

SUMMARIES

LATVIAN MUSIC CULTURE IN THE 1920S –1930S AND MODERNISM. THE NARRATIVES OF THE PRESS AND CONTEXTS.

By Ināra Jakubone

Keywords: modernism, national modernism, music criticism, Jāzeps Vītols, ISCM

This publication aims to trace the ways 20th century modernism reached Latvia during the two decades of the 20th century interwar period. The main source for the research was the Latvian press of the 1920s and 1930s.

The discourse prevailing in Latvian musicology is that musical modernism had almost no impact on Latvian music until the very end of the 20th century, and the techniques, idioms and paradigms of 20th century modernism found reflection in Latvian music only sporadically and unsystematically. Thus, it was quite a surprise to realise how broad and detailed the narrative on musical modernism actually was in Latvian press of the period.

Firstly, it included stylistic and aesthetical analyses of contemporary music, the first publications on the subject to be found as early as of 1921. (It should be noted that only a year earlier the Freedom Battles, fighting both the Red Army and the German established Bermond-Avalov army had ended in Latvia.) It also included information on international activities related to modern music, such as reports on the festivals of the International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM), the organisation's strategies and tactics. Publications by renowned representatives of modernity can be found, for example, reports of composer Egon Wellesz (1885–1974) on the status quo of contemporary music and on the ISCM festivals of 1925.

Secondly, it comprised a thorough evaluation of the quite many representations of modern music in Riga concert halls. The music critics had the opportunity to express themselves about modern music performed by the composers Sergey Prokofiev (*Sergej Prokof'ev*, 1891–1953), Igor Stravinsky (*Igor' Stravinskij*, 1882–1971), Karol Szymanowski (1882–1937), Alfredo Casella (1883–1947). They reported on performances of modern repertoire by pianists Zbigniew Drzewiecki (1890–1971), Henri Gil-Marchex (1894–1970), Robert Casadesus (1899–1972), Claudio Arrau (1903–1991), Vytautas Bacevičius (1905–1970), violinists Henri Marteau (1874–1934), Irena Dubiska (1899–1989), Ginette Neveu, (1919–1949), Jacques Thibaud (1880–1953), cellist Maurice Maréchal (1892–1964), singer Stanisława Korwin-Szymanowska (1884–1938), a.o. They provided evidence on the cooperation of the Latvian National Opera Orchestra with conductors interested also in contemporary symphonic scores – Gregorz Fitelberg (1879–1953), Rhené-Baton (1879–1940), Emil Cooper (1870–1960), Georg Schnéevoigt (1872–1947), Lovro von Matačić (1899–1985), Otto Klemperer (1885–1973), Albert Coates (1882–1953), Napoleone Annovazzi (1907–1984), and others. They contemplated on the Latvian

National Opera's productions of such ballets as Stravinsky's *Pulcinella*, "Firebird" and *Petrushka*, Prokofiev's *Le pas d'acier*, and Ernst Krenek's opera *Jonnie spielt auf* as well as Jaromir Veinberger's opera *Schwanda, the Bagpiper*.

And, last but not least, the reviews chronicled the attempts of local soloists, ensembles and orchestras to approach contemporary repertoire.

The authors writing on modern music included composers Jānis Zālītis (1884–1943), Jēkabs Graubiņš (1886–1961), Jānis Cīrulis (1897–1962), Jēkabs Poruks (1895–1963), Volfgangs Dārziņš (1906–1962), Knuts Lesiņš (1909–2000), music historian Jēkabs Vītoliņš (1898–1977), poet Jānis Sudrabkalns (1894–1975), a.o. Their reviews were published both by the daily press and specialised music magazines.

The most often performed in Riga then were Stravinsky, Prokofiev, Ravel and Szymanowski. But also works by such contemporary composers as Vytautas Bacevičius (1905–1970), Ferruccio Busoni (1866–1924), Manuel de Falla (1876–1946), Aloiz Hába (1893–1973), Paul Hindemith (1895–1963), Jacques Ibert (1890–1962), Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco (1895–1968), Gaspar Cassadó (1897–1966), Zoltán Kodály (1882–1967), Ernst Krenek (1900–1991), Darius Milhaud (1892–1974), Francesco Malipiero (1882–1973), Nikolaj Myaskovski (*Nikolaj Mâskovskij* (1881–1950)), Arhur Honegger (1892–1955), Francis Poulenc (1899–1963), Ottorino Respighi (1879–1936), Jean Roger-Ducasse (1873–1954), Albert Roussel (1869–1937), Arnold Schoenberg (1874–1951), Florent Schmitt (1870–1958), Franz Schreker (1878–1934), Dmitry Shostakovich (*Dmitrij Šostakovič* (1906–1975)), Joaquín Turina (1882–1949), Ralph Vaughan-Williams (1872–1958) and others were heard in the Riga concert halls.

Apparently the young composers in Latvia were in the mood for modernism, too. A concert of the very first students and graduates of Jāzeps Vītols' composition class at the Latvian Conservatoire – Lūcija Garūta (1902–1977), Jānis Kalniņš (1904–2000) and Jēkabs Poruks (1895–1963) – was even titled "Concert of the Latvian modernists". Given in 1926, the concert also included songs by Jānis Zālītis (1884–1943) who until then was considered to be the only one Latvian composer attracted by modern techniques – due to his profound knowledge of early modernistic trends acquired during the (pre-war) study years in St. Petersburg.

The article aims to oppose the widespread assumption that the sole person to blame for the unfavourable attitude towards modernism in Latvia was composer Jāzeps Vītols (1863–1948) – a long-time professor at the St. Petersburg Conservatoire (1886–1918), the founder of the Latvian Conservatoire and its rector (1919–1944), the tutor of not only Latvian, but also Estonian, Lithuanian and other composers during the interwar period – and his legendary conservatism. It is also said that due to Vītols Latvia did not join the ISCM then. So the conditions for Latvia joining the ISCM were analysed and compared to the experience of the then neighbouring Poland (which joined ISCM in 1924) and Lithuania (which joined ISCM in 1936). The overall state of the Latvian music life of the period was taken into account, including education, concert management, audience perception, the cultural policies and their impact on composers, musicians and their

work. This allowed the deduction that however influential Vītols' personality was, the impact of all the above mentioned circumstances were as important and determining on the representation of modernistic trends in Latvian concert life and music.

The research made it possible to conclude that the presence of modernism in the music life of the interwar Latvia was much bigger than assumed so far. This is even in spite of the fact that no particular means to institutionalise contemporary music (including contemporary Latvian music) were envisaged then.

LATVIAN MUSICIANS' SOCIETY (1922–1939): ACTIVITY PROFILE AND CONCERT CAMPAIGN “MUSICIANS DAY”

By **Laura Švītiņa**

Keywords: public organizations of musicians, musicians' trade union, orchestras, concerts of united orchestras

Social activity was one of the most significant phenomena that characterized the first decade of Latvia's state formation. Musicians also took part in this process, as evidenced by the founding of many musicians' associations in the 1920s. This article attempts to introduce one of the oldest and most thorough musicians' associations during the first period of Latvia's Independence – the Latvian Musicians' Society, its main activity fields, and their special concert campaign “Musicians Day”. The article is based on the author's bachelor's thesis, which initiates a new research area in Latvian Musicology, as this is the first in-depth archival study of music societies in Latvia.

The Latvian Musicians' Society (*Latvijas Mūziķu biedrība*) was founded at the end of 1922. It operated in very challenging and rapidly changing times in the history of Latvia. In 1919, the first national music institutions had just been founded (the Latvian National Opera and the Latvian Conservatory). The year 1925 marked the beginning of the Latvian public broadcaster (the Riga Radiophone). Towards the end of the decade, Latvian musicians were affected by the popularity of jazz and dance music as well as by the advent of sound films. In the 1930s, musicians struggled with the consequences of the economic crisis. However, the development of the Latvian democratic movement was interrupted in 1934 when Kārlis Ulmanis established an authoritarian regime. However, the Latvian Musicians' Society was not eliminated. It continued to operate under the new forms of centralized management. At first, in 1936, the Latvian Musicians' Society was included in the Latvian Chamber of Labor (*Darba kamera*) as a Musicians' Union. But later, in 1938, it was added to the Latvian Chamber of Writing and Art (*Rakstu un mākslas kamera*). The Music Section of this last Chamber established a new music association called the Latvian Music Society to which the Latvian Musicians' Society and last remaining music associations were added in 1939. However, the Latvian Music Society existed for a very short time – it was interrupted by the occupation of Latvia in 1940, after which the society was transformed into the Latvian SSR Musicians' Union.

To conclude this historical insight, it should be emphasized that the Latvian Musicians' Society was able to adapt to different circumstances and transform into new forms of work, which substantiate its importance in the formation of music life of Latvia.

Seeing what impacted musicians in the 1920s and 1930s gives a better understanding of the Latvian Musicians' Society contribution. The Society united musicians living in Latvia with the aim to promote various activities of music life, defend the rights of musicians, and to take care of opportunities to improve musicians' welfare. The members of Latvian Musicians' Society were orchestral musicians (from the Latvian National Opera Orchestra and the Radiophone Orchestra), ensemble musicians (from various restaurants, cafes, and other locals), and freelance musicians (employed on an occasional basis). In the initial period of the Latvian Musicians' Society, the number of members was higher and during the existence of the Society it varied from 200 to 700 members, with 350 members on average. The main place of operation was Riga; however, branches were established as well in other Latvian cities – Liepāja (1924), Tukums (1927), Jelgava (1927), Kuldīga (1928). The Latvian Musicians' Society was managed by a full meeting of members, the Board, the Council, and the Audit Committee. During the first period, the chairman of the board changed every year. Some stability arose when Voldemārs Pulciņš (1897–1971), a lawyer and a violinist, worked in this position for almost six years.

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The article concludes that the Latvian Musicians' Society functioned as both a professional association and a trade union. Consequently, the activity profile was divided into two main fields – the cultural field and the rights and protection field. Such activities as publishing music journals, founding orchestras, establishing a music library, and actively participating in the formation of the music scene can be indicated among the first field. The Latvian Musicians' Society's contribution to concert life is related to the establishment of orchestras (the Riga Symphony Orchestra, the Latvian Musicians' Society Wind Orchestra, and the Joint Symphony Orchestra of the Latvian Culture Society and the Latvian Musicians' Society) and active participation and support in promoting their activities (the Riga-Jurmala Symphony Orchestra, the Riga Philharmonic Orchestra).

The second field of the Society's profile included activities such as the protection of musicians' rights, wage regulation, the establishment of different benefit funds and organizations. The Latvian Musicians' Society offered musicians opportunities to improve their well-being and material provision for the future. To support this, the association established various benefit funds: the Funeral Fund (1924, *Bēru fonds*), the Aid Fund (1928, *Palīdzības fonds*), the Labor Protection Fund (1929, *Darba aizsardzības fonds*), and separate organizations: the Musicians' Savings and Loan Association (1924, *Mūziķu krājaizdevu sabiedrība*) and the Musicians' Mutual Life Insurance Association (1930, *Mūziķu savstarpējā dzīvības apdrošināšanas biedrība*).

The music campaign "Musicians Day" can be considered as a unifying element of both activity fields. The Latvian Musicians' Society organized this concert campaign

not only to represent the musicians and the Society or to create a tradition, but also to obtain funding that would allow it to fight unemployment and competition in the labor market. Within the framework of it, in 1928, 1929, and 1931, an open-air symphony concert took place in Arcadia Park in Riga (Pardaugava). For this occasion, a festival-type orchestra was formed, which brought together the three largest orchestras that operated during the summer season. The orchestra consisted of almost 100 musicians, and, as music critics pointed out in the press, it was still a sensational phenomenon in Latvia at that time. The benefits of these concerts were the promotion of the Latvian Musicians' Society and the polishing of its representative image, a popularization of symphonic music and participating symphony orchestras, support for the idea to use city parks as concert places, and finally income for the future work of the association.

To summarize, the author would like to emphasize that a broader view of the activities and the significance of the Latvian Musicians' Society can be developed by researching other music societies to study mutual interaction and the level of influence on music life in Latvia.

PIANO-VOCAL SCORES OF *SCHLAGERS* COMPOSED IN LATVIA DURING THE 1920S AND 1930S: PUBLISHERS, COMPOSERS AND DANCE MUSIC GENRES

By Alberts Rokpelnis

Keywords: dance music, music publishing, *schlager*

After establishing the Republic of Latvia, the trends in European popular music reached Latvian entertainment culture as well. The number of *schlager* scores increased in the circulation of popular music as a category created by the music publishers. The article focuses on scores of dance music containing dance genre indications, arranged for voice and piano and published in Latvia, mostly Riga, in the 1920s and 1930s.

In the 1920s, social dances like the tango and the foxtrot similarly to the well-known waltzes and polka, were called *party dances*. Probably this is the most precise word in the context of their time. However, in the press there were other notions, such as *modes dejas* in Latvian derived from German *Modetanz* or *modern dances* meaning the newest, trendiest dances.

The scores stored in the Alfrēds Kalniņš Music reading room of the Latvian National Library were used for quantitative data analysis. The research gathers data on editions of Latvian-born authors of *schlager* between 1923 and 1940, in total 317 items with remarks about composing in the dance music genre. 210 of them are published as piano-vocal scores. The relatively small number of score editions derives from the fact, that foreign *schlagers* published in Riga have not been included in the selection similarly to the localized, translated, adapted or otherwise transformed versions of the foreign

songs, for instance, couplets. The corpus of the dance music genre piano-vocal scores stored in the Latvian National Library allows for the assumption of general tendencies. Nevertheless, there are certain shortages in the set of data. Precise information on other, probably even earlier published *schlagers* mentioned in other sources, is still missing.

The article aims to research the piano-vocal scores of *schlagers* composed in Latvia, analysing them in the context of composers' creative work and publishing business, revealing the links to the leading dance music genres of the time.

In the 1920s, Latvia imported foreign scores and shellac discs. At the same time, the first *dance schlagers* by local composers won their place gradually. Currently, only a few examples from the first half of the '20s have been discovered, therefore, the publishing of local *schlagers* at the time cannot be described as a stable music publishing category. In the beginning, there were just a few attempts to approach the internationally recognized format of *schlager*. The notable increase of publishing the *schlagers* written by local composers comes only at the end of the 1920s.

In the turn of the '20s and '30s the number of *schlager* scores by local authors increased. However, due to an increased demand for shellac discs, the published scores became something like an *additional medium*. At the beginning of the 1930s, the first local recordings of *schlagers* in larger quantities in the Latvian music market appeared. It led to the increasing interaction between-gramophone records and published scores in distribution. This fact confirms the thesis expressed in theoretical literature about media interaction and migration of *schlagers* between several music distribution media also in Latvia. It means that in the '30s the *schlager* can be considered a stable category of the music industry in the local market.

Despite radio, records and the film industry played more important roles in the '30s, the published scores kept their niche as a music distribution medium until the Second World War. The advantages of the score were obvious: one edition in several languages at once, easy to copy and reprint, low production costs in comparison to recordings.

The analysed *dance schlager* editions allow the conclusion that in Latvia the dominating rhythms were in a two-beat time signature. The one-step that was one of the top dances of the '20s lost its position in the '30s. Since the number of scores published by local authors during the '30s increased, the leading position was taken by the most popular dance music genres – the foxtrot and the tango. At the same time, slower and faster waltzes remained among the most popular dances. But the unbeatable leader and the most popular genre among the *schlagers* of the '30s was the tango. The number of tango-songs increased sharply. In the mid to late 1930s, the score albums allowed the composers to collect their achievements of the previous years in selected works.

In Latvia, the score printing mostly took place in Riga, where the largest publishers of *schlagers*, musicians, sellers of music instruments and book publishers were based. The *musicalia* (piano-vocal scores) by Latvian authors of the 1930s were published by such editorials as "Kazanova" and "Akords" followed by "K. Reinholds", "Harmonija"

and “Daiņa”. In few cases, the role of publisher was the printing house or composer himself. The aforementioned publishers were also the leading score distributors of adapted foreign *schlagers*, operettas and film music.

In the turn of the 1920s and 1930s, characterized by an active circulation of shellac records, the community of active *schlagers*' authors (composers) was established. The most popular authors were Oskars Stroks (Oskar Strok, Oscar Strok, 1893-1975), Alfrēds Vinters (1908-1976), Aleksandrs Okolo-Kulaks (1906-1989) and Marks Marjanovskis (Mark Mar'ānovskij, 1890-1945). They were competitors, but at the same time collaborated as representatives of the same field working on joint score albums and *schlager* records

It has to be pointed out that *schlagers* by Oskars Stroks and Alfrēds Vinters predominate in terms of the number of compositions written in the segment of dance scores. Therefore, the total number of issues conserved demonstrated a quantitative disproportion and somewhat one-sided view. At the same time, it argues the true leading status of music by Stroks and Vinters in the entertainment music of the 1930s. Considering the research experience in terms of the circulation of *schlagers*, the question arises regarding the composers of very few *schlager* editions published: why did they compose this music at all and/or why are there so few scores? Probably, the answer hides in the partially conserved collection of sources.

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CAREERS OF LATVIAN OPERA SINGERS AT THE LATVIAN NATIONAL OPERA AND ABROAD IN THE 1920S AND 1930S

By **Lauma Mellēna-Bartkeviča**

Keywords: Latvian opera singers, LNO, opera history, Latvians in the world, interwar period, mobility, provinciality.

The article focuses on the careers of Latvian opera singers in the 1920s and 1930s, particularly emphasizing Latvian pioneers on international opera stages and their followers during the interwar period which also performed in the Latvian National Opera. During the aforementioned decades due to different socio-historical circumstances, many Latvian opera singers strived to improve their vocal skills with professors in Italy, tried their chances in opera theatres abroad (mainly in Germany, but also in Russia and elsewhere) and some of them became artists with internationally acclaimed careers, extending their operatic career geographically as far as the USA and Australia. Naturally, the context of those performing overseas could be regarded as more exceptional cases rather than a trend, however, these personalities are important, but so far not as extensively researched.

The aim of the article is to provide a comprehensive overview of Latvian opera singers, whose careers have been documented in sources like memoirs (mostly published first in the Latvian diaspora overseas), correspondence and press. The selected sources have been chosen not only due to the pandemic circumstances that kept the doors of archives and museums closed during the research period, but also for the fact that these sources sometimes are essential to document certain facts and events and that they provide wide-ranging contexts of the time and professional environment. The article is structured in three parts. The first part reveals the personalities of some of the “pioneers” – tenor Pauls Sakss (1878–1966), baritone Ādolfs Kaktiņš (1885–1965), soprano Ada Benefelde (1884–1967) and tenor Rūdolfs Bērziņš (1881–1949). The second chapter tells the story of the amazing career started on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean of dramatic soprano Alīda Vāne (1899–1969) and her return to Latvia at the end of the 1930s, but the third tackles some of the several Latvian tenors in Europe during the 1930s and their relationship with the Latvian National Opera at the time. Tenors Mariss Vētra (1901–1965), Artūrs Priednieks-Kavara (1901–1979), Jānis Vītiņš (1897–1941) successfully conquered several prestigious German opera stages in Berlin, Wiesbaden and Dessau as critically acclaimed soloists. Most of their careers have been interrupted by different circumstances, such as national labour policies during the interwar period in European countries, the Second World War emigration and other events. Some of them have suffered from misunderstandings with the cultural managers of the time, more precisely, the provinciality of the Latvian National Opera administration that followed the cultural policy of the newly established Republic of Latvia focusing on local audiences, opera and operetta productions performed in the local language, and the consideration of anyone looking for an international career almost as a fortune-seeker and opportunist instead of a cultural ambassador of a small, new country of talented people. Some had unfortunate destinies. For instance, Latvian tenor Jānis Vītiņš, the leading tenor of the Dessau opera theatre of the time, among others, joined *Aizsargi* (Defenders), the paramilitary organization of volunteers in and after the Soviet occupation until 1940 when he was sentenced to death as an “enemy of the people” and shot in Astrakhan. The legend tells that his last will was to sing an aria from “Andrea Chenier” by Giacomo Puccini. He is one of the “forgotten” characters from the pages of Latvian operatic history written between 1940 and today. Another person hardly mentioned in books is soprano Alīda Vāne, born in Latvia, raised in the USA and vocally trained in Italy who successfully started her international career in Europe, North America and South America. She came to Latvia at the end of the 1930s, but wasn’t able to sing properly in Latvian and, despite her vocal qualities, she fell apart in spotlight.

As for tenors in Germany, one of the greatest personalities in terms of his time being documented in newspaper articles, essays and letters is tenor Mariss Vētra, whose rich heritage leaves plenty of testimonies about the adventures of Latvian singers abroad. This material provides detailed information that contributes to the biographies of several contemporaries and colleagues of Vētra and tells a lot about the rules and customs of the opera industry at the time as compared to today’s situation. Another personality who deserves further research is tenor Kārlis Nīcis (1888–1985), who emigrated to Australia

in the end of 1920s. He became not only a successful opera singer, but also the axis of the Latvian diaspora community in Australia up until the end of his life.

The research in progress proves that these personalities deserve to be restored in Latvian opera and musical theatre history uncovering some previously overlooked contexts and new facts. This article claims that research has to be continued in order to forge the fundament for the database of Latvian opera singers as a first step in completing an encyclopaedic edition in the field following the recently published Latvian Encyclopaedia of Ballet and Dance (2018) and theatre history book "Theatre Since the Restoration of Independence" (2021) to fill the gap in sources related to musical theatre in Latvia.

LIBRETTO: TERMINOLOGY, RESEARCH AND UNDERSTANDING IN RELATED FIELDS OF SCIENCE

By Aija Kupjanska

Keywords: libretto, opera libretto, terminology, typology, libretto as translation, syncretism of libretto and music

As a phenomenon of musical theatre, libretto and its meaning in any of the formats of the musical theatre genre is often an underestimated field. Therefore, all issues related to the transferring of literary source material to musical theatre production is still not sufficiently researched. However, libretto is in a way the most changeable element of the opera genre and comprehensive research of it would enrich the historical context of opera and the understanding of the dramaturgy of the score.

Current research uncovers the perspective of opera as a result of a synthesis of several art forms, encouraging researchers to extend their research field. At the same time, from the musicologist's point of view, the object of interest, more than a libretto itself, is its impact and signifies the different developmental stages of a production of musical theatre – during its creation, in relation to music and the staging process. The author of the article believes that raising the awareness on the existence of different researching perspectives of the libretto is most important for musicology, since music is the primary condition and justification of the existence of a libretto.

Etymologically the term "libretto" relates to Latin and Italian. It roots in the word *liber*, meaning "book" in Latin and its Italian form *libro*, from which the diminutive *libretto* or "little book" derives. The earliest testimony of use of the term *libretto* in written texts dates back to 1274. However, the designation of the text of a musical work appears in the turn of the 17th and 18th century (Borchmeyer 1996: 1116) and in some places in Europe only during the 19th century (Gier 1998: 3).

Although in the beginning libretto seems to be a very clear and easy-to-define notion, its understanding is still very different in terms of its contents, which depends on the

type of the libretto in question. This affirmation is backed on encyclopaedic sources and characterizations of the libretto therein. The article analyzes the descriptions by Ludvigs Kārklīņš (Kārklīņš 2006: 103), Dieter Borchmeyer and Richard Macnutt (Macnutt 2001: 645) and concludes that these descriptions do not provide a universal definition of libretto, but rather they explain the term through its characteristics.

In his research, German literature scholar Alexander Rudolph has tried to systematize different genres of music reflecting the use of term “libretto” and has grouped different types and characteristics of libretto (Rudolph 2015: 390–400). This systematization allows for the conclusion that the libretto’s terminological differences oblige to distinguish clearly the genre boundaries in each and every research summary related to this phenomenon. However, the scheme elaborated in this article shows that the diversity in the understanding of the libretto leads to problems in the classification of its types.

The creation of a libretto and its aim closely relate to the principle of transformation. Kamilia Ziganshina, a researcher from Kazan Federal University, who has based her ideas on Roman Jakobson’s text interpretation or “transformation as translation” principle, has elaborated an analytical approach, where the peculiarities of operatic text transformation are investigated from the viewpoint of translation analysis and cultural semiotics (Ziganshina 2017).

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In her article, Ziganshina analyses opera libretto in three levels – cultural, textual and linguistic. In each of the levels the author pays attention to five text transformation or translation modalities: substitution, repetition, deletion, adding and permutation or modification. Consequently, the text transformation mechanism gives the possibility to evaluate how the text of the literary source and the libretto as well as the text of the libretto and the opera influence the musical language.

The research of Ziganshina and another Polish scholar – Marta Kaźmierczak from the University of Warsaw, prove that the transformation in the case of opera is rather more adding of music to the text, thus creating a new artwork, which is based on the previous one, but not dependant on it (Kaźmierczak 2018).

Flemish music scholar Arjan van Baest sees opera as a semiotic system that includes two components or signs – the libretto and the music in a syncretic union (Baest 2000: 52) Accordingly, the only possible chronological sequence of elements during creation of an opera is between the literary source and the libretto. From this point of view, there is no sense to blame the libretto in case the opera fails.

Baest considers the libretto a form of dramatic art and describes it as the main bearer of operatic dramaturgy, therefore claiming that the libretto can be analyzed in terms of drama or play. The author sees the staging as an opera production process, which is not a part of opera itself (Baest 2000: 52).

In this aspect, Baest’s opinion coincides with the observation by Rudolph that the research of libretto leads to a paradox – the analysis of the score and the text of the

libretto are not able to provide a full understanding about the final result of the opera making process or the production (Rudolph 2015: 399).

Taking into account the aforementioned differences in terminology and understanding of the term “libretto” as well as the approaches offered by several authors, it is possible to draw up a partially individualized opera analysis mechanism that is derived from the libretto and related directly to the examination of the text integrated with the score. Such a necessity could become applicable when researching historical works, where the types of libretto related to the opera in question and their changeability during the creation or staging can add important information on historical contexts and dramaturgy solutions.

The information included in the article proves that the libretto as an element belonging both to the field of literature and music historically is closely related to the creation of opera genre and development of opera theory.

FELICITA TOMSONE AND HER OPERA *PŪT, VĒJIŅI! (BLOW, THE WIND!) (1960)*

By Aija Kupjanska

Keywords: opera libretto, opera production, Rainis, *Pūt, vējiņi! Blow the Wind!* in musical theatre, culture policy, folk song

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The literary source of the opera *Pūt, vējiņi! (Blow, the Wind!)* by Latvian composer Felicita Tomšone is one of the best-known plays by the famous Latvian playwright Rainis. Up until today, there are two operas based on this play that have been produced for the opera stage, namely the opera by Felicita Tomšone of 1960 and the opera with the same title by Arvīds Žilinskis (1905–1993) written in 1969. In 2011, the Liepāja theatre successfully produced a musical *Pūt, vējiņi!* by Kārlis Lācis (1977). However, the interest regarding the play as a source for composition was expressed also by other composers: Alfrēds Kalniņš (1879–1951), Aleksandrs Valle (1890–1972), Mārtiņš Jansons (1899–1972), Artūrs Salaks (1891–1984) and Bruno Skulte (1905–1976). The opera by Felicita Tomšone is the first stage production of the relevant Latvian play at the opera house.

Felicita Tomšone was born on March 30, 1901, in Jelgava, in a family of the civil servant Jānis Vidbergs and his wife Elizabete. Her maiden name Vidberga is widely known because of her brother, Sigismunds Vidbergs (1890–1970), a distinguished Latvian graphic artist of the 20th century. From 1917 to 1920 Tomšone studied composition theory at the Petrograd Conservatory with Mikhail Klimov (*Mihail Klimov*, 1881–1937) and piano with Boris Zacharov (*Boris Zaharov*, 1887–1943) (J. Škapars, *Literatūra un māksla*, 20. 09. 1969)

After her return to Latvia, she continued her musical education at the Conservatory of Latvia. In 1926, Tomšone graduated with distinction from the piano class taught by Nikolajs Dauge (1894–1964) (Fūrmane 2017: 24), and in 1950, from the composition class by Ādolfs Skulte (1909–2000) (J. Škapars, *Literatūra un māksla*, 20. 09. 1969)

There are very few works left from Tomsone's compositions found at the score library of Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music, music reading room of the National Library of Latvia, the score library of the National Opera and Ballet of Latvia and in the archive of the Literature and Music museum. The only published collection *Dziesmas balsij un klavierēm* (*Songs for voice and piano*) by Felicita Tomsone and Teodors Tomsons (1904–1992) – was issued after the death of the composer in 1989.

The musical material of the opera *Blow, the Wind!* by Tomsone is stored in the score library of the National Opera and Ballet of Latvia (No. 0178, 0179) and in the archive of the Literature and Music museum (No. 213350). Both copies contain diverse notes that provide a detailed insight into the staging process of the opera.

The information available testifies that despite the premiere of *Blow, the Wind!* by Felicita Tomsone took place on 2nd June, 1960, the first drafts are dated already during her composition studies. The opera production was led by the conductor Edgars Tons (1917–1967) and stage director Kārlis Liepa (1905–1990). In set design, the artist Biruta Goģe (1926–2008) used the top-notch technologies of the time – a projector allowing the showing of colorful diapositives by the photographer Egons Keris (1922–2016) containing the landscapes of Latvia (Grāvītis 1961: 45).

The opera was staged with two casts for soloists of the main roles of Uldis and Baiba: Pēteris Grāvelis (1919–1995) and Auguste Klinka (1918–2012) as well as Mairgurs Andermanis (1922–2011) and Elza Zvirgzdiņa (1927–1998) (LMM No. 275903).

The information found in archival materials and the press confirms that *Blow, the Wind!* was performed at least 11 times. About a month after the premiere, the press published several relatively negative reviews by prominent critics. In the Third Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Latvia held on 1st and 2nd August 1960, the opera by Felicita Tomsone was seriously criticized by Augusts Voss (1916–1994), the secretary of the party. It shows that the press reviews reflect only the surface of the politically unstable and changing situation of the time and its impact on the culture processes.

Felicita Tomsone in cooperation with the librettist Jūlijs Vanags (1903–1986) created the opera in three acts or five scenes. The structure of the work allows it the classification of chamber opera. The reviews of the composer's contemporaries mostly describe the stylistic and structural solution as inappropriate for the scale of Rainis' drama. However, to put it more precisely, the incompliance in this case concerned the chosen form and the requirements and expectations of the time regarding the opera genre and creative work by Rainis.

The libretto and musical material reveals that one of the core elements of this opera is folk song. For instance, the folk song *Pūt, vējiņi* (*Blow, the Wind*) in opera becomes a leading theme related to the character of Uldis similarly as in the play and is heard in the introduction and all three acts. A significant role in terms of plot is given to the folk song *Tec, saulīte, tecēdama* (*An Orphan's Song! As the sun runs on its journey* – transl. Lilija Zobens) included in Baiba's aria *Eglīt, mana lūzējiņa* (*Dear Spruce broken off*) of the third

act. Both examples show that Felicita Tomsone uses the folk songs in an opera score in a very creative and diverse manner.

The article concludes that the research of historical testimonies, including the original score of the opera *Blow, the Wind!* by Felicita Tomsone proves its artistic qualities both in form (chamber opera) and innovative set design. The overlooked personality and heritage of the composer today does not imply a lack of professionalism, but rather a close relation to the political situation at the turn of the 1950s and 1960s that produced a strong impact on the staging of *Blow, the Wind!* and public evaluations of the production.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Ināra Jakubone (b. 1960), MA in Arts, graduated from the Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music Musicology Department in 1987, and commenced her career in “practical musicology”. She worked at Radio Latvia (1984–2006), authoring various programmes on music, and also producing concerts and live broadcasts for Latvian and European radio audiences. Then she directed the Latvian Music Information Centre (2006–2018), providing many different publications (brochures *Music in Latvia* (7 editions), *Jazz in Latvia*, *Performing Arts/Latvia*, and more than 30 CDs).

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Thanks to the invitation to participate in the “CARD” project, Ināra Jakubone is currently involved in the research of the 20th century interwar period of music and concert life in Latvia.

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