

REVIEW

from

Prof. Dr. Dean Evgeniev Pavlov – Professor of "Opera Singing with a Conductor" – “Musical Theatre Department” at the Vocal Faculty and "Opera - Symphonic Conducting" - Department of “Conducting and Composition” at TCDF at the National Academy of Music “Prof Pancho Vladigerov”

of

The doctoral dissertation on “The specifics of comic belcanto in the opera "Don Pasquale" by Gaetano Donizetti. Theoretical and directing approaches ” by Assistant Professor STEFAN SVETOZAROV DONEV for awarding the scientific-educational degree“ Doctor ”- in the professional department“ Music and Dance ”8.3

Stefan Donev was born in Sofia. He graduated from the National Music School "Lyubomir Pipkov" with a degree in "trumpet" in 1989. He graduated from the Faculty of Philosophy at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" with a master's degree in Culturology from 1992 to 1997. 2002 - 2003 Master's degree in “Music and Stage Directing” at the Vocal Faculty at the National Academy of Music (Prof. Pancho Vladigerov ”. He has been an assistant professor since 2003 at the “Musical Theatre Department” - Vocal Faculty - teaches "acting for opera singers" and "musical - stage directing" Stefan Donev has had a number of productions in operas and musical theaters in the country: National Sofia Opera, Musical Theater "Stefan Makedonski", State Opera - Stara Zagora, Musical Theater "K. Kisimov - Veliko Tarnovo, State Opera - Ruse, State Opera - Varna, State Opera - Burgas and Training Opera Theater at the National Academy of Music "Pancho Vladigerov" - Sofia. Varna;

REPERTORY

-April 2002 – “**The Barber of Seville**”, J. Paizielo, UMT, on the stage of NMT "Stefan Makedonski", ASO;

-May 2003 - "**Women are like that**", W. A. Mozart, UMT, on the stage of NMT "Stefan Makedonski", ASO;

- June 2004 – “**Don Pasquale**”, G. Donizetti, UMT, on the stage of NMT "Stefan Makedonski", ASO;
- March 2005 - "**Patilantsi**", Al. Yosifov, State Opera, Stara Zagora;
- October 2005 - "**Alice**", Al. Yosifov, OFD Burgas;
- November 2005 - "**Patilantsi**", Al. Yosifov, NMT "Stefan Makedonski";
- December 2005 - "**Rita**", G. Donizetti, Chamber Stage in December 2000 - "Rita", G. Donizetti, UMT, on the stage of NMT Sofia Opera and Ballet;
- July 2006 - "**Norma**", V. Bellini, State Opera of Stara Zagora, on the stage of the Ancient Forum "Augusta Trayana";
- March 2007 - "**Winnie the Pooh**", Al. Yosifov, Stara Zagora State Opera;
- November 2007 - "**The Love of the Gods**", Al. Josifov,
-NMT "Stefan Makedonski";
- November 2008 - "**Winnie the Pooh**", Al. Yosifov, OFD Ruse
- December 2010 – “**The Four Twins**”, G. Kostov,
- Stara Zagora State Opera;
- April 2011 - "**The Magic Flute**", W.A. Mozart, UMT, on the stage of DMBC "Stefan Makedonski", ASO;
- April 2012 - "**The Wedding of Figaro**", WA Mozart, UMT, ASO
- May 2012 - "**The Four Twins**", G. Kostov, OFD Ruse;
- November 2012 - "**Bastien and Bastienne**", W.A. Mozart, Chamber Stage of Sofia Opera and Ballet;
- January 2014 - "**The Magic Flute**", W.A. Mozart, OFD Ruse;
- March 2014 - "**Monastery Troubles**" and "**The Woman with the Golden Hair**", G. Kostov, UMT, ASO; October 2016 "K. Kisimov" Veliko Tarnovo;
- January 2017 – “**Don Pasquale**”, G. Donizetti, Stara Zagora State Opera;
- May 2019 - "**The Four Twins**", G. Kostov, DMBC "Stefan Makedonski";
- October 2019 - "**Patilantsi**", Al. Yosifov, MDT "K. Kisimov" Veliko Tarnovo.
- March 2021 - "**The Princess of the Circus**", Imre Kalman, MDT "K. Kisimov" Veliko Tarnovo.
"**The Four Twins**" G. Kostov, MDT.

The candidate's dissertation consists of 347 pages, 321 of which - Introduction, Seven Chapters with subpoints, conclusion and 26 pages of contributions, bibliography and applications.

The subject of the research of the present dissertation is the Italian comic opera buffa in particular and one of its emblematic masterpieces - "Don Pasquale" - the work of Gaetano Donizetti. It is perceived as a work on the territory completing a very long and ambiguous genre development of the comic type of opera in the era of Romanticism on the one hand, and on the other it is perceived as a cornerstone work, which produces and sets a new creative standard, with which all the subsequent works further in development of the comic genre and of the opera form itself in general should conform as a standard.

The goals and objectives of the study are: a thorough multifaceted study of the opera Buffa "Don Pasquale" in the perspective of history of music, culture and belcanto style and in-depth presentation of its artistic innovation regarding purely compositional techniques, dramatic techniques and presentation of its aesthetic originality and innovation from a stage and musical-stylistic point of view in a parallel analysis of the musical comic in the aspect of the main aesthetic romantic theories of the comic from the first half of the twentieth century. By virtue of the specifics of the subject it relies on the elaboration of a relatively homogeneous view, based on its own interdisciplinary methodology, which equally combines elements of philosophical aesthetic critical observation directly related to the immediate musical theater elements and their general theatrical understanding and immediate directorial motivation.

Expected results - to discover something about the universal nature of the human spirit and how it always finds a way to renew and take new and unexpected paths and turn art and its masterpieces into a kind of inexhaustible "reservoirs" of deep inner knowledge, to find in them reasons for their own eternal struggle for meaning in a single harsh, cold and subject to chance and cruelty cosmic order.

IN CHAPTER ONE - The Romantic World and the Opera "Don Pasquale" chapter presents in parallel the main elements and content of the concept of romanticism in terms of culture, literature and music. Its etymology and general philosophical and general cultural content are explained as

the diachronic representation related to the derivation of the main aesthetic romantic components, which are found in the opera, as a kind of syncretic stage art.

CHAPTER TWO - "The Comic and its romantic transformations and its musical manifestation" the candidate defines the comic and presents its philosophical and theoretical justification in antiquity, the Middle Ages, Renaissance, Enlightenment and modernism. Its essential characteristics and aesthetic features have been traced. "Romantic irony" - a central concept in romantic philosophy with a multifaceted aesthetic manifestation. Theoretically substantiated by the brothers August and Friedrich Schlegel and their concept of total intellectual transformation, later adopted by the representatives of Jena Romanticism and originally reinterpreted by Jean Paul Richter. The subjective side of the comic stands out through the romantic irony. Contrary to the one-sided seriousness of the educated thinking, only the impulse of romantic irony is capable of exposing and demonstrating the truth about the impermanent ambiguous meaning of life. Therefore, it is easy to conclude that the romantic irony is both a high philosophical concept of the universe and the place of man in it and also a directly functionally oriented and productive artistic program.

THE COSMIC IN MUSIC - Stefan Donev traces in a diachronic plan how the comic manifests itself on the territory of the musical fabric, which and of what nature are the means for this in formal and substantive aspect and how it functions in different epochs and different genres in the Medieval, Renaissance, Baroque, Classical and Romantic eras for classical music. The statement to the fore - the most perfect manifestation of art and the most perfect art is music for the romantics. However, the musical-comic is created not so much by the search for new means of expression, but through new ways of operation and the application of already well-known and established "old" techniques and means of expression from other major aesthetic categories (the sublime, graceful, pathetic, tragic, heroic etc.). It is in this way of connecting, combining and contrasting transmission that the romantics differentiate the basic comic modifications such as smile, joke, fun, joke, humor, irony, grotesque, satire, parody, sarcasm and more.

CHAPTER THREE - "Specifics of the musical image" - serious attention is paid to the musical image, which is defined as a specific form of generalized reflection of a specific or more generalized part of life, form as a way of entering life through means and techniques of musical

art. The basis of any musical image is the specific musical theme that expresses and is generated by the musical idea-intention-invention. The building block of the musical language is precisely the musical image, through which the musical meaning itself is realized and the direct musical understanding is achieved, which is in fact the unique and recognizable creative handwriting.

In CHAPTER FOUR - The Masterpiece "Don Pasquale" - the candidate examines in detail the history, creative features, artistic specifics and musical nature of the opera. Dramatic, musical and stylistic analysis, which are presented in professional detail and with extreme precision.

CHAPTER FIVE - "Comic and Beauty" -. The ideal beauty in the aspect of the musical aesthetic appears not only as pure free abstractness, but also as a powerful and safe means for the acoustic experience to be as immediate as possible, ie. to be associated with the creation of a light, carefree and pleasant mood that expresses happiness. It is the theoretical equivalent of the German romantic concept of "*absolute beauty*" and expresses a similar philosophical and aesthetic content. The neobelcanto style is a celebration of absolute vocal beauty, but in its totality of operatic style, as Donizetti practically turned it into, beauty becomes an absolute requirement for all elements of the work, which should be coordinated in beauty. Stefan Donev finds the right path to the "belcanto" expression - by determining the way to do it: with the ability to make smooth transitions from sound to sound, the so-called technique - legato, with seamlessly clean intonation and production of clear, ringing vocals, beautiful and rich in timbres, colors and nuances of sound, with noticeable uniformity of voice in all registers, ease, spontaneity and naturalness of sound guidance, which guarantees the smoothness and absence of effort, flexibility and mobility of the voice, even in professional technical and virtuoso places when moving from one vocal part to another. Donizetti's innovation in the overall Belcanto style is the inner unity of the principle of ideal beauty on the one hand, and the generality and homogeneity of musical reception on the other - the immediate power of imagination and its adequate provision in formal and psychological aspects; the distinct desire for musical-dramatic consistency.

CHAPTER SIX - "Directing Approaches" is an analysis of the need for the figure of the "director", his role in staging a play and all kinds of production methods that exist: Archaeological -

conservative, radical-transposing, conditional-metaphorical and types of theater - of experience, of depiction, of craft. The different directorial approaches and styles in the twentieth century, as detailed and comprehensively divided into decades: 50s, 60s, 70s, 80s and 90s. As well as the XXI century -2000 - the first decade. With reasonable conclusions about the change and the characteristics of the styles changing depending on the multilayered accumulations of the various experiments in this direction.

CHAPTER SEVEN "Three possible directorial approaches to the opera" Don Pasquale "- historical, transposing, metaphorical. HISTORICAL - VALUE approach is expressed in this: to show the universal content of the authentic work of art, which is perceived as an independent axiological value, complete in itself, which does not need so much virtuoso interpretation as a delicate adequate understanding and explanation of features arisen in the context of the time of the creation of the work. In this case, the romantic buffa "Don Pasquale" is an iconic example of the comedy genre of early Italian musical romanticism, which builds on the rapid tradition of professional comedy masks not only in formal terms but also congenial in spirit. The comedy develops as a tangled intrigue with farcical elements and a series of misunderstandings and again the traditional "disguise" here - not of a woman in a man or vice versa, but of a girl in a novice. The finale is happily foretold the poor get rich as in the original comedy del arte. Careful compliance with the instructions for the era, time and place of action and stylistic consideration of all the details that follow. The style is the so-called artisan or bourgeois empire from the early nineteenth century. Men's clothing was influenced by military fashion and imposed by Napoleon, while women's fashion developed under the influence of his wife Josephine. The characters follow the fashionable colors of the first decade black, dark and a little lighter solid blue, reddish-brown and brown. The style is the so-called artisan or bourgeois empire from the early nineteenth century. Men's clothing was influenced by military fashion and imposed by Napoleon, THE TRANSPOSITIONAL APPROACH - represents - updating, searching for situational humor and comic effects with elements of wit, delicate farce, irony and satire. The effect of the comic comparison and the discrepancy between the expected and the actual is sought. Second plan: social

criticism of young narcissists who seek quick realization by all means, but are defeated by love and dignity.

THE METAPHORICAL APPROACH - The aim of this approach is to shed light on the romantic feeling of compassion and sympathy for the characters, who are charming and gifted with great kindness, despite the somewhat ridiculous situation to show people's temperaments and relationships. That is why the joy will be achieved by surprise and a happy ending, of course all gags will be born from the inappropriateness of the characters in the situations. The comic poeticization presupposes that the characters are close to the spectators, and therefore the metaphorical-symbolic in them will be emphasized not in everyday life. The point is to show people's temperaments and relationships.

From the selected and analyzed information in the work, the understanding of the essential historical significance of Italian comic opera for the European musical theater in general and the special role of comic belcanto in it, not only instrumentally as vocal technique, much broader as a stylistic and artistic concept, predetermining the inner aesthetic orientation of the composers and building the overall romantic aesthetic ideal. With its emergence and establishment as an independent opera genre in the eighteenth century and especially with the outstanding achievements of the comic belcanto of the first half of the nineteenth century in the face of the three great Gioachino Rossini, Vincenzo Bellini and not least Gaetano Donizetti, through whose activity the opera buffa genre plays a decisive role in the establishment in the opera of socially relevant themes of realistic nature, dotted with vivid images of the present, representatives of various social strata and close to the audience, unlike the serious opera, which still deals with mythological, heroic or historical plots. The comic in art embodies the longing for freedom and recognizes its primacy in the essence of the human, through it we recognize our passion, dignity and strength, as well as our mistakes, absurdity and stupidity, and so paradoxically express not so much our spiritual greatness as our inner freedom and a reluctance to confine ourselves to beings doomed to our shortcomings, but rather to strive for our development and perfection.

CONTRIBUTIONS - The study for the first time puts in philosophical-aesthetic and theoretical-scientific focus the concept of "comic belcanto", highlighting its artistic specifics and manifestations in the iconic opera Buffa "Don Pasquale" by Gaetano Donizetti.

- The very concept of "belcanto" is re-evaluated, which is beginning to be considered in a broader theoretical sense as a kind of stylistically constructive element, and not only as a vocal technique. It is clarified how the transition from its purely instrumental interpretation and scope to its broader general philosophical and aesthetic significance takes place in practice. Through its widespread use and application, it has become possible to scientifically explain a number of hidden internal trends, ideological movements and transformations in Italian comic opera of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and its traceable development in the twentieth century.

- Exposing the main theoretical-artistic and philosophical-aesthetic features of the "comic" as one of the central aesthetic categories; a more in-depth and multifaceted explanation of the manifestations of the comic in the fabric of tonal art and its artistic effects can also be recognized as an essential asset of the work.

- A contribution to the benefits of such a scientific examination can be found in the more careful, with a desire for completeness, analysis of the opera "Don Pasquale" in terms of its specific image, drama and musical structure.

- Theoretical and aesthetic development of possible directorial approaches, their structuring and subordination on a single principle and then visualization and illustrating with concrete project-production examples in relation to the opera buffa "Don Pasquale".

The following is an extremely rich and varied bibliography, consisting of 133 listed sources.

After everything I read, as a conductor who knows in detail the opera "Don Pasquale" by G. Donizetti, I think that the work is very interesting, detailed and contains useful information for all current and future directors decided to start work on the aforementioned opera. I am convinced

and recommend to the scientific jury to award the scientific-educational degree "Doctor" to Assistant Professor Stefan Donev.

15.05.2022

Professor Dr. DEYAN PAVLOV

Scientific approach and research method -

I Chapter

The Romantic World and the Opera Don Pasquale

Basic aesthetic characteristics of romantic music

Romanticism. General definition.

Periodization and main characteristics

I. Pre-Romanticism 1790 - 1800

II. Early Romanticism 1800 - 1830

III. Mature romanticism 1830 - 1850

IV. Late Romanticism 1850 - 1890

V. Postromanticism.

Transition between the two centuries. 1890 - 1915