



Actio! Actio! Actio!
Historical Acting and Theatre
Academy of Creative and Performing Arts
Universiteit Leiden
December 5-7, 2022

Actio! Actio! Actio!

The story of Demosthenes' transformation from a much-mocked to a much-admired orator is well-known: he emerged from his 'subterranean study'—after dedicated and rigorous physical training—a master of delivery. His diligence was spurred by the realization that a performance that was not only powerful, but also graceful and dignified, 'could carry all before it.' The pre-20th-century actor's moving, declaiming body, flashing eyes and graceful hands hearkened back to the ancient Greek's good example, for as Gilbert Austin re-told the tale in his *Chironomia* (1806): 'When Demosthenes was asked, what was the first requisite in speaking, he answered, that delivery was the first, that it was the second, and that it was the third.' *Actio! Actio! Actio!*

This symposium reflects on issues of propriety, emotion and virtuosity on the European stage, both past and present. Through lectures and performance, we address historical texts as thespian provocations; we see words not as mere thoughts, but as catalysts to histrionic display. While proposing a return of art and artifice to the actor's craft, we welcome debate: can we revive a *démodé*, brightly-feathered, sweet-song'd (and sometimes double-tongued) tradition—a tradition that stretches back to Demosthenes—whose wings have been clipped by the modernist shears of 20th-century naturalism?

And if we can...should we do so, just *because* we can?



Symposium Schedule

December 5 Telders Auditorium, Academiegebouw

13:00-14:30 Session One: Tools and Craftsmanship
Chair: Terry F. Robinson

João Luís Paixão (University of Amsterdam): The Actor's Passion as Instrument: Ideas Toward Artistic Research into 18th-Century Acting
James Harriman-Smith (Newcastle University): Cultivating Macklin's Garden: An Acting Lesson from the Eighteenth Century

14:30-15:15 Tea and Coffee

15:15-16:45 Session Two: At the Edges of 'Authenticity'
Chair: David Wiles

Wojciech Klimczyk (Uniwersytet Jagiellonski w Krakowie): Embodying Psychotic Modernism: Some Notes on a Reenactment of Nijinsky's Last Performance
Jed Wentz (Universiteit Leiden): On *Not* Performing David Bispham's *The Raven*: Arthur Bergh's Melodramatic Poe, Revisited

17:00-18:30 Reception (by invitation only)



December 6 Academiegebouw, Telders Auditorium

10:00-11:30 Session Three: Bridging Media and Genres
Chair: Tiffany Stern

Amanda Eubanks Winkler (Syracuse University): Making the Case for *Psyche*
Hayley Bradley (The University of Manchester): Gesture and Movement Across Mediums: Victorian Technique from Stage to Early Silent Film

11:45-12:45 Keynote: On Decolonizing Acting
Tracy C. Davis (Northwestern University)

12:45-13:30 Lunch

13:30-15:00 Session Four: Performance Issues
Chair: Wojciech Klimczyk

Magnus Tessing Schneider (Stockholms Universitet): The Operatic Scream: Traetta, Gluck, Mozart
Tiffany Stern (University of Birmingham): Walking, Seeing and Hearing Genre on the Early Modern Stage

15:00-15:30 Tea and Coffee

15:30-17:00 Session Five: Feeling and Being
Chair: João Luís Paixão

David Wiles (University of Exeter, Emeritus): Acting, Self and Identity: A Historical Perspective on the Problem
Terry F. Robinson (University of Toronto): Focalizing the Passions: Garrickian Acting and Its Truth Effects

December 7 Telders Auditorium, Academiegebouw

10:00-11:30 Session Six: Imagery
Chair: Anne Smith

Martina Papiro (Schola Cantorum Basiliensis): The Affective and Dramaturgic Role of Stage Decorations in Metastasio's Libretti
Laila Cathleen Neuman (Universiteit Leiden): Staging *Proserpina*: Attitudes, Movement and Costume in Goethe/Eberwein's Melodrama of 1815

11:45-12:30 Wrap-up and discussion: João Luís Paixão

ABSTRACTS

Hayley Bradley *Gesture and Movement Across Mediums: Victorian Technique from Stage to Early Silent Film.*

When Lillian Gish observed ‘We have to tell the story without saying a word’ she referred to her own performances in early silent film but there’s a line of inheritance and influence that stretches back to the nineteenth century and the actor’s stage craft. With published manuals and hand-books the performance techniques of the period were noted, annotated and anatomised from head to toe. Drawing from Henry Siddons and Henry Neville’s practical guides, in conjunction with theatrical posters, this paper will explore ways of seeing and reading the performer’s body as it moves across mediums from stage to screen and navigates a different relationship, still based on gesture, between an actor and an audience.

Biography: **Hayley Bradley** is a Research Associate at The University of Manchester. Her research interests span late nineteenth/early twentieth-century popular theatre and culture including early film, stage machinery and technology, collaboration, and adaptation. Hayley has published work on Ouida and Moths, theatrical artisan Henry Hamilton, autumn dramas at Theatre Royal Drury Lane, Edwardian fashions, and ‘Stagecraft, Spectacle and Sensation’ in *The Cambridge Companion to English Melodrama*, ed. by Carolyn Williams. Hayley is currently working on a collaborative project with Dr Janice Norwood, exploring ‘Deathly Spectatorship’ and visual, theatrical and filmic representations of death and dying in the Victorian-Edwardian period.

Tracy C. Davis *On Decolonizing Acting*

In performance, eighteenth-century English drama has been over-determined by conventions that rigidly endorse gender, race, and class. Teaching the corpus to student actors has been a pretext for imparting ‘style’ mannered behaviors and vocal traits that encode the white ruling class even when casting is diverse. How can actors be equipped to analyze these plays complexly and undertake their verbal and physical demands while ‘decolonizing the repertoire’ for the twenty-first century? How can dramaturgs envision performance as a form of stance-taking that reckons with eighteenth-century history, subjectivity, power, and discourse from consciously located perspectives (e.g. gender fluidity, multi-racial empires, and pluralities of power in the family and state) to offer points of affiliation and distantiating? How can actor-training in culturally responsive methods (such as SoulWork) ally with insights into the repertoire from deconstruction and critical race theory in order to *present*, not just argue, an understanding of colonized, subjugated, and/or subaltern histories and commentaries in the plays, reflecting progressive activism’s imperative for historical reckoning in this repertoire? Can this enhance artists’ sense of empowerment, reclaiming a place for the repertoire as matters of cultural importance, while also be cognizant of historical specificity in texts?

These propositions are being broached in relation to characterization, movement, and voice with diverse American acting students. Young artists prioritize their responsibility to public space, and so pedagogies that can ‘take back’ control of how performance signifies social memory and affirms performers’ identity are needed. Thus, along with the imperatives to ‘decolonize’ theatre in relation to professional conduct ([Chicago Theatre Standards](#)) and equity ([We See You White American Theatre](#)), this posits ways that repertoire’s relevance for the twenty-first century can be foregrounded.

Biography: **Tracy C. Davis**, Barber Professor of Performing Arts and Professor of Theatre and English, specializes in 19th-century British theatre history, gender and theatre, and performance theory. She regularly teaches courses on 19th-century culture, theatre history, and historiography. Her current work is on mid-19th-century liberalism.

Amanda Eubanks Winkler Making the Case for *Psyche*

In 1675 a multi-national team including the English composer Matthew Locke created the opera *Psyche*, published that same year under the title *The English Opera*. English opera, as conceived by Locke and his colleagues, was a deeply collaborative intermedial genre that created meaning through acting, music, dance, and spectacle. Unlike through-sung miniature operas such as Blow's *Venus and Adonis* (ca. 1683) and *Dido and Aeneas* (ca. 1688), which are frequently performed, *Psyche* largely has been neglected. The reasons for this neglect are two-fold: a) genre-trouble: the notion that *Psyche* will fail to communicate with modern audiences because of its 'archaic' form; b) the costs of putting on *Psyche*, which requires singers, instrumentalists, actors, and dancers. Drawing on a newly discovered version of *The English Opera* with late seventeenth-century annotations, information gleaned from Sébastien Daucé's 2020 concert performance and subsequent recording of *Psyche* with his Ensemble Corespondances, the research of dramaturg Katherina Lindekens, and my own experience with staging similar works as part of the AHRC 'Performing Restoration Shakespeare' project, I 'make the case' for the stage-worthiness of *Psyche* and its appeal for a modern audience. Focusing on three different scenes that present distinct staging challenges, I use historical knowledge as a prompt to creativity, as I provide a cost-effective plan for staging *Psyche* that respects the unique dramaturgy of English opera.

Biography: **Amanda Eubanks Winkler** is Chair of the Department of Art and Music Histories and Professor of Music History and Cultures at Syracuse University. Her research focuses on English music and drama. She serves as General Editor for The Collected Works of John Eccles (A-R Editions). Other publications include *O Let Us Howle Some Heavy Note: Music for Witches, the Melancholic, and the Mad on the Seventeenth-Century English Stage* (Indiana UP, 2006); *Music, Dance, and Drama in Early Modern English Schools* (Cambridge UP, 2020); two editions of Restoration-era theatre music; and, with Linda Austern and Candace Bailey, an essay collection *Beyond Boundaries: Rethinking Music Circulation in Early Modern England* (Indiana UP, 2017). She was a long-term fellow at the Folger Shakespeare Library and from 2017-2020 she was the Co-Investigator with Richard Schoch on Performing Restoration Shakespeare, a practice-based research project funded by the Arts & Humanities Research Council, UK. Her most recent book, co-authored with Schoch, is *Shakespeare in the Theatre: Sir William Davenant and the Duke's Company* (Arden Shakespeare/Bloomsbury, 2021).

James Harriman-Smith: Cultivating Macklin's Garden: An Acting Lesson from the Eighteenth Century

For the last year, I have been working with theatre professionals around the UK to develop rehearsal exercises inspired by eighteenth-century acting theory and practice. This paper tells the story of one such exercise, based on an account by John O'Keeffe of one of Charles Macklin's actor training techniques, and developed in collaboration with the DJW School of Acting in Stockton-upon-Tees. Using this story, I will argue for the use of historically informed rehearsal exercises as a way of doing two things: connecting contemporary actors with the history of their craft, and disturbing current paradigms of theatrical tuition.

Biography: **James Harriman-Smith** is a senior lecturer in Restoration and eighteenth-century literature at Newcastle University, UK. He is also one of the university's public orators. His first book, *Criticism, Performance and the Passions* came out in 2021. His next, *What Would Garrick Do? Or, Acting Lessons from the Eighteenth-Century*, will be published by Bloomsbury in 2023.

Wojciech Klimczyk Embodying Psychotic Modernism: Some Notes on a Reenactment of Nijinsky's Last Performance

In my presentation I want to share some preliminary thoughts on the reenactment of Vaslav Nijinsky's last performance in 1919 that I am currently working on. The dance was not preserved in any form except for two descriptions by live witnesses and by Nijinsky himself who wrote about it in his notebooks, eventually published as *The Diary of Vaslav Nijinsky*. I consider Nijinsky's untitled dance performed in St. Moritz in Switzerland on the eve of his 'leap into madness' an example of what I call psychotic modernism - a historical phenomenon I would like to theorize in my presentation in reference to Nijinsky. In my research into the latter's *œuvre* which takes the notebooks as its focal point I have found myself more and more pressed to establish an embodied connection with my 'object' and hence the decision to reenact his final dance. Since I am neither a professional actor nor dancer but dance historian and dance dramaturg my initial approach was academic and analytical - I worked out a kinetic structure based on available evidence and planned to present the piece from a Brechtian perspective distancing myself from the historical body and its experiences. Yet on rereading the notebooks it became painfully clear that such an approach misses what Nijinsky himself was mostly concerned with - the feeling. In my presentation I would like to ponder on the possibility of reenacting a psychotic feeling and through this on the ways we as artists and researchers can approach the difficult legacy of psychotic modernism in respectful yet serious and uncompromising manner.

Biography: Sociologist by profession, currently more interested in cultural studies, **Wojciech Klimczyk** has published diverse works on the body in contemporary culture, including the following books: *Postmodern Eroticism*, *Visionaries of the Body. Panorama of contemporary dance theatre* and *The Virus of Mobilisation. Dance and the formation of modernity 1455-1795*, vol. 1-2. Together with Agata Świerzowska he has edited the anthology *Music and Genocide*. His doctoral thesis entitled *Anthropology of Contemporary Dance Theatre. Dynamics of artistic practice* was defended with honours. Outside of the university he is the initiator of The Flying Academy of Dance Languages and vocalist in Lucky Boy and Black Black Rooster as well as lyricist in projects like Andrzej Grabowski & Cedury, Starszy Pan and Jutuber.

Laila Cathleen Neuman Staging Proserpina: Attitudes, Movement and Costume in Goethe/Eberwein's Melodrama of 1815

Goethe's monodrama *Proserpina* had been set to music in 1778 by Karl Sigmund von Seckendorff, albeit with moderate success. Thirty years later, the new 1815 *Proserpina* is the result of the dramaturge's collaboration with the composer Franz Carl Eberwein. In this version, performed on February 4, 1815, at the theatre in Weimar with the actress Amalie Wolff in the title role, the author wanted to employ all the elements a modern theatre production had to offer.

With the 1815 *Proserpina* as a starting point, Laila Cathleen Neuman will speak of her research on historical acting techniques, and more particularly on attitudes and movement in the sources of Johannes Jelgerhuis, a Dutch actor and painter, who was a member of the acting company at the Amsterdam Theatre between 1806 and 1836. Jelgerhuis left multiple writings and drawings on acting and acting techniques, some of them still unpublished.

The presentation will show the steps that lead from a physical understanding of the attitudes in silence, to using the attitudes to stage the spoken text, and eventually to creating a unity between attitudes, movement, and the music. In *Proserpina*, Laila Cathleen Neuman's research and stage work meet Goethe's indications on acting. This also includes the costume as a means of expression: Proserpina's mantle and veil are not merely an elegant ornamentation, but serve a dramatic purpose. They are indicators of Proserpina's emotional state, and are in keeping with the decisions she makes.

Biography: **Laila Cathleen Neuman** is a professional singer and PhD candidate at the University of Leiden, where she focuses on the works of Johannes Jelgerhuis as a source for his- torically informed stage performance. Since 2014, she has taught historical acting techniques in Europe, and has presented her work at symposia in Stockholm (IFTR), and at New College, Oxford.

Martina Papiro The Affective and Dramaturgic Role of Stage Decorations in Metastasio's Libretti

The visual elements of an opera, especially in a courtly context, were designed carefully and consciously. Frequently, the stage decorations were prepared before the composer had even started his work. Having new and fascinating stage decorations determined the success of a production, since they were, to the audience, as attractive as the singers themselves.

In the beginnings of opera, stage decoration served to arouse the *meraviglia* of the audience by the display of dynamic, spectacular stage machinery, often presenting supernatural places – on stage, art and technology were surpassing nature. After the 1720s opera libretti ceased to deal with deities, mythological or fantastic characters acting between heaven and hell. Therefore, also the visual elements acquired new functions and were designed accordingly: stage decoration should present the sites of the plot with appropriate historical and geographical verisimilitude, but also mirror the dramatic action that would take place there, as well as the interior, emotional states of mind of the characters.

In her article 'Le didascalie sceniche del Metastasio' (1989), Mercedes Viale Ferrero analyses his directions for the stage sets and states convincingly that Metastasio was interested in the relation of actions and sentiments with the scenery, which he required 'to reflect the evolution of the dramatic plot and of the psychological interactions of the characters ... so that the scenery helps the audience to understand them & the drama' (my translation). I would exemplify this by looking at Metastasio's directions for his *Didone abbandonata* (1724) and some of his later librettos (*Demofonte*, ...).

Goal of this proposal: encourage to consider also the visual parts of historical operas as material for HIP acting. As the scenery was designed to attract the aesthetic and emotional attention of the audience & to 'pull' them deeper into the operatic drama, stage sets had an important role for the 'emotional economy' of a performance.

Biography: **Martina Papiro** studied art history, musicology and German literature in Basel, Berlin, and Florence. In 2012 she received her doctorate with a PhD dissertation on Florentine festival prints of the Seicento (*Choreographie der Herrschaft. Stefano della Bellas Radierungen zu den Reiterfesten am Florentiner Hof, 1637–1661*, published 2016). One of her research interests concerns the interaction between music and visual arts in the early modern period. She has been part of several interdisciplinary research projects: 'European Festival Culture' (Berlin, 2006–2009), 'Epistemology of Early Modern Images' (Florence, 2009–2011), and 'Bowed String Instruments c. 1500' (Basel, 2011–2015). Since 2016 she has been research fellow and staff member of the Research Department of the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis. In addition, she is active as an author, translator, radio journalist for the Swiss national radio SRF 2 Kultur, and curator.

Her research in the field of opera started with her MA-thesis about the portrait of the castrato Marc'Antonio Pasqualini (Rome, c. 1640), went on during her research projects in Berlin (focussed on the visuality of opera) and in Florence (due to the close link between festival culture and operatic spectacles), and is opening now to the 18th century with the development of an interdisciplinary, collaborative research project devoted to the stagecraft of opera singers. Inspired by Jed Wentz and the DHAC, in 2022 she has launched the 'Declamation café' together with Deda Cristina Colonna: a gathering for experimentation with declamation, offering acting exercises based on historical iconography.

João Luís Paixão The Actor's Passion as Instrument: Ideas Toward Artistic Research into 18th-Century Acting

The actor's trade, according to the majority of 18th-century accounts, was to represent human passion. Modern scholarship has established the centrality of passion for early modern dramatic performance, and numerous studies have helped map out the codes of representation specific to theatrical displays of passion. More recently, theatre historians have devoted greater attention to pre-modern actors' bodies and the processes of emotional embodiment favoured by different acting styles. Research into this technical, and often tacit, knowledge poses several obstacles, however. How can details on acting practice be guessed from technical handbooks on the passions? How can artistic research be conducted to investigate the emotions of the past, and to which extent? Drawing on Ben Spatz's notion of *technique as knowledge* and on Monique Scheer's *emotion as practice*, I will explore how the actor's passion can be seen as a discrete instrument to both investigate and perform 18th-century theatre.

Biography: João Luís Paixão is a performer and researcher specialized in historical acting and singing. Since 2014, he has acted, coached, and staged in several opera and melodrama productions in The Netherlands and abroad. He is a PhD-applicant at the University of Amsterdam, conducting artistic research on facial expression on the 18th-century stage, and he teaches at the Conservatories in The Hague and Utrecht.

Terry F. Robinson Focalizing the Passions: Garrickian Acting and Its Truth Effects

Why is it that some spectators were convinced that David Garrick's onstage expression of feeling was real and others not? This talk addresses controversies over Garrick's performative sincerity by exploring their relation to contemporary moral discourse and to a burgeoning culture of spectacle, with the aim of shedding light on what it was about his technique that made Garrick's acting compelling to some, and to others, contemptible.

Biography: Terry F. Robinson's research explores how the literature and culture of the long eighteenth century fashioned the body (socially, politically, sartorially, aesthetically) and interpreted the body's forms and expressions. She is drawn to literary and visual representations of the body; to sites of enactment such as the theatre; to the ways in which artistic, cultural, and economic shifts shaped how people perceived bodies and communicated meaning; and to the kinetic movement of bodies in space. She is editor of Mary Robinson's 1794 drama *Nobody (Romantic Circles)* and co-editor of *Transnational England: Home and Abroad, 1780-1860* (Cambridge Scholars). Her articles have appeared in *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, *Eighteenth-Century Life*, *European Romantic Review*, *Studies in Romanticism*, *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, *BRANCH*, and *Oxford Handbooks Online*, among others. Her current book project, *Reading the Acting Body in the Romantic Age: Performance and Its Truth Effects, 1750-1830* (forthcoming Oxford University Press), examines Romantic-era performance in light of eighteenth-century histrionic theory and practice. She is also currently at work on an edition of Richard Brinsley Sheridan's *The School for Scandal* for Broadview Press, and a volume of collected essays entitled *The Visual Life of Romantic Theatre* for the University of Michigan Press.

Magnus Tessing Schneider The Operatic Scream: Traetta, Gluck, Mozart

Screaming in opera was the ultimate form of vocal expression in eighteenth-century opera, as it went right to the limit of singing, or even beyond it, and the operatic scream was therefore the subject of considerable aesthetic reflection and debate.

In *Sofonisba* from 1762, Tommaso Traetta required the Mannheim soprano Dorothea Wendling to emit ‘a French howl’ in her aria in act 2, which the music theorist Pierre-Louis Ginguené in 1791 interpreted as a call for ‘the most piercing cry that the human voice can utter.’ In 1767, the Viennese critic Joseph von Sonnenfels was struck by a ‘high, incisive tone’ in the title heroine’s act 2 aria in Gluck’s *Alceste*, performed by Antonia Bernasconi, which he described as ‘the true accent of maternal feeling stretched to the utmost, in which the voice skips, as it were, and emits a jarring note that is uncomfortable to the ear, but exactly therefore wounds the heart of the spectator, leaving its sting in the wound for a long time.’ When the opera was mounted in Paris in 1776, that same tone, now sung by the celebrated Rosalie Levasseur, caused very strong reactions, dividing the audience into those moved to tears by the scream and those disgusted by its alleged unmusicality. In 1787, finally, Luigi Bassi emitted what is perhaps the most famous scream in eighteenth-century opera: the death cry of Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*, which has been anticipated by Donna Elvira’s ‘horrible scream’ and Leporello’s ‘even louder scream.’

The paper will reflect on what these screams might have sounded like, on how their effect depended on the dramatic and musical context, and finally on the role of the scream within the broader context of late Enlightenment aesthetics.

Biography: **Magnus Tessing Schneider**, PhD, is a docent and researcher in Theatre Studies, Department of Culture and Aesthetics at Stockholm University. He specializes in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century theatre; relations between dramaturgy, aesthetic theory and scenic-vocal performance practice in Shakespeare and Italian opera; the operas of Claudio Monteverdi, Francesco Cavalli, C. W. Gluck and W. A. Mozart; the librettos of Giovanni Francesco Busenello, Ranieri Calzabigi and Lorenzo Da Ponte; historical singers and interrelations of singing and acting; allegory and theatricality; theatre and the Enlightenment; and issues relating to historically informed performance practice. In addition to working as a researcher, he serves as a dramaturgical-historical consultant for opera directors, singers and conductors around the world. A cofounder of the Copenhagen-based Nordic Network of Early Opera, he has also directed three operas. He is the author of *The Original Portrayal of Mozart’s Don Giovanni* (Routledge, 2021) and has edited Felicity Baker’s *Don Giovanni’s Reasons: Thoughts on a Masterpiece* (Peter Lang, 2021) as well as (together with Ruth Tatlow) *Mozart’s La clemenza di Tito: A Reappraisal* (Stockholm University Press, 2018). His current research project, ‘Enlightenment Anthropology and Italian Opera: The Revolutionary Theatre of Ranieri Calzabigi’, is funded by the Swedish Research Council.

Tiffany Stern Walking, Seeing and Hearing Genre on the Early Modern Stage

This talk will focus on three aspects of early modern English staging that stated, or ironised, genre. One is the tragic walk, known variously as stalking, jetting and strutting, and the tragic footwear that went with it. By walking in a particular fashion an actor could convey genre through his feet. Another is the genre-specific curtains that could be, but were not always, hung along the back of the stage, making the arena ‘look’ tragic or comic. The third is on the ballads performed in productions, but sold and sung outside them. Ballad singers and sellers who performed around the theatre might, through song, supply genre and other hints before the audience even entered the playhouse.

Biography: Tiffany Stern’s work combines literary criticism, theatre and book history and editing from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. Stern is fascinated by the theatrical contexts that brought about plays by Shakespeare and others; several of my books and articles are on the theatrical documents put together by authors and theatrical personnel in the process of writing and learning a play: actors’ parts (the documents consisting of cues and speeches from which actors learned their roles), prologues, epilogues, songs, letters, arguments, backstage plots, plot scenarios and other separate stage documents. As General Editor of the New Mermaids play series, and *Arden Shakespeare 4*, she is also interested in the way plays were manifested in manuscript and print, and in how to rethink editing for the digital age. Current projects are a book on early modern theatre and popular

entertainment, *Playing Fair*, exploring the cultural exchanges between playhouses and fairgrounds, a book on *Shakespeare Beyond Performance*, looking at the theatrical documents produced in the light of a play's performance – ballads, chapbooks, commonplace books, 'noted' texts – and an edition of Shakespeare's *Tempest*.

Jed Wentz Not Performing Bispham's *The Raven*: Arthur Bergh's Melodramatic Poe, Revisited

David Bispham (1857-1921) was a celebrated American operatic singer particularly famed for his acting skills. In 1909, with the composer Arthur Bergh accompanying at the piano, he performed a melodramatic version of Poe's *The Raven* in which he *spoke* Poe's text in time to the music. He would go on to perform the highly successful piece throughout the United States. By all accounts, Bispham's energetic and pathetic acting style had an overwhelming impact on the audience, guaranteeing the work's artistic and commercial success. Indeed, the published score was supplemented with 10 photographs of Bispham in affective attitudes, associated with specific lines of text, encouraging purchasers to act out *The Raven* for themselves. This combination of images, text and musical score had the potential to create a shared physical bond, associated with a beloved poem, between audience and performer.

This paper places my own performance of Bergh's musical setting of *The Raven* in the context of the original Bispham interpretation: research carried out in the New York Public Library has revealed the singer's own score (with performative annotations), newspaper reviews and numerous photographs of the actor in the heat of the moment. Given my commitment to historical approaches to acting, and in the light of such rich documentation of the original interpretation, why did I choose *not* to reenact Bispham's premier performance?

Biography: **Jed Wentz** received his Bachelor of Music degree from Oberlin Conservatory. He received his Master degree from the Royal Conservatory in the Hague and his doctorate from Leiden University, under supervision of Rebecca Harris-Warrick (Cornell University). He has recorded more than 40 CDs with various Early Music ensembles including his own (Music ad Rhenum), has conducted staged opera performances and published in journals like *Early Music*, *Cambridge Opera Journal* and *European Drama and Performance Studies*. He is university lecturer at The Academy of Creative and Performing Arts, Leiden University, and is artistic advisor to the Utrecht Early Music Festival.

David Wiles Acting, Self and Identity: A Historical Perspective on the Problem

My broad-brush paper addresses the seventh proposition put before this conference: 'Examinations of the past are of greatest assistance when they enable us to see ourselves more clearly in the here and now.' A concern with identity is an unmistakable part of the habitus of today. Acting (*actio*) requires an actor to suggest, represent, inhabit, or by whatever means imagine herself into whatever it is that drives the actions of another. If there is no cultural consensus about the nature of personal identity, then it is impossible to develop any collective craft of acting, which in turn makes it harder to develop a long-term collaborative relationship with an audience. As Wentz's example of McKellen indicates, Method acting has lost its way in the conditions of the 21st-century, and students are faced with a smorgasbord of gurus. Selfhood has a history, which is tied to the history of acting. Through understanding how we have been produced by the past, we gain a better understanding of the creative tensions and energies around us, and will be better placed to shape the future.

Biography: **David Wiles** is Emeritus Professor of Drama at the University of Exeter. Increasingly nomadic in his academic interests, he addressed the historical art of the Actor in his books on the Elizabethan clown (1987), on the Greek theatre mask (1991, 2007), and in his study of western performance space (2003). An investigation of historical acting on the stage of Drottningholm (2014) triggered his most recent monograph, *The Players' Advice to Hamlet* (2020), which argued that the art of rhetoric informed the ever-changing craft of the professional player from the Renaissance through to the 19th century.

