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OPERA SHI GUANGNANA „ŻAL ZA PRZESZŁOŚCIĄ” W PRZESTRZENI WSPÓŁCZESNEGO TEATRU CHIŃSKIEGO: AKTUALNE ASPEKTY INTERPRETACJI

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Adnotacja. W artykule przedstawiono sposoby kształtowania się chińskiej opery typu europejskiego i podkreślono główne etapy przyswajania tradycji europejskiej w dziedzinie sztuki teatralnej. Kultura operowa współczesnych Chin jest postrzegana jako całościowe zjawisko o złożonej strukturze i różnorodności stylistycznej. Na materiale inscenizacji opery „Regret for the Past” Shi Guangnana w 1981 r. (Beijing People’s Theater) i 2018 r. (Poly Theatre, Beijing) zbadano formy przyswajania europejskich doświadczeń na terenie współczesnej chińskiej opery.

Słowa kluczowe: współczesna opera chińska, dramat liryczny, tradycja narodowa, twórczość Lu Xin, model gatunkowo-kompozycyjny opery europejskiej.

SHI GUANGNAN “REGRET FOR THE PAST” IN THE SPACE OF MODERN CHINESE THEATER: RELEVANT ASPECTS OF INTERPRETATION

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Abstract. The article outlines the ways of formation of Chinese opera of European type and highlights the main stages of mastering the European tradition in the field of theatrical art. The opera culture of modern China is considered as a holistic phenomenon with a complex structure and style diversity. Shi Guangnan’s “Regret for the Past” performances in 1981 (Beijing People’s Theater) and 2018 (Poly Theatre, Beijing) explored the forms of gaining European experience in modern Chinese opera.

Key words: modern Chinese opera, lyrical drama, national tradition, works of Lu Xun, genre and compositional model of European opera.

ОПЕРА ШИ ГУАННАНЬ «ЖАЛЬ ЗА МИНУЛИМ» У ПРОСТОРИ СУЧАСНОГО КИТАЙСЬКОГО ТЕАТРУ: АКТУАЛЬНІ АСПЕКТИ ІНТЕРПРЕТАЦІЇ

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Анотація. У статті окреслено шляхи формування китайської опери європейського типу та виділено основні етапи засвоєння європейської традиції в галузі театрального мистецтва. Оперна культура сучасного Китаю розглядається як цілісний феномен зі складною структурою та стильовим розмаїттям. На матеріалі постановок опери “Regret for the Past” Shi Guangnan у 1981 (Beijing People’s Theater) та 2018 роках (Poly Theatre, Beijing) досліджено форми засвоєння європейського досвіду на теренах сучасного китайського оперного театру.

Ключові слова: сучасна китайська опера, лірична драма, національна традиція, творчість Лу Сінь, жанрово-композиційна модель європейської опери.

Introduction. The last two centuries in the history of Chinese music art have been marked by the expansion of Western culture. Among its most important values, China perceived the European musical theater, represented primarily by opera. The purposefulness of the convergence of West and East in the opera genre is confirmed not only by a significant chronological framework, but also by the emergence of a separate line of modern Chinese opera – Europeanized, pro-European – the active development of which continues to this day.

As it is known, the concept of “Chinese opera” includes two independent musical and theatrical branches. The first of them (戏曲 Xi Qu – “Traditional Chinese opera”) developed outside European influences and is an original art with unique aesthetics and expression system. The most famous version of Chinese traditional drama – the Peking

(Beijing) Opera¹ – was formed in the XVIII century. The second branch, mentioned as “Chinese Opera”², appeared much later – in the first half of the XX century – and was the result of direct influence of the European opera tradition. It is the second branch of Chinese music and performing arts that is the focus of this study. It was followed by the names “Chinese contemporary classical opera” (Zhang Lizhen), “New Chinese Opera”, “Chinese National Opera” (Liu Jin) – all these terms are close and used in the work. The phenomenon of modern Chinese opera is seen as a purposeful and sustainable process of learning European experience, different from its own national tradition.

The question of the differences between Chinese and European opera art can be thoroughly considered only taking into account the historical situation, as well as in the light of the specifics of the Chinese national mentality. The uniqueness of modern Chinese opera lies not only in the fact that it has organically absorbed the European tradition, but also in the fact that it has managed to preserve its national identity. The desire to go beyond the national tradition is strangely combined with the desire to preserve it. Modern Chinese opera demonstrates the ability to absorb European culture, carefully preserving national specifics. This is manifested in the concentration of opera plots around national history, the rich and varied embodiment of folklore, the preservation of a special folk style of singing, the significant role of plasticity and gesture, the use of traditional instruments etc. The entry of modern opera into the transnational cultural space is confirmed by master classes of Chinese vocalists abroad, festivals and competitions of international level, as well as repeated and successful premieres of Chinese operas in the world.

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Thanks to such rapid progress in the world opera market, China is now gaining new weight in the eyes of the international community. This is an obvious trend that is inappropriate to ignore. Against the background of intensive economic cooperation between the countries of East and West, the enrichment of the musical theater is particularly acute. New artistic products are coming with a powerful wave of influence and changing the initial configuration within the European opera space. All this determined *the relevance* of this study, which examines the process of integration of Chinese opera into the system of European musical theater.

The aim of the work is to identify current trends in the development of the new Chinese opera of the late XX – early XXI centuries, to outline the prospects of interaction of national and European musical and theatrical traditions.

The main **objectives** of the study are predetermined by the aim of the work:

- to determine the history of the formation of musical contacts between Europe and China, to highlight the main stages of mastering the European tradition in the field of theater art;
- to outline the ways of formation of Chinese opera of European type;
- to study the specifics of genre and style interactions in the operas of China and Europe;
- to form an idea of the opera culture of modern China as a holistic phenomenon with a complex structure and style diversity;
- describe the features and problems of vocal and performing arts in China;
- to analyze the results of mastering the European experience on the example of operas “Regret for the Past” by Shi Guangnan;
- to generalize the ways of assimilating the traditions of Chinese musical theater in the field of modern European opera.

The research methodology. According to the set aim of the work, the research methodology is based on a combination of art history, interpretative and culturological approaches. The theoretical and methodological basis of the dissertation were the works of Ukrainian, Chinese and Russian scientists on the history of musical theater of East and West, history and theory of opera art.

The scientific novelty of the study is that for the first time the material of the unexplored national opera Shi Guangnan “Regret for the Past” was introduced into scientific research, as well as the prospects for the development of new Chinese opera in modern musical and theatrical discourse.

¹ *Peking opera*, or *Beijing opera* (Chinese: 京剧: Jīngjù), is the most famous and important form of Chinese opera, which combines various components: music, vocal performance, mime, dance and acrobatics. It appeared in Beijing in the mid-Qing Dynasty (1644–1912) and became fully developed and recognized in the middle of the XIX century.

² *Chinese contemporary classical opera* (Chinese: 当今古典歌剧) is a musical art form that is based on western opera traditions. It differs from current changes of traditional Chinese opera.

^{China} has several separate *geju* companies that belong to the Ministry of Culture, together with the traditional Chinese opera companies. The most prestigious are the Beijing-based Central Geju-Yuan China National Opera House troupe (CNOH), and the Shanghai-based Shanghai Opera House company. In each case, the term “Opera House”, *Geju-Yuan*, means some institute or company, but not a building or theatre. The street addresses of both companies are merely administrative offices and rehearsal rooms. Other notable *Geju* companies around China include the Liaoning *Geju-Yuan*, based in Shenyang and a lot of others. The level of *Geju* has been increased by availability of new world-class venues such as the China’s National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing (“The Big Egg” on Tiananmen Square East) and the new Shanghai Grand Theatre. Since its opening in 2009 CHNCPA has staged operas such as “Xi Shi” and “A Village Teacher” in 2009, “The Chinese Orphan” in 2011, as well as the folk-opera “The Ballad of Canal” in 2012. The Shanghai Grand Theatre has similarly staged Chinese-language *Geju* of the Shanghai Opera House company along with operas in Italian, French and German languages.

Presenting the main material. At the moment, the work of Shi Guangnan is an absolutely unexplored area in Ukrainian musicology. At the same time, we can speak of an active interest in the composer's musical heritage on the part of European and Chinese scientists. References to the opera "Regret for the Past" can be found in dissertations by Chen Ying (Chen, 2015), Liu Bingqiang (Liu, 2014), Liu Chingsu (Liu, 2000), Lian Liu (Lian, 2013), Sun Juan (Sun, 2013), Zhang Lichzhen (Zhang, 2010).

In the context of the stated problems, the works of Chinese scholars in the field of opera art, devoted to the study of the problems of formation and features of modern national opera of the XX–XXI centuries, as well as the nature of its relationship with European opera, were extremely important. An important place among such studies is the fundamental work of the authoritative Chinese musicologist Man Xin Ying "History of Modern Chinese Opera" (Man Xin Ying, 2012), which examines the historical specifics of the spread (since the late XVIII century) of European opera art in China and the nature of its future positive influence on the formation of modern national opera.

Other works in this area include the monographic "History of Chinese Opera and Musicals" by Ju Qi Hong (Ju Qi Hong, 2014), articles by I. Gaida "New Chinese Opera and the Central Experimental Opera Theater of China" (Gaida, 1960), and "Comparative analysis of Beijing and Italian operas" by Lian Yun (Lian, 2008), "Chinese National Opera: 1920s–1980s" by Liu Jin (Liu, 2009), "Reflections on the Three Culminations in the Development of Chinese Opera" by Tian Ya Zhu (Tian, 2004), "On the History of Chinese Opera and its European analogies" by Tu Dun (Tu, 2008). In addition, it is worth highlighting the works of Hong Seuk-Pyol (Hong, 2019), N.M. Pankaj (Pankaj, 1982), Qi Chen and Hui Xu (Chen, Xu, 2015), devoted to the analysis of the problems and stylistics of the literary primary source of the opera – the story of Zhou Shuren (Lu Xun).

In the mid-1980s, there was a genuine rise in interest in musical theater in China. The new generation of composers, on the one hand, actively studied the latest European opera, on the other hand, they analyzed the past of the Chinese national opera and explored its artistic laws. In the last twenty years of the XX century, various styles and forms of musical art coexisted on the theater stage. Serious major operas, chamber operas, comedy operas, operettas, musicals and other genres competed for the audience's attention. The best works of the Chinese national opera of that era, according to Li Ming, are "The Hundredth Bride" (第一百个新娘) by Wang Shiguang and Cai Kexiang (1980), "Fangcaoxin" (芳草心 "Fangfang, heart of grass", 1983) by Wang Zujie (王祖皆) and "Zhang Zhuoya" (张卓娅), "The Savage Land" by Jin Xiang (1987).

The opera "Regret for the Past" ("Shang Shi") written by Shi Guangnan (Chinese: 施光南; 1940–1990)³ was among the most striking events in the musical and theatrical culture of China in the late XX century. This composition, being focused on the genre and compositional model of European opera, presents qualitative changes in the general course of Chinese theater policy in quite a good way.

The premiere of the opera was an enormous success on stage of Beijing People's Theater (北京人民剧院). The performance made a real sensation in public circles, which was largely facilitated by the brilliant cast of performers. The tenor Cheng Zhi (程志) and soprano Yin Xiumei (殷秀梅) were starring.

"Regret for the Past" ("Shang Shi"), which belongs to the collection "Pang Huang" ("Wandering") of 1925, is one of Lu Xun's best stories that has a lyric élan, which is pretty rare among contemporary Chinese writings. Told from the first-person-central point of view, the story, which contains a little dialogue as well as a lot of memories, reminiscence and searching for soul, is a confession of the protagonist called Juansheng.

Zhou Shuren (25 September 1881 – 19 October 1936), who is better known as Lu Xun by his pen name (or Lu Sun), was a Chinese writer, essayist, poet, and literary critic. He was a leading person in modern Chinese literature. Writing in vernacular Chinese and classical Chinese, he also was a short story writer, editor, translator, literary critic, essayist, poet, and designer.

In the 1930s, he became the titular Head of the League of left-wing writers in Shanghai. Being a versatile writer, Lu Xun created his works using both traditional Chinese conventions and European literary forms of XIX century. Lu Xun was a master of irony and satire (what can be noticed in "The True Story of Ah-Q") as well as he could write impressively direct prose, too ("My Old Home", "A Small Incident"). He showed harsh criticism of social problems in China, particularly in his analysis of the "Chinese National Character" (Foster, 2001).

Lu Xun is an original national artist who has deeply mastered the Chinese tradition. The plot prose of Lu Xun is distinguished by the originality of style and the richness of spiritual tones. Any story by Lu Xun has its own special interior, its own plot, its own characters. Behind the general external calm, seeming indifference, one can see his own author's intonation, subtle shades: satirical, ironic, sad, sympathetic. It is characteristic that the irony is most clearly felt in Lu Xun's depiction of the characters of the privileged class, provincial, county, local nobility, while the author's sympathies are invariably addressed to the destitute, unfortunate, humiliated people. And well-aimed touches, everyday details, peculiar signs of a difficult life are clearly aimed at awakening sympathetic emotions, evoking heartedness, movement of the soul, goodwill.

In the story "Regret for the Past" ("Shang Shi"), the atmosphere of Beijing during the 1920s – The May Fourth Movement⁴, one of the darkest periods in the long history of China, can be noticed.

It should be recalled that in 1915, under the idea of Japanese encroachment on China, young intellectuals, inspired by "New Youth" (Xinqingnian), a monthly magazine edited by the iconoclastic intellectual revolutionary

³ The original name of the opera is 伤逝. The following translation options that are currently available are: "Sorrow for the Dead", "Sorrow for Those Passed away", "Pity for the Past", "Gone Love", "Mourning", "Grief for the Dead".

⁴ *May Fourth Movement* is an intellectual revolution and sociopolitical reform movement that lasted in China during 1917–1921. The movement was aimed at national independence, emancipation of the individual, rebuilding society and culture.

Chen Duxiu, began agitating for some reform and strengthening of Chinese society. Being the part of this New Culture Movement, they attacked traditional Confucian ideas and exalted Western ideas, particularly connected with science and democracy. Their inquiry into liberalism, pragmatism, nationalism, anarchism, and socialism provided a basis from which they managed to criticize traditional Chinese ethics, religion, philosophy, social and political institutions. “Moreover, led by Chen and the American-educated scholar Hu Shi, they offered a new naturalistic vernacular writing style (baihua), replacing the difficult 2.000-year-old classical style (wenyan)”, K. Kuiper tells us (Kuiper, 2020).

In accordance with the sources, these patriotic feelings and the zeal for reform turned out to become an incident on May 4, 1919. From there did the movement take its name. On that day, more than 3.000 students from 13 colleges in Beijing held a mass demonstration against the decision of the Versailles Peace Conference, which drew up the treaty officially ending World War I, to transfer the former German concessions in Shandong province to Japan. The Chinese government’s acquiescence to the decision enraged the students so much that they burned the house of the Minister of communication and assaulted China’s Minister to Japan, both pro-Japanese officials. During some following weeks, demonstrations happened around the country; several students died or were injured in these incidents, and more than 1.000 of them were arrested. In the big cities, strikes and boycotts against Japanese production were begun by the students and lasted more than two months. For one week, starting from June 5, merchants and workers in Shanghai and other cities went on strike showing their support to the students. Faced with this growing tide of unfavorable public opinion, the government acquiesced; three pro-Japanese officials were dismissed, the Cabinet resigned, and China refused to sign the peace treaty with Germany.

As a part of this movement, there was a campaign undertaken to reach the common people; mass meetings were held across the country, and more than 400 new publications started to share the new mind. As a result, the decline of traditional ethics and the family system was accelerated, the emancipation of women gathered momentum, a vernacular literature appeared, and the modernized intelligence became a major factor in China’s subsequent political developments. The movement also spurred the successful reorganization of the Nationalist Party (Kuomintang), later ruled by Chiang Kai-shek (Jiang Jieshi), and stimulated emerging of the Chinese Communist Party as well.

It was a period when usual people lived under numerous restrictions, as it was shown with the help of the repeated image of a bird in a narrow cage forgetting how to flap its wings. Superior knowledge or better education did not help a person get a decent job. Both Juansheng and Zijun are members of the younger, better-educated generation, a new breed in the wake of the May Fourth movement of 1919, yet their knowledge of Western literature and foreign languages is more of a liability than an asset, and that turns them into liberals spurned by their contemporaries.

Many of these societal norms were the main topics of Lu Xun’s short story called “Regret for the Past”. The storyteller is Shi Juansheng, a man who went through a heart wrenching yet passionate journey with his former lovely Zijun. They moved in together and engaged in premarital relations against her family’s will and society’s norms. At first, their relationship was new, exciting and daring, however, soon it was left bleak and eventually was destroyed by the loss of his job and his honest confession that he was not in love with her anymore. At the end, Shi Juansheng was left alone yearning for his past with his illegitimate lover, while Zijun killed herself, not being able to overcome a taboo given her by society.

An in-depth analysis of the literary source is presented in the study by Elizabeth H. Bowker. Thus, the author notes the complexity and ambiguity of the artistic images of Lu Xun’s story: “The characters in this story are relatable, being that mistakes are a central theme, along with truth and hypocrisy. While Zijun represents female consciousness, she was also the proto-type for everything that China was against. Such as women living and thinking for themselves and to go against their families and societies. However, while Lu Xun presents this strong-minded woman, he is also warning the readers what can happen if you break away from traditional Chinese rules” (Bowker, 2021).

According to literary critics, who try to draw an analogy to the revolution of the youth at that time, Lu Xun seemed to be rendering difficult for understanding Chinese consciousness, arguing that if somebody breaks away from traditional values, pretty a lot of negative stuff could happen to that person. “While Zijun was a Chinese woman and many of her struggles were at the hands of her specific cultural values, universally women can relate to many of her hardships that she endured such as the dichotomy between being a strong independent woman while at the same time having respect for your societal role and rejecting the needs required of the man you love” (Bowker, 2021).

When Zijun goes away, there was nothing left for Juansheng but emptiness. The only way for him to start over is with the help of confession, and his first important step is to record his remorse and grief for both Zijun and himself. The record becomes a magnificent story of tragic love. Indeed, as writes Sherwin S.S. Fu, nowhere else is Lu Xun so gloomy in his reflections on the topic of love and existence, sacrifice and selfishness, and nowhere else in modern Chinese literature can we find a young couple that is so reckless in their struggle for survival and so alienated from society (Sherwin, 2021).

“Zijun will not come again – will not come, never, never! ... When Zijun wasn’t in my little room, I wasn’t noticing anything. Full of melancholy, I clutched at any book, no matter which one – scientific or artistic. And suddenly I realized that I did not remember what had been discussed on a dozen read pages. But my hearing became very sensitive – I could distinguish the steps of Zijun among many others, outside the gate, I heard them approaching, slightly creaking, but, unfortunately, they often subsided, as if disappearing in the tramp of other people’s feet.

If I could, I would describe all my remorse and all my grief – for the sake of Zijun, for my own sake.

It is dreary and empty in the wretched, abandoned, forgotten little room of the community. And how quickly time passes by! It's been a year since I fell in love with Zijun, and thanks to it I got rid of this melancholy and emptiness. But everything turned out so sadly that I again returned to the same, as if for purpose empty room. There was still a broken window, and outside the window – a half-dried acacia and an old wisteria. There was a square table by the window in the same place. Next to the same shabby wall, there was the same wooden bed. Late at night, when I lie alone on this bed, it seems to me as if I have never been with Zijun, as if the past year has been erased from my life, as if it never existed and I did not leave this little room and did not create small family hearth, full of hope, in the alley “Harbinger of Happiness”” (Lu Xun “Regret for the Past”).

To celebrate the 100th birthday of Lu Xun, the novel of the same name by Lu Xun, with the music composed by Shi Guangnan was adapted by playwrights Wang Quan and Han Wei.

Shi Guangnan was a famous Chinese composer, best known for writing patriotic and nationalistic songs of the Cultural Revolution era that combined traditional melodies with westernized accompaniment. He visited the middle school division of the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing and graduated with a degree in composition from the Tianjin Conservatory in 1964. There, at the same time, he was assigned to the Tianjin Dance Theater. In 1985 Shi Guangnan was elected as Vice-Chairman of the Chinese Musicians' Association and he created more than 100 works during his 20-year career ⁵.

He has also written many operas, ballets, Beijing operas, and other large-scale compositions, among which there are two full western-style operas in Chinese; “Regret for the Past” (伤逝, 1981) and “Qu Yuan” (屈原, 1990), as well as the ballet “Hundred Snake Biographies” (百蛇传). Being known as “Songster of the era” and “Master of melody”, Shi Guangnan had made a most significant contribution is his enormous output of “lyrical songs”, many of which then became all-time hits in Mainland China both in popular culture and mainstream classical music.

The fact that Shi Guangnan was creating opera is the focus in China's opera circles. The impact of this process of writing operas is not as good as his song creation process, but he discovered a new opera style with the contemporaneity and popularity understanding the differences and similarities of Western opera, absorbing its essence and discarding its dross, finally achieving a thing that united the Western opera composition with China's opera creation. He also skillfully put China's classical and modern stories into the representation of opera art, which meet the aesthetic demand of Chinese people; it is a combination of classical and realistic.

Shi Guangnan played a very important role in the development and renewal of Chinese theatrical culture. Based on the genre and compositional principles of European opera, the composer not only preserved the national specificity of music, but also emphasized its originality due to the latest musical and stylistic means. This has largely determined the future development in Chinese opera art of XXI century.

Critics unanimously recognized this composition as a landmark in the history of the musical stage art of modern China. And these statements are not an exaggeration. The opera “Regret for the Past” still causes great interest from the side of directors-interpreters and does not leave the stage.

One of such bright versions was the performance staged by the talented and experienced director Chen Wei⁶ in 2018 on stage of Poly Theatre, Beijing ⁷. According to the director, an amazing unity of ideological depth and emotional immediacy were achieved in the performance of that composition. Soloists of the highest level were invited to take part in the performance – soprano Wan Gyin (王莹, Zijun) and tenor Wang Chuanyue (王传越, Juansheng).

⁵ Information about the composer is submitted taking into account the biographical data presented on the following Internet resources:

http://en.people.cn/english/200009/10/eng20000910_50190.html.

https://contemporary_chinese_culture.en-academic.com/695/Shi_Guangnan.

<https://www.sin80.com/en/artist/shi-guangnan> and others.

⁶ Directed by: Chen Wei 陈蔚

Conductor: Zhang Zheng 张峥

Production designer: Wang Xingang 王辛刚

Lighting designer: Meng Bin 孟彬

Costume design: Chu Yan 楚艳

Video design: Hu Tianji 胡天骥

Design-stylization: Fang Xiuling 方绪玲

Props design: Gou Deqiu 勾德秋

⁷ Beijing Poly Theatre Management Co., Ltd (Poly Theatre) is a subsidiary of the large-scale central enterprise, China Poly Group Corporation, which has built a strong presence in the theatre industry and culture in China. As the leading theatre management company, Poly Theatre is nowadays running 68 theatres nationwide across 58 cities in 21 provinces (including first-tier cities, direct-administered municipalities, as well as autonomous regions), with over 125 performance venues and 130.000 seats for visitors. In 2019, over 11.000 performances have been shown in their theatres, and around 11 million viewers visited the performances.

Beijing Poly Theatre Management Corporation Limited mainly focuses on performance and theatre management, including theatre chain management, performance, creative design and production, and ticket marketing. Based on the theatre chain management business, Beijing Poly Theatre Management Corporation Limited carries out theatre construction engineering consulting business. The company has taken part in in about 60 consulting cases of theatre construction projects in China.

ⁱⁿ addition, they work with arts organizations from 10 more countries along the Belt and Road, with more than 500 performances of 100 projects presented annually. In 2016, we initiated a biennial International Theatre Forum, the first theatre forum formed by an enterprise in China, which aims at providing a collaborative platform to establish a regular communication and consultation mechanism through thematic discussions to facilitate dialogues in the industry. In 2016 and 2018, representatives from the US, UK, France, Germany, Japan, Korea, and China gathered at the forum and delivered fruitful results.

The director rethought and endowed the main problem of the composition with a modern sound. Thanks to the masterful reading of the musical dramaturgy of the opera written by Shi Guangnan, the stage action of the opera was filled with through movement, and the images were dynamically developed.

Zijun, one of the brightest and non-standard images for Chinese literature, in the musical interpretation of Shi Guangnan acquired the features of lyrical heroines of European opera on the verge of the XIX and XX centuries. Having challenged society with its imposed stereotypes of behavior, Zijun wants to live according to the will of the heart. She strives for the freedom of love, speaking out against the inveterate feudal restrictions, so she solemnly declares to Juansheng: 'I am my own mistress, and no one has the right to interfere in my life!' However, social oppression turns out to be beyond her strength, and the helplessness of her lover made the tragic ending irreversible. In fact, breaking out of family and tribal cell, Zijun got into another – social and domestic.

Juansheng is an intellectual, educator and revolutionary at heart – has high spiritual impulses. Inspired by the idea of equality between men and women, he sincerely tries to build his life with Zijun by analogy with the heroes of the novels of his beloved H. Ibsen and R. Tagore. He sees the meaning of his life in the highest development of his own creative abilities and tries to subordinate the will of Zijun to the realization of this goal. However, having lost his job, Juansheng found himself face to face with everyday realities that were insurmountable for him. The rupture in the relationship became more and more obvious, and, unable to cope with the new task of life, Juansheng chooses to give up love. Shi Guangnan emphasized the main problem of his image – the inability of the hero to combine personal goals and selflessness in love.

"Regret for the Past" is created according to a model of late XIX-century French lyric opera. The connections with the stage works of Jules Massenet and Leo Delibe are the most pronounced. The opera minimizes the external stage action, and focuses on the disclosure of psychological conflict. The musical images of Juansheng and Zijun receive deep and multifaceted characteristics. Shi Guangnan successfully uses traditional forms of European opera school, combining in the through action arias, recitatives and duets of the main characters.

A very interesting dramatic technique is the allegorical comparison of stage pictures of the opera with the seasons. Yes, the first meeting of Juansheng and Zijun took place in the spring, the summer brought happiness and prosperity to both. Autumn exposed insurmountable difficulties and conflict in the relationship of lovers. And winter turned into a tragedy of unfulfilled dreams. Zijun is dead, and a return to a happy past for Juansheng is impossible. Only the approaching spring promises the hero a future rebirth of the soul. The personification of this revival becomes a symbol of flowering wisteria. It is this image that has the function of the leitmotif in the opera. And the lyrical duo, scenically associated with the gift of a beautiful flower for their beloved, became a real hit in the history of Chinese opera art.

Conclusions. The opera "Regret for the Past" by Shi Guangnan, based on the principles of European dramaturgy, is stylistically a vividly national phenomenon. The virtuosity of the song genre, especially in the field of love lyrics, has directly predetermined the success of his lyrical drama "Regret for the Past".

In terms of style, the author focuses on the norms of classical European opera. But within the framework of tonal music, he uses the most diverse methods of expressiveness of the XX century. Along with this, he uses elements of folk music, remade in such a way that the sound takes on a modern character. Arias, recitatives, ensembles, expressive choral and orchestral fragments vividly characterize the characters and situations. Overall, Shi Guangnan's "Regret for the Past" was the pinnacle composition of Chinese opera in the 1980s.

Becoming a participant in the global cultural process in the field of opera art, the Chinese National Opera, of course, follows its own way. Absorbing the creative experience of European musical theater, Chinese opera retains its original national features, which cause considerable interest. Assimilating the creative experience of European and now world opera, the Chinese National Opera is gradually becoming more and more in demand in different countries of the world. At the same time, China's modern achievements in the field of opera art uncover the opportunity for compatriots to join the spiritual riches of world musical culture.

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