

## Intertextual Aspects of Opera Art by N. Harnoncourt Within Simulative Reality

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**Abstract:** This study presents, the results of contemporary opera art study phenomena from the perspective of an interdisciplinary approach. The subject of the study was the staging of V. Mozart's opera "The Magic Flute" at the Salzburg Festival in 2012, implemented in cooperation the conductor N. Harnoncourt and the director Y.D. Herzog. During the analysis of musical interpretation peculiarities, determined the set design, which differs significantly from prevailing ones in this genre and at is this tradition opera direction, a number of references and quotations on the cultural phenomena of past eras was revealed. On the basis of the selected mutually determinated links between the researchers of the study, the conclusion was made about the presence of the intertext system in the opera production reflecting the peculiarities of artistic interpretation. The introduced intertexts organically complemented the opera plot and performing the functions of both the cultural and historical phenomenon symbols, given an opportunity to rethink the artistic content of opera performances from the perspective of the actual problems of our time. The principles of metanarrative and intertextuality allowed N. Harnoncourt to soften the syndrome of contemporary plot disappearance. The conductor was not just an interpreter of an researcher's creation, but a co-author who states the element of performing improvisation founded by the text itself. The social and philosophical issues of considered direction reflect the modern simulative statement of reality that creates the illusion of metaspace, where man develops the scenario of being by himself.

**Key words:** Intertextuality, N. Harnoncourt, simulative reality, opera art, V. Mozart

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### INTRODUCTION

In contemporary art, there is the tendency to rethink the classic themes in the context of socio-philosophical perspective, reflecting the spirit of the age, its spiritual and moral determinants political, economic and social reforms as well as historical and cultural character. In directions, the traditional stories are enriched with new meanings by introducing unexpected staging, costumes, scenery, scenic attributes which in some cases are interpreted as the symbols of other cultures and may get the functions of intertextuality, embodying an researcher's artistic intention. You can talk about the possibility of a person multicultural space expansion in the process of initiation to a different culture, turning it into the sphere of spiritual experience. In the context of the designated problem, the need for "modern specialist personality formation able to freely navigate in a multicultural world, be tolerant to the representatives of different peoples, their cultural diversity and values" increases (Valiahmetova, 2014). However, the idea of universal tolerance and forgiveness relevant for the end of the twentieth is often questioned century in the XXIst century. For example, in V. Mozart's production "The Magic Flute", carried out by the conductor

N. Harnoncourt and director Y.D. Herzog. The creators of the opera make a viewer think about the correctness and moral justification of these ideas.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study object is a modern opera art where the elements of different arts may act as intertexts: literary texts, costumes, scenery, stage design, choreography and, of course, music that is "one of the more than other forms of art faced to the emotional sphere of human" (Kamalova, 2014). The direction of W. Mozart's opera "The Magic Flute" at the Salzburg Festival of 2012 was revealed among the number of innovative readings of classic opera traditions as one of those the artistic interpretation of which was logically built on the basis of a careful and thorough reading of an original musical text. An unusual scenography of the opera here is based on an authentic approach to a musical text which was initiated by the conductor Harnoncourt (1985b), a famous explorer-autentist, an expert of Mozart's creation, the creator of the baroque ensemble of authentic instruments "Concentus Musicus", the performer of all symphonies and the director of the composer's operas. The basic principles and details of N. Harnoncourt artistic

conception were set out in a number of his publications, one of which is the book "Music as Speech: Towards a new understanding of music". There are several studies investigating certain aspects of creativity in the field of instrumental (Karpati, 2005; Hurwitz, 2012) and cantatas and oratorios (Naulleau, 2014) genres. At the same time, we did not find enough studies revealing the principles of his work with opera performances.

The aim of this study is to examine the intertextual aspects of the conductor's opera creativity in the context of contemporary simulative reality. In order to achieve this goal, we set the following objectives:

- To identify and consider the intertexts in Mozart's opera stage "The Magic Flute" at the Salzburg Festival of 2012
- To summarize the functioning of intertexts from the position of an artistic content production
- To trace the manifestation of a creative personality as a subject of an artistic communication in the context of simulative reality

The definition of "intertextuality" concept was introduced in the mid-twentieth century by the French theorist of post-structuralism Yu. Kristeva. The main point of her concept is the parallel coexistence of the artist reality and the reality preceding, it with which he is in a constant dialogue. According to the interpretation of the concept "intertextuality" in the works by I. Ilin literature, culture, society, history and a man may act as a common intertext. One of the most comprehensive and profoundly reflecting the essence of this wording concept is Barth (1994)'s definition: "Every text is a new cloth woven from old quotations. Scraps of cultural codes, formulas, rhythmic structures, social idioms and so forth all of them are obsessed with a text and mixed there, as a language always exists prior to a text and around it" (Gulyanitskaya, 2009). Let's recall the famous actual continuation concerning "the refusal from author rights" by Barth (1994), the meaning of which is that an author is not able to predict the possible interpretation of the text by a reader. Possible different connotations are developed in a reader's or an interpreter's head into the whole integrity: "A reader is the space where every quote is kept, from which a letter is composed; a text becomes a united not in its origin but in its mission".

After some speculations concerning Bart, we can assume that the mind of each interpreter develops his own, conceptual image unlike the author's original, some kind of simulative reality that the author of the text tries to convey with scrupulous thoroughness. "The author is dead", but, ultimately, to make a reader be born. In this

sense, the simulative reality as a copy of a non-existent materialization of simulacra is the possibility of communication between an author and an interpreter of a text in terms of image creation. The simulative reality allows to create a simulative environment in which there are only desired images created or projected by an individual. This point of view is supported by Baudrillard (2013)'s thesis, "The actual fact is no longer what it was, nostalgia attains its full meaning. The increase of the secondary truth, objectivity and authenticity value was observed".

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

W. Mozart's opera "The Magic Flute" is the genre of opera singspiel, was written in 1791 during the last year of the composer's life. The production of the opera at the Salzburg Festival of 2012, differs with an innovative set design, as well as with new interpretations of a plot during >200 year history of opera in which the traditional Sarastro's victory, symbolizing the triumph of reason, is replaced by the hopeless confrontation with the queen of the night. The innovative solution leveled a fabulous primal foundation of the plot in which the outcome of the struggle between good and evil was predetermined by the principles of moral and ethical context, transformed into a philosophical perspective of dialectical confrontation of eternal categories like oriental concepts.

The leading role in the implementation of this stage belongs to Harnoncourt (1985a)'s conductor. Among the key features one should identify the use of the old instrument baroque ensemble "Concentus Musicus", giving a softer tone to the sound of the entire musical score softer which also the interpretation of vocal and instrumental parts which differs from the existing opera traditions, based on a careful study of the researcher's original text and the pursuit for the most accurate, corresponding to the reference of the previous epoch. The theoretical foundations of interpretation set forth by the conductor in the book "Music as Speech: Towards a new understanding of music", contain the differentiation of approaches to the perception of music. According to N. Harnoncourt the music of 1600-1800 need to be understood more than felt like the music of subsequent periods of art, based on its similarity to speech. The sound of the vocals distinguishes especially, expressive articulation, reproducing the structural ruggedness of human speech in music.

An authentic approach to a musical text led to the emergence of unusual interpretations in terms of famous opera room traditions. Let's consider some which are in our opinion, the most significant ones: the duet of Pamina

and Papageno in the first act of the opera and Sarastro's aria in the second act. The research interest in precisely these opera episodes was caused by a sharp contrast compared to the opera tradition of their artistic sense leveling the natural and vibrant expression of living and intimate human feeling with a sudden appearance of rational and sober intonations. The duo sounds much slower compared with the usual tradition, moreover, it differs not by romantically elevated mood but rather reasonable and even preachy tone, a serious attitude with which Pamina tries to convey the significance of her words for Papageno. Instead of direct admiration with long known truths heroes tend to grasp their meaning. An unusual principle of vocal intonation of a word is argued by N. Harnoncourt in his book, highlighting besides the expressive articulation the requirement of music understanding reasoned by W. Mozart as a voice message containing a definite meaning. Harnoncourt (1985a, b) brings as an evidence the biographical fact of the composer's life, preserved in his personal records. The fact W. Mozart wrote music especially for connoisseurs of art, while he named "Papageno" (IT. Parrot) the fans calling this or that thing is beautiful, without understanding nothing in it, which acquired a particularly negative value when he pronounced it.

In the second act of the opera Sarastro's aria "bad feelings of revenge" sounds in the most dramatic moment of the action. Aria is preceded by the scene of second aria from the famous queen of the night in which she gives a dagger to her daughter with the requirement to kill Sarastro. The girl is confused, she does not dare to violate the mother's order but she can't kill a man. Sarastro appeared suddenly and found Pamina in tears and upset. According to the story, he had to console the girl by his words and in the existing performing tradition his voice with a deep velvety timbre, sounding at a slow pace helps it. Aria was written by the composer for the bass in a very low tessitura, with the use register range extreme sounds. It was transposed by a semitone up due to lower natural vintage sound of old stringed instruments. Compared with modern instruments their strings can not be set at the same height.

The analysis of considered as well as other musical performance sounds led to the assumption of opera staging by the means of social and philosophical issues of modern times on the gradual displacement of lively and direct creative expression by strengthening the role of rational consciousness, reflecting the thrust of civilization technocratic development from a man's life in the XXIst century. Musical interpretation is reflected in the staging of an opera performance, containing references and citations considered by us as intertexts, the analysis

of which in aggregate revealed their systematic and consistent use and to put forward the justification for the assumption concerning the increase of social-philosophical problem complexity concerning opera artistic content, reflecting the current issues of modern human society.

The direction contains a number of references and citations associated with the images of the past cultures and carrying a certain semantic contexts. The first scene of the opera differs by an unusual scenography in which Prince Tamino is saved from the snake pursuing him. The character of staging performed by a director as well as the presence of some pretty frank details in it, causes involuntarily associations with the theory of Freud, in which the image of a snake is one of the key one and symbolizes the presence of inner fears in a man caused by the natural attractions. According to Freud's theory, the deep layers of a man's subconscious mind are both the dark side of a personality, who can be metaphorically called the kingdom of the night and a source of creative potential, contributing to the transformation of the world. The perception of scenic elements from the opera first scene as intertexts recreating substantive aspects of Freud's theory, lead to a rethinking of the prince Tamino image, who became the symbol of a person experiencing internal conflicts that lie in the field of subconscious and intuition.

The research interest is presented by the *mise en scene*, directed during Papageno's aria singing. The hero appears before the audience, surrounded by young girls, which is justified by the plot, according to which, Papageno dreams most of all about the meeting of his bride. In this scene, the attention is attracted by the costumes of a girl group in the style of the post-war Soviet period, which characterizes youth subcultures in the Soviet Union, who chose the American way of life as a reference one and received the name of dandy. The described youth subculture is characterized by such features as a deliberate indifference to politics, a certain cynicism in judgment, dismissive attitude to a number of moral and ethical norms of Soviet society. The stage image treated as the intertext, associated with the subculture of free-thinking young Soviet men in the mid-twentieth century, is continued logically by symbolic subtexts of opera beginning artistic content.

The central intertext performed by scenographic means becomes the image of a flute, introduced using a stage attribute that symbolizes a musical instrument in the form of a drainpipe, causing the associative images of artistic sense in the poem written by Mayakovsky "Could you?". This attribute is made in the stage as a bent water pipe that does not match the appearance of the flute as a

musical instrument and forces a viewer to recall the famous poem by Vladimir Mayakovsky, where such an image used as a challenge facing thereader. The image of the flute as a subject capable of changing the world for the better in the hands of a man ready for it, gives the opportunity to ease categorical judgments concerning the queen of the night, taking into account its direct involvement in the appearance of an object in the hero's hands. The introduction of listed intertexts by the innovative scenography allows to justify the confrontation between two opposing forces in the fairy story, the leaders of which are sarastro and the queen of the night.

**Summary:** In the context of simulative reality, erasing the opposition between natural and artificial, we can talk about postmodern transformations of classical interpretation concepts. The introduced intertexts organically complemented the opera plot and performing the functions of both the cultural and historical phenomena symbols, provided the opportunity to rethink the artistic content of opera performances from the perspective of the actual problems of our time. Due to the design of the text by an interpreter it became possible in postmodern art to see a controlled sprawl of simulation. As was noted correctly "the art is from gods, only these are the gods of simulation" (Velikanov, 2007).

### CONCLUSION

The analysis of unusual Mozart's opera "The Magic Flute" at the Salzburg Festival in 2012, suggests make a conclusion on the consistency and persuasiveness of the artistic design and highlight, it in a series of many such opera art phenomena, including the productions of the same opera during the last 10 year. The identification of a number of interdependent intertexts in the opera scenography allowed to argue the logic of artistic content in considered opera stage by W. Mozart. The tendency to retelling a classic story with a modern twist in this performance acquired a higher level argument through the use of intertextuality possibilities. In our opinion, the directors were able to provide a viewer's image in detail. An innovative solution is addressed to this viewer.

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