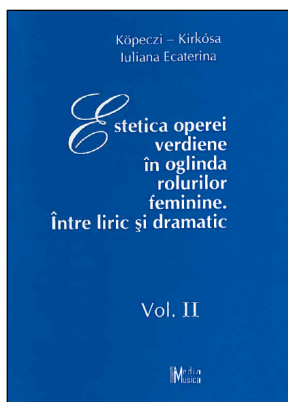


## **BOOK REVIEWS**

### **KÖPECZI – KIRKÓSA JÚLIA ECATERINA, *The Aesthetics of the Verdian Opera Reflected in its Female Characters. Between Lyric and Dramatic*, Ed. MediaMusica, Cluj-Napoca, 2010.**



The book mentioned in the title written by Köpeczi – Kirkósa Júlia Ecaterina is divided into four volumes, each containing important information regarding the esthetical approach and the interpretation of the female characters created by Verdi. The four volumes are structured as follows:

1. The message of the Verdian dramaturgy within the field of romantic aesthetics.
2. The aspects of the *belcanto* style in the light of Verdian music.
3. The stylistic-aesthetic features of the Verdian creation in the light of some of the paradigmatic female roles I.
4. The stylistic-aesthetic features of the Verdian creation in the light of some of the paradigmatic female roles II.

The first volume contains four main chapters: the first one offering detailed information regarding the history of the opera and drama, including data regarding the predecessors of Verdi and their contribution to the development of the genre. The second chapter describes the genesis of the modern drama,

mentioning the importance of the contribution made by Shakespeare and other poets like Goethe and Schiller, followed by a short subchapter regarding the history of the novel genre, which is considered to play a very important part in the development of the modern literary drama. The third chapter of this first volume entitled *The tragedy, an integrated part of the opera* comprises two subchapters describing the role of tragedy in music and the role of tragedy in modern art. The last chapter, a very important one, entitled *Esthetical mimesis in music*, describing the opinion of the Greek philosophers, Hegel, Kant and Thomas Mann, regarding the phenomenon of mimesis in music.

The second volume comprises three main chapters. The first chapter describes the evolution of the *belcanto* style from the beginnings until its fall, offering detailed information regarding its origins and its characteristics, including techniques and methods for the proper learning of this singing style. The second chapter describes the aesthetics of the romantic opera, starting with a short history of the genre with the mentioning of its most important representatives and their works. The last chapter of the volume concentrates on Verdi and his contribution to the romantic opera.

The third and fourth volumes contain several chapters, each offering detailed descriptions of the following Verdi operas: *Nabucco*, *Macbeth*, *The Troubadour*, *Simon Boccanegra*, *Un ballo in maschera* and *Don Carlos*. Within these chapters, the authoress offers many details regarding the origin and subject of each opera and its libretto, paying special attention to the female roles and the innovations made through them. The subchapters entitled *Personal impressions* have an increased importance, since they contain the observations made by the authoress (regarding singing techniques and interpretation), who has been cast in those roles several times throughout her career.

The four volumes are the result of a very thorough research made by the authoress, and are conceived in a highly logical and refined manner. The language is elevated and yet accessible for everyone, especially for opera lovers who wish to complete their knowledge. The book is also recommended for students who wish to improve their singing techniques or who are faced with the challenges of a Verdian role. The information contained in the four volumes is not limited only to the field of music, but also refer to the other arts make the book suitable for professional musicians and nonprofessionals alike. Whilst the technical and interpretative observations are of great importance to the first category of readers, the second category can be more interested for the historical data contained within. Based on the observations I have made during the reading of this book, I sincerely recommend it to both categories and to everyone interested in the opera music of Verdi.

**NOÉMI MIKLÓS BOGNÁR**