

The Formation of the Professional Vocal Education in China

Regarding the Russian Musicians' Contribution

Kaidi Wang

The Russian State Specialized Academy of Arts
Moscow, Russia

Abstract—The article is devoted to the creation of professional vocal education in China. The dotted line outlines the main stages in the development of vocal education in the ancient times. The main attention is paid to the establishing of the European style of professional vocal education. This emphasizes that Russian musicians and teachers played an important role in this process. It is noted that the first opera house opening in Harbin allowed the educated Chinese society to get acquainted with the achievements of European, as well as Russian operas. This states that according to the program of Russian pre-revolutionary conservatories in the 20s three music schools worked in Harbin, including higher school of music named after Glazunov. It is said about the first performances on the Chinese stage of Tchaikovsky's operas "The Queen of spades" and "Eugene Onegin", performed under the leadership of the Russian musicians.

Keywords—*professional vocal education; European system; Russian musicians; teachers; opera; Tchaikovsky*

I. INTRODUCTION

In the past ten years, the new period of cultural interaction between China and Russia was marked by the powerful breakthrough in the field of humanitarian cooperation. The dialogue between two countries got a multidimensional nature so that it disposes to understanding of the processes happened in their culture and history including musical art in the past and in modern times.

This article is focused on the problem of formation and development of China's professional vocal education system. The major development stages of the vocal education in the ancient China are marked by dotted lines in this composition. The article zeroed in on the creating of European style of professional vocal education and that role the Russian musicians and teachers played in this process.

II. THE ANCIENT CHINA'S PROFESSIONAL VOCAL EDUCATION

In the Shan dynasty (from 1600 to 1046 BC), the professional education of traditional vocal had already developed in China. In that time, the High (Da Xue) and Lower schools (Xiao Xue) where students acquires singing and dancing techniques were established. As is known, these

two types of performing arts in the traditional culture of China were closely interrelated).

The epoch of the Zhou dynasty (from 1026 to 256 BC) was marked by establishing the normative framework in the educational system. That was when the state school (Gou Xue) was organized where main disciplines were philosophy, singing and dancing. In the Qin (from 221 to 206 r. BC) and the Han (from 202 to 220 BC) dynasties, the house of music "Yu Fu" was established in which along with vocalists studied musicians of different professions.

The professional vocal education reached its peak during the Tan dynasty (from 618 to 907 AD). In that time the gradation in education which was given in three stages: advanced, intermediate and elementary had already been outlined¹.

The period of studying lasted for 15 years during which students took 12 exams (7 exams with medium difficulty and 5 exams with the high one).

As a result of reorganization of the numerous schools the famous music academies were established besides Yue Fu - Li Yuan", "Tai Chan Shu" and the other ones where voice training based on professional education. Thus, it can be said that to the middle of the nineteenth century the professional vocal education in China "had numbered more than 3000 years of its existence and in its history inherited and developed its traditions".[1]

The next stage of development of the traditional vocal art was Peking opera, also named as jingxi, which (had) formed finally by the middle of the nineteenth century. This unique genre is the ancient theatre of classical China's drama and «achieved status of the national cultural heritage.² The vocational training for singer-artists included four stages: learning skills, comprehending techniques, mastering skills as well as personal creation. According to the manner of

¹ In the period of governing of the Sun dynasty (960 – 1279 yrs) came degradation years both as in state administration and in economy and that had an effect on the music education in whole and the vocal education particularly.

² The Beijing Opera was included in the representative list of the intangible cultural heritage of mankind at the meeting of the UNESCO of Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage held in Nairobi, Kenya, on the 16th of November in 2010.

performance there are two different schools of vocal art in Peking opera: xun (masculine, heroic) and ji (feminine, graceful). High professionalism of artists consists in the ability to combine these two styles.

Nevertheless, inheriting of traditions was a strictly practical thing. A young singer learned repertoire of voices and gestures, imitated motions and postures, and remembered *mise-en-scène*. As growing up the young artist understood the meaning of acting and it helped him to find his personal creative manner. Similar school of formation was gone by the famous Chinese actor, Mei Lanfang (1894-1961). He studied at the private theatre school with a poetry name as "The hall of cloud harmony" (Yun He Tang) where his first teacher was an old actor told him (verbally) about the secrets of traditional Chinese art.

III. CREATING THE SYSTEM OF PROFESSIONAL VOCAL EDUCATION OF EUROPEAN STYLE

In China the period covered the end of the 19th and the first quarter of the 20th century was marked by an active interest in European genre of vocal music. It was much helped by returning of Chinese students who studied abroad and that involved requirements for establishing European system of professional training.

In the formation process of the professional vocal education of European style one can mark out several major milestones, first of all, establishing of the new Chinese schools where both foreign and native vocal teachers worked. Among the main centers were the following:

- The music department of Peking woman's higher pedagogical institute³ which began its work in 1920 where along with the Chinese pedagogy-vocalist Zhao Liliang worked K.A.Khorvat – a wife of D.L. Khorvat who was a head of the department in the alienation zone of CER (The Chinese Eastern Railway) and a head of the Russian emigration in the Far East.
- The music department of the private Yanjing university (1929) established thanks to the contribution and participation of the church organization of the USA, teachers – M. Vint(the USA) and Saelli (Italy).
- The music department of Hujiang University (1929) – teachers G.Kar (Great Britain) and Selivanov (Russia).
- The private Wuzhan professional institute of arts (1930)
- The private Shanghai professional institute of arts (1930), where at music department they studied "Academic singing"

³ The Beijing women's pedagogical institute became the Pedagogical University and later named as the women's humanitarian and technical Institute of the Beijing State University.

The main event in creation of the vocal education was establishing of Shanghai state conservatoire in 1929, as well as Peking Central conservatoire (1949) which unites under its wing two music departments established earlier, such as: the music department of Peking state institute of arts and the music department of Huabei university.

IV. RUSSIAN MUSICIANS' ACTIVITY IN CHINA

One of the most important landmarks in the process of creation of European system of professional vocal education was the activity of Russian musicians toured in China and also the representatives of the emigrational circles who was in China by chance.

The majority of emigrants settled on the territory of Manchuria where, except for the musicians and artists, took their refuge highly educated scientists, writers, soldiers, economists, as well as members of the clergy. As I.N. Golenishchev-Kutuzov said "they are not refugees or a random element, but they are the pioneers of Russian culture who won a certain and honorable position at the cost of many victims and efforts.

At the same time, their activities were missionary, which had a huge impact on Chinese culture and art: "Service to the "Russian idea" was understood by them quite widely. First, they considered that their primary task in exile was to save spiritual values, preserve a historical memory, a national experience in order not to interrupt the connection between times and generations and to keep saving of the basis for future revival of Russia. Secondly, they considered as their duty to acquaint the people of the country with the achievements of national thought and culture in various fields of human's knowledge⁴.

The administration of the China-East railway (CER) not only fulfilled direct duties for the maintenance of the roads in a good condition, but also contributed to development of music art and education in the city. Harbin for China actually became a creator of the European music style with the academic direction. The first Symphony orchestra consisting of a permanent staff of 60 musicians was organized there. The city had Commercial Assembly and theatre "Modern". At the same time, the building of the Harbin railway Assembly with its 1200-seat concert hall, costume rooms, a library and a restaurant-club acquired the importance of a cultural center. Musicians noted that all the theatre had excellent acoustics.

There was a significant event in the cultural life of Harbin thanks to establishing of China's first opera theatre which was located in the building of Railway Assembly. It was during this period that the educated Chinese society had

⁴ Ariy Moiseyevich Pazovsky (1887-1953) graduated the Saint-Petersburg Conservatoire with violin classic (the class of P. A. Krasnokutskiy, and L. S. Auer). The conducting debut took place at the Opera house of Yekaterinburg city in 1905. He worked as a conductor in the provincial theaters of Perm, Kazan, Saratov, Minsk. From year to year he was the chief conductor of the Bolshoi theatre in Moscow, the Opera, as well as Kirov in St. Petersburg ballet theatre (now known as the Mariinsky theatre).

gotten acquainted with the achievements of the European and, in particular, the Russian opera theater.

A great contribution to establishing of the opera was made by Ariy Moiseyevich Pazovsky, who arrived in Harbin upon the invitation of the Soviet administration of CER. The repertoire of the theatre was unusually wide. Russian classical music was presented by the "A life for the Tsar" and "Ruslan and Lyudmila" written by M. I. Glinka, "Eugene Onegin" and "The Queen of Spades" written by P. I. Tchaikovsky, "the Demon" written by A. Rubinstein, "Boris Godunov" written by M. P. Musorgsky and "Prince Igor" written by A. Borodin. "the Tsar's bride", "The Snow Maiden" and "Sadko" was written and composed by N. Rimsky-Korsakov. The opera of "The Legend of The Invisible city of Kitezh" required a lot of efforts to perform it. The operas were staged by not only Russian classics but also by western European composers, such as: "the Barber of Seville" by J. Rossini, "Madame Butterfly" by J. Puccini's Opera, "The Tales Of Hoffmann" by J. Offenbach, "Faust" by Gounod, "La Traviata" By G. Verdi. Verdi and "Carmen" by Georges Bizet.

The Harbin troupe consisted of the famous Russian singers: G. S. Sayapin, N.A. Orzhelski. The bass-baritone voice was strongly stood out. A. I. Mozhukhin (I.I. Mozhukhin's brother of the artist in the silent movie), possessed a pleasant bass of singing, a singer V.I. Kastorsky, V. G. Suslin who was the soloist of the Mariinsky theatre performing part of bass repertoire. The famous Russian singers toured in Harbin, S. Y. Lemeshev began his career there, who worked in the Russian opera for two seasons. The part of Lensky from the opera of Tchaikovsky's Eugene Onegin was particularly successful in his performance. Kozlowski, who brilliantly performed the role of Berendey in opera of "The Snow Maiden" came there as well. He conducted the performances: A. M. Pazovsky, V. V. Velikanov, V. N. Kaplun, A. E. Slutsky.

In March 1936, two years before his death, Feodor Chaliapin visited Harbin and gave a concert there. Although, some audiences noticed that there was no former greatness in his voice, all who heard this performance, fell under the charm of the singing and acting Chaliapin's talent.

V. THE CONTRIBUTION OF RUSSIAN MUSICIANS AND TEACHERS IN CREATION OF PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION IN THE FIELD OF PROFESSIONAL SINGING

The professional musical education in Harbin was also given a great attention. According to the program of the Russian pre-revolutionary conservatories in the 20th century, three music schools worked in the city, including the higher school of music named after A.K. Glazunov, before closing in 1936 it was headed by a talented violinist and teacher U.M. Glazunov. The music college was established later, which was led by a brilliant pianist and educator L. B. Aptekarev. The classes of solo singing in the college were led by S.A. Baturin, who had a beautiful soprano and performed in the opera theatre of the railway assembly, and V.A. Vitels.

All these schools with numerous private music studios, which worked outstanding teachers-musicians N. In. Osipova-Zakrzhevskaya, A.N. Solovieva-Matsulevich, and O. N. Rodyukov "played a huge role in the development of the musical life in Harbin and in the other cities of China, gave a powerful impetus for Russian and Chinese youth to learn in the musical schools. There are hundreds of Russian and Chinese boys and girls got a good musical training and education there during the period of 1922 – 1931»

The day of Russian culture was celebrated in Harbin, Shanghai, as well as in the other Chinese cities and it was combined with the date of Pushkin's birthday, whose poetry has always found a response in the hearts of the Chinese, and therefore: "... Pushkin holiday has become not only a national Russian, but also a favorite Chinese holiday" [4]. The performance of Tchaikovsky and Glinka, Rimsky-Korsakov and Borodin, Musorgsky and Rachmaninoff was played.

The new stage of life had started in the city in 1932. Manchuria was conquered by Japan, and Russia refused the rights for the road. As a result, the Russian-speaking population goes to the South of China. Many representatives of the Russian creative intelligentsia moved from Harbin to Shanghai. By the early 1930s, the prerequisites for the opening of the Russian opera house were also planned. In the first season of 1932 there were some operas, such as: "Boris Godunov", "Eugene Onegin" and "Mermaid" composed by Dargomyzhsky. In the future, the Shanghai Opera troupe performed Boris Godunov, Prince Igor and the Queen of Spades.

It was opened three years before the creation of Shanghai Conservatory, and it was a multinational institution: the director of the conservatory-Xiao Yumei-sought to build training on the European model, in connection with which well-known musicians and teachers from different countries, including Russia, were invited here. Vladimir G. Shushlin taught there at the vocal Department of Shanghai Conservatory of music during 15 years. He was a highly educated professional musician; he was a graduate of St. Petersburg conservatory, who had a significant impact on the development of vocal art in China⁵. Vocal technique Shushlin dedicated a number of works by Chinese musicologists, including article Zhang Shuna Shushlin -- the founder of modern Chinese vocal pedagogy," published in the tenth issue of the Peking magazine "The Lover of Music" in 2010. Shushlin taught skills for their students have absorbed the characteristic of the Russian classical art, which related to breathing control, the concept of singing (singing with full use of the top of head cavities) and resonant singing.

At the Shanghai Conservatory, V. G. Shushlin taught a lot of famous singers, including Chinese ones, among them-an outstanding singer Shen Xiang, who had "a beautiful, rich tenor of dramatic color" [5]. The voices of such timbres are rare in China. Looking ahead, we note that this singer played

⁵ In the early of 1900s V.G. Shushlin was adopted in the Saint-Petersburg Choral Capella of (M. G. Klimov). He studied in the class N.. Rimsky-Korsakov (composition), N. N. Tcherepnin (conducting) and S. I. Gabela (academic singing) at the St. Petersburg Conservatory.

a role of Herman in the performance of the Central Beijing Conservatory in 1958. We can note that V.G. Shushlin was one of the members of the famous performance of "Queen of spades" composed by A. N. Benoit at the Mariinsky theatre in 1921. "Reliable information about whether the teacher shared memories of this event with the student and, if so, whether it influenced Shen Xiang's future work has not survived. However, this possibility is not excluded..." [5].

A new stage in the development of cooperation in the field of vocal education and opera arts between Russia and China placed on the 50s of the 20th century. This period of close cultural interaction between two countries contributed to the emergence of personnel of the national Chinese intelligentsia, which made an invaluable contribution to the modernization of China. In December 1956, at the Beijing experimental opera house under the direction of Russian specialists, the opera was staged by George Verdi "La Traviata", which was given in Chinese. The main roles were played by Chinese singers: Zhang Quan (Violetta), Li Guangxi (Alfred), Li Weibo (Germont).

Two years later, the premiere performance in Chinese of the first act of Tchaikovsky's Opera "The Queen of spades" took place on the stage of the theater "Bo Guosi" thanks to the teachers and students of the Beijing Conservatory. In the main roles, as mentioned above, played: Shen Xiang (Herman), as well as teacher of the vocal department Yu and Xuan (Lisa) and a student of the Conservatory Peng Ya An (Countess). At the premiere of the Opera, the orchestra was led by Chinese conductor Hoan Fei Li.

This performance was also given with the assistance of Russian specialists. As a consultant was invited the Soviet singer N. K.Kuklina, "it was she who took over the producer's functions, while showing thoughtful, patient work on the preparation of performers, but also extremely demanding attitude to them" [5]. Among the consultants was the actress of the Moscow art theatre named for V.A. Dementieva, who worked at the time as a teacher of the central opera house in Beijing.

It should be noted that the first act of the opera "The Queen of Spades" was already performed a few years before 1958 in Tianjin – the birthplace of Shen Xiang – as it became known from an interview with singer Gou Shu Zheng-in the past, his students, but now she is a head of the Department of Opera singing of the Central Conservatory. Two main roles, as in Beijing, were performed by Shen Xiang and Yu Yi Xuan. Unfortunately, there is unknown about other participants of the performance.

Tchaikovsky's music, as well as Pushkin's poetry, enjoyed great popularity in China. Therefore, it was quite natural that the Beijing Central Opera house turned to the Opera Eugene Onegin, which embodied the creative spirit of two Russian geniuses. The Opera was premiered in its original uncut version in 1962 at the Tian Qiao theatre. Tatiana was performed by the soloist of the Central Opera house, student and wife of Shen Xiang-Li Tingwei. In the subsequent performances, this role was performed by Guo Shu Zhen, who graduated from the Moscow Conservatory (class of Professor E. Katulskaya), and already sang it four

years earlier at the Moscow musical theater named after K. Stanislavsky and V. Nemirovich-Danchenko. Other roles in the Opera were entrusted to Liu Bigny (Onegin) and Li Guangxi (Lensky).

In memory of the first Beijing performance in 2009, the Opera "Eugene Onegin" was performed again on the stage of the Beijing Tianqiao theater. This performance was marked for the 130th anniversary from the premiere of opera, which was presented by the students from Moscow Conservatory in 1879. It is significant that the anniversary performance of 2009 was a joint project of the Central Chinese and Moscow conservatories, initiated and directed by Guo Shu Zhen. All parts were performed by students of both conservatories. The Chinese students sang the Opera in the original language. In January of the following year, the opera was performed again with the same cast and now on the stage of the great hall of the Moscow Conservatory.

Stage life of "Eugene Onegin" was much more successful, the opera was performed in China repeatedly and it was a huge success with public.

VI. CONCLUSION

"The first performances of two classical Russian operas during the period of "political friendship" of China and the USSR didn't only reflect a favorable historical moment but also they became a kind of tribute to the Russian opera school, which made the foundations of the Chinese modern musical theater" [6]. Likewise, they served further development of professional academic Opera school of China.

Success didn't take long to wait for it, as evidenced by the awards on the vocal competitions, which were held in many countries. In particular, from year to year Chinese singers were well proven themselves on the International competition in the honor of P. I. Tchaikovsky and won great awards, among who are: Yu Jixing (third prize, 1986), Chen Ye Yuen (first prize, 1994), Wang Chuan Yue (second prize, 2015).

Nowadays, there is a significant growth in the field of cultural exchange. As a result the Russian vocal teachers are invited to work in the higher educational institutions of China. Likewise, Chinese students have an opportunity to study in conservatories, academies, as well as institutes of Moscow, St. Petersburg and other cities of the Russian Federation: "our countries have signed about 950 cooperation agreements in the field of education, which includes more than 150 Russian educational institutions and 600 Chinese" [7]. We can see that there is the key to further success in the field of cooperation between two countries in the field of professional vocal education.

REFERENCES

- [1] Yao Wei. Training of vocal art specialists in the systems of the higher music education in China and Russia : dissertation of candid. of pedagogy sciences. Astrakhan, 2015. P.-26; P. - 28.

- [2] Beijing musical drama (the mid of the 19th – the early of the 20th century). M.: Science, 1970. P.-108.
- [3] M. N. Golenishchev-Kutuzov, Russian literature on the Far East / Russian Harbin. // [comp., preface. and comments by E. P. Taskina]. 2nd issue, corrected and added – M: the publishing house of Moscow State University: Science, 2005. P.-106.
- [4] L. F. Goverdovskaya, Socio-political and cultural activities of the Russian emigration in China in 1917-1931. M.: Institute of the Far East, 2004. P.-118-119; P.-154; P-139.
- [5] Sun Zhaoshun. Herman P. I. Tchaikovsky in the works of outstanding singers of XIX-XXI centuries: Monograph. — SPB: publishing house: The Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia, 2013. P.-112; P.-116; P-118.
- [6] Chen Ying. Chinese Opera of the beginning of XX - XXI century: the problem of the development of European experience: dissertation of candid. of pedagogy sciences. Rostov-on-don, 2015. P.-99.
- [7] J. Magdalenskaya Foundation for cooperation // the Breath of China. 2018. No. 5. P.-7.