

OPINION

of

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concerning
dissertation paper of Stefan Donev on the topic:

"Specifics of the comic Bel canto in the opera "Don Pasquale" by Gaetano Donizetti.
Theoretical and directorial techniques."

Scientific adviser Assoc. Prof. Petar Plamenov, PhD

The dissertation paper consists of 321 pages basic content. The separately presented bibliographic reference contains 135 titles, of which 32 are in Bulgarian, 90 in Latin (English, German and Italian) and 13 in Russian. The appendix consists of 14 pages and contains a list of Gaetano Donizetti's works in chronological order and main recordings of the opera "Don Pasquale".

The goals and tasks set by the doctoral student in the present study are a thorough multifaceted study of the opera buffa "Don Pasquale" in terms of music history, culture of Bel canto style and in-depth presentation of innovation in compositional techniques, dramatic techniques compared to aesthetic romantic theories of the comic from the first half of the nineteenth century.

The dissertation paper is presented in an introduction, seven main chapters, a conclusion and two appendices.

The first three chapters are introductory. They introduce us to the origins of romanticism; main characteristics; periodization; the comic and its transformations in its musical incarnation; specifics of the musical image.

Chapters IV and V contain detailed musical and dramatic stage analysis of the opera "Don Pasquale", history of the general picture of Italian romantic opera in the XIX century, libretto, history of creation, features of bel canto as a style and characteristic vocal techniques.

Chapter IV begins with a general picture of the historical, socio-political situation in Italy in the first half of the 19th century, which influences the cultural life and development of Italian romantic opera - the time when Gaetano Donizetti wrote his opera buffa “Don Pasquale”. This chapter also contains the libretto of the opera, the actors, the original line-up of artists from the first premiere (in Paris - 1843) and information about subsequent performances in various countries in Europe and Australia (Sydney - 1854). The first performance in Bulgaria was in 1932 at the Sofia Opera.

The short biographical reference to Gaetano Donizetti introduces us to the turbulent life full of very interesting events, travels, meetings of the composer, thoughts of his contemporaries, critics, as well as thoughts of the composer himself. And here I am tempted to share one of his thoughts, which the doctoral student quoted in his work and is so important today - for the continuity of art:

“When I'm not in my prime, someone else has to take my place. The world wants something new. Others have given their places to us and we must give ours to others... I am more than happy to give my place to talented people like Verdi.”

The fourth chapter concludes with an in-depth dramatic and musical analysis of the opera “Don Pasquale”, as well as some characteristics of Gaetano Donizetti's musical language.

Chapter V - In pursuit of the ideal beauty.

From my position as an opera singer and vocal pedagogue, I find this chapter extremely interesting and useful with important information about the Bel canto style and a detailed description of the vocal and technical specifics of Belcantoism.

“Bravura, virtuosity, brilliance, light and stunning vocal performance are beautifully illustrated by the awareness that Bel canto style is technically ensured and it helps to improve vocal ability leading to increased vocal volume, freedom, lightness and grace of vocal movement through registers. The Bel canto technique is based on resonance and could be defined as a resonant singing technique that is organized as a specific respiratory culture. The goal of Bel canto mastery is to achieve "expressive beauty" and bright elegance. The Bel canto technique is a

paradoxical search, a vocal technique that is rooted in a deep understanding of the nature of the voice and makes possible the synthesis of opposites: on the one hand the extreme tenderness and elegance of sound, and on the other the maximum power and volume; a piercing clear, distinct and clear acud and an expressive colored timbre dramatic accent.”

Chapter VI – Director’s approaches

In this chapter Stefan Donev makes a historical reference to the emergence and development of the directing profession. The word "direction" appeared first in 1820.

Today, the fashion in opera is dictated by directors, while at the dawn of opera, the composer himself played the role of an director in his work.

This chapter also reviews the director’s techniques and style typical of the twentieth century.

Chapter VII - Three Possible Directing Approaches to the Opera “Don Pasquale”

Here the doctoral student describes in great detail the three possible directing approaches to the opera "Don Pasquale":

1. Historical value approach - in accordance with the instructions for the era, time and place of action.
2. Transposing approach - transferring the time of the action immediately to the present time and changing its place.
3. Metaphorical approach - time will be the immediate present.

The work of Stefan Donev is impressive in its volume and content from research point of view, and definitely it has a contributing nature. His style of expression is at a very high level.

The abstract specifically reflects the essence of the study.

In conclusion, I would like to suggest to the esteemed members of the Scientific Jury to evaluate positively and with dignity the dissertation of doctoral student Stefan Donev and to vote for his award of educational and scientific degree "Doctor of Philosophy" /PhD/.

City of Sofia
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Reviewer:
/Prof. Dr. Ivanka Ninova/