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Senzorial Theater
– Visual and acoustic emotions –
The way to feel Opera

Galati – Romania
23 – 25 October 2016

Report on
« RE CERVO »
by Adelina Diaconu

Is the opera performance a sensorial experience for the public? Can a show which contains elements of music, theatre, dance and visual art to have a very strong impact on the audience? The world premiere with the opera *Re Cervo* (*The King Deer*), which took place on 23 of October 2016, at 7 p.m., at „Nae Leonard” Musical Theatre from Galați, Romania, responded positively to these questions.

The Theatre from Galați takes part in the european project „SENSES – The sensory theatre. New transnational strategies for theatre audience building”, a project cofunded by the „Creative Europe” program, which belongs to the European Union. Besides the Musical Theatre, from the project takes also part the „Lower Danube” University from Galați, the Universities from Avignon and Milano and „ScenAperta Altomilanese Teatri”. The libretto of the *Re Cervo* opera is inspired by Carlo Gozzi’s homonym fairytale and it was written by Paolo Bosisio, a famous opera stage director and University professor. In the workshop which was held at the University of Milan from October to December 2015, where the main themes developed were Gozzi's biography and works, the analysis of the historical context in which Gozzi worked and the difference between Gozzi's poetics and Goldoni's one, Paolo Bosisio was a guest star at the workshop, where he explained to the students the process from the original piece to the rewrite one. Bosisio explained the transition from a piece made for theatre to a piece for opera. He also told his ideas about the realization of the

performance itself. Another activities were held by Prof. Chiara Sironi, who analyzed the plot and the structure of the original version of *Re Cervo* and, also, the students were requested to be dramaturgs for a day and they reworked, with the help of Prof. Tancredi Gusman, some stories in a theatrical form.

The music for the *Re Cervo* opera was written in 2015 by Angelo Inglese, a prolific composer and conductor. The staging was made also by Paolo Bosisio, while the scenography and the costumes had the signature of the talented Domenico Franchi, who is permanently present on the posters of many famous theatres in the entire world. The premiere was a great succes, with an international cast: Denys Pivnitskyi (*Deramo*), Young Ju Kim (*Angela*), Carmine Monaco (*Tartaglia*), Florentina Soare (*Clarice*), Adrian Mărginean (*Brighella*), Adrian Ionescu (*Smeraldina*), Dominic Cristea (*Pantalone*), Sebastian Băncilă (*Durandarte*) and the ballerinas Iosefina Solon and Alina Donțu, a cast that impressed the public who filled the hall of the „Nae Leonard” Musical Theatre, in the evening of the premiere.

Paolo Bosisio, the librettist of the opera and the stage director of the premiere from Galați, has created a very well structured text, impregnated with a slang venetian dialect, which is combined with literary Italian language. Bosisio has remained faithful to the initial writing style of Gozzi, but he has modernized it and enriched it in a very intelligent way through asymmetric rhymes or free versification, creating a libretto very suitable for putting in stage and for adaptation on music. Here are the librettist's thoughts: „The action gradually departs by the original story, so we are confronting with the opportunity of creating a *linguistic and stylistic false*, which permits a pleasant fusion between the author's lyrics and those I created myself. With an Italian writing which is specific to the 18th century and with a dialect with roots which belong to the venetian intonation, they represent the source of the material created in my book, with which I had fun since the beginning, and in which I put some dirty words of the contemporary period. This aspect led to a serious-comic opera, in which the entertainment is found in the sentimental story and also in the moral of the original fable”. (Paolo Bosisio). The musicality of the text permits to the singers to assimilate the words very easy. Bosisio is creating, through his original dramaturgic style, a romantic atmosphere when Angela and Deramo are on the stage or, in the contrary, a realistic or grotesque image, when Smeraldina, Brighella or Tartaglia appear, inviting the public to laugh out loud or to make judgements about the defects of the characters. Bosisio shows through his libretto special qualities of dramatist, based on a very long pedagogical experience at the department of History of Theatre and Performing Arts from the University of Milan and on an experience as a writer, with 21 scientific published books, being considered one of the most important researchers of the writings of the famous 18th century authors – Carlo Goldoni and Carlo Gozzi, but also on the experience as an opera stage director, gained through a period of 20 years, being frequently present on the stages of the theatres from the entire world. The directorial approach has potentiated the value of the work, through an unitary and compact concept, which has highlighted each character of this musical fairytale. Paolo Bosisio creates veridical relationships between the characters of the opera, who are very well defined on stage, having its own characteristics: Angela and Deramo, two young in love, who breathe a romantic air, having a distinguish and reserved behaviour, but true and high feelings; Tartaglia, a negative character, bitter, stammering, blind by the wishes of power and

pleasure, but who, in the end, realises that all these whises led him to his death; Pantalone is a loving father and Clarice has a moderate romantic behaviour, none of them standing out more than the dramaturgic context requires; Smeraldina, sung by a tenor in disguise, comic and grotesque, who considers herself beautiful and virtuous enough to conquer Deramo, but her brother, Brighella, another comic character, will emphasise all her defects, both the characters speaking in a very delicious venetian dialect; or Durandarte, a moralist magician with an oriental outfit, who appears in a smoky cloud, monopolizing the attention of those who are on the stage. We can't forget the appearance of the two deers (ballerinas), which add more credibility to the hunting scene from the forest.

The composing style used by Angelo Inglese in the *Re Cervo* opera is infused by traditional elements of the Italian opera, which are intertwined with modern writing elements and film music influences. So, many fragments from the opera seem to be a tribute to the great Italian composers, of which the most important influence on Inglese seems to have Giacomo Puccini. The composer himself affirms that he wanted to „create an autobiographical and historical excursus of the entire Italian melodrama and not only. I tried to make to coexist different styles, from madrigal to jazz, without losing that fairytale atmosphere, which I wanted to give to the entire opera” (Angelo Inglese). The orchestration used by the composer delights the ears of the listeners through a particular timbrality, offered especially by the presence of some instruments that are used more seldom: the English horn, the bass clarinet, the „glockenspiel”, the xilofone, the tambourine and woodblock. The characters of the opera are very well known masks from the Italian *commedia dell'arte* tradition, which the composer has outlined them very well in the traditional style, but also has gave them a touch of modernity. Thereby, the central lovers couple – Angela and Deramo – receive late romantic and verismo style sonorities, the melodic line of the soprano being constructed predominant in the puccinian vocal style and the score of the tenor receiving elements of verismo and also melodrama: his vocal line is often in „parlato” way, while the orchestra accompanies him – this method highlights the character's feelings, but also has a descriptive role. Tartaglia, a negative character whose stammering is ingeniously translated in music by the composer through the rhythmic line, draws upon him and his actions an ironic look from the public. The famous old man, who falls in love with a young and beautiful girl, is transformed here in a power-and-pleasure-hungry minister, who is musically characterised through a very difficult high-baritone vocal register, but also with expressive possibilities in the lower register, to the ambitus of a bass-baritone. Besides Tartaglia, the Brighella – Smeraldina couple, high tenor and baritenor in disguise, represents a very original and modern stylistic part in the composing view of Inglese. Their melodic lines are characterised by a game of musical intervals and of spoken melody, with an unstable tonal framework, while the orchestral accompaniment draws in a caricatural way the actions and the feelings of these two comic characters.

Visually and spatially, the premiere has benefited by the creations of the scenographer Domenico Franchi, who knew how to enjoy the viewers eyes through ingeniously modular triangular sets, simple but efficient, with many facets, namely multifunctional. The costumes was created after the model from the *commedia dell'arte* period, with a chromatic range which uses white and golden and with rich ornaments in the baroque style – they looked very nice on the



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performers, transforming them in real characters and they transported the public in a veridic atmosphere of the evoked period.

Thereby, the show from Galați, Romania exploitet intensively the senses of sight and hearing of the public, senses that this country was assigned to deal with in the european project described at the beginning of this article.

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