

## 2022 Salzburg Easter School – MA- and PhD-Forum

In the context of the 2022 Salzburg Easter Festival  
4-8 April 2022, Salzburg University

### Romantic Fairy Tales into Opera



TOP/MIDDLE (L-R): Sabine Coelsch-Foisner, Mathis Neidhardt, Jens-Daniel Herzog, Sibylle Gädeke © Brigitte Haid / Bauprobe *Lohengrin* © Osterfestspiele Salzburg / Unipark Nonntal © Luigi Caputo |  
BOTTOM (L-R): Philipp Stölzl, Paolo Bressan © Brigitte Haid / PhD students of the inaugural Salzburg Easter School in 2014

*Lohengrin*, Richard Wagner's Romantic opera in three acts to his own libretto (première, under Franz Liszt's direction, on 28 August 1850 at the Großherzogliches Hoftheater in Weimar) is a prime example of the transmedial transformation of Romantic myths into opera. Set in a semi-factual historical past in the Antwerp of King Henry the Fowler in the first half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, and incorporating mythical elements of the legend of the Holy Grail, it is based on *Lohengrin*, a Middle High German epic poem of unknown authorship (c.1280-90), as well as on Wolfram von Eschenbach's poems *Parzival* (c.1205) and his incomplete epic *Titurel* (c.1210-1220). Lohengrin, Knight of the Holy Grail, is the son of Parsifal and becomes the Swan Knight and eponymous hero of Wagner's masterpiece. Summoned from the Temple of the Grail at Montsalvatsch, Lohengrin comes to the rescue of the harried Elsa, Princess of Brabant, to deliver her from a forced marriage and defend her against her political rivals, Friedrich von Telramund, the count of Brabant, and his wife, the sorceress Ortrud. Lohengrin is to marry Elsa, with the stipulation that she does not enquire neither his name nor his origin; but when she subsequently infringes on this warning, he is forever, and fatally, lost to her.

From Lohengrin's own concealed identity, appearing out of nowhere in a vessel hauled by a swan, to the marvellous transmogrification of Duke Gottfried, Elsa's brother, first into a swan and then back into his human form, *metamorphosis* is a key concept in understanding the myth of *Lohengrin* – which may be said to enact the Pythagorean dictum that, though all things may change, nothing is ever lost. This is also true from a structuralist perspective as the opera underscores the dynamics of the transmedialisation and reception of myths and fairy tales into opera in the Romantic era. The top-level production of Wagner's opera at the renowned Salzburg Easter Festival in 2022, conducted by Christian Thielemann, is therefore an excellent occasion to further query the treatment, recasting and transfiguration of (Romantic) myths and fairy tales in the arts and in literature. To this end, we invite oral presentations and poster contributions investigating from various approaches:

- the features and properties of the Romantic;
- the transmedial processes of recasting myths, legends and fairy tales in (Romantic) literature and art;
- Romantic uses and functions of metamorphosis (primarily of, but not restricted to, characters) in connection with myths and fairy tales;

- the ways in which jeopardized female characters as a (stereo)type represent fixed cultural notions of femininity;
- the extent to which body transformations in myths and legends subvert or reinforce gender norms, specifically in their conception of (what) 'women' and 'men' (ought to be).

Exclusive cultural fringe, unique artist encounters, and workshops in festival management and leadership guarantee all SEAS participants a unique opportunity to explore and apply the connections between theory and artistic practice to their research.

The participation fee of 250 EUR includes coffee, lunch breaks and cultural fringe.

If you would like to contribute an oral presentation or a poster to the SEAS 2022, please send us your abstract (500 words) **by 15 January 2022**, as well as your motivation and short biography (together 500 words) to Univ.-Prof. Dr. S. Coelsch-Foisner at [ATELIER\\_GESPRAECH@plus.ac.at](mailto:ATELIER_GESPRAECH@plus.ac.at). Successful candidates will be notified by February 2022.

In the event of Covid-19 related restrictions, SEAS 2022 will provide for digital participation and offer workshops and lectures online.