

Libretto Thematology in Rossini's Operas and Its Formation by the Composer

Areti Tziboula, Anna-Maria Rentzeperi-Tsonou

I. INTRODUCTION

Abstract—The present study examines the way Gioachino Rossini's librettos are selected and formed demonstrating the evolutionary trajectory of the composer during his operatic career. Rossini, a dominant figure in the early 19th century Italian opera, is demanding in his choice of librettos and has a preference for subjects inspired by European literature, of his time or earlier. He begins his operatic career with farsae and operas buffae, but he mainly continues with operas seriae, to end it with a grand opera that conforms to the spirit of romanticism as manifested in Paris of his time. His farsae, operas buffae and comic operas in general are representative of the trends of the time: in some the irrational and the exaggeration prevail, in others the upheavals, others are semi-serious and emotional with a happy ending and others are comedies with more realistic characters, but usually the styles are mixed and complement each other. The stories that refer to his modern era unfold mocking human characters, beliefs attitudes and their expressions in every day habits, satirizing current affairs, presenting innovative elements in dramatic intervention and dealing with a variety of social and national issues. Count Ory, his final comic work, consists of a complex witty urban comic opera entwined with romantic sensitivity. The themes he chooses for his operas seriae are characterized by tragic passion, take place in the era of the Trojan War, the Roman Empire, the Middle Ages, and the Age of the Crusades and are set in Italy, England, Poland, Greece, Switzerland, Israel and Egypt. In his early works he sketches the characters remotely, objectively and with static, reflexive emotional expression and a happy ending. Then he continues with operas for the San Carlo Theater, which are characterized by experimentation and innovation to end up his Italian operatic career with the ostensibly backward but in fact tragic Semiramis followed in Paris by William Tell, his ultimate dramatic achievement. There are indirect references to burning issues of his era but the censorship of the time does not allow direct reference to topics that would upset the status quo. In addition, Rossini lives in a temporal period of peace after the Napoleonic Wars and by temperament he resists openly engaging in political strife. Furthermore, the need for survival necessitates the search for the more profitable contracts. In conclusion, Rossini, as a liberal personality, shapes his librettos without interruptions or setbacks, with ideas that come out after a lot of thought and a strong sense of purpose. He moves from the moral and aesthetic clarity of the classic tradition of his early works to a more elaborate and morally ambiguous romantic style in a moderate and hesitant way.

Keywords—Gioachino Rossini, libretto, nineteenth century music, opera.

Areti Tziboula is a PhD candidate with the Department of Music Science and Art, University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki, Greece (phone: 00306932608378, e-mail: atziboula@uom.edu.gr)

Dr. Anna Maria Rentzeperi-Tsonou is Associate Professor with the Department of Music Science and Art, University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki, Greece (phone: 00306944839637, e-mail: arentzep@uom.edu.gr)

ROSSINI is the most discussed opera composer in the first half of the 19th century. His operas are established as “repertory works” and he has influenced his next generation. In total he writes 41 operas: 6 farsae, 21 seriae, the majority written between 1813 and 1823, 4 semi seriae, between 1815 and 1821, and 9 buffae from which 7 are written between 1811 and 1817 and 1 grand opera.

While he is at the peak of his career though, he puts himself in operatic pause. He is also strongly criticized by supporters of the “music of the future” such as Wagner. This study focuses on the trajectory of his operatic career, how the choice of the thematology of his librettos affects it and on the reasons that the composer ceases to write operas. Special reference is made to certain operas that consist keystones in his career.

II. ROSSINI'S DEBUT, HIS FARSAE AND OPERAS BUFFAE

Rossini's first attempt to write an opera dates back to 1809-10, while he is still a student. He takes the libretto in fragments, by the singer Domenico Mombelli, written by his wife Vincenzina. The outcome is an opera seria, *Demetrio e Polibio*, that is performed privately for the Mombelli family [1].

His professional debut though as an opera composer takes place in 1810, at an inferior theater, the Teatro San Moisè in Venice, where at the time only lighter forms such as the marionette opera, and opera buffa are staged. Its cast is usually formed by six singers with no chorus, the scenery is minimal, the budget is tight and the rehearsals are limited, but the theater has good management and it is ideal for a novice composer [2], [3].

Between 1810 and 1813 Rossini writes 5 farsae for the San Moisè, with librettos from Foppa, Rossi and Priviladi. They are representative of the main trends of his era. So, *La cambiale di matrimonio* (1810, libretto by Rossi) has an excessive and irrational effect, *L'inganno felice* (1812, libretto by Foppa) has half-serious and emotional story with happy end, *La scala di seta* (1812, libretto by Foppa) has a plot with upheavals and *L'occasione fa il ladro* (1812, libretto by Priviladi) and *Il signor Bruschino* (1813, libretto by Foppa) consist comedies of errors [4], [5]. Furthermore, *La scala di seta*, *L'occasione fa il ladro* and *Il signor Bruschino* have French ancestors. Specifically *La scala di seta* is inspired by the homonymous opera comique in one act *L'Echelle de soie*, while *L'occasione fa il ladro* derives from the comedy *Le Prétendu Par Hazard, ou l'Occasion Fait Le Larron* by Eugène Scribe and *Il signor Bruschino*'s source is the comedy in prose in 5 acts *Le Fils par hasard, or Ruse et folie* by

Chazet and Ourry [1], [5], [6].

His operas buffae have elements of both types of comic opera that were established in the late 18th century Italy. So, some have the style of a fun story unfolding in an ever-moving action at a frantic pace with a dose of exaggeration, cross affairs, jokes, interference, disguise and caricatures and others are comedies with more realistic plots and less schematic characters. Neither trend is found in Rossini in its purest form, but they are useful guides to a general categorization of the themes of his works [5].

The masterpiece of the transition from one kind of comedy to another - from the comedy of exaggeration to realistic comedy - is *L' Italiana in Algeri* (1813). Despite a comedy, strong nationalistic elements emerge with a variety of social hints to Rossini's contemporary Italy, such as the issues of inequality among men and women, of "Pappataci" - the husbands who sense their wife's disloyalty but tolerate it - and of the indoctrination into secret societies [1], [7].

In 1816 he commissions Sterbini to write a new libretto for *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, inspired by the homonymous play by Beaumarchais, *Le barbier de Séville*. The outcome is an opera that according to Fisher, consists "a crown jewel ... a masterpiece of lyric theater, a tribute to the art form as well as to its ingenious composer". Rossini's opera describes the events of the first of the trilogy by the French playwright that revolves around a clever and resourceful character named Figaro, the barber of the title. The work had already been adapted for opera by Paisiello - Petrosellini in 1782 and was a great success in Rome. That is why Rossini initially gives his new opera the title *Almaviva*, ossia *l'inutile precauzione*, as he wants to avoid comparison. The plot of Beaumarchais's play is not authentic as it has a similar story to Moliere's *Ecole des femmes*. In Beaumarchais, however, the characters are more complex. The text in Rossini's work is written from the beginning and another character is added, Bertha. The dramatic situations are similar to the previous opera, but Sterbini in many places complicates the plot, something that generally characterizes the Italian opera buffa [8], [9].

As the Barber of Seville had innovative elements in terms of dramatic intervention compared to Paiziello's version 30 years ago, so does *La Cenerentola* (1817), his last Italian opera buffa. The libretto is by Ferretti and he accepts to work on it under the condition to omit any supernatural elements of its previous versions, *Cendrillon* by Etienne and Isouard (Paris, 1810) and *Agatina* by Fiorini and Pavezi (Milan, 1814). The opera twiddles between seriousness and comical [5].

Rossini's last opera buffa which is written in Paris, is *Le Comte Ory* (1828). It differentiates from his previous comic works. Here there are no stereotypical comic characters while his protagonist Ory has subtlety and grace, we would dare say even femininity that give him a degenerate air, almost dangerous that even Berlioz admires [1].

III. SEMISERIAE OPERAS

From his semiseriae operas, *Torvaldo e Dorliska* (1815) and *La gazza ladra* (1817) are "rescue operas", *Eduardo e Cristina* (1819) is mainly serious with comic elements while *Matilde di*

Shabran (1821) is mainly comic with serious elements.

The libretto of *Torvaldo e Dorliska* is based on the novel of the French playwright Jean-Baptiste Louvet de Couvray *Vie et amours du chevalier Faubles* (1790). The characterization "rescue opera" is justified due to the elements of rescue from the tyrannical Duke, and the humanistic spirit that prevails in this opera.

The libretto of *La gazza ladra* is based on the play *La Pie voleuse ou La Servante de Palaiseau* (1815) by Caigniez and D' Aubigny but it also reminds the plot of the novel *I promessi sposi* (1827) by Manzoni, the most important novel in Italy on the age of Risorgimento [5]. In this opera, Rossini handles the libretto realistically and it could be said that it consists a first sign of early Italian verismo as the characteristics of the honest, sweet and poor girl (of Nineta), are more common to the central heroine on Puccini's operas than on Rossini's [1].

Eduardo e Cristina's libretto is based on Pavesi's homonymous libretto.

His last semiseria opera is *Matilde di Shabran*, written towards the end of the composer's Italian career and his mood for change is evident. Here, although the protagonist Isidoro, is a character taken from the commedia dell arte, the plot is complicated and exaggerated in order to satirize tyranny and all kinds of discrimination. Of course, Rossini has always used parody as a means of comic expression. Until now, however, it was done in more traditional ways. The novelty compared to Rossini's previous semiseriae operas is that it is a sophisticated musical game, partly an opera within opera, and not a classic comedy based on older tactics, such as *Cinderella*.

IV. OPERAS SERIAE

In 1813 a boost in Rossini's career takes place, both nationally and internationally, with the opera seria *Tancredi* and later in the year with the opera buffa *L'Italiana in Algeri*. These works consist a milestone in the periodontology of historical musicology [10].

Tancredi's libretto is written by young Romani, based on the work of the same title by Voltaire. The work is premiered in Venice and after that, it is performed in Ferrara and Milan. For Ferrara, Rossini makes drastic changes, such as replacing the happy ending with a tragic one, according to Voltaire's original work, while for Milan the composer restores the happy ending [11], [5]. In a few years of its debut, this opera becomes the model of Italian serious opera, an archetype that subsequent works will either have to emulate or - even greater danger - oppose [5]. However, the opera is not innovative. It belongs to the 18th century heroic tragedy with the happy ending. It is simple in its structure, its focus and its moral element. Action and characters are sufficed to a static, reflexive emotional expression. Even the main heroine, Amenaide, has characteristics that indicate sweetness and hesitation, unlike Voltaire's who is explosive and dynamic. [5]. Goethe compares *Tancredi* with pastoral myths that refer to another world of immaculate beauty, balance and order. Of course, Goethe's analogy is not literal as the play is anything but pastoral and the plot includes elements used by composers

in 19th century operas, such as the medieval scene and the knighthood of *Tancredi*. Goethe probably refers to the rational way in which Rossini handles his characters, to the moral clarity, and to the happy ending of the opera [1], [5].

Most of Rossini's early works take place in northern Italy. In 1815 the composer moves to Naples - then a significant opera capital - and that ultimately constitutes a turning point in his career. In Naples he takes over as director of music at the most important theater of the town, San Carlo Theater. It has the most famous orchestra and it presents only operas seriae. Rossini, in order to establish himself there, writes a series of operas with "superior" themes of tragic passion. He has become more and more demanding with the choice of his librettos. For example, in 1812 for *Ciro in Babilonia* he had claimed that the infamous original librettist be replaced by the professional Count Avedi and in 1815 he rejects the adaptation of an old libretto by the famous house librettist Anelli as he says for a new opera he needs a new libretto [5].

Barbaja is the impresario of the theater at the time and one of the most powerful men in musical Italy. He manages to promote Rossini and take off his career [11], [12]. A primadonna of the theater at the time is the beautiful and talented Isabella Colbran, with a special inclination to tragic roles. She is Rossini's future wife. Rossini composes 10 operas in total with her voice in mind. Isabella and Barbaja push him against his natural tendency for composition in the comedy genre. The fact is that the Neapolitan operas give impetus to his career and develop Rossini into an international reputation. He composes a total of nine operas for San Carlo: *Elisabetta, regina d'Inghilterra* (1815), *Otello, ossia Il moro di Venezia* (1816), *Armida* (1817), *Ricciardo e Zoraide* (1818), *Mosè in Egitto* (1818), *Ermione* (1819), *La donna del lago* (1819), *Maometto secondo* (1820) and *Zelmira* (1822). In addition to the operas in San Carlo, he writes operas for other theaters, as his contract allows. So, at the same time he composes nine other operas: three buffae, his last farsa *Adina* (1818), three semi seriae and two seriae [5].

The themes he chooses for his operas seriae are characterized by tragic passion. The operas *Ermione* and *Zelmira* are placed in the era of the Trojan War, *Tancredi*, *Adelaide di Borgogna*, *Ivanhoé* and *Guillaume Tell* take place in the Middle Ages, while *La donna del lago* takes place in the Scottish Middle Ages. *Aureliano in Palmira* takes place in the era of the Roman Empire, while *Ricciardo e Zoraide* and *Armida* in the time of the Crusades. As far as the religious operas are concerned, *Ciro in Babilonia* and *Mosè in Egitto*, have high spiritual meanings and moments of meditation as they are performed during the period of fasting. Furthermore, the operas seriae that are set in distant places such as Switzerland and Scotland, have elements of exoticism in both music and scenery, something that is common in the opera of the time. Another innovative element is the tragic ending to some of his operas. Thus, the operas *Tancredi* (in the performance of Ferrara), *Otello*, *Maometto secondo* and *Semiramis* have a tragic ending.

In 1823 he writes his last Italian opera, *Semiramis*. With that opera, his career makes a perfect circle. His first opera

seria, *Tancredi* in 1813, and this last success before settling permanently in Paris, have common forms and structure, they are both performed in the theater La Fenice in Venice, they have the same librettist, Gaetano Rossi, and the same literary source, the works of Voltaire *Tancredi* (1760) and *Semiramis* (1748) respectively [5].

After experimenting with the works of Naples, *Semiramis* looks consciously classical, even retrograde. The libretto, for which he collaborates more than usual with his librettist, Rossi, in certain places follows the respected Semiramis of Metastasio. So, Rossini on his return to Venice is as if he returns to conservatism [6]. However, the similarities intensify the differences and reveal the progress that the composer has made in serious opera over the past ten years - his transition from the moral and aesthetic clarity of the classical tradition to the most elaborate and morally ambiguous romantic style. Still, at this last opera he keeps a moderate attitude as, although he seems to recognize that Italian opera needs renewal, he probably believes that it should be done gradually. [5], [13].

Semiramis is based on supernatural elements that did not exist in the more human tragedy *Tancredi*. It is a real drama in which the guilty though sympathetic anti-heroine, unable to escape from the passions of the past, finally pays for the crimes and the insult. The audience sympathizes with her and expects her happiness and her escape, but there can be no reconciliation. The action unfolds in a series of upheavals, revelations and theatrical techniques culminating in the death of Semiramide at the hands of her son, Arsa. No character punishes her deliberately or consciously. It seems rather as if her fate is the result of supernatural justice which is interpreted as divine punishment [5]. Thus, while *Tancredi* focuses on a single hero, *Semiramis* dispenses the attention between the hero and the anti-heroine. Its plot is complex and possessed by ethical complexity. The guilty heroine's tragic feelings are the ones that pervade the coming operas of the 1830s such as Bellini's *Norma* and Donizetti's *Lucrezia Borgia*. At the same time, the supernatural elements, such as ghosts and divination, as well as the involvement of motherhood and crime that are pervasive in the *Semiramis*' plot, reflect the emerging romantic tastes. The result is expressed in different tones and dramatic styles in the two operas and it is clear that Rossini is trying to reconcile classicism with romanticism [5], [13], [14].

At the same time, there are discussions in the Italian literary circles concerning the modernization, that is the romanticization, of Italian literature and the renewal of the Italian opera scene. Critics of the time accuse the Italian musical drama as abstained from romantic literature and consider the involvement with opera buffa inferior [13].

Rossini is surely aware of the discourse regarding the connection between text and music in opera. From the documents we have at our disposal however, it is clear that his ideas are not explicit. It is certain that he does not feel comfortable with the romantic way of writing as it is against his natural inclinations. There is no doubt that he admires classical German music, especially that of Mozart and Haydn,

and was influenced by it [15]. The trajectory of his work though, indicates efforts for his development in the romantic style. Thus, after 1816 not only there are signs of romantic fashion in his operas; but also, he almost withdraws from the comic genre which is despised by the romantics. The only exceptions to comic writing are the farsa *Adina* and the operas buffae *La Cenerentola*, *Il viaggio a Reims* and *Le Comte Ory*. *Adina* though, a private order for a Portuguese patron, more of a sketch than a complete work, is in a sad mood and furthermore there is no indication that Rossini ever attended its performance. As for *La Cenerentola*, it incorporates elements both from the opera seria and the opera semiseria in its comic content and *Il viaggio a Reims* and *Le Comte Ory* are classified on the comic genre but they arise romantic sensitivity [1], [13].

From 1817 onwards he works almost incessantly against his real propensity. It is true that over the years his involvement with the opera seria increases and includes a series of experiments which, although centered on the Naples' operas, in the following years are developed in *Semiramis* for Venice (1823). Rossini's compositional course unfolds without interruptions or setbacks, led by an autonomous personality, with ideas that come out after much thought and a strong sense of control [5]. Proof of that is his last opera, *Guillaume Tell* (1829). It consists of a grand opera that conforms to the spirit of romanticism as manifested in Paris of his time and its plot is based on a political epic. Rossini's point of view though is rather conservative as he focuses on the grandeur and harmony of nature as well as the collective spirit of the Swiss peasants. That results to a cold reaction of both the audience and the critics and discourages the composer who ceases to write operas.

Much is speculated about his sudden withdrawal from the active operatic scene. Some researchers conclude that after becoming wealthy he became less driven to produce material; others believe that following the spectacular success of the grand operas of Mayer and Halévy, Rossini became demotivated after the subsequent failure of *Guillaume Tell*; others claim that his mental disorder combined with the gonorrhoea that plagued him, had worsened after 1830 and these hindered his ability to compose. Whatever the case may be, following his retirement, Rossini became an important member of the social and cultural life of Paris. He held the title of "Music Emperor of Europe" and surely lived as such, keeping homes in Italy and Paris and a holiday villa in the outskirts of Paris [9].

V. ROSSINI'S MUSICAL APPROACH TOWARDS HIS LIBRETTOS AND HIS ORCHESTRATION

On the subject of the way he handles his librettos musically, musicology rarely deals with it as he does not have much to present regarding the coherence of his musical thoughts. Inwardly there is an admission that Rossini distances himself from his works and his music is a kind of potpourri [10].

Essentially, all the characters in Rossini's works express themselves musically in a way that is unconnected to the plot. Instead, they move away from it and rely on their acting talent

for the success of the play. For Rossini, music is not an imitative art but possesses the autonomous role of expressing and arousing emotions. It does not have the role to reflect the reality of the time. It is as if the Carnival spirit, which inspired Paiziello's funniest scenes, is now overdeveloped. So, many arias or ensembles start from a close imitation of reality, but in the process, this is lost in the coloratura or the frenetic rhythms. For Rossini, coloratura and rhythm are not the material for imitating situations and they do not contribute to understanding the story but on the contrary, they are the objective. They are part of the work [5]. Hence, according to Rossini, the composer with his art should be independent from words and his main role should be, not to convey the text, but to reveal emotion.

As a result, his melodies do not always match the words. On the contrary, they are asynchronous with them and repetitive as if they sabotage the text. It is as if Rossini uses the voice of his protagonists as an aid to the rhythm and the melodic outline. His music is the music of the soul and not of the character and it is addressed to the whole audience. His aesthetic remains in the standards of the 18th century and attempts to give an ideal form to the impulses of the heart and to the basic components present in the characters behind the text and beyond [5]. Furthermore, he writes for a large orchestra, with extensive use of woodwinds and brass. His orchestration thus becomes extremely noisy and excessive, unable to follow the words. Already in his first opera, *La cambiale di matrimonio* (1810), Rossini receives complaints from some of the singers that their song is lost under the intense orchestration. This ascertainment gradually becomes a constant complaint about Rossini's music by critics of his day [15]. Of course, we occasionally encounter the laconic style, such as the finale of the second act of *Semiramis* or the almost silent end of *Otello* where the protagonist stabs himself to death and ends up within seven meters, while the stage closes without a choral part, rondo or cavatina, but these are exceptions. The most common and notable factor in his music is the noise [5]. It is worth mentioning however, that some musicologists connect the noise created by Rossini's music with the Napoleonic wars. According to them, the noisy orchestration tries to represent the emotional and psychological state of the audience and furthermore, to substitute the real world with a better and happier one [7], [16].

In an era dominated by the reform parties that lead to the liberation of Italy in 1861, Rossini's music expresses the enjoyment of success. The general joy that characterizes him however, is an aspect of his melancholy that expresses the whole generation of reform after the Napoleonic wars, which is characterized by resigned distancing, mixed with cheerful skepticism and melancholy [5], [17].

Generally speaking, his musical language is the same in both his comic and serious operas. In all his works the opposites meet: in the comic, the comical has devastating effects due to the phrenitis of music and in the serious, in the tragic moments of utter despair it is as if the ropes are revealed from which the fake characters hang like moving puppets [5].

These elements are considered superficial by his contemporary critics and are not in line with the nature, truth and beauty that were beloved in the 18th century. According to Wagner, opera comes to a standstill with Rossini as music dominates the action [18]. However, Rossini was very influential for the detachment from classicism, and his operatic style lasted until the early 1850s. He soon became so famous that Pacini commented that imitating Rossini was perhaps the only way to succeed [18], [19]. The later Donizetti and Verdi have fully assimilated the teachings of the late Rossini [18], [20]. Great composers who follow Rossini, such as Bellini and later Donizetti, succeed with their work in evolving Italian opera and transforming the "Century of Rossini" into an "Age of Romanticism" [18].

VI. THE ASPECT OF NATIONALISM IN HIS LIBRETTOS

As far as Rossini's contribution to the Italian nationalistic issue through his operatic work, opinions differ. In order to investigate it, it is necessary to examine his own beliefs as well as his attitude towards politics. The majority of his few clear statements date after the end of his operatic career in 1829, and hence their relation to Rossini's possible attempt to politicize opera is slight. In particular, he firmly believes that the externalization of political beliefs should be avoided, or even disclosed to the public [21]. In addition, during his career he was asked to write music in librettos from opposite political fields and he accepted orders for contrasting political circumstances. There are moments where the words "patria" and "Italia" are mentioned, but these are few compared to the other issues that prevail in his librettos, such as love, nature, the strength and value of family ties and more [7]. The most distinctive example of nationalistic expression is found in the character of Isabella in *L'Italiana in Algeri*. The words "patria" and "Italia" are heard in this opera. Nevertheless, it is not sure that Rossini seeks to emphasize them, nor is it certain that his contemporaries realize the stress, especially since her words are lost in the noise of music. In general, his attitude towards politics and Italian nationalism is distant and conforms to the noisy orchestration and the unrealistic way of acting in his operas [7].

Still, there are opposite opinions on the subject, such as Grempler's. According to him, the words of the libretto decode the composer's beliefs. He concludes that the patriotic theme plays an important role in Rossini's operas, especially the French ones, where the national question emerges more clearly than in the Italian works [22].

VII. CONCLUSIONS

In the course of his career, Rossini is becoming more and more demanding about the choice of his librettos.

His style is bordering between classicism and romanticism. It is worth noting though that despite the fact that he places himself among the latest classics, almost always he avoids using "classical" themes of ancient mythology and history. At his modern time the ideals of Nature and Humanism - which were the source of inspiration between 1750 and 1790 - are

lost and the librettos of the Enlightenment with the didactic character are no longer modern. Rossini's librettos move away from humanism and the placidity sought by the Enlightenment. Rossini seeks to deal with issues of "romantic" literature and refers mainly to the French writers of the 17th century - the famous grand siècle - such as Racine and his heirs of the 18th century, Voltaire, Arno, Bellina as well as to Italians like de la Valle [10], [15]. Ultimately, through the adaptation of classic literary works for opera librettos, Italians of the time come in contact with the great classical writers. For example, through *La donna del lago*, they make their first contact with the Scottish author Walter Scott as his works had not yet been translated into Italian. Other operas based on works by great playwrights include *Tancredi* based on Voltaire, *Otello* on Shakespeare, *Armida* on Tasso, *Bianca e Falliero* on Arnaut. He also planned to work on Goethe's *Faust* which eventually he did not do [10].

Of course, his talent is most successfully expressed in the comic genre [6]. Thus, when the rest of his works fall into obscurity due to the rise of Bellini and Donizetti in the 1830s and Verdi in the 1840s, his comic operas are the ones that remain in the repertoire insuperable and incomparable style models that any composer who wants to write in a comic way should follow [23].

His comic operas present a grotesque and disorienting version of reality. It is as if his characters are always wearing masks and act knowing that they are the heroes of the opera and not real beings, they have no past or future, they have no memory of who they were or an idea of what they will become. They live exclusively for the theatrical present and in Freudian terminology, they have no subconscious. The only reality in his comic operas is the operatic. The subject for Rossini is always the opera itself and the joke touches the demonic. Even satire seems to be largely aimless, as if the characters are hovering around, not placed at a particular time but serving as an occasion for excessive fun [15].

For Rossini, in the middle decades of the 19th century operatic music ceases to be the music of the heart and becomes the music of the character. This is a substantial aesthetic change, associated at the same time to the societal and ideological change and to significant changes in the presentation of opera. Thus, Rossini sees the musical reform of his time with indifference, if not intolerance, and puts himself on operatic pause. When he leaves opera, he writes about politicized modern music, which he criticizes [5].

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The study is supported by The Special Account for Research Funds of University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki, Greece.

REFERENCES

- [1] Osborne, Richard (2007), *Rossini, his life and works*, Oxford University Press, New York, pp. 13, 180-183, 192, 200, 215, 253, 316
- [2] Lawrence, W. J. (1924), "Marionette Operas", *The Musical Quarterly*, Apr., 1924, Vol. 10, No. 2 (Apr., 1924), pp. 236-243, Oxford University Press, pp. 236
- [3] Schwager, Myron, (1986), "Public Opera and the Trials of the Teatro

- San Moisé”, *Early Music*, Vol. 14, No. 3, pp. 387-394, Oxford University Press, pp. 388
- [4] May, Eldonna, (2010), “Early Operas”, *Notes*, Quarterly Journal of the Music Library Association, Volume 66, Number 3, March 2010, pp. 622-623
- [5] Senici, E. (2004), *The Cambridge Companion to Rossini*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, pp. 3, 4, 5, 14, 56, 57, 59, 60, 61, 62, 139, 140, 141, 142
- [6] Plantinga, Leon, (1984), *Romantic Music*, W. W. Norton, New York, pp. 131, 135
- [7] Senici, E. (2012), “‘An atrocious indifference’: Rossini’s operas and the politics of musical representation in early nineteenth-century Italy”, *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 17:4, 414-426, Routledge, pp. 416, 418, 423, 424
- [8] Loewenberg, Alfred (1939), “Paisiello’s and Rossini’s ‘Barbiere di Siviglia’”, *Music & Letters* Vol. 20, No. 2 (Apr., 1939), pp. 157-167, Oxford University Press, pp. 157
- [9] Fisher, Burton, D. ed. (2007), *The Barber of Seville: Il Barbiere Di Siviglia*, Opera Journeys Publishing, Miami, Florida, pp. 9, 14
- [10] Dahlhaus Carl, (1989), *Nineteenth century music*, Berkeley, University of California Press, pp. 54, 59, 60
- [11] Gossett, Philip, (1971), “The ‘Candeur Virginale’ of ‘Tancredi’”, *The Musical Times*, Apr., 1971, Vol. 112, No. 1538 (Apr., 1971), pp. 326-329, Musical Times Publications Ltd., pp. 316, 326, 340
- [12] DeIDonna, Antony, (2002), “Production practices at the Teatro di San Carlo, Naples, in the late 18th century”, *Early Music*, Volume XXX, Issue 3, August 2002, p. 429-446, Oxford University press, pp. 441
- [13] Tomlinson, Gary (1986), “Italian Romanticism and Italian Opera: An Essay in their Affinities”, *19th Century Music*, 1986, Vol. 10, nr.1, pp. 43-60, University of California Press, pp. 45, 46, 47 48, 49
- [14] Londonio, Carlo Giuseppe, (1817), *Cenni critici sulla poesia romantica*, Pirotta, Milano
- [15] Kimbell, David, (1991), *Italian Opera*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 354, 355
- [16] Heine Heinrich (1837), *Über die Französische Bühne, στο Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe Der Werke*, (1980), Vol. 12, Jean - René Derré and Christiane Giesen, Hamburg, pp. 227
- [17] Istel, Edgar, Baker, Theodore, (1923), “Rossini, A Study”, *The Musical Quarterly* Vol. 9, No. 3 (Jul., 1923), pp. 401-422, Oxford University Press, pp. 422
- [18] Whittall Arnold, (1997), *Romantic Music*, Γουίτελ, Αρνολντ (1997), Ρομαντική Μουσική, Αθήνα, Σ.Ι. Ζαχαρόπουλος, pp. 88, 89, 90, 92
- [19] Samson, Jim, (2001), *The Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Music*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 101
- [20] Mooney, A.G., (1970), *An assessment of Mercadante’s contribution to the development of Italian opera* M.Mues. dissertation, University of Edinburgh, pp. 8, 9
- [21] Fabbri, Paolo, Carter, Tim (1994), “Rossini the Aesthetician”, *Cambridge Opera Journal*, Mar., 1994, Vol. 6, No. 1 (Mar., 1994), pp. 19-29, Cambridge University Press, pp. 19
- [22] Grempler, Martina (1996), *Rossini e la patria, Studien zu Leben und Werk Gioachino Rossinis vor dem Hintergrund des Risorgimento*, Kassel: Bosse, pp. 178
- [23] Rinaldi, M. (1965), “Felice Romani: dal melodramma classico al melodramma romantic”, *Gazzetta piemontese*, 1 January 1840, σελ. 373, Rome, pp. 373