

THE CATEGORY OF THE OPERA IMAGE AS A COMPLEX PHENOMENON

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Abstract: The article examines the complex properties of the opera image as a central category of opera art. The importance of the structural and national-style aspects of the study of the opera image for compositional, performing creativity and musicological discourse in the context of the integration paradigm of modern musical art is determined. The purpose of the article is to define the main components of the complex unity of the opera image in the context of its musical and semantic integrity. It is proved that the national-style and structural factors of the integrity of the opera image are decisive for the formation of the vocal-performance interpretation, which is determined by the genre-style principles of the composer's thinking and musical-interpretive creativity.

Keywords: opera art; opera; opera image, performing interpretation, modern performing creativity, national style content, structure of opera image, musical and semantic integrity

1 Introduction

The relevance of the research topic is due to the exceptional importance of the opera image category for opera art, which, being a complex phenomenon, is connected, on the one hand, with the composer's concept of the opera opus, and on the other - with the musical-aesthetic and stylistic principles of individual performance creativity. As a specific form of artistic image, the opera image combines different levels of embodiment of musical content (due to its synthetic nature) and, accordingly, determines the breadth of its performance embodiment.

The national-style aspect of the study of the opera image as a complex phenomenon, which actualizes the urgent problems of modern opera art, performing creativity in particular, acquires special importance in the conditions of the integration processes of musical art in the 21st century. The phenomenon of the opera image in this context acquires primary importance due to its universality: being a specific form of embodying the spiritual meanings of human life, it is also capable of reflecting different aspects of the national worldview, forming a "psychosemiological context of genre and style dimensions of music" [5, p. 15]. This context is directly related to the structural properties of the opera image, which form its complex unity. Given the fact that this issue is not a research priority in modern musicology, addressing it is timely and has theoretical and practical value for modern opera art.

The question of the specific features of the musical image as a type of artistic image is most often considered in musicological studies devoted to various aspects of the phenomenon of musical content and emphasizing the systemic properties of the musical image that form the artistic integrity of a musical work. In this subject direction of musicological thought, the musical image is perceived as the main element of musical content, which in musical and intonational form embodies the individual-composer's ideas about the various meanings of life's reality [2; 4; 9; 10]. This provision indicates the principle of dialectical unity and the complex nature of the musical image as a component of musical-semantic integrity ("subjective image of the objective world" [15]).

The process of distinguishing the phenomenon of the operatic image as the central category of operatic art was gradually carried out in the space of the opera science vector of traditional musicology [11; 16], which today is represented by a number of dissertation studies [1; 5; 19; 20], that contain the development of theoretical and performance aspects of the opera image based on the material of European opera samples of the 19th and 20th centuries.

The purpose of the article is to determine the main components of the complex unity of the opera image in the context of its musical and semantic integrity.

2 Method

The complexity and multi-element nature of the opera genre determines the methodological basis of the study. The methodology of this research is based on the use of the cultural-historical method, analysis and synthesis, as well as the figurative-stylistic method and the genre-style semantic method.

3 Results and Discussion

The traditional musicological understanding of the musical image is based on the dialectical unity of the objective and subjective factors of the formation of musical content, which is determined by the essence of creative activity - compositional and performing. Musicologists consider a musical image as "a holistic representation of the subject about the idea and intonation-sound structure of a musical work" [9, p. 24]. This definition corresponds to the idea of the universal functions of the image as such, established in the art of music, because it is a "tool" for the formation of the musical-semantic integrity of a musical work, which is used with equal success by composers, performers, and teachers [2]. Moreover, the phenomenon of a musical image is relevant for the art of musical theater, in which it finds a complex embodiment (audio-visual), living in the conventional space of musical-stage action. It should be noted that modern musicological approaches to the problem of artistic integrity are based on a complex understanding of this phenomenon, since it embodies both "... the initial systemic quality of artistic creativity, which arises as a result of the interaction of artistic components both among themselves", and "... the deep reason for the unity of artistic content and an act that is revealed in the process of artistic influence, in a communicative and dialogic way" [17, p. 169].

L. Kazantseva suggests considering such "spheres of musical imagery" as the world of man, the world outside of man, and the world of music as an objective factor of musical content [7]. Each of the specified spheres has its own meaningful spectrum, which produces the artistic meaning of a musical image: thus, the human world is identified with thinking, language, individual manifestation of character, various mental states and emotional manifestations, etc.; the world outside of man is connected with the surrounding reality, nature and its various representatives and even with the energy of the universe. The world of music in this musicological concept consists of specific phenomena of musical art as an artistic system (sound, timbre, singing, playing instruments, etc.).

The phenomenon of musical image is extremely relevant for opera art and vocal performance creativity of this direction, because due to its synthetic nature, the genre of opera puts forward a rather special form of musical image determined by its complex nature - the sound and visual components in it function on a parity basis. This is precisely what determines the structural and functional side of the opera image as a key category of opera art in all the variety of its creative manifestations (composer's work, vocal performance work, director's work). The main elements of the complex unity of the opera image are the verbal, musical-intonational (vocal and instrumental) component, as well as plastic-mimic. Combining in an organic unity, these components form the artistic and semantic integrity of the composer's idea and shape the so-called "stage picture" of the image of one or another hero of the opera work. Thus, the structural level of the category of the opera image indicates the meaningful multifacetedness of this phenomenon, which, in turn, requires the performer to have a clear idea of the expressive potential of each of the structural components - vocal-intonational, verbal, plastic. This provision corresponds to the modern musicological idea of artistic integrity as a phenomenon of music-performance interpretation, which means "...the

creation of a successful personal-semantic resonance with the figurative field of the work and the auditory consciousness of the recipients" [17, p. 173].

In relation to the last two mentioned positions of the given quote – the figurative field of the musical work and the auditory consciousness of the performer – the national-stylistic parameter of the opera image, which turns out to be an essential factor of its musical-semantic integrity, is of particular importance, that is discussed in musicological studies. So, for example, Wang Te claims that "opera, as a synthetic art form that is universal and integrates various genre and stylistic intentions of music, appears as a kind of mirror of the semantic attitudes of culture, therefore, in one way or another, it always solves the problem of national choice" [16, p. 47].

Modern musicological concepts of national style are based on a systematic understanding of this phenomenon as a specific "correction of individual and historical styles in the conditions of a given national culture and in the processes of adaptation and generation of stylistic features <...> which records the transition of the phenomena of national mentality and national spiritual culture into a specific system of means of musical expressiveness" [13, p. 8].

Extrapolating the experience of modern musicology in the study of national style into the field of opera art, Wang Te proposes in his dissertation, among other levels of manifestation of national features in opera style, such one as specifically colored language means [16, p. 48] It is indicative that in both of the given definitions of national style in music there are concepts of linguistic means and means of musical expressiveness as a specific creative toolkit for the artistic embodiment of the national and cultural content of musical art.

In this semantic context, the category of the opera image can be considered as a special form of reproduction of cultural tradition and certain worldview models: "opera heroes enter the cultural memory as bearers of necessary positive qualities and attitudes, and their characters are perceived as models of human communication, historical and timeless at the same time, therefore both concretely sensuous and ideally spiritual" [5, p. 15]. Opera, first of all, strives to understand and reproduce the idea and image of a person in their special musical and scenic portrait unity, therefore it claims to create a gallery of artistic personalities who bear the imprint of an era and present their own historical time. An opera portrait of a person always has a high degree of genre-stylistic synthesis and semantic generalization.

If we are faced with the task of revealing the essence of the national-stylistic factor of the musical-semantic integrity of the opera image, then it is appropriate to turn to the meaningful content of the concept of the image as such, which is central to art and artistic-creative activity. Not without reason, A. Nikolaev believes that "... image is the heart of art, and art itself is a way of thinking with artistic images" [12, p. 34].

The literary definition of an artistic image is based on understanding it as such an aesthetic category that arises as a result of the author-artist's understanding of a particular phenomenon or process of life reality, which is objectified in the form of a work with the help of those means of expression inherent in some type of art [8]. As noted by V. Khalizev [8, p.167], the focus on the creation and reproduction of characters (in the diversity of their properties) opened the way for art (primarily literature, but we also add operatic art and synthetic musical forms) to mastering the human world as an individual and personal one. In the character, not only the strong core of human individuality is embedded, which is manifested in enlarged and bright manner, but also the entire scope of the inner soul, emotional and psychological reality, the entire immanent life experience of human individuality emerges and is explicated.

The majority of musicological reflections on the phenomenon of musical image, which is reflected in the modern theory of

musical content and semantics, unfold in the same direction: "Since the sound image corresponds to the nature of music, it is natural to call the artistic representation embodied in musical sound a musical image" – L. Kazantseva notes [7, p. 136]. The solo-performer interpretation in the opera is determined by the semantic task of the opera work, which consists in the artistic portrayal of a person, first of all, from the inner, psychological and semantic side. Opera art creates special conditions for the representation of the experience of a separate, at the same time combined with social, based on reciprocity, human existence; it comes from the total humanity of all relationships that exist in the sociocultural world, takes care of the uniqueness of the individual, reveals the importance and shakiness of boundaries, which are necessary for personal individualization and complicity with the "other".

In his time, Hegel, who in his studies on aesthetics paid a lot of attention to the creative nature of art, emphasized the complex properties of the artistic image. He stressed that a work of art "...must present the content not in its generality, taken as such, but must individualize this generality, give it a sensually singular character" [6, p. 30]. The German philosopher noted that the image represents the unity of the general and the concrete, therefore "... art arises from the absolute idea itself ... and its goal is the sensual image of the absolute" [6, p. 118]. Accordingly, the originality of artistic images is directly related to the method of reflecting reality chosen by the artist, who by definition is the bearer of one or another national and cultural tradition, possessing a certain worldview system and a specific mental complex.

It is impossible not to agree with Hegel, according to whose fair statement, in art, the general character of the depicted cannot act as an abstract judgment or a general teaching, but must become the inner content of the artistic image [6, p. 57]. Aesthetic knowledge presents new meanings, individualizing the generality, giving it a singular character. Therefore, it is necessary to recall Aristotle's opinion that in an artistic image the singular cannot be perceived only as a means of conveying the universal. A single creation is an independent aesthetic value. On the other hand, it is interesting in itself also because the appeal of different authors to the same, "eternal", worldview topics demonstrates the polysemy, multivariability of general meanings.

It is known that the image as a form of human exploration of the world is, first of all, sensual in nature. In the process of cognition, a holistic image of a phenomenon is formed as a concrete presentation based on a set of sensations, which later becomes the basis of rational thinking. But unlike concepts that strive for abstraction and generalization, images clearly reflect the unique properties of individual objects. The sensuous nature of imagery also underlies the specificity of aesthetic cognition.

Hegel notes that an essential feature of art is its initial reliance on sensory perception. Image perception within the framework of everyday cognition is aimed at practical benefits. In a work of art, the sensual does not exist by itself, but appeals to the human spirit. An artistic image appears as a result of the combination of two independent phenomena or states, one of which "is the meaning understood in the form of the image of the other" [6, p. 118]. It can be said that aesthetic cognition is between bare material sensibility and ideal thought.

Creativity, revealing "the truth in a sensual form, has its ultimate goal in itself, in this representation and disclosure" [6, p. 61]. Hegel sees the highest meaning of art in the possibility of overcoming the antagonism between the natural drives of everyday life and the general abstract laws of moral will. This irreconcilable contradiction, in which a person of modern rational culture exists, cannot be removed only by the duty that comes from the scientific and philosophical theory. But sensual images addressed to the archetypal depths of the psyche and based on the inviolability of personal experience can evoke a response in the mind.

The statement that the artistic image is the unity of the general and the individual formed a classic representation of aesthetic thought. It is usually noted that, unlike a scientist, an artist conveys the general not by way of abstractions, but in the concrete-sensory form of a single phenomenon. Based on his individual perception of life, on the understanding of its internal logic, its regularities, the artist creates vitally relevant artistic images with the help of creative imagination. As we can see, any artistic image reflects not so much the factual reality of any phenomenon or process, but to a greater extent - the individualized idea of them by the author-artist, which is largely formed under the influence of the national and cultural tradition. We can talk about the national-cultural determination of a particular image of the opera hero, which is an artistic reproduction of the national culture in its individualized form. The influence of the environment, according to V. Tyupa's fair remark, ultimately determines the fate of a person, shapes his behavior model. "The unity of social laws, according to which society lives, and the power of which affects each of its representatives, determines the general features of this unique personality" [14, p. 156].

In this context, Dong Xinyuan's opinion regarding the semantics of the opera image is extremely important: "The key characteristics of people's creative experience can be reflected and concentrated in the content of an opera work, acquiring the quality of both canon and exemplarity, becoming necessary musical-figurative psychosemantic artifacts" [5, p. 15]. Such psychosemantic artifacts include the main components of the opera image, which were discussed earlier: verbal and vocal-intonational elements (sound complex), as well as plastic-scenographic elements (visual complex). Each of the listed components can act as a carrier of national stylistic quality, an artistic equivalent of the content and various meanings of the national worldview.

The vocal intonation of the opera hero, which is the main expressive element of his image, is also indicative in terms of national style, as it is a direct reflection of the national performing tradition and thus remembers the musical and intonation profile of the national culture. Wang Te notes in this regard that "... the national specification of the opera form begins with the separation of the singing manner as determined by the national character - emotional and psychological guidelines typical for this national culture, including the relationship to the personality of the artist-musician" [16, p. 50].

The verbal component of the sound complex of an opera image represents a certain type of speech intonation, which is characteristic of a particular national language, determines the intonation profile of the vocal part, as well as the general level of expression of the "intonated meaning". Modern researchers of opera art are increasingly turning to the problem of its structural regularities, and they see ways to solve it in delineating the visual series and the sound image of the opera part-role. Thus, given the fact that the verbal text of the part is inextricably linked with the vocal and intonation expressiveness, V. Bogatyrev suggests introducing the term "vocal line of the role" to denote the semantic content of the sound component of the operatic image [3, p. 164].

The image of an opera hero consists of a number of behavioral nuances, which together form a complete plastic appearance that conveys a higher ideological content and determines the logic of performance interpretation. As for the visual complex in the structure of the opera image, here it is about the level of meaningfulness of the opera role, which is not always fixed in the opera score and becomes the prerogative of the creative thinking of the performer (as well as the director). In accordance with the composer's idea, he creates in his stage image the fullness and depth of the individuality of the opera hero with the help of plasticity and facial expressions. Thus, an opera singer has the opportunity to reflect a specific type of character and temperament, a certain type of emotional reactions to events taking place in one or another situational context in a stage gesture. The vocal interpretation of the opera image unfolds as

the unity of the theatrical and scenic representative form, the opera verbal content and the musical language as their mediator, which allows the opera concept to find theatrical expression, and the theatrical form - to find special ways, communicative channels of content transmission, that is, to provide channels of personal awareness. Opera interpretation in its institutional integrity is an extremely complex functional phenomenon, which not only arises from the synthetic genre nature of opera, but largely depends on the artistic and organizational structure of the opera text, as on the obligatory interaction of its leading constitutive features: spectacle, verbalization, priority of musical broadcasting.

4 Conclusions

Opera art has always been centered on a man, because a set of artistic means allows embracing him from all sides, but first of all - to reveal his life trajectories in historical and personal contexts, seeing the areas of their intersection and interaction. The image of a person is the main guideline of art as a whole, but for an opera work, as already noted, it acquires a fundamentally important meaning. The task of revealing the nature of personal consciousness and actualizing its positive psychological aspects is the main goal of opera creativity, which is inseparable from the stage performance, but is most dependent on the musical presumption of the opera hero. Understanding the essential aspects of the category of opera image is relevant for any historical time, any generation of opera performers, composers and directors, historians and theorists of musical art, because in each historical epoch the complex nature of this phenomenon acquires new meanings and semantic potential.

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