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Revived is the Lord... : Two Readings of a Dramatic Approach in Music

Gospod živi... : Dve branji dramatičnega pristopa v glasbi

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IZVLEČEK

ABSTRACT

Predstaviti nepredstavljivo je podvig. Uspel bo le, če bo konvencionalni okvir ustrezal namenu, če bo skladatelj sposoben izjemne ustvarjalnosti in če bo poslušalstvo imelo veliko domišljije. Primerjava zgodnjega oratorija La Resurrezione HWV 47 (1708) Georga Friedricha Händla in opere Risurrezione, prvič izvedene 1904, ki sta jo ustvarila skladatelj Franco Alfano in libretist Cesare Hanau po romanu Vstajenje Leva N. Tolstoja, bo pokazala, da določene strukture v osnovi in glasbeni izvedbi del zagotavljajo, da ni nevarnosti za nepomembnost ali šovinizem. Medtem ko je Händlov pristop sakralen, Alfanov pa posveten, je njuna izhodiščna točka hkrati točka stika med obema antitetičnima območjema. V nadaljevanju so opazovane tudi - ne podobnosti - temveč možnosti za individualizacijo tematike, ki je - čeprav je vabljiva zaradi možnosti glasbene karakterizacije transcendentnega - bila redko za uporabljana v teku glasbene zgodovine.

To envision the non-presentable is a venture. This will only succeed if a conventional frame is going to secure the intention, if the composer is able to release extraordinary creative potential and the audience is endowed with effectual imagination. A comparison of Georg Friedrich Handel's early oratorio La Resurrezione HWV 47 (1708) and Franco Alfano's opera Risurrezione, premiered 1904, which is based on a libretto by Cesare Hanau after Lev Tolstoy's novel Resurrection, makes it clear that certain structures - of the works' dispositions as well as the musical realizations - help to avoid any danger of irrelevance or chauvinism. Whereas Handel's approach is a sacral, Alfano's a secular one, both times a starting position for the composer arises which basically incites a link between the antithetic spheres. Further on not similarities, but possibilities to individualize a topic are questioned, a topic which - notwithstanding the attraction of characterizing a transcendental area compositionally - has scarcely been taken up in the course of music history.

“The first magazine is the bible”, the Austrian writer Thomas Bernhard once stated in an interview.¹ In fact, already in the 14th century the figurative depiction of the revived Christ had become a potential motif in Eastern Church’s icons, and during the Renaissance era also within paintings in the Catholic West of Europe, whereas musical narratives for a long time avoided his figuration. From the 15th century on the revived Christ appeared on stage in *sacre rappresentazioni*, traditional Easter plays representing the ‘*visitatio sepulchri*’, but mostly stayed in a certain distance. His appearance in a transcendent human form was not even displayed in the musical genre in which composers tried to dramatize the biblical events: in oratorios. Among them – besides subjects from the Old Testament – numerous works in which the passion and death of Jesus are taken up exist, whereas a discourse of biblical and/or allegoric characters, sometimes underneath the cross, is only occasionally realized, and even less frequently the Ascension is attended to. Christ’s Resurrection, finally, is hardly ever taken up – if so, authors always display a reflective attitude, of panegyric and cautionary contemplation, so for instance Marco Marazzolis’ *Per il giorno di Resurrettione* from about 1650.²

Accordingly, a Catholic oratorio dealing with the Resurrection happened without the very protagonist. What a challenge for the young, 23 year old Georg Friedrich Handel, when he was asked by the mighty Cardinal Marchese Francesco Maria Ruspoli to compose an oratorio on this topic for Easter Sunday, 8th of April 1708. *La Resurrezione di Nostro Signor Gesù Cristo* (HWV 47) originated from a libretto by Carlo Sigismondo Capece (1652–1728)³, who actually was in the service of the exiled Polish Queen Maria Casimira. The work is supposed to have paved the way for the extraordinarily quick spreading of ‘Il Sassone’s’ reputation. However, besides the highly esteemed composition the popularity of the librettist should have contributed much to this success. Capece was a prominent member of the ‘Accademia degli Arcadi’ in Rome, a group of poets who tried to re-initiate a classicistic approach. Moreover, the circumstances of the first series of performances pushed the composer’s standing.⁴ Ruspoli had engaged a downright large orchestra (22 violins, 4 violas, 1 viol, 6 cellos, 6 double basses, 2 recorders, 4 oboes, 2 trumpets, 1 trombone, and instruments for the basso continuo), conducted by the renowned Arcangelo Corelli as concertmaster.⁵ This, compared with other oratorios rich instrumentation enabled Handel to integrate diverse solo-instruments and, on the whole, to display a play of orchestral colours – characteristics that can already be found in Alessandro Scarlatti’s oratorio *Il giardino di rose*, composed for Ruspoli the year before. In this performance Handel had taken part as a harpsichordist.⁶

1 Thomas Bernhard in *Thomas Bernhard. Eine Begegnung. Gespräche mit Krista Fleischmann*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt a. M., 2006, p. 55.

2 Rainer Heyink, “Marazzoli, Marco”, in *Oratorienführer*, ed. by Silke Leopold/Ulrich Scheideler (Metzler, Stuttgart et al., 2000), pp. 437f.

3 The title in the libretto is *Oratorio per la risurrettione di Nostro Signor Giesù Cristo*. Cf. Sabine Ehrmann-Herfort: “La Resurrezione» zu Ostern 1708 in Rom. Ein Ereignis der Superlative”, in *Barockes Musiktheater in Geschichte und Gegenwart. Bericht über die Symposien der Internationalen Händel-Akademie Karlsruhe 2005 bis 2007*, ed. by Thomas Seedorf (Laaber: Laaber Verlag, 2010 (Veröffentlichungen der Internationalen Händel-Akademie Karlsruhe 9)), pp. 13–33, p. 13.

4 Cf. Bernd Baselt, “Georg Friedrich Händels »La resurrezione«”, in *Musikzentren – Persönlichkeiten und Ensembles*, ed. by Eitelfriedrich Thom/Frieder Zschoch (Blankenburg: Kultur- und Forschungsstätte Michaelstein, 1988 (Studien zur Aufführungspraxis und Interpretation der Musik des 18. Jahrhunderts 35)), pp. 52–54.

5 Ellen Rosand, “Handel paints the Resurrection”, in *Festa Musicologica. Essays in Honor of George J. Buelow*, ed. by Thomas J. Mathiesen/Benito V. Rivera (Stuyvesant/NY: Pendragon Press, 1995 (Festschrift series 14)), pp. 7–52, p. 10.

6 Juliane Riepe, “Händels »La Resurrezione« – Bemerkungen zum Kontext von Werk und Aufführung”, in *Barockes Musiktheater*

Despite these models a lot of novelties were introduced in *La Resurrezione di Nostro Signor Gesù Cristo*. Cardinal Ruspoli in some ways competed with another influential patron of music in Rome, Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni. In Lent and during Easter Time 1708 the two rivaled in so far, as Ottoboni engaged the famous Scarlatti to write a new oratorio, Ruspoli however dared to contract the still almost unknown Handel for an oratorio dealing with the Resurrection.⁷ The performances were expensively arranged, the 'Sala delle Accademie' in Ruspoli's Palazzo specifically set up; but finally, because of the large orchestra or perhaps due to an expected rush of guests the location was changed: The more spacious 'Sala grande' was adapted within only five days with a stage and appropriate decor, amongst it, ostentatiously, several coats of arms of Ruspoli.⁸ On the wall behind the stage a large painting of the Resurrection was fixed that did not represent the Revived, but – following an older western iconographic tradition – the earthly figures of the plot: Maria the mother of Jesus, Maria Magdalena and the Evangelist John, whom an Angel announces the Resurrection of Christ. Furthermore a banner spanned the hall on which a locket with the title of the oratorio could be seen, mysteriously illuminated from behind.⁹ This costly frame graded up the performance without affecting the action, which considering to the scriptural topic did without costumes and action on the stage.¹⁰

Three 'prove' of Handel's *Resurrezione* during Holy week and two 'funtioni' during the Easter Holidays were held. Already the so called 'prove' were open to the public. Probably this happened so as to avoid a control by the Papal Curia. With good cause, as could be seen after the first official performance on Easter Sunday, when the soprano singer Margherita Durastante had been assigned the role of Maria Maddalena, though the appearance of female singers in public had been strictly forbidden in the Papal States. Right away the corresponding blame arrived and was immediately complied on Easter Monday. The castrato Filippo took over the role, and we may assume that he was by no means unprepared for this task.¹¹ Even before, most probably with regard to an appeal by the papal censorship, the originally planned beginning of the oratorio, a scene showing the triumphant Lucifero, had been eliminated.¹² To confer the representative opening scene of the drama to the devil had definitely exceeded contemporary official ecclesiastical view. All in all the first series of performances of *La Resurrezione*, all that modern at first sight, was finally subject to a conservative mode of presentation.¹³ The majority of the audience originated from local nobility and, though often in sacral dignity, they had mainly re-assembled to get amused, not to dis-

in *Geschichte und Gegenwart. Bericht über die Symposien der Internationalen Händel-Akademie Karlsruhe 2005 bis 2007*, ed. by Thomas Seedorf (Laaber: Laaber Verlag, 2010 (Veröffentlichungen der Internationalen Händel-Akademie Karlsruhe 9)), pp. 35–55, p. 43.

7 Baselt, "Georg Friedrich Händels ...", p. 52.

8 Rosand, "Handel paints the ...", p. 9f.

9 Ibid., 10.

10 Riepe, "Händels »La Resurrezione« ...", p. 46.

11 Ehrmann-Herfort, "»La Resurrezione« zu Ostern ...", p. 15.

12 Hans Joachim Marx, "Formen des Rezitativs in den oratorischen Werken Händels", in *Göttinger Händel-Beiträge*, vol. 8 (2000): pp. 105–122, pp. 110f.

13 Juliane Riepe clarifies in how far – despite a basically new orientation – common concepts of passion oratorios and passion meditations can be proved in *La Resurrezione*; cf. Juliane Riepe, "Das italienische Passions- und Osteroratorium und Händels »La Resurrezione«", in *Händel-Jahrbuch*, vol. 52, *Biblische Gestalten bei Händel* (2006): pp. 195–214.

play contemplative devotion. Presumptively, just as at the concerts in the palaces of the Cardinals Benedetto Pamphili and Pietro Ottoboni, some refreshments were offered setting off this special occasion against performances in churches.¹⁴ Even if sometimes not numerous, the audience was a musically experienced one, and often included culturally interested travellers that had come to Rome. Of course these people were able to assess the efforts of the artists – and therefore stimulated, even forced the patron to spend plenty of money on an extraordinary, ambitious presentation.¹⁵

The action in *La Resurrezione* is settled between the death and the resurrection of Jesus and displayed on two levels: on earth the demonstrations of the mortal souls of the two Marias and St. John, in hell – where Jesus, due to the text of the creed, firstly moves after having died in order to save the souls of the deceased¹⁶ – by a gara, a competition between an Angel (it must be Michael, though it is not told) and Lucifer.¹⁷ Here, the victory of Archangel Michael over Samiel stands in the background.¹⁸ As the main feature, however, the profile of Maria Maddalena is developed, not as a penitent, but as a representative of the human 'anima', as a charitable soul – her predominance can be seen by the number of her arias, a total of five is more than assigned to any other role.¹⁹ Such a constellation enabled the librettist to interpolate gracious traits of religious lyricism and borrowings from mystic iconography opposed to the awesome facets of the inferno. This literary approach inspired Handel to take up several conventional topics, e.g. the contemplative site of sentimental arias or, regarding Lucifer's part, an oscillating characterization as the hell's sovereign and, at the same moment, the tempting arch-villain. Following the customary composers' habits and supported by the fact that a concrete localization of the plot is avoided Handel leads the music into a virtuosic, challenging sphere, shaping the special profile of his singers. As neither the figures of Jesus nor of his mother Maria appear on the stage, the scenery misses its focus.²⁰ The dialogue between angle and devil takes place in the underworld, musically reflecting a light and dark-perspective, but at the same time shifting the action into an unreal place.²¹

In *La Resurrezione* Handel already shows his special talent for dramatization of a subject by means of baroque musical speech²² as well as his potential to come up to an individual drawing of characters.²³ Capece's libretto – despite its dramatic restraint – facilitated Handel's task with a nearly operatic design.²⁴ Drafted metaphorically, it

14 Ehrmann-Herfort, "«La Resurrezione» zu Ostern ...", pp. 18, 28.

15 Cf. Hans Joachim Marx, "Die Musik am Hofe Pietro Kardinal Ottobonis unter Arcangelo Corelli", in *Studien zur italienisch-deutschen Musikgeschichte*, ed. by Friedrich Lippmann (Köln/Graz: Böhlau, 1968 (Analecta musicologica 5)), pp. 104–177, esp. pp. 106, 114.

16 The "Decensus Christi ad Inferos" is comprehensively narrated in the apocryphal gospel of Nikodemus; cf. Ehrmann-Herfort, "«La Resurrezione» zu Ostern ...", p. 23.

17 Baselt, "Georg Friedrich Händels ...", p. 53; Ehrmann-Herfort, "«La Resurrezione» zu Ostern ...", p. 20.

18 Marx, "Formen des Rezitativs in den ...", p. 110.

19 Cf. Susanne Fontaine, "Liebreiz statt Zerknirschung. Die Figur der Maddalena in Händels »La Resurrezione«", in *Händel-Jahrbuch*, vol. 52, *Biblische Gestalten bei Händel* (2006): pp. 215–223; Ehrmann-Herfort, "«La Resurrezione» zu Ostern ...", p. 26.

20 Rosand, "Handel paints the ...", p. 13.

21 *Ibid.*, p. 18.

22 Cf. Carolyn M. Gianturco, "The characterization of Lucifero and Angelo at the opening of Handel's »La resurrezione«", in *Göttinger Händel-Beiträge*, vol. 7, *Händels italianit* (1998): pp. 27–39.

23 Baselt, "Georg Friedrich Händels ...", p. 53; Rosand, "Handel paints the ...", pp. 19f.

24 Terence Best, "Handel's wordsetting in »La Resurrezione«", in *Göttinger Händel-Beiträge*, vol. 7, 1998: *Händels italianit*, pp. 40–50, p. 40.

created a vivid language of naturalness and agility by making use of many adjectives and verbs concerning an immediate action.²⁵ A moment of indoctrination, familiar to the Italian oratorio, gets reduced.²⁶ Instead the Angel, as the intermediary between this and the other world, obtains a central position that is reflected in very virtuosic passages. The more astonishing, though corresponding with a certain distance expressing the inconceivability of the salvation, a restraint of musical expression is to be observed in the Angel's Recitativo und Aria "Donne, voi ricercate" – "Se per colpa di donna"²⁷, when the Angel tells the women about Jesus' resurrection²⁸ and finally points at the abolition of Eve's fall which should 'inversely' be reported to women firstly. The latent inconspicuousness most probably is the reason for the little attendance given to this aria in the quite umpteen contributions hitherto published on Handels oratorios. Just two violins accompany the Angel, and they only play in the aria's ritornello – a simple continuo-aria without a distinct da-capo-scheme, nevertheless conveying an ethereal shade thanks to the soloistic instrumentation of the basso continuo. The tempo, Andante, has something dignified, which is yet more than replaced by consecutive semi-quavers in the vocal part, including several coloraturas and mediating an exultant atmosphere. These coloraturas were applied either pictorially or to stress a certain word, on "sgorgò" (sprang up) resp. "avvivò" (inspired anew). Interestingly, the structure of the verses, which generally follows the 'noble' hendecasyllable (endecasyllabo) consisting of eleven syllables, once – over "all' uomo nel seno" ([when infusing] poison in the man's breast) – is abandoned in favour of a shortened verse of seven syllables (settenario tronco). On the whole such a breach is not all that surprising, it often occurs; but in this case it is conspicuous that Handel continues with the melodic gesture and does not react to the allusion of sexual blame in the libretto – a fact clearly accentuated in the text is flattened musically.

Later on Handel borrowed twenty of the oratorio's 29 numbers for other works, which is a real proof of his estimation of *La Resurrezione*²⁹, a work characterized by Ellen Rosand as "a Baroque composer's response to the competing arts of poetry and painting [...]. In requiring his music not only to mime emotion but to compensate for the limits of the oratorio genre, to supply light, action, and scenography, he [Handel] transcended the boundaries of his own art. Accepting the challenge of Capece's evocatively imaginistic poetry, Handel strives for an even higher degree of pictorialness in his music. Through text, music becomes visual."³⁰ It is that kind of visualization which also appears in Angelos aria "Se per colpa di donna", though due to its dramatic position Handel does not exhaust effective means of composition but does without them.

Different from the Italian oratorio which was touched by the new, concerted style already in the late 17th century, the Lutheran passion changed by degrees from Grego-

25 Rosand, "Handel paints the ...", p. 15; Riepe, "Das italienische Passions ...", pp. 204, 206f., 209; Ehrmann-Herfort, "La Resurrezione zu Ostern ...", pp. 22, 25.

26 Riepe, "Das italienische Passions ...", p. 214.

27 Compared for instance to the Angel's appearance before Lucifero, when the music falls from the highest tones down into deepness; cf. Best, "Handel's word setting in ...", p. 41.

28 This is a recitativo secco typical for Handel, as action or at least incidents are advanced, whereas recitativi accompagnati are mainly used to portray situations; cf. Marx, "Formen des Rezitativs in den ...", p. 112.

29 Rosand, "Handel paints the ...", p. 29.

30 Ibid., p. 52.

rian models on recitation tones to a monodic presentation in recitatives such as in the essential passages in Heinrich Schütz' *Historia der fröhlichen und siegreichen Auferstehung unsers einigen Erlösers und Seligmachers Jesu Christi*. However, the words of Jesus are set to music differently, in two parts and in motet style – Jesus does not speak like a human being, but with two tongues, and again a distance to the concrete manifestation of the revived Christ can be conceived.³¹ Subsequently for largely dimensioned vocal works in Lutheran tradition the musical specifications of the Italian oratorio, arias and choirs were gradually taken over, but any dramatic action was consistently avoided. In works of librettists like Karl Wilhelm Ramler, whose *Auferstehung und Himmelfahrt Jesu* formed the basis for several compositions, among them a work composed in about 1760 by Johann Friedrich Agricola and one by Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach of the year 1774, not only the evangelist disappears, but also the dialogic moment is neglected.³² Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock takes over this conception in his poetry, especially in his frequently composed epic *Messias*³³ set to music e.g. by Sigismund Ritter von Neukomm 1828, Charles V. Stanford 1874 and paradigmatic for a non-affected text.

Only the loss of this connotation, for the sake of a metaphorical secular use of resurrection, as realized in Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy's novel *Voskresenie (Resurrection)* published in 1899, opened up a dramatic understanding of the subject. One year after the composition of Albert Roussel's Symphonic Prelude "Resurrection" (op. 4, written 1903) Franco Alfano (1876–1954) – who is casually still known as the composer to complete Giacomo Puccini's *Turandot* – composed his first opera *Risurrezione* after a libretto of Cesare Hanau (1868 – after 1908) based on Tolstoy's novel. The world premiere took place in Torino's Teatro Vittorio Emanuele on November 30th, 1904.³⁴ Inevitably Hanau had to condense Tolstoy's extensive story for the opera libretto, and amongst other devices applied in this context he decided to resolve the frequently used flashbacks as well as to renounce the ideological parts of the text. As the frame for *Risurrezione* there remains:³⁵ Dmitry Nekludov, an aristocratic dandy with the backbone of an honest conscience, seduces the young orphan Katyusha when visiting his aunt on her country estate where the girl grows up. He makes her pregnant, but abandons her for an easygoing life. Katyusha then loses her job, also the child, becomes a slut and gets involved in a murder, finally being convicted innocently. Nekludov, as it happens juryman in the trial, cannot prevent her being sentenced to compulsory labour in Sibiria. Deeply impressed by the occurrence, however, he gives up his lifestyle, renders all his estates to the farmers who cultivate them and travels to Sibiria, accom-

31 Cf. Günther Massenkeil, *Oratorium und Passion*, part 1 (Laaber: Laaber Verlag, 1998 (Handbuch der musikalischen Gattungen 10/1)), pp. 184f.

32 Cf. the articles on Agricola and C. Ph. E. Bach by Peter Wolny in *Oratorienführer*, ed. by Silke Leopold/Ulrich Scheideler (Metzler, Stuttgart et al., 2000), p. 1 resp. pp. 10–12.

33 Klopstock's poem is not the standard text for Handel's *Messiah*; its text was compiled from the English gospel of the Anglican Church and the *Book of Common Prayer* by Charles Jennens. A part for Christ is not scheduled.

34 Using Tolstoj's novel as the point of departure, later on two further operas by Stevan Hristić (1912) and Ján Cikker (1962) as well as a ballet by Alexandre Tansman (1962) followed; cf. Alexander Reischert: *Kompendium der musikalischen Sujets. Ein Werkkatalog*, vol. 1 (Bärenreiter, Kassel et al., 2001), pp. 174f.

35 For an extensive summary see Jürgen Mähler, "Franco Alfano. *Risurrezione*", in *Pipers Enzyklopädie des Musiktheaters*, vol. 1, ed. by Carl Dahlhaus (München/Zürich: Piper, 1986), pp. 32f.

panying the line of prisoners with Katyusha. Yet she, who meanwhile has made the acquaintance of Simonson, an anarchist, and has fallen in love with him, refuses Neklov's – too late – proposal. Nevertheless, at this moment both, Katyusha and Dmitry, feel that a new life discretely begins to unfold, summing up the former encounters, raising their love to eternalness.

Retrospectively Jürgen Mähder, one of the most learned experts of the Italian opera, accuses Franco Alfano on the one hand of not having got beyond the musical language of Catalani or Mascagni, and on the other hand of having missed to represent Tolstoy's social criticism as well as any special Russian background.³⁶ Holding against, neither Hanau nor Alfano – despite the partly veristic sceneries of a women's prison and a penal camp – may have wished to convey a socio-graphic inventory. They rather tried to focus on the feelings of the protagonists, an endeavour resulting in concentration on their characters and a mostly lyrical touch within the music.³⁷ Notwithstanding an impact of credibility is evoked just by this density. Yet the inner change of Katyusha and Dmitry in the course of the time, their 'resurrection' from a dissolute and irresponsible existence developed quite clearly by Tolstoy, is not shown convincingly on the basis of Alfano's musical means. Instead, an omnipresent dramatic gesture superimposes psychic acuteness.

The reason that Alfano in *Risurrezione* maintained a certain 'mainstream' of opera composition may be found in the composer's longing for a resounding success in his home country after some rather lousy years in Paris where Alfano, amongst other things, had worked as an instrumentator of ballets for the Folies Bergères.³⁸ The fact that later operas, especially *L'ombra di Don Giovanni* and *La leggenda du Sakuntala*, sometimes also disappoint common expectations³⁹, and considering that some of Alfano's pupils composed on the base of dodecaphony and serialism, indicate that he did not blindly or unimaginatively follow the tradition of verismo when he decided to compose *Risurrezione* in a certainly agreeable manner.⁴⁰ Furthermore, the contemporary specialised press attested Alfano's compositional style a particular originality and esteemed his contribution to a 'Russian wave' which spread in Italy in the years around 1900.⁴¹ In so far the efficient melodic configuration in *Risurrezione*, avoiding any striking cantilena⁴² and just 'nominating' a short motive at the very beginning as the nucleus of the whole musical inspiration may stand for the composer's personal attitude. Moreover, 25 repetitions of the German premiere at the Komische Oper Berlin in 1909

36 Ibid., p. 33.

37 A women's prison and a penal camp are locations which do not appear in Tolstoy's novel and thus reveal the intention to adapt the action. It can be assumed that librettist and composer have discussed a lot during the process of formulation, as it was common practice in Italy at that time.

38 Alan Mallach, *The Autumn of Italian Opera. From Verismo to Modernism, 1890–1915* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2007), p. 299.

39 Cf. John C. G. Waterhouse, "Da *Risurrezione* a *La leggenda di Sakuntala*. Dal «verismo» degli esordi allo stile personale della maturità", in *Ultimi Splendori: Cilea, Giordano, Alfano*, ed. by Johannes Streicher (Roma: ISMEZ Editore, 1999), pp. 523–548.

40 Cf. Jürg Stenzl, *Von Giacomo Puccini zu Luigi Nono. Italienische Musik 1922–1952: Faschismus – Resistenza – Republik* (Buren: Frits Knuf, 1990), p. 187.

41 Cesare Orselli, "«Risurrezione» e «Cyrano de Bergerac»: quasi due «Literatur-Opern»", in *Franco Alfano. Presagio di tempi nuovi con finale controcorrente*, ed. by Rino Maione/Francesco Canessa (Milano: Rugginenti, 1999 (De Musica 4)), pp. 67–88, pp. 67f.

42 Mallach, *The Autumn of Italian Opera* ..., p. 299.

show that the audience at that time was captivated by Alfano's opera, even though the critics measured the work with Puccini's – and spurned it.⁴³

The audience's sagacity should not be underestimated – it reflected the desire to experience, besides artistic enjoyment, some entertainment. Although opera performances – not only in Italy, but all over Europe – were attended by differently cultured classes⁴⁴, in the end for all those a longing for pleasure formed the main impulse to enter an opera house. That is why theatres offered saloons for conversation, dining and sometimes even for gambling.⁴⁵ On the other hand, in Italy more than anywhere else, also small cities operated a theatre that occasionally was staged by opera troops, and that is why the genre became a matter of national interest. Estimation and opinion of the public were based on rich knowledge – as a distinct production was seldom attended one single time, but usually repeatedly, and (apart from guest performances of famous singers) the attendance of operas was mainly understood as the participation in a social event.⁴⁶ In Italy the extraordinary value of opera in social life did not even change in the years around 1900, when the achievement of national unity ensued in economic crises and the formation of a new leading society, consisting of officials and enterprisers, enveloped the whole state. Perhaps, because this recent upper class wanted to dress up in personal profiles, the 'bourgeois' opera received an aesthetic turn – whilst the repertory remained open for new works. In particular, themes and their artificial design were qualified intellectually.⁴⁷ Alfano matched these expectations perfectly.

Tolstoy had regarded the title of his novel as a motto, and he had cared for this literally with the help of reminiscences effecting the subliminal, sometimes hardly noticeable presence of a guiding line.⁴⁸ With regard to this Hanau and Alfano integrated a stylized Easter choral as to envision the idea of resurrection and, simultaneously, to connect the decisive moments within the action. The choral's first appearance – when Dmitry and Katyusha find each other for the first time after Easter Mass – corresponds with Tolstoy's novel, its second occurrence in the last scene, however, differs from the model and actually replaces Tolstoy's ending up in long quotations from the bible. Instead, a sensitive expression of atmosphere arises: In the first act the easterly "Cristo

43 Josef-Horst Lederer, *Verismo auf der deutschsprachigen Opernbühne 1891–1926. Ein Untersuchung seiner Rezeption durch die zeitgenössische musikalische Fachpresse* (Wien/Köln/Weimar: Böhlau, 1992 (Wiener musikwissenschaftliche Beiträge 19)), p. 207. Recent reviews of the work are only available in Italian language: Orselli, "«Risurrezione» e «Cyrano de Bergerac: ...", pp. 69–77, and Gherardo Ghirardini, "Dio pietoso. «Risurrezione» di Franco Alfano ad un secolo dalla «prima», in *Musicaaa! Periodico di cultura musicale*, vol. 10 (2004): pp. 16–19.

44 Cf. Michael Walter, »Die Oper ist ein Irrenhaus«. *Sozialgeschichte der Oper im 19. Jahrhundert*, J. B. (Stuttgart/Weimar: Metzler, 1997, chapter "Das Publikum der Oper", pp. 318–341. Cf. also the reviews reproduced by Lederer, *Verismo auf der deutschsprachigen Opernbühne ...*

45 Carlotta Sorba, "In die Oper gehen« im 19. Jahrhundert: Orte, Publikum und Tendenzen des italienischen romantischen Melodrams", in *Zibaldone. Zeitschrift für italienische Kultur der Gegenwart*, vol. 35 (2003): pp. 21–31, p. 25. On the whole this contribution – just as the study by Michael Walter quoted in footnote 44 – shows that the audience in times of the Italian Risorgimento was attracted by opera performances not only by nationalistic tendencies, but also by culturally set self identifications in all social classes.

46 Sorba, "In die Oper gehen« ...", p. 27.

47 Cf. Mallach, *The Autumn of Italian Opera ...*, esp. the chapters "Prologue" (pp. 3–20), "The Rise of Bourgeois Opera in a Changing Nation" (pp. 122–150), "The End of the Era" (pp. 337–362).

48 Following the edition Leo N. Tolstoi, *Auferstehung*, complete translation into German by Adolf Heß (Leipzig, s. a.: Insel Verlag, [c. 1920]), pp. 81–86, 199f., 266, 366, 383f., 476 (for the first time from the perspective of both protagonists of the novel), 638.

è risuscitato!" is a remote sound and merely this line of the text can be understood verbally; the choral's rest – as if something is to be delayed – is sung "a bocca chiusa", the choir buzzes. The transfiguring last bars of the opera, however, move forth to the "Osanna", and the desire to close the past, as well as the conclusiveness of the new become apparent in the indication "Largo (come all'inizio dell'opera)" for the last ten bars of the score.

Rarely ever such an impression of a threshold between this and the other world is conveyed on stage. It seems to be difficult to realize such a situation dramatically with the help of music, whereas several works aim at a similar message by means of an orchestra or some instruments only.⁴⁹ Gustav Mahler demands a large orchestra, vocal soloists and choir for his Second Symphony in C minor (composed 1888–1894). The symphony is referred to as "Resurrection" Symphony, though the name does not originate from Mahler, who allegedly was inspired for the fifth and last movement of the symphony when attending the requiem for the famous conductor and pianist Hans von Bülow. Mahler, with this work, went beyond dimensions accepted so far, thus provoking irritation. His "Resurrection" Symphony with its setting of Klopstock's poem of the same title actually approaches a dramatic solution. Yet Mahler, like others, evaded action and the pooling of this and the other world in a dramatic context, did not dare to break the barrier between worldly and transcendental spheres decisively. However, as Handel and Alfano have shown from very different points of departure, sacrality can of course be represented in secular terms, as long as the composer is willing to manage the coexistence of expectations and appropriate stylistic means.

POVZETEK

Čeprav usidrana v dolgi tradiciji sakralne glasbe, je predstavitev Kristusovega vstajenja dobila pomemben impulz leta 1708, ko je mladi Georg Friedrich Händel s svojim rimskim oratorijem *La Resurrezione* osvetlil dramatično plat dogodka. Čeprav Händel – in, to moramo dodati, tudi njegov znani librettist Carlo Sigismondo Capece – ni načrtoval nastopa Kristusa na odru, so ga k temu privedle možnosti, ki jih je brez bojazni za stroške omogočil kardinal markiz Francesco Maria Ruspoli. Gledališko vzdušje sta v njegovi 'Sala grande' ustvarjala velika slika vstajenja za odrom in skrivnostno osvetljen trak, na katerem je bil napisan naslov oratorija. Skladatelja so morala spodbuditi bogata glasbena sredstva: briljantni vokalni solisti in veliki orkester, sestavljen iz najboljših rimskih glasbenikov tistega časa. Posledično je Händel ustvaril premišljeno, barvito, za izvajalce zahtevno partituro. Pomembnost izvedbe in kasneje bleščeča kariera skladatelja bi nas morda vodila k misli, da je delo prineslo spremembo v obravnavi tematike

vstajenja v glasbi. Pa ni bilo tako. Namesto tega so, pod vplivom razsvetljenstva, pravila luteranskega oratorija začeli upoštevati tudi v katoliških oratorijih. Glede na posebnost in izjemen pomen Kristusovega vstajenja je prevladovala odsotnost dramskega dogajanja in bogatejših glasbenih barv, posledično pa je upadlo tudi zanimanje za glasbeno prikazovanje te teme. To je trajalo skoraj stoletje. Različna glasbena dela, nastala ok. leta 1900 – kot so Druga simfonija "Vstajenje" Gustava Mahlerja in leta 1904 v veristični tradiciji komponirana opera *Risurrezione* Franca Alfana, na libreto Cesara Hanaua, prirejenem po romanu Leva N. Tolstoja *Voskresenje* (Vstajenje) – označujejo odločen obrat, nenazadnje zato, ker so jasno usidrana v posvetnem. Vendar sta se Hanau in Alfano – sledeč Tolstojevemu vračanju k Svetemu pismu – še vedno oprla na krščansko sporočilo, čeprav sta ga spretno prenesla na odnos med Katjušo in Dimitrijem ter uporabila velikonočni "Cristo è risuscitato" kot glasbeni narekovanj, ki označuje njuno notranjo preobrazbo.

Prevod naslova, izvlečka in povzetka Aleš Nagode

⁴⁹ For hints on the repertory see Reischert, *Kompendium der musikalischen Sujets* ..., vol. 1, pp. 174f., 608–610; Klaus Schneider, *Lexikon Programmmusik*, vol. 1, *Stoffe und Motive* (Kassel et al.: Bärenreiter, ²2001), pp. 144–149, 170f.