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OLEKSANDR KOLODUB SCHOOL OF OPERA STAGE DIRECTION

The article is concerned with the creative activity of famous Ukrainian stage director Oleksandr Kolodub and briefly outlines the main stages of his life. There are highlighted pedagogical principles and methods of his work on productions at Opera Studio of Ukrainian National Tchaikovsky Academy of Music.

Key words: creative activity, pedagogic principles, work practice, staging of Opera Studio.

In modern times of the revival of original Ukrainian national culture can not be ignored the important issues regarding the history of music and theatrical art of Ukraine. Namely – the principles of operatic performance, as well as ways of developing and forming traditions of Ukrainian School of opera stage direction of the twentieth century. So, going back to the past, it is worth mentioning that the "new, particularly important stage in the history of Ukrainian music and theatrical art was mid 30's" when "controversial period of experimentation, acute controversy with tradition, the race artistic trends gradually were replaced by persistent pursuit in the field of stage realism, fruitful development of national classic traditions and ideological consolidation of the figures of opera and ballet and operetta ensembles of the republic "[13, p. 80].

An outstanding role in general cultural process in Ukraine was played by a creative activity of prominent musical and theater workers at Kiev Opera. And absolutely undeniable in the history of Ukrainian musical culture is the fact that due to general directing of the efforts of composers, conductors, directors, soloists and chorus masters Ukrainian opera flourished and reached considerable heights. It was also quite productive time, time of active development of Ukrainian opera and stage direction, time of formation of its traditions, the rapid growth of its professional representatives.

Thus, remembering stage directors, it is worth to be mentioned an important fact that "the synthesis of various schools and performing traditions, which developed

opera stage direction at the Kyiv stage defined its further development and conditions for reorientation of musical theater life to Ukrainian needs and interests "[11, p. 181].

Among famous Kyiv directors of musical theater there worked artists distinguished by their ingenuity and were quite different due to their individual approaches to work together. They were: Joseph Lapytsky, Volodymyr Manzii, Mykola Smolych, Volodymyr Losskyi, Mykhailo Stefanovych, Volodymyr Skliarenko, Yukhym Lyshanskyi and others. Their multifaceted creative activity based on national sources of classical music and theater culture, promoted the formation of new special means of expression, trends and traditions inherent in modern musical theater. And special attention amongst the famous names of these figures of opera deserves no less talented and famous, in his time, opera director, teacher, singer and artist Oleksandr Kolodub.

You can certainly say that the contribution of A. Kolodub to the treasury of Ukrainian culture is very significant, if you look back and carefully analyze all of his artistic career. In the past, graduating from Kiev Conservatory as an opera singer (he was a lyric tenor), he mentioned among the founders of the Ukrainian opera of Kharkiv and Odessa [3, p. 5]. He was also invited as a soloist of Kiev Opera and Ballet Theatre, where he performed leading opera roles. Kolodub's career as an opera singer was rather short because at the age of 33 years during the performance of "Eugene Onegin" by P.I. Tchaikovsky, there happened an accident that put an end to his career of a singer and interfered with disclosure of his unique singing talent. Living with this and having courage by taking a new reality for himself, O. Kolodub desperately had to decide his further professional development. Thus he had many-sided creative personality and inextricably bound his life with opera, the next logical step in his creative work was opera stage direction.

Thus, since 1933 O. Kolodub starts working as director at Kiev Opera and Ballet at the position of a stage director under supervision of V. Manziy (as assistant and advisor). Significant "impact on the formation of O. Kolodub as a director also had J. Lapytsky and more M. Smolych who also worked at Kiev Opera House" [3, p. 9]. His first independent director's staging was comic opera "Camorra" by Italian

composer Eugenio Esposito that received great success in Kiev audience. Total in theater Oleksandr made about thirty productions, including masterpieces of world opera "Faust" by Ch. Gounod, "Tosca" and "Madama Butterfly" by G. Puccini "Mermaid" by O. Dargomyzhsky, "Prince Igor" by O. Borodin, "Aleko" by S. Rachmaninov and others. Overall, artistic heritage of Kolodub contained more than 40 productions on the Opera stage, Opera Studio and amateur stages that always were depicted by high artistic level. Also among his works there were a large number of individual acts and certain scenes from operas at opera class of the Conservatory.

Oleksandr was lucky to work on the same stage with some outstanding actors, outstanding representatives of Ukrainian opera for more than two decades, first as a soloist and later as an opera stage director. Those were famous names that enriched Ukrainian music art by their creative work. Namely, it was – Maria Ivanivna Lytvynenko-Volgemut, Mykhailo Ivanovych Donets, Oksana Andriivna Petrusenko, Ivan Sergiiovych Patorzhynsky, Zoe Mykhailivna Gaidai, Yuriy Stepanovych Kyporenko-Damanski, Mykola Gavrylovych Zubarev. According to Kolodub "<...> their art was due to their high standards to their own skills to the professional armament, artistic technique and stage expression. <...> We know that each opera work, his musical drama is revealed through a central figure – through the actor-singer, his vocal and performing arts and the power of influence which acts directly on the perception of the listener. Vocal in opera is associated with the word and the word – with music. Speaking in drama theater or singing in opera means to act. The effectiveness of music is in a a word or of a word in music – is the basis of operatic art. This art of expressive speech in the opera perfectly possessed our best actors of the opera <...> and it was possible that a powerful force of inspiration and meaningful words in singing was that main principal that so highly elevated their performing arts" [8].

Simultaneously with the work in the theater there began very active and fruitful educational work of Oleksandr Kolodub at Kiev Conservatory as a teacher-stage directed of the opera class. Dozens of his students became theater performing artists Ukrainian theatres, as well as many theaters of the Soviet Union. Among them there

were folk and honored artists that passed highly theatrical training by Professor O. Kolodub: L. Rudenko, D. Hnatiuk, P. Karmaliuk, L. Lobanov, N. Goncharenko, E. Chervoniuk, I. Maslennikova, G. Stanislavova, P. Razumova, A. Demska, E. Tomm, E. Kolesnik, D. Petrynenko, M. Kondratiuk, A. Zhyla, V. Matveev, G. Sholina, A. Kykot, K. Radchenko, A. Shestakova, M. Mishchenko, A. Levitsky and many others.

Andrew Yakovych Shtogarenko (1954-1968) a composer, teacher, rector of Kiev Conservatory was good at describing the teaching career of Alexander Kolodub: "Associate professor of Opera Department Oleksandr Oleksandrovych Kolodub, who worked as a professor since 1953 (Order of the Ministry of Culture of the USSR №88), was a skillful specialist in the field of education of opera personnel. O.O. Kolodub possessed wide stage, stage directorial and pedagogical experience. His pedagogic work was differentiated by high competence, hard work and was popular with students. In 1960, Kiev musical audience celebrated Kolodub's sixtieth anniversary and forty years of his creative, educational and public work. A large number of students vocalists who passed scenic training by O.O. Kolodub now worked in opera houses in many cities of the Soviet Union. As an opera singer O. Kolodub once created a number of major opera roles of lyrical plan (Lenskiy, Guidon, Vladimir Igorevich, Indian guest, Faust, Almaviva, a number of parties of the Soviet repertoire and many others). As a director, O.O. Kolodub carried out a number of interesting productions in Kiev State Opera and Ballet Theater the Order of Lenin, at the Opera Studio of the Conservatory, in the Opera and Amateur Studios in Kiev. In the field of scientific and methodical work of the department O.O. Kolodub takes an active part among many stage directors' exhibitions; highlighted the significance of such of his works as "The creative principles of the opera performance organization", "External Role Distinctness" and so on. O.O. Kolodub also serves as a reviewer of the periodical press, O.O. Kolodub devoted much effort to the Conservatory, being a long time a dean of Vocal Department and Deputy Head of Opera Department. <...> O.O. Kolodub was awarded with three medals. All the above is confirmed by the relevant documents attached, reviews, programs, posters and information in the book of M. Stefanovich "Kyiv Opera and Ballet Theatre" and

partly in the book by G. Bernard "Dictionary of the operas" [2, pp. 8-9].

In turn, rector of the Kiev Conservatory, Professor K.N. Mykhailov stressed that "higher musical and vocal education is the great stage experience, talent of artist-painter – all that contribute to the nomination of O.O. Kolodub to the ranks of first-class opera directors and teachers of opera and stage art "[3, p. 19].

Among the productions made by O. Kolodub on stage of opera studio there were well-known operas: J. Puccini "Cio-Cio-San", M. Lysenko "Natalka-Poltavka", Rachmaninov "Aleko", P. Tchaikovsky "Iolanta" and "Eugene Onegin", M. Arkas "Catherine", A. Dargomyzhsky "Mermaid", Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov "Vira Sheloha" and "The Tsar's Bride", V. Kyreyko "Forest Song", Ch. Gounod's "Faust", M. Verykivsky "Maid". All of them were united by troublesome work of creative tandem of a director with the artist and conductor of the unity of stage performances, music, vocal embodiment and decoration. After all, the coordinated work of artists is in direct proportion as the ultimate goal that influence the success of the performance among the audience. And since some of his works as stage director O.O. Kolodub acted also as a graphic designer, that also describes him as a talented scene-designer, those productions were distinguished by creative idea of flawless clarity combined with artistic simplicity and sincerity in the reflection of composer's intention.

Oleksandr Kolodub himself having wide experience in implementing his stage production ideas, was convinced that the "initiators of creative ideas and performances were a conductor, stage director and a n artist. They determined the overall creative atmosphere in the team and the overall in his work. They should awaken in performers imagination, creativity, search for internal and external distinctiveness in individual roles and in the whole performance. On director's cooperation depends what will be the embodiment of artistic and creative tasks facing the troupe and technical workshops "[4, p. 104]. An important emphasis of Oleksandr Kolodub making and staging specific stages: "<...> directors should conduct extensive preparatory work before proceeding to the rehearsal period. They need to think deeply and explore music and drama to the author, script, libretto, which was created by the music of the opera, define the images of melodic work, they identify

nodal stages of development actions, carefully analyze the vocal and orchestral texture that creates a musical image and its theatrical effectiveness and at the end properly disclose a conflict of Music and Dramatic scenic means, pinpoint its most important task, continuous action, experience of the logical development of the conflict, determine the necessary climax. <...> Pre-exposure study of director exposition should be done with the entire creative team and technical workshops. It should be remembered that each staging plan, whatever it was thoroughly thought out, always prior to its implementation "[4, p. 105-106]. All these principles are adhered by Oleksandr Kolodub cooperation over the performances with such well-known conductors as V. Piradov, V. Tolba, Ya. Karasik.

Referring to a production at the Opera Studio by O. Kolodub the opera by V. Kyreyk "Forest Song" according to drama extravaganza (fairy show) of Lesya Ukrainka, you can find out that the key to its success was exactly the right approach to the disclosure of composer's musical intention by scenic appropriate means. Stage director aims to comply with all of the above steps. These components of performance as decorative design, costumes, properties, sceneries, type of artists, make-up had to be subordinated to the general idea of the work not as an auxiliary element, not an end in itself but as organic components of the overall solution of the performance, which would help in revealing the inner content of the opera characters. About all these tasks O. Kolodub wrote in his scientific writings "Director's exposure of the Opera "Forest Song" by V. Kyreyk" and "creative principles of operatic performances." It states that "the theme of the opera is a tragedy of love, the idea is to fight for freedom of a person. Through action is the desire for happiness that is divided through various obstacles. Total culmination of this – Lukash's betrayal and Mavka's death. Ethics can be seen as the culmination of suffering of Lukash. "And as for the fairy tale side of the opera, it was implemented by means of realistic-equivalent plan.

Many positive responses the opera received in the press, one of which would like to be mentioned: "<...> The play by Kyiv Opera Studio was breathing with poetry inspirational, unique images of brilliant scores. In the stage director's judgment

of an experienced master of opera O. Kolodub, every picture, every mise en scene impressed us by its musicality, romantic sublime lyricism and emotion. In a modest studio performance there was not a hint of pretentious "props" in its high poetic dream came alive. New life was found on the opera stage by original literary heroes. As if from the pages of a dramatic poem descended a gentle and charming Nymph – D. Petrynenko and impulsive, fiery Perelesnyk – A. Mokrenko. Opera "Forest Song" was the decoration of studio repertoire at Kiev Conservatory" [12]. Opera has really been made at the proper high artistic level. It is also highly rated in Moscow 1965 All-Union Vocal Conference. All prepared performances of Kyiv Conservatory were a great success in the Moscow Kremlin Theater.

Many positive responses from reviewers also received performed on stage of Conservatory Studio Opera of M. Lysenko "Natalka Poltavka". Some of them we can single out: "The students met with familiar characters of immortal work. Successfully played her part of Natalka P. Stetsiuk. With great enthusiasm played T. Panasiuk (Terpelyha) and V. Bilotserkivsky (Petro). The character of Voznyi was created by soloist of Opera Studio S. Ivashchenko. The character of Vybornyi was performed by the artist O. Suslov. Inspiringly and truly the character of Mykola was played by the singer M. Poludennyi. Stage director O. Kolodub found many bright colors and new solutions in the production of classical opera. At a high artistic level held the symphonic orchestra playing at Opera Studio conductor, Honored Artist of the USSR Y. Karasyk "[6].

Silvestrov L. once wrote: "When you go to the Opera Studio of Kiev State Conservatory, then waiting for something new, interesting, and this time we were very pleased with the performance" Natalka-Poltavka "which was staged by opera studio. <...> An interesting interpretation of the play was made by the stage director of the play interim Professor of Conservatory O. Kolodub. Rejecting the traditional domestic or ethnographic techniques he went towards some conventions, keeping actuality of the presentation. <...> A real success of the performance was reached by professional accompaniment of the orchestra under the direction of Honoured Artist of the Republic Ya. Karasyk. Opera "Natalka - Poltavka" performed by students and

the artists of Conservatory Opera Studio gives true aesthetic pleasure. It is especially pleasant that at the stage appeared young people who will soon come to the big stage "[10].

As for the stage director's methods of O. Kolodub, the whole preparatory process was divided into stages. At first, after the presentation of the exhibition and director layouts, sketches of the planned opera, with all staff in a short period, discussed the general plan and exterior images of performances. Then followed the work of the soloists accompanist in the class on the study of parties and specifically set by the director and conductor of tasks. During this period, the soloist should also receive assistance from qualified conductor and director to move in the right direction towards finding the correct interpretation of his part, and has to learn how to properly allocate his vocal and emotional capabilities. The next step is to work with a conductor when he accepts operatic roles, then are followed by songs in which all bands, choirs are tested and opera in general. The next follows tour of stage director rehearsals (in the class, and then on the stage) with the conductor, which conducts its outreach director staging job using scenically-expressive means to achieve the final result. At this period rehearsals based on individual approach to the artists. Only then occur consolidated orchestral rehearsals that are transfer into general rehearsals during which fixed work on the opera entire team. Gently approaching the general rehearsal, after which performance has already accepted the leaders.

Regarding the methods of work with students O. Kolodub, they are accurately depicted by his students. Thus, B. Buimister stressed that "his work has its own peculiarities: when a student had difficulties in stage rehearsals with singing, he took his by the hand and led under the scheme of stage action and this facilitated the task of harmonious combination of singing and performance. O. Kolodub in class and during rehearsals tried to acquaint the student with the laws of stage movements, especially the spatial representations, given the perception of the audience "[1, p. 72]. In his turn A. Mokrenko stressed: "Man is soft and delicate as a stage director he demanded firmly adhere to the established staging even in details, with those formed by personal demonstration" [7, p. 51]. The method of personal demonstration,

Oleksandr Oleksiiiovych probably borrowed from Mykola Vasyliiovych Smolych. The latter, in the words of Kolodub, perfectly mastered this skill with ductility to match the style of the epoch, according to a specific product. Similar features between the directors was also preparatory process leading rehearsals and was associated with a thorough study of all the material, which concerned the literary framework, style and musical score features work. This complex process when thinking cherished idea of a holistic and perfect performance, with all its small details and stage consisted score all the work. So during staging there could not be even a hint that the main idea of the stage director Kolodub could be violated even by one of the performers. This was due to his confidence in his concept when staging opera performance.

In the daily work with their students the stage director tried with all known to him methods to ignite in his pupils desired artist creative fire that generated inspiration, emotion, imagination, will, without which there can be art. O. Kolodub emphasized the ability to work independently on the way, taught to understand the structure, content, ideas, essence of conflict in the works. He helped to achieve inner truth of life, native and foreign distinctiveness in their roles, images, and was opposed to both of these images tunes craft tools and all kinds of labels. Artist was held by the opinion that talent, vocal nature of the material, vocal school, the development of musical and performance skills, general culture – all that was only a tool for creativity. The essence of the creativity itself was the ability to use this arsenal of artistic means by the basic laws of the creative process for some artistic purpose. Some features inherent by O. Kolodub recalls his son Yu. Kolodub: "My father was a consistent realist painter in everything he did. Unjustified directorial tricks, all kinds of "modernizing" or mod pattern called "artificial things." And indeed, when my wife and I were celebrating my father's 80th anniversary and watched his staged opera "Aleko" by Rachmaninov, we noted, in addition to the excellent execution of performance, the absence of unreasonable behavior of actors or ridiculous mise en scene" [5, p. 49-50]. This is because the director could achieve coherence in combination of stage performance with musical scores, especially starting from the latter.

Thus, the example of Oleksandr Kolodub's skill as the stage director became known as opera performances on the stage of Opera Studio where actors lived a short but true life with all its ups and downs, with a rich palette of various different human emotions and experiences. Thus, most studio productions were indicative due to their considerable artistic level and the methods that were the basis of the work of the studio.

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