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Opera Dilogy *der Beglückte Florindo* ("Florindo Made Happy") and *Die Verwandelte Daphne* ("Daphne Metamorphosed") by G.F. Handel: Problem of Plot Formation

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Abstract. In line with the interest of domestic researchers in libretto of vintage operas and Baroque music theatre, this article turns over a new leaf of the G.F. Handel's operas of his early period, and also puts them into the context of the performance traditions of the Hamburg State Opera at the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries.

Der beglückte Florindo ("Florindo made happy") and *Die verwandelte Daphne* ("Daphne metamorphosed") are the operas, which were performed on the stage of the Hamburg Theatre at the Gänsemarkt square (lit. Geese Market) and became not only the first G.F. Handel's try on the genre of pastorals, but also a prime example of a Baroque opera dilogy. As the composer's music sheets have been almost completely lost, the author is focused on the preserved texts of the libretto and sets an objective to identify their specificity in the context of plot formation of a Baroque opera. This article makes an attempt to analyze Handel's opera dilogy in fine detail.

Thus, the author reveals the underlying dramatic conflict between two gods – Phoebus and Cupid, determines the number of pairs of characters involved in the love dramaturgical line and provides schemes depicting their relationships. In addition, there are enlisted key plot motifs such as mutual/unrequited love motif, motif of suffering, death motif, hatred motif, revenge motif and guile motifs. The identification of the role of each of these motifs in the plot contributes to the confirmation of the hypothesis that Handel's dilogy belongs to the traditional samples of the early 18th century operatic texts, which are distinguished by the complex intrigue, the intricate love relationships of characters, the typical plot and situational schemes.

Keywords: libretto analysis, the Hamburg Theatre, history of the opera, dilogy, plot formation, Hinrich Hinsch, George Handel, baroque opera, *Der beglückte Florindo*, *Die verwandelte Daphne*.

Research area: musical art.

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Introduction

The name of G.F. Handel, an outstanding master of the *opera seria* genre, attracts the extensive attention of performers, directors and is quite often found on posters of the world theatre stage. The research interest in Baroque opera as a whole, as well as in the works of the German composer, intensified in the 20th century. Among the largest foreign authors the outstanding figure is R. Strom, who devoted most of his works to the study of Italian and German tradition. The Book by W. Dean "Handel and the Opera Seria" (first published in 1969) and J.M. Knapp's "Handel's Operas of 1704-1726" (Dean, Knapp, 1995; first published in 1987) also became fundamental for modern Handel studies. Fundamental work on the collection of archival documents relating to Handel's life and works was carried out by the Oxford University team of D. Burrows, H. Koffey, J. Greenacombe, and A. Hicks (Burrows et al., 2013). One more thorough work was done by S. Leopold, S. McCleave, T. McGeary, D. Kimbell (Kimbell, 2016).

In Russian musicology, particular scientific interest in Handel and his operas dates back to the end of the 20th century. In 1970 a short monograph by A. Belonenko was published. This was followed by a number of articles by Russian researchers, such as V. Konen, V. Protopopov and T. Livanova. In 1994-1995, two dissertations were defended. One of them ("Musical Dramaturgy in Handel's Operas") was written by V. Demidov (1994), the other ("Opera Art of G.F. Handel") – by I. Fedoseev (1996). The latest publication was L. Kirillina's monograph "Theatrical Vocation of G.F. Handel" (Kirillina, 2019). But even this research is not exhaustive.

The present article is focused on the analysis of published libretti of operas "Florindo made happy" and "Daphne metamorphosed"

by Handel. Let us remind once again that the scores have not been retained.

The research reveals a problem that challenges many musicologists: whether it is possible to study operas in the absence of musical notation; whether analysis of the libretto provides all the necessary data to draw conclusions about the operas' drama feature?

Methods

This study was implemented at an interdisciplinary level, involving methods of musicology, literature, theatre and cultural studies. The main approach was very comprehensive and included the most fundamental research methods: the biographical method; the cultural and historical method, which helped to establish the links of an artistic work with the history and culture, tradition and social environment of the Baroque epoch. As literary phenomena are polygenetic, the comparative method is particularly important in libretto analysis. By using this method, the author compares the event series in the libretto with a certain literary source or historical sources. Comparative literature studies enable making conclusions about the regularities of literary texts belonging to this or that culture within the Baroque period. The formal and structural method became the main ones for analyzing the plot formation of the opera libretto. These methods were an indispensable part of the national literature schools headed by V. Shklovsky, B. Tomashevsky, A. Veselovsky, Y. Lotman, V. Tyupa and others. Hermeneutical method developed by German scientists of the 18th–19th centuries F.D.E. Schleiermacher and W. Dilthey allowed me to deduce the meaning of works and determine their timeless artistic value.

Librettological problems necessitated the adoption of methodology from literary studies and predetermined the reference to such a

direction as plot studies. One of its scientific methods, story analysis, became a critical factor in the study of libretto of G.F. Handel's operas, opening up new opportunities for interpretation of the artistic text.

Discussion

Der beglückte Florindo and *Die verwandelte Daphne* are the examples of how G.F. Handel's first addressed one of the most famous plots of the opera pastorals, drawn from the myth of Apollo and Daphne. The earliest theatrical embodiments of this plot can be found at the turn of the 16th–17th centuries and they belong to Italian composers¹ – J. Corsi and J. Peri (1598) and G. Caccini (1602)². In 1608 in Mantua M. de Galliano staged "Daphne" based on the libretto by O. Rinuccini; then the revised libretto in a free translation made by M. Opitz³ was used in an opera by the German composer G. Schütz (1627, Torgau). Thus, we see that the plot about the nymph Daphne crossed the borders of Italy and was spread in Germany. Subsequently, the text written by Opitz was used by Bontempi (1671), Weissenfel (1698) and finally Handel (Korobova, 2007: 133-134). All this shows the extraordinary popularity of this story in Germany and the pastoral genre in general⁴.

G.F. Handel's operas were created at the request of R. Kaiser in 1706. The author of the libretto was Hinrich Hinsch, a German poet and lawyer by education. His main task was to

adapt a fashion of Italian opera for the German public⁵. Therefore, according to the Hamburg tradition, part of the vocal pieces (33 of the 96, including the arias and ensembles) were written in Italian (perhaps their texts were partly borrowed from the Italian libretto) and the rest in German. No exact details of the first and subsequent productions are available, but the performances were supposedly staged in January and February 1708 at the Hamburg Theatre on Gänsemarkt (Chrysender, 2019). Handel was in Italy at this time (Nigito, 2017: 125-136) and probably did not attend his dilogy, moreover, he may have not intended it to be performed in a single evening, as the poet might have originally conceived (Kimbell, 2016: 6-7). The decision to split the work into two operas was announced by Hinsch in the preface to the published libretto of *Der beglückte Florindo*⁶ (1708) (Fig. 1, 2).

Following other researchers, I shall make a remark that before Handel dilogies, two evening performances of different operas had already been staged several times in this very Hamburg Theatre on Gänsemarkt. Among them are works by R. Kaiser: "The First Part of the Circe, or Ulysses" and "Penelope, or the Other Part of Ulysses" (libretto by F.C. Bressand) premiered in February 1696 in Braunschweig, Hagen Town Hall; then at the Hamburg Theatre in 1702), "Störtebecker and Jödge Michaels" (1701, libretto by Hotter), "The Dying Eurydice or Orpheus" (1702, libretto by F.C. Bressand). They were all full-length, three-act operas (Dean, Knapp, 1995: 72).

Turning to the analysis of the libretto, it is worth recalling that a fragment from Ovid's "Metamorphoses: Book I" was chosen as the storyline for the operatic dilogy of Florindo and Daphne. It recounts how Daphne avoided the wooing of Phoebus (Apollo) and turned to his father Peneus for help. He turns her into a laurel tree (Publius Ovidius Naso, 1983) (Fig. 3, 4).

¹ M. Cohen dwells on curious historical and political parallels of the emergence of operas devoted to the popular myths of Apollo and Daphne, Orpheus (Cohen, 2017).

² Among the musical and theatrical productions, which used the myth of Apollo and Daphne, there is a dramatic pastorale with the music of J.P. della Viola, the first night took place in 1486 in Mantua.

³ M. Opitz was one of the first authors to adapt the Italian libretto for the German stage (Flaherty, 2015: 11-12).

⁴ A.G. Korobova in her dissertation gives examples of opera pastorals written by German authors at the turn of the 17th-18th centuries. Among them are works by I Sebastiani ("The Shepherd's Play, in Performing Music Presented", 1663), R. Kaiser ("The Royal Shepherd, or Basilius in Arcadia", 1693; "Ismena", 1693; "The Found Lovers", 1695; "Beloved Adonis", 1697; "Pomona", 1702); I. Kusser ("Narcissus", 1692; "The Loving Forest", 1699), I. Krieger ("Basilius in Arcadia", 1696), G.K. Schurmann ("Celebration of Joyful Shepherds", 1708).

⁵ The traditions of the Hamburg Theatre are described in a special article (Kosheleva, 2014: 81-85), and a book by L.V. Kirillina (Kirillina, 2019: 27-38).

⁶ Detailed consideration of this issue can be found in the article by M.A. Kosheleva (Kosheleva, 2019: 70-71).



Fig. 1. The title page of the libretto of the opera *Der beglückte Florindo* ("Florindo made happy")



Fig. 2. The title page of the libretto of the opera *Die verwandelte Daphne* ("Daphne metamorphosed")



Fig. 3. Carlo Maratta "Apollo in pursuit of Daphne" (1681)

A complete list of characters⁷ is given in the Preface to the libretto of *Der beglückte Florindo* (Hinsch, 1708):

Phoebus, in love with Daphne.

Daphne, daughter of the river god Peneus, with whom Phoebus is in love, engaged to Florindo.

Florindo, son of the river god Enipeus, engaged to Daphne and secretly in love with Alfirena.

Lycoris, a Thessalian nymph in love with Florindo.

Damon, a Thessalian shepherd in love with Lycoris.

Galathea, an old nymph, Daphne's confidante.

Alfirena, daughter of the river god Apidan, secretly in love with Florindo.

⁷ Phoebus, Daphne, Cupid, Galathea, Peneus, Enipeus and Vulcan are mythological creatures, while Lycoris, Damon and Florindo were made up by the librettist.



Fig 4. Virgil Solis "Apollo kills Python"
(Engraving for Ovid's "Metamorphoses Book I", 16th century)

Thyrsis, noble shepherd from Arcadia, close friend of Damon.

Cupid, god of love.

Vulcan, god of fire.

Peneus, father of Daphne, god of the river.

Enipheus, Father of Florindo, god of the river.

Choir, shepherd boys and girls of Thessaly, Cyclops, Tritons and Nayades.

In the foreword to the libretto, H. Hinsch justifies the choice of names for operas that bring special meaning to the operatic content: "For instance, the first of these two parts depicts the feast celebrated in honour of Phoebus (Apollo) and the betrothal of Florindo to the nymph Daphne, which took place on the same day. So, the opera is called "Florindo made happy". The other part tells of Daphne's stubborn resistance to Phoebus's love, then the rejection of the feeling of love for a man, and finally her metamorphosis into a laurel tree. Thus, the opera is called "Daphne metamorphosed" (Burrows et al., 2013: 118).

The integrity of the dramatic action of the two operas is enhanced by the distribution of scenes along the plot. While the first opera *Der beglückte Florindo* gives an exposition of all the actors, a node and a main conflict, the second opera, *Die verwandelte Daphne*, develops the conflict, its culmination and outcome.

Traditionally, as in most of the storylines in Baroque opera, the key themes in these very operas are "**the struggle for power**" and "**love**". The former is realized at the level of mythological plot and dramaturgy as the confrontation between the two gods – Phoebus and Cupid. The determining factor is the plot *motif of revenge*, which drives Cupid's actions. This motif appears in scene 2 of Act I: Phoebus mocks Cupid's bow and the latter decides to prove his superiority as a mighty god endowed with the power to control other people's destinies (Cupid's aria "Wiltum einem Wort nicht glauben / Solln's dir meine Werkelehren" / "If you don't want to believe my words, my work will make you"). He hurts Phoebus with a golden-tipped arrow and instills in him a feeling of love. Then, when Cupid sees that Phoebus is trying to gain Daphne's favour but in vain (scene 8 of Act I), he is crestfallen, feeling doubt about his own power. Cupid decides to reinforce his puissance by poisoning the heart of Daphne, who was supposed to cause Phoebus's love suffering. He turns to Vulcan for help. In scene 2 of Act III, Vulcan, in sympathy with Cupid, makes a lead-tipped arrow to arouse the hatred of all men in Daphne. In scene 1 of Act I of the second opera, Cupid comes at the wedding of Florindo and Daphne and wounds her,

interrupting the ritual. In the interaction of the two subject lines (mythological and love story) *the motif of revenge* generates *the motif of hatred* and *the motif of rejection of love*, which will determine Daphne's actions. In the second opera, the nymph, whose heart was filled with love for Florindo and liking for Phoebus, grows to hate this feeling in all its manifestations and flees from everyone, completely devoting herself to wildlife. As a consequence of the loss of his beloved, Florindo feels misery, and the motif of suffering, which appeared in scene 3 of Act III, will accompany the hero to the end of the opera.

The climax is traditionally attended by gods and *the motif of forgiveness* contributes a lot to universal reconciliation: Peneus transforms Daphne into a laurel tree; Cupid blesses Florindo and Alfirena for their union and asks Damon to forgive Lycoris, after which they are also reunited.

However significant *the motif of revenge* might be, in a love story and drama line, *the motifs of mutual and unrequited love* are decisive. The only couple that was originally united by love is Daphne and Florindo. After Cupid's intervention, this tie is torn. In addition, there are five other pairs of characters whose behaviour is guided by an unrequited love motif:

- Alfirena → Florindo
- Lycoris → Florindo
- Damon → Lycoris
- Galathea → Thyrsis
- Phoebus → Daphne

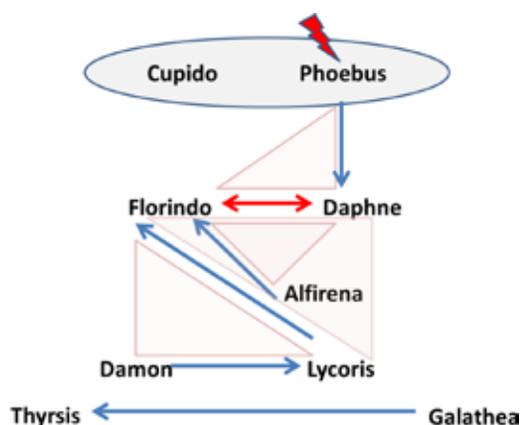
Such a complicated tangle of love relations corresponds to the traditional scheme of *opera seria* (to some extent it even outstrips *opera series*) with its complex figurative structure (Scheme 1).

The very exposition in the first opera *Der beglückte Florindo* reveals the complexity of love relations. Specifically, in scene 4 of Act I, wounded Phoebus feels that he is madly in love with Daphne and barely bears her coldness for him (recitative and aria of Phoebus "Miro, vagheggio, e adoro" / "Look, admire and adore"). Next, in scene 3 (duo), Alfirena admits to Daphne that she is in love and her feelings are unrequited, then in scene 5, Alfirena, gripped by her love for Florindo, performs the aria

"Dolce foco mi tormenta" / "Fire of tenderness torments me") In scene 8, Lycoris in her arias sings about her nonreciprocal feelings for Florindo, and in scene 9 Damon confesses about his one-sided love.

The motif of unrequited love gives rise to *the motif of suffering* that moves the actors in different ways. Thus, the hesitant Damon is ready to fulfill any wish of Lycoris who taunts him. After long and dark suffering, Alfirena dares to act bravely and confides (albeit secretly) in her feelings to Florindo. In next opera she will carve a love message on a tree (opera *Die verwandelte Daphne*, scene 11 of Act I). Noble and wise nymph Galathea, having suffered from an unrequited love for a young shepherd, Thyrsis, acts virtuously. She is worried about Damon and with all her might tries to dissuade him from realising an insidious plan of Lycoris (opera *Die verwandelte Daphne*, scene 5 of Act III). Florindo, who suffers from the anguish of love with Daphne who has been wounded in the heart, for most of the second opera attempts to get his beloved back.

In contrast, plot *motifs of unrequited love* and *suffering* played a "cruel joke" with Lycoris. As a consequence, they generated *the motif of guile*, which ordains all her actions. This has greatly complicated the love affair, and the actions of this character led to slander against Daphne and her subsequent death. On the other hand, there could be no other outcome, because the "wounded" Phoebus, having not reconciled



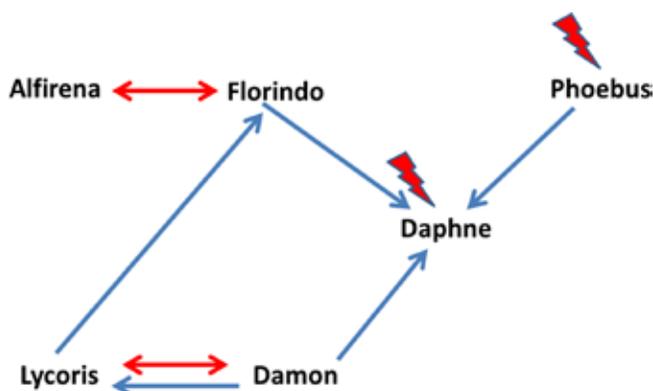
Scheme 1. Relationships between characters in the plot of the opera *Der beglückte Florindo*

to the irresponsibility of the feelings of the nymph and seeking to reclaim her, made Daphne even more miserable. Her transformation was the only way out.

The paradoxical nature of the operas' plot formation lies in the predominance of *the motif of unrequited love* at the exposition stage; there are five pairs of characters, who are affected by initial insult to Cupid: it is he who endues Phoebus with a sense of unrequited love and suffering. Moreover, Cupid subverses the only harmonious love union between Daphne and Florindo. However, as a result of the action development, the conflict between Phoebus and Cupid is resolved by Daphne turning into a laurel tree, which entails the harmonization of relations between the other characters and establishes the dominance of *the mutual love motif* (Scheme 2).

It is impossible not to mention two other plot motifs, traditionally used in Baroque operas. The first one is *the motif of changing clothes*. It appears in scene 11 of Act II of the opera *Die verwandelte Daphne*: Lycoris meets Daphne in the woods and complains to her about her misfortune of unrequited love. Daphne comforts Lycoris and once the former says she wants to sleep, Daphne covers her with the cloak. When Lycoris gets Daphne's clothes at her disposal, she changes and follows her cunning plan; this time her task is to convince Florindo that the nymph does not love him and flirts with other men. In scene 2 of Act III, Lycoris handles Daphne's clothes to Florindo, traducing Daphne, saying she has left it after a date with a satire.

The second plot motif the is *the abduction of a beloved girl* (3 pp., II act, *Die ver-*



Scheme 2. Relationships between characters in the plot formation of the opera *Die verwandelte Daphne* ("Daphne metamorphosed") (with the result in pairs Alfirena-Florindo and Damon-Lycoris)

It was the death of Daphne which "removed the obstacles" on the way to love between these pairs of characters: Florindo-Alfirena, Damon-Lycoris.

In this way, Cupid proves his powerful influence on people's lives. By sacrificing the love of Daphne and Florindo, he ruins a world in which the unrequited love reigns and promotes the creation of new relationships based on love and reciprocity⁸.

⁸ The final outcome of the plot embodies the philosophical and aesthetic thought of the sublime, expressed by F. Schiller. He wrote that the sublime "gives way out of the sensual

wandelte Daphne). The fact is that a typical component of the plot of many Baroque operas, including those of Handel's, is the insertion of a magical element. Hinsch in his libretto introduced a spectacular scene of Vulcan producing a magical instrument, as well as Cupid's calling for Furies. After Cu-

world" and at the same time "spurs mixed feeling. It is a combination of grief and joy, where the mind and sensuality do not coincide, and this contradiction between them accounts for that magic, which is mastered by our mind" (Schiller, 2019). This is one of such educational ideas that turns out to be close to those of G.F. Handel and will be materialised in his subsequent operas" (Berghahn, 2016).

pid's aria of revenge "Lasset die Mord-Trompeten ersthaslen" / "Let the murderous tube sound", he becomes fearful of that Daphne could be inflamed with love with Florindo once again, and therefore he decides to kidnap her. That is how the motif of the abduction appears in the plot formation.

With that said, the libretto of Handel's dilogy is a typical example of early 18th-century operatic texts distinguished by the complexity of intrigue, the complexity of the love relations between characters, the priority of such plot motifs as *the motif of mutual/unrequited love, the motif of suffering, the motif of death, the motif of hatred, the motif of guile.*

Conclusion

To sum up the study of the features of the libretto written by H. Hinsch, the following conclusions can be drawn.

The opera dilogy of *Der beglückte Florindo* and *Die verwandelte Daphne* is theatrical

performance of high quality, falling in line with traditions of Baroque opera of the beginning of 18th century. First of all, it is the choice of everyone's favourite and well-known mythological plot in the pastoral genre. Secondly, it is a thoroughly composed plan and dynamic dramaturgy, including bright scenes of conflict situations and their resolution. Thirdly, the storyline is coherent and consistent. Fourthly, the multiplicate figurative structure of the interrelationships of operatic characters that undergoes changes as the action develops. The fifth trait is the use of the native German language (with the exception of separate arias in Italian), which is a vital constituent in gaining success with the Hamburg public. Finally, there is a spectacular component that was also taken into account by the librettist, as evidenced by the remarks in the text.

All this shows that there may have been room for continuous performing if only the scores of "Florindo" and "Daphne" had somehow survived.

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Оперная диалогия «Счастливый Флориндо» и «Преображенная Дафна» Г.Ф. Генделя: к вопросу о сюжетосложении

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Аннотация. В русле интереса отечественных исследователей к либретто старинных опер и музыкальному театру барокко данная статья открывает одну из новых страниц опер Г.Ф. Генделя, относящихся к раннему периоду творчества композитора, а также вписывает сочинения в контекст традиций постановок Гамбургского оперного театра рубежа XVII-XVIII столетий.

«Счастливый Флориндо» и «Преображенная Дафна» – оперы, ставшие не только первым обращением Г.Ф. Генделя к жанру пасторали, но и ярким примером барочной оперной диалогии, постановки которых осуществлялись на сцене гамбургского театра на Gänsemarkt (площади Гусиного рынка). Так как музыка композитора практически полностью утеряна, в центре исследовательского интереса оказались сохранившиеся тексты либретто, определившие цель, заключающуюся в выявлении их специфики в контексте сюжетосложения барочной оперы. В статье предпринята попытка анализа оперной диалогии Генделя.

Так, автором выявляется основной драматический конфликт между двумя богами – Фебом и Купидоном, определяется количество пар персонажей, участвующих в развитии любовной драматургической линии, и приводятся схемы, отображающие их взаимоотношения. Помимо этого, определяются такие ключевые сюжетные мотивы, как взаимная/безответная любовь, страдание, смерть, ненависть, месть, коварство. Выявление роли каждого из перечисленных мотивов в сюжетосложении способствует подтверждению того, что диалогия Генделя принадлежит к традиционным образцам оперных текстов начала XVIII века, отличающихся сложностью интриги, запутанностью любовных отношений персонажей, типичностью сюжетных и ситуационных схем.

Ключевые слова: анализ либретто, гамбургский театр, история оперы, диалогия, сюжетосложение, Хайнрих Хинш, Георг Гендель, опера барокко, «Счастливый Флориндо», «Преображенная Дафна».

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