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## Facilitating national security of Ukraine by means of arts

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### Abstract

Modern theory of national security is based on many concepts: international security, economic security and more. However, due to objective and subjective factors, insufficient attention is paid to the cultural component of state-building processes. Dialogue of cultures, the interaction of artistic creativity of artists from different countries have significant potential in the field of cultural diplomacy, the effectiveness of which affects the state of national security.

An example of the trend of such interaction is the Ukrainian interpretation of the French opera 'The Spanish Hour' by Maurice Ravel, the specifics of which are the content of this article from the standpoint of dialogue of cultures.

**Keywords:** national security, cultural diplomacy, dialogue of cultures, interpretation, Maurice Ravel, 'The Spanish Hour', interaction of art.

### Introduction

Any manifestation of the director's interpretation is a certain model of creative thinking, which is dictated by the artist's education, mental affiliation and life goals. When choosing an art piece to stage, artist is looking for something that has touched his life and can resonate with the public. But in some cases, especially if we are dealing with the 20th-century music, communication between the performer and the spectator is extremely important.

For this reason, there was a need for the text adaptation of Maurice Ravel's opera '*L'heure espagnole*' in order to instantly understand comic situations in which the heroes of the opera are getting into. For its part, translation is authorship with all that follows, and the work, in essence, is an 'interpretation of what has already been interpreted', so to speak. Due to the practical necessity of adapting the French libretto to the stage embodiment, the author of the article I. Dats, who was staging the piece, made her own Ukrainian translation of the opera. Ukrainian composer and musicologist Andrii Bondarenko found a reference to the existing Ukrainian-language translation of the 1980's by Apshis and Komarova (the names of the authors are unknown). However, the manuscript was officially lost by the Central State Archive-Museum of Literature and Arts of Ukraine, which is why the Russian translation by N. P. Rozhdestvenskaya (made in 1976) was in demand and published by the publishing house 'Music'. This text, as befits a libretto, was focused primarily on the convenience of vocal performance, so it retained the general content of Frank-Noen's poem without regard to linguistic details and accuracy of their translation. In addition, differences were implemented due to the soviet censorship which changed the authenticity of indecent connotations. Because where Concepcion openly says that she craves for erotic adventures, there are soviet phrases like 'a night full of care', etc.

It is fair to say that for the present day there are only three Ukrainian-language productions of this opera, production of this article's author was the second and was based on the score of outstanding conductor Veniamin Tolba, the third interpretation in independent Ukraine was

embodied by Tetyana Voronova. All the performances were made by Ukrainian National Tchaikovsky Academy of Music graduates. In 2009, Dmytro Todoryuk staged this opera in French on the stage of Tchaikovsky National Musical Academy Opera Studio as a state exam in music directing. The Concepcion part was sung by Susanna Jamaladinova (Jamala), Gonsalve – by Georgy Nechayev, Inigo by Roman Smolyar, and Ramiro by Mykhailo Humenny. It was also found one more production another production was found, apart from the researcher of this article I. Dats staged in the early 2000s at the National Philharmonic of Ukraine. It turns out that in the late 60's, according to the memoirs of Professor of the Ukrainian National Tchaikovsky Academy of Music L. P. Prudnikova, was a 'two-piano version' of Benjamin Tolba, the rendition was made by the conductor himself from the orchestral version to the piano score. In fact, it served for concert performances of the opera and vocal exams by singers graduates of the Ukrainian National Tchaikovsky Academy of Music in Russian.

Two versions were chosen to be compared to the researcher's own stage interpretation, namely: the Grand Opera version, which is a less 'conservative' director's version of Frank Corsaro for the 1987 Glyndebourne Opera Festival, which recreates a visual range in the style of Catalan watch with toy, somewhat mechanical protagonists that exist within the time mechanism.

The second version of the National Opera in Paris specifies and makes events looks more modern by transferring them to the late 90's. In general, in our opinion, this interpretation appeals to the genre of sitcom. Recognized by many of the world's leading opera houses, director Laurent Pelly reveals the inner comedy of this plot, interpreting it through constant emotional tension and sensual expression of the main character. In this version, we immediately find ourselves in the cluttered apartment of the antiquarian Torquemada. Everything looks as if this clumsy domestic chaos is in tune with the troubled family life of the Torquemada-Concepcion couple. And literally everything has its time, its 'internal clock'. Even the washing machine starts the countdown. This reinforces the 'pseudo-tragedy' of existence in this world of Concepcion. After all, her 'women's watch' (time of sensual pleasures) is literally limited, and the determination of potential partners leaves much to be desired.

## Results and discussion

The operatic work of Maurice Ravel in the first decade of the 20th century is rightly considered as a specific artistic phenomenon. In the context of verists gaining momentum, Debussy's fundamental impressionistic opera 'Pelleas and Melisande', experimental ballet performances 'Russian Seasons' in Paris, expressionists Berg and Strauss, Ravel turns to the *commedia dell'arte*, which take place in the 18th century in the Spanish town of Toledo. The plot and comedy of masks method, as they say today, is outdated, but the ways to solve it are modern and relevant today. Intonational features of the French everyday language, original background sound effects brings us closer to the declamatory style of *comédie-française* and, so to speak, modern direction such as film music. As a result, those different styles and meanings has a powerful effect on the audience's imagination and perception, which actualizes the eternal story of the 'young wife and old husband' and rises a wide variety of musical and directors' interpretations.

Analyzing the selected material, there is a need for detailed study of the original sources of this plot, so to speak, the librettological principles of Frank-Noen (Maurice Etienne Leonard) and the composers style [3].

The work was written and presented in the modern era, when the eclectic style blurred the boundaries of genres. So it should not be considered as a completely *comédie-bouffe*. The libretto goes beyond this genre: there is a constant play on words, hints, 'part – a part'. And these are the characteristics of farce. For example, in the scene of disappointment Concepcion in lovers, which from the director's perspective is a 'turning point' in the perception of the main character and is a

certain pre-climax, Ravel quotes the motif of Beethoven's 5th Symphony, 'as fate knocks on the door'. But we understand, that the counterbassoon theme cannot have the meaning of the original idea. And this reveals composer's amazing sense of humor.

Ravel's orchestral paints depict both songbirds and the mechanical pendulum's sounds of the watchmaker's workshop. The percussion group of the orchestra plays an extremely important role. Starting with a small overture, or rather 'introduction', which is the 'key to the opera', as Boris Pokrovsky said, in our opinion, there is an instant immersion of the listener in the atmosphere of the watch workshop. The clocks are ticking, crashing, and in the background, you can hear wavy intonations, that mimic the boiling water of Guadalquivir.

Later in the climax (in Concepcion's arioso), we will hear how these intonations will pass into the character's musical vocabulary in the rhythm of habanera. It seems important, that throughout the score Ravel actively uses rhythms of bolero, habanera, seguidilla, etc. But he does not quote existing melodies, but writes his own ones. The central aria of Concepcion is a habanera, on the background of which in the amplitude *mf* – *ff* the character complains about her female destiny. She repeats three times: 'This is an adventure!'. And only when Concepcion suddenly has the decision, these waves in the orchestra and the motif moves from the area of internal conflict to external.

The only really singing character is Gonsalve. But he does not just sing, but sounds like a canary, which was quoted by the composer in the introduction. This is in tune with his field, because he is a poet, a student. Musical intonation of Concepcion is an endless oscillation from high to low register, alternating with the short 'parlato'. According to the author himself, 'The Spanish Hour' is a musical comedy in genre, but for the director it is more like *commedia dell'arte* and the 'comedy of intrigue', and its libretological composition and text style is a farce. So, the hypothetical idea will definitely revolve around the genre specifics of musical comedy and farce. The theme of time, which is traced in all the aspects of the work (both linearly – in the score, and in volume – through the visual part) certainly cannot escape the attention of the interpreter and be detached from the textual reading.

In fact, the title of the work can be interpreted as an astronomical measure of time and hour, as well as the 'moment' or 'Spanish era'. The compositional idea exists on the border of several styles and genres, but is reduced to the *comédie lyrique*, as the composer defines himself.

The first director's version of the opera, considered in this article, was staged by Laurent Pelly and was performed together with another Ravel's opera '*L'Enfant et les sortilèges*' at the Glyndebourne Opera Festival in 2011. Although, specifically, the '*L'heure espagnole*' was performed at the National Opera of Paris in 2004. Laurent Pelly is one of France's most famous drama and opera directors. His productions always consist of the smallest details, he also designs costumes for the productions.

Director himself often becomes a costume designer for his shows. It is important due to the fact that the first thing audience perceive in the visual range colours and light. The male roles are dressed in mostly dark pastel colours, except of the orange-green clothes of Gonsalve, which creates the effect of a painted rooster. And this visually shows the conflict between him and Concepcion. The colour chaos of the apartment is in tune with the state of mind of the heroine: her mood changes every minute; she is on the verge of logic and madness. She talks to the washing machine, beats a huge bull model, hates the sounds of clocks, and most importantly – wants to get out of this cluttered space in a transparent glass window to the street. And this coexists well with Ravel's idea of the main's character disquiet, where she, in the end, will go against the circumstances of life. This 'mono idea' of the director is reinforced by Pelly's long-term collaboration with conductor Kazushi Ono and the London Philharmonic Orchestra. At least, the version for the Glyndebourne Opera Festival is occasionally more complete than the first version of in the director's hometown – *Opera Bastille* (National Opera of Paris) in 2014.

*'L'heure espagnole'* in the artistic interpretation of Laurent Pelly gives the impression of a sitcom – a series, in which every housewife will sincerely believe in. The author brings the realistic idea, where all the components are combined with sound content. The genre of the production we define as *comedy lyrique* with the sitcom elements. Laurent Pelly himself said, that in the opera 'all the characters belong to a watchmaker's shop, so it was very interesting to draw a melody to create the movement. For almost the entire performance, movement accompanies Ravel's idea'. For example, in the final quintet-morality Gonsalve, even after the love, he does not suffer, but enjoys the inspiration that came to him under the influence of the events: he dances, and other heroes support him and sincerely admire his poetic talent. So, in the finale of the opera in Pelly's interpretation there is not moralizing, but stating the antics of time as the fact of happy existence. And this fundamentally distinguishes his vision of the opera.

To sum up this staging, Laurent Pelly, as a representative of the French directing school, in his version does not create ideal heroes and absolute situations. His *'L'heure espagnole'* is based on external stage action, intrigue around the main character and play on words. The orchestra and the singers exist in a single sound-style space, and the scenography reveals the director's intentions to deepen the internal conflict, everything that exists in the text does not cause contradictions in the whole composition.

One of the main figures of American directing in the last third of the XX century Frank Corsaro. Always an innovator, Corsair has breathed new life into many works, and continues to make viewers think about what they need to change in life. In a 1988 interview with Bruce Duffy, Corsaro said it was important not to turn a comedy into a farce. And he sincerely follows this rule on the example of his version of *'L'heure espagnole'*. It is immediately noticeable that the director has extensive experience in musical theatre. Subtle humor, multifaceted thinking, a sense of Ravel's music in a *mise-en-scène* solution – all this creates the effect of a single sound-style space. It is worth noting that this work was carried out in collaboration with the conductor Sian Edwards. Such a tandem with a rather conservative British conductor, creates a sense of innovation. But at the same time, it is a good example of cooperation between two extremely bright personalities: Corsaro, a mature Broadway classic, and Edwards – young conductor with a conservative musical background.

The genre of the production is defined as a musical comedy (similar to operetta). When it comes to the stage set, in the embodiment the main concept is a huge clockwork on the stage, in the middle of which life itself is created. Torquemada is an old watchmaker, and at the beginning of the opera he adjusts his wife's clock. That is, in fact, he acts as a ruler of time, who catches the heroine's lovers in a mousetrap, and also successfully earns money from them. So, Corsaro reveals this plot from another point of view. In the context of this concept, it is not the heroine who chooses the same man who will 'replace her clock in the bedroom', but her old husband, who keeps the young lady close to himself. Therefore, the final quintet justifiably proclaims Boccaccio's idea of the 'effectiveness of the lover': he is able to guard the workshop, to wear watches, and to love. In addition, his silence is a guarantee of prosperity in the marriage of old and young. The director also adds characters to his production. This is the ballet, that serves as Torkemada's helpers, who are also the part of this mechanical miracle, which once again elevates this character above all other heroes of the workshop. Their movements are puppet-like, and this deepens the general feeling that nothing is accidental in the watchmaker's workshop and everything is a subject to someone's plan. The main color is pink and pale gold. Sustained in a costume of this era (we are talking about Spain in the XVIII century), which is specified by Frank Noen in the libretto. There are also all the attributes of Spanish life and style. The heroine with a covered head, as befits a married Spanish woman. Ramiro is a bright representative of the dynasty of bullfighters, behaves confidently and heroically. Concepcion is restrained, but in 'a part' she reveals her real feelings. Gonsalve and Inigo are very parodic and puppet-like. The director uses various technological means for *mise-en-scène*, such as

a 'turning circle', a system of plungers and lifting and lowering. Of course, we must pay tribute to the fact that this is a film version, which means that there is a possibility of a 'large frame' or detailing the perception of the idea.

To sum up the production, Frank Corsaro creates a vividly pictorial performance. He pays special attention to the sounds and mechanisms of the workshop. The director evokes a number of certain reflections based on the coexistence of clock and life mechanisms. In fact, for him time is the master of feelings, processes of existence. The version is simple and at the same time complex in its stage embodiment. In the vocal sense, it is the most authentic in terms of Ravel's style.

Ukrainian translation of libretto was made for the staging in the Ukrainian National Tchaikovsky Academy of Music Opera Studio in 2018 (directed and translated by Tetiana Voronova). It is worth noting that there was a translation made in the 80's (by translators Apshis and Komarova).

While working on the French translation and N. Rozhdestvenskaya's Soviet translation, a number of the following disadvantages in the Soviet one was revealed: the subtle erotic connotation of the French libretto was replaced by the moralizing Soviet one; non-identical substitutions of verbs; loss of humor, elements of farce.

We are repeatedly faced with the problem and metaphorical nature of the name of the opera. In Russian, 'The Spanish Time' is interpreted as 'time' or an 'hour'. In opera it is about the period of the day when in Spain work stops and passion begin (well known as siesta). The librettist Frank Noen indicates the place of action — Toledo, and, importantly, the time — Thursday at 12:00 pm. In the context of the above, the Ukrainian translation of the name 'The Spanish Hour' is rather an astronomical hour, during which the private life of people hidden from the inquisitive eye is revealed. Interestingly, the French word 'l'heure' is used either in the understanding of the physical period of time, or as a sign of a new mini-era, time.

Often there is a problem of discrepancy in the length of words. For example, the French word 'l'horloge' (two syllables, emphasis on the second syllable). In Ukrainian, this word consists of three syllables, the emphasis falls on the second syllable, and therefore we have one extra syllable. After all, when we deal with translations of films or books, certain incomprehensible to the average (potential) viewer expressions, winged expressions, comparisons, metaphors have to be replaced by similar in meaning Ukrainian counterparts.

## Conclusions

Comparing and analyzing the experience of worldwide embodiments of Maurice Ravel's opera 'L'heure espagnole' due to the influence of collective factors, both personal and social, an understanding of its embodiments in Ukraine was achieved. Both the author of the article and director T. Voronova used scores translated by V. Tolba, as well as their own corrections in some French expressions, which were adapted from Spanish traditions to the Ukrainian ones. No less important are the musical means and characteristics of Ravel's style, which have to be faced at the stage of mise-en-scène work of the director: sound and noise effects have their dramatic justification in each individual episode, but are the part of a semantic work's model. Given the analysis above, we see a significant work of art of the XX century, in addition to the rare comedy art genre. This is the small contribution to the modern history of Ukrainian culture.

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