

Performing arts between dilettantism and professionalism. Music, theatre and dance in the Norwegian public sphere 1770–1850

Introduction

The aim of this project is to generate new knowledge about changes in the understanding and practice within the fields of music, theatre and dance in the transition from the 18th to the 19th century. In this period what is described as *professionalization* of several of the performing arts takes place, and processes connected to this transition will necessarily be central in the project. The changes in the period can be summarized as a transition from *dilettantism* to *professionalism* – two essentially different paradigms for art performance.

It was precisely at the dawn of the 19th century that a new understanding of the arts and a new art practice was established, through what is described as autonomous art. Professionalization in the period implied that art performance moved from a private to a public arena. This led to a re-functioning of the arts on several levels. On the *personal*, expressive level the focus changed from self-edification/self-education (“*dannelse*”) to entertainment; on the *social* level qualities of sociability were replaced by the importance of being a *public*; and on the *institutional* level private relations and spontaneity were replaced by the buying and selling of experiences, formalized relations, contracts/agreements and even specialized buildings. Fundamentally, this re-functioning can be read in the light of another characteristic trait of the period: the establishment of a new bourgeois *public sphere*. This concept covers changes in social and cultural relations in a broader sense, changes that constitute a frame around old and new understandings of the arts and new art performing practices.

The project sets out to describe and analyse the development of the performing arts music, theatre and dance during the formative decades around 1800 in this overall perspective. The notion of the public sphere becomes a frame of understanding to investigate the transition from a dilettante regime to a professional regime. In broad terms, the project seeks to examine what consequences these changes – dependent on social historical circumstances – led to in the field of the arts on 1) the personal/career-orientated level, 2) the social/collective level and 3) the institutional level.

In summary, the project wants to investigate

- How the different art forms existed in a tension between private educational needs, cultural needs of assertion, and individual business and career alternatives, and how the different art forms offered various conditions for artistic craftsmanship and aesthetic development, as well as for the participants' self-understanding as “artists” or dilettantes.
- How different performance venues (private homes, mansions, city halls, concert halls, theatres) were established and developed, out of the need to make manifest the changing understanding of ongoing artistic activity.
- How the choice of repertoire and genre reflected the performing arts' relationship to the various existing discourses on professionalization.

Even though we will focus on each singular profession (dancers, dance teachers, actors, musicians, composers, theatre decorators etc.) separately, we also have an interdisciplinary approach. A main reason for this is that theatre, dance and music often were performed together, within the same piece, or as part of the same programme. Analyses of early music drama as music *or* as theatre/drama alone cannot give a comprehensive picture of the works, experiences or events – or of the activities assessed as “professional art” performed in a public sphere. Another reason for an interdisciplinary analysis of the process of professionalization is that the participants were recruited from the same social circles, performed in the same venues, and that their activity in these three fields satisfied the same need for education and entertainment.

Theoretical orientation

Professionalization of the arts in the period that is the project's focus can be read in the light of the establishment of a new bourgeois public sphere. As is well known, literature – both factual prose and fiction – was central in the creation of the new public sphere. What we know today as theories of the public sphere – especially in the wake of the works of Jürgen Habermas, Reinhart Koselleck and others – places literature in the centre as a primary medium of the public sphere. Literature has even been assigned a public sphere of its own: the literary public sphere, understood as a precursor to the political public sphere. This has to do with the decisive importance of the new public sphere as a critical, reasoning discourse needing the written word as its primary medium.

Publicity and sociability

Analyses of the bourgeois public sphere have to a very limited extent drawn in art forms other than literature. This can be explained by the theories' heavy emphasis on the critical and rational, and on discourse, in the growing public sphere. But the development of a new public sphere implied that other factors played a role, in fact were essential, for the establishment of the new public space of action. The literary public sphere presupposed that the public's "personal taste for culture could be satisfied [only] in coffee houses, salons, reading societies, theaters, museums, and concert halls opened to them in the urban centers of a bourgeois society [...]" (Baker 184–185). These aspects of the new public sphere can be summarized in a concept of *sociability*, and already here lies the germ of institutionalization of the art field. Thus the somewhat one-sided focus on written discourse may obscure the fact that Habermas's public sphere is reliant on the establishment of "institutions of intellectual sociability" (Goodman 1992:8). What is at stake here is the bourgeois *self-education* ("*dannelse*"), but it is important to hold on to the fact that this self-education (even when it is primarily connected to performance of the arts) is not a development of "taste" and artistic competences alone. Activities in coffee houses, theatres, reading circles and clubs take place in a new *society*, and it is the sociable element connected to art performance which is the "self-educating" per se. The German culture historian Andreas Schulz even claims that the cultural constituting of the bourgeois class can be exemplarily followed through dilettantism, and that in addition to the growing enthusiasm for the arts and the amateur movement, clubs and associations were central parts of the making of the bourgeoisie itself (Schulz 1996). His view resembles Hanna Arendt's emphasis on the fact that acting individuals in tangible meetings are a prerequisite for publicity (Arendt 1996). Annette Storli Andersen has used this perspective in her doctoral thesis to examine the relationship between the bourgeois public sphere and the explicit political public sphere – a theme that is not pursued in our project (Andersen 2008).

Privacy and "associativity"

In addition to the fact that literature has been central, the public side of the dichotomy public/private has been given most attention. The fact that the new bourgeois public with its sociability was an integrated part of the *private* domain has consequently been underestimated. Dena Goodman tried to adjust this perspective in 1992, when criticism of Habermas was gaining speed, by systematically drawing on the works of Philippe Ariès about "private life" in the discourse of the public sphere, and pointing out that Habermas's public sphere was identical with a "'new culture' of private life" (1992:9). With strong relevance for our objectives of study, Ariès also pointed out that "some of these groups adopted formal rules and organized as clubs, intellectual societies, or academies, losing some of their spontaneity in the process. They became public institutions." (Ariès 1989). The associations (which at this time comprised a great variety, from comradeship to social formations) may thus be understood as the seed of the growing institutionalization of the arts.

Gender perspectives

The participation of women in the field of the performing arts is strongly linked to the question of privacy and "associativity"/sociability. Within recent culture history and public sphere research

there is a new attention to this theme based on empirical studies, rather than theoretical assumptions about the public sphere being masculine and the private sphere feminine (Mellor 2000:9). We have extensive knowledge about women's participation in the literary public sphere, as publishers, authors and readers, and research has also been done into women's musical careers (Selvik 2007). However, in the Norwegian context little has been done in the three fields covered by the project. We know that opportunities for women varied within music, theatre and dance, not in the least because the art forms were regulated by their own moral, practical and socio-historical "rules", and we want to investigate how professionalization developed differently within these fields and arenas.

Professionalization

Recent theories connect professionalization, as a historical phenomenon, to self-education and social processes. This is a perspective that comes in addition to the established ones, emphasizing professionalization as protection of business practice, and emphasizing artistic ability and competence. According to such an understanding, the professions were an opportunity for self-fashioning across social distinctions – through the acquisition of knowledge and skills. In 1986 Jean-Christophe Agnew conducted a study of the theatrical professions based on the view that theatre is the art form where self-fashioning is the easiest to demonstrate, because in theatre it is possible to work with the conventions of social life and with the tensions between existence and pretence (Agnew 1986). Other scholars emphasize – in line with the tradition from Bourdieu to Giddens – the role of the institutions in the formation of identity, for example Elizabeth Mansfield in *Art history and its institutions: foundations of a discipline* (Mansfield 2002). We also know that achievements in the private space could compare favourably with, and even surpass, what was achieved publicly in the period, a fact which in itself led to disputes about what was regarded as most valuable and contributed to the artistic development of a country. Marie-Theres Federhofer claims that dilettantism may be regarded as a "cultural practice" offering a frame for artistic practice/performance and professionalization (Federhofer 2011:16). In this perspective an important professionalization takes place *within* the frame of dilettantism, a view that will be pursued in the project. A deciding factor in our support for this tradition in profession studies is that they correspond well with our basic assumption that professionalization takes place in the intersection between *artistic* need of expression, *cultural* self-education and conscious *career* orientation.

Background

An essential starting point for the project is that the repertoire of the professionalization period was largely a "light" one. This was not the repertoire that was later canonized and made central in the establishment of Norwegian national art. Nevertheless, it was in this period, and with this light repertoire, that professionalization took place.

The field of music

Musico-dramatic genres like vaudeville and light opera (*syngespill*) have been underexposed in Norwegian music and theatre historiography because of the low status of these genres and their marginal position in the nation-building project. The first volume of the established work *Norges musikkhistorie* (Edwards et al. 2001) treats light opera and vaudeville superficially and briefly. The second volume (Benestad et al. 2000) gives a few glimpses into the history of music drama in the capital and the struggle for a national dramatic institution (Christiania Theater). Not even here, with the exception of Waldemar Thrane's *Fjeldeventyret*, are light opera and vaudeville given specific attention. The new history of Norwegian opera and ballet has not brought new knowledge in the field (Vollsnes 2010). Internationally these genres have been subject to new scholarly interest during the previous decades, with some recent interesting Danish contributions (Petersen 2010; Schwab 2010). In addition, Randi M. Selvik, in her description and analysis of the development of musical life in Bergen between 1750 and 1830, to a certain extent covers the processes of professionalization and their conditions in the field of music (Selvik 2005).

The field of theatre

Similarly, the popular genres of spoken drama have drawn little scholarly interest. The German theatre “tailors” (a negative designation used both by contemporaries and by posterity) August von Kotzebue and August Wilhelm Iffland dominated the repertoire. Norwegian theatre historiography has only to a limited extent revised this slightly condescending view on the popular repertoire. A tentative new orientation is shown, for instance, in the works of Andersen (2008) and Gladsø (2004). In continental theatre research there is a growing opinion that the trivial plays of Kotzebue played a very special role in the formation of the German middle class, as dramatist to “the classless bourgeoisie,” which points towards a broader and more diverse theatre audience than previously assumed (Möller 1996). Within our perspective of professionalization, this repertoire assumes special importance, because it offered an arena for performing and technical professionals. In general, the professions of the theatre have hardly been made the object of study. However, the recent dissertation of Ellen K. Gjervan (2010) deals with the profession of director, poised between European ideals and local Bergen conditions. This topic is also seen in the light of a certain repertoire and its influence on staging practices. The theatrical profession most often described is that of the actor, but almost exclusively in a biographical perspective. Theatre decorators and chief machinists in the period have been treated, among others, by Eli Ansteinsson (1968). Norwegian scholars have hardly conducted any research on those professions since Ansteinsson’s effort.

Venues

Light repertoire is one approach, physical venues another. The project will study the different arenas where professionalization took place, which implies analyses of urban communities and particular buildings through several decades. Of special interest are cities and towns where it is possible to follow one organization (or multiple, shifting ones), who administered their own buildings over time as the physical, material basis for the arts. The conditions in Christiania and Bergen have been mapped out fairly well, at least with regards to theatre and music. Smaller towns like Trondheim and Halden have been surveyed to a certain extent (Jensson 1965; Parmer 1967). Their locales and practices are no less interesting objects of study, both because of the differences relative to Bergen and Christiania, and because of the differences between them. There still remains much unexplored material related to these buildings (Trøndelag Teater from 1816 and “Konservativen” [Halden] from 1777), both concerning the distinction between private and public, the use of stage technology, social foundations and forms of organization.

The field of dance

Dance claims a special position within the project, since its historical description is largely devoid of a scholarly basis, at least in regard to Norwegian conditions. The tension between social dance and theatrical dance is the project’s primary interest, and the light repertoire is a prioritized research area. The early dancing masters Martin Nürenbach (?–1780) and Johan Peter Strömberg (1773–1834) are well-known figures in the early Norwegian dance and theatre historiography (Anker 1958), but we have only limited understanding of the results of their itinerant education of Norwegian individuals in the private sphere. Nor do we know much about Norwegian dancers and their performances in vaudevilles and light operas. Some information can be deduced from the wealth of manuscripts, scores and sheet music that exist – to a great extent unexplored. The project aims to study the influences and impacts (in social settings, military academies and in the theatre) made by various dance trends and dance forms.

Ongoing activity within, or connected to, the project

As shown by the individual projects, CVs and the reference list the project members have ongoing activity leading up to, or being part of, the project. Randi M. Selvik has worked with the project period on several occasions, for example by more systematically relating the circumstances in Bergen to the discourse of dilettantism in the anthology *Mellom pasjon og profesjonalisme. Dilettant-*

kulturer i skandinavisk kunst og vitenskap (Selvik 2011). This book (edited by Marie-Theres Federhofer) is the result of a conference on dilettantism in art and science in 2008. The feminine perspective in the field of music has been treated by Selvik in *Studia Musicologica Norvegica* (Selvik 2007). Currently she is co-operating with professor Hans Erik Aarset (NTNU) on a book about the operas of Lully, a musico-dramatic genre from a period leading up to the project period.

Svein Gladsø and Annabella Skagen have established contact with European research groups working on the “light” repertoire in the transition between private and public arenas. The conference “Private Theatricals” at Royal Holloway in the UK will be arranged for the second time in 2011, with Gladsø and Skagen contributing with papers on thinking behind light repertoire and aspects of gender. Gladsø also contributes to the anthology *Mellom pasjon og profesjonalisme* (Gladsø 2011). Since 2009 Gladsø and Skagen have also been working on a project focusing on *Konservativen* – Halden’s and Norway’s oldest multicultural building for theatre, dance and music.

Anne M. Fiskvik has, since 2007, been a member of the Nordic Research Project “Dance in Nordic Spaces: The Formation of Corporeal Identities.” This historical project investigates Nordic dance history and dance as various corporeal practices in the 19th and 20th century. Three volumes will be published, the first currently in press, the second in 2013 by Ashgate. Fiskvik has also done research on 18th century dance and dance practices in the Nordic countries, and takes part in a project at NTNU on the 18th century minuet. From the start in 2008 this has arranged two international symposiums, in Paris (2008) and in the USA (2009). Fiskvik has also examined how Norwegian folk dance has been used in theatrical settings in the 18th century. A particular study on the ballet *Amor og ballettmesterens luner* (Copenhagen 1786) has been a focal point (Fiskvik 2008, 2009).

The project “Performing arts between dilettantism and professionalism” was co-arranger of an international research seminar in April 2011: “The Performance Turn: Implications for Academic Research and Organization”. One day was dedicated to the theme of “Performativity and historiography”, with professor Shannon Jackson (University of California, Berkeley), among others, as contributor. Researchers, archivists and librarians met in a discussion on the empirical basis of, and possible approaches to, a renewal of the studies of the performing arts in early Norwegian history. Another conference on the archive situation is planned in the autumn of 2011, funded by NTNU.

Project plan

The project has been designed in such a way that the single contributions cover different themes, periods and art forms and thus answer the secondary objectives of the project in various ways. The following section sketches the research projects of the four participating scholars at NTNU (Selvik, Gladsø, Fiskvik and Skagen), arranged in the order of primary subject areas. The relationship between these projects and the PhD and Postdoctoral projects is shown in the table below:

	Main aspects, period	
Music	PhD project Light opera and vaudeville 1770–1820	Randi M. Selvik Light opera and vaudeville 1820–1850
Dance	PhD project Extension of the minuet 1770–1800	Anne Margrete Fiskvik Nürenbach and Strömberg and Norw. Dance History
Theatre	PhD project Annabella Skagen 1790–1814	Post doc. project Theatre architecture and stage machinery 1814–
	Svein Gladsø Professionalization and organization 1790–1850	

Financing of the PhD projects in music and dance and the two-year Post doc. project in theatre are included in the application. The PhD project in theatre already has funding from NTNU, and is part of the university’s own financing in the project.

The project has been developed through discussions with colleagues within the respective disciplines, not in the least through the networks outlined above (ongoing projects etc.). Several colleagues are willing to be associated with the project, as referees, as participants in the individual

projects, as keynote speakers (see “Dissemination of project results”) and as co-supervisors. The following contacts have been made:

- Dr. Claudia Jeschke, professor in Dance Studies at the University of Salzburg
 - Keynote speaker 2013
- Dr. Lena Hammergren, professor in Dance Studies at the University of Stockholm
 - Keynote speaker 2012, Co-supervisor PhD in dance
- Dr. Heinrich W. Schwab, professor emer. in musicology, University of Copenhagen
 - Keynote speaker 2013
- Ph.D. Jens Hesselager, associate professor in musicology, University of Copenhagen
 - Keynote speaker 2012
- Dr. philos Live Hov, professor in theatre studies, University of Oslo:
 - Co-supervisor Annabella Skagen (PhD in theatre research)
- Dr. philos Hans Erik Aarset, professor in literature, NTNU
 - Keynote speaker 2013
- Dr.art. Jørgen Langdalen, Researcher, the National Library of Norway, Oslo
 - Keynote speaker 2012
- Arvid O. Vollsnes, professor in musicology, University of Oslo
 - Co-supervisor PhD in musicology
- Liv Blikrud, professor in Nordic language and literature, University of Oslo
 - Keynote speaker 2014
- Marie-Theres Federhofer, professor in German literature, University of Tromsø
 - Keynote speaker 2014

Projects in music history/musicology

These comprise **Randi M. Selvik**: *Light Opera and Vaudeville in Norway 1820–1850* and a PhD fellowship studying the same field 1770–1820.

Light opera (“syngespill”) and vaudeville played an important role in Norwegian music and theatre from the last decades of the 18th century and several decades into the 19th. The great majority of the repertoire was imported from abroad. It was performed in collaboration between musical and dramatic amateur societies, or between professional, privileged travelling or stationary dramatic companies and amateur musical societies. The repertoire was central in the artistic development from dilettantism to professionalism within music and theatre, and it was an important educational tool for the development of the self-esteem of a growing bourgeois public.

Considering the performance of this repertoire – taking place in the intersection between the private, semi-public and public spheres – the relationships between the institutions, actors, singers, musical leaders, repertoire and the public are essential to the understanding of how the genres developed in different sociabilities, and how the various kinds of public spheres changed during the period in question. It is the interaction between the different elements that led to a higher degree of professionalism in the field that is at the centre of attention.

Important in this respect is that the institutions where light opera and vaudevilles were performed from a “habermasian” point of view were part of the private domain, with various degrees of accessibility to the public, and some of the dramatic institutions, at least in the early stages, represented hardly more than an extension of the intimate family sphere, a fact that had consequences for how actors, singers and musicians regarded themselves as performers.

Special attention will be given to gender perspectives, and to analysis of the different roles of men and women in connection with the repertoire – its composition, production and performance. In this respect, Selvik’s previous work on women as professional musicians and dilettantes can be built upon. It is important to be aware of the fact that the concepts of “dilettantism” and “profes-

sionalism” are open to various interpretations, which must be discussed and taken into consideration.

Most of the repertoire was imported from Denmark, at least in the early years. It is natural to investigate a selection of pieces performed in some of the main Norwegian cities. The source material is rich and varied, much of it still unexplored. Main emphasis will be on Danish light operas and vaudevilles from the 1770s (Niels Krog Bredal’s period as a leading figure at the royal theatre in Copenhagen); the years around 1800, when a specific national Danish light opera began to be developed; and the 1820s, with J. L. Heibergs Danish vaudeville, which became immensely popular in both countries. The royal library in Copenhagen has a rich collection of sources. Another important figure is F. G. Schediwy, composer/arranger of a substantial repertoire in Bergen around the middle of the century (Grinde 2008), and there will be a selection of other musicians/performers to focus on.

The sources must be analysed in a wide cultural and social perspective, and with strong emphasis on central milieus and figures. The empirical material in question will be quite varied and include music scores, sheet music and other historical sources from libraries and archives in Norway and abroad. Different methods will be required, from traditional musicological style analysis to critical historical methods, depending on the sources in question.

Projects in theatre history/theatre research

Svein Gladsø: *The Organizational Basis of Professionalization*

In Norwegian theatre historiography, the distinction between the private and the public has been one of the decisive criteria to ascertain if, and when, Norway obtained a professional theatre. The concept “private theatre” acquired an odious ring during the first decades of the 19th century, and functioned as a means to distinguish the attempts at new public and “professional” establishments from their predecessors, the (private) dramatic societies. In the writing of the history of Norwegian theatre, one was focusing on the status of the actors (whether they defined themselves as professional or not), and on the fact that membership-based societies were the organizational basis for theatre production. The qualities of this internal organization (and the kind of professionalization this, in fact, represented) have been largely ignored as a contribution to the founding of a national theatre. Not until recent times has this been mentioned, but not further investigated.

This is remarkable, as similar ways of financing and producing theatre have been accepted as important stages in the establishment of national theatres in other European countries. In several European cities, public theatre was produced by ensembles with quite different social basis and organization, often competing, and often using the same facilities. Owners of a theatre building could hire a professional, travelling troupe for a period – the very next season, a dramatic society could take on the responsibility of offering the city the sought-for entertainment.

The project will investigate different aspects of this professionalization with a focus on local theatres as competent production systems. As such, the project will contribute to the institutional “macro-level” of the total project. The dramatic societies’ statutes and records are our primary sources for the study in question. These have often been viewed as *curiosa*, due to the great number of rules – from technical rules to rules on behaviour and moral norms. The project wants to investigate where the directors of the dramatic societies found their basis to operate professionally, and which models were behind the running of their theatres. This entails finding the inspiration behind the statutes, but also an investigation of the societies over time. Until now they have been regarded as fairly homogeneous, but the fact is that the decades around 1800 display important variations among the societies, from the earliest ones with a clear structure, to more complex partnership companies with rules concerning both the trading of company shares and for running the operation.

An important contribution to such an analysis is an examination of Danish and Norwegian corporate law. A preliminary exploration of this field shows that several dramatic societies were organized after the model of an “anonymous” partnership company (“*interessentskap*”). We also find

companies that make deposits of both work and capital, precisely describing the kind of “artistic business” a theatre is. In what way, and by whom, were these models introduced into dramatic societies as a contribution to professionalization? In addition to statutes and records, the archives of the dramatic and related musical societies will be analysed. These are largely unexplored as a source for the analysis of anything other than repertoire and personal biographies.

Annabella Skagen: *The Count's Palace to Prince's Street: Theatre in Trondhjem 1790–1814.*

This PhD project will investigate the theatrical activities, private, amateur and professional, native to Trondheim around the turn of the 19th century. Among the project's aims is a discussion of the theatrical locales and stages that were used in the Trondheim area, their descriptions, functions, and possible continental (especially Danish) influences. While the earliest theatrical stages were situated in private homes where performance attendance was strictly by invitation only, from the turn of the century two theatrical locales were recognizable as cultural institutions – a members-only amateur dramatic society and a semi-professional, public theatre open to all paying audiences.

The co-existence of a private theatrical dilettante society and a public theatre house where actors were paid to perform is particular to Trondheim in the period, and emphasizes the distinctions and tensions as well as the negotiations between the public and private spheres. An investigation into the theatrical milieus of Trondheim is therefore likely to yield new insight into the social and cultural functions of theatre, relative to their status as private or public, dilettante or professional.

A significant, but still largely untapped, source of knowledge regarding the scenic practices of the period is the repertoire, which can be studied both with a view to understanding the scenic potentials and limitations, as well as to the genres, themes and styles which were considered relevant by performers and playgoers of the time. While in the 1770s up to the early 90s Norwegian dramatists wrote plays frequently situated in a Nordic frame of reference, from the early nineteenth century on, staged plays were likely to be foreign in origin and romantic in topic, and therefore often considered unimportant by latter-day historians. This project will include an analysis of selected examples of plays, with the dual aims of a disclosure of scenic practices and a reading of the values and ideals embedded in the texts. These will be seen as expressions of the changing preferences and tastes of the growing bourgeois class during the transition from enlightenment to romanticism, from absolutism to early democracy, while their preoccupation with art changed from sociable self-fashioning to institutionalized audiencing. Svein Gladsø is supervisor of the project, with professor Live Hov, University of Oslo, as co-supervisor.

Post Doc.: *Stage technology and staging practices 1814–1850.*

This project is to be a systematic study of the stages of some of the Norwegian dramatic societies, in order to describe how the layout of these stages and their differing stage technology affected staging practices between 1814 and 1850.

The theatres of the dramatic societies in Halden, Bergen and Trondheim would be the focal points of the study, in addition to written sources connected with these buildings. Among the relevant sources are fire insurance assessments and the archives of the dramatic societies. Production manuscripts from the period represent a valuable addition to traditional sources, and these are found at the university libraries in Trondheim and Bergen. At Bergen Museum's cultural-historical collections, there are artefacts from the Bergen theatre – such as stage machinery – that have not been investigated from the perspective of staging practices. In Halden, there is a unique collection of sets of scenery from Fredrikshald Theatre that is an untapped resource in theatrical research.

The dramatic societies had many staging practices in common. One reason for this was that the majority of the plays performed belonged to a common European, romantic repertoire. This repertoire made certain demands on scene design, technical solutions, acting conventions and production practices. Another cause of similar practices was the fact that theatres throughout Europe established their settings using the same elements: the scenery consisted of painted wings, flats, borders

and backcloths. No matter whether the setting was to present an interior or an exterior locale, the scenery was the same and the different settings were established according to common conventions.

Based on the uniformity in repertoire and in how the settings were established, one might think that the staging practices in this period were uniform also. However, the design of the theatrical spaces and their stage technologies were not identical in the various towns. Some stage floors were flat, whereas in the majority of theatres the stage was raked. As the scenery was to change during the course of a play, different kinds of stage machinery were used to assist this change of scene. Did different solutions have consequences for staging practices? Does this difference in stage technology and layout manifest itself in local, staging practices?

Projects in dance history/dance research

The projects in dance history are comprised of research conducted by **Anne Margrete Fiskvik** and a doctoral fellowship on the use of theatre and ballroom dance practices in the period between 1770 and 1840. Two different points of interest will be subject to scrutiny, one related to two well-known dancing masters, and the other to the minuet. The main course of action in this endeavour will be extensive archival work into various primary sources. Through the focal points of the two dance projects, the aim is to create a clearer picture of dance in various types of theatrical entertainments before and after 1800, and to relate these to the larger frame and to the theatre and music aspects of the larger projects.

Due to the lack of royalty, Norwegian theatre dance history has been shaped in different, but no less interesting ways than in Denmark and Sweden. We assume that dancers of various kinds were used in many types of theatre productions, especially the lighter types of entertainments like vaudeville and “syngespill”. But we know very little about who performed these dances or what the dance looked like. We know the names of some important dancing masters and dancers, but not so much about their background and training. What kind of training did dancers have, and from where were they recruited? Did the repertoire include the same types of dances that can be found on the continent around 1750–1850, primarily of French origin? The minuet, for instance, developed and became highly standardized under the latter part of Louis XIV’s reign. It functioned both as a theatre dance and as a social dance for more than two hundred years and was danced in both aristocratic circles as well as in upper and middle class society. The planned PhD project will investigate the manifestation and use of the continental minuet as a theatre and social dance practice in Norway 1770–1800. One important objective is the dance activities at the “Fredrikshald Theater” in Halden (Fredrikshald), especially with regards to the minuet. The project aims to trace how minuets were used in the Norwegian private and public sphere, and by whom the minuet was danced.

Various types of dance have been a part of most attempts to institutionalize theatre activity in Norway. Two central theatre directors and dancing masters will be the focal point of Anne M. Fiskvik’s part of the study – Martin Nürenbach and Johan Peter Strömberg. The German dancer and actor Martin Nürenbach represented the typical travelling actor of the 18th century, who was versatile and could both dance, sing and act. Nürenbach was granted royal permission to show theatre and dance performances in Christiania in 1771, performing, among other things, so-called “Line dance”. This event is regarded as the “start” of the history of Norwegian theatre dance. Artistic versatility can also be found in the Swedish actor and dancer Johan Peter Strömberg who employed dancers at his “Strömberg’s Teater”. In 1827, when the theatre opened, it employed 16 actors and a *corps de ballet* consisting of 22 poor children from the capital city. This is to our knowledge the first time a *corps de ballet* is formed in Norway, and is thus of special interest.

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