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**PRACOWNIA OPEROWA NARODOWEJ AKADEMII MUZYCZNEJ  
IM. P.I. CZAJKOWSKIEGO JAKO PLATFORMA STARTOWA DZIAŁALNOŚCI ZAWODOWEJ  
MŁODYCH UKRAIŃSKICH REŻYSERÓW TEATRU MUZYCZNEGO**

***Iryna Dats***

*ludowa artystka Ukrainy,  
profesor Katedry Szkolenia Operowego i Reżyserii Muzycznej  
Narodowej Akademii Muzycznej Ukrainy imienia P.I. Czajkowskiego (Kijów, Ukraina)  
ORCID ID: 0000-0003-3851-2047  
irynadats@gmail.com*

***Mykola Hamkalo***

*docent Katedry Szkolenia Operowego i Reżyserii Muzycznej  
Narodowej Akademii Muzycznej Ukrainy imienia P.I. Czajkowskiego (Kijów, Ukraina)  
ORCID ID: 0000-0001-5919-2099  
hamkalomykola@gmail.com*

**Adnotacja.** Celem badania jest określenie roli Pracowni Operowej Narodowej Akademii Muzycznej im. P.I. Czajkowskiego, m.in. na obszarze scenicznym Wielkiej Sali im. Bohatera Ukrainy V. Slipaka, w kontekście programu edukacyjnego powstawania nowych specjalistów sztuki teatralnej – reżyserów Katedry Szkolenia Operowego i Reżyserii Muzycznej Narodowej Akademii Muzycznej im. P.I. Czajkowskiego. Rozważane różne gatunki, style muzyczne i charakter dramaturgii spektakli absolwentów tej katedry dowiodły znaczenia zdobywania doświadczenia empirycznego przez młodych specjalistów. Przewiduje się, że perspektywy dalszego rozwoju odmian scenicznych przez młodych specjalistów będą bardziej zanurzone w multimedialnych poszukiwaniach teatralno-przestrzennych, biorąc pod uwagę społeczno-kulturowe elementy teraźniejszości. Udowodniono, że możliwość realizacji inscenizacji operowej na pełnoprawnym obszarze scenicznym, m.in. Wielkiej Sali im. Bohatera Ukrainy V. Slipaka – jest niezbędnym elementem programu procesu edukacyjnego reżyserów muzycznych. Pomaga to w pełnym kompleksie opanować podstawy tego wielowektorowego zawodu.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Pracownia Operowa Narodowej Akademii Muzycznej im. P.I. Czajkowskiego, reżyser Teatru Muzycznego, reżyseria operowa.

**OPERA STUDIO OF UKRAINIAN NATIONAL TCHAIKOVSKY ACADEMY OF MUSIC  
AS A STARTING PLATFORM FOR THE PROFESSIONAL CAREER  
OF YOUNG MUSICAL THEATRE'S STAGE DIRECTORS**

***Iryna Dats***

*People's Artist of Ukraine,  
Professor at the Department of the Opera Training and Music Directing Ukrainian National Tchaikovsky  
Academy of Music (Kyiv, Ukraine)  
ORCID ID: 0000-0003-3851-2047  
irynadats@gmail.com*

***Mykola Hamkalo***

*Docent at the Department of the Opera Training and Music Directing  
Ukrainian National Tchaikovsky Academy of Music (Kyiv, Ukraine)  
ORCID ID: 0000-0001-5919-2099  
hamkalomykola@gmail.com*

**Abstract.** The purpose of the article is to trace the role of the Opera Studio of Ukrainian National Tchaikovsky Academy of Music, in particular the big stage named after Hero of Ukraine V. Slipak in the context of educational program for the formation of new theatre art specialists, particularly stage directors at the Department of Opera Training and Music Direction of the Ukrainian National Tchaikovsky Academy of Music. Considered performances of the graduates of this department, that differ in genres, styles of music and the origin of drama, proved the importance of gaining empirical experience by young specialists. It is predicted that the prospects for the further development of stage variations by young specialists will be movement towards multimedia searches, taking into account the socio-cultural components of today. It has been proven that the possibility of staging a performance on a big stage, in particular, the Great Hall named after Hero of Ukraine V. Slipak, is a necessary component of the educational process program for stage directors of musical theatre. It allows to master the principles of this multi-vector profession in full.

**Key words:** Opera Studio of Ukrainian National Tchaikovsky Academy of Music, stage opera directing, stage opera director.

## ОПЕРНА СТУДІЯ НАЦІОНАЛЬНОЇ МУЗИЧНОЇ АКАДЕМІЇ ІМ. П. І. ЧАЙКОВСЬКОГО ЯК СТАРТОВА ПЛАТФОРМА ПРОФЕСІЙНОЇ ДІЯЛЬНОСТІ МОЛОДИХ УКРАЇНСЬКИХ РЕЖИСЕРІВ МУЗИЧНОГО ТЕАТРУ

**Ірина Даць**

*народна артистка України,*

*професор кафедри оперної підготовки та музичної режисури*

*Національної музичної академії України імені П. І. Чайковського (Київ, Україна)*

*ORCID ID: 0000-0003-3851-2047*

*irynadats@gmail.com*

**Микола Гамкало**

*доцент кафедри оперної підготовки та музичної режисури*

*Національної музичної академії України імені П. І. Чайковського (Київ, Україна)*

*ORCID ID: 0000-0001-5919-2099*

*hamkalomykola@gmail.com*

**Анотація.** Мета дослідження полягає у виявленні ролі Оперної студії Національної музичної академії ім. П. І. Чайковського, зокрема сценічного майданчика Великої зали ім. Героя України В. Сліпака, у контексті освітньої програми формування нових спеціалістів театрального мистецтва – режисерів кафедри оперної підготовки та музичної режисури НМАУ ім. П. І. Чайковського. Розглянуті різні за жанрами, стилями музики та характером драматургії вистави випускників даної кафедри довели важливість набуття емпіричного досвіду молодими фахівцями. Спрогнозовано, що перспективами подальшого розвитку сценічних варіацій молодими фахівцями стане більше занурення у мультимедійні театральні просторові пошуки, зважаючи на соціокультурні складові сьогодення. Доведено, що можливість втілити оперну постановку на повноцінному сценічному майданчику, зокрема Великої зали ім. Героя України В. Сліпака, – це необхідна складова програми навчального процесу музичних режисерів. Вона допомагає у повному комплексі опанувати засади цієї багатовекторної професії.

**Ключові слова:** оперна студія НМАУ ім. П. І. Чайковського, режисер музичного театру, оперна режисура.

**Introduction.** The multifaceted, multi-complex profession of a stage director requires a holistic approach of mastering it, a large amount of theoretical knowledge and skills. This specialty is characterised by the ability to comprehensively conduct an analysis, develop artistic ideas and implement them, taking into account the current culturological needs of society, the historical and political background of the specific place and time, where the artistic work is staged. It is important to educate a new generation of specialists who have the necessary skills to work with various musical and dramatic genres and forms, based on the available technological capabilities of the stage, as well as the professional capabilities of the performers. Guided by musical and textual drama components, written by composer and librettist, young artists learn how to coordinate the elements of a stage performance, particularly acting, scenography, costumes, stage light, choral and dance episodes, mass scenes.

The research methodology covered such scientific approaches as cultural, historical-comparative and interdisciplinary. The scientific novelty of the research lies in the analysis of the Opera Studio stage significance in the creative development of students of the Opera Training and Music Directing Department of the Ukrainian National Tchaikovsky Academy of Music through their staged performances.

The task of students in the process of acquiring a profession is to master both theoretical and practical components of directing art, methods of working with a production team (composer, conductor, set designer, ballet master, choir master, singers), as well as theatre departments (light, and technical department, staging department, flymen and mechanists, costume, wigs and make-up department). This includes the ability of diplomatic resolution of conflict situations, an individual psychological approach to performers during the rehearsals. Practical work on the stage becomes dominant in the acquired experience, therefore the stage director's lack of empirical knowledge is revealed at the point of the rehearsing process and final work's preparation for the premiere.

Undoubtedly, an important issue of training is the repertoire choice of students, which at the initial stage shapes the aesthetic and worldview of the director. When choosing a dramaturgy piece to stage, with the students the main practice is to turn to operatic classics: time-tested, polished in the process of stage productions, which reveals socio-psychological issues, gives an opportunity to practise the embodiment of mass large-scale scenes and intimate chamber ones. The famous Ukrainian director, professor of the Opera Training and Music Directing Department of the Ukrainian National Tchaikovsky Academy of Music P. I. Ilchenko noted that the events, conflict, and era depicted in classical opera, are far from modern realities for the students. It appears as something distant, unfamiliar, mysterious. That's why the deep analytical work is required here: 'Often, in the process of work, the student is afraid of the scale of classical drama, the depth of the conflict, the motivation of the characters' behaviour, and, fearing that he will not be able to cope with the material, he resorts to a rough, arbitrary modernization of it' (Ilchenko, 2017: 61).

The Ukrainian National Tchaikovsky Academy of Music is one of the key educational institutions in the context of training directors of the opera theatre in Ukraine. The process of educating young specialists has been successfully

carried out for twenty years at the Opera Training and Music Directing Department of the academy, in the creation of which a key role was played by the Ukrainian choral conductor and teacher, People's Artist of Ukraine, professor, rector of the academy Oleg Semenovich Tymoshenko (1932–2010). Due to his strategic concept, which he initiated and developed for the Music Directing Department, the whole system of personnel training for the young artists was formed. It relied on the Ukrainian theatre's integration into the world's educational methodology, and their synthesis, which seemed especially important and significant nowadays.

The culmination of the educational process for directors is the personal embodiment of a musical performance, in particular at the Opera Studio of Ukrainian National Tchaikovsky Academy of Music, as this venue is a full-fledged theatrical structure that functions in accordance with the requirements for a cultural institution, and operates with theatres' departments and inventory. Given an opportunity for the graduates to embody their idea, at Great Hall named after Hero of Ukraine V. Slipak is a unique starting platform for the professional activity of young Ukrainian musical theatre directors.

Turning to the productions of the academy students of the last decade, it was noted that a wide palette of genres was demonstrated on stage, which made it possible to show the creative potential of young stage directors even with limited financial components.

The premiere and graduation exam of director Tetyana Voronova, who staged Maurice Ravel's opera 'L'heure espagnole' on the stage of the Opera Studio (class of a Senior Lecturer M. I. Hamkalo) in 2018, conducted by Ivan Stetskyi, was a bright example of the genre conventions in accordance with the primary source.

As the genre of this opera is a comedy, a special role in its dramaturgy was given to spoken dialogues, and only by understanding every line does the viewer fully follow plot twists. That is why the Ukrainian translation became the important part of the author's interpretation of the opera. Libreto was translated by the director T. Voronova herself, which is also a useful experience for the stage director. The director paid careful attention to every word in the translation, as well as to the search for language equivalents for a high-quality linguistic representation of the opera in the practice of Ukrainian translation of world operas.

The director decided to limit the set design elements to laconic clocks, which were actively used in the *mise-en-scène* by the actors. Artists also introduced ballet dancers who represented the main characters in a dance and pantomime variation. Thus, she gained experience working with a ballet troupe and choreographer (V. Vitkovskyyi).

The performance received a standing ovation from the audience, positive feedback and reviews in the press, which singled out the work of the actors. The importance of the translation of the libretto into Ukrainian was especially noted: 'the mastery of the staging and performance convinces us that in front of us is not just an exam, but a landmark event in the artistic horizon of the capital, therefore the appeal to such a pearl of the World Classics by young artists-graduates of the National Academy of Music, and masterful staging in Ukrainian inspires hope for the revival of Ukrainian opera art' (Bezvuchy, 2018).

After successful experience of staging the premiere of a foreign opera on the big stage, T. Voronova had the opportunity to implement one more performance at the Opera Studio during her post-graduate education. This time, she turned to the Ukrainian classics, specifically the work of outstanding writer Lesya Ukrainka, study of creativity of whose is still not given enough attention in the framework of musical theatre. The performance became a significant event in the cultural context of Ukraine, because it was performed for the first time on the stage, and before the landmark date – the 150th anniversary of the birth of Lesya Ukrainka. An important experience in this production was the opportunity to collaborate with the composer of the opera-ballet of the same name – 'Orgy' by Oleksandr Kostin (the creative producer of the project was professor I. V. Dats.)

The complexity of work on the play consisted in the scope of work both with the soloists on the material, and with the ballet (ballet master – Vyacheslav Vitkovskyyi) and choral (choir master – Dmytro Kravchenko) parts of the performance with a short rehearsal process and extreme conditions of the production. The previous experience of working with the same group of soloists and artists became an important factor, because the ability to organise a team that is close in artistic beliefs and rehearsing process management, is also a skill that a director should possess.

The composer himself, who was present at the premiere, noted the harmony of the images created by the actors to the characters written by him (Ovcharenko, 2021). Thus, there was a positive cooperation between the director and the composer, which is an valuable experience for young directors.

Undoubtedly, implementation of the national repertoire in the learning process is necessary and should be a more common practice. Turning to the context of the national opera, staged by the graduates of the department, it is worth mentioning another production – opera by outstanding composer Vitaliy Kyreyko, 'On Sunday morning..' (based on the novel by Olga Kobylanska). The performance was staged by Lada Shylenko, a student of the Ukrainian National Tchaikovsky Academy of Music (class of a professor P. I. Ilchenko) in 2014.

The scenographic minimalistic space was successfully used in the *mise-en-scènes* and light partiture, as well as elements of the theatre of shadows, what was a great option due to the genre of an opera – a romantic drama. In the production, director developed the chamber scenes in detail, and vividly combined them with the expanded genre and dance episodes. Through this she was able to emphasise heroes feelings, for which the composer V. Kyreyko 'used a variety of structural and genre forms, such as arias, ariosos, songs, duets, trios, quartets, recitatives, lullabies, dances' (Shesterenko, Shylenko, 2021).

A great advantage of directing practice is that during the work L. Shylenko was able to receive advice and instructions from the composer of the opera and work with a dance group of performers (ballet master – Lilia Klymchuk).

The students of the Ukrainian National Tchaikovsky Academy of Music, who played the main roles, 'impressed the audience with their high professionalism, the ability to embody the psychological depth of the images,

and the drama of the feelings vividly presented in the artist's music. The listeners were presented with pictures of the life of the Carpathian Hutsuls of the beginning of the last century, their strict customs and burning passions, the struggle for happiness and the boundless world of emotions' (Shesterenko, 2014).

Even in an adapted author's form (from the original four acts opera was shortened to two, the choir parts were removed), the performance received positive reviews in the press. Especially positive feedbacks got director's work, as she clearly demonstrated her professional skill – she conducted this romantic opera-drama with a tragic outcome 'in one breath', understanding its philosophical undertones, feeling and embodying the through development of all vocal numbers, the specifics of scenic and dramaturgical contrasts' (Shesterenko, 2014).

The mystical opera 'Medium' by Gian Carlo Menotti which was interpreted by Oleksandr Spivakovsky, a graduate of the Ukrainian National Tchaikovsky Academy of Music, became an original and intriguing piece. The production was timed to the annual conference of the academy and was combined with the master class of a senior teacher M. I. Hamkalo in 2020. It is worth noting that this was not Olexander's first performance on the stage of the opera studio, in the past during his studies he had the experience of staging an opera 'Il Tabarro' by G. Puccini.

It was decided to stage 'Medium' in the Ukrainian translation, for what it was translated by the director himself, what seemed to be significant. This gave the Ukrainian public the opportunity to fully and 'without the mediation of distracting by technical devices to feel everything that the composer wanted to convey' (Bondarenko, 2020).

It is important that this performance was implemented with a full-fledged orchestral accompaniment (conductor – Kostyantyn Starovytskyi), which is an important experience in directing practice, because not all young artists have such an opportunity. The presence of an orchestral sounds palette created necessary atmosphere and completeness, emphasises the characters' features, and requires a director's knowledge regarding the specifics of the mise-en-scène specifics and set design placements.

The proper solution for the production was also designer's costumes by the Ukrainian fashion brand 2LFactura, what implies also multidisciplinary approach by combining musical theatre and *haute couture* industry on the stage.

Opera 'Medium' became a big premiere, and received an award at the international theatre festival 'Skhid-Zakhid' in Krakow, what happened for the first time in the history of the Opera Studio of the National Musical Academy.

In the feedback and reviews of the performance, which ended with loud applause from the audience, the director's vision of the opera was particularly positively noted: all the characters were 'constantly moving, living their lives, avoiding static opera 'poses', as it often happens, for example, in the National Opera. At the same time, their movements were expedient, each time dictated by this or that specific situation' (Bondarenko, 2020).

Using the example of four productions performed on the stage of Opera studio by the Department of Opera Training and Music Direction of the Ukrainian National Tchaikovsky Academy of Music graduates, it is observed that these premieres made possible the beginning of young artist's professional career, helped to reveal their potential and gave impetus for the discovery of an artists' personal style.

T. Voronova's stage reading of Spanish opera by M. Ravel's 'L'heure espagnole' was able to convey the concept of the comedy genre by scenographic elements, characters of the roles, and the general atmosphere of the performance. Her second show on the big stage – the first reading of O. Kostin's opera-ballet 'Orgy' had a completely different core of music and dramatic impulses, which was embodied in the classical meaning. The director was able to organize a large creative team, choral and dance episodes of the performance, find an interesting mise-en-scène solutions and a develop a lighting score. Considering the fact that this was the first reading of the opera, a young director had a special responsibility while working with composer himself, as well as the complexity of the creative-making decisions, which justified themselves during the premiere.

L. Shylenko's production 'On Sunday Morning...' by V. Kyreyko was also an important event in the Ukraine's capital, because it was the first time the opera was performed in almost 50 years. The opera turned out emotional, with a minimalist graphic design of the scenographic space, which made it possible to concentrate on the expressive images of the characters. Special emphasis was placed on the contrasts of light and shadow, which was a successful element for reproducing the genre mysticism of the work's drama. Despite the limited instrumental accompaniment, premiere gathered a full audience and was noticed by the musical critics.

O. Spivakovsky's performance 'Medium' by G. C. Menotti received a stage life at different venues, took part in festivals, and won a prize at an international theatre festival. It's mobility, mysticism, and psychologically detailed roles guaranteed this performance an diverse stage platforms and a great career starting point for it's creator.

Using the available technical means of the stage, young directors tried various creative ways of visual expression with minimal multimedia options of the venue. However, the development of today's visual art, its syntheticism and multi-genre core requires such means, which, step by step, capture theatre world.

The graduates, having the specified experience of working on the professional stage, were later able to implement works of various formats on other stage platforms. In particular, in 2022, T. Voronova staged a full production of G. Puccini's 'Tosca' on the stage of the Chernivtsi Philharmonic Hall. In 2016, L. Shylenko staged the comedy-opera 'Rita' by G. Donizetti on the stage of the Kyiv Opera, which was nominated for the Ukrainian Theater Award and received widespread attention in the press. She subsequently staged Rossini's 'The Marriage Bill' at the same theatre in 2022. In the interpretation of this opera, the director also worked as a set designer and costume designer. O. Spivakovsky, while receiving post-graduate education at the Ukrainian National Tchaikovsky Academy of Music, staged the opera 'Blue Beard's Castle' by B. Bartok in 2022, the genre of which the director defined as a social opera in two parts.

**Conclusion.** Opera Studio of the Ukrainian National Tchaikovsky Academy of Music proved itself as a unique venue in the process of formation and training of musical theatre directors. Undoubtedly, the current context of artistic trends implies the further modernization of young specialists' professional education, and development of the educational and artistic method of specialisation, initiated by O. S. Tymoshenko.

An important factor for this is the development of technical stage equipment of the available space, various light and video devices. The lack of practical director's knowledge is revealed at the phase of the rehearsing process and especially during the last stage work before the premiere. During this time, the student has the opportunity to get support from his artistic mentor, which seems significant in the educational process of work with the full stage production.

All educational levels of the Opera Training and Music Direction Department's, such as 'bachelor', 'master', and post-graduate education, require lifelong professional development for those who acquire the specialty, which is based on empirical components. Therefore, the first productions, embodied by the Academy's graduates on the stage, adjacent to the educational institution, become a reliable springboard for their long creative career, both on Ukrainian and international platforms.

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