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NATIONAL PERFORMING TRADITION AS A BASIS OF OPERA CREATIVE WORK OF G. VERDI

The article under consideration deals with the national and performing sources, with the emphasis on issues of history and theory of vocal performance and vocal pedagogy as the basis of operatic poetry by G. Verdi. Verdi's musical drama appears as a result of the development of the opera of Italy in the nineteenth century, which justifies and forms a new performing school requiring additional professional qualities from the singers.

Keywords: opera, Verdi's musical drama, performing school, vocal pedagogy, performing style.

Appeal to the national-performing sources of opera poetic manner of G. Verdi makes it necessary to go beyond the limits of historical musicological works, turn to studies devoted to the problems of history, theory and methodology of vocal performance and vocal pedagogy [1; 4; 5; 6; 10]. The generalization of a number of provisions of these studies makes it possible to suggest the following series of statements, which is the key to the relevance and demand for the research line is under consideration in the article.

The formation of the national Italian vocal school, which is more closely connected with the bel canto's historical style, was preceded by a long developmental path that culminated in the occurrence of a new genre – an opera that absorbed all the best that has accumulated over the centuries in folk, church and secular musical art. The flexibility of the melody, the dynamic and rhythmic variety of folk songs (lament, tarantella, siciliana, lyric) anticipated the vocal basis of Italian academic singing. One can not ignore the phonetic characteristics of the Italian language, which are contributing to singing, with the invariability of the vowels sounding with respect to any neighboring consonants, with frequent doubling of the sonorous consonants, before which the vowels sound requires a high rise of palate, with no complex sound combinations, and articulation activity.

The opera of the end of the 18th century is experiencing a severe crisis, because it completely breaks with the realistic principles of Monteverdi, Cavalli, Cesti, loses its dramatic integrity, turns into a kind of contest of virtuoso singers-improvisers. The crisis also affected the performing arts: the semantic aspect, the expressiveness of the performance were pushed to the background; brilliant vocal technique becomes a goal in itself. The art of improvisation loses its artistic value. In the thirties of the 18th century, the comic elements included in operas develop into an independent genre called the opera buffa (comic). The first opera buffa was "The Servant-Mistress" Giovanni Battista Pergolesi, which was

originally an insert in opera-seria "Proud Prisoner". Before the performers of this genre new tasks were set: the simplicity and organicness of the stage behavior, the wide use of various expressive means, the skillful application of dynamic and timbre nuances, which convey the change in the feelings and moods of the characters. Opera buffa, above all, a lively and cheerful theatrical performance, where the stage action and character relationships are placed at the forefront. Nevertheless, they retain the most valuable element of the opera-seria – bright, extended and technically complex arias. The democratic character of the plot, the peculiarity of the interpretation of the parties of the actors, have brought to life new expressive means based on the organic nature of the stage behavior – facial expressions, gesture, that is, a whole complex of musical expressive means. There occur a cast of excellent comic artists, vocal-technical skill. By the end of the 18th century, the historical victory of the tenors over the castrate castes took place. In the opera seria and the buffa operas, the tenors performed minor roles – pageboys, shepherds, etc. At the premiere of Domenico Cimarosa's opera *The Secret Marriage* (1792), the tenor Giuseppe Viganoni sang with great success. Since that time men's parties began to be performed by tenors, and with the appearance of such masters as Andrea Nodzari, Giacomo. David, the castrati singers were ousted from the opera scene. Completion of the new performing style of the opera buffa takes place already in the 19th century and is connected with the name of Gioacchino Rossini.

The centers of vocal education in Italy in the 17th-18th centuries were conservatories (academies of music), which were closed educational institutions, in which singers from early childhood were brought up. Initially, conservatories were orphanages, where children were taught crafts. In the 17th century in the shelters was introduced teaching music, which subsequently took the main place in teaching and lasted for 8-10 years. Vocal education began from childhood, from six to seven years. The final formation of the singer ended about 17 years. The programs of the conservatories were unusually rich and presupposed the education of a well-educated musician who knew the basics of composition, several musical instruments capable of coping with vocal and technical difficulties, mastering the skills of teaching vocals. At the heart of the teaching of singing lay the empirical method: the method of display, imitation. Consequently, only a singer could be a singing teacher. However, the requirements to it were not limited to this. As a rule, a singing teacher was a man of wide erudition and great creative possibilities.

The first musical-dramatic works (*dramma per musica*) had a largely verbal character. Calm, relaxed vocal speech suggested the use of moderate volume, the absence of sharp dynamic changes; and the duration of the voice quality was not required (the vocal parts were limited to the octave range), the melodic constructions were short, and the intervals were narrow. Hence the use of speech breathing is quite natural. Later, in the period of the popularity of the operatic works of Monteverdi, Cavalli, Honor, Scarlatti, the widespread art of *filing* (as one of the defining expressive means), as well as the need to sing lengthy musical phrases, required the organization of non-verbal and specific singing breathing. That's why P.F. Tosi advises to pump air into lungs more than usual, taking care at the same time that the breast does not get tired. He also warns about the need for an economic distribution of the amount of air that has been pumped into lungs. And Mancini not only recommends to easily recruit and save the recruited amount of air, but also to pay attention to the singing exhalation, which, in his opinion, depends on some essential qualities of the voice. Mancini already gives more detailed advice, speaking about the need to save breathing with such savings, to accustom the apparatus to regulate, moderate and restrain the voice. For the first time, the concept of "art of breathing" appears. By *filing*, according to the author, you can not proceed before mastered the art of preserving, delaying and enhancing breathing. Heinrich Ferdinand Manstein sums up the development of the pedagogical thought about the nature of singing breathing and gives an exhaustive formulation: breathing should be organized in such a way that the chest is moved (during inspiration it expands and rises, during the flash expiration it returns to its original position). Emphasizing the need for a special training, Manstein gives practical advice: to use every pause for air intake, to keep a large amount of it before a long musical phrase or passage etc. Outlining the specificity of singing breathing, Manstein calls it "trick in singing" [1].

In the middle of the 19th century in the operatic art of Italy is put forward the powerful figure of Giuseppe Verdi. He left 26 operas to the world, of which the first "Oberto Graf di San Bonifaccio" was created by the 25-year-old composer, and the last – "Falstaff" – the famous 80-year-old master. All of his operas were staged at Milan's Scala Theater. In the work of Verdi, the achievements of his predecessors are focused. He created in the period of a powerful revolutionary upsurge, and his works reflected the patriotic mood of the Italian people, the desire for independence, and therefore the people called Verdi the Maestro of the Italian Revolution. The composer puts high demands on the libretto, considering necessary

contrast comparisons, alternating low and lofty, heroic and trivial. His work is distinguished by Shakespearean approach to the treatment of the plot, the basis of which must be the truth of life. Hence the setting: the opera is inconceivable without conflicting contradictions, without sharply pointed antitheses, the tension of passions that would engender a musical dynamic action. Verdi always takes responsibility not only for the music, but also for the plot, the libretto, the stage decision and the design. To create a musical drama, it is necessary to find a synthesis of music, words, scenic incarnations, to achieve a comprehensive emotional and intellectual impact on the listener. Verdi puts forward new serious demands for opera singers. So, in search of the singer for the role of Lady Macbeth Verdi rejected the proposal of the Directorate to invite Eugenia Tadolini to this role, because he believed that Lady Macbeth should be with a devilish voice and devilish appearance, and not an angel with an angelic voice. [7]

The main factor in the opera G. Verdi considers the melody, which shall be connected with the dramatic truth, with a deep penetration into the nature of the character [11]. From this perspective, he criticizes his predecessors, in particular Rossini, saying that melodies are not made from gamuts, trills and gruppetto. In Verdi's works coloratura and complex passages are practically absent, the vocal parts require more rich sound, a good sound message. The upper portion of the male voice range is greatly expanded, the culmination is carried upward, and the operatic drama completely excludes the light falsetto sound, replaced by the so-called covert sound. A contrast comparison of situations, a change in psychological states, naturally leads to a wide use of dynamic nuances. High tessitura baritone parties, justified by the need to convey a greater degree of emotional strain, psychological tension, forcing the singers to find appropriate devices in the work of the voice apparatus. It's no coincidence there is a new classification – "Verdi's baritone". This type of voice Verdi entrusts heroic parties. The first singer of this type was J. Ronconi – the performer of Nebuchadnezzar in the opera of the same name. One of the features of Verdi's arias is the inclusion of recitative declamatory elements in the cantilena line. This dramatizes the aria and complicates the vocalist's task, who is required a flexible transition from one manner of vocalization to another [2]. As professionalism grew, Verdi became more and more demanding about the scenic embodiment of his operas. Creation of a musical drama, a change in the nature of the vocal parts, caused active intervention of the composer in the work of the actors over the artistic image. The first rehearsals, in which Verdi was the

conductor, director and teacher, caused a negative reaction from the artists. The artists proved the impossibility of performing vocal parts, their unacceptable complexity, which violates the naturalness of singing. It is widely known that the famous tenor singer Francesco Tamagno, who had a huge voice and a range of voices with especially bright high notes, could not succeed in Othello's final scene, and Verdi began to show how it should be done. And when the old maestro fell near the bed of the dead Desdemona and rolled off the platform on which it was installed, the audience present at the rehearsal stood motionless: everyone was sure that the maestro could not stand the enormous emotional strain. A sigh of relief escaped the listeners when Verdi rose and calmly said that this is how he imagines the scene of Othello's death [9].

Thus, Verdi's musical drama, as a result of the development of the operatic art of Italy of the 19th century, brought to life a new performing school, demanded from the singers additional professional qualities: a combination of vocal and acting skills, a wide pitch range, the smoothness and uniformity of the voice, the creation of a mixed register and covering the upper portion of the range of the male voice [2].

Thus, the change in the performing style, the new tasks facing singers performing vocal parts in the operas of G. Rossini, V. Bellini, G. Donizetti and G. Verdi, led to a significant correction of the vocal performance. The old educational methodology could not provide the necessary professional qualities of the singers of the 19th century. Accumulation of performing experience allowed to form a new pedagogical technique. At the same time, Francesco Lamperti – the largest teacher who brought up a brilliant cast of singers, was never a professional singer. A musician of wide profile (organist, director of the opera house), he became famous as a vocal teacher, since 1850 working as a singing professor at the Milan Conservatory. Lamperti left a number of theoretical works: "Theoretical and practical guidance for the study of singing", "The first vocal lessons" and the expanded work, translated in 1892 into Russian, "The Art of Singing" [2; 4].

Thus, by the end of the 19th century, the notion of opera as an integral phenomenon, organically combining vocal and acting skills, is being formed. Therefore, Verdi's drama, which reached the heights of vocal-dramatic expressiveness, required the singers to have a different attitude to the opera text, including the greater tension of the vocal apparatus, the greater saturation, power, and color of the sound, especially in the upper register, which was the main load in the climax moments not only in the aria, but also in recitative (which caused

particular dissatisfaction among lovers of a smooth, flowing melody), required energy, expressive recitation, impetuosity, temperament [2; 9]. This trend was further strengthened with the emergence of a new stylistic trend, called "verism" (from Italian "vero" - truth, veritas), whose spiritual father was Emile Zola. There were young composers, whose work influenced the performing style. The famous writer – the head of the Italian faith Giovanni Verga had a decisive influence on the development of the operatic art of his country. In place of historical subjects and heroes of great universal importance comes a man from the people, but endowed with strong feelings and passions. Instead of grandiose performances a one-act opera novel is born. In 1899, in Milan there was announced a contest for the best one-act opera. The first prize was given to P. Mascagni for the opera "Rural Honor". In 1892, at the Dal Verme Theater in Milan, the premiere of the second pianist opera "The Pagliacci" by R. Leoncavallo was held.

Great success was enjoyed by the first performer of the party of Santuzza, Jema Bellinchoni. In the historical records of vocal performance, the names of the tenors Roberto Stagno (the first Turido) and Giuseppe Borgatti – the interpreters of the creativity of composer Verasci Mascagni, Leoncavallo, Cilea, Giordano – are inscribed in the annals of the history of vocal performance. A special page in the history of opera art belongs to the work of Giacomo Puccini – a composer who created his own brightly written handwriting, which differs in many respects from that of his contemporaries. His work has had a significant impact on the development of operatic composing and performing art of the twentieth century. The operas of G. Puccini attracted the leading performers not only in Italy, but also in other countries. They were impressed by the melodic generosity, deep musical and psychological characteristics of the characters, the opportunity to demonstrate their vocal skills, and most importantly, through artistic intonation and acting skills, create convincing images of the opera heroes.

The creativity of talented performers softened veristic strain and contributed to the formation of the "verdi- veristic" style. Enrico Caruso became a vivid representative of the new verdi- veristic performing style. The peak of his art was the role of Canio ("Pagliacci"). The combination of an unusually powerful voice, captivating timbre, truth of emotion, impetuosity and tenderness made Caruso's performance unique. Contemporaries of Caruso noted his amazing ability to change the timbre, depending on the nature of the vocal part.

One of the best singers of verdi- veristic direction was also Titta Ruffo – the possessor of a rare voice of the widest range, strength and exceptional beauty of timbre. Contemporaries noted his ability to use various colors that made his voice soft and velvety, then sharp and metallic (ringing, cold). The repertoire of the famous dramatic baritone included more than sixty works. The most favourite were the parties in the operas of Verdi and veristic composers. More than thirty works performed by Titta Ruffo are recorded on discs and give an opportunity to fully appreciate the art of a remarkable singer.

Discussion of the prerequisites for the formation of national features of Verdi's operatic style will remain incomplete unless one compares his creative method with certain principles of R. Wagner's work. As it is known, Richard Wagner and Giuseppe Verdi are coevals – were born in one year (1813), and both of them became the national pride of their countries: Wagner – Germany, Verdi – Italy. Thus that is why their creative attitudes are fundamentally different. Certainly, these two great composers have similarities: both went down in history as opera reformers, although Verdi, strangely enough, to a lesser degree. Such polarity of masters begins with the difference of their worldviews, socio-aesthetic and artistic ideals [3].

The era that gave birth to Verdi - the era of national wars and bourgeois revolutions, the era of the national liberation movement in Italy for independence and political freedom. Verdi took part in this struggle as an artist of the tribunes and the singer of his people, the herald of his feelings and aspirations. And struggling for the freedom of his art, for his vitality, truthfulness and simplicity, Verdi drew strength from the folk source, from the Italian song and turned into a true national artist, who glorified himself and his country. Hence the most important feature of Verdi's style as democracy.

In the sixties, Verdi became acquainted with the principles of Wagner's operatic reform and with his work. He believes that Italian composers do not give anything artistically significant, that the most talented of them, like Boito, show an interest in "harmful" influences. Verdi feels himself the one and most responsible of the composers responsible for the future of the Italian national opera. The sixties are the years of the composer's persistent preparation for the struggle, his arming with the latest achievements of musical and dramatic technique. "Aida" and "Othello" are the result of this preparation. In connection with the general ideological evolution of Verdi, the composer's interest in exposing the evil of life increased: it was associated with the priests in Aida, the Inquisition

in "Don Carlos", and Iago in Othello. The forces of evil and cruelty of Verdi show typical for themselves means: a single-voiced melody, devoid of accompaniment, moves with measured, rectilinear steps, often unison, sometimes develops canonically, producing the impression of inexorably approaching strength (Chorus of Priests).

Verdi's earliest reformatory opera was Don Carlos. It prepares all its subsequent work, being completed by a psychological drama. Verdi no longer divides opera into numbers, giving it, like Wagner, a cross-cutting development. Continues the reformation of Verdi's opera "Aida". Here the composer already widely uses the leitmotifs, but does not impregnate them with all the musical material, but uses them as characteristics of the characters that sound during the appearance or meaning of the image they are referring to [8].

One of all European composers, only Verdi was able, based on the strong foundations of the classical national musical and dramatic culture, to oppose something real and positive to the reform of Wagner. Verdi, also, creates an opera through development, but retains the number as the backbone of dramaturgy: it has an open form and does not terminate the action, which was completely transformed in "Aida". In this opera, Verdi combined the best features of the three opera schools, while preserving its national basis. In "Othello" Verdi found an ideal relationship between the recitative-declamatory and the song-arias beginning. Therefore, the transitions from recitative to arioso forms are so limited in the opera. Thus the melodic generosity of Verdi has not dried up, he is faithful to the folk song origins. In later Verdi's operas, as Wagner, abandons the overture and uses the orchestral introduction. Thus, Wagner has such a conflicting performance which represents one image, as in the introduction to "The Ring", while Verdi, if we take "Aida", is a contrast between the leitmotif of Aida and the theme of the priests, who then merge in counterpoint. Wagner completely rejected the choirs, Verdi did not refuse the choirs and widely used them in the same "Aida", which does not object his interest in the ensemble, for example, to the septet in "Othello", or to a free monologue form akin to Wagner's declamatory constructions (Aida, Iago).

Wagner's harmony reached the peak of its development in "Tristan and Isolde", but the idea of veiling (avoidance) of the tonic has already manifested itself in the "Lohengrin". According to Wagner, tonal stability stops, breaks music – hence the Wagner's "infinite" melody. Verdi for a long time could not abandon the T-S-D relationship of squareness and periodicity. Thus in the late period of creativity, his harmonic language became noticeably

more flexible and bright, tonal movement – more diverse. So, in "Aida" Verdi sensitively creates the characteristic modal features of oriental music, using the lowered II and VI stages (the prayer of the Great priestess). Coloring is also created by means of timbre expressiveness: in the picture of the night on the banks of the Nile (the beginning of Act III), Verdi uses flutes with mute fiddle, pizzicato alto and cello flageolets. Becoming more colorful and diverse, since the 50's, the Verdi Orchestra has not lost its individual qualities: luscious and strong sounding, "pure" timbres, bright contrasts of groups, bright and transparent color, powerful dynamics.

Thus, Verdi's creativity follows its own path, but it also partially leads to Wagner's ideas that are related to Wagner, which can be considered the general dictates of time and an expression of the general genre and historical trend in the evolution of operatic poetics. The peculiarity of Verdi's operatic method, conditioned by his aesthetic positions, but directly manifested at the level of musical drama, is defined precisely as national – in the context of the specific properties of Italian Romanticism.

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