

RECENT THEATRICAL AND MUSICAL ADAPTATIONS OF
APULEIUS' *METAMORPHOSES**

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Undoubtedly, no other work of ancient literature is so full of theatrical episodes, masquerades, and pantomime as Apuleius' novel *Metamorphoses*, also known as *The Golden Ass* from the second century AD,¹ in which Lucius, a young man, is accidentally turned by witchcraft into asinine form and in this guise experiences a stream of adventures before he gains his human form back only by initiation to the cult of the goddess Isis.

As Regine May has recently shown convincingly, drama is used constantly as an intertext in all of Apuleius' works, and especially in the *Metamorphoses* the author makes use of the readers' knowledge of contemporary drama, in particular comedy, to interpret the comic adventures of his protagonist.²

It is therefore unsurprising that soon after this only Latin novel to have survived as an entirety was translated into the modern languages, it was also, at least partially, adapted for the stage. In earlier centuries though, these adaptations are limited to the inset story of Cupid and Psyche. The reason for that is the overall atmosphere of the story which forms the framework of Apuleius' novel with its somewhat loose morality: Lucius' sexual encounters with Photis and even more his carnal adventures in asinine form were for many centuries not considered as a suitable topic for a literary or a theatre audience.

However, with the radical changes in the attitudes of the Western world towards sexual morality and ever growing sexual freedom since the 1960s our attitude towards certain aspects of classical literature has fundamentally changed, and this change also had an enormous influence on the reception of this most fascinating piece of ancient literature. Still, Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* as a whole were discovered relatively late as a subject matter for plays and have been put on stage regularly only in very recent years.

I will begin this paper by giving a brief overview of the general, and in particular the musical and theatrical, reception of Apuleius' novel since the Renaissance. This summary proves the assumption that stage adaptations of Apuleius' novel for centuries more or less mean adaptations of the tale of Cupid and Psyche. Although most of my observations are based on already existing research and are therefore far from original, I hope at least to combine some loose strands, as in many cases the data available so far exists only in the form of handbook entries. But as my main focus in this paper is clearly aimed at more recent adaptations of the *Metamorphoses*, I can only treat most of these adaptations from the Renaissance to the twentieth century very briefly, and furthermore I will look at things with a central European perspective. More important for the sake of my conclusion is the impression of the overall development, and the reader should most importantly notice the ever growing mass of productions of Cupid and Psyche stage versions, many accompanied by music, from the sixteenth century onwards.

In the second part I will concentrate on the growing number of productions of the *Metamorphoses* at the end of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty first century, some of them still based on the inset tale of Cupid and Psyche, but others constituting a clearly growing number of adaptations focusing on different aspects of the novel. The reader's attention is especially drawn to some of the very latest adaptations over the last decade, some of them quite alien to the original. With these productions this paper attains a far more global perspective, both in terms of their country of origin and their affiliation with different genres. Most of the very recent adaptations are not (yet) available or are even simply not reproducible in printed form.³ In these cases their documentation on the Worldwide Web has supplied me with material for this overview.⁴ The nature of this material shows that, particularly in the case of performance reception, it is necessary to take a look beyond the boundaries of tradition established by classical philology, especially as in this case we are not dealing with a piece of literature which was originally intended to be put on stage. Instead we have to be aware of the 'critical distance' between the ancient text and its modern versions that should help us to broaden our cultural horizon.⁵

EARLY LITERARY RECEPTION OF THE *METAMORPHOSES* DURING THE RENAISSANCE

Whereas during Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* were treated as somewhat dubious,⁶ they had a considerably larger influence on the emerging novelistic literature of the Renaissance and early modern times. The few surviving Roman verdicts on the literary quality and importance of the ancient novels are negative, usually on the grounds that these texts were considered too frivolous in content to join the serious canon of literature: Macrobius⁷ in his *Somnium Scipionis* 'condemns prose fiction as merely titillating and more suitable for the nursery than for serious consideration',⁸ and likewise in a supposed letter by emperor Septimius Severus⁹ in the *Historia Augusta* the novel is associated with old women, its content characterised as trivial, and its readers labelled credulous. This early marginalisation is partly revised during the Renaissance, when it was the allegorical interpretation of Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* (along with that of other novels) that helped to confer the deep intellectual significance which seemed to be lacking on the surface.¹⁰

The modern reception of Apuleius' novel begins in 1355 when the humanist Giovanni Boccaccio¹¹ discovered a manuscript of the *Metamorphoses* at Monte Cassino, transcribed it,¹² and later allegorised the tale of Cupid and Psyche in chapter 7.2 of his *De Genealogiis Deum Gentilium*, a collection of similar mythological narratives from antiquity. Boccaccio also included three adultery stories from book 9 of Apuleius' novel in his classic *Il Decamerone*, best known for its bawdy tales of love in all its facets.¹³ The stories Boccaccio adapted from his model are 'The lover in a cask' (Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 9.5–7) at *Il Decamerone* 7. 2,¹⁴ in which a wife hides her lover in a tub, and two combined adultery stories at *Decamerone* 5. 10: 'The Miller's wife' (Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 9.22–31), in which a wife and her new lover are surprised by the miller's return. The wife manages to hide her lover at first before he is eventually discovered by the husband and punished appropriately. Boccaccio's versions of these episodes from Apuleius are clearly modified:¹⁵ the alterations of the original stories are obviously required by the sexual attitudes of the Renaissance that, needless to say, were different to those of antiquity. But Boccaccio has even exploited

his alterations to give Apuleius' version a more comic tone: in his version it becomes clear from the beginning that the reason why the miller's wife took lovers at all lies in her husband's homosexuality, and consequently the cuckolded miller punishes his rival by assaulting him in the mill's bedroom.¹⁶

Boccaccio's use of Apuleius' work only marks the beginning of the latter's popularity. His collected works were also among the earliest classical books ever printed, with the first edition published in Rome under the inspection of Johannes Andreas, bishop of Aleria, in 1465 and reissued in 1488 and 1493 in Venice. Naturally, with the subsequent translations of the *Metamorphoses* into Italian (Matteo Maria Boiardo, printed in 1508 and especially Agnolo Firenzuola's influential version, finished in 1524 and printed as *L'asino d'oro* in 1550, later reprinted several times), Spanish (Diego López de Cartagena, 1513), French (Guillaume Michel, 1522), German (Johann Sieder, 1500, printed in Augsburg 1538 as *Ain Schön Lieblich, auch kurtzweylig gedichte von einem gulden Esel*) or English (*The Golden Asse* by William Adlington, 1566), Apuleius' novel became one of the most widely read works of fiction in Europe.¹⁷ In France alone, the *Golden Ass* was published four times between 1600 and 1648. The *Metamorphoses* also helped to give birth to the genre of the so-called picaresque novel in Spain.¹⁸

SEPARATE STAGE ADAPTATIONS OF THE MYTH OF CUPID AND PSYCHE (SIXTEENTH–TWENTIETH CENTURY)

The inset tale of Cupid and Psyche (Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 4. 28–6, 24) in particular has inspired both writers and composers since it became popular in the Renaissance.¹⁹ It tells the story of the marriage of the human girl Psyche to a mysterious spouse—who turns out to be the god Cupid—their separation caused by her evil sisters, Psyche's adventurous quest for her lost husband, and their happy reunification at the end. The tale has often been characterised as the earliest European folktale. Yet this designation is an anachronism, as the development of the genre of fairy-tale, according to recent research, is clearly a result of modern times: in antiquity its place was taken by mythological tales based on popular belief.²⁰ Already in late antiquity the story of Cupid and Psyche had developed an allegorical reception of its own, manifesting itself in a fifth or sixth century version by Fulgentius, a Latin grammarian of African origin, who in his *Mythologiarum Libri* explained a series of older myths in either mystical or allegorical ways. Fulgentius sees in Apuleius' tale the quest of the human soul, Psyche, for Love, alias Cupid.²¹ In the Renaissance this allegorical version has been reawakened by Boccaccio's version in *De Genealogiis Deum Gentilium* mentioned earlier.²²

Separate printed editions of the tale appear surprisingly late though, the earliest by Northius at the end of the eighteenth century.²³ Northius' edition is clearly inspired by the common contemporary German interest in fairy-tales and folktales and has been followed by an ever growing number of editions until today.

As, quite naturally, Lucius' sexual adventures both as a human and an ass were not considered apt for stage presentation in Renaissance and early modern times, the tale of (Cupid and) Psyche with its fairy-tale character and timeless validity emerged separately as an interesting subject for all kind of artificial reception: from the fifteenth century it became a usual motif for painters and sculptors,²⁴ and later the couple's fate

became a popular element of everyday culture, with versions on tapestries, for example.²⁵ Quite naturally it was adapted by librettists and set to music by composers as well, and over centuries formed the thematic basis for a continuing sequence of stage adaptations, many of them a combination of theatrical and musical elements in the genre of ballet or opera.²⁶

Italian composers found the story of Cupid and Psyche as early as the sixteenth century for use in their work: although the epic version *Fabula Psiches et Cupidinis* by the poet laureate at the court of Ferrara, Niccolò da Coreggio²⁷ is unfortunately lost,²⁸ its plot seemed to be the main influence of the Piedmontese aristocrat Galeotto del Carretto,²⁹ who wrote an early scenic piece *Le nozze di Psyche e di Cupidine*, that reportedly was performed on stage at Milan in 1520. The main difference from the original version by Apuleius is the twist that, in the end, Psyche's sisters are reawakened from the dead and forgiven for their mischief.

But from Italy as the innovative cultural centre of Europe adaptations of Cupid and Psyche spread across the whole of Europe. From the seventeenth century onwards we can trace an ever growing number of musical compositions, namely ballets, operas or *Singspiele* ('sung plays') on Cupid and Psyche and their performances all over the continent. These early modern versions made use of the dramatic twist of the story and its happy ending, which provided them both with a perfect formula for an entertaining and gripping piece of drama and (where appropriate) music with a clear structure whose dramatic solution could be stretched over several acts. The timeless mythological and generally serious character of Apuleius' original did not necessitate radical changes, so that writers and composers could concentrate on the artistic implementation. The perceptible popularity of the subject between the sixteenth and nineteenth century that can be seen from the sheer number of adaptations and productions, clearly led to an unspoken competition that fortified the efforts of all artists engaging with the originally ancient material.

In Germany the national tradition of Cupid and Psyche plays starts with Sigismund von Birken,³⁰ who was one of the most prominent and productive baroque poets of his time. Von Birken wrote a pastoral Singspiel³¹ whose first performance took place at Nuremberg in 1652. Only a couple of years later, in 1660, a *Ballett von der Natur* was performed at the court of prince Anton Ulrich of Brunswick³² at Wolfenbüttel that included a part *Spiel von der Psyche*. The prince was not only a noted art lover, patron, and respectable poet himself but for a short while, in the year 1646, he was personally educated by Sigismund von Birken with whom he obviously shared a common interest in the story of Psyche.

But undoubtedly the most important early modern versions and stage adaptations of Psyche have their origin in the French culture of 'Le Grand Siècle' under the Sun King Louis XIV.³³ Molière's³⁴ play *Psyché* (1671) was one of many spectacles produced in celebration of the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle that ended the War of Devolution between France and Spain in 1668. Molière though did not start the French tradition himself: in the seventeenth century there had already been two ballets performed on the subject at the French court, the *Ballet de la reine tiré de la fable de Psyché* of 1619 and Isaac Benserade's³⁵ *Ballet de Psyché* of 1656. A few years earlier, in 1669, Jean de La Fontaine³⁶ (1621–1695) had also published a tale entitled *Les Amours de Psyché et de Cupidon*. Like these earlier versions Molière had to adapt

Apuleius's sometimes far too overtly sexual version for the seventeenth century stage. Still Molière was only responsible for outlining the plot, and versifying the prologue, the first act, and the first scene of acts two and three. The rest of the play was written by Pierre Corneille,³⁷ and finally set to music by Jean-Baptiste Lully;³⁸ this in fact was Molière's and Lully's last and most successful collaborative work, a magnum opus whose performance lasts more than five hours. Soon afterwards, the two most prominent French artists of the time ended their collaboration, which had begun in the early 1670s, in dispute. The plot differs from Apuleius' original version on several occasions; in Act Five for example Psyche is killed by a poisonous vapour coming out of Proserpina's box and only later is granted immortality so that she is reunited with Cupid in the end.

Molière's and Lully's *Psyché* was given for the first time on January 17th, 1671 at the Salle des Tuileries. As was usual for the traditional *ballet de cour* (court ballet) the cast included not only professional singers and dancers, but also many eminent figures at court who actively participated in the ballet scenes. For modern taste the play is more or less impracticable in performance and can be enjoyed more as a work of literature.

Only a couple of years later in 1678 Lully produced a second version of *Psyché*, this time a *tragédie en musique* (musical tragedy), that he composed in collaboration with Thomas Corneille.³⁹ Thomas of course was the younger brother of Pierre Corneille who had assisted Molière with the earlier version. This operatic version reuses the interludes from Molière's play, since they had been such a spectacular success seven years earlier. All in all Lully seemed to be in a hurry while composing this version of *Psyché*. The plot is identical with the earlier version only in the Prologue and at the closure and is notably varied by Corneille by darkening the role of Venus and transforming her into a diabolical character. Although this later version was also well received by the contemporary audience, compared to Lully's other operas it appear to have been the least popular and is often overlooked by modern musicologists.

Another French version that was produced in the eighteenth century⁴⁰ is Jean Joseph Cassanéa de Mondonville's⁴¹ *L'Amour et Psyché* (1758), a one act *ballet héroïque* (heroic ballet) composed by this most famous violin virtuoso of his time, who was also a protégé of Madame de Pompadour.⁴²

At roughly the same time Reinhard Kaiser,⁴³ a German composer, was director of music at the Hamburg opera house on the Gänsemarkt and cantor at the city's cathedral. His opera *Die Wunder-schöne Psyche* used the libretto by Christian Heinrich Postel,⁴⁴ itself based on Apuleius and a contemporary Italian play version by Matteo Noris,⁴⁵ entitled *L'amor innamorato*. It was first performed in three acts in 1702 at the Hamburg opera house.

With the turn of the eighteenth century we see ballet and opera versions performed in all major European cities from Paris to St. Petersburg, a development that continued into the nineteenth century. A quick glance at the German operatic tradition of the time is sufficient to prove that the subject of Psyche attracted writers and composers more than ever. The perception and therefore artistic emphasis in these two centuries is clearly shifting from the dramatic to the more comic aspects of the story, as stage productions were now produced for a much broader audience; writers could no longer

take the knowledge of the original version for granted and had to condense the content of their plays to fewer acts.

To name a few examples: Joseph Schuster,⁴⁶ who was actually court composer at Dresden, produced an opera entitled *Amor e Psiche* for the Teatro San Carlo at Naples while travelling in Italy in 1780. Peter von Winter⁴⁷ was educated at Mannheim, Munich and Vienna where he took lessons by Salieri. He later became bandmaster at the Bavarian royal court at Munich where his opera *Psyche. Heroisches Spiel* in two acts was performed at the Salvatortheater at Munich in October 1790. The libretto was produced by the Carl Friedrich Mühler⁴⁸ and was also the source for the homonymous Singspiel by Carl Bernhard Wessely,⁴⁹ the first performance of which took place on November 18th 1789 at the Nationaltheater in Berlin.

The Austrian playwright Carl Meisl⁵⁰ gave the subject an even lighter tone: *Amor und Psyche*, a so-called *Karikaturopoperette* (caricature operatta), was set into music by Ferdinand Kauer⁵¹ staged October 2nd 1817 at the Josephstadt theater at Vienna.

To sum up, the intensified interest of composers and writers in the subject continued throughout the nineteenth century, as César Franck's⁵² tripartite symphonic poem *Psyché*, written for chorus and orchestra and first performed in 1888, and Hugo von Hofmannsthal's⁵³ lyric poem *Psyche* of 1892 prove.⁵⁴

In 1897 a new medium discovered the subject: a silent short movie was shot by photographer and early cinematographer Frederick W. Bleckyrden. An anonymous plot synopsis describes it as follows:

On a stage at San Francisco's Sutro Baths, in front of what looks like a large crowd, a young woman portraying Psyche and a girl of about ten portraying Cupid perform a simple dance. Psyche wears a white dress with petticoats and dons a white-feathered hat. Cupid is in a white leotard with wings on her back. The dance itself is rhythmic and without drama or much interaction between the characters—more of a prancing about.⁵⁵

This first movie adaptation marks an important step in the overall reception, but still in the twentieth century we can find a number of adaptations of the Psyche story that clearly tie in with much earlier traditions.

Adaptations of the tale in new music are Paul Hindemith's⁵⁶ seven minute ballet overture, first performed under the title *Cupid and Psyche* on October 28th 1943 at Philadelphia by the Philadelphia Orchestra under Eugene Ormandy,⁵⁷ or the opera in one act with the title *Cupid and Psyche* (1956) by the Austrian born composer Kurt Manschinger,⁵⁸ known after his emigration to the US by the pseudonym of Ashley Vernon.

There is also a very recent short opera by the German composer Eberhard Schoener,⁵⁹ called *Palazzo del Amore/Cold Genius* (1996), in which Amor and Psyche meet Romeo and Juliet and sing together about eternal love. In the course of the plot the lovers are threatened by modern cosmopolitan and multicultural society and by the gods likewise. But love is triumphant in the end, for one pair of lovers in death, for the others in heaven. Beside Argentinean mezzo-soprano Nidia Palacios,⁶⁰ and Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli,⁶¹ the cast of the CD production of Schoener's opera included Italian rock icon Gianna Nannini⁶² and the American singer Helen Schneider,⁶³

accompanied by the United Philharmonic Orchestra Budapest which proves the cross-over character of the opera.

Even in contemporary popular music we can find distant echoes of Apuleius' tale of Cupid and Psyche, even if their occurrence is limited to song or CD titles. In the mid-1980s for example the British synth-pop group Scritti Politti⁶⁴ released an album called *Cupid and Psyche 85*, which became a huge commercial success. A similar example is the debut album *When Cupid Meets Psyche* from 2001 by Stephen Coates aka (The Real) Tuesday Weld,⁶⁵ sharing not only a remarkably similar album name, but also the same love-fuelled style as Scritti Politti.

MORE FROM CUPID AND PSYCHE: RECENT MUSICAL AND THEATRE VERSIONS OF THE TALE

It is impossible to give a detailed overview of all of the ongoing and recent productions of theatrical adaptations of the story of Cupid and Psyche, as this tale—as we have seen—has not only been adapted for the stage (and even) screen for centuries and has so become an integral part of our cultural heritage, but has also inspired other European versions of the story such as popular German or French fairy tale versions based on the internationally prevalent folk motifs *The Search for the Lost Husband*, *The Monster Bridegroom*, and particularly *Beauty and the Beast*.⁶⁶ The latter in particular itself triggered a chain of independent reception:⁶⁷ French versions appeared from the late seventeenth century among collections of *contes de fées* (fairy tales), inaugurated by Charles Perrault,⁶⁸ the first published version of the tale being that by Gabrielle de Villeneuve⁶⁹ in 1740. This tradition culminated in the most popular version of *La Belle et la Bête* in J.M. Leprince de Beaumont's⁷⁰ *Magasin des enfants* (1756). In Germany likewise a number of the famous *Kinder und Hausmärchen* (Children's and Household Tales) collected by the Brothers Grimm⁷¹ can be traced back to the core folk-motifs just mentioned.

In the twentieth century the story was adapted for the movies, most famously Jean Cocteau's⁷² French version *La Belle et la Bête* from the year 1946,⁷³ and Disney's 1991 animated film or the TV Series created by Ron Kinslow⁷⁴, running from 1987 to 1990 on CBS. The story also became a worldwide successful Broadway musical with music by Alan Menken⁷⁵ and lyrics by Howard Ashman⁷⁶ and Tim Rice,⁷⁷ running on Broadway for 5,464 performances between 1994 and 2007. In modified form it is the scenario of the movie classic *King Kong* from the year 1933, recently remade by award-winning director Peter Jackson⁷⁸ in 2005.

But the 'Beauty and Beast'-tradition certainly deserves a treatment of its own, so in the following I will return to adaptations which as regard content have a closer connection to the story of Cupid and Psyche proper. Generally it remains difficult adequately to describe live performances for a reading audience; and undoubtedly the production and the live audience is a key part of modern reception.⁷⁹ So the following task of taking a detailed look at modern theatrical adaptations of either *Cupid and Psyche* or the *Metamorphoses* as a whole can only give an approximate impression without yielding a satisfactory overall picture. An adequate way to emulate the effect of actual personal presence might be through citing reviews. Although the danger is that one relies of course on the individual or even one-sided opinion of theatre critics, this method seems to be the closest to the real theatre experience of an audience. By way

of example, three versions of the story of Cupid and Psyche, a musical, an American play, and a German mask play, are examined. These observations will be followed in the next chapter by an appraisal of four versions of the *Metamorphoses* as a whole, one of them a Canadian opera, the others respectively plays from Italy, the UK and Austria.

As we have already observed, most of the adaptations of the Cupid and Psyche story follow the original version quite closely in content and structure. It is often simply by means of the production that the desired variations and effects aimed at the audience are achieved. The contemporary audience in particular is in most cases not expected to have a concrete clue of the actual origin of the tale, but a general knowledge of the plot is assumed. This may lead to the interesting effect that both authors and directors more than ever stick to the original version, as deliberate changes and variation would be appreciated by only a minority of viewers and listeners.

Following the huge success of an earlier adaptation of a classical text (Mary Zimmerman's⁸⁰ Broadway hit *Metamorphoses*,⁸¹ based on Ovid's myths), Sean Hartley⁸² had his lyrics *Cupid and Psyche* put to music by Jihwan Kim.⁸³ The musical successfully tries to retell the story for a modern audience while preserving the basic plot. But no attempt has been made to give the story a contemporary setting, which is certainly impossible when places like Mt. Olympus and Hades play a major part and the actors represent ancient gods on stage. But these ancient gods do nonetheless behave the same way as contemporary humans in most respects, so that typical stock characters of our society are blended into the ancient myth: Venus for example acts like an over-protective mother who forbids her son Cupid to fall in love with the mortal Psyche, whom humans have begun worshipping in her stead.

Hartley, who is a regular collaborator with The Walt Disney Company, has managed to create a verse libretto which can be understood by children as well as adults. In the best tradition of American musical theatre the production, while making you laugh, also manages to tug at the heartstrings by underscoring lessons to be learned, underlining the allegorical character of the story that has been dwelt on since late antiquity.

The musical was performed with a four-person cast—Cupid, Psyche, Venus, and Mercury—for 90 minutes without an intermission at New York's tiny 40-seat John Houseman Studio, downstairs at 450 West 42nd Street—'off-Broadway'—and had its debut on September 17th, 2003. The set was simple, consisting of little more than white walls, benches, and a couple of doors, painted with clouds. The special effects were achieved by the costumes, such as a glittery revealing gown for Venus and a cyclist's outfit for the messenger Mercury. As one critic said about the actual music by Kim:

The song titles—Venus's 'Spread a Little Love', Cupid's 'One Little Arrow', perpetually single Mercury's *I Hate Love*—suggest a more generic tone not truly present in the score; the songs, steeped in bubbly melody and well-honed musicianship, are attractive and varied, full of honest character and droll humor, and never resorting to cheap tricks.⁸⁴

The young US playwright Joseph Fisher⁸⁵ has also adapted Apuleius' original version as a comedy. His *Cupid & Psyche* had its world premiere in 2002 at the Stark Raving Theater in Portland where Fisher was playwright-in-residence at the time. It is still

being produced around the US. More than two hours in length, Fisher's play includes a cast of eight actors, half of them male, half female, who perform the complicated love affair between Cupid and the beautiful mortal Psyche with a contemporary twenty-first century spin, as it reminds the audience more of a celebrity reality show than of an ancient myth: the play covers barely half of the original myth, and often seems to be an intellectual discourse about the nature of love and beauty, with each of the characters bringing their own point of view into the picture. Some critics have attacked Fisher's lengthy monologues that sometimes detract from the actual action of the story, and especially the use of cell phones as a means of communication between the gods seemed somewhat out of place.⁸⁶ Still Fisher's play has been a success. As critic Bob Hicks from *The Oregonian* has put it:

This play by ... Joseph Fisher is one of the most interesting scripts I've seen produced this season—an imaginative, comic, accessible and irony—free variation on a classic theme...you'll be rewarded with a play that's literate, a little sexy and grown-up, a play that deals forthrightly with the double edge of sadness and happiness that comes with love.⁸⁷

A very recent German adaptation of the Cupid and Psyche tale is *Amor & Psyche. Ein Spiel mit Masken für einen Mann und eine Frau*, adapted from Apuleius by Claudia Hann⁸⁸ and Udo Mierke.⁸⁹ This production, first performed in 2002 and still currently running at the Cassiopeia Theater in Cologne, tells the story of Cupid and Psyche in 85 minutes without a break as a masque play. The masks are not actually worn by the two actors Claudia Hann and Waldemar Hooge,⁹⁰ but carried in front of them, so that they appear to be autonomous objects. This leads to the impression that at times four instead of two actors appear to be on stage. The production interprets Psyche's story as an act of successful inner maturing away from the influence of her family. The accentuation of this aspect gives the story a contemporary twist aimed at attracting a younger audience.⁹¹ In 1999 The Cassiopeia Theater initiated a series *Mit allen Sinnen lesen* (Reading with All Senses) that is dedicated to the dramatisation of classical works that were intentionally not produced as theatre literature. *Amor & Psyche* is only the second production of the series that has started with a scenic collage *Liebe und Verwandlung* (Love and Metamorphosis), based on Ovid, Plato, and Otto Brahm.⁹²

All these very different adaptations have in common that regardless of the actual genre of performance, even very recent stage versions of Cupid and Psyche continue to follow the ancient myth in general and stress the timeless testimony of the narrative. There is clearly an enduring fascination and a permanent interest in the story which holds even for the fastidious theatre audience of the twenty first century.

A NEW DEVELOPMENT: THE METAMORPHOSES AS A WHOLE ON STAGE

It may sound like an impossible task to put the whole of Apuleius' novel on stage. Still, in recent years there have been a growing number of productions that try to achieve exactly this. What makes these modern adaptations so attractive is not so much their accurate recounting of the ancient model, but the perceptible effort to point out that despite its age the *Metamorphoses* can be an appropriate metaphor for the global society of the twenty first century with its sometimes bewildering mix of cultures, religions, and sensual attractions, that seem to suggest a parallel with Apuleius' own

lifetime and the variegated cultural atmosphere of the Roman empire in the second century.

Interestingly enough, it was an Italian effort that first tried to undertake the ambitious task of adapting the complete body of the novel for the stage. And even more fascinating that this experiment began as early as the early 1970s. Under the director Sergio Spina⁹³ the *Metamorphoses* had been made into a movie in 1969 and released in August 1970. With its duration of 99 minutes *L'asino d'oro: processo per fatti strani contro Lucius Apuleius cittadino romano* remains the only cinematic adaptation of Apuleius' novel so far.⁹⁴ The script, written by Spina himself, lays its focus on the erotic aspects of the novel which makes the movie range over the *erotico-storici* (erotic-historic) sub-genre of Italian soft pornography, together with other (for our taste) sensational biopics of famous Roman individuals,⁹⁵ which were obviously quite popular in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

More than 25 years later one of the cast members of the movie, Paolo Poli,⁹⁶ who in the meantime had become one of Italy's most renowned actors, picked up the original idea and gave it a more serious touch. Still it is the contemporary comic tone of Poli's version that made this production a special event. From March 28th—April 15th, 1995 his version of *L'asino d'oro* was performed at the Teatro della Tosse in Sant' Agostino of Genova. The play had been adapted by Poli together with his long-time collaborator Ida Ombini and he also directed the production.

In April 1999 the Canadian Opera Company produced a more than two hour operatic version in two acts of the *Golden Ass*, based on the libretto by the celebrated Canadian author Robertson Davies.⁹⁷ The idea of an opera based on Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* had been a dream of Davies for more than four decades, yet finally set in music by Randolph Peters,⁹⁸ it was performed a couple of years after his death at the Hummingbird Festival at Toronto. Famous Canadian critic and professed opera fan Ben Viccari gives a vivid description:

Audiences who came to the premiere expecting an opera that lacked in tonality and harmony were agreeably surprised to find Peters' music indeed highly accessible and Robertson's libretto witty and amusing. And the production was outstanding ... From the moment the curtain rose, the stage was filled with constant motion as more than 50 performers recreated a market place in ancient Carthage of almost 2,000 years ago. Deployed on a set consisting mainly of two flights of marble stairs, and acting out a variety of situations, including some torrid (and convincing) lovemaking and a ballet based on the legend of Cupid and Psyche, they moved up and down the stairs with fluidity.⁹⁹

The popularity of the *Metamorphoses* for the stage is even growing in the new millennium: *The Golden Ass or The Curious Man*¹⁰⁰ by British author Peter Oswald¹⁰¹ was written as an erotic verse comedy and first performed at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre in London during the 2002 season. Intended by the author as an allegory on human lust in every possible way, the production also included every conceivable kind of theatrical genre, ranging from silent movie to puppetry and opera. The cast therefore also included musicians and added up to around 40, which made this three hour play in three acts quite a spectacle/*spectaculum*; it also included some scenes of an x-rated

nature, the adultery stories commented on as 'pass the parcel', anecdotes, which were acted out in a riotous way. Oswald's story is actually quite close to the original. Lucius, an insatiably curious young man of extraordinary appetites, plunges into a carnival of vice, sorcery and madness, and eventually finds himself transformed into an ass. He is then hurtled into a new series of misadventures with bandits, adulterers, slave-drivers, cult members, and circus performers. So the audience learns about the wickedness and depravity of human kind from an ass's-eye view.

While the first act ends with Lucius' transformation, the second act not only recounts his further adventures under an assortment of owners, but also includes an operatic puppet show in the Japanese Bunraku tradition, telling the tale of Cupid and Psyche. In the last act the hero is able to escape his asinine body and, having confessed his sins and been initiated into a secretive ancient cult, is able to live a decent and humble life thereafter. The director Tim Carroll¹⁰² made a considerable effort to fulfil the audience's desire for sensual excitement and comical thrills, though he may have gone too far in the end, when he presented the band of robbers as a gang of Wild West cowboy-outlaws driving around the stage on mini-scooters or the goddess Isis as an ice-cream vendor on a tricycle.¹⁰³ As critic Amanda Hodge has put it in her review:

Tim Carroll envisaged the production as rooted in recent popular culture... In parts it's a fun frolic and the gulf between the ancient source of the story and its modern edginess is intriguing but the sum of its parts doesn't unfortunately equate with my idea of an entertaining evening; it's certainly way overlong, often seems puerile rather than witty and lacks flair overall.¹⁰⁴

The play *Apuleius Short Cuts*,¹⁰⁵ by the Austrian author Wolfgang Kindermann,¹⁰⁶ who, like Oswald, has adapted other ancient themes for the stage over the last decade,¹⁰⁷ is another clever, two-hour adaptation of Apuleius' novel. The total of nineteen scenes involves five actors. It had its world premiere at the Innsbrucker Kellertheater in Austria on June 10th, 2004. Vienna-born Kindermann presents the Roman Empire as a global corporation, Lucius as a commercial traveller and the other protagonists as his colleagues, with whom he works in the field. According to Apuleius' own intention, *lector intende: laetaberis* (reader pay attention: you will enjoy it) (Apuleius *Metamorphoses* 1.1.1), the protagonists are always looking for pleasure and gratification.

The ass does not appear directly on stage, but it becomes obvious that desire transforms humans into animals. Lucius is infamous as a 'lady-killer' within the corporation and makes an ass of himself; equipped with asinine attributes of a long tail and a speech defect he wanders around different circles of society in which free life and love are exercised. When in the end he is fascinated by the obscure Isis-sect, his re-transformation seems to be far from desirable. Kindermann's adaptation is a lively and clever contemporary version of Apuleius for a twenty-first century audience, highly entertaining and sometimes deliberately reminiscent of contemporary TV-shows like *Jackass* and other reality-shows.

ALIENATION AND BURLESQUE OF APULEIUS' MODEL

The production of the *Metamorphoses* by the world renowned Polish theatre company, Gardzienice Centre for Theatre Practices,¹⁰⁸ is internationally well-known. Gardzienice

takes its name from a small village near Lublin, Poland where it is based. It was founded in 1978 by the company's artistic director, Włodzimierz Staniewski,¹⁰⁹ who had previously worked with Polish theatre legend Jerzy Grotowski¹¹⁰ (1933–1999) since 1971. The group is rooted in the tradition of Grotowski and Poland's most outstanding artist of the second half of the twentieth century, Tadeusz Kantor.¹¹¹ Gardzienice is considered by many to be the most important contemporary theatre company in Poland today. The Centre is famous for taking up old, forgotten songs and musical traditions and has been credited with creating its very own theatrical culture based on this material.¹¹² Most of the group's productions are based on a long and gradual evolutionary process of collective research into the fast-fading rural folk traditions of Central and Eastern Europe. In addition to rigorous drill in dance, song, and acrobatics, the group's members make expeditions to study the music and rituals of Ukrainian, Belarusian, Roma and Jewish communities.¹¹³

With the Gardzienice version of the *Metamorphoses* we are clearly entering a grey area of the still very small number of theatrical or stage adaptations which are inspired by other parts of Apuleius' novel than *Cupid and Psyche*, which are at the same time emerging from the boundaries of the original to create something new.

Metamorphosis [sic]—a Theatrical Essay (*Metamorfozy*, 1997), composed by Staniewski, is a unique performance. Reviving the spirit of a pre-Christian society full of energy, joy and lightness the company for the first time did not use living traditions, but actually went back for inspiration to stone relief and papyrus remains from between the fifth century BC and the second century AD. So strictly speaking the actual textual source for this production is not Apuleius' Latin text, rather the production tries to reconstruct ancient Greek songs and sounds. Staniewski is convinced that Pythagorean music was sung and danced in the dynamic and passionate way we normally associate with indigenous cultures. As in all other productions of the troupe, musicality to a certain extent replaces verbal discourse.¹¹⁴

It is the overall atmosphere rather than the text of Staniewski's *Metamorphosis*, which is mainly based on the eleventh book of Apuleius' novel, although he himself says that words are of no significance. The audience can indeed grasp the performance without understanding the Polish text.¹¹⁵ However, words find their equivalents in situations on stage, incorporating live images, acting, dance, song and music. The eleven singers and dancers appear at the mythical-historical turning point when the gods Apollo and Dionysus bow out and Christ appears. As Apuleius was a Platonist, the group refers to key Platonic ideas, including the nature of soul, the nature of love, and the mystery of change.

The ecstatic performance seems to finish too quickly in the eyes of the audience. But each performance production is an interpretation and always unique, and the play was a huge international success, performed at festivals and theatres around the globe.¹¹⁶

As Apuleius' novel is sometimes grotesque, so on the fringes of the established cultural world of the early twenty first century we find some adaptations which prove to be equally bizarre or too *avant-garde* for the general taste of society. This overview of theatrical adaptation will therefore conclude with two such examples, one an adaptation of *Cupid and Psyche*, the other mirroring one of the most notoriously erotic scenes of

Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, the mating of Lucius as an ass with the wealthy matron/*matrona* in Book 9 of the novel.

Guests of the 'Puppet Uprising Fringe Usurper' Festival, held in Philadelphia in 2004, and visitors to El Museo Cultural de Santa Fe from Feb. 17–26th, 2006 had the chance to witness a most interesting production with the title *Amabantur*, a toy-theatre version of the story of Cupid and Psyche [*sic*] played by the Mattel toy dolls, Barbie and Ken, and set in English and Spanish verse. The people behind this production were Ron Dans and Laia Obregon-Dans,¹¹⁷ who under the motto 'Small actors, big meaning' describe their work as

inspired by the old puppet and folkloric theater traditions of Catalonia, Spain, France, and Italy. Each of the plays is original. Some are based on mythology and folk tales while others are based on historical events and characters, and current topics. The plays are not specifically targeted for children although most are suitable for ages five to ninety-five.¹¹⁸

The American-Spanish couple wants to bring back to life 'something that is altogether missing in so much of our modern culture.' Consequently there are as many levels of interpretation for their plays as there are ages in the audience. Despite their admirable efforts, due to the limited nature of this adaptation, the main source of distribution for it—apart from similar puppet festivals—is obviously the World Wide Web. So in the end it might be difficult to have versions like this widely distributed or at least accepted as a genuine part of Apuleius' cultural heritage.

That even our enlightened Western European society has its boundaries can also be proven by a final example from Germany. In the summer of 2004, a partial adaptation of Apuleius' novel proved to be too frivolous for Germany's time-honoured hanseatic city of Hamburg—at least according to some tabloid journalists. In recent years, the Catalan group 'La fura Dels Baus' (Sewer Rats),¹¹⁹ which emerged in the late 1980s from the world of Catalan firework processions and street theatre, has coordinated and catalysed a number of events that can be shown in different formats, from theatrical or operatic productions, and Olympic ceremonies¹²⁰ to advertising productions and such hybrid forms as rave parties or other high-voltage technological performances. With the 'Sewer Rats', we finally have a new kind of stage creation that results in new forms of dramatic creativity, which sometimes go beyond traditional limits; this a form for the twenty first century.

One of their productions, XXX, was quite successfully performed in Spain and Britain, and was also planned to be put on at the annual Kampnagel Summer Festival at Hamburg. The group has, according to their website,

decided to enter into the erotic genre by looking at the radical and transgressive writer the Marquis de Sade¹²¹ and his novel *Philosophy in the Bedroom*. Following the line of this work written in 1795 (although placing it in the present day), XXX is about the abuse of a young woman called Eugenie carried out by a group of liberal people. Madame Lula, a retired porn star, sensual, calculating and manipulating, is the brain of this particular journey through the sexual initiation of the innocent Eugenie.¹²²

We meet an 18-year-old drama student who is inducted by a group of porn actors into their craft. Lesbian caresses are followed by oral instruction as well as vaginal and anal penetration, until the hapless Eugenie succumbs to every form of sensory delight. According to director Álex Ollé,¹²³ the show is offering 'pastiche porn to release us from our presumed inhibitions and to ram home Sade's point that sexual pleasure pursued to its limits is spiritually liberating'.¹²⁴ Undoubtedly pushing the four actors to their extremes, the scenes of obscenity conclude in an unbearable climax of gang-bang, rape and mutilation, and contain a video sequence of the mating of a naked woman with an ass, clearly inspired by Lucius's sexual encounter with the wealthy lady in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*.

A successful campaign by Germany's mass-selling tabloid *Bild* drew attention to the fact that the play included a video sequence showing a woman having sex with a donkey, and this in turn led to a police investigation against the Spanish group on the charge of 'diffusion of violence and bestiality'.¹²⁵ The video scene had finally to be cancelled.

Quite clearly even nowadays such a close reception of Apuleius' novel proves to be problematic with certain audiences, evidence enough for the overall descriptive force of Apuleius' novel. Although an ancient audience might be used to descriptions of bestiality as a common theme in classical myth, and therefore might be less shocked by Apuleius' adultery tales,¹²⁶ the planned public performance of a sexual act between the ass and a condemned poisoner in Apuleius' novel is also considered a step too far and Lucius-ass is spared this final act of degradation. And so history repeats itself: as in the novel Lucius is able to flee his public degradation, for the modern Hamburg show the public sexual act finally also had to be cancelled.

CONCLUSION

Whereas the inset tale of Cupid and Psyche relatively early developed a separate reception of its own, and therefore it is not surprisingly that nowadays we find traces and theatrical adaptations of it in a broad range of genres, ranging from fairy tale over musical to animated film, the adaptation of the whole of Apuleius' novel for the stage is a relatively recent development.

As this study of recent theatrical adaptations has shown, even these very recent versions of the *Metamorphoses* are not minute re-narrations, but are rather either comical or allegorical interpretations of the second-century novel.

The results of this paper fit into the concept of 'critical distance' as one important theoretical approach within reception studies. They demonstrate, as Lorna Hardwick has put it, that 'critical texts are used as critical devices for outwitting censors and enabling current social and political concerns to be addressed through the apparently neutral, 'distant' (and safe) medium of classical culture'.¹²⁷ As the knowledge of the *Metamorphoses*' content could not be taken for granted, authors as well as directors do not have to meet certain set expectations—as they do in the case of the inset tale of Cupid and Psyche¹²⁸—but instead have a certain freedom of expression and interpretation. This freedom in accordance with the general content quality of the novel allows them to transfer the action to contemporary society or to take it as a starting point for an artistically independent reception.

In every case, it is the fascinating present-day impression of Apuleius' novel and its 'globalised' mix of cultures, social backgrounds, and religion that qualifies it as a most fascinating and increasingly popular subject for contemporary theatre practice. Hopefully this survey of recent stage adaptations of both Cupid and Psyche and other aspects of the *Metamorphoses* can help to raise awareness in the research community of this interesting phenomenon of growing theatrical interest in Apuleius' novel and inspire further research.

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ENDNOTES

*The initial idea for this topic emerged during a postdoctoral sojourn in Berlin, during which I worked as an extra for the *Deutsche Oper*. In the context of the festival *Theater der Welt in Berlin* (18 June–4 July 1999), the theatrical essay *Metamorphosis*, based on Apuleius' novel, was performed at the *Matthäuskirche*. I thank Prof. Stephen Harrison (Oxford), Prof. Wolfgang Haase (Boston) and the anonymous readers of *New Voices* for their helpful comments.

¹ For theatrical elements in the novel in general see: Frangoulidis (2001); Fick (1990), Zimmerman (1993).

² Cf. May (2006).

³ As Macintosh (2004) stated: '*However, since so much work in performance reception has been conducted in areas where subject ... have rarely ventured before, there has perhaps been much that has been overly empirical and raw*'.

⁴ This may explain why, especially in the second half, the sources for many of the citations are actually URLs.

⁵ Cf. Hardwick (2003: 8).

⁶ Apuleius was chiefly famous as a magician and Platonist philosopher then, cf. Schlam (1990).

⁷ Ambrosius Theodosius Macrobius was a Roman grammarian and Neoplatonist philosopher who lived during the reigns of emperors Honorius and Arcadius (395–423) and was still particularly popular in the Middle Ages.

⁸ Cf. Harrison (2002: 143–4); the relevant citations are Macrobius, *Somnium Scipionis* 1.2.8: '*Hoc totum fabularum genus, quod solas aurium delicias profitetur*' and *Historia Augusta* 12, 12: '*cum ille neniis quibusdam anilibus occupatus inter Milesias Punicas Apulei sui et ludicra litteraria consenesceret*'.

⁹ Lucius Septimius Severus (146–211) was a Roman general, and Roman Emperor from 193 to 211.

¹⁰ See Scobie (1978).

¹¹ Giovanni Boccaccio (1313–1375) was an Italian author and poet. He was an important Renaissance humanist and author of a number of notable works.

¹² The copy in his own hand is preserved as Florence. Laur. 54.32.

¹³ For Boccaccio's dependence on Apuleius cf. Haight (1945) Mass (1989).

¹⁴ For the tub episode see Dick (1941).

¹⁵ These alterations are demonstrated by Radcliff-Umstead (1968).

¹⁶ Cf. Scobie (1978: 213).

¹⁷ Martos (2003) gives an excellent introduction on Spanish and Portuguese Renaissance reception, for the Italian development cf. Moreschini (1994) and Acocella (2001).

¹⁸ A general overview of the *Nachleben* of the *Metamorphoses* is given by Walsh (1970: 224–43). For the influence of the novel on Spanish literature see esp. Scobie (1969: 91–100) and Scobie (1978: 218 and 227, esp. n. 45). The topic has been freshly approached by Küenzlen (2006).

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- ¹⁹ The reception of Cupid and Psyche up to c.1650 is now covered by Carver (2008) and Gaisser (2008).
- ²⁰ For the relation of myth and fairy-tale in antiquity cf. Heldmann (2000, 141) and crucially Fehling (1977) who shows that literary fairy-tales derive from the novel rather than vice versa.
- ²¹ See Fulgentius, *Mythologiae* 3, 6.
- ²² Cf. above n. 6.
- ²³ Northius (1789).
- ²⁴ Cf. Weiland-Pollerberg, F. (2004)
- ²⁵ Holm (2006).
- ²⁶ An extant list of compositions and performances can be found in the database by Reid (1993: 919–55); another helpful source is the '*Bibliographie zum Nachleben des antiken Mythos*' published by the Commission for Ancient Literature & Latin Tradition of the Austrian Academy of Science (www.oeaw.ac.at/kal/mythos/bibliomythos.pdf). Accessed 14 April 2009.
- ²⁷ The poet Niccolo di Coreggio lived from 1450–1508.
- ²⁸ Stiller (2002).
- ²⁹ Galeotto del Carretto, born 1455 died in 1531.
- ³⁰ Sigismund von Birken (1626–1681) was a distinguished German hymn writer and baroque poet.
- ³¹ For the genre of *Singspiel*, the earliest German-language opera libretti, cf. Wade (1990).
- ³² Duke Anthony Ulrich (1633–1714) of Brunswick-Lüneburg ruled over the Wolfenbüttel subdivision of the duchy from 1685 until 1702 jointly with his brother, and solely from 1704 until his death.
- ³³ Louis XIV (1638–1715) ruled France for 72 years, the longest reign of any major European monarch.
- ³⁴ Molière (1622–1673), French writer. His name is a pseudonym for Jean-Baptiste Poquelin. Molière was a French actor and playwright, considered one of the greatest writers of French comedy.
- ³⁵ Isaac de Benserade (baptised 1613–died 1691) was a French poet who became a favourite at court, especially with Anne of Austria.
- ³⁶ Jean de la Fontaine (1621–1695), French poet, whose fables rank among the masterpieces of world literature.
- ³⁷ Pierre Corneille (1606–1684) was a French tragedian who was one of the three great 17th Century French dramatists, along with Molière and Racine. He has been called "the founder of French tragedy" and produced plays for nearly 40 years.
- ³⁸ Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632–1687), Italian by birth, born as Giovanni Battista Lulli in Florence, Lully made his career in France, where he rose from page to the position of Composer of the King's Music, Master of Music to the Royal Family and to a position of complete control of all musical performances that involved singing throughout.
- ³⁹ Thomas Corneille (1625–1709) was a French dramatist and younger of the 'great Corneille' Pierre.

⁴⁰ There has not been any scenic performance of Mondonville's opera since 1777 and outside France until 2004 when the opera was performed for the first time for over 200 years by students of the Musikhochschule Hamburg.

⁴¹ Jean-Joseph Cassanéa de Mondonville (1711–1772), French violinist and composer.

⁴² Jeanne-Antoinette Poisson, Marquise de Pompadour, also known as Madame de Pompadour (1721–1764) was a well known courtesan and the famous mistress of King Louis XV of France.

⁴³ Reinhard Kaiser (1674–1739), also known under his Italian name *Rinardo Cesare*, his surname is also known as Keyser, Kaiser or Kayser.

⁴⁴ Christian Heinrich Postel (1658–1705), was a German poet, librettist and lawyer and was the most important and prolific writer of libretti for the Hamburg Opera towards the end of the 17th century.

⁴⁵ Matteo Noris (1640–1714) was an Italian librettist and a prominent figure in Venetian opera in the second half of the 17th century.

⁴⁶ Joseph Schuster (1748–1812), was a German opera composer.

⁴⁷ Peter von Winter was baptised in 1754 and died 1825.

⁴⁸ Carl Friedrich MÜCHLER (1763–1857) was a German writer who originally worked for the Prussian administration and later turned to literature. He produced several libretti and became also popular for his crime stories.

⁴⁹ Carl Bernhard Wessely (1768–1826), German composer and conductor. He was conductor at the Berlin National Theatre (1788–95) and at Prince Heinrich's private theatre at Rheinsberg (1796–1802). After the prince's death he became a civil servant at Potsdam, where he founded a society for the performance of classical music.

⁵⁰ Carl Meisl, alternatively spelled as Karl Meisl (1775–1853) was an Austrian civil servant und playwright, and one of the most important representatives of the Viennese *Volkskomödie*. Meisl was best known for his parodies of serious drama and opera.

⁵¹ Ferdinand August Kauer (1751–1831) was an Austrian composer and pianist who wrote about 200 operas and *Singspiele*.

⁵² César Franck (1822–1890), composer, organist and music teacher of Belgian and German origin who lived in France. Franck belongs to the important figures in classical music in the second half of the 19th century.

⁵³ Hugo von Hofmannsthal was born 1874 in Vienna and died 1929 in Rodaun. He was a major Austrian poet, dramatist and essayist.

⁵⁴ Cf. Schmid (1985: 31–32, 58–64).

⁵⁵ See www.imdb.com/title/tt0217344/plotsummary. Accessed 14 April 2009.

⁵⁶ Paul Hindemith (1895–1963) was a German composer, violist, violinist, teacher, music theorist and conductor who emigrated to the US in 1940 and became an American citizen in 1946, but returned to Europe to live and teach at Zurich.

⁵⁷ Eugene Ormandy (1899–1985) was an eminent conductor and violinist whose 44-year tenure with the Philadelphia Orchestra began in 1936.

⁵⁸ Kurt Manschiger (1902–1968), an Austrian born musician, composer, and critic who also emigrated to the US in 1940.

⁵⁹ Eberhard Schoener, born 1938, is a German conductor and composer. In 1965 he founded Münchener Kammeroper. Since the 1970s he has tried to blend classical and popular music and has composed several operas and scores, especially for popular German TV series. On this very versatile composer, who arranges a lot of music for films and TV, cf. www.eberhard-schoener.de. Accessed 14 April 2009.

⁶⁰ Nidia Palacios is an Argentine singer of Italian origin. Born at Buenos Aires she studied at Argentina and Germany and won international fame in 1990 as finalist of the International Mozart Competition at Salzburg, Austria. Since then Palacios has been a member of several German opera ensembles.

⁶¹ Andrea Bocelli (born 1958) is a renowned Italian singer. Blind since the age of 12 He is both an operatic tenor and a classical crossover singer. He has recorded various classical and pop albums and sold 55 million albums worldwide.

⁶² Gianna Nannini, born 1956, is an Italian singer-songwriter and rock musician.

⁶³ Helen Schneider (born 1952) is an American singer and actress, working mainly in Germany.

⁶⁴ The band was formed in 1977 by Green Gartside (vocals) and Tom Morley (drums), who met at college in Leeds, England. Along with bassist Nial Jinks and keyboardist Matthew Kay, the duo formed the Sex Pistols-inspired political four-piece, Scritti Politti, named after an Italian political diatribe.

⁶⁵ The Real Tuesday Weld is a British band, fronted by lead singer and founder Stephen Coates and named after the American actress Tuesday Weld (born 1943). They are known for producing jazzy 1930s cabaret-style music with subtle electronic influences, a style dubbed 'antique beat' by Coates.

⁶⁶ These motifs are commonly classified as [AT] 425 ABC by Antti Aarne and Thompson (1961); for the fairy-tale character of the story of Cupid and Psyche cf. Megas (1977, 464–72). Swahn (1956), 144–45; Wright (1971, 273–84).

⁶⁷ Cf. Accardo (2002, 68–87, i.e. ch. 'Three French Versions of the Beauty and the Beast')

⁶⁸ Charles Perrault (1628–1705) popularised the genre of *contes des fée* in France. His fairy-tale collections influenced the brothers Grimm.

⁶⁹ Gabrielle de Villeneuve (1695–1755), is the author of the *Histoire de la Bête*.

⁷⁰ Jeanne-Marie Leprince de Beaumont (1711–1780) is a French author who worked originally as a governess for aristocrats in France and London. During this pedagogic occupation she wrote stories and fairy-tales appropriate for children and published them in her '*Magasin des Enfants où Dialogues entre une sage gouvernante et plusieurs de ces élèves*' (1756).

⁷¹ Jacob Ludwig Carl Grimm (1785–1863) and Wilhelm Carl Grimm (1768–1859) were 19th century German academics who were best known for publishing collections of folk tales and fairy tales and for their work in linguistics.

⁷² Jean Maurice Eugène Clément Cocteau (1889–1963) was a French poet, novelist, dramatist and designer who also worked as boxing manager and filmmaker. His versatile, unconventional approach and enormous output brought him international acclaim.

⁷³ The first film version of this fairy-tale classic dates back to 1903, followed by a series of silent US and UK versions from the years 1903, 1912, 1913, 1922, and 1924.

⁷⁴ Ron Koslow, born 1947, is an American television writer and producer.

⁷⁵ Alan Menken (born 1949) is an American Broadway and Academy Award winning film score composer and pianist best known for his work on several Disney animated features.

⁷⁶ Howard Ashman (1950–1991) was an American playwright and movie music lyricist who worked together with Menken on several films for Disney. Ashman died at the age of 40, during the making of 'Beauty and the Beast'.

⁷⁷ Sir Timothy Miles Bindon Rice (born 1944) is an English lyricist, author, radio presenter and television game show panellist who collaborated most famously with Andrew Lloyd Webber, Sir Elton John and Abba's Benny Andersson and Björn Ulvaeus.

⁷⁸ Peter Jackson CNZM (born 1961) is a New Zealand filmmaker and director of the trilogy *The Lord of the Rings*, adapted from the novels by J. R. R. Tolkien. The classic *King Kong* was the film that inspired him to become a film director when he was 9 years old.

⁷⁹ On the crucial factors of live performance and audience and the impossibility of analysing them adequately, see Hardwick (2003: 51–70, i.e. ch. IV 'Staging Reception', 51–70).

⁸⁰ Mary Zimmerman received her BS, MA and PhD from Northwestern University, where she is currently a faculty member in the Performance Studies department and is currently also a member of the Lookingglass Theater Company and Artistic Associate of the Goodman Theatre in Chicago, Illinois. She has received awards nationally and internationally, and in 2002 received a Tony Award for Best Direction for *Metamorphoses*.

⁸¹ The show opened at Broadway's Circle on the Square Theater in March 2002.

⁸² Sean Hartley is Director of the Theater Wing at the Kaufman Center in New York, where he is also Artistic Director of the Center's resident theatre company, the Poppy Seed Players. For *Cupid and Psyche* he received a Drama Desk nomination for Outstanding Lyrics.

⁸³ Jihwan Kim started piano at the age of five and began studying music at the Juilliard School at 10. He has performed throughout the New York metropolitan area, including Carnegie Hall, Steinway Hall and Merkin Hall, and has performed with the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, the Little Orchestra Society and the Bronx Symphony Orchestra. Together with Sean Hartley, they have written five musicals for children, *Tsugele*, *The Frog Prince*, *The Gardner*, *Wise and Old* and *The Ghost of El Castillo*.

⁸⁴ *Cupid and Psyche*, Theatre Review by Matthew Murray: online under www.talkinbroadway.com/ob/09_24_03.html . Accessed 14 April 2009.

⁸⁵ Joseph Fisher, 30, is a native of Texas who now lives in Portland, Oregon. He is a graduate of Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas, where he received his BFA in Playwriting and recently finished his fourth and final year as playwright-in-residence at Stark Raving Theatre, which produced world premieres of his plays *Prometheus Bound*, *Tundra*, *Cupid & Psyche*, and *Faust*. Fisher is at the moment certainly one of the most sought-after playwrights in the US. He has won the National Arts Club Playwrights First Award and has been accepted into the prestigious New Dramatists, a New York organization with a reputation for nurturing some of the finest American playwrights of the twentieth century. His play *Thunderbird* (2004) has just finished a run at the Cherry Lane Theater in New York.

⁸⁶ Cf. Josephine Cashman's review from April 13th, 2006, to be found at the nytheatre archive 2005–06 Theatre Season Reviews: www.nytheatre.com/nytheatre/archweb/arch2006_05.htm Accessed 14 April 2009.

⁸⁷ Cf. entry on Fisher at www.playscripts.com/author.php3?authorid=290 Accessed 14 April 2009.

⁸⁸ Claudia Hann studied philosophy, German literature and art at Cologne University and was also educated as an actress and classical singer. Hann is founder and director of the Cassiopeia Theater at Cologne that specialises in contemporary productions and puppet shows in particular.

⁸⁹ Udo Mierke studied art history and philosophy at the University of Cologne and has worked since 1994 as director for Claudia Hann's Cassiopeia Theater, he is also responsible as director for *Amor & Psyche*.

⁹⁰ Waldemar Hooge, born 1957 at Orneck, Kazakhstan, studied at Moscow University and worked as an actor at Almaty, before moving in 1991 to Germany, where he worked for a number of theatres in Cologne and Bonn.

⁹¹ Cf. the review of the second performance in *Kölnische Rundschau*, May 9th, 2001: 'Augenzwinkernd schenkt man der tragischen Geschichte der beiden Liebenden ein versöhnliches Ende, weil Amor und Psyche nicht mehr dem Einfluß ihrer Umwelt gehorchen, sondern ihrer eigenen inneren Stimme folgen. So wird die psychische Reifung letztlich zum Thema, das aus der Vorlage sinnvoll herauswächst.'

⁹² Otto Brahm (Abrahamson) (1856–1912), German-Jewish theatre critic, director, and founder of the *Neue Bühne* Berlin (1889). He devoted his efforts to eliminating from the German stage old-fashioned techniques by employing the theories and methods of the naturalists.

⁹³ Sergio Spina, born 1928, is an Italian TV and cinematic director who gained fame in the mid-60s.

⁹⁴ See Elsom (1989) on the reason why the *Metamorphoses*—like Fellini's adaptation of Petronius' novel which actually included a scene from Apuleius' novel, namely the Risus festival of book II (Apul. *Met.* 2.31–11)—would make a good film (ideally by P.P. Pasolini).

⁹⁵ Particularly popular in this genre are movies about the infamous empresses Poppaea or Messalina that should depict their assumed overt sexual appetite.

⁹⁶ Paolo Poli is an actor, a film director and a playwright. After a degree in French Literature he started teaching and working in radio and theatre. In 1959 he became part of 'La Borsa di Arlecchino', an avant-garde theatre founded in Genoa by A. Trionfo. Paolo Poli's first play, *Il Novellino* (1961), performed at the Cometa Theatre in Rome, was followed by a series of funny shows, based on literary texts. This was the beginning of a successful career: *Il diavolo* (1964); *Rita da Cascia* (1967), which was highly controversial because it clashed with religious values; *La rappresentazione di Giovanni e Paolo* (1969); *Carolina Invernicio* (1969); *La vispa Teresa* (1970); *L'uomo nero* (1971); *Giallo* (1972). Along with writing plays, he also played parts in *Il mondo d'acqua*, by A. Nicolajs, *Il suggeritore nudo*, by F.T. Marinetti and *La nemica*, by D. Niccodemi (1969). In this period, he started working with Ida Omboni and in the early 70s with his sister Lucia. He wrote two plays with her: *Apocalisse* (1973), and *Femminilità* (1975). In the 90s, he started focussing on the myths: *Il coturno e la ciabatta* (1990), based on a work by Alberto Savinio and written by Ida Omboni, *L'asino d'oro* (1996), which is a comic remake of the work by Apuleius and, in 1997, he wrote a play based on *Gulliver's Travels* by Swift.

⁹⁷ William Robertson Davies (1913–1995), CC, FRSC, FRSL was a Canadian novelist, playwright, critic, journalist, and one of Canada's best-known and most popular authors. Davies was the founding Master of Massey College, a graduate college at the University of Toronto.

⁹⁸ Randolph Peters (born 1959) is composer-in-residence with the Canadian Opera Company, which has commissioned from him an upcoming opera about the turn-of-the-century Canadian poet and entertainer Pauline Johnson, with a libretto by Margaret Atwood. In addition to music for television, radio, dance and theatre, he has composed over 50 film scores.

⁹⁹ Viccari, B.: 'The Golden Ass: Will We See It Again?', *Performing Arts & Entertainment in Canada* 1999: http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1319/is_3_32/ai_57398189 Accessed 14 April 2009.

¹⁰⁰ The text is available in print: cf. Oswald (2002).

¹⁰¹ Peter Oswald, born 1965, is a well-known English playwright and lives in Devon. He was writer-in-residence at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, London, UK, for whom he wrote three new plays and is currently Playwright-in-Residence at the Finborough Theatre, London. Oswald's first stage piece, *The Swansong of Ivanhoe Wasteway*, a monologue, which he wrote while at university, was produced by his college, moved to Edinburgh and was performed at the Festival Club and subsequently at the Cafe Royal. It had its first London outing at the Brain Club, Soho in 1991. *Allbright*, his first original verse play, was performed at the Turtle Key Arts Centre, Fulham in 1991 and his next verse play, *Valdorama*, was the debut production of the Grace Theatre at the Latchmere in 1992. In the same year his adaptation of Schiller's *Don Carlos* was produced at the Lyric Studio, Hammersmith. His verse adaptations of Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannos* and Plautus *The Haunted House* were performed at the Bridge Lane Theatre, Battersea in January 1994. During his residency at the Globe he wrote *Augustine's Oak* which opened there in 1999. The Gate Theatre in London mounted Oswald's new verse adaptation of *The Odyssey* in November 1999 and his stage dramatisation of the Sanskrit epic *The Ramayana* opened at the Birmingham Rep on the main stage in 2000. He has recently re-worked Friedrich Schiller's classic *Mary Stuart* in a new version for the Donmar Warehouse Theatre, London. The Text of *The Golden Ass or The Curious Man* has been published in 2002 by London based publisher Oberon books.

¹⁰² Tim Carroll began his career with the English Shakespeare Company, for whom he directed Julius Caesar, Cymbeline and The Tempest. He was Associate Director of the Northcott Theatre in Exeter (1994–5), and has since 1994 directed a number of opera productions at Kent. He is now Director of Productions for Kent Opera and Associate Director of Shakespeare's Globe in London where he had already directed Oswald's play *Augustine's Oak* in 1999.

¹⁰³ The intended verbal pun on 'Ices ~ Isis' was according to Stephen Harrison difficult to grasp for the audience, as the punning during the whole play was quite exuberant.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. www.londontheatre.co.uk/amandahodges/reviews/goldenass02.htm Accessed 14 April 2009.

¹⁰⁵ The title of course is reminiscent of Robert Altman's movie *Short Cuts* (1993), a swan song about the everyday lives of a number of run-down Los Angeles residents in a world of prosperity and wealth.

¹⁰⁶ Wolfgang Kindermann, born 1967 at Vienna, who after studies in journalism and dramatics works as playwright, lyric poet, and director.

¹⁰⁷ *Metamorphosen*. Vier Stücke (1992), *Tuchführung*. Probe in vier Aufzügen (1993), *Zum Beispiel Tantalos*. 8 MusikTheaterSzenen (1997), *Pressekonferenz* (ODYSSEUS fragment 1), *Der Bauch des Pferdes* (ODYSSEUS fragment 2), *Penelope* (ODYSSEUS fragment 8) (2001, 2002, 2003), *Metamorphosen MEMORY* (2001), *Das unversehrte Jahr*. Performance nach einem Roman von Josef Leitgeb (2003), *Die Verdienten*. Helena : Menelaos Match (2003).

¹⁰⁸ There is an ever growing pool of literature on Gardzienice: See Allain (1995/1998) and Hodge (2003).

¹⁰⁹ Włodzimierz Staniewski, who, after some years of close collaboration with Grotowski, finally rebelled and as a result founded the Gardzienice Centre. Today, 25 years later, Staniewski's

method of acting, known as 'theatre ecology', has been numbered among the most important of the 20th century.

¹¹⁰ Jerzy Grotowski (1933—1999) was a theatre director at the '*Teatr 13 Rzędów*' (Theater of 13 rows), founded 1959 at Opole, and between 1965 and 1984 at the Laboratory Theatre in Wrocław. He is a leading figure in avant garde theatre of the 20th century, most notable for his work in the mode known as 'poor theatre'; he helped give rise to the contemporary field of performance studies.

¹¹¹ Tadeusz Kantor (1915—1990) worked as a painter, assemblage artist, set designer and theatre director. In Poland and abroad Kantor was well renowned for his revolutionary performances.

¹¹² According to Polish theatre historian and theorist, Leszek Kolankiewicz: 'Gardzienice's performances... are works in which the pattern of folk culture is transformed and organically united with the avant-garde one, thus forming a new, individual style... There, in the Centre for Theater Practice, a new genre of visual arts has been born. It may be called ethno-oratorio, a phenomenon radically refreshing our image of musical theater. The effect is astonishing and brings to mind associations with middle age pageants. European theater was born perhaps twice: in ancient times and in the Middle Ages, both times from the spirit of music. And both times its true background was folk song. With Gardzienice we witness how a Mystery Play is born, yet again, out of the spirit of music.' This and other reviews of the group's performances, including descriptions and photographs of all their productions see their excellent website, also available in English: www.gardzienice.art.pl/. Accessed 14 April 2009.

¹¹³ For the concept and history of the Centre now see esp. Hodge (2003).

¹¹⁴ *Spektakl Wieczorny* ('An evening performance'), 1977, *Gusla* ('Sorcery'), 1981; [Zwyot protopopa] *Awwakuma* ('[The Life of Archpriest] Avvakum'), 1983; *Carmina Burana*, 1990; Euripides' *Elektra* (*Cheironomia*). *Esej teatralny*, 2003 and currently (2007) *Ifigenia in Aulis* (Euripides, work in progress).

¹¹⁵ 'The fact that you can understand the performance without understanding the words is proved by reactions of a foreign audience, which without knowing Polish, is able to understand the performance and gets enchanted by it.' cf. B. Wildstein's critic, *Rzeczpospolita*, September, 1, 2002; to give a vivid impression of the show: 'With lips nearly touching, two women sing into each other's mouths—their soaring voices blending and clashing': J. Whitworth, *New York Times*, January 21, 2001.

¹¹⁶ 1998, Norway, Porsgrunn Theatre Festival, 1998, Sweden, Stockholm, 'Landscape X' at 'Stockholm—a cultural capital of Europe' festival, 1998, USA, Bennington College, Central Connecticut State University, University at Buffalo, State University of New York 1999, Wales, Aberystwyth, Performance Studies Conference 1999, France, Nancy, 'Passages' festival 1999, Germany, Berlin, 'Theater der Welt' Festival 1999, Bosnia, Sarajevo, 'mess' International Theatre Festival, 2000, Italy, Modena, Emilia Romagna Teatro 2000, Slovenia, Ljubljana, 'Gladisko-Polesni Abonma' Theatre Festival 2000, Germany, Hanover, SCENA—Internationales Festival Theater & Religion, Christuskirche, Klagesmarkt 2000, Germany, Düsseldorf, Festival der Kammeroper 2000, Germany, Bielefeld, Festival '360°' 2001, USA, New York, La MaMa Theater. As one strange fruit of the production there is now an Artistic Inn called 'Golden Ass', in Grodzka Street in Lublin, below the company's office.

¹¹⁷ Ronald Dans is the Department Chair for the Interpreter Training Program at Baker College in Auburn Hills, Michigan with over 15 years of experience directing deaf community affairs. Ron has been deaf since birth. Ron has also been American Sign Language (ASL) professor at St. Clair College in Windsor, Ontario Canada. As an ASL Consultant for Deaf Community Network

Michigan, Ron implemented and developed the Interpreter Training Program for Oakland Community College where he worked as an American Sign Language Coordinator and Academic Professor for eight years. He received evaluation and training through The Canadian Cultural Society of the Deaf and also received his Bachelor of Science: Business Administration from Gallaudet University, Washington D.C. A video of Ron Dan's mission statement for D-Pan in sign language can be found at www.d-pan.com accessed 14 April 2009.

¹¹⁸ Some photographs and a short film of this production can be viewed at www.imageevent.com/puppetsrevenge Accessed 14 April 2009.

¹¹⁹ Their website is also available in English, at www.lafura.com Accessed 14 April 2009.

¹²⁰ The group successfully staged the opening ceremony of the 1992 Barcelona Olympics.

¹²¹ Donatien Alphonse-François de Sade (1740–1814) was a French aristocrat and writer of philosophical and often violent pornographic works.

¹²² See the English text at www.furaxxx.com/xxx/ Accessed 14 April 2009

¹²³ Álex Ollé, born 11 April 1960 in Barcelona, Spain is an actor and director, who has become famous for his internationally feted movie Fausto 5.0 (2001).

¹²⁴ Cf. the review in the *Guardian* 5 June 2002, available at www.guardian.co.uk/arts/culturalexchange/story/0,11113,727653,00.html. Accessed 14 April 2009.

¹²⁵ Cf. the report at www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,1564,1305783,00.html . accessed 14 April 2009

¹²⁶ Robson (1997).

¹²⁷ See Hardwick (2003), 9.

¹²⁸ See above ch. 'More from Cupid and Psyche: Recent musical and theatre versions of the tale'.