

THE ORCHESTRAL SCORE IN THE OPERA *THE LYING WOLF* BY ZLATA TKACH

Luminița GUȚANU¹

Abstract: *This study aims at emphasizing the orchestral plane in the opera "The Lying Wolf" by Zlata Tkach. In this opera, the orchestra is intended to illustrate the various moments of the dramatic development, in a suggestive manner. The author creates the impression of an orchestral dramaturgy, in which the orchestral sections are assigned different roles, yet somehow constant, throughout the opera. It is a score rich in colors and nuances, the main role being the game of registers and colors.*

Key words: *Bessarabian opera, Zlata Tkach, the orchestral plan, The Lying Wolf.*

1. Introduction

« In Bessarabia's musical work of the second half of the 20th century, the beginnings of musical theatre for children are related to the work of composer Zlata Tkach, "*The Lying Wolf*" (in Romanian – "*Lupul mincinos*"), a fairy-opera for vocal soloists and orchestra. Initially, the opera had been entitled "*The Goat and Her Three Kids*" (in Romanian – "*Capra cu trei iezi*"), in the first two releases – 1967, 1977; it was only on the third release, in 1983, that the author changed its title to "*The Lying Wolf*"(1).

The opera "The Lying Wolf" is written for a small orchestral ensemble.

In this opera, the orchestra is intended to illustrate the various moments of the dramatic development, in a suggestive manner. It acquires major functions in the channeling of the musical course, in leading the ascending arch of the

discourse, creating a unity in movement of the entire edifice, emphasizing or obscuring the various melodic profiles, depending on the context. Largely, it creates the impression that there exists an orchestral dramaturgy, in which the orchestral sections are assigned different roles, yet somehow constant, throughout the opera. It is a score rich in colors and nuances, the main role being the game of registers and colors. The game of registers represents moments of contrast, of shifting from one emotional state to another, either imperceptibly or suddenly. The merger between sonorous contrasts, the skillful use of instrumental resources and the inner tension employed by the composer confirm the sonorous nobleness of this musical piece. The orchestral timbres are actively and dynamically engaged in the process of presenting the musical discourse. The composer uses a rich orchestral language, either in compact piles or in thin canvases,

¹ Univ.Lecturer, PhD –Faculty of Arts, Department of Arts, Spiru Haret University, Bucharest, Romania.

full of a colorful effect, either in discreet and pure or tough instrumental tone colors.

We can notice the author's predilection for a "pasty" sound density, for the timbres of wind instruments (especially woodwinds and horns) and of instruments that add color (the celesta, the glockenspiel (campanelli) and the piano).

The instruments of color provide the musical discourse with the atemporality and non-reality that are specific to any escape into the world of fairytales, as they gently articulate truths for the pure souls of children. Each instrument brings along either a shade of suavity, or a shade of force.

In all, there is certain coherence, from the musical standpoint. Largely, the musical discourse is led through homogenous instrumental sections, according to the pattern of the classical orchestra: string, brass, woodwind and percussion instruments, with color additions from the piano.

The ensemble reveals the composer's intention of tackling the timbres globally and it lightens up the background with an impressive coloristic fantasy (by adding effects of flageolet, *glissando*, successions of figurations, *pizzicato*).

It is noticeable the large area on which the composer thinks and thriftily consumes her expressive solutions and tools, being able to keep a certain tone color or a certain type of musical writing for a precise purpose. The orchestral imagery results from the dramaturgy of the opera it illustrates.

The composer alternates contrasting sections in terms of intensity, compositional manner, dynamics, etc., transcribing them into the orchestration through a certain sonorous mobility. In this score, the means of sound suggestion manage to graphically illustrate the most varied situations and circumstances.

The orchestration does nothing but reproduce the profoundly expressive intentions of the dramaturgy. The mixing of the instrumental timbres, in the multitude of its states, generates rich and profound artistic images, also varied in terms of the spheres that we perceive as global entities.

2. The opera

2.1. Overture (Da capo – reference point no. 6, scene I)

- ▲ Allegro – is comprised of three large segments [no. of bars = 93; cuts/no. of bar = I – (1–27) = 27 bars; II – (28–61) = 34 bars; III – (62–93) = 32 bars];
- ▲ Pitch organization system: tempered; tonal – *B flat major*;
- ▲ Elements of musical construction: triads;
- ▲ Rhythm organization system:
 - duple meter (2/4);
 - minimum measurable duration = the sixteenth note;
- ▲ Units of expression:
 - A. Chords in an eighth-note pulse, which configure a melody with a low ambitus (range);
 - B. An ascending, isochronous scale with short note values (sixteenth notes), spanning a range of 1, 2 octaves;
 - C. A formal articulation in (minimal) units of 2 bars;
- ▲ Syntax: accompanied monody, in which both the monody and the accompaniment are written homophonically;
- ▲ Orchestration: the musical discourse is led through homogenous instrumental sections, according to the pattern of the classical orchestra: strings, brass, woodwinds, with color additions from the percussion instruments;

The musical discourse of the Overture is added some various micro-intonations

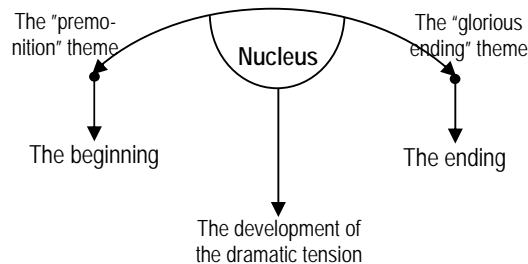
which appear throughout the opera, highlighting essential themes:

- a) the "glorious ending" theme;
- b) the "premonition" theme;

The author has written the overture within two poles (beginning – ending),

placed on a **bipolar arch**, in which the imminent tragedy is about to unfold – the development of the dramatic tension.

Expressed graphically, we obtain the following drawing:



Segment I – Here, the melodic line is tonally centered on *B flat major* with a duple meter, structured on low-range intervals with a divergent profile and a formal arching, in minimal, 2-bar units.

Sub-segment II is built on the thematic material of the opera's ending – *the "glorious ending" theme* (scene III, Act II – sub-segment I), in an identical exposition.

Segment II – the melodic line is focused on two types of units: *sub-segment I* – with an isochronous, sixteenth-note pulse; *Sub-segment II* comes with a rhythmic formula in which the succession of eighth notes is interrupted by two half notes. The shift from one sub-segment to the other is made through an isochronous, ascending, supraoctavian scale [with modal inflexions – *B Lydian* (E natural)], with short note values (sixteenth-notes).

Segment II comprises the intonations of *the "glorious ending" theme*

- *Sub-segment I* = sub-segment II of the ending (Act II, scene III) with changes in the instruments' distribution: *reversal of planes* – the woodwinds with the strings;

- *Sub-segment II* = segment I of the ending (Act II, scene III), identically rendered.

Segment III

The first segment is written on the intonations of the "glorious ending" theme (the identical reproduction of sub-segment I from scene III, Act II); *Sub-segment II* begins at reference point no. 5, through an isochronous, descending, octavian scale (with a Lydian shade – E natural) and it progresses towards a blurry, solemn ending (*Trombones, Cello*), at which point **the premonition theme** is introduced (the theme at the end of scene I, Act I).

2.2. The scene of magic (Act I)

The composer outlines the atmosphere of this scene through polychrome panoply of means of expression. Here, we find sonorous developments that fit the theatrical message, as Zlata Tkach manages to delineate the sinister, evil character of this action. It is an eloquent example of dramatizing a musical discourse.

The discourse is built on certain units of expression, such as:

- using *glissando*, chromatic scales (infraoctavian and supraoctavian scales, either ascending, descending or divergent);
- using elements of construction – triads, chords based on the fourth-fifth principle, with adjacent degrees, characterized by a gradual progression, upwards and downwards, etc.);
- using elements from children’s folklore, by using specific rhythmic-melodic configurations (on restricted ranges);
- using dynamics that attain a polychrome array of shades and accents;
- the instrumental distribution of “*Tutti*”.

The scene of magic [*Allegro assai*/reference point no. 12 (page 173) – 2/4 (page 185)] is made up of two large segments (no. of bars = 50; cuts/no. of bar = [(1–12); (13–22)]; [(23–40); (41–50)]) – I = 22 bars; II = 28 bars.

Stated through a rapid movement (“*alla breve*”) and a duple meter (2/4), *Segment I* (“*Allegro assai*”) reveals a homophone exposition with the tonal center on pitch A (with a *major/minor* relativized ethos).

Sub-segment *primo* reveals an isochronous, eighth-note pulse. Reference point no. 12 marks the solo trajectory in the kettledrums, this time (“*Timpani – soli*”), which consists in a melodic formula (two augmented fourths, with a descending and ascending profile), restated identically throughout 4 bars, with an 8th-note pulse.

In the *second* sub-segment, there appears a rhythmic formula in which the succession of eighth notes is interrupted by a pair of two sixteenth notes.

From reference point no. 13, the melodic line appears in the xylophones, with a quarter-note pulse, being embellished with chromatic melodic formulas on restricted

ranges (a melodic construction on three notes).

Stated in a moderate movement and with a quadruple meter (4/4), *Segment II* (“*Moderato assai*”) is presented as an *accompanied monody* (the accompaniment formula remains in *ostinato*, on a heterogeneous metric structure in the total of 8 eighth notes: 3+2+2).

The melodic line stands out at reference point no. 14 (bar no. 4) [*monody* – the woodwind and string sections (Violins I, II; Viola) + *accompaniment* – the brass section, piano and larger stringed instruments (cellos and double bass)], being preceded by a short, 3-bar introduction, which displays an isochronous, ascending, supraoctavian scale, with short note values, introduced by the flutes and clarinets.

Reference point no. 15 marks the presence of a chromatic, isochronous, descending, infraoctavian scale, with a quarter-note pulse, introduced by the bassoon and xylophone.

The monody of this segment reveals two types of units, characterized by:

- A:** *glissando*, sequences of gradually augmented intervals, on a chromatic scale and with a divergent profile, eighth-note pulse and the persistence on a chord function.
- B:** alternation between 4 *sixteenth notes* / 2 *eighth notes* or the succession of 2 sixteenth notes – 1 eighth note; “*Tutti*” character.

2.3. The Rabbits’ Dance (Act II)

The Rabbits’ Dance [Reference point no. 10 (page 17) – Ref. point 18 (page 35)], a formal edifice made up of 114 bars (cuts/no. of bar: [(1–16); (17–28); (29–39)]; [(40–55); (56–64); (65–76); (77–89)]; [90–114]).

The formal typology of the segments has the following structural configuration:

Verse I [A (16 bars), B (12 bars), C (11 bars) = 39 bars];

Verse II [A (16 bars), B (12 bars), C (9 bars), D (13 bars) = 50 bars];

Verse III [A (7+2), (8+8) = 25 bars].

Sub-segments **A**, **B** and **C** have a thematic function, whilst **D** – the function of a bridge. Their melodic lines are anchored in children's folklore, according to the rhythmic-melodic constructions (spanning a low ambitus) and to the unusual intervals used (leaps of seconds, thirds and fourths).

Verse I – is tonally centered on *E major* (duple meter).

Sub-segment A (Reference point no. 10) – starts off with a simple, playful melodic line, with an eighth-note pulse stated by the *solo violin*, seconded by *flutes and oboes* and developed on a tonal harmonic support (the tonic chord, the 6th-degree chord, subdominant chord, etc.) stated by the *violin I, II; Viola and piano*.

Beginning in a modal atmosphere (*E Mixolydian scale*), the melodic discourse will shift (towards the end of its development) into a minor one (*E minor*), as there are permanent inflexions in the minor key.

Sub-segment B – the melodic line appears in the *first violins* (ref. point no. 11), displaying a modal ethos [we can notice here the presence of the Lydian fourth – *E Lydian* (A sharp)]. Throughout its development, the melodic line is inserted short interventions (of 2 eighth notes each), by the *woodwinds and piano*.

In *sub-segment C* (ref. point no. 11a), the melodic line is attributed new tone colors. This time, it is introduced by the brass instruments (*Horn solo*), evolving on the long pedals of *violas* and *cellos* and supplemented by the melodic formulas (*ostinato* constructions that do not span more than a major-third ambitus)

introduced by the woodwinds and by the *first and second violins*.

Verse II has the same tonal center; it is structured into 4 sub-segments, built on the same principles as in *Verse I*.

Sub-segment A begins with a minor exposition (*E minor*). The melodic line is introduced by the woodwind instruments (simultaneous exposition), on the harmonic support of the *string instruments* and *piano*.

Sub-segment B (ref. point no. 14) is centered upon the thematic material of *sub-segment C* (*Verse I*), with changes in the instruments' distribution:

- the melodic line remains in the brass section, this time being stated by the solo trumpets;
- the harmonic support incurs a reversal of planes: the pedals are played by the *violins I, II* and the *ostinato* formulas – by the *violas, cellos* and *bassoons*.

Sub-segment C is focused on the thematic material of sub-segment B (*verse I*), with some changes at tonal level - the exposition is made with major/minor-key inflexions – *G major/G minor* – and in terms of instruments' distribution: the melodic line changes its timbral spectrum (the *cellos* are added to the *first violins*). The orchestral support is presented „step-by-step“ (*Vni II, Vle, Cb*) with some interventions by the *woodwind instruments*.

Sub-segment D has a bridge function, being the liaison that ensures the shift to the next verse.

Verse III functions as the *conclusion* and *dramatic climax* and is made up of sub-segment A (exposition – reiteration). The melodic line is assigned to the woodwinds (*flute, oboe, clarinet*), string instruments (*violins I, II; viola*) + *xylophone*. This verse has the instrumental distribution of *tutti*.

Being the *dramatic climax* of the opera, this sub-section ends with a descending, isochronous, supraoctavian scale, with an 8th-note pulse, stated by the *first* and *second violins*, *violas* and *cellos* – ‘*pizzicato*’, in unison, with timbral emphases in the percussion instruments, presented on the random exposition in the woodwind instruments (*flute*, *oboe* and *clarinet*) and *xylophone*.

Next, let us look at the following diagram, illustrating the thematic connections between the verses’ sub-segments.

At the end of this analytical endeavor, we can conclude that “*The Rabbits’ Dance*” has the following characteristics:

- 3 verses, sub-segments A, B and C have a *thematic* function and D acts as

a *bridge*; verse III is the *conclusion* or *dramatic climax*;

- an eighth-note pulse; a simple, playful melody, in duple meter;
- modal ethos (*Mixolydian*, *Lydian*), with inflexions of *major/minor* keys and tonal chords (third, fifth intervals);
- a “*tutti*” distribution of instruments.

References

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