

THE TRANSMISSION AND CIRCULATION OF WESTERN OPERA IN THE NETHERLANDS EAST INDIES, 1835-1869: PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS¹

Akiko Sugiyama

Abstract

In October-November 1835 eight French professional performers directed by Ferdinand Minard completed six vaudeville shows in Batavia. The shows were highly acclaimed as they enlivened Batavia's cultural life dominated by productions and performances by amateur artists. Inspired by the novel experience, local dilettantes were now calling for more professional shows, especially opera. Much to their delight, Minard and his ten some performers returned to Batavia in October 1836, specifically for operas. The second residency of Minard and his troupe marked the first known season of Théâtre-Français (French Theatre) that would continue into the 1860s and beyond under the successor series Théâtre Français de Batavia (French Theatre of Batavia). The arrival of Minard and his performers was a catalyst for a few important shifts in Batavia's cultural life among European residents. It set in motion a tradition of annual professional and commercial productions by visiting performing artists. Minard's engagement in 1836 included select performances of Italian opera, which placed Batavia within the emerging world culture of Italian opera. The journeys of Minard and his performers also saw early uses of steamboat and hotels that were antecedent to the age of steam to usher in globally with the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. By focusing on Batavia, this article makes a fresh contribution to the global study on the transmission and circulation of Western opera in Southeast Asia.

Introduction: Cultural Life of European Residents in Batavia at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century

Western music began to make its way into Asia since the Portuguese arrival in Asian waters at the tail end of the fifteenth century. Early contacts with Western music were largely confined to ceremonies, Christian education and household events and were commonly performed by slave and locally hired musicians. This status quo was beginning to change at the dawn of the nineteenth century when resident Europeans, now arriving in greater numbers, were growingly yearning for cultural and social life of Europe and calling to bring (European) professional entertainers to Asian frontiers.²

In Batavia, a new musical trend was beginning to take shape during the British interregnum in 1811-1816. The new epoch brought a group of ruling officers, who themselves were highly learned and brought with them the British etiquettes of "civilized behavior" that extended from table manners, sitting posture, conversation to dance.³ The cultural sophistication of the British ruling elite was in a marked contrast with the Dutch predecessors of VOC employees. Many of such men came from humble backgrounds, commonly married local Eurasian women, and lived in the Mestizo world. The British insistence on proper European manners led to the opening of the Military Bachelors' Theatre on 17 October 1814 in Weltevreden in the southern district of Batavia precisely for "the amusement of the ladies and provision of civilized diversion" in the city.⁴ While the plan for a new theatre was already underway prior to the British takeover, it was Stamford Raffles who materialized it with the construction of a bamboo-built theatre that could hold up to 250 persons.

The opening of the Military Bachelors' Theatre witnessed the advent of "an alien culture." Previously, entertainers constituted predominantly household slaves and native dancers and puppeteers. Contrastingly, the new theatre, even though it was still an amateur undertaking, began to present current European entertainments, such as Shakespearean plays, specially for Europeans by individuals with European status at the venue outside the living quarter.⁵ Quickly there emerged a notion of cultural exclusivity that European (English) entertainments are *for* European residents and vice versa.

The cultural life of European residents in Batavia continued to diversify after the restoration of Dutch rule. By the 1820s a local amateur company, *Ut Desint*, was performing regularly at *Schouwburg Weltevreden*. The Schouwburg was completed in 1821 and replaced the aforementioned and by then run-down Military Bachelors' Theatre as a novel venue for musical and theatrical productions.⁶ While contemporaneous sources often described the new theatre as small and even "unremarkable," the European community still cherished it as their "art temple."⁷ In addition to indoor entertainments, open-air evening concerts were commonplace in the city centre, especially in a small garden connected to *Sociëteit de Harmonie* or Harmony Society. Built initially as a clubhouse in 1815, the Society, along with the Schouwburg, would become principal venues for instrumental and vocal concerts by the 1850s.⁸ What we can surmise from the observations above is that by the late 1820s Batavia's cultural orientation was in motion from amateur productions to professional and commercial enterprises. The opening of the new venues only bolstered such trends in the following decades.

The Arrival of Professional Performers from France and the Beginning of *Théâtre-Français*

*The arrival of a small group of professional performers from France in 1835 was a fresh breath of air.*⁹

A group of eight performers under the direction of Ferdinand Minard, or *La Compagnie Française* (The French Company) as they were called in the local press, arrived in Batavia on 23 September 1835 on the Dutch barque *Le Charles* from Singapore.¹⁰ After completing six presentations of *vaudeville*, a type of theatrical entertainment consisting of songs, dances, and comic acts, the group departed Batavia on 24 November 1835 on the American ship *St. Lawrence* to Bremen.¹¹ As we saw in the vignette, the shows were highly popular among Batavia's theatre-goers so much so that "there was a loud call for more, so that Ferdinand Minard, leader of the group, returned in 1836 with a complete opera group."¹²

Much to the public delight, on 2 October 1836 Minard, together with ten some performers consisting mostly of conjugal pairs of singers and actors, arrived in Batavia on the French ship *Alexander* from Bordeaux.¹³ They stayed in Batavia until October 1837 and presented at least twenty-four recorded performances of *vaudeville*, *opéra comique* or comic opera, and Italian opera, for a new theatre series advertised as *Théâtre-Français* or French Theatre (TF).¹⁴ The first ever season of the TF opened on 14 October with *Ma tante Aurore* (My aunt Aurore), a comic opera by a French librettist Charles de Longchamps (1768-1832) and composer François-Adrien Boieldieu (1775-1834), and *Catherine, ou la Croix d'or* (Catherine, or the Golden Cross), a vaudeville by Nicholas Brazier (1783-1838) and Mélesville (1787-1865).¹⁵ Both shows were current in France at the time with the former being premiered in Paris on 13 January 1803 and the latter just being published in May 1835, indicating that the Batavian audiences were enjoying the recent trends in the French theatrical entertainment nearly synchronically as their French counterparts.¹⁶

We also learn from the same advertisement that Minard stayed at Hotel de Provence.¹⁷ The mention of Hotel de Provence is noteworthy. Located at the heart of Batavia near the

Harmony Society, the building was erected in 1828 as a boarding school for girls but soon closed due to the shortage of female pupils in the Dutch East Indies. In 1829 the Frenchman Antoine Surleon Chaulan purchased the property and named Hotel de Provence after his birthplace in France. The French connection between the owner and Minard was likely a factor in the former hosting the latter at his estate. Following a couple bouts of ownership changes, a Swiss staff member acquired the estate in 1856 and renamed Hotel des Indes and remained so until Indonesian independence in 1945. From then on until the time of its demolition in 1971, the hotel was known as Hotel Duta Indonesia.

It was during the time of Hotel des Indes when the hotel's reputation rose to its height as the chief accommodation for notable sojourners and residents alike. Incidentally guests were now increasingly journeying to and from Batavia by steamboat and steamship and some of such were performing artists. By the 1860s a handful of musicians were documented arriving in Batavia by steamship and subsequently staying at Hotel des Indes.¹⁸ Into the twentieth century, the hotel continued to grow in its size and range of services on offer and by then was also well known for its superb live music of all genres from Jazz to classical.¹⁹

While the programmes of the first several weeks into the season were primarily comic opera and vaudeville, by December 1836 the company was incorporating Italian opera into the repertoire, most specifically *Il barbiere di Siviglia* or The Barber of Seville by Gioacchino Rossini (1792-1868). One of the first of such instances took place on 2 December. The review of the Barber of Seville by a certain "S." a few days later was nothing but positive, stating that the performance was "generally satisfactory" for the public and "the music was executed with perfection."²⁰ Writing in French, the same reviewer also praised the singing and acting of the entire cast who performed "with zeal and intelligence."²¹ Particularly outstanding was Mrs. Gautrot who sang various airs for her unspecified role "with the greatest perfection."²² One shortcoming, if not a disappointment, was a rather unconventional stage costume of Mr. Divoit who sang the part of Dr. Bartolo, one of the lead characters in the opera. Taken aback, the reviewer noted with regret "we do not remember having ever seen Dr. Bartholo [Bartolo] wearing a horned hat."²³

Despite the public excitement and the rave review, the company appears to be struggling financially. We are already seeing announcements of fundraising benefit concerts for the company as early as mid November 1836.²⁴ Even the institution of the professional and commercial theatre itself was barely making ends meet at this point. A report in *Javasche Courant* on 26 June 1841 illuminates financial challenges of the early performing arts productions. Signed off on behalf of Batavia's *Toneel en Muziek Gezelschap* or Theatre and Music Society (TMG), the report featured the TMG's urgent plea for selling lotteries at reduced prices in cooperation with the Java Bank, then the central bank of the Dutch East Indies established in 1828, in an anxious attempt to secure funding for forthcoming productions.²⁵

The reported financial strains notwithstanding, the arrival of the director Minard and his performers from France was a major milestone in the development of the professional theatrical entertainment in Batavia. It connected Batavia firmly to two interrelated cultural phenomena in the early-mid nineteenth century, the reverence towards the French theatre and French influence in the global transmission and circulation of Italian opera. The ample use of French in the advertisements and the review in Batavia's local press, as we saw above, was an uncanny illustration of the French influence in the theatrical entertainment of the time. The French theatre industry saw a remarkable growth in the wake of the Revolution of 1789. The Chapelier Law of 1791 declared the liberation of theatres from a few privileged artists of the old regime.²⁶ Effectively, new theatres sprung up across France and put out new plays and operas. French acting was gaining a high reputation so much so that actors and actresses from

England, Germany, Russia, and even America were now willing to endure arduous journeys to France and vied to perform in the theatre capital of the world.²⁷

The expansion of the theatre industry in the post-revolutionary France came to a temporary halt when the government under the First Empire (1804-14) overturned the Chapelier Law and limited the number of theatres and shows on offer.²⁸ The new policy was to remain in place until 1864, and the number of theatres dwindled as a result. Despite the newly imposed restrictions, the French theatre continued to be held in high regard and French performers were in demand overseas. Residents of the former French colony of New Orleans were already hearing French opera before 1800, and at least 343 actors and actresses from France were recorded to be working abroad by the mid-nineteenth century.²⁹ Moreover, French was “the language of the civilized world” and the de facto lingua franca of the theatre industry. As such, it was a commonplace for local companies “from Cairo to New Orleans and from Lisbon to St Petersburg” to present plays in French during the nineteenth century.³⁰

In the age of Francophone and the French paramountcy in the theatrical entertainment, it comes as no surprise that it was the touring performers from France that brought Italian opera under the limelight in Batavia. In the first place, the inclusion of Italian opera into the repertoire of Minard and his troupe is highly noteworthy because it was precisely this genre of Western opera that circumnavigated the globe and established itself as a world culture in the course of the nineteenth century.³¹ By the mid-nineteenth century Italian opera was performed regularly not only all over Europe but regions beyond. Particularly popular were works by Rossini who gained international fame as the creator of some of the most popular operas of the time. His early works, such as *Tancredi* (1813) and the *Barber of Seville* (1816), were phenomenally successful, both artistically and financially, in such major cities as Vienna, Manchester, Odessa, Constantinople, New York, Havana, and Caracas.³² Paris quickly capitalized on the soaring popularity of Italian opera. By 1801 the *Théâtre Italien* (Italian Theatre) was already dedicating itself to performing Italian opera in Italian where Rossini himself was the director in the 1820s.³³ Additionally, French performers were credited to introducing the genre to some of the world’s leading cities, such as New York City in 1825.³⁴ Batavia was no exception when it came to the strong French connections, be they the directors, performers, or even owners of local businesses such as Hotel de Provence, that loomed large in the early productions of Italian opera.³⁵

Early Uses of Steamship and Steamboat by Western Opera Companies

The immediate footprints of Minard and his musicians following their appearances in Batavia are not known. Yet by August 1838, the group embarked on a new performing arts engagement, this time in Semarang in Central Java. The official gazette *Javasche Courant* reported that on 30 August 1838 a troupe of around ten performers, including the director F. Minard, departed Batavia to Semarang on the Dutch steamboat *van der Capellen* for *Spectacle Français* or French Spectacle.³⁶ The use of the steamboat en route to Semarang is significant because this was one of the early known journeys in which sojourning performers were linked to then the nascent steamboat and steamship travel.

More performers followed suit in the coming decades and were seen taking steamboats and steamships.³⁷ On 7 December 1845, another performing arts company of around fifteen under a director named Robert departed Batavia for Semarang on the steamship *Koningin der Nederlanden* upon conclusion of their TF season in January-December 1845.³⁸ Built in 1840, the vessel belonged to the newly established *Nederlandsch-Indische Stoomboot Maatschappij* (Netherlands Indies Steamboat Company, NISbM) since 1844. Set up on 3 March 1842, the NISbM is the first of the three government-commissioned, private steam shipping companies in the Netherlands East Indies. The main goals of these companies were to expand and improve the transportation of mail, goods, and passengers at

reasonable costs across the Dutch colony and beyond. The vessel was later owned by Cores de Vries from 1860 to 1865 and the *Nederlandsch-Indische Stoomvaart Maatschappij* (Netherlands Indies Steamship Company, NISM) from 1866 to 1874, the second and the third of the steam shipping firms.³⁹

By the 1860s every documented itinerary of the touring opera companies involved steamship travel, especially for intraregional movements between major coastal cities of Java and Sumatra, as well as Singapore that were serviced by the abovementioned Cores de Vries established in 1851 and the NISM that began its operation in 1866.⁴⁰ In Surabaya on the northeastern corner of Java, a dozen musicians of the French Maugard company arrived on 19 September 1864 from Batavia on the steamship *Prins van Oranjeto* embark on an annual season of *Théâtre de Sourabaya* or Theatre of Surabaya.⁴¹ Following the conclusion of the season around 15 March 1865, they returned to Batavia on 28 March 1865 on the steamship *Singapore*.⁴² Both vessels were serviced by Cores de Vries and consisted of two of the six steamships operated by the company. Meanwhile in January-February 1869, the NISM line from Batavia to Padang in West Sumatra transported a group of performers led by Lemoigne, Lavagne and Caussadefor their theatrical engagement in the latter.⁴³

From *Théâtre-Français* to *Théâtre de Batavia* and the “Batavia Opera Company”

*Lovers of music will be glad to learn that the Batavia Italian Opera Company intend favouring us shortly with a series of operatic performances here.*⁴⁴

The arrival of the director Ferdinand Minard along with his eight performers in late October 1835 was trailblazing on several accounts. The highly acclaimed vaudeville shows of 1835 were some of the earliest known professional theatre productions to be presented in Batavia. The shows' success paved the way for the inauguration of the Théâtre-Français (TF) in October 1836 when Minard returned to Batavia with his opera company. The TF marked the beginning of the annual theatre seasons that would continue well into the 1850s.⁴⁵ Between 1836 and 1847, there were at least five known TF seasons under five different directors, including two under Minard in 1836-37 and 1842-43, respectively.⁴⁶ By 1853 the initial epithet Théâtre-Français was replaced by the *Théâtre Français de Batavia* or French Theatre of Batavia (TFdB) and the series continued intermittently at least until 1860.⁴⁷

Meanwhile in 1843 a new entertainment series called the *Théâtre de Batavia* or Theatre of Batavia (TdB) began its run and would remain the mainstream theatre series well into the 1870s.⁴⁸ It was also in the 1840s when Dutch is taking over French as the primary language used in reviews and editorials concerning performing arts. Concurrently, the background of sojourning artists in Batavia was diversifying. By the 1870s the Dutch, Flemish, and Italians were well represented among the resident professional performers alongside the French counterparts that remained actively involved in Batavia's theatrical entertainment.

The advent of the steam shipping industry and the ongoing shift from the age of sail to the age of steam facilitated a greater circulation of Western opera both within and beyond the Netherlands East Indies. By the 1860s steamboats and steamships serviced by the Dutch firms Cores de Vries (1851-1865) and the NISM (1866-1890) were replacing sailing ships as the chief means of maritime transport for the intraregional journeys of the arriving and departing opera companies in Batavia. By performing common repertoires in multiple urban centers in Java and Sumatra, these opera troupes, now on the move by steam-powered vessels, helped engender an unified cultural experience among urban European residents and sojourners. Furthermore, the presence of the touring performing artists, some of whom were

steamship passengers, in Hotel des Indes, was documented in the local press from the 1850s onwards.

Indicative of its growing reputation as a regional hub of theatrical entertainment, some touring troupes were literally called the “Batavia” opera companies by the 1870s and their arrivals were often times highly anticipated. Such was the sentiment of the abovementioned passage from the *Straits Times Overland Journal* on 8 November 1870, which eagerly announced the upcoming tour of the “Batavia Italian Opera Company” in Singapore. The performers behind the hype were a group led by the Italian director Giovanni Pompei that had arrived in Batavia in May 1869 for the Théâtre de Batavia and subsequently toured in Semarang before leaving for Singapore.⁴⁹

Concluding Notes

Between 1835 and 1869, Batavia quickly established itself as a new entertainment capital for European residents and visitors in the maritime Asia. In just over three decades, the city’s cultural life evolved from one dominated by amateur productions to one known for the production of Western opera. Such a remarkable transition was possible because of the longstanding interest among the city’s European residents and the colonial government in commercializing and professionalizing theatrical entertainment, a movement well evident by the turn of the nineteenth century and resulting in the construction of the new theatres. The opening of the new hotel, the ample coverage on performing arts in local journalism, and the expansion of maritime transport were also factors behind the birth of the “Batavian” opera company.

Notes

¹This article focuses on opera in the Western tradition. *Encyclopaedia Britannica* defines opera as “a staged drama set to music in its entirety, made up of vocal pieces with instrumental accompaniment and usually with orchestral overtures and interludes. In some operas the music is continuous throughout an act; in others it is broken up into discrete pieces. . . separated either by recitative (a dramatic type of singing that approaches speech) or by spoken dialogue” (<https://www.britannica.com/art/opera-music>, accessed 19 December 2017). Opera and operatic traditions are also prevalent in Asia, including specific forms of Chinese music such as *jingxi* or Beijing opera, Japanese music, South Asian arts, and Southeast Asian arts.

² For a case on Batavia, see, for example, Gerda Theuns-de Boers, Saskia Asser and Steven Wachlin, *Isidore van Kinsbergen 1821-1905: fotopionier en theatermaker in Nederlands-Indië*, Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Aprilis, 2005, pp. 20-21.

³ Jean Gelman Taylor, *The Social World of Batavia: European and Eurasian in Dutch Asia*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983, p. 100.

⁴ Taylor, *The Social World of Batavia*, p. 101.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 100-101.

⁶The building was renamed several times. Since 1987 it has been called *Gedung Kesenian Jakarta* or Jakarta Art Building.

⁷Theuns-de Boers, *Isidore van Kinsbergen*, pp. 20, 22. On the frequency of Ut Desint’s productions, the performance of *De Vrouw met Tween Mannen*, Dutch adaptation of the French original by R. C. Guilbert de Pixérécourt, on 27 September 1833, was the fifth out of ten shows scheduled for 1833 (*Javasche Courant*, 21 Sept. 1833).

⁸ The Society was demolished in 1985 to create space for parking and road expansion.

⁹Theuns-de Boers, *Isidore van Kinsbergen*, pp. 20, 22.

¹⁰*Javasche Courant*, 26 Sept. 1835.

¹¹*Javasche Courant*, 28 Nov. 1835.

¹²Gerda Theuns-de Boers, Saskia Asser and Steven Wachlin, *Isidore van Kinsbergen 1821-1905: fotopionier en theatermaker in Nederlands-Indië*, Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Aprilis, 2005, pp. 20, 22.

¹³*Javasche Courant*, 5 Oct. 1836.

¹⁴ *Javasche Courant*, 30 Nov. 1836. According to *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, comic opera is “French form of opera in which spoken dialogue alternates with self-contained musical numbers” (<https://www.britannica.com/art/opera-comique>, accessed 17 December 2017). Italian opera, refers to Italian form of opera and opera in the Italian language.

¹⁵ *Javasche Courant*, 12 Oct. 1836.

¹⁶ Bibliothèque nationale de France <http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb140133652> and <http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb30391951c> (accessed 14 December 2017).

¹⁷ *Javasche Courant*, 12 Oct. 1836.

¹⁸ Two examples are: Mr. Agostino Robbio, a classical violinist, who was on tour in Batavia from around February to August 1861 (*Java-Bode*, 23 Feb. 1862, 27 Feb. 1862); an Italian opera company under Giovanni Pompei that arrived in Batavia on the French steamship *Capitole* on 21 May 1869 (*Java-Bode*, 22 May 1869, 29 May 29 1869).

¹⁹ Gelink, J. M. B., Arthur J. Koenig, F. de Haan, and V. I. van de Wall. *N.V. Hotel des Indes: Batavia: 50 Jaar: 1897-1947*, Batavia: publisher not identified, 1948. [unpaginated page 60]

²⁰ *Javasche Courant*, 7 Dec. 1836.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Javasche Courant*, 16 Nov. 1836.

²⁵ *Javasche Courant*, 26 Jun. 1841.

²⁶ F. W. J. Hemmings, *The Theatre and State in France 1760-1905*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 113.

²⁷ F. W. J. Hemmings, *The Theatre Industry in Nineteenth-Century France*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, p. 3. In contrast, as Hemmings writes, “few Frenchmen were prepared to were ready to undergo the discomforts of a [Dover] Channel crossing for the sake of visiting the Haymarket or Covent Garden [in London]” (*The Theatre Industry*, p. 3).

²⁸ The new policy was aiming to root out remnants of favouritism from the old regime that gave certain theatres preferential treatments in the allocation of government subsidies; for further discussion, see Hemmings, *The Theatre and State*, pp. 113-22.

²⁹ Hemmings, *The Theatre Industry*, p. 3.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Javasche Courant*, 7 Dec. 1836.

³² Roger Parker, ‘The Opera Industry’, in Jim Samson (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Music*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001, pp. 89–91.

³³ For details of Rossini’s careers in Paris, see Benjamin Walton, *Rossini in Restoration Paris: The Sound of Modern Life*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, pp. 5-7.

³⁴ Don Michael Randel, *The Harvard Dictionary of Music*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003, p. 930.

³⁵ While Batavia was not the sole center of Italian opera production in Asia at the time, the prevalence of French influence in the nascent entertainment industry appears to set the city apart from its contemporaries. A case in point is Macao where the initial boom of Italian opera came from Portugal and South America. The genre was introduced to the Portuguese settlement at least by October 1832, when a Portuguese and Macanese group had presented Rossini’s *Cenerentola* or Cinderella in Spanish (Harriett Low Hillard and Katharine Hillard, *My mother's journal: a young lady's diary of five years spent in Manila, Macao, and the Cape of Good Hope from 1829–1834*, Boston: G. H. Ellis, 1900, p. 146). In the following year a touring group of six from South America performed at least eleven operas, predominantly Italian, in the first ever Italian opera season from April to October 1833 (Akiko Sugiyama, ‘Macao’s Two Opera Seasons in 1833 and 1865: A Study of Travelling Musicians and Maritime Connections in the Nineteenth-century World’, *Revista De Cultura =Review of Culture: Rc*, 42, 2013, pp. 144-45.)

³⁶ *Javasche Courant*, 1 Sept. 1838. It is unknown when the group arrived in Semarang and how long they stayed there. Eventually, the group would return to Batavia for one last time for another TF season from October 1842 to September 1843 and reportedly left the city on 30 September 1843.

³⁷ One major distinction between “steamboat” and “steamship” is the latter is usually equipped with multiple engines.

³⁸ *Java-Bode*, 17 Dec. 1845.

³⁹ J.N.F.M. à Campo, *Engines of Empire: Steamshipping and State Formation in Colonial Indonesia*, Hilversum: Verloren, 2002, pp. 38, 643.

⁴⁰ By crosschecking performance advertisements and reviews with shipping intelligence published in commercial newspapers, my current dataset has compiled journeys of performing artists and their means of

transportation to and from the Netherlands East Indies between 1835 and 1872. There were at least twenty-six recorded opera seasons in Batavia, Semarang, Surabaya and Padang, as well as twenty some presentations by a variety of guest artists ranging from instrumentalists, (operatic) singers to acrobatic entertainers. The last documented journey of an opera company by ship was in 1865 when a group of twenty some for the Théâtre de Batavia under the direction of Lemoigne departed Rotterdam on 11 May and arrived in Batavia on 19 August on the Dutch ship *Kortenaer* operated by J. Cezard & Co (*Java-Bode*, 19 Aug. 1865).

⁴¹*De Oostpost: Letterkundig, Wetenschappelijk en Commercieel Nieuws- en Advertentieblad*, 20 Sept. 1864

⁴²*Java-Bode*, 29 Mar. 1865.

⁴³*De Locomotief: Samarangsch Handels- en Advertentie-blad*, 11 Mar. 1867, 17 Apr. 1868. Besides Padang, the group had a sequence of their operatic engagements in Batavia, Semarang, and Surabaya between August 1868 and January 1869 (*De Locomotief*, 11 Mar. 1867, 17 Apr. 1868).

⁴⁴*Straits Times Overland Journal*, 8 Nov. 1870.

⁴⁵ It remains to be seen whether the opera seasons continued beyond the 1870s.

⁴⁶ Minard (1836-37); Meder, Jeandelisse, Lécuyer (1839-42); Minard (1842-43); Robert (1845, 1846-47).

⁴⁷*Java-Bode*, 5 Jan. 1853.

⁴⁸ The series was directed by the Paris-born E. F. Rijckmans. Trained as a pianist himself, the 20-year-old Rijckmans arrived in Batavia via Calcutta in 1841 and went on to tour not only in Batavia but Semarang in central Java and Sungai Liat, the provincial capital of the Bangka and Belitung islands located off the eastern coast of Sumatra (*Javasche Courant*, 13 Dec. 1843).

⁴⁹*Java-Bode*, 25 Nov. 1870.