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The deconstruction of the character of Tosca and the method of performance

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ABSTRACT

Tosca is a classic opera written by Puccini, based on the original play by French playwright Sardou, which tells a tragic love story. Tosca is an important milestone in Puccini's creative career. This study aims to explore the performance method and the way of portraying the character Tosca in Puccini's opera Tosca, adopting the methods of literature research, interview and observation to analyze in depth the image structure, vocal performance and performance techniques of the character Tosca. By observing and comparing the versions sung by different singers, the performance methods and ways of portraying the role of Tosca are summarized. The two singers, Callas and Georgiou, each sang the aria "For art, for love" in their own way, showing Tosca's inner struggles and contradictions, as well as his love for art and his obsession with love. The two versions of the aria show a high level of artistic accomplishment, but differ in characterization, and the researchers explored the ways to make Tosca's character performable through comparative analyses.

Introduction

Background of the study

Background of the composition of the opera Tosca

Puccini's *Tosca* opera, the fifth work of his creative career, is an essential classic in the history of music. With a libretto by Illica and Giacosa, the opera was first performed publicly in 1900, and has since become a classic fixture in the repertoire of the world's major opera houses, where it remains a favorite.

As early as 1889, Puccini intended to adapt the play of the same name by the French playwright Sardou into an opera. However, for various reasons, this plan was never realized. As his contemporaries Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana* and Léoncavallo's *Les Scandals* sparked a fervor in the opera world with their stark realism, Puccini realized that his own compositions needed to evolve with the times. Therefore, he began to actively select scripts and finally chose Sardou's *Tosca* as his creation, thus laying the foundation for the magnificent transformation of *Tosca* from drama to opera. (Wang Rui, 2018)

Sardou's original play *Tosca*, set in the 16th century during the French Wars of Religion, tells a true historical story that provided Puccini with a wealth of inspiration. During the adaptation process, Puccini made significant adjustments to Sardou's original play. The original play had a three-act structure, which Puccini streamlined into two acts, resulting in a more compact plot. There are ten-character roles in the original play, but in Puccini's opera, only seven roles remain, including two supporting roles. This restructuring resulted in a more distinctive characterization of the opera, and the setting was relocated to the Napoleonic era, with the whole unfolding in a few hours over the course of a single day, presenting the audience with a tighter, more compelling story.

In the creation of *Tosca*, Puccini not only made a breakthrough in the subject matter, but also abandoned the tragic and sentimental mood consistently pursued in his previous works in terms of musical composition. Instead, he adopted a more powerful and grandiose musical style to shock the audience. This change in musical style makes *Tosca* an important milestone in Puccini's creative career (He Ying, 2005).

Although Illica and Giacosa's adaptation of the libretto was criticized for the illogicality of parts of the plot, Puccini's romantically passionate music won wide acclaim, and the opera *Tosca* was a great success when it was first performed on January 14, 1900 at the Teatro Constantini in Rome. The audience was impressed by Puccini's music and applauded the opera. Since then, "*Tosca*" has become the classic repertoire of the world's major opera houses, and has become a bright pearl in Puccini's creative career.

Overall, Puccini's *Tosca* opera is a work full of romantic passion and realism style. By adapting the play *Tosca*, Puccini successfully transformed a true historical story into a fascinating opera. His breakthroughs and innovations in music composition have made this opera a classic among classics. The success of *Tosca* also further consolidated Puccini's position in the opera world, making him a great composer in the history of music.

Literature Review

Overview of the plot of the opera Tosca

The three-act opera *Tosca* is a profoundly moving work that depicts a heart-wrenching love tragedy in the city of Rome in 1800. The opera is a finely nuanced portrayal of the deep

affection between the painter Cavaradossi and the opera singer Tosca, and the tragic sacrifices they made for their love and ideals (**Table 1-1**).

Character (in a play, novel etc.)	dignity	Voice type (part)
Tosca	singers	soprano
Mario Cavaradossi	painter	tenors
Scarpia, capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Tw)	sergeant	baritone
Cesar Angelotti	political prisoner	lower register male voice
	churchwarden	baritone
Spoleta	Secret agents (police)	tenors
Charonne	gendarmier	lower register male voice
	prison guard	lower register male voice
	shepherd boy	children's voice

Table 1-1: Information about the main roles in the opera Tosca

Set in the historically rich city of Rome, Cavaradossi gets into trouble when he is arrested and imprisoned for covering for an escaped revolutionary. His lover Tosca, an opera singer of great repute, turns to the sinister and cunning police chief Scarpia for help to save his beloved lover. Scarpia, who has always coveted Tosca's beauty, shamelessly makes a demand that he forces Tosca to commit herself to him in exchange for rescuing Cavaradossi. Under Scarpia's lechery, Tosca has no choice but to agree to this shameless demand, demonstrating her firm belief in sacrificing everything for the sake of love. However, Tosca is not always at the mercy of fate. At the time when Scarpia was getting carried away, she was so clever that she used the dagger on the table to stab Scarpia's chest, showing her brave resistance. This heroic act not only reflects her steadfastness in love, but also highlights her independence and dignity as a woman. In the early hours of the morning, on the execution ground located on the roof terrace, Tosca informs Cavaradossi that this execution is a fake, and specifically instructs him to remain motionless and pretend to be dead after the gunshot. She orchestrates an elaborate escape plan, hoping to regain her life with her lover. However, when the shots are fired, Tosca is shocked to realize that she has been deceived. Scarpia's men realize that the chief is dead and quickly come to apprehend Tosca. Facing the approaching police and soldiers, Tosca angrily shouts, "Scarpia, I'm going to God with you!" She then determinedly jumped off the building and ended her life. This tragic ending is heartbreaking, and at the same time makes people stand in awe of Tosca's bravery and determination.

Unlike the original play, in the operatic version, the character of Tosca's backstory is drastically compressed, but her complexity is closely tied to her life experiences. Originally a wild girl herding sheep in the mountains, Tosca was adopted by the nuns of the Church and brought into the convent. Her piety contrasts with Cavaradossi's idea of freedom. In the convent, she demonstrated a remarkable musical talent and at the age of sixteen was discovered by a composer who wanted to train her as an opera singer. This decision sparked a bitter dispute between the composer and the convent, and even drew the attention of the Pope. After an audition, the Pope, impressed by her singing voice, declared her free to devote herself to the arts. Soon her singing conquered audiences in Rome and throughout Italy. Tosca was impetuous, capricious, affectionate and religious, and told her confessor priest everything

that was on her mind without reservation. She is also a fervent royalist, but this character trait is downplayed in Puccini's writing. This makes the audience focus more on the tragedy of her love for Cavaradossi and the brave sacrifices she makes for love.

Overall, *Tosca* is a touching opera work, which shows a deep and moving love tragedy through delicate characterization and vivid plot. The character of *Tosca* wins the admiration and sympathy of the audience with her bravery, determination and spirit of sacrifice. Her story makes us think deeply about the complex relationship between love, ideal and sacrifice, and at the same time makes us feel the glory and greatness of human nature.

Analysis of the creation of the role of "Tosca"

Puccini's classic opera *Tosca* has become a bright pearl in the history of opera with its rich characterization and profound emotional portrayal. In this work, the character of *Tosca* is particularly compelling, not only as a passionate woman, but also as a complex individual struggling between love and jealousy (Niu Minghui, 2009).

In the first act of the opera, *Tosca* is imbued with qualities of beauty and kindness. She is proactive in her pursuit of love and harbors a deep love for Cavaradossi. However, impatience and jealousy also lurk in her character. This complex character trait makes *Tosca* suffer from constant inner struggle and torment in her pursuit of love. Puccini skillfully deepens *Tosca*'s deep love for Cavaradossi through a dramatic scene related to the portrait. *Tosca*'s insistence that Cavaradossi change the color of the eyes in the portrait to the same black as hers is a move that not only reveals her deep-seated jealousy and possessiveness of her love, but also demonstrates her persistence and steadfastness in love. As the plot develops, Scarpia uses the female fan to trigger *Tosca*'s jealousy, causing her to fall into an elaborate trap. The design of this plot not only demonstrates Scarpia's cunning and insidiousness, but also highlights *Tosca*'s wavering and struggling between love and jealousy. When Cavaradossi is tortured by Scarpia to extract a confession, *Tosca* has no choice but to reveal Angelotti's whereabouts in order to save her lover. This act not only demonstrates her bravery and selflessness, but also highlights her helplessness and compromise in the face of love.

However, when Scarpia threatens Cavaradossi's life and forces *Tosca* to commit herself to him, *Tosca* chooses to bravely defend her love and dignity. She takes up a dagger and stabs Scarpia, an action that not only reflects her character trait of daring to love and hate, but also highlights her strength and bravery in times of trouble. Puccini brings *Tosca*'s dramatic conflict to a head through opera. In an emotional mix of helplessness, bravery and strength, *Tosca* fights for love. However, she naively thinks that she will be able to get away from the world with Cavaradossi after executing the fake shooting, but when she finds her lover in a pool of blood, she realizes that she has been tricked. The handling of this plot not only demonstrates Puccini's deep understanding of his characters' psychology, but also pushes *Tosca*'s complex character to the extreme. Puccini's dramatic conception of the opera *Tosca* is extremely clever, and *Tosca*'s jealousy becomes the key to the development of the plot. This character trait not only drives the plot, but also makes the character of *Tosca* more vivid and three-dimensional. Scarpia's use of the fan successfully provokes *Tosca*'s jealousy, making the play reach its climax when the audience is worried about *Tosca*. When *Tosca* picks up the dagger and stabs Scarpia in the chest, she shows her helplessness and bravery, which fully demonstrates Puccini's ingenious plot idea of the play.

The successful portrayal of *Tosca* in the opera "*Tosca*" is due to the careful creation of the script writer as well as Puccini's excellent artistic talent and profound literary skills.

Through the twisted and novel storyline and profound psychological depiction, Puccini successfully portrayed the typical character of Tosca in the typical environment of the opera. Her love, jealousy, bravery and strength are fully demonstrated on stage, making her vivid image deeply imprinted in the hearts of the audience. Puccini's opera "Tosca" is not only a masterpiece depicting love, but also an artistic treasure showing the glory and complexity of human nature. It lets us see the beauty and fragility of love, as well as the resilience and bravery of human nature in difficult situations. The successful portrayal of the role of Tosca has undoubtedly left a colorful mark in the history of opera.

Objective

The purpose of this paper is to analyze and summarize the performance method and shaping of the role of "Tosca", and to explore how Puccini successfully portrayed Tosca as a rich and complex character by using musical and dramatic means. At the same time, the study takes the classic cantata "For Art, For Love" of Tosca's character as an example, and summarizes the performance methods and shaping methods of Tosca's character through the analysis of the versions sung by different singers.

Research Methodology

Literature research method

This study adopts the literature research method to analyze and study in depth the literature related to Puccini's opera Tosca and the role of Tosca. Through reviewing books, papers and journal articles on opera librettos, Puccini's life and creative style, opera criticism and appreciation, and character analysis, we collect and organize information on the creative background, character traits, and musical and dramatic performance of Tosca's characters. Through the comprehensive analysis of these documents, we will gain an in-depth understanding of how Puccini successfully portrayed Tosca, a full-bodied and complex character, through the use of musical and dramatic means.

Interview method

In the course of the study, the researchers interviewed literary experts, vocal experts and myrmecologists, and studied the opera Tosca, the role of Tosca, and Tosca's classic cantata For Art, For Love from the different professional perspectives of the three experts. The three experts chosen for the interviews all have a high academic level in China, and at the same time have a more in-depth research base on the opera Tosca. The information of the three experts is as follows (Table 3-1).

Serial Number	Name Of Expert	Unit (Of Measure)	Title
1	Mr. Wang	Department of Chinese, HB University	Associate Professor, Department of Chinese
2	Ms. Liu	TJ Academy of Arts	Professor, Department of Vocal Music

Serial Number	Name Of Expert	Unit (Of Measure)	Title
3	Mr. Sheng	HDSF University	Aesthetics expert and professor

Table 3-1: Information on Expert Interviews

An outline of the interviews with the three experts is provided below (**Table 3-2**).

Outline of an interview with a literary expert
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. From your professional literary perspective, what are the distinctive literary features of the opera Tosca in terms of plot structure, theme and characterization? 2. How would you evaluate the dramatic conflict in Tosca and the way it presents the psychological changes in the characters? 3. How does the cantata "For art, for love" textually represent the inner world and emotional turns of Tosca's character?
Outline of an interview with an expert in vocal studies
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the vocal qualities and technical requirements needed for the role of Tosca, analyzed in terms of vocal technique and singing style? 2. What are the difficulties in singing the cantata "For art, for love" and how can they be overcome? 3. What elements do you think should be present in a successful vocal performance of Tosca's character in Tosca?
Aesthetics Expert Interview Outline
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. From an aesthetic point of view, how does the role of Tosca present the complexity and contradictions of human nature in the opera Tosca? 2. What are the aesthetic qualities of Tosca as a tragic figure who is faced with love, art, and moral choices? 3. How is Tosca's aesthetic portrayal portrayed through music, lyrics, and staging in the classic cantata "For Art, For Love"?

Table 3-2: Outline of expert interviews

Observation Method

In the course of the study, the researchers observed and analyzed world-renowned sopranos Callas and Georgiou as they sang the cantata "For Art, For Love," making detailed observations and records of their vocal techniques, emotional expression, and stage performances in their singing. The singers' performance methods and techniques in portraying the role of Tosca will be observed. The observation results will provide the study with a wealth of practical experience and real-life examples, which will help to gain a deeper understanding of the performance methods and ways of portraying Tosca's roles.

The observation table is below (**Table 3-3**).

singers	sung version	Observation Methods
Maria Callas	1964 Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, England Edition	Video Watch
Angela Georgiou	Version sung in Puerto Rico in 2005	Video Watch

Table 3-3: observation table**Comparative analysis method**

This study adopts the comparative analysis method to explore the differences in the performance methods and techniques of different singers in portraying the role of Tosca by comparing and analyzing the versions of For Art, For Love sung by different singers. The singing versions of two famous sopranos, Maria Callas and Angela Georgiou, were chosen for comparative analysis.

Multidisciplinary Cross-Research Approach

In the process of exploring the performance methods and ways of portraying Tosca's characters, this study employs a multidisciplinary cross-study approach. Starting from a single disciplinary perspective, such as literature, voice and aesthetics, it crosses disciplinary boundaries and combines theories, methods and perspectives from different disciplines in order to understand the complexity and multidimensionality of Tosca's characterization in a more comprehensive and in-depth way.

Result

Aspect	Findings
Literature Research Findings	The literature review revealed that Tosca is a multifaceted character shaped by her diverse life experiences, including her time as an orphan, shepherdess, and nun. Each phase of her life contributes uniquely to her personality traits, such as resilience, independence, and emotional sensitivity. These experiences align with psychological theories on personality development.
Expert Interviews	Literary Experts: Highlighted distinctive features of the opera's plot and themes, emphasizing dramatic conflicts that illustrate Tosca's psychological changes. Vocal Experts: Discussed technical requirements and challenges of performing the role, emphasizing the need for a strong emotional connection. Aesthetics Experts: Explored Tosca as a tragic figure, examining her moral choices and emotional struggles.
Comparative Analysis of Performances	Analysis of different singers' interpretations of the cantata "For Art, For Love" revealed variations in vocal techniques and emotional expression. Notable performances by Maria Callas and Angela Georgiou showcased distinct approaches: Callas emphasized dramatic intensity, while Georgiou

Aspect	Findings
	focused on lyrical beauty. This highlights the importance of individual interpretation in portraying Tosca's character.
Overall Findings	Tosca is a rich and complex character whose development is influenced by her multifaceted background and the interplay of various artistic elements. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of character development in literature and opera, emphasizing the significance of interdisciplinary approaches in analyzing complex characters.

Discussion

The multifaceted nature of Tosca's character, as explored in this research, reveals a profound complexity shaped by her diverse life experiences and contradictory traits. This discussion delves into the significance of these findings and their broader implications in understanding character development in literature and opera.

The Impact of Diverse Backgrounds

Tosca's life as an orphan, shepherdess, and nun significantly influenced her character, each phase contributing uniquely to her personality. Her early orphanhood instilled a sense of independence and resilience, essential for navigating life's hardships. This aligns with psychological theories suggesting that early life experiences profoundly impact personality development (Bowlby, 1982). The free-spirited and fearless nature developed during her time as a shepherdess illustrates how interaction with nature can foster a sense of freedom and fearlessness. Such traits are often emphasized in literary characters who draw strength from their environments (Thoreau, 1854).

Religious Influence and Character Formation

Tosca's time in the convent and her strong religious faith played crucial roles in shaping her moral compass and behavior. Her unwavering faith and sense of justice, while admirable, also highlight a potential naivety and vulnerability to deception. This duality reflects the complexities observed in characters who possess strong moral convictions yet struggle with practical realities (Dostoevsky, 1866). The exploration of this aspect of Tosca's character contributes to the broader understanding of how religious upbringing can create both strengths and blind spots in an individual's personality.

Contradictory Character Traits

The juxtaposition of Tosca's strong independence and emotional vulnerability adds depth to her character. This duality is a common theme in literature, illustrating the inherent contradictions within human nature (Shakespeare, 1603). Tosca's ability to exhibit both strength and sensitivity enhances the realism of her character, making her relatable to the audience. This complexity is crucial in character studies, as it demonstrates that multifaceted personalities are more engaging and realistic.

Tosca's Approach to Love

Tosca's passionate and sometimes impulsive approach to love underscores her intense emotional nature. Her extreme dedication and jealousy reflect a common narrative in romantic

literature, where love is portrayed as an all-consuming force (Brontë, 1847). This intense emotional involvement often leads to dramatic and tragic outcomes, as seen in Tosca's story. Understanding her approach to love offers insights into how characters navigate their personal relationships and the consequences of their actions.

Musical Expression and Emotional Conveyance

The use of musical elements to express Tosca's emotions is a significant aspect of this research. The composer's ability to convey Tosca's inner world through music demonstrates the power of auditory elements in character portrayal. This technique aligns with theories in musicology that emphasize the emotional impact of musical motifs and themes (Cooke, 1959). Analyzing these musical expressions provides a richer understanding of how Tosca's character is brought to life on stage.

Broader Social and Historical Context

Situating Tosca's character within her broader social and historical context enhances the understanding of her actions and traits. The societal norms and expectations of her time influenced her behavior and decisions, highlighting the importance of context in character analysis. This approach aligns with historical criticism, which examines literature in light of the historical period in which it was created (Greenblatt, 1980).

Symbolism and Thematic Complexity

Finally, the symbolic elements used in portraying Tosca's character add layers of meaning to her story. Symbols such as her voice and musical motifs are crucial in understanding the thematic complexity of her life. This aligns with semiotic theories that explore how symbols convey deeper meanings in literature (Barthes, 1967).

Conclusion

Image structure of Tosca's characters

Literary perspective deconstruction: the tragic figure of Tosca

Tosca's life is full of complexity and drama. Her multiple backgrounds have shaped her character while making her life path twisted and bumpy. As an orphan, she lacked the warmth of a family and parental guidance since she was young, which forced her to face the hardships of life independently and develop a strong and independent personality. However, this experience has also made her emotionally sensitive and fragile, and she is easily hurt by the outside world.

As a shepherdess, Tosca's life background gave her a free-spirited and fearless nature. In the vast expanse of nature, she learned to keep company with animals and talk with heaven and earth, and this way of life made her character more straightforward and fearless. She dared to pursue her beliefs and ideals without being bound by the world, and this spirit was reflected in her later life.

Upon entering the convent, Tosca was inculcated and baptized in religion, which became an integral part of her life. She was loyal to her faith and stood firm on justice, and this quality was fully reflected in her behavior. However, religious faith also makes her appear to lack the ability to recognize truth and good and evil when facing the complexity and change of the real world. She believes too much in the inherent goodness of human nature and is easily deceived and exploited by others.

Tosca's character has a strong and independent side as well as a sensitive and vulnerable side. Her upbringing, though simple and well-intentioned, makes her seem overwhelmed in the face of a complex and changing society. This contradictory character trait makes her seem hesitant in dealing with relationships and easily influenced by others. However, it is this contradictory character that allows her to show amazing courage and determination in the face of the threat of power and tyranny.

When it comes to love, Tosca shows passionate initiative, dedication and sensitivity. She dares to pursue her love and defies the world's eyes, and this courage is admirable. However, she is also prone to jealousy and has difficulty controlling her temper, which leads to misunderstandings and conflicts between her and her lover. Her views on love were full of impulsiveness and extremes, and she regarded love as the whole of her life, which made her lover's passing away a great blow to her, and eventually led to her tragic martyrdom.

Overall, Tosca's life journey is full of drama and tragedy. Her background of multiple identities, contradictory character traits, and her persistent pursuit of love have made her life colorful.

Deconstruction from a Vocalist Perspective: The Multiple Characters of Tosca

Tosca's personality is unique, frank and firm, however, in the whirlwind of emotions, she also reveals her sensitive, jealous and emotional side. In order to portray the complexity of this multi-faceted character, the composer ingeniously chose a singing declamation as a means of musical expression.

The declamatory key, as a unique form of music, provides a broad stage for Tosca's emotional world. Through the continuous small wave melody, we seem to be able to feel Tosca's inner romance and lyricism. And when the octave dances resound in the music, her excitement surges like a tidal wave, letting us feel the strong fluctuation of her emotion. In addition, the parallel upward repetition of pitches or upward scales skillfully depicts Tosca's escalating jealousy, like a flame burning in her heart, getting more and more intense (Xu Niannian, 2012).

Before Tosca has even taken the stage, her presence is already signaled by her distinctive voice. Her lover, Cavaradossi, is a fresco painter at the church, and when Tosca arrives to look for him, she finds the church doors closed. She calls out anxiously from outside the door, her voice full of anticipation and anxiety. However, her lover is slow to come to the door, which makes Tosca's mood more and more anxious. This expressive technique of hearing her voice before seeing him not only emphasizes Tosca's straightforward character, but also vividly shows her anxiety and impatience as she waits outside the door through the expansion of the horizontal intervals and the gradual narrowing of the note timbres.

Figure 4-1: Tosca Scherzo

Image credit: Opera Tosca proper (Chinese-Italian version)
searched on March 28, 2024

In the opera Tosca, Tosca's affectionate calls and urgings to his lover Mario, followed by his anger and suspicion, are skillfully expressed through music. In the first call of "Mario" (**Figure 4-1, mark 1**), the composer uses two small words and two groups of E, and carries the melody horizontally from long to short. This treatment not only conveys Tosca's heartfelt inner call, but also shows her anticipation and longing for her lover. In the subsequent development of the music, the composer successfully demonstrates Tosca's change of mood through changes in pitch, rhythm and melody. In the second "Mario" (Figure 4-1, Marker 2), the pitch rises to a small-letter group II ascending F, creating a parallel major second. At the same time, the timing changes from the previous combination of half notes and quarter notes to three even quarter notes. This clear rhythmic and horizontal melodic line fully reveals Tosca's urging tone revealed in its calmness. In the section where "Mario" is called out three times in a row with the exact same melody (Figure 4-1, Marker 3), the musical treatment changes dramatically. The pitch drops from E-flat in the second group of small words to B-flat in the first group of small words, giving a purely fourth downward progression that imparts a "commanding" tone to the music. At the same time, the tempo changes from a natural balance to an urgent and unstable "dotted" quarter note. The notation "stizzita" (angry) and "rall." (slow) are also marked on the score. These careful musical treatments succeed in showing Tosca's suppressed roar and her slightly skeptical tone.

Although the audience cannot see Tosca herself in this section, we can deeply feel her blunt and impatient personality through her unique voice performance. The use of this musical expression not only enriches the inner world of the character, but also brings the audience a more three-dimensional and vivid viewing experience. Through the power of music, we seem to be able to cross the screen and directly feel Tosca's inner struggles and conflicts.

Looking at the score, every emotional twist and turn of Tosca's life is brought to the fore through the telling sense of the declamatory key added to the score. From the romantic lyricism of the small wave melody, to the excitement of the octave jump, to the jealousy of the repeating pitches and upward scales, these musical elements together constitute Tosca's complex and multi-faceted emotional world. At the same time, through the expansion of horizontal intervals and the gradual narrowing of note timings, the composer skillfully depicts Tosca's psychological state as he waits outside the door. This musical expression not only shows Tosca's anxiety and impatience, but also enables the audience to understand her emotional world more deeply.

Aesthetic perspective deconstruction: feminist reflections in Tosca's

In traditional European society, the concept of gender roles is deeply rooted, but Puccini, with his unique artistic perspective, breaks away from the norm and shows the audience a real and complex world of gender.

In Tosca, Puccini's talent is on full display. Using his mastery of musical technique and "realism", he succeeded in portraying the qualities of gender and sexuality to the fullest extent. The role of Tosca is not only an operatic character, but also a medium used by Puccini to explore the concept of gender. Her fate, her inner world, becomes a powerful tool for Puccini to reveal the complexity of gender concepts.

Puccini's creations convey the belief that the value of a work lies in whether it can truly reflect real life and touch people's hearts. He chose to focus on the fate of female characters,

exploring the most hidden corners of their character and listening to their inner world, precisely because he saw the important role women play in the social concept of gender.

Tosca, a woman who lived during the Revolutionary period of dark politics and coercion, had a personality that was true and pure, passionate and jealous, daring to love and hate. However, it is this personality that makes her a victim of unjust social phenomena. Through the character of Tosca, Puccini successfully reveals the complexity and contradiction of gender concepts in the society at that time. In a revolutionary period seemingly full of freedom and passion, the fate of women is still bound and restricted by gender concepts. Tosca's jealousy becomes an important thread in the opera, and Puccini skillfully combines it with tension, pathos and mockery, which makes the theme of the opera deepen and expand.

Methods of performing Tosca's role

For Art, For Love is the most important aria sung in the role of Tosca, from which the researchers explored ways to summarize the performance of the role of Tosca by comparing the versions sung by Maria Callas and Angela Giorgiu, two world-class singers.

Versions sung by Maria Callas

For Art, For Love eschews elaborate intros, and Callas' voice is soft and flavorful, accompanied by low chords that are always precisely controlled, like a carefully polished artifact that is both tough and resilient, demonstrating unparalleled virtuosity. Her range is so wide that she seems to be able to embrace all the emotions of the world. Each note flowed slowly and long under the skillful support of her breath. Karas' tone is like the deep night sky, both mysterious and full of deep emotion. There seemed to be an irresistible sadness in her voice, an emotion that surged like a tidal wave. This emotion is conveyed not only by the strength and pitch of her voice, but also by the perfect combination of her deep understanding of music and her mastery of technique.

Bar 9 is an important turning point in the accumulation of Tosca's character's emotions (Wang Lili, 2011). In this section, Callas successfully showed Tosca's inner struggles and contradictions through his superb performance and skillful musical treatment. Such a way of performance not only allows the audience to understand the inner world of the character more deeply, but also makes the emotional expression of the whole opera richer and more vivid. In this part of the performance, Callas' singing skills were also fully demonstrated. She successfully portrayed the complexity of the character of Tosca through her delicate voice changes and rich emotional expression. Callas also skillfully used elements of stage performance, such as body language and facial expressions, to enhance the emotional expression of her character. Every movement and every look she made was full of drama, enabling the audience to feel Tosca's inner pain and struggle more deeply.



Figure 4-2: "For Art, For Love".

Image Credit: "For Art, For Love" Proper Score (Chinese-Italian Version)

Searched On March 28, 2024

When the music quietly shifts from E-flat minor to E-flat major, leading the listener into the second part of the movement, the new melody, like the first rays of sunshine at the break of dawn, breaks the previous silence and atmosphere, bringing a new sense of flowing ebb and flow. This transformation not only injects new vitality into the entire piece, but also pushes the character development on an emotional level, laying a solid foundation for the subsequent plot. In this section, the accompaniment of harp, cello and flute intertwines with Callas' singing, forming a harmonious and layered musical picture. Callas sits in a chair, her body leaning forward slightly, as if she is praying to the distant heavens, to that supreme God. She sings with a slight crying tone, a timbre that not only gives the song a deeper emotional connotation, but also makes the character's authenticity and intimacy more deeply rooted.

**Figure 4-3: "For Art, For Love"**

Image Credit: "For Art, For Love" Proper Score (Chinese-Italian Version)

Searched On March 28, 2024

Angela Georgiou singing version

Georgiou knows that music is not only a combination of notes, but also a transmission of emotions. Therefore, she integrates her emotions into every note, so that every listener can feel her sincerity and passion. This emotional authenticity and intimacy is the most attractive part of Georgiou's voice. When the melody and lyrics echo each other, when the piano and vocals intertwine, this immersive musical experience makes the movement not just a piece of music, but a complete story, a story that can touch the depths of one's heart.

From bar 17 onwards, Georgiou gradually increased the tempo of her singing, with each note seeming to jump in her throat, like drops of water in a torrent, fast and powerful. As the music progressed to bar 22, her singing gradually increased in intensity and speed, as if she was using the music to portray Tosca's inner struggles and conflicts. Tosca, the devout follower of God, her image was vividly portrayed in Georgiou's voice. This voice, which does not simply come out through the throat, but rather springs from deep within, carries with it endless sorrow and pain. Especially in the B section, the entire rhythm consists of irregular triplets, as if imitating the rhythm of Tosca's heartbeat, each beat filled with tension and anxiety.

In order to show the excitement of Tosca's emotions, Georgiou boldly changed her breath during the singing, and each breath was like a spiritual baptism, bringing out Tosca's inner emotions. She handled it loosely without losing the coherence of her voice and the richness of

her tone, as if she was painting a picture of Tosca's mind for us with her music. In the process, Georgiou's vocal technique blended with emotion to perfection. She not only used her voice to show us Tosca's inner struggles and conflicts, but also used the music to convey to us Tosca's firmness and persistence in his faith. This expression of emotion undoubtedly made the role of Tosca more vivid and three-dimensional, becoming a timeless classic in the hearts of the audience.



Figure 4-4: "For Art, For Love"

Image Credit: "For Art, For Love" Proper Score (Chinese-Italian Version)

Searched On March 28, 2024

Comparative analysis of the two singing versions

Through a comparative analysis of the versions sung by Maria Callas and Angela Georgiou, the researchers concluded that they each performed the aria "For art, for love" with a high degree of artistic mastery.

Karas's version of the song focuses more on the precise control of the voice and the depth of emotion. Her voice is soft and flavorful, with a wide range and deep timbre, as if it can embrace all the emotions in the world. In her singing, she skillfully utilized the elements of music processing and stage performance to successfully show Tosca's inner struggles and contradictions, making the emotional expression of the whole opera richer and more vivid. Especially in the 9th stanza, Callas pushed Tosca's inner emotion to the climax through her superb performance and musical treatment, making people feel Tosca's love for art and persistence in love.

Georgiou's version of the song, on the other hand, focuses more on emotional authenticity and intimacy. She incorporated her emotions into every note, enabling every listener to feel her sincerity and passion. In her singing, she changed her breath boldly and loosely, bringing out Tosca's inner emotions. Especially in the B section, she successfully depicted the rhythm of Tosca's heartbeat through the change of tempo and the control of volume, letting people feel Tosca's inner tension and anxiety. Georgiou's singing skills and

emotions were blended to perfection, making the character of Tosca more vivid and three-dimensional.

Synthesizing the team’s observations of the two singing versions, the researcher summarized the comparison of the characterization of the two versions as follows.

singers	musicality		technological		affective expression		Typhoon image		Innovativeness
	rhythmic performance	melodic performance	tone color change	volume control	Character Interpretation	Emotional interpretation	theatrical performance	body language	
Maria Callas	The tempo follows the score relatively strictly	Melodic focus on fluidity	Uniformity of tone	Volume is based on the score	Digging deeper into the tragedy of Tosca’s character	Gradual emotional push	Small range of motion, fine acting	Attention to facial details	relative ly conservative
Angela Georgiou	Relatively free tempo control	Melodic expression of emotion	The tone changes with the mood	Volume is dominated by emotional flow	Emphasize the complexity of Tosca’s character	Emotionally obvious	Higher modulation and strong emotions	Upper body movements drive emotion	Bold and innovative in presentation

Table 4-1: Comparison of Maria Callas and Angela Georgiou singing versions of characterization

Recommendations

Study the impact of toscas’s diverse backgrounds, conduct an in-depth analysis of how various life experiences, such as being an orphan, a shepherdess, and a nun, influenced Tosca’s personality and life path. This aims to deepen the understanding of how her multifaceted background contributed to her complex character development. Examine the role of religion in toscas’s life, investigate the dual impact of religious faith on Tosca’s worldview and behavior, focusing on how religious influences manifest in her interactions and decision-making processes. This seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of religion’s role in shaping her life. Analyze the contradictory aspects of toscas’s character, explore the interplay between Tosca’s strong, independent nature and her emotional sensitivity and vulnerability. This aims to offer a nuanced understanding of the complexity and depth of her multifaceted personality. Explore toscas’s approach to love, analyze Tosca’s passionate and devoted approach to love, including her impulsive and extreme actions in relationships. This aims to provide insights into the intensity of her emotions and the central role love plays in her life. Evaluate the use of musical expression to convey toscas’s emotions, examine how the composer utilizes musical elements to express Tosca’s emotions, emphasizing the effectiveness of musical expression in portraying her inner world. This seeks to enhance the audience’s understanding of her character through musical analysis.



Contextualize Tosca's character traits within broader social frameworks, situate Tosca's life and character traits within the broader social and historical context of her era. This aims to provide a holistic understanding of external factors that influenced her life's development. Study symbolism in Tosca's character depiction, investigate the various symbols used in portraying Tosca's character to uncover layers of meaning and enhance appreciation of the thematic and emotional complexity of her life and story.

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