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*Donizetti in (Buda-)Pest: opera, national identity, and transcultural encounters in Habsburg Europe, 1837-1847*, «Donizetti Studies», 5, 2025, pp. 77-108.

*Abstract*

The article discusses the reception of Gaetano Donizetti's operas in (Buda-)Pest between 1837 and 1847, a formative period in the development of the city's cultural landscape and in Hungary's national self-definition within Habsburg Europe. Productions of Donizetti's operas within the institutional and cultural-political context of Pest's German and Hungarian theatres show how these works became a site of negotiation between national, transnational, and imperial identities. Three case studies sketch the circumstances of staging Donizetti (*L'elisir d'amore*, *Belisario* and *Lucrezia Borgia*) at Pest's Hungarian Theatre during its first operatic seasons. They demonstrate the challenges of multilingual encounters, and the fluidity of linguistic and artistic boundaries (in terms of operatic repertoires, performers and audiences) in the context of Pest's competitive theatrical landscape, where the newly founded Hungarian Theatre vied for prominence alongside the established German institution. The examples illustrate how Donizetti's music facilitated Pest's alignment with European operatic trends, while also contributing to Hungary's evolving cultural identity. Ultimately, Donizetti's role in Pest underscores the city's dual aspiration—its cosmopolitan determination within the Empire and its emerging national consciousness.