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GENRE-THEMATIC FOUNDATIONS OF THE ITALIAN OPERA: FROM HISTORICAL ORIGINS TO VOCAL PERFORMING AUTONOMY

The purpose to discover the genre and thematic foundations of the formation of the Italian opera school as a semantic and technological unity of composing and vocal-performing achievements, which gave the Italian opera a leading place in the European operatic culture. *The methodology* is to combine historical-cultural and genre-aesthetic approaches, which are projected into the sphere of performing-stylistic assessments. *The scientific novelty* is due to the projection of a genre-aesthetic approach to the field of operatic vocal performance, is caused by identification at the Italian school of opera singing of the basic technological and art principles for creation of an opera system of images which gaining international value and distribution. *The conclusions* it is possible to prove that thanks to the unity and literal consistency of the theatrical, thematic and vocal-performing content, reflected in the general composition of the work, the Italian opera remains the encyclopedia of operatic skill, which determines the unity of the composer's and singing schools.

Keywords: Italian opera, genre and thematic principles, plot, vocal-performing stylistics, European opera culture, anthroposcopy, heroism, the theme of love.

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Жанрово-тематичні засади італійської опери: від історичних витоків до вокально-виконавської автономії

Мета статті – виявити жанрово-тематичні засади формування італійської оперної школи як семантичної та технологічної єдності композиторських і вокально-виконавських досягнень, що забезпечила італійській опері провідне місце в європейській оперній культурі. *Методологія роботи* полягає у поєднанні історико-культурологічного та жанрово-естетичного підходів, що проектується у сферу виконавсько-стилістичних оцінок. *Наукова новизна* зумовлена проекцією жанрово-естетичного підходу до сфери оперного вокального виконавства, виявленням в італійській школі оперного співу засадничих для створення оперної системи образів технологічних й художніх принципів, що набувають міжнародного значення й розповсюдження. *Висновки* дозволяють засвідчувати, що завдяки єдності та буквальній співзвучності сюжетно-тематичного та вокально-виконавського змісту, віддзеркаленого у загальній композиції твору, італійська опера донині залишається енциклопедією оперної майстерності, зумовлюючої єдність композиторської та співацької шкіл.

Ключові слова: італійська опера, жанрово-тематичні засади, сюжет, вокально-виконавська стилістика, європейська оперна культура, антропософійність, героїзація, тема кохання.

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Жанрово-тематические основы итальянской оперы от исторических истоков до вокально-исполнительской автономии

Цель статьи – выявить жанрово-тематические основы формирования итальянской оперной школы как семантического и технологического единства композиторских и вокально-исполнительских достижений, обеспечившего итальянской опере ведущее место в европейской

оперной культуре. **Методология** работы заключается в соединении историко-культурологического и жанрово-эстетического подходов, проектируемых в сферу исполнительско-стилистических оценок. **Научная новизна** обусловлена проекцией жанрово-эстетического подхода в сферу оперного вокального исполнительства, выявлением в итальянской школе оперного пения основных для создания оперной системы образов технологических и художественных принципов, приобретающих межнациональное значение и распространение. **Выводы** позволяют удостоверять, что благодаря единству и буквальной созвучности сюжетно-тематического и вокально-исполнительского содержания, отраженного в общей композиции произведения, итальянская опера по сей день остается энциклопедией оперного мастерства, обуславливающей единство композиторской и певческой школы.

Ключевые слова: итальянская опера, жанрово-тематические основы, сюжет, вокально-исполнительская стилистика, европейская оперная культура, антропософийность, героизация, тема любви.

The relevance of the topic and content vectors of the article is explained by the fact that Italian opera is a special cultural, historical, artistic and semantic phenomenon, which defined the creative foundations, social purpose not only of European but also world opera art, contributed to the formation of a separate musical and stylistic way, that is, singling out operatic language as a specific musical and semiotic formation that meets the needs of the humanitarian community throughout its problematic breadth. It can even be said that the Italian opera opened a specific and musical internal language of the European man, who was confronted with a complex systematic arrangement of two worlds at once: the external environment and his own psychological. Moreover, those contradictions and problems that arise as a result of the interaction of these cognitive-value systems of culture, are resolved by artistic and aesthetic means, are smoothed and harmonized, they open up a new beauty of overcoming the existential obstacles of human being.

The aim of the article is to reveal the genre-thematic foundations of the Italian Opera School formation as *a semantic and technological unity* of composer and vocal-performance achievements, which has provided the Italian opera a leading place in the European opera culture.

The main content. The topics and plots of opera art discovered on the territory of the Italian Opera School are not just about borrowing mythological figurative structures; they are genre marks of everyday human experience, so they tend to be universalized and easily translated from one national school to another, and in all cases of genre design and reconstruction, the primary initiatives are derived from the experience of the Italian school itself. By the end of the XIX century, the genre-style priorities of Italian opera were undoubted and universally recognized [8; 9].

The first completed genres of operatic genre patterns emerge in the Baroque period because the musical aesthetics and poetics of this era are focused on the issues of human individuality, seeking to reveal the personal traits of the human character and their typical features; the ways of typologizing a newly discovered experience of one's personal life and experience are laid in art, artistic and poetic ways. The operatic thinking of K. Monteverdi, who wrote his first opera "Orpheus" in 1607, based on the rhetorical language of the Madrigals, and the last - "Coronation of Poppei" - in 1642, is based on a new, stylistically expressed and decorated interest in the human personality is entirely the author's rhetorical music-themed figures.

The spread of the opera genre in other European countries took place as a means of direct borrowing-transplantation (and it lasted until the middle of the XVIII century, for example in Russian music), and with efforts to discover new, specific and national aspects of the genre content of opera art. Actually, in France there was Jean Battiste Lully, by the way, an Italian by birth, who relied on the principles of classicist tragedy reclamation, deepening the intonational foundations of solo operatic melos, also enhanced the spectacular side of the play, its scenographic brightness and storyline.

But did Lully really create a national French opera language? This question remains open, as the texts of the "great" French opera are dominated by musical lexemes that have arisen in the backbone of the Italian opera series, a genre variety that justly deserves to be defined as an encyclopedia of musical operatic vocabulary, a meta-historical focus of musical-verbal poetry.

Following the rhetorical Italian opera techniques, an English opera was formed, from G. Purcell to G. F. Handel, from the Royal Mask Theater to the "Opera of the Poor". Significant is the fact that during the life of the composer G. Handel his operas did not receive a well-deserved artistic evaluation precisely because they developed the genre principles of Italian opera art, even against the will of the author, as it was not only difficult, but also fundamentally impossible and wrong to completely depart from them, in terms of artistic attributes of the opera genre form.

What are the main features of Italian opera as a generalized genre phenomenon, which is gradually increasing its artistic and systemic potential, can be distinguished as constructively and semantically the most significant?

The first such feature is *anthroposophy* - bringing to the center of the composition of *the image of man as intelligent being*, which is able not only to comprehend the laws of nature, but also to direct them in the necessary humanistic direction, to transform the world on effective moral principles, that is, to act as a truly positive progress not only of human, but of all natural life. Moreover, human personal qualities determine all other circles of the content of the opera, that is, the main criteria for all events and actions reflected in the opera composition.

Throughout its historical development, the opera will not deviate from this fundamental principle, the task of displaying the intimate-psychological human qualities as those that determine the most important virtues of man and the human community. This is how the ethical collectivism and aesthetic humanism of operatic poetics, derived from the semantics of Italian operative studies, are approved.

From this fundamental semantic trait of the opera genre, two of the following branch out: *heroisation of the opera character*, affirmation of the nomination of the opera hero for all the leading characters of the opera: the promotion of a topic of love that crosses through all subspecies of the opera to the low-profile comic. The combination of heroic figurative tone with transformations of the theme of love causes a special operatic poetry, defined as the objective basis of the genre, which is approved and developed individually by the author.

Thus, George Frederic Handel creates the finest operatic works, combining the baroque ideals of heroics with the romantic interpretation of the topic of love, creates original semantic contamination of the aesthetic features of the opera image, turns the opera genre into a bridge between epochs, and this is the role of its author. Due to the deepening of the personal characteristics of the opera heroes, the composer greatly deepened the musical and dramatic language of the heroic and Italian opera series, enriched its vocal forms, musical recitation, orchestral means. Handel's special merit is the creation of an operatic type of oratorio and an oratorical variety of opera is the development of compositional interchange tendency of "large", most socialized genre forms.

Almost a contemporary composer of G. Handel, Christoph Willibald Gluck, creates his first operas in Italy, but in the future, even going the way of reforming the opera genre, he retains the classic features of the opera series, gradually tends to recognize the melodic stylistic advantages of the Italian opera-style successful expression of the general operatic idea.

On the whole, from the time of its origin to the beginning of the XIX century, opera was dominated by main genres set by the Italian school; the genre unity of the opera form goes beyond those stylistic differences that arise from the interpretation of genre conditions by composers from different national schools. The need for autonomy of the national composing school begins to dominate, as a necessary factor in the evolution of European musical consciousness, only until the beginning of the Romantic era. But it is always preserved, strongly linked to the development of the series opera form, the idea of operatic poetics as an encyclopedic, able to unite "all the circle of knowledge" about music at the moment of the historical being of culture.

The third significant plot and semantic factor in the evolution of the genre form of opera, coming from the Italian concept, is the construction of the action, a composite statement of the opera plot, which must acquire *the logic of intrigue*, that is, to present *the complex conflict conditions* of the initial presentation (exposition), and final resolutions expression of figurative-action twists and turns. The differentiation of the story zones leads to the separation of musical and lexical figures, a typology of musical and poetic rhetorical techniques, which contributes to the development of the broad and deep *bel canto* style. Based on the extension of the semantic dreams and functions of the *bel canto* stylistics, the Italian opera of the first half of the XIX century was dominated by three composers - D. Rossini, G. Donizetti and V. Bellini. All three were masters of a virtuoso vocal melody that required the art of special voice skills. Therefore, in their demonstration of the vocal capabilities of the performers, it rivals the intriguing development of the plot and the contrasts of the stage settings [3; 8].

Changes in social tastes played a role in the formation of operatic vocal styles. Sound extraction techniques, in particular vibrato technique, have been changing over the centuries. J. Perry (1561–1633), singer and author of the earliest, partially preserved, opera ("Daphne"), sang the so-called "white" voice - in a relatively flat, unchanged style, with little or no vibration, according to the interpretation of voice as a tool that was recognized as a professional requirement of the Renaissance - Baroque era. During the XVIII century, the cult of the virtuoso singer developed, first in Naples, then throughout Europe. At this time, the lead character in the opera was performed by a male soprano: castrato singers brought the range and mobility of their voices to the limits of the possible, and completely subdued the striking mastery of the composers whose music they performed. Leading singers became

real heroes - the main figures - of opera events, they focused on the meaning of opera productions, and some of them even composed the operas themselves and directed the opera companies. Only the revival of Italian vocal art allowed the festival opera life of the XX century to give new life to Rossini's diverse opera work. Moreover, the principles of vocal technique are preserved in almost intact form, because for the sake of artistic result, they must be used according to the primary creative canons. Yes, the singing style of the comic bass is almost unchanged, with its "simple" effects and accelerated speech rhetoric, which is extremely typified and constant in its figurative characteristics.

Despite the "lightness" and minimalism of the plot and events, psychological situations, to this day D. Pergolesi's opera buff "Maid-maid", which is perceived as a creative manifesto of a comic opera in various national-stylistic dimensions, has acquired the significance of pan-European operatic classics.

The national specification of the opera form is not limited to the initial period of Italian school history; an important period of its establishment and worldwide spread is the second half of the romantic age, when individual-style composer installations begin to prevail and, in accordance with them, new individualized forms and manners of singing appear. Not only the German "heroic tenor" testifies to the new requirements for vocal-timbre singing culture; J. Verdi's mature works and the operas of his followers require "strong" (di forza) tenors and energetic dramatic (spinto) sopranos, and the content and semantic setting of a romantic opera sometimes give rise to such vocal and performance interpretations that go against the composer.

It is necessary to remind that vocal training centers in Italy of the XVII and XVIII centuries were conservatories, which were closed educational institutions that brought up singers from early childhood and about 17 years. Conservatory programs differed in extreme saturation and involved the education of a broadly educated musician who possesses the basics of composition, several musical instruments capable of coping with the vocal and technical difficulties of opera singing and its teaching. The teaching of singing was based on an empirical method: a method of showing, imitation, so only a singer could be a teacher of singing. However, the requirements for it were not limited. Typically, the singing teacher was a man of broad erudition and great creative ability, and at the same time a specialist who knows the secrets of accurate sound pitch and free-flowing breathing as a companion to well-crafted "vocal language".

The calm, unstressed vocal language implied the use of moderate volume, the absence of sharp dynamic changes; the duration of the phoning was also not required (vocal parts are limited by the octave range), so it is quite natural to use ordinary language breath. Later, during the period of popularity of the operas of Monteverdi, Cavalli, Honor, Scarlatti, widespread art of waxing, as well as the need to sing long musical phrases, the organization not of linguistic but specific singing breath was required. That is why P. F. Tozi advises to recruit more than usual, warns about the need for economical distribution of the collected air. And Mancini not only recommends easy gathering and saving the amount of air collected, but also to have a careful attitude to the singer's exhalation, which, in his opinion, depends on some essential qualities of voice [1]. The concept of "art of breathing" is being developed, which is equated with vocal skill and the knowledge of which allowed Rossini to create vocal parties that are comfortable for his voice and favorable for his development [1].

For the first time in the history of the opera, Rossini created vocal parts in which the individual character of the hero was laid down in a vocal-intonational performance form. Thus, in the "Barber of Seville" (libretto by C. Strebini on the famous play by P. Beaumarchais) the peculiarities of the melody of the Rossini party (the party written for the color-coded mezzo-soprano) testify to its playfulness, cunning and charm; the dynamism, swiftness, courageous vigor that characterize the Figaro party; creeping as a snake, the tune of Basilio provides the key to interpreting this image; in the Cavatina of the Almaviva the cantilen dominates, as a sign of the lyrical depth of the image. Creating operas in which color-coded moves occupy a significant place ("Italian in Algeria", "Cinderella", "Semiramis", "Magpie-Thief"), although, at the same time, Rossini protests against the improvisational arbitrariness of the performers.

The heyday of Italian opera in the first half of the XIX century is also associated with the names of two striking composers - Vincenzo Bellini and Gaetano Donizetti. Bellini's work is distinguished by expressive melos, which summarize the most revealing features of "fine" opera singing [3]; temperamental and dynamic, spectacular virtuosity inherent in Donizetti's style, the author of more than 70 operas containing complex virtuoso passages. The development of the opera style of this period implies the formation of an opera school, represented by the names of Isabella Angela Kolbran (color soprano, tragic actress of great temperament); Theresa George-Bellock (soprano, heroic parties); Giuseppe Benísis and Claudio de Ronzi (owners of a bright comedy gift); Luigi Zamboni that is the first Figaro in

the “Barber of Seville”, combining the beauty of voice with emotional, scenic and acting talent; Marietta Alboni - Rossini's student; the Grisi sisters are Judo's mezzo-soprano and Julia's soprano - the first Romeo and Juliet in Bellini's opera “Capuletti and Montecchi”. Judith Pasta and Giovanni Battista Rubini became the brightest representatives of the new performing style. These vocalists have differently solved the task before them: Pasta, using means of expressiveness, Rubini using voice capabilities, change of tone and dynamics [3; 7; 9].

An exception to the development of the virtuosic vocal side of the opera genre as defining is written in Paris and staged in 1829 by the opera "William Tell" by J. Verdi, in which the basis of musical dramaturgy of the opera are large stage, in which the major place is occupied by choirs and ensembles, and the main opera hero has no arias. His only solo number is a small arioso at the end of the opera. The main melodic thesaurus is embedded in the love-lyrical parties of Matilda and Arnold, which set the singers quite difficult tasks. In the Matilda aria, it is necessary to withstand the broad breath, the smooth nature of the sound that flows, the richness of artistic intonation. In the last act, in Arnold's cabalet with the choir, the singer meets with the task of forming the upper portion of the range of voice; there are not only tessitura difficulties associated with overall emotional tension (the hero summons armed insurgents to action), but also the need to use new techniques in maintaining high tessitura [13].

The works of J. Verdi summarize the achievements of all his predecessors in the development of genre varieties of Italian opera [2; 4; 6; 11; 12]. The composer puts increased demands on the libretto, considering the need for contrast juxtapositions, alternation of perfectly-heroic and realistic-everyday. His work is distinguished by the Shakespearean approach to the interpretation of the plot, the installation of conflicting contradictions, sharp antithesis, the strains of passions that give rise to musical dynamic action. Verdi always takes responsibility not only for music, but also for plot, libretto, stage decisions and design. To create a musical drama, according to the composer, it is necessary to find a synthesis of music, words, stage embodiment, to achieve a comprehensive emotional and intellectual impact on the listener. Therefore, Verdi puts forward new broad creative requirements for opera singers; thus, in his search for a singer for the role of Lady Macbeth, he rejected the proposal of the directorate to invite Eugene Tadolini to this role, believing that Lady

Macbeth should be with a devilish voice and a devilish appearance, but not an angel with an angelic voice [11].

The main factor in J. Verdi's opera is the melody, which must be associated with dramatic truth, with a deep insight into the nature of the character [14]. From this standpoint, he criticizes predecessors, in particular Rossini, saying that tunes do not go with screams, trills and gruppo. In Verdi's works, coloring and complex passages are virtually absent, and the vocal parts require a more intense sound, good sound link. The upper part of the male voice range is greatly expanded, the climax is carried upwards, and the operatic dramaturgy completely eliminates the light falsetto sound, replaced by the so-called covered sound. Contrasting situations, changing psychological states leads to widespread use of dynamic nuance. High tessitura of baritone parties, justified by the need to convey a higher degree of emotional incitement, psychological tension, forces the singers to find appropriate adaptations in the work of the voice apparatus. It is no coincidence that a new classification, the Verdi Baritone, appears, and he is entrusted with heroic parties by this type of voice. The first singer of this type was J. Roncona - the performer of Navuhodonosor in the eponymous opera.

One of the striking features of the Verdi arias is the inclusion of recitative recitation elements in the cantilever line. This dramatizes the aria and complicates the vocalist's task, which requires a flexible transition from one voice to another [5]. As Verdi's professionalism grew, he became increasingly demanding of performing his opera on stage. Creating a musical drama, changing the nature of the vocal parts caused the need for active interference of the composer in the work of actors in an artistic way. Thus, Verdi's musical drama, as a result of the development of opera art of XIX century, has brought to life a new performing school, demanded from the singers additional professional qualities: a combination of vocal and acting skills, a wide sound-altitude range, equality and homogeneity of sound change the upper region of the male voice range [5; 12].

The scientific novelty of this study is due to the projection of a genre-aesthetic approach to the sphere of operatic vocal performance, to the discovery in the Italian school of opera singing fundamental for the creation of an opera system of technological and artistic principles images that acquire ethnic significance and distribution.

Conclusions. Italian opera, which runs its main historical path from the Baroque period to the second half of the XIX century, expresses by means of vocal language, vocal

and performing style those figurative foundations, semantic directions of the genre that influence other national varieties of opera. Among them are the anthroposophical emphasis on thematic content and the kind of characterization of personalities, the intensification of the sensual intentions associated with the state of love - the topic of love, the development of its own plot logic, which requires enhanced contrast dramaturgy.

Due to the unity and literal *coherence* of the subject-thematic and vocal-performing content reflected in the overall composition of the work, the Italian opera still remains *the encyclopedia of operatic skill, which determines the unity of the composer and singing schools*.

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