, and one who can use his language with skill and discretion

Herbert Peyser: (1922)

Poetic sensibility and musicianly understanding

E. J. Dent: (1935)

Understand how each phrase of the libretto contributes to the development of the plot or character, understand how the music itself contributes to this development, and know something about the language from which he is translating

# WHAT MAKES A 'GOOD' TRANSLATION?

Modernization and Currency

## **TRANSLATION GUIDES**

Resources for Translators

Holistic view of Opera Translation