

REVIEW

by *Prof. Dr. Angelina Petrova Petrova*,
NMA "Pancho Vladigerov",
on the dissertation of *Theodoros Haridis*,
professional field 8.3 Music and Dance Art,
PhD candidate at New Bulgarian University,
on the topic:

Chamber Opera "LA KROPIA":

History of Creation and Musical Analysis

(The work is based on the book "In the Zone of Smoke and Anemones" by Ioannis Profis in (4) four poetic images")

for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Supervisor. *Prof. Elisaveta Valcinova-Chandova, D.Sc.*

Biographical data:

Theodoros Haridis is a Greek composer whose most recent projects include the opera that is the focus of this dissertation. He was born in Athens, where he began his musical studies - at the National Conservatory of Athens, studying Composition and Orchestration under D. Kapsomenos. He further graduated the National Academy of Music "Pancho Vladigerov", Sofia, Bulgaria, with a Master's degree in Composition in the class of Alexander Raychev.

Theodoros Haridis' activity as a composer and theorist is multifaceted - he writes film, chamber and opera music, contributes to the field of music pedagogy and at the same time establishes himself to the public as an innovative composer. One of his most significant opuses is the opera La

Kropia, also presented as his doctoral thesis. Theodoros Haridis has taught at the Thessaloniki Conservatory and lectured at the University of Macedonia. During his years of artistic activity he has worked with distinguished artists in Greece and abroad, participated in festivals and concerts, written music for several documentaries, had his works broadcast on Greek radio, and has been active as a teacher. He is a member of the Union of Greek Composers. He is a PhD candidate of the New Bulgarian University, Sofia.

Description of the dissertation

The dissertation is 126 pages long, including 122 pages of text with music examples, abstract, introduction, assessments, an interview with Ioannis Profis, contributions and bibliography. A professional biography of the author, Theodoros Haridis, as well as the score of the opera La Kropia ("La Kropia") are appended. The thesis is a total of 125 pages, consisting of an abstract and introduction, four main chapters, a conclusion, a list of contributions, a bibliography and two appendices. The literature used mainly includes links to Internet sites - 32 titles in total, including four operatic scores.

Contents of the dissertation: purpose, ideas, contributions

The author, Theodoros Haridis, combines his interpretation of the genre of opera with his concept of the relationship between genre models of the past and the present, as well as the attracting or nurturing of audiences to the traditions of musical theatre. His project is related to the field of both the original authorship and to the field of the relationship with early classical operatic models and the field of popular music. The

originality of Haridis's approach is part of the task he has set himself - to create an opera that simultaneously focuses on the pedagogical dimensions and the relationship of the operatic genre with young listeners. He is following his idea of building a concept of a synthesis with the traditions of opera from the eighteenth century to the present in which, on the one hand, the "first foundations of the genre" from the eighteenth century would be integrated and, on the other hand, the musical experience young listeners have with various kinds of music, including popular music.

According to Haridis, the main aim in the opera is to "consider the conception and basic ideas of composition, which are aimed at bringing technical compositional solutions from the past into the present.../The text deals with the influence that the end result of the creativity of the past has on the psychological attitude and emotions of the audience in the fragments in which elements from the past are part of the present" (p5, abstract). Almost all the elements of this operatic conception subscribe to this idea of the audience's connection to the genre's primal traditions: the vocal forms and the opera's plot; the idea of a national opera theatre, the union of the traditional and the contemporary, the intervention of vivid vocal idioms that send some parallel to pop music (the aria "Mamma Mia") and the presence of an interpretation of elements of classical and jazz harmony.

The structure of the dissertation comprises, as already stated, an introduction in which the composer presents the coherence of theoretical, compositional and pedagogical aspects. The description of the purpose and coherence of these three aspects is the subject of the 'Introduction'. The next chapter is entitled 'Greek composers who composed operas'. Here Haridis explores the national operatic tradition, from the earliest roots of opera in the Ionian islands and the pioneers, to the composer with

the ambition to found a national school of music, Kalomiris, with his major contribution in the field of laying the foundations of historical and dramatic opera, linked to the Romantic models. This part is devoted to situating Haridis's operatic project in the historical aspects that characterize the development of the musical theatre genre in Greece, from the 18th to the 20th century. The history of the opera composers of Greece is interpreted to support the dissertator's idea of creating a "bridge" between the very first operatic traditions in his country, between popular linguistic idioms/ideas, and the current consciousness of the youth audience today.

The structure of the dissertation is related to Haridis's attempt to analyze all the elements of his conception: the next chapter is devoted to an analysis of the libretto, as well as a thorough entry into the world of the ideas of the poet Ioannis Profis, followed by a description and analytical notes on the libretto.

Haridis creates Chapter 6 in which he interprets his ideas about musical language in opera. In the note examples we see that the opera's action is given emphasis at the beginning through a quotation of a popular operatic-vocal idiom, the canzonetta by Cesare Bixio, followed by his ideas and overlays in the plot and language. The author has described his style, stressing that: 'it has elements of neoclassicism and romanticism, achieving and harmonious language with a modern mindset. Written in the 21st century, the work is impossible to dismiss modern thinking and aesthetics"/p.../. In chapter six, Haridis has also attempted to reveal his ideas about harmonic language in opera, elements of modal thinking and chord construction in jazz are unleashed in his system. In this section, Haridis attempts to lay out his views on types of harmonic language and find his treatments worthy of attention.

The next chapter, moves into the realm of generalizations and articulates Haridis's idea of creating an operatic theatre that would 'resolve' the contradiction that operatic opuses today are either addressed to specialized audiences who know and appreciate postmodern language, or are difficult to access/understand for general audiences. Haridis believes he is looking for a way out of the dilemma: "The entertainment needs of the masses versus the intellectual need for classical art to be based on and derived from a common constant of the past, which relates to compositional devices" (p. 21). It is for this reason that he stresses the need to educate the listener in the language of opera: 'Like the melodic lines that can be imprinted on the listener's memory so that he can retain and sing them after the performance is over, the morphological structure of the text in this case is based on traditional forms, the harmony does not deviate from tonal frameworks, and the overall framework of the project does not deviate from this philosophy' (p. 21, abstract).

In the end, Haridis, at the intersection of pedagogy/composition, tradition/pop music, attempts to derive a new treatment of the chamber-opera genre: "And so I conclude that this musical movement may be one that will unburden and at the same time provoke or awaken the interest of today's listeners. It will be the one that will draw emotional reactions in people's souls and that will create a channel of communication between the composer and the listener. There are many points in common in the past and the present that we can compare" (p22). In the end it is perhaps the pedagogical 'spark', the appropriateness, the 'bridge to young listeners' that is most important in his project, i.e. in this he finds a clear contribution to the project he has created, which is both creative, writing an opera, and pedagogical - interpretation/elaboration , an appeal to a young audience.

A distinctive and valuable point in T. Haridis's dissertation is the concept of possible performance: 'Chamber opera is presented as an alternative model of production in small towns (refuting the theory that opera is an inherently urban genre)' (p23). The whole conceit is original and valuable in that it combines an impulse of enlightenment, original work, interpretation/original interpretation of history and contemporary operatic language.

I also recommend an appropriate publication and performance of the opera, which could take place in a small theatre or university setting. This project is designed with the idea of also carrying out a pedagogical "laboratory" experiment, where the author can approbate his concept . As a result of the fact that the dissertation contains an original point of view, analysis and interpretation of the literature, the abstract corresponds to the content, and the text/idea itself contains clearly expressed contributions, I propose to the esteemed Scientific Jury to award Theodoros Nikiforos Haridis the degree of Doctor of Education and Science in the professional field 8.3.- Music and Dance Art.

Prof. Dr. Angelina Petrova

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