

**FRYDERYK CHOPIN UNIVERSITY OF MUSIC**

**Field of art, artistic discipline: musical arts**

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**Subrette, vocal and stage aspects, specificity of the type of  
voice on selected examples**

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## **Chapter I. Historical outline of the soprano voice with particular emphasis on the soprano voice**

### **1.1 The historical and social context of the creation of buffo opera works**

#### **1.1.1 Italian opera *buffa***

In the second half of the 18th century, the economies of many European cities continued to prosper and the bourgeois class became stronger. On such fertile ground, growing dissatisfaction and disappointment with the formalism of traditional opera serie among circles familiar with opera, as well as increasingly popular performances at city fairs, created ideal conditions for the creation of opera *buffa*. Premiere of the opera *La Serva Padrona* by G.B. Pergolesi's work from 1733 laid the foundations for opera *buffa*. Moreover, the most outstanding composers and works of opera *buffa* of this period include: *La Cecchina Nubile* by N. Piccini (1728-1800), *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* by G. Paisiello (1740-1816) and *Matrimonia Segreta* by D. Cimarosa (1749-1801). The excellent tradition of Italian opera *buffa* was brilliantly developed in the hands of Rossini and Donizetti in the first half of the 19th century. Nevertheless, Italian comic opera experienced a decline in the mid-19th century.

#### **1.1.2 French *opéra comique* and *opérette***

At the end of the 17th century, a type of drama with singing, spoken dialogue and instrumental accompaniment was becoming increasingly popular in the markets of Paris, often using folk or popular melodies known to the audience to complement a previously unknown libretto. Shortly thereafter, a popular theater dedicated to this genre was established, which in 1715 was called *Opéra-Comique*. In 1752, an Italian comic opera troupe came to Paris to perform *La Serva Padrona* by G.B. Pergolesi, which initiated the famous "*Querelle des Bouffons*" in the history of Western music. With subsequent performances and the controversies surrounding them, the fashion for opera *buffa* became more and more popular among both the lower social classes and the aristocracy, and other composers joined its ranks. In 1810, after the emergence of Romanticism in Europe, French *opéra comique* became increasingly popular. In 1855, J. Offenbach (1819-1880) founded the *Théâtre des Bouffes-*

*Parisiens* at his own expense, specializing in energetic and witty works, and his *Orphée aux enfers* and other operettas were very popular in Paris in the mid-19th century.

### **1.1.3 German *Singspiel* and Viennese operetta**

In 1743, *Der Teufel ist los*, an adaptation of the English beggar's opera, was performed in Berlin and attracted much attention from the public. The play was performed again with great success in Leipzig in 1752, accompanied by popular German vocal pieces arranged by J. C. Standfuss. The German *Singspiel* had a huge influence on the creation and development of later German opera works. Operetta originally comes from Paris in the mid-19th century at the hands of J. Offenbach. In 1855, Offenbach funded the construction of his own theater, specializing in comedies. Since then, the tradition of operetta has gradually developed in Paris, as the author has already mentioned above. This light and lively operatic genre once again spread throughout Vienna, where it experienced its second flowering.

### **1.2 Soubrette soprano – an important element in the construction of comedy works**

The comedy, girliness and lightness of the characters result, on the one hand, from the type of voice and, on the other hand, from the way it is presented. Transient sounds are an important element in this matter. This means suspending the sound in such a way that it also maintains the bass registers. Transient voices cannot have a high volume because they cannot cope with the resonance in the chest. On the one hand, the problem concerns the soprano registers, another problematic issue is the bass registers. If a soubrette soprano focuses on the lower notes and tries to strengthen the resonance in the chest, she may lose the necessary lightness of the voice and even threaten the higher registers. The sound processed in this way also does not fit the figure of a soubrette. In the bass register, the soubrette's voice should still be focused on maintaining a high position and directing the sound to the mask. In addition, the transitional voice also gives you a better opportunity to shape the character's image.

### **1.3 Soubrette's voice in opera dramas**

As we all know, soubrette is the term for a character who usually appears in a comic opera or operetta. In most opera productions, the soubrette soprano is cast in comedic roles, usually as a pretty, young girl who approaches life lightly, characterized by audacity and "real-life wisdom". This type of voice is characterized by flexibility, refinement and an excellent high register. However, this is not his only task in the opera, it is also important to properly distinguish the types of voices and match them to individual characters. In the German voice classification system, we can find the following distinction between soubrette and lyric coloratura soprano (also called soubrette with coloratura). This means that some soubrettes are comedic figures who do not require high vocal skills, but only the performance of technical tasks similar to those faced by coloratura sopranos. However, they need more performance skills. This also means that some soubrette roles belong to the lyrical voice of the coloratura soprano, which requires not only high stage skills, but also excellent vocal skills such as cadence, staccato, trill, as well as perfect soprano registers.

## **Chapter II. Analysis of selected soubrette arias**

### **2.1 Comedy arias and their issues**

Based on the examples cited by the author above, it is easy to conclude that many soubrette characters are not the main characters of the opera. Young singers tend to strive for leading roles in operas, considering supporting roles to be less valuable. This is quite a popular phenomenon all over the world. This type of thinking usually limits singers to seeking dramatic roles of main characters, such as Aida, Tosca, or Turandot. At this point, we should ask ourselves whether the key characters of the opera must be dramatic and main characters? Not necessarily. For example, although in *Così fan tutte* Ferrando, Guglielmo, Dorabella, Fiordiligi and Don Alfonso certainly fit into the "key character" pattern, without the character of Despina the plot of the opera would come to a standstill. Therefore, the view that this type of voice is less valuable to the opera as a whole is unjustified. If only "big" voices dominated in operas or operettas, such works would quickly become monotonous. Moreover, the power

of drama often lies in short, funny elements that further enhance the "power" of a given opera. After preliminary analysis, it is clear that although mastering stable vocal techniques can improve the quality and expressiveness of the voice, the goal should not be to develop our talents more fully and try to force our own voice to become more explosive and impressive, but instead it is better to focus on improving vocal conditions that nature has given us. The voice should be natural, unforced and give the listeners the impression of lightness, charm and roundness. Hence the question arises whether this type of voice is a second-class voice. This completely erroneous belief results from an imperfect translation or understanding of the categories in Rudolf Kloiber's voice classification, which divides voices into first and second professions. This assignment is more for categorization, aimed at specifying the form and type of voice, rather than for evaluation. It's as if a person with a buffo bass voice suddenly dreamed of becoming a tenor with coloratura. In this case, it is not about an incorrect diagnosis at the educational level, but about an objective finding of the structure of the larynx and vocal cords.

## **2.2 Stage tasks and performance difficulties on selected examples**

The performance quality of a soubrette depends largely on the way the libretto is presented, both in song and in speech. It is important to use the voice freely and dynamically, use a wide range of means of articulation and present the libretto clearly, in accordance with the composer's (or director's) stage assumptions. Soubrette roles contain many onomatopoeias in their parts, which also need to be paid attention to and properly interpreted on stage. In comedy, elements such as gestures, body language, one word, facial expression, one look or one sigh are sometimes very important for the expression of the whole and emphasize the character of the comedy. Sometimes even the way you breathe can become a means of expression.

Compared to the dramatic lyric soprano or contralto, the light lyric soprano belongs to smaller-scale "instrumental music". Sometimes in character descriptions you can find terms such as: delicate and light gestures. As a professional opera singer, a soubrette soprano must have impeccable presence. However, it happens in life that vocal and physical conditions do

not always go hand in hand. It goes without saying that there are many singers who qualify vocally as soubrettes but do not fit the visual requirements of this type of role. Therefore, agility, delicate physique and youthful appearance are the basic physical features of this type of character, thanks to which it is possible to more fully reflect his image and sometimes even a provocative personality.

## **Chapter III. Comparison and analysis of arias classified for coloratura soprano and soubrette**

### **3.1 Analysis of selected coloratura soprano parts**

#### **3.1.1 J. Strauss - „*Welche wonne, welche Lust*” - Blonchen's aria from Act II of the opera *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*.**

In the second act, the aria „*Welche wonne, welche Lust*” appears Blonchen meets her lover Pedrillo and learns from him that Passa has decided to accept Belmonte's arrival and perhaps employ him, and that they already had an escape plan prepared. At this moment, Blonchen is very happy and expresses her blessing and joy through this aria, while assuring that she will immediately convey this good news to Constance.

The entire composition is in Allegro tempo, starting in the key of G major, and a fast rhythm in 4/2 time is its basis. The piece has a clear structure and can be divided into a prelude (bars 1-8), part A (bars 9-35), part B (bars 36-67), part A' (bars 68-96), part B' (bars 97-140) and a coda (141 bars to the end).

In the prelude (bars 1-8), the main motif is very clear. The simple melody accompanied by fast and joyful sixteenth-note accompaniments is flexible, optimistic and hopeful. Additionally, the accompaniment emphasizes Blonchen's impatience, creating a perfect background for the turbulent emotions expressed in the vocal part (look note example 1).

Note example 1:

The image shows a musical score for a piano and voice. The top system is for the piano, marked 'Allegro (快板)' and 'Piano' with a forte 'f' dynamic. It features a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 2/4 time signature. The melody includes a trill ('tr') in the second measure. The bass clef part consists of a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The bottom system is for the voice, starting at measure 6, with a treble clef and the same key signature and time signature. The vocal line includes the lyrics 'Wel - cheW'. Below the voice line is a piano accompaniment marked 'Piano' with a piano 'p' dynamic, featuring a treble clef and a bass clef with a more active accompaniment.

*“Welche wonne, welche Lust, herrscht nunmehr in meiner Brust! Ohne Aufschub will ich springen, und ihr gleich die Nachricht Bringen, und mit Lachen, und mit Scherzen, ihrem schwachen, feigen Herzen, Freud' und Jubel profhezeihn* (What happiness, what joys have now taken possession of my heart! I would like to jump out immediately and tell her this message, with a smile and a joke, so that her weak and timid heart announces joy and excitement)”. The entire text of the song consists of repetitions of these phrases, and in bars 10-11 there is a direct ascending scale, which emphasizes Blonchen's excitement. You can draw inspiration here from the performances of masters such as Lucia Popp and Kathleen Battle, whose voices are like strings of pearls, having both elfin bounce in individual sounds, as well as fluidity and equality in sound between words and phrases<sup>1</sup>.

In this aria, you can draw inspiration from the performance of the American soprano Judith Blegen<sup>2</sup>: The moment Osmin is about to touch Blonchen, she resolutely opposes him, and her facial expression shows no trace of fear or anxiety, but is full of mockery and triumph. He's obviously very good at dealing with this poor guy. Of course, this does not mean that she is not in any danger. In this type of relationship, the maid may be at risk of being sexually harassed by the master at any time. However, Blonchen, as an exceptional woman, is able to defend herself perfectly against this, in a situation of immediate threat, without hesitation to

<sup>1</sup> Audio recording performed by Lucia Popp: <https://youtu.be/NsnjAhcUczM>., 01.07.2023

Audio recording of Kathleen Battle: <https://youtu.be/Xrn4SiQolO0>., 01.07.2023

<sup>2</sup> <https://youtu.be/1leAwt8muG0>., 10.07.2023

firmly face ugly old Osmin. It's clear that Blondchen has enough wisdom and courage to deal with Osmin. In the bar 121-140, Judith Blegen on stage constantly breaks free from the hands of Turkish soldiers holding weapons. Her behavior and gestures are filled with innate rebelliousness towards these "paper tigers" and disregard for them. Through his facial expression, full of the desire for freedom and decisiveness, he repeats the phrase "*Freud' und Jubel prophezeihn*" (to predict joy and triumph), thus expressing his excitement. It is the culmination and emphasis of the desire for freedom.

### **3.1.2 G. Donizetti - „*Prendi, per me sei libero*” - Adina's aria from Act II of the opera *L'elisir d'amore***

The aria „*Prendi, per me sei libero*” is a classic fragment from this opera. He appears in the second act. Adina has already purchased Nemorino's contract from the army. By this time, the heroine has already realized that she loves this seemingly frivolous young man very much and does not want him to join the army. To this end, he buys his contract from Belcore. Adina convinces Nemorino to stay in the countryside, explains to him that everyone loves him here, and asks him not to leave his hometown.

The entire song is in the uniform key of F major. The structure of this aria is relatively simple, divided into a prelude (bars 1-6), part A (bars 7-16) and part B (bars 17-end).

Marks in the score specify the rhythm as 2/4. The tempo seems to be very fast, but in fact it is extremely smooth and melodious. The music is characterized by broad melodic lines in phrases, a rich lyrical mood, and the piece is extremely melodious. In this way, the 2/4 time signature does not require a fast tempo, but a tighter and smoother development of the music. In bars 1-6, a slow prologue builds a calm atmosphere for the scene to come. The music in part A (bars 7-16) seems simple, although it is an examination for singers, checking their ability to master all the musical details written in the score. For example, the music is rhythmic, but there are repeated rhythms of dotted notes, triplets in bar 10 and logical accents in bars 14-15, as well as ornaments in bars 11 and 15 (look note example 2). The above details stimulate the emotional development of the melody, the singer must perform them precisely and thus realistically portray the mood of Adina, who, having abandoned her pride, asks the



young man to stay and give up his desire to join the army. It is necessary to fully present the function that the above details play in the aria. Although the above-mentioned elements stimulate the singer's mood, she should stick to the mood of humility, sing in a tone of gentle persuasion, and the emotions cannot be too strong.

Note example 2:

**Cantabile (如歌地)**

Piano *p*

Voice

Piano

5 Pren - - di;

9 pren - di, per me sei li - - be-ro: re - sta nel suol na - ti - - o;

13 non v'ha destin sì ri - - o, che non si can - gi un dì resta.

(舞台提示: 挽起内莫利诺的手)

截图(Alt + A)

The above piece is of a stage nature. As a singer, I base my interpretation of the role of Adina on the stage version performed by Angela Gheorghiu and Robert Alagna in 1996 at the

National Opera in Lyon<sup>3</sup>. In this staging, Gheorghiu was dressed in an extremely expressive red dress and playful red leather shoes. The singer had very attractive, long curly hair falling to her shoulders, shiny and flexible, greatly highlighting her temperament. Such modern costumes of the characters quickly reduced the distance between the actors and the audience. Gheorghiu's singing approached perfection, her voice was lively and light, expressive, her look was filled with delicacy and tenderness, the singer perfectly presented the stage image of sincerity and reluctance towards separation, fully revealing the image of Adina. her collaboration with Alagna was also fantastic, as if there was a sweet aroma of love in the air. It was beautiful, charming, confident Adina.

We can also refer to the interpretation of Adina in the 2005 version at the Vienna State Opera with Anna Netrebko and Rolando Villazón in the main roles<sup>4</sup>. The style of this staging was very close to the style of the Romantic era. The opera used only one scene with a rather simple style. Anna's costume was in line with 19th century realities, classic, simple, in a rustic style. Anna Netrebko interpreted the role of Adina using her unique voice. The pair of actors exchanged glances very often, and in the second part of this aria, Adina was constantly gently stroking her beloved's arms. I am convinced that even the toughest men would be moved by this scene. She was truly charming Adina.

### **3.1.3 G. Donizetti - „*Ciascun lo dice*” - Marie's aria from Act I of the opera *La figlia del reggimento* (*La fille du regiment*)**

In the first act there is the aria „*Ciascun lo dice*”, in the style of a military march, mainly in the key of F major. It is an aria with a "strophic form". The same melody is sung twice. The structure of this aria is clear and can be divided into an introduction (bar 1), part A (bars 2-16), part B (bars 17-35), interlude (bars 36-62), part A' ( bars 63-77), part B' (bars 78-126), coda (bars 127-131).

Bar 1 is an introduction (see note example 3), which takes the form of an "improvised coloratura" in the key of C major. It is a joyful display of coloratura, both the prologue and the

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<sup>3</sup> <https://youtu.be/cVMNqYmnbDM>, 12.07.2023

<sup>4</sup> [https://youtu.be/DT2axpci\\_kA](https://youtu.be/DT2axpci_kA), 12.07.2023

point of difficulty of the entire piece. Marie expresses her cheerful mood by singing "lalala...", the aim of which is to attract the attention of everyone in the audience, and during the performance the emotional mood should be elevated. After all, she is a lively and simple girl who grew up in a military camp without any restrictions. As long as she can hear the military drumbeat, she will feel extremely happy, so she is relatively at ease and relaxed here. Here we can learn to sing the Italian soprano Mirella Freni at the La Scala opera in 1969<sup>5</sup>. When she sang the dense staccato, she was as light and agile as a lark in the army, without the slightest evasion, so that each note was in high position to sing. And she made free extensions on some C note (three red box markers) to show off her flexible voice and excellent vocal skills. At the same time, Freni's way of singing made the audience feel Marie's proud mood and lively character. Here we can draw inspiration from the stage performance of French soprano Natalie Dessay at the Vienna State Opera in 2007<sup>6</sup>. Dressed in breeches and suspenders, the lithe, tomboy-like Dessay simply impresses with her exaggerated movements and vibrant appearance. She kept gesturing with her large innocent and childish eyes as if she was raising the morale of the group of soldiers sitting across from her. At that moment, Marie caught the attention of the soldiers who were sitting together and looking at her, ready to start listening to her praise about how great the 21st was.

Note example 3:

The image shows a musical score for a piece titled "Marziale". It consists of three staves: a vocal line in the treble clef, a piano accompaniment in the right hand, and a piano accompaniment in the left hand. The vocal line has lyrics "LaLaLaLaLaLaLa La La La La" and "LaLaLaLaLaLa LaLaLaLaLa Ah!". There are three red boxes highlighting specific notes in the vocal line. The piano accompaniment includes a "6" marking above a measure. The score is in 2/4 time and has a key signature of one flat.

In note example 4, it is the high C that pushes the aria to its climax, and the emotion of the song is fully unleashed here, further demonstrating Marie's sincere personality and charming image. At the same time, you should pay attention to the clever combination of emotional

<sup>5</sup> Link to the video: <https://youtu.be/5kRF3M5Nne8>, 14.07.2023

<sup>6</sup> <https://youtu.be/hhb6nM3CDWY>, 32:05-35:52

mood and vocal techniques, and not to the skills themselves. “If during a performance a singer is too busy controlling her voice, always thinking about "putting" it high, "opening" and "widening" the throat, "raising" the soft palate, etc., the chances of successfully combining art and vocal techniques are slim. Therefore, this initial processing of the technical aspects of a given art form allows singers to use their vocals in a world full of imagination and inspiration. Then art and technology come together in a lasting and fruitful union”<sup>7</sup>.

Note example 4:

The image displays a musical score for the aria 'Quel guardo il cavaliere' from Donizetti's opera 'Don Pasquale'. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is written in a single staff, and the piano accompaniment is written in two staves (treble and bass clef). Two specific vocal phrases are highlighted with red rectangular boxes. The first box is around the first three notes of the first vocal line. The second box is around the first three notes of the second vocal line. The piano accompaniment consists of chords and moving lines in both hands.

### 3.1.4 G. Donizetti - „*Quel guardo il cavaliere*” - aria Norina z I aktu opery *Don Pasquale*

The aria „*Quel guardo il cavaliere*” is one of the most famous arias in this opera and appears in the second scene of the first act. Noriny is reading a book in her home, and upon seeing its plot, she cannot help but initiate her own thoughts and feelings. This aria has a clear structure and can be divided into a prelude (bars 1-10), part A (bars 11-30), and part B (bars 30 to the end).

The music begins in the key of G major. Part A (bars 11-30) is the scene of the appearance of the heroine Norina in the form of a recitative. We can follow the example of Anna Nehrebko's excellent interpretation at the Metropolitan Opera in 2010<sup>8</sup>. We see Norina, played

<sup>7</sup> Richard Miller, op, cit., p. 161

<sup>8</sup> <https://youtu.be/PIu28o1jisc>, 04.08.2023

by Anna, dressed in pink tights, casually flipping through the pages of a book lying on the bed, tenderly and soothingly talking about the love story she read that touched her heart.

We see that in bars 114-167, Anna's character, Norina, was standing in front of her dressing table, decorating herself with perfume and a powder puff, and then she picked up a mirror and shook it in her hand as if her whole body was shining with Jumping "stars".

In bars 168-173 there are cadences of continuous sixteenth notes (see: note example 5), here the cadence has the form of a "large scale". We must prepare in advance a good singing condition to cope with such a difficult phrase cadence. This feeling of being ready to sing is like the moment before a sharpshooter's salvo. Be careful not to take in too much air to avoid overfilling your lungs, which will disturb the balance of your singing. Lilli Lehmann mentions the technique of singing "major scales": "The first note is sung actively, and after singing, the diaphragm immediately relaxes, that is, it becomes softer as the breathing decreases. All other vocal organs continue this relaxation and thus become flexible."<sup>9</sup> Let us also pay attention to the preservation of the grain of each note, and to the superposition of emotional expression, crescendo and finally explosion to express the lightness and playfulness of the characters.

Note example 5:

The image displays a musical score for 'Note example 5'. It consists of two systems of music. The first system features a vocal line in treble clef with the tempo marking *leggerissime* above it. The lyrics are 'rzar, ah!' and 'gay, ah!'. Below the vocal line are two staves for piano accompaniment. The second system begins at measure 171, marked with a '171' and an 'N' in a box. It shows a vocal line with the lyrics 'mi' and 'I'm' and a piano accompaniment. The piano part includes a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The music is written in a key with two flats and a common time signature.

<sup>9</sup> Lilli Lehmann, op. cit, p. 190-191

Lamperti<sup>10</sup>said: “Breathing is not only related to good or bad voice, but also influences the expression of emotions. Increasing the rate of breathing is one of the best ways to express emotions”<sup>11</sup>. From bar 174 to the end there is the culmination of the entire piece (look note example 6). When singing, the "faster breathing" method can express Norina's gradual outburst of emotions and her passionate and determined temperament. At the climax of this aria, Anna meanwhile picked up a pillow and threw it away, then picked up another pillow and "pulled" it in her hands repeatedly before throwing it away. Then he picked up a beautiful bouquet of flowers next to him, slowly lay down flat on the bed full of joy, and held the bouquet of flowers high above his head. This action series shows that Norina is a person who hates being tied down and loves freedom, and beneath her witty and lively personality there is also a strong determination in the pursuit of true love. Anna received thunderous applause after her aria, but her real talent lay in the combination of performance, stunning appearance and exciting voice.

Note example 6:

The image displays two musical excerpts. The first excerpt shows a vocal line with lyrics: "mi pia - - - ce, mi" and "I'm hap - - - py, I". The second excerpt, starting at bar 176, shows a vocal line with lyrics: "pia - - ce to scher - zar, ho te - sta vi - va - ce, mi" and "love to be gay, I'm light and vi - va - cioud, I". Both excerpts include piano accompaniment with chords and a bass line.

### 3.1.5 J. Strauss - „Mein Herr Marquis” - Adele's aria from Act II of the opera *Die Fledermaus*

<sup>10</sup> F. Lamperti (1811-1892): Outstanding singing teacher at the Milan Conservatory in Italy, appointed Commander of the Italian Crown for his services to music, author of "L'Arte del Canto".

<sup>11</sup> Shang Jiayang 尚家骧, op. cit, p. 192

„*Mein herr Marquis*” is an aria that Adele sings in the second act of *Die Fledermaus*. He sneaks into the ball in Rosalinde's dress and meets Count Eisenstein there. The Count tells her that she reminds him of his maid, and Adele laughs at his words and sings this classic aria. This aria contains many musical imitations of laughter, which is why it is also called "Adele's Laughing Aria". Although it is a servant's aria, it can be considered the culmination of the entire operetta.

It is in the key of G major, in the rhythm of a 3/8 waltz, at a flexible allegretto tempo. The key is to capture the rhythm as you sing and reflect Johann Strauss' unique waltz style. It is an aria with a "strophic form". The same melody is sung twice. The structure of this aria is clear and can be divided into prelude (bars 1-7), part A (bars 8-22), part B (bars 23-51), part C (bars 52 to the end).

Singers can refer to Edita Gruberova's wonderful performance at the Vienna State Opera in 1990<sup>12</sup>, where, speaking of her delicate hands and small feet, she used a somewhat hidden yet contented look to vividly portray the maid's inner experiences and aspirations, who wants to get into a higher class. When she continued to talk about her speech and manners, her slim waist and her well-thought-out etiquette, she was completely absorbed in it, as if she had already entered the upper class and become a successful actress. Describing the characteristics that distinguish her from being an ordinary maid, Gruberova cleverly uses various body language movements - she reaches out to Eisenstein, lifts her skirt to reveal her feet, and from time to time strokes the waist under her dress with both hands to attract the hero's attention. In bars 26-27 and 30-31, the composer skillfully uses a coloratura melody to express the "laughter" of the characters. In Gruberova's performance, at this point her "false smile", which was intended to provoke the marquis, turned into a "smile of satisfaction" as the heroine melts in self-admiration. She boasted ironically and pretended to be surprised and annoyed by the Marquis' remark that she was a maid, saying: "*dergleichen finden Sie bei einer Zofer nie*". Her facial expression revealed "the persistence of anger in silence", thanks to which she is able to deceive everyone around her and successfully hide her true identity. Later, in the lyrics "*gestehen müssen sie fürwhar, sehr komisch diesel irrtum war*", Gruberova sang

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<sup>12</sup> <https://youtu.be/kekog9ZzPNs>, 07.08.2023

in a teasing tone, which further emphasized Adele's contempt for the Count.

Notice the coloratura phrase in note example 7. We can imagine Adele at this moment, as if playfully convinced that her plan had succeeded, proud and happy that she had retained her self-esteem thanks to such a clever response. The continuous coloratura phrase here is a full development of the previous "laughter", which can fully demonstrate the skill of performing coloratura. It should be noted that the notes here are denser, and the performer must sing each note clearly and accurately. Then you can add a freely stretched high D after tr in bars 90-91, which will be the most thrilling moment of this aria. In this way, you can not only show Adele's self-confident and arrogant character, it is also a test of her singing technique in the high register, which means that the entire weight of the sound emission comes from the head register. The vocal cords, working only part of their length, emit sounds resembling violin flageolets. Consciousness should switch the feeling of the sound attack to the part above the forehead, directing the sound waves to the height of the crown. The sensations of sound clarity and "respiratory support" remain. It is necessary to open all spaces in the oral cavity extremely wide, paying particular attention to the opening of the jaws (lower and upper) and the attack of the sound on the central part of the parietal<sup>13</sup>.

Note example 7:

The image displays a musical score for two systems, measures 79-86. The first system (measures 79-85) features a vocal line in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature. The vocal line begins with a fermata over a whole note, followed by a series of sixteenth notes and a trill (tr) on a high note. The piano accompaniment is in bass clef, starting with a piano (p) dynamic and moving to fortissimo (fz) by measure 85. The second system (measures 86-91) continues the vocal line with a trill (tr) on a high note, followed by a series of sixteenth notes. The piano accompaniment starts with a fortissimo (fz) dynamic and moves to fortissimo (ff) by measure 91. The score includes various musical notations such as dynamics (p, fz, ff), articulation (tr), and phrasing slurs.

<sup>13</sup> Anna Jeremus, op. cit, p. 67-68



### 3.1.6 J. Strauss - „*Spiel'ich die Unschuld vom Lande*” - Adele's aria from act III of the opera *Die Fledermaus*

„*Spiel'ich die Unschuld vom Lande*” is Adele's aria from the third act of the opera *Die Fledermaus*. Adele and her sister were sent to the city jail. Guard Frank, who has been drinking champagne all night, is already drunk. At this point, Adele had to confess her true identity as a maid to the guard, begging him to put in a good word for her with Eisenstein so that she could keep her current job. At the same time, she wastes no time asking the warden to fulfill the promise he made to her last night to help her become a real actress. Frank shakes his head over and over at the truth, and Adele confidently says, "You're about to find out if I really have talent!" and sings this classic aria.

This is a very expressive aria that can push the singer to extremes. It consists of three parts, part A (bars 1-44), part B (bars 54-79) and part C (bar 90 to the end), with a transitional phrase interwoven between each part. Both vocally and on stage, this aria contains many details that are worth paying attention to.

We can't help but recall Gruberova's captivating performance in the version described earlier<sup>14</sup>. In note example 8: "*Spiel ich die Unschuld vom Lande, natürlich im kurzen Gewande*", here Gruberova made the gesture of lifting her skirt; when she sang: "*so hüpf'ich ganz neckisch umher, als ob ich ein Eichkatzerl wär*", she did a cute jump. Gruberova's tone was full of self-satisfaction, and her voice was light and flexible, like a girl's soft curly hair, fluffy but not ruffled, clearly showing the liveliness and vitality of a "country girl". As she sang about how she was going to use seduction techniques to capture an elegant young man (bars 13-32), Gruberova turned her back to Warden Frank, swayed her graceful waist towards him and occasionally scratched Frank chin with hand. These activities made him very happy. And when Frank reached out to play with Adele's skirt, the music cut right to the lyrics "*sag' ich naiv: "Sö Schlimmer, Sö!"*". This design makes the music fun. With that, Gruberova placed her hands on Frank's lap again, which at that moment eased Frank's embarrassment and he was soon smiling again.

Note example 8:

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<sup>14</sup> <https://youtu.be/ao8C2aZCkHw>



Spiel'ich die Unschuld vom



6

Lan - de, na - tür-lich im kur-zen Ge - wan - de, so hüpf' ich ganz ne - ckisch um -

10

- her, als ob ich ein Eichkatzerl wär; U

*poco rit.* (略为渐慢)

*poco rit.* (略为渐慢)

In note example 9 (bars 90-105), Gruberova sat on a table, presenting a casual, luxurious lady; Singing "*da kommt ein jungler Graf ins Haus*", Gruberova imitated and gestured to the man's beard with her fingers, adding a cheeky touch; When Gruberova sang: "*der geht auf meine Tugend aus, ach!*", Frank covered his mouth in surprise. Singers should pay attention to some coloratura cadences in note example 9, they are in bars 92-93, 96-97, 102-103, 106. "In the case of a coloratura soprano, the runs are endless rhythmic and melodic processions, reaching even a few bars. They should be performed with full "breathing support", controlling the amount of exhaled air. It is extremely important to use accents that organize the course, which will help in performing various combinations of figures with great attention to the precision of each sound."<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Anna Jeremus, op. cit. p. 59-60

Note example 9:

90 *Allegretto grazioso* (优美的小快板)

Spiel'ich 'ne Da-me von Par-is, ach, ach, die Gat-tin

95 ei-nes Herrn Mar-quis, ach, ach,

100 — da kommt ein jun-ger Graf ins Haus, ach, ach, der geht auf

105 mei-ne Tu-gend aus, ach! Zwei Akt' hin-d'

### 3.2 – Analysis of selected soubrette batches

#### 3.2.1 G.B. Pergolesi- aria „*Stizzoso, mio stizzoso*” - Serpina from act I of the opera *La serva padrona*

„*Stizzoso, mio stizzoso*” is Serpina's aria from the first act. Count Uberto is very dissatisfied with the daily behavior of the maid Serpina and loses his temper. Serpina, however, felt that she should be treated as a hostess, so she flirtatiously criticizes the Count, hoping to calm him down and make him realize the value of her existence. This is also the meaning of this aria.

Some accent marks in the score emphasize its strong character (see note example 10). The singer may arrogantly start singing with his hands on his hips, a smug look on his face and his head slightly raised. While singing the words "*ma no*", we can extend our hand in a gesture of negation, because Serpina practically deals with all matters in the house, both minor and major ones. Therefore, in her opinion, she must also occupy a place in the house, emphasizing that she wants to gain due respect and be able to communicate with the count on equal terms. Moreover, the repeated words reflect her patience in convincing the count and her self-confidence. The performer can move left and right on stage to show that Serpina feels as if she was in the Count's house as her own. Even though Serpina speaks firmly to her master, there is unrest in her heart. He is afraid that by showing his strength he will not be able to calm the count's anger. However, in order to prove her worth and make the Count feel her specialness, she must maintain an appearance of self-confidence and not show weakness. That's why we have to feel Serpina's inner emotions while singing. When writing the words "*zit zit*", pay attention to the dynamic marker "*pp*" in the score, introducing a slightly flirtatious feminine tone at appropriate moments. You can also use the gesture of placing your index finger on your mouth, which mirrors the situation in which people in everyday life indicate not to speak, which will help hide the character's anxiety and soften his decisive attitude.

Note example 10:

35

Stiz - zo - so, mio - stiz -  
Un - ru - ly, Sir, un -

40

zo - so, voi fa - te il bo - ri - o - so, ma no,  
ru - ly, And fain to play the bul - ly? But naught,

46

ma non vi può gio - va - re; bi - so - gna al mio di - vie - to star  
naught you'll gain by vio - lence; 'Tis time to end this ri - ot, Be

In the stage performance, one can also refer to the 1962 film version by soprano Anna Moffo<sup>16</sup> and Sonya Yoncheva's version for Radio Svizzera Italiano from 2008<sup>17</sup>. They both interpreted this role perfectly.

In the 1962 film version, Anna Moffo created Serpina with the temperament of a "spicy housewife". Her Serpina always maintains a certain distance from the Count. At first she holds the keys, preventing the Count from leaving, accusing him "in anger", circling him and imperiously demanding silence from the Count, and sometimes she proudly "educates" him by pointing her finger, and her look seems to be talking to him. In Part B, Serpina's tone was somewhat soothing, recounting memories of being with the Count for many years, somewhat of a contrast to his earlier "provocative" behavior. She then asked the count again not to talk too much, but to listen to her carefully, and she gently struck the count in front of the count with the small scepter in his hand. Even though her words seemed threatening, she couldn't help but laugh, which made the Count feel helpless towards her. Moreover, her kind look and wide smile meant that despite her bold words and bold behavior, regardless of the circumstances, the Count could not be offended by her.

Serpina, played by Sonya Yoncheva, has many close interactions with the Count. At the

<sup>16</sup> <https://youtu.be/PysUIPOFvGc>, 16.08.2023

<sup>17</sup> <https://youtu.be/Aq3Ujw-z-Ak>, 16.08.2023

same time, from time to time he moves the handkerchief he holds in his hand up and down and admonishes the count with a look. It is not so much an everyday conversation between the count and the maid, but rather banter and jokes between the lovers, showing the lively, charming and confident character of the maid. Serpina is bold, bold and seductive, and her character is portrayed perfectly.

### 3.2.2 W.A. Mozart - „*In uomini, in soldati*” - Despina's aria from Act I of the opera *Così fan tutte*

The aria „*In uomini, in soldati*” appears in the first act. Dorabella declares that because of Ferrando's departure she is deeply saddened and has lost the courage to live. Despina comforts and convinces her mistress that loyalty cannot be expected from a warrior. Despina believes that men, looking only for pleasure in women, can change their minds at any time. For this reason, women do not have to be faithful, but should seek their own happiness.

The whole composition has light, simple folk-style music. This piece can be divided into three parts: part A (bars 1-24), part B (bars 24-57) and part C (bars 58-92).

(Look note example 11) „*In uomini, in soldati, sperare fedeltà?*” Despina expresses her position from the very beginning, claiming that men are not trustworthy, while observing the attitude of both sisters. With the words "*sperare fedeltà*" in bars 8-10, the composer uses the intervals of jumps six, five and four to increase the ups and downs of the melodic line, showing Despina's strong suspicion and distrust of male loyalty. At this point we can refer to the performance of the famous Italian mezzo-soprano singer Cecilia Bartoli<sup>18</sup>: from the very beginning Bartoli uses an ascending progression, at the same time carefully examining the posture of her ladies, moving sideways and scratching her head, and at the same time, with a careful facial expression and in a persuasive tone, he tells the two sisters that they should not trust the loyalty of men. In bars 18-19, Bartoli, with a confident face and a smile, with his hands on his hips, categorically emphasizes "*fedeltà*" and then folds his hands while letting out a wild and ironic laugh, because Despina believes that talking about men's loyalty is just funny. You can see that in these short musical phrases, Bartoli uses facial expressions, glances,

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<sup>18</sup> <https://youtu.be/E2ISCPk15n8> ,17.08.2023

gestures, tone, and subtle changes in mood to portray Despina's onstage characterization as a person with a sense of observation and a very intelligent person. It should also be noted that the places where the pauses occur are not breaks in the music, but are a kind of psychological description. We must stay in the music without abandoning the role to show Despina's cunning in her influence on the two sisters. Bars 21-23: "*non vi fate sentir, per carità!*" The short musical phrases also clearly show that she considers the two sisters' blindness with love to be mere childishness. Here you should pay attention to the speed and flexibility of singing the text to make it more expressive. This is a hallmark of musical comedy, resembling tongue twisters that highlight Despina's contemptuous attitude and highlight her eloquence.

Note example 11:

**Allegretto (小快板)** (1756-1791)

Voice

In uo - mi - ni, in sol -

Piano

*p* *tr* *tr*

4

- da - ti, spe - ra - re fe - del -

10

- tà? in uo - mi - ni spe - ra - re fe - del - tà?

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

15

in sol - da - ti, - spe - ra - re fe - del - tà, fe - del - tà, fe - del -

20

- tà? Non vi fa - te sen - tir, per ca - ri - tà! non vi fa - te sen - tir, per ca - ri -

24 **Allegretto** (小快板)

- tà!

### 3.2.3 W.A. Mozart - „Una donna a quindici anni”- aria Despiny z II aktu opery *Così fan tutte*

This aria „Una

*donna a quindici anni*” appears in Act II. Despina sings it after encouraging her sisters to respond to the advances of two Albanians. The background plot is that the two sisters still think about their loved ones supposedly on the front lines, and their loss, which feels like the end of the world, torments them both. Despina will once again convince both sisters not to blindly believe in the man's feelings and to take advantage of the opportunity when new love appears on the horizon. Despina, having extensive love experience, believes that a fifteen-



year-old girl should already be able to have fun with a man. Of course, this is most likely supported by her own experiences. He also declares that: "One must know all kinds of clever tricks, making lovers fall in love, pretending to laugh, pretending to cry, and making excuses. In one moment he must listen to a hundred men and speak with his eyes to a thousand. "

The piece can be divided into three parts: part A (bars 1-21), part B (bars 22-51) and part C (bars 52-end).

Part A (bars 1-21) begins in the key of G major. The composer marked the tempo as "Andante", which is similar to the speed of a human step (see note example 12). Tutaj można uczyć się od słynnej włoskiej mezzosopranistki Cecilii Bartoli śpiewającej w Metropolitan Opera w 1996 roku<sup>19</sup>. Its performance moves at a steady pace, without losing the sense of the 6/8 time signature and without rushing. It is similar to the way older people talk to younger people. Katheleen Battle, the American star in the 1982 production at the Vienna State Opera, also plays Despina in a very inspiring way<sup>20</sup>. It expresses Despina's cunning by emphasizing "diavolo" and "coda". The stage arrangement of bars 13-15 can also be borrowed from Bartoli's performance: When singing "*finger riso*", he leans forward slightly, with a smile on his face, pretending to laugh, while when singing "*finger pianti*", he slightly frowns and bows his head, pretending to be sad.

Note example 12:

**Andante** (行板)

The image shows a musical score for voice and piano. The voice part is in G major, 6/8 time, with lyrics "U - na don - na a quin - di - ci an - ni dee sa -". The piano accompaniment features a dynamic shift from forte (f) to piano (p) in the first measure. The score is written for three measures.

<sup>19</sup> [https://youtu.be/Ue2s\\_MCe86M](https://youtu.be/Ue2s_MCe86M), 25.08.2023

<sup>20</sup> <https://youtu.be/NZYzHdjsXsA>, 25.08.2023

4  
- per o - gni gran mo - da, do - ve il dia - vo - lo ha la

7  
co - da, co - sa è be - ne, e mal cos' è, Dee sa -

10  
- per le ma - li - ziet - te, che in - na - mo - ra - no gli a -

13  
- man - ti, fin - ger ri - so, fin - ger pian - ti, in - ven -

The tempo of part B (22-51 bars) changes to Allegretto, you should pay attention to the flexible use of your breath while singing. F. Lamperti once said: "Especially when singing Allegretto, it is necessary to use the "half-breathing" method (rapid breathing), which means that the singer is forced to breathe quickly, simply inhaling a small amount of air needed at a given moment into the lungs"<sup>21</sup>.

<sup>21</sup> F. Lamperti, "Voice Teaching" (嗓音遗训) (trans. Li Weibo 李维渤), Shanghai Music Publishing House (上海音乐出版社), 2005, ISBN: 7-80667-684-8, p. 13

### 3.2.4 D. Cimarosa - aria „*Perdonate, signor mio*” - Carolina from act I of the opera *Il matrimonio segreto*

„*Perdonate, signor mio*” is an aria from Carolina appearing in the first act of the opera. Carolina is the main female character of the opera, who is in love with Paolino, with whom she secretly marries, hidden from her family. Carolina constantly urges her newlywed husband to find a way to reveal their relationship as soon as possible. Paolino, being a bright young man, comes up with a clever plan to marry his patron, Count Robinson, with Carolina's sister, Elisetta. Then, being Geronimo's son-in-law, he would intercede for the young couple and ask for a blessing for them. To everyone's surprise, however, the Count chooses Carolina as the object of his interests, and in her aria „*Perdonate, Signor mio*”, she tries to discourage him, explaining that she is just a country girl who should not marry a nobleman.

This piece can be divided into two parts: part A (bars 1-87), part B (bar 88-end).

In terms of stage aspects, it is worth checking out the version performed by Veronica Seghers presented at the Tenerife Opera House in 2021<sup>22</sup>. This is a new version full of multi-colored energy and an engaging live atmosphere. The director moved the plot of the opera to New York in the 1950s. In this version of the story, wealthy businessman Geronimo now runs a successful boutique confectionery shop, while Paolino is no business partner at all, just a humble supplier, and Count Robinson is their most prominent client. Veronika is a slim and airy soprano who looks extremely girly and charming in a light pink dress. Carolina's aria creates a very funny scene full of comedic details. When the heroine tries to "disgust" Robinson, she does not stop greeting customers entering the confectionery shop. While she is making fun of her poor knowledge of foreign languages, several gentlemen and ladies who look like the "business elite" appear one by one at the bakery, trying to start a conversation with her, which she deliberately prevents. In their helplessness, the customers turn for help to Geronimo, who, behind his daughter's back, serves them diligently and reliably. The father's character also contains comedic elements - he is dressed in a rather strange closed red coat and sunglasses, and holds a white stuffed dog in his arms. To sum up, Veronika's stage

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<sup>22</sup> Link to the video: <https://youtu.be/cldjzNci4Bo>, 12.08.2023

performance has the right energy and the right amount of romantic sentimentality - the singer sparkles and sparkles against the whole background like bubbles in a glass of champagne, which attracts the audience's eyes and attention.

Singers can also refer to the version performed by soprano Antonella Bandelli in 1986 with the Italian-Swiss Symphony Orchestra<sup>23</sup>. Antonella is gifted with an extremely charming voice with a delicate, elegant and flexible timbre. The director preserved the 18th-century setting, giving the set design balanced elegance and eye-pleasing aesthetics. The design of Carolina and the Count's traditional costumes are pleasing to the eye while also reflecting the characters' social status. When Carolina tells what happens when other people speak to her in a foreign language, Antonella's eye rolling, sighing and facial expressions almost build the entire scene and make the audience laugh. In the B part of the song, when Carolina says that she is just a daughter of good origin, the Count tries to hug her, and the singer performs an agile and accurate dodge. A moment later, when she says she wants to go home, the Count makes a second attempt to embrace her. Then the singer crouches, freeing herself from the hug, which gives the whole thing a very comic look. At the end of his aria, he emphasizes again that he offers only good origins and nothing more. At this point, the Count begins to get impatient and, unable to control himself, he chases Carolina around the stage. However, the girl is more agile and manages to successfully dodge and escape. For another moment, he teases the Count and makes the "peek-a-boo" gesture known to everyone from childhood. A moment later he runs off the stage. To sum up, Antonella's Carolina in the face of the "spitting" Count remains resolute and firm, and with great skill, sophistication and sense of humor she portrays the embarrassing moment of rejecting unwanted advances, thereby taking over the entire scene for herself.

### **3.2.5 G. Verdi - „*Volta la terrea*” - Oscar's aria from the first act of the opera *Un ballo in Maschera***

Aria „*Volta la terrea*” is Oskar's aria from the first act, in which he defends the fairies. A judge comes to Riccardo and wants to get permission to banish Ulrica for practicing

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<sup>23</sup> Link to the video: [https://youtu.be/2A6qi9\\_-JTs](https://youtu.be/2A6qi9_-JTs), 26.08.2023

witchcraft. When Riccardo asks the judge why he would make such a decision, he says: "Her name is Ulryka and she is a woman with black, dirty blood." Oscar, standing at his side, had heard about this mysterious woman before, and the news about her piqued his curiosity. Wanting to taste her magical abilities, as soon as he heard that the judge wanted to banish Ulrica, he naturally did not feel positive emotions and favor towards him, on the contrary, it worsened his mood. So Oskar rushes to the judge to defend Ulrica, saying that her prophecy has come true and asking for her pardon. During the defense, Oscar wanted to prove Ulrica's extraordinary abilities to Riccardo and asked him to pardon her, but on the other hand, he provoked the judge and expressed contempt for his attitude.

It is an aria with a "strophic form". The same melody is sung twice. The structure of this aria is clear and can be divided into prelude (bar 1), part A (bars 2-9), part B (bars 10-20), part C (bars 20-37).

When Oskar says the words: "*Volta la terrea fronte alle stelle...*" the combination of a dotted eighth note and a thirty-two note emphasizes the lightness of the melody. The whole thing was enriched with a lot of staccato. Therefore, when singing, you should pay attention to maintaining the flexible work of the diaphragm, to keep the phrases short and light, to reflect Oskar's mischievous stage image (Look note example 13). In the case of stage performances, singers can refer to the 1991 version of *Un ballo in maschera* at the Metropolitan Opera<sup>24</sup>. The role of Oscar is played there by African-American soprano Harolyn Blackwell, who plays the classic image of the character. The singer herself is of slight build, and her lively image is very much in line with Oskar's description. Exaggerated expressions and flexible stage acting vividly portray the characters' innocence and exuberance. While singing this aria, he "jumps and rolls" around the stage like an elf, and with wide-open eyes he constantly observes the changes in the faces of the other characters. It takes small steps, and in addition to showing the vigor and vitality of the young man, it is a bit more careful and accurately portrays the image of a page standing at his master's side.

Note example 13:

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<sup>24</sup> <https://youtu.be/tzGpQA0atNk>, 03.09.2023

ALLEGRO ♩ = 88

Vol - - ta la terre - a.....

ALLEGRO ♩ = 88

*p*

4

..... fronte alle stel - - le co - - me sfa - - vil - - la..... la sua pu -

9

- pil - - la,

For stage performances, you may be inspired by American soprano Reri Grist's 1986 performance at the Vienna State Opera<sup>25</sup>. Grist's performance on stage is different from Blackwell's portrayal of the brash, bouncy and untamed Oskar. Grist's playing is more "stable" and the rhythm of the performance is relatively slow. Rich facial expressions express the hero's humor and joy, and the range of body movements is relatively small. In this stage performance, Oskar looked extremely calm, which seemed to be due to his "strong" position in the political arena, which was extremely funny!

You can also refer to the version performed by South Korean soprano Sumi Jo at the 1990 Salzburg Music Festival<sup>26</sup>: When she mentioned Ulrica, she was full of excitement and her body began to tremble slightly, playfully and playfully imitating Ulrica's "moves". As she spoke of Ulrica's omniscience and magical ability to predict the future, she began to move forward in small steps, her body language most clearly showing Oscar's admiration for the fortune teller. Sumi Jo's voice is smooth, without the impression of skips, the notes are sung

<sup>25</sup> <https://youtu.be/SKBM3LMp3d8>, (time:16:40-18:28), 03.09.2023

<sup>26</sup> <https://youtu.be/k2srA869g9M>, 03.09.2023

clearly and flexible, and the entire phrase is performed lightly and clearly. The timbre of her voice gives the impression of slenderness and softness, which adds a layer of shyness to Oskar's lively and unruly stage image, which becomes even more touching.

### **3.2.6 G. Verdi - „*Saper vorreste*” - Oscar's aria from act III of the opera *Un ballo in Maschera***

„*Saper vorreste*” is an aria appearing in the third act of the opera *Un ballo in Maschera*, in which Oscar teases Renato. At this point, the entire opera reaches its climax - the titular masquerade ball. All characters are elegantly dressed and ready to participate in the ball, and beautiful masks hide their true faces, making them difficult to recognize. Renato already had plans to kill Riccardo, but he was unable to definitely identify him in the crowd of masked figures, so he could not lay a hand on him. As soon as mischievous Oskar passes by, Renato immediately recognizes him as a familiar boy. It seems that this is his only chance, so he asks Oskar where Riccardo is, sure that he knows the answer. However, Oskar does not like this serious, phlegmatic and dignified man, whose face remains very strict and serious on a daily basis. Although Oskar knows that Renato and Riccardo have a good relationship with each other, he has always been loyal to Riccardo and the latter also trusts him greatly, but he cannot stop his dislike towards Renato. Standing before the person who really wanted to know Riccardo's disguise, Oskar behaves like a hero who hides state secrets. By joking in this way, he mocks Renato and deliberately deceives him in the aria "*Saper Vorreste*". Nevertheless, he is still just a young and naive boy who is finally deceived by Renato's lies. He claims that he has an important matter to tell Riccardo, to which Oskar reacts with panic and immediately reveals to him what his master's disguise is. Shortly thereafter, tragedy occurs. Due to the fact that it is an aria intended to mock another character and is also performed in dance, Verdi used a 3/8 beat, which gives the whole piece a witty and funny character.

It is an aria with a "strophic form". The same melody is sung twice. The structure of this aria can be divided into a prelude (bars 1-3), part A (bars 4-24), and part B (bars 25-36).

The music begins in the key of G major and the tempo is Allegretto (see note example 14). The first movement (bars 1-24) begins in the key of G major. The cheerful and fast prelude of

the first three bars immediately showed Oskar's optimistic and cheerful character. Oscar then teases with the words: "*Saper vorreste di che si veste...*". He sings in a mysterious tone, as if he was deliberately playing tricks on Renato, while maintaining a comical expression on his face, simply making fun of him. The music then moves to B minor (bars 13-16) with the words: "*Oscar lo sa, ma nol dirà.*" Here you can refer to Sumi Jo's performance mentioned above<sup>27</sup>: Oscar looked at Renato, who was anxious and impatient, and wanted to find out where Ricardo was from his mouth, but Oscar looked at Renato only for a moment, then looked satisfied of himself and said nothing. Even he himself is amazed by his own wit and intellect. This fragment should be sung as if we wanted to say something in a declarative tone. Notice the large number of accents placed throughout the aria, e.g. bars 6, 7, 10, 11 in note example 65, bars 17, 19, 21 in note example 66 and bars 26, 27 and 29-35, boldly presenting Oscar's childish, teasing and funny image.

Note example 14:

Allegretto (♩ = c. 100)

OSCAR:

Sa -

per vor - re - ste di che si ve - ste, quan - do l'è co - sa ch'ei

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system shows the vocal line (treble clef) and piano accompaniment (grand staff). The piano part features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in the right hand and chords in the left hand. The tempo is marked 'Allegretto' with a quarter note equal to approximately 100 beats per minute. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The second system continues the vocal line with lyrics and the piano accompaniment. Dynamics include *f* (forte) and *pp* (pianissimo).

<sup>27</sup> <https://youtu.be/ougAAum1Dfo>, 06.09.2023



11 Poco più mosso

vuol na - sco-sa. Os - car lo sa, ma nol di - rà. Tra la la la

*p*

### 3.2.7 G. Puccini - „Quando me'n vo' ” – Aria Musettuy from Act II of the opera *La Bohème*

„Quando me'n vo' ” is Musetta's aria in Act II of the opera. Musetta appears on the scene accompanied by the elderly councilor of state - Alcindoro. Wanting to rekindle the passion with his former love, Marcello, she sings an aria to attract his attention and finally reconcile with him.

The structure of this aria can be divided into prelude (bars 1-4), part A (bars 5-20), part B (bars 21-36), part C (bars 37-end).

In terms of stage skills, the performance of the Ukrainian soprano Olga Kulchynska<sup>28</sup> and the Italian soprano Adriana Martino<sup>29</sup> may also be a source of inspiration for the interpretation of the role of Musetta. Olga's Musetta is full of pride, sex appeal and wildness. Her modernized costume consists of an elegant dress and a red belt emphasizing her feminine shapes. Matching red high-heeled pumps and fancy black mesh stockings attract the attention of all men - both those on stage and in the audience. Life in high society gave her the charm of a noble lady, and her strong character undoubtedly made her image take on a magical color whenever she appeared on stage. She boldly flirts with the men around her, showing them her long legs and emphasizing the curves of her body. From time to time, he makes eye contact with them and looks into their eyes with a seductive gaze, or brushes his fingertips over their hair or shoulders before abruptly looking away. This kind of attraction and repulsion game makes the men around her unable to resist her. In the third part of the song, he walks slowly

<sup>28</sup> [https://youtu.be/360M9RXb\\_Xs](https://youtu.be/360M9RXb_Xs), 16.09.2023

<sup>29</sup> [https://youtu.be/-C4dsW2SQ\\_M](https://youtu.be/-C4dsW2SQ_M), 16.09.2023

towards Marcello, who sits alone sulking and puts his hands on his body. We see that when she notices her former lover and remembers the good old days, her eyebrows seemed to express longing and nostalgia for the past. There seems to be a trace of arrogance on her face, and there is reproach or irritation in her tone, which paradoxically expresses a desire to reconcile with Marcello. As a result of her actions, the fire in the man's heart seems to have been rekindled and his face shows anticipation, but at the end of the song Musetta pushes him away again, which makes him walk away frustrated. To sum up, Musetta played by Olga shows the wild temperament and charm of the heroine who teases men, as well as her untamed and dissolute character.

Unlike Olga's rather "heavy taste" style of character development, Adriana perfectly understands the proportions of the heroine's various features. During the performance, she wears a blood-red dress with a deep neckline, and her performance is characterized by naturalness, flawlessness and faithfulness to her singing. She doesn't use too many decorations, and even when she flirts and interacts with the men around her, she does it in a traditionally understood "courtship" way. It is also a way of taking care of the feelings of Marcello, who is watching her from the other side of the room. These two have an unfinished love story and an obsession with themselves. Although her performance is slightly less aggressive and devoid of wildness and passion, charm, charm and femininity are the hallmarks of this version. Adriana vividly and artistically shows Musetta's inner world, her ambivalence towards simultaneously enjoying male admiration and longing for pure love.

And it can be seen that Puccini often uses the rubato tempo marking as a means of expression in his works (Vide: note example 15). Often a certain word, a particular sound or phrase is sung longer or shorter than the duration of the actual note, the rhythm is not continuous and balanced, and the bars and phrases are both fast and slow, with the duration of the sound being extended or shortened. "This type of tempo rubato has an unwritten rule: without it, the audience will be bored, but if it is used excessively, the performance will become vulgar and overcomplicated, so it should be used in moderation. This sense of moderation in the use of tempo rubato is one of the important determinants of the singer's artistic achievements and artistic temperament"<sup>30</sup>.

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<sup>30</sup> Shang Jiayang 尚家骧, op. cit, p. 151

Note example 15:

Musette (sempre seduta, dirigendosi intenzionalmente a Marcello, il quale comincia ad agitarsi)  
 (immer im Sitzen, wendet sich vorsätzlich an Marcel, der erregt zu werden beginnt)

Tempo di Valzer lento ♩ = 104  
 con molta grazia ed eleganza quasi rit.

5  
 Mus. Quan - do me'n vo' quan - do me'n vo' so -  
 Zieht's mich hin aus, und schlendre ich al -

21  
 Vl. I  
 Hr. pp  
 Vl. II  
 Va.  
 Fl. Klar.  
 Ob.  
 Eklar.  
 Vc., Kb. pizz.

9 a tempo quasi rit. a tempo  
 Mus. - let - ta per la via, la gen - te so - sta e mi - ra... e la bel -  
 lein die Straßen lang, dann bleibt entzückt man ste - hen, labt sich an

14 appena allarg. a tempo  
 Mus. - lez - za mi - a tut - ta ri - cer - ca in me, ri - cer - ca in me da ca - po a  
 mei - ner Schön - heit, starrt fasziniert mich an, und mei - nem Reiz verfällt je - der

19  
 Mus. piè;..  
 Mann;

Marcel (agli amici con voce soffocata)  
 (zu den Freunden mit unterdrückter Stimme)  
 M. Le - ga - te - mi al - la seg - gio - la! [121]  
 So bin - det mich am Stuh - le fest!

Alcindor (sulle spine)  
 (wie auf Kohlen sitzend)  
 A. Quel - la gen - te che di -  
 Was man ü - ber uns wohl

Mbl.  
 Hr.  
 Str.

### 3.3. Similarities and differences

#### 3.3.1 Scale range

The author's analysis of some selected arias leads to the following conclusions: the range of soprano coloratura arias is wider than that of soubrette arias.

#### 3.3.2 Coloratura fragments

Coloratura fragments in the form of agile cadences, jumps and ornaments often appear in parts intended for soubrette and coloratura sopranos. The range of registers of coloratura moments of most soubrette sopranos is not as large as in the case of coloratura sopranos, concentrated mainly in the area of the mid-high voice. Vocal skills are not difficult and emphasize mainly the elements of stage performance, such as the character's appearance, emotions and personality. For example, the coloratura fragments in the aria *Saper vorreste* take the form of some less difficult staccato (bars 53-59 in note example 16).

Note example 16:

The image displays a musical score for Note example 16, consisting of two systems of music. The first system covers bars 50 to 56, and the second system covers bars 57 to 59. The music is written for a soprano voice and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo marking is *Poco più mosso*. The lyrics are: "rà gra - do o bel - tà. Tra la la la la la la, tra la la la la la la, tra la la la la la la, tra la la la la la la. Os -". The piano part includes dynamic markings such as *p*, *col canto*, and *pp*, and performance instructions like *stent.* and *iem*. The vocal line features various ornaments and staccato notes.

On the other hand, the register span of most coloratura soprano songs is relatively large, mainly concentrated in the high area, and singing is relatively difficult, not only to highlight

the stage elements of the characters, but also to a large extent show the excellent vocal technique. For example, one of the coloratura fragments from the aria *Quel guardo il cavaliere* (look note example 17):

Note example 17:

The image displays a musical score for a vocal piece. The top section shows a vocal line with a coloratura flourish, followed by a piano accompaniment. The bottom section, starting at measure 156, shows the vocal line with lyrics and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line includes the lyrics "si, yes, ah! an! si, are!" and features a coloratura flourish. The piano accompaniment consists of chords and a bass line.

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