

Industrial Ballets

Modes of circulation of the ballets *Excelsior* and *Columbia*

Johanna Hilari (University of Bern)

Abstract

Industrial Ballets paradigmatically deal with scientific rationality, industrialization and electrification. Their relevance for dance history lies in the inter-connection these ballets have towards technological and socio-cultural developments in the turn of the 19th to the 20th century.

Focussing on the examples *Excelsior* and *Columbia*, this paper investigates the specific references to fast-paced technological inventions as well as current events like industrial fairs and world fairs. Furthermore, it highlights the modes of circulation both ballets have within two theatrical cultures, the high culture of opera houses on one side and popular variété shows on the other. The aim is to throw light on the fragmentary source material and to ask how this condition affects the dance specific research on this period of time. More generally the analysis of these two examples questions the marginalized role of Industrial Ballets in dance historiography.

Biography

Johanna Hilari is an assistant and PhD candidate at the Institute for Theatre Studies, University of Bern. In her dissertation *Expanded Choreography – Expanded Cinema* she examines the interdependency of filmic and choreographic practices and their distinct relation towards dance historiography. Occasionally she works as a dance-dramaturge.