

Dr. Valerie Lynn Schrader

Professor Tenure-Line

Communication Arts and Sciences

Title of your research project.

Defining the Soubrette: A Thematic Analysis of the Soubrette Archetype in Classic and Contemporary Musical Theatre

Description of research. Please provide a few sentences that explain the question and the methods employed in this research project.

Traditionally, the term "soubrette" referred to secondary light-sounding soprano maidservant roles in opera; however, the term now encompasses a broader spectrum of operatic character types. In this article Valerie Lynn Schrader examines the archetype of the "soubrette" in classic and contemporary musical theatre. Because the soubrette is not clearly defined in these forms, in doing so she seeks to establish the varying characteristics of the type, and to analyze musical theatre characters who are representative examples. Using a list of the longest-running Broadway shows from the popular Broadway fan website playbill.com, Valerie Lynn Schrader has conducted a thematic analysis of fifty-eight "soubrette" characters in thirty musicals. By defining and studying the soubrette, she seeks to provide both theatre scholars and practitioners with a tool for character analysis and performance study.

Did this project include Penn State students as researchers?

No

If yes to the above question, please state where it was published.

New Theatre Quarterly

What problem do you address with your research?

This pilot study expands the scope of an opera archetype to musical theatre.