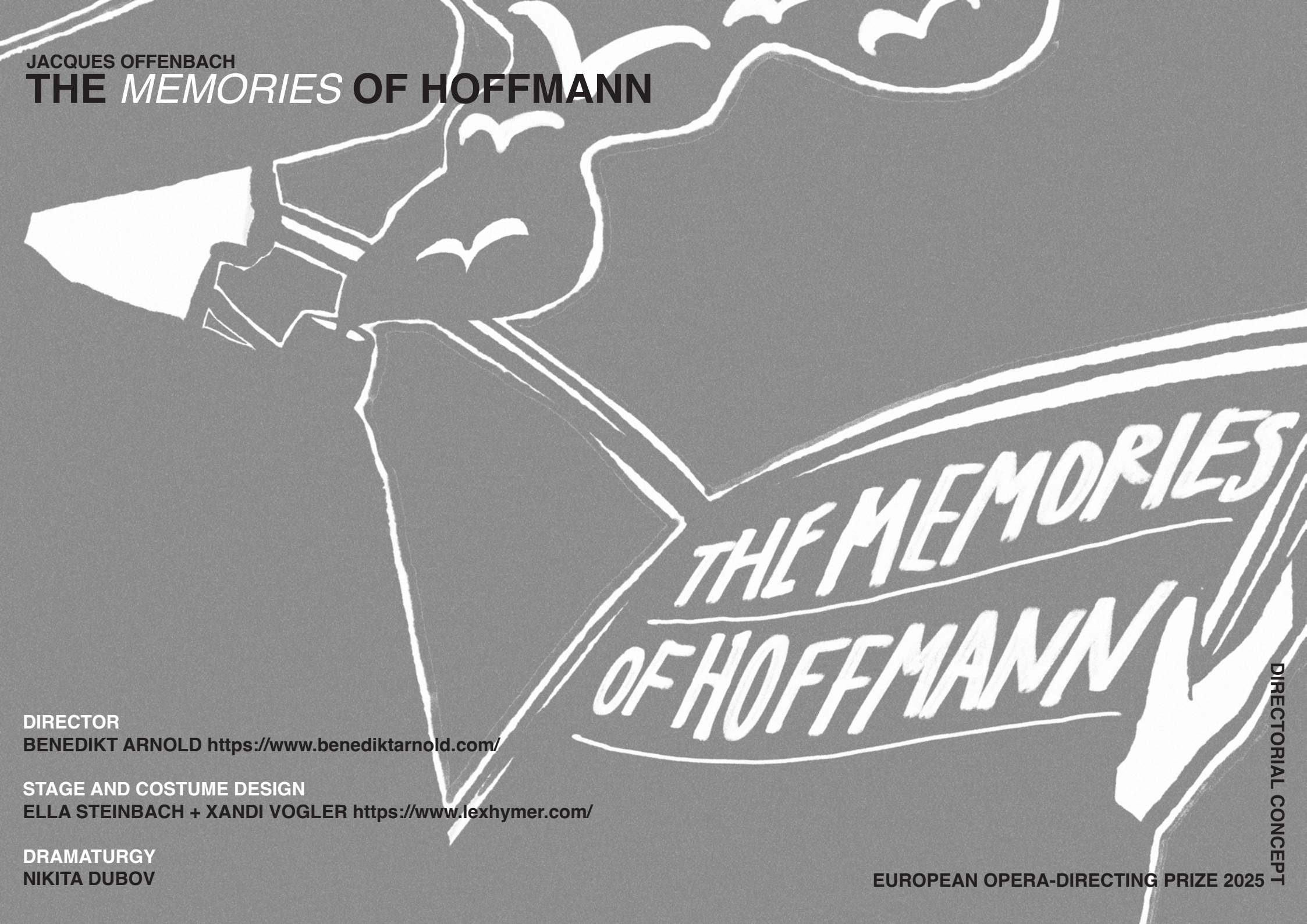




JACQUES OFFENBACH

# THE *MEMORIES* OF HOFFMANN

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THE *MEMORIES*  
OF HOFFMANN

EUROPEAN OPERA-DIRECTING PRIZE 2025

DIRECTORIAL CONCEPT

Short summary of the concept

# The MEMORIES of Hoffmann

Hoffmann's three stories are presented as a chronology of an outsider's life and brought to the stage in nightmarish flashbacks.

While Hoffmann is confronted with the processing of his memories and behaviors, our concept focuses also scenically and musically on his lifelong companion Nicklausse – a developing figure ,in-between,' with strong feelings and longings of their own.

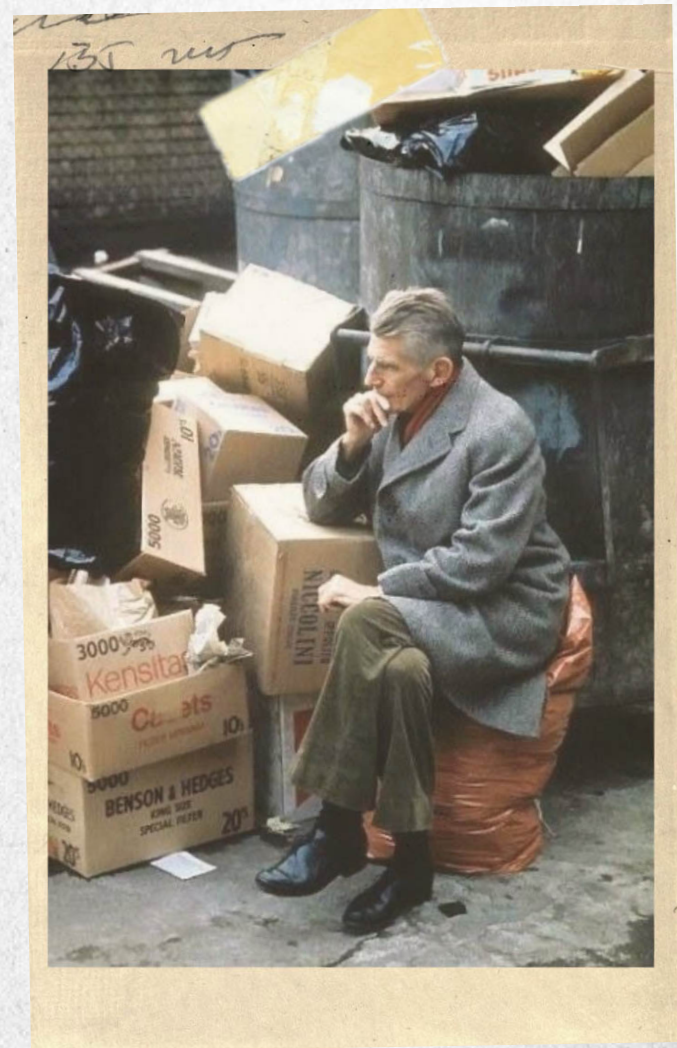
We depict a possibly missed queer love story between the two protagonists due to Hoffmann's distorted and problematic views on women:

In his encounters with Olympia, Antonia, and Giulietta, he only sees clichéd surfaces and combines them into a constructed and unattainable ,Stella' projection.



## HOFFMANN AND NICKLAUSSE

An unevenly aged couple: Hoffmann is losing himself, while Nicklausse is finding themselves.  
Dependent on each other, torn between affection and aversion.  
How do two people shape and change when they spend their entire lives together?



## ACT 1 + 5

Hoffmann's blurred projections and intoxicated imaginations.  
Dead ends, waiting, beginnings and endings – for both Hoffmann and Nicklausse.



## ACT 2

Hoffmann at the age of 6.

Childlike fascination, sensory overload, discovery of first feelings.



## ACT 3

Hoffmann at the age of 25.

Fragile ideas of a future forever, responsibilities and escaping from them.



## ACT 4

Hoffmann at the age of 45.

Excess, loss of control, addiction, (self-)destruction.



**ACT 2** A birthday party, where celebration turns into nightmare.



**ACT 3** A hotel room, where rapture unfolds as reality shifts.



**ACT 4** A public hall, where longing fails and fantasies multiply into endless Juliettas.



**ACT 5** Back to reality.

# APPENDIX

The setting



## ACT 1 + 5

Hoffmann's blurred projections and intoxicated imaginations.  
Dead ends, waiting, beginnings and endings – for both Hoffmann and Nicklausse.



## ACT 2

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## HOFFMANN AND HIS THREE PAST SELVES

An artist character who loses himself – but finds true affection with Nicklausse.  
Dissatisfied, moody, self-loathing, provocative.



## NICKLAUSSE

A character who finds themselves.

Embodies inspiration and rationality – encapsulates feelings towards the lifelong friend Hoffmann.



## OLYMPIA / ANTONIA / GIULIETTA = STELLA

Hoffmann's idealized and detached projections, images, distortions – and the women behind them.



## **Lindorf / Coppélius / Dr. Miracle / Dapertutto**

A figure in four characters who triumphs over the defeated Hoffmann -  
and who embodies and possesses what Hoffmann is not and does not have.

**Act 1** No 3-6, Scènes IV-Finale, Klein-Zack



**CHOIR ACT 1+5**



**CHOIR ACT 2**



**SPALANZANI**



**OLYMPIA**



**COPPÉLIUS**



**HOFFMANN**





**CHOIR ACT 4**



**DAPERTUTTO**



**SCHLEMIL**



**GIULIETTA**



**Act 1** Beginning – No 1, Scène I, Romance de la Muse [2. version]



**Frame 1** The framework of our narrative is defined by a bus stop as a place of pause and waiting. Outside of it, everything fades into a hazy blur.

**Act 1** No 2, Scènes II-III, Couplets Lindorf



**Frame 2** The initial scenes of the first act stand in contrast to the concrete bus stop image, appearing as restless hallucinations, nightmares, and projections of Hoffmann's drowsy, fantasizing mind.

**Act 1** Couplets Lindorf, Klein-Zack



**Frame 3** Stella appears as a projection, a distant ideal that, in Hoffmann's eyes, exists only as a superficial shell.

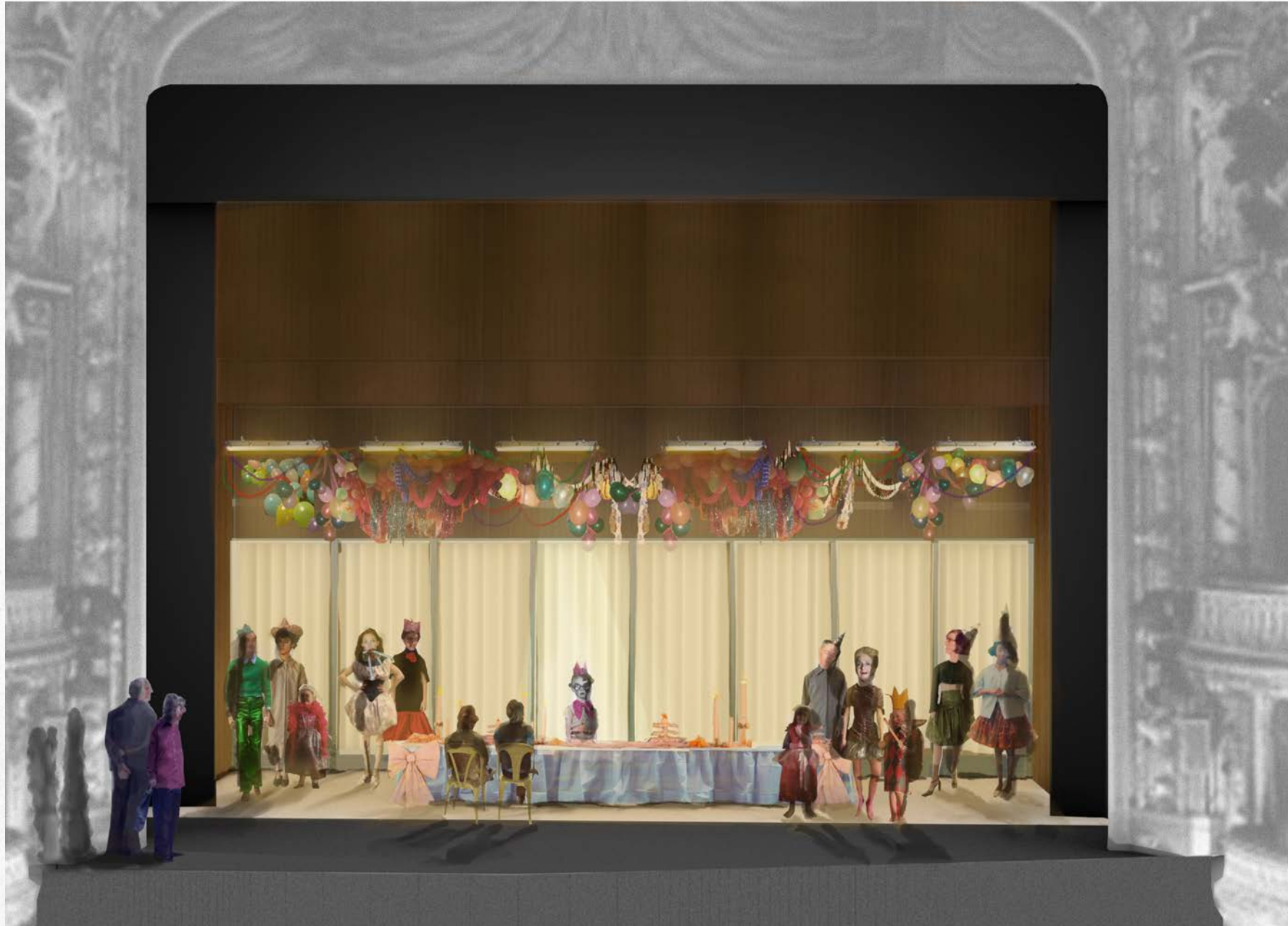


**Frame 4** Through artistic ups and downs in his life, Hoffmann has become a bizarrely romanticized character. His alcohol-fueled performance of Klein-Zack is observed by the boorish and unpleasant men's choir.



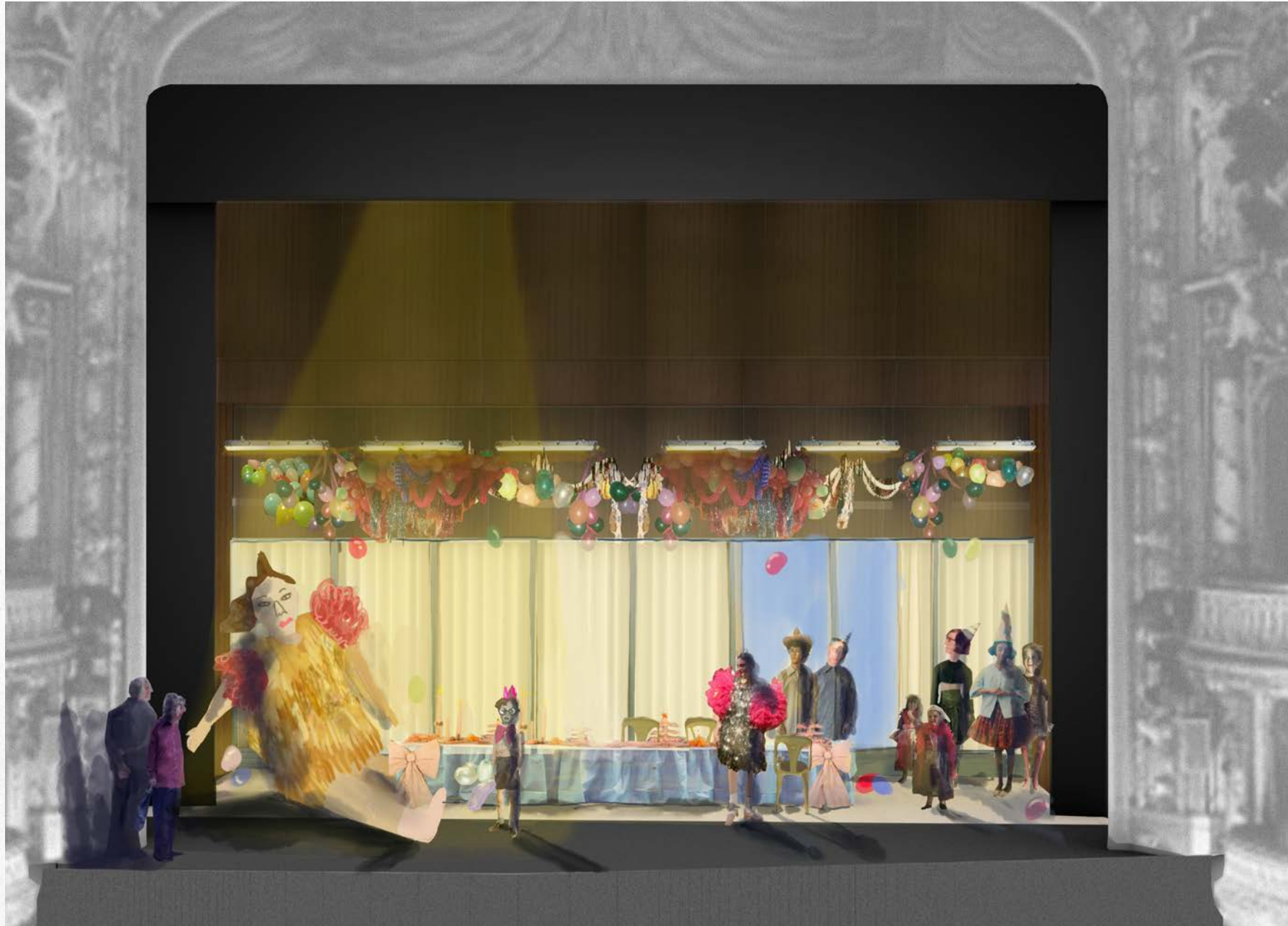
**Frame 4** Through artistic ups and downs in his life, Hoffmann has become a bizarrely romanticized character. His alcohol-fueled performance of Klein-Zack is observed by the boorish and unpleasant men's choir.

**Act 2** No 7-9, Scènes IV-VII, Romance de la Muse [O rêve de joie], Trio



**Frame 5** Like each of our three acts of remembrance, Act 2 begins with a concrete image: we find ourselves at Spalanzani's preparations for a birthday celebration. Gradually, this scene shifts into a nightmarish realm.

**Act 2** Air d'Olympia, No 10-11, Scènes X-XI



**Frame 6** The reliability of memory is further called into question through a distortion of dimensions. Olympia appears in an additional puppet version, becoming an exaggerated replica in Hoffmann's eyes.



**Frame 7** At the moment of culmination, the bubble finally bursts — Hoffmann's overwhelming feelings of shame reveal his mechanisms of repression.

**Act 3** No 13-17, Scènes I-XII, also: Romance de Nicklausse [Vois sous l'archet frémissant]



**Frame 8** In a hotel room, three young adults fall into rapture:  
Alongside Hoffmann and Antonia, we also hear poetic yearnings from Nicklausse – though much more hidden and allegorical.



**Frame 9** The initially concrete hotel room begins to act more and more strangely: pictures fall from the walls, windows and curtains open and close by themselves. A shifting of interior and exterior spaces takes place, and the room alternately expands and contracts.



**Frame 10** In the transitional space of a lobby, Hoffmann destroys the utopian image of the Barcarole and tries in vain to reconnect with his past artistic successes. He must fill an ever-growing emotional void — with alcohol, physical love, and compulsive gambling.

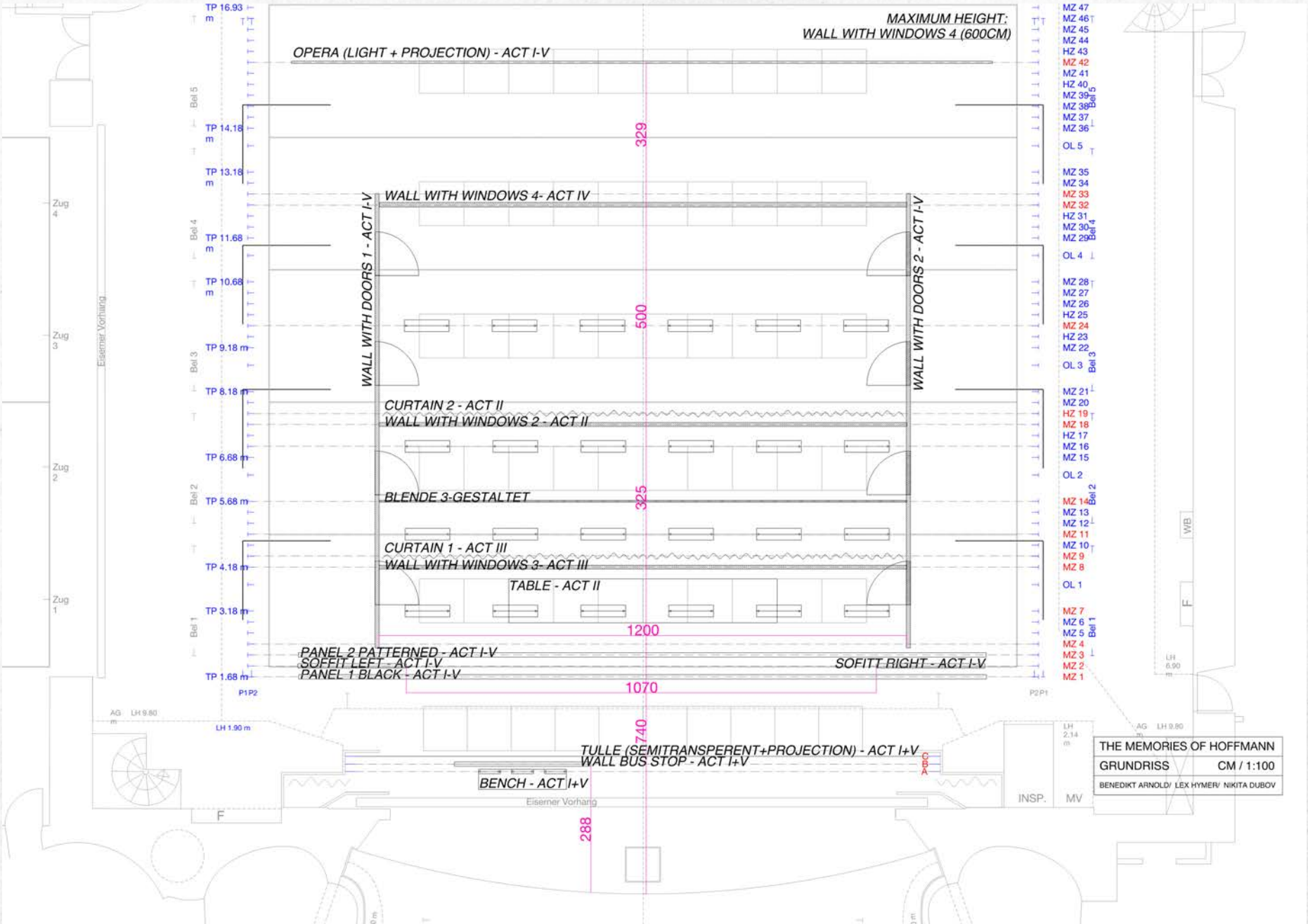


**Frame 11** Giulietta appears to the now blurred-sighted Hoffmann in multiple forms. He loses himself in the bodiless copies of his self-created „Stella fantasy“ and he loses Giulietta in a chorus full of Giuliettas.



**Frame 12** The ending is a return to the beginning: „Stella’s“ projection now appears tripled, and Nicklausse faces a long-over-due, though not painless farewell.

proposal for a floor plan and usage of mechanical hoists



proposal for set transformations

### Transformation Act 1 -> Act 2

End of Act 1 („Messieurs, on va lever le rideau ...”, ca. 01:00 min)  
+ Entr’acte (01:15 min) + beginning of Scène I (01:55 min) / overlaps in Act 2

### Transformation Act 2 -> Act 3

Ent’acte (00:50 min) + beginning of Romance d’Antonia (“Elle a fui ...”, 03:30 min) / overlaps in Act 3

### Transformation Act 3 -> Act 4 START

End of Act 3 (“Mon enfant, ma fille ...”)

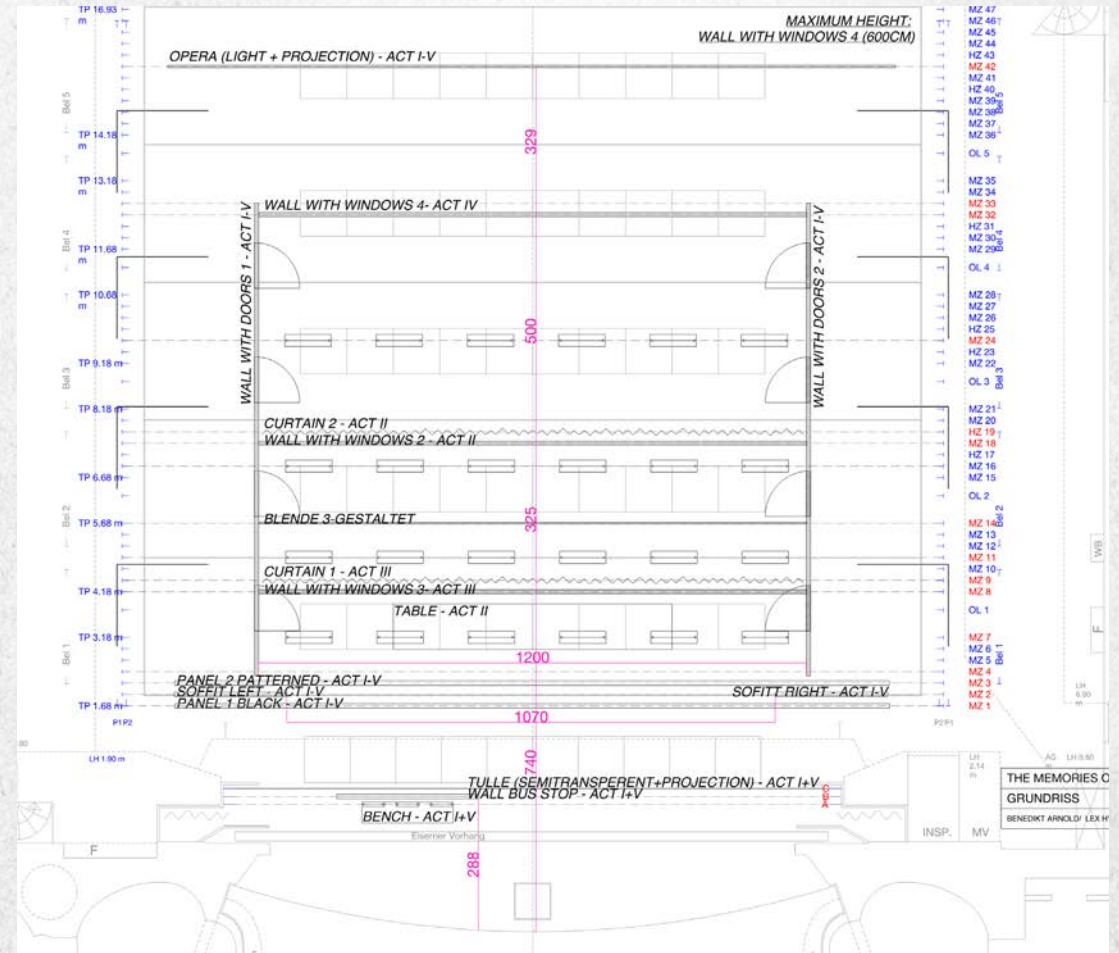
## INTERMISSION

### Transformation Act 3 -> Act 4 END

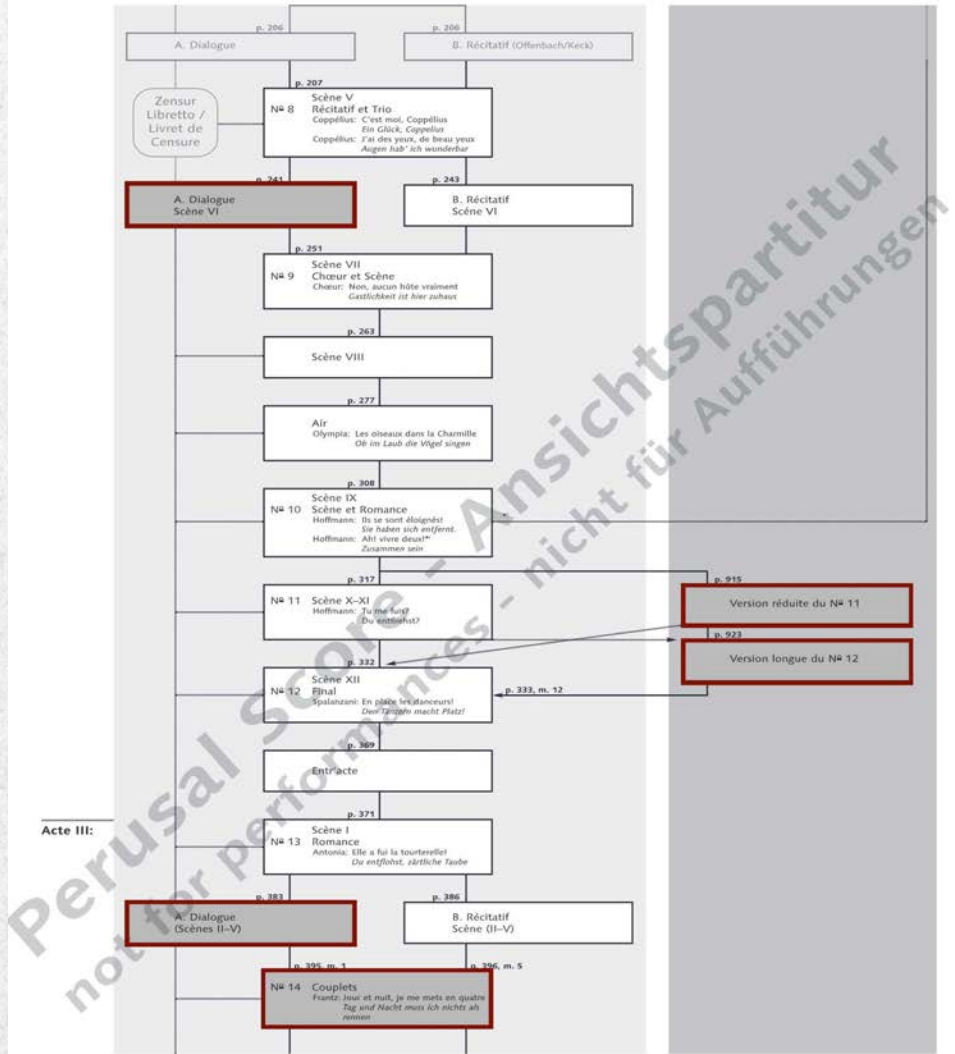
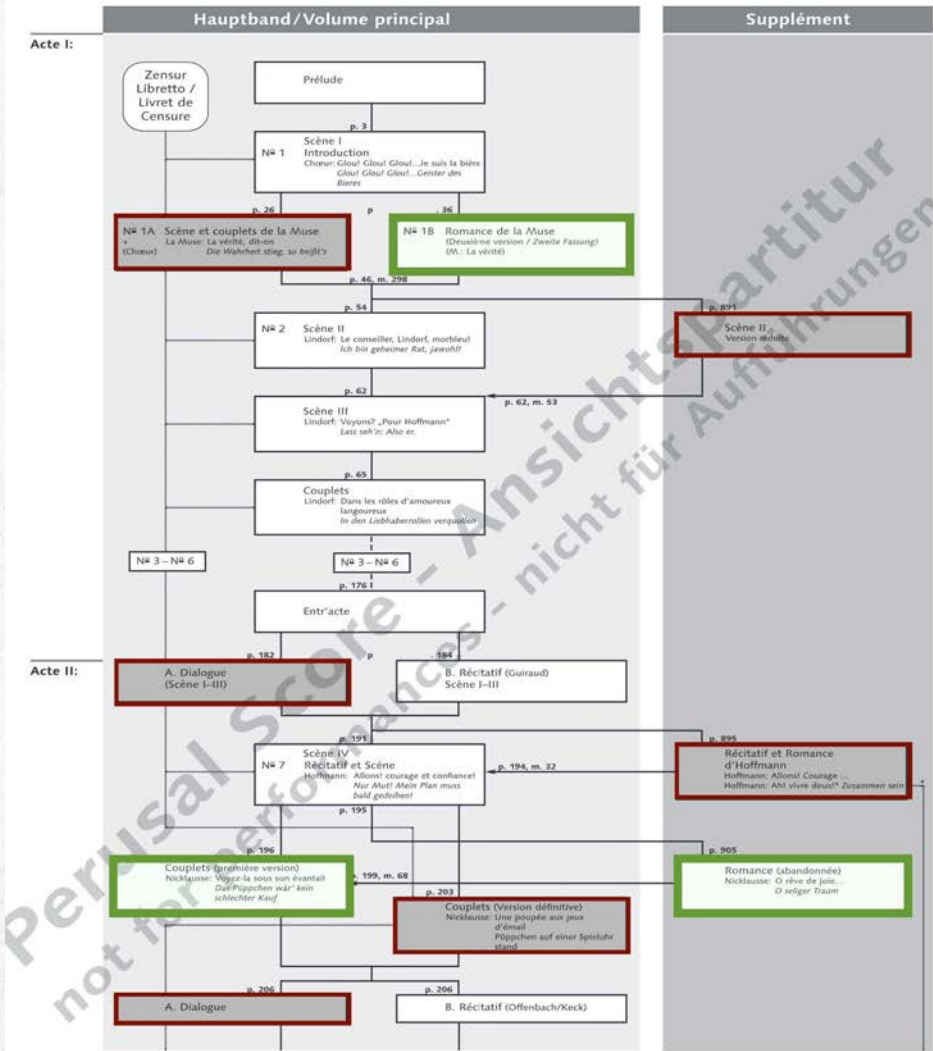
No 18, beginning of Barcarole (“Belle nuit ...”, 03:22 min)

### Transformation Akt 4 -> Akt 5

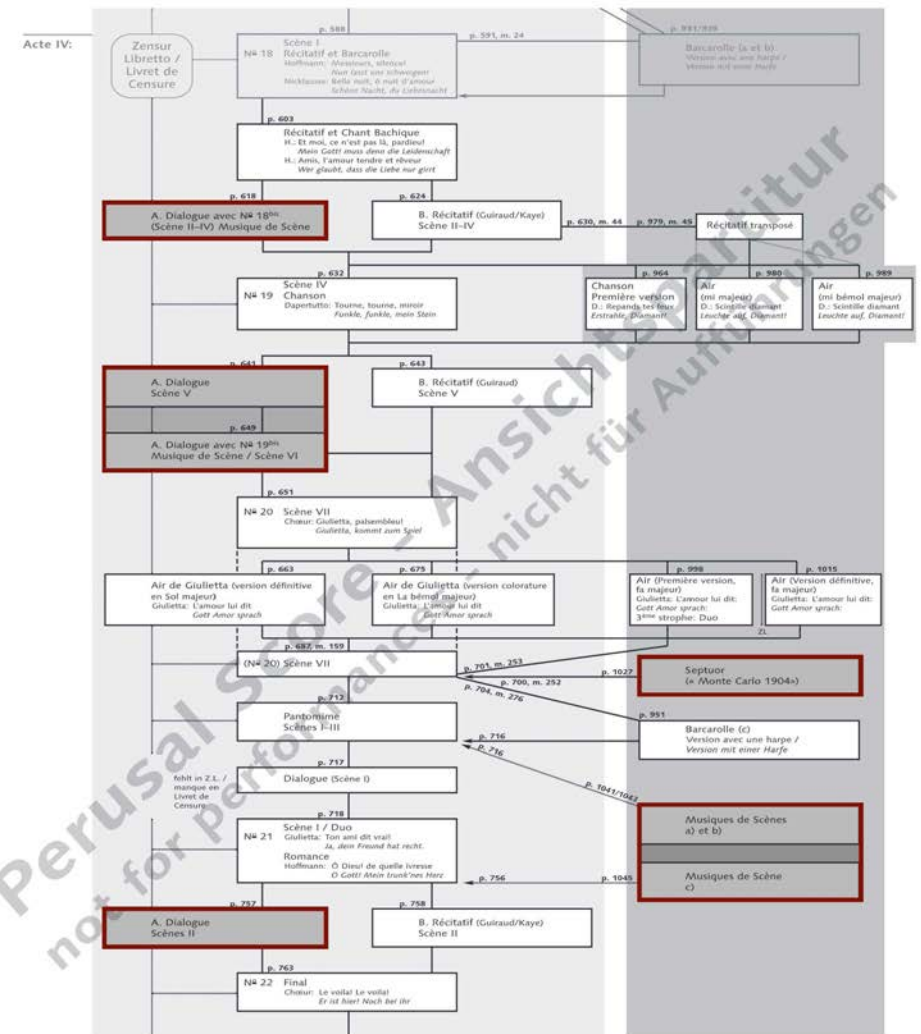
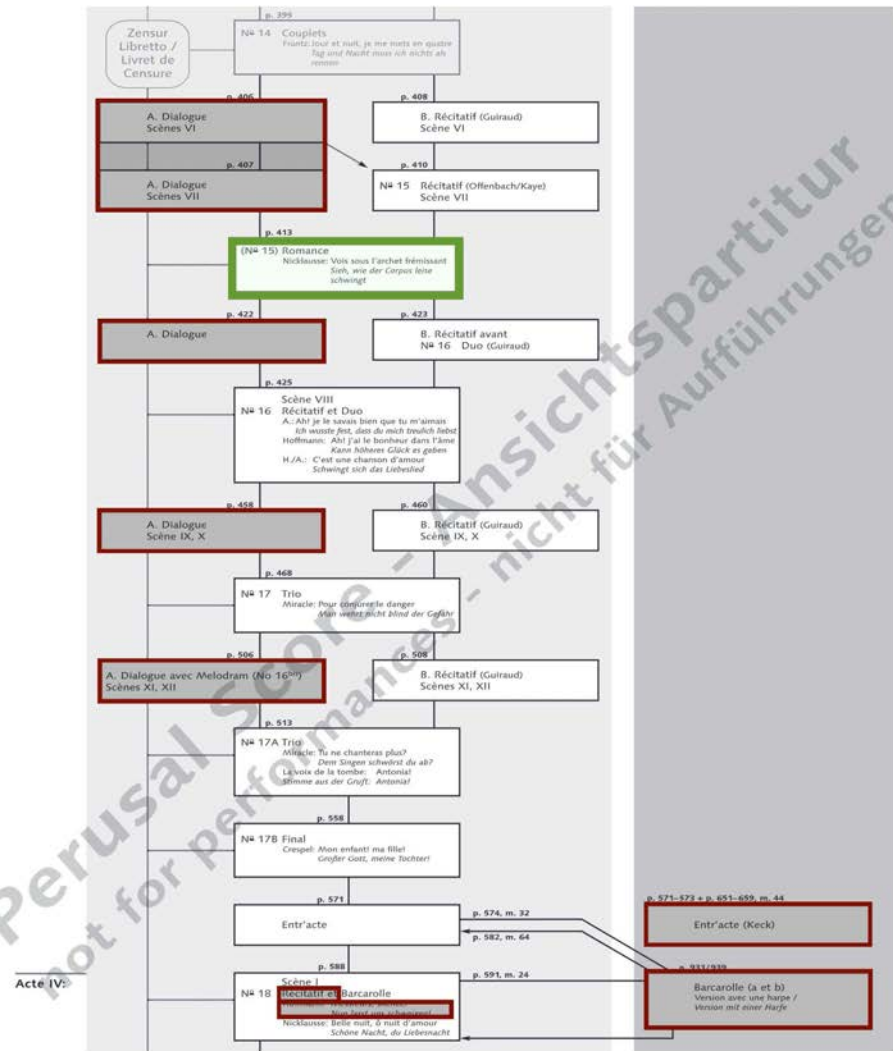
Entr’acte (01:20 min) + No 23 Choeur (“Folie! Oublie ...” 01:37 min)



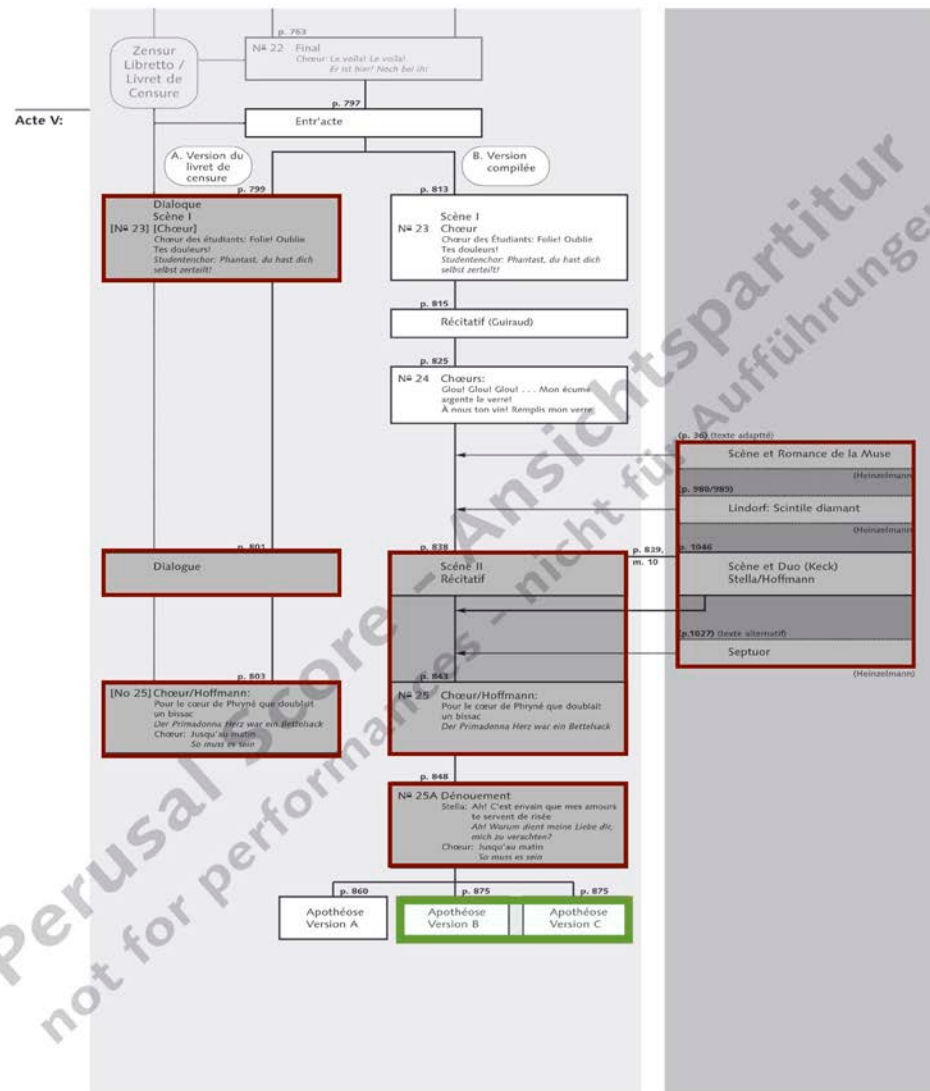
proposal for a musical version based on the Kaye/Keck edition



proposal for a musical version based on the Kaye/Keck edition



# proposal for a musical version based on the Kaye/Keck edition



THE END