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**FROM IDEA TO IMPLEMENTATION: COMPOSER'S COMMENTS
(ACCORDING TO THE MATERIALS OF INTERVIEW WITH ALEKSANDR
KRASOTOV)**

The content of the article is in the range of the problems of the modern opera art in Ukraine. The material is based on the interviews with Odessa composer A. Krasotov, which discuss the issues of stability of opera genre features, the relevance of the traditional opera forms, the stylistics of modern musical language, the specifics of opera dramaturgy, performing interpretation and the role of music criticism in representation of the facts of opera premieres.

Keywords: *opera, opera works of A. Krasotov, genre features, stylistics of contemporary musical language.*

The development ways of the opera genre, its viability at present stage, the problems and prospects of the opera theater functioning are widely discussed on the pages of publications by musicologists, sociologists and cultural specialists. From the moment of inception at the turn of the XVI - XVII centuries, balancing between popular and elite genres, opera has gone through various stages from blossoming to decline and revival. And despite the fact that more than a hundred years, according to T. Adorno, "it is impossible to escape the impression that the opera form is getting obsolete" [1, p. 66], it has retained not only its basic genre features, but also the leading place among the representatives of academic art.

As a synthetic genre, used to the emotional impact on the listener, the expressive possibilities of all the major arts, opera almost its entire story has claimed to be the conceptual theater genre, "musical novel", which reflected both moral-ethical and artistic-aesthetic intonations of the epoch.

And if in the XVIII-XIX centuries the repertoire policy of opera theaters was based mainly on premieres, today theater groups survive due to the productions of classical operas with varying degrees of interpretive freedom. The facts of the premiers of opera works in modern national theatrical world are extremely rare and therefore deserve special attention from opera art historians. Actually this is the kind of event this article is dedicated to, namely the premiere of Aleksandr Krasotov's opera "Mikhail Vorontsov" at the Odessa State Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre. The opera was written and staged in 1994 and dedicated to the 200th anniversary of the city foundation. The opera staging became a bright and actively discussed event in Odessa music world. The press published a number of reviews containing both

praiseful and critical comments. On the stage of the Odessa Opera Theater were held three performances, after which dust settled gradually.

The resulting temporal distance separating us today from the premiere day, and the consonance of the many topics raised in the opera, the problems of contemporary art, have prompted us to attempt returning and to rethinking the value of this work in the context of the national musical culture.

Being the students of Musicological Faculty of the Odessa Conservatory at the time of the premiere, we experienced that event vividly and emotionally. Indeed, as already mentioned, visiting an opera premiere at the late XX century is not such a frequent phenomenon. The factor of personal acquaintance with the composer, who at that time was the leading professor at the Composition Department, enlivened our interest in what was happening even more. The impressions overwhelming us after visiting the opera premiere provoked wild debates that took place in the intervals between the acts, and at the Conservatory lectures, and during the afternoon tea in the hostel. As a result, appeared an article entitled "Opinions and doubts", written by a group of IV year students. In spite of its brevity, it presented radically different but having the right to existence points of view in relation to the performance. Which to the authors' undisguised joy, was appreciated by Aleksandr Krasotov himself. The desire to continue the dialogue on the vital topic has given rise to the idea of organizing a creative meeting with the composer, where music critics beginners could ask questions to find out what, according to Aleksandr Aleksandrovich, "could be specified by the living author."

Apart from students the interview was attended by the teachers of the Department of Music History of and Musical Ethnography Professor Rimma Markovna Rosenberg and Sergey Albertovich Taranets. The range of issues discussed, although repelled directly from the fact of the opera premiere was significantly wider and covered such topics as the issues of ethics and moral, comprehension of the key historical events, the issues of modern musical language stylistics, performing interpretation and objectivity of musical criticism. Fortunately, the record made during the meeting was preserved, giving us an opportunity to hear the statements of one of the brightest representatives of Odessa composers school of the 2nd half of the XX – beginning of the XXI century. Let me give you a brief information about the life and work of the composer.

Aleksandr Krasotov was born on May 5, 1936, in [Odessa](#). In 1959 he graduated from the Odessa State Conservatoire (now the Odessa [National N.A. Nezhdanova Academy of Music](#)) in composition class of T.S. Malyukova, piano – B.A.

Charkovsky, history of music – A.L. Kogan. In the same year – a teacher at Odessa Conservatory.

Since 1966 – a member of the Composers' Union of Ukraine. In 1966-1970, and since 1976 – Executive Secretary of Odessa branch of the Composers Union of Ukraine. Since 1982 – Associate Professor, since 1991 – Professor of the Odessa State A.V. Nezhdanova Conservatory. The founder of the South-Ukrainian composer school, trained more than 60 students, among them well-known contemporary composers Karmella Tsepkenko, Julia Gomelskaya, Lyudmila Samodaeva. Since 1999 – Honorary Professor of Composition faculty of the Tianjin Conservatory of Music (China). [4]

The Honored Artist of the Ukrainian SSR (1987), winner of National and International competitions: All-Ukrainian competition in Kiev (1967, 1971, 1983), International competitions (Berlin – 1973, Tokyo – 1992), the Regional Prize named after E. Bagritsky (1967). Deceased on October 5, 2007. The author of numerous works of various genres (totally about 300): symphonies, operas, instrumental concerts, oratorios, cantatas, musicals, romances and songs, music for dramatic plays, television programs, films [4].

The composer wrote three works of opera genre: "The End of Fairy Tale," libretto by V. Timofeev (1959); "Taiga Song", libretto by R. Rozenberg (1977) and "Mikhail Vorontsov," libretto by R. Brodavko (1994) [2; 3].

The last of the mentioned operas was the central event of the 185th theatrical season of the Odessa Opera Odessa Opera. In the creation of the play took part music director and conductor I. L. Shavruk, director Honored Artist of Russia B. I. Seidenberg, artistic director Honored Artist of Ukraine N.M. Bevzenko-Zinkina, performance leading director, Honored Worker of Culture of Ukraine N. M. Grigor.

The performers were both famous and beginning opera singers. The main roles were played by People's Artist of Ukraine A. T. Kapustin (Vorontsov Mikhail Semenovich); laureate of international contests T. G. Zakharchuk (Vorontsova Elizaveta Ksaverievna); laureate of international contests T. V. Spasskaya (Zavadovskaya Elena Mikhailovna); E. I. Odinokova (Arthur-Pototskaya Sofia); V. V. Bogachev (Levshin Aleksey Iraklievich); R. V. Zinevich (Sadovsky); Honored Artist of Ukraine S. A. Kovalevsky (Stiglitz); Honored Artist of Ukraine A. I. Duda (Saltykov); V. V. Pavlov (Ordynsky); award winner of international contest A. A. Kisteneva (Anna).

So, coming back to the interview given by Aleksandr Krasotov after the premiere of opera "Mikhail Vorontsov," I want to lift the curtain and offer a glimpse

into the creative laboratory of the composer, based on his own judgments on the passed way from the idea to its realization.

The first of the issues discussed was the attitude of Aleksandr Aleksandrovich to the personality of Mikhail Vorontsov. Among the contenders for the role of the central character of the opera were such historical figures as Richelieu, Deribass, Pushkin, who had already appeared in the musical play "Only Thirteen Months," with music by A. Krasotov.

The choice fell on Vorontsov. The composer, according to him, was interested in the fact that the governor by his power in 1833 banned the export of bread from Odessa, because the inhabitants of Odessa were under the risk of hunger due to poor harvest. Quote: "I was struck by the parallel that in 1933 the Bolsheviki, on the contrary, exported bread from Ukraine to fraternal struggling parties. Roughly in one hundred years the Soviet Ukrainians exported bread, condemning their people to death from hunger. And Vorontsov made an important matter for the state, he took responsibility for breaching the contract with Western partners, he paid the penalty himself and provoked other wealthy people of the city to do the same, and prevented the city from starvation. Is it not the most important thing for us, is not it a moral example for our contemporaries. Not to mention other similar situations of his life."

Trying to reveal the character primarily as a versatile personality, show him from different angles, not only as a statesman, has provoked the emergence in opera dramaturgy of another line – lyrical one, revealing the relationship of the count with Elena Zavadovskaya.

It is this component of the plot that inspired the composer to write music. Quote: "For me was the first phrase with which the opera began, was the phrase" Life without love, what kind of life is that? I have not learned living only in the past." That was the phrase that made me start writing the opera. When I took the libretto and started looking for something suddenly the music sounded, exactly in this place. And then it proceeded further and further."

The libretto, written by Roman Brodavko, as is clear from the interview, quite satisfied the composer. Quote: "I intentionally asked that the text should be prosaic, I do not like poetic texts. Because poetic text binds rhythmic. Even in songs. I wrote the vast majority of the songs so that first the music was created, and then the text was written. I am still convinced that this makes songs more melodically vivid, more unique. But in any case, I even teach my students to read poems in romances or songs not as poetry, not as rhymed lines, but as prose. That is emphasizing that they should not follow the rhythm, not stay in captivity of the work's rhythm, but listen to

the meaning of the word. So, of course, working with that libretto was very interesting."

Aleksandr Aleksandrovich's arguments about the specifics of opera musical stylistics are of unconditional interest to us today. Quote: "As for the musical language, that was a problem. I had thought for a long time about what language should be like. And that's what I thought. Friends, I know modern language, I know how it is done, but I understand very well and I am aware of the fact that what is written in such a language, is written for a narrow range, not even of a spectrum, but one of the spectrum colors of listeners. I wanted opera to be staged by our theater. Firstly, it was about staging it by our opera studio. And it is no secret that each composer, no matter how much he would pretend, still secretly cherishes the hope that it will be a success, that what he writes will be needed for someone. Even Stravinsky, who boasted that he did not care how his music would be accepted. Nothing of the kind, do not believe him. There are no such composers who would not care. Composers are just focused on different layers of listeners. "... The audience is very different. How is it possible to please everyone? Some people will like it, other people will not like it. And there is even such thing in the articles: minus sign – means eclectics, plus sign – polystylistics. You know, music is always listened to when it is familiar. When the music stops, if people can sing it on, it means they like it, if they cannot – then they do not like that kind of music. And even more so for our tired audience, which does not feel like listening to music or going to the opera. "... And I thought, why in the XIX century a romance and styling could not be sung? After all, what Alena Kisteneva sings on Byron's poems – is really the stylization of Russian romance. Have you noticed that the first scene, for example, there in the orchestra, is so to speak, some aleatoric, sonorific things. The accompaniment taken in frames, dialogues of the brass Shavruk showed just during the pauses between the characters' dialogues. Until the entry of Vorontsov there are quite obvious aleatoric things, that is, I have shown that I can do. At first, I showed it. Well, then, I do not know, I thought it would be deliberate, unnatural and would not be listened to."

Attempts to identify the genre of opera resulted only in the definition given in the above article – "lyrical-citizenly scenes." As the composer himself strongly insisted that for him all sorts of genre definitions were secondary and did not matter in the creative process. As for the features of the opera dramaturgy, it should be noted that along with the traditional solutions, the composer, librettist and director of the play were trying to give it dynamism, a kind of "cinema-likeness", "frame-likeness". Since, according to A. Krasotov, "all the genres are good except for the boring one."

And the remarks that his opera turned out to be short, and there was some haste in the development of separate images, he regarded more as a compliment: "there is no haste, but dynamics, with a plus sign."

And the solo vocal items are seen as some "stop-frames". Quote: "So, the play was written first, and then we sat and thought, where stop-frames could be, that is, where it was possible to reveal some inner experiences of the characters. Only, God forbid, not long ones. So that, God forbid, not to tire the listener. Do you think we did not have to think about it? That's how we got such small stop-frames. "... These small arioso – it's really a tribute to tradition. Anyway, everybody says they have no place to sing, everybody needs cantilena, and I need action."

The desire for open-type dramaturgy led to accusations by the performers in relation to the fact that after extensive solo numbers, characterizing one image or another, the composer immediately switches to the next picture, leaving no room for well-deserved ovation. While maintaining great sense of humor inherent to him, Aleksandr Aleksandrovich promised that "to meet the wishes of the prima donna, will cut this beat and set "pump" with contrabasses."

The reason for the lack of traditional ensemble scenes in opera the author explains: "I am generally annoyed since childhood when everybody sings at the same time, I am annoyed when I do not hear the words. What are they singing about, what is it? "... I had no objective to do an ensemble. I did not want to. When people talk at the same time – that means they cannot hear each other. Is that right? In life, right? Yes, the opera genre dictates ... I did not find it necessary to do it here. It would have already been conventionality, such stump oratory. "

In the musical implementation of the plot, the composer paid great attention to leitmotif work, which, unfortunately, has not been noted by critics. "There has been not a word about the leitmotif for some reason, – states A. Krasotov: not a word about the uniqueness of each character's intonation. And especially the secondary ones. Have you noticed that, Sadovsky and Levshin speak on the same motives. And the orchestra finishes what sounded at the very beginning. That is single intonation sphere of the character is spread out. That's what I would like to be noticed."

Much of the discussion was devoted to the issues of performing interpretation, the extent to which the author's vision of the characters corresponded to their stage implementation by the leading actors. Aleksandr Aleksandrovich noted that in general, the performing staff of the performance had coped with creative tasks, and the scenic images were as close as possible to the author's concept. After all vocal parts were mainly written for specific performers.

Numerous "lyrical" digressions, again and again arising in the course of conversation, contain interesting remarks on the work of contemporary composers: "For me, there are authorities that, if I do not understand something in this music, so I see the reason in myself, but not in them, you know? To some degree, for me such an authority was Schnittke. The perfect authority for me was Boris Tchaikovsky, a brilliant composer, a man of modesty, he does not sound to me, the authority for me was Moses Weinberg, and, of course, Shostakovich. I just name those whom you do not know so well. Shchedrin and perhaps Schnittke."

In the final part of the conversation, the composer talks about the role and importance of music criticism. Quote: "In fact, I would like people to notice that there are several different lines. This opera is not just about the export of bread and so on. It is about relevance, about the eternity of human relations. The issues of honor, integrity, trust, generosity or meanness, well, love, of course. These lines, whether they are relevant? That is what I would like to be noticed by not musicologists. Is not it heard? Is the text, you say, how much it corresponds to the XIX century, or does not correspond... But we did not, perhaps, set such a task. Maybe it's better for people to feel at that time there were the same problems as now. Or, on the contrary, that we have the same problems as in the XIX century."

To the students' question, "What will happen to your opera next? Will it be in the constant repertoire?" A Krasotov replied: "I would like to, but it does not depend on me anymore ... Opera must live."

So the scope of this article has enabled us to present just a concise reasoning of those areas that have been highlighted by Aleksandr Krasotov during the creative meeting. In our view, the text of the interview is of great interest to the modern music critic and a simple fan of music that raises the question of searching an opportunity of its publication in the full version.

Another purpose of this article was drawing attention to the work of one of the most important representatives of the South-Ukrainian school of composition, unjustly deprived of attention from both the performers and musicologists. Significant creative legacy of Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Krasotov, representing different genres of contemporary musical art, is still waiting for its researchers.

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