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The Role of Ekaterinburg Composer School in Establishing Creative Traditions of South Urals Music Theatre

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The article is devoted to the study of South Urals Music theatre history. The author describes artistic and creative processes that took place in the given field of art from late 1930s to early 1980s. Repertoire policy and the search of content by regional composers are studied taking into account the ideological priorities of the particular historic period. The article outlines the major tendencies of the regional music-theatrical art during 1930s-1940s, 1950s-1960s, 1970s – early 1980s.. Also attention is paid to the character of individual search in creativity of South Ural composers.

Keywords South Urals Music theatre, National opera, Large – scale music-dramatical genres, Ideological priorities of the epoch, Regional creative elite, Artistic and creative processes

South Ural Music Theatre was formed due to a wide range of factors both external determined by sociopolitical (ideological) goals of the epoch and internal influencing substantially the character of genre- stylistic, plot-thematic and musical-lexical search. Lively musical- dramatic surrounding polemically focused on deciding urgent questions of modern art was one of the most efficient conditions of its development. Close creative contacts with the representatives of major composing schools of the country determined the beginning of local traditions. Formation of independent composing school in South Ural took place thanks to conversation with Ekaterinburg masters. Experience of Ural classical composers such as V. Trambitskiy, M. Frolov and A. Fridlander who wrote the first regional nationally recognized opera samples became a creative impulse due to which South

Ural artists joined the circle of serious problems in «great» art. Consequently, it is important to consider creative work of Ekaterinburg composers in music theatre and characterize its most significant aspects.

Personality of V. Trambitskiy (1895-1970) is unfairly underestimated by contemporary native music and music drama experts. Being an outstanding artist and person, V. Trambitskiy grew in atmosphere of great transformations in life and art, having experienced disasters of February and October revolutions. During turbulent time of 1910-s the composer lived in Petrograd – «cradle» of revolutionary and vanguard movement. According to the accepted view of the composer biographers, development of Trambitskiy's musical aesthetic views was influenced by the acquaintance and cooperation with B.Asafjev and B.Mayerhold (Zh. Sokolskaya, 1998, 87). Work in

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music department of Narcompros in cooperation with Asafjev and in drama school of world-recognized director and avant-garde artist could not but helped to influence his creative outlook.

The year 1925 played a key role in biography of the composer as he came to Ural and after a long period of «nomadic» life as a touring conductor, pianist and manager of music part in mobile theatres he settled in Ekaterinburg. Trambitskiy's active creativity in music theatre begins from the middle of 1920-s.

In the first large composer's work – the opera «Botfly» (1926-1929; opening night took place in 1929) we can discover some features of his individual author's style together with general tendencies peculiar to creative approach of 20th century artists. So, the opera was written on the basis of composer's own libretto which was connected with the author's wish to reach maximum unity of the text and music, music speech synthesis allowing to strengthen art impact on the spectator. In genre – style nature of music pursuit to unite different sources – first of all Russian classical and West European romantic («Italian») traditions - was reflected. High emotional pitch of the opera, pompousness of images and dynamics of the plot also proved preferences of the composer- the contemporary of the revolution who didn't keep away from epoch heroics.

The major genres in creative heritage of the composer are heroic – historical and lyrical drama. Pathos of epic interpretation of personality and nation destinies is traced in a number of Trambitskiy works. The topic of struggle for the independence of North African Arabian tribes against colonizers is the basis of the plot in naive-romantic opera «Wrath of the desert» (1930; performance wasn't made). Tragic-dramatic episodes of native history unite operas «The Great Way» (1932), «Orlena» («For the Life»; 1934), «Days and Nights» (1950),

«Heart Memory» (1967). It is demonstrative that the basis of libretto in them is literary works of novel-chronicle type with strongly marked documentary- publicist pathos: «Atamanship» by M. Alexeev («The Great Way»), «Days and Nights» by K. Simonov, «One Life» by F. Knorre («Heart Memory»). In the opera «Orlena» the composer directly addresses to documentary historical materials of Revdinsk coal-miners' rebellion in the middle of 19th century creating his own original libretto.

In addition to historical drama the composer touches upon the drama of the person – lyrical epos of character and destiny of the person in tragic life circumstances. For example, the opera «Thunderstorm» (A. Ostrovskiy prototype drama; 1940) and «Lace-maker Nastya» (K. Paustovskiy similar novel; 1963). The source of libretto is works of high art dignity in which the first place belongs to psychological origin and destiny of leading characters (heroines Katerina and Nastya) is monumentalized and enlarged up to the lyrical epos.

Application of large-scale dramatic messages in the field of music theatre was a characteristic feature of the epoch when Trambitskiy lived. Genres of historical heroism and psychological drama dominated in the work of outstanding native artists who suffered greatly from historical revolutions and possessed lively feeling of present time. Dramatic concept of the works «The Great way», «Days and Nights» and «Orlena» has analogies with V. Deshevov's operas «Ice and Steel», V. Ank's «Spring Love», V. Zhelobinskiy's «Mother», S. Prokofjev's «Semen Kotko» and T. Khrennikov's «In a Storm». Katerina's lyrical tragedy in «Thunderstorm» is comparable with Katerina Izmailova's drama in D. Shostakovich masterpiece, story of A. Alexandrov's heroin in «Bella» and in A. Pashenko's opera «Krechinskiy's wedding». In this respect Trambitskiy absolutely blends with the context showing interest towards

urgent range of problems: personality and time, person's destiny and historical drama.

Composer's searching of his own music language is also very important. During 1920-1950-s (in this period Trambitskiy's most significant works were created) the problem of music vocabulary in opera art was one of the most serious and contradictory. And V. Trambitskiy as a true artist of the 20th century couldn't ignore the problem of stylistic and linguistic «revolution» in music of that time. Together with most serious and profound musicians he was involved in the process of experiment with linguistic opera means. The source of innovative decisions in the field of vocal dramatic art was the question of music speech and its reciting nature, achievement of maximum expressiveness of music intonation as a prototype of the word. Trambitskiy was probably deeply interested in this question; it is confirmed by his close attention to opera libretto (the majority of them is written by the composer himself). «Speech» material of composer's best works proves the usage of declamatory principles of A. Dargomyzhskiy and M. Musorskiy. We can find it in the prevalence of recitative beginning, speech phrasing, and variable metro- rhythmic pulsation as well as in the construction of scenes on the basis of speech monologue or dialogue such as the language of «Thunderstorm». It is not a mere chance that in libretto characteristic opera poetry of the word was broken and as the basis he took prosaic text of A. Ostrovskiy play. Prosaic type of libretto was created on V. Mayerhold's advice contrary to unsuccessful I. Keller's poetic version. The composer found samples of new speech thinking in Katerina's arioso from the 2nd scene of the 1st act («Oh, girl, something bad is happening to me»), the 4th scene in the ravine from the 2nd act.

Destruction of classical ladotone system and usage of other non- classical models of harmonious thinking was rather a vital problem of

opera theatre epoch. From the view of academic art, it meant collapse of melodic origin and now it means collapse of foundations themselves of vocal traditions. Overrunning from steady lado-harmonious relations led to more strained contradictions between traditional and non-classical genre-style elements. Polytonality, serial technique, chance music, resonant effects actively interfered into the essence of new compositions strengthening feeling of hypertrophied peculiarity of the images and situations, polarity of emotional spheres (from subtle lyricism up to tough sarcasm and grotesque). At the same time the quality of intonation pitch (melody) of vocal music changed dramatically; a new creative problem appeared for composers – it is a compromise between revolutionary and traditional means of art expressiveness.

In Trambitskiy's creative work innovative energy was fully expressed in the opera «Thunderstorm». Except experiments with speech nature of music, in this work the composer demonstrated his interest in new harmonious systems. The opera illustrates the usage of enlarged 12-phase sound system which opens opportunities for application of polyphonic and polyladonic complexes. Similar to innovators of opera language S. Prokofjev and D. Shostakovitch, Trambitskiy achieves sharp contrasts between «unstable zone» and tone foots strengthening acuteness of harmonious inclinations and emotional tension. Simultaneously with the help of multicomplex harmonious sketches the composer tries to establish centres of strict lado-functional principles (foundations) creating emotional «islands» of bright optimistic beginning. It allows as much as possible to polarize the figurative worlds of opera – the world of love and the world of lower middle classes, the beauty of lyrical feeling and ugliness of rough and stubborn routine as in Katerina's aria and a parting scene from the 6th scene in 4th act.

Trambitskiy uses folklore as one of the effective means of dynamism in opera nature. Brightly expressed singing is part of Katerina's image. At the same time humorous rhyming (chastushka) folk dancing motives in the scene of wedding from the 1st act intensify a rough peculiarity of the images Kabaniha and Dikoy.

«Thunderstorm» became Trambitskiy absolute success. High appreciation of outstanding contemporaries (for example, appraisal of D. Shostakovitch, remarks of N. Mayakovskiy, D. Kabalevskiy and G. Sviridov) and reviews of official critic experts, who point out bad sides of the opera, prove it. One of such statements about theatrical performance of «Thunderstorm» on the stage of Sverdlovsk opera and ballet house in 1958 says: «Unfortunately, musical art achievements of «Thunderstorm» were far from being completely revealed in their real sounding... Besides, intrusive excess of recitatives prevented from direct perception of the opera» (Sokolskaya, 1998, 97). The last remark doesn't seem to be random at all. The creative author's goal – search of new expressing means- was interpreted as formalization means of art language. It explained the reason why after publishing a resolution of the Central Committee All-Russian Communist Party (bolshevists) in 1948 10th February «About the opera «Great Friendship» by V. Muradeli» Trambitskiy's «Thunderstorm» together with other contemporary works was abolished to stage in Leningrad Kirov opera and ballet house, and the author was accused of «formalism» and «antinationalism».

We should pay a special attention in creative heritage of the composer to the opera «Orlena» («For the Life»), which became the first true opera work with the plot taken from the Ural history. During his life Trambitskiy returned twice to his score re-editing the opera in 1938 and in 1968. It is the opera «Orlena» in which the most typical features of composer's style are demonstrated.

The basis of music opera language is Ural folklore which the composer gathered through many years. Planned as folk drama, «Orlena» represents dramatic synthesis of ensemble and choral scenes. This defines the role of folk element in opera nature. Trambitskiy uses the whole variety of popular genres: «bitter lamentations of dependent people and heart voice songs... work songs of wood raftsmen, and also «traditional folk thoughts» (Sokolskaya, 1998, 95-96). He applies the methods of direct citing as well as methods of arrangements and free variation of material.

Appearance of «Orlena» on the opera Ural stage creates the first precedent of addressing to regional music traditions represented in vast stratum of music folklore.

Closer interaction with folklore sources is found in works of M.P. Frolov (1892-1944). As Trambitskiy, the composer developed in 1910-1920-s. Having come in St. Petersburg from provincial place Harbin, he entered the conservatoire (A. Esipova's group, 1913), where he was seriously engaged not only in piano playing but also in composition. A. Glazunov's appraisal and high appreciation testifies depth and professionalism of Frolov's classes. He advised a young musician to address all his efforts towards studying of composer trade. From 1918 to 1921, having moved to Kiev, Frolov studied in Kiev Conservatoire subjects of composition theory and the piano. His teachers were I. Turchinskiy, F. Blumenfeld and further R. Gliar who influenced greatly the formation of creative views of the composer. Besides, figurative system of Frolov's works was affected by the impressions got during his work in popular conservatoire established by B. Ayvorskiy in the atmosphere of revolutionary optimism and pathos of renewal. On the whole, to the end of 1920-s (to the moment of moving to Sverdlovsk and the beginning of work in the Urals in 1928) two figurative-emotional sources of the composer's creativity appear: classical

tradition of Russian pre-revolutionary composer school with the support on lyrical-psychological motives, and arising historical-revolutionary topic which is revealed in motives and images of national folklore and popular culture.

Unlike Trambitskiy, Frolov can't be called primarily music-theatrical composer. He addressed to opera genre only in 1939 and got a proposal to write a composition on the topic of Buryatia national epos – the opera «Anhe-Bulat Bator». However, this very composition corresponds to regional art tradition as it is completely based on thorough studying of folklore material. To his work on libretto (together with N. Baldano) joined D. Auyshchev – Frolov's apprentice, a student of Sverdlovsk Conservatoire who consulted his teacher in questions of language and Buryatia folklore. Similar to Russian musical classics such as M. Glinka and «gatherers», the composer resorted to the practice of individual author's interpretations of the original ethnographic materials. It gave him an opportunity to preserve authentic national colour, peculiarity of national music vocabulary and at the same time to monumentalize the material up to epic scale.

The opera was written in Buryatia language which defined the meaning of thorough knowledge of its expressive peculiarities (phonetics and rhythm). M. Frolov himself described the process of creating the opera this way: «Working on this opera, I as a composer faced a number of problems, - new language, limited singing range and lack of singing technique, mainly pentatonic type of Buryatia songs, new tasks for libretto writer who has never dealt with dramatic laws of opera libretto and at last extremely limited time of writing the opera» (Frolov, 1941, 4).

Without any exaggeration the opera «Anhe-Bulat Bator» can be considered as a sample of Soviet popular-heroic opera. The plot taken from folk Buryatia legends and songs (the story about epical hero strong man Shon Bator) is based on

the opposition of people and power. The main hero of the opera Anhe is an adopted son of Bumal-khan I together with the smith Darkhan and his daughter Arjun-Goron reveal the idea of noble heroism and pathos of social liberation. On the opposite side there are two characters-cruel Bumal-khan and Anhe's brother Arhe-Mergen.

M. Frolov emphasizes the meaning of choral episodes and crowd scenes which are associated with the image of people as a great historical power. Such conception is coordinated with the traditions of classical popular epic drama samples of which you can find in creative work of M. Glinka and M. Musorskiy. Monumentalism and entertainment characterize the brightest crowd episodes (the choir of courtiers and the march of bators from the third act, people choir from the 4th act).

Similarity with classical popular-heroic drama is also proved by wide usage of folklore material and application of the system of leitmotifs and leitthemes. Samples of skilful arrangement of national melos are arias of Bumal-khan and Arjun-Goron (2nd act), drinking song of the narrator (3^d act). Leit subject matter is used to show contrast opposition of the main figurative spheres. The most significant dramatic opera topics are themes of Shon Bator (embodiment of Buryatia people), Anhe and opposition heroes Bumal-khan and Arhe-Mergen. It is also necessary to note dramatic completeness and form clarity of «Anhe-Bulat Bator».

On the whole, estimating M. Frolov's work it is necessary to underline purposive classicism of musical-dramatic composer's message. Outstanding musicians of 1940-s among them are R. Gliere and M. Grinberg pointed to it (Gliere, 1940, 6; Grinberg, 1940, 4). Trambitskiy's creativity marked the interest in searching of a new art language in music drama, M. Frolov's composition, on the contrary, approved the meaning of the tradition.

Investigating creativity of Ekaterinburg School, it is impossible to ignore works of A. G. Fridlander (1906-1990). A. Fridlander is a representative of St. Petersburg performing and composing school where A. Glazunov and M. Shtaneberg heard his first compositions; he is also apprentice of A. Gauk on the subject of conducting. Having settled down in Sverdlovsk in 1939 as V. Trambitskiy, the musician refers both to search of new expressive means in interpretation of serious lyrical-psychological topics and to motives of Ural antiquity. The composer paid attention to ballet art; hence he applied to other means answering the nature of plastique, assisting to convey specificity of dancers' gestures and mimicry, substituting expressiveness of the word and speech. Analogy of Trambitskiy «Thunderstorm» is considered the ballet «Dowerless girl» (according to A. Ostrovskiy play, it was staged in 1958 in Sverdlovsk theatre and ballet house), based on stylized everyday music material of 19th century. At the same time plots of local folklore attracted Fridlander and it led to writing of two ballet works on the basis of well-known P. Bazhov tales- «Mountain tale» (1940-1941) and «Stone Flower» (1942-1944). While writing the composer studied thoroughly Ural folklore traditions and it was reflected in citing of real song sources (songs «Little Strawberry», «On the thawed ground», etc.). Further the ballet «Stone Flower» was staged in Perm and Chelyabinsk theatres.

Creativity of masters from Ekaterinburg composing school had an evident influence

on regional music art. Besides direct creative cooperation during 1940-1980-s in the form of author's meetings, concerts and theatrical performances, art principles generated by Ekaterinburg composers turned out to be very important for South Ural musicians. Characteristic features of Ekaterinburg masters are the following:

- reference to regional, historical, folklore and urgent (contemporary, social) material as a dramatic basis of compositions;
- gathering, interpretation, citing, author's variation of folklore sources in outline of works; support of intonation and ludo-harmonious system, genre elements of national music;
- usage of achievements in classical music-dramatic art of 19th century Russia (composition principles, genre nature of drama);
- simultaneous shown tendency towards renewal of art language, complication of music vocabulary due to expansion of used expressive means.

On the whole, while comparing music-theatrical works of Ekaterinburg composers with South Ural ones evidently we can discover their content and aesthetic continuity. It is more obvious from 1980-s – active self-affirmation period of regional composing school. It appeals to start more careful investigation of the problem concerning cooperation of composing schools in South Ural and in «Big» Ural.

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Роль екатеринбургской композиторской школы в становлении творческих традиций Южно-Уральского музыкального театра

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Статья посвящена исследованию истории музыкального театра Южного Урала. Автор рассматривает художественно-творческие процессы, протекавшие в данной области искусства с конца 1930-х до начала 1980-х гг. Репертуарная политика и содержательные поиски региональных композиторов рассматриваются в контексте идеологических приоритетов конкретного исторического периода. В статье отражены важнейшие тенденции музыкально-театрального искусства региона 1930-х – 1940-х гг., 1950-х – 1960-х гг., 1970-х – нач. 1980-х гг. Наряду с этим уделяется внимание вопросу о характере индивидуальных поисков южно-уральских композиторов.

Ключевые слова: музыкальный театр Южного Урала, национальная опера, идеологические приоритеты эпохи, крупномасштабные музыкально-драматические жанры, региональная творческая элита, художественно-творческие процессы.
