

# Influence of The Bel Canto Style on Vocal Performance in China

Ling Yang \*

The Belarusian State University of Culture and Arts, Minsk, Belarus

\* Corresponding author: Email: yangling8888888@gmail.com

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**Abstract:** In the modern period, within the framework of the academic style in China, there is a division into the Western-oriented tradition (conventionally called by Chinese practicing musicians “bel canto”) and the tradition associated with national opera drama. The study of these relationships fundamental to Chinese vocal culture is of great importance in the history of Chinese vocal art.

**Keywords:** Bel canto; Italy; National opera art; Schools of vocal music; Voice characteristics; Folk performances; Arias; Techniques; Exercises; Characteristics of resonance; Vocal apparatus.

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## 1. Introduction

Relevance of the research topic. Bel canto originated in Italy and was associated with the development of the national opera art and vocal school at the end of the XVI century. The expressive means of the style were formed on the basis of the phonetic features of the Italian language and the traditions of folk performance. The spread of arias for one voice has enabled composers and performers to pay more attention to the art of singing. This was reflected in the creation of exercises called solfeggio, designed to train the voice and improve the performance of works.

This style is characterized by an even voice, an excellent legato, a slightly higher register, unusual mobility and flexibility, and a soft timbre. The technique was given more attention than the volume, and this led to the fact that the bel canto style was long associated with an exercise that confirmed the bravura of the performer: such a singer had to hold a candle in front of him, sing, and the candle flame should not move. This was done to control the correct singing breathing: it should not be forced and shake the candle flame. And the strength, beauty of the timbre, lightness and flight of the voice was achieved not by pressing the breath on the larynx, but by the effective use of the resonant properties of the vocal apparatus by the singer. The bel canto technique is a resonant singing technique.

## 2. The Features of Bel Canto Style as A Performance Technique for Vocalists

### 2.1. Analytical review of research bibliography

The methodological basis of the typological research is based on the works of contemporary Russian and other foreign theorists of musical art who study vocal arts.

This research includes works of the following authors: «Opera: a guide from the origins to the present day » by G. Marchesi, «Selected works» by B. V. Asafyev, «Theater and symphony. The role of opera in the formation of a classical symphony» by V. D. Konen, «Vocal parallels» G. Lauri-Volpi, «Opera: a guide from the origins to the present day » by G. Marchesi, «Musical and historical heritage. Opera in the XVII

century in Italy, France, Germany and England » by R. Rolland -and many others. It is important to note that this issue is not sufficiently addressed is not sufficiently addressed in Belarusian literature. The theoretical base of biographical information about the great figures of musical art such as Gaetano Donizetti, Vincenzo Bellini presented in the works of some authors. The book «Donizetti and His Operas» by W. Ashbrook played an important role in writing the master's thesis. The author, throughout his life, studied the life and opera of the 19th century Italian composer Gaetano Donizetti. The book includes unique research in the field of vocal art and its place in the art of music in general. The author analyzes the creative activity of Gaetano Donizetti and the peculiarities of his creative musical language. It is important to note that the subject of this study is vocal art, so singing remains the focus of attention. The author sets himself the task of presenting his vision of vocal art and at the same time describing the main styles of singing, in particular bel canto. The unique style of Gioachino Rossini and his operas have a very important role in the art of singing. His vision helped bringing the florid style of baroque opera to a whole new level of virtuosity and make way to the Bel Canto era. Rossini's unique work is examined in the book «Rossini: l'opera de Lumiere» by C. Damien. The author analyzes the era in which Rossini lived and the author analyzes the era in which Rossini lived and the features of his musical works. Vincenzo Bellini is one of the most famous composers of the bel canto era. The composer would become well-known for his expansive melodies that would become the inspiration for many Italian composers thereafter. Bellini's unique work is explored in the book «Bellini» by Fr. Pastura. A number of articles by music critics consider the issues of methodology and technique of opera singing. The authors pay special attention to the analysis of the singers' performing skills. Among such works, the most interesting are the works of foreign and Chinese scientific researchers: «Application of National Opera Singing Techniques on Vocal Music» by Li Jing, «Comparison of Emotional Expressions and Singing Skills of National Vocal Music and Bel Canto» by Ma Di, «Methodology of singing» by K. M. Mazurin, «Influence of the Spread of Bel Canto on National Vocal Music in China» by Pang Jie, «National Schools of Singing: English, French, German, and Italian Techniques of Singing

Revisited» by R. Miller.

A number of works deal with the history of the development of vocal art in China. In the book «The development of Chinese musical art in the European tradition. End of the XIX – beginning of the XXI centuries by Liu Lian, the author analyzes Chinese performing arts in the context of the development of European vocal art.

The following reliable electronic sources were used for the writing of this master's thesis: the article «The influence of Western festive culture on the traditional culture of China: history and Modernity» by Shang Bofei. The paper analyzes the history of Western holidays in China, their transformation under the influence of Chinese traditional culture, determines their cultural meaning in modern China. China has a new image of Western holidays that have cultural meaning, customs and many distinctive features related to the Chinese traditions and national culture. The author concludes that Western holidays enrich the everyday life of Chinese people gradually becoming Chinese holidays. Other foreign literature was also used: «On the Art of Singing » by R. Miller, «Bel Canto: A History of Vocal Pedagogy» by J.A. Stark, «Selected letters » by J. Verdi, «The Cambridge Companion to Monteverdi» by J. Whenham and others.

A special place in this work is occupied by illustrative material posted in the appendices to this work. When compiling it, the following works were used: "Belcanto": Great Russian Encyclopedia» edited by Yu. S. Osipov, «Gioachino Rossini: A Research and Information Guide» by Gallo Denise, «The 20 Greatest Operas of all time» and others electronic sources. Thus, we can conclude that the scientific reliability of this master's thesis is provided by extensive material, application of scientific methodology, using various information sources on the topic of the influence of the Bel Canto Style on Vocal Performance in China. The literature of both Russian and other foreign authors was used for the purpose of a comprehensive review of the selected topic. The articles from periodicals were also used for a complete and 11 accurate presentation of the material. It should be noted that the research topic under consideration is adequately covered in the literature.

## 2.2. The history of Bel Canto style

Bel canto, literally meaning "beautiful singing," was first associated with the virtuosic singing of the Italian Baroque solo song and opera during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. During this period vocal technique focused on the purity of vowels, balanced vocal quality, and freedom of agility seen within highly ornamented music.

The origin of the art of solo singing was closely connected with the theater and theatrical genres: "From 1580 to 1600, new thoughts" boiled and roamed "in the theatrical and musical Florence... all Italian musical and theatrical genres, old and new, compete with each other, trying to combine music and drama: as if for the last time there is a review of all the forces before making a single choice". Major opera centers were formed in Florence, Mantua, Venice, Rome, and later in Naples. Each school has its own characteristics and distinctive features. In this era, "opera was looking for its own ways, developing its own laws".

The invention of the so-called monodic style of solo singing belongs to the composer, singer-virtuoso Jacopo Peri (1561-1633), who became famous for his virtuoso playing of the organ and many other keyboard instruments. He came to the creation of this style "through theoretical and aesthetic

conclusions". The monody is based on one-voice singing with the accompaniment of an instrument, where the text is given a dominant position. Hence, the vocal parts-the roles of the first opera work fit into the octave range of spoken speech.

Many of Peri's works are lost, so it is impossible to trace his entire creative evolution in the field of monody creation. His most famous operas are: "Dafne" (1594, together with J. Corsi on the text of O. Rinuccini; not preserved) and "Eurydice", 1600, also on the text of O. Rinuccini; extant). Peri is the creator of the recitative style. He believed that such intonations of the utterance of ordinary living human speech, which are closest to singing and could serve as the basis for creating a new harmony in musical accompaniment and which would express a specific emotional mood, are able to comprehensively reveal the performance capabilities. In the preface to Eurydice, he set out his wishes for the performance of his work, in which the singing should be both "a cast from the words" and more elevated, "than ordinary speech, but with a less clear pattern than the humming melodies, would be halfway between them". To achieve these goals, the composer deeply studied the Italian language, discovering in it those intonations that can serve as the basis of a recitative style and will contribute to the full expression of various feelings (suffering, joy, sadness, passion, love), with which to express the dramatic content. Indeed, he did a tremendous job of shifting the spoken language to the musical one. Peri's method of fixing various intonations of speech utterance with notes contributed to the formation of a new type of musical phrase, which differs from the construction of themes in polyphonic music.

Peri sought to move away from all the styles known at the time and revive the ancient melos, which was "a cross between the rapid pace of dramatic speech and the slow, lagging pace of singing".

In the second half of the XVI century, musical culture and the musical language in particular consistently began to manifest trends that tended to break with all the previous centuries-old composing practice. They were finally realized during the birth of the opera. Music science connects this turning point with two points: with the transition from polyphony to homophonic-harmonic composition, and with the introduction of a number of new, fundamentally important principles related to tonal, melodic and instrumental thinking. The very birth of opera is mainly connected with the reunion of poetry, music, theater and the desire to revive the ancient performance: "All the figures of culture and art of the Renaissance were characterized by the desire to revive the spirit of antiquity with its optimism, love of life and faith in the limitless possibilities of man".

At the turn of the XVI-XVII centuries, a circle of experts in literature, music and philosophy was formed in Florence – the Camerata Corsi-Bardi, which earned the significance of the first art center in the history of music, in which new musical and theatrical ideas began to be realized. Opera, oratorio and cantata originate from the activities of this circle. Members of this community (the main ones: composers Jacopo Peri, Giulio Caccini, Emilio de Cavalieri; poets Jacopo Corsi, Giovanni Bardi, Ottavio Rinucci) opposed the fascination with polyphonic works decorated with complex vocal patterns, which not only hindered the understanding of the words, but sometimes distorted the whole meaning of the text.

These new techniques proliferated into the Italian courts and the music of composer Luzzasco Luzzaschi, who wrote

for the Concerto Della Donne at the courts of Duke Alfonso II of Ferrara and Duke of Mantua. The Della Donne's concert performances, showcasing new vocal prowess and virtuosic technique, influenced many other composers including Orlande de Lassus and Giulio Caccini. Specifically, these influences brought immediate change to Caccini's compositional style moving the Italian madrigal away from *stile antiqua*. He experimented with music for the non-amateur singer as can be seen in his work *Le Nuove Musiche*, a collection of solo songs written in 1602 with specific instructions on their performance.

If Peri tried to bring singing closer to ordinary speech by creating a monody, then the composer, singer, performer on the theorbe, theorist of vocal art, teacher Giulio Caccini (c.1550-1618) tried to make the monody more melodic. Considering that "it is impossible to excite the mind by singing if the words are incomprehensible", he decided to "invent a kind of singing where it would be like speaking to music". This also shows that it was important for him to convey to the listener not only the beautiful-sounding singing, but also the idea inherent in the work. Thus, in his work, the following happened: full-fledged formation of the recitative style of singing.

It was he who made a double contribution to the reform of the Florentines: 1) created a school of composers and singers; 2) provided samples of a new style and lessons of a new singing.

Thanks to the fact that Caccini cultivated *coloratura*, the development of *coloratura* singing, rich in trills, passages, and various ornaments that change the main melodic pattern, was given an impetus in vocal performance.

Thus, not knowing the samples of ancient musical and dramatic creativity, the composers wanted to recreate the ancient tragedy; they were looking for more convincing, musically impressive, realistically expressive means of musical speech. Thus, they proclaimed the dominance of poetry over music; abandoned medieval polyphony; put forward a homophonic-recitative style. Their main goal was to "free the text from the counterpoint that entangled it and create a new recitative style".

As a result of the above, all the recommendations of the Florentine composers, as a rule, were based on the natural pronunciation of words and clarity of diction. The German music theorist, organist, and composer Andreas Werkmeister (1645-1706) also spoke about this: "If a real vocalist lets himself be heard in figurative music and sings a spiritual text from there, then this is a phenomenon of the same order as if a good speaker spoke and used his efforts to excite the audience with various appeals to the good". The attitude to the dramatic text was so strengthened by the fact that

The Florentines were convinced of the following: by creating a work of art of a new genre, they would lay the foundations not only for a new musical form, but also for a more perfect kind of drama. In their opinion, the new genre corresponded to the name *drama per musica*, which literally means "drama on music", or "musical drama".

As a result of the above, all the new processes in the musical language were aimed at replacing polyphony with monody. Monody (Greek: *monodia*-song of one) – "a new type of melody (as an imitation of the ancient one) in the form of solo lyrical singing accompanied by an instrument".

Bel canto scholar and pedagogue James Stark summarized this. It is clear, then, that the "Old Italian school of singing" grew out of courtly music of the late sixteenth and early

seventeenth centuries, first in the luxuriant type of pseudo monody as sung by female virtuosos associated with Ferrara and Mantua, and then in the new 'noble manner of singing' of Giulio Caccini and his coterie in Florence. With Caccini, vocal technique and new styles of recitative and monody were inextricably linked."

The bel canto style continued its presence throughout the eighteenth century and throughout Europe with such composers as W. A. Mozart and G. F. Handel. However, it was not until the formation of teaching schools associated with vocal pedagogues Manuel Garcia and Giovanni Lamperti that the term bel canto gained usage and prominence, at which point in music history it became synonymous with the compositional style of V. Bellini, G. Rossini, and G. Donizetti. However, there was no clear demarcation between the Mozart and the so-called bel canto literature of the nineteenth century by Bellini, Rossini, and Donizetti. Moreover, the term bel canto became a reaction to Romanticism in "1860 when it became clear that the newer school of verismo writing was making increasing vocal demands on singers." More specifically, Duey believed, "it was primarily a reaction to the declamatory style of Wagner that made Italians rally behind the term bel canto and it was that struggle that made the term famous." This Wagnerian or Germanic style incorporated a more pressurized or muscular technique known as *strauprinzip*.

Stark agrees that "bel canto is usually set in opposition to the development of a weightier, more powerful and speech-inflected style associated with German opera and Wagner in particular." These stylistic oppositions continue to exist in modern solo and choral music. Although freedom, imagination, and expression were characteristics of the Romantic style, it is simplicity that dominates the vocal colors of the bel canto tradition. Some might say that florid lines and years of training are anything but simplistic, but the simplicity lies in the beauty of tone and ease of vocalism, free from tension.

Stark describes the complexity of this singing style: "such singing requires a highly refined use of the laryngeal, respiratory, and articulatory muscles in order to produce special qualities of timbre, evenness of scale and register, breath control, flexibility, tremulousness, and expressiveness".

The basic principles of the Italian bel canto style are the building blocks to understanding beautiful, flexible, and free vocal production in all styles.

Bel canto principles include:

1). *Il respiro* – passive inhalation with breath "falling into the body."

2). *Coup de glotte* – "stroke of the glottis," beginning each attack with the antagonist relationship known as the *appoggio* (lean into the voice), with equal amounts of subglottic pressure and vibration through onset and phonation.

3). *Chiaroscuro* – the blending and balancing of the opposing dark and light resonances with equal parts brilliance and roundness through the range and vowel spectrum.

4). *Messa di voce* – gradual crescendo and decrescendo that is well maintained within the body so that resonance can remain constant throughout.<sup>9</sup> This requires fine motor control of both subglottic pressure and airflow.

## 2.3. Stages of development of the bel canto style

There can be distinguished several stages of the

development of bel canto:

- birth of Italian opera (C. Monteverdi);
- the heyday of the "Neapolitan school" (Alessandro Scarlatti);
- the period of creative activity of V. Bellini and G. Donizetti;
- the work of J. Verdi
- Verist School (Puccini, Leoncavallo, Mascagni, etc.)
- Revival in 1950-s

The father of Italian opera can be called Claudio Monteverdi. His immortal works "Orpheus" and "The Coronation of Poppaea" are called "Shakespearean plays in music". The dramatic effect of these works is not achieved by the fact that the melody conveys the meaning of a particular phrase. It is a carrier of dramatic tension. Monteverdi's opera usually consisted of duets and terzets, as well as numerous choral numbers. Accordingly, in this music there was a polyphony, characteristic of the Renaissance. A number of composers who belong to the Roman opera tradition can also be attributed to this school: Emilio de Cavalieri, Domenico Mazzocchi and others.

During the dawn of the metropolitan opera in Italy, there were two main genres: comic and pompous, lush in the Baroque style. In his early operas, Monteverdi reserved the ornamented way of singing (in the style of Caccini) specifically for the roles representing divinities. But in later works such as *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* and *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, he also gave this privilege to a larger type of roles, like humans with high social status. From that moment, the difference between the 'speaking in song' and the 'singing in speech' started to be so indistinguishable that it is complicated to point out a clear definition of what was singing and what speaking. Nonetheless, we have to think about the role that improvisation played during that time as it had a fundamental impact on performance. It is impossible for us to deduce any solid thought about the real state of singing at that time. However, some ideas can be assumed with a certain conviction: the fact that the opera as spectacle moved from the palaces to the theatres required the orchestras to be placed in pits. The effect of this change resulted in increased space for performances and larger audiences. This inevitably provoked changes in how singing was understood and practiced. This fact leads us to Francesco Cavalli and Antonio Cesti.

The Venetian school became decisive in the formation of the bel canto style. The head of the Venetian school was rightly considered an outstanding composer, singer and teacher - Claudio Monteverdi. He contributed to the development of the vocal art of Italy and brought up a whole galaxy of wonderful singers. He was called a master of psychological realism. When working with singers, he demanded not only a beautiful flowing sound, but also expressive intonations that truthfully convey various emotional states. In his operas, the melodic arias *lamento* (complaint) were widely used, the performance of which required the singer to cantilena, that is, to sing in a beautiful, unforsed voice. Of the nineteen vocal and stage works by C. Monteverdi, the most famous are his first opera "Orpheus" and the best in this genre "The Coronation of Poppaea" - the last creation of the master. All kinds of vocal forms are found here: *arioso*, aria (two-part and three-part), duets and ensembles, the range is expanded, the vocal parts are complicated. The composition of the orchestra has been

significantly changed and increased, although the accompanying role has been retained during the soloist's singing.

A distinctive feature of Monteverdi's operatic work is that in his compositions the melodic image is closely connected with the emotional character of the character. At the heart of his vocal parts is no longer a recitative, as in the Florentines, but a dramatic melody. Monteverdi seeks from the performers not only a good pronunciation of the word, but also the appropriate character of the sound of the voice, facial expressions, gestures, that is, a whole complex of musical and stage expressive means.

If the vocal parts of Peri and Caccini were somewhat one-dimensional (it is difficult to determine the character of the character by the melodic line, tessitura, range), then in Monteverdi each character is endowed with an individual characteristic. Vocal parts are complicated: there are wide intervals, vocalized passages emphasize certain emotional states. All this poses new performance and vocal-technical challenges for the singer.

After this moment — the first half of the 17th century —, we can probably talk about the rise of an operatic tradition started in Italy — and the consequent vocal technique progression in order to face the new repertoire — that spread along Europe and settled the basis of what we understand as bel canto. It is then easy to trace the progressive evolution of this 'new' vocal understanding. Later, by the middle of the seventeenth century, the center of musical art moved to Venice. Claudio Monteverdi also moved there, where he created his later operas. A number of innovations appeared in the works of the composers of the Venetian school, which ultimately changed the entire history of music.

In the 17th century there should be highlighted important names like Alessandro Scarlatti, Nicola Porpora and Baldassare Galuppi, the latter were all musicians who had compositional styles that advanced and embraced an increasing amount of the bel canto features. Scarlatti's creative activity is truly fantastic. He composed about 115 operas, in which there are diverse arias (*lamento*, *buffoon*, *virtuoso*), *recitative secco* (dry) and *accompagnato* (accompanied - melodic, clearly rhythmic with developed accompaniment), more than 600 cantatas, at least 200 masses, many oratorios, motets, madrigals, orchestral and other works; he was the compiler of a methodological manual for teaching playing the digital bass. However, the main merit of Scarlatti is that he created in his work a type of opera-seria, written on heroic-mythological or legendary-historical subjects, with a predominance of solo numbers, which later became the standard for composers. Scarlatti's work has deep roots.

The vocal parts of the seria operas are characterized by a wide range, a complex melodic pattern, using various, often wide intervals, a combination of cantilevered and virtuosic beginnings. He drew on the traditions of the Venetian opera, the Roman and Florentine music schools, summarizing the main trends of Italian opera art at the turn of the XVII-XVIII centuries. Scarlatti's operatic work is distinguished by a subtle sense of drama, discoveries in the field of orchestration, and a special taste for harmonic boldness. However, perhaps the main advantage of his scores is the arias, saturated with noble cantilena, then expressive and pathetic virtuosity. It is in them that the main expressive power of his operas is concentrated, typical emotions are embodied in typical situations: sorrow - in the aria *lamento*, love idyll - in the pastoral or Sicilian, heroics - in the bravura, genre-in the light aria of a song and

dance character.

The Neapolitan Opera School summed up the achievements of the Roman and Venetian schools. The true founder of the Neapolitan opera school of the XVIII century was Alessandro Scarlatti. The work of A. Scarlatti and his followers contributed to the flourishing of vocal art, which received the definition of *bel canto*-beautiful singing. Since the 30s, the Neapolitan school began to apply *coloratura*, which by the end of the XVIII century would become decisive. Vocal parts with an abundance of complex passages are becoming more and more instrumental. A three-part aria (*da saro*) is widely used, in which the third movement, being a repetition of the first, is partially improvised by the singer himself. The art of improvisation is a feature of the musical culture of the XVIII century. The more complex the *coloratura* decorations, the higher the singer's art is evaluated. The famous singers of that time were united by such professional qualities as the beauty of the timbre of the voice and the uniformity of its sound in all registers, the mastery of the cantilena, the perfection of the fluency technique, and the brilliant art of improvisation.

At the beginning of the XVIII century, the *coloratura* technique was actively developed in the opera art. This is the age of unprecedented flourishing of vocal virtuoso singing. All the aspirations were aimed at creating the scale of the aria, the length of the theme and its development. The cantilena, in turn, became filled with great pathetic power and expressiveness, a kind of breakthrough of "musical energy, movement, not connected with any external sources". The virtuoso embellishments that were supposed to emphasize the vocal text gradually freed themselves from rhetorical elements and began to serve the music.

By the 1730s, the Neapolitan operas *seria* had finally crystallized the style of the *arias parlante* (spoken arias), in which expressive pronunciation of words was the main quality. Subsequently, its elements began to manifest themselves in other types of arias (for example, *buffoon patter*). Further, the canon of opera *seria*, undergoing strong transformations by the end of the XVIII century, was replaced at the turn of the 1820s-1830s in Italy by a new canon of melodrama of lyrical or heroic quality thanks to the work of composers of this era-Rossini, Bellini and Donizetti.

The singer, conductor, and pianist Rossini (1792-1868) began the brilliant 19th century in Italian opera music on the one hand, on the other — completed the history of the opera genre-opera *seria*, on the third-opened the way for a new folk-heroic opera of the Romantic era. At the age of 34, he became the royal composer and Inspector General of singing in Paris. Author of 37 operas. Its main strength lies in the inexhaustible inventiveness of the melodies: fascinating, brilliant, virtuosic, and for the singers it is also an opportunity to show the beautiful *bel canto*. The most famous and best examples of his operas: "The Barber of Seville" and "Cinderella" — the peaks of the genre of opera *buffa*; "Wilhelm Tell" — the heroic and patriotic opera *seria*, in which Rossini, in his own words, gave the word "freedom" in such a way as to make it clear how much he warmly relates to his homeland and "to the noble feelings with which it is filled".

The composer did not break with the already established musical and theatrical traditions, but in many ways he renewed them, thereby emphasizing the most progressive aspects of the Italian opera aesthetic: *bel canto* culture, inexhaustible melodic richness, folk-genre basis, and the spirit of cheerfulness.

All these features have received a classically complete expression in the "Barber of Seville". At the same time, Rossini's creative development is marked by the desire to renew the traditional Italian opera genre. He brought musical theater closer to the aesthetics of modern literature and drama. As a result of all the above, the composer's realistic aspirations led him to the French "opera of salvation" with its vivid theatricality and vital-truthful fusion of the heroic and everyday beginnings. Although Rossini did not create a new complete dramatic style, he nevertheless renewed all the musical and dramatic techniques of the old opera *buffa*, combined all the innovative and bright things that he found in previous comic operas, and vividly embodied these features in the Barber of Seville.

"The Barber of Seville" is rightly considered the best comic opera of all time. Verdi believed that this opera is full of "genuine musical thought, for its extraordinary comic inspiration, for the truthfulness of its recitation, the most beautiful opera-*buffa* of all existing".

In accordance with the traditions of Italian art, the "Barber of Seville" is dominated by solo singing. The vocal principle is subordinated to the idea of the beautiful that preceded it, in the so-called "golden age" of the singer, which was formed in an indissoluble connection with the "concert" style of the opera of the XVIII century.

The characters of the Rossini operas received juicy characteristics; the music sensitively follows all the turns of the action. The vocal parts are extremely expressive: sometimes they are lyrical, sometimes they resemble the intonations of a temperamental Italian speech; along with the brilliant ornamental passages (*cavatina graf*), there is also a cantilena (the first part of *cavatina* Rosina), and a rapid patter (*aria* of Figaro), and a grotesquely angular melody (*Don Basilio*), and replicas on one sound, and many other purely vocal means of creating images.

The problem of musical and dramatic enrichment of the opera can be solved only in conjunction with its ideological and artistic renewal. This circumstance prompted Rossini to create a new type of dramatic performance, completely freed from the false-heroic pathos of the theater of classicism — the opera "Wilhelm Tell". Despite the fact that this work is not characterized by the charm and magnificent theatrical skill of the "Barber of Seville", it is no less important for the world of opera art. The composer was able to find here those artistic techniques that opened the way for the development of heroic opera of the XIX century.

The drama of this work is theatrical, enriched with a variety of musical and stage techniques of the French opera performance. The basis of musical drama is large scenes that combine various elements of a musical performance: ensembles, choirs, solo singing, recitatives, ballets and instrumental paintings. Thus, Rossini achieved a high unity between action and music, singing and word.

The novelty of the opera's drama is due to the embodiment of the theme of the popular uprising, united by the ideas of the national liberation struggle. The main character of the work is the people fighting for their freedom. "Wilhelm Tell" is dominated by mass scenes, in which the main role is played by the choir. In the opera, there are almost no closed solo numbers — a phenomenon unusual for Rossini, but characteristic of the formation of the tradition of the Italian school. It is also unusual that the main character Wilhelm Tell does not have a single aria, only a single solo performance — a blessing to his son before the fatal shot — a small *arioso*.

The few arias of the opera "Wilhelm Tell" are filled with expressiveness, a completely new depth of sound. This opera is notable for the fact that at one time it represented the struggle between two outstanding singers — Dupre and Nurri. Nurri's extreme top notes differed in sound from his entire range, thus losing the necessary masculinity and strength of sound, despite the fact that he "had a sound hot and strong, perfect technique, characterized by milled transitions", and in Dupree, on the contrary — the voice was distinguished by both masculinity and sonority, although "at first it was not very strong". The latter proved that it is possible, performing difficult music, to reach "unheard-of heights, vocalizing in full voice with the participation of all resonators and combining diaphragmatic breathing with costal abdominal breathing, that is, forcing your entire body to participate in vocal phonation".

It is worth noting here that for the performance of Rossini's arias, the difficulty lies not only in the technical techniques, but also in the transmission of the subtlest emotional shades — from sad and sensitive to carefree fun and humor, especially if these nuances are laid down in coloratura passages.

The national patriotic opera "Wilhelm Tell" marked the beginning of a new opera school in Italy; many vocal works of musical theater from different countries are associated with it; it influenced the work of Bellini and Verdi.

Rossini put an end to the arbitrariness of the singers, for the first time in the history of Italian opera, recording all the virtuoso vocal passages and decorations in the musical text (which had previously been improvised by the singers), requiring the performers to perform them accurately. This circumstance led to the establishment of artistic unity between the music of the aria and the cadenza, and also thanks to this, in his operas, the coloratura ceased to depend on the inspiration and mood of the singer, completely submitting to the requests of the composer. This event in the vocal art was a kind of reform, because the XIX century — the century when the main place in the opera was occupied by the singer. However, the performers still continued to improvise, maybe not to the same extent as before, but few of them were willing to give up their own virtuoso inserts. This trend remains to this day: the coloratura framing of the aria completely depends on the technical capabilities of the singer.

In general, Rossini still reformed the Italian opera art, freeing opera seria from ornate and lifeless forms, and opera buffa from meaningless plots and motionless masks, but at the same time the composer remains devoted to virtuoso singing. The search for Rossini as a playwright goes in the same direction as his predecessor Gluck, namely, the desire for efficiency, continuity of development. His operas are distinguished by their closed numbers. Arias, ensembles, and choirs take on dynamic forms, becoming defining for the entire 19th century. In the finales, Rossini confronts all the participants with intrigues due to the rapid pace, virtuosity, ultra-high notes, and crescendo. The difficulties of performing Rossini's operas lie in new qualities: a wide range, more refined dynamics, and timbre diversity.

The composer, without abandoning the virtuosity of the Neapolitans, made singing a natural, meaningful process, bringing it to brilliance and grace. We can say that Rossini was the true creator of bel canto, which was promoted by his contemporaries — Bellini (1801-1835) and Donizetti (1797-1848), whose names are associated with a significant flourishing of vocal performance. Both composers sharply

differ from each other in the ideological and artistic direction of their work.

The operatic work of the first of them — Bellini — is marked by pronounced romantic features. Following Rossini's operas, he developed in his work the patriotic rise of the Italian national liberation movement. He was attracted to melodramatic passions. Operas have a soft, dreamy lyricism. Hence, the closely intertwined lines emerged in the drama of Bellini's operas: the first continues the heroics of "William Tell", in which the composer's original intonations are found, corresponding to the emotional content of the heroic scenes (for example, in "Norma" the theme of the uprising of the oppressed Gallic Druid tribe is outlined through the melodrama, in "Puritans" — the struggle between the democratically minded Puritans and the adherents of the monarchy against the background of civil strife, etc.); the second is endowed with elegant lyricism and romantic dreaminess, which lie at the origins of Italian folk songs, in which Bellini breathed new life (they are characterized by a wide cantilena, contrasted with a distant harmonic background, for example, the romance of Juliet from the opera "Capulet and Montague", the prayer of Norma "Casta diva" from the opera "Norma", etc.)

The character of Bellini's arias is sometimes melancholic, sometimes animated by a heroic impulse, captivating with beauty, breadth of breath, and amazing length. He is the author of 11 operas, on which a whole generation of singers grew up, bringing the Italian bel canto world fame. The most famous of them: "Norma", "Pirate", "Somnambulist", "Puritans". "In his operas, along with patriotic motifs, the touching and sweet cordiality, the overflowing warmth of feeling inherent in the people of Italy, found their expression". Verdi believed that Bellini "is rich in a sense of sadness, an individual feeling, inherent in him alone", truthfulness and the power of recitation. The composer can rightly be considered a master of bel canto, who had a significant influence on the development of vocal art. His melodies are characterized by bright and expressive melodies, distinguished by the breadth of breath. He had a fine poetic taste, sought an indissoluble connection between the text and the melody. His main melodic technique can be considered the principle of gradual removal of virtuoso coloratura from the main melody, a kind of "slow" decoration. This deep interpenetration of coloratura into the melody led to the emergence of an inner wholeness and unity, the birth of a sense of infinity of melodic unfolding.

Perhaps the most striking example of this fusion is Norma's aria "Casta diva" (from the opera "Norma"). The theme of the aria grows out of a single initial motif for the vowel "a", which is both a chant and a coloratura. The so-called intonation variants are formed, which give rise to cantilena. Bellini's vocal style is characterized by exceptional smoothness and flexibility, with the fioritura organically woven into the melodic fabric of the vocal numbers. In the Italian opera of the XIX century, two trends are clearly traced: the first is associated with the interpretation of decorations in the spirit of ornamental inserts, designed to make the main melodic line more diverse and interesting; the second — with the derivation of coloratura from the main theme of the aria, its melodic chants and decorations.

The second composer — Donizetti — is one of the most popular of the mid-XIX century. Together with Bellini, he established romanticism in the Italian musical theater. Author of 72 operas. Donizetti worked in various genres — in lyric-comic ("Love Drink", "Don Pasquale", etc.), lyric-dramatic

("Lucia di Lamermoor", "The Favorite", etc.), socio-psychological ("Linda di Chamouni", "Gemma di Vergi", etc.), historical-heroic ("Torquato Tasso", "Mary Stuart"), in the genre of tragic melodrama ("Lucrezia Borgia", "Anne Boleyn", etc.). His operas are characterized by sharp entertainment, exceptional ease of melody, accessibility and grace. The variety and effectiveness of theatrical techniques, brilliant vocal virtuosity attracted the audience of many European countries to them. He often succumbed to the tastes of the public, was fond of spectacular virtuosity, while caring little about originality and innovation, but, nevertheless, the performance of vocal parts in his operas requires from the singer, as well as in the operas of Rossini and Bellini, brilliant vocal and technical skill.

Donizetti's operas are incredibly rich. His comic operas sparkle with melodic virtuosity, and are deeply connected with the Italian folk theater. The singer has high requirements: the possession of a perfect cantilena, brilliant virtuoso technique, deep penetration into the musical and stage image. Donizetti had the same freedom to master different national styles and different genres. However, his work was distinguished "not only by its diversity, but also by its stylistic diversity". He was influenced by Rossini and Bellini, as a result of which he "exaggerated the entertaining features of the music of the one and the melodramatic character of the operas of the other". If his predecessors' vocal coloratura had a sense of proportion, Donizetti's had developed into "virtuoso excesses". Rossini, Bellini, and Donizetti made a huge contribution to the development of world opera. Their works are staged on the best stages of opera houses around the world, and brilliant arias from the composers' operas are heard in concert performances by outstanding opera singers of our time.

Despite the fact that the operatic works of Rossini, Bellini and Donizetti are highly individual in style and character, it is possible to distinguish three common points of contact of important elements of Italian opera.

1) In the operatic roles of Rossini, Bellini and Donizetti, the cantilevered and virtuoso styles of *bel canto* were used relatively equally, but each of the composers had their own priorities. For example, Rossini's arias are very effective, capable of giving the impression of a festive fireworks display. In them, the main thing that matters is not what the hero of the opera is talking about, but how well the singer knows his voice and technical skills. It is quite different with Bellini, who has a peculiarity of intonation in cantilena rather than in virtuosity. It is characterized by transitions from a broad cantilena to intonation-expressive passages of a special vocal-instrumental-coloratura type. Donizetti's operas are dominated by virtuosity, which is characteristic of Rossini. However, he also has his own achievements—strengthening the role of speech intonation, which, mixing with other types of singing, fuses and merges them together. All the elements of *bel canto* in Donizetti interact freely, penetrating each other.

2) For the works of these composers, an important element is coloratura (with ital. coloratura — "decoration") — "virtuosic, technically difficult passages and melisms in the vocal part", decorating the melody.

3) The scores of the operas of this time demanded art from the singers: a) to withstand for a long time the notes of an extremely high range on extremely bright dynamic nuances; b) the endurance of the singing apparatus.

*Bel canto* of the first half of the XIX century is a synthesis of two principles — cantilena and virtuosity, which Rossini,

Bellini and Donizetti used in their works in their own way, taking into account their preferences. Hence, *bel canto* has acquired a unique, individual appearance for the creativity of each of them. Accordingly, vocal pedagogy was aimed at educating such qualities of the singing voice that were required for the professional performance of the modern repertoire for that time.

Although the vocal part in operas is still overloaded with coloratura decorations, the singers are already required to convey the feelings of the living characters in a realistic way; the increased tessitura of the parts, the greater richness of the orchestral accompaniment, place increased dynamic demands on the voice. *Bel canto* is enriched with a palette of new timbre and dynamic colors. The outstanding singers of this time are J. Pasta, M. Malibran, A. Catalani, sisters Giuditta and Giulia Grisi, E. Tadolini, M. Marcolini, I. Colbrand. This was their era — the era of the prima donnas. On the one hand, they were all different from each other, and on the other — they had similar abilities: with the help of vocal means, they revealed the content of the composer's idea.

However, it is worth noting that in the first half of the XIX century, virtuoso coloratura had more of a musical character, decorating the melodies, rather than carrying a poetic meaning. Nevertheless, the desire for a more accurate and sufficiently deep reading of the composer's score came to the fore; the singer's acting abilities began to play an important role in conveying the drama of stage situations.

As a result, we can distinguish two types of improvisation inherent in the XIX century, performed by arias by Rossini, Bellini and Donizetti: 1) the performer proceeds from the author's idea, and his virtuoso inserts are organically interwoven into the melodic line of the work; 2) the singer focuses on his own singing style, corresponding to the nature of the author's composition.

If in the XVIII century the singer was a kind of co-author of arias to such an extent that the composer could not even recognize them, all the wishes of the performer were taken into account—from artistic preferences to performing techniques, then in the XIX century opera parts were initially focused on the voice data of certain vocalists. Each composer had their favorite performers, to whom they gave more preference, creating parts for them. Here are just a few of them: in Rossini—M. Marcolini, I. Colbrand; in Bellini—J. Pasta, M. Malibran; in Donizetti, J. Grisi, J. Ronzi de Begnis.

It follows that the performance data of the singers had a significant impact on the nature of the vocal parts and their technical difficulties. For example, the part of Norma from Bellini's opera of the same name was written specifically for the singer G. Pasta. This role is characterized by a special expression and dramatic expressiveness. To perform it, you need: mastery of the sound palette, a large range, flexibility and virtuosity of vocal passages, a wide cantilena of huge breath.

High-class singers sang any repertoire: from contralto to soprano. Despite the fact that the possession of an extensive range, the highest coloratura technique and a wide cantilena was also the norm of that time, however, the desire for dramatic truth and expression began to come to the fore.

After analyzing the work of Rossini, Bellini and Donizetti, all the complexities and individual features of *bel canto* of each of them, a modern singer can focus on the true reading of the parts and become a full-fledged performer of *bel canto* composers of the XIX century.

In any case, the first half of the 19th century is commonly

understood among musicians as the golden age of bel canto singing, including on that idea the names of famous composers like Gaetano Donizetti and Vincenzo Bellini. However, in that period, and embracing the principles of Romanticism, the search for a more truthful and human quality lead composers to write for the voice in a new way, moving away from the previously described principles of bel canto. The closer we are to the end of the 19th century, the bigger this search became. In 1831, the French tenor Gilbert Duprez started a revolution of the vocal technique which translated into the enhance of the middle register of the voice, closer to the spoken language, and allowed composers to concentrate their work in the central range of the voice, emphasizing greater importance to the text than was conceded by Rossini. Even Donizetti admitted that music is nothing more than the stressed declamation of sounds hence any composer should feel a song and fashion it out of the prosody in declaiming the words. For these reasons, it is not hundred per cent correct to consider Donizetti and Bellini as pure bel canto composers, since they lie at the axis between the 'old' and the 'new' school of opera composition. Moreover, this search for a more humanistic vocal aesthetic (fundamental for the Romantics), together with the new vision of vocal music, transformed opera in such a way that the bel canto ideal slowly disappeared with the rise of composers such as Giuseppe Verdi, Richard Wagner, Ruggero Leoncavallo, or Giacomo Puccini. It is only after the Romantic and the Verismo periods (and in part as a reaction against them) when the music historians start to talk about the bel canto style in reference to an older manner of singing.

In the middle of the XIX century, the powerful figure of Giuseppe Verdi was put forward in the opera art of Italy. He left the world 26 operas, of which the first "Oberto Graf san Bonifaccio" was created by a 25-year - old composer, and the last - "Falstaff" -by the famous 80-year-old master. All of his operas were staged at the Teatro alla Scala in Milan.

Verdi's work focuses on the achievements of his predecessors. He worked during the period of a powerful revolutionary upsurge and his works reflected the patriotic mood of the Italian people, the desire for independence, so the people called Verdi the Maestro of the Italian revolution. The composer places high demands on the libretto, considering it necessary to contrast the juxtapositions, the alternation of the low and the sublime, the heroic and the everyday. His work is distinguished by a Shakespearean approach to the interpretation of the plot, which should be based on the truth of life.

Hence the statement: opera is unthinkable without conflicting contradictions, without sharply pointed antitheses, the tension of passions that would give rise to a musical dynamic action. For the first time in the history of Italian opera, Verdi takes responsibility not only for the music, but also for the plot, libretto, stage decision and design. To create a musical drama, it is necessary to find a synthesis of music, words, stage embodiment, to achieve a comprehensive emotional and intellectual impact on the listener.

Verdi puts forward serious new demands on opera singers. So, in search of a singer for the role of Lady Macbeth, Verdi rejected the offer of the management to invite Eugenia Tadolini for this role, since he believed that Lady Macbeth should be with a devilish voice and a devilish appearance, and not an angel with an angelic voice.

The main factor in the opera is J. Verdi considers the melody to be connected with dramatic truth, with a deep

insight into the essence of the character. From these positions, he criticizes his predecessors, in particular Rossini, saying that melodies are not made from scales, trills and groupetto.

In Verdi's compositions, coloratura and complex passages are practically absent, while vocal parts require a richer sound, a good sound message. The upper part of the range of the male voice is significantly expanded, the climax is transferred to the top, and opera drama completely eliminates the light falsetto sound, replaced by the so-called "covered" sound. The role of the orchestra becomes more complicated. The orchestra system increases.

Contrasting comparison of situations, changing psychological states leads, of course, to the widespread use of dynamic nuance. The high tessitura of the baritone parts, justified by the need to convey a greater degree of emotional intensity, psychological tension, forces the singers to find appropriate adaptations in the work of the vocal apparatus. It is no accident that a new classification appears - the "Verdi baritone". Verdi assigns heroic parts to this type of voice. The first singer of this type was J. Ronconi is the performer of Nebuchadnezzar in the opera of the same name.

One of the features of Verdi's arias is the inclusion of recitative elements in the cantilevered line. This dramatizes the aria and complicates the vocalist's task, which requires a flexible transition from one manner of voice formation to another. As Verdi's professionalism grew, he became more and more demanding of the stage representation of his operas. He was no longer satisfied with the La Scala Theater with its dilapidated scenery, the carelessness and indifference of the choir, and the cliches in the director's decision. After the production of "Macbeth", the composer said: "I will never write for a theater that kills operas like Macbeth.

The creation of a musical drama, the change in the nature of the vocal parts caused the need for active intervention of the composer in the work of the actors on the artistic image. The first rehearsals, in which Verdi was a conductor, stage director and teacher, caused a negative reaction from the artists. The artists proved the impossibility of performing vocal parts, their unacceptable complexity, violating the naturalness of singing.

There is a well-known case when the famous tenor singer Francesco Tamagno, the owner of a huge voice in strength and range with particularly bright high notes, could not manage the final scene of Othello, and Verdi began to show how to conduct it. And when the old maestro fell at the bedside of the dead Desdemona and rolled off the dais on which it was installed, the audience present at the rehearsal froze: everyone was sure that the maestro could not withstand the enormous emotional stress. A sigh of relief escaped the slushers when Verdi stood up and calmly said that this was how he imagined the scene of Othello's death.

Verdi's musical drama, as a result of the development of opera art in Italy of the XIX century, brought to life a new performing school, required additional professional qualities from the singers: a combination of vocal and acting skills, a wide pitch range, evenness and uniformity of the voice, creating a mixed register and covering the upper part of the range of the male voice.

It is very important to understand how the composer treats the relation between text and music. Thus, the textual approach carried out by composers like Gluck, Verdi and Puccini (among others) differs from the way Händel or Rossini set text to music. The latter usually understood the

voice as the protagonist of the score, even if it meant sacrificing the understanding of the poetry through long coloratura passages, the change of registers, or the sequences of trills. Although, we can surely find examples of all kinds of textual treatments in all composers; hence I am not saying that Gluck or Verdi did not write coloratura passages, nor did Rossini never compose a syllabic passage. Instead, I am talking about their general understanding of how music and text were connected. Nonetheless, there are doubts about how to define whether something is part of the bel canto tradition or not, and this is most seen with composers like Monteverdi, Mozart or Donizetti, all of whom existed on the border of major stylistic changes in music. We cannot create an extreme delimitation to assure who used the bel canto style and who did not. In actuality, it is even more complicated because we need to take into account several aesthetics that were co-existing at these times. For example: Hasse was a composer with clear bel canto tendencies; however, he died in 1783, only four years after Gluck. We should therefore not forget that all the Italian operatic repertoire in-between the 16th and the 19th centuries were part of the same tradition.

By the end of the XIX century, the concept of opera mastery, organically combining vocal and acting skills, was formed. The requirements for performers - orchestra, choir, soloists-are derived from the idea of the opera house as a musical and dramatic theater. Verdi's drama, which reached the pinnacle of vocal-dramatic expressiveness, demanded from the singers more tension of the vocal apparatus, more saturation, power, colorfulness of sound, especially in the upper register, which was the main burden in the climactic moments not only in the aria, but also in the recitatives (which caused particular dissatisfaction among fans of smooth, flowing melodies), required energy, expressive recitation, impetuosity, temperament.

This trend was further strengthened with the emergence of a new stylistic trend, called "verism" (from ital. vero – truth), whose spiritual father was Emile Zola. Verism penetrated into the dramatic art and, finally, into opera. There were young composers whose work influenced the performing style.

The famous writer-head of Italian verism, Giovanni Verga, had a decisive influence on the development of the opera art of his country. Historical subjects and heroes of great universal significance are replaced by a person from the people, but endowed with strong feelings and passions. Instead of grandiose performances, a one-act opera-novella is born.

In 1899, a competition for the best one-act opera was announced in Milan. The first prize was awarded to P. Mascagni for the opera "Rural Honor". The premiere of this opera took place on May 17, 1890 at the Costanza Theater in Rome, establishing the national drama on the stage of the opera house. In 1892, the second Verist opera *Pagliacci* by R. Leoncavallo premiered at the Teatro Dal Verme in Milan.

A new trend in Italian music has formed a special performing style, the characteristic features of which are expression, affectation, chanted speech. These traits were most pronounced in Emma Carelli, a talented student of her father Beniamino Carelli. The artist served as a model for many singers who touched the work of young verist composers. The best roles of Emma Carelli were Santuzza ("Rural Honor"), Iris ("Iris" by P. Mascagni). However, it was in the work of this talented singer that negative features of the style appeared: naturalism, hysterical anguish, sobbing, mannerism, speech shouts.

The first performer of the part of Santuzza, Cema Bellincioni, enjoyed great success. The names of the tenors Roberto Stagno (the first Turidu) and Giuseppe Borgatti-interpreters of the works of the verist composers Mascagni, Leoncavallo, Chilea, and Giordano-are inscribed in the annals of the history of vocal performance.

A special page in the history of opera belongs to the work of Giacomo Puccini, a composer who created his own vividly individual handwriting, which in many ways differs from the style of his contemporaries. His work had a significant impact on the development of opera composing and performing arts of the XX century.

The operas of J. Puccini attracted leading performers not only in Italy, but also in other countries. They were impressed by the melodic generosity, deep musical and psychological characteristics of the characters, the opportunity to demonstrate their vocal skills, and most importantly-with the help of artistic intonation and acting skills to create convincing images of the opera characters. The creativity of talented performers softened the Verist strain and contributed to the formation of the "Verdi-verist" style.

E. Caruso became a bright representative of the new "Verdi-verist" performing style. The pinnacle of his art was the role of Canio ("*Pagliacci*"). The combination of an unusually powerful voice, captivating timbre, true emotionality, impetuosity and tenderness made Caruso's performance unique. Caruso's contemporaries noted his amazing ability to change the timbre depending on the nature of the vocal part. The breadth of the singer's repertoire is amazing: he sang in fifty-seven operas. Despite his statement that he loved everything he performed equally, the most successful parts were those with a pronounced emotional intensity. E. Caruso had a rare ability to work. Daily classes, lasting at least two hours, began with a set of exercises that developed cantilena, fluency technique, breadth of range, milling, and evenness of sound in all registers. The use of different timbres helped the singer to create true, highly artistic images of different, often diametrically opposite characters. So, there is a case when Caruso with great success sang the bass part in the play "*La Boheme*" instead of the sick artist. In the same performance, he also performed the role of Rudolf in the usual tenor sound.

One of the best singers of the Verdi-Verist movement was Titta Ruffo-the owner of a rare voice of the widest range, strength and exceptional beauty of timbre. Contemporaries noted his ability to use various colors, which made his voice soft and "velvety", then sharp and metallic (ringing, cold). The repertoire of the famous dramatic baritone included more than sixty works. The most popular roles were in operas by Verdi and verist composers. More than thirty works performed by Titta Ruffo are recorded on records and provide an opportunity to fully appreciate the art of a wonderful singer.

In the 1950s, the phrase "bel canto revival" was coined to refer to a renewed interest in the operas of Donizetti, Rossini and Bellini. These composers had begun to go out of fashion during the latter years of the 19th century and their works, while never completely disappearing from the performance repertoire, were staged infrequently during the first half of the 20th century, when the operas of Wagner, Verdi and Puccini held sway. That situation changed significantly after World War II with the advent of a group of enterprising orchestral conductors and the emergence of a fresh generation of singers such as Montserrat Caballé, Maria Callas, Leyla Gencer, Joan Sutherland, Beverly Sills and Marilyn Horne, who had

acquired bel canto techniques. These artists breathed new life into Donizetti, Rossini and Bellini's stage compositions, treating them seriously as music and re-popularizing them throughout Europe and America. Today, some of the world's most frequently performed operas, such as Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* and Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*, are from the bel canto era. Many 18th-century operas that require adroit bel canto skills have also experienced post-war revivals, ranging from lesser-known Mozart and Haydn to extensive Baroque works by Handel, Vivaldi and others.

## 2.4. The influence of the bel canto style on the European national vocal schools

The French national vocal school was formed in the era of classicism. In the political life of France, the XVII century is a time of consolidation of the nation, the formation of a national centralized state, one of the most powerful in Western Europe. The introduction to opera and bel canto in France began with a tour of Italian companies, whose repertoire included works by composers L. Rossi and F. Cavalli.

In 1671, the opera "Pomona" (Pomona — the goddess of fruits) was shown in the French capital by French authors — the composer Robert Camber (1628-1677) and the poet-abbot Pierre Perrin (1620-1675), which began the history of the "Royal Academy of Music" — the National Academy of Music "Grand Opera". However, even earlier, in 1659, a "Pastoral" by Robert Camber and Pierre Perrin was performed on a private stage in Issy, the music of which has not been preserved. It is known from the playbill that this is the first French comedy set to music and presented in France.

G. Camber and P. Perrin went down in history as the founders of French opera. However, the creator of the French classical opera was the Florentine Jean-Baptiste Lully (Jovanni Battista Lully, 1632-1687). Since the 50s of the XVII century, he headed all the court music institutions, receiving the status of "music superintendent" and "Maestro of the royal family". Since 1672, Lully was appointed head of the "Royal Academy of Music" and at the same time also secretary and adviser to King Louis XIV. Lully became the founder of the opera genre - "lyric tragedy" (the first - "Cadmus and Hermione", 1673), related to the tragedies of Corneille and Racine.

Jean Philippe Rama is a whole epoch in the field of harmony ("A Treatise on Harmony", 1722; "A new system of theoretical music", 1726; "Bringing the principle of harmony", 1750). The followers of Lully reproached Ram for his inheritance from the Italians, for his extreme boldness in the use of harmony, for his exquisite rhythm, and for the abuse of vocal embellishments.

France of the eighteenth century had no great singers who were equal to the Italian ones. But there were performers here. Declamation as a defining feature of the French national vocal school, the nature of the vocal parts did not contribute to the flourishing of opera art, as it was in Italy in the XVIII century, where virtuosity and brilliance of the coloratura of the Bel Canto era (castrato singers and coloratura singers) triumphed.

The manner of the French performance is in conflict with the practical capabilities of the vocalists. Contemporaries claim that "they do not sing, but shout with their throats and noses at the full power of their lungs... The singers have no idea how bad their singing is. If they did not take up the performance of Italian arias, I could excuse their French screeching" (Mozart).

The era of classical opera art of the XVIII century was completed by L. Cherubini (1760-1842), an outstanding opera composer, who, synthesizing with his work the national traditions of Italian opera (seria and buffa) and the principles of Gluck's drama, paved the way for romantic opera of the XIX century.

Gluck's operas, which played a progressive role in the fight against clichés, routine, and affected manner of performance, did not contribute to the development of vocal technique. France at the beginning of the XIX century, as in the XVIII century, in the field of vocal art could not compete with Italy.

The turning point was 1828—the year of the production of "The Mute from Portici" ("Fenella") by F. Aubert (1782-1871). A student of L. Cherubini, an associate of E. Scriba, and later director of the Paris Conservatoire (1842-1871), Aubert is the creator of the genre of grand opera, which reached its apogee in the works of G. Meyerbeer.

Dupre's vocal and pedagogical activity began during the period of his performances on the opera stage. In 1842-1850, he was a professor of solo singing at the Paris Conservatoire, and in 1853 he opened his own school — the "Vocal Institute", from which many singers came out. Dupree left the opera stage in 1855.

In the person of Dupre, the French vocal art received a musician, singer, teacher, author of operas, oratorios, masses, requiem, famous songs, patron of young talents. His daughter Caroline Dupree brought up a beautiful singer. In the history of vocal art, Dupree entered as a reformer of singing techniques. His main work, *The Art of Singing* (Paris, 1846), is dedicated to the genius of Rossini and is approved by the outstanding Italian composer. It became a milestone for the vocal pedagogy of that period. Through the whole book runs the idea of asserting the need to form a mixed register of the singing voice and cover the upper part of the range of the male voice. This method is also used today to form women's voices.

The outstanding vocal teacher of the XIX century is rightly considered to be Manuel Garcia-son (1805-1906), who created the methodology on the principles of which singers and teachers were brought up and are now being brought up not only in France, but also around the world. In 1847, his work "A Complete Treatise on the Art of singing" was published, which was based on his later work "Notes on the Singing Voice" (1840). In 1850, Garcia moved from France to London, where he received a position as a singing teacher at the Royal Academy of Music. He lived in England until his death. The "Treatise" is the final work on vocal pedagogy, which most vividly and fully reflects the principles of the old Italian and new French (after Dupre) vocal schools and preserves the traditions of vocal performance of the late XVIII, early and mid-XIX centuries.

The operatic art of France of the late XIX — early XX century is characterized by diversity: some composers professed the aesthetics of R. Wagner, R. Strauss and admired their interpretation of the nature of the voice as an instrument that is the main one in the harmony of the orchestra, others tried to revive the traditions of Rama, that is, they took melody as a basis; others followed the lyricism of Gounod's opera.

French composers Giacomo Meyerbeer (1791-1864), Charles Gounod (1818-1893), Georges Bizet (1838-1875), Camille Saint-Saens (1835-1921), Jules Massenet (1842-1912) brought unique features to the development of romantic opera of the XIX century, creating the French school of opera. The Grand Oregue (Grand Opera) in Paris was the leading

opera house in Europe in the 19th century.

Meyerbeer's fame was brought to the Grand Opera by the production of the opera "Robert the Devil" (1830) to a libretto by E. Scribe. The opera "Robert the Devil" by Meyerbeer marked the birth of the "grand French opera" of the XIX century. The production of Robert the Devil became a successful universal formula, which Meyerbeer followed in his subsequent operas: The Huguenots (1836), The Prophet (1849), etc. In all his components of the opera performance, Meyerbeer asserted the ideas of romanticism in the opera genre.

It should be noted that the second half of the XIX century in France was a special period, because then new trends in opera art declared themselves. By the 1850s, the French Grand Opera was entering a period of crisis. Such was the impact of the emerging realistic tendencies in French art in the second half of the nineteenth century. In the opera "Faust" (1859), Charles Gounod achieved a synthesis of romantic and realistic depiction of the plot, filling it with both bright musical images and deep psychological states of the characters embodied in the arias of the main characters - Marguerite, Faust, Mephistopheles, Valentine. Gounod's "Faust" is considered an emblem of the "lyrical" and romantic opera of the XIX century, in which the objective background of life is vividly presented.

Georges Bizet is a great classic of French music. The premiere of the opera "Carmen" in 1875 immortalized the name of the composer. Famous words of P. I. Tchaikovsky: "I am convinced that in ten years 'time' Carmen 'will be the most popular opera in the world". At present, Bizet's opera "Carmen" is rightfully an "operatic masterpiece" in world music. C. Saint-Saens has a special role in European music. At one time, he became known as "a pianist, organist, conductor, music critic and writer, teacher, music and public figure". "Of Saint-Saens' 12 operas, Samson and Delilah (1876) was a great success, an opera that is distinguished by its rich, plastic melody. It is an example of Saint-Saens' passion for musical orientalism. For the first time, the opera was performed in Weimar under the baton of Liszt, who highly appreciated the opera. N. A. Rimsky-Korsakov characterized this work of Saint-Saens as "the ideal of the operatic form".

Delilah's three arias are characterized as the pinnacle in the European opera vocal repertoire. In the arias, the compositional originality of Saint-Saens was very high. Jules Massenet's work in opera continued and summed up the development of "lyric" opera in France. He wrote about 25 operas. Phenomena in the creative heritage of Massenet-opera "Manon (1884) and "Werther" (1886). In our time, these works are included in the repertoire and are performed in theaters of the world scale. As July Kremlev noted: "One of the greatest strengths of Massenet's music is melody. Critics rightly noted the flexibility of his "melodic speech", combining declamation with melody. Massenet's melos follows the text sensitively and betrays the rapid transitions from concentration or indecision to emotional impulses. Massenet has shown himself to be an outstanding exponent of love and has created a language of tenderness unlike any other. You can recognize Massenet's melody among thousands. She is characterized by a penetrating sensitivity, exciting sensuality, flexible grace...".

The origins of the German school of singing should be sought in folk and church music of the Reformation era (XVII century), as well as in the work of R. Wagner's predecessors

— G. Schutz, J. Bach, G. Handel, W. Mozart, K. Weber. A characteristic feature of the vocal performance style of the Middle Ages, as well as the first period of the Reformation in Germany and throughout all Europe — is the unanimous singing of the a capella. As the most accessible type of singing, this performing direction corresponded to the plans of G. Luther (1483-1546). For this purpose, a collection of German songs for church singing was created (1524). Psalms, hymns, and liturgical songs were sung not in Latin, but in German. German folklore became the source of the Lutheran chorale introduced into worship. All the parishioners sang the chorales in unison. Over time, the Lutheran chorale was performed in a chord composition in a three- and four-voice presentation and played a leading role in the development of German national professional music.

The predecessor of Bach G. Schutz made modifications to spiritual music. A fan of the school of Italian masters, in particular C. Monteverdi, G. Schutz created compositions in the style of Italian madrigals, tried to give the musician a pathetic character, introduced solo singing in the form of a dramatic recitative with an expressive melody that required a declamatory manner of singing. G. Schutz also attached special importance to the instrumental part, assigning it an independent role. This is the beginning of a new period in the general development of church music and the associated vocal performance style, which takes on the features of instrumentality.

You should pay attention to the figure of I. Matzeon (1681-1764). He was a widely enlightened man, a composer, poet, performer, theorist and practitioner in the field of music. The works of J. Matzeon, a fighter for German art and the German style, were classics for German kapellmeisters, cantors, organists and teachers.

G. Handel, who lived in Italy for many years, was brought up in the Italian opera art, transferred the style of the Italian bell canto to operatic and oratorical forms and became the successor of the Italian opera-seria. Handel's operas are, first of all, huge collections of arias. For example, in the opera "Almira" (Hamburg, 1705) there were 42 "German" and 15 "Italian" arias. The opera "Nero" consisted of 75 arias.

The range of vocal parts of Handel's early vocal works is very wide. In the cantata "In the African Groves", the range of the bass part is from the c-sharp of the big octave to the a of the first octave (that is, more than two and a half octaves). This was made possible by the fact that the singers used falsetto. Handel wrote and directed most of his operas in England, where he moved from Italy in 1712. His constant rivals were J. R. R. Tolken, Bononcini, N. Porpora, A. Gasse.

W. Mozart began his musical career also with works in the Italian style. It was later that he created a number of works that not only belong to the German vocal school, but also became an achievement of the world opera art. The vocal and stage art of the "Mozart Theater" was formed and developed in the second half of the XVIII century in the era of the European Enlightenment. In Germany, this period is characterized by the movement Sturm und Drang ("Storm and Onslaught"). Adherents of Zh. - Zh. Russo-German "Rukhovites" - stood for the traditions of national art, fought against the canons of classicism. "Stormy geniuses" turned to the work of V. Shakespeare, whose tragedies attracted them with a deep truth of life, instilled a desire to create their own folk theater.

The aesthetics of W. Mozart is inextricably linked with the advanced trends of European culture, with the national

traditions of the comedy folk theater zingspi-la (formed in the 30s of the XVIII century). This theater appeared on the basis of amateur music making, school theater amateur performances, university theaters, traveling troupes. Repeated attempts to create a national German musical theater remained unfulfilled. One of the main reasons for this was the insufficient number of national performing personnel. After a long struggle, effort and work, German opera houses appeared in a number of cities in Germany.

As for the German vocal school, the founder of the German national school of singing was Friedrich Schmitt (1812-1884). His main work "The Vocal School of Germany" was published in 1854, that is, long before the call of R. Wagner (1865) for the creation of the German national school of singing, and reprinted in 1868. In the same year, F. Schmitt published another of his works - "The Search for a Mixed Voice". Criticizing, like R. Wagner, the Italian method of teaching as unsuitable for teaching German singers (given the phonetics of the German language), F. Schmitt completely removes the exercises and methods that are characteristic of the Italian method, and offers his own, as he believed, correct views on the teaching of solo singing.

Speaking about the vocal pedagogy of Germany of the XIX century, we cannot ignore the figure of Julius Stockhausen (1826-1906), who is a representative of the "school of primar tone". His method is a synthesis of the Italian and French singing schools, taking into account the phonetics of the German language. Julius Stockhausen was brought up in an aristocratic artistic family (his father was a virtuoso harp player, his mother was a singer M. Schmuck). Julius Stockhausen published the work "The Method of singing" (1886), dedicating it to his mother. In this work, the author adheres to the main methodological provisions of his teachers M. Gar-sia and G. He also expresses his own views on the training of the singer, among which, in particular, are: the strength of the voice depends on the functioning of the respiratory system; the pitch of the sound — on the function of the larynx; the modification (change) of the timbre — on the change of the supravental tube.

During the formation of the German vocal school *bel canto*, G. Schutz modified the chorale, adopting the style of C. Monteverdi, hence the pathos, solo singing, the independent role of the instrumental part; J. — S. Bach, studying the work of Italian masters, considered the singing voice as an instrument, transferred the art of *Bell canto* to German soil; G. Handel used the style of the Italian *Bell canto* in his operatic and oratorical forms, and also became a successor to the traditions of the Italian opera seria; V. Mozart began his career as a singer a career with works in the Italian style.

The German national opera of the 19th century is represented by such outstanding names as Karl Maria Weber (1786-1826) and Richard Wagner (1813-1883). Weber's operas *The Magic Arrow* (1820), *Euryanthe* (1823), and *Oberon* (1826) marked the beginning of romantic German opera. Weber's work is a significant page of romantic art of the XIX century. Richard Wagner-the finisher of the romantic development of the European opera of the XIX century, the composer-reformer, driven by the ideas of updating the opera genre as a whole. Wagner's innovation touched on many components of the opera performance: plots and their development, the development of the musical fabric in the form of a continuous symphonic development, where the system of "leitmotifs" - symbols of musical images played a dominant role.

Fundamental changes in Wagner affected the interpretation of the musical form of opera. Wagner abandoned the "numbered" division of the opera act, from individual arias, choirs, ensembles, leaving the musical-dramatic idea to combine the opera into a single cycle. The role of the orchestra became the leading one. Wagner's operas "Tannhauser" (1845), "Lohengrin" (1850), "Tristan und Isolde" (1859), "The Nuremberg Meistersingers" (1867) embodied the composer's reformist ideas and brought Wagner world fame. The epic "Ring of the Nibelung" includes four musical dramas - "The Gold of the Rhine" (1854), "Valkyrie" (1856), "Siegfried" (1871) and "The Death of the Gods" (1874). Thanks to its creation, Wagner embodied his reformist ideas in the philosophical concept of a single operatic musical action.

The grandiose musical idea required a special implementation, which was accomplished during Wagner's lifetime: a special musical theater was built in Germany, in Bayreuth, for productions of Wagner's operas. "Wagner had a versatile influence on the world musical culture, the aesthetic value of his legacy is so great that subsequent generations of composers could not pass by him. Wagner objectively reflected the essential aspects of reality in his work, revealed the acute conflicts of life, and responded sensitively to the spiritual demands of our time. His best works continue to live intensively on the stage of the world musical theater". "The Theater of one composer" is a unique phenomenon in the modern world, combining the XIX and XX centuries with Wagner's music. Every year, in the month of August in Bayreuth, Germany, the "Bayreuth Music Festival" is held, where Wagner's operas are performed by the best musicians in the world, and this celebration is led by the direct heirs of Wagner.

### 3. Conclusions

The style originated in Italy and was associated with the development of the national opera art and vocal school at the end of the XVI century. The expressive means of *Bel Canto* were formed on the basis of the phonetic features of the Italian language and the traditions of folk performance. The spread of arias for one voice has enabled composers and performers to pay more attention to the art of singing. This was reflected in the creation of exercises called *solfeggio*, designed to train the voice and improve the performance of works. This style is characterized by an even voice, an excellent legato, a slightly higher register, unusual mobility and flexibility, and a soft timbre. The technique was given more attention than the volume, and this led to the fact that the *bel canto* style was long associated with an exercise that confirmed the bravura of the performer: such a singer had to hold a lit candle in front of him, sing, and the candle flame should not move. This was done to control the correct singing breathing: it should not be forced and shake the candle flame. And the strength, beauty of the timbre, lightness and flight of the voice was achieved not by pressing the breath on the larynx, but by the effective use of the resonant properties of the vocal apparatus by the singer. The *bel canto* technique is a resonant singing technique. The main principles are *il respire*, *Messa di voce*, *Chiaroscuro*, *Coup de glotte*.

There can be distinguished several stages of the development of *bel canto*: birth of Italian opera (C. Monteverdi); the heyday of the "Neapolitan school" (Alessandro Scarlatti); the period of creative activity of V. Bellini and G. Donizetti; the work of J. Verdi; Verist School

(Puccini, Leoncavallo, Mascagni, etc.); Revival in 1950-s.

A great impact the style of bel canto imposed on vocal schools of France and Germany. The development of opera in these countries also was influenced by Italian musical culture.

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