UNIVERSITY OF OSTRAVA

FACULTY OF FINE ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF VOCAL STUDIES

The role of Despina from the opera Così fan tutte by W. A. Mozart and the specifics of its interpretation

BACHELOR THESIS

Author: Patricia Janečková

Supervisor: doc. MgA. Eva Dřízgová, Ph.D.

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• circumstances surrounding the origin and period context of the opera - analysis of the character of Despina from the perspectives of interpretation, psychology and her development - external concept of the Olomouc production from 2019 - comparison of various interpretations of Despina - statement on the artistic contribution to a young beginning artist - study of the role in a professional opera company.

List of recommended literature:

MELOGRANI, Piero. Mozart: Biography. Prague: Paseka, 2010. HARNONCOURT, Nikolaus. Musical Dialogue. Prague: H&H, 1994. ŠALDA, J. Prague: NS Svoboda, 1999. FREJKA, Jiří. The Living Theatre. Prague: Divadelní ústav, 1970. FALTYSOVÁ, Marie. Rococo Fashion. Prague: Mladá fronta, 1992. CASSINI, Claudio. Amadeus: The Life of Mozart. Prague: Academia, 2001.

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In Ostrava on 28 November 2019

ABSTRACT

This thesis considers the role of Despina from the opera Cosi fan tutte by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart from the point of view of the interpretation. It further looks at the process of staging, psychology of the role and stage development of acting and movement. The thesis also considers period clothing and costumes. It is based on the production by the Moravian Theater Olomouc from 2019 and on the author's own interpretive experience with this role.

Keywords:

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Così fan tutte, Despina, Moravian Theatre Olomouc, opera, opera part, rendition, interpretation, premiere

DECLARATION OF HONOUR

I, the undersigned student, hereby solemnly declare that the text of the final thesis I have submitted in printed form and on CD is identical to the text of the final thesis uploaded to the DIPL2 database.

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I declare that the submitted thesis is my own original work, which I prepared independently. All literature and other sources that I drew upon in preparing it are properly cited in the thesis and are included in the list of references.

In Ostrava on 25 May 2020

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INTRODUCTION

I chose the topic of my bachelor thesis on the basis of my own preparation for and experience of interpreting the role of Despina in Mozart's opera Così fan tutte on the professional opera stage of the Moravian Theatre Olomouc. I have performed the role of Despina at this theatre since May 2019.

The aim of this thesis is to analyse the role of Despina in terms of preparation, interpretation and the character of the figure in Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's comic opera Così fan tutte.

The theoretical part briefly focuses on the life of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, with emphasis on his operatic output as a whole. The opera Così fan tutte and the circumstances surrounding its creation are examined in greater detail. It provides information about the librettist Lorenzo Da Ponte and about the plot of the opera.

The practical part focuses on the role of Despina in the opera Così fan tutte. Based on personal experience of preparing this role, it analyses the interpretive requirements for Despina and the entire process of studying the part. In a specific analysis of the 2019 performance of Così fan tutte at the Moravian Theatre Olomouc, Despina's character is examined from interpretive, acting, movement and relational perspectives. The final chapter is devoted to the costumes of the Moravian Theatre Olomouc's 2019 production, which are conceived in the Rococo period. It examines Despina's costumes in greater detail and their positive and negative effects on stage. The author's own interpretive contribution is also analysed.

I have grown fond of the role of Despina, and I believe that through this thesis I can contribute above all to young artists beginning their careers on the professional stage.

1 WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was born on 27 January 1756 at 8 p.m., under the constellation of Aquarius, in the Austrian city of Salzburg. He was baptised at the font of the cathedral and, in accordance with the custom of the time, was given a long series of names: Johannes Chrystostomus (Chrysostom) Wolfgang Theophilus (Bohumil), the latter in honour of the merchant Pergmayr, who was Mozart's godfather. The last name was Germanised as Gottlieb and then rendered in Latin as Amadeus, and was sometimes altered to Amadé. At his confirmation he was given the additional name Siegmund in honour of Salzburg's ruler, the archbishop and Count Scharatenbach. Within the family, however, only the name Wolfgang was used, with various diminutives such as Woferl, Wolferl, Wolfgangerl or Wolfganggangrrl. In the Salzburg dialect, Gangerl meant a little devil. He sometimes introduced himself as "Trazom" or "Glagflow". At times he abbreviated his surname to "Wmzt". On one journey, for example, it occurred to him that his name might be Wolfgang Amadeo De Mozartini. After the age of thirty he invented the nickname "Punkitititi" and signed a letter with the initials "WAM".[1] Mozart himself devised various humorous versions of his name and was very creative in doing so. I would describe his personality as highly humorous, and this is also reflected in his comic operas.

As a small boy, Mozart needed affection, and several times a day he would ask the people around him whether they loved him. If they said no, he would burst into tears. He was the seventh and last child of Johann Georg Leopold Mozart (born 14 November 1719 in Augsburg) and Anna Maria Walburga Mozart, née Pertl (born 25 December 1720 in Sankt Gilgen). Of their seven children, only two survived: Wolfgang and his sister Maria Anna Walburga Ignatia (born 30 July 1751), nicknamed Nannerl (Annie). She was five years older than Mozart and was also an excellent musician. She was a model for her brother, although feelings of jealousy and rivalry appeared between them. At first she performed together with her brother, but later devoted herself to teaching the harpsichord. Their father Leopold taught both children. He was very meticulous and compiled a notebook of compositions for each of them. Mozart played the piano from the age of four and later also learned to play the violin, while taking an interest in mathematics.[2]

At the age of twenty-five he moved from his native Salzburg to Vienna, where he built a career as a musician. He gave private piano lessons, composed operas, sold

1 MELOGRANI, Piero. Mozart Životopis. Paseka. Praha: Paseka, 2010. ISBN 978-80-7432-062-0. s.5.
2 CASSINI, Claudio. Amadeus, Život Mozartův. Praha: Academia, 1995. ISBN 80-200-0862-4. s.17.

music to publishers and, as a composer and pianist, gave concerts. After his successful period came the war with the Turks, and his concert career collapsed. He had to move from the centre of Vienna to the suburbs and became a composer at the Viennese court.[3]

Mozart was a brilliant creator of chamber, symphonic and operatic music. He brought eighteenth-century opera to its culmination and, as the only composer of the "Viennese trio of Classical composers" (W. A. Mozart, Joseph Haydn, Ludwig van Beethoven), became an icon of operatic composition of that period. Mozart composed opera seria, then moved on to opera buffa and finally to Singspiel. Despite a certain immaturity of character, he possessed great talent and extraordinary gifts. He was very playful and was able to project his states of mind into his music. Mozart died in poverty in Vienna on 6 December 1791.[4]

1.1 Opera seria

Opera seria is serious opera in which emphasis is placed above all on the emotional element. During his journeys to Italy, Mozart composed opera seria under his father's supervision. At the age of fourteen he composed the opera Mitridate, Ré di Ponto (Mithridates, King of Pontus, 1770), which was successful in Milan and was repeated there a total of nineteen times. A year later, he presented the serenata teatrale Ascanio in Alba (Ascanio in Alba, 1771) in Milan. He composed the opera Il Ré pastore (The Shepherd King, 1775), to a text by Metastasio, for the Salzburg court, and by the age of twenty-five he had already undertaken stays and concert tours in Paris, London and Munich. For the electoral court in Munich he composed Idomeneo, Ré di Creta (Idomeneus, King of Crete; premiered 29 January 1781 in Munich). In this opera we encounter ballets, choruses, marches, extensive through-composed scenes and numerous accompanied recitatives. The libretto was written by Giambattista Varesco. Opera seria also includes La clemenza di Tito (The Clemency of Titus; premiered 6 September 1791 at the Estates Theatre in Prague), to Metastasio's libretto as adapted by E. Mazzolà, commissioned as a coronation work for Emperor Leopold II. Mozart wrote this opera in only eighteen days.[5]

3 ABBATEOVÁ, Carolyn and PARKER, Roger. Dějiny opery posledních 400 let. Prague: Argo, 2017. ISBN 978-80-257-2094-3.

4 TROJAN, Jan. Dějiny opery. Prague: Paseka, 2001. ISBN 80-7185-348-8. p. 106.

5 Ibid., pp. 106-107.

1.2 Opera buffa

Opera buffa is Italian comic opera, originating in the Italian tradition. Mozart's temperament was well suited to composing buffa. At the age of twelve he composed the three-act divertissement La finta semplice (The Pretended Simpleton, 1769), which ends with three marriages and is full of intrigue. For Munich he composed the opera buffa La finta giardiniera (The Pretend Garden-Girl, 1775), thanks to which he gained access to the theatrical stage.[6]

Mozart composed the musical comedy - commedia per musica - entitled Le nozze di Figaro (The Marriage of Figaro, 1786). This subject underwent many changes. It is an outstanding work composed on the basis of the literary trilogy by Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais. Lorenzo da Ponte reworked the middle part of this valuable dramatic text, cutting scenes, shortening it and translating it into Italian. The proportion of arias and ensembles is balanced; the opera has the longest finales in the operatic literature of its time, in the second and fourth acts. It was performed in Italian in Prague in December 1786; in Vienna it was performed in German in January 1787 and prompted the commissioning of Mozart's next opera, Don Giovanni. This opera premiered in Prague on 29 October 1787 at the Nostitz Theatre (now the Estates Theatre) and was conducted personally by Maestro Mozart himself. This performance became Prague's greatest cultural event. The wittiest buffa Mozart wrote was Così fan tutte (Thus Do They All, 1790). Dorabella is hot-tempered, Fiordiligi is more lyrical, Ferrando is a gentler type of man, and Guglielmo is more masculine. Despina and Don Alfonso provide the wit and intrigue in this opera. It contains dazzling arias for Dorabella and Fiordiligi, as well as many extensive ensembles. The libretto was written by Lorenzo da Ponte.[7]

1.3 Singspiel

Singspiel is a distinctly national German form of opera, arising from the domestic tradition and characterised by the alternation of musical numbers with spoken text. Mozart also wrote operas to German texts. His very first operatic premiere was the Singspiel Bastien und Bastienne (Bastien and Bastienne, 1768), which he wrote at the age of twelve. Here Mozart was inspired by French comic opera. In the second half of the eighteenth century new subjects appeared on the stage, and Mozart drew inspiration from Turkey. The opera Die Entführung aus dem Serail (The Abduction from the Seraglio, 1782) premiered at Vienna's Burgtheater

6 TROJAN, Jan. Dějiny opery. Prague: Paseka, 2001. ISBN 80-7185-348-8. pp. 107-110.
7 Ibid., pp. 110-112.

and was Mozart's first opera written on a Turkish theme; it enjoyed great success with audiences. Der Schauspieldirektor (The Impresario, 1786) is a one-act opera that Mozart composed on commission for the Schönbrunn court. Mozart was admitted to the Masonic lodges in December 1784 and perhaps for this reason his final stage work was inspired by Masonic orders. Mozart composed Die Zauberflöte (The Magic Flute; premiered 30 September 1791 at the Theater auf der Wieden in Vienna) to a libretto by Emanuel Schikaneder. This opera is called the great Masonic opera and was written when Mozart was already seriously ill.[8]

8 TROJAN, Jan. Dějiny opery. Prague: Paseka, 2001. ISBN 80-7185-348-8. pp. 110-112.

2 COSÌ FAN TUTTE

The opera Così fan tutte, ossia La scuola degli amanti (Thus Do They All, or The School for Lovers), K. 588, was created in 1789. It is an opera buffa in two acts. It is Mozart's final comic opera to an Italian text, with a libretto by Lorenzo da Ponte. Così fan tutte is the least known opera in Mozart's trilogy, which also includes The Marriage of Figaro and Don Giovanni. The subject of the opera is comic and points to female cleverness. It retains a comic character in the Italian style, but in many places Mozart elevates the subject to an emotional level. This opera focuses on human relationships and on the confusions that can occur in the life of any of us. It is probable that Mozart longed to save his marriage to Constanze, found himself in a similar situation and apparently identified with the character of Don Alfonso. At various points in the opera we most likely find echoes of conversations about fidelity and betrayal between Mozart and his wife Constanze. The final chorus then represents Mozart's assertion that happy is the person who allows reason to guide him and maintains his peace in the midst of the world. This was what Mozart wanted from Constanze.[9]

It is not known exactly how the Viennese audience reacted to Così fan tutte, but it is inferred that the response was somewhat lukewarm. It may have offended aristocratic circles. It may have appeared immoral to the Viennese public. It is full of indecent double meanings and mocks the institution of marriage. At that time the audience may have recognised itself. The theatres had to close on 20 February 1790 because Joseph II died, and therefore Così fan tutte was suspended after three repeat performances. A further five performances took place between June and August of the same year.[10]

Ludwig van Beethoven and Richard Wagner strongly rejected this opera despite greatly admiring Mozart. Ludwig van Beethoven was a serious and reserved man, and so the libretto by the poet Lorenzo da Ponte was completely unacceptable to him. Richard Wagner, by contrast, was a great Romantic, and his ideal was an innocent and pure woman, which is the exact opposite of what Mozart portrayed in this opera. Così fan tutte returned to the stage only at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, thanks to Richard Strauss, who considered it a perfect comic work. The Czech premiere of Così fan tutte took place in Prague in 1791 at the Hybernia Theatre.[11]

9 MELOGRANI, Piero. Mozart Životopis. Prague: Paseka, 2010. ISBN 978-80-7432-062-0. pp. 219-225.
10 Ibid., pp. 219-225.
11 The first Prague theatre converted from a monastery church.

The opera Così fan tutte is frequently performed in theatres throughout the world. In the Czech Republic, Così fan tutte is currently in the repertoire of the National Theatre Brno and the Moravian Theatre Olomouc, and several years ago it was staged at the National Moravian-Silesian Theatre in a poetic adaptation by Jaromír Nohavica. In this opera season it could be seen, for example, at the Metropolitan Opera in New York, where the Czech opera singer Adam Plachetka could be heard in the role of Guglielmo. Other theatres that have recently staged the opera include the New National Theatre Tokyo, Bayerische Staatsoper Munich, Dutch National Opera & Ballet Amsterdam, Grand Théâtre de Bordeaux, West Australian Opera Perth, and many others. The opera is also performed at many opera festivals, and recordings of these festival productions can also be seen on DVD, for example from the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence in France in 2005 and from the Salzburg Festival in 2013. Many other recordings exist from opera houses such as Teatro Real Madrid, the Royal Opera House, Zurich Opera House, Teatro alla Scala, the Metropolitan Opera New York, Vienna State Opera and others.

2.1 Circumstances surrounding the creation of the opera

The opera Così fan tutte (Thus Do They All) was commissioned by Emperor Joseph II. According to Constanze's testimony, he first commissioned the opera from Salieri, who began work on it, but because he did not like the subject, he abandoned it and the Emperor offered it to Mozart for 200 ducats (900 florins). This sum was twice the normal fee for an opera commission; Mozart accepted it also because of his financial difficulties. Constanze fell ill in July 1789 and Mozart found himself in a state of mental despair and was unable to compose.[12]

He wrote many letters to Puchberg urgently asking him for money. Puchberg traded in silk and was very accommodating towards Mozart. Between 1788 and 1791 he lent him around 1,450 florins. This was approximately as much money as Mozart would have earned in two years. However, because the complete correspondence between Puchberg and Mozart has not survived, it is possible that Mozart was even more deeply in debt. At his death Mozart still owed Puchberg 1,000 florins, which Puchberg never recovered. In 1802 Puchberg declared his company bankrupt, and in 1822 he died in poverty.[13]

12 CASSINI, Claudio. Amadeus, Život Mozartův. Prague: Academia, 1995. ISBN 80-200-0862-4. pp. 183-193.
13 LEONHARTOVÁ, Dorothea. Mozart, zamlčená tvář. Prague: Albatros, 2005. ISBN 80-00-01721-0.

In the autumn of 1789 Mozart finally began composing again and wrote the Clarinet Quintet K. 581 and the opera Così fan tutte, K. 588. In his memoirs Lorenzo Da Ponte refers to this opera only as Scuola degli amici (The School for Lovers). This title apparently derives from the first trio in the opera Le nozze di Figaro (The Marriage of Figaro). On stage Count Almaviva finds Cherubino curled up in an armchair in Susanna's room and concludes that the beautiful Susanna has allowed Cherubino to court her. Don Basilio comments on the situation with the words: "Così fan tutte le belle donne, non c'e alcuna novitá." ("That is how all beautiful women behave; there is nothing new in it.") Mozart originally wrote the two principal female roles for the Ferrarese sisters, who came from Italy. One of them, the greater intriguer Adriana, became Lorenzo da Ponte's mistress. This opera underwent many alterations. In the nineteenth century the belief began to spread that Così fan tutte was based on a true event and that Emperor Joseph II himself had supplied the subject. He could not attend the premiere or any of its first three repeat performances because he was at war against the Ottoman Empire; after returning from the war, he died on 20 February 1790 and therefore never saw the opera.[14]

2.2 Lorenzo da Ponte

Lorenzo Da Ponte's real name was Emanuele Conegliano. He was born on 10 March 1749 in Ceneda, Vittorio Veneto, Italy. He was an Italian of Jewish origin. After his mother's death, his father remarried a woman from a Catholic family and therefore decided in 1763 to have the whole family baptised. Emanuele consequently took the name of the bishop who baptised him. Da Ponte studied at a seminary and in 1773 received minor orders, but never pursued the priesthood. In 1779 he was banished from Venice, where he had worked as a professor of literature. He therefore went to Gorizia in northern Italy, where he established himself as a poet and translator. Here he first encountered work for the theatre when he was assigned to translate two tragedies from French. He had to leave Gorizia because of literary disputes. He then went to Dresden, where he began working with the poet Mazzola. In 1782 he went to Vienna with a recommendation to Salieri, who subsequently proposed that he become imperial court poet. Da Ponte was appointed to the court in 1783. His Viennese career reached its peak through his collaboration with Mozart. He wrote the libretti for Mozart's operas Le nozze di Figaro (The Marriage of Figaro), premiered in Vienna in 1786, and Don Giovanni, premiered in Prague in 1787. For the latter opera Da Ponte

14 CASSINI, Claudio. Amadeus, Život Mozartův. Prague: Academia, 1995. ISBN 80-200-0862-4. pp. 183-193.

personally took part in the rehearsals in Prague. He wrote missing sections, supervised the preparation and attended to details. Another libretto he wrote for Mozart was for the opera Così fan tutte (Thus Do They All), which premiered in Vienna in 1790.[15]

In 1791, when Leopold II came to power after the death of Joseph II, Da Ponte had to leave Vienna. He settled in Trieste, where he met his wife Nancy Grahl. She was the daughter of an English merchant, and he married her in August 1792. In March of the same year the couple settled in Vienna, but after a very short time they decided to move to Paris. In 1792 Da Ponte settled in London, where he worked at the King's Theatre as a theatrical poet. In 1798 he was dismissed from this position and tried unsuccessfully to make a living as a bookseller. In 1805 he and his wife moved to America, where he attempted to earn a living as a merchant in colonial goods, then as a distiller and pharmacist in Pennsylvania. In 1819 he returned to New York, where he opened a bookshop, taught Italian privately and wrote memoirs. In November 1825 he proposed a production of Mozart's opera Don Giovanni. It was the first performance of a Mozart opera in America and was very successful. Lorenzo prepared the libretto in both Italian and English, and both versions were very successful. This did not, however, improve his financial situation. In 1831 his beloved wife Nancy died, and Lorenzo Da Ponte lived out the rest of his life in poverty. He died in New York on 17 August 1838.[16]

Da Ponte's libretti were of a high stylistic standard. He was able to combine the Italian language perfectly with music. He knew how to sensitively unite the expression and metre of Italian poetry. His experience with many personalities in the theatre gave him an excellent sensitivity to audiences. We can observe this in his London period, which evokes an elegiac-pastoral to classical atmosphere, while in his Viennese period we can follow work influenced by the great era of buffa and by the audience at the Viennese court. Goldoni was his great model. Da Ponte's libretti are dignified; he does not use ridiculous or vulgar expressions. In his time he was unique. With a sense of perspective he was able to combine wit and the dramatic drive of comic pieces; individual scenes and characters, through to the final dramas, were always comprehensively thought out.[17]

15 JAKUBCOVÁ, Alena et al. Starší divadlo v českých zemích do konce 18. století. Osobnosti a díla. Prague: Divadelní ústav, 2007. ISBN 978-80-7008-201-0. pp. 127-129.

16 Ibid., pp. 127-129.

17 Ibid., pp. 127-129.

Lorenzo da Ponte, with his unfailing sense of theatrical effect together with the literary quality of his texts, undoubtedly contributed to the extraordinary success of the three Mozart operas (Le nozze di Figaro, Don Giovanni and Così fan tutte) that emerged from this creative collaboration.[18]

2.3 Synopsis of the opera

The opera Così fan tutte (Thus Do They All) is in two acts. The libretto was written by Lorenzo da Ponte. Fiordiligi and Dorabella are sisters from Ferrara. Ferrando and Guglielmo are their fiancés from Naples. Don Alfonso is an old philosopher and Despina is the sisters' maid. The action takes place in Naples during the Rococo period at the end of the eighteenth century. Così fan tutte is built around ensembles, arias and choruses. It contains 31 numbers in total, 18 of them in Act I with recitatives and the remainder in Act II; overall, ensembles outnumber arias. In every note the music carries seriousness and cheerfulness, comedy and genuine feeling, exaggeration and realistic expression. The musical setting is masterful and refined, and the expressive power of the music surpasses the subject and its value.[19]

Characters:[20]

Fiordiligi - soprano

Dorabella - soprano/mezzo-soprano, her sister

Ferrando - tenor, Dorabella's fiancé

Guglielmo - baritone, Fiordiligi's fiancé

Don Alfonso - bass, an old philosopher

Despina - soprano, the sisters' maid

Act I

The action of Così fan tutte is set at the end of the eighteenth century in the Italian city of Naples, where two officers, Guglielmo and Ferrando, are engaged to two sisters, Fiordiligi and Dorabella. The young officers are convinced that their fiancées would never be unfaithful to them with another man. Their friend Don Alfonso is convinced that all women are

18 ZOCHLING, Dieter. Kronika Opery. Prague: Fortuna Print, 1999. ISBN 80-86144-24-0. p. 58.

19 HOSTOMSKÁ, Anna et al. Opera, Průvodce operní tvorbou. Prague: NS Svoboda, 2018. ISBN 978-80-205-0637-5. pp. 119-122.

20 MOZART, Wolfgang Amadeus. Cosi fan tutte. Milano: Ricordi, 1961.

inconstant in love and bets the young officers that, if they do everything he tells them for one day, he will prove his claim. Both lovers agree and wager 100 ducats with him because they trust their fiancées.

Scene change: Don Alfonso tells the fiancées that their betrothed are leaving for war. The two lovers say goodbye to their fiancées and promise them eternal fidelity. Alfonso meanwhile prepares a plan for winning the wager.

Scene change: The girls are very sad and long for their fiancés. Their maid Despina tries to cheer them up and advises them to find new suitors, because men are inconstant in love and do not deserve women’s fidelity. The sisters leave because they disagree with her. Don Alfonso arrives and bribes Despina. She brings in two Albanians who have come to visit Naples and introduces them to the fiancées. The two foreigners are very pleasant and talkative. They are Ferrando and Guglielmo in disguise, and even Despina does not recognise them. The sisters are angry that strangers are in the house. Each man courts the other’s fiancée, but the sisters reject them in every possible way. The fiancés are delighted by this and plan how they will spend their winnings. They leave the house, and Don Alfonso reminds them that it is not yet evening and devises another plan with Despina.

Scene change: The sisters are sad and miss their fiancés. Meanwhile the foreigners return to the house and pretend that they have taken poison because of unhappy love. The girls are moved and call Despina. They send her for a doctor and in the meantime try to care for the foreigners themselves. After a while the doctor arrives, but no one suspects that it is Despina in disguise. She draws the poison out of the poisoned men and tells the women to care for the sick men until they recover. During their recovery the sisters begin to take a liking to the foreigners and no longer reject their courtship.

Act II

(Evening) Despina tries to explain to the fiancées that they should not take fidelity so seriously and should enjoy life. The sisters begin flirting with the foreigners and divide them between themselves. Alfonso is pleased that each has chosen the other’s fiancé.

Scene change: A romantic encounter takes place. Alfonso and Despina leave, allowing the lovers to be alone. Dorabella accepts a golden heart from Guglielmo as a gift and in return gives him a chain bearing a picture of her fiancé. Fiordiligi continues to resist Ferrando, but eventually admits to herself that she has fallen in love.

Scene change: Later the foreigners meet. Ferrando tells Guglielmo that he was unsuccessful with his fiancée. Guglielmo tells him the opposite and shows him Ferrando’s miniature. Ferrando is disappointed by his fiancée’s behaviour, and Guglielmo wants his share of the winnings. But the day is not yet over.

Scene change: Fiordiligi is angry at her sister’s inconstancy, but she too feels that she has fallen in love with the foreigner. She wants to remain faithful to her fiancé, but Ferrando returns and once again tries to win Fiordiligi’s love, and this time he succeeds. Guglielmo is angry. Alfonso knows that he has won and prepares a double wedding.

Scene change: Despina suggests to the sisters that they marry the foreigners. They agree to the proposal and send Despina for a notary. Everything is prepared and Alfonso arrives with the notary. Instead of a notary, however, the maid Despina comes on stage in disguise. At the moment when the couples are about to sign the marriage contract, Don Alfonso pretends that the fiancés are returning from the army. The two foreigners flee and return in their own identities. They find the marriage contract and accuse the sisters of infidelity. Finally, both admit that they themselves were behind the foreigners’ disguises. Despina realises that Alfonso told her only part of the plan and feels deceived. The fiancées ask for forgiveness, and Don Alfonso urges all four lovers to learn a lesson from what has happened. The day ends with a celebration of reason and wisdom.

3 PREPARATION OF THE ROLE OF DESPINA

Mozart’s opera Così fan tutte is known throughout the world and continues to be performed in many opera houses worldwide in a variety of adaptations, independently of the original notation and conception. The central idea of this opera remains relevant today, and therefore lends itself to virtually any directorial treatment set in any period or environment.

3.1 Interpretive requirements for Despina

For an artistic performance to be of value, the performer should above all possess vocal maturity. She needs to have mastered vocal technique and to have movement and acting abilities. The role of Despina is listed as a soprano role, but also as a mezzo-soprano role. The vocal part lies predominantly in the middle register, and therefore the ability to use the chest register is also required for this role, particularly in ensemble numbers. By contrast, Despina’s arias offer the opportunity to create one’s own vocal cadenzas which, although stylistically restricted, are not restricted in range, so that the performer has the opportunity to display her vocal abilities even into the third octave. It is important to maintain the appropriate style and phrasing and to observe the score in terms of rhythm, dynamics and agogics.

The original text of the opera is written in Italian, so knowledge of the correct pronunciation, stresses and accents of the language is required. It is necessary to know the literal translation of the entire text as thoroughly as possible, so that the performer can inhabit the role and so that every acting gesture, movement and facial expression has a basis. The key is to understand the character and to have the ability to identify with the role of Despina and all of her subsequent transformations so that the performance is credible and convincing for the audience. Another essential quality is the ability to adapt to the current situation on stage, to be flexible and to react promptly to colleagues and the conductor. When necessary, the performer must also be able to improvise and respond to an unexpected situation that may arise.

The prerequisite is to have vocal technique, knowledge of the text, rhythm and melody so thoroughly internalised and automatic that the performer has room to fulfil the director’s requirements and, in addition, enrich them with an individual acting contribution. Self-control and a certain restraint on the performer’s part during the rehearsal period are integral. It is necessary to listen to and fulfil the conductor’s requirements, while also being able to contribute one’s own opinion.

3.2 Study process for the role of Despina

The first priority is to judge correctly whether the role is suitable for the performer in terms of age, singing and vocal qualities. If these requirements are met, we can proceed to the first, informational stage of study. The most important source of information is the piano-vocal score, from which we learn the role. It contains all the important information for the performer, including the libretto, which must be known very well. Through the plot of the opera we become acquainted with our own role, the other characters and the relationships connecting them.

Study begins with learning the text with precise pronunciation, preferably by heart. Once the text has been mastered, we combine it with the rhythmic component. After precisely mastering the spoken text with its rhythm, we can move on to learning the written melody. I recommend studying at a slow tempo, because it is necessary to learn to intone cleanly and correctly and to observe the phrasing, dynamics and rhythm. In order to learn the vocal line precisely, it is important to repeat phrases and particular vocal passages several times in succession. At this stage of study I recommend singing an octave lower so that the voice is not unnecessarily strained at the beginning.

After completely mastering the previous recommendation, we can proceed to the next stage of study: singing in the original register, with correct vocal technique, on supported breath and in the correct stylistic interpretation. Here again we repeat several times the vocal phrases in which more difficult passages may occur. This is the place to make use of the singer’s learned technical procedures so that the given passage can be sung comfortably. Ideally, it is appropriate to sing under the guidance of a voice teacher, whom a singer should have throughout his or her singing career. At this stage of study we already make use of coaching sessions, which help us develop an interpretive conception, recognise emotions and feelings, and prepare us for embodying the role.

Another important step is the ensemble rehearsals, where we meet the conductor and the other soloists for the first time. The soloists need to be aware of and listen to one another, and during these rehearsals absorb all the conductor’s information and comments. At this stage we perceive and study the opera as a musical whole.

The next phase begins with the first introductory rehearsal with the director, during which the performers are introduced to the director’s dramatic and visual concept and to the proposed set and costumes. We receive information about the director’s conception of Despina and her character, and begin

working on that intention, to which we add our own wit and sense of comedy. It is always necessary to enrich the character with one's own experience, imagination and emotional involvement.

The following stage, which lasts approximately two months, consists of blocking all the scenes with piano accompaniment. We build the character's personality in terms of movement and voice. Gradually, we refine the movement, expression, gestures, facial expressions and overall character until they fully correspond to the director's conception. It is precisely during this period that we have the opportunity and space to create the role and identify with it both physically and psychologically. Through this intensive rehearsal process, we should connect and subsequently internalise vocal technique with movement and acting so that we appear natural and self-assured on stage. This period concludes with the so-called piano dress rehearsal, during which the entire opera is performed on the set and in costume so that the director and opera singers can check and refine the details before moving on to work with the orchestra.

The next phase is the so-called "sit-down" rehearsal, during which we encounter the orchestra and chorus for the first time. The entire cast is unified rhythmically, dynamically and interpretively, and the two components work together towards ideal coordination. This rehearsal takes place without acting or movement on stage. Once these components have been joined, the entire cast moves to the stage, where the opera is "polished" into the final form in which it will be presented as a completed production. From the premiere onwards, all that remains is to enjoy the prepared role on stage responsibly and with pleasure.

4 THE 2019 PRODUCTION OF COSÌ FAN TUTTE AT THE MORAVIAN THEATRE OLOMOUC

The premiere of Così fan tutte at the Moravian Theatre Olomouc took place on Friday, 10 May 2019. The opera is performed in the original Italian with Czech surtitles and lasts approximately 2 hours and 45 minutes. This two-act comic opera was musically prepared by Miloslav Oswald, head of the opera/operetta company, who also conducts the opera. The production was directed by Slovak director Andrea Hlinková, with set and costumes by Miriam Struhárová. Musical preparation was provided by Milada Jedličková and Lucie Kaucká.

Cast:

Fiordiligi - Elena Gazdíková / Barbora Řeřichová

Dorabella - Radoslava Muller / Anna Nitrová

Ferrando - Jozef Gráf / Milan Vlček

Guglielmo - Martin Štolba / Tadeáš Hoza

Don Alfonso - Jiří Přibyl / David Szendiuch

Despina - Barbara Sabella / Patricia Janečková

4.1 The character of Despina in the 2019 Moravian Theatre Olomouc production

Despina is a young maid, companion, cook, doctor and notary. She is a highly adaptable and comic character who offers an incredibly varied range of acting modes and characterisations. She is the maid of two sisters with whom she has a close and friendly relationship, although she must still maintain a certain distance because of their social class. Her most characteristic traits are high spirits, free-spiritedness and a great sense of humour. She is a comic and entertaining character, very playful and willing to impersonate other people for the sake of a joke and amusement. Overall, Despina is a positive character in the opera. She is able to listen to the sisters and support them in any situation that arises, while at the same time she is always confident in the experience she has acquired and therefore feels more “above it all” than the girls. She often feels the need to instruct them and convince them of “her” truth. She enjoys playing with men like “a cat with a mouse”. Don Alfonso is captivated by her beauty and temperament, but he is far too

old and unattractive for Despina, and so she flirts with him only for amusement. She is self-confident enough that at certain moments she even allows herself to flirt with Guglielmo, although she knows perfectly well that he is attached. Like most women, Despina is fascinated by beautiful things, and she is therefore enchanted by the material gifts the sisters receive from their disguised lovers. These include beautiful dresses, jewellery, perfumes and cosmetics. Despina knows very well that she will never own such things, and therefore takes every opportunity to touch and try them. She imagines that these things belong to her.

Her temperament and character can be expressed through acting in many ways. The entire role requires consistency of expression, gait, facial expression and gesture. Despina's walk is quick and agile, and all her movements are sharp and energetic. This consistent manner must be maintained in every acting situation, including her laughter, all interjections and the expression of emotion. Despina constantly feels the need to draw attention to herself, even at moments when she is not the centre of interest on stage. She draws attention to herself with loud, distinctive laughter, affected facial expressions and theatrical gestures, such as rolling her eyes or waving her arms. Despina likes being the centre of attention, but she also enjoys moments of privacy. When she knows she is alone in the room, undisturbed and without anyone else present, she enters her own world and does not hesitate to hum melodies of her own invention and entertain herself with her dance creations.

At the finale of Act I, Despina enters the stage in her first disguise, as the doctor who "cures" Guglielmo and Ferrando. The doctor is an old-fashioned comic character, involving changes in vocal colour, gait and diction.

In Act II Despina is flirtatious, even slightly cheeky, and curiously peeks behind the sheet to admire the naked gentlemen. She is so inquisitive that during the duet between Ferrando and Fiordiligi, when the two want to be alone together, she finds many reasons to keep returning to them while pretending not to notice them. In the finale of Act II, Despina and Don Alfonso prepare a grand wedding. Here she proves herself to be a reliable maid who takes the preparations for the ceremony seriously. Once everything is ready, she slips unnoticed from the stage and returns disguised as a notary. The notary is again an old-fashioned comic character, with changes in vocal colour, gait and diction. The doctor disguise differs from the notary disguise in both acting and expression. This disguise depicts an old man who fictitiously marries the two exchanged couples. Despina's impersonation ends when Guglielmo exposes her. While removing the disguise, the maid reveals her true identity to the sisters and thereby also the invalidity of the marriage contracts. The entire wager is thus revealed and the game approaches its end. Despina has fulfilled all her tasks and therefore deservedly enjoys a glass of champagne with Don Alfonso. With mildly

mischievous interest she watches the sisters apologise to one another for their sins and declare their love for their true lovers. In the end there is nothing left to do but forgive one another, and the whole game ends with a group photograph beside the wedding cake.

4.2 Aria from Act I[21]

Despina's first aria, "In uomini, in soldati...", occurs approximately halfway through Act I of Così fan tutte. It is written entirely in F major with the tempo marking Allegretto. It begins in 2/4 time and changes to 6/8 in bar 25. The pitch range of the piece is from C4 to A5, and the aria lies primarily in the middle soprano register. The aria contains 93 bars in total. It is preceded by a recitative in which Despina asks Fiordiligi and Dorabella why they are both unhappy. She learns from them that the girls' lovers must leave for war. Because Despina is unattached and free-spirited, she cannot imagine their pain and therefore makes light of the situation. She persuades the sisters to detach themselves from their partners and enjoy their freedom with other men, because in her view their beloveds will do exactly the same while at war. In the aria itself, Despina feels experienced and above the situation, and therefore feels the need to teach Dorabella and Fiordiligi what men are really like. According to her, they are all unfaithful, fickle, untruthful and false, and so Despina urges the sisters to detach themselves emotionally and enjoy themselves just as the men do.[22]

In this aria the performer has many places where she may, but need not, use appoggiaturas. This depends on the conductor, who may prefer more ornamentation or may adhere to Classical simplicity. At the same time, there are places in the aria where the typically "Mozartian" releases must be observed; in this piece they are achieved by a light emphasis on the first beat of each bar. In bars 20 and 57[23] there is a fermata, which offers the possibility of a short and simple cadenza. Bars 31-33[24] contain technically more demanding octave leaps, and the phrase can also be exhausting in terms of breath. This can be prevented by taking a deep breath in the middle of bar 30[25] and conserving the breath so that the entire phrase can be sung in one breath. The following bars may at first appear relatively simple, but it is necessary to realise that they form a preparatory phrase for bars 41 and 44, where G5 is sung,

21 The text of this chapter refers to the musical material contained in Appendix No. 1.

22 Translation by Marie Kronbergerová - translator, publicist and language consultant.

which is already a more demanding tessitura. Bar 57 contains the previously mentioned fermata on A-flat5 to the text "...chieder pietà".[26] For this note to sound well, the solution is to anchor the tone correctly in the forward resonators. In the last two phrases before the climax of the piece, trills are written on "tralala"; these should be as light as possible and likewise relaxed in the forward resonators, so that they fulfil the playful affect connected with the meaning of the text at the end of the aria. The final two phrases of the piece can be understood as the climax of the aria itself, in which W. A. Mozart used unusual intervallic leaps - major ninths.

From the acting perspective, everything derives from the translation of the aria's text. The entire aria takes place in the sisters' room. In order for the sisters to understand correctly what Despina is trying to tell them, she assumes the posture of a man, represented by stiffening her body, thrusting out her chest and clenching her fists. Everything she says is exaggerated, almost parodied. After a comic military march across the front of the stage, Despina giggles to herself and, with graceful feminine movements, offers the sisters a cup of tea. On both sides of the room stand mannequins wearing ladies' dressing gowns, which Despina uses as props to demonstrate male seduction to the sisters. She therefore again assumes a male posture, kneels before the mannequin, kisses imaginary hands, fondles it and invites it to dance. To make the girls understand that when a man sees a prettier woman he immediately scorns the first, Despina moves to the second mannequin and seduces it even more intensely. She concludes this entire acting étude with her favourite dance creations, which she also tries to teach the ladies so that they relax as she does and begin to enjoy themselves more.

4.3 Aria from Act II[27]

Despina's second aria, "Una donna a quindici anni...", opens Act II of Così fan tutte. The entire aria is written in G major, begins with the tempo marking Andante and changes to Allegretto from bar 21. It is written throughout in 6/8 time. The pitch range of the piece is from D4 to B5 and, like the first aria, it lies primarily in the middle soprano register. This aria contains 99 bars in total. It too is preceded by a recitative with Fiordiligi and Dorabella, as in the aria from Act I.

In the aria Despina instructs the sisters on how a young woman should behave towards men, what she should know and how she should control them. Although at first glance it may appear that she is instructing them for their own good, she is cunning and does everything for her own benefit, in order to persuade the sisters to enjoy themselves with the foreigners

26 Czech translation: "... ask for mercy".

27 The text of this chapter refers to the musical material contained in Appendix No. 2.

and thereby help Don Alfonso win the wager. At the end of the aria she is proud of herself because it seems to her that the sisters have taken a liking to this instruction.

Given the meaning of the text, the entire piece should be sung joyfully and with a dance-like mood. Above all, the performer should have the agogics of this aria very carefully conceived and worked out. In the very first two bars, although it is not written in the score, I sing with a sense of portamento in order to separate the following bars expressively. In bar 4 there are sixteenth notes under a slur, and there the legato should be observed strictly. Appoggiaturas are written in bars 6 and 7, and it is appropriate to use them to express Despina's playfulness. Since the phrases from bars 13-17 and 17-21 are completely identical, it is appropriate to distinguish them expressively as well. The meaning of the text can also help create a dynamic contrast, for example by singing the first phrase forte/mezzoforte and the second phrase, by contrast, mezzopiano/piano. Bar 21 contains a fermata and a change of tempo marking, which alters the character of the following phrases. This is expressed by the written staccato in the musical accompaniment. The phrase beginning at bar 29 has a descending-ascending melodic line spanning a major sixth at a relatively fast tempo, so attention must be paid to clean intonation.

The written fermata in bar 36 should be emphasised by a feeling of increased weight and a ritardando on the three preceding notes. This also helps the expression, as Despina calculatingly claims that lying is an art. In the following phrase, F-sharp5 is written forte on the word "regina". In bar 67 the notation gives a melody similar to the preceding phrases, but in a more exposed register, and the word "regina" appears again, this time on G5; therefore the same applies here as in bar 37. In bar 75 a melodic gradation appears, and I therefore begin this section mezzopiano with a gradual crescendo to forte in bar 78 on the word "voglio". Bar 80 contains D4, which is already relatively low for a soprano, so I sing it with a connected chest register. The following phrase, from bar 81, is entirely forte and the melody constantly moves on F-sharp5 and G5, so care must be taken to support the breath correctly from the diaphragm and keep the throat free. At the same time, this phrase can be understood as the climax of the entire aria because the highest note in the piece - B5 - also appears here. Despina sings the final phrase of the aria to herself, so singing piano is desirable here.

From the perspective of acting, movement and stage business, this aria is quite extensive. Fiordiligi and Dorabella are relaxing in a wellness spa, and Despina, as their faithful maid, waits on them both and looks after their comfort. She therefore has a unique opportunity to instruct the girls once again,[28] while applying facial

28 See the Czech translation in Appendix No. 2.

masks, scraping hardened skin from their heels and applying shaving foam to their legs. The purpose is clear - the girls are expecting male visitors and therefore want to look perfect. There are countless acting actions and props used in this aria, so it is important to have the music and text of the aria completely internalised. It provides an ideal opportunity to capture Despina's nature through the previously mentioned quick walk, sharp movements, and theatrical facial expressions and gestures. Despina is completely frank with the girls and therefore does not hesitate to make it clear that their feet are neither particularly fragrant nor beautiful. These emotions can be expressed through pronounced, disgusted grimaces. Despina's gestures clearly demonstrate that the sisters' feet are not very appealing, and she therefore holds them with only two fingers. Because Despina has a sense of humour, she does not miss the opportunity to apply the shaving foam so that it sprays everywhere around her. After completing her work, she hands the girls razors and towels, leaves them to rest, and exits the stage once again with her creative attempts at dancing.

4.4 Personal interpretive contribution

Understanding and empathising with the character being prepared is very important, as it subsequently influences the character's actions, conduct and behaviour towards the other characters on stage. Despina is a young chambermaid, free-spirited, mischievous and hyperactive, and this inspired me to make her into a modern young woman. When I am alone on stage, I light and enjoy a cigarette and have tea with it. When I see an opportunity to have a glass of champagne, I am very happy to take advantage of the situation, drink it with pleasure and secretly pour myself another. I am very curious, and so sometimes I creep around the sisters, at other times I tiptoe around the foreigners, or look at them discreetly through my fingers. I also have the opportunity to express myself both as an actress and a singer in my two additional disguises.

In the doctor disguise, I created a comic character by choosing a mincing gait with the very small steps of a very old gentleman suffering from "Parkinson's disease".[29] Exaggerated trembling of the body, and especially of the hands, suits this elderly character. I also use a change of vocal colour and diction, singing the doctor in an extremely nasal,[30] almost parodic manner, while taking extra care not to damage my voice. I add a slight tongue-tied quality to the exaggerated articulation so that Fiordiligi and Dorabella do not recognise Despina in disguise.

29 Parkinson's disease - a neurodegenerative disease of the central nervous system; common symptoms include tremor, feelings of fatigue, stiffness in the limbs and muscles, sleep problems and others. Parkinson's disease was first described by the London physician James Parkinson in 1817. (ROTH, J., SEKYROVÁ, M. and RŮŽIČKA, E. Parkinsonova nemoc, 2009.)

30 Muffled, nasal singing.

In the second disguise, as the notary, I made use of the seriousness of this character and adopted a hunched gait with a slight forward stoop, intended to represent an old and painful back. The notary’s very conspicuous and comic glasses represent poor eyesight and, because of them, very poor orientation on stage, manifested by bumping into people and walls. Because of the poor eyesight, I begin reading the marriage contract I have with me for the couples to sign upside down, but fortunately the couples in love do not find anything suspicious. It is genuinely impossible to see through these glasses, so while singing I have to comically slide them down to the tip of my nose in order to see the conductor’s hand. For the character of the notary I use a low vocal placement with coughing fits, even though I am still singing in the soprano register. It is strenuous for the vocal folds, but it sounds very comic.

5 ROCOCO COSTUMES, WITH A FOCUS ON THE OLOMOUC PRODUCTION OF COSÌ FAN TUTTE

In the Moravian Theatre Olomouc production of Così fan tutte, the costume design and scenography were created by Miriam Struhárová, who conceived the entire production in the Rococo period. This style took its name from the twisted ornament “rocaille”, meaning a shell. Rococo flourished during the reign of Louis XV. The style placed emphasis on beauty, splendour and dignity. During the reign of Louis XIV, France was regarded as the “queen” of fashion, but the Rococo period confirmed its outstanding reputation and leading position worldwide and maintained its fashion supremacy of the time. The clothing of this style was more refined and decorative than that of the preceding period. The typical Rococo silhouette was known as the “Robe à la française”, or French-style dress. This style remained in fashion until the French Revolution.

The outfit consisted of three basic elements: the dress, petticoat and triangular stomacher, which filled the deep neckline of the bodice. A corset and a framed crinoline were worn beneath the dress and together shaped the silhouette. At the height of Rococo ornamentation, the nobility needed more comfortable clothing for everyday life and looked to ordinary people for inspiration. The practical jackets and skirts worn by lower-class women influenced aristocratic fashion, and elegant women’s clothing, except on formal occasions, gradually moved towards a more restrained style. Women’s Rococo fashion was characterised by elegance, refinement and ornamentation, while also incorporating elements of whimsy and coquetry. Small details softened the enormous crinolines. Garments were made from soft satin and other lustrous fabrics, accompanied by rich cascades of lace and ribbons in delicate, light pastel shades. Natural proportions were disrupted; disproportion became a characteristic feature. The dimensions of the crinoline and hairstyle contrasted with miniature decorations, while naturalness was replaced by imitation and artificial effects. Fashion designers encouraged the whims of the nobility, competing with one another in extravagant arrangements of both hair and clothing.

One of the principal elements of women’s fashion was the crinoline, which served as a support system for the dress and consisted of five rows of hoops that became smaller towards the top. The skirt rose so far at the sides that ladies could rest their hands upon it. The unnaturally gathered skirt also required a specific posture. Slightly raised arms, with the elbows held away from the body, resembled the pose of porcelain figurines. Skirts were decorated with entire cascades of lace, ribbons, bows and artificial

flowers, of which Rococo was particularly fond. Underwear became much more prominent than before in the period of low necklines. The petticoat did not serve merely to support the skirt. Its lower hem, often decorated with lace, ribbons or flounces, was occasionally visible while walking, and the legs were sometimes exposed to the ankles; stockings therefore became a fashion accessory. They were even decorated with silver and gold and with embroidery.[31]

Rococo shoes were made from brocade, silk, velvet or satin. High heels, lace decorations and ribbons made them a fashionable and delicate accessory. Men's footwear consisted of low shoes decorated with a buckle.[32]

Rococo hairstyles displayed everything the imagination of hairdressers could devise. White powdered wigs concealed age and looked as artificial as Rococo fashion itself. The hairstyles were very uncomfortable but, conversely, extremely fashionable. Flat bottles containing a little water, for example, were inserted into hairstyles, with fresh flowers and stems placed in them. Springtime on the head, amid snow-white powder, created the impression of a fresh breeze. Men's wigs were arranged in a queue, tied with a ribbon and powdered white.[33]

A typical Rococo decoration was the beauty patch. These small silk patches, in various shapes such as flowers, circles, squares or animals, contrasted with carefully made-up skin. They were artfully placed in areas intended to attract attention through beauty and seductiveness, for example on the forehead, neck, cheek and décolletage. A small pouch for cosmetic items, known as a "pompadour", became an accessory of the lady's toilette. This little bag was named after Madame de Pompadour, mistress of Louis XV. Fans also played an important role at court. Ladies were permitted to open them only in the presence of the queen. They were made from leather, silk and parchment and decorated with mother-of-pearl, tortoiseshell and silver. Later they also came into use among the bourgeoisie. The artificial style of dress was emphasised by elaborate make-up. Layers of powder stylised the face. Despite all its splendour, Rococo fashion was highly unhygienic. Strong perfumes masked the smell of dirt and perspiration.[34]

31 SKARLANTOVÁ, Jana a ZÁRECKÁ, Jaroslava. Základy oděvního výtvarnictví. Praha: SPN, 1978.

32 Móda: z dějin odívání 18., 19. a 20. století: sbírka Kyoto Costume Institute. Přeložila BRABCOVÁ, Blanka. Vyd. 1. Praha: Slovart, 2003. ISBN 3822826243.

33 SKARLANTOVÁ, Jana a ZÁRECKÁ, Jaroslava. Základy oděvního výtvarnictví. Praha: SPN, 1978.

34 Móda: z dějin odívání 18., 19. a 20. století: sbírka Kyoto Costume Institute. Přeložila BRABCOVÁ, Blanka. Vyd. 1. Praha: Slovart, 2003. ISBN 3822826243.

5.1 Analysis of the costumes in the Olomouc production of Così fan tutte

Dorabella has a costume with a Rococo silhouette consisting of a corset-shaped bodice decorated with flounces and bows, and three-quarter sleeves with flounces, sewn together with a layered skirt fastening at the back. The skirt is lifted by a typical Rococo crinoline reaching to the floor. As the basic pattern for Dorabella's entire costume, the designer used broad diagonal stripes alternating in light blue and coffee brown. She skilfully coordinated this with a fan made of real feathers and a blue tulle appliqué decorating the Rococo wig. The neckline is dominated by striking pearls and small earrings. When Despina undresses Dorabella on stage in front of the audience, Dorabella remains in her corset and wide, gathered, knee-length white satin drawers, decorated with blue bows matching those on the bodice. The ensemble is completed by white fishnet hold-up stockings and white Rococo shoes with blue satin bows.

Fiordiligi's costume is almost identical in cut to her sister's, but the designer used a different colour scheme: delicate pink combined with white. The costume is also decorated with lace and bows, and broad stripes again play an important role. The ensemble is completed by a beautiful white fan made of white feathers and a pearl necklace with a medallion, an accessory that is an important part of the story. Fiordiligi's wig is likewise decorated with a tulle appliqué which, under the theatre lights, visually enlarges the head and thus further emphasises the Rococo style of ostentation. Her underwear, accessories and shoes are identical to Dorabella's. During the opera, both Dorabella and Fiordiligi appear in colourful women's dressing gowns decorated with flounces and fastened with a single button beneath the bust. Both sisters wear the gowns over their underwear, that is, over the corset, drawers and hold-up stockings. In the finale of Act II, both ladies enter in sumptuous, full white wedding dresses with a Rococo silhouette. Their wigs are decorated with long tulle veils that fall with the dresses to the floor.

The entire opera opens with a comic scene in which Ferrando and Guglielmo fall from the sky like two parachutists - a "leap" into the twentieth century, since the parachute dates from 1911. Ferrando and Guglielmo first appear on stage in brown overalls decorated with epaulettes with gold fringes on the shoulders, fur collars and sleeves

with prominent cuffs. The costume is cut and decorated throughout with gold braid and striking gold buttons, together with applied false pockets. The three-quarter-length trouser legs of both men are also decorated at the sides with gold buttons and are completed by black boots. They wear aviator goggles, leather earflap caps and black leather gloves matching the caps and boots. To achieve a striking subsequent costume transformation, the designer also gave both men dark beards.

The men’s following disguises are again Rococo in style and identical in silhouette. As with the sisters, different colour schemes are used, foreshadowing the story for the audience. Ferrando’s costume includes a blue A-line coat decorated with bows, braid and applied pockets with satin ribbons. The front panels are decorated with colour-coordinated applications of gathered braid. The lower sleeves have circular chiffon flounces. From the same materials and colours, the designer created a striking jabot at the neck. Beneath the coat Ferrando wears a second layer consisting of a purple satin shirt and a man’s waistcoat. Ferrando’s waistcoat has a delicate stripe whose colouring works beautifully with the outer coat, while the colouring of Guglielmo’s lower waistcoat matches Fiordiligi’s costume beautifully. Beneath the waistcoats, the men wear satin shirts coordinated with their costumes and three-quarter-length trousers. The lower hems are again decorated with bows, whose colour is echoed in the bows on the shoes. The men’s legs are also decorated with dark patterned fishnet knee-high stockings. Ferrando’s trousers are plain blue satin, while Guglielmo wears satin trousers with coloured stripes. Both men’s shirts are decorated with flounces, jabots and bows protruding from the coat sleeves. Both men’s wigs are grey and Rococo in style, with a queue at the back and ringlet curls decorating the sides of the head.

Don Alfonso likewise wears a typical dark-grey Rococo coat made of brocade. The costume includes a waistcoat with decorative appliqués, a chiffon jabot with a bow at the neck, and cuffs at the sleeves. His three-quarter-length trousers with a subtle grey-and-black stripe are colour-coordinated with Despina’s costume. Like Guglielmo and Ferrando, he wears knee-high stockings and heeled men’s Rococo shoes with buckles. Don Alfonso’s wig is deliberately untidy and dishevelled. Alfonso’s face is made up in the Rococo style and completed by an attached long grey full beard corresponding with the wig.

5.2 Analysis of Despina’s costumes in the Olomouc production of Così fan tutte

Despina enters the stage in a Rococo-style costume. She wears a bodice with a rectangular neckline, chiffon inserts and sleeves ending in circular flounces; it is cut at the waist, into which a full skirt is sewn. The maid’s entire costume is made from black-and-white striped material. Over the dress she wears a white chiffon apron tied with a large, conspicuous bow. The volume of the skirt is supported by side hoops and a crinoline which, together with a simple undecorated white corset beneath the dress, creates the Rococo silhouette. Her head is adorned with a large black curly wig with two large swept-up buns at the sides.

At the end of Act I, Despina changes into her first disguise, the doctor. In great haste, she puts a black three-quarter-length balloon-cut coat with a stand collar over her striped dress. The front of the coat is decorated with gathered black braid, and the sleeves have wide buttoned cuffs. A very dominant accessory of the doctor’s disguise is a large black felt hat with a very broad brim and a high crown. A further detail of the disguise is a pair of round black plastic spectacles with very thick lenses.

In the finale of Act II, Despina changes for the second time, this time into the role of the notary. She wears a long black cape made from a carpet-like material, with two openings for the hands in the front. The dominant feature, standing out in colour against the dark base of the cape, is a large white collar falling over the shoulders, cut into pronounced points at the front and rounded at the back. The notary’s costume is complemented by a striking musketeer hat with a large feather and a long, curly black wig falling below the shoulders. The notary’s disguise is completed by the same spectacles used for the doctor.

5.2.1 Advantages and disadvantages of Despina’s costumes on stage

Every artist should be able to adapt to and cope with the costumes designed for a production. Any costume can help a singer, but it can also hinder them in terms of movement, acting or singing. The role of Despina likewise faces both positive and negative effects from its costumes. Women’s corsets are an integral part of women’s costumes. In my case, the corset helps me to become aware of and support my overall

breath support and also helps me maintain correct posture. Despina’s wig is both asymmetrical and heavy, and therefore needs to be carefully secured and glued to the head.

Both of Despina’s disguises are layered over her costume and, as a result, both complete costumes are excessively heavy. Moving and singing on stage in these costumes is not at all easy. It becomes unpleasantly hot beneath them and I have to pay attention to the coordination of my body. The greatest hazard of the disguises is the hats. The doctor’s hat is placed on Despina’s large wig in a very short time and, because it is secured only by an elastic band, its weight combined with its instability forces me to be even more alert so that it does not fall off, since the role of the doctor involves a great deal of movement. The notary’s hat is placed on the long wig, which means that the musketeer hat sits correctly and there is no risk of it falling during the acting and singing. The risk arises when I have to remove the hat in front of everyone, so I take care not to remove the wig together with it. All positive and negative experiences on stage are enriching and move us forward in our professional lives.

CONCLUSION

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was a highly gifted pianist and composer. During his life he travelled to many places from which he drew inspiration, and not only his operatic works but also all of his instrumental music continue to be performed throughout the world today.

The aim of this bachelor's thesis was an interpretive analysis of the role of Despina in Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's opera Così fan tutte. I analysed the role in terms of interpretive requirements and the study process. I then applied this to my preparation of the role of Despina for the Moravian Theatre Olomouc's 2019 production of Così fan tutte, in which I personally perform the role of Despina. I described the role from interpretive, acting, movement and relational perspectives.

I analysed Despina's costume and both of her disguises, including all their positive and negative effects on stage and how to deal with them with professionalism and perspective. Meeting the requirements of the conductor, director or costume designer may not always be easy, but with new challenges I gain new experiences that I can then apply in other opera productions.

During the preparation of the role of Despina, I realised that as a performer I must have an excellent command of vocal technique. For this artistic performance to be of value, it is also absolutely essential to possess movement and acting abilities. This role enriched me with new singing and acting experience. I learned to react more promptly and to cooperate with colleagues on stage. I also learned to be more flexible and quick in unexpected situations, which taught me rapid reactions, improvisation and collegiality. I am very grateful for the opportunity to prepare and sing the role of Despina at the Moravian Theatre Olomouc, and I hope that I will have the good fortune to perform and sing it in other opera houses as well.

RÉSUMÉ

The theoretical part of the bachelor's thesis contains brief information about the composer, the librettist, and the period and circumstances in which the opera Così fan tutte was created. The principal practical part of the thesis is devoted to the preparation of the role of Despina in the Moravian Theatre Olomouc's 2019 production and to an analysis of the role in terms of interpretation, acting, movement and relationships. The thesis also considers costume design in its historical context, focusing in particular on Despina's costume and all of her disguises. Their possible influence on the artist's performance on stage is also described. In the conclusion, the author summarises the knowledge and experience gained while preparing and interpreting the role of Despina.

SUMMARY

The teoretical part of the thesis focuses on the opera Così fan tutte in general – its author of the music, the librettist, the time and circumstances of the origin. The main practical part of the work is concerned with the role of Despina from the production of the Moravian Theater Olomouc 2019. It contains an analysis of interpretation, acting, movement and relations. The thesis is also discussing the costume design in the historical context, mostly the costume of Despina and all her costume changes. It also concerns a possible influence of the costume on the performance of the artist on the stage. In the conclusion of the work, the author summarizes her knowledge and experience gained during studying for and interpreting of the role of Despina.

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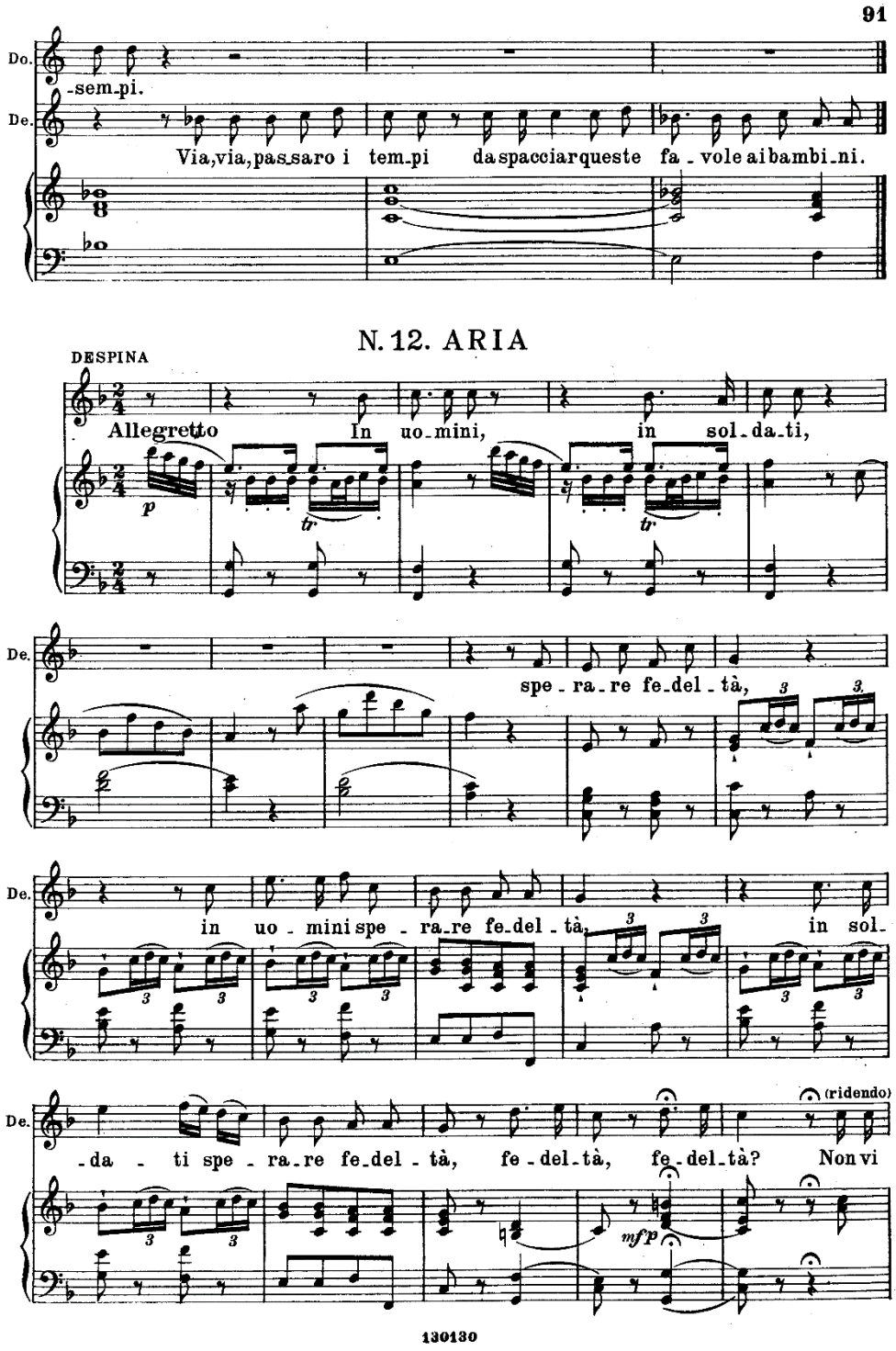
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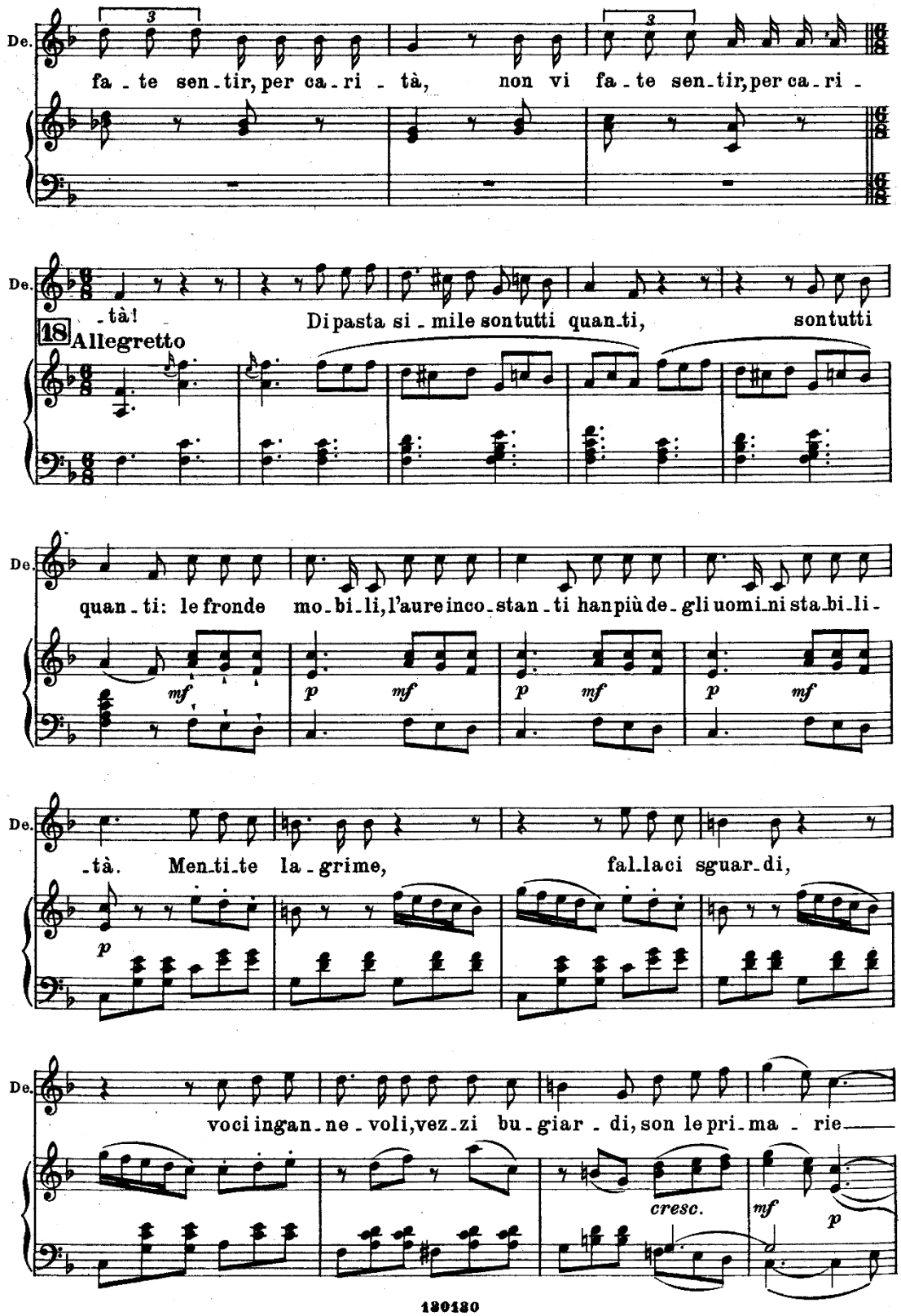
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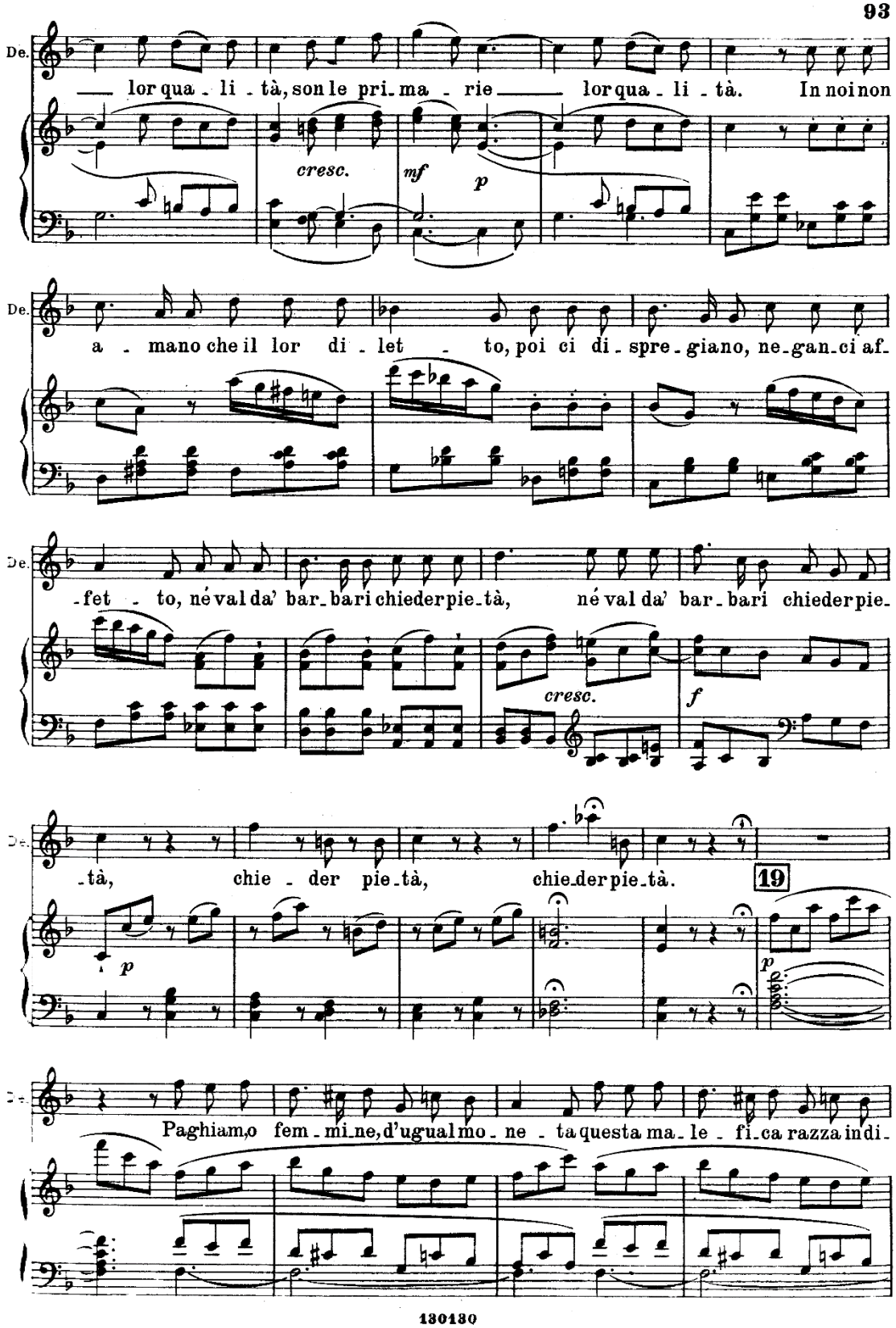
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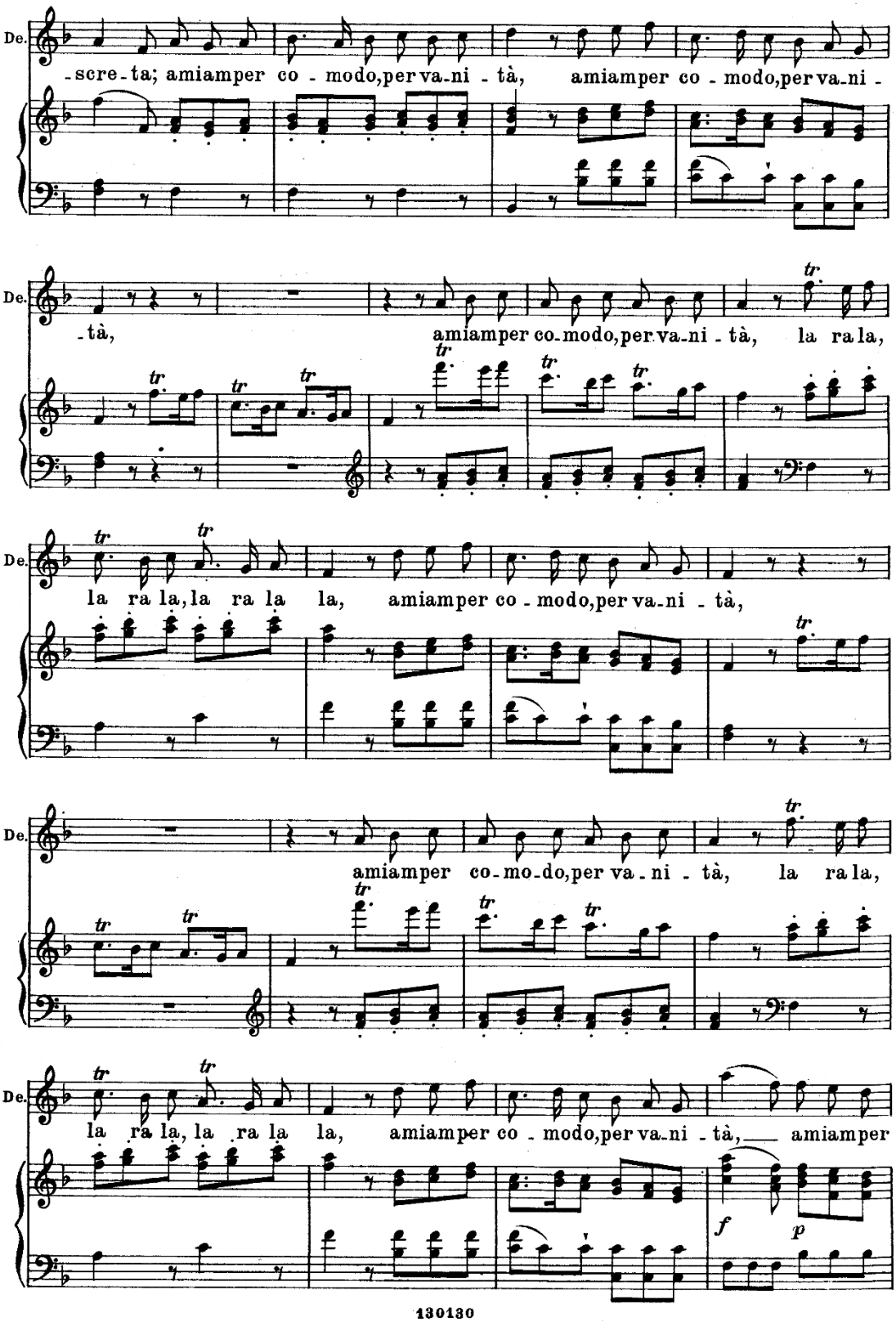
No. 1: Despina's first aria

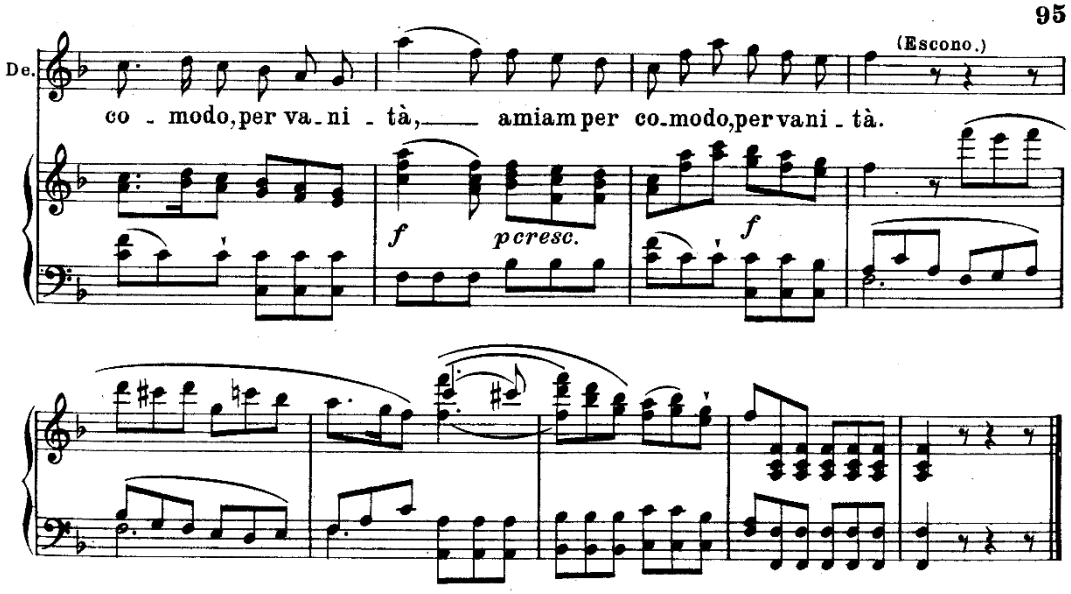
č. 1: První árie Despiny




De.
fa - te sen - tir, per ca - ri - tà, non vi fa - te sen - tir, per ca - ri -
- tà!
Di pasta si - mile son tutti quan - ti, son tutti
18 Allegretto
quan - ti: le fronde mo - bi - li, l'aure inco - stan - ti han più de - gli uomi - ni sta - bi - li -
mf
p mf
p mf
p mf
- tà. Men - ti - te la - grime, fal - laci sguar - di,
p
voci ingan - ne - voli, vez - zi bu - giar - di, son le pri - ma - rie
cresc.
mf
p

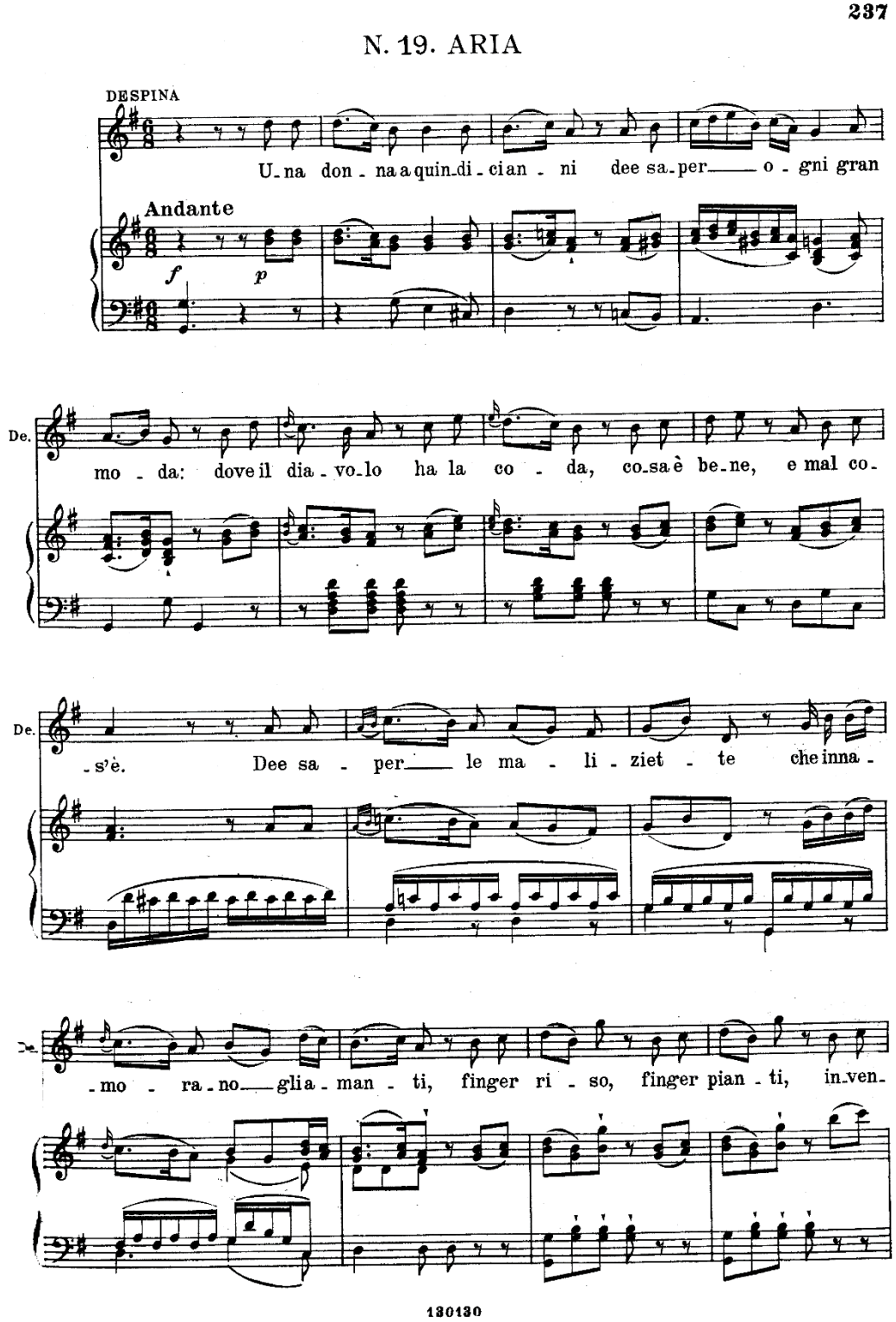

De.
lor qua - li - tà, son le pri - ma - rie lor qua - li - tà. In noi non
cresc.
mf
p
De.
a - mano che il lor di - let - to, poi ci di - spre - giano, ne - gan - ci af -
De.
- fet - to, né val da' bar - bari chieder pie - tà, né val da' bar - bari chieder pie -
cresc.
f
De.
- tà, chie - der pie - tà, chie - der pie - tà.
19
p
p
De.
Paghiam, o fem - mi - ne, d'ugual mo - ne - ta questa ma - le - fi - ca razza in di -

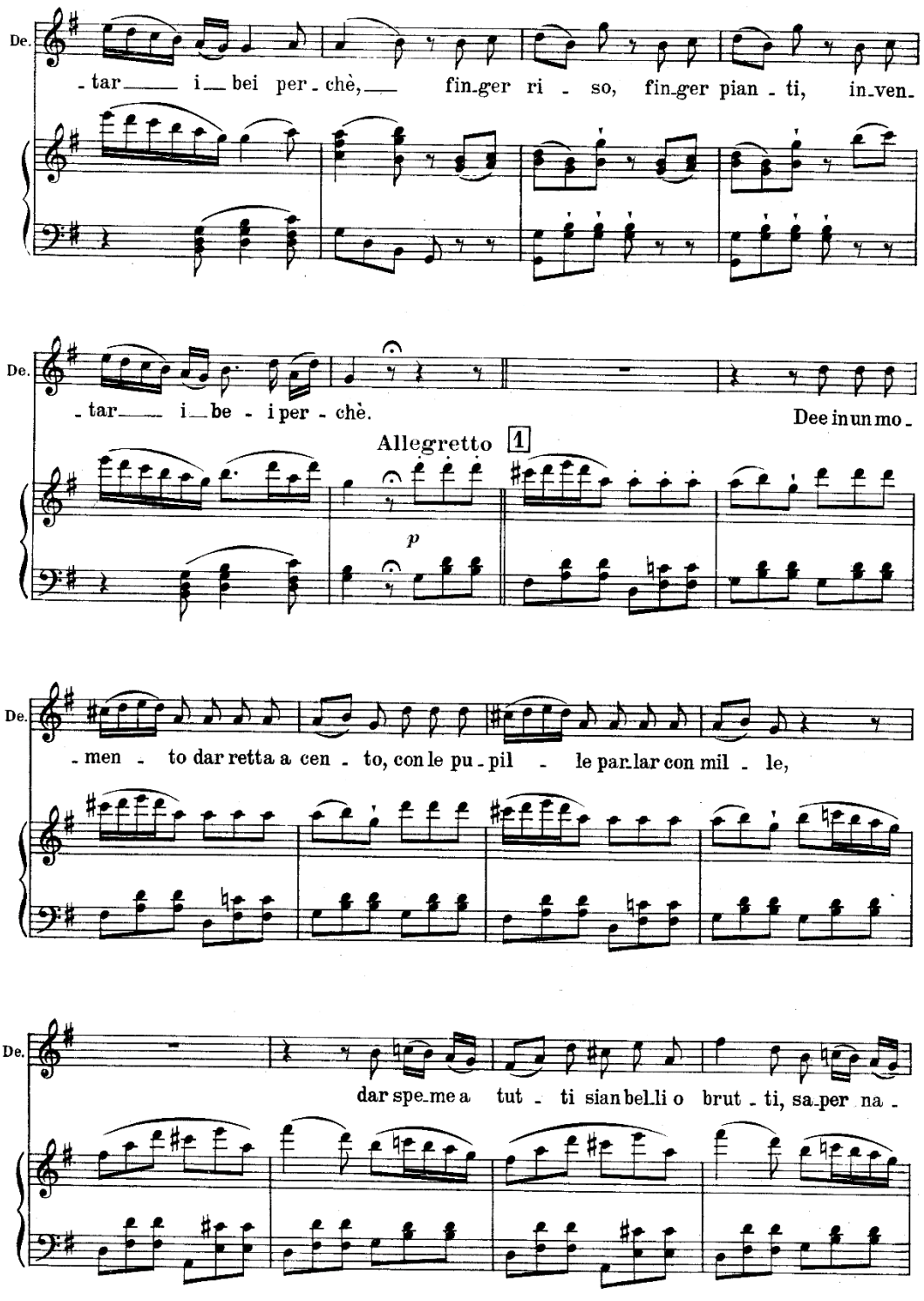

De.
-scre-ta; amiamper co - modo,per va-ni - tà, amiamper co - modo,per va-ni -
De.
-tà, amiamper co-modo,per va-ni - tà, la ra la,
De.
la ra la,la ra la la, amiamper co - modo,per va-ni - tà,
De.
amiamper co-mo-do,per va - ni - tà, la ra la,
De.
la ra la, la ra la la, amiamper co - modo,per va-ni - tà, amiamper
f
p

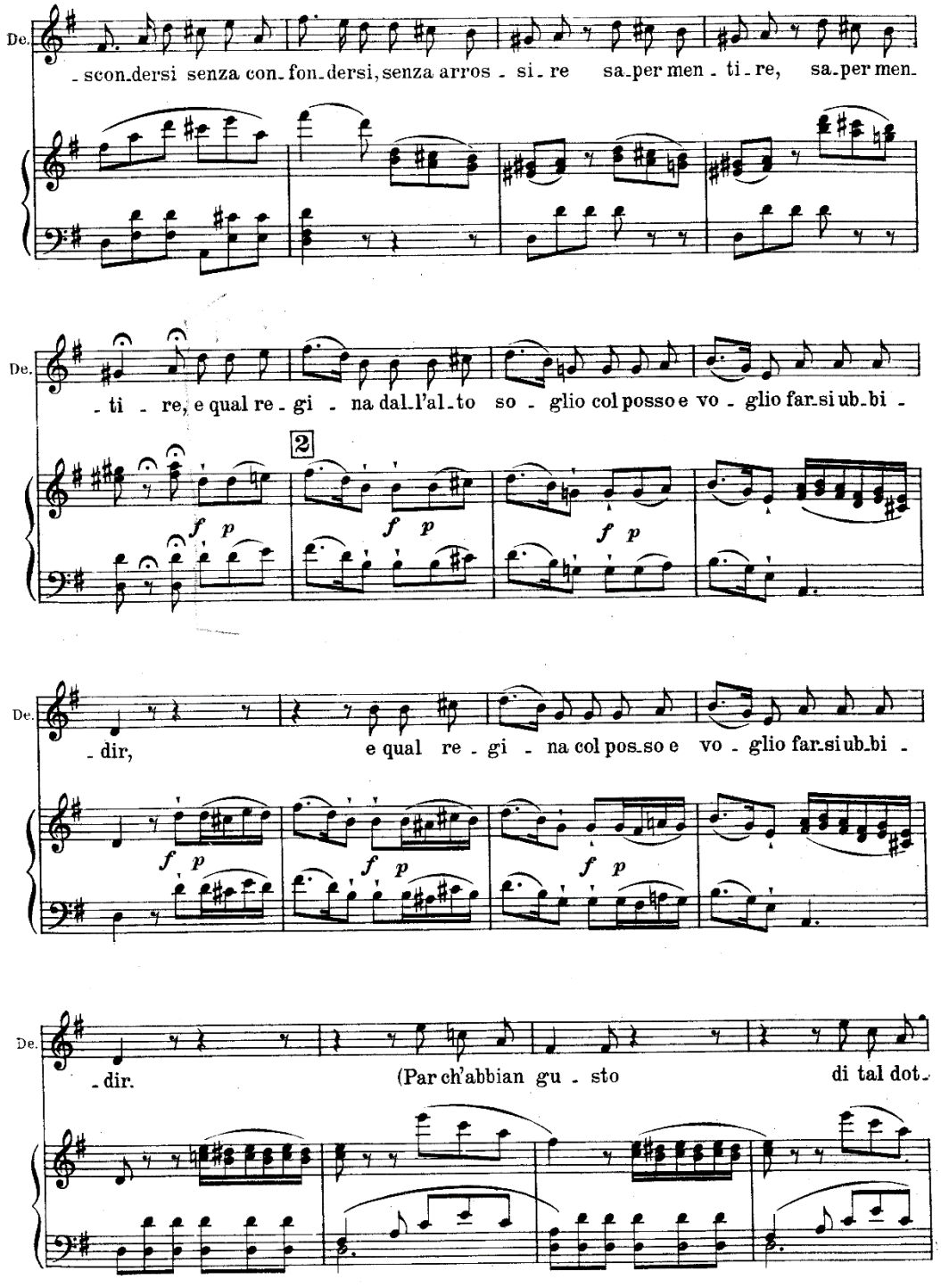

De.
co - modo, per va - ni - tà, amiam per co-modo, per vani - tà.
(Escono.)
f
p cresc.
f

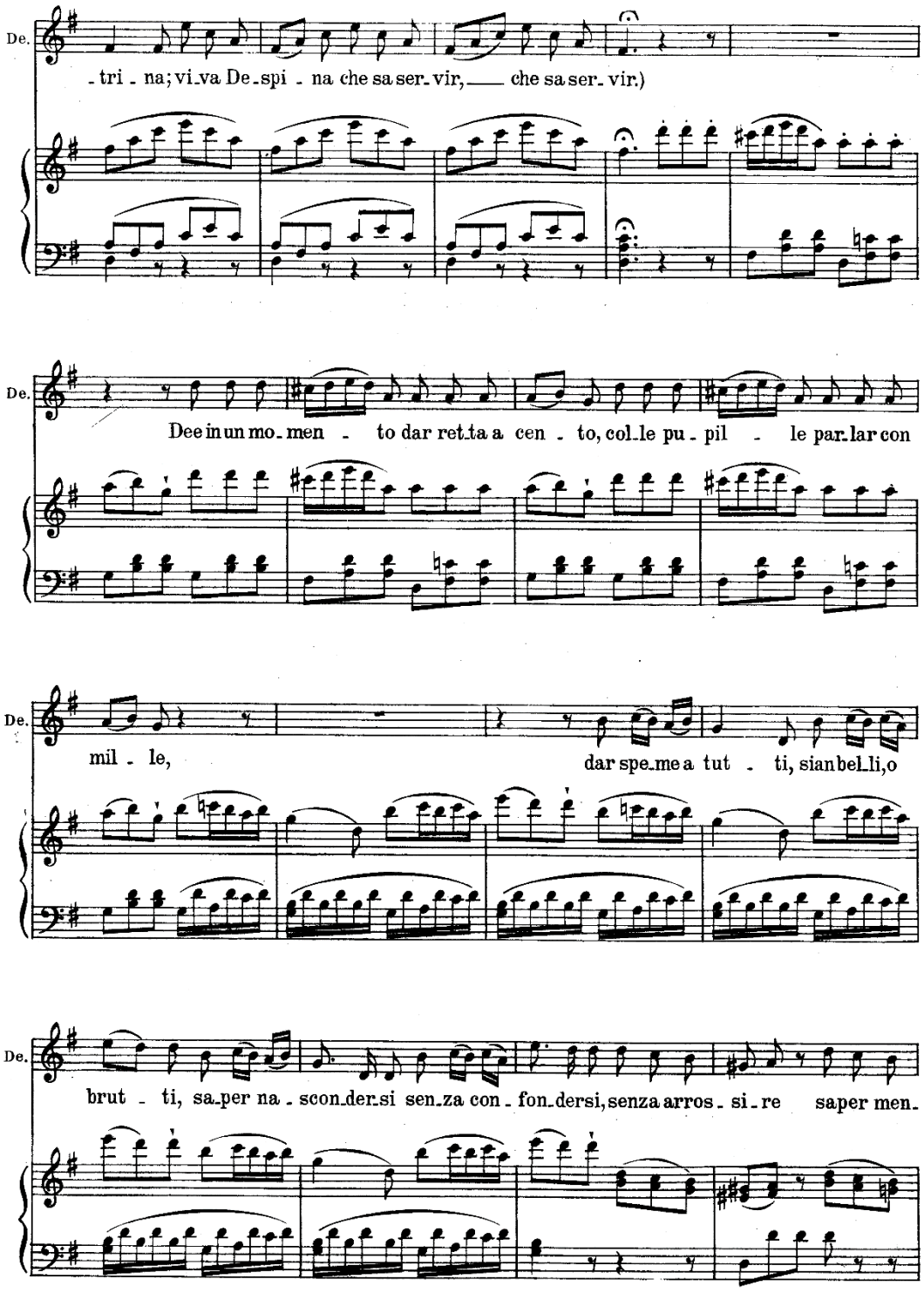
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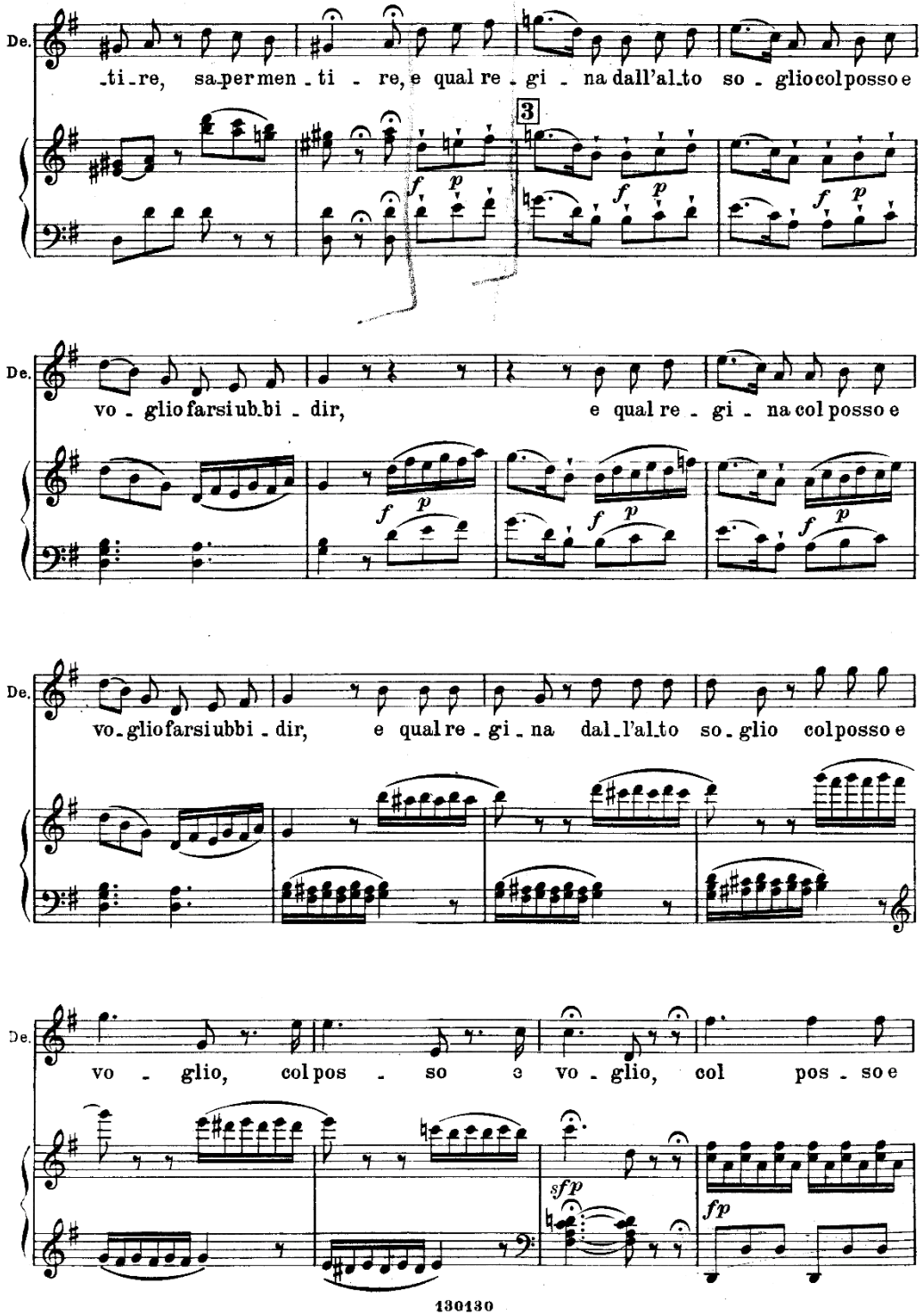
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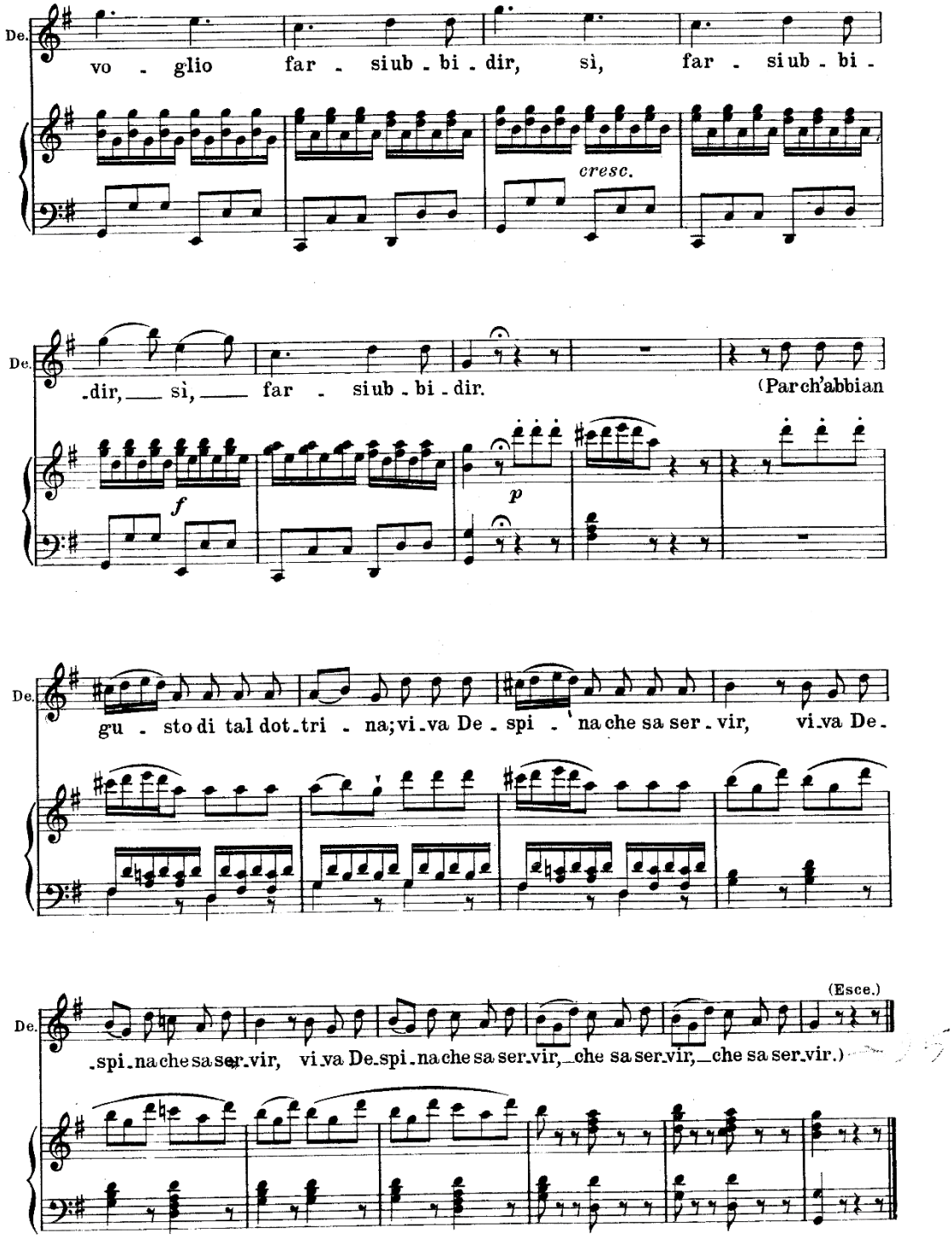



De.
-tar i bei per-chè, fin-ger ri - so, fin-ger pian - ti, in-ven-
De.
-tar i be - i per - chè.
Dee in un mo-
Allegretto 1
p
De.
-men - to dar retta a cen - to, con le pu-pil - le par-lar con mil - le,
De.
dar spe-me a tut - ti sian bel-li o brut - ti, sa-per na -


De.
-scon-dersi senza con-fon-dersi, senza arros - si - re sa-per men - ti - re, sa-per men-
De.
- ti - re, e qual re - gi - na dal-l'al-to so - glio col posso e vo - glio far-si ub-bi -
2
f p
f p
f p
De.
- dir, e qual re - gi - na col pos-so e vo - glio far-si ub-bi -
f p
f p
f p
De.
- dir. (Par ch'abbian gu - sto di tal dot-


De.
-tri - na; vi_va De_spi - na che sa ser_vir, che sa ser_vir.)
De.
Dee in un mo_men - to dar ret_ta a cen - to, col_le pu_pil - le par_lar con
De.
mil - le, dar spe_me a tut - ti, sian bel_li, o
De.
brut - ti, sa_per na_scon_der_si sen_za con_fon_dersi, senza arros_si_re saper men_


De.
_ti_re, sa_per men_ti _ re, e qual re_gi _ na dall'al_to so _ glio col posso e
3
De.
vo _ glio farsi ub_bi _ dir, e qual re _ gi _ na col posso e
De.
vo_glio farsi ubbi _ dir, e qual re _ gi _ na dal_l'al_to so_glio col posso e
De.
vo _ glio, col pos _ so e vo _ glio, col pos _ so e
sfp
fp


De.
vo - glio far - siub - bi - dir, sì, far - siub - bi -
cresc.
De.
-dir, sì, far - siub - bi - dir. (Par ch'abbian
f
p
De.
gu - sto di tal dot - tri - na; vi - va De - spi - na che sa ser - vir, vi - va De -
De.
(Esce.)
-spi - na che sa ser - vir, vi - va De - spi - na che sa ser - vir, che sa ser - vir, che sa ser - vir.)

II. English translations of the arias

Translation No. 1:

In Uomini, in Soldati,	In men, in soldiers,
Sperare fedeltà?	Hope for fidelity?
Non vi fate sentir per carità!	For heaven's sake, don't even say it!
Di pasta simile	They are all made
Son tutti quanti:	Of the same stuff:
Le fronde mobili,	Fluttering branches,
L'aure incostanti	Fickle breezes
Ha più degli uomini	Have more constancy
Stabilità.	Than men.
Mentite lagrime,	Feigned tears,
Fallaci sguardi,	Deceitful glances,
Voci ingannevoli,	Deceptive words,
Vezzi bugiardi	False caresses
Son le primarie	Are their principal
Lor qualità.	Qualities.
In noi non amano	In us they love
Che'il lor diletto;	Only their own pleasure;
Poi ci dispregiano,	Then they despise us,
Neganci affetto,	Deny us affection,
Né val da' barbari	It is no use asking such barbarians
Chieder pietà.	For mercy.
Paghiam, o femmine,	Let us repay, O women,
D'ugual moneta	In the same coin
Questa malefica	This malicious
Razza indiscreta;	Impertinent race;
Amiam per comodo,	Let us love for convenience,
Per vanità.	For vanity.

Translation No. 2:

Una donna a quindici anni	A woman at fifteen
Dee saper ogni gran moda:	Must know every great fashion:
Dove il Diavolo ha la coda;	Where the Devil has his tail;
Cosa è bene, e mal cos'è.	What is good and what is bad.
Dee saper le maliziette	She must know the little tricks
Che innamorano gli amanti,	That captivate lovers,
Finger riso, finger pianti,	Feign laughter, feign tears,
Inventar i bei perché.	Invent pretty reasons and excuses.
Dee in un momento	In a single moment she must
Dar retta a cento,	Pay attention to a hundred,
Colle pupille parlar con mille,	Speak with her eyes to a thousand,
Dar speme a tutti,	Give hope to everyone,
Sien belli, o brutti,	Whether handsome or ugly,
Saper nascondersi	Know how to conceal herself
Senza confondersi,	Without becoming confused,
Senza arrossire	Without blushing,
Saper mentire,	Know how to lie,
E qual regina	And, like a queen
Dall'alto soglio	From her lofty throne,
Col "posso, e voglio"	With "I can, and I will"
Farsi ubbidir.	Make herself obeyed.
(Par ch'abbian gusto	(It seems they like
Di tal dottrina,	This teaching,
Viva Despina	Long live Despina,
Che sa servir.)	Who knows how to serve.)

III. Interview with director Andrea Hlinková, via e-mail correspondence dated 31 March 2020

1. How did you come to be offered the opportunity to direct the opera Cosi fan tutte in Olomouc?

I received the offer to direct Così fan tutte at the Moravian Theatre in Olomouc from the artistic director of the opera company, Miloslav Oswald. After several successful productions I had created for this theatre over the previous few years (for example Falstaff, Eugene Onegin, La Bohème and Rigoletto), I was approached again for further collaboration. This time, however, we wanted a change, so we chose W. A. Mozart's operatic comedy Così fan tutte.

2. What do you find interesting about this opera?

I must admit that this opera is very close to my heart, because it was my graduation production at the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava. Staging Così fan tutte brought back pleasant memories of my student years. All of Mozart's operas, especially his comic works, are immensely interesting and very inspiring to me. Since I speak Italian fluently, it is a great challenge for me to search both the text and, of course, the music for various hidden references, secrets and puzzles, details and, above all, the double meanings for which Mozart and the librettist Da Ponte were famous. Although the plot of this bizarre opera is relatively simple, it still contains an incredible essence of musical beauty and character creation.

3. What is your usual working process and preparation, from the first rehearsal to the premiere? How was it working with us, the performers?

The process of preparing and studying an opera is, for a director, a period of searching, thinking, listening to recordings and carrying out various kinds of research, whether in books or online. For me it is usually about half a year of work before a precise idea of the future opera takes shape in my mind. And of course I wait for the moment when the muse visits me and gives me a 'kick'. Once I have an idea of the directorial and visual concept, I begin collaborating with the designer, and together we gradually put together the opera's 'design'. It is a very creative period, after which the 'harsh reality' usually arrives in the form of financial possibilities and the need to give up some of our creativity. In cooperation with the theatre and its technical possibilities and equipment, we always look for

compromises that allow us to come as close as possible to my 'ideal' directorial concept. The most beautiful part of preparing an opera - especially a comedy - begins with the rehearsal process. While preparing Così fan tutte at the Moravian Theatre in Olomouc, I encountered a wonderful group of young and exceptionally talented artists. My high directorial demands fell on fertile ground, because the atmosphere throughout the rehearsal process was very friendly, inspiring and constructive, even if at times perhaps exhausting. This creative period culminated in a beautiful premiere with which we were all extremely satisfied.

4. Which moments in the opera are key in your view?

Finding the right directorial key to stage the opera in such a way that you make the audience believe that the sisters Fiordiligi and Dorabella can be deceived by their fiancés' disguises is one of the greatest challenges for a director. If this succeeds, I think it is a victory for the director. In my view there are several key moments in the opera, but because conductor Oswald and I decided on a number of musical cuts, the dramaturgy of the original work is structured somewhat differently. In Act I of my production, the key moment was certainly the arrival of Ferrando and Guglielmo disguised as gay fashion stylists. From that moment the real 'crazy' comedy begins, culminating in the first finale at the end of Act I. I think an important moment in Act II is Ferrando and Guglielmo's admission of defeat before Don Alfonso, the principal instigator of the wager (Così fan tutte).

5. Who is Despina? What is she like, and why?

Despina - servant, maid, nanny, companion, cook, doctor, notary, stylist ... and above all Don Alfonso's right-hand woman. To me, Despina is an exceptionally versatile and comic character who offers an incredibly varied range of acting modes and characterisations. Opera singers cast in this beautiful role of Despina should have excellent vocal and technical maturity as well as physical fitness (this is, of course, my subjective opinion). In my production I see her more as the crazy friend of two bored young ladies than as some negative 'bitch'. She is a very lively and energetic character who brightens up her 'boring' life and has fun together with Don Alfonso. I cannot fail to mention Patricia's portrayal of Despina, which

embraced my directorial intention with great enthusiasm and raised the level of the production considerably through her acting and singing talent. In portraying the role, Patricia made use of her wit, sense of comedy, excellent Italian diction and, last but not least, her beautiful lyric soprano.

6. What was your aim with this production?

My directorial perspective focused this time on the Rococo period and its historicising elements. In my productions - especially comedies - I also use more modern scenic elements; I am not strictly bound by the period. I like connecting the classical with the modern, whether in acting actions or in visual aesthetics. A large powder compact, as a symbol of femininity, was the dominant directorial and scenic element of the entire opera. The fact that all of us women are extravagant, love fashion, make-up and above all the admiration of men brought a somewhat different perspective to this opera from the one we had been accustomed to in the past. My aim was to create a work full of entertainment and also to point out that Così fan tutte deals with the incomprehensible fact that, in a romantic relationship, chance can play a greater role than we might be willing to admit.

IV. Photographs from the Moravian Theatre Olomouc's 2019 production of Così fan tutte

Photo No. 1:

IV. Fotografie z inscenace Così fan tutte Moravského divadla Olomouc z roku 2019

Foto č. 1:



Photo No. 2:

Foto č. 2:



Foto č. 3:

Photo No. 3:



Photo No. 4:

Foto č. 4:



Photo No. 5:

Foto č. 5:



Foto č. 6:

Photo No. 6:



Photo No. 7:

Foto č. 7:



Photo No. 8:



Photo No. 9:

Foto č. 9:



Photo No. 10:

Foto č. 10:

