

Scaramouche

Sibelius's horror story

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Scaramouche. Ballet in 3 scenes; libr. Paul [!] Knudsen; mus. Sibelius; ch. Emilie Walbom. Prod. 12 May 1922, Royal Dan. B., Copenhagen. The b. tells of a demonic fiddler who seduces an aristocratic lady; afterwards she sees no alternative to killing him, but she is so haunted by his melody that she dances herself to death. Sibelius composed this, his only b. score, in 1913. Later versions by Lemanis in Riga (1936), R. Hightower for de Cuevas B. (1951), and Irja Koskkinen [!] in Helsinki (1955).

This is the description of Sibelius's *Scaramouche*, Op. 71, in The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Ballet. Initially, however, Sibelius's *Scaramouche* was not a ballet but a pantomime. It was completed in 1913, to a Danish text of the same name by Poul Knudsen, with the subtitle 'Tragic Pantomime'. The title of the work refers to Italian theatre, to the *commedia dell'arte* Scaramuccia character. Although the title of the work is *Scaramouche*, its main character is the female dancing role Blondelaine.

After *Scaramouche* was completed, it was then more or less forgotten until it was published five years later, whereupon plans for a performance were constantly being made until it was eventually premièred in 1922. Performances of *Scaramouche* have

attracted little attention, and also Sibelius's music has remained unknown. It did not become more widely known until the 1990s, when the first full-length recording of this remarkable composition – lasting more than an hour – appeared.

Previous research

There is very little previous research on Sibelius's *Scaramouche*. Early Sibelius writers devote just a few sentences to the work and claim, essentially, that Sibelius would not have been interested in this composition.

In 1931, Cecil Gray wrote: 'The music to *Scaramouche*, a tragic pantomime by Poul Knudsen, is also in fantastic vein. The scenario, based upon the hackneyed theme of the sinister stranger who lures away a wife from her husband, is unfortunately weak. In consequence, probably, the composer does not seem to be interested in his task as he certainly seems to be in *Swanwhite*. With all its technical brilliance and mastery one feels something rather mechanical and uninspired about it.'¹ Almost thirty years later, in 1959, Harold E. Johnson wrote: 'One suspects that he found it difficult to work up any real enthusiasm for his task. It is, however, competently written, and it follows the stage action closely.'²

The Sibelius biographer Erik Tawaststjerna investigated the origins of the work by means of diary entries and correspondence, but did not provide any analysis of the composition. Erkki Salmenhaara described the work to some extent in his Sibelius book. More broadly, *Scaramouche* was discussed by Andrew Barnett in connection with the world première recording in 1990;³ he also wrote about the relationship between Poul Knudsen's text and Sibelius's music, so in this article I will only look at the work in general terms. Barnett also examined *Scaramouche* in his Sibelius book published in 2007.⁴ Barnett's sleeve notes have been the source for other scholars, such as Marc Vignal and Jean-Luc Caron.⁵ In her 2017 thesis *Nordic Incidental Music*, Leah Broad deals with *Scaramouche* as part of her research perspective, but not the work in its entirety, and among *Scaramouche* performances, she focuses on one in Stockholm in 1924.⁶

Although *Scaramouche* was completed in 1913, it was then forgotten until it was performed nine years later.⁷ It was published five years after having been completed,

¹ Gray 1931, p. 97

² Johnson 1959, p. 153

³ Barnett 1990

⁴ Barnett 2007, pp. 236–37

⁵ Caron 1997, pp. 205–07; Vignal 2004, pp. 625–27

⁶ Broad 2017

⁷ cf. Sibelius.fi/Scaramouche

whereupon plans for a performance were constantly being made until it was eventually premièred in 1922 (see below). Projected venues were not only Royal Theatre in Copenhagen but also three Finnish theatres: the Swedish Theatre in Helsinki, the Finnish National Theatre and the Finnish Opera (Finnish National Opera). After the première in Copenhagen, the work was heard in no fewer than three other Nordic capitals within two years: Helsinki, Oslo and Stockholm. Karen Vedel, who has studied these performances, has shown in her article *Scaramouche 1922–1924: Ballet pantomime in four Nordic Capitals* (2014) that in real terms there were only two productions of *Scaramouche*, those in Copenhagen and Helsinki, as the Copenhagen version was also exported to Oslo and Stockholm.

Concerning theatre research, it is interesting that the Austrian researcher Heinz Kindermann mentions *Scaramouche* in Part IX of his ten-book series *Theatergeschichte Europas (The History of Theatre in Europe; 1970)*.⁸

Scaramouche is related to the *commedia dell'arte* tradition, but among earlier writers only Barnett and then Vignal have pointed out this connection.⁹ More recently Karen Vedel has also mentioned this link.¹⁰ In his article *Neo-classical Opera* from 2005, Chris Walton mentions *Scaramouche* while discussing works associated with the *commedia dell'arte* (Ferruccio Busoni's opera *Arlecchino* and Ernst von Dohnányi's music for Schnitzler's pantomime *Der Schleier der Pierrette*): 'Another, roughly contemporaneous, "pantomime" using a character from the *commedia dell'arte* was Sibelius's *Scaramouche*... again, its approach is far removed from Busoni's, and it was in any case not performed until 1922.'¹¹

In this article I shall first examine two related themes: the *commedia dell'arte* as a well-known theatrical form, and pantomime.

Scaramouche and the commedia dell'arte

The *commedia dell'arte* originated in Italy, from where it spread throughout Europe. Touring theatre companies performed it in public places such as markets. The heyday of this theatrical form ran from the early 16th century to the middle of the 18th century. Characteristics of the genre are the fixed characters of the actors and similar

⁸ In his discussion of Danish theatre, he mentions *Scaramouche*'s Copenhagen première in words and pictures. In the Finnish theatre section he includes an image and caption of the Helsinki performance, and also points out that *Scaramouche* was in the programme of the Finnish National Ballet. (Kindermann 1970, pp. 608–09; 684; 686). In this series of books he was assisted by local theatre historians. Including *Scaramouche* as part of the essential history of Danish and Finnish theatre testifies to Sibelius's standing in the 1960s, when the material was collected for Kindermann's books.

⁹ Barnett 1990; Vignal 2004, p. 626

¹⁰ Vedel 2014

¹¹ Walton 2005, p. 108

outlines for the plots and scenes, on the basis of which the actors improvised their performances. The characters were easily recognizable, wearing masks over their faces and costumes associated with the character in question. The cast consisted of a number of contrasts: rich / poor, old / young, master / servant. The characters were divided into three main groups: servants (*i zanni*), old people (*i vecchi*), and lovers (*gl'innamorati*).



**Costume designs for grotesques and commedia dell'arte characters (1680)
by Lodovico Ottavio Burnacini (1636–1707)**

Among the male servants were Arlecchino (Harlequin), Brighella and Pulcinella. Pulcinella was humpbacked. The Pulcinella character was the role model for the Kasper puppet in Germany and Punch (Punchinello) in England. Pedrolino is a servant of the type that formed the model for the French character Pierrot. Female servants included both young women (such as Colombina) and old ones (such as La Ruffiana). There were various different names for young female and male lovers. Elderly characters include Pantalone (rich but senile), Il Dottore (a wise man) and Il Capitano (an army captain who boasts of his exploits). Scaramuccia (Scaramouche) is a variation of Il Capitano.

Scaramuccia was made famous by the actor Tiberio Fiorilli (1608–94). 'He transformed the military role (Il Capitano) to that of a comic servant, usually an indigent gentleman's valet. Scaramuccia is an unscrupulous and unreliable servant.

His affinity for intrigue often landed him in difficult situations, yet he managed to extricate himself, usually leaving an innocent bystander as his victim.’¹²



Tiberio Fiorilli as Scaramouche

(frontispiece from Angelo Constantini's *La Vie de Scaramouche*, publ. 1695. Public domain)

In a break with tradition, Fiorilli performed without a mask. The essence of the character came from his own appearance: a large nose, a big moustache and whiskers. He wore black trousers, a jacket and a beret. In old drawings and paintings, the Scaramouche character is often depicted with a musical instrument – a guitar or violin.¹³ Italian theatre companies took the *commedia dell'arte* to France and Scaramouche-Fiorilli acted with Molière. Molière worked with the composer Jean-Baptiste Lully and, for example, his play *Le bourgeois gentilhomme* (1670) includes a 'Chaconne de Scaramouche' written by Lully.

The *commedia dell'arte* was closely associated with dance, and the actors were multi-talented: actors, dancers, singers and acrobats. There is also a special dance step from this period called the 'Pas de Scaramouche', which was used by Tiberio Fiorilli and his successors. The *commedia dell'arte* dancer Barry Grantham describes this step as follows: 'The performer slides into a forward split and pulls up onto the

¹² Encyclopaedia Britannica/Scaramouche

¹³ Knapper 1998, pp. 106–08

front leg. By repeating this on alternate legs he is able to cross the stage in a few moves. It requires considerable strength and is more for the acrobat than the dancer.’¹⁴

Ballet-pantomimes and *Scaramouche* at the beginning of the 20th century

Pantomime is based on the gestures, expressions and movements of its performers and has a connection to the *commedia dell’arte*. In ballet-pantomime, developed at the Paris Opera in the mid-19th century, the pantomime includes dance as well. Pantomime and ballet-pantomime were popular in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Commedia dell’arte characters made the transition to ballet-pantomime, and in Paris a ballet-pantomime named *Scaramouche* was performed at the Nouveau Théâtre in 1891, written by the Belgian Maurice Lefèvre with music composed by André Messager (1853–1929). Messager’s ballet-pantomime includes a scene entitled ‘Scène d’hypnotisme de Scaramouche’. This was revived as a ballet at the Grand Opéra in Avignon on 1 December 2019.



¹⁴ Grantham 2017, p. 282

In France, Paul Verlaine had already shown an interest in *commedia dell'arte* characters. His collection of poems *Fêtes galantes* (1869), contains several poems on the themes of *commedia dell'arte* characters and pantomime. These poems inspired music by Claude Debussy from the 1880s onwards (including *Pantomime* and *Fantoches*, featuring Scaramouche and Pulcinella).

In 1888 the pantomime *Scaramouche in Naxos* by the Scottish poet John Davidson (1857–1909) was published, in which Scaramouche is the impresario 'A Showman'.¹⁵ This is probably connected with Hugo von Hofmannsthal's libretto for Richard Strauss's opera *Ariadne auf Naxos* (1912–16).¹⁶

In his study *Carnival, Comedy and the Commedia. A Case Study of the Mask of Scaramouche* (1998), Stephen P. J. Knapper has explored the background and history of the Scaramouche character before the time of Fiorilli, the character as created by Fiorilli, and later appearances of the Scaramouche character. In this context, he also briefly mentions Sibelius's *Scaramouche*: 'Wicked too [like in André Messager's ballet-pantomime] is the Scaramouche of a pantomime ballet performed in Copenhagen in 1922, with a score completed by Sibelius in December 1913. Scaramouche is here in his most grotesque incarnation, a black-robed, hunchbacked dwarf viola player whose music drives a noblewoman so wild that she kills him and then dances herself to death.'¹⁷

The *commedia dell'arte* interested artists of various disciplines in the early 20th century, such as Picasso in the visual arts and Schoenberg in music (*Pierrot lunaire*, 1912). These characters are also featured in Schumann's piano work *Carneval*, an orchestrated version of which was performed in Paris in 1910 by Sergei Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, who went on in the next few years to present Stravinsky's *commedia dell'arte* ballets *Petrushka* (1911) and *Pulcinella* (1920). J. Douglas Clayton, who has studied the Russian *commedia dell'arte* tradition, describes *Petrushka* as belonging to the 'Russified Pierrotic tradition'.¹⁸

The *commedia dell'arte* is also linked to neo-classicism in music, as is shown for example by Ferruccio Busoni's operas *Arlecchino* and *Turandot*, which were premièred in Zürich in 1917. The figure of Scaramouche also appears in 20th-century works associated with the *commedia dell'arte*, for example Richard Strauss's opera *Ariadne auf Naxos* and in the ballet *Les Millions d'Arlequin* (music: Riccardo Drigo, 1900) with choreography by Marius Petipa.

¹⁵ Davidson 1888

¹⁶ Hofmannsthal 1985 (SW XXIV), p. 246

¹⁷ Knapper 1998, p. 181

¹⁸ Clayton 2017 p. 365

Scaramouche films and other Scaramouches

The *commedia dell'arte* also found its way into a new art form: film. In 1913, the film *Das Schwarze Los*, written by Sibelius's friend Adolf Paul, was completed in Germany; it also appeared under the title *Pierrots letzte Abenteuer* (*Pierrot's Last Adventure*). In 1923, the popular silent film *Scaramouche* (Metro Pictures) was completed in the USA. It is based on Rafael Sabatini's historical novel *Scaramouche*, published two years earlier, which tells the story of a young lawyer during the French Revolution. One of his adventures is to join a travelling *commedia dell'arte* company, playing the character of Scaramouche. The film was a success, and in 1924 it was shown in Finland too. The film critic of *Hufvudstadsbladet* warned: '[It] should not be confused with the love story for which Sibelius composed music.'¹⁹ Sabatini's novel was filmed again in 1952 (Metro-Goldwyn Mayer).

Darius Milhaud (1892–1974) composed a suite for two pianos named *Scaramouche*, which he later arranged for saxophone (or clarinet) and orchestra. The music had originally been composed for Molière's play *Le médecin volant* (*The Flying Doctor*), which was performed in 1937 in Paris at the Théâtre Scaramouche, a theatre that concentrated on performances for children, and the name of Milhaud's composition comes from there. In 2005 the ballet dancer José Carlos Martínez (b. 1969) devised choreography for this music for the École de Danse de l'Opéra National de Paris: the title was *Scaramouche*, and it also included ballet music by Tchaikovsky, Minkus and others.

The character of Scaramouche has also found his way into Punch and Judy performances and is featured in popular culture, such as the lyrics of the British group Queen's song *Bohemian Rhapsody* (Freddie Mercury, 1975). This incarnation of Scaramouche is probably the one that is best-known today, as people who have heard this song can be counted in billions.²⁰

The popularity of pantomime and ballet-pantomime

The popularity of pantomime and ballet-pantomime is linked to modernist thinking at the turn of the 19/20th centuries as a means of bodily expression. In his book *Body ascendant. Modernism and the Physical Imperative* Harold B. Segel has explored the appearance of dance and physical expression on stage in this period. In this context, he deals separately with works in which these are found, such as pantomimes.²¹

¹⁹ '...bör inte förväxlas med den kärlekssaga till vilken Sibelius komponerat musik'. *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 15 September 1924, 'Scaramouche. En Rex Ingram-film på Kinopalats'.

²⁰ Wikipedia/Bohemian Rhapsody, quoting *The Guardian*

²¹ Segel 1998, Chapter: Modernist Pantomime and the Retreat from Speech in the Drama

Another researcher, Hartmut Vollmer, examines pantomime with particular reference to German literature in his study *Die literarische Pantomime. Studien zu einer Literaturgattung der Moderne* (2011). Both researchers discuss works such as Arthur Schnitzler's *Der Schleier der Pierrette*, but neither mentions Knudsen's *Scaramouche*.

The Austrian writers Hugo von Hofmannsthal (*Die Grüne Flöte* [*The Green Flute*]), Richard Beer-Hofmann (*Pierrot Hypnotiseur*) and Arthur Schnitzler (*Der Schleier der Pierrette*) all wrote texts for pantomime and ballet-pantomime. As is already shown by the work titles, the latter two have links with *commedia dell'arte*. As with Messager's ballet-pantomime, Beer-Hofmann's text includes references to hypnotism, reflecting the turn-of-the-century fascination with this subject.²²

Hugo von Hofmannsthal's famous prose work *Ein Brief* (*The Letter of Lord Chandos*) from 1902 expressed his dissatisfaction with verbal expression and an interest in the non-verbal sort.²³ In 1911, the article *Über die Pantomime* (*On Pantomime*) was published, written by Hofmannsthal while he was collaborating with the famous dancer Grete Wiesenthal.²⁴ Both of these are central texts concerning pantomime in the early twentieth century. With his interest in pantomime and dance, Hofmannsthal also collaborated with Sergei Diaghilev's Ballets Russes. In May 1914, *Josephslegende* (*The Legend of Joseph*), based on a libretto by Hofmannsthal and Harry Graf Kessler, was premièred in Paris. The music was by Richard Strauss, who also conducted the first performance. The next month the Ballets Russes performed it in London, where Strauss again conducted the music at the first night.²⁵

Max Reinhardt (1873–1943), an Austrian director and theatre manager working in Berlin, was also interested in pantomime. The pantomimes he directed gained great popularity and were also performed in London, Paris and New York, such as the Oriental-themed *Sumurûn* (Friedrich Freksa / Victor Holländer, 1910) and the religious mystery play *Das Mirakel* (*The Miracle*; Karl Vollmoeller / Engelbert Humperdinck, 1911), the latter of which was premièred in London and performed hundreds of times on tour in the United States.²⁶

As a result of the popularity of these pantomimes, Reinhardt wanted to establish a dance and ballet department in his theatre. He collaborated with dancers such as Grete Wiesenthal. It was probably the acclaim found by his own pantomimes, in

²² Vollmer 2011

²³ Hofmannsthal 1991 (SW XXXI), pp. 45–55; Segel 1998, pp. 32–33

²⁴ Hofmannsthal 2011 (SW XXXIV), pp. 13–16; Segel 1998, pp. 42–44

²⁵ Hofmannsthal 2006 (SW XXVII), pp. 392–404

²⁶ The performances are catalogued in Huesmann 1983.

conjunction with the success of Sergei Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, that boosted Reinhardt's interest in dance.²⁷

In Oslo in 1915 Reinhardt had seen the 16-year-old Norwegian dancer Lillebil Christensen (1899–1989) 'twirling',²⁸ and secured her services in his theatre company.²⁹

Sibelius, dance and pantomime

Overall, the dance genre was relatively insignificant in Finland in the early 20th century, with regard both to ballet and to modern so-called 'free dance'. On his numerous trips abroad, Sibelius followed what was happening in the arts, including dance. The famous American pioneer of free dance Isadora Duncan (1877–1927) visited Helsinki in 1908, but Sibelius was already familiar with her work, having seen her in Berlin 1905, from where he wrote to his wife Aino: 'Tonight, soon, I'm going to see Isadora Duncan, the dancer. [Adolf] Paul says it's just humbug. Now we'll see.'³⁰

Before *Scaramouche*, Sibelius had composed a large amount of stage music that included both pantomime and dancing, as specified by the playwrights of the time. The best-known of the dances is from the music to Arvid Järnefelt's play *Kuolema* (*Death*; 1903), from the pantomime and dance scene of which he extracted *Valse triste*. The two pieces he added for a revised version of the play were also composed for pantomime and dance scenes: *Valse romantique* and *Canzonetta* (1911). The incidental music to Hjalmar Procopé's *Belshazzar's Feast* (1906) features Khadra's dances of life and death. August Strindberg's *Swanwhite* is rich in pantomime scenes for which Sibelius composed several musical numbers (1908). The music for Mikael Lybeck's *The Lizard* (*Ödlan*; 1909) and Wedding March from Adolf Paul's *Language of the Birds* (1911) also fall into this category.

In the spring of 1909, Sibelius received a request from the famous Canadian dancer Maud Allan (1873–1956) to compose music for *The Sacrifice*, an Egyptian-themed

²⁷ In addition to performing in Paris, the Ballets Russes appeared especially in London. After its début in Paris in 1909, the company performed in Berlin the very next year, and toured in Germany in 1912 and 1914, including appearances in Berlin. (See Buckle 1979, pp. 167–69; 214–15; 272)

²⁸ Ibsen 1961, p. 55

²⁹ Lillebil Christensen moved to Berlin with her mother Gyda Christensen, a dancer-choreographer who selected dancers from Norway for Reinhardt's theatre company. Lillebil had been taught by her mother and also at the Danish Royal Ballet School (Hans Beck, Emilie Walbom) and from Mikhail Fokine, who had done the choreography for Ballets Russes projects. Lillebil Christensen danced in a number of Reinhardt's productions, and ballet-pantomimes were written especially for her.

³⁰ Letter from Jean Sibelius to Aino Sibelius, 8 January 1905: 'Illalla s.o. kohta, lähden katsomaan Isadora Duncania, tuota tanssijatarta. [Adolf] Paul väittää että se on vaan humbugia. Saa nyt nähdä.' (Talas 2007, p. 5). About Duncan's visit to Helsinki, see Suhonen 1999

ballet-pantomime she had written, which would be performed at the Palace Theatre in London. According to Erik Tawaststjerna, it may have been Ferruccio Busoni who suggested that Allan should contact Sibelius, as she had been Busoni's piano pupil in Weimar and Berlin.³¹

Sibelius wrote to Aino from Berlin on 9 April 1909: 'The scenario is very appealing to me, as it is a pantomime with music, my genre (not opera!).'³² Interestingly, he seems to suggest that pantomime is his own genre on the basis of his earlier theatre music, although he had not composed music for a complete pantomime before. Nonetheless, Sibelius did not accept the offer, even though it was financially attractive. He wrote to Aino a couple of weeks later: 'I shan't go to England and nor shall I compose this dance score because I don't want to take on any Oriental things now. And nowadays I only do what I have inspiration for.'³³

At this point Sibelius professes not to be interested in Oriental subject matter, although he had composed music for *Belshazzar's Feast* a few years earlier (1906). The decision not to participate is also notable in view of the enormous box-office success scored the following year by the Oriental pantomime *Surumûn*, directed by Max Reinhardt.

Sibelius had apparently agreed to compose a ballet-pantomime, however, as Maud Allan approached him again in the autumn, reminding him of his promise. They continued to correspond on this subject until the end of 1909, but in the end Sibelius refused.³⁴ Maud Allan was clearly interested in Sibelius's music, as she danced to the accompaniment of Sibelius's tone poem *The Dryad* in London in 1911.³⁵

Although Sibelius had written to Aino that he was not interested in composing anything Oriental, he nonetheless wrote a Wedding March for Adolf Paul's Old Testament Oriental play *The Language of the Birds* just two years later, in 1911.

³¹ Tawaststjerna 1989a, p. 157

³² 'Scenariet är mycket tilltalande för mig det är nämligen just pantomim med musik, min genre (icke opera!!)' (Talas 2007, p. 135)

³³ Letter from Sibelius to Aino, 21 April 1909: 'Till England går jag ej icke heller kommer jag att komponera till dansen ity att jag ej ids med det orientaliska nu. Och jag gör numera hvad jag har inspiration till.' (Talas 2007, p. 142)

³⁴ *The Sacrifice* was renamed *Isis* when Maud Allan offered it to Claude Debussy in 1910. The title changed again to *Khamma*, and the work was completed in 1913. Owing to disagreements between Maud Allan and Debussy, the work's performance was delayed. The music was first heard in concert in 1924 and the ballet-pantomime *Khamma* did not receive its theatre première until 1947 (Orledge 1982, pp. 128–48, 139). Debussy studies do not make it clear that Maud Allan first offered the ballet-pantomime to Sibelius. (Orledge 1982; Lockspeiser 1978 [1965], Walsh 2018). As a result, researchers have been unable to date with accuracy the origins of this ballet-pantomime text before it ended up in Debussy's hands.

³⁵ Diary 26 December 1909, Sibelius 2005 p. 38; p. 351 ref. 26; Bullock 2011, p. 103–04, ref. 2

Knudsen and the ‘accidental’ ballet-pantomime

Sibelius and Knudsen did not know each other before the *Scaramouche* project. The collaboration began, according to Knudsen, ‘by chance’, as becomes clear from the answer he gave in a press interview: ‘How did you come into contact with Sibelius?’ – ‘By chance. A friend of mine read the manuscript of a pantomime and said that no one but Sibelius could write music for it. Through Wilhelm Hansen’s music publishing company, negotiations started with Sibelius...’³⁶

The Dane Poul Knudsen (1889–1974) made his début as an author with the ‘tragic pantomime’ *Scaramouche*, written in 1911–12. It was published in 1914 in libretto form, but not in its entirety until 1922. According to Knudsen, his only two sources for *Scaramouche* were historical works about the theatre: the Danish writer Karl Mantzius’s *Skuespilkunstens historie* and the Italian Luigi Riccoboni’s *Histoire du Théâtre Italien* (1731). From these, he had taken the title role of Scaramouche; and he claimed that the text described a scene between Scaramouche and Pierrette.³⁷ In Knudsen’s text the traditional Pierrette character is renamed Blondelaine. In addition, the cast includes other stereotypes from the *commedia dell’arte*, such as Mezzetin, a variation on the servant character Brighella.

Knudsen’s life and works have received little attention. After his literary début, he worked as a writer, playwright, translator and, after completing a law degree, as a civil servant. His production also includes film screenplays, and he later collaborated with three other Finnish composers: Leevi Madetoja on the ballet-pantomime *Okon fuoko* (1927), Väinö Raitio on the ballet *Vesipatsas* (1930) and Tauno Pykkänen on the opera *Ikaros* (1960). Knudsen also wrote texts for Austrian composer Emil von Reznicek (1860–1945), who worked in Germany: librettos for the operas *Spiel oder Ernst* (1930), *Der Gondoliere des Dogen* (1931) and *Das Opfer* (1932). In 1935 Sibelius and Emil von Reznicek were both recipients of the Goethe Medal (Goethe-Medaille für Kunst und Wissenschaft) and of the City of Hamburg’s Johannes Brahms Medal. These were not awarded to Jews or to those who were openly negative towards the Nazi régime. During World War II, Knudsen worked at the Danish Consulate in Hamburg.

The origins of Sibelius’s work have previously been discussed by Erik Tawaststjerna and by Fabian Dahlström in his explanatory comments to the published edition of Sibelius’s diary. Here I examine the origins of the work with reference to the diary, correspondence and newspaper articles.

³⁶ *Turun Sanomat*, 30 January 1914. *Sibelius pantomiimin säveltäjänä*, quoting *Politiken*

³⁷ *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 30 January 1914, *Scaramouche, en pantomimin af Jean Sibelius*, quoting *Politiken*

Wilhelm Hansen had previously written to Sibelius a few times concerning other matters.³⁸ The letter concerning the *Scaramouche* commission, however, has not survived. In September 1912, Sibelius wrote in his diary: 'Received a request to compose music for Poul Knudsen's text'.³⁹ During the following days he made further diary entries concerning work on *Scaramouche*.⁴⁰ The fact that he started work straight away suggests that Sibelius had received either a synopsis or a version of Knudsen's libretto manuscript with the letter from Hansen. The diary entry does not mention the nature or scope of the commission – aspects that would later cause problems.

In late September Sibelius travelled to the Birmingham Music Festival in England, at the invitation of Granville Bantock, to conduct his Fourth Symphony.

In the wake of the *Scaramouche* commission, Hansen had undertaken to organize a concert for Sibelius in Copenhagen. In October, Hansen wrote two letters to him the same day, one about the programme for this concert and the other about *Scaramouche*, which he referred to as a 'ballet-pantomime'. This letter mentions the fee for the theatre performances suggested by Michael Trepka Bloch (1873–1938), a theatre agent and lawyer based in Copenhagen. At the same time Hansen declared that he was ready to publish the music. We can therefore surmise that at this stage Hansen acted only as an intermediary with Sibelius.⁴¹ Trepka Bloch was probably the 'friend' mentioned by Knudsen who acted as a middleman between him and Hansen. As a result Trepka Bloch, whose name first appeared in this context in Harold Johnson's Sibelius book in 1959, is often incorrectly listed in Sibelius literature as the co-author of the work.⁴²

There followed an exchange of letters in which Hansen acted on Sibelius's behalf and Trepka Bloch spoke for Knudsen. Communication between Sibelius and Knudsen took place through these middlemen, which made it more difficult to convey even simple information: Sibelius first wrote to Hansen, Hansen passed the information to Trepka Bloch and Trepka Bloch delivered it to Knudsen. Knudsen's messages to Sibelius followed the same route in the opposite direction. This caused a variety of problems; for example, Sibelius did not receive clear instructions at the outset and did not have direct discussions with the librettist Knudsen. This was especially problematic because Knudsen revised his text several times.

³⁸ Letters from Wilhelm Hansen to Jean Sibelius are dated 28 May 1900, 16 June 1900 and 17 December 1910. Archive of the Sibelius Family. Box 45. National Archives. Hereafter: Hansen's Letters to Sibelius, Ref. SPA 45

³⁹ Diary, 11 September 1912: 'Erhållet anbud att komponera till Poul Knudsen's text', Sibelius 2005, p. 152

⁴⁰ Diary, 12 & 14 September 1912, Sibelius 2005, p. 152

⁴¹ Letter from Hansen to Sibelius, 23 October 1912. SPA 45. See also Sibelius 2005, p. 403, ref. 200, quoting this letter.

⁴² Johnson 1959, p. 152. Knudsen's printed text and Sibelius's printed score do not include Trepka Bloch's name. Neither his nor Knudsen's names are mentioned in the contract that Sibelius signed with Hansen for *Scaramouche* (29 January 1913).

In November Sibelius began planning an opera based on Juhani Aho's novel *Juha*, with a libretto by Aino Ackté. He also toyed with another opera project, based on Adolf Paul's play *Blauer Dunst* (*Sheer Invention*). Neither of these came to fruition.⁴³

In November/December, Sibelius was in Copenhagen, where he met not only Hansen but also Knudsen and Trepka Bloch. He conducted the Fourth Symphony and other works, receiving negative reviews. Tawaststjerna states that the pile of reviews that awaited him when he returned home 'ruined' his birthday. Sibelius wrote in his diary: '47 years old today! – All hell let loose in the Copenhagen papers. I was denounced infernally. I can no longer keep my spirits up.'⁴⁴ In a letter that arrived after Sibelius's birthday, Hansen suggested splitting the revenue three ways: Trepka Bloch, Sibelius and the publishing house would each receive a third, as was verbally agreed.⁴⁵ According to this, Knudsen would receive nothing directly, though we may assume that he would have been remunerated by Trepka Bloch. Sibelius wrote in his diary: 'Wilhelm Hansen wrote with the publisher's proposal. You have to respond and out on the pressure (!) if it is to be successful now.'⁴⁶

The same day, he responded to Hansen's proposal, whereupon Hansen proposed half the fee immediately and half upon delivery of the work.⁴⁷ Sibelius signed the publishing contract in late January 1913. After receiving the contract Hansen commented that he expected to receive the manuscript in April. There is nothing in the text of the contract that specifies the scope of the work or when it should be completed. Nor is there any mention of the author of the text. Apart from defining the rights to the work, remuneration and so on, the contract merely states that the commission is music for the ballet-pantomime [!] *Scaramouche*.⁴⁸

⁴³ Later, both Aarre Merikanto and Leevi Madetoja composed operas based on *Juha*. Paul's play *Blauer Dunst*, interestingly, is based on a *commedia dell'arte* storyline. In Paul's text, a mother wants her daughter to marry an old rich man, even though the daughter loves a young and poor poet (Paul 1909). This comedy is set in Spain, like Rossini's opera *The Barber of Seville*, which is based on a similar *commedia dell'arte* plot.

⁴⁴ Diary, 8 December 1912: 'I dag 47 år! – Djäflarna framme i Köpenhamns tidningar. Nedsäld på ett infernaliskt sätt. Jag vill ej mera kunna hålla humöret uppe'; Tawaststjerna 1989a, p. 310, Sibelius 2005, p. 158

⁴⁵ Letter from Hansen to Sibelius, 11 December 1912, SPA 45; see also Sibelius 2005, p. 403, ref. 200

⁴⁶ 'Wilhelm Hansen skrivit med förlags-förslag. Måste besvara och strängera (!) om det nu lyckas' (Diary, 17 December 1912, Sibelius 2005, p. 160)

⁴⁷ Sibelius 2005 p. 408, note 249, quoting letters from Sibelius to Hansen, 17 December 1912; Hansen to Sibelius, 31 December 1912, SPA 45

⁴⁸ 'Musiken til Ballet-Pantominen [sic!] "*Scaramouche*"'; contract dated 29 January 1913, SPA 45. Hansen sent the contract to Sibelius on 23 January 1913 and Sibelius signed it on 29th of that month. In a letter dated 3 February 1913 confirmed receipt of the signed contract; this was the letter in which he mentioned an April delivery of the score (SPA 45).

New text with spoken lines and *Der Schleier der Pierrette*

Before signing the contract, Sibelius had received a new libretto at the turn of the year 1912–13, including dialogue. He was disturbed by the idea that the spoken words could potentially ruin the pantomime, and he gave his reaction in a letter to Hansen.⁴⁹

Knudsen, via Bloch and Hansen, stated that *Scaramouche* is purely a pantomime, and that the dialogue in the text, as in *Der Schleier der Pierrette* (*The Veil of Pierrette*) by the Austrian author Arthur Schnitzler (1862–1931), was only intended to serve as a guide for the actors, so that they could more effectively bring out the expressions and movements required.⁵⁰ *Der Schleier der Pierrette*, published in 1910, does indeed contain dialogue, but it is specified that the words are there only to assist the actors: 'That which is presented as dialogue in the text is, of course, only expressed as pantomime.'⁵¹

In general, Sibelius's progress on new compositions was closely followed in the Finnish press. In February, news of his new work *Scaramouche* was announced.⁵² Sibelius was busy with other works, however – piano pieces, the second (G minor) Serenade for violin and orchestra and *The Bard*. He returned to *Scaramouche* in April, mentioning it in diary entries between 10 and 19 April, such as 'working on the S. dance' (17 April) and 'forging the pantomime' (19 April).⁵³

Knudsen's reference to *Der Schleier der Pierrette* as a model for *Scaramouche* – about the dialogue being used only as a guide – probably drew Sibelius's attention to Schnitzler's work. Then he read a synopsis of it and observed that *Scaramouche*'s plot was very similar. He sent a furious telegram to Hansen, saying it was gross plagiarism and wanting to withdraw from the contract.⁵⁴ As he mentioned in his diary: '*Scaramouche* is plagiarism. Have sent a telegram. A drama is brewing'.⁵⁵

⁴⁹ Tawaststjerna 1988, pp. 323–24, quoting letter from Sibelius to Hansen, 3 January 1913

⁵⁰ '*Scaramouche* rent og skaert er en Pantomime – den er blot skrevet med Replikker i Lighed med Arthur Schnitzler's *Pierrettes Slør*, da det er en Erfaring, at Skuespillernes Udtryck og Bevegelser retledes og tydeliggøres, naar disse tanke sig Replikkerne udtalt.' (Hansen to Sibelius, 13 January 1913, SPA 45)

⁵¹ 'Auch was im Text dialogartig gebracht ist, wird selbstverständlich nur pantomimisch ausgedrückt', Schnitzler 1972 (1910), p. 323

⁵² *Dagens Tidning* 16 February 1913: Snart utkommande verk af Sibelius

⁵³ 'Smidt på S.-dansen'; 'smider pantomimen' (Diary entries 10, 15, 16, 17 and 19 April 1913, Sibelius 2005, pp. 169–170)

⁵⁴ Part of the telegram is copied in a letter from Hansen to Trepka Bloch (undated), which Hansen also sent to Sibelius for information on 3 May 1913: 'Have read synopsis of Schnitzler's pantomime *Pierrette*, *Scaramouche* will be seen as gross plagiarism, am very displeased.' ('Referat über Schnitzlers Pantomime *Pierrette* gelesen, man wird *Scaramouche* als grobes Plagiat ansehen, bin tief verstimmt.') In Sibelius's draft telegram to Hansen, he even proposes that the composition be published as it is, without text: 'if you like to publish my music independently' ('wenn Sie wollen meine Musik als selbständiges zu publicieren'). SPA 45.

⁵⁵ Diary, 24 April 1913: '*Scaramouche* ett plagiat. Jag telegraferat. Det gestaltar sig ett drama', Sibelius 2005, p. 170. See Tawaststjerna 1989a, pp. 323–24; Sibelius 2005, p. 413, ref. 56

Hansen informed Michael Trepka Bloch and Poul Knudsen. In his reply, Knudsen explains the plot of *Der Schleier der Pierrette*, compares the two texts and apologizes. He admits certain similarities, but claims that he had written *Scaramouche* before Schnitzler's *Der Schleier der Pierrette* appeared, and that an initial printed version of it had been made three years earlier, before the publication of Schnitzler's work. He suggests an assessment by an 'impartial arbitrator' and concludes: 'If he thinks my work is plagiarism, I would like the contract to be upheld (I can commit to submitting another text).'⁵⁶ He also commented: 'But if he finds only small details that are reminiscent of *Der Schleier der Pierrette*, it could possibly be revised.'⁵⁷

Der Schleier der Pierrette had been premièred on 22 January 1910 at the Dresden Royal Opera with music by the Hungarian Ernst von Dohnányi (1877–1960), and it was published the same year. Thereafter *Der Schleier der Pierrette* was performed in, for example, Vienna, London, Copenhagen, Berlin, Oslo and Budapest.⁵⁸ The work became popular with (in particular) Russian theatre directors (Vsevolod Meyerhold, Alexander Tairov).⁵⁹

In Dresden, the main roles were played by opera singers, that of Pierrette being taken by the Finnish singer Irma Tervani (1887–1936), sister of Aino Ackté, whose singing career was centred in Germany.

Scaramouche, published in 1922, gives 1911–12 as its years of writing.⁶⁰

Interestingly, the Royal Theatre in Copenhagen performed *Der Schleier der Pierrette* in 1911, with Carl Nielsen conducting Dohnányi's music.⁶¹

Meltdown – a through-composed work

Sibelius's diary for May 1913 contains no references to progress on *Scaramouche*. In June he returned to the work. On 15 June he wrote: 'I must start on *Scaramouche* in its original form'⁶² and the following day: 'Worked on the pantomime. Considered linear counterpoint!'⁶³

⁵⁶ 'finder han saa at mit er Plagiat, vil jeg meget nodig have at Kontrakten gennemfores (jeg kan jo forpligtige mig til at levere et andet)' (Hansen to Sibelius 3 May 1913, SPA 45, see also Sibelius 2005, p. 413, ref. 56)

⁵⁷ 'men finder han det kun i rene Enkeltheder Minder om *Pierrettes Slör* kunde dette jo muligen omaendres', Hansen to Sibelius, 3 May 1913, SPA 45, see also Sibelius 2005, p. 413, ref. 56

⁵⁸ Vollmer 2011, p. 86; Wiers-Jenssen 1924, p. 233 (performance in Oslo)

⁵⁹ Sullivan 1995

⁶⁰ Knudsen 1922

⁶¹ Leicht-Hallar 1977, p. 240, performances from 18 March to 29 November 1911

⁶² 'Måste börja på *Scaramouche* i sin ursprungliga form'. Diary, 15 June 1913, Sibelius 2005, p. 172

⁶³ 'Arbetat på Pantomimen. Mediterat öfver en linear kontrapunkt!' Diary, 16 June 1913, Sibelius 2005, p. 173

This would suggest that Knudsen may have come up with a revised version of the text that was in some ways similar to the first one. He may have adjusted it as a result of the accusations of plagiarism. In any case, after receiving it Sibelius contacted Hansen and, according to Tawaststjerna, the final 'meltdown' came when it became apparent to Sibelius that he had to deliver a through-composed pantomime instead of three separate dances.⁶⁴

Hansen replied that Trepka Bloch had shown Sibelius's letter to Knudsen, whereupon Knudsen declared that the work should be through-composed and should closely follow events on stage, as in any mime ballet. In addition, it could be performed both in theatres and in opera houses; Knudsen uses the term 'ballet-pantomime' about the work, as in the contract mentioned above.⁶⁵

In his reply, Sibelius demanded an increase in the fee for *Scaramouche*, pointing out that when he accepted the commission, he did not think he would need more than two or three days to compose it: 'I did not think that the pantomime would be a through-composed work.' Now that appeared to be the case, 'my entire reputation is in the balance.'⁶⁶

That same day, 21 June, Sibelius noted in his diary: 'I ruined myself by signing the contract for *Scaramouche*. – Today things became so heated that I smashed the telephone. – My nerves are in tatters. What remains for me? Nothing. I have allowed one stupidity after another to weigh me down. Have written both to Breitkopf & Härtel and to Hansen (with a demand for an additional fee). But now I'm in a jam both as an artist and as a human being. How wretched!'⁶⁷ Nevertheless, a few days later he was back at work on *Scaramouche*⁶⁸ and wrote in his diary: 'Hansen would release me from the *Scaramouche* contract, but Trepka Bloch – not a chance.'⁶⁹

At the end of June, Hansen mentioned that he had forwarded a letter from Sibelius to Trepka Bloch and Knudsen, from whom he was awaiting a response.⁷⁰ While Sibelius was waiting (commenting in his diary: 'Spending my time waiting for a decision concerning the pantomime'⁷¹) he began composing *Luonnotar* for Aino

⁶⁴ Tawaststjerna 1989a, p. 324

⁶⁵ Hansen to Sibelius, 18 June 1913, SPA 45

⁶⁶ 'någon Pantomim med genomkomponerad text tänkte jag icke på' – 'ligger hela mitt världsrykte i vågskålen'. Sibelius 2005, p. 414, ref. 76; Tawaststjerna 1989b, p. 324, quoting Sibelius's letter to Hansen, 21 June 1913

⁶⁷ 'Ruinerat mig genom underskrifvandet av *Scaramouche* kontraktet. – Var så häftig i dag att jag slog sönder telefonen. – Mina nerver alldeles slut. Hvad återstår mig? Intet. Dumhet på dumhet har jag låtit komma mig till last. Skrifvit både till B et H och till Hansen (med yrkan på ett tilläggshonorar.) Men nog är jag nu fast både som konstnär och som människa. O ve! Ve!' Diary, 21 June 1913; Sibelius 2005, p. 173

⁶⁸ Diary, 27 June 1913; Sibelius 2005, s. 173

⁶⁹ Diary, 29 June 1913; Sibelius 2005, p. 174

⁷⁰ Hansen to Sibelius, 28 June 1913, SPA 45

⁷¹ 'I väntan på ett afgörande i pantomimfrågan går min tid' (Diary, 3 July 1913, Sibelius 2005, p. 174)

Ackté.⁷² ⁷³ In August Sibelius made only a few diary entries, probably because he was hard at work on *Luonnotar*, which he completed on 24 August.⁷⁴ It was premièred at the Gloucester Festival on 10 September and in September/October Sibelius revised the score.

In early August Sibelius completed a small piano piece called *Spagnuolo*,⁷⁵ an occasional piece for the Hämeenlinna-based publisher Arvi A. Karisto's Christmas magazine *Joulutunnelma*. The Spanish style of this piece is perhaps a spin-off from Sibelius's work on *Scaramouche* which, as Knudsen's text makes clear, features a bolero.

Sibelius returned to *Scaramouche* in September, when he received the fourth version of the text from Knudsen, and was already thoroughly fed up with it. He had been working on the basis of the third version of the text, and now drafted a letter to Knudsen: 'I can no longer change anything without the whole musical structure collapsing. To revise the work according to what you just sent would take too long, and I no longer have the inclination for that – especially as I have already twice accommodated you by making revisions arising from additions from your side.'⁷⁶ Moreover, Sibelius had to work separately on the passages that were plagiarisms of Schnitzler. At this stage he planned for the pantomime to play for an hour, with two separate pieces, *Danse dramatique* and *Canzone*, that could be extracted. These titles suggest that Sibelius was already planning separate numbers, of which he later made piano versions (with different names).⁷⁷

Understandably, receiving this fourth version made work on the piece frustrating, and it became increasingly burdensome, as the September and October diary entries reveal: '*Scaramouche* is tormenting me. It's killing me'; 'I can't manage to finish the

⁷² Diary entries concerning *Scaramouche*: 3, 5 & 17 July 1913; Sibelius 2005, 174–75

⁷³ While work on *Scaramouche* was paused, Sibelius found other activities to fill his time. He took a car trip with K. A. Paloheimo, admiring Finnish nature. He wrote in his diary: 'Varit på automobil-tur till Forssa-Vuojoki-Raumo-Åbo. – Härligt! Oändligt tilltalat af Pyhäjärvi sjö (Kauttua)' (Been on a car trip to Forssa–Vuojoki–Rauma–Turku. – Wonderful! There is something infinitely appealing about Lake Pyhäjärvi [Kauttua].') – Diary, 8 July 1913; Sibelius 2005, p. 174). Car travel was very rare at that time; before 1914, there were fewer than a thousand cars in Finland. *Autoilun historiaa Suomessa*, Wikipedia, quoting Moisala, Uuno Erkki 1983, *Auto Suomessa: auton kaupan, käytön ja korjaamotoiminnan historia vuoteen 1983*, Autoalan keskusliitto ry, p. 55.

⁷⁴ Diary, 24 August 1913; Sibelius 2005, pp. 175–76

⁷⁵ Diary, 6 August 1913; Sibelius 2005, p. 175

⁷⁶ Jag kan ej numera ändra någonting utan att hela den musikaliska byggnaden ramlar. Att omarbete verket enligt Eder sednaste skulle taga för mig mycken tid i anspråk, och därtill har jag ej mera lust. I synnerhet som jag redan tvenne gånger tillmötesgått Eder med omarbetningar på grund af tillägg från Er sida.' Draft letter from Sibelius to Knudsen, 21 September 1913, SPA 45; see also Dahlström 2003, p. 312.

⁷⁷ Draft letter from Sibelius to Hansen, 21 September 1913, SPA 45. Sibelius also drafted a letter to Knudsen (see above).

pantomime. I pay in blood for these commissions!'; 'Working today on the pantomime that will never be finished.'⁷⁸

Sibelius accepted commissions as a way of earning money, but they did not bring in enough, as he always had insufficient resources to fund his lavish lifestyle. His diary is full of entries on this subject. In May 1913 he wrote: 'At present I have a staff of five servants, who cost me thousands when I take pay, board and lodging into account...'⁷⁹ He also questioned his standing as a composer. In July he wrote: 'Bankruptcy and poverty are grimacing at me.'⁸⁰

By November, Sibelius was apparently occupied intensively with *Scaramouche*, as he wrote in his diary: 'Business matters are constantly interrupting my work on the pantomime.'⁸¹ And after his birthday he continued: 'Yesterday was my 48th birthday. *Sic itur ad astra*. – I was overworked and sick. Nervous in the extreme. Making a fair copy of the pantomime, i.e. composing it in its definitive form. What will become of this child?'⁸²

On 19 December 1913 *Scaramouche* was ready, more than six months later than originally foreseen.⁸³ Two days later he sent it to Hansen along with a letter stating: 'As you see, the original scheme has grown into a comprehensive work. To get it right has cost me much thought and work. In the form it now takes, I believe it will be successful. Generally speaking, I have thought of the stage as being full of activity – it's not a work for actors who stand around waiting for gestures from on high.'⁸⁴

Decades later, Sibelius told his faithful secretary Santeri Levas about the confusion surrounding the composition and the contract: 'Poul Knudsen burst into my hotel room in the middle of the night with a lawyer and a contract... I signed it without reading it properly. It was only later that I realized that I had obliged myself to compose a large-scale work.'⁸⁵ Perhaps this was some kind of preliminary contract, as Sibelius was in Copenhagen in the autumn of 1912, and the lawyer who accompanied

⁷⁸ 'Scaramouche pinar mig. Den tar lifvet af mig' (Diary, 28 September 1913; Sibelius 2005, p. 177); 'Jag vill ej kunna slutföra pantomimen. Dessa beställda saker kosta mig blod!' (Diary, 11 October 1913; Sibelius 2005, p. 177); 'Arbetar i dag ännu på pantomimen, som nog aldrig blir färdig' (Diary, 28 October 1913; Sibelius 2005, p. 178). *Scaramouche* features in diary entries on 10, 12 and 28 September, and 11, 17, 25 and 28 October 1913, Sibelius 2005, p. 176–79.

⁷⁹ 'I dag en tjänarstab af 5 personer, hvilka årligen med lön och vivre kostar mig tusenden...' (Diary 1 May 1913; Sibelius 2005, p. 171)

⁸⁰ 'Emot mig grinar konkurs och fattigdom' (Diary, 5 July 1913; Sibelius 2005, 174)

⁸¹ 'Mina affärer afbryta alltsomoftast mitt arbete på pantomimen' (Diary, 25 November 1913; Sibelius 2005 p. 178; see also 17 November 1913; Sibelius 2005, p. 178)

⁸² 'Fyllde i går 48 år. Sic itur ad astra. – Varit överarbetad och sjuk. I högsta grad nervös. Pantomimen skrifver jag rent d.v.s. komponerar det definitiva. Hvad månne bli af detta barn.' (Diary, 9 December 1913; Sibelius 2005, p. 179)

⁸³ Diary, 19 December 1913; Sibelius 2005, p. 179

⁸⁴ Tawaststjerna 1986, p. 245; Tawaststjerna 1989a, p. 324; Tawaststjerna 1991, p. 315, quoting Sibelius's letter to Hansen dated 31 December 1913 (actual date 21 December, as in a letter dated 23 December Hansen thanks him for the score of *Scaramouche*); SPA 45

⁸⁵ Levas 1992, p. 258

Knudsen was presumably Trepka Bloch. When Sibelius signed the official contract in January 1913, he was in Finland and the text of the contract defines the work only as a ballet-pantomime. It is also possible that Sibelius had not understood what the term ‘ballet-pantomime’ implied. Sibelius always uses the word ‘pantomime’ in his diary when mentioning *Scaramouche*, never the ‘ballet-pantomime’. Such confusion can occur when the parties are not in direct contact with each other.

Piano arrangements in Berlin

In early 1914 Sibelius spent more than a month in Berlin, working on a commission from the USA that became *The Oceanides*, and listening to what his colleagues were doing.⁸⁶ During this time he made piano adaptations of the *Danse élégiaque* and *Scène d’amour* from *Scaramouche*.

On the way to Berlin he stopped in Copenhagen, where he met his publisher Hansen. *Scaramouche* was discussed, and for the role of Blondelaine the famous Russian ballet dancer Anna Pavlova (1882–1931) was suggested. Pavlova had first appeared abroad in 1908 on a tour by the Imperial Ballets Russes organized by Edvard Fazer, and then with Sergei Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes; she moved to London in 1913.⁸⁷

Sibelius wrote to Aino on 8 January 1914 after arriving in Berlin: ‘With him, dear old Wilhelm Hansen, I had an hour-long meeting, which resulted in me being promised 1,000 kronor (although it doesn’t seem to be in the contract) in a few days’ time, after I’ve managed to deliver the arrangements. Otherwise they are very excited about the whole thing. And, believe you me, I fired them up. They plan to get Anna Pavlova or [illegible] to create the role. In any case, it looks very promising.’⁸⁸ A few days later Sibelius wrote again to Aino on this subject: ‘The more distance I have from the pantomime, the more I begin to believe in its success. Today, I finally finished the *Danse élégiaque* piano arrangement. They break my spirit, these “Valse tristes”, but – so be it.’⁸⁹

The next day he wrote in his diary: ‘Busy with the piano arrangements (*Scaramouche*). It’s true that I overexerted myself with the pantomime. To get back to normal I need rest. But I don’t have time for that. The American commission is

⁸⁶ Tawaststjerna 1989, p. 341

⁸⁷ Pavlova never danced the role of Blondelaine, but she did perform to Sibelius’s *Valse triste*.

⁸⁸ ‘Med honom, den gamle härlige Wilhelm Hansen hade jag en timmes konferens som resulterade i att jag får 1000 kronor (eheru det ej tyckes vara i kontraktet) om några dar, då jag hunnit leverera arremgementer. I öfvrigt äro de mycket förtjusta i kakan. Och du kan tänka Dig att jag eldade upp dem. De planera att få Anna Pavlova att inungarera eller [epäselvä nimi] rol[I]jen. I alla händelser ser det mycket förhoppningsfullt af’ (Talas 2007, p. 229)

⁸⁹ Letter from Jean to Aino Sibelius, 11 January 1914: ‘Jota kauvemmaxi mitä tulen pantomiimista niin sitä enemmän rupean uskomaan sen menestykseen. Olen tänään vihdoinkin saanut *Danse élégiaquen* pianosovitus valmiiksi. Ne vievät minulta hengen nuo ”vals trisit”, mutta – hyvähän on.’ (Talas 2007, p. 231)

urgent.⁹⁰ He immediately wrote to Aino again: 'The pantomime is excellent. But with all my heart I long to be rid of it. How good that I have finished it'⁹¹ and then, in mid-January: 'Now I have completed the piano transcriptions of *Danse élégiaque* and *Scène d'amour* and I sent them to Hansen today. Yesterday I worked until 3 a.m.'⁹²

When Knudsen's libretto was published, he sent it to Ainola together with a letter. It was forwarded by Aino Sibelius to Sibelius in Berlin in mid-January.⁹³ Sibelius did not mention receiving this, but a couple of weeks later he wrote to Aino: 'If people take to the pantomime, we'll be debt-free at a stroke. I'm intrigued.'⁹⁴

Sibelius had no previous experience of working with Hansen, but the firm would go on to publish his last three symphonies and other works. The piano arrangements that Sibelius sent to Hansen appeared as late as 1921, as a consequence of the First World War. Later still, in 1925, he made an arrangement for violin and piano of the *Scène d'amour*.⁹⁵ While in Berlin Sibelius wrote a reminder to himself in his diary: 'Some things in the pantomime must be re-orchestrated.'⁹⁶

A massive score

Early in 1914, it was reported in both Denmark and Finland that Sibelius's massive score for *Scaramouche* was ready, and the text was being translated into five languages.⁹⁷ This referred to the completion of Sibelius's composition, not the appearance of the printed score, which did not happen until 1918. The printed score has three languages, French, German and English, including dialogue and stage directions.⁹⁸ The work is dedicated to the Danish dramatist and critic Svend Borberg (1888–1947).⁹⁹

⁹⁰ 'I pianoarrangementens tecken (*Scaramouche*). Väntar på underrättelser från Hansen [...] Det är nog så att jag öfveransträngde mig med pantomimen. Att återställa mig behöfves vila. Men därtill har jag ej tid. Den amerikanska beställningen hastar.' (Diary, 12 January 1914; Sibelius 2005, p. 181)

⁹¹ Letter from Jean to Aino Sibelius, 13 January 1914: 'Patominin [sic] är utmärkt. Men längtar jag med hela min själ bort från den. En lycka att jag fått den färdig.' (Talas 2007, p. 234)

⁹² 'Jag har nu fått färdig[t] de båda klaverutdragen af "*Danse élégiaque*" och "*Scène d'amour*" samt sände dem i dag till Hansen. Jag arbetade i går till 3 på natten-.' (Talas 2007, p. 235. letter from Sibelius to Aino, 15 January 1914 (see also Diary 14 & 16 January 1914; Sibelius 2005, p. 181).

⁹³ Letter from Aino to Jean Sibelius, 13 January 1914 (Talas 2007, p. 233)

⁹⁴ Letter from Jean to Aino Sibelius, 25 January 1914: 'Om pantomimen går i folk äro vi skuldfria i ett rapp. Nyfiken är jag.' (Talas 2007, p. 242)

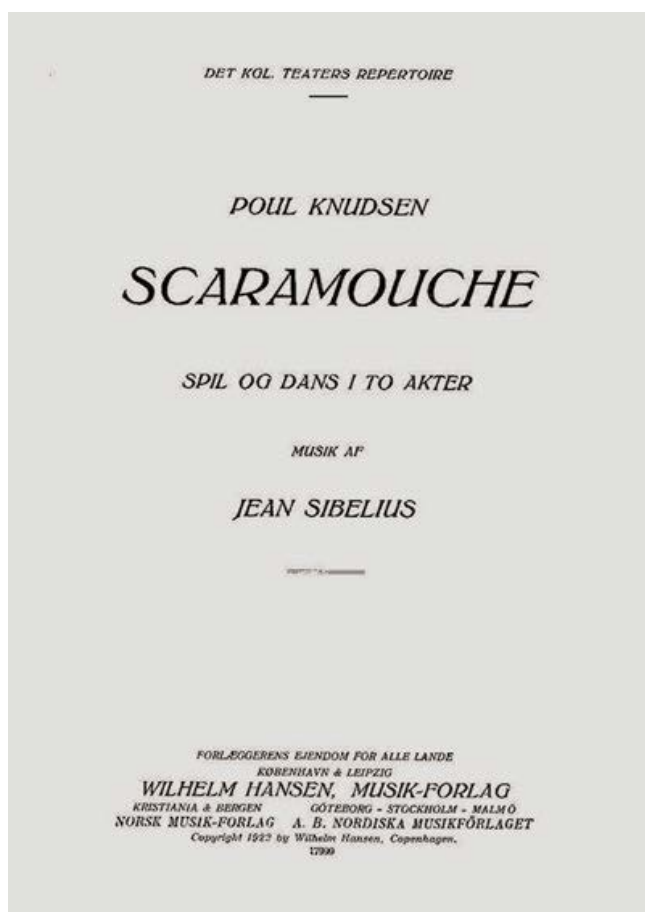
⁹⁵ Dahlström 2003, pp. 314–15

⁹⁶ 'Vissa saker i pantomimen måste ominstrumenteras' (Diary 24 January 1914, Sibelius 2005, p. 183)

⁹⁷ *Hufvudstadsbladet* 30 January 1914, quoting *Politiken*; *Turun Sanomat* 30 January 1914; *Helsingin Sanomat* 31 January 1914

⁹⁸ Sibelius 1918

⁹⁹ We have no information on Borberg's connection to Sibelius. Borberg's plays were not performed until after the publication of *Scaramouche*. He is said to have sympathized with the occupying forces in Denmark during World War II



The term ‘massive score’ used in the news coverage is accurate, as this through-composed stage work runs to more than 200 score pages.¹⁰⁰ The duration of the piece is approximately 65 minutes. It is thus much longer than Sibelius’s early through-composed opera *Jungfrun i tornet* (*The Maiden in the Tower*). The incidental music to Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* is also more than an hour long, but is not continuous. The symphonies are all shorter than *Scaramouche*.

Scaramouche consists of two acts that play without a break, and are divided into 21 scenes (ten in the first act, eleven in the second). Several of the scenes last less than a minute, and the longest is scene 20 in Act II, which plays for thirteen minutes. It is scored for strings plus woodwind (2 flutes [piccolo], 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons), a brass section comprising just four horns and a *cornet à piston*, piano and percussion (timpani, triangle and tambourine). Sibelius has followed the instructions for dances contained in Knudsen’s text, and also makes use of leitmotifs. The work is not Wagnerian, however; it is more reminiscent of chamber music, delicate and lyrical. The musicians are divided into three groups: the main orchestra, a group of offstage players (*Scaramouche*’s troupe) and players among the dancers on stage.

¹⁰⁰ Sibelius 1918; Hansen score pages 3–230

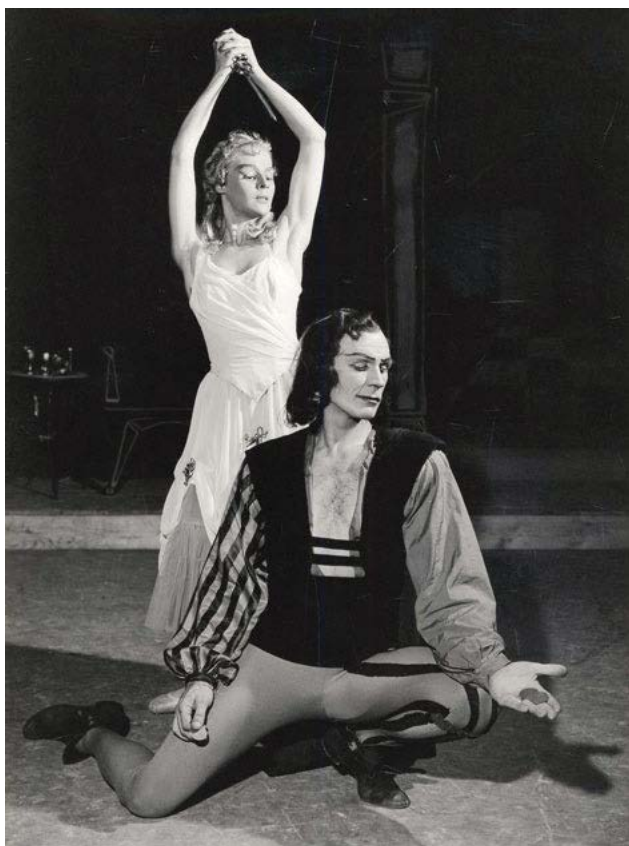
The action is set at Leilon's farmhouse and the events take place one evening and in the small hours. The pantomime's theme revolves around a ball at the house and Blondelaine's solo dances, so music is a central part of the plot. The first act contains the ball with musicians, the playing of Scaramouche and his trio, and Blondelaine's dances. The second act includes Leilon playing the spinet and more of Blondelaine's dances.

At the start of Act I we hear the music of the ball – in Sibelius's score, a minuet. The host, Leilon, does not dance, and his wife Blondelaine complains about this to her admirer Mezzetin. During the festivities Blondelaine dances a bolero for the guests. A Spanish atmosphere is created not only by the bolero rhythm but also by the jingling of the tambourine. From outside we hear Scaramouche playing the viola (in Knudsen's text, viola da gamba). Sibelius represents Scaramouche's playing with chromatic viola and cello solos. Scaramouche's troupe includes a boy playing the flute and a woman playing the lute.

Scaramouche is invited to play at the festivities and, while he plays the bolero, Blondelaine – observed by the ball guests – dances ever more passionately and erotically. The jealous Leilon drives Scaramouche and his troupe away, and then the ball continues with the guests dancing – in Sibelius's score, a waltz. This waltz blends with Scaramouche's playing, which entices and seduces Blondelaine.

At the beginning of Act II, Knudsen's text gives no instructions about music. Leilon and his friend Gigolo are drinking wine after the guests have left, and Leilon reminisces about Blondelaine. Here Sibelius has composed an attractive, melancholy string theme that will later be transformed into a flute solo (*Tranquillo assai*). In Knudsen's text the posthorn sounds to signal the departure of the post coach, and Gigolo leaves. In Sibelius's score, the posthorn (represented by the *cornet à piston*) is heard offstage as instructed.

Blondelaine enters; the scene with her and Leilon contains hints of the flute theme from earlier. When Leilon has left, Scaramouche arrives to take Blondelaine away. Scaramouche does not play any music in this scene, but the Scaramouche theme is heard in Sibelius's score. Blondelaine doesn't want to go with Scaramouche and stabs him with a dagger, then hides his body behind a curtain.



Blondelaine (Lisa Taxell) stabs Scaramouche (Klaus Salin), Act II (1955)

© Finnish National Opera and Ballet archives / Tenhovaara

After this the music once again becomes an integral part of the events on stage. Leilon returns; Blondelaine takes him to the spinet, and he starts playing. The music heard is the minuet from the very beginning. Blondelaine begins to dance, stumbles and sees a trickle of blood running from behind the curtain. As she continues to dance, she imagines that she can hear Scaramouche playing in the room. Leilon reveals the body of Scaramouche behind the curtain and Blondelaine dances herself to death. Leilon loses his mind. At the end (the score is marked *Grave*), the boy and woman from Scaramouche's troupe come looking for him, and find him dead. They leave, and the woman makes the sign of the cross.

After seeing the Copenhagen performance, Professor Rolf Lagerborg (1874–1959), an expert in Finnish moral-philosophical matters, wrote that '*Scaramouche* could be performed in church as a modern-day mystery play: it discourages people from sinful love more effectively than images of the horrors of hell.'¹⁰¹ The piano transcriptions that Sibelius made focus on the bolero played by Scaramouche in Act I (*Danse élégiaque*) and the music from the scene at the beginning of Act II depicting Leilon's love for Blondelaine (*Scène d'amour*).

¹⁰¹ '*Scaramouche* kunde ges i en kyrka som ett modernt mysteriespel: den avskräcker från den syndiga kärleken mer än bilder av helvetets fasor.' (Rolf Lagerborg, *Våra kvinnor* No. 2, 22 January 1924, '*Scaramouche* i Köpenhamn'; Lagerborg 1924, p. 127)

Karen Vedel depicts *Scaramouche* as follows: ‘Familiar from folksongs, the plot is structured over the conflict between the tempered desire of the everyday and the allure of the unknown. In terms of the dancing it is best illustrated in the contrast between the Minuet and the wild dance spurred by Scaramouche’s tune, reaching climax in Blondelaine’s death-by-dancing. The dichotomy addresses the double function of dance as a manifestation of order *vis à vis* dance as a representation of madness, and points in symbolist terms to a bridging between the conscious and the unconscious by way of music while privileging dance as a site of corporeal expression.’ About the figure of Scaramouche she writes: ‘From the position on the fringes of the social world, he mocks the institution of marriage by bringing into focus the powerful symbiosis of dance, music and sexuality.’ Vedel sees Blondelaine as a dual role of both *femme fatale* (cf. Oscar Wilde’s *Salome*) and a figure comparable to Nora in Ibsen’s *Doll’s House*. ‘Serving a double function of the one hand pleasing the male gaze and on the other providing access to some of what is repressed in the family institution and gender roles of the bourgeois world, dancing to Scaramouche’s tune is shown as transitory and fatal.’¹⁰²

The music’s suggestive power and erotic dancing

Scaramouche is described in the directions given in Sibelius’s score as ‘A little hunchbacked dwarf dressed in black’. In Knudsen’s text published in 1922, however, there is no description of Scaramouche’s appearance. The *commedia dell’arte* Scaramouche is not hunchbacked; that is a characteristic of Pulcinella. Apparently the idea is that the power of both music and musician are so great that they cast a spell on Blondelaine.¹⁰³

In addition to writing music of great suggestive power associated with Scaramouche’s playing, Sibelius was a masterful composer of dances. The dance forms found in *Scaramouche* – the minuet, bolero and waltz – were all ones that Sibelius had used in the past.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Vedel 2014, pp. 365, 366

¹⁰³ Leah Broad has examined the bolero played by Scaramouche and its sexuality (Broad 2017)

¹⁰⁴ *Balletscen* (1891, JS 163) includes the clicking of castanets; *Menuetto* (1894, JS 127) features glockenspiel and tambourine. The incidental music to *King Christian II* (1898, Op. 27) includes a Musette and Minuet. Although there is no polonaise in *Scaramouche*, Sibelius had previously used this form in *Cortège* (1905, JS 54), which also includes a tambourine. Sibelius had written several boleros before *Scaramouche*. The third tableau of the *Press Celebrations Music* (1899, JS 137), ‘Scene from Duke Johan’s Court’ (*Quasi tempo di Menuetto*), was subsequently renamed ‘Quasi bolero’. Sibelius later revised it as ‘Festivo’ (*Tempo di Bolero*), the third movement of *Scènes historiques I*, Op. 25. Here too, the dance rhythm is enhanced by castanets. *Musik zu einer Scène* (1904, revised as *Dance-Intermezzo*, Op. 45 No. 2) contains a bolero, complete with tambourine. Similarities with *Scaramouche* can also be found in *Pan and Echo* (1906, Op. 53), which, in addition to the bolero rhythm, contains a dance that accelerates towards the end. (About bolero rhythms in Sibelius, see Wood 1947, pp. 66, 82.)

Cecil Gray has pointed out: 'The influence of Johann Strauss... is not confined to the waltzes themselves, but can be detected throughout his work in the form of a strong predilection for themes which make use of the characteristic technical device of the Viennese waltz called the *Atempause* – the strongly marked rest, like a catch in the breath, which precedes the final note of the bar.'¹⁰⁵ The influence of Johann Strauss's waltzes is a consequence of Sibelius's studies in Vienna in the early 1890s.

Sibelius had previously composed an accelerating 'death dance' (*danse macabre/Totentanz*), comparable with the one performed by Blondelaine, in his music for Järnefelt's play *Kuolema: Valse triste*.

According to Kari Kilpeläinen, *Scaramouche* may contain material from sketches for *Pohjola's Daughter* (Op. 49, 1906) as well as from the unfinished orchestral song *The Raven*, material from which was also used in the Fourth Symphony (Op. 63, 1911).¹⁰⁶ Researchers have pointed out that *Scaramouche* has connections with several other works by Sibelius too. After the appearance of the first recording, Veijo Murtomäki reviewed the CD in *Helsingin Sanomat*: 'It contains expressive chromaticism, stridency in the manner of the Fourth Symphony, a thrilling depiction of the anguish of the soul'.¹⁰⁷ According to Erkki Salmenhaara, the chromatic theme played by *Scaramouche* resembles the Fifth Symphony¹⁰⁸ and according to Robert Layton it has links with the Seventh.¹⁰⁹ In addition, both Murtomäki and Layton have pointed out its connection with the impressionism found in *The Oceanides*. *Swanwhite* and the violin Humoresques have also been mentioned in this context.¹¹⁰

Salmenhaara writes that *Scaramouche* was 'almost the first expressionist work to have been performed on our main stage [the Finnish National Theatre]'.¹¹¹ It has also been compared to works by Richard Strauss. Ralph W. Wood has pointed out similarities with *Der Rosenkavalier*, Robert Layton to *Der Bürger als Edelmann* and Marc Vignal to *Ariadne auf Naxos*.¹¹² These were all completed just before *Scaramouche*, and all had been directed by Max Reinhardt.¹¹³

Scaramouche has also led researchers to speculate about what kind of operas Sibelius might have written at that time.¹¹⁴ Moreover, in 1947 Ralph W. Wood: 'It

¹⁰⁵ Gray 1931, pp. 105–06

¹⁰⁶ Kilpeläinen 1991a, pp. 126–27

¹⁰⁷ 'Siitä löytyy ilmeikästä kromatiikkaa, vihlovuutta 4. sinfonian tyyliin, sielullisen ahdistuksen jäntevää kuvausta' ('Harvinaista Sibeliusia levyllä. *Scaramouche*-baletti on hienostunut mestariteos', Murtomäki, *Helsingin Sanomat*, 31 August 1991.

¹⁰⁸ Salmenhaara 1984, p. 375

¹⁰⁹ Layton 1992, p. 132

¹¹⁰ Murtomäki 1990; Layton 1992, p. 132

¹¹¹ Salmenhaara 1984, p. 374

¹¹² Wood 1947, p. 86; Layton 1992, p. 133; Vignal 2004, p. 626

¹¹³ Reinhardt's productions: see Huesmann 1983

¹¹⁴ Salmenhaara 1984, p. 375; Barnett 2007, p. 236

brings into one's head a very unexpected speculation about what Sibelius might have done as a composer for films'.¹¹⁵

Der Schleier der Pierrette and Scaramouche

As the similarity between *Der Schleier der Pierrette* and *Scaramouche* overshadowed Sibelius's compositional process from the outset, it is appropriate to compare these two works, as their kinship continued to play a part in their performance history.

The plot of *Der Schleier der Pierrette* is briefly as follows: Pierrette is forced by her parents to marry the old and rich Arlecchino (Harlequin), even though she loves the impecunious Pierrot. In the middle of their wedding, Pierrette escapes to be with her lover, with the intention of dying with him (cf. *Romeo and Juliet*). Their joint suicide by poison does not take place because of Pierrette's hesitation; only Pierrot dies after drinking from a poisoned cup. Pierrette returns to the wedding party and to Arlecchino, who in a fit of jealousy has smashed the musicians' instruments. Pierrot's ghost appears to Pierrette at the wedding reception and tells Pierrette to retrieve the veil she had left at Pierrot's house. Arlecchino follows Pierrette and locks her in a room with the dead Pierrot. Pierrette loses her mind and dances herself to death.

Scaramouche and *Der Schleier der Pierrette* certainly exhibit similarities. Both take place in a single evening and the early hours. Both feature *commedia dell'arte* characters and a love triangle comprising one woman and two men. They both contain a ball, where the woman meets another man and dances herself to death in front of that man after having played a part in his death. In addition, a dead man appears in each of the women, either as a vision (Pierrot) or as sound (*Scaramouche* playing). They even both feature Gigolo, a friend of Leilon's in *Scaramouche* and the 'Tanzmeister' who organizes the wedding dance in *Der Schleier der Pierrette*, listed as a 'young man' in the *dramatis personae*.¹¹⁶

Both texts include a female death dance, a *danse macabre*. In the early 20th century, several works were published in which a woman dances herself to death, most notably Hugo von Hofmannsthal's *Elektra*, with music by Strauss, premièred in 1909, and Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*, premièred by Sergei Diaghilev's Ballets Russes in Paris in the spring of 1913 – the very time when Sibelius was working on *Scaramouche*.

Finally, both Schnitzler's and Knudsen's pantomimes differ in one respect from the *commedia dell'arte* tradition: they are both horror stories in the turn-of-the-century style.

¹¹⁵ Wood 1947, p. 86

¹¹⁶ Schnitzler 1972 (1910); Knudsen 1922

Performance plans

Karen Vedel, who has studied the performance history of *Scaramouche*'s Copenhagen première, has stated that Knudsen's text was suggested to the Royal Danish Ballet as early as 1912. The ballet master Hans Beck (1861–1952) then rejected it because he believed it lacked 'any possibility for pantomimic or gesture actions.'¹¹⁷ The previous year, 1911, Beck had devised the choreography for *Der Schleier der Pierrette*.¹¹⁸ At this stage, Sibelius's music had not yet been composed; it is likely that he did not receive the commission until after the rejection, as negotiations went on until the end of 1912 and Sibelius signed the contract in early 1913.

As mentioned above, when the composition was complete Sibelius met Wilhelm Hansen in Copenhagen, on his way to Berlin, in the early days of 1914, when they discussed getting Anna Pavlova to play Blondelaine. After this meeting, Hansen sent Sibelius a letter stating that Kay Nielsen (1886–1957) had been chosen as costume designer.¹¹⁹ Nielsen was Danish but had studied in Paris and was working at the time in London as an illustrator. His artwork from London includes drawings for stories such as *The Sleeping Beauty* and *Bluebeard*.

In October that year Knudsen sent Sibelius drawings for *Scaramouche*.¹²⁰ Hansen, too, kept Sibelius informed, and announced in December that Knudsen and the costume designer (presumably Kay Nielsen) had not reached agreement about in which era the performance should be set or the costumes required.¹²¹ He also explained that he did not know the address of Betty Nansen (1873–1943). The famous Danish actress Nansen had also visited the Swedish Theatre in Helsinki but was by then working in the United States, where she made several silent films between 1913 and 1917.¹²² Hansen and Sibelius had probably considered her for the role of Blondelaine, along with the ballet dancer Anna Pavlova. At this stage, however, the plans were not taken any further. In any case, the programme of the Royal Theatre in Copenhagen had once again included *Der Schleier der Pierrette* the previous season (1913–14).¹²³

¹¹⁷ Vedel 2014, p. 354

¹¹⁸ Vedel 2014, p. 354; Leich-Hallar 1977, p. 240

¹¹⁹ Hansen to Sibelius, 23 January 1914, SPA 45

¹²⁰ Diary, 21 October 1914; Sibelius 2005, p. 200

¹²¹ Hansen to Sibelius, 31 December 1914, SPA 45

¹²² Lüchou 1977, pp. 104–05, 108

¹²³ Leicht-Hallar 1977, p. 240

After this, a performance in Finland was also considered. In 1916, both the Finnish National Theatre and the Swedish Theatre in Helsinki simultaneously planned to give the première of *Scaramouche*.¹²⁴

In February 1916, Sibelius wrote in his diary that the Swedish Theatre was interested in performing *Scaramouche*.¹²⁵ In April, the theatre's board of directors decided to contact Wilhelm Hansen for information about Sibelius's score. The performance was planned for the theatre's next season, and at the August board meeting, it was decided to schedule it in March 1917.¹²⁶ Furthermore, in September it was reported in the press that *Scaramouche* would be performed during the 1916–17 season.¹²⁷

This news came as a surprise to the Finnish National Theatre, which had already contacted Hansen, and had asked for and been promised the world première. After reading the news reports, the theatre's director Jalmari Lahdensuo immediately wrote again to Hansen, but did not receive a reply; the board therefore decided to wait for Hansen's answer. *Scaramouche* was not mentioned in the board meeting minutes in the next few months, so apparently Hansen did not respond.¹²⁸ Earlier that spring, Hugo von Hofmannsthal's *Everyman* had been discussed at the National Theatre's board meeting, and it had been decided to include it in the programme, with music commissioned from Sibelius. In this context, Sibelius and Lahdensuo are also likely to have discussed *Scaramouche*.¹²⁹

Hansen did not reply to the Finnish National Theatre, but only to the Swedish Theatre. In October the theatre's management discussed Hansen's letter to the artistic director, Adam Poulsen (1879–1969), stating that Sibelius would be keen on

¹²⁴ This is apparent from the minutes of the board meetings of both theatres. The records of the Finnish National Theatre are kept in the theatre's own archives, and the records of the Swedish Theatre are stored in the archives of the Society of Swedish Literature in Finland (SLS).

¹²⁵ Diary, 13 February 1916; Sibelius 2005, p. 245

¹²⁶ Board meeting minutes, 12 April 1916; 3 May 1916; 30 August 1916. Swedish Theatre Archives. Society of Swedish Literature in Finland (SLS)

¹²⁷ *Dagens Press*, 1 September 1916; *Turun Sanomat*, 2 September 1916; *Uusi Suometar*, 2 September 1916; *Suomalainen*, 4 September 1916

¹²⁸ Board meeting minutes, 6 September 1916. Archive of the Finnish National Theatre. This is the only mention of *Scaramouche* in this source. I have not been able to ascertain when the theatre was in contact with Hansen, as there is no mention of *Scaramouche* in the minutes for the 1914–15 and 1915–16 seasons.

¹²⁹ At a board meeting in May, Jalmari Lahdensuo stated that he had asked Sibelius about composing the music for *Everyman*, and that the latter was 'excited' about the task (Minutes, 21 & 28 May 1916, National Theatre Archives). The première of *Everyman* in Finnish, with Sibelius's music, took place on 5 November 1916 and was a success. Although Sibelius's music was performed a number of times together with the play in Finland and even in England, it remains unpublished. The Swedish Theatre in Helsinki also performed this play (*Enhvar*) in 1916 (première on 30 October). The Swedish-language performance featured music by Palestrina and the Swedish composer Einar Nilson, composed for the première of the play that had been directed by Max Reinhardt in Berlin in 1911 (Kurki 2018). We do not know whether Sibelius offered his music to a publisher immediately after the National Theatre performance, but later (1925) there were plans for an orchestral suite, in which Lienau was very interested, but which did not materialize. Sibelius offered the full *Everyman* score to Hansen in 1928, without success. Much later (1955), when Hansen did express an interest in it, Sibelius replied that Teosto owned the rights to the work in Finland (Dahlström 2003, p. 362).

having *Scaramouche* premièred at the Swedish Theatre, and that Hansen wanted to take the composer's wishes into account as long as an agreement could be reached with the theatre's board. The material was currently being published, but Hansen could not say exactly when it would be ready.¹³⁰

The Danish actor Adam Poulsen had just moved from the Royal Theatre in Copenhagen to Helsinki, where he worked as director of the Swedish Theatre from 1916 until 1919. Poulsen, who had studied under Max Reinhardt in Berlin, came from a celebrated Danish acting family. His uncle Olaf Poulsen had visited Helsinki to act at the Swedish Theatre in 1897, and Adam himself had visited in 1914.¹³¹ In his memoirs Poulsen describes a visit to Ainola during his Helsinki years, and mentions that he had met Sibelius before, at Alfred Wilhelm Hansen's villa in Copenhagen.^{132 133}

There are several reasons why Sibelius might have wanted the première of *Scaramouche* to take place at the Swedish Theatre in Helsinki. First of all, Adam Poulsen had contact with Sibelius's Danish publisher. Secondly, when Hansen wrote that Sibelius wanted *Scaramouche* to be performed at the Swedish Theatre, Sibelius was already working on the *Everyman* commission for the National Theatre. He might therefore reasonably have expected his music to be performed simultaneously on two different stages in Helsinki.

After receiving a letter from Poulsen, Hansen immediately wrote to Sibelius about Knudsen's suggestion that *Scaramouche* should be performed at the Swedish Theatre complete with spoken dialogue. This would be like 'a dress rehearsal to assess its impact'.¹³⁴ Apparently Knudsen thought the Finnish staging would serve as a trial run for a Copenhagen performance.

Nonetheless, *Scaramouche* was not performed in March 1917; it was postponed until March 1918, with, in reserve, '*Der Schleier der Pierrette*, pantomime by Ernst von Dohnányi'.¹³⁵ The artistic director, Adam Poulsen, may well have seen *Der Schleier der Pierrette* at the Royal Theatre in Copenhagen in 1911 or its repeat performance there in the 1913–14 season, with his brother Johannes Poulsen in the role of Arlecchino. Adam Poulsen himself was director of the Dagmar Theatre in Copenhagen from 1911 until 1914.

¹³⁰ Board meeting minutes, 11 October 1916; Hansen's response to Poulsen's letter of 28 August 1916. Swedish Theatre Archives/SLS

¹³¹ Lüchou 1977, pp. 87–88; 130–32

¹³² Jag havde tidligere truffet Sibelius hos Musikforlaeggeren Alfred Wilhelm Hansen i hans Villa ved Klampenborg. ' (Poulsen 1962, p. 17)

¹³³ The publishing firm of Wilhelm Hansen was founded in 1857 by Jens Wilhelm Hansen (1821–1904). The company was then run by his sons Jonas Wilhelm (1850–1919) and Alfred Wilhelm (1854–1923). After Alfred Wilhelm, the company passed to his sons Asger Wilhelm (1889–1976) and Svend Wilhelm (1892–1960) and then to Svend Wilhelm's daughters and granddaughter.

¹³⁴ 'en Art Generalpröve, för att bedömma virkningen', Hansen to Sibelius, 2 September 1916, SPA 45

¹³⁵ 'reserv: Pierrettes slöja, pantomim av Ernst Dohnanyi'; Board meeting minutes, 18 April 1917, SLS

In May, Poulsen was authorized to sign a contract on behalf of the theatre with Wilhelm Hansen for the performance of *Scaramouche*, and performances – of *Scaramouche* or *Der Schleier der Pierrette* – were planned for the period from 16 March to 14 May 1918.¹³⁶ Plans for the performance were thus coming along nicely.

In September, when the theatre announced its programme for the coming season, it included: 'An original Finnish work, Jean Sibelius's pantomime *Scaramouche* or, if the publisher keeps us waiting for the material, Arthur Schnitzler and Ernst von Dohnányi's *Der Schleier der Pierrette*.'¹³⁷ The extra mention of the publisher is an expression of irritation with Hansen because Sibelius's score had not yet been published. Moreover, the theatre had openly juxtaposed *Scaramouche* and *Der Schleier der Pierrette*, thereby drawing attention to the similarity that Sibelius had remarked upon and tried to change when composing the music. This juxtaposition cannot not have been to Sibelius's liking. Subsequent board meetings, from October onwards, discussed only *Der Schleier der Pierrette*.¹³⁸

In any case, *Scaramouche* could not have been performed in the spring of 1918, as Sibelius was still proofreading the score from March to September 1917, and it did not appear in print until December 1918. But in the end the programme did not include *Der Schleier der Pierrette* either. Owing to the Finnish Civil War, the theatre's activities were curtailed, and it closed completely in the spring of 1918 for more than three months.¹³⁹ Immediately after the Civil War, the minutes of the Swedish Theatre do not include plans for either *Scaramouche* or *Der Schleier der Pierrette* for the 1918–19 or 1919–20 seasons.¹⁴⁰

In the end *Der Schleier der Pierrette* was not included in the Swedish Theatre's schedule until 1928, when the leading roles were played by guest actors – Mary Paischeff (Pierrette) and Alexander Saxelin (Pierrot), famous dancers who had trained at the St Petersburg Ballet School.¹⁴¹ *Scaramouche* was, however, never performed at the Swedish Theatre.

¹³⁶ Board meeting minutes, 29 May 1917

¹³⁷ 'En inhemsk original, *Scaramouche*, pantomim af Jean Sibelius eller, om förläggarna fortfarande låta vänta på sig med materialet "Pierrettes slöja" pantomim av Arthur Schnitzler och Ernst Dohnanyi." *Dagens Press*, 1 September 1917; *Åbo Underrättelser*, 2 September 1917: 'Teaternarna. Svenska teater. Direktionen meddelar uppgifter angående det stundande spelåret'.

¹³⁸ Board meeting minutes, 22 October 1917, 14 & 17 November, 5 December 1917, 9 January 1918

¹³⁹ Lüchou 1977, pp. 138–39

¹⁴⁰ Board meeting minutes, 1918 – spring 1920

¹⁴¹ Lüchou 1977, p. 159

Problems with publication

By early 1917 Sibelius had proofread the first sixteen pages of *Scaramouche*, and in March he continued with pages 17–50.¹⁴² He wrote to his friend and patron Axel Carpelan: ‘Yesterday I finally received the first pages of proofs for *Scaramouche*. Let’s see what comes of this child.’¹⁴³

By mid-April, the rest of the proofs had arrived, and Sibelius was ‘downright impressed’ to see the big pile of sheet music.¹⁴⁴ When reading the proofs, however, he was far from satisfied. The notation was full of errors and the printing was bad: ‘Read the *Scaramouche* proof. A terrible effort; I could scarcely imagine anything more miserable.’¹⁴⁵ The task of making corrections was laborious and took a long time. In July the second proof arrived and in September came the third.¹⁴⁶ In mid-September Sibelius sent the third corrections to Hansen.¹⁴⁷

The score was finally published in December 1918 and the parts a few months later, in February of the following year. The publication of *Scaramouche* involved a number of separate print runs, as is shown by a letter from Hansen to Sibelius in February, mentioning that the orchestral parts had been printed, the orchestra score had come out some months previously, and the piano version had been engraved and was ready to be printed at any time. Librettos in Swedish, German and French were already printed, and English and Danish ones were almost ready. Therefore, Hansen said, preparations could be made for the pantomime to be performed the following autumn.¹⁴⁸

The letter says that Hansen began preparations because, after the score had appeared, the première was planned once more at the Royal Theatre in Copenhagen. Karen Vedel writes: ‘When *Scaramouche* was resubmitted for consideration by the Royal Theatre in 1919, spoken dialogue had been added to the previously purely pantomimic libretto. Moreover, it was accompanied by a newly written score by Sibelius. The censorship still found the work to be, in certain parts, too similar to *Der Schleier [der Pierrette]*. However, the prospect of performing the score by the

¹⁴² Hansen to Sibelius, 27 February and 29 March 1917, SPA 45

¹⁴³ Sibelius to Carpelan, 12 March 1917: ‘I går erhöj jag ändtligen de första sidorna av *Scaramouche* i korrektur. Få nu se hvad det blir af detta barn.’ (Dahlström 2010, p. 408)

¹⁴⁴ ‘Erhöj i går hela korrekturet till *Scaramouche*. Och var rentaf imponerad.’ (Diary, 17 April 1917; Sibelius 2005, p. 260; Hansen to Sibelius, 17 April 1917, SPA 45)

¹⁴⁵ ‘Läst korrektur till *Scaramouche*. En förfärlig ansträngning då ett eländigare knapt förekommit mig’ (Diary, 26 April 1917; Sibelius 2005, p. 261)

¹⁴⁶ Hansen to Sibelius, 20 July and 6 September 1917; SPA 45

¹⁴⁷ Diary, 13 September 1917; Sibelius 2005, p. 262; Kilpeläinen 1991b, pp. 240–241

¹⁴⁸ Hansen to Sibelius, 22 February 1919, SPA 45

renowned composer persuaded Gustav Uhlendorff, Beck's successor as ballet master, to accept *Scaramouche*.¹⁴⁹

Notably, *Der Schleier der Pierrette* was once again included in the theatre's schedule in the 1918–19 season.¹⁵⁰

In June 1919, Sibelius attended the Nordic Music Days in Copenhagen and, according to Tawaststjerna, met the theatre conductor Georg Hoeberg (1887–1950), with whom he went through the *Scaramouche* score in preparation for the première.¹⁵¹ The following month Sibelius wrote in his diary that he had received payment from Hansen for *Scaramouche*,¹⁵² and that 'Hansen is pleasant enough, but they cannot be counted on. There are middlemen involved who do not wish me well.'¹⁵³ By 'middlemen' Sibelius may be referring to Trepka Bloch and perhaps also to others who were in contact with Hansen.

Despite the plans for a performance in Copenhagen, Hansen was actively trying to arrange one in Helsinki too. In October 1919 he wrote to Sibelius that he hoped to secure a performance of *Scaramouche* in Helsinki during the winter.¹⁵⁴ In November, he announced that a director's manual (*Regiebok*) had been prepared by Svend Gade.¹⁵⁵ This manual could be copied and then used in a theatre in Helsinki. Gade's manual indicates that 100 lines were to be spoken.¹⁵⁶ But, as we have seen, *Scaramouche* was no longer in the schedules of the Swedish Theatre in Helsinki, and its director Adam Poulsen had by then moved back to Copenhagen.

In February 1920 it was reported in *Hufvudstadsbladet* that *Scaramouche* would be performed at the Royal Theatre in Copenhagen 'shortly'. In this context it was reported that the Finnish Opera had also planned to put on *Scaramouche* but, because the lead role was a female dancer, the plans had to be put on hold until the opera had the appropriate resources.^{157 158}

¹⁴⁹ Vedel 2014, p. 360

¹⁵⁰ Leicht-Hallar 1977, p. 240

¹⁵¹ Tawaststjerna 1989b, p. 339; cf. Georg Hoeberg 8 July 1919

¹⁵² Diary, 4 July 1919, Sibelius 2005 p. 288

¹⁵³ 'Hansen nog så angenäm, men icke äro de att bygga på. Där äro nog andra emellan, som icke vilja mig väl.' (Diary, 12 July 1919; Sibelius 2005, p. 288)

¹⁵⁴ Hansen to Sibelius, 4 October 1919, SPA 45

¹⁵⁵ Svend Gade (1877–1952) had put on productions at the Royal Danish Theatre of the plays *Everyman* (*Det Gamle spil om Enhver*; 1914) and *Aladdin* (1919) directed by Johannes Poulsen and co-directed by Kay Nielsen. Gade had also worked for several years in various theatres in Berlin. (Jacobsen 1990, pp. 20–21, for details on Poulsen's and Gade's collaboration; Gade's productions and directing at the Royal Danish Theatre, see Leich-Hallar 1977, pp. 388–389, 416–17)

¹⁵⁶ Hansen to Sibelius, 10 November 1919, SPA 45

¹⁵⁷ *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 20 February 1920. 'Litteratur och konst. Jean Sibelius' pantomim "Scaramouche" i Köpenhamn'.

¹⁵⁸ In May 1920 Hansen informed Sibelius that Edvard Fazer, director of the Finnish Opera, no longer wanted *Scaramouche* and that the piano reduction and libretto would therefore be sent to the the Swedish Theatre in Helsinki (Hansen to Sibelius, 9 May 1920, SPA 45). At that time, ballet at the Finnish Opera was still in its infancy, and Edvard Fazer played a key role in its establishment. The first ballet performance there, *Swan Lake*, would not take place until early 1922 (see Suhonen 2016). Edvard Fazer had previously taken the Imperial Russian Ballet to Europe in the period

The same day, Sibelius wrote in his diary: '*Scaramouche* will soon be performed by the Royal Theatre [in Copenhagen]. I'm like Thomas [a doubting Thomas] about its success despite my splendid music.'¹⁵⁹ More than two years were to pass between this diary entry and the news reports ('shortly') before *Scaramouche* would finally be premièred.

The Copenhagen première

The first performance of *Scaramouche* took place at the Royal Danish Theatre in Copenhagen on 12 May 1922. It was directed by Johannes Poulsen (1881–1938), whose brother Adam had previously been director of the Swedish Theatre in Helsinki and had tried to organize the work's première in Helsinki. The choreography was by Emilie Walbom (1858–1932), who was the first woman to do choreography for the deeply traditional Royal Ballet in 1906 and had done so several times since then. The set and costumes were by Kay Nielsen and the orchestra was conducted by Georg Hoeberg (1872–1950). Johannes Poulsen and Kay Nielsen also collaborated on *The Tempest* with Sibelius's music at the same theatre in 1926.¹⁶⁰ Poulsen, Walbom and Nielsen had worked together previously.¹⁶¹



Royal Danish Theatre, Copenhagen (c. 1900)

1908–10, for example to Berlin (but not Paris) with star dancers such as Anna Pavlova. This began a year before Sergei Diaghilev's Ballets Russes first performed in Paris in 1909. The Finnish Opera's board meeting minutes do not mention *Scaramouche* at all in the period 1919–21 (Finnish Opera and Ballet Archives).

¹⁵⁹ '*Scaramouche* uppföres snart af det Kongelige teatret i Kobenhavn. Är Thomas [en tvivlande Tomas] angående framgången trots min vackra musik' (Diary, 20 February 1920, Sibelius 2005, p. 295)

¹⁶⁰ Leicht-Hallar 1977, p. 263

¹⁶¹ Vedel, 2014, pp. 361–62

Scaramouche was the first ballet-pantomime that Poulsen directed, and he also performed the title role.¹⁶² Originally, the job of directing *Scaramouche* had been offered to Max Reinhardt and Mikhail Fokine (1880–1942), a former dancer-choreographer with the Ballets Russes, who had both turned it down.^{163 164}

Kirsten Jacobsen, who has studied Johannes Poulsen's work, notes that he was a modernist among Danish directors, influenced by Max Reinhardt and Edward Gordon Craig.¹⁶⁵

The performance included dialogue, just as Sibelius had feared when he had received the revised libretto. The dialogue was part of a deliberate 'experiment' involving all aspects: pantomime, speech, music and dance.¹⁶⁶ Karen Vedel remarks: '*Scaramouche* combined several complementary styles, drawing on symbolism in the stage direction, on art nouveau in the set design and on expressionism in the choreography... it placed equal importance on the music, the set design, the mime/dance and the dialogue.'¹⁶⁷

In the role of Blondelaine was Lillebil Ibsen (née Christensen), who had previously danced at Max Reinhardt's theatre. She came to rehearsals at short notice and was permitted to design her own dance moves, incorporating the choreography by her former teacher Emilie Walbom.¹⁶⁸ Poulsen particularly praised Lillebil's performance.¹⁶⁹ According to the reviewer in *Politiken*, however, she lacked some of the wildness and temperament needed in the closing scene.^{170 171}

¹⁶² Jacobsen 1990, pp. 140–50

¹⁶³ Salmenhaara 1984, p. 375, quoting Gunnar Hauch, *Nationaltidende*, 11 May 1922, 'Sibelius og "Scaramouche"'

¹⁶⁴ Max Reinhardt had visited Copenhagen with actors from the Deutsches Theater Berlin in the autumn of 1920 and then later as a director in the spring of 1921, working with Danish actors and singers on Offenbach's operetta *Orpheus in the Underworld*. (Huesmann 1983, Nos 2432–36, p. 417). During these visits, *Scaramouche* is likely to have been discussed. Mikhail Fokine had lived and worked in Copenhagen in 1918–19 (Vedel 2012, p. 511).

¹⁶⁵ Jacobsen 1990, pp. 9–15, 174

¹⁶⁶ Poulsen said: 'Medens man herhjemme gerne holder paa det bestaaende og engang vedtagne, forsøger man i Utlandet stadig at finde nye Veje for Skuespilkunsten og det er det, vi nu vil forsøge med "Scaramouche"... Teaterkunsten traenger til Fornyelse, men Fornyselsen kan kun komme gennem Eksperimenter' (Whereas we here at home [in Denmark] like to hold on that which is enduring and accepted, abroad they are constantly trying to find new avenues for the performing art, and this is exactly what *Scaramouche* is trying to do... Theatre needs renewal; renewal can only be achieved by experimenting' – Jacobsen 1990, p. 141, quoted in *Berlingske Tidende*, 12 May 1922; also *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 16 May 1922: 'Sibelius' Scaramouche i Copenhagen. Vad Johannes Poulsen Säger'.)

¹⁶⁷ Vedel 2012, p. 524

¹⁶⁸ Jacobsen 1990, p. 149, Ibsen 1961, p.133

¹⁶⁹ Ibsen 1961, p. 134; *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 6 June 1922

¹⁷⁰ 'Till trods for sin talentfulde dans manglede hun nogen grad den vildskab og det temperament, som krævedes i slutscenen.' (Jacobsen 1990, p. 149, quoting *Politiken*, 13 May 1922, signed A.W.)

¹⁷¹ On this occasion the role of Blondelaine was originally intended to be taken by the Danish actress Asta Nielsen (1881–1972), known for her roles in silent films, but nothing came of this (*Hufvudstadsbladet*, 17 October and 7 December 1921 'Litteratur och Konst'; *Svenska Tidningen*, 6 December 1921 'Ur utlandets dagskrönika'). Elna Jörgen-Jensen, the theatre's regular dancer, was ill (*Hufvudstadsbladet*, 18 April 1923). Lillebil Ibsen danced in all nine performances in the spring of 1922. Sibelius was a familiar composer to her, as she had previously danced to the music of *Valse triste* (with choreography by her mother) at her own ballet performances (Ibsen 1961, pp. 121–24). Lillebil

Reviewers of the première compared *Scaramouche* to *Der Schleier der Pierrette*, but the difference was that *Scaramouche* included dialogue and also shouting when more intensity was required.¹⁷² The treatment of the dialogue was compared with Maurice Maeterlinck.¹⁷³ The reviewers no doubt remembered the production of *Der Schleier der Pierrette* in 1911, choreographed by Hans Beck, in which Poulsen had played the role of Arlecchino,¹⁷⁴ which was repeated in the 1913–14 and 1918–19 seasons.¹⁷⁵

Both Kirsten Jacobsen and Tawaststjerna note that reviews of *Scaramouche* used the word ‘perverse’. When writing about the sets and the costumes, the word ‘half-perverse’ (‘halvpervers’) was mentioned;¹⁷⁶ the ‘unexplored and eternal passion’ of Sibelius’s music ‘was manifested in black mysticism and incomprehensible visions’ and contained ‘a demonic wildness and his refinement almost bordering on perversity...’¹⁷⁷ Jacobsen has observed that at the première Sibelius’s music attracted attention and appreciation.¹⁷⁸ Indeed, the music was even rated as excellent.¹⁷⁹

The Finnish press wrote about the performances and the reception received by Sibelius’s music in Denmark.¹⁸⁰ *Svenska Pressen* clearly headlined the comments in the Danish papers: ‘Sibelius won a great victory as a dramatist – The whole score is a masterpiece – Gripping poetry.’ A few days later, Sibelius noted its success in his diary.¹⁸¹

Both Jacobsen and Ibsen (in her memoirs) report that the intention had been for Sibelius to conduct the music at the première, but he cancelled owing to illness.¹⁸² Sibelius’s diary contains no mention of a trip to Copenhagen. In late April he wrote about having flu symptoms, and in early May he learned that his brother Christian was suffering from an incurable illness that would lead to his death two months later. Perhaps these were the reasons for his cancellation.¹⁸³

Ibsen was also a member of the Norwegian cultural élite, as she was married to Tancred Ibsen, whose grandfathers were on his mother’s side the Nobel Prize-winning author Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson and on his father’s side the playwright Henrik Ibsen.

¹⁷² Jacobsen 1990, p. 142

¹⁷³ Vedel 2014, p. 363

¹⁷⁴ Jacobsen 1990 p. 142; Leicht-Hallar 1977, p. 240

¹⁷⁵ Leicht-Hallar 1977, p. 240

¹⁷⁶ Jacobsen 1990, p. 142, quoting Gunnar Hauch, *Theater XXII*, p. 150

¹⁷⁷ Tawaststjerna 1988, p. 108, quoting *Politiken*, 13 May 1922

¹⁷⁸ ‘I samtiden vækte musikken til *Scaramouche* både opmærksomhed og anerkendelse’ (Jacobsen 1990, p. 144)

¹⁷⁹ Tawaststjerna 1988, p. 108, quoting *Berglinske Tidende* and *Politiken*, 13.5.1922; Dahlström 2005, p. 480, note 14, quoting *Social-Demokraten*, 18 May 1922

¹⁸⁰ *Helsingin Sanomat*, 17 May 1922; *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 16, 18 & 19 May 1922; *Svenska Pressen*, 18 May 1922 (‘Sibelius vann en stor seger som dramatiker – Hela partituret ett mästerverk – En våldtagande poesi’)

¹⁸¹ Diary, 22 May 1922; Sibelius 2005, p. 315

¹⁸² Jacobsen 1990, p. 144; Ibsen 1961, p. 133

¹⁸³ Diary, 27 April & 3 May 1922; Sibelius 2005, pp. 314–15

Scaramouche remained in the Copenhagen schedules for a couple of years, during which time it was performed at the Royal Theatre 26 times, with various dancers in the role of Blondelaine.¹⁸⁴

After the première, Hansen wrote to Sibelius: '*Scaramouche* was a great success yesterday... We're working towards a performance at the Staatsoper in Dresden, Grand Opéra in Paris, Coven [sic] Garden, the Operas in New York and Stockholm.'¹⁸⁵

Hansen clearly expected *Scaramouche* to succeed, as after the première he issued some piano arrangements by Eyvind Alnaes: *Scène d'amour* (1922) and *Choix de mélodies tirées de la Pantomime tragique Scaramouche* (1923). Even before that, a piano version of *Scaramouche* by the Danish composer Otto Olsen (1919) and Nicolaj Hansen's arrangement of the *Scène d'amour* for salon orchestra (1920) had been published. The piano adaptation by Sibelius himself of the *Scène d'amour*, which he had supplied to Hansen as early as 1914, appeared in 1921 together with the *Danse élégiaque*.¹⁸⁶

The first Helsinki performance: 19 March 1923

The next place *Scaramouche* was performed was Helsinki, where it had its Finnish-language première at the National Theatre on 19 March 1923. Surprisingly, this Finnish performance has never been researched in detail before, even though it involved music by Sibelius and a theatrical event that was announced in advance in *Helsingin Sanomat* as 'an extremely interesting and eagerly anticipated première.'¹⁸⁷ The following day it was even front-page news, with performance photos (*Uusi Suomi*, 20 March 1923), and several reviews were published.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁴ Leicht-Hallar 1977, p. 252

¹⁸⁵ '*Scaramouche* fik en stor Sukces i gaar. [...] Vi arbejder nu for en Opførelse paa Staatsoper i Dresden, Store Opera i Paris, Coven [sic] Garden, Operaen i New York samt Stockholm.' (Hansen to Sibelius, 13 May 1922, SPA 45)

¹⁸⁶ Dahlström 2003, pp. 313–15

¹⁸⁷ 'erinomaisen mielenkiintoinen ja suurella jännityksellä odotettu ensi-ilta' (*Helsingin Sanomat*, 16 March 1923. 'Kirjallisuus ja taide. Kansallisteatteri. Mielenkiintoinen ensi-ilta maanantaina')

¹⁸⁸ This Helsinki production of *Scaramouche* has not been studied by theatre, dance or music researchers. The performance is, however, mentioned in Heinz Kindermann's *Theatergeschichte Europas IX*, which includes a photo and caption that mistakenly names the director as Eero Snellman (in fact he designed the sets). (Kindermann 1970, p. 684). Karen Vedel writes about the Helsinki performance, but her only sources are a single newspaper item, included in a book of reviews, and a poster at the Theatre Museum. There are also mistakes in her account, such as claiming that the actor Jussi Snellman and director Eero Snellman were brothers. Among Finnish writers on the Finnish National Theatre, Rafael Koskimies writes just 16 lines about it, half of which are quoted from Toivo Haapanen's music review in *Ilta-lehti*. (Koskimies 1972, pp. 143–44). In his memoirs, theatre director Eino Kalima devotes only 10 lines to it, Ruth Snellman (Sibelius's daughter) only four, and choreographer Maggie Gripenberg none (Kalima 1968, pp. 149–50; Snellman 1970, p. 166; Maggie Gripenberg 1950). A more recent book, *Suomen teatteri ja draama (Finnish Theatre and Drama)* (2010) does not include it at all either as a theatrical or a dance production, although the National Theatre's dance performances and Maggie Gripenberg are discussed separately (Seppälä-Tanskanen 2010; Laakkonen 2010, pp. 139–52). Among Sibelius scholars, Erik Tawaststjerna, like many others, does not mention the performance. Salmenhaara

As we have seen, the Finnish National Theatre had been interested in securing the world première of *Scaramouche* in 1916, and had received Hansen's consent for this, but nothing had come of the plan and Hansen had been in contact with the Swedish Theatre in Helsinki instead. After the Copenhagen première, though, Hansen offered *Scaramouche* to the National Theatre. Around the same time the Finnish Opera planned to perform it, and this was reported in the press.



National Theatre, Helsinki (1902–05)

(CC BY 4.0)

The project was first discussed by the theatre's board in late August 1922. The theatre's director, Eino Kalima, was of the opinion that it belong at the Finnish Opera, and he had therefore held talks with the opera's director, Edvard Fazer. Sibelius, for his part, had been in contact with Kalima and, as a result, Kalima submitted the project to the board: 'Only when the composer wanted it to be performed by the National Theatre did he [Kalima] propose that it be included in the programme.'¹⁸⁹ Sibelius may also have had a personal interest, as his daughter Ruth Snellman acted at that theatre.

mentions it briefly, as do Caron and Vignal, and the Sibelius.fi website. (Salmenhaara 1984, p. 374; Salmenhaara 1996, p. 127; Caron 1997, p. 206; Vignal 2004, p. 626; Sibelius.fi/Scaramouche)

¹⁸⁹ 'vaan kun säveltäjä oli tahtonut että se tulisi Kansallisteatterin esitettäväksi, esitti hän [teatterinjohtaja] sen ottamista ohjelmistoon' (Board meeting minutes, 31 August 1922. National Theatre Archive)



Eino Kalima

Hansen first contacted Sibelius, and then sent information about the performance rights directly to the theatre, but did not receive a response. In mid-August, Hansen asked Sibelius to contact the board.¹⁹⁰ A week before the board meeting on 31 August 1922, it was reported in the press – in the context of the coming season's schedule at the Finnish Opera – that 'negotiations are ongoing about the performance of Sibelius's pantomime *Scaramouche*.'¹⁹¹ Apparently, Kalima had discussed the matter with Edvard Fazer, as at the same time the Finnish Opera revealed its plans; its ballet section had started its operations at the beginning of the year with a performance of *Swan Lake*. At the Finnish Opera's board meeting in the spring of 1922, the conductor Robert Kajanus suggested performing *Scaramouche*, but the matter was left undecided.¹⁹²

Probably owing to Sibelius's influence, Hansen offered *Scaramouche* to the Finnish National Theatre at a cheaper rate than usual. Kalima was assigned the task of contacting the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra to play the music, and had to 'provide a libretto translation'.¹⁹³ As the theatre did not have its own orchestra, it collaborated with the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra which, in addition to giving its own concerts, also played at the Finnish Opera and at theatre productions.¹⁹⁴ Thereafter things moved ahead swiftly: the next board meeting in September discussed the draft contract received from Hansen.¹⁹⁵ Subsequent minutes from 1922–23 contain no further references to *Scaramouche*.

¹⁹⁰ Hansen to Sibelius, 17 August 1922, SPA 45

¹⁹¹ 'underhandlingar om uppförande av Sibelius pantomim *Scaramouche* pågå även' (*Svenska Pressen*, 23 August 1922: 'Finska Operan. Den stundande säsongen')

¹⁹² Finnish Opera board meeting minutes, 23 May 1922. Finnish Opera and Ballet Archives

¹⁹³ Board meeting minutes, 31 August 1922. National Theatre Archive

¹⁹⁴ The Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra played in theatres until 1931 and at the Finnish Opera until 1963. This part of its activity was regarded as of secondary importance, but was an important source of income (Marvia-Vainio 1993, pp. 400–01). Unfortunately we do not know who Kalima ordered the Finnish translation from: the printed translation omits the translator's name and the archive material does not shed any light on the subject. Kalima may even have translated it himself, as he did with several other plays (Knudsen 1923). The general ledger for the performance is missing from the archives (only the individual role-books are in the archives of the Theatre Museum), and there is no mention of it in the minutes of the Theatre's board meetings.

¹⁹⁵ Board meeting minutes, 18 September 1922. National Theatre Archive

Direction and choreography for the production were entrusted to Maggie Gripenberg (1881–1976), a pioneer of the art of dance in Finland, who had studied eurhythmics under Émile Jaques-Dalcroze in Dresden.¹⁹⁶ The set design was by Eero Snellman and the costumes were by Matti Warén. The visual effect was described as ‘colourful’.¹⁹⁷

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Ruth Snellman as Blondelaine and Einar Rinne as Scaramouche

© Finnish Theatre Museum Archive

The role of Blondelaine was played by Sibelius’s actress daughter Ruth Snellman (1894–1976), who was engaged at the theatre. She rehearsed the dancing for the role for three months¹⁹⁹ but, as many critics pointed out, the role really needed a

¹⁹⁶ In 1906 Gripenberg was the first person to dance to the music of *Valse triste* (cf. the music for the play *Kuolema* at the National Theatre in 1903, featuring the actress Katri Rautio). She choreographed the dances for the 1916 performance of Hofmannsthal’s *Everyman*, and would do the same for *The Tempest* in 1927 and more performances of *Everyman* in 1935. Later, she did the choreography for the Finnish National Ballet performances of *Scaramouche* and *The Tempest* in 1946. In her memoirs she does not mention this 1923 *Scaramouche* performance at all (Gripenberg 1950). Gripenberg, who ‘presided over the rehearsals and had clearly taken great care with the scenic performance’, merited ‘unqualified appreciation’ (‘som haft inövandat om hand och synbarligen nedlagt den största möda på det sceniska framförandet, ett oförbehållsamt erkännande’ – Hjalmar Lenning, *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 20 March 1923, ‘Litteratur och Konst. Kansallisteatteri. Runar Schildt: Hirsipuumies – Sibelius: *Scaramouche*’).

¹⁹⁷ Haapanen, *Ilta-lehti*, 20 March 1923

¹⁹⁸ Reviews of the performance appeared in various newspapers: *Uusi Suomi*, 20 March 1923; *Helsingin Sanomat*, 20 March 1923; *Ilta-lehti*, 20 March 1923; *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 20 March 1923; *Svenska Pressen*, 20 March 1923; *Suomen Sosialidemokraatti*, 21 March 1923; *Suomen Kuvalehti* No. 12–13/28 March 1923; *Åbo Unterrättelser*, 30 March 1923; *Karjala*, 1 April 1923; *Ylioppilaslehti*, No. 12/ 28 April 1923; *Valvoja-Aika*, No. 5–6/1 May 1923

¹⁹⁹ Helmi Krohn, *Suomen Kuvalehti* No. 12–13/1923, 28 March 1923, ‘*Scaramouche*’

performer who was primarily a dancer.²⁰⁰ Her performance was praised and was consistently described as charming and beautiful. But, like Lillebil Ibsen, 'Madame Snellman's temperament was insufficient for the powerful climax in the closing act.'²⁰¹ This was Ruth Snellman's first important role in a play for which her father had composed the music. Later she played Ariel in *The Tempest* (1927), Swanwhite (1930) and Paramour in *Everyman* (1935). In her memoirs, she openly admits that 'as a young actress I got the role of Blondelaine in *Scaramouche* because my father had composed the music.'²⁰²

Leilon was played by her husband Jussi Snellman (no relation to Eero Snellman), and *Scaramouche* by Einar Rinne. *Scaramouche* divided critical opinion: some emphasized his 'gloomy imagination' and others saying he was portrayed as a 'robber type' instead of 'having a mystical, mysteriously fascinating power.'²⁰³



Einar Rinne as Scaramouche

(© Finnish Theatre Museum Archive)

²⁰⁰ Toivo Haapanen, *Iltalehti*, 20 March 1923, 'Suomen Kansallisteatteri: Sibeliuksen *Scaramouche*'

²⁰¹ 'slutaktens våldsamma stegring räckte fru Snellmans temperament icke.' (Lenning, *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 20 March 1923; also Krohn, *Suomen Kuvalehti*, 28 March 1923)

²⁰² 'sain Blondelainen roolin *Scaramouchessa* nuorena näyttelijättärenä siksi, että isäni oli säveltänyt siihen musiikin.' (Snellman 1970, p. 166)

²⁰³ Nils Luchou, *Svenska Pressen*, 20 March 1923; 'Runar Schildt och Jean Sibelius på Finska Teatern': dyster fantasiefullhet'; Krohn, *Suomen Kuvalehti*, *ibid.*; Åbo Unterrättelse, 20 March 1923, 'Sibelius "Scaramouche": "stråkrövare" '

In general Sibelius's music was praised, but Knudsen's text came in for criticism: 'It is surprising that Sibelius could have been inspired by such a text'.²⁰⁴ The spoken dialogue used at the performance was confusing: 'The main fault with yesterday's performance was that it was too much talk and too little real pantomime';²⁰⁵ 'unusually high demands were placed on the performers, who actually had to be ballet artists and actors at the same time.'²⁰⁶

The music was played by the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Tauno Hannikainen (1896–1968). Evert Katila wrote in *Helsingin Sanomat*: 'Most of the words spoken on stage tend to be drowned out by the orchestra; you hear that something is being said, but actually understanding it requires some effort. It might be advisable to play those parts of the score that accompany dialogue *piano* or *pianissimo*, no matter what it says in the score.'²⁰⁷ This comment illustrates the problem that Knudsen caused by adding dialogue.

The critics paid particular attention to the beginning of Act II. The music critic and composer Lauri Ikonen wrote: 'The strongest passages were the "wordless" ones, such as the fine, atmospheric portrayal of Leilon's troubled mood with the flute solo.'²⁰⁸ The theatre critic Hjalmar Lenning took the view: 'The most appealing and touching part of this beautiful music is the depiction of Leilon's sorrow in the second act and his reunion with Blondelaine.'²⁰⁹

Unlike in the case of the Copenhagen performance, the reviews do not mention the 'perversity' of the performance or the music. Another interesting difference is that, despite being critical of the text, the critics did not note the connection with Schnitzler's *Der Schleier der Pierrette*. Either the critics were unfamiliar with that work or the critics did not point out the plagiarism out of respect for Sibelius.²¹⁰

²⁰⁴ 'ihmetyttää, että Sibelius on sellainen teksti voinut innostuttaa' ([reviewer's name unclear], *Karjala*, 1 April 1923, 'Taidekirje Helsingistä')

²⁰⁵ 'Eiisen esityksen yleisenä vikana olikin, että se oli liian paljon puhenäytelmää ja liian vähän todellista pantomiimia.' (Haapanen, *Ilta-lehti*, 20 March 1923)

²⁰⁶ 'Ovanligt stor krav på de medverkande vilka egentligen borde på samma gång vara balettartister och skådespelare' (Lenning, *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 20 March 1923)

²⁰⁷ 'Henkilöiden näyttämöllä lausumat sanat pyrkivät suurimmalta osalta hukkumaan orkesterin soittoon, kuulee kyllä puhuttavan mutta sanojen ymmärtäminen vaatii ponnistusta. Olisi ehkä käytännöllistä soittaa ne partituurin kohdat, jolloin puhutaan piano tai pianissimo – riippumatta siitä kuinka musiikki on kirjoitettu.' (Evert Katila, *Helsingin Sanomat*, 20 March 1923: 'Jean Sibelius "Scaramouche"')

²⁰⁸ 'Kiinteimpiä olivatkin näyttämöllä "mykemmät" kohdat, kuten esim. hieno tunnelmakuvaus Leilonin murheelliseen mielialaan liittyvine huilusoolineen.' (Lauri Ikonen, *Uusi Suomi*, 20 March 1923: '"Scaramouche" ja "Hirsipuumies" Kansallisteatterissa')

²⁰⁹ 'Det vackraste och måhända mest gripande i alla denna vackra musik är dock skildringen av Leilons sorg i andra akten och återseende med Blondelaine' (Lenning, *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 20 March 1923)

²¹⁰ They were in fact probably familiar with Schnitzler's work, as the Finnish opera singer Irma Tervani had played the lead role at its première in Dresden, and this had been reported in the Finnish press along with the plot of the pantomime. The plot was discussed in particular in *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 10 February 1910 ('Musikbrevet från Dresden') and *Uusi Suometar*, 3 April 1910 ('Kirjallisuutta ja taidetta. Musiikkikirje Dresdenistä')

Despite the positive critical reception of Sibelius's music and the performance itself, the production failed to attract a large audience. *Scaramouche* shared a programme with the première of the one-act play *Hirsipuumies* by the Swedish-speaking Finnish writer Runar Schildt. The newspaper *Karjala* in Vyborg, the largest provincial newspaper outside Helsinki in the 1920s, reported: 'Of course there was a full house on the first night, but when *Hirsipuumies-Scaramouche* was performed for a second time, only a negligible quantity of tickets was sold. This won't be a box-office hit.'²¹¹ The total number of performances – over a five-week period in March and April – was just eight.²¹²

Because of the inclusion of the music, ticket prices were higher than average. Hjalmar Lenning in *Hufvudstadsbladet* wrote that the evening's programme, including the pantomime, was not what the theatre audiences were used to, but on the other hand the works: 'have given the National Theatre a programme designed to arouse interest in far wider circles than are normally presented to its audiences.'²¹³ Interestingly, both works were later performed on numerous occasions abroad even though they had not appealed to the National Theatre's audiences.²¹⁴

Theatre professionals, on the other hand, were more favourably impressed. In the journal *Valvoja-Aika*, the reviewer Anna-Maria Tallgren wrote that this first night was 'the most significant of the entire season' and, about *Scaramouche*: 'the libretto itself – made in the spirit of Maeterlinck – was trivial in the extreme, so the work's raison d'être was exclusively Sibelius's music.'²¹⁵ In his memoirs the theatre's director Eino Kalima wrote: '*Scaramouche* enchanted the audience above all on account of the music. Altogether the evening was one of the most important that year.'^{216 217}

²¹¹ 'Ensi-illassa oli luonnollisesti täysi huone, mutta kun *Hirsipuumies-Scaramouche* toista kertaa esitettiin oli vain mitättömän vähän lippuja myyty. Kassakappaletta tästä ei tule.' ([name unclear], *Karjala*, 1 April 1923, 'Taidekirje Helsingistä')

²¹² That spring's most popular production, the Hungarian Ferenc Herczeg's comedy *The Gyurkovics Girls*, was played 20 times. In terms of the number of performances that season, *Scaramouche* was only average, and certainly not among the most popular. By contrast Hugo von Hofmannsthal's *Everyman* with Sibelius's music, in the 1916–17 season, was the most popular production that season (24 performances) (Report 1916–17; Report 1922–23; Finnish Theatre. Diaari I. *Scaramouche* 623. Performance Posters 19 March – 23 April 1923. Archives of the Finnish National Theatre).

²¹³ '...har givit Kansallisteatteri ett program, vilket är ägnat att väcka intresse i långt vidare kretsar än dem som i vardagslag representera teaterns publik.' (Lenning, *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 20 March 1923)

²¹⁴ *Hirsipuumies* was later performed at, for example, the Royal Theatre in Copenhagen in 1929 and in various seasons in the 1940s, and also in Paris (in French). (Leicht-Hallar 1977, p. 178; Kalima 1968, p. 149)

²¹⁵ 'näytäntökauden kaikkein merkittävimpiä'; 'libretto itse – Maeterlinckin henkeen kaavailtu – oli täysin mitätön, joten kappaleen raison d'être johtui yksinomaan Sibeliuksen musiikista.' (Anna-Maria Tallgren, *Valvoja-Aika* No. 5–6, 1 May 1923, 'Teatterikatsaus. Ensi-iltoja Helsingin suomenkielisillä näyttämöillä')

²¹⁶ '*Scaramouche* lumosi yleisön ennen kaikkea musiikillaan. Illasta kokonaisuudessaan tuli yksi vuoden merkittävimpiä.' (Kalima 1968, pp. 149–50)

²¹⁷ Nonetheless, Kalima did not work too strenuously on *Scaramouche*. In October, six months after the production had ended, Hansen wrote to Sibelius, mentioning that they had heard nothing about the Finnish performances although they had sent several enquiries to Kalima; in November he wrote to Sibelius again on the same topic, because there had been no clarification about how many performances there had been, for invoicing purposes. (Hansen to Sibelius, 27 October & 8 November 1923, SPA 45)

Sibelius himself was not present at the first night because he was in Rome, where the previous evening he had conducted a concert including his Second Symphony. He did not get the chance to see the Helsinki production until after his return; he will therefore probably have attended the final performance, on 23 April. Various writings about Sibelius suggest that he did see the Helsinki performance, but do not offer any evidence to substantiate this claim.²¹⁸

Might Sibelius have assisted with the preparations for the performance before setting off on his trip? At the very least he probably discussed it with his daughter, as the theatre was a very important part of the Sibelius family's life. In his memoirs Eino Kalima wrote that Sibelius himself rarely went to the theatre, 'but he keenly followed its activities', whilst Aino Sibelius 'saw almost all of the plays shown at the National Theatre.'²¹⁹ There is, however, no mention of Sibelius being involved in the performance planning in the memoirs of the persons concerned, in press reports, in any known correspondence or in the archives of the National Theatre.²²⁰

Performances and planned performances in the 1920s

The following performances of *Scaramouche*, in Oslo (Kristiania, première 1 December 1923 at Centralteatret) and Stockholm (première 29 September 1924 at the Royal Opera), were largely based on the Copenhagen performance. Both used the sets and costumes by Kay Nielsen, and the Stockholm performance had the same direction and choreography as well. In Oslo the choreography was by Gyda Christensen and the role of Blondelaine was danced by her daughter Lillebil Ibsen. In Stockholm it was taken by the prima ballerina of the Swedish Ballet, Ebon Strandin.²²¹

In Oslo Sibelius's music was played by a small orchestra under the baton of the theatre's own conductor, Torolf Voss. *Scaramouche* was a success, receiving 26 performances. In Stockholm it was conducted by Wilhelm Stenhammar, to whom Sibelius had dedicated his Sixth Symphony the previous year.²²²

²¹⁸ Salmenhaara 1984, p. 374; Salmenhaara 1996, p. 127; Vignal 2004, p. 626; Sibelius.fi/Scaramouche. Marc Vignal also claims erroneously that the production omitted the spoken dialogue (Sibelius assista en revanche l'année suivante à une production donnée au Théâtre national d'Helsinki, sans dialogues parlés et avec sa fille Ruth dans le rôle de Blondelaine)

²¹⁹ 'mutta seurasi vilkkaasti sen toimintaa'; 'näki lähes kaikki Kansallisteatterissa esitettävät näytelmät.' (Kalima 1968, p. 252)

²²⁰ Material related to the performance can be found in the archives of the Finnish National Theatre and the Theatre Museum, including role-books, photos and Matti Warén's costume sketches

²²¹ Vedel 2014, pp. 367–368; Ibsen 1961, pp. 169–170. Gyda Christensen had done the choreography for *Der Schleier der Pierrette* and had played the role of Pierrette in Oslo in 1910 (première 12 May), Wiers-Jenssen 1924, p. 233; Nationalteatret/Forestillningsarkiv

²²² Gjesdahl 1964, p. 136 quoting Reidar Mjoen, *Dagbladet*; Hansen to Sibelius statement 23 September 1924, SPA 45

Scaramouche was also given in Gothenburg (première 1 November 1926 at Stora Teatern), Ebon Strandin from Stockholm making a guest appearance as Blondelaine. It was directed by the Danish scenographer Poul Kanneworff, who was employed there, and the orchestra was conducted by the Italian Tullio Voghera. Between them, these two Swedish stagings accounted for a further 22 performances.²²³

The first German performance was in Dessau in 1927 (première 22 May 1927 at the Friedrich-Theater [the former Court Theatre]), directed by the theatre's intendant Georg Hartmann and under the baton of its regular conductor, Peter Schmitz. Blondelaine was danced by the Vienna-born Hertha von Türk-Rohn, who was regularly engaged by the theatre. Unfortunately the theatre's archives do not shed any light on how many performances were given. In the *Allgemeine Musikzeitung* the dramaturge Arthur Seidl wrote an article lambasting Knudsen's text.²²⁴

During the 1920s performances of *Scaramouche* were planned at a number of prestigious venues: the Metropolitan Opera in New York, Empire Theatre in London, and the Deutsches Theater and Großes Schauspielhaus in Berlin. The work was suggested to (but not taken up by) a number of key figures – among them the Ballets Russes impresario Sergei Diaghilev (to whom Sibelius wrote, at Hansen's suggestion) and to the theatre director Max Reinhardt, founder of the Salzburg Festival. There was even a suggestion to include it in a Ballets Russes tour to America, or in a tour organized by Finnish Americans. None of these plans came to fruition.²²⁵

In the mid-1920s there were plans for *Scaramouche* in Paris, both at the Opéra Comique and at the Odéon. In the end, it was given there at the Théâtre du Champs-Élysées, in a guest appearance by the Royal Danish Theatre. There was just a single performance on 10 June 1927, in the context of the first conference organized by the Société Universelle du Théâtre. The Danes opened the conference with an event that included theatre, music and dance; *Scaramouche* was the last item on the

²²³ Fromell 1929, pp. 91, 396–399, 404

²²⁴ Poster, 22 May 1927. Anhaltisches Theater Dessau/Archiv. Copy and information provided to the present author by Michael Assmann 23 August and 16 September 2019; Arthur Seidl 1927, *Allgemeine Musikzeitung*. *Scaramouche*, pp. 622–23; *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 4 June 1927, 'Sibelius "Scaramouche" uppförd i Dessau'

²²⁵ New York Metropolitan Opera: Ibsen 1961, pp. 139–142 (a plan with Lillebil Ibsen as Blondelaine). Hansen to Sibelius, 29 May and 12 June 1923 (a plan with conductor Carlo Edwards), SPA 45. – London Empire Theatre: *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 17 November 1924. 'Litteratur och Konst. Sibelius "Scaramouche" uppföras i London' (a plan with Ebon Strandin as Blondelaine). – Berlin Deutsches Theater: *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 19 May 1922 'Jean Sibelius succés i Köpenhamn' (a plan with Lillebil Ibsen as Blondelaine), Grosses Schauspielhaus: Dahlström 2016, p. 379, Adolf Paul to Sibelius 18 October 1924 (a plan with Ebon Strandin as Blondelaine). – Diaghilev's Ballet Russes: Hansen to Sibelius, 18 January 1924, SPA 45; Tawaststjerna 1988, p. 109. – Max Reinhardt: Poulsen 1946, pp. 13–14 (a plan in discussion with Johannes Poulsen in 1927, 'Reinhardt fortæller om *Scaramouche*, som han tænker paa at spille'). – The Ballets Russes American tours and Finnish Americans performers organized by Toivo H. Nekton: Hansen to Sibelius, 18 January 1924, SPA 45; Tawaststjerna 1988, p. 179

programme. It was again conducted by Georg Hoeberg, and Blondelaine was danced by Ulla Poulsen, wife of Johannes Poulsen.²²⁶

The Finnish press wrote about the conference and the invited guests who were present, but Sibelius's music was only mentioned in passing. On 26 June 1927 the composer noted in his diary: 'The failure of *Scaramouche* has depressed both me and Aino.'²²⁷ This probably refers not just to that fact that there was only one performance in Paris but also to the lack of stagings in other major musical centres, despite attempts to arrange them.²²⁸

A new text – Adolf Paul

After *Scaramouche*, Knudsen approached Sibelius in vain with new requests for pantomimes. In 1915 he proposed *Moder og Barn (Mother and Child)* based on a fairy tale by Hans Christian Andersen, in 1920 *Skygger (Shadows)*, in 1922 *Kavakami* and in 1923 *Okon fuoko*.²²⁹ In the end Leevi Madetoja wrote the music for *Okon fuoko* which, Erkki Salmenhaara writes, represented the first setback in Madetoja's career: 'It is not known whether Leevi Madetoja went to see *Scaramouche*, but in any case that should have warned him about Poul Knudsen!'²³⁰

In 1921 Adolf Paul, too, tried to persuade Sibelius to collaborate on a pantomime, but Sibelius was not enthusiastic. Paul wrote to him: 'Will you write music for a big pantomime that I've written? We divide the income and it will be performed here [in Berlin] immediately.'²³¹ In 1928, however, Sibelius was evidently feeling dissatisfied with Poulsen's text, and wrote to Aino from Berlin: 'I'd like Paul to write a new text for *Scara[mouch]e*. I wrote to Hansen and yesterday I received the piano arrangement. Now we'll see.'²³² But this plan too came to nothing. Sibelius was right

²²⁶ *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 17 December 1926 'Sibelius *Scaramouche* i Paris och Warschau'; *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 1 January 1927 'Uppförandet av Sibelius "*Scaramouche*" i Paris framskjutet'; Gustav Hetsch, *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 16 January 1927. The Danish musician and composer Emil Reesen (1887–1964), who was in Paris at that time, tried to have *Scaramouche* performed there at the Odéon-Théâtre de l'Europe and also in Poland, at the Opera in Warsaw, but these plans fell through.

'Finländsk musik i Paris'; Hansen to Sibelius, 14 December 1926, SPA 45. Leicht-Hallar 1977, p. 252

²²⁷ 'Scaramouches nederlag nedstämt mig och även Aino.' (Diary, 26 June 1927; Sibelius 2005 p. 330)

²²⁸ *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 15 June 1927, 16 June 1927 'Sibelius *Scaramouche* på parisisk scen'; Anna Levertin, *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 23 June 1927 'Gästspelet på Théâtre des Champs Elysées'

²²⁹ Diary, 1 May 1915, Sibelius 2005, p. 228, p. 441 note 92; Hansen to Sibelius, 7 October 1922 and 17 May 1923, SPA 45

²³⁰ 'Ei tiedetä, kävikö Leevi Madetoja katsomassa *Scaramouchen*, mutta sen olisi pitänyt joka tapauksessa varoittaa häntä Poul Knudsenista!' (Salmenhaara 1987, p. 259; p. 210)

²³¹ 'Will du skriva musik till en stor pantomim af mig? Vi dela tantiemerna och spelad bli den genast här.' (Paul to Sibelius, 24 January 1921 [Dahlström 2016, p. 351])

²³² Sibelius to Aino, 1 March 1928: 'Jag ville att Paul skulle göra en ny text till Scara-e. Skref till Hansen och fick i dag klaverutdraget. Få nu se.' Talas 2007, p. 376, see also Tawaststjerna 1988, p. 286

to want changes to the text: *Scaramouche* did not begin to find greater success until the dialogue was removed and the work was performed as a ballet.

Ballet performances from the 1930s onwards

Scaramouche has been performed as a ballet by three different companies: the Finnish National Ballet, Latvian National Ballet and Marquis de Cuevas's ballet company.

The work was first included in the Finnish National Ballet's programme in 1935, at the time of Sibelius's 70th birthday, and after that it was frequently performed in conjunction with his birthday celebrations. The 1955 *Scaramouche* with choreography by Irja Koskinen became one of the National Ballet's 'cultural exports'. The most recent performance was in 1974, with choreography by Margaretha von Bahr.²³³ (See appendix.)

Scaramouche was mounted by the Latvian National Ballet in Rīga in 1936 with choreography by Osvalds Lēmanis, conducted by Oļģerts Bištēviņš. There were nine performances, and the work was included in the schedules again in 1971–81 (choreography: Alexanders Lambergis), with 29 performances in all. This production was also seen in Finland, at the Kuopio Dance Festival.²³⁴

In 1951 Marquis de Cuevas's ballet company performed *Scaramouche* in Paris (première 30 November 1951 at the Théâtre de l'Empire). The choreography was by Rosella Hightower, an American dancer with the company, who also danced the role of Blondelaine. Where and how often did this famous company perform *Scaramouche*? Its performances have not been systematically catalogued or researched, but the answer can be found in archive material in relation to Sibelius and Hansen, where performances of *Scaramouche* are noted for the purposes of calculating royalties. The company performed a shortened version of *Scaramouche* a total of 58 times between 1951 and 1954, each year in Paris and in three summers in Biarritz and Deauville. Further performances took place in Cannes, Nice and Bordeaux. The company visited the Edinburgh Festival in 1952, where it gave the first British performance of *Scaramouche*. The following year it was given in Lisbon as well.²³⁵

²³³ Vienola-Lindfors – af Hällström 1981, pp. 53–54; 71; 102–103, 'Encore' performance database; See about cultural export: Suhonen 2012.

²³⁴ Beaumont 1952 (1942), pp. 95–106; Programme 1936, *Scaramouche*; Copy and information provided to the present author by Aija Pliena. 3 May 2018, Latvian National Opera and Ballet Archives.

²³⁵ Hansen statements, 7 July 1954 and 20 April 1955, SPA 45. See more information about de Cuevas Grand Ballet in Daguerre 1954, Mannoni 2003 and Crisp 2005.

Jussi Jalas's orchestral version

Sibelius did not make an orchestral suite from *Scaramouche*, although Harold Johnson wrote that he planned to do so in 1921, when the forthcoming première in Copenhagen was already being planned.²³⁶ An orchestral suite remained on the cards at least until 1926, when Hansen referred in a letter to a discussion with Sibelius in Copenhagen, and asked when Sibelius could begin work on arranging a '*Scaramouche Suite*'.²³⁷

Santeri Levas reported that twenty years later, in the autumn of 1946, an orchestral suite was planned by 'a Latvian conductor living in Stockholm'. According to Levas, Sibelius liked this idea and gave permission for it to be realized. When he received the manuscript for the suite, however, the 80-year-old Sibelius found it lacking and, despite his advanced age, set about making improvements, spending considerable time and effort on the project. Nonetheless, he remained dissatisfied with the outcome.²³⁸

Although some Sibelius books have mentioned this attempt at a suite, none has named the arranger.²³⁹ From Sibelius's correspondence it is apparent that the 'Latvian conductor living in Stockholm' was Oļģerts Bištēviņš (1907–72), who had conducted performances of *Scaramouche* in Latvia a decade earlier and was thus familiar with the piece. Bištēviņš sent his orchestral suite to Hansen, including a letter in which he himself admits that Sibelius was not satisfied with it. Hansen thereupon wrote to Sibelius to ask if he should send the material back to Bištēviņš, as the Hansen company could not undertake anything in its own right.²⁴⁰ Levas comments: 'In the early stages of their correspondence, Sibelius had promised to recommend the work to Hansen's publishing firm, but of course he did not do so.'²⁴¹

In the end Sibelius's son-in-law, the conductor Jussi Jalas (1908–85), arranged an orchestral suite (that plays for approximately 20 minutes without a break) in 1957, the year of the composer's death. Jalas related that, in accordance with the composer's wishes, no changes were made to the instrumentation.²⁴² Jussi Jalas had conducted *Scaramouche* frequently, for the first time in 1946. Jalas relates in his memoirs: 'Ever since that performance, *Scaramouche* has been close to my heart. It contains a lot of the kind of music that reveals the Sibelius I knew – not the great

²³⁶ Johnson 1959, p. 153; Dahlström 2003, p. 313; Salmenhaara 1984, p. 374

²³⁷ Hansen to Sibelius, 28 January 1926, SPA 45

²³⁸ Levas 1992, p. 258

²³⁹ Salmenhaara 1984, p. 375; Mäkelä 2007, p. 226 ref. 60; Sibelius.fi/Scaramouche

²⁴⁰ Hansen to Sibelius, 20 January 1947, SPA 45

²⁴¹ 'Kirjeenvaihdon alkuvaiheessa Sibelius oli luvannut suositella teosta Hansenin kustannusliikkeelle, mutta sitä hän ei tietenkään sitten tehnyt.' (Levas 1992, p. 258)

²⁴² Jalas 1981, p. 234

prophet of the symphonies but a sensitive interpreter of intimate moods.’²⁴³ Jalas had started out as a theatre conductor, subsequently working in the field of opera – so it therefore comes as no surprise that he was keen on conducting Sibelius’s theatre music.

Jalas made a recording of his orchestral suite in 1974, when he started a collaboration with the Hungarian State Symphony Orchestra. The same year, *Scaramouche* returned to the Finnish National Ballet schedules, conducted by Jalas. Jalas also made an arrangement for flute and piano of the passage in Act II that contains a flute solo (*Tranquillo assai*), and this was published by Hansen in the year that the orchestral recording was made.²⁴⁴

Radio performances and recordings

Scaramouche was performed on Danish Radio in 1926, and the *Scène d’amour* was broadcast frequently in the 1920s and 1930s.²⁴⁵ At least some of the music must have been included on a recording, as in the 1920s Hansen paid Sibelius royalties for sold ‘Nordisk Polyfoni’ discs.²⁴⁶ Nothing more is known of this recording. There were also plans for a recording in the late 1930s.²⁴⁷ *Scaramouche* features on a disc recorded in 1940 by the Victor Salon Orchestra conducted by Nathaniel Shilkret (1889–1982), including extracts from *Finlandia* (3'55) and ‘Melodies from *Scaramouche*’ (3'48).²⁴⁸ The world première recording of the full original ballet pantomime music was not made until 1990, by the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra conducted by Neeme Järvi.²⁴⁹

²⁴³ ‘*Scaramouche* onkin tuosta esityksestä lähtien ollut lähellä sydäntäni. Siinä on paljon sellaista Sibeliusia, joka liittyy minun tuntemaani ihmiseen, ei sinfoniain suureen profeettaan vaan intiimien tunnelmien herkkään tulkkiin.’ (Jalas 1981, p. 108).

²⁴⁴ In 2019 Hansen published Luukas Hiltunen’s string quartet arrangement of the *Scène d’amour* (based on the version for violin and piano).

²⁴⁵ Radio performance, 22 December 1926, Statement 26 April 1927 and e.g. 9 November 1926, 9 December 1931. SPA 45

²⁴⁶ Statements 28 July 1923 (62 records sold); 15 February 1924 (30); 26 May 1924 (50); 15 July 1925 (45); 15 September 1925 (17); 15 December 1925 (23); 1 April 1926 (17). SPA 45

²⁴⁷ Hansen to Sibelius, 25 November 1938, SPA 45

²⁴⁸ Victor 26583 (10-inch, 78 rpm). www.finna.fi

²⁴⁹ BIS-502

Sibelius's idea: *Scaramouche* as a film

In 1945 Sibelius agreed to participate in a film to mark his 80th birthday. In this film, Jean and Aino are seen in short clips. It also includes a scene from *Scaramouche*, based on the 1935 Finnish Opera production with choreography by Alexander Saxelin; the dancers in the main roles are the same as in that production. It was filmed at the Suomi-Filmi studio, and the scene in question is when Scaramouche arrives to play at Leilon and Blondelaine's ball.²⁵⁰

In March 1948, Asger Wilhelm Hansen visited Helsinki to meet Sibelius, who suggested that all of *Scaramouche* be made into a film. In April Hansen contacted London Film Productions, and in his reply letter the following month, company spokesman Hubert Clifford told Hansen about the various options. After discussions with his colleagues he put forward two proposals: '1. Pantomime could be retained intact as "a play within the play", i.e. a wider story would have to be written to strengthen this allegory. 2. *Scaramouche* might be a self-contained episode in a film which had four broad chapters, i.e. four linked stories, as has the film *Dead of Night*.'²⁵¹

London Film Productions was founded by the Hungarian-born Sir Alexander Korda (1893–1956) in 1932. Hansen's letter was answered on behalf of the firm by the composer and conductor Hubert Clifford (1904–59), who worked there 'as the music director... supervising and commissioning the scores for such pictures as *Anna Karenina* (1948) and *The Third Man* (1949) among many others'.²⁵² Clifford wrote that Sir Alexander Korda was currently on a trip to the USA, and that the firm would return to the subject later. Apparently, however, there was no further contact. The film *Dead of Night* mentioned in Clifford's letter was a horror movie based on a story by H. G. Wells.

²⁵⁰ *Jean Sibelius*, directed by Holger Harrivirta. Duration: 15 minutes. The film was shown to an invited audience at the Savoy Theatre on 9 November 1945 (National Audiovisual Institute. www.finna.fi). Stills from the filmed *Scaramouche* scene in Waldemar Baronin's photo album. Finnish National Opera and Ballet Archive. 1 minute extract available online at: [Hiljaiseloa Ainolassa/Elävä arkisto/yle.fi](http://Hiljaiseloa.Ainolassa/Elävä_arkisto/yle.fi).

²⁵¹ London Film Productions Ltd to Hansen, 3 May 1948; Hansen to Sibelius, 8 May 1948, SPA 45

²⁵² Bruce Eder: Hubert Clifford, Artist Biography, www.allmusic.com

Conclusions: Sibelius and ballet

After completing *Scaramouche*, Sibelius had to wait nine years for its première. The reason was the delay in publishing the work and, as a result, the postponement of several planned performances. In the 1920s, *Scaramouche* was performed in Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden, Germany and France.

From the first performance onwards, the work's problem was the spoken dialogue that its author Poul Knudsen added during the time of the music's composition, resulting in a fusion of ballet-pantomime and melodrama. Moreover, it was weighed down by the text's similarity to Arthur Schnitzler's *Der Schleier der Pierrette*. It was for that reason that Sibelius asked Adolf Paul to write a new text to go with the *Scaramouche* music, although this came to nothing.

Sibelius regarded *Scaramouche* as an important work, and so did Wilhelm Hansen, whose publishing company worked hard to have it performed in major cultural cities, but these attempts often failed. As it is through-composed, unlike most other theatre scores by Sibelius, *Scaramouche* proved difficult to rework into an orchestral suite. As a result, despite his publisher's wishes, Sibelius apparently never set about preparing a suite, and this admirable work has remained virtually unknown.

As we have seen, in 1909 Sibelius declared pantomime to be 'my genre'. But what did he think of ballet as a compositional form? In 1914, after the completion of *Scaramouche*, Maggie Gripenberg tried to persuade Sibelius to compose music for the ballet *Karhuntappajaiset* (*The Bear's Death Ceremonies*), which she was to perform in London.²⁵³ Sibelius asked Axel Carpelan's opinion in a letter dated 27 July 1914: 'Ballet suits me, and I'll have a lot of success... But to throw away on a few "pas" a motif that would be brilliant in symphonic guise. Well – well –.'²⁵⁴ Carpelan encouraged him to refuse the project.²⁵⁵

Sibelius evidently felt that he had wasted themes on *Scaramouche* that he would have preferred to use in symphonies. Therefore he chose not to take on the pantomime and ballet projects he was offered. Although Sibelius did not compose any more works specifically for dancing after *Scaramouche*, his other compositions (including *The Swan of Tuonela*) have since been used in numerous choreographies.

Sibelius regarded his music as good, as his contacts with Diaghilev and his plans for a film version indicate. Admittedly Sibelius wrote some 'distressed' remarks in his diary

²⁵³ Diary, 24 July 1914. Sibelius 2005, p. 191, p. 427: ref. 91 & 92

²⁵⁴ 'Baletten ligger nog för mig och stor framgång skall jag ha... Men att kasta bort på några "pas" ett motiv som skulle göra sig brillant i en symfonisk utarbetning. Ja- ja- .' (Dahlström 2010, p. 362–63, Sibelius to Carpelan, 27 April 1914)

²⁵⁵ Juhani Aho's text and Gripenberg's choreography did not receive their première until 1924 under the title *Metsolan tanhuvilla* at the Finnish National Theatre, with music by Otto Ehrström.

while composing the music, but on the other hand he also wrote: 'Recently and today I've been working on the pantomime. I have the feeling that I'm a genius.'²⁵⁶

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*Eija Kurki D. Phil. published her dissertation *Satua, kuolemaa ja eksotiikkaa. Jean Sibeliusen vuosisadan alun näyttämömusiikkiteokset (Fairy-tale, Death and Exoticism. Jean Sibelius's Theatre Music from the Beginning of the 20th Century)* in 1997. She has written numerous articles in various specialist publications both in Finland and internationally (e.g. *Sibelius Studies*, Cambridge University Press 2001). This article is based on extensive new research into Sibelius's music for Knudsen's *Scaramouche*.*

*English version published in *Sibelius One Magazine*, January 2020. Translation: *Sibelius One*.*

²⁵⁶ Arbetat dessa dagar och i dag på Pantomimen. Har känsla af att vara ett geni' (Diary, 27 June 1913, Sibelius 2005, p. 173)

Appendix

Finnish National Ballet performances of *Scaramouche*

1935 ch. Alexander Saxelin
1946 ch. Maggie Gripenberg (postponed from 1945)
1955 ch. Irja Koskinen
1956 Lübeck, Hamburg
1957 Leningrad (St Petersburg)
1958 Stuttgart
1959 Edinburgh (Edinburgh Festival)
1961 DDR tour: Berlin, Rostock, Karl-Marx-Stadt (Chemnitz)
1962 Stockholm
1965 Bergen, Oslo
1966 Stockholm
1974 ch. Margaretha von Bahr

In all, *Scaramouche* was performed by the Finnish National Ballet 65 times between 1935 and 1974, including 21 performances abroad in the 1950s and 1960s: it was given, for example, in a number of cities in both East and West Germany. In addition, it was performed on tours to Finland's neighbouring countries – Sweden, Norway and the Soviet Union. In addition to these 65 performances it has been heard in various Finnish provincial towns.

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Copenhagen: The Royal Danish Library, Copenhagen University Library

Oslo: Nationalteatret/Forestillningsarkiv

Rīga: Latvijas Nacionālā Opera un Balets/Latvian National Opera and Ballet

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