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GENRE AND AESTHETIC BACKGROUNDS OF VOCAL-PERFORMANCE INTERPRETATION OF OPERA CHARACTER

The article defines principle genre and communicative and artistically significant parameters of opera, conditions for creation of a peculiar opera artistic specific synthesis. The performance nature of this synthesis, on the one hand, and particular complicated functional hierarchical nature of opera performance, on the other hand, are disclosed. The required professional and personal qualities of opera vocal performing musician are highlighted.

Keywords: opera genre, opera synthetic performance form, opera poetics, opera tempo-rhythm, vocal performance interpretation.

The history of opera genre evidences, that the basis of this kind of a theatrical and music art is drama per musica, therefore, drama action, the representation of which is accompanied and promoted by musical beginning. Stage scene with visually spectacular component peculiar therefor is a leading process for any theatrical and scenic form. The opera birth is an integral part of the theater formation as such, in other words, of the theatricality as an important dominant of the culture, having caused a particular interest to human and his experiences, that is involving the process of intimization of figurative meanings. Opera and other theatrical and musical forms occupy a transitional position in the genre system of art, including in genre lineal artistical consciousness. In the content of operetic work, on the part of verbal and musical part, that is in the intonational syntagms of the opera literary text, we can distinguish groups of “semantic formulas”, which represent historical memory of genre. They can be associated with generic “themes”, more specifically, epic, dramatic (tragical), lyrical. Particular compositional “plots” and intonational prototypes, indicating the items of operetic dramaturgy - conductors of opera scene - are peculiar for every of the mentioned themes.

Operetic dramaturgy supposes use of general regularity of building theatrical scene, including such component parts as conflict, subject, start, end, culminating point, and afteraction stage. Opera poetics is closely associated with the development of a special literary form, namely, libretto, which is often based on popular literary images and subjects, however, opera is primarily a musical composition, if for no other reason than because it is conceived and implemented as a composer's text. Precisely the composer's intention defines the rest, extramusical, aspects of operetic composition, including in the production scenic form. Composers' ideas and interpretative positions are found to be determinant also for

performance form of opera, including vocal part. The significance of the latter in the general dramaturgy of opera scene is intensified by the fact, that precisely the vocalists-performing musicians perform the dramatic play itself, that is, represent the characters in their figurative relations and interdependencies. Immediately due to their efforts the part of dramatic characters is represented by musical and intonational figures, musical and thematic structures, is turned into music and sound atmosphere of stage play. Opera music contains a “nuclear of stage play”, its basic psychological sequences, ways of characters’ description, their interaction, ways of conflict development and demonstration of action line, tempo-rhythm and emotional expression of operatic action are especially bright and clear.

Synthetic and performing collective forms of opera allow to interact with several kinds of art and various subtypes (specializations) of the music art, that determines, mainly, the specificity of the "genre program" of operatic work. One of the conditions of this program is a definition of performance hierarchical pattern of the opera content, in other words, allocation of performing functions according to the degree of their significance in the organization of artistic genre as a whole.

The major task of the opera production director is to find a fundamental idea of the author and show “the essence” of the entire stage play. While working with singers-artists he has to help them discovering kind of their characters, psychology, logic of actions, to find action line, to build an accurate scenic communication, to show the role “essence”. The work with choir should not differ essentially from the methods of work with principal performers.

The major task of musical director of the opera production is to find musical algorithm of stage play, actantial model in music, to define rhythmical, tempo and timbral features of every musical fragment of opera, to achieve such sounding of principal performers, choir, and orchestra, that will completely correspond to the nature, narrative and genre and artistic significance of the scene being performed.

The major task of singer-artist with regard to opera production is to find correct musical and vocal and scenic means in the artistic palette, which would allow him completely taking shape of the character being created by him, to show the author’s idea, for the sake of which this character was created, to denote its message.

It is commonly believed, that while interpreting opera part the most reliable sources for singer-artist to study a character are musical score and libretto. However, not less important part of authentically creative interpretation of opera character is studying its

literary and scenic underlying cause. In general, the wider is the range of knowledge about the character and the work he is related to, the deeper and more successful the vocal-performing interpretation will be.

“Opera singer deals not with one, but with three arts at once, that is, with vocal, musical and scenic. This is, on the one hand, the difficulty, and on the other hand, the advantage of his creative work. The difficulty is in the very process of studying three arts, but, since they perceived, singer has such great and various opportunities to influence the spectator, which we, dramatic artists do not have. All three arts, which singer possesses, shall become one and be directed towards one general goal. If one art has an impact on viewer, while the others will prevent this effect, then the result will be undesirable. One art will destroy what another creates.

The majority of opera singers do not know this simple truth. Many of them have little interest in the musical part of their specialty; as for the scenic part, they both do not study it, but often treat it scornfully, as if they are proud of the fact, that they are *singers*, not just dramatic actors. However, it doesn't prevent us from admiring F.I. Shalyapin, who is an amazing example of three arts in one on the stage.

The majority of singers think only about “little sound”, as they on own call well singed note and rendered to the public. They need sound for the sake of the sound itself and a good note for the sake of good note itself.

With such views on the opera craft the musical and dramatic culture of the majority of singers is at the primitive dilettante stage” [3, p. 402].

Working with a literary text, figurative project, narrative model is a necessary and the most important stage of the opera writing by a composer. In the history of opera, there are very few cases, when the text of a literary work fully corresponds to the expectations, aspirations of composer, although there are examples of such semantic openness and variability of the literary word, that it becomes a dramatic basis of opera without significant changes.

In our opinion, the main tendencies of the interaction between the verbal literary material and the composer's musical intention in the context of the genre and artistic content of the opera are as follows:

comparison of aesthetic music creed and literature, basic means of expression, peculiar for two kinds of art, in particular, ways of metaphorization of life phenomenon by means of artistic form;

creation of own verbal form of opera in the form of a verbal text of a voice part; the auxiliary commenting libretto restatement in programs of the opera stage play (the libretto in its narrow and particular meaning); the verbal nomination and short characteristic of the leading characters in the score (clavier) of the opera; introduction of composer's verbal scenic remarks and performance instructions, different comments to the fulfilment of conditions of the written and oral text of the opera; finally, occurrence of verbal composer interpretations, explanations, judgments distracted from the musical text of the opera work, but addressed thereto; identification of those ways of a musical intoning, which can be accordant to the semantic nature of literary and drama images, at the same time acquire new special meaning and artistic communicative functions, moving from a certain musical interpretation to the holistic comprehension of the literary content of the opera.

Such an approach to the study of verbal literary parameters of the operetic creative work can be found in the thesis of Jean Bibo, which allows us to establish the conceptual order and terminological sequence of opera studies discourse [2].

Thus, referring to the creative work of composers-romanticists, the musicologist mentions the names of H. Berlioz, R. Schumann and F. Liszt as recognized authorities in the field of musical and critical literature, program and genre and compositional pioneer work. A special attention is paid to Berlioz, whose literary devotions were the most long-lasting and stable and even more the most peculiar for romantic poetics. According to Jean Bibo, H. Berlioz masterfully used compositional dramaturgic techniques in his works, typical for literary narration (moreover, they are used at the level of specific musical means). Among such techniques there are metaphor - metonymy, defamiliarization - anacoluthon, descriptiveness - "plot", personification of images and relations - stylistic personification. Moreover, the author emphasizes, that "double" definition of the technique is designed for indication of its initial characteristic and final *musical* result.

In our opinion, information in Jean Bibo work can serve not only for deep understanding of ideas on expressional features of music; it allows also to indicate those conditions for musical influence, which are able to be included into literary form, to provide verbal part with a peculiar musicality, in other words it allows defining ways of "reverse"

(“responsive”) impact of musical form on the literary one. From this point of view, he found out metamorphoses, the ideas of plots and images of popular literary works suffered from, in particular, poems about Childe Harold by G. Byron, Shakespearian tragedies, “Faust” (if referring to the works of Berlioz, Liszt, Gounod, and others); he writes about the stark difference of the operas concepts of G. Puccini from the literary original sources [2].

The main categorial series of studies, resulting in his theoretical and analytical positions, is defined by the following notions.

Opera poetics is the unity of verbal, literary, and musical ways of "making" an opera form and providing it with the necessary fullness of artistic and semantic content.

The verbal and literary basis of opera is a special form of work with a word as a preliminary and concluding process of artistic perception of the material, the unity of verbal (primary-speech) and poetic (secondary-lingual) purpose of word as a way of various semantic instances' message.

The musical concept of opera is a boundary phenomenon, showing the ambivalent valuable and informative nature of an opera genre; provision of a musical plan, musical and sound embodiment of the opera idea with conceptual completeness and definiteness by means of verbal component parts of the opera text, and the verbal part the of opera contents – the width and openness of musical understanding.

Semantic functions of music are focused on musical sounding on the course of interpretation, allowing to concentrate possible meanings of a musical and lexical figure around the conceptual center (image, hero, event, situation) of the opera work.

Interpretation (in opera) is a way to find out (explicate) understanding, to represent it for interaction with another possibility of understanding, in our case, the opposition of the semantic functions of the verbal and musical plans of the opera text for the purpose to reveal their conceptual interdependence [2].

The latter idea can be added the finding of uniform tempo-rhythm of opera scene, without which complete opera interpretation is impossible both acting and vocal performing.

Since life is, first of all, motion and action, so life rendering by means of artistic images means some tempo of motion, and when it is agreed with action, a certain tempo-rhythm. Identification of tempo-rhythm task of a character being performed, becomes a necessary part of the opera idea understanding process (see thereof, for example, [4]).

Every role has as much rhythms as possible in “real” experience. Rhythm is dependent on feeling, it becomes its intonational trajectory and significant indicator. It creates some musical and rhetorical precedent, an interpreter can rely on while exercising or saying over a role. This rhythm is set by composer, but it is also showed by a dramatic part of scene, conjugated with word.

In the opera concept, "counter motion", "the oncoming rhythm” of word and music is fully implemented (the term by E. Ruchievska). That is “... opera artists are happier ... than dramatic. They have ready rhythm and tempo. Drama artist is a creator of rhythms by himself. He has to feel, guess, create and blend into the general collective creative work of stage play, having not violated its harmony” [1, p. 88-89].

A peculiar general (adjoining) phenomenon between verbal dramatic and musical performing expressional parts is a pause. Pause is the strongest way of expression, because, not stopping the stage action for a minute, it gives both a spectator and an artist to become a single whole in deathly silence, literally to hear the mutual breathing. During the pause an actor can express what he did not “say” in the text, or what is not mentioned in the text, or what follows the text.

“Pause is a limiting form of internal action, when external means of expression disappear and the power of radiation (of an actor) increases. Pause can be complete or incomplete. In the latter case an external action on the stage does not stop, but happens “without fanfare”, having only greater and lesser tendency to become a pause. Such a pause has the same effect as the full one on the viewer, he feels its disturbing arousing attention power...

There are two kinds of pauses: preceding the action and following it. The pause of the first kind prepares a viewer to the perception of the preceding action. They waken viewer’s attention and due to the emissions (and often due to the atmosphere) suggest him, how he shall experience the preceding stage event. The second kind of pauses is a pause, which follows the text, summarizes and deepens for viewer the obtained impression from the action, which had already happened. That is why an action, not accompanying by pause (complete or incomplete), leaves in viewer only surface impression” [5, p. 418-419].

Pause is the most important semantic element of stage action both verbal and dramatic and musical and intonational. It is also the most important component of tempo-rhythmical unity, finds out its continual basis as a combination of “dumb meanings”.

Thereby, skills to use pauses as “parts” of process of interpretation turns out to be a factor of imagination and attention development of opera interpreter. For the great actor Mikhail Chekhov, Stanislavsky's student, imagination and attention are the basis of acting skills of an actor, because images created by the artistically creative imagination live an independent life. “They (the images) enter into mutual relations with each other, play scenes before you, you watch new events, strange, unexpected moods capture you. Images involve you into the events of their life, and you start actively to take part in their struggle, friendship, love, happiness or unhappiness. You watch with excitement these images coming from somewhere, living independent life, and a whole range of feelings is awakened in your soul. You “become one of them” [5, p. 348].

Well-developed imagination of opera interpreter allows him to open and explicate the image content. In order to keep before his inner “man” required circle of associations, thematic emotional bonds, opera artist has to possess enough power of attention as an ability of intellectual and sensual concentration. M. I. Chekhov there about very neatly: “What does the soul experience at the moment of concentration? If it happened to you to observe yourself in such periods of your life, when you during days and weeks were looking forward to the beginning of an important event for you or meeting a person you wanted and loved, you could notice that along with your everyday life you also lived another one - internally active and intense, no matter what you did, wherever you went, what you talked about - you constantly imagined the expected event. Even when your mind was distracted by the worries of everyday life, you did not interrupt the connection with it in your heart. Inside yourself you were in continual active state. This activity is the attention itself. In the process of attention, you internally perform four actions simultaneously. First, you invisibly hold the object of your attention, and secondly, you attract it to yourself. Third, you tend thereto. Fourth, you penetrate therewith. All four actions, composing the attention process, are carried out simultaneously and represent big emotional power” [5, p. 351].

Working on the role, the opera interpreter gathers together all of its components and looks for an adequate form of the embodiment of the found unity, new image integrity, the instrumental beginning of which is verbal material and musical intonation to the same extent.

Therefore, vocal-performing interpretation of the opera character is a long and multifaceted process in which the stage performance-implementation is one of the steps, although the culminating one. This process means mastering not only required set of acting

and vocal abilities, but also self-cognition, self-actualization, in other words, active attraction of personal psychological thesaurus. This is greatly facilitated by the possession of the principles of the system developed by K. Stanislavsky. It is designed to help an artist to find the reserve of strengths and knowledge from the "personal" spheres of life experience, intellect and memory, which will provide a suggestive impact, therefore, deep assimilation, of the content of operetic work.

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