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## **THE SYNTHETIC NATURE OF OPERA IMAGE IN THE OPERAS BY MOZART**

*The article addresses the problem of adequate stage musical reproduction of the images of Mozart's operas in the contemporary director's theater. Various methods of modern reading are offered – presentation of Mozart's opera conceptions, the main methods of creating images of the leading characters in the operas are distinguished. General and specific dramatic vocal-intonation sides of the opera character creation are compared.*

*Keywords: opera image, opera character, opera dramaturgy, opera conception, personification.*

The known words of G.V. Chicherin that Mozart is more the composer of the XIX century than of the XVIII and more of the XX, than the XIX [8], can now be added that also more of the XXI, than of the XX. These words first of all relate to the operas by W.A. Mozart, being the classic foundation of modern opera theater. The concept of the classic in this context acquires three meanings. Firstly, it is an indication of the historical time of Mozart's music, his opera conceptions determined by the theatrical classicist aesthetics and musical language, formed in the work of the so-called "Viennese classics" among whom was Mozart himself. Secondly, the concept of the classic in connection with the genre nature of opera theater becomes the characteristic of those operatic works, without which operatic repertoire cannot do, which are exemplary and obligatory in the confirmation of the professional level of music-theater activity. Thirdly, the operas by Mozart can also be called classic today because they contribute significantly to the development of "director's theater", are the permanent subject of staging interpretation, hence – are the classic examples of the modern reconstruction of the stage content of the of the opera work.

This is facilitated by the complexity and ambiguity of the images of characters that fill the semantic space of Mozart's operas, that is, the conceptual layering and even the mystery of Mozart's opera conceptions.

Of all the operas two of them often push to a creative experiment – "Don Giovanni" and "The Magic Flute", as they are the most innovative and unusual musical-stage works by W. Mozart. This is noted by L. Kirillina, V. Shirokova, E. Chigareva (who is the author of the fundamental work "Mozart's operas in the context

of the culture of his time. Artistic individuality, Semantics" [7]), M. Izvorskaya-Yelizarieva, finding "cosmogonic mythologies" in "The Magic flute". [3]

The new meaning and inexhaustible figurative-semantic richness of these operas is evidenced by the new stagings of "Don Giovanni." In particular, the German film director Michael Haneke (known as the director of "Pianist") staged "Don Giovanni" on the stage of the Paris National Opera (27.01.2006), but the opening of the 60th season of Lyric Opera of Chicago in 2014–2015 was made thanks to the new staging of Mozart's opera "Don Giovanni" by Robert Falls. But no matter how many traditional radically innovative or moderately updated staged versions of "merry drama" by Mozart arise, they all follow a single goal: to reveal the true content of the psychological dramaturgy of the opera, to reveal all the complexity and fine details of the psychological duel taking place between the characters in the opera in its entirety. On this basis, **the main objective of this article** becomes revealing the synthetic complexity of the image of the main character of the opera, Don Giovanni, on the basis of which there emerges the polyphonic ideologically-figurative construction of the opera as a whole.

The main "psychological counterpoint" in the opera "Don Giovanni" by Mozart arises between the images of Giovanni and Commendatore, and it emerges through the musical-thematic way. The whole musical-thematic material of the opera is polarized and presents some shaped duel of life, embodied in the protagonist, and the death, the harbinger of which is the Commendatore. And the beginning of this duel is put by the introduction to the opera, and the end coincides with the finale of the second act, that is, with the completion of the entire opera and its general culmination. It is pertinent to note that, having inherited some principles of Buffon opera, Mozart often builds the final scenes as the ensemble ones with gradual involvement of more and more characters, until all the main characters appear on the stage, that is, building finals on the principle of situational and semantic crescendo. However, the ensemble nature of the image of Don Giovanni, this main "communicator" of the opera, is not exhausted by his confrontation with Commendatore – like the fear of death, the extinction of vital energy and feeling of love. His own special relationship Don Giovanni establishes with all the characters;

not only with the "Trio Avengers", which seems weak glow of Commendatore's deathly secret, but also lyrical-pathetic Elvira and innocently-pastoral Zerlina and Masetto, finally, with profane, rude Leporello.

On the one hand, Don Giovanni, with each of them, "speaks" their language as the language they understand. His part is distinguished by stylistic mobility and volatility, as volatile, sensitive to the diversity of life as he himself. On the other hand, Don Giovanni's intonations indicative for him tone-modal features are being introduced in the parts of the other characters dominate their personalities, revealing Giovanni's special power over people (not only over women), his talent of "art of life." The center of gathering Giovanni's musical ego is his Aria with Champagne (B flat major), which value is fully disclosed through the monothematic way, i.e. through the participation of its expressive elements in the ensemble scenes, in addressing the rest of the opera characters.

The finale of the second act is the climax of the main figurative and musical line of the opera. It converges the main threads of the previous thematic development. Mozart uses both festive D major, resembling the sonata allegro of the overture, and detailed section in B flat major, and dynamized reproduction of the introductory part material of the overture (theme of fate) and the scene of Commendatore's fight with Don Giovanni. This finale confirms the meaning of the ensemble interaction of polar images of the opera, opening their internal connection: the intonations and harmonies of Commendatore are laid in the musical language of Don Giovanni from their first meeting; these images create "an ensemble of the highest order", thus recreating the antinomy of life-death, pointing to the death of Giovanni as a moment of his triumph over death. High sense of fullness of life in the encounter with death – quite Pushkin's idea that force the Russian poet to build his "little tragedies" in Mozartian way...

In the course of the opera, Don Giovanni and Commendatore are characterized by the contrast musical material: major – minor, the predominance of authentic turns, diatonics, and triad and quart turns of Giovanni's part – plagality, alterations, variations, chromatic passages, Phrygian mode, diminished intervals in the part of Commendatore. However, in Aria with champagne in the middle part sounds chromatized phrase, double dominant appears in harmony and major is replaced by

minor, that is, there are stylistic elements of the image of Commendatore. And vice versa. Introduction in the overture begins with quart and semi-authentic turn. According to a just observation of E. Chigareva, "the same as the major tetrachord of the motive of aria "with champagne" is a mirror image of the Phrygian tetrachord of overture, the leith-interval of Don Giovanni (authentic quart) is a kind of theme-epigraph inversion (upward movement instead of downward and steady ending instead of the unstable). This "similarity in contrast," proves once again that the scopes of the conflict have mutually reciprocity, that these are the two faces of one idea "[7, p. 90]. It can be added that D major as one of the tonal "colors" of Don Giovanni is the same name in D minor – leith-tonality of Commendatore and the "avengers."

The last scene with Commendatore is not only the tragic outcome, the logical conclusion of the main psychological resistance, but also the climax of the image of Don Giovanni. Chigareva calls it a duel, in which "the physical destruction of the hero does not mean his defeat" [7, p.113].

Commendatore's response to Don Giovanni with the words, "I have never been known as a coward" sounds like a reminiscence of the minor median fragment of Aria with champagne. Such a conclusion of the musical destiny of Don Giovanni in Mozart's opera allowed B. Chicherin to write the following lines: "Mozart's Don Giovanni is a superman, challenging the fate, throughout the whole opera from start to finish, dark and mysterious forces of fate are digging out and bursting into action, which the hero fights, especially <...> at the end of the second final – with superhuman "No! No! No! "[7, p.113].

Therefore, the complexes of musical-thematic structures, turning into personalized "themes of the highest order", create a deep psychological subtext of this "merry tragedy", prove the semantic significance of the image of Don Giovanni, carry out his artistic-aesthetic justification and "purification."

But, nevertheless, in some director versions the story of the Don Giovanni remains a story "of an immoral adventurer who relentlessly pursues women, thus ruining the lives of everyone whom he faces, including his own" and therefore

represents a very a complex work, both for the performers of the main parts and for the production directors.

R. Falls transfers the action of Mozart's opera to the Spain of the 20s of the XX century, seeking to justify the scenic design of Walt Spangler, which includes light direction in the form of neon signs and lights, that does not prevent from using large statue of Madonna and Commendatore and preserving the idea of retribution for sinful acts like getting to the hell. The image of the main character is clearly negativized by the scenic interpretation; he is a rich playboy taking cocaine, who causes suffering of the people around him, starting with his own servant. "This Don may look charming in the eyes of women, but he is also a disgusting, selfish and manipulative person. Perhaps, he accidentally shot Commendatore, but the next moment he appears to us as a violent sex maniac, such as in the banquet scene with a tied, bloody girl who as an abandoned toy was sitting in the corner of the stage. The purpose of such a vivid demonstration of unpleasant things – is to render a deep moral message to the opera, which can be rarely found in other modern performances of "Don Giovanni" in our time. This Don is not just a complacent lover, he is a wily criminal who fully deserved his punishment". [1] And yet, Mozart's music performed by highly professional singers serves to justification – if not Don Giovanni, then the feelings which he is able to cause and in which in some way he is involved, that is the passionarity of bright human lives. The sign of such fate becomes the image of Donna Elvira, appearing on the scene (played by Anna Maria Martinez) wearing "tight maroon pants and glasses for riding a motorcycle" and demonstrating "the constantly changing state of her heroine – from mad love to Don Giovanni to the insane hatred to him" [1].

Adriana Chuchman as Zerlina, Maikal Sumuel in the part of her fiance Masetto, Antonio Poli – playing Don Ottavio, have formed an equal and artistically effective ensemble of soloists as a group of antagonists capable of providing resistance to Don Giovanni. But in doing so they raise the image of Don Giovanni to the level of the main protagonist of the musical idea of the opera, which in the context of this performance can be represented as follows: no matter how strong are the human efforts to cause and keep the love, any other passionate feeling, the final

sentence is made by death. This semantic aspect of the Chicago performance allows it maintaining contact with the tragic nature of opera piece by Mozart. However, the representation of Don Giovanni as a negative interaction center of positive in their main moral essence characters does not quite correspond to the lyrical side of the image of Giovanni, clearly opening in Mozart's music. On this side, as the most important for the singer – performer of Giovanni's part, speaks the *solo singer of Odessa Opera and Ballet Theater Vasily Dobrovolsky, who three times played Don Giovanni's part at various opera stages, worked with three different directors, three conductors and three cast lists of performers* [ 2].

Thus, in the Odessa Opera Theater the play was staged by People's Artist of Russia, director Yuri Aleksandrov and the conductor-director was People's Artist of the Republic of Moldova, the chief conductor of the Odessa Opera House Aleksandru Samoile. According to V. Dobrovolsky, after working with A. Samoile, all difficulties in subsequent performances disappear, as there have already been laid the foundations of style, nuances of the form of the work; as regarding the director, the singer noted that staging in modern style, "weaving" with music by Mozart becomes an extraordinary and spectacular artistic event, appealing not only for the artists, but also, above all, for the viewers, listeners [2]. The new staging of Mozart's opera in Odessa theater was motivated by the fact that the opera is in many ways a visual genre, spectacle and spectators need to be inspired by an active stage movement, so the singers need the ability to easily change postures, move around the stage, sing in different positions, and so on, that is to become the dynamic participants in the dynamic stage event.

"Don Giovanni" of director's version by Paolo Bazizio staged at the State Academic Theater of Opera and Ballet named after Abay in Almaty, Kazakhstan, in 2013, turned out to be bright interpretive contrast, since the play was designed in strict classical style (from the costumes and scenery to the interpretation of the images and the characters' behavior), made to transfer to the epoch of Mozart, was distinguished by ambivalent approach to the image of the main character, rather he testified about the possibility of its Renaissance interpretation.

The third staging, which the most fully allowed V. Dobrovolsky to evaluate the musical syntheticalness of the image of Don Giovanni, was held at the Opera House, the city of Craiova, Romania, was made by director Plamen Kartalov, who headed the State Opera in Sofia, and conductor-director George Stanciu [2]. The idea of this performance grew out of the analysis of Mozart's music, "parsing" the opera text "to the smallest details" when "even the smallest motive of the composer was realized and understood until the very end, and the director emphasized these nuances by the introduction of ballet. It was also present in the Odessa staging, which is not standard in itself – when the opera singer works with the ballet. But for maestro Kartalov ballet fills certain meaning gaps and enhances what is present. Thanks to this approach, the performance is saturated, there appear many tasks, which I was only too happy about – it helped me to reconsider the attitude of Don Giovanni to the other characters and feel a stronger plot-psychological connection with them." Noting the ability of music director to precisely follow Mozart's style, to be guided by the sound leading, intonational literacy, but not the pressure, strength of voice, V. Dobrovolsky emphasizes that the *character of Don Giovanni is Mozart himself*, and the opera is an "absolutely stunning musical canvas, which does not need confirmation of its greatness and uniqueness" [2].

The experience of the three directorial reconstructions of Mozart's opera allow making sure in the legality of the interpretation of Don Giovanni image as a contradictory, even paradoxical, but positive already because it relates to the sphere of "eternal images", hence associated with the axiological field of culture, which is constantly important for human development. According to V. Dobrovolsky, "every epoch, in every time and generation has its own Don Giovanni. It is a kind of regularity. Once upon a time there appeared not a hero-lover, but a phenomenon called "Don Giovanni" and it is eternal ... <...> Personally, I think that this character is distinguished by the following qualities: he can not be rude, he is really a connoisseur of women, capable of easily winning any woman, he is extremely charming and can give each exactly what she expects from him. This is the basic thing for me in working with this part, because, as shown by my experience, every time I find something missed earlier, or make some new discoveries, trying to

improve my interpretation performance by performance. This is still a multi-faceted character, he cannot be interpreted unambiguously, and we cannot describe him in the one and only "shade" [2].

The musician comes to the conclusion that the interpretation of the image of Don Giovanni today depends entirely on the director and his interpretation of the idea of Mozart's opera piece, and it is about the idea that goes beyond a single image, even more so – which determined, brought this image to the stage musical life. "Someone is able to put him as the victim all the circumstances, plagued by doubts and seeking something perfect; someone shows him a hero-lover, a master of seducing women, who perfectly mastered the understanding of female psychology; and for someone he is a completely negative character, crafty seducer, adventurer, deceiver and villain. And each of the images has a right to exist, because each director has his own world-view" [2]. However, the most important thing is to pay attention to those parameters of Don Giovanni image, which point to his relationship with positive musical-aesthetic idea and explain the fact that Mozart's opera served as a model for the interpretation of the story of Don Giovanni as the tragic-poetic in the works of A. Pushkin, namely :

- embodiment in the image of Giovanni the poetics of a game in its extremely intense existential variety, as game with death;
- Giovanni's yearning for "the eternal feminine" as the saving ontological beginning, which alone can justify the efforts of human life, and endow them with meaning; this parameter of the image makes it kindred with the image of Faust from the same-name tragedy by J. Goethe;
- no less pronounced tendency of Giovanni to beauty, including the beauty of creation, *to the musicality of the human action and attitude* as to its sensuous content and sound, capable of creating reciprocal feeling.

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