



The Influence of Democratic Thought on the Creation of Russian National Opera in the Romantic Period—Taking Glinka, "The Powerful Group" and Tchaikovsky as Examples

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Abstract

Since its birth in Italy, opera has spread rapidly in the European continent represented by France, Britain and Germany. After the influence of the social and cultural background of the Baroque period and the classical period, as well as the successive explorations of artists from all over the world Under the creation, the operas of various countries have gradually formed their own distinct style characteristics, and opera has become one of the most popular and influential artistic genres. Although Russian opera started and developed relatively late, with the wide spread of capitalist progressive thoughts in Western Europe and the vigorous development of democratic movements, Russia's national consciousness has gradually awakened, and Russian nationalist opera has been established under the continuous exploration and creation of composers. His own unique creative style and spiritual connotation. The introduction of revolutionary democracy, critical realism and other very democratic and progressive ideas at that time deeply influenced the creative ideas of outstanding Russian composers. The composers represented by Scyth have created a series of classic works with the spirit of democracy and a clear tendency of realism. These works with democratic and progressive ideas have also greatly enriched and developed Russian national opera.

Keywords

Russian Opera, Nationalism, Realism, Democratism

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1. The background of the spread of democratic and progressive ideas in Russia

The spread of democratic and progressive ideas in Russia is inseparable from Russia's long-standing political background and socio-economic situation. From the 18th century to the beginning of the 20th century, Russia has been in an imperial period. After the reign of Peter I, known as Peter the Great, Russia was first defined as the Russian Empire. During this period, Russia was in the dark dictatorship of the Tsar. During the 36 years of Peter the Great's reign, he continued to invade and expand, and launched up to 53 wars, making Russia a powerful empire and the hegemon of the

Baltic Sea. The greatest influence of Peter the Great is that he finally obtained the Baltic Sea outlet and successfully opened up a channel for cultural exchange with Western Europe, allowing advanced Western technology, ideas and systems, including cultural forms, to be introduced into Russia. Although the rulers are actively learning about Western things, whether it is Peter I or the second emperor Catherine II, they are still constantly strengthening their feudal centralized system through reforms, and further strengthening the Russia has a long history of violent and barbaric feudal serfdom, which further oppresses the people, and has long pursued a policy of ignorance of the people. However, with the wide spread of progressive ideas of capitalism in Western Europe and the vigorous development of democratic movements, in these countries, the awareness of national democracy has grown, and a movement for national independence or revival of national culture has gradually been launched. The advanced capitalist economic system in the West, and the spread of progressive ideological trends from Enlightenment to Romanticism, and the long-term dark, feudal and decadent tsarist autocratic rule of the country and nation, the unfree life, the backward economy, and the shackled ideology have formed sharp contrast. These social backgrounds provided the soil for the dissemination of democratic ideas such as Chernyshevsky's revolutionary democracy and Pushkin's anti-serfdom and critical realism, as well as the awakening of national consciousness.

Chernyshevsky is a famous Russian revolutionary democratic thinker and materialist philosopher. His revolutionary democracy is closely related to his life experience. In 1846, when the young Chernyshevsky was studying at Petersburg University. He was deeply influenced by the progressive ideas and revolutionary movements in Russia and Western Europe at that time, and became a staunch revolutionary democrat and a staunch critic of tsarist autocracy and serfdom. He applied his ideas to aesthetics and put forward the important proposition that "beauty is life", thinking that "anything in which we can see the life as it should be according to our understanding is beautiful; anything, whatever What shows life or reminds us of life is beauty."

Pushkin was a great Russian poet of the 19th century. In Russian literature, he is the founder of positive romanticism and the founder of critical realist literature. Pushkin's critical realism is also directly related to the background of the times he lived in. In his youth, Pushkin was deeply influenced by the Decembrists against the autocratic serf system, pursued freedom, and wrote many poems praising democracy and freedom. Later, Pushkin was persecuted by the tsar and exiled because he wrote progressive ideas such as democracy and critical realism into his poems. Adopted and re-worked by many composers.

2. Glinka's National Opera Creation

The birth of nationalist music comes from the awakening of national consciousness, and the awakening of national consciousness is often related to the special environment of the country, such as the long-standing political autocracy, the oppression of the people, and the economic and cultural backwardness. In this way, a group of composers at the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century had already awakened their national consciousness and actively explored and created operas, but, in general, their music was still at an immature semi-amateur level. That is, they are still in the stage of naive copying and imitating Western European music. The content of the works is relatively shallow and dull, and the artistic techniques are quite rough. Although they also began to consciously adopt the theme of the nation and introduce the melody of folk songs, the national factor is in their creation. It is only a kind of embellishment and decoration, and it is not organically combined with Western technology." (Yu Runyang, 2016). Until the appearance of Glinka and the birth of his operas, Russian national music began to be on the right track, and professional music officially entered a mature period. He not only opened up and established a path for the development of Russian national opera, but also made the artistic value of Russian opera has caught up with the level of Western European countries.

Mikhail Ivanovich Glinka was born in 1804 in the family of an estate owner in the Basque village of Novossk, Smolensk province. In such a family environment, Glinka has been influenced by the beautiful environment of Russia since childhood. Russian folk songs and songs played by serf bands are the source of happiness for Glinka in childhood. Under the influence of such an environment, Glinka is very fascinated by Russian folk songs. At the same time, Glinka cultivated his cordial feelings and democratic thoughts for the masses in his close contact with serf musicians. In 1818, Glinka entered the Petersburg Noble School to study piano and music theory at the same time. The study during this period had a profound impact on Glinka's opera creation, because during this period he not only learned from Italy from the Grand Theater. Some works from France and some works created by Russian predecessors, and during this period, I met Pushkin and other progressive youth cultural figures. Glinka fully agreed with Pushkin's anti-serfdom democratic and progressive ideas, and came into contact with critical realism ideas in the poems of Pushkin and others, and these democratic and progressive ideas directly influenced the creation of the themes of Glinka's operas. In 1825, Glinka, who was in his prime, experienced the Decembrist uprising that shook the whole of Russia. This was launched in December

1825 by a group of Russian nobles who were engaged in revolutionary activities. Russia first tried to overthrow the tsarist autocracy. Although the democratic armed uprising of the system and serfdom ended in failure, it deeply shocked Glinka and ignited the democratic thoughts and patriotism of Glinka, Pushkin and other patriotic youths and even the whole society. After that, Glinka studied and studied music techniques in Germany, Austria, Italy and other regions.

In these contexts, Glinka's first opera "Ivan Susanin", which was composed in 1836, was officially staged. The theme, in order to protect his own nation and protect his hometown, Ivan alone led the Polish invaders into the desolate forest and eventually perished with the enemy. What is shocking is that this stalwart figure full of patriotism and national spirit turned out to be a peasant who had been oppressed by serfdom for a long time. Glinka moved such a figure to the opera stage and achieved success, which is of great value to the development of nationalist music and the development of the entire Russian opera art, and this opera has also become the first Russian nationalist opera. The masterpiece successfully established the development direction of national patriotic historical opera for the development of Russian opera. We learn from his famous motto: "It is the people who make music, and we, the artists, only make it into music". You can fully feel the democratic and progressive ideas in Glinka's creative ideas. Another famous opera of Glinka is the mythical drama "Ruslan and Lyudmila" created in 1842. This opera Glinka is based on Pushkin's narrative poem of the same name. The content of this poem also allows us to see Pushkin. The idea of critical realism contained in the creation of poetry, the plot tells the story of the ancient Ruslan warrior Ruslan and the princess Lyudmila in love, but during their wedding, Lyudmila was robbed by the devil, Ruslan In order to save his lover, he went through all kinds of hardships to fight against the devil and finally won the myth. Although this opera established another creative direction of Russian national opera: the style path of folk myth opera, but if we look at this opera and Pushkin's original work now, we can understand the irony and criticism of the social darkness and the tsar's corrupt and autocratic notice.

3. The National Opera Creation of the "Powerful Group"

The "strong group" is also known as the five-member strong group, the five-member group, etc. Although they have different identities, they are all willing to devote themselves to the development of the Russian music industry, and they all admire Glinka very much, regard Glinka as a pioneer or even a teacher. Wanting to inherit Glinka's music career and further develop Russian nationalist music, the "power group" eventually formed, they called themselves the "new Russian music school".

3.1. Reasons for the successful formation of the "Powerful Group"

Mussorgsky was in the Praetorian Guard, Guy was a general in the army, Rimsky was a naval officer and Borodin was a professor of medicine, and only Balakirev was a professional composer. In addition to their own love for music and admiration for Glinka, and wanting to inherit Glinka's fine tradition, the five composers with different identities and ages were able to form a group. Another important reason is that they all lived in the 1860s, when the Russian serf system was abolished and the social movement was on the rise. Under the influence of the revolutionary democratic aesthetics of Chernyshevsky and others, they all respected Chernyshevsky. The basic aesthetic point of view is based on the principle that art must not only have a beautiful temperament, but also must reflect reality (Lin Juan, 2013). In addition, they are all very nationalistic, love Russian folk music, and draw nutrients from it to make their creations have a distinct national character and can deeply and vividly show the life, emotions and thoughts of the Russian people. Therefore, their creations all reflect the distinctive nationalism and the budding realism style.

3.2. Contribution of "Powerful Group" to the development of opera

The composers of the "Powerful Group" are mainly based on objective description. They like to draw creative materials from folklore and myths, and use unique expression techniques to map the real social environment, and they are good at using and excavating Russian folk music materials. Using the characteristic music of the Russian nation to show the people's life and thoughts has profound social practical significance (Lin Juan, 2013).

Among the "powerful groups" who have contributed the most to the development of Russian opera are the two composers Mussorgsky, Borodin and Rimsky-Korsakov. Mussorgsky wrote five operas in his lifetime. He is the first in the history of Russian music to use prose as opera lyrics, and absorbs the tonal elements of the Russian language to integrate the characteristics of the Russian language into the music, opening a new chapter in Russian opera (Zhu Xiu, 2020). Mussorgsky, who lived in the Russian countryside since childhood, received meticulous care and nurture as a serf nanny. Therefore, Mussorgsky had a special deep affection for Russian serfs and Russian folk music throughout his life. After that, Mussorgsky was influenced by the Russian revolutionary democratic ideas represented by Chernyshevsky in St. Petersburg, and was fully exposed to the prevailing literary theory and aesthetic trend of thought at the time. Mussorgsky's creative ideas also followed suit. It gradually matured and formed a distinct national-

ity, democracy, and an artistic conception that reflects and criticizes the reality of real life. It advocates that "art must avoid its own conventions and directly present its theme without modification," and believes that "art. The appropriate subject for creation should be real everyday life." His most famous opera "Boris Godunov" was also composed during this period (Han Xiaoyan, 2019). "Boris Godunov" is an opera composed by Mussorgsky based on Pushkin's tragedy of the same name. Mussorgsky combined Pushkin's original work with his own ideas and reimagined it, this opera directly and sharply reflected the direct confrontation between the people and the tyrant, and pointed the finger at the dark and decadent autocratic rule of the Tsar and the corrupt and dark intra-class disputes of the aristocracy. Neither the previous Russian composers nor even Glinka did this, and this fact reflects the reality of Russian society and the spirit of democracy and its strong nationalist opera with a tendency to realism successfully established Glinka as the first. The development direction of a major opera The historical opera of national patriotism developed to its peak and became a model of Russian opera.

Although Borodin only composed two operas in his life, his creations were full of nationalism. Borodin liked to depict the magnificent epic pictures of Russia and express his patriotism through music. He wrote the epic opera "King Igor" based on the 12th-century Russian poem "Igor's Expeditions". The opera depicts the story of King Igor of the ancient Russian city of Bukifer who struggled to revive the motherland. The oriental melodies created by Borodin, the distinctive Russian folk music melody, the delicate harmony language, and the charming singing and dancing music in the whole opera endow this opera with unique meanings, which Borodin has not had time to complete. This epic play passed away, and was subsequently completed by Rimsky and Glazunov. This opera inherits the second Russian opera style created by Glinka in the spirit of democracy and patriotism, the mythical epic opera, and develops this style to its peak.

4. Tchaikovsky and his opera creation

Tchaikovsky is a great Russian composer who is basically in the same era as the "Powerful Group" composers, but his writing style is quite different from that of the "Powerful Group" composers. Tchaikovsky did not think about it. To inherit the music career of his predecessor Green, his opera creation was more influenced by Russian romantic literature and the subsequent rise of critical realism literature. He is devoted to humanistic thought, and strives to shape the real emotional world of the Russian people in music, tap people's inner emotions, and express their disappointment with the real social domination. Tchaikovsky wrote 10 operas in his life, the most representative of which are "Evgeny Onegin" and "Queen of Spades", both of which were adapted from Pushkin's works of the same name. The lyricism of "Evgeny Onegin" can be said to be unprecedented in Russian opera creations. It describes the boredom of contemporary young Russian aristocrats with the way of life of their social class, and they are in the dark. The tragic experience of following one's own dreams and love in the future shows the oppression of people's advanced ideas in contemporary Russian society. The melody of this work is very lyrical, the phrases are long and soft, and the music can express the psychological characteristics of the characters in great detail (Men Xiang, 2019). Tchaikovsky's second opera masterpiece is "The Queen of Spades". The opera tells the story of Gorman, a civilian representative of civilians, whose longing for a beautiful love and yearning for the future is beaten by cruel class attributes and social reality. Shattered, eventually insane, and committed suicide in despair. The tragic color and dramatic power of the entire opera were brought into full play by Kowski's musical language, and the mapping of the content of the opera to real life also represented the despair of the people under the tsarist autocracy in the second half of the 19th century. This creation from real life also fully demonstrates Tchaikovsky's critical realism thought.

5. Conclusion

The author believes that the two democratic and progressive ideas that have the greatest influence on the creation of Russian opera in the Romantic period are the influence of Russian revolutionary democratic ideas represented by Chernyshevsky and the critical realism represented by Pushkin. These two democratic and progressive ideologies just resonated with the awakened nationalist trend of thought in Russia during the Romantic period, and experienced the baptism of the December Revolution together. Therefore, they have a lot in common with each other in their hatred and resistance to the tsar's corrupt and dark rule. Such as Glinka, "Powerful Group", Tchaikovsky and other outstanding composers have injected these advanced democratic ideas into their works through their own artistic techniques.

During the 100 years or so of the Romantic period, under Russia's special political system and social environment, with the unremitting efforts of great composers from Glinka to Tchaikovsky, Russia has developed its own national opera to its peak. On the basis of its own distinctive nationalism, it has also absorbed progressive ideas such as revolutionary democracy and critical realism, which makes Russian national operas have a unique spiritual connotation, and the ideological light reflected in them still makes people feel even today. People are moved by it.

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