

BARTULIS' EXPRESSION IN THE OPERA

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Summary

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Among the most prominent opera composers in Lithuania Vidmantas Bartulis stands out as an author of non-typical solutions who values an unrepeating fantasy of the moment. Alongside with his operas mention must be made of the *The Lamb of God (Dievo Avinėlis, 1981–1982)* by Feliksas Bajoras which consolidated the idea of polylogue and related, in a manner different from that of *Thrush – the Green Bird (Strazdas žalias paukštis, 1981)* by Bronius Kutavičius, the contemporary language, ethno signs and deep authenticity as well as the archetypal expression of Lithuanian thought. Opera *The Bear (Lokys, 2000)* by Kutavičius in a postmodernistic view presents us with a myth of barbaric ancestors and synthesizes the major part of Kutavičius' early works through the language of music. In terms of its drastic plot the opera is closer to Bartulis' *A Lesson (The Pamoka, 1993)*.

Bartulis tried to break through in a different way, having resolutely revised both the language itself and the manner of presenting opera. That unnaturalness has a depressing effect on both performers and listeners. And being very sensitive towards falseness, Bartulis could not miss it. He makes himself important like a self-confident *pompous* conductor whose very participation in the production is much more valuable than the work itself, artists or listeners etc. It is interesting that his prototype was the Polish composer and conductor Krzysztof Penderecki.

Another thing worth mentioning while speaking about *A Lesson* is aleatory technique. It was partly limited by the composer's participation in the process of the performance. He limited the accidental moment in the vocal parts. But had the actors prepared the parts themselves, the accidental moment would undoubtedly have increased. The orchestral part is not aleatoric. The role of the orchestra is rather similar to that in a traditional opera. We can partly apply to Bartulis' creative method the insight of Arnold Schönberg. The repetitive form of *A Lesson* which seems to return to its initial point should cause a feeling of cathartic harmony, based on the nature of the material, but the psychological tension, suffered not long ago upon discovering how the repetitively beginning scene, which seems to be idyllic, will end – a new round of events – leaves the listeners with a twofold feeling. A feeling of tension which seems to ease but the shadow of the former tension is more tangibly lingering about the consciousness of the listener.

We may state that Vidmantas Bartulis searches for the new possible ways for chamber opera. After composing *A Lesson* in 1993 the composer

planned to create a cycle of chamber operas. There were composed: *Mozart's Birthday (Mozarto gimtadienis)* for the anniversary of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart in 2006, *Morning Star (Aušrinė)*, libretto by Liudvikas Jakimavičius and Bartulis) in 2006 and *Pas de deux* (libretto by Bartulis after the texts by Aleksandre Dumas) in 2007. The *Morning Star* is after the material of saga and continues the tradition of poetic opera. The opera has not been staged yet. It is significant to compare it to Bronius Kutavičius opera *Old Man Bones on the Iron Mountain (Kaulo senis ant geležinio kalno)*, 1976).

Mozart's Birthday became almost opera-pastiche under the request of festival organizers. Nevertheless, Bartulis managed to create Mozartian quip and to keep a subject's intrigue, which is typical for such works. Herewith the listeners were allowed to admire the immortal Mozart's music without considerable pretensions to authority. The composer collected the public-beloved arias from different operas (*The Marriage of Figaro*, *The Abduction from the Seraglio*, *The Magic Flute*) and the extract from Requiem. Then Bartulis wrote his own libretto, arranged the extracts under his own order and merged together with his original music. This music was organic to Mozart's creation. Mostly composer used the recitative links where the turns of subject were introduced. Between other compositions with such an in-text technique this opera is considered to be the boundary, impossible to cross.

The latest Bartulis' opera *Pas de deux* is an unprecedented combination of opera seria and culinary opera in Lithuania. The composer intended to compose a French opera. Bartulis chose the period of French revolution. The act happens in Paris, kitchen of Tampl's palace, in January, 1793.

As Bartulis organically perceives the essence and power of performance, he stimulates the new experience and refined taste of improvisations, which are full of cultural associations. It may be assumed that the show authors try to eliminate the border between the art and life after the example of Fluxus. The carnival and action have the function to invert the made-up or implemented truth and meanings and to demonstrate the possibility of perceiving them in a controversial way. The composer questions the unambiguous attitude towards various art appearances. Consequently, his contribution toward the formation of a new chamber opera model is vivid.

Literatūra

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