

O. Muravskaya

**GENRE AND STYLISTIC ASPECTS OF THE OPERA BY E.
HUMPERDINCK "HANSEL AND GRETTEL" AND THE TRADITIONS OF
THE GERMAN BIEDERMEIER**

This Article analyzes the genre and style, figurative and semantic aspects of the opera by E. Humperdinck "Hansel and Gretel", which are considered in line with the artistic traditions of the German Biedermeier.

Keywords: *German Opera, romanticism, Biedermeier, "Hansel and Gretel" by E. Humperdinck.*

“A witty musical storyteller, one of the pioneers of mixed-age children’s fairy tale opera in Germany, a conservative supporter of Wagner’s music drama ... a follower of Maestro Bayreuth and at the same time, an ardent genre breeder, inventor of the progressive vocal-declamatory sprechgesang style and, accordingly, a new kind of melodrama ...: all - Engelbert Humperdinck” [2, p. 7]. This gives a comprehensive description of the prominent German composer abroad XIX - early XX century, a researcher L.V. Lyutko. A contemporary of the great Wagner, learned through creative dialogue and friendship with the latter, a lot of aspects of his style, E. Humperdinck at the same time did not become his imitator, but he managed to find his own way in art, while maintaining the creative individuality.

Domestic bibliography devoted to this author is negligible. Hardly any single study can be regarded the thesis by L.V. Lyutko cited above “E. Humperdinck’s opera art: genre and dramatic solutions, specific implementation of national traditions” (Kiev, 2013), which can be seen at first in domestic musicology of generalization of poetics of musical theater of the author. Poor study of his work in the mainstream genre and stylistic pursuit of German culture of this period, in particular, his most popular opera “Hansel and Gretel” in combination with the demand for a stage of the work in contemporary performance practice determines the relevance of the topic of this article. Its subject is focused on the identification of genre and stylistic specificity of the title works in the context of the traditions of the German Biedermeier, acting at

the level of one of the styles “Dominant” German culture of the XIX century, along with romanticism.

Romanticism, impressing the conflict between the individual and the world, the endless desire for a new dynamic, according to L. Uhland, is regarded as a “mystic manifestation of the spirit ... in the form of humanization of the divine ... a premonition of the infinite in the visible and imaginary” [Cited by: 5, p. 84]. Biedermeier, replacing the “rapid” spiritual and aesthetic search of romance as their peculiar antipode and, at the same time, godfather, is regarded as the epitome of modern art history of high spiritual significance of the everyday, the mundane, as a “way of life, imbued with religiosity”, in which each component gains a sacral sense of belonging to the Ecumenical. The foregoing makes it possible to regard the diversity of Biedermeier art manifestations, including music, at the level of the German “model” of a patriarchal culture.

A creative way of E. Humperdinck and genre and stylistic, as well as figurative and semantic parameters are correlated with the aforementioned phenomena of the German culture of the XIX century. The romantic side of his heritage, coupled with the Wagnerian music and theater tradition, has received coverage in the aforementioned work of L.V. Lyutko, while Biedermeier’s stylistic component of the composer remains out of sight of the researcher.

Activities of E. Humperdinck, as already noted, on the one hand, is closely linked with the biography and works of Richard Wagner, with whom he had a few years of creative communication (at the level of a “teacher – student”). E. Humperdinck also participated in the preparation of staging Wagner’s “Parsifal”. Finally, for some time he served as musical mentor of Siegfried Wagner.

Musical and theatrical legacy of E. Humperdinck is largely correlated with the three areas of German opera, popular in the XIX century. - Volksoper, comic opera and her magical fairy-analogue. Their typology is somehow represented in the most famous works of the composer - the opera “Hansel and Gretel” (1894), in the children’s Liederspiel “Seven Little Kids” (1895), in the fabulous opera “Sleeping Beauty” (1902), as well as “fairy-fabulous musical drama” “Royal Children” (1910).

It combines a work of deep and versatile composer's interest in children's opera to the images of childhood, to the tale, interpreted in the tradition of the German mythological school and, above all, the Brothers Grimm. According to L.V. Lyutko, E. Humperdinck "... became one of the few, one of the first composers who "descended from heaven" of intricately-exalted myths, abandoning them in favor of the unpretentious and clear" good" German fairy tale. His operas served as an impulse for the revival of the fantastic genre in the German opera art of the late XIX century" [2, p.19]. Rhetoric of the cited researchers on the one hand, fixes the obvious differentiation of the poetics of Wagnerian theater and opera E. Humperdinck: differences of specifics of epic-scale drama of Richard Wagner's and fairy operas of E. Humperdinck are obvious. On the other hand, we should not forget that the work of these authors has a common genesis, the origins of which date back to the German folk-epic tradition, which has become the subject of detailed study and creative interpretation of the German culture of the XIX century, since the activity of Jena and Heidelberg romantics and, specifically, the Brothers Grimm. Proceedings of the past history of German mythology in all its diversity of its manifestations, as well as collections of German fairy tales, legends and stories largely made up of subject-sense basis how opera works of E. Humperdinck, and Wagner. It is known that during the last work on the "Lohengrin" and "Tannhauser" actively studying "German Legends" by the Brothers Grimm as one of the most important sources, fixing the German epic. The foregoing makes it possible to state that the work of these authors, as well as their predecessors and contemporaries, developed in conjunction with the German concept of the mythological school, according to which the "mythology was the primary material for all art", "kernel, the center of poetry". According to J. Grima, that "the myth of evolution in the process of having a fairy tale, the epic, the legend". "Transferring to the study of folklore methodology of comparative linguistics Grimm erected similar phenomena in the folklore of various peoples for their common ancient mythology to certain "pramifu". According to them the ancestral mythological traditions are particularly well-preserved in the German folk poetry" [3].

This position was close enough for German opera composers of the XIX century, including E. Wagner and Humperdinck. At the same time the first of them in the implementation of their reform ideas appealed to the German epic in all the richness and scope of its manifestations, while E. Humperdinck appealed more to the tale as a small epic forms, which, however, are concentrated the most important archetypes German Culture in a literal compliance with the principle of imprinting Biedermeier's "large", the spiritual significance of "small" means.

The conjugation of spiritual and aesthetic principles of creativity of the Brothers Grimm with Biedermeier are largely due and the time, which accounts for the flourishing activities of collectors and curators of the German epic - the Restoration, it is traditionally correlated with the age of Biedermeier. At the same time, the German folk tale collected by the brothers Grimm and systematized through them and gained their pan-European and later international fame, recorded the most important quality of a German national consciousness. Z.E. Fomina, studying ethnic and cultural peculiarities of the German national character in a fairy tale by the Brothers Grimm discourse, more precisely, in the names of fairy tales, highlights their "genealogy" and "artifact" "naming". The first "reflect a cult genealogical (family, kin) tree and clearly confirm the importance of such important concepts for the Germans as a family, home, hearth, Chad Households", while the second is related to the "cultivation of household items of ordinary people", with love to the Order as the most important category of the German national consciousness" [7, p. 29, 33]. The aforementioned qualities make spiritual sense basis and culture of Biedermeier as the German "model" of a patriarchal culture.

Indicative in this respect acts and a common name of the Brothers Grimm fairy meeting – "Children's and Household Tales", which include and "Hansel and Gretel", which served as the basis for the plot of the opera of the same name by E. Humperdinck (See below.). It not only has a narrow (for children), but also a broader context, as "the people of Jacob Grimm – child of biogenetic sense. Children's true - it is the truth of the old man, for the beginning of each individual is in line with the beginning of the people. Therefore, "People" and "children" are synonyms ... The

collection was created not for children, but it is addressed to them” [4, p. 78]. Such an orientation meeting at the fantastic special understanding, interpretation of the phenomenon of childhood and its relationship with different generations of society is largely due also to the educational role of the cycle, which also allows you to correlate it with typological characteristics of the Biedermeier culture. For the latter, this aspect is an essential factor in understanding the ethical tradition as collateral preservation and inheritance of World Order and its spiritual laws so relevant to Germany in the early XIX century, and its national idea.

A regular thing in this respect is the authors’ desire to adapt to the conditions of folklore modernity while preserving its archetypal foundations. Like Heidelbergers, who planned to cover their collectively-folklore activity “all German land, thus electing to intermediaries primarily teachers and preachers, the slogan of Grimm’s tales was the desire “to turn a story into modernity through the concept of the primacy of natural plant and animal character ...” [4, p. 42, 54]. Such orientation of the authors on the German burgher spiritual and ethical traditions in its highest sense, correlated with Biedermeier and appealing to the general reader, appeared in the XIX century, one of the essential means of uniting the German people and their inclusion in the age-old truths of the national culture.

The aforementioned is also confirmed by the creative experience E. Humperdinck certifying already at the turn of XIX-XX centuries the relevance of both cultural and creative ideas of the Brothers Grimm, and genre-stylistic specificity of the German Biedermeier, which is particularly evident in one of his most famous opus - the opera “Hansel and Gretel”, created in 1894. It is interesting that the original intent of this work (1890) was paired with children’s home performances related to the Christmas celebrations in the family of E. Humperdinck and his sister. Only later the composer realized orchestration of the piano version of a home performance, which has been praised by Richard Strauss [see: 2, p. 80].

There are certain differences between the fairy tale by the Brothers Grimm and its opera interpretation, which, however, do not detract from the profound spiritual connotation as the primary source of folklore and its musical and theatrical treatment.

The plot of "Hansel and Gretel" in a variety of interpretations is quite common in the folklore of many European nations. This home fairy-tale is very interesting primarily from the point of view of the initiation as the rite of "entering into the adult status". The indicated ritual is considered by many folklorists as "usually occurred in the woods ... In this way [the initiation] the heroes are waiting for a kind of dying: a fairy tale witch intends to eat children, bake them as cookies ... After the test, they [children] are returned to their parents, as it were renewed, with matured souls. Motives of communication with nature ..., the image of the river (as the image of the transition to a new life), return home with gifts - as a symbol of their domestic enrichment" become important and characteristic of this period of [2, p. 81].

A close version of the interpretation of the archetypal symbolism in this tale is given by Anna Benu in her study, seeing in it a plot description of the process of growing spiritual children: "In the area of the forest - the area of the unknown there is adulthood of Hansel and Gretel-consciousness - a beautiful soul. Battling with the manifestation of the shadow of the person in the form of a witch that seeks to devour them, children learn to recognize what is really gingerbread, sweet, and that putting on sugar and honey, hides the destruction ... matured logical beginning and emotional now find their way home, but it is already a released house of released consciousness. The children who gained experience bring home treasures of unfading values... Treasures of clarity of understanding of what is happening, distinguishing the true from the false, the ability to win, transform illusory in a flaming furnace in transforming the freedom of the heart" [1, p. 365].

The archetypal roots of the fairy-tale fully were felt by the authors of the collection of the German folklore. In particular, J. Grimm back in 1815 in the article "Sacred Way and Sacred Pillars" indicates the relationship of plot motifs of "Hansel and Gretel" as with the ancient and medieval mythology: "Phaethon, to mark your way, sprayed red-hot smoldering ashes like children in fairy tales - bread crumbs, corn and white gravel, which they can find their way home ... The same motif is available in ... Description of the trip of Makarios of Egypt in the garden, planted pagan magicians; he marks his way with stems of reeds" [Cited at 4, p. 281].

Opera “interpretation” of the fairy tale, presented in the same essay by E. Humperdinck, shows yet another embodiment of the image-interpretation of its story base correlating not only with the actual poetics of musical theater composer, but also with the aforementioned spiritual and stylistic bases of German cultural and historical tradition . Among the changes made to analyze the operatic version there can be identified a more prosperous environment in which children are present (no stepmother), and the introduction of new characters - angels, Sandman, children (the final part of the Opera), focuses on the positive shaped field work.

The latter is greatly supported by the gain in the figurative sense of the spiritual side of the work, the Christian factor, which is evident not only as the main characters (Hansel and Gretel), embodying the faith, virtue, forgiveness, but also in defining the idea of the whole opera. “The quintessence of a positive thing in the image of children and in the opera as a whole there is a religiously painted morality of the fairy-tale embedded by the composer to the girl’s mouth: “The more difficult the life is to us, the God himself is closer to us” [2, p. 85]. The aforementioned idea receives the appropriate intonation etched in opera by E. Humperdinck, appealing not only to folklore, but also to the German-Protestant liturgical singing tradition. This is evidenced by both the rhythmic “evenness” chant, and its intonation specifics, oriented to the characteristic melodic movement by the sounds of the tonic triad with singing fifths tone. The intonation of such a kind is indicative of a number of Protestant chorales [See: 9, No.55, 121, 267, 427, 390, and others], the occurrence of which is associated with the names of Hans Sachs, F. Nicolai, J. Walter and others. At the same most of them are either of text associated with the images of Passion cycle, or with songs, postulated the Protestant understanding of the fundamentals of the Christian faith and life, correlated with the sense of cited above the title of the spiritual idea of the opera by E. Humperdinck. Note also that we find the intonation of this kind in the leading topics, “The Legend of St. Elizabeth” by F. Liszt and Wagner’s orchestral introduction “Parsifal”, in the setting of which, as mentioned above, E. Humperdinck was directly involved.

A choral theme in the composer’s analyzed opera also plays a role of the most

important leitmotif, with the occurrence of which a lot of culmination sections of the work. It has a great role in the overture, in which this theme serves as a symbol of spiritual music “framing” a large-scale sonata composition. In the picture, sounding on the lips of Gretel, she embodies the Christian morality, suggestion parents, and thus partly opposed and at the same time complements the thematism associated with images of playful childhood. In the final bars of the Opera Choir, the topic presented in the rhythmic increase, effectively combining the performance of all participants (parents and children), symbolizing the spiritual connection between generations and introduction to higher truths.

The indicated thematism also makes the basis of still one episode of the opera, determining its extraordinary popularity right up to the present time. This is the “Evening Prayer” of children falling asleep in the forest (II picture). The significance of this episode is largely determined not only by obvious choral melody of playing traditions and principles of its harmonization, but also as an introduction to the basics of verbal text from the collection of German songs J. von Arnim and C. Brentano’s “Magic Horn” (“Abends will ich schlafen gehn ... “). The text is a prayer addressed to 14 angels-intercessors, designed to protect the peaceful sleep of children [See: 8, p. 264]. It’s characteristically that in the opera by E. Humperdinck an instrumental version of choral theme, according to the text, is “voice” episode of the procession of angels, introduced immediately after the children’s prayer. According to the conclusions of A. Naumenko, the text “Evening Prayer” hit the famous song of the cycle of Heidelberg Romantics precisely because of anonymous participation in its creation of the Brothers Grimm. According to the words of Wilhelm Grimm “we both heard it from our maid, and she - from her grandmother” [4, p. 41].

It should be noted that the spiritual sense of the quoted text of the folklore associated also with the German Catholic spiritual practices of prayer appeals to 14 “Holy Helpers” (Homo festivus) [6], which goes back to the XIV century. Here there are 14 angels and correlate with 14 highly revered saints, most of which are related to the early period of Christian history (III - IV century.). Their “collective” reverence was expressed not only in the corresponding celebration of church calendar (August

8), but also in the construction of a grand temple and monastery architectural complexes, among which the most famous are the Basilica Firzenhayligen (Bavaria), as well as the monastery Lichtenfels (Upper Franconia), the decoration of which is the Altar of the 14 saints of brush of Mathias Grunewald [10].

Taking into account such a significant spiritual intonation and meaning genesis, simple and artless children's "Evening Prayer" from the opera by E. Humperdinck is conjugated with centuries-old traditions of German spiritual culture, in accordance with the aforementioned principle Biedermeier's imprinting "big" to "small". Ultimately, the symbolism of this episode goes "beyond" the actual fairytale narrative, thereby causing a wide range of other analogies, similes: children - with humanity, woods - with life's trials and sincere children's Prayer - spiritual vector defining purposefulness and meaning of human earthly journey.

The key role of the analyzed topics of choral prayer in the opera by E. Humperdinck is also determined by the fact that its Intonational foundation is the basis for other topics related to the area of positive imagery. Thus, three-sound momentum, only in a different genre "attire", are felt well enough and in scherzo keynote of Hansel and Gretel, which unites almost thematism of the whole I picture, and the final chorus of joyous children, reminding jubilee figured chorale.

The apparent reliance of the composer on a typical and generally significant thematic layer is complemented in "Hansel and Gretel" by a quotation in I picture of the German folk songs – "Suse liebe Suse, was raschekt im Stroh" and "Ein Mannlein steht im Walde ganz still und stumm", reproduce, according to the observations of D. Todea, spirit and atmosphere a Grimm's fairy-tale [11, p. 62].

At the same time, the basic characteristics of intonation of Hansel and Gretel game are presented in multiple sketches. "Often they are based on the theme of stylization or reliance on children's folklore (counting rhymes, teasing), which emphasizes the mischievous, cheerful character of a brother and sister ... In this way children are already represented in the exposure (the scene is built on the alternation of cheerful song and dance scenes and dialogues): arioso Gretel "*Chu straw rustling under our window*" (song-dance, consisting of two verses with orchestral loss). In

such a sustained nature and the following episodes: teasing “*Go away evil beech!*” songs-dances: “*Than be sad and very heavy*” and “*I’m kicking: top, top, top ...*” (with the refrain “*Tra, la, la*”)” [2, p. 84].

The dominant positive image and semantic quality of E. Humperdinck’s opera is supplemented not only by its genre typology, appealing to the opera-fairy tale, but by the principles of drama. Antinomy of the real and the fantastic worlds of good and evil are not here for the dramatic nature of the opposition, as thematism single negative character in a work - Witches - more focused on the scope of the genre whimsical scherzo. The defining idea of “Hansel and Gretel” in the end is more focused on the process of spiritual transformation noted above, the initiation of the main characters and emphasizing the idea of a positive family and harmonizing final of the work attributable to Biedermeier’s artistic tradition.

Thus, the analysis of image and meaning, and intonation and dramatic components of E. Humperdinck’s opera “Hansel and Gretel” indicates a significant role of Biedermeier’s style traditions in it, clear and in appealing to the fairy-tale, fixing in small forms of the archetypal qualities of th German culture (“large” in the “small”), and in its spiritual and didactic, moralizing orientation, and appealing to the images of childhood and family issues, and finally, in appealing to the typical, universally valid forms of musical expression, oriented to folk and singing and prayer (choral) tradition, imprinted as a final result in the harmony of Divine and Human. According to the words of Louis-Auguste Sabatier “to create a myth, so to speak, means to dare for the reality of common sense to look for a higher reality - this is a clear sign of the greatness of the human soul and the proof of its capacity for infinite growth and development” [1, p. 5].

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