

OPINION

FOR DISSERTATION WORK

Author : Stefan Svetozarov Donev

Topic: Specifics of the comic bel canto in opera "Don Pasquale" by Gaetano Donizetti

Theoretical and directorial approaches

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Faculty: Philosophy

Department: Logic, ethics and Esthetics

The dissertation proposed for public defense is an original, independent study of the history and specifics of the comic type of opera from the Romantic era and Gaetano Donizetti's opera Don Pasquale as an innovative work and a benchmark for the development of this genre and opera directing in the following centuries. The topic of the dissertation has not been studied so far as a musical-theoretical and philosophical-aesthetic topic. In this sense, one of the significant contributions of the dissertation is its thematic focus on a new and unfamiliar research area. This is the field of philosophical and aesthetic reflection of the comic belcanto as a musical phenomenon and genre in the time of the Romantic era and the opera "Don Pasquale" by G. Donizetti as a masterpiece of opera art. According to Stefan Donev, the innovative spirit of Donizetti's opera and the genre that it represents is not satisfied solely with the technical aspect of musical art. This spirit goes much further by engaging with current social issues and realistic plots, unlike traditional mythological, heroic or historical serious plots.

Despite the lack of a well-defined research thesis, the main text of the dissertation outlines relatively clearly the doctoral student's ambition to describe and explain the importance and innovation of the opera Don Pasquale as an alternative to the romantic skepticism and irony. The descriptions, definitions and analyzes included in the separate chapters of the exposition point to this conclusion, and the concluding part and the contributions listed at the end of the dissertation correctly and realistically reflect the results of the research. Among them stands out as the most significant achievement the rethinking of the concept of belcanto and his philosophical and aesthetic interpretation as a musical phenomenon of fundamental importance and revolutionary

effect on the development of opera, music theory and philosophical and aesthetic reflection on beauty, the sublime and the freedom of the human as a creator of art.

To realize this rethinking, the doctoral student turns to historical-retrospective analyzes of the comedic as an aesthetic category, the culture, the philosophy and art of Romanticism, the features of the genre of Italian comic opera of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and its development in the twentieth century, in a time when opera directors possess a wide variety of different approaches and capabilities of dramaturgy thanks to the innovative spirit and musical imagery of works such as Donizetti's opera *Don Pasquale*.

The attempt to present all these different areas as comprehensively as possible gives a complex character to the research, and requires the adoption of an interdisciplinary approach to the issue. As a result, research interest extends to many additional descriptions of details and phenomena from different areas, such as going back to the Homeric era to explain the comic, although the opera did not yet exist at the time. This has led to an increase in the total volume of the dissertation, which is unusual for this type of research - 347 pages and structuring the exhibition into a large number of chapters and two appendices.

The first three chapters are presented as introductory and general theory in the introduction of the dissertation, but as a text they represent almost half of the content of the dissertation. In contrast, the other four chapters are „to the point“ because they address more specific, theoretical and practical issues of the philosophical and aesthetic dimensions of the opera *Don Pasquale* and its interpretive possibilities from a dramaturgical, stage and musical point of view. Thus, the first half of the dissertation text turns out to be an introduction to the second half due to the pursuit of a large number of research tasks. These are tasks such as "highlighting the basic theoretical understandings in regards to the aesthetic theory of the comic and its functional manifestations in classical music" and detailed theoretical descriptions of musical imagery. These details can be very important from a music theory point of view, but in a dissertation with a subject and object - the peculiarities of comic belcanto in the era of early romanticism and the famous " *Don Pasquale* " they create the impression of insufficient consistency of the text and deviation from its main purpose: "to trace, understand and interpret the manifestations of the phenomenon of comic belcanto within the opera "*Don Pasquale*".

In part, this methodological shortcoming of research is offset by the collection, systematization and presentation of a lot of information and knowledge about a large number of

theories, categories, phenomena and facts, which is necessary due to the large number of research goals and objectives. This increases the overall informative value of the dissertation and its educational level. The research impresses with the quantity and variety of descriptions and explanations of various phenomena and definitions in the field of music, philosophy, culture. The dissertation is a cornucopia of informational and educational abundance with its broad-spectrum reading of the comic as an aesthetic category, culture, philosophy and art of the Romantic era, musical imagery and attached at the end of the dissertation lists of major audio and video recordings of the opera "Don Pasquale" and a reference sheet with a detailed description of Donizetti's operatic, instrumental and symphonic works. The collecting and systematizing of this information and descriptions requires serious, in-depth knowledge of the history and theory of opera and music and their development under the influence of sophisticated individualism, the cult of the genius and the worship of art as characteristic trends in Romantic culture.

Conclusion : the methodological shortcomings of the research are significantly less than its indisputable achievements such as the original topic, high educational value and research contributions. These achievements are sufficient grounds to recommend to the esteemed members of the scientific jury to award Stefan Donev the scientific-educational degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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