

## **Interculturality in Contemporary Music Theatre**

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The possibility to combine, contrast and juxtapose multidimensional or even contradictory layers of stylistic allusions or musical meaning has made music theatre a principal medium for questioning received notions about operatic canon. An important issue in this process - in works of both Western and non-Western composers - is the articulation of musical interculturality and its ability to open up new forms of musical theatre together with a critical perspective on linear, essentialist concepts for defining “opera”.

This paper will focus on three main aspects of recent works of interculturally conceived contemporary music theatre by Chinese, Japanese and Western composers (Tan Dun, Guo Wenjing, Kondo Jou, Ishii Maki, Helmut Lachenmann, Luca Mosca, Francesco Pennisi among others):

- 1) The ways in which interculturality conditions the canon of operatic musical language (i.e. the generally accepted rules or standard by which a piece of theatre with music and text is accepted as “opera”) on the form of the text/libretto, and their political and sociocultural preconditions;
- 2) The ways in which specific traditional Asian theatrical models and/or instruments or vocal techniques are incorporated in the overall musical context;
- 3) The use of both musical and theatrical gestures hinting at or openly referring to specific East Asian melodramatic traditions; the creation of an analogous yet original vocabulary of musical and theatrical gestures for grounding contemporary music theatre language.