

# The Emergent Properties of the Opera Genre in the Contemporary Musical Context

## As propriedades emergentes do gênero ópera no contexto musical contemporâneo



**Olha Putiatytska**

Department of the History of the Ukrainian Music and Folklore  
Ukrainian National Tchaikovsky Academy of Music, Kyiv, Ukraine  
olha.putiatytska@ukr.net  
<https://knmau.com.ua/aspirantura-ta-doktorantura/>



**Olena Sakalo**

Department at the History of World Music  
Ukrainian National Tchaikovsky Academy of Music, Kyiv, Ukraine  
olena.sakalo@ukr.net



**Vira Artemieva**

Department at the History of World Music  
Ukrainian National Tchaikovsky Academy of Music, Kyiv, Ukraine  
viraartemieva@meta.ua  
<https://irbis-nbuv.gov.ua/ASUA/1266231>



**Dmytro Shchyrytsia**

Department of Composition, Instrumentation and Musical Information Technologies  
Ukrainian National Tchaikovsky Academy of Music, Kyiv, Ukraine  
dmytro.shchyrytsia@outlook.com  
<https://irbis-nbuv.gov.ua/ASUA/1470508>



**Olena Yakymchuk**

Department of Musicology, Musical Training and Choreography  
Vinnytsia Mykhailo Kotsiubynskyi State Pedagogical University, Vinnytsia, Ukraine  
olenayakymchuk@meta.ua  
[https://scholar.google.com.ua/citations?user=IR\\_o434AAAAJ&hl=ru](https://scholar.google.com.ua/citations?user=IR_o434AAAAJ&hl=ru)

**Abstract:** The article's relevance is influenced by the 20th-21<sup>st</sup> century composers' innovative opera approach, experimental theatre principles, and the use of untraditional subjects and plots in academic operas. The purpose of this study is to reveal the emergent properties of the opera genre in the context of the development of contemporary music art. The methodological framework is based on general scientific and special methods, including analysis and synthesis, a historical and systematic approach to the study of the opera genre in a contemporary musical context. The study reveals that the opera genre, encompassing both traditional and new trends, is characterized by a strong emphasis on visual perception, a strong entertainment function, a search for new performance forms, and the synthesis of various musical phenomena. Emergent properties in the opera genre are considered from various scientific perspectives, and various beliefs and statements of leading educators, musicians, and scientists are compared and analyzed. The practical significance of the study lies in developing of the modern direction of opera poetics theory and considering the theory of contemporary opera interpretation as a separate branch of contemporary performing art. This is related to the uniqueness and semantic palette of the opera variety, which helps to identify new emergent properties of the genre in line with contemporary traditions. The study can be useful in preparing lectures on performing arts history, opera theory, culturology, methodological work, and opera studies in higher music education in Ukraine.

**Keywords:** emergence, opera, performing arts, music theory, composer, innovation, synthesis of musical genres.

**Resumo:** A relevância do artigo é influenciada pela abordagem inovadora da ópera dos compositores dos séculos 20 e 21, pelos princípios do teatro experimental e pela utilização de temas e enredos não tradicionais nas óperas acadêmicas. O objetivo deste estudo é revelar as propriedades emergentes do gênero ópera no contexto do desenvolvimento da arte musical contemporânea. O

enquadramento metodológico baseia-se em métodos científicos gerais e especiais, incluindo análise e síntese, uma abordagem histórica e sistemática ao estudo do gênero ópera num contexto musical contemporâneo. O estudo revela que o gênero da ópera, englobando tanto as tendências tradicionais como as novas, é caracterizado por uma forte ênfase na percepção visual, uma forte função de entretenimento, uma procura de novas formas de execução e a síntese de vários fenômenos musicais. As propriedades emergentes no gênero da ópera são consideradas a partir de várias perspectivas científicas, e são comparadas e analisadas várias crenças e declarações de educadores, músicos e cientistas de renome. O significado prático do estudo reside no desenvolvimento da direção moderna da teoria poética da ópera e na consideração da teoria da interpretação da ópera contemporânea como um ramo separado da arte performativa contemporânea. Isto está relacionado com a singularidade e a paleta semântica da variedade da ópera, o que ajuda a identificar novas propriedades emergentes do gênero, de acordo com as tradições contemporâneas. O estudo pode ser útil na preparação de aulas sobre história das artes do espetáculo, teoria da ópera, culturologia, trabalho metodológico e estudos de ópera no ensino superior de música na Ucrânia.

**Palavras-chave:** emergência, ópera, artes cênicas, teoria musical, compositor, inovação, síntese de gêneros musicais.

Submetido em: 22 de julho de 2024

Aceito em: 13 de setembro de 2024

Publicado em: setembro de 2024

## 1. Introduction

The theatre, as a dynamic and multifaceted cultural phenomenon, continues to captivate the 21st-century audience, reflecting a deep-seated interest in the evolution of music and theatrical genres. This fascination is evidenced by the significant engagement of both audiences and creative professionals, composers and directors alike, who have driven the ongoing experimentation and genre modifications in musical theatre. Over the past two decades, the landscape of musical theatre has undergone substantial transformation, particularly within academic musical theatre genres, where opera holds a pivotal position. The creative forces behind opera, including musicians and scholars, have embraced new artistic paradigms such as experimentalism, conceptualism, and minimalism, which have reshaped the genre. These innovations are closely tied to the integration of cutting-edge digital technologies, facilitating the reimagining of traditional artistic ideals into multimedia compositions that blend music with television, cinema, and video art (Tronchin *et al.*, 2020). Moreover, the infusion of mass culture elements into opera, coupled with the influence of new media, has significantly altered the production and structural principles of operatic works. This convergence of media has also spurred composers to explore themes that resonate with contemporary social, political, and economic issues, further expanding the scope and relevance of the opera genre in the modern cultural landscape (Fratoni *et al.*, 2020; Zasyadvovk, 2023).

Both the nature of the innovation and the historical period during which it was initiated bring the aspect of emergence to the forefront in contemporary modifications of opera as a system. The emergence property is now broadly studied in liberal sciences when analysing the structural, content, and functional uniqueness of a particular system and is recognised as one of the key concepts of modern systems theory and system analysis. The history of opera suggests that emergence is an integral element of this complex artistic system, which was potentially laid in its very foundation. On

the one hand, from its very conception, drama, poetry, music, fine and performing arts have actively and systematically interacted in it (Goehr, 2015). That is, it has proven to be a phenomenon with a synthetic and systematically organised nature, and the very presence of a system (as integrity) is considered by modern researchers to be the only possible condition for the realisation of emergence. On the other hand, the majority of contemporary musicologists view the opera as the culmination and pinnacle of the development of dramatic art, as the speech and dramatic art acquired a new meaning-bearing stage – through music development.

As a result, this led to the emergence of a fundamentally innovative artistic musical and dramatic phenomenon. In other words, the appearance of the opera was the result of the invasion of the emergent element. Emergence is often considered a form of the principle where quantitative changes lead to qualitative ones (Taniguchi, 2023). A through-composed musical text embodies this concept. It reveals the composition and singing as organized pitch intonations of a verbal text, forming a melody. This musical structure can be viewed as a realization of the emergence principle. After all, in the speech and drama theatre, the musical component was very modest, subordinated to the tasks of verbal and textual drama and had no independent value. Instead, the challenge of creating a theatrical genre to idealize the Renaissance man-creator and elevate him above everyday life led to the formation of the concept of the “singing man” – the opposite of the “speaking man”, and thus the growth of the musical component to a scale that completely displaces speech as a tool of conveying meaning.

There is also a third factor: opera appeared at the beginning of the modern era, and, as is known, at each round of evolution there are phase transitions, emergent transformations, in which a new, the previously unknown property is manifested, that is, emergence in the process of transforming the speech drama into opera appears as a way of giving birth to novelty in the process of evolution. Emergence usually contributes to the formation of a

new leader genre in the genre systems of each new era. Due to its communicative potential and ability to reflect the vital concepts of each time, opera assumed this place in the modern era. Its focus on matching a set of actual value orientations has made emergence a permanent element of the genre as an integral system. In the late 20th – early 21st centuries, audiovisual multimedia arts were introduced as emergent components in opera, the interaction of which contributed to the creation of new artistic phenomena with an active cultural potential. Traditionally developed opera is defined as a unique musical and theatrical synthetic genre, including elements of poetry, drama, vocal and instrumental music, choreography, pantomime, fine and decorative arts. In musicology, opera is considered a phenomenon of musical art, modified in accordance with the artistic and stylistic trends of different eras (Kalashnyk *et al.*, 2024; Sartbekova *et al.*, 2024). The main genre components of opera are determined by the poetics of the verbal genres of the primary sources of the libretto, namely: epic, lyrics, drama, tragedy, comedy, satire, fairy tales, etc. Features of the genre are often indicated by the composer on the title page of the score, for example, epic opera, ballad opera, etc. Opera is also a musical and theatrical genre in which the problem of musical drama is brought to the fore (Kiseyeva and Dyomina, 2020).

Tronchin *et al.* (2020) investigated the acoustic characteristics of Italian opera theatres, emphasising the impact of architectural design on sound quality. The authors emphasise the necessity of keeping these characteristics during restoration and modernisation initiatives. While their study is critical for understanding the physical environment of opera, current research goes beyond acoustics to investigate how these conserved spaces interact with new interpretative practices, notably the adaption of classical works for contemporary audiences. Fratoni *et al.* (2020) provide a virtual orchestra tool for measuring and validating the acoustics of old opera houses, providing a non-invasive approach to preserving their cultural importance. While Fratoni *et al.* make essential technological contributions to opera preservation, the



current study fills a research need by focussing on the cultural and performative components of opera, specifically how conventional operatic forms are transformed for modern audiences.

Kiseyeva and Dyomina's (2020) research is on the incorporation of mythical models and ceremonial aspects into modern musical theatre, emphasising the continuity and alteration of cultural themes. While they emphasise the continuity of cultural motifs in musical theatre, the current study is unique in that it focusses on the historical development and restoration of 17th- and 18th-century operas, emphasising the evolution of their form and content, which Kiseeva and Dyomina do not specifically address in the context of historic score restoration. Lareau's (2021) research investigates the figure Soliman's long-term impact on current musical theatre, including its historical and cultural relevance, as well as its influence on character archetypes. While Lareau's work helps to understand character progression in musical theatre, the present study fills a research vacuum by looking at how complete operatic works are changed and interpreted today, taking into account the genre's conservatism and modern audience needs.

The choice of the subject of the study is determined by the specifics of the genre of opera in the context of modern intercultural dialogue, which is manifested in the growth of creative activity of Ukrainian and European musicians. Among the issues that arise as a result of this activity, there are those related to performance, in particular, the introduction of the Western European opera repertoire in Ukrainian theatres requires singers to possess appropriate stylistic performing techniques, along with knowledge of the history and theory of the opera genre (Lareau, 2021). The interaction of different types of art is one of the relevant challenges of cultural studies, the solution of which, among other things, is associated with the study of the development of artistic culture in both theoretical and practical aspects (Rodinova *et al.*, 2023). Opera, like other genres of art, should be studied with regard to the development of culture in general and artistic and historical

processes of a particular era (including specifics related to the synthesis of arts) (Ha, 2021).

The purpose of this investigation, which is to study the emergent properties of the opera genre in a modern musical context. Research objectives were defined:

1. To investigate the evolution and adaption of 17th and 18th century opera music in current performances, focussing on the balance between historical accuracy and contemporary originality.
2. To evaluate the influence of current staging and interpretive approaches on the reception of classical operas by contemporary audiences.
3. To explore how cultural and regional contexts influence the performance and perception of opera, with particular attention to the Ukrainian opera scene.
4. To help establish a theoretical framework that describes opera as a synthetic form, integrating music, theatre, and visual arts in historical and current settings.

## 2. Materials and Methods

Within the framework of this study, the genre of opera is considered as one of the forms of theatrical art, in which music is a fundamental component. The methodological framework is based on general scientific and special methods, including analysis and synthesis, a historical and systematic approach to the study of the opera genre in a contemporary musical context. This investigation uses some methods and methodological approaches, in particular systematic, dialectical, and comparative. The research methodology is determined by the synthetics of the opera genre, which includes elements of such performing arts as acting, scenography, choreography, ballet. The main method used in the study was the method of comprehensive analysis, which includes a complete and detailed study of the object and its components. During the analysis, the key concepts of the study were



characterized, such as “opera”, “Renaissance”, “performing arts”, “music theory”, “synthesis of musical genres” and many others. The method of analysis made it possible to realize the purpose of the study, namely, to consider the emergent properties of the opera genre in interaction with the modern cultural environment. Hence, the main stages of the development of opera were characterized and it was found that each of the national schools searched for its unique path of development of the genre, reflecting the mental specificity and national identity.

A special type of analysis that was used in the study was logical analysis as a methodological approach to the results of cognitive activity. Logical analysis refers to the identification of the main structural elements related to the performing arts and their interrelationships, which are presented as a schematic description. By determining the consistent meaning of the truth or falsity of certain perspectives in a scientific text, the validity of the information is established. The synthesis method in this study is used as a mechanism for combining elements of the opera genre identified in the analysis process, characterizing the interaction of all parts and the essence of the subject of study.

### 3. Results

In Italy, music remained a mandatory component of theatrical performances. Theatrical music was designed to enhance the emotional impact and impressions of the viewer, entertain the audience, and vibrantly “colour” the action taking place on stage. Such music had no significant dramatic value. The music was created by professional composers and performed by court musicians. Such music was written liberally, without fear of technical difficulties, trying to convey musical and theatrical eloquence. The richness of nuances, sound, and dynamics of sound through the interweaving of many vocal and instrumental parts became the undisputed artistic conquest of the era. However, excessive enthusiasm for polyphony often proved counter-productive in the context of musical theatre: thus, the

meaning of the text, repeated by the choir in different voices and at different times, was often incomprehensible to the listener. At the same time, the musical common culture of the cities witnessed the convergence of music and performing arts. Singing and dancing were often an accompanying attribute at local fairs, squares, and extraordinary performances in castles (Mitchell and Frenco, 2021). These processes contributed to the dynamics of the maturation of the idea of creating *dramma per musica* ("drama through music"), where music, according to the idea of its founders – representatives of the Florentine Academy – was to turn into the main meaning-bearing series, and it was through its mediation that the concept was revealed.

The birthplace of the opera was Italy (Navone, 1993). The first public representation of the new genre of *dramma per musica* "Eurydice" took place in Florence, Italy in October 1600 at the wedding ceremony of Henry IV of Navarre and Marie de' Medici. It was based on the tragedy by the poet Ottavio Rinuccini, the music was composed by Jacopo Peri, an outstanding organist and singer, who performed the main part in the play. Any opera is based on the synthesis of words, music and stage action. Unlike other genres of dramatic theatre, where music plays a subordinate role, music in opera becomes the main component. The most important integral element of the opera is the vocal part, which in the most subtle shades reflects the richness of human emotions. The embodied emotions and affects individualise the characters of the opera and reflect the features of their character and temperament (Mozghovyi *et al.*, 2021). During the 17th and 18th centuries, opera composers faced the problem of creating an actual picture of the world and showing the place of man in it, which was based on the principles of Renaissance anthropocentrism (Opera in the early..., 2024). The complex of components that assumed the main communication function of the opera at the initial stage of development of the opera became:

- libretto (versified plot of the opus with relevant content);
- the musical component, which largely depended not only on the talent of the composer but also on the skill of performers: singers-soloists, choir, orchestra performers;
- design (decorations, costumes, machinery).

The recognition of the socio-cultural importance of opera started in Rome when the cardinals and the Pope from the Barberini family built the first specialised opera house with 3,000 seats. According to the pious tradition in Rome, the stories based on ancient mythology were replaced by Christian ones: the lives of the saints and the instructive stories of the repentant. But for such performances to be popular among the general public, theatre owners had to introduce a number of innovations. They spared no expense for an impressive performance: artists, musicians, singers, choir, and orchestra won over the audience with their virtuoso skills and colourful stage decoration. Also, theatrical miracles of all kinds, flights of “angels and demons” are performed with a such technical precision that they give the impression of a magical illusion. It should be noted that for the Medieval and Renaissance mysterious theatrical practice, machinery was not a novelty, but in opera, such stage effects used to reveal humanistic anthropocentric issues, to some extent, had emergent nature, because in sacred plots they appeared spontaneously. But even more importantly, to satisfy the tastes of the general public, Roman composers began to introduce daily comic scenes on pious themes; sometimes entire small shows were built into the programme. Thus, the opera features everyday figures and everyday situations – “living sprouts” of the realistic theatre of the future. The described processes indicate the dynamism of the property, which is emergence.

In the actively developing Venice, opera was in a different state. The leading role in the development of the opera genre was played not by high-ranking benefactors, but by entrepreneurs who, first of all, had to consider the tastes of the mass audience. However, the theatre buildings (and some of them were built in

Venice in a limited time) became much simpler. The interior was crowded and so dimly lit that guest had to bring candles with them. Printed texts that briefly explained the operas were first published in Venice. They were published in the form of small books that fit comfortably in a pocket and allow the audience to follow the action. Hence the name of the Opera text – libretto (Hrbek, 2020; Melnyk, 2024). The nature of the performance, which brought together many participants and different artistic styles, required not only a large stage space but also a larger number of spectators. Opera required more and more visual and accessible plots, ever more visual action, and brilliant stage work. Therefore, opera became an increasingly massive and democratic genre of musical theatre (Cascelli and Condon, 2020).

Understanding and theoretical processing of opera as a synthetic genre that includes academic singing, scenography, costumes, acting, choreography, and elements of other artistic and cultural phenomena began in the second half of the 20th century. As for the practice of writing and staging operas, the process of rejecting the established tradition began in the last third of the 20th century. In 1970, Mauricio Kagel wrote the famous “Staatstheater” (Younge, 2023). Critics considered it one of the most important works of post-war musical theatre, among the most essential for the current state of opera art and questioned whether Kagel’s “Staatstheater” would become the standard of musical theatre. Later, it became the source of the development of the postmodernist trend in musical theatre and the whole musical art. The piece challenged all ideas about the phenomenon of opera in all its manifestations: from the score to the performance. In almost every method of comprehension and representation of elements of the traditional opera system, there was the effect of the sudden emergence of atypical interpretation of established means. The composer offers to perform 9 parts of “Staatstheater” in a free sequence at the request of the director. Using the entire apparatus of the opera house (soloists, chorus, orchestra, ballet company and props), each of the 9 parts involves

the performers in a series of actions that undermine the usual performing hierarchy: chorus members sing overlapping solos, soloists sing in an ensemble, non-dancers perform ballet.

Although “Staatstheater” did not become a standard, it inspired the processes of rethinking and in-depth modernisation of the opera tradition in the compositional and staging practice in the musical theatre of the late 20th – early 21st centuries. There are pieces that do not contain all the typical features of the opera genre, the so-called alternative opera genres. According to the theory of opera revival by the outstanding German composer Zimmermann, a characteristic feature of pluralistic opera is a combination of different artistic genres. Zimmermann compares the new theatre to a huge structure that can shape the image of the entire city, so the theatre is the embodiment of intellectual and cultural freedom, the most important meeting place in the broadest sense of the word (Scott, 2017). The traditional opera repertoire of our time consists mainly of works of the late 17th – early 20th century, the most common of which are operas by composers of the 19th century. In the Romantic era, the genre of opera spread throughout Europe. Operas are generally divided into two genre categories – “serious” and “comic”, correlating with the tragedy and comedy of the ancient theatre. In modern opera houses, the repertoire predominantly features Italian and German works, with Italian operas dominating both the serious and comic categories. French operas, while significant historically, are less frequently performed. Major opera houses typically present these works in their original languages, with repertoire choices primarily driven by audience popularity and current artistic trends.

One of the issues of performing opera classics in the 20th century was the lack of awareness of singers about the performance specifics in operas of a certain historical period. At a time when the genre of opera with virtuoso coloratura and allegorical plots was falling out of fashion, few cared about the historically informed style of performance. At the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, through the efforts and hard work on the part of conductors and performers, singers with a high level of vocal culture were trained to

perform complex opera parts in an authentic setting (Damásio and Paixo da Costa, 2020; Giga and Oparyk, 2023). Composers of the Baroque era, including Peri, Monteverdi, and Lully, were rescued from oblivion. Mastering the technique of singing countertenors became a trigger for the revival of pieces by Enlightenment composers Handel, Vinci, Scarlatti. This trend has contributed to the emergence of annotated editions, especially works by authors of the 17th century, which highlight little-known features of the technique and nuances of the dynamics of performance.

However, the restoration of scores of the 17th-18th centuries in the repertoire has also raised certain challenges (Dellal, 2023). By its very nature, opera is a rather conservative genre. This leads to compliance with certain performance traditions, despite the availability of new technical capabilities. For centuries, opera has remained relevant and has influenced the listener, in particular, due to the synthesis of different art forms. Opera is a complex genre that requires high-quality production and high skill of singers and orchestras (Zhang, 2023; Hasanov *et al.*, 2018). Due to the conservatism of the genre, the resource of influence on the listener cannot be radically expanded: one example is the composition of a symphony orchestra, which has not changed significantly in recent decades. In this sense, the action on stage can be embodied more dynamically, because classical opera can be staged in an avant-garde manner, without changing a single note in the score. Adapting classical opera to the requirements of the modern listener, conductors periodically remove incomprehensible parts of the score, make bills, add insert numbers, and so on. However, these changes are often executed in such a way that the performed compositions become significantly distorted from the original work written by the composer (Smith, 2020). Classical opera often does not meet the expectations of modern directors who strive to embody current trends on the stage of musical theatre. The problem of insufficient relevance of means of expression and plots of classical music can be solved in several ways, separating the three artistic levels of construction of the opera genre (Kolbe, 2022):



1. Fun: this option is quite uninteresting because it is enough to use ready-made rules for its implementation, especially since it does not meet the requirements of modern opera.
2. Interest: in this case, the work amuses the listener through the ingenuity of the composer, who found an original and effective solution to the artistic task.
3. Depth: music expresses high feelings that bring inner harmony to the listener. In this case the contemporary opera should be detrimental to the state of mind. This is very important because music, despite its high artistic value, may contain characteristics that subtly suppress the listener's will.

In the process of adapting the opera of past centuries to the present, emergent properties are clearly visible. Within the framework of the modern phenomenon of "reggie" theater, directors often create new independent storylines that become the content of the stage action and have no connection with the verbal and musical text of the score, that is, unrelated to the elements of this content-textual system. Such decisions are very rarely successful, as they are aimed at entertaining the audience and turn the deep musical content of the original works into a sound background. Despite the influences of different art forms, new technologies and the importance of stage interpretation, the basis of opera as a musical genre remains the music itself. It also undergoes changes as a result of the creative approaches of modern composers.

The Ukrainian opera environment remains mostly conservative. This is due to the stage embodiment of classical works, and to the repertoire policy of opera houses, where productions of operas by modern European and Ukrainian composers are rare. However, it should be noted that at the end of the 20th century, such innovative pieces as Yevhen Stankovych's choral folk opera "When the Fern Blossoms" and Vitaliy Hubarenko's mono-opera "Love Letters" ("Tenderness") appeared in the Ukrainian music scene. Recently, through the efforts of some opera theatres in

Ukraine, not only modern productions of classics, but also new compositions in the genre of opera are starting to appear. One of the last large-scale productions of a contemporary Ukrainian author is the opera by Alla Zahaykevych “Vyshyvaniy. The King of Ukraine” (Kharkiv, 2021). All these works retain the emergent features of the opera genre, although they also use other elements that are not inherent in it.

Opera as a genre has grown and adapted continually since it first appeared in Italy. Throughout its history, opera has shown emerging characteristics, beginning with its usage to enhance theatrical performances and growing to become a distinct art form. These include the incorporation of various creative elements, the balancing of artistic integrity with mass appeal, and the ongoing conflict between tradition and innovation. The genre has proven adaptable to changing societal tastes and advancements in technology, from the lavish performances of 17th-century Rome to the experimental works of the 20th and 21st centuries. Despite the challenges of modernising classical material while remaining relevant, opera continues to evolve through new composing approaches, staging strategies, and the inclusion of current topics. The enduring appeal of opera’s fundamental characteristics – music, drama, and spectacle – as well as its ability to reinvent itself, indicate the genre’s cultural significance.

## 4. Discussion

The analysis of scholarly materials on the topic studied revealed the lack of relevant research on the emergent properties of the opera genre in the modern musical context. However, in the scientific information space, there are enough contemporary studies on such issues as: the historical context of the genre of opera, the place of opera among some performing arts, opera as a synthetic genre, and the latest approaches to the study of the genre of opera and many others. One of such is the study by Saez (2020), where issues related to examining the plot and genre of

European opera of the twentieth century were considered. This study has revealed that the categories of plot and genre are closely related, which leads to differences in the interpretation of the essence of opera. Features of technical classification of opera genres of the twentieth century in the corresponding historical and cultural context are considered. The conditions that determined the richness of modern opera works, and the main trends in their development are presented. In the art-opera system, one of the key points is the categories of event and genre.

It is impossible to grasp the essence fully without referring to such categories. Obviously, both categories are crucial in the study of opera: problems of a general nature, namely, the definition of the concepts of plot and genre of opera, they are equally objective for detailed analytical and historical research. Organisational and genre themes in opera are of particular importance for 20th century art. After all, it is at this moment that the greatest expansion and complication of the genre and level of the action takes place in opera. For example, Baranello's (2020) studies address the issue of the correlation between opera and symphony. The hypothesis of the criteria for classifying operas is presented, the purpose of which is to find a genre invariant that would be important for studying operas of the past and creating operas of the future. The genre of opera here is defined as a way of structural and dramatic organisation of the artistic whole, which determines the peculiarities of the interaction of linguistic elements of the opera. The opera genre is a specific structural and speech formation that has a structural potential inherent only in opera, and a peculiar language spectrum (expressive spectrum).

According to Piechocki (2020), today a significant role is played by the study of the opera genre from the perspective of the synthesis of various types of art, in particular poetry, drama, vocal and instrumental music, choreography, fine arts, decorative and applied arts and many others. The aggregate work of art allows the opera to fully embody different sensual modalities of a person (Zavialova *et al.*, 2020). Public problems and new

directorial solutions that have recently changed have transformed opera into a completely different synthetic art form, consisting of a contradiction between the potential of drama inherent in the score and the actual performance on stage. The issue of interaction of various artistic genres is one of the most pressing problems of cultural studies since its solution is directly related to the justification of the development of artistic culture both in the theoretical and practical sense. As everything is relatively known, it is impossible to study a specific artistic genre without regard to the development of culture in general, and the processes taking place in the art world as a whole, that is, beyond its form.

This implies that understanding the specifics of some art forms is a necessary requirement for studying the interactions and interactions of art. This need arises, on the one hand, at a new level of integration processes in art and society as a whole, and on the other – in the search for new directions of artistic creativity in modern culture. This work of art is probably the most synthetic because it correctly reflects the essence of the general (art) and character (namely, the art form). A work of art can contain many artistic elements. For instance, it is not surprising that the sculpture contains elements from painting, music, etc. But this does not exempt from affiliation to this art form. Musical synthesis, especially opera synthesis, is particularly interesting. It can be considered from several perspectives. Operas are based on the active participation of several art forms, namely literature, music, and sculpture, the interaction of which creates a new artistic phenomenon that has an active cultural potential and can perform several important functions in contact with culture. Musical synthesis received another interpretation – the synthesis of directing and acting skills. All this demonstrates the organic interconnection of the problem of synthesis with many aspects of artistry. From this point of view, the dramatic introduction of an opera is often reduced to a literary model.

A number of studies by researchers, such as: Jeanneret (2020) and Spurná (2018) refer to the paradoxes that the genre of

opera contains, namely cultural meanings and aesthetic values. According to the researchers, the genre of opera is more complex than listeners and people with no relevant ation in music can imagine. These ideas can be very professional or conventional, but they all belong to the form of opera as a kind of musical theatre. The cultural significance of opera, the reasons for its popularity or decline, the place of music and structure in opera, the problems of opera, operatic conventions and attempts to break them, bringing opera closer to life – these are the questions that listeners regularly seek answers to. They express their subjective vision of a certain disregard for creativity as a cultural form that has problems and a sign of the style of the time, resistance to aesthetic syntax and the desire to break with old forms. These subjects are further developed through other artistic trends, and the piece is still perceived as an ordinary art, little known but important for the status of the contemporary opera audience, symbolically presenting itself to the “world”. High culture adoption. In this sense, the opera genre has become a brand that helps it survive financially. Popular culture with all its technological possibilities can turn a very popular genre of musical theatre into mass production, or the aesthetic part of a world-class artwork is the subject of limitless modern experiments.

The study by Minors (2020) and D’Aoust (2019) considers the issues of representation of the opera genre in various screen forms. The authors argue that the translation of the cultural form of musical theatre into another language (film, television, or Internet broadcast) inevitably leads to a change in the semantics of the original idea. They distinguish several representative screen spaces where opera finds its screen “life”: opera films, film broadcasts of opera performances and screen broadcasts in front of many opera halls. Therefore, consideration is given to the impact of technical means on opera as a genre, and the accessibility of all opera performances and concerts on the Internet, which does not imply the increase of the aesthetic level

of the mass audience but is focused on entertainment and leisure. The authors note that no modern technical tool that could serve to evaluate classical art, especially the genre of opera and its film adaptations, has an undeniable aesthetic potential based on the broad artistic development of modern society. Summarising the above, it is important to emphasise that the exceptionality of modern opera lies in the combination of new technologies and original sound with high artistic value. It is also an effort to balance the desire to present contemporary art with the need to preserve classical traditions and history. Oddly enough, an opera based on cultural grounds can become a platform for the embodiment of a unique sound inherent in modern musical stylistics. This gives the opportunity to create a masterpiece that at first glance does not fit into any theoretical and historical category but has cultural value and appeal to the listener.

## 5. Conclusions

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the transition from the traditional style of opera to the modern one, associated with innovative searches, is considered an evolutionary process. This process is a synthetic combination of styles, features of the musical language, and elements of musical forms. A considerable part of the study is devoted to the essence of the classical opera tradition, the necessity of its preservation, and the degree of admissibility of innovations that do not allow the transformation of the framework model of the genre. The emergent properties of opera in a modern musical context are a phenomenon that combines the traditional means inherent in the genre from the very beginning of its creation, with the result of the influence of new concepts, technologies, and other types of art. The observations of the dynamics of opera art and the analysis of its current state allowed to state that the genre still retains its own creative potential and relevance. It is a source of innovation in music, stage art, and directing. At the same time, it



retains its unique features. This makes opera attractive for modern composers, directors and other artists who have the opportunity to express themselves in this synthetic genre.

More than 400 years of opera development have given rise to many genre models with their own specific properties and stylistics. The key to the integrity of the work of art is the observance of the unity of proportions and structural patterns. The evolution of the opera genre reflected the complex processes that took place in the cultural life of each era, and reforms in the realm of the genre were often attempts to return to the imaginary classical ideals of opera. Constant fluctuations in the aesthetics of musical theatre between the two poles (classical and innovative) characterise all the phenomena of opera art. In the centuries-long development of the opera genre there are two opposite and mostly mutually compensating tendencies – the desire to reflect the immediate reality of life and the creation of a special, unreal artistic space. In each era, the opera genre had specific properties that were determined by the historical context of its existence, while maintaining its constant features. All this, on the one hand, reflects the general situation of development of the genre and its panorama, and on the other hand, reveals new opportunities for transformation. Therefore, the prospects for the development of the opera genre may impress with a variety of potential avenues. The comprehensive analysis of scientific sources, which examine in detail the genre of opera in the aspect of synthesis of arts, has confirmed the relevance of this study, and achieved the objective of the investigation.

Future studies might look at incorporating new technology into the restoration and performance of historical operas, examining how these developments can improve the audience's experience while conserving the authenticity of the original works. Furthermore, studying how these reconstructed operas are received in various cultural settings could bring understanding to how historical works are altered and perceived across areas and audiences.

## References

BARANELLO, M. Viennese operetta canon formation and the journey to prestige. In: **The Oxford Handbook of the Operatic Canon**. Oxford: Oxford Academic, 2020. p. 458-473.

CASCELLI, A.; CONDON, D. Experiencing music and visual cultures: Threshold, intermediality, synchresis. **Journal of Siberian Federal University – Humanities and Social Sciences**, v. 1, p. 230-224, 2020.

D'AOUST, J. R. Posthumanist voices in literature and opera. In: **The Oxford Handbook of Sound and Imagination**. Oxford: Oxford Academic, 2019. p. 629-651.

DAMÁSIO, M.; PAIXO DA COSTA, J. Portuguese soap operas: A case study on the emergence of an original production culture. **Critical Studies in Television**, v. 15, p. 25-48, 2020.

DELLAL, P. **Telling the Origin Stories: Opera in the 17th Century**. 2023. Available at: <https://www.earlymusicamerica.org/web-articles/telling-the-origin-stories-opera-in-the-17th-century/>. Access in: 19 June 2024.

FRATONI, G.; ROVIGATTI, A.; GARAI, M. A virtual orchestra to qualify the acoustics of historical opera houses. **Journal of Cultural**, v. 27, p. 235-252, 2020.

GIGA, S.; OPARYK, L. Methodical aspects of stylistic attribution arrangement of pop-vocal composition. *Asian-European Music Research Journal*, v. 12, p. 81-92, 2023.

GOEHR, L. The concept of opera. In: **The Oxford Handbook of Opera**, 2015. p. 92-134.

HA, J. Y. Female masculinity and cultural symbolism: A history of Yeoseong gukgeuk, the all-female cast theatrical genre. **The Review of Korean Studies**, v. 24, n, 2, p. 107-144, 2021.

HASANOV, E. L.; PANACHEV, V. D.; STAROSTIN, V. P.; PUDOV, A. G. Innovative approach to the research of some characteristics of choir scenes as culturology issue. **Astra Salvensis**, v. 6, n. 1, p. 749-759, 2018.

HRBEK, M. Decomposition with new technologies in contemporary Slovak theatre productions. **Slovenske Divadlo**, v. 69, p. 277-289, 2020.

JEANNERET, C. Costumes and cosmopolitanism: Italian opera in the north. **Cambridge Opera Journal**, v. 32, n. 1, p. 27-51, 2020.

KALASHNYK, M.; LOSHKOV, U.; YAKOVLEV, O.; GENKIN, A.; SAVCHENKO, H. Musically-acoustic thesaurus as spatial dimension of cognitive process. **Scientific Herald of Uzhhorod University. Series Physics**, v. 55, p. 1421-1427, 2024.

KISEYEVA, E. V.; DYOMINA, V. N. Mythological models and ritual forms in contemporary musical theater performance. **Music Scholarship**, v. 4, p. 77-87, 2020.

KOLBE, K. Producing (musical) difference: Power, practices and inequalities in diversity initiatives in Germany's classical music sector. **Cultural Sociology**, v. 16, p. 231-249, 2022.

LAREAU, B. Soliman's legacy: What has to teach in musical theatre. **Studies in Musical Theatre**, v. 15, p. 241-248, 2021.

MELNYK, M. Theatre art: Conceptual and categorical problems. **Interdisciplinary Cultural and Humanities Review**, v. 3, n. 1, p. 46-52, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.59214/cultural/1.2024.46>

MINORS, H. J. Opera and intercultural musicology as modes of translation. In: **Opera in Translation: Unity and Diversity**. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Translation Library, 2020. p. 13-33.

MITCHELL, K.; FRENDO, M. A conversation on directing opera. **New Theatre Quarterly**, v. 37, p. 246-255, 2021.

MOZGHOVYI, L.; MULIAR, V.; STEPANOVA, O.; IGNATYEV, V.; STEPANOV, V. Religious-secular reality of individual consciousness in the context of COVID-19. **Postmodern Openings**, v. 12, n. 2, p. 522-534, 2021.

NAVONE, J. Opera: The creative expression of Italy. **New Blackfriars**, v. 74, n. 874, p. 400-407, 1993.

Opera in the early eighteenth-century world, 2024. Available at: <https://www.encyclopedia.com/humanities/culture-magazines/opera-early-eighteenth-century-world>. Access in: 24 June 2024.

PIECHOCKI, K. N. Compulsive masculinity: Hercules and early Italian-style opera in Paris. **The Italianist**, v. 40, n. 3, p. 400-418, 2020.

RODINOVA, N.; BUKLIV, R.; BUKLIV, S. Art of latest technologies: Problems, prospects. **Culture and Contemporaneity**, n. 1, p. 64-69, 2023.

SAEZ, D. M. Aesthetics, musicology and secularization. The myth of the birth of opera in the historiography of the last century. **Resonancias**, v. 24, n. 47, p. 39-59, 2020.

SARTBEKOVA, N. K.; DYUSHENALIEVA, A.; YULONG, J.; RUI, W. Musical culture of the Kyrgyz people. **Asian-European Music Research Journal**, v. 13, p. 41-52, 2024.

SCOTT, L. Creating opera for mobile media: Artistic opportunities and technical limitations. In: **Frontier of Computer Science and Technology: Materials 11th International Conference**. Exeter: Bath Spa University, 2017. p. 477-484.

SMITH, C. P. Inventing tradition: Symphony and opera in progressive-era. **Music and Culture in America 1861-1918**, v. 2, p. 299-321, 2020.

SPURNÁ, H. Methodologic questions of theatre research of music theatre (opera). Prolegomena to any future research. **Theatralia**, v. 21, p. 163-180, 2018.

TANIGUCHI, T. On parallelism in music and language: A perspective from symbol emergence systems based on probabilistic generative models. In: **Music in the AI Era**, 2023. p. 9-25.

TRONCHIN, L.; MERLI, F.; MANFREN, M.; NASTASI, B. The sound diffusion in Italian opera houses: Some examples. **Building Acoustics**, v. 27, p. 333-355, 2020.

YOUNGE, B. **Body as Music**: Mauricio Kagel's Repertoire from Staatstheater and Marina Rosenfeld's My Body. 2023. Available at: <https://academiccommons.columbia.edu/doi/10.7916/haxx-3674>. Access in: 21 June 2024.

ZASYADVOVK, O. Cultural phenomenon of mass event. **Culture and Contemporaneity**, n. 1, p. 29-34, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.32461/2226-0285.1.2023.286778>

ZAVIALOVA, O. K.; KALASHNYK, M. P.; SAVCHENKO, H. S.; STAKHEVYCH, H. A.; SMIRNOVA, I. V. From a work to an "Open" work: Research experience. **International Journal of Criminology and Sociology**, v. 9, p. 2938-2943, 2020.

ZHANG, Z. "Model opera" of the 20th century in Chinese musical culture. **Notes on Art Criticism**, v. 43, p. 206-210, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.32461/2226-2180.43.2023.286862>

## Publisher

Federal University of Goiás. School of Music and Performing Arts. Graduate Program in Music. Publication in the Portal of Periodicals UFG.

The ideas expressed in this article are the responsibility of their authors, and do not necessarily represent the opinion of the editors or the university.