

THE IMAGE OF JOAN OF ARC IN THE ORATORIO BY A. HONEGGER «JOAN OF ARC AT THE STAKE»

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SUMMARY. The article examines the oratorio genre in the work of the Forantz composers of the group of six. The focus is on the oratorio "Joan of Arc at the Stake" ("Jeanne d'Arc au bûcher") by Arthur Honegger. The aim of the article is to reveal the image of the main character. The oratorio «Joan of Arc at the Stake» by A. Honegger is one of the most striking examples of 20th-century Western European composers turning to the oratorio genre. What makes it particularly interesting is that the composer, drawing upon national traditions of blending various genres, achieves a new level of genre synthesis and introduces new elements into the oratorio format. The complex fusion of genre components presented here prompts the author to abandon traditional genre classifications and call his work a «mystery». Honegger harmoniously balances the components of the musical whole, dramatizing the content and achieving an organic synthesis of music, text, and stage dramaturgy. The blending of these diverse elements impacts the unfolding of the plot, the dynamics of character development, and the musical portrayal of the image of Joan of Arc.

Keywords: the musical culture of France, Arthur Honegger, oratorio, Joan of Arc, mystery.

Introduction

The musical culture of France in the early decades of the 20th century is characterized by exceptional richness. During this time, new styles and trends in French music emerged, creative associations of young composers

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were formed, and outstanding works – true masterpieces of world musical art – were created, opening new horizons for its further development in the mid and late 20th century.

The 1920s became the time of the affirmation of new directions in French music and the creation of new creative unions. It was during this period that «Les Six» (The French Six) was formed, uniting six young composers: Arthur Honegger, Darius Milhaud, Francis Poulenc, Louis Durey, Georges Auric, and Germaine Tailleferre. Their union was based on shared ideological and aesthetic principles. Above all, they expressed a sense of saturation with Romantic music, which shocked them with its verbosity and excessive emotional frankness. They believed it was time to dispel the spell of Impressionist refinement.

«Les Six» brought together composers of different creative calibers. One of the most remarkable members of the group was Arthur Honegger – an outstanding French composer who played a major role in European music from the 1920s to the 1960s and was highly esteemed both in France and internationally. Honegger created numerous works across a wide range of genres and for various performing ensembles.

The oratorio genre holds an important place in Honegger's work. His early oratorios («King David» and «Judith») as well as the musical tragedy «Antigone», which was also described as an «oratorio», were composed in the early stages of his career, during the 1920s. These works are based on biblical and classical themes. The pinnacle of this genre in Honegger's musical legacy is the dramatic oratorio «Joan of Arc at the Stake», inspired by a well-known episode from French history. The aim of the article is to reveal the image of Joan of Arc – the main character of oratorio.

Literature Review

A. Honegger's oratorios, as well as his work as a whole, have been studied mainly by French and American researchers by G. Casaglia⁴, H. Halbreich⁵, B. Kelly⁶, J. Roy⁷, etc. The authors focus on global issues of the creativity of the composers of the group of six, the development of the oratorio genre in French music of the first half of the twentieth century, the

⁴ Casaglia, Gherardo. "Performances of Jeanne d'Arc au bûcher". L'Almanacco di Gherardo Casaglia, 2005.

⁵ Halbreich, Harry. Arthur Honegger. Translated by Roger Nichols. Portland, Oregon: Amadeus Press, 1999.

⁶ Kelly, Barbara L. Music and Ultra-modernism in France. A Fragile Consensus, 1913–1939. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2013.

⁷ Roy, Jean. Le Groupe des Six. Paris: Le Seuil, 1994.

composer's heritage of A. Honegger, etc. There is no analysis of the image of Joan of Arc in the indicated studies. The appeal to the analysis of the image of Joan of Arc in this article is due to the need to highlight the musical embodiment of one of the key episodes in the life path of the legendary heroine of the French people, whose image became a symbol of the unification of the nation and the struggle for freedom.

Discussion

Honegger's turn to the oratorio was not accidental. Alongside the cantata, this genre had long played an important role in French music of previous centuries – serving as a leading mass genre during the French Revolution of 1789 and attracting the attention of 19th-century French composers such as Hector Berlioz, Charles Gounod, Camille Saint-Saëns, César Franck, and others. Honegger both continued this tradition and sought his own interpretation of the genre. In particular, his oratorios display a strong emphasis on genre blending – a feature characteristic of 20th-century music – resulting in original and innovative treatments of the oratorio form.

The oratorio belongs to the category of monumental, large-scale musical genres. It is a major composition for choir, vocal soloists, and symphony orchestra, written on a dramatic subject and intended for concert performance. It typically includes an extensive number of grand choral movements alternating with solo sections – recitatives, arias and duets.

The oratorio developed from the dramatized *lauda* – a polyphonic sacred hymn created based on a popular melody. In the 16th century, such hymns were performed in Rome in so-called *oratories* – special rooms attached to churches, where believers gathered for Bible readings, religious discussions, and interpretations. The first known oratorio-like work, *The Representation of Soul and Body* by Emilio de' Cavalieri, was staged as a performance (1600, Rome). However, stage acting soon disappeared from oratorios and was replaced by a recitative part performed by a narrator. A prominent master of the oratorio in the 17th century was Giacomo Carissimi, composer of oratorios such as *The Judgment of Solomon*, *Jephthe*, and others, based on Latin biblical texts.

A special type of oratorio is the *Passion* – vocal-dramatic works based on the religious story of the suffering and death of Jesus Christ. This genre was embraced by German composers, most notably Heinrich Schütz and Johann Sebastian Bach. In Bach's work in particular, the Passion genre reached its highest level of artistic refinement.

The classical form of the oratorio as a monumental work with a predominant choral component was established in England during the

1730s–1740s by George Frideric Handel. In his oratorios based on biblical themes (*Messiah*, *Samson*, *Judas Maccabaeus*), the main character is the people, which led to a significant enhancement of the role of the chorus in the overall dramaturgy of the compositions.

Genre-descriptive oratorios were composed by Joseph Haydn at the end of the 18th century, including *The Creation* and *The Seasons*.

Among the many oratorios of the 19th century, notable works include those by Felix Mendelssohn, Hector Berlioz, Franz Liszt, and Antonín Dvořák. However, the general trend of the era leaned toward a more intimate and lyrical treatment of the oratorio form.

In the 20th century, Western European composers saw a revival and a new stage in the development of the oratorio genre. At a time when oratorio seemed to have exhausted its possibilities and inner resources – long past its golden age (16th–18th centuries) and marked by uncharacteristic lyricism during the Romantic period – it experienced a resurgence in its classical, monumental forms and was once again infused with heroic content. This revival was largely driven by historical events – powerful popular movements, large-scale and bloody wars – which provided fertile ground for exploring themes of national and universal significance, as well as historical and heroic-patriotic narratives in the oratorio.

In the works of several Western European composers of the 20th century, the oratorio genre occupies a key place and, during certain creative periods, becomes central in importance: at the end of the 1920s for Paul Hindemith, in the 1920s–1930s for Arthur Honegger and Darius Milhaud, and in the late 1940s–1950s for André Jolivet, François Lesure, and Olivier Messiaen.

The composers' interest in the oratorio genre had a direct impact on its development in the 20th century. Researchers note a significant evolution of the oratorio and identify the following contributing factors:

- 1) national traditions of the genre, which helped shape various «national types» of oratorio (French, German, Italian, etc.);
- 2) the influence of various stylistic trends in 20th-century music on the musical language of the oratorio;
- 3) the interaction of the oratorio with other musical genres (opera, symphony) and with related art forms (theater, cinema, literature, visual arts), which is determined in each specific case by both national traditions and stylistic trends.

In the latter case, a significant expansion of the genre's boundaries occurs, leading to the emergence of new genre variants. This process is characteristic not only of the oratorio but also of the entire genre system of contemporary music and is described by scholars as «genre synthesis», «genre diffusion», «genre mixing», and «genre transformation». Within the

oratorio genre, researchers identify several forms of genre interaction, each of which relies on the so-called «historical memory of the genre».

The first of these forms is the convergence of oratorio and opera – a new trend characteristic of 20th-century music. This leads to the creation of a new genre: the opera-oratorio. From oratorio, it inherits themes of national-heroic scope, broad epic forms, moments of elevated generalization, and an impersonal narrative tone. From opera, it borrows stage action, theatricalization, and dynamic, rapid plot development. In works belonging to the opera-oratorio genre, depending on the concept, either oratorical or operatic features may be emphasized.

In some works, the visual, theatrical aspect prevails so strongly over musical development that the opera-oratorio stands on the threshold of becoming a theatrical performance with music. This is especially true for the French opera-oratorio. Analyzing the reasons for the active inclusion of theatrical elements in the French oratorio, one should note that this is linked to long-standing traditions in French music. One such tradition is the blending of genre features of opera, ballet, and oratorio in the French court theater of the time of Lully and Rameau, which continued into the 20th century and influenced the theatricalization of the oratorio. Another national characteristic in the interpretation of this genre goes back to the era of the French Revolution of 1789, when theatrical popular performances in the open air became widespread – grandiose mass spectacles deeply democratic in spirit and purpose. In the 1930s, French composers revived the tradition of such festivities, not by restoring the revolutionary performance in all its details, but by drawing on its core ideas and individual features. Works such as «*Prometheus*» by Georges Fauré, «*Christopher Columbus*» by Darius Milhaud, and «*The Truth about Joan*» by André Jolivet can be included among such compositions.

French oratorios also absorb features of other theatrical forms that were attracting the attention of composers at the time – ancient tragedy, medieval mystery plays, and folk theater. The complex interweaving of these influences gave rise to the uniqueness and distinctiveness of each production.

The second form of genre synthesis is the convergence of oratorio and dramatic theater. In this case, on one hand, there is an influence of the dramatic play on the oratorio: the word comes to the foreground, which increases the role of spoken parts for soloists and leads to the use of a «speaking» chorus in oratorios. On the other hand, the reverse process can also be observed – the influence of the oratorio on dramatic theater. According to researchers, features of oratorical form are inherent in one branch of 20th-century European theater – Bertolt Brecht's «epic theater», whose key characteristics (mass format, social orientation, thematic significance, a slow, narrative tempo of unfolding events, and sometimes even static nature)

are also typical of the oratorio genre. Oratorical qualities appear in attempts to "musicalize" Brecht's plays, for example, in *Lehrstück* ("Didactic Play") by Hanns Eisler and Paul Hindemith.

The result of the processes of active genre interaction and genre convergence that took place in Western European music of the 20th century were the following genre varieties of oratorio:

- 1) oratorio in its «pure» form, which has various national types of the genre;
- 2) oratorio-cantata, which arises as a result of the monumentalization of the traditional cantata;
- 3) opera-oratorio, with a predominance of either narrative (as a feature of oratorio) or theatrical action (as a factor approaching opera);
- 4) the fusion of oratorio with ancient tragedy – the revival of the forms of Greek tragedy in combination with the principle of oratorio; here there can also be different accents (action or philosophical generalization);
- 5) «epic theatre» with music – a philosophical and didactic play with oratorio-like features, in which words dominate, action is almost absent, and the music contributes to philosophical generalization;
- 6) oratorio-mystery – a harmonious combination of oratorio and various elements of folk performance-mystery.

In the 20th century, the oratorio genre took on an original form in the works of many Western European composers, including Arthur Honegger, who in his oratorios strove for convergence and synthesis of various genre elements. For example, in the oratorios «*Joan of Arc at the Stake*», «*King David*», and «*Nicholas of Flüe*», he revived the idea and specific elements of French theatrical performances with music, medieval mystery plays, and folk theater. In «*King David*», «*Judith*», and «*Antigone*», one can observe the blending of oratorio and opera (with the former emphasizing oratorical features and the latter two highlighting operatic ones), while in «*Dance of the Dead*», there is a fusion of oratorio and cantata characteristics.

The oratorio «*Joan of Arc at the Stake*» (1938) is one of the most striking examples of 20th-century Western European composers turning to the oratorio genre. What makes it particularly interesting is that the composer, drawing upon national traditions of blending various genres, achieves a new level of genre synthesis and introduces new elements into the oratorio format. The complex fusion of genre components presented here prompts the author to abandon traditional genre classifications and call his work a «*mystery*». Honegger harmoniously balances the components of the musical whole, dramatizing the content and achieving an organic synthesis of music, text, and stage dramaturgy.

The combination of epic imagery and dramatic narrative development, the cinematic «storyboarding» (scene transitions), the use of retrospective

storytelling, the introduction of dramatic roles, the multifaceted treatment of mass scenes, and the interweaving and independent development of several dramatic lines all point to the birth of a new genre form – the *oratorio-mystery* – and confirm the work as a significant artistic and aesthetic phenomenon.

According to Honegger himself and the librettist, renowned French playwright Paul Claudel, «*Joan of Arc*» is a theatrical performance that is not an opera: it is a synthesis of all elements of a play with the inclusion of text.

The interpenetration and synthesis of elements from different genres (oratorio, opera, dramatic theater) not only led to the creation of a new genre form but also defined the dramatic structure of the work. At its core lies the principle of intertwining traits characteristic of different genres.

At the center of the narrative are the images of Joan of Arc and the people. In the oratorio, they are revealed in contrasting ways. The image of the people (mixed chorus), which represents one of the most important lines of the work, is shown in a process of formation and dynamic development. The transformation of the people is depicted primarily through their attitude toward Joan. At the beginning of the oratorio (Scene 3), the masses appear as a faceless, fanatical crowd possessed by religious psychosis; however, by the finale, they are no longer a crowd but a people who have come to understand the heroine's sacrifice. The turning point in the development of the people's image and the beginning of their rapprochement with Joan occurs in the central scenes of the oratorio, where everyday genre elements are introduced for the first time. This genre sphere is tied to depictions of peasant life – rural scenes (Scene 7 «Catherine and Margaret»), and a national celebration marking the arrival of peace (Scene 8 «The King's Procession in Reims»).

In portraying the people, the composer emphasizes features of the oratorio genre – grandeur, epic scale, fresco-like breadth, the technique of «broad brushstrokes», etc. The epic element is deepened by the tragic problem: the living Joan is hated by the crowd, and only her death transforms the mob into a true people. Only in the flames can the heroine fully unite with her nation. The process of the crowd's spiritual growth and its convergence with Joan is revealed musically through symphonic development.

All the major events in the oratorio's narrative unfold around Joan of Arc⁸. The primary focus is on Joan's image at the moment of her execution. In contrast to the dynamically portrayed people, Joan's image is characterized by unity, integrity, and the absence of internal dramatic conflict; the epic aspect is enriched with lyrical and psychological depth. Throughout the oratorio, the heroine is viewed from different angles:

⁸ Joan of Arc (the Maid of Orleans) is a real historical figure, a heroine of the French people, under her leadership the French troops won a battle with the army of the English queen. She was tried by the Inquisition, declared a heretic and burned at the stake.

- 1) her image is exalted, with emphasis on its epic nature;
- 2) her image is shown in close-up, with intensified psychological and lyrical treatment;
- 3) indirect characterization is employed (in scenes seen through Joan's eyes).

The role of Joan of Arc is assigned to a dramatic actress; however, her character is revealed not only through the poetic text she recites but also through extended musical characteristics. The most significant moment of Joan's direct musical expression is the song «*Trimazo*», performed before she is burned at the stake (Scene 10).

The oratorio is based on the principle of narration, unfolding like pages of Joan's «book of life». A cinematic technique of retrospective storytelling is used, with events presented in reverse or «mirror» order. In the prologue and finale (Scene 11), Joan stands on the scaffold surrounded by a massive crowd, awaiting execution. In the middle scenes (Scenes 1–10), Joan mentally travels into her past, with her consciousness «extracting» key moments of her life: first the more recent events (the frenzied crowd's cries demanding the burning of the «witch», the Inquisition trial), then earlier ones (the betrayal by the French king, his triumphant entry into Reims, the people celebrating victory), and finally the most distant memories (her childhood, life in the village). This method of retrospection is widely used not only in cinema but also in contemporary theater drama.

The essence of the unfolding events is revealed through the conversational dialogues between Joan and the priest Dominique. These dialogues emphasize the dual-layered nature of the action on stage, as all the scenes being enacted and commented on by Joan and Dominique actually exist only in the imagination of Jeanne, who is exhausted, chained to a stake, and awaiting execution. Yet it is precisely these imagined scenes that provide a realistic, vivid, and full-blooded picture of the life of the people. Thus, in the interpretation of Jeanne's character and the inclusion of dialogues that comment on the action within the oratorio, elements of theatricalization and features of dramatic performance are evident.

The epic, lyrical, and genre-based domestic lines of the oratorio are complemented by a satirical-accusatory line, which is very important to the ideological direction of the work. In the satirical scenes, the inquisitor priests who sentence Joan to death are portrayed. These priests appear in the guises of foolish animals (donkeys and rams), and the chief judge of the inquisition, Bishop Cauchon, is represented as a pig. Elements of folk farce and carnival, characteristic of medieval mystery plays, are used here.

Such a fusion of various styles, genres, and types of dramaturgies required the composer to adopt an innovative approach to realizing the plot,

searching for new principles of musical development that differ from the traditional ones typical of the oratorio genre. In this work, the unifying factor is the principle of symphonization, which overcomes the inertia of the traditional number-based structure, establishes a connection between formal elements, and introduces dynamic, continuous development. The symphonism of the oratorio is also expressed in the deeply generalized nature of its expression. The character of the thematic material and the principles of its development, as well as the predominance of musical statics and contrast over dramatic conflict, point to the epic nature of the musical dramaturgy, and its kinship with epic symphonism. At the same time, the presence of lyrical thematism and two lyrical spheres – a more generalized, elevated one and a more domestic, folkloric one — justify speaking of the great importance of lyric-epic imagery in the oratorio.

In line with the specifics of musical expression, a technique borrowed from cinematic dramaturgy is used – the method of «scene overlapping». The oratorio features an original dramaturgy of strette and overlapping of major sections, where the beginning of one scene overlaps with the end of the previous one. This accelerates the pace of development, enhances dynamism, and intensifies the dramatic tension of the conflict.

The monumentality, epic scale, and philosophical reflection characteristic of the oratorio genre are most fully revealed in the oratorio's finale, which combines the last two scenes: Scene X («Trimazo») and Scene XI («Joan of Arc in the Flames»). Here, the culmination and resolution of the action occur: Joan of Arc, unrepentant, is burned at the stake, and the people recognize her heroic deed and praise her as their heroine.

The final scene «Joan of Arc in the Flames» is integrated into the overall narrative sequence of the preceding scenes. It includes parts for the Holy Virgin (Mother of God), Saints Catherine and Margaret, Jeanne's continued declamation, the entry of the inquisitor priest, and mention of Brother Dominique. The main protagonist of the final scene becomes the people, so the choir is personified as a real crowd gathered around the stake, which during the development of the finale transforms into «Jeanne's people».

In the epic final scene, the images of Joan and the people merge in an outburst of glorification of heroism, courage, purity of soul, and strength. The composer creates a specific type of melody, devoid of concrete genre features, distinguished by asymmetrical phrasing, tonal instability, and a generalized lyrical character. This melody is connected to speech intonations, its rises and falls governed by the logic of declamation.

The thematic material of the finale also includes song-like features, pure diatonicism, themes with a small pitch range, and a clear, simple rhythmic pattern. These traits belong to the figurative-intonational sphere

associated with the images of Jeanne, the people, and the homeland. Their dominance in the final scene, as well as the convergence of the intonational characteristics of Joan and the people, emphasize the main idea of the work – the inseparable connection between the heroine and her people. Final unity is achieved at the moment when Joan sings a folk song – a spring song familiar from her childhood⁹. This unity is also realized by the previously enraged crowd surrounding the scaffold, which only after Jeanne's song gradually calms, transforms, and becomes the people who understand and accept Jeanne.

Despite the grand scale of the finale and the introduction of parts for several characters, it is characterized by thematic homogeneity, a lack of vivid intonational contrasts, and the absence of clear genre-specific traits. The thematic material of the finale is based on a free connection of varying motifs, with a predominant polyphonic texture. This influences the compositional structure of the finale, which is marked by blurred, indistinct formal sections. This is due to the increased fluidity and continuity of development, along with the weakening of genre-based individualization of the themes.

The dramatic action unfolds in three stages, each corresponding to a section of the musical form. Each section is built upon a specific theme, which undergoes polyphonic development.

In the first section of the final scene (up to rehearsal number 92), we see Joan returning from nonexistence to reality («She awakened as if from a dream», the crowd exclaims), once again becoming aware that she is standing on the scaffold, surrounded by a frenzied crowd fanatically repeating the accusations of the Inquisition: «It is said: Joan is a witch, a heretic, an enemy of the French people; it is decided: she harmed people with the help of unclean forces». At the same time, a division occurs within the crowd, and part of the people begin to shout words glorifying Jeanne: «Jeanne, the saint! Glory to the pure virgin maiden!» Both texts are proclaimed simultaneously, as the composer assigns them to different parts of the mixed choir.

The thematic characteristics of the first section directly reflect the crude and terrifying reality of the crowd's state as a furious and blind mass, and its extremely cruel attitude towards Jeanne. This is expressed in the almost complete absence of lyrical melody, the predominance of recitative-like melodic lines, the use of short, fragmented phrases, and the gradual dynamic build-up of the choir from a quiet murmur to an exalted scream.

The way thematic material is introduced also contributes to creating the desired atmosphere. For example, the main theme is not initially presented in a single part but is distributed between the alto and bass parts in the form

⁹ Joan sings in the oratorio only once, in the tenth scene of «Trimazo».

of a dialogue. As a result, instead of a complete theme, we hear fragmented phrases. Upon its repetition (now fully presented in one part), a rhythmized choral recitative without definite pitch is used as a counter-theme.

Amid the intensifying atmosphere of tense expectation, the more melodic and complete phrases praising Joan sound in contrast. These also accompany the theme and serve as new counter-themes (rehearsal number 88). The material is distributed as follows: the theme is presented in the bass part; the first counter-theme, based on rhythmized choral recitation, is given to the altos; the second counter-theme with the text glorifying Joan is sung in unison by the soprano and tenor parts.

Great importance is given to short imitations, where key words and phrases of the text («it is decided», «it is known», «with the help of unclean forces», etc.) are repeatedly passed from voice to voice. This technique significantly energizes the musical presentation and creates the effect of mass chanting or incantation.

The second, central section of the final scene (up to rehearsal number 101) depicts the transformation and evolution of the people's image, who ultimately change their attitude toward Joan and recognize her as a heroic figure. In this section, the crowd stops shouting accusatory phrases and begins to sympathize with Joan standing in the flames («She is a poor child! Just a girl! She is terribly frightened»). This shift in the crowd's image is reflected in a new musical characterization. The section is built around the development of a new theme – the «purifying fire» theme (which, in the third section, gradually transforms into a hymn of praise for Jeanne).

Besides the crowd, represented by the choir, individual characters also become active in the plot during the second section. They can be divided into two groups:

1) real characters – Joan herself and the inquisitor priest, observed by the crowd (their parts are performed by dramatic actors);

2) imaginary characters – seen and heard only by Jeanne, such as the Holy Virgin (joined in the third section by Saints Catherine and Margaret, and angels).

At the center of the second section's composition is a dialogue between Joan and the inquisitor, who demands her confession and repentance. It is in this scene that Joan achieves spiritual liberation. Gripped by the terror of impending execution and the fear of burning alive, Joan hears the voice of the Holy Virgin from above, whose words calm and support her. Thus, the dialogue with the inquisitor is spoken by a spiritually strengthened Joan who no longer fears torture and refuses to sign the false confession¹⁰.

¹⁰ Although the priest promised to remove Jeanne's chains if the guilty verdict was signed,

The characters' dialogues unfold against a backdrop of the developing «fire theme» in the choral parts. This symbolizes the gradually intensifying flames meant to consume Jeanne. The theme is characterized by an initial ascending perfect fifth leap (replaced by a perfect fourth in tonal responses). The theme is introduced through stretto entries, which result in constant entrances and exits of vocal lines, creating an extremely dynamic and ever-changing musical texture. In the course of its development, various intonational variants appear in different iterations of the theme, particularly at the end, altering the general outline of the theme.

Above the polyphonic texture of the second section «floats» the voice of the Holy Virgin throughout. Her part serves as a kind of cantus firmus, unifying the section and giving it intonational cohesion.

The third and final section of the oratorio «Joan of Arc at the Stake» (from rehearsal number 101) serves as an epilogue. Here, equilibrium is achieved in the relationship between «Joan and the people», the semantic culmination is reached, and the development is brought to a conclusion. According to the plot, Joan breaks free from her chains and burns in the flames of the stake, while the people praise Joan as their heroine.

This section features polyphonic development of themes from earlier scenes in the oratorio, affirming the intonational sphere associated with Jeanne. It also provides a logical conclusion to the development of the thematic material of the final scene. The concluding section opens with a culminating statement of the «fire theme», which dominated the preceding second section. However, it now transforms into a hymn of praise for Jeanne: «Praise to our sister Jeanne, who blazed like fire for all eternity over dear France!» (rehearsal number 101). The hymn-like nature is emphasized by the unison presentation of the theme in the choral parts, accompanied by a solemn rhythmic stride in the orchestral voices.

A new concluding theme – enlightened and quiet – appears at the very end of the oratorio (rehearsal number 105, Lento). It is based on generalized intonations of a declamatory nature, with a wave-like melodic contour. This theme is performed by the «assembly of saints» (the Holy Virgin, Saints Catherine and Margaret, and the angelic voices), then taken up by the choir. The conclusion of the monumental dramatic oratorio-mystery with a lyrical theme allows us to speak of lyrical-epic features in the dramaturgy of the finale.

hinting at her possible release, admitting guilt would not have saved her life anyway – such were the laws of the Inquisition.

Conclusions

Thus, «Joan of Arc at the Stake» serves as a vivid example of the fusion and synthesis of elements from various genres (oratorio, opera, dramatic theater), which not only influenced the creation of a new genre – dramatic oratorio-mystery – but also determined the dramaturgical structure of the work. This structure is based on the interweaving of features characteristic of different genres. Oratorio traits include the monumental composition, large «fresco-like» style, and choral masses in the prologue and finale. The multifaceted nature of the action, the presence of multiple plot lines, and the introduction of contrasting characterizations are typical features of operatic dramaturgy. The fusion of oratorio and operatic elements is complemented by cinematic methods – sharp «scene changes», shifts in time and place, breaks in chronological sequence, and intertwining of plot lines. Strongly pronounced, too, are the traits of a dramatic play – most notably the assignment of the part of Joan of Arc to a dramatic actress. The blending of these diverse elements impacts the unfolding of the plot, the dynamics of character development, and the musical portrayal of the main figures.

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