

RENATO BRUSON: THE ART OF SINGING, AUTHENTICITY AND DISCIPLINE. CONNECTIONS BETWEEN OPERA AND CHAMBER MUSIC

SERGIU GARABAJII¹ 

SUMMARY. This article explores the artistry of the renowned baritone Renato Bruson, emphasizing the interpretative authenticity and discipline that have ensured his long-lasting career. Based on a direct interview conducted with the maestro in Parma during a vocal interpretation masterclass organized through the Renato Bruson Foundation, the research highlights essential themes such as the evolution of the baritone voice, the significance of chamber music in vocal development, and the role of textual interpretation in opera. Additionally, it examines the impact of this approach on the training of future performers and his perspective on vocal discipline and artistic authenticity. By integrating historical and musicological perspectives, the study establishes connections between operatic and chamber music practices, emphasizing their reciprocal impact on the evolution of a lyrical artist. The conclusions underline the necessity of balancing natural vocal talent with rigorous study while maintaining fidelity to the composer's intentions, simultaneously developing a unique interpretative style.

Keywords: Renato Bruson, baritone voice, opera singing, vocal technique, artistic authenticity, chamber music, opera interpretation, musical discipline.

Baritone (i) (from Gk. Barytonos; Fr. baryton; Ger. Bariton; It. baritono)²
(βαρύτονος), meaning "deep sound"
(bary- = low, deep; tonos = tone).

The interview with the great baritone Renato Bruson, conducted in Parma at the maestro's museum-house, took place during a masterclass he was offering. On this occasion, the maestro agreed to answer questions related

¹ PhD Student. *Gheorghe Dima National Academy of Music, Sigismund Toduță Doctoral School, Cluj-Napoca.* E-mail: garabajii Sergiu@gmail.com

² O. Jander, J. B. Steane, E. Forbes, E. T. Harris, and G. Waldman, "Baritone (i)," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (accessed from a local PDF file on January 2, 2025).



to the doctoral research titled *“The Variability of the Baritone Voice Throughout the Stylistic Evolution of the Opera Genre.”* The interview provided deep insight into essential themes for lyrical singing: vocal technique, authentic interpretation, the importance of the word, and the longevity of a successful career.

The baritone Ion Budoiu³ states that, the baritone voice, now a well-defined category in the opera world, emerged as a distinct classification only at the beginning of the 19th century. Previously, it was alternatively associated with tenors or basses, depending on the *tessitura* of the role.⁴ However, the first uses of the term *baritonans* date back to the 15th century: *“the term ‘baritonans’ was first used in Western music towards the end of the 15th century, principally in French sacred polyphony, where it may signify a voice lower in pitch than the bassus.”*⁵ In the 17th century, *“in 17th-century Italy, the term ‘baritono’ takes up its modern position between the tenor and bass parts”*, with its use becoming more frequent in both sacred music and opera.⁶

In the 19th century, baritone was solidified as a distinct vocal category with the introduction of prominent characters in the operas of Romantic composers. Verdi created roles that *“demonstrated the dramatic flexibility and power of this voice,”* such as Germont (*La Traviata*, 1853) and Macbeth (*Macbeth*, 1847).⁷ In the 20th century, Italian baritones continued to define excellence in the Verdian repertoire: *“Piero Cappuccilli was regarded as the leading Italian Verdi baritone; other Italians eminent in the Verdi and Donizetti repertoires have included Giuseppe Taddei and Renato Bruson.”*⁸ These transformations contributed to the diversification of the repertoire and directly influenced the evolution of the careers of great opera artists.

Renato Bruson (b. Granze, Padua, January 13, 1936) is one of the most remarkable baritones of the 20th century, renowned for his exceptional interpretations of Verdi and Donizetti operas. His impressive career, spanning over five decades, is the result of rigorous training and outstanding vocal development.

³ Ion Budoiu (1930–1992) was an exceptional baritone, performing major roles from the universal classical repertoire, ranging from Mozart and Rossini to Verdi, Wagner, and Puccini. He also distinguished himself in Romanian opera, taking the lead role in *Pană Lesnea Rusalin* by Paul Constantinescu and performing Enescu's lieder in Berlin under the baton of Kurt Masur. See “95 de ani de la nașterea solistului de operă Ion Budoiu,” *Cotidianul HD*, January 3, 2025, <https://hd.cotidianul.ro/95-de-ani-de-la-nasterea-solistului-de-opera-ion-budoiu/>. Accessed February 7, 2025.

⁴ I. Budoiu, “The Baritone in Opera,” in *Musicology Studies* (Vol. 17-18, p. 190; Cluj-Napoca, 1985).

⁵ O. Jander, J. B. Steane, E. Forbes, E. T. Harris, and G. Waldman, “Baritone (i),” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (accessed from a local PDF file on January 2, 2025).

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

Renato Bruson began his vocal studies at the *C. Pollini* Conservatory in Padua under the guidance of Professor Elena Fava Ceriati, considered “one of the most respected voice teachers in Italy.”⁹ His official debut took place in 1961 in Spoleto, in Giuseppe Verdi’s *Il trovatore*, where he performed the role of Count di Luna.¹⁰ This achievement came as a result of winning the *Concorso Nazionale Giovani Cantanti Lirici in Spoleto* that same year.¹¹ From that moment on, he embarked on an increasingly acclaimed and recognized career. One of the most significant events that propelled him to international fame was his debut in *La forza del destino* at the Teatro Regio di Parma in 1967. This success opened the doors of the Metropolitan Opera in New York and marked the beginning of an exceptional series of debuts on the stages of the world’s most prestigious theaters.¹²

In the book by Maestro Bruson’s wife, Tita Tegano¹³, published on the occasion of his 25th career anniversary, numerous posters and reviews of his performances were compiled. Among them is a 1986 review from Rome, in which conductor Giuseppe Sinopoli stated that, for him, Renato Bruson represented the ideal realization of musical sensitivity and intelligence. Even then, it was foreseen that Bruson would remain in the history of Italian opera as a benchmark baritone, thanks to his elegance and refined interpretative style.¹⁴ Today, 39 years later, the maestro’s career remains

⁹ GBOpera, “Album of Memories: Renato Bruson (b. 1936),” accessed on January 1, 2025, from <https://www.gbopera.it/2022/01/album-dei-ricordi-renato-bruson-n-1936>.

¹⁰ Teatro Lirico Sperimentale di Spoleto “A. Belli,” “Docenti del Corso di Canto,” accessed on January 1, 2025, from <https://www.tls-belli.it/docenti-del-corso-di-canto>.

¹¹ Claudio Del Monte and Vincenzo Raffaele Segreto, *Stagione Lirica (1991-1992). Renato Bruson. Trent’anni di carriera*, p. 9 (Parma: Teatro Regio, 1992).

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Tita Tegano was a set designer, costume designer, and author of books, many of which were published by Grafiche Step in Parma, dedicated to the art and career of her husband, baritone Renato Bruson. She collaborated with Teatro Regio di Parma, designing the set for *I due Foscari* (1984–1985, directed by Anna Proclemer) and contributing to numerous opera productions. In 2014, together with Bruson, she donated an important art collection to the Cariparma Foundation, including 70 works by renowned artists such as Giovanni Boldini and Giovanni Segantini. See “Addio a Tita Tegano, scenografa, costumista e moglie di Renato Bruson,” *Gazzetta di Parma*, March 10, 2022, <https://www.gazzettadiparma.it/spettacoli/2022/03/10/news/addio-a-tita-tegano-scenografa-costumista-e-moglie-di-renato-bruson-632027/>, accessed February 7, 2025.

¹⁴ Tita Tegano, ed., *Renato Bruson: 25 anni di teatro in musica*, with testimonies and critical notes by Carlo Belli, Maurizio Arena, Gianandrea Gavazzeni, Gianluigi Gelmetti, Carlo Maria Giulini, Giuseppe Morelli, Franco Mannino, Riccardo Muti, Giuseppe Sinopoli, Alberto Antignani, Giocchino Lanza Tomasi, Giuseppe Negri, Roman Vlad, Piero Rattalino, Sylvano Bussotti, Rodolfo Celletti, Giuseppe Puglisi, Giorgio Gualerzi, Bruno Cernaz, Presto Moli, Bruno Cagli, Francesco Canessa, Sergio Segalini, Daniele Rubboli, Christian Springer, Angelo Foletto, Maurizio Modugno, Marcello Conati, Michelangelo Zurletti, and Elvio Giudici, p. 21 (Bologna: Edizioni Bongiovanni, 1986).

a compelling example of continuity and the preservation of essential qualities for an opera singer. Moreover, these traits have not only been maintained but also cultivated and passed on to future generations through non-formal education, making him a model of perseverance and excellence in the field.

Among the most important theaters where Maestro Bruson has performed are Teatro alla Scala in Milan, the Metropolitan Opera in New York, the Wiener Staatsoper, the Royal Opera House Covent Garden in London, the Bayerische Staatsoper in Munich, the Teatro di San Carlo in Naples, and many others, including the Romanian National Opera in Cluj, where he performed the title role in *Rigoletto* in 1970.¹⁵

In 1970, he collaborated for the first time with conductor Riccardo Muti in Verdi's *Un ballo in maschera* at the Teatro Comunale in Florence, marking the beginning of a long-lasting artistic relationship. In 1972, he made his debut at Teatro alla Scala in Milan in Gaetano Donizetti's *Linda di Chamounix*. In 1986, in Ravenna, Maestro Riccardo Muti described Renato Bruson as an authentic, expressive, and refined artist, emphasizing that any conductor would wish to have him as a collaborative partner in the demanding preparation and realization of an opera production. This recognition is also mentioned in Tita Tegano's book, dedicated to the maestro's career.¹⁶ Among his numerous distinctions, one of the most notable is the honorary title of *Kammersänger*, awarded by the Vienna State Opera.¹⁷

This stands as both a testament to Maestro Bruson's professional excellence and a reflection on the complexity of the operatic profession. It is a continuous process of exploration, preparation, and construction—an endless formation. Despite this, it is an imperfection that becomes perfect through the lived experience of the performance. An emotion can never be repeated with absolute precision; it is a feeling that can be relieved, but always through the lens of new preparation.

Renato Bruson began his responses in the interview by emphasizing that his artistic development was profoundly influenced by a teacher for whom he holds deep respect and gratitude. As mentioned in the maestro's biography, this refers to Professor Elena Fava Ceriati. *"I learned from my teacher, who had been a chamber music singer. From her, I acquired taste and sensitivity. And I must thank her even today because she taught me how to interpret and sing."*

This approach, rooted in chamber music, helped him develop a solid vocal technique and a deep awareness of the semiotics of artistic interpretation.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

¹⁷ Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, founded by Giovanni Treccani, "Renato Bruson," accessed on January 1, 2025, from <https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/renato-bruson/>.

Chamber music is a highly exposed environment without the support of an orchestra, every detail becomes fragile and delicate, and even the beating of the heart seems to take on a perceptible presence. Accompaniment in chamber music represents an essential relationship, a collaboration and synchronization between the performer and the accompanist because the accompaniment does not merely provide support but complements the interpretation through specific musical motifs and phrases. This further underscores the necessity of thorough education and rigorous preparation.

Another essential aspect mentioned by the maestro was the importance of discipline. Renato Bruson emphasized: *“For a long career, you must know how to choose what to do and stay within your repertoire,”* warning about the risks singers take when exploring a repertoire that exceeds the natural limits and possibilities of their voice. *“You don’t have to do everything today; many take on anything just to make money. No, if you want a long career, there must be humility, seriousness, and complete dedication.”* In his view, the ability to maintain a proper balance in repertoire selection is a quality that sustains the longevity of an opera singer.

This idea of discipline and balance resonates with Professor Paul Popovici’s¹⁸ statement that *“passion must meet vocation and natural gifts,”*¹⁹ emphasizing that success in a career cannot exist without an alignment between inner desire and natural abilities. Moreover, the concept of discipline extends to daily practice, which is regarded as *“moral hygiene”* for those who approach their profession with such commitment.²⁰

In addition to these observations, the maestro emphasized the importance of understanding the stages of vocal maturation. *“Just as the body matures, so does the voice,”* he said, highlighting that each stage of a singer’s life must be approached naturally and appropriately.

¹⁸ Paul Popovici is an associate professor and a specialist in law, actively engaged in legal education and intellectual property. He served as vice dean (2020–2022) at the Faculty of Law, Dimitrie Cantemir Christian University in Bucharest (Faculty of Law in Cluj-Napoca) and as a master's program director (2013–2015). Since 2023, he has been an associate professor at Vasile Goldiș Western University of Arad. In addition to his academic work, he is a judicial technical expert, arbitrator, and mediator in the field of intellectual property. See *Curriculum Vitae – Paul Popovici*, Vasile Goldiș Western University, https://www.uvvg.ro/docs/Facultati/cv_profesori/facultate_juridice/POPOVICI_PAUL.pdf, accessed February 7, 2025.

¹⁹ P. Popovici, *“The Ethics of Scientific Research and Academic Integrity,”* online course held at the Gheorghe Dima National Academy of Music, Sigismund Toduță Doctoral School, Cluj-Napoca, December 2, 2024.

²⁰ P. Popovici, *“The Ethics of Scientific Research and Academic Integrity,”* online course held at the Gheorghe Dima National Academy of Music, Sigismund Toduță Doctoral School, Cluj-Napoca, November 25, 2024.

An excerpt from an academic paper presented at the Academy of Sciences in Paris, Manuel García Jr.²¹ supports the following idea: “*L’insieme della voce umana va soggetta ad innumerevoli modificazioni sotto l’influenza dell’età, dei sessi, delle costituzioni.*” (“*The human voice, as a whole, is subject to an infinite number of modifications influenced by age, sex, and physical constitution.*”).²²

As Robert Thayer Sataloff²³ and Karen M. Kost²⁴ emphasize in their article “*The Effects of Age on the Voice, Part 1,*” published in the *Journal of Singing*, the official journal of the National Association of Teachers of Singing, a U.S.-based organization, voice teachers “*should be familiar with many of the more important, clinically relevant age-related changes that occur in the human voice.*”²⁵ This approach helps singers adapt their repertoire and technique according to the specific characteristics of each stage of vocal development.

This perspective is supported by specialized literature. In the book *This is a Voice*, authors Jeremy Fisher²⁶ and Gillyanne Kayes²⁷ explain that:

²¹ Manuel García Jr. (1805–1906) was a singer, pedagogue, and researcher of the human voice, renowned for his revolutionary contributions to the study of vocal mechanisms. In 1840, he presented his paper *Mémoire sur la voix humaine* at the Academy of Sciences in Paris, demonstrating a profound understanding of the physiological phenomena of the voice. In 1854, he became the first to use the laryngoscope, which allowed him to confirm his theories on vocal production. His singing method had a significant impact on vocal education, and his observations on vocal registers and timbre remain fundamental in modern vocal pedagogy. See Michèle Castellengo, “Manuel Garcia Jr: A Clear-Sighted Observer of Human Voice Production,” *Logopedics Phoniatrics Vocology*, DOI: 10.1080/14015430500298131, PMID: 16287657.

²² M. Garcia Jr., *Scuola di Garcia. Trattato completo dell’arte del canto* (Part 1, p. 14; Milan: Ricordi, 1970).

²³ Robert T. Sataloff is a specialist in otolaryngology, professor, and chairman of the Department of Otolaryngology–Head and Neck Surgery at Drexel University College of Medicine. He is also a professional singer, holding a Doctor of Musical Arts (DMA) degree in vocal performance. He has published approximately 1,000 works, including 62 books, and serves as Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Voice and the Ear, Nose and Throat Journal*.

²⁴ Karen M. Kost is a professor of otolaryngology at McGill University and the director of the Voice and Dysphagia Laboratory at the same institution. A specialist in ENT oncology, airway disorders, and voice, she served as president of the *Canadian Society of Otolaryngology–Head and Neck Surgery* (2013) and the American Society of Geriatric Otolaryngology (2012–2014). She has delivered over 400 international presentations and has published extensively on topics related to voice and tracheostomy. See https://www.nats.org/_Library/JOS_On_Point/JOS-077-01-2020-63.pdf, accessed February 7, 2025.

²⁵ R. T. Sataloff and K. M. Kost, “*The Effects of Age on the Voice, Part 1,*” *Journal of Singing* 77, no. 1 (2020): 63.

²⁶ Jeremy Fisher is an award-winning musician and performance coach with over 30 years of experience working with actors and singers. He is a multimedia vocal educator, having developed numerous training DVDs and professional development tools for Vocal Process and the Science Museum. He has co-authored four books and written approximately 300 articles on classical and commercial singing.

*“Your voice is a biomechanism that changes with the rest of the body, growing and maturing – along with your lung capacity and the ability to control breath – as part of the life cycle from child to adult. The positioning and size of the larynx are important factors, as well as the relative firmness of the cartilages.”*²⁸

This description highlights the importance of selecting the appropriate repertoire while respecting the body’s natural development, allowing the voice to grow and mature alongside it in a balanced manner.

The maestro also described the decisive role of constant study, emphasizing that only through sustained effort and discipline can one achieve remarkable results. *“Otherwise, you remain mediocre.”* This insistence on study reflects a deep perspective on discipline, seen as the foundation of continuous development. In this regard, it is perfectly complemented by the observation of Manuel Garcia Jr., who highlights that natural predispositions are not enough: *“Le più belle disposizioni hanno d’uopo d’essere nella loro applicazione coltivate e dirette da uno studio lento e ragionato.”* (*“The most beautiful predispositions need to be cultivated and directed in their application through slow and rational study.”*)²⁹ These perspectives emphasize that in singing, success depends on the combination of natural talent and rigorous study. Vocal technique cannot be left to chance, and every detail from body posture to breath control must be consciously practiced transforming innate gifts into a balanced vocal expression. At the same time, text interpretation, whether in opera, chamber music, or other genres and the understanding of a character’s psychological portrait are fundamental. These elements provide the emotional depth and authenticity necessary to move and inspire the audience.

Regarding the negative influences affecting new generations, Renato Bruson observed: *“Because nowadays, what ruins young singers even though the voices exist is the influence of radio, television, and the recording industry.”* Lack of patience, along with these influences, is another major issue: *“Young people want everything here and now. That’s not how opera singing works.”* For the maestro, patience and seriousness remain the keys to long-term success.

²⁷ Dr. Gillyanne Kayes is a voice expert and vocal pedagogue with 35 years of experience inspiring singers and teachers. She holds a PhD in voice research and has authored seven books, including *Singing and the Actor*. Recognized as a pedagogue and presenter at international conferences, she has also contributed as a curriculum advisor for institutions such as CSSD, RCS, and DMusics Barcelona.

²⁸ J. Fisher and G. Kayes, *This is a Voice: 99 Exercises to Train, Project and Harness the Power of Your Voice* (p. 40; London: Wellcome Collection, 2016).

²⁹ M. Garcia Jr., *Scuola di Garcia. Trattato completo dell’arte del canto* (Part 1, p. 21; Milan: Ricordi, 1970).

This idea reminds me of my professor, Greta Benini³⁰, who taught me at the Musik und Kunst Privat Universität der Stadt Wien. In her classes, there was a clear condition: we were not allowed to listen to recordings, especially when preparing a role or facing the risk of “*plagiarizing*” an interpretative dramaturgy practices that strip us of our individuality. This approach aligns with what my professor, Iulia Augusta Suciu³¹, from the Gheorghe Dima National Academy of Music in Cluj-Napoca, used to tell me. I have always valued her guidance and support.

I believe that art involves a long process of creation and continuous research, a delicate intimacy with the score that requires a well-defined plan and a deep understanding of musical expression.

On the other hand, one of my voice teachers, Michail Lanskoï³², who sang alongside Renato Bruson 30 years ago at the Ludwigsburg Festival in Verdi’s operas *I masnadieri* and *Giovanna d’Arco*, told me that it is important to listen to reference baritones.³³ Some studies conducted by R. Harris and B. M. de Jong³⁴ suggest that this process, known in science as “*mirror neurons*”, has a clear impact on auditory-motor transformations. As the authors emphasize: “*Passive listening to music evoked auditory-parietal-premotor*

³⁰ Greta Benini is an Italian pianist specializing in vocal and opera accompaniment. She studied in Ravenna, Florence, and Bologna and has been a laureate of several international competitions. She has worked as a répétiteur at Wiener Kammeroper and Volksoper Wien, collaborating with renowned artists and performing on major stages across Europe and the United States. Currently, she is a professor of opera repetition at Musik und Kunst Privat Universität der Stadt Wien. See <https://muk.ac.at/studienangebot/lehrende/details/greta-benini.html>, accessed February 2025.

³¹ Univ. Prof. Dr. Habil. Iulia Augusta Suciu is the Vice-Rector responsible for academic activities and a répétiteur at the Gheorghe Dima National Academy of Music in Cluj-Napoca. Throughout her career, she has performed numerous recitals and concerts, participating in national and international festivals. Due to her pedagogical work, many of her graduates now perform on some of the world’s most prestigious stages, including the Metropolitan Opera, Vienna State Opera, Munich Opera, Royal Opera House, and others.

³² Michail Lanskoï was born in Moscow and studied at the Bolshoi Theatre Singing School and the Gnessin Institute. He earned a doctorate in musicology from the Tchaikovsky Conservatory in Moscow (1990). A laureate of vocal competitions in Russia, Spain, and Austria, he has performed leading roles in operas by Mozart, Verdi, Puccini, Rossini, and Tchaikovsky on major stages in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, England, and Russia. He has collaborated with renowned conductors such as Helmuth Rilling, Valery Gergiev, and Gianandrea Bramall. See <https://muk.ac.at/veranstaltung/meisterklasse-gesang-mit-michail-lanskoi.html>, accessed 7 February 2025.

³³ M. Lanskoï, voice teacher at the Hochschule für Musik in Berlin and MUK in Vienna, personal correspondence, October 20, 2024.

³⁴ R. Harris and B. M. de Jong are researchers in the Department of Neurology at the University Medical Center Groningen and the University of Groningen, Netherlands. They are also affiliated with the BCN Neuroimaging Center, where they specialize in neuroimaging and neurology.

*activations when subjects had attentively listened to this music before, while the premotor activation even further increased when such music pieces had actually been practiced.”*³⁵

This listening of musical literature helps to raise awareness of the technical and stylistic aspects and to understand the diversity within the subcategory of the baritone voice a true culture of variability. Recordings of great baritones can serve as a “passive school” that inspires and provides new perspectives, but they do not absolve us from the search for our own path. However, in interpretative and dramaturgical terms, it is crucial to pay special attention to the composer, respecting the semiotics of the score. Authenticity and personal development remain essential, and inspiration should be used as a starting point, not as a substitute for individual work.

Vocal technique was a central theme in the interview. Renato Bruson explained: *“Singing is always singing; only the style changes – Italian style, German style, American style, etc., but singing always remains singing.”* Chamber music taught him to breathe correctly and develop artistic taste: *“Because I first sang chamber music and learned to sing with style and sensitivity.”* This reflects a constant concern for details and artistic authenticity, where every performance must be faithful to both the text and the emotion it conveys.

In this context, the maestro also highlighted the importance of the word in lyrical singing: *“You must capture the audience’s attention; otherwise, you won’t have a career, it’s over. That’s why the word is very important, and I care deeply about the word.”* This observation emphasizes that the text and its interpretation are fundamental in creating an authentic connection with the audience. As Paul Higgins notes in an article about the importance of the word, interpretation is not merely an imitative rendering of the text on a musical platform; it is a profound analysis of the text, which is essential and must address the *“poetic, formal, semantic, and aesthetic complexities of a song.”*³⁶

This relationship between music and the word is also highlighted by the idea that *“music is a syncretic whole and addresses the eye, the ears, and the senses.”*³⁷ In this whole, the word is not just a means of communication, but an element that gives depth and meaning to the artistic act. Gestures,

³⁵ R. Harris and B. M. de Jong, “Cerebral Activations Related to Audition-Driven Performance Imagery in Professional Musicians,” *PLOS ONE* 9, no. 4 (2014): <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0093681>.

³⁶ P. Higgins, “Benjamin Britten: Art Song, a Synthesis of Words and Music – Issues and Approaches to Text-Setting,” *Maynooth Musicology*, Maynooth University, Maynooth, Ireland, January 1, 2009, cited in Rosenwald, “*Theory, Text-Setting, and Performance*,” p. 53.

³⁷ L. Olărașu, “Music in Antiquity,” personal blog, October 27, 2011, accessed on January 9, 2025, from <https://olarasuloredana.wordpress.com/2011/10/27/muzica-in-antichitate>.

movement, and other visual elements contribute to this unity, creating a synthesis that leads to the “*attainment of moral perfection*” and to harmony with the Cosmos through ethos.³⁸ Thus, the word plays an essential role, as it is the one that facilitates catharsis – the purification of the soul through art.³⁹ In this regard, B. V. Asafiev⁴⁰ emphasizes the importance of emotional expressiveness in music: “*One must be able to sing anger, compassion, pain, jest, mockery, tenderness, kiss, cunning, bravery-in a word, the entire range of emotions.*”⁴¹ This idea reflects the fact that interpretation is not merely a reproduction of sound, but a complex process of transposing emotions, where every detail contributes to the authenticity of the interpretative act.

From Renato Bruson’s perspective, the variability of the baritone voice is a natural phenomenon, determined by the gifts received from God. “*It is what God or nature has given you, there’s nothing you can do about it. After that, you just have to study, study, and study.*”

Timbre is “*a distinct and unmistakable vocal fingerprint,*” which makes the opera singer authentic. Manuel Garcia Jr., who was a Spanish opera singer (baritone), voice teacher, and music pedagogue, also known as the inventor of laryngoscopy,⁴² defines timbre as: “*quel carattere proprio e variabile all’infinito*” (“*that unique and infinitely variable characteristic*”).⁴³

Maestro Bruson made an interesting comparison between opera and chamber music, explaining the fundamental differences in the relationship with the audience: “*In chamber music, you are exposed; the audience is focused solely on you.*” This observation highlights the need for an authentic connection, an essential element for success on stage: “*Otherwise, you won’t have a career, it’s over.*”

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Boris Vladimirovich Asafiev (July 29 [O.S. July 17], 1884 – January 27, 1949) was a Russian and Soviet composer, musicologist, music critic, and writer, recognized as one of the founders of Soviet musicology. He was the dedicatee of Prokofiev’s Symphony No. 1. He was born in Saint Petersburg. See <https://www.discogs.com/artist/2905491-Boris-Asafiev>, accessed February 2025.

⁴¹ B. V. Asafiev, cited in V. P. Morozov, *Искусство резонансного пения. Основы резонансной теории и техники* (The Art of Resonant Singing. Fundamentals of Resonance Theory and Technique) (p. 247; Moscow: IP RAN, P. I. Tchaikovsky State Conservatory, “Art and Science” Center, 2002). Original quote: “*Надо уметь петь гнев, сострадание, боль, шутку, насмешку, ласку, поцелуй, лукавство, смелость – словом, всю гамму чувствований.*”

⁴² “*Inventos españoles: el laringoscopio,*” HC Energía (Summer Edition, 2011), accessed on January 9, 2025, from <http://web.archive.org/web/20150222042346/http://www.hcenergia.com/boletinhc/verano2011/cultural.htm>.

⁴³ M. Garcia Jr., Scuola di Garcia. *Trattato completo dell’arte del canto* (Part 1, p. 17; Milan: Ricordi, 1970).

In conclusion, baritone Renato Bruson offers a clear vision of lyrical singing, based on authenticity, discipline, and respect for the word. His response “No.” to the question about the need “*to learn from a Maestro to become a Maestro*” reflects his belief that learning is a personal process of discovery and assimilation, not merely imitation.

The relationship between opera and chamber music, as reflected in the maestro’s artistic journey, emphasizes an essential idea: music is not just about the difficulty of the repertoire, but about how we succeed in moving the audience through authenticity and emotion.

The variability of the baritone voice transcends nationality, tradition, or origins; it consists in the broad realization of the same essential idea, which is the sharing and co-involvement in a great encounter with the Creator of creation, manifested through the diversity of the subcategories of the baritone voice throughout the entire opera genre repertoire.

The predominant common factor (vocal authenticity) lies in the difference of timbral individuality, with each vocal instrument adapted according to the parameters that the individual naturally possesses.

The problem of the present is that each opera artist, in one way or another, tries to imitate someone based on the success that individual has had. However, the reality is that this represents an illusory image that tends to reach a form of *bovarism*—the desire to live a foreign identity that is disconnected from one’s own authenticity. True virtue lies in discovering one’s “*own heart*,” through which you can give value to the “*word*” and, with intelligence, overall, know how to use your voice.

Therefore, authenticity is essential; accepting the voice that the opera artist possesses, the body, the color, and the timbre is the most beautiful thing, because it makes you unique.

Furthermore, the connection between chamber music and opera highlights the complementarity of these genres. While opera allows for an expansive development of vocal and dramatic storytelling, chamber music brings intimacy and special attention to detail. This complementarity was essential in the artistic development of baritone Renato Bruson, who learned to combine the sensitivity and technical precision of chamber music with the dramatic emotion specific to opera. Together, these genres enrich the interpretation, placing a common and essential element at their core: the word.

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