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A Divine Kerfuffle
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World of Play

Take a Look at 1895 Europe



Figure 1: Map of 1895 Europe by Stanford. Courtesy of Geographicus Rare Antique Maps

Description

“Map of Europe from England to the Balkans and Northwest Spain to the Baltic Sea”
(Geographicus Rare Antique Maps.)

Cartographer

Edward Stanford

1895 Europe: Among the Age of New Imperialism

What is Imperialism?

Definition: process of a nation exerting power over other regions through territorial expansion or indirect control over the politics or economy of another country.

What is New Imperialism?

- Imperialistic expansion from 1870s until World War 1 in 1914.
- Loans were given to many countries to hopefully bring about international support.

What was the result of New Imperialism?

- Brought about new medicines, new weapons, trains, steamships, and other technology that aided with convenience.
- Many countries and empires expanded, including the colonization of most of Africa. By 1914, Ethiopia and Liberia were the only two states left independent. The remaining parts of the continents were colonized between Britain, France, Germany, Portugal, Italy, Belgium, and Spain.

1895 Europe: Theatrical Growth and Exploration

The Importance of Being Earnest by Oscar Wilde

- Released in 1895.
- First performed as a light comedy for Victorian society.

Yiddish Opera

- December 1895.
- Performed at the Standard Theatre in London.
- J.T. Grein, prominent theatre critic, was at the December performance.
- Grein was surprised to see big posters in Hebrew letters and smaller ones in English announcing the Yiddish Performances by the Oriental Operatic Company.
- A quote from Grein, "I don't need to explain to you that I was looking with big eyes at the posters – great Hebrew operas, sung by Jews, composed by Jews, performed in a Jewish neighbourhood – this was so unique that I just had to be there, even if the performance started already at 7.45, which would force me to dine in the City. And what that means, only a true "West End-man" knows."

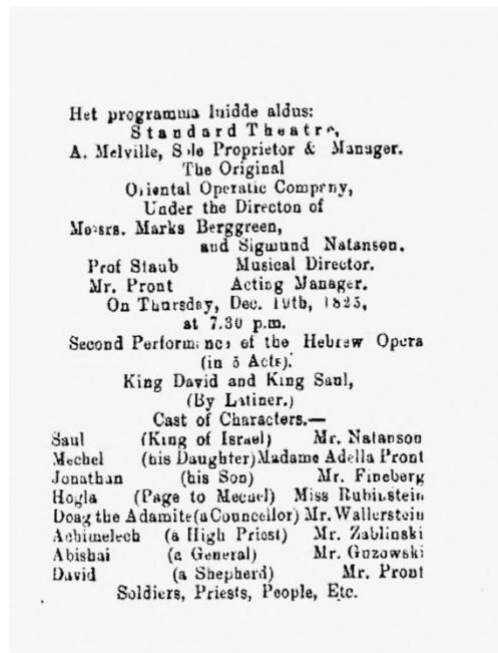


Figure 2: Program of the performance Grein saw.

- A quote from Grein on the performance, "... the music of the opera *Saul and David* is a clever mosaic of the most famous arias of Jewish composers, there is no spark of authenticity in it, the ensembles are gaudy, full of *fiorituras* à la Meyerbeer, the solos are variations on popular folksongs – tunes that catch the ear and strike the sentimental heart."

Tragedy, Meta-Tragedy, Meta-Theatre

- Luigi Pirandello's (1867–1936) *Six characters in Search of an Author* and Jean Genet's (1910–1986) plays are famous meta-tragedies.
- Meta-tragedy (also called "meta-theater") focuses on role playing and the relationship between reality and theatrical illusions and is based on the belief that tragedy cannot suit the modern world.

Symbolism and Aestheticism

- Symbolism was focused on Art for Art's sake, a new movement of the time. Focused on the beauty of art over using it for political or social power. It was associated with Maurice Maeterlinck.
- Aestheticism was associated with Oscar Wilde and also focused on Art for Art's sake.

Avant-Garde in the Theatre

- 1895, Chekhov was writing *The Seagull* and noticed the incoming of the new trend in Western theatre, the Avant-Guard Movement.
- The Avant-Guard Movement wanted to transform storytelling.
- “Anti-Tradition”
- Also known as Experimental Theatre.
- Created as a response to perceived general cultural crisis. Tries to introduce a different approach to the use of language and the physical motion to communicate storytelling. Tries to have a more active relation with the audience.

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