

## Theoretical and Practical Issues of Opera Conducting

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**Annotation:** The article deals with theoretical and practical issues of opera conducting. The history, formation and specifics of opera conducting are presented on scientific and practical examples. Let us briefly dwell on the problems of opera conducting in Uzbekistan.

**Keywords:** opera, conductor, director, stage, drama, etc.

Conducting is a complex type of art of music performance, which is to lead the performers (orchestra, choir, ensemble, opera, ballet troupe, etc.) in the process of preparing a piece of music for performance, as well as directly in front of the audience<sup>1</sup>. Conducting originated in the late XIX century and is a young art form. Among the founders and conductors who put the industry into practice are Ignaz (Franz) von Mosel, Carl Maria Friedrich Ernst von Weber, Louis Spohr, Ludwig van Beethoven, Louis-Hector Berlioz, Wilhelm Richard Wagner, Hans Guido von Bülow, Hans Richter, Arthur Nikisch, Paul Felix Weingartner, Richard Georg Strauss, Gustav Mahler, Miliy Alekseevich Balakirev, Nikolai and Anton Grigorievich Rubinstein, Sergei Vasilyevich Rahmaninov, Sergey Alexandrovich Koussevitsky, Herbert von Karajan, Leopold Stokowski, Eugene Ormandy, Leonard Bernstein, Bruno Walter Schlesinger, Wilhelm Furtwängler, Otto Klemperer, Arturo Toscanini, Evgeny Aleksandrovich Mravinsky, Alexander Shamilevich Melik-Pashaev, Evgeny Fedorovich Svetlanov, Gennady Nikolayevich Rozhdestvensky, Charles Munch, Karel Ančerl and others.

Among the first conductors in Uzbekistan were F.V. Leysek, N. Mironov, V. Uspensky and others<sup>2</sup>. Later, conductors such as N.Olimov, A.Kozlovskiy, M.Ashrafiy, B.Inoyatov, M.Nasimov, T.Sodiqov, F.Shamsutdinov, A.Abduqayumov, D.Abdurahmonova, Z.Haqnazarov, G.Tulaganov, N.Khalilov, H.Shamsutdinov, B. Rasulov, S.Valenkov, A.Sultonov, B.Umidjonov, A.Hamidov (choir conductors), T.Jalilov, A.Petrosnts, S.Aliev, D.Zokirov, M.Bafoev, F.Sodiqov, F.Abdurahimova (conductors of the orchestra of Uzbek folk instruments), E. Azimov, V. Medyulyanov, A.Raimjanov (conductors of chamber orchestras) appeared.

This article is devoted to the theoretical and practical issues of opera conducting, so I got acquainted with several collections of literature and articles on the subject. Well-known conductor Z. Haqnazarov in his textbook “On Conducting” believes that “Literature in the field of conducting is very common and can be divided into autobiographical, memoir, analytical-executive, monographic and other groups of literature used in educational practice”. There is also a growing need in educational and methodological literature in music pedagogy, which can meet the requirements of the art of professional conducting in this specialty.

It is well known that it is difficult to imagine practice without theory. Since conducting is directly related to practice, all theoretical analyzes in the literature are based on many years of experience of leading conductors. For example, we can cite a number of authors such as *Sir Henry Joseph*

<sup>1</sup> National Encyclopedia of Uzbekistan. P. 296. [O'zbekiston milliy entsiklopediyasi. 296 bet].

<sup>2</sup> Azimov K. Conductors of Uzbekistan [O'zbekiston dirijyorlari]. T., 2001.

Wood, Ilya Alexandrovich Musin, Kirill Petrovich Kondrashin, Ariy Moiseevich Pazoskiy, and Charles Munch.

When analyzing the issues covered in the chapters and sections on the activities of famous conductors in the opera house, among such literature Ariy Moiseevich Pazoskiy's "Notes of the conductor"<sup>3</sup>, "Arturo Tuscany"<sup>4</sup>, memoirs, articles, materials of Edgar Tons<sup>5</sup>, "Art Arturo Tuscany" memoirs, biographical information<sup>6</sup> and others we can show.

First, let us consider the lexical meaning of the word opera. Opera (Latin opera – a product of labor, work) – a genre of musical drama. Opera is a mixed (synthetic) genre, which includes several types of art, in which the forms of drama, music, fine arts and dance inextricably linked in a holistic stage process.<sup>7</sup> Ariy Moiseevich Pazoskiy in his book "Conductor's Notes" explains, "Opera is not a concert of soloists, choir and orchestra, but a musical drama, a symbol of musical-theatrical, which emphasizes the active movement on each stage, subject to the laws of the stage"<sup>8</sup>.

The orchestra plays an important role in the art of opera. Therefore, it is hard to imagine this genre without a conductor. In fact, the requirements for a symphony orchestra conductor are the same as for an opera conductor. However, in addition to them, the opera conductor has a number of other tasks ahead of him.

K. Kondrashin says about opera conducting in his book "On the art of conducting": "The difficulty of conducting opera is that, in addition to providing a complex ensemble (soloists, choir, orchestra, "band"), the coordination of stage and orchestra balance"<sup>9</sup>.

One of the books detailing opera conducting and its features is A.M. Pazovsky's book "Notes of a conductor", which is based on the author's many years of work and rich experience in theater. The issues and problems of musical dramaturgy, creative collaboration of the conductor and the director in operas, which are not found in many literatures, are illustrated by examples. In addition to a brief biography of the author and general information about the art of conducting, the book has a separate chapter on music and the stage.

This chapter is divided into several parts based on the duties of an opera conductor:

- Conductor and director
- libretto and musical dramaturgy
- Composer score and director score
- music and pantomime, singing and hand movements
- about the effectiveness of real and imaginary scenes
- About future plans

We know that the activities of the famous Italian conductor Arturo Tuscani are also directly related to the opera house. That is why we got acquainted with the memoir literature of "Arturo Tuscanini", dedicated to his creative portrait. The literature only covers the biographical image of the conductor and the memories of the musicians who worked with the maestro. There are no

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<sup>3</sup> Moscow. 1968.

<sup>4</sup> Performing arts of foreign countries. (tuzuvchi G. Edelman) Issue 6. Moscow. 1971.

<sup>5</sup> Compilers A.Kenigsberg and V.Krastin. Moscow, 1974.

<sup>6</sup> Leningrad branch. 1974.

<sup>7</sup> National Encyclopedia of Uzbekistan. P. 186.

<sup>8</sup> A. Pazovsky. Conductor's notes. M., 1968. P. 472.

<sup>9</sup> K. Kondrashin. About the art of conducting. L., 1970. P. 67.

scientific-analytical chapters on opera conducting. However, paragraphs on the principles applied by the conductor in practice are necessary for our scientific research.

“Arturo Toscanini’s Art” also contains memoirs and biographical information about the conductor. However, Mario Labrock’s and Virgilio Boccardi’s article “The Art of Tuscany” raises questions about the conductor’s skill, technique, interpretation, theatrical work with singers, stage and directing. Director Gioacchino Fortzano recalls his collaboration with A. Toscani at “La Scala” Opera House: “We have radically changed the direction of the opera and introduced many innovations”. In addition, we tried accurately cover the plot of the opera, to express its uniqueness, clearly show the audience every event on stage. “Our views on directing were the same: Tuscany tried to reflect the vitality and reality of the opera while preserving all the musical effects and bringing them to perfection. Real dramatic action should be jammed in the music. Now not stage it in the old way: the choir lined up on both sides of the square, and in its center was the placement of soloists. As a result of Tuscany’s work, storytelling has emerged in opera performances, and finally the audience begins to understand the events of the scene”<sup>10</sup>. In this literature, one can find many ideas about Tuscany’s contribution to opera directing and conducting. It is clear from the above that the interdependence of stage, music and drama, which is the basis of the opera, is an example of direct interaction between the conductor and the director.

The next book with a similar content is a collection of memoirs, articles and materials by the famous Latvian conductor Edgar Tons. One section of the collection focuses on Edgar Tons’ work at “La Scala” and “Covent Garden”. According to Edgar Tons, “The basis of the vitality of opera is the human voice. The melody, which is the main component of the performance in the opera, should be the material for the sound. This, of course, does not mean that today everything should be the same as before. The melody, like the expressive means of music, develops over the years and reflects new intonations. In modern opera, this new look can be even more complex. However, it must include the main emotional aspects”<sup>11</sup>. The success of the collection is that Edgar Tons analyzed the theoretical aspects of the operas precisely from the point of view of conducting through examples. He also provided insights into what the conductor’s roles are in staging a new opera. This comes in handy in shedding light on the problems of opera conducting that we need for our research. “The opera conductor must have a clear sense of what tasks lie ahead of him at each stage. He needs to be able to direct the team clearly, – said Edgar Tons. In addition to the main idea of the work, the conductor must be able to direct the work of soloists, edit the orchestral score, provide the ensemble, generalize (synthesize) all the groups in stage rehearsals and create a single musical-theatrical work”.

John Mauceri’s book “Maestros and Their Music (The Art and Alchemy of Conducting)”<sup>12</sup> differs from other literatures in that it addresses issues in the field by comparing the work of famous conductors and comparing their activities. He also spoke in detail about the peculiarities of classical and modern conducting. John Moseri is a world-renowned conductor, educator and writer who has worked with the world’s leading opera houses and symphony orchestras. He has been the permanent conductor (direttore stabile) of the Royal Theater of Turin and the music director of the Scottish Opera. When we were acquainted with the sections on opera conducting, the author shared his experience and quoted with examples.

“A real opera conductor always tries to support the picture created on stage. Its color and shape reflected in the music. This is the main idea of the opera, for which it first be described. The

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<sup>10</sup> The art of Arturo Toscanini (author G. Edelman). Publishing house Music. Leningrad branch 1974. P. 175-176.

<sup>11</sup> Memoirs, articles and materials of Edgar Tons (authors A. Kenigsberg and V. Krastin). Moscow, 1974. P. 114.

<sup>12</sup> Translated by Taira Mamedova, Moscow. 2019.

conductor and the stage director argue with each other and achieve the goal with the will of the critics and the support of avant-garde ideas. It is not about creativity or imagination. The key is not to ignore the text. The audience often expresses their dissatisfaction. In addition, the conductors and singers draw attention, as if pointing out that the music section is a special show. In addition, life goes on. The next opera from the permanent repertoire will be announced and the process will begin again”, said author John Mauceri<sup>13</sup>.

There are no books on Uzbek opera conducting among the analyzed literature. From the literature on theoretical issues and dramaturgy of Uzbek opera: M. Druskin “Questions of the musical drama of the opera” (Leningrad, 1952), A.Korsakova “Uzbek Opera Theater” (Essays on history. Tashkent, 1961), “History of Uzbek Soviet Music” volumes 1-2-3 (Toshkent, 1972, 73, 91), J. Pekker “Uzbek Opera” (Moscow, Soviet composer 1984), R. Abdullaev “Opera dramaturgy” (Tashkent, 2007), E. Mamadjanova “History of Uzbek music (works of composers of Uzbekistan: personalities, periods, genres)” (Tashkent, 2020) and others.

In the late 1930s, the first Uzbek operas created in collaboration with Uzbek and Russian musicians. From the day of the premiere of the first Uzbek opera M. Ashrafi and S. Vasilenko’s opera “Storm” (conductor M. Ashrafi) (June 11, 1939), the musical-drama theater was renamed the Uzbek State Opera and Ballet Theater. Along with this opera, work will begin on the opera “Layli and Majnun” by T. Sodikov and R. Glier. It is noteworthy that these two authors (M. Ashrafiy, T. Sadikov) successfully conducted conducting activities in the opera theater.

The founders of Uzbek opera conducting are the great conductors (B. Inoyatov, D. Abdurahmanova, A. Abdukayumov, N. Goldman, G. Tulaganov, F. Shamsutdinov, S. Shodmonov, B. Rasulov, F. Yakubjanov, A. Ergashev) can be found in the literature of K. Azimov “Conductors of Uzbekistan” and E. Toshmatov “The Art of Conducting”. However, these books do not contain analytical-theoretical quotations or examples on the problems of Uzbek opera conducting.

N. Qobulov and Sh. Muhammadiev’s textbook “Actor’s work with a conductor (musical theater acting), contains “examples of the study of the art of conductors, at least in Uzbek musicology” mainly in the information section. Among them are F. Sharipova’s monograph on D. Abdurahmanova’s work, K. Azimov’s textbook “Conductors of Uzbekistan”, Malko N.A. Basics of technical conducting (M-L: Muzyka, 1965) Gulzarova I. Eldar Azimov (Creative portrait) (Tashkent, 1997). However, the analysis of the role of the art of conducting in the process of staging operas and ballets has been left out, and we will try to show it as a priority in the study of the problem mentioned in this work as the main one”<sup>14</sup>.

Based on all the above examples, it said that the scientific substantiation and analysis of theoretical and practical issues of opera conducting, in particular, the formation, specificity and problems of the Uzbek school of opera conducting not been fully studied. The relevance of the topic raised in the article confirmed by the analytical views.

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<sup>13</sup> John Moseri. Maestro and their music. Moscow, 2019. P. 194.

<sup>14</sup> Kobulov N., Muhammadiev Sh. “Actor’s work with a conductor” (musical theater acting).Tashkent, 2020. P. 16.