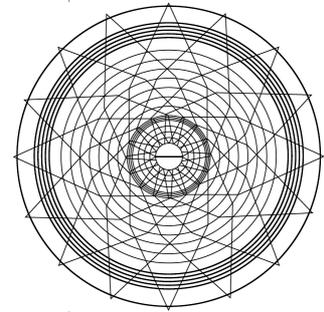


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# HANDEL'S OPERAS IN THE CONTEXT OF MODERN STAGE DIRECTION: ON THE QUESTION OF IMPLEMENTING THE CINEMATOGRAPHY COMPOSITION PRINCIPLES IN AN OPERA PLAY<sup>1</sup>

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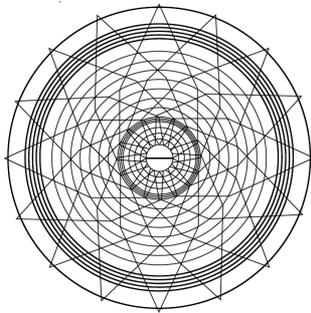
### **Abstract:**

The article is based on the authors' attending modern performances of Baroque operas by Georg Friedrich Handel (1685-1759) in 2019, in the theaters of three German cities: Halle, Bad Lauchstädt and Bernburg. The first, which is the composer's birthplace, annually hosts the international Handel music festival, dedicated to the study of the great Saxon's and his contemporaries' works. The concept of the festival in 2019 was related to the study of female characters represented in Handel's operas: "Handel's women – sensitive, heroic, sublime".

Comprehending the considered scientific and artistic concept, the authors come to the conclusion that the possibilities of directors' interpretations of ancient operas have significantly expanded due to the incorporation of composition principles of cinematographic editing and expressive means of modern, primarily screen arts into both musical and stage dramaturgy. To study this phenomenon, we used a scientific apparatus developed in Russian science by Lev Vygotskij, who, exploring the fiction literature protagonist's spiritual world, revealed his psychological contradictions, expressed as the conflict between plot and story, and by Sergey Eisenstein, who, knowing well Vygotskij's manuscript of "Psychology of art" and influenced by his ideas, created his own "psychology of art", presented on the pages of his works from various years.

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<sup>1</sup>Detailed Russian version ("Handel's operas in the context of modern stage direction: on the question of implementing the techniques of modern media») of this article is published in the academic journal *Ars inter Culturas* (2019, Vol. 8, pp. 259-278), and the German version is published in the academic journal *The Art and Science of Television* (2020, no. 2, pp. 101-128), abridged and adapted in accordance with its profile. The English version of the text, which has also undergone a number of changes, taking into account the specifics of the academic journal "Communications. Media. Design", is published, with the kind consent of the editorial boards of *Ars inter Culturas* and *The Art and Science of Television*, in order to expand the readership interested in this issue.



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The core of this concept was "the transition from Expressive Movement to the image of a work of art... as a process of interaction between layers of consciousness" (Eisenstein, 1980, p. 188), which allowed to provide a possibility of multiple entries into the artistic image (previously, this method of analysis was used by one of the article's authors for a work on the painting and cinema principles' integration: (Konson, 2018; Konson, 2019). Such an entry is also based on some features of cinematographic drama, where the first among equals is the principle of intellectual film editing, discovered by Eisenstein (Eisenstein, 1998), which also generalizes other types of editing (the linear, the parallel, the associative), that formed a large-scale system of studying artwork protagonists' psychology. In this article, revealing the essence of processes mentioned above gave its authors an opportunity to see, in the interpretations of Handel's operas by German directors, a "building of meaning" phenomenon, produced by merging of the two seemingly irreconcilably conflicted layers of consciousness: the Baroque – and the modern, that has developed over the last century.

**Keywords:** Handel, Halle, theatre, opera, director, composer, performer, ballet, stage, aria, getting into the character, building of meaning, layers of consciousness, screen.

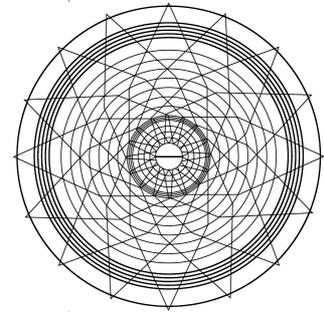
As witnessed by one of the authors of the article, I. A. Konson, or more than 30 years the opera direction of George Frideric Handel's works in Germany goes on amazing with its interpretations' extraordinary novelty and the inexhaustible imagination of the directors. The major part of their creative thinking is realized not only through the principles of theatrical art, but also of cinematographic drama, used both externally (direct incorporating the use of silver screen into the fabric of theatre) and internally, using the principles of film editing, first and foremost – the intellectual editing, the honor of which belongs to Sergey Eisenstein, the illustrious classic of Russian cinematography (Eisenstein, 1998). Combining the principles of these two types of art gives Handel's characters a special energy that reveals the protagonists' personal qualities in a new way. Therefore, in this article we will focus on the analysis of their interaction in Handel's operas that we managed to attend in Germany: "The Faithful shepherd", "Atalanta", "Berenice" and "Julius Caesar". This year they were performed in two suburban theatres in Halle-Bad-Lauchstädt (its second name Goethestädt, or Goethe Theatre) and Bernburg, as well as at the Halle Opera house. All these Baroque works of the first half of the XVIII century at the Handel festival were recreated in a modern Western European manner with a slight charm of directorial irony, sometimes reaching the level of theatrical-absurdist improvisation, which, however, according to Zh.-M. Warszawski, can "tell a lot about human destinies" (Warszawski, 2019).

The international Handel festival, held annually in Halle, the composer's birthplace, was expected to bring together over 1,000 performers from all over the world in 2019, and the program included more than 100 events at 22 stages and concert venues (see about: Birnbaum, 2018). As far as it is possible to judge, such magnitude was reached,

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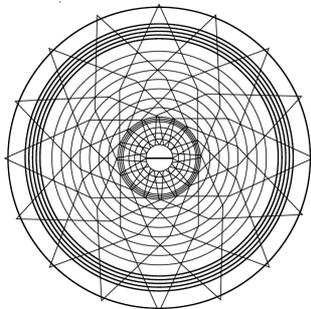
and not by coincidence, as this year's festival was dedicated to a rare and exquisite theme, quite relevant to the context of the feminist agenda, especially popular in the Western world today – women's personification in stage music: "Sensitive, heroic, sublime – Handel's women"<sup>2</sup>, although Sandra Bowdler, an Australian reviewer, doubts that some of them, such as Jupiter's vain lover Semele, the hideous Queen Athalia or the evil sorceress Melissa can claim definite inclusion in this list as heroines, bearing in mind the definition's positive connotations. But at the same time, she still considers them not only intimidating, but also exalted persons (Bowdler, 2019). And this is true, because, as Paul Henry Lang wrote, At the heart of their actions was love, ranging from the emotions of girlish affection to burning passion and jealousy (Lang, 1966, p. 284).

Such ambiguity of Handel's images allows us to speak about their multiple interpretations, which we will try to analyze in order to identify the merging between the drama of ancient opera and the composition principles of cinema.

The concept of the London festival mentioned above was also aimed at reinterpreting Handel's operas, but in a different visual sphere: images from historical archives, performance photography, typographic doodles and graffiti were selected for this. The main goal of the project designers was the most dimensional representation of imagery in advertisement materials, which is why, according to the festival's design studio co-founder Matt Baxter, the creators' approach was "bold" and full of "flashes of humor" (Polianskaya, 2019). It is no coincidence that the use of "photos of performers with makeup created with lipstick applied to their faces" (Polianskaya, 2019) was used as a marketing move. As Baxter revealed, this effects (such as, for example, applying traces of kisses to the image of Handel), was used to "distort" classical images (see: (Polianskaya, 2019) (Figure 1).

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<sup>2</sup> The international Handel festival in April of the same year in England at the new Linbury theatre of the Royal Opera house was also dedicated to a related theme - "Handel's Divas". Regarding the choice of such a theme, festival director Samir Savant said: "It is impossible to enjoy Handel's music without thinking about the great women who were his inspiration and whom he nurtured – his divas" (cit. on: Thraves, 2018).



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**Figure 1. The brochure of the London festival of G. F. Handel<sup>3</sup>**

However, despite such an outrageously extravagant approach to Handel's work by the British, we limit ourselves to its relatively traditional interpretations in Germany, but still with some original directors' "breakthroughs" to the audience's modern thinking.

Let's start with Handel's "The Faithful Shepherd" (HWV 8), staged at the Goethe Theatre. The first version of this opera was created by Handel in 1712, the author of the libretto being J. Rossi, based on the famous pastoral play by J. B. Guarini. Despite the fact that this opera appeared in a number of works arising after the triumphal "Rinaldo" (1711), it did not have much success. The updated version of this opera was then presented at Covent Garden (1734) and became more popular. That play featured a contemporary rising star, the young English tenor John Beard, as well as a French ballet led by the magnificent "Terpsichore of France", Marie Sallé, for which the composer had written a standalone ballet prologue, "Terpsichore", and ballet solos at the end of each act (Burrows, 2012).

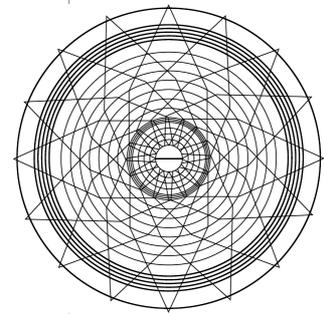
For the modern theatre production of "The Faithful Shepherd", the very beginning of the performance brings the spectator evaluating the play to a clear feeling contradiction between it and the poetic atmosphere in which he has just plunged, wandering along the pond near the Goethe Theatre and contemplating the sculptural images of the past. Of course, the ballet music of Handel, where Sallé's grace shone in the XVIII century, remained intact. But in her stead, a canadian dancer Davidson Giacomello now appears on the stage, with his performance of the choreographic

<sup>3</sup> Image from: Design Week <https://www.designweek.co.uk/issues/1-7-april-2019/london-handel-festival-classical-music-rebrand/>.

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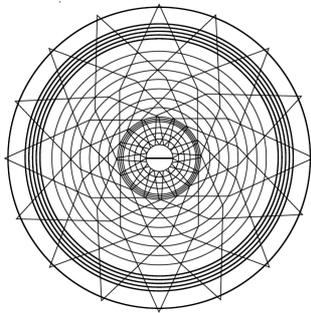
preamble to the opera reaching nervous convulsions. Apparently, Handel's ballet inserts into the drama of the opera served as the impetus for the modern Director Daniel Pfluger's plastic characterization of the main protagonist, which received an ambiguous interpretation here. According to the plot<sup>4</sup>, the main character of the pastoral is the shepherd Mirtillo (played by the countertenor Philip Matmann), living in the village of Arcadia and hopelessly in love with the nymph Amaryllis (Sophie Junker, soprano). Yet, according to the Zagreb reviewer Ivan Ćurković, he is actually a person of today – "suffering from both burnout syndrome and mental anguish, he's Mirtillo's alter ego, but, through parallel editing, the continuous deployment of the pastoral and modern stories as the opera progresses makes him more and more complex, all that without jeopardizing the simplicity of the original composition idea" (Ćurković, 2019).

Indeed, the director's concept turned out to be much more complex than the original plot. It seems that the main character can be portrayed rather in the generalizing role of the reclusive author, which is also facilitated by the screen projection on the wall, which enlarges his acutely psychological image as our contemporary. Like the shepherd Myrtillo (and also like Pygmalion), he is also in love with the heroine of his work (in this case, the nymph Amaryllis) – that, in our opinion, is what the storyline is about<sup>5</sup>. This new author is mentally ill. In his ballet performances, the world of tragic experiences is revealed through complex modern choreography, expressed in painful fractures of body lines and even convulsions. But the eyes also betray his mental deviation from the norm (Figure 2). Such a look can be compared to post-traumatic, which in English is called "a thousand-yard stare". It is used to describe the unfocused gaze of a person who is in a state of shock, when one looks over the other person into the distance, as if a thousand miles away. This expression appeared in 1945 after a reproduction of a painting by American war correspondent Thomas Lee (Shakko, 2019) (Figure 3). And his love only gives the protagonist of Handel's opera some outlet for healthy emotions.

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<sup>4</sup> The plot is the original version of the work (see: Vygotskij, 1968, p. 75).

<sup>5</sup> The plot is the author's interpretation of the plot [ibid., p. 188-189].



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Figure 2.<sup>6</sup> G. F. Handel. Opera "The Faithful Shepherd"



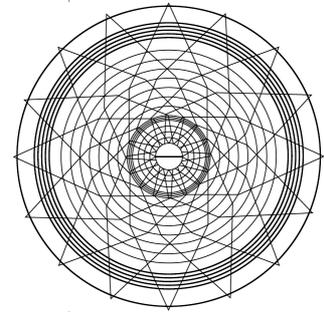
Figure 3. Thomas Lee. S. the Marines call it «the 2,000-yard stare.» 1944. U.S. army center of military history, Washington. Oil on canvas. 36 x 28.

<sup>6</sup> Images here and below, unless specified otherwise, are kindly provided by the Press service of the International Handel festival in Halle, Germany.

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Both roles of the leading character (Mirtillo and his second self – the supposed Creator of the play) are revealed simultaneously in three perspectives: in the interior of the reclusive author's residence, bifurcated into a stage plan and a screen plan, the last providing information about the author as a mentally ill person, and in an idyllic plan, which is seemingly guessed outside his home. At the same time, inside the house, the story develops in the spirit of modern bedroom scenes (Mirtillo, who is both his doppelganger and the author, seems to betray his true love for Amaryllis, due to the intrigues of her jealous friend Aurellia (Rinnat Moria, soprano), who is also in love with Mirtillo).

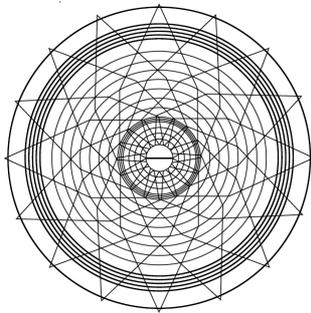
Meanwhile, outside the window, the entire eclogue is shown modestly, dressed in poetized idyllic costumes, in accordance with the chaste traditions of the Baroque pastoral genre. With the action unfolding in two parallel-crossover directions, the director uses the principles of intellectual editing to make images of Baroque and modern reality, in other words – the different layers of consciousness from both distant and modern eras, collide. (see Figure 2). The result of such editing is an amazing heuristic effect that gives the plot a new problematic angle – the convergence of incompatible poles of death and joy – a suicide of the imaginary author (a seeming doppelganger of the shepherd Mirtillo) and the happiness of the real Arcadian hero, who, despite some similarities with his "second self", links his fate with his beloved.

In addition to the two possible scene interpretations (by Ćurković and ours), initially there is one more, brought by the director from the detective sphere: the protagonist's tragedy in the play staged in Halle is presented through the prism of a crime story: at the beginning and the end of the opera the police take interest in him, collecting evidence of his probable suicide, and putting a gun and other evidence into a transparent bag (transparent probably to include the audience as witnesses). However, when the murder is close to happening, the almost shot lover is paradoxically not noticed by anyone.

Thus, getting into character in this interpretation of ballet scenes in "The Faithful Shepherd" takes place multiple times (Konson, 2018; Konson, 2019). Handel was the first to do this in the 18th century: by placing mournful elegiac ballet fragments at the beginning and center of pastoral opera, he dramatized the genre of Divertissement<sup>7</sup> (see: Fedoseev, 1996). In the twenty-first century, director Daniel Pfluger introduced the figure of a modern, mentally unstable hero to the bucolic content of a complicated story, even adding to it the context of detective surveillance, sharpening the genre of Handel's pastoral opera with the help of edition techniques.

The second opera we listened to, "Atalanta" (HWV 35), was staged in Bernburg, in a theatre named after the composer Karl Maria von Weber. Dedicated to the wedding of Frederick Ludwig of Hanover, Prince of Wales, and Augusta, daughter of the Duke of Saxe-Gotha (1736, libretto by an unknown author based on the work of Belisario Valeriani "La Caccia in Etolia" – "The Aetolian Hunt"). In Handel's work, it is considered

<sup>7</sup> A ballet performance that is not related to the story.



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one of the most bright and cheerful. "Atalanta" is related to "Il Pastor Fido", a pastoral theme that the composer hasn't touched since 1712, and which proved extremely popular in Covent Garden plays in 1734, as well as in the celebrations of Royal weddings (Handel & Hendrix in London, n.d.).

According to the story, Princess Atalanta of Arcadia, a huntress, disguised as the shepherdess Amaryllis (Marelise Gerber, soprano), is resting among nymphs and shepherds in the forests of Aetolia. She is sought out by the enamored ancient hero, king Meleager of Aetolia (Amelie Müller, soprano), also disguised as the shepherd Thyrsis, with whom Atalanta falls in love too. After a series of funny twists and turns, they are united in a marriage. As a shade of this love-lyric line, a love-comedy line is introduced into the drama, expressed in the duet of Irene (Maria Weiss, mezzo-soprano) and the shepherd Aminta, represented in the play by a pudgy bartender with a fashionable ponytail tied with an elastic band on the back of his head (Christian Zenker, tenor).

The first entry into the characters' personalities is made somewhat indirectly – that is through the general lively tone of the opera, set by an overture (example: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VSyrO7koQbw>). The quick part of it displays a light irony – the composer seems to warn the audience that all collisions in the performance will be decorative. However, serious fragments still appear and culminate in solos. Such is the aria of the angry Aminta "Di ad Irene, tiranna" (act II, sc. 6), accusing Irene of tyranny.<sup>8</sup> Permeated with outraged shouts, suddenly changing to consummate angry chants, it includes lyrical episodes filled with suffering. In comparison with the interpretations of other singers (the lyrical style of Nikolai Gedda, the dramatic style of Michael Slattery), Christian Zenker interprets it in a grotesque way, which, being close to Slattery's performance, makes a strong impression.

One of the most profound episodes – and the pearl of Handel's lyrics – is Meleager's arioso "Care selve, ombre beate" (act I, sc. 1).<sup>9</sup> The power of the protagonist's musical characterization is shown here in its original Handel plan, without requiring additional means for concrete definition. The singer who plays Meleager (Amelie Müller, a countertenor, mind you, but a high soprano), dressed in a modern white male suit and disguised as a moustached man, but with long, elastic-bound hair, creates a sublime image of the king due to the noble timbre and generally high mastery of the cantilena. Therefore, despite the initial aesthetic dissonance, the music makes you forget about the discrepancy between the external and internal appearance of the protagonist.

The director enhances the characters' portrayal in both story and comedy with the introduction of a screen and the principle of film editing to the visual part of the performance: a video clip is shown during the overture. First, Atalanta is almost

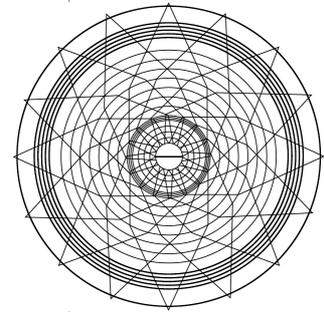
<sup>8</sup> Its nature and theme are unusually close to Arsace's aria "Furibondo spira il vento" from Handel's Opera "Parthenope" (act II, sc. 9).

<sup>9</sup> The sublimely enlightening nature of its descending melody, it evokes associations with the future pastoral aria of the viola "He shall feed his flock" from Handel's oratorio "Messiah". This anticipation of the musical material of the 1740s oratorios shows how it was prepared in Handel's operatic genre.

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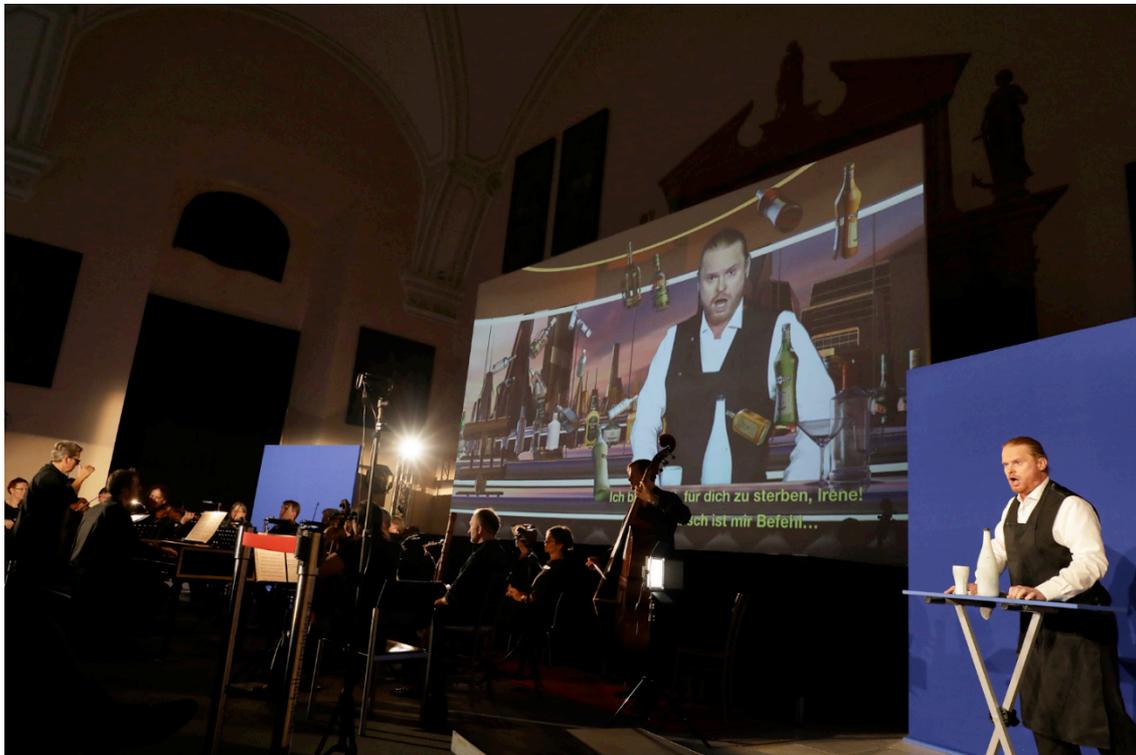
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attacked by a shark looking forward to a meal, with an endless row of teeth. The girl, dressed in fins and scuba goggles, appearing right in front of the shark's mouth, swims away without much panic, and at the end of her flight she meets Meleager in the water. He then is shown already on land, riding a motorcycle on an asphalt road among skyscrapers and looking sadly through binoculars in search for his betrothed.

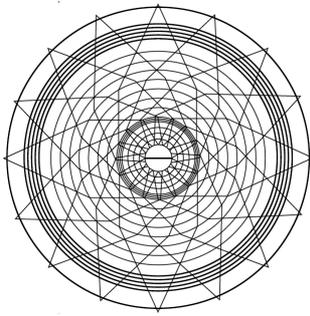
Aminta is presented exclusively in the context of comedic circumstances, when he feels sick from fast driving in a car, during a violent quarrel with Irene, in a bar with bottles floating in the air, and, after a small fire he's burning his hands to pull out the only survivor, a badly burned sausage. The entire set of comics ends with the appearance of a very serious and edifying face of Mercury and wishes written on the screen, stating that the audience should live in "Handel-style" (Figure 4).



**Figure. 4. G. F. Handel. Opera "Atalanta"**

At the same time, the comic act goes on past the end of the overture: at the beginning of the opera, Atalanta is shown at the computer in search for he so needed Meleager among potential husbands.

Thus, getting into the character for the second time is made on the principles of associative and intellectual editing, which expands the possibilities of the overture as an opera form designed to introduce the audience into the overall emotional tone of the work. In "Atalanta" overture, it became possible not only to incorporate a generalized musical-thematic connection with the opera performance, but also to



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accurately transfer a specified brief content, as well as to present the opera's characters.

Getting into character also happens a third time, without character screening, but with associative and parallel editing, performed by theatrical means, when the main characters (Atalanta and Meleager) act in the foreground, while the secondary (Aminta and Irene) appear in the proscenium between the curtain and the background of the stage. These last are invisible, but from how objects of women's underwear fly to the floor from somewhere, and then from Aminta happily putting on trousers, it becomes clear that he and his beloved have finally stopped quarreling and found common ground.

As a result of the analysis, evaluating the director's work done by Coby van Rensburg, and the acting in "Atalanta", we can say that this creative team managed to masterfully express the composer's style through the prism of a modern vision of his works and music hearing, which together contributed to increased building of the meaning in the comedic-lyrical concept of a charming wedding extravaganza.

The content of the opera "Berenice" (HWV 38, 1737, based on a libretto by Antonio Salvi), staged at the opera house in Halle, is based on two hopelessly entangled intrigues – love and politics. They connect five people in a single circle of difficult relationships: the Egyptian Queen Berenice, her sister Selene and three suitors for the hand and heart of one or the other (the Romans want her relative Alexander as a husband for Berenice, while the Pontic king Mithridates wants her for his agent Demetrius). An additional storyline tells about the feelings of Prince Arsace, who loves Selena. On top of this, along the way, according to the director's plan, Berenice (Romelia Lichtenstein) flirts with a solo oboist from the orchestra. Although this flirtation naturally leads to nothing, A. Ehrnrooth writes that their duet "was the most vivid and gentle moment of the play, when Romelia sat next to the standing (and magnificent) oboist, with her legs dangling into the orchestra pit. Everything ends in comedy when the couple takes a selfie" (Ehrnrooth, 2018).

It is really impossible to solve this "love pentagon" and figure out who is in love with whom. Such a kaleidoscope of couples not mutually in love makes it possible for the audience to arrange their dispositions differently each time, and most importantly – to show love games struggle for victory over rivals, which ultimately means political gain, according to the plot.

The principles of documentary cinema, the use of which shows the director's desire to bring the Handel era closer to the present day and pay attention to the eternal life problems, clarify greatly the dramatic principles of the play. Here lies the super-idea of the play, a kind of supra-temporal layer of consciousness built into the play by its director. For example, how topical are the words of one of "Berenice" characters, Aristobulus (Ki-Hyun Park): that without politics the world would be much better (sc. VII). At the same time, on the screen above the stage, media news about the American President Donald Trump, events concerning the current English Royal family, etc. are randomly thrown in (Figure 5). And then everyday issues appear - tips for housewives on how to stuff chicken, videos with cats, music videos, etc. (Figure 6).

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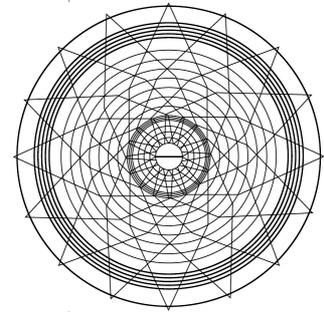
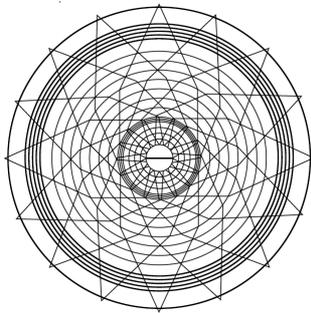


Figure 5. G. F. Handel. "Berenice"



Figure 6. G. F. Handel. "Berenice"



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**Figure 7. G. F. Handel. "Berenice"**

Such a kaleidoscopic start on the upper "tier" of the stage, combined with things happening below, where the actor posing as cleaner with a bucket sweeps the floor, creates the impression of a kind of dynamic multi-screen, which causes an ambiguous reaction from the audience. Ehrnrooth writes that "director Jochen Biganzoli is determined to show action in today's today's self(ie)-obsessed world"<sup>10</sup>. Here we can see parallelisms with the Baroque era "vanity fair", but this play, being somewhat more pressing in this respect, appeals rather to our time, aiming the entire plot at it" (Ehrnrooth, 2018).

Additionally, the whole lot of the opera characters, racing against each other, regularly run through the compartments of the circular installation – the process, which is interpreted here, not without due irony, as a special type of moving linear editing (aimed at individual close ups that appear before the viewer "only for a moment"<sup>11</sup> (Eisenstein, 1964, p. 378), called "the suite of types" by its creator) (ibid).<sup>12</sup> S. Bowdler, using the play from 2018 as an example, notes, considering the beginning of

<sup>10</sup> A word game utilized by the author

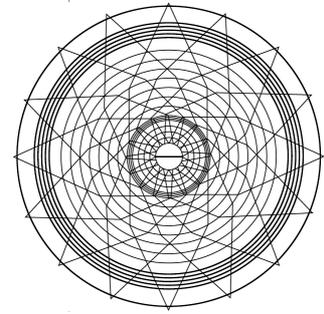
<sup>11</sup> In the author's early publications, this idea was mistakenly attributed to S. Freilich (Konson, 2018; Konson, 2019).

<sup>12</sup> For a reinterpretation of this phenomenon, see: (Freilich, 1964, p. 25). Concerning the definition "the suite of types" (типажная сюита [tipazhnaya syuita]): in the author's early publications, it was mistakenly translated into English as "the character suite" (Konson, 2018; Konson, 2019). This article gives the correct version of the definition.

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the opera, that "it was post-postmodern in all its manifestations. The show began with a lengthy sequin curtain, next to which a cleaning lady in a blue robe and yellow gloves was sweeping the stage while answering a call to her cellphone" (Bowdler, 2018). But, as the critic writes it, the epatage started when the screen was introduced: "The real horror came with a network of screens above the rotating scenery, that mercilessly bombarded us with typical screen images: news, ads, user profiles from Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, email messages... Throughout the performance, the soloists constantly pulled out their cellphones... to call, text, read, and take selfies, naturally" (Bowdler, 2018) (Figure 7).

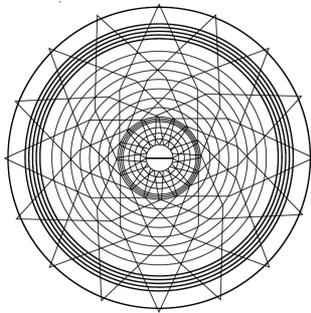
The reviewer was particularly surprised by the deliberate eclecticism in the artists' garments, where pieces of clothing of the XVIII century were easily matched to similar attributes of modern subcultures: for example, brocade coats over leather trousers and motorcycle boots. Selena (Svetlana Slivia, soprano), who started with a wig, later turned almost into a Gothic punk: with a black bob (short hair) and a t-shirt with silver skull and bones. And the cleaner, also changing clothes, was none other than the Prince Arsace (Franziska Gottwald, mezzo-soprano).

However, in our opinion, if the outward attributes of kitsch are removed from the play, the libretto will remain to be a piled intrigue that, if subject to serious reading, will be a big parody of a stilted and very conventional story, almost ossified in traditional opera-seria. But in the Halle staging, the cameras aimed at the stage images of the actors in the top tier of the stage, created their multiscreen portraits and triggered a kind of motion that contributed to a subtle revelation of the protagonists' psychological images. As a result of this overlapping of screen projections and stage action, the characters' appearance was deformed, blurred, and lived as if animated to its independent life (Figure 8).



**Figure 8. G. F. Handel. "Berenice"<sup>13</sup>**

<sup>13</sup> For example, something evil and aggressive was revealed in Berenice, anticipating the danger of some of her actions in the future.



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Yet another opera by Handel, staged at the Halle theatre, was "Julius Caesar in Egypt" (HWV 17, 1724). The libretto, based on the work of the same name by Giacomo Francesco Bussani, was created by the poet-musician Nicola Francesco Haim, who was sensitive to Handel's creative ideas and therefore successfully wrote the libretto of the operas "Julius Caesar in Egypt", "Tamerlane" and "Rodelinda". "Julius Caesar" is one of the best Handel operas, the dramatic plot of which is initially well "twisted", but in the concept of Peter Konvichny it takes a turn towards parody. The reason for this has a strong base, minding the grotesque features of Ptolemy created by Handel himself.

Cleopatra (Vanessa Waldhart, soprano), wanting to get into the camp of the triumphant Julius Caesar (Grga Perosh), gets a job in his team as a cleaner under the guise of Lydia. Even in the crowded Caesar's camp, she attracts his attention, working hard to clean the floors, and also by her looks.

However, Caesar is forced to hide because of Ptolemy's insidious plans. Left alone, Cleopatra realizes that his hatred will now be directed at her. The bitterness of separation and a foreboding of the coming tragedy are expressed in her mournful aria "Piangero la sorte mia", which the singer masterfully performs in the tradition of high lamento (a mournful genre – cry, lament). Such transition from a mass act to a solo one, the features of a composition called pathetic [term by P. Eisenstein] in classical cinema are revealed, but here it has a suddenly fading effect, that is, the effect of inverted pathos. The role of Pompey's widow Cornelia, which was tragically performed by Svetlana Slivia, is similar. For example, such is her duet with her son Sextus "Son nata a lagrimar" (end of act I). The doomed nature of this duet comes into discord with the appearance of a teenager (Benjamin Schrade), who, furious against the killer of his father – Ptolemy (and even with a scarf on his head) is much alike to either an evil pirate or a modern terrorist.

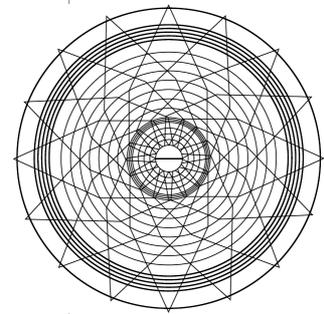
Thus, a powerful emotional and psychological mood swing is created between the kitsch reading of the Opera libretto as a whole and the mournful character's characterization in the layers of consciousness – which, moreover, like in Handel's "Almira", is supported by switching from a mass act to a solo. In this "ambivalent" phenomenon (parody outward and drama from the inside), the "joining" of plot and story is realized, from which intellectual editing is born. Consequently, getting into the character of Cleopatra (directly) and Cornelia (indirectly) in the Halle version is based on the acute conflict of their external portraits and internal emotional states.

Traditional theatrical techniques are also used in "Julius Caesar": it is the appearance of an otherworldly image calling for retribution (remember the Ghost of Hamlet's father in Shakespeare's tragedy by the same name, the "writing hand" in Handel's oratorio "Belshazzar", later – the statue of the Commander in Mozart's Opera "Don Juan"). It is used here in an unorthodox interpretation: a glowing from the inside, singing Pompey's head, and later – his almost animated monument (Jake Arditti, countertenor). Such interference by transcendent forces into the lives of mortals usually produces a sense of horror. But here, those who prostrate in fear of the

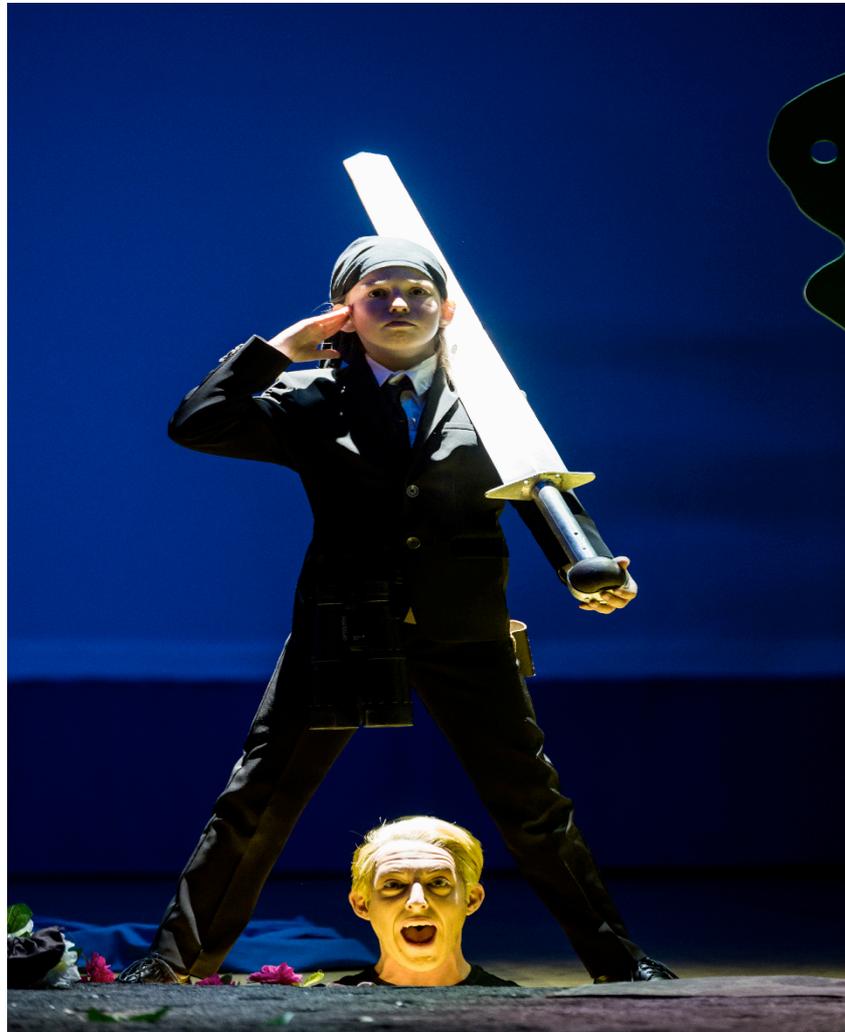
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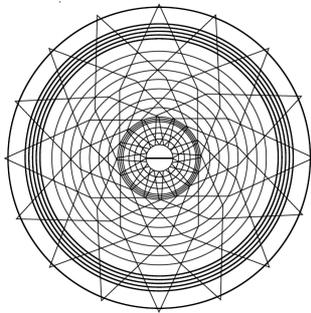


victim's head shining with a mysterious green light, create a grotesque impression (Figure 9).



**Figure 9. G. F. Handel. "Julius Caesar in Egypt"**

Summarizing our observations, we come to a conclusion: the director's understanding of Baroque operas has expanded enormously due to the introduction of compositional principles of cinematographic edition and modern means of expression, primarily screen arts, into musical and stage dramaturgy. This phenomenon makes it possible to delve deeper into the emotional and psychological world of Handel's characters, which personify invariant human qualities in their diverse manifestations and later – in the fantasy vision of modern directors – are interpreted as a multi-layered phenomenon. The depth of understanding of Handel's opera characters is provided by a sharp combination of the Baroque and modern layers of consciousness, which gives both the director and the audience the opportunity to get into the same characters multiple times. In this process of directing the author's idea towards the audience, a significant part was played by the conflict of video and



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musical compartments, catchy theatrical techniques, the principles of documentary and artistic cinema: parallel, associative and intellectual editing, pathetic composition, which ultimately gave an extraordinary increase in the semantic capacity of the old opera genre at the present stage.

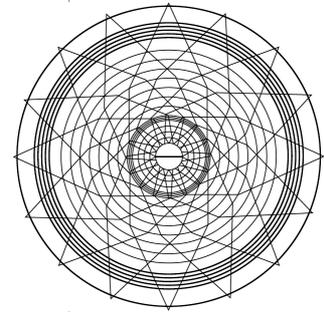
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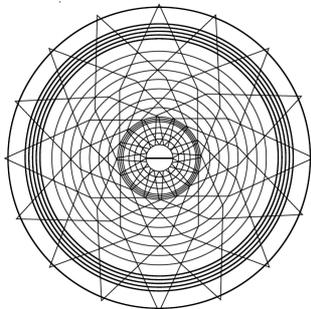
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### ОПЕРЫ ГЕНДЕЛЯ В КОНТЕКСТЕ СОВРЕМЕННОЙ РЕЖИССУРЫ: К ВОПРОСУ О ПРЕТВОРЕНИИ В ОПЕРНОМ СПЕКТАКЛЕ КОМПОЗИЦИОННЫХ ПРИНЦИПОВ КИНОИСКУССТВА

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#### **Аннотация:**

Статья написана на основе посещения ее авторами в 2019 году современных постановок барочных опер Георга Фридриха Генделя (1685–1759) в театрах трех немецких городов: Халле, Бад-Лаухштедта и Бернбурга. В первом, являющемся родиной композитора, ежегодно проводится Международный генделевский музыкальный фестиваль, посвященный исследованию творчества великого саксонца и его современников. Концепция фестиваля в 2019 году была связана с изучением воплощенных в его операх женских образов: «Чувствительные, героические, возвышенные – генделевские женщины».

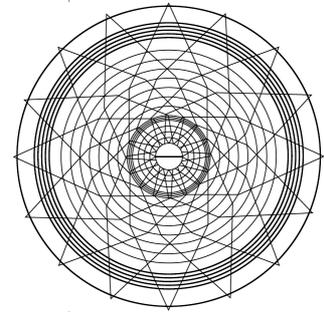
Осмысливая рассматриваемый научно-художественный концепт, авторы приходят к заключению, что возможности режиссерских трактовок старинных опер значительно расширились за счет инкорпорирования в музыкально-сценическую драматургию композиционных принципов киномонтажа и выразительных средств современных, прежде всего, экранных искусств. Для изучения этого явления использован научный аппарат, разработанный в отечественной науке Львом Выготским, который, исследуя в художественной литературе духовный мир героя, выявил его психологические противоречия, выраженные в конфликте фабулы и сюжета, и Сергеем Эйзенштейном, хорошо знавшим рукопись исследования «Психология искусства» Выготского и не без влияния его идей создавшим свою собственную «психологию искусства», которая изложена на страницах его работ разных лет.

Стержень этой концепции составил «переход от Выразительного Движения к образу художественного произведения... как процесс взаимодействия слоев сознания» (Эйзенштейн, 1980, с. 188), что позволило обеспечить множественное вхождение в художественный образ (ранее такой метод анализа был применен одним из авторов статьи в работе, посвященной интеграции принципов живописи и кино (Konson, 2018; Konson, 2019)). Подобное вхождение фундируется и некоторыми чертами кинодраматургии,

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где первым среди равных является открытый Эйзенштейном принцип интеллектуального монтажа (Эйзенштейн, 1998), в котором нашли свое обобщение и другие типы монтажа (линейный, параллельный, ассоциативный), сложившиеся в широкомасштабную систему исследования психологии героев в искусстве. В настоящей статье выявление сущности отмеченных процессов дало возможность ее авторам увидеть в трактовках генделевских опер немецкими режиссерами феномен наращивания смысла, возникающий в результате слияния двух, казалось бы, непримиримо-конфликтных слоев сознания: барочного и современного, сложившегося на протяжении последнего столетия.

**Ключевые слова:** Гендель, Халле, театр, опера, режиссер, композитор, исполнитель, балет, сцена, ария, вхождение в образ, наращивание смысла, слои сознания, экран.