

The Danish Première of Alban Berg's Three-Act *Lulu* A Contextualized Oral History of a European Capital of Culture Event in 1996

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Abstract: In 1996, Copenhagen was awarded the title European Capital of Culture. Amongst its most publicized events was the Danish and Scandinavian première of the complete version of Alban Berg's opera *Lulu*. In this study, an oral history methodology is applied to draw conclusions regarding the significance, reception, and legacy of *Lulu* in Copenhagen from the perspectives of four Danish administrative leaders involved in this production, who, through interviews, reflected on this project within the context of Copenhagen's cultural landscape. Their testimonies depict a narrative of how this production established a new perspective of opera in Copenhagen, as well as the innovation of performing opera at unique venues not usually associated with this genre. This phenomenon contributed to attracting a wider audience demographic, who would be less receptive to more traditional methods of opera staging. Furthermore, it was established by the *Lulu* project instigators that the production depicted Danish cultural identity, while simultaneously promoting an international cooperation and an international standard of artistic execution.

Keywords: Alban Berg, *Lulu*, performance history, Copenhagen, European Capital of Culture

According to the European Union (EU), culture is understood as the underlying foundation for European solidarity, where the different paradigms that constitute national identities and histories can stimulate collaboration and partnership across the continent. These divisions have the ability to create wider degrees of awareness and understanding, however, they can also foster intolerance and reticence towards the unfamiliar.¹ Therefore, cultural policy was “designed both to enlarge

1. *The Cultural Politics of Europe: European Capitals of Culture and European Union since the 1980s*, ed. by Kiran Klaus PATEL (New York: Routledge, 2013), 1.

the scope of EU power and authority and to win the hearts and minds of European citizens.”²

The European Capitals of Culture (ECOC) program was established to facilitate a pan-continental awareness of culture, striving to “highlight the richness and diversity of European culture and the features they share, as well as to promote greater mutual acquaintance between European citizens.”³ The title of ECOC is awarded annually to one or multiple cities for the duration of one year, where the cities

then host cultural events of various kinds. The awarded cities turn into laboratories where European cultural policy meets local, regional, national and global needs, with EU officials, city managers, cultural impresarios, transnational experts but also normal urban dwellers or tourists straddling the divide between questions of European history and heritage, issues of belonging and identity, as well as political, social and economic concerns.⁴

The ultimate endeavor of such an initiative is to emphasize unity amongst EU citizens, and to celebrate cultural diversity. Ideally, the host city highlights local paradigms within a broader European context.⁵

Copenhagen was awarded the 1996 ECOC title a few years prior to taking on the mantle. The present study investigates a specific event in Copenhagen, within the scope of the ECOC program. According to the individuals I interviewed, this occasion proved a monumental success not only within the framework of the ECOC’s target aims, but as a revitalizing agent for this expressive genre in Copenhagen. Furthermore, from the perspective of the event’s architects, these activities resulted in long-lasting implications for the city’s cultural landscape. Staging Alban Berg’s modernist opera *Lulu* as a marquee event during Copenhagen’s ECOC year constituted both the Danish and the Scandinavian première of the complete three-act version of the opera. The following discussion relating to the history, inception, significance, and reception of this production is based on interviews I conducted with the Danish administrators that envisioned and realized this project. The individuals with whom I conversed offered four distinct, yet congruent, perspectives that depicted all elements of the production. Ultimately, they agreed on the significance of the production that they presented to the public.

From a methodological perspective, this project utilizes research methods related to oral history to procure data. This methodology aids in addressing issues of

2. *Ibid.*, 2.

3. *Ibid.* Quoted from the official mission statement.

4. *Ibid.*

5. I am consciously using only a non-critical corpus of literature related to EU cultural policy to contextualize my project, as I feel that a broader discussion of policy would be unnecessarily tangential to the specific narrative that my interview subjects present later in this paper.

society and culture, which are associated with notions of Danish cultural identity in my work.⁶ Therefore, I aim to present the perspectives of the people in the project (to study how they think and behave in local time and place), in order to document their principles, and those of the ECOC, as they are superimposed onto Berg's opera. The application of this particular method is crucial in deducing how the Danish administrators viewed the effects of their endeavors. Furthermore, through these tenets, I seek to explicitly represent how this event was viewed by the interviewees as a shared cultural paradigm within the centralized parameters of the city of Copenhagen whilst avoiding multiple sites or cross-cultural obstacles. As an oral historian for this project, I apply inductive reasoning to the collected testimonies, seeking to build a culture of insight around the operatic event under investigation. This approach will yield both an insider perspective (a view derived from the Danish interviewees), and an outsider perspective (a view derived from the ECOC, observations of audience reception, and my own insights), which will be juxtaposed in order to depict the totality of the significance of Berg's *Lulu* in Copenhagen.

Oral history methodology records the past by preserving perspectives not found in printed materials. The purpose of such an undertaking is to create a primary source of the event in question that recreates the objective past. The interview process allowed my interviewees to directly discuss the history of their experience and incentives, and to personally evaluate the significance of the event they were a part of. Such a perspective will yield a more valuable understanding than any formal record of the event could present. This methodology entailed procuring preliminary data (the background of *Lulu*, Grønnegårds Theater, the ECOC, and the collaboration of Grønnegårds with the Danish National Symphony Orchestra), followed by providing the interviewees (in advance of the interviews) a specific and detailed set of 20 questions divided into five subsections (in which they were also given license to further reflect on the elements that they were specifically involved with). Following the interview process, related documents were reviewed, including the booklet accompanying the audio recording of the *Lulu* production in Copenhagen, the audience program booklet for the staged production, as well as contemporary journalistic reviews of the performances and reception. The final section of the study investigates the persistent historical censorship of *Lulu*, and

6. My concept of Danish cultural identity is derived from Anthony D. Smith's definitions of "national community" and "national identity," which I conflate to represent culture in the context of the *Lulu* production's inclusivity with Copenhagen's venues and history, tenets of the ECOC, and representational features acknowledged by the Danish interviewees. When discussing "national community," Smith defines it as: "A named human community residing in a perceived homeland, whose members share a heritage of memories, myths, symbols, values, and traditions; disseminate a distinctive public culture; and observe common laws and customs. The related concept of 'national identity' can be defined as: the continuous reproduction and reinterpretation by the members of a national community of the pattern of values, symbols, memories, myths, and traditions composing the distinctive heritage of nations, and the variable identification of its individual members with that heritage and its cultural elements." Anthony D. SMITH, "Icons of Nationalism," in *Building the Nation: N.F.S. Grundtvig and Danish National Identity*, ed. by John A. HALL, Ove KORSGAARD and Ove K. PEDERSEN (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015), 54.

how the Copenhagen production abstractly sought to overcome the stigmas that the opera for decades faced.

These interviews are collated to present an overall view of the operatic production, demonstrating how the interviewees believed that *Lulu* helped establish a new perspective of opera in Copenhagen. Simultaneously, these insights demonstrate the innovative viewpoint that utilizing unorthodox and unprecedented venues can improve opera's accessibility, and reinvigorate this genre for new audiences who are less beholden to traditional values. The *Lulu* production will also be contextualized as a representation of Danishness that combined elements of Danish history in conjunction with the performance venue and the Danish monarchy with elements of modernity, progressiveness, and innovation.⁷ Such a representation will ultimately juxtapose Danish cultural identity with an explicitly international outlook, inherent to the *Lulu* production, and in keeping with the ECOC's framework.⁸ I believe that this research project is important because it demonstrates, in hindsight, how this operatic event in 1996 established a cultural archetype in the genre that is still evident in Copenhagen today. Furthermore, the methodological approach is more conducive to successfully gleaning deeper insights than other methods, such as history, anthropology, or sociology, which may not produce the same quality of expressiveness related to emotion, memory or honesty. It therefore provides both a personal and professional brand of testimony that captures a wider representation of the investigated event.

1. Background to the Completion of *Lulu*

Before embarking on the details surrounding the production of *Lulu* in Copenhagen, a review of the opera's chaotic history will contribute to an understanding of the appeal and intrigue that surrounded this work – and which made it such a worthy candidate for an ECOC event.

7. In his preface to an edited collection of articles on music in Copenhagen, series editor Niels Krabbe expressed the notion that the “musical history of Copenhagen is in many respects identical to the history of *Danish* music.” This statement and the source within which it is found, reflects my conviction to blend local and the national perceptions of Copenhagen and Denmark, respectively, and how the view of cultural identity that is presented by the Copenhageners in this study accurately reflects the wider national concept of Danishness that they project. See *Music in Copenhagen: Studies in the Musical Life of Copenhagen in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, ed. by Niels KRABBE (Copenhagen: Copenhagen University, 1996), 7.

8. Contemporary Danish cultural identity may be seen as a by-product of modern Danish national identity. Danish historian Uffe Østergaard offers similar yet varied overviews of the latter phenomenon in three documents that depict modern Danish national identity through broad historical contextualizations that are applicable to further understanding my characterization of Danish cultural identity. See Uffe ØSTERGAARD, “Peasants and Danes: The Danish National Identity and Political Culture,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 34/1 (January 1992), 3–27; id., “Danish National Identity: Between Multinational Heritage and Small State Nationalism,” in *Denmark's Policy Towards Europe after 1945: History, Theory and Options*, ed. by Hans BRANNER and Morten KELSTRUP (Odense: Odense University Press, 2000), 139–184; id., “Nation-Building and Nationalism in the Oldenburg Empire,” in *Nationalizing Empires*, ed. by Stefan BERGER and Alexei MILLER (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2015), 461–509.

On 11 December 1935, Alban Berg heard, performed for the first time, the extracts from his almost-finished second opera *Lulu*, which he had compiled to create his *Lulu Suite*.⁹ He would be dead 13 days later. Even if Berg was cognizant of his quickly-approaching death, he would have scarcely been aware of the convoluted and controversial path that awaited *Lulu* from its 1937 Zürich première as a two-act torso to the première of the full three-act (and most authentic) realization in Paris in 1979.¹⁰ At the time of his death, Berg's widow, Helene, agreed with the overwhelming consensus that *Lulu* was indeed complete, and only required some blanks to be filled in, which would have been a relatively simple task for someone familiar with Berg's compositional style. Helene, therefore, sought to have the remaining orchestration of the final act completed. However, after some initial setbacks, she reneged, and explicitly forbade the orchestration of the third act. In the ensuing years, a public outcry from specialists to rectify what they deemed to be an injustice followed, but to no avail.¹¹ Consequently, the opera's completion had to commence in secret and subsequently after Helene's death in 1976, albeit not without great resistance posed by the Alban Berg Foundation that Helene created and empowered as the executors of her will. *Lulu* finally saw the light of day in the form that Berg had intended nearly 44 years after his death. This turbulent history has contributed to the mythologizing of *Lulu*, and the appearance of the three-act version had invoked a unique perception on account of its gestation, which is now intrinsically connected to its performance. It was therefore a testament to the perseverance of an aesthetic ideal, as conceived by the composer, which informed performances of the complete opera in the decades which followed the second world première.

These sentiments were undoubtedly at the forefront of the collective consciousness of those who engineered the ambitious undertaking of staging the complete version of *Lulu* in Copenhagen to coincide with that city's tenure as European Capital of Culture. Moreover, due to the fact that realizing the three-act version had received widespread international advocacy, along with worldwide media coverage preceding the première, this debut was certainly a triumph for opera lovers

9. Berg followed the successful practice that he started with *Wozzeck*, his first opera, by presenting excerpts from the opera in concert prior to the world première to stimulate awareness and interest in the forthcoming debut of the complete work.

10. For insight into the history and authenticity of the three-act version of *Lulu*, see George PERLE, "The Complete 'Lulu,'" *The Musical Times* 120/1632 (February 1979), 115–120; id., *The Operas of Alban Berg*, vol. 2: *Lulu* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985); id., "Some Thoughts on an Ideal Production of *Lulu*," *The Journal of Musicology* 7/2 (Spring 1989), 244–253; Claudio SPIES, "Some Notes on the Completion of *Lulu*," in *Alban Berg: Historical and Analytical Perspectives*, ed. by David GABLE and Robert P. MORGAN (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 215–234; Friedrich CERHA, "Some Further Notes on my Realization of Act III of *Lulu*," in *The Berg Companion*, ed. by Douglas JARMAN (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1990), 261–268; id., *Alban Berg: "Lulu"* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) (= *Cambridge Opera Handbooks*).

11. The composer and Berg authority, George Perle, had written a letter to Berg's editors at Universal Edition as early as 1963 to vouch for the necessity of completing *Lulu*. For that letter, see George PERLE, "A Note on Act III of *Lulu*," *Perspectives of New Music* 2/2 (Spring–Summer 1964), 8–13.

all over the world. In addition, the prestige of having this German opera premièred by a French conductor in the French capital further propagated its international prowess. Together, these factors created an aura around the three-act version of *Lulu*, ascertaining its candidacy for an ambitious project of international scope that was instantly associated with an international fervor to perform this masterpiece in its most authentic form. Therefore, these factors were just as prevalent at the first Scandinavian performance in 1996; this performance was imbued with the same international anticipation as the Paris world première in 1979.

2. Grønnegårds Theater and the Path to *Lulu*

Grønnegårds Theater is an open air theater in the heart of Copenhagen, founded in 1982 by Lars Liebst and other students from the Acting School at Odense Theater.¹² Liebst was the director of the theater until 1996, and under his leadership the company undertook ambitious and bold productions at innovative venues. In 1987, the theater staged its first performance at the opulent Ridehuset (Riding Stables) at Christiansborg Castle, and would return for additional productions in the ensuing years.¹³ Her Majesty, Queen Margrethe II had permitted the Ridehuset for Grønnegårds's utilization in the 1980s, and ultimately also for the production of *Lulu*.¹⁴ In 1992 and 1993, Grønnegårds enjoyed successful collaborations with the Danish National Radio Symphony Orchestra,¹⁵ with whom they decided to form an ambitious collaboration to stage an opera for the 1996 ECOC year in Copenhagen.

In order to trace the cultural implications and legacy of the *Lulu* project in Copenhagen, I interviewed four key Danish members of the production's administration. These individuals were central to conceiving, executing, and reflecting on the production's logistical background, as well as its symbolic national value in the context of the ECOC and Copenhagen's cultural identity. Only local contributors would have the capacity to accurately judge the totality of what *Lulu* represented, even though the project, and all interviewees, continuously stressed the international scope of the endeavor. The following discussion is a juxtaposition of these interviews, as each individual addressed their views relating to a variety of production-oriented topics.

A brief introduction of the interviewees precedes the discussion of the production. As stated earlier, Lars Liebst was a founder of the Grønnegårds Theater, its director until 1996, and departed roughly five months before the curtain rose on *Lulu*. His perspective represents the inception of the project from the theatrical

12. <<https://www.groennegaard.dk/teatrets-historie/>> (accessed 1 August 2019).

13. Ibid.

14. *Lulu* Program Book, Grønnegårds Theater, 1996, 3. Scan acquired from *The Royal Library*, Copenhagen. The program book also included historical essays and musical analyses.

15. Today known as the DR SymfoniOrkestret or Danish National Symphony Orchestra.

side. Per Erik Veng was at the time the managing director of the Danish National Radio Symphony Orchestra (DNRSO), and collaborated with Liebst on the idea of combining the two institutions to produce an opera, and was the individual who ultimately chose *Lulu*. Veng's perspective represents the musical side of the project, as well as the importance and meaning of using Ridehuset as the performance venue. Klaus Bondam was the incoming director of Grønnegårds, who entered the fold mere months before the performances in question. His perspective conveys the context of the theater preceding and during the première. Anette Abildgaard, Liebst's wife, choreographed the staging, and offered her view on the opera's symbolic meaning in relation to the stage director's vision.

3. Origins of the *Lulu* Production

At the start of our discussion, Liebst stated that

at the time of the first night, I had left my job as general manager [of Grønnegårds] and became the CEO of Tivoli. *Lulu* really started with Grønnegårds in 1992–1993 when all of Copenhagen was talking about the big festival that was to take place in the city in 1996 for the ECOC year. Grønnegårds sought to participate in one way or another. We had done three or four productions at Ridehuset up to that point, and we thought of doing another project there, but not a theater piece or play. We wanted something different for the brand of Grønnegårds Theater. In those years, during the summer, we had a symphonic concert every Sunday at Grønnegårds, so we actually had a very good relationship with the DNRSO. We had suggested to the symphony that there could be something we could do together to mark the ECOC. Out of that discussion came the idea to try to do an opera, because nobody had tried to do something like that. Furthermore, doing an opera at Ridehuset with an international cast and a very young and talented American director in Travis Preston would create a production that at that time had not been seen in the Copenhagen area. So that was how it all started.¹⁶

Per Erik Veng began with the following:

at that time, in the mid-'90s, I was the leading classical music consultant of the ECOC for Copenhagen 1996. In that context, we were developing many projects. Also at that time, I was CEO of the Danish National Symphony Or-

16. Lars Liebst, interview conducted by the present author, Copenhagen, Denmark, 15 July 2019. All subsequent quotes from Liebst are taken from this interview. All interviews conducted by the present author were done in English.

chestra and Choirs, and it was really important for me that the orchestra did some spectacular productions and activities that were really unique, because they had to be very special for the ECOC year. Some of the activities that I did in the early '90s with the orchestra included close collaborations with Lars Liebst. He and his theater company specialized in theater productions at special venues. They did summer, open air plays at a major garden in the middle of the town, and we were both extremely enthusiastic about Ridehuset in Copenhagen. Liebst and I – with the orchestra – we did some of those concerts in the early '90s at Ridehuset. When we had decided to join forces, the idea immediately came to produce an opera in Ridehuset. I was very fond of Alban Berg's two operas *Wozzeck* and *Lulu*, and the version of *Lulu* with the ending by Friedrich Cerha had never before been staged in Scandinavia. There was a *Lulu* production earlier in Copenhagen that was only a television production, but in Denmark, Berg's *Lulu* had never been performed. Lars didn't know Berg's *Lulu* at that time, but I suggested the title, and said that the whole decadent atmosphere of this opera by Berg suits Ridehuset perfectly. Part of the agenda was that it would be the Scandinavian première of the complete three-act version of the opera. However, it was also important for us to make a production that had value and interest outside of Denmark as well, so that it was not seen as solely a local or regional endeavor.¹⁷

Regarding the choice of Ridehuset, Veng described the venue thus:

The riding stables in Copenhagen were built in the 1740s, and were a historically important venue in Copenhagen because until the late nineteenth century, it was the largest room in the city where there were many concerts and activities in the early nineteenth century. The founder of Tivoli Gardens, Georg Carstensen, had started organizing activities at the stables in the 1830s and early '40s. Due to their architectural concept, these stables were also often perfect acoustically. And there was a history about this venue that was relevant to the ECOC program. You had a place in Copenhagen that was not generally known to the public, but it could be activated for use due to its fantastic acoustics.

Veng added the following:

It's important to mention that the riding stables in Copenhagen are such from the outside, and are part of the Danish state building, so the state takes care of the exterior. But from the inside, it was a personal matter of her Majesty, the

17. Per Erik Veng, interview conducted by the present author, Copenhagen, Denmark, 23 July 2019. All subsequent quotes from Veng are taken from this interview.

Queen of Denmark. So when we formed the idea of staging an opera at Ridehuset, Lars and I had to go through a process where we had a meeting with the queen, and had presented the project to her. She was to nod and accept that it was a production that would take place there, as well as condone the style and whole concept of execution. At some point, she expressed the belief that all theater or concert productions that were done in Ridehuset should have some motivic element of horses in it. We did not succeed in bringing about such a condition, but it was something that we had to deal with. She finally accepted the entire proposal, and it was done. The whole concept of using the riding stables was with the knowledge that all the royal horses were actually out in the countryside during the summer, so that in the months of July and August, this great venue in the middle of Copenhagen, in the most historic part of the city, was empty. So it was a win-win for us. The horses went out, and we could take the venue for these two months. However, part of the agreement with the Royal Court was that we could use it, but had to reinstall everything when we were finished. When we had dug out what we did – the pit for the orchestra – we had to, of course, fill it back in again when we were finished, and the riding stables should appear after the production exactly as they had been before it.

Once the venue was chosen for its historic and acoustic attributes, Veng described the process that he and Liebst then embarked on when selecting the opera they would jointly perform:

Lars and I were very inspired to see how opera could be performed at extraordinary venues. We visited a famous venue at the Savonlinna Opera Festival in Finland, where they perform in a medieval castle, to see how a long-established festival operates at a special venue. We also went to the Salzburg Festival to especially see a performance of *Lulu* done at the Felsenreitschule, which is itself a riding hall. So these experiences abroad were part of the concept of our own production. It is important to note that the chief conductor of the DNRSO at the time was the German conductor Ulf Schirmer, who had a strong affinity for Berg, Wagner, and Strauss, and it was therefore a dream production for him to consider conducting *Lulu* for the ECOC year in Copenhagen. We had also discussed Wagner's *Ring*, but that was dismissed rather quickly. Schirmer was principal guest conductor of the Vienna State Opera at the time, and was very much linked to the Viennese stage. He knew Friedrich Cerha personally, and from then on, we talked about *Wozzeck* and *Lulu*. I was also aware that apart from this potentially being the Scandinavian première of the three-act version, this Cerha version of *Lulu* was very popular in the '90s and was being done all over Europe. So it was an international trend we could continue by presenting its Scandinavian première. I had also been personally enthusiastic about *Lulu*

from even earlier. So these discussions, and the experiences of Lars' and my trips abroad, had influenced us to settle on *Lulu*. With all of this in mind, we went into the project. It was an extravagant undertaking because we had to do something that had never been done before: to stage an opera at the riding stables.

Veng continued:

As far as Bergian opera performance history in Denmark was concerned, there was a production of *Wozzeck* in Copenhagen in the early '90s, however, *Wozzeck* was staged in Denmark for the first time in the '60s. But *Lulu* was never staged in Denmark. There was a production of the play in Denmark by Wedekind, but never Berg's opera that was based on it. The version without the completion by Cerha was done as a television production, but it was only a studio TV production. These kinds of things were done in the '60s and '70s – I think it was in the late '60s and early '70s that that was done in Copenhagen. So that was the only introduction of *Lulu* to Danish audiences that had been seen in the country before our production, and our production was the first time either version of it was staged.

When Klaus Bondam reflected on Berg's operas in Denmark and the choice of *Lulu*, he too recalled the *Wozzeck* staging of the early '90s:

I think that one of the contributing elements for choosing *Lulu* was that in the early '90s, there was a very popular production of *Wozzeck* in Copenhagen. I remember seeing it in 1992 or 1993. It was a production of the Royal Theater and took place at the Tivoli Gardens. So there was in opera circuits in Copenhagen an understanding of who Alban Berg was. The Danish audience is very open to new productions of modern works, as we consider ourselves to be open-minded people who are receptive to new influences and trends. I think that Lars agreed to do *Lulu* because he wanted something that was extraordinary and modern.¹⁸

From these initial testimonies, it becomes clear that innovation via bold and expansive means was the direction in which Liebst and Veng sought to steer the production from the outset. Liebst expressed his desire to stage an opera at Ridehuset because it would present to Copenhagen something not previously experienced. Veng echoed this desire for a grand spectacle of significance for the

18. Klaus Bondam, interview conducted by the present author, Copenhagen, Denmark, 3 July 2019. All subsequent quotes from Bondam are taken from this interview.

ECOC year, and that the project also had to have value beyond Denmark, in order to avoid being viewed solely as a local event. Therefore, the desire to realize the essence of European diversity as emphasized by the ECOC was a fundamental condition. This notion was further demonstrated by virtue of Liebst and Veng's European travel to garner inspiration and insight for their project, signifying an international outlook that could be applied to Copenhagen's purposes. Moreover, describing the history and significance of Ridehuset, Veng pinpoints an inherent reflection of Danish cultural identity that is also associated with the Danish monarchy. I contend that the cultural significance of the performance venue cannot be divorced from the production, because the uniqueness of the operatic endeavor does not allow the manner of complacency as would a standard opera house. Indeed, due to the venue's specific association with a national institution such as a monarchy, the venue's intrinsic Danishness is implicit. This, in turn, instills an equal awareness in both insider and outsider perceptions of the cultural significance of this production. Lastly, Bondam's description of a cosmopolitan Danish vision, in terms of embracing that which is new and innovative, attests to the positive cultural implications of Berg's *Lulu* in such an aesthetic landscape, and why it was an appropriate choice for their operatic project.

4. *Lulu* as Part of Copenhagen's ECOC Year

The ECOC was an event that all parties were acutely aware of in their reflections, both in terms of its general meaning and its significance for stimulating and propagating Copenhagen's cultural landscape. Veng objectively reflected on this atmosphere from an external perspective (from the viewpoint of the ECOC and audience expectations), noting how *Lulu* had

become a production that really had an impact during the ECOC year. But you had to do these types of things. If you are thinking about modern audiences, they love to experience things at venues they normally do not have access to, which was precisely what we sought to give them. We determined that we had to build up everything for the stage production, and also had to build up the seating area for the audience. We instigated activities in the foyer, which were done in a fantastic way. There were no backstage facilities, so we had these wagons in the yard, which meant that we had to have our singers and everybody in the crew outside. Therefore, there was a mixture of indoor and outdoor presence for everyone involved with the production.

The production's program booklet echoed Veng's assertion of how the event conveyed magnitude:

it was natural for both Grønnegårds Theater and the DNRSO to participate actively in the cultural year. Grønnegårds has presented the slogan: “to make the impossible possible,” and has now, for the first time in its 15-year history, produced an opera. The DNRSO has chosen the theme here in the cultural city of “Copenhagen in Europe – Europe in Copenhagen.”¹⁹

Klaus Bondam contributed his reflections on the institution of the ECOC by stating that *Lulu* was

one of the major flagship productions of Copenhagen’s ECOC program. It is important to understand the enormous transformation that the city of Copenhagen had been undergoing at the time. I moved to the city in the early ’80s, which was, at the time, a completely worn out, poor, dirty city that did not have a cultural life. There was no outdoor life in terms of cafés or exterior charm. Then in the late ’80s and early ’90s, the development of reducing urban space and using the city started. There were many great locations that could be opened [for] use and activity. The Copenhagen you see today is so different with a vibrant urban life and a lot of outdoor activities – cafés, restaurants, concerts, the opera festival – so it’s a very culturally vibrant city today, and in the years leading up to 1996, that development started with the “Festival of the Fools,” which was run by Trevor Davies, who was also the head of the ECOC foundation that gave money for these various projects. But *Lulu* was one of the big projects. It was an original production by a significant European modern composer. The whole idea of the ECOC was to lift Copenhagen to another level on the cultural scene, and it succeeded in doing that. Whether the city succeeded at that on an international level, I have no idea. I do believe that it succeeded with general Copenhageners, and is viewed today as a significant moment in the city’s recent history. It increased the confidence and pride that Copenhageners felt for their city. Citizens of the city today are very aware of the strength and merits of the capital, for its outstanding livability, and its progressiveness. The ECOC ’96 was a part of that change in mindset. As I said, Copenhagen was worn out in the years leading up to it, so one cannot underestimate the role of the ECOC for the city. And in that context, I feel that *Lulu* really did contribute to the benefit of the city and how Danes felt about culture.

Lars Liebst agreed with Bondam’s sentiment that *Lulu* was meant to raise the level of Copenhagen’s cultural prowess during the ECOC by noting that

19. “Det har været naturligt for både Grønnegårds Teatret og Radiosymfoniorkestret at deltage aktivt i Kulturbyåret Grønnegårds Teatret har endnu engang sat sit slogan ‘at gøre det umulige muligt’ på prøve, og har nu for første gang i sit 15 årige virke kastet sig ud i at være operaproducent. Radiosymfoniorkestret har her i Kulturbyåret valgt temaet ‘København i Europa – Europa i København.’” *Lulu Program Book*, 3. All translations are my own, unless otherwise indicated.

we thought it [*Lulu*] would be a good way of showing what Copenhagen could do. We had long discussions with the individual who was in charge of the ECOC, Trevor Davies. There was a lot of support from him in the beginning, and he thought staging an opera was a wonderful idea. But there was a lack of financial support, so we had to go to different sources to acquire the funds that we needed. We felt at some point that he did not live up to what the ECOC should have contributed in terms of financial support. But we were happy that we had some very good sponsors that helped us throughout the process, without whom we would not have been able to stage the production, as it was very costly.

In this section of the interviews, Veng, Bondam, and Liebst expressed how they intended their ECOC project to elevate Copenhagen's cultural prestige. This strikes me as significant, because it stresses potential as much as prowess. It requires a level of faith and courage to believe that the outcome of an endeavor can exceed previous realities. Veng stressed the importance that if *Lulu* was to succeed, it had to be produced at a unique venue which audiences did not frequent, especially not for opera productions. He also emphasized the interactive aspects of the environment for the audience, where indoor and outdoor activities were available. The ability to offer audiences immersive experiences contributed to the essence of innovation, and infused the operatic genre with a more contemporary, active approach that non-standard opera-goers could more easily identify with. Bondam spoke of the ECOC revitalizing Copenhagen culturally following its stagnant years of the early 1980s. His view that the ECOC tenure contributed to a change in mindset for Danes, in terms of how they viewed their own capital city, is an important realization that contributes to the legacy of monumental cultural events of which *Lulu* was certainly one of the most successful.

5. Performance Aspects of *Lulu*

There were many considerations regarding both the casting and set design for this production, as the opera is notoriously hard to sing, play, and stage. Veng maintained that he and Liebst had

long discussions about the casting. I myself did most of the casting because I knew the vocal and operatic world, so all of this was my choice. Lars had proposed hiring the American Travis Preston as the director, whom Lars had known from his time in New York City in years past. We also had a fantastic Danish scenographer ([who had a] very high profile at the time), Nina Flagstad, who went into the production and the development of Ridehuset. From there, we constructed our international cast. We also had good Danish names, but it

was important for us to cast as international[ly] as possible. We were also very lucky to get Theo Adam,²⁰ who was one of the most prominent singers in the world. We got him for the role of Schigolch. We got the young American soprano, Constance Hauman, who was the choice of the director. She came in, and I did the rest of the casting. Our conductor, Ulf Schirmer, was also very helpful to me when I was gathering the vocal cast for the opera, as he had known some of the singers from his endeavors as an opera conductor.

Veng continued:

There was a fantastic atmosphere because all the singers and production crew knew it was an almost impossible task. But there was a very adventurous attitude from everybody. So even the elderly staff and singers, like Theo Adam, went into it with a lot of enthusiasm. And then we made the production, which was one of the high points of the ECOC, as we had hoped. We took a chance with casting Constance Hauman as Lulu, but she was quite popular at the time. We also considered inviting Teresa Stratas to sing the role, because she sang it in the Boulez première. Ulf Schirmer knew her, as they had worked together already. But then we decided against Stratas²¹ after a discussion with Travis Preston. We settled on Hauman, who was a very young singer at the time, whom we also thought was perfectly cast theatrically for the stage of this opera.

Regarding the stage production, Veng stated that it was

very good, and perhaps indicative of how operas were produced in the '90s. Scenographically, there were a lot of carpets that were put on the sides, which we discussed, because they took the sound and amplified the already-strong acoustical capabilities of the riding stables. The venue created an intense and focused atmosphere toward what was happening on the stage. The set design and costumes did not depict a specific moment in time, but rather a timelessness that focused on the inner psychology of the characters.

Anette Abildgaard added to this by saying that the production's symbolism was aimed at

depicting the characters on stage very sexually, where they had to project physical strength more than aesthetic beauty. That's what we were looking for – to

20. According to Veng, Adam, who was in Dresden at the time, liked the sea. So he was enticed to come because he was put up at a house near the sea in northern Copenhagen, and would swim there twice daily.

21. Veng also maintained that "Stratas had requested a tremendous salary, and refused to sing the role for any less. The project had a limited budget, and the international cast had come because they loved the concept of the project and had agreed to lower fees than what they normally got at the opera houses."

present an inner, psychological representation of blood, flesh, and soil, where you get the sense of a primordial beginning of life and its meaning. Everything on the stage was made from soil. Preston's way of thinking was both choreographical, and a vision from a psychological perspective of something universal and timeless.²²

Veng echoed Abildgaard's sentiments here, reflecting on the importance of soil in Preston's vision:

There was soil, because we were on soil and the stables had soil. We walked on it, and the audience was sitting on top of soil, as was the orchestra. The soil element, if I remember what Preston was saying, was closely associated with the organic instinct of humanity. And I think that was his approach. The staging was focused on representing the inner action between the characters, who behaved like animals. You can stage *Lulu* in such a way that psychological play is almost very primal. The combination of the venue and the physical earth under you was the source of this notion of organic humanity – good and bad.

The thematic and symbolic meaning of soil was a crucial element of the production, and Preston himself offered a written interpretation of his vision in the program booklet (which also appeared in the accompanying booklet of the recording). From the very beginning of the Prologue, Preston wrote that

a subterranean plane of earth is strewn with huge canvases. Together with the Animal-Tamer, they [a "chorus" of unspecified individuals] conjure Lulu from the earth and initiate the audience into the action of the opera.²³

The concept of emerging from the earth and returning to it in death is further developed with the murder of each of Lulu's husbands, who are all buried in the soil by the chorus in the staging. This correlates with Veng's assessment of the organic instinct of humanity, as a cornerstone of Preston's production.

Lars Liebst reflected on his hiring of Preston, stating:

By choosing Travis Preston as the director, the production was raised to another level. With his background, something happened in the transformation of Ridehuset and utilizing the whole space, because where he comes from, he possibly had a different approach to opera than other people would have [had]

22. Anette Abildgaard, interview conducted by the present author, Copenhagen, Denmark, 15 July 2019. All subsequent quotes from Abildgaard are taken from this interview.

23. Travis PRESTON, "Lulu – An Interpretation" in *Alban Berg: Lulu*. Chandos opera recording booklet (1997), 17. [Chan 9540(3).]

in his position. And I think he looked very much into each and every role, and spent quite a while speaking to all the singers about what they were going to do. I think that gave the opera something that you don't typically see when attending a conventional opera. It created an atmosphere for people who do not normally go to the opera to be grabbed by what they saw.

In discussing the qualities of Berg's music, Abildgaard noted:

I think that the music is quite difficult when you listen to it for the first time. But when you get used to it, then it's actually incredible how it sounds like other music; other classical music and pop music. But the opera was so carefully prepared and staged – and the singers and orchestra were so good together – that the audience felt comfortable even for those members that were not used to this music. The stage design was supporting the music because it was a transformation of the music to the stage in a modern way. The performance was very sensual and not at all intellectual.

Veng expanded on this discussion by commenting on the conductor's approach to the score:

Ulf Schirmer's approach to the music was almost romantic. He was very careful and keen on the sound in Ridehuset, and the dramatic aspects as well. He was intent on presenting the music as almost late romantic. If you hear Boulez conducting this score, it's much more analytical and clean, but Schirmer's approach was much more romantic. I recall that he actually spoke about that and said that he saw the opera both as a radical piece, but also as a musical development of the Romantic German opera tradition from Wagner and Strauss. And I know that during his tenure as chief conductor of the orchestra, the musicians felt that this *Lulu* production was the high point of his career with the DNRSO. Schirmer is also, in his mindset, very much intellectual on one level, so he was certainly aware of this world of Wedekind and Berg, and represented those intellectual and dramatic dimensions of the opera quite convincingly. One should not forget that Alban Berg was also very romantically predisposed in his outlook, so this historical development of sound that combined radical and romantic elements was in the forefront of Schirmer's approach.

Klaus Bondam rounds off the discussion of the performance by admitting that despite not contributing throughout the planning stages

I do feel that it was an extremely accessible opera production that was easy to watch. I understand that Berg's music may be hard to grasp, but dramatically,

I think we succeeded in creating a version that was also accessible for the ordinary audience member. I think it's partially due to Constance Hauman's performance, which was very good, and also because while she was in Copenhagen, she understood the international aspect of the events in the city, and opened for a techno DJ at another event in the city. I helped her to get hold of him, and I remember her telling me that she sung the *Queen of the Night* aria [from Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*] to techno music, and was very enthusiastic about it. For me, it was a very modern and contemporary way to access her craft as an opera singer, and to push the boundaries of her art. She was a fantastic stage actress and drew in the audience with her charisma.

From the beginning, the interviewees stressed the paramount necessity of engaging an international cast. The cultural and national diversity of such a cast contributed to the adventurous attitude in the face of an almost impossible task, as Veng described it, and is a revealing byproduct of this production. This attitude originates from the same convictions of faith and courage that were essential in instigating the entire project. Abildgaard and Veng spoke of the stage production's symbolism, of psychological complexity and meaning, which further struck a chord with audiences for its sophisticated yet approachable depictions: once again infusing an archaic and esoteric art form with something indicative of contemporary significance. Liebst believed that this stemmed from Travis Preston's vision of the opera's narrative and dramaturgical capabilities, which were further enhanced by the attributes of Ridehuset. Bondam concurs with the production's accessibility, which successfully drew in the audience and captivated their imagination. Visually and musically, it is evident from these testimonies that the organic qualities of this production inspired audiences to personally identify with the characters on stage, thereby engaging in cultural solidarity through a shared experience. This is precisely the aim of the ECOC, and the interviewees knew that *Lulu's* success would hinge on realizing this phenomenon.

6. The Production of *Lulu*: Reception and Legacy

All the interviewees that I spoke with emphasized the international scope of the *Lulu* production in the context of the ECOC. To them, attaining an operatic standard of international excellence was more important than depicting any overt feature of Danish cultural identity. Nevertheless, elements of the venue, participating entities, and the presence of the Danish monarchy all contributed to an insider perspective of the interviewees' reception of the production, as well as the awareness of the outsider spectator that this production did have strong references to notions of Danish identity. Veng identified these factors most explicitly, stating that

first of all, there were a lot of roles with prominent Danish opera singers. It was the Danish National Radio Symphony Orchestra playing, which is, of course, the Danish angle. And then for me, the venue was also significant because it was a historic spot for Copenhagen. In that area of the capital, there was a statue of Bishop Absalon, who had founded Copenhagen. Also, this island [Sjælland], where this castle [Christiansborg] and seat of Danish parliament is, traces the roots and history of Copenhagen. So we made a production at a place that's the oldest venue in the capital, which represents this strong Danish angle to the *Lulu* production. On the other hand, this was a performance where we could exhibit a level of production, originality, and a high musical level, all of which were of the greatest international standards. To put it bluntly, this production was far above the level of the Royal Opera in Copenhagen at the time. It created some new standards of what you could do in Copenhagen, and also happened to possess this link with the history of Copenhagen. I think the production showcased how profound the history of the city is. It was also a demonstration of the city's cultural heritage, as it has existed for a very long time and remains intact today. The Danish monarchy has historically always supported art and culture. And within Copenhagen's music scene, we have a lot of history and culture that has also existed for a long time. This demonstration of the city's cultural background was also on display for the ECOC year to show how the choice of venue for *Lulu* represented centuries of Danish cultural history. There was also the desire to present the world with a view of Copenhagen's cultural resources, such as the DNRSO, which was depicted as having a high international performance standard, and then also showing the world that we have very good singers based in Denmark, singing major roles in the *Lulu* production. So it was a way of exemplifying historical and contemporary prowess in terms of both Danish capabilities of those representations, as well as producing an opera that was at that time very popular in its full version, and being performed by the best orchestras and companies around the world. Another aspect of it was bringing about an awareness of the whole Ørestad region that included Southern Sweden. We had a couple of singers who were Swedish and sang the small roles of the manservant and the police officer, because we wanted to promote this connection with the Ørestad region, and this also contributed to the cohesion and solidarity of everything the *Lulu* production sought to promote on a regional and international level.

When asked about the audience reception of the performances, Veng replied as follows:

You can start off with the queen. She attended one of the performances and was crying. The experience was so overwhelming. It had all the features of a fantastic theater production in the way it was received by the audience. The opening night received tremendous applause at the end and lasted for a long time.

People were really moved and grabbed by this. And I think it had something to do with the focus on the psychological side. Opera can take you away with an overwhelming production. Travis really wanted the production to showcase the psychological interactions between characters and not to be focused on other theatrical elements. One needs to remember that there is a hardcore operatic audience that goes for the popular titles of Puccini, Wagner, and Mozart, and then you have an audience that wants to broaden their experiences and are curious about special productions like at Ridehuset. And this *Lulu* production had all those special elements.

Veng was in agreement with the view that *Lulu* opened the doors to audiences that would not have otherwise experienced opera at a standard opera house.

Liebst reflected on the international impact of the *Lulu* production, representing an outsider's perspective of the production's widespread renown by stating the following:

I remember in my new job that I was sitting in London a few days after the opening night of *Lulu* with a lot of bankers. When I arrived at the meeting, they were all talking about the *Lulu* production in Copenhagen. I was stunned. One does not expect bankers in London to talk about *Lulu*. But they did, and I recall seeing some articles in the *Financial Times*, which showed me that we succeeded. We were able to reach people internationally that never would have thought of the cultural events in Copenhagen. They didn't go see it, but they knew about it. If you look at *Lulu's* reception with the general audience and with professionals – meaning musicians, singers, and anyone associated with the arts – I think it brought something to the entire Copenhagen community, as well as to Europe. It demonstrated that a production on that scale could yield a very positive result. The impact was significant not only to Copenhageners and Danes, but to many internationals as well. Also, the element of the venue as part of the Danish monarchy showed the world how Danes look upon their own society in a celebration of the arts, and how the monarchy is an inclusive member of Danish art and society.

Anette Abildgaard added her view on the legacy of the *Lulu* production in Copenhagen by contending that

since the production, opera in Copenhagen has been on the rise. We have the Copenhagen Opera Festival, which attracts large audiences from all over Copenhagen and Denmark. This festival also works with special venues like castles and outdoor parks. The Royal Opera also experienced a positive upswing. It's difficult for me to say, but our *Lulu* production was very unique and could very well have inspired these other organizations today to do something similar.

Klaus Bondam's reflection on the reception – also representing an outsider perspective regarding audience impact – was that

it was an extremely accessible production. And especially because of the sponsors, there were a lot of ordinary people who were non-conforming opera-goers. The queen was present for one of the performances, and knowing her elaborate tastes, I think she probably enjoyed it. I believe that the venue contributed in the sense that it was an extraordinary place and quite an unorthodox setting for an opera. Our *Lulu* production in those days was the talk of the town. Many people were aware afterwards that Grønnegårds had done the production, and people would come up to me every once in a while to say how they remember the production and really loved it. After that, there was a revival of opera in Denmark in terms of attracting younger audiences who did not view the opera as a formal event.

When asked to discuss the legacy of the *Lulu* production in Copenhagen, Veng reflected as follows:

I think the legacy is tied to the fact that it was one of the events that made the ECOC year memorable. Again, the production set standards about how you can do opera and music theater in different venues in Copenhagen, away from normal theaters. And it helped the development of future companies like the Copenhagen Opera Festival that does productions now in extraordinary venues. I was also very inspired by Ridehuset, because at the time, I did a lot of collaborations in Germany. At the time, the areas of Düsseldorf, Köln, and Dortmund were very industrial and dirty. But then much of the industry went out and the big halls that were used for industry were changed into cultural venues. And through this kind of thinking – of advancing culture by using these pre-existing venues over the years – these places have completely changed the international reception of culture in that rural area of Germany. It is amazing how the image of an entire state – North Rhine-Westphalia – can be changed from an international, cultural perspective. And it was high-level art production, including opera and theater, that was brought to these historically industrial venues. So they used art, theater, and opera to develop completely new ways of thinking about the whole area by using these extraordinary venues, and the same perceptions became evident in Copenhagen because of the *Lulu* production. If you want to develop the genre of music theater now, you have to go into different kinds of venues, like we did with Ridehuset. *Lulu* suddenly created a new atmosphere of how enterprising you could be by choosing opera repertoire. But one must say, afterwards, the Royal Opera in Copenhagen have themselves been more enterprising and entrepreneurial about their own opera

repertoire planning. And they had their own *Lulu* production recently in the house. They've also done *Wozzeck* and contemporary opera, as well as operas by Thomas Adès, John Adams, etc. So a lot of awareness at the Royal Opera had stemmed from our original *Lulu* production, and is still felt to this day.

This portion of the interviews emphasized the interviewees' greater awareness of representations concerning Danish identity. This was viewed through an insider versus outsider dichotomy, as Veng affirmed when comparing Ridehuset, the Danish orchestra in the pit, several of the Danish singers, and the Danish monarchy with the overall production that strongly stressed internationalism. The atmosphere created by the production both depicted and projected Copenhagen's history, cultural heritage, and most importantly, asserted that these phenomena are still intact today. I perceive the *Lulu* production as a bridge between a static history of the past that is frozen in time, with contemporary and relatable views of the past: from both Danish perspectives specifically, and European/humanistic perspectives generally.

Liebst and Abildgaard stressed the implications of *Lulu* also from outsider and insider perspectives, respectively: Liebst with regards to the attention the production received even in London, and Abildgaard in terms of *Lulu*'s influence on other opera companies in Copenhagen to adapt similar approaches for stimulating audience growth. Bondam reiterated the production's accessibility for non-standard opera-goers. I also believe that for new audiences to become sympathetic to opera by a composition as specialized and esoteric as Berg's speaks volumes to the manner in which the opera was produced, with all of its constituent parts playing a vital role in making something that has historically been appreciated only by connoisseurs suddenly garner near-mainstream appeal. As the interviewees comprehended, this was the *Lulu* production's ultimate legacy in Copenhagen.

Some of the sentiments which the interviewees expressed regarding the reception and broader cultural significance of the *Lulu* production are also evident from journalistic reviews in local newspapers at the time of the performances. In the weeks following the première, the *Lulu* production entered into a wider cultural conversation of justifying building a new music hall in Copenhagen. Arne Worsøe of the International Concert Organization was quoted as saying: "It is a fact that there is a tendency to continue to increase music events of all kinds throughout Europe. Live opera and classical events are on the rise."²⁴ The *Lulu* production at Ridehuset was specifically mentioned here amongst the most successful events of the ECOC tenure, and Jens Madsen adds that "[e]ven here dur-

24. "Det er et faktum, at der er en tendens til fortsat øgning af musikarrangementer af enhver art i hele Europa. Levende opera og klassiske arrangementer er i stærk stigning." Jens Jørgen MADSEN, "Jubel Over Ny Musikhus-Plan," *Det Fri Aktuelt* (19 September 1996), section 2, page 3.

ing the cultural city year – which has offered an extraordinary range of concert events – they are often sold out.”²⁵ These views echo the direct influence of *Lulu* that Abildgaard and Veng referred to in terms of the increase in the popularity of opera in the city and venue expansion, respectively. Veng himself was named an advocate of a new concert hall, thus directly linking the *Lulu* production with the cultural realizations that had gripped Copenhagen in the aftermath of the performances.

Lilo Sørensen provided the most comprehensive review of *Lulu*, describing, amongst other elements, the production’s effective lighting, which “created an ingenious scenography for the Riding House’s atypical space.”²⁶ He then depicts the atmosphere of the staging:

The shades are dark, preferably kept in black and white, interrupted only by a few bright colors. The costumes and decorations are simple – large paintings of the glorified woman, set pieces with parts of a naked woman, a stylized puppet theater with a big eye. An eerie sequence of images describes Lulu’s incarceration, and finally the giant white moon and an old car where Lulu receives customers and where she is murdered.²⁷

This view of the staging is echoed in Veng’s similar appraisal of the theatrical symbolism:

The venue created an intense and focused atmosphere toward what was happening on the stage. The set design and costumes did not depict a specific moment in time, but rather a timelessness that focused on the inner psychology of the characters.

Sørensen’s comments reflect the essence of Travis Preston’s vision of austere naturalism for this opera. In a summation of the title character’s performance and overall dramatic contour of the production, Sørensen states:

The instructor, together with the choreographer, has brought to life this perfect space with great intensity, where all the participants naturally enter the whole. Like Lulu, [the] American Constance Hauman is singularly and physically per-

25. “Selv her i kulturbyåret – der har budt på et ekstraordinært udbud af koncertarrangementer – er der ofte meldt udsolgt.” Ibid.

26. “Skabt en genial scenografi til Ridehusets atypiske rum.” Lilo SØRENSEN, “Fuldendt *Lulu*,” *Det Fri Aktuelt* (26 August 1996), section 2, page 3.

27. “Nuancerne er dunkle, holdt fortrinsvis i sort og hvidt, kun afbrudt af enkelte knaldende farver. Kostumer og dekorationerne er enkle – store malerier af den glorificerede kvinde, sætstykker med dele af en nøgen kvinde, et stiliseret dukketeater med et stort øje. En uhyggelig billedsekvens beskriver Lulus fængsling, og endelig den kæmpe hvide måne og en gammel bil, hvor Lulu modtager kunder, og hvor hun myrdes.” Ibid.

fect for the role, as she sings with a smoothly clear color soprano and lends with a stirring dramatic nerve. It is a complete achievement.²⁸

This estimation of Hauman is strikingly reminiscent of Veng's description of her as a singer "whom we also thought was perfectly cast theatrically for the stage of this opera." The idea of natural entrance is once again a nod to Preston's vision of presenting the characters as of the earth. Sørensen ends his assessment with the reflection that "'Lulu' is one of this century's great operas, a unique work that unites the past and present. A work that, in its dramatic substance, is eternal with a human insight that makes it relevant and changes anyone who comes into contact with it."²⁹ Once again, we see in this reflection the abstract projection of humanity that Preston sought to convey, and how the timelessness of the opera had a unifying effect of different periods, which in turn reflects its effectiveness as a cultural and temporal bridge, complementing the tenets of the ECOC. Other contemporary local newspaper reviews simply chose to present a plot summary of the opera, brief historical descriptions of its composition genesis, and a cast list.³⁰

As the interviewees reiterated several times, *Lulu* was an international endeavor intended to demonstrate Copenhagen's cultural attributes to the world. Indeed, foreign press coverage was keen to take notice of the production, and described the opera in context of its ECOC ambitions. Within these wider parameters of Copenhagen's overall tenure as capital of culture, *New York Times* journalist Alan Riding described the context thus:

Copenhagen may have found the right formula for success. Instead of trying to draw fleeting attention to itself in a Europe already swimming with arts festivals, the promoters of the latest cultural capital have used the occasion to invest in the future, by both strengthening cultural organizations and stimulating local interest in the arts. Europe is the excuse, but Copenhagen is the beneficiary.³¹

Trevor Davies, head of the ECOC foundation, was quoted in the article as saying that this installment of the ECOC would function as "opening Copenhagen

28. "Instruktøren har sammen med koreografen levendegjort dette fuldendte rum med stor intensitet, hvor alle medvirkende går naturligt ind i helheden. Som Lulu er den amerikanske Constance Hauman sangligt og fysisk perfekt til rollen, som hun synger med en smidig klar koloratursopran og forlener med en pirrende dramatisk nerve. Det er en fuldendt præstation." Ibid.

29. "'Lulu' er én af dette århundredes store operaer, et unikt værk, der forener fortid og nutid. Et værk, der i sin dramatiske substans er eviggyldig med en menneskelig indsigt, der gør det vedkommende og forandrer enhver, der kommer i berøring med det." Ibid.

30. See Niels Viggo BENTZON, "Lulu-Feber," *Det Fri Aktuelt* (24 August 1996), 22; "thor," "Erotisk Opera," *Det Fri Aktuelt* (20 August 1996), 7.

31. Alan RIDING, "Europe's Cultural Capital For '96 Takes a Longer View," *New York Times* (28 August 1996), C11.

to the world,”³² which the *Lulu* production embraced wholeheartedly. Riding then proceeds to review *Lulu*:

The highlight of Copenhagen’s opera program for the year, the Scandinavian premiere of the complete version of Berg’s “Lulu,” also took place last weekend. It was performed on a large temporary stage in the Royal Riding Hall at Christiansborg Palace at the invitation of Queen Margrethe II of Denmark. The production was by an American director, Travis Preston, with Ulf Schirmer leading the Danish National Radio Symphony Orchestra. Although the advantages of performing in the cavernous 18th-century hall rather than in the nearby opera house were not self-evident, Mr. Preston dealt skillfully with the absence of wing spaces by having the cast appear and disappear through trapdoors, while he found novel ways of occupying the vast stage, not least in one scene by filling it with large icon[-]like paintings of Lulu. Fears of an acoustical disaster also proved unfounded. But if the production was acclaimed on opening night, it was largely because of a young American soprano, Constance Hauman, who was singing the role of Lulu for the first time. Not only did critics praise her handling of the immensely taxing score, but also she injected deep poignancy into her portrayal of Lulu’s fall from cruel splendor to humiliation and death, even appearing naked onstage so that Lulu’s lover, Schon, could write his letter of farewell to his fiancé on her body.³³

Richard Fairman of the *London Financial Times* also presented his critique of *Lulu*. This review is very likely that which Liebst mentioned when expressing his surprise at witnessing bankers in London discussing the *Lulu* production in Copenhagen. Fairman started by placing the performance in the context of Copenhagen’s tenure as ECOC, proceeding with the following:

This *Lulu* marked the high-point of its [the DNRSO’s] year. Put on an opera with enough razzle in advance and it is possible to work up quite a head of public enthusiasm, even for a composer as difficult as Berg. The orchestra picked for its venue the newly-restored riding school in Christiansborg Palace and plastered Copenhagen with posters showing a tight clench of writhing, naked bodies. That sold out all eight performances. As long as the audience was not expecting an orgy on the lines of the publicity photo, this was a sexy *Lulu* – more so, certainly, than the recent Glyndebourne production. Where that showed Lulu as an everyday girl, a real plain Jane, this one went to the other extreme and made her the ultimate feminine icon in a surreal world, where nothing was as it seemed. The producer, Travis Preston, projected titles for

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid.

each scene onto a large frame around the stage (“Venus in Furs or The Cuckold’s Nightmare” it said for one) and kept as much of the action as he could at one remove, as theatre-within-a-theatre or film. As an interpretation of Berg’s opera this was decidedly over-coloured, but there were some strong theatrical touches. *Lulu* has conquered new territory.³⁴

Both reviews by foreign journalists discuss the spectacle of Preston’s production, albeit with different conclusions. Neither seemed to grasp the historical significance of Ridehuset, but both recognized the utilization and manipulation of the venue to serve the narrative vision. Lilo Sørensen certainly took greater care to describe details in more depth, but all of the articles address the profound impact that this production had in larger contexts beyond solely the performances themselves. It can be inferred from these receptions that *Lulu* was as much of a resounding success as the interviewees claimed (with many similar assessments made by the *Lulu* instigators and journalists), and that the outcome of this production was as much a tribute to Copenhagen’s cultural abilities as it was the birth of a new awareness for the potential of opera as a contemporary and versatile performing art form.

7. *Lulu*’s History of Censorship and Travis Preston’s Atonement

In an attempt to draw a historical arc from the period of Berg’s composition of *Lulu* to Copenhagen’s ECOC production of the opera, the theme of censorship will be presented as a tenet of inauthenticity in the history of this opera prior to its creation (in the form of the source material plays), until today. This phenomenon has been a constant theme associated first with the *Lulu* plays of Frank Wedekind, with Berg’s operatic adaptation of Wedekind’s plays, and subsequently with regard to the cultural repression of the Nazi regime. Further censorship resulted in the suppression of Act 3 of Berg’s unfinished opera by his widow. Conversely, Travis Preston’s vision of *Lulu* can ultimately be viewed as liberating the aesthetic limitation imposed on the opera by historical censorship, and an emancipation of the oppressive construct of political interference that betrays the morality of Berg’s intentions. By focusing on a primordial setting that emphasizes empirical naturalness, the production encompasses an underlying impetus to dispel functional bureaucracy and political propaganda in order to peel back the layers and present the most morally authentic essence of Berg’s narrative. This section will demonstrate how Berg was forced to self-censor his opera’s libretto in order to curry favor with the authorities; how Preston abstractly and subtly combated this

34. Richard FAIRMAN, “Sexy Lulu Conquers New Territory: Richard Fairman Enjoys the Cultural Capital’s Big Arts Event,” *London Financial Times* (6 September 1996), 13.

in the essay of his production's interpretation; and how the four Danish interviewees were also faintly aware of these matters in their own pursuits to depict an authentic representation of the opera.

In her book on the censorship of Wedekind and Berg's *Lulu*, Margaret Notley begins by stating how the 1990s saw an increase in scholarly assessment of censorship as a deeply-rooted social paradigm that yielded comparisons to other strata of "social regulation."³⁵ This notion presents relevant similarities to the 1996 Copenhagen production, and demonstrates an evident and sustained interest in, and awareness of, Preston's stage production of *Lulu*. Notley further notes that Wedekind's *Lulu* was censored exclusively for its unacceptable portrayal of sexual morality.³⁶ This too presents congruence with Preston's *Lulu*, which emphasizes an uninhibited, natural sexuality between its characters. Notley additionally states that

establishing performance traditions connected to Berg's conception of his opera became an increasingly remote possibility, and staging practices with little or no basis in the details of his score filled the void. Censorship of Wedekind's plays, Berg's libretto, and Act 3 of the opera itself thus had a complex and continuing impact on Berg's *Lulu*.³⁷

Without further consideration of Wedekind and the censorship of the *Lulu* plays, I will recount Berg's actions strictly through a few examples of his correspondence with the conductor Erich Kleiber.³⁸ Essentially, Berlin had rejected Berg's libretto for *Lulu* in 1934, thereby disqualifying the opera from performance in the city. Shortly afterwards, Berg received a letter from the conductor Wilhelm Furtwängler who informed the composer that *Lulu* would not be performed in Germany due to the controversial content of the libretto.³⁹ This prompted Berg to arrange some sections of the opera into a suite that focused almost exclusively

35. Margaret NOTLEY, "Taken by the Devil:" *The Censorship of Frank Wedekind and Alban Berg's Lulu* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 2. For a different perspective on the subject of censorship and Berg during the Nazi years, see Patricia Hall's chapter in her edited book, which offers a harsher judgment of Berg's ingratiating actions, seemingly damning him morally despite acknowledging the plethora of hardships that motivated him: Patricia HALL, "Alban Berg's 'Guilt' by Association," in *The Oxford Handbook of Music Censorship*, ed. by ead. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 377–388. For other discussions of censorship, including its application and impact, see Pierre BOURDIEU, "Censorship and the Imposition of Form," in *Language and Symbolic Power*, ed. by John B. THOMPSON, transl. by Gino RAYMOND and Matthew ADAMSON (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 137–159; William OLMSTED, *The Censorship Effect: Baudelaire, Flaubert, and the Formation of French Modernism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016); Robert C. POST, "Censorship and Silencing," in *Censorship and Silencing: Practices of Cultural Regulation*, ed. by id. (Los Angeles: Getty Center, 1998), 1–16.

36. NOTLEY, *Censorship of Lulu*, 2.

37. *Ibid.*, 9.

38. Kleiber famously conducted the première of *Wozzeck* in Berlin in 1925, and conducted the first performance of the *Lulu* Suite in 1934, after which he resigned his post as general music director of the Berlin State Opera in protest to the Nazi government's ban of Berg and other composers' music.

39. NOTLEY, *Censorship of Lulu*, 73.

on the music. Berg described the precarious situation he was in when he wrote to Kleiber on 8 March 1934, informing him:

I am in financial difficulties. The sudden drying up of all income from Germany (which has always made up a good three-quarters of my total income) for a year, and in addition to this, many external performances of the resulting income, and finally the very disgraceful failure of the Vienna State Opera ... all these circumstances, for which by God I am not to blame, have meant that I have been without income for a year, which will continue in this season ([19]33/[19]34) too.⁴⁰

This letter illustrates the dire financial situation that Berg found himself in, which compelled him to appropriate *Lulu* in whichever form might yield a performance.

On 21 March 1934, Berg again wrote to Kleiber, this time offering his perspective on *Lulu*:

Now that I have an overview of it, I am even more convinced of the piece's profound morality. *Lulu*'s ascent and descent are balanced; in the middle the great reversal, until finally – like Don Juan – she is taken by the devil.⁴¹

With these words, Berg justifies his version of *Lulu* by projecting it as a treatise of morality, and distances his version from Wedekind's sexually gratuitous moral bankruptcy, despite having pointed out that Wedekind also described his plays as morally upstanding when he defended himself against the censors' suppression.⁴² Berg attempted to convey here that his libretto was acceptable because *Lulu* was punished at the end of the opera, thereby delivering a sense of moral justice to conclude his narrative. Notley concurs that Berg's concept of "profound morality" was "based on *Lulu* receiving the punishment she deserved." Furthermore, "Berg had shifted the emphasis on sexuality in Wedekind's plays to the symbolic aspect of the *Lulu* figure."⁴³ Lastly: "the threat of censorship, his awareness that authorities could block performances of his opera, no doubt played a role in Berg's deci-

40. "Ich befinde mich nämlich in Geldschwierigkeiten. Das seit einem Jahr plötzliche Versiegen aller Einnahmen aus Deutschland (was ja immer gut dreiviertel meines Gesamteinkommens ausmachte), und damit im Zusammenhang auch vieler durch auswärtige Aufführungen resultierender Einnahmen, schließlich das ganz schmählische Versagen der Wiener Staatsoper ... alle diese Umstände, an denen mich bei Gott keine Schuld trifft, haben es mit sich gebracht, daß ich seit einem Jahr – fast ohne Einkommen bin, und es in dieser Saison (33/34) auch bleiben werde." *Alban Berg – Erich Kleiber: Briefe der Freundschaft*, ed. by Martina STEIGER (Wien: Seifert Verlag, 2013), 115.

41. "Jetzt wo ich es überblicke bin ich erst recht von der tiefen Moral des Stückes überzeugt. *Lulus* Auf und Abstieg hält sich die Waage; in der Mitte die große Umkehr, bis sie schließlich – wie Don Juan – vom Teufel geholt wird." *Ibid.*, 118.

42. NOTLEY, *Censorship of Lulu*, 49.

43. *Ibid.*, 98.

sion to present it as he did, in comments that continue to affect our understanding of *Lulu*.”⁴⁴

On 29 May 1934, Berg wrote to Kleiber to inform him of Furtwängler’s rejection letter. Here, he also states:

Now I would like to tell you the following: I am now making a suite of about 25 minutes out of the *Lulu* music. U. E. [Universal Edition] wants to get this out as soon as possible so that all orchestra associations (around the world!) can play it by autumn. To conclude from Furtwängler’s letter, I believe that such a première would be riskier in Germany. Just between you and me, since the music in this suite is selected in such a way that it will not pose any resistance even in biased circles – on the contrary: it will arouse pleasure. In some ways, maybe even more than the *Wozzeck* fragments. I am also firmly convinced that this suite will pave the way for the possibilities of stage performances, which will happen one day – even in Berlin.⁴⁵

Notley also comments on Berg’s ploy to negate the controversy of Wedekind’s words through beautiful music by saying that “he offset the problems in a different manner through achingly beautiful passages in the first movement that evoke *Lulu*’s aura and that led several critics to associate the character, as already implied, with the lush sound of tonal harmony at the turn of the century.”⁴⁶

The final element to discuss in Berg’s endeavors to have his music performed in an unfavorable political climate is how he and his friend Willi Reich fabricated deceptive program notes to further consolidate the desired première of the *Lulu Suite* in Berlin. Berg wrote to Reich on 8 July 1934: “An authentic text will be needed very soon for future program books. I myself do not want to make it, but it should indeed be authentic.”⁴⁷ This is a rather curious request by Berg, as it belies the intent to mislead the authorities who would ultimately decide the fate of *Lulu* in terms of performance. Indeed, Notley notes how Berg and Reich

went on to coauthor misleading program notes that deliberately portrayed the *Symphonic Pieces [Lulu Suite]*, and thus the opera, in a distant and idealizing

44. *Ibid.*, 116.

45. “Nun möchte ich Dir gleich folgendes mitteilen: Ich mache jetzt aus der *Lulu* Musik eine Suite von ca. 25 Min Dauer. Die U. E. will das möglichst bald herausbringen, so daß im Herbst alle Orchestervereinigungen (der Welt!) sie spielen können. Nach dem Brief Furtwänglers zu schließen glaube ich, daß eine solche Urauff. auch in Deutschland zu riskieren wäre umso mehr – füge ich unter uns hinzu – als die Musik dieser Suite so ausgewählt ist, daß sie auch in voreingenommenen Kreisen keinen Widerstand – sondern im Gegenteil: Gefallen erregen wird. In gewisser Hinsicht vielleicht sogar noch mehr als die *Wozzeck*bruchstücke. Außerdem bin ich fest davon überzeugt, daß diese Suite den Weg ebnen wird für die Möglichkeiten von Bühnenaufführungen, zu denen es ja einmal – sogar in Berlin – kommen wird.” STEIGER, *Berg-Kleiber Briefe*, 122.

46. NOTLEY, *Censorship of Lulu*, 76.

47. Quoted in Margaret NOTLEY, “Berg’s Propaganda Pieces: The ‘Platonic Idea’ of *Lulu*,” *The Journal of Musicology* 25/2 (Spring 2008), 107.

manner. Like the preface and prologue for *Die Büchse der Pandora*,⁴⁸ the program notes provided a paratextual frame, a guide to interpretation for censors as well as other types of audience members.⁴⁹

Furthermore, “the *Lulu* plays were certainly well known by 1934, but in the end, Berg decided to ignore that fact and to present their content in the program notes as if it were something other than what it was known to be.”⁵⁰ Lastly, as it was Hermann Göring who on 15 November gave Kleiber permission to perform the *Lulu Suite*, “it is likely that they [the program notes] crossed the desk of Göring himself – and that long before, Berg had realized this would happen and kept the likelihood in mind as the notes took shape.”⁵¹ From Berg’s letters and actions, it becomes explicitly evident that he sought to do all that he could, musically and textually, to change his opera’s image with the censors through the calculated stylization of the suite.

The following discussion focuses on Travis Preston’s production in Copenhagen, and how his vision of *Lulu* came to abstractly oppose the opera’s historical censorship. In the production, censorship is projected conceptually as the constriction of one’s true self via oppressive idealizations. The characters seek an inner and outer freedom from some form of epitomized bondage: *Lulu* from her portrait image (as exemplified in Act 3); Dr. Schön from his dependence on *Lulu*; the Painter from his erroneous idealization of *Lulu*; Geschwitz’s desire to free *Lulu* from prison as an idealized depiction of her own servitude by taking *Lulu*’s place, and later wanting complete freedom in the form of a “new life as a champion of women’s rights.”⁵² The tragic implication of the desire to be free is the subconscious awareness that it is fated to fail. This also reflects Berg’s glamorized fantasy that the beauty of his music could transcend the censorship imposed on the text, which it did, initially, but was not sustainable, and ultimately led to its prohibition.

In the opera’s first scene, Preston’s initial description of *Lulu* is as a “motionless *object d’art*.” Later in the scene, he states: “The previously static *Lulu* is now rampaging through the landscape as though freed from her existence as image.”⁵³ In the following scene, *Lulu* “confides that she feels like an animal within the confines of her conventional bourgeois marriage to the Painter.”⁵⁴ This further stresses the motif of seeking freedom, as she is experiencing a type of censorship

48. This was the second of the two *Lulu* plays by Wedekind that Berg had used along with the first, *Erdegeist*, to craft his libretto. In the prologue to *Pandora*, Wedekind had justified *Lulu*’s morality in an effort to have the play approved by censors.

49. NOTLEY, *Censorship of Lulu*, 75.

50. *Ibid.*, 80.

51. *Ibid.*, 81–82.

52. PRESTON, “*Lulu* – An Interpretation,” 19.

53. *Ibid.*, 17.

54. *Ibid.*

in the form of confinement from her true self. Meanwhile, at the same time, Dr. Schön attempts to “free himself from the uncanny power of Lulu”⁵⁵ by reiterating his intention to marry his long-standing fiancé. When Schön notices how debilitatingly enamored the Painter is with Lulu, he is compelled to reveal her true nature to the Painter, which shatters his idealization, and prompts him to “commit suicide by slashing his throat with the matador’s sword from Lulu’s costume. In the process he creates a violent abstract painting with his own blood.”⁵⁶ The Painter sought and achieved freedom from his torment through suicide, which is abstractly implied through the blood painting which results from this act. In the following scene, Schön once again attempts to wrest control and “free himself from her insidious power.”⁵⁷ However, it is not to be, as “he is completely mastered and humiliated by the young performer.”⁵⁸ In the second act’s description of the prison escape, Preston states that “Geschwitz, having united with Lulu by infecting them both with cholera, completes this gesture of masochistic self-sacrifice by taking Lulu’s place in prison. Their Mistress has finally been delivered from her long entombment in prison.”⁵⁹ Berg’s hideous menagerie of despair obviously quells all forms of hope through the suppression of freedom, which again reflects the historical fate of censorship that the opera endured.

Regarding the four Danish interviewees, their collective approach can be contextualized in Veng’s previous statement that

part of the agenda was that it would be the Scandinavian première of the complete three-act version of the opera. It was important for us to make a production that had value and interest outside of Denmark as well. This Cerha version of *Lulu* was very popular in the ’90s and was being done all over Europe. So it was an international trend we could continue by presenting its Scandinavian première.

This admission is crucial in tracing the international appeal and significance of Berg’s *Lulu*. When the full three-act version of the opera premiered 44 years after its composer’s death, the international reception was staggering: representing a universal triumph that had been built around a mythologized history of controversy with notions of censorship, incompleteness, and death. Therefore, the use of the three-act version was an example of disregarding the imposed ban, or censorship, of Act 3 that Helene Berg placed on the opera. The two-act torso that was performed up until the Paris 1979 première defied the formal structure that Berg envisioned, which only the full three-act version satisfies. Therefore this

55. Ibid.

56. Ibid.

57. Ibid., 18.

58. Ibid.

59. Ibid.

performance in Copenhagen stood in solidarity with the composer's authentic wishes, which was clearly evident to the Danish interviewees in their own pursuit of the new authenticity that was associated with performances of *Lulu*. Furthermore, in 1934, when Berg was struggling to forge opportunities for his opera, his publisher at U. E. had asked him: "couldn't you make it a bit more engaging and more universal," which Notley inferred as a proposal to have Berg distance his new adaptation even more from the opera's sordid themes.⁶⁰ This notion of greater universality plays to the international theme of the Paris première, as well as the mantra of Copenhagen's production, thereby prompting an explicit and direct historical connection of values from Berg to Paris to Copenhagen. *Lulu's* turbulent history can ultimately be seen as a reflective paradigm of society that is in turn mirrored in the tenets of the ECOC's aim to bridge divided cultures. By staging the opera at a patently Danish venue, yet dressing it in a nebulous, ethereal, and humanistic stage production, it takes social and historically political themes and renders them with a universality that truly represents Copenhagen's ECOC motto of "Copenhagen in Europe – Europe in Copenhagen."

8. Conclusion

Reflecting on the ECOC's mission statement to "highlight the richness and diversity of European culture and the features they share, as well as to promote greater mutual acquaintance between European citizens," the 1996 *Lulu* production in Copenhagen can be seen as achieving precisely these aims. From Alban Berg's untimely death in 1935, to the two-act torso première in 1937, and culminating with the Parisian world première of the full three-act version in 1979, *Lulu* had undergone a musical and cultural transformation by the time it reached Copenhagen in 1996. Certainly, the intrigue and controversy characterizing its path towards the full three-act version (as demonstrated by the opera's history of censorship) stimulated an international awareness and appeal in the work that has steadily grown by the time it reached the Danish capital. This opera was therefore unanimously viewed as a central event of Copenhagen's ECOC tenure, as well as a distinguished occasion by virtue of its status as the Danish and Scandinavian première – the latter of which also fueled its popularity and international profile.

Utilizing oral history methodology and thereby applying inductive reasoning, I have drawn conclusions regarding the significance, reception, and legacy of *Lulu* in Copenhagen through the interviewees' observations. A juxtaposition of these insider and outsider perspectives yielded a broad view of the production, while maintaining Copenhagen's cultural landscape as the central focus. The four

60. NOTLEY, *Censorship of Lulu*, 80.

Danish administrators that envisioned and instigated the project reflected on how *Lulu* established a new perspective of opera in Copenhagen, and the innovation of performing the genre at unique venues not usually associated with opera. This phenomenon contributed to attracting a wider audience demographic, who would be less receptive to more traditional methods of staging operas. Furthermore, it was established by the instigators of the *Lulu* project that the production depicted Danish cultural identity, while simultaneously promoting an international cooperation and an international standard of artistic execution. Indeed, from the historical significance of Ridehuset to the venue's larger context as the seat of parliament, as well as the personal involvement of the Danish queen, and the involvement of the DNRSO and Danish singers, according to the interviewees *Lulu* demonstrated a profound display of Danishness that had contributed to Danes' view of the production with pride in their city's history and cultural legacy. Nor can the innovative efforts of Grønnegårds Theater, coupled with the enterprising leadership of the DNRSO, go unrecognized for possessing the vision and courage to see this ambitious endeavor through to its successful completion. The mass appeal to audiences was ultimately the greatest measure of the opera's success, and the legacy which reinforced for Danes how significant the ECOC tenure was for their city. In a more abstract sense, *Lulu*'s legacy can be felt in all the ways that opera culture has flourished in Copenhagen since, becoming a vibrant mainstay in the landscape of the city's proud and rich cultural identity.

The element of temporal displacement also plays a significant role in reception due to the years of hindsight that the interviewees had the luxury of drawing on based on the nature of my research. This project stressed the juxtaposition of insider versus outsider perspectives in terms of the 1996 event from the views of the four Danish insiders, the outsider representation of the ECOC, and audience reception. Nevertheless, there is a further aspect to the same dichotomy to consider in the form of the temporal displacement that distinguishes 1996 from 2019. Certainly, in this sense, I am the outsider myself in this instance, contrasting my view of the event with the hindsight of the interviewees. The individuals I interviewed had lived in Copenhagen for 23 years in the wake of the *Lulu* production, and could directly appreciate the impact of their efforts from 1996. This provided them with a unique insight that would not have been possible if I had conducted the interviews at the time of the event. Therefore, expressing the projection of any possible legacy would have been pure speculation. The avoidance of such circumstances adds a further dimension to my project: it can now trace the root source of Copenhagen's present-day operatic scene from practices that were presumably only adopted as a result of the 1996 event. Furthermore, by being so far removed, I can logically concur, as a temporally-displaced outsider, that the implications of *Lulu* can still be felt today in Copenhagen, as someone who has lived in the city himself and experienced its innovative operatic approach. My work has shown that the architects of the 1996 event have recognized the fruits of their labor in Co-

penhagen's contemporary cultural life, which emerges as an asset in an analysis of the lasting effects of an event. The passage of time most certainly influenced the interviewees' interpretation of the 1996 event, as they could more readily accept the success that they fostered and express their pride, as a parent experiences the growth of a child over time. I do believe, then, that conducting this investigation so many years after the fact has achieved a more profound understanding of what the *Lulu* production was able to bestow upon Copenhagen in 1996, and how the city is still culturally benefiting from that experience today.