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«WOMEN-CONDUCTORS IN THE INTERIOR OF THE ODESSA OPERA HOUSE»(ECHO AFTER A CENTURY ... DISCOVERIES... COINCIDENCES ...)

This article analyzes the work of two women-conductors in Odessa opera house – Elena Senkevich (20s of the XX century) and Oksana Lyniv (beginning of the XXI century), in the context of creative activity of the theater connected with the discovery of new trends in the development of both Ukrainian opera art and Ukrainian school of opera and symphony conducting.

Keywords: Odessa opera house, women-conductors, new directions of the development of Ukrainian art.

June 15, 2015 marks 120 years since the birth of Elena Bogdanovna Senkevich (1895–1978) – the conductor, pianist, assistant professor of the departments of solo singing and opera training, the founder of the opera class of the Gnessim Institute, teacher, head of the department of the Gnessim college [24].

I acquainted myself with the work of Elena Senkevich when writing an article on the staging of operas by N.V.Lysenko in Odessa. In particular it was mentioned that on August 8, 1927 Elena Bogdanovna conducted his opera “Nocturne” [4, c. 13].

A few days later the head of the Kiev Museum of Nikolay Lysenko (*Museum of N. Lysenko is a department of the Museum of the outstanding figures of Ukrainian culture L. Ukrainka, N. Lysenko, M. Starytsky and P.Saksagansky*) Roxana Nikitichna Skorulsky wrote to me: "... It was interesting to learn about it personally to me. For Elena Bogdanivna Senkevich (Lyunya) is a co-student of M. Skorulsky in Zhytomyr RMS music classes. We even saved her letter from Odessa of 1928."

I asked Roxana Nikitichna to help me and to tell all that is possible on the Odessa period of life of E. Senkevich. " I also I have found something in the internet about Elena Senkevich. But that was remembered in the family? – Remembered the "Lyunya". Sometimes mentioned her. When mom visited Odessa – they would meet... But I do not remember anything specific. All I could write – I wrote at once... Now in April I am going for a few days to Zhytomyr to look for materials about the great-grandmother - I have overlooked her... There I will try as well to look for Lyunya in RMS classes (later – RMS Zhitomir Music College. The colleagues did an exhibition there about L. Mestechkin, and it seems she also studied under him."

S.M. Kogan says that Elena Bogdanovna graduated the Petrograd Conservatory specializing in the piano under A. Esipova. In 1915 she took conducting lessons under

Alexander Glazunov. In 1920 she moved to Odessa, where she studied conducting in the class of G. Stolyarov. "Since 1925 she worked in Odessa as a pianist-accompanist at the Opera house, as well as conducted the Symphony Orchestra of the Odessa Philharmonic Society (OPS). Then she worked as a conductor in Perm, Astrakhan and other cities, as well as in the musical society named after Leontovich" [13, c. 292]. She was the only female conductor in Ukraine.

On February 2, 1926 Elena Senkevich conducted the ballet by A. Adan "Giselle" in Perm, and this date became a birthday of the Perm ballet [8].

S.T. Richter remembers about her (see the footnote): «At the time the conductor of the Odessa opera was Elena Senkevich – she ran a circle at the House of sailors where twice a week singers that have not found themselves performed ...» [30].

Elena Bogdanovna gave a lot of attention to the activity of a pianist. For example on August 23, 1927 she performed the piano party at the Evening of new ballet performances by the ballet-master Kasyan Yaroslavovich Goleizovskiy. And she played the works by Prokofiev ("Fugitive Visions"), Rachmaninov, Scriabin, and others in the second – modern part of the program [3, c. 18]. The talented experiments of Goleizovskiy caught the whole young ballet company, and the novelty of this ballet attracted attention.

From November 25 the opera "Rigoletto" by G. Verdi [23, c. 16] joins the repertoire of E.B. Senkevich «Everyone knows, – writes the correspondent N.G-is (*the original spelling retained*), – that "Rigoletto" demands voices of high quality. This time young singers obtained the roles. However they generally make a very good impression. **E. Senkevich is charged with the conducting – we welcome her as the first woman that takes the rack in our Opera House.**

E. Senkevich who is known in the local musical circles as a wonderful concertmaster and accompanier has mastered the score and the orchestra just find (the role of the orchestra in this opera is in particular is the accompaniment to singers). She led the opera sensitively and rhythmically" [18, c. 6]. The parties were performed by Gorelov (Rigoletto), Kapara (Duke), Spivak (Gilda), Bryanskaya, Totsky, Gavrilov.

In the beginning of September 1928 Elena Senkevich accompanied Nikolay Pechkovsky. Being still a student in 1923 he joined Odessa opera company. Noting the passionate performance of parties of Verter, German and Lenskiy the critics wrote that "his strength is not the art of pure singing but the sincerity, expressiveness and clarity of diction»

[19, c. 4]. In his book Pechkovskiy describes how on his way from Italy to Leningrad he “drove to Odessa where he gave a concert that was my creative report. I sang arias from operas "L'Elisir d'Amore" by Donizetti, "Rigoletto", "Traviata", "Tosca", etc. The concert was a great success» [26, c. 39].

It seems that despite her youth, the participation of Elena Senkevich in music life of the country was significant, notable, didn't pass unnoticed.

For a state theater it was an important task to secure qualified creative personnel and to create a new repertoire. Operas "Taras Bulba" by Lysenko [21], "Turandot" by J. Puccini, "The Golden Cockerel" by Rimsky-Korsakov and others, the new ballet "The Red Poppy" by Gliere were set for the new season of 1928/1929. Very reputable conductors worked on these performances: J. Pribik, S. Stolerman, G. Stolyarov, N. Pokrovsky. Elena Bogdanovna served as concertmaster-conductor [9, c. 4]. This season she was charged with a new production of the opera by R. Leoncavallo's "Pagliacci".

S.T. Richter who worked as a concertmaster at Odessa opera mentioned: «I remember we were preparing “The Golden Cockerel” with singers. At that time it was common to indignantly of Rimsky-Korsakov. “Cacophony!,” said everyone around us because it was all new. Everyone cursed him, and I liked him a lot ... The theater was very interesting, and so was the director, and the ballet master» [30].

A very important remark by S.T. Richter on account of the repertoire of Odessa opera of that time is quoted by Bruno Monsaingeon: «At that time Odessa opera boasted of the avant-garde repertoire. It is there that for the first time in Russia “Princess Turandot” was staged, followed by “Triptych” by Puccini. Also they performed Krenek’s «Johnny spielt auf» that was of a fantastic success, and then it was forgotten. For two years it wouldn't come off posters, and then it was prohibited” [16].

Elena Bogdanovna did a lot for as it is called “promotion” of works by Ukrainian composers. We have already mentioned the staging of the opera by N. Lysenko “Nocturne”. On March 11, 1929 at the evening of commemoration of T.G. Shevchenko at the State dramatic theater with the participation of the choir under Tolstyakov and soloists she performed the piano part in cantata by N. Lysenko “Rapids Are Roaring”.

The newspaper "The theater, club, cinema" a picture of the young conductor appears [29, c. 14]. And in April 1929 the newspaper "Burst" publishes an article about conductors G. Stolyarov, J. Pribik and E. Senkevich [17, c. 11].

Her letter to the composer M.A. Skorulsky of 12.10.1928 from Odessa says a lot about creative interests of the conductor (obtained from R.N. Skorulskaya):

«My dear old friend Mihail Adamovich!

I am sincerely glad to see your name in the press with great feedback, and also to hear that your symphony is among works of the Ukrainian composers scheduled for the soonest performance. I sincerely congratulate you and wish you fruitful creative work. Even though you and I have lost each other, but I think you still treat me warm and well, don't you?

Probably you have heard something about me as well: I am full-time conductor of the Odessa state opera – I conduct not without a success. In spring for the first time I performed at the symphonic stage, and it didn't go bad either. I do not get disheartened and keep working.

This is what I wanted to ask you. There is Aleksandr Semenovich Chishko among the artists of our opera – a very rare example of a singer. Heroic tenor, his repertoire includes: "Aida", "Samson [and Delilah]", "Carmen", "Sadko", "The Queen [of Spades]," etc. – at the same time he is a theorist, composer and a wonderful chamber singer. This year he wants to give a concert exclusively of the works of contemporary Ukrainian composers, and having heard about our friendship he is asking you through me to send your vocal works written for Ukrainian text as soon as possible.

He asked Kosenko the same but had not received any answer. Would you be so kind to remind Kosenko about it, and to ask him for a response – whatever it is. I also request you to answer me as soon as possible if you agree to send your works. If you want to write something specific, I will be very grateful.

Piano part will be performed by me.

Awaiting your soonest response. My address: Remeslennaya str. 6, apt. 4.

Elena Senkevich (Lyunya)" [27, c. 162–163]

The characteristics given by Elena Bogdanovna to the soloist Oles Chishko was totally confirmed when his operas "Apple Captivity" and "Battleship "Potemkin" have been staged.

Having moved to Moscow Elena Bogdanovna Senkevich worked at the Musical College named after the Gnessins. The conductor and the pianist, she was a teacher, a head of the department of this college, and then became the founder of the opera class of the state musical institute named after the Gnessins, the assistant professor of the solo singing and

opera preparation department, where her colleagues were such famous conductors and directors as B.A. Pokrovsky, G.P. Ansimov... [28]

Odessites met one of the students of E.B. Senkevich in 1978 at the Festival of young soloists – winners of the All-Union and International contests. Vladimir Matorin, the soloist of the Theater of Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko (later soloist of the Bolshoi Theatre, Professor and Head of Department of solo singing RAM) has studied the chamber class under Elena Bogdanovna Senkevich. “She was the first woman – conductor in Russia,” the singer said. “She graduated Odessa and Petersburg conservatories. Elena Bogdanovna was already old and could barely see. But when I would do a mistake, she would say: “Dear, the third tact has a little dot. Once again, please” [1]. In his review on the performance N. Ogranich wrote: “Vladimir is not only a singer on the stage, he is also an actor; convincing not only in vocal but also in dramatic interpretation of a character» [20, c. 2].

There are archive records of different years due to which today we can get an idea of how Elena Bogdanovna Senkevich performed and conducted. The names of the performers and orchestras speak for themselves.

For example the romance by T.N. Khrennikov, lyrics by A.S. Pushkin “Winter Road” performed by E.A. Andreeva [31].

Or the archive records of 1948, 1950, 1953. The conductors N. Golvanov, A. Orlov, O. Bron, V. Nebolsin, V. Piradov and E. Senkevich. Recorded are arias and scenes from the operas "Iphigenia in Tauris", "Jewess", "Pagliacci", "Manon Lescaut," "Othello," "The Night Before Christmas," "Legend of the City of Kitezh", "Oresteia" by D. Tarkhova, Manon and Fevronia performed by N. Rozhdestvenskaya and Orest performed by N. Petrov [22].

One could listen to the Spanish folk song “The Heart of Aragona” performed by S. Hromchenko accompanied by the orchestra of the USSR State Academic Bolshoi Theater, conductor E. Senkevich. The record of year 1947 [14]. Or a romance of Don Jose from the second act of the opera by G. Bizet "Carmen" and the aria of Radames from the opera “Aida” by J. Verdi by B. Geft also accompanied by the Bolshoi Theatre Orchestra, conductor E. Senkevich [32, №№ 569, 570].

There is a wonderful record of 1939 on a 78 rpm record by the Aprelevskiy plant. All-Union Radio Chorus and the Orchestra of the Moscow State Philharmonic Society directed by Elena Senkevich performed M. Rauhvergera’s opera "Little Red Riding Hood." This is a

chorus of hares, dance of hares, duet of Little Red Riding Hood and her mother, and finally, the song of Little Red Riding Hood [33, №№ 604, 607].

On the 70th anniversary of the Gnessins Institute in the Memorial Museum-apartment of E.F. Gnessina an exhibition of "Teachers-founders" took place. The most valuable item in the exhibition, according to the organizers, was a letter of A.K. Glazunov written in 1916 with the recommendation of a recent graduate of the Petrograd Conservatoire Elena Bogdanovna Senkevich, "**the first woman conductor, performed in our country**" [7].

The second woman-conductor, invited to Odessa opera house in 2008 when the refurbishment was over and the theater obtained the status of the national theater, was Oksana Yaroslavovna Lyniv. After a long period of work on foreign stage it was time to work in the wonderfully equipped, clean and beautiful building that is rightly called an architect pearl of Odessa, the time to renew creative power and the repertoire of the theater.

At that time conductors of different generations worked in the theater: D. Sipitiner (in Odessa opera house since 1953), Ya. Skibinskiy (since 1995), I. Shavruk (since 1970), I. Chernetskiy (since 2000), A. Yurkevich (since 2004), V. Regrut (since 2009), etc.

Unfortunately in the beginning of 2009 the chief conductor of the theater Yarema Antonovich Skibinskiy passed away [6].

The management of the theatre announces a special project "Parade of conductors". "Among the conductors – one woman. The citizen of Lvov Oksana Lyniv that since February of the last year has been working at the Odessa Opera House" [5]. Lyniv adequately performed in "Pagliacci" announced as "a premiere of a new play in the old scenery" among famous conductors from Ukraine, the Netherlands and Germany.

In the report on the event the correspondent Zhanna Zhukova wrote: "A fragile girl from Lvov Oksana Lyniv conducted the orchestra. By the way, she is one of the contenders for the job of musical director of the Odessa Opera House that will be elected by the 30th of June in the framework of the "Parade of conductors" competition. Her participation in the "Parade of conductors" Oksana Lyniv defined as a test of strength" [11].

By that time her Odessa repertoire in addition to the opera "Pagliacci" included "Rigoletto" and "Il Trovatore" by G. Verdi, "La Boheme" and "Madama Butterfly" by J. Puccini.

This is what we can read at the site of Odessa opera (*with some reductions*):

Oksana Lyniv graduated from the folk department of Lviv State music school named after S. Lyudkevych. In 2003 she graduated with honours from the faculty of opera and symphony conducting of Lviv State Music Academy named after Mykola Lysenko.

The winner of the 3rd prize of the First International Conductors Competition named after Gustav Mahler in Bamberg (Germany, 2004). She was invited to the job of an assistant to the chief conductor of the Bamberg Symphony Orchestra, but did not use the offer.

From 2005 to 2009 she studied at the High School of Music named by Carl Maria von Weber (Dresden). She graduated with honors from Aufbaustudium Meisterklasstudium. She is a scholarship holder of the Goethe-Institut, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), Dresdner Europa Stipendium, Oscar and Vera Ritter Foundation for young musicians, the special grant of Bergischen symphonic academy for women conductors and Conductors Forum of the German Music Council.

In 2006 she recorded works by Scriabin, M. de Falla and L. Sidorenko with the Bamberg Symphony Orchestra commissioned by the German state radio company Bayerischer Rundfunk. In Germany she also conducted the Bavarian Chamber Orchestra, Philharmonic Orchestras of Berg, North Rhine-Westphalia, Bremen, Nuremberg. She worked with the symphony orchestras of Romania and Japan. As an opera conductor she has performed at the Opera of Bonn, in the theater of Osnabrück (Germany), Lviv National Academic Theatre of Opera and Ballet, the National Opera of Estonia.

Since 2008 she worked in the Odessa National academic theater of opera and ballet where she carried out the renovation of the opera "La Boheme" by G. Puccini, "Pagliacci" by R. Leoncavallo, staging of the ballet "Don Quixote" by L. Minkus and the ballet "Vienna Woods Mystery" to the music of T. Mahler and J. Strauss with her own musical concepts.

Since September 2013 she is a conductor and an assistant to the General music director of the Bavarian General Shtatsopery [15]. Oksana Lyniv was awarded the prize of the Munich Opera Festival, as well as the title "Star of the Year 2015" in the category "Classic" [10]. She is invited to tour in France, Japan, Spain and Sweden [12].

The ability of the conductor to "deal at the rehearsal routine with such stylistic poles as Mozart and Blaher, Wagner and Zimmermann, Rossini, Donizetti and Berg, Verdi and Ruders, Tchaikovsky and Britten" [10], is noteworthy, just as her desire to open music of Ukrainian composers to western audience.

The creative work of Oksana Yaroslavna is widely shown in the media. It is possible to familiarize yourself and to listen to her performances in different countries in the internet.

In October 2009 Alexander Grigorievich Samoila was invited to the position of the chief conductor of the Odessa Opera. Progressive musician, well familiar with the conjuncture, often on tour, he began to regularly hold interesting festival projects both on the stages of the Opera House and in the open air. O.Ya. Lyniv was actively involved in these projects.

In 2013, within the framework of the II International Festival of Arts on the Small Stage "Mezzanine" the premiere of the opera "Alcides" by Dmitry Bortniansky took place that was performed by soloists of the opera and ballet, the orchestra of the theater, the Chamber Choir of Odessa regional center of Ukrainian culture under the guidance of Galina Shpak. Music Director and Conductor of the Production – Oksana Lyniv, production director S. Zuenko, costume artist S. Vasiliev.

The play was performed on the marble stairs from the Palais Royal in the span of which a small auditorium for 100 seats was set. The party of Alcides was performed by the soloist of the opera I. Berlizova. «In the end of the performance the audience gave a standing ovation, many were shouting bravo and would not let artists go» [25]. The Ukrainian National Radio Company plans to broadcast the recording of the opera "Alcides" by Dmitry Bortniansky on the stage of the Odessa Opera (conductor - Oksana Lyniv) on radio stations of the European Broadcasting Union along with the records of the Paris Grand Opera, London Covent Garden, the New York Metropolitan Opera and other world famous theaters [5].

The theater holds festivals of classical art "Mellow season in Odessa Opera".

In 2015 Oksana Lyniv Oksana (Ukraine, Germany) was among the invited famous musicians. On the Small Stage "Mezzanine" she implemented the project "Magic of Ukrainian poetry" from the works of E. Stankovic, M. Skorik, O. Kiva by opera singers E. Cymbalyuk and T. Shafranskaya, Bogdana Pivnenko (violin) and the Chamber Orchestra of Odessa Regional Philharmonic Society.

The main event in the performance of O.Ya. Lyniv, it seems to us, was the "Golden crown of Boris Liatoshynsky" (to the 120th anniversary of the composer). Performed were excerpts from the opera "The Golden Hoop", "Commander" (2nd Edition of the opera

"Shchors"), a symphonic poem "Reunion" and other works. Soloists – V. Navrotsky, A. Schultz, Yu. Tereshchuk, Yu. Dudar, choir and orchestra of the theater. Chief choirmaster L. Butenko, director Oksana Taranenko, using decorations of E. Lysik.

The highlight of the II Festival of Arts "Mellow season in Odessa Opera House" in September 2016, in our opinion, was the concert "Bereginya. The renaissance of the soul" with Nina Matvienko (vocal cycles by O. Kiva), bard singer Mariana Sadouskaya, soloists and orchestra of the Odessa Opera House. The conductor Oksana Lyniv (Germany) built a concert program to highlight the features of the Carpathian kolomyiki and jazz, piano sounding like a dulcimer, a chamber orchestra.

Oksana Lyniv cooperates with the Odessa Philharmonic Orchestra, Chamber Choir of Odessa National Music Academy named after A.V. Nejdanova and female youth choir "Oriana" of Odessa regional center of Ukrainian culture (conducted by Galina Shpak) and often performs with them in the Odessa Philharmonic Society. On February 6, 2015 with the Odessa Philharmonic Orchestra O.Ya.Lyniv for the first time in Odessa performed the first edition of Symphony number 3 by B. Liatoshynsky. "I consider the Third Symphony by Liatoshynsky in the first edition, created in 1951, relevant to the present-day Ukraine," – admitted in an interview Oksana Yaroslavovna. – It is prophetic. The epigraph to the symphony is "Peace will win the war" [2].

In general, the activities of women-conductors, as reflected in the history of the Odessa Opera House, is related to the discovery of new trends in the development of opera as the Ukrainian and Ukrainian school of opera and symphony conducting.

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