

**GHEORGHE DIMA NATIONAL ACADEMY OF MUSIC  
CLUJ-NAPOCA**

**Faculty of Music Performance**

**Department of Singing and Musical Performing Arts**

**IULIA SUCIU**

**ACCOMPANIMENT**

**SINGING**

**COURSE HANDBOOK**

**BACHELOR DEGREE**

## **YEAR I**

### **SEMESTER I**

#### **COURSE 1**

Selection of repertoire. Audio-video landmarks

Selecting the repertoire is a very important process, accomplished in a close collaboration with the professor, according to the vocal features of each particular student. The repertoire is established so as to serve an immediate purpose determined by the two professors in view of the harmonious, gradual, and stable development of the students.

The selection of the repertoire should correlate the current stage of the student's development - from the point of view of their singing abilities and also of their general knowledge - with the subsequent stages of their learning, so that we may gradually reach certain clearly outlined landmarks in the course of their education.

For a better and more attractive presentation of the repertoire proposed for study, we shall listen to and watch many recordings in compared performances, in order to get a complete image of the final outcome we aspire to.

During the auditions the students follow the score closely, so that the content and difficulty of the analyzed pieces may be evaluated correctly.

#### **COURSE 2**

Introductory notions for accompanied singing

The clear particular feature of the discipline singing within the curriculum of the homonymous major subject is that the concept of singing is not presented for study apart from the concept of instrumental accompaniment, or more precisely – orchestral accompaniment. Given that the description of the discipline *Accompaniment – singing* depicts the path of the student's development in parallel with the path presented in the description of the discipline *Singing*, the approached repertoire belongs exclusively to the opera genre, from its appearance until nowadays.

Thus, we study only accompanied singing, obviously with the help of piano reductions. These reductions must be used first of all in order to outline the harmonic, polyphonic framework of sounds, as well as the emotional framework of the opera arias; the instruments chosen by the composers in order to express their musicality will be presented later. Singing accompanied by orchestras appeared in the Antiquity. Nowadays we have numerous ancient musical pieces that are still successfully performed in theatres all over the world as complete works or merely as fragments - arias with recitative - which we offer the students for study in the first years of their music education.

### **COURSE 3**

The melodic-rhythmic approach of the score

Regardless of the student's level of musical training on enrolling the singing classes at the university, the stages of their education are invariably the same, as variations appear only in the context of their knowledge of the music theory, which can be advanced or merely general.

The study of each score starts by approaching the melodic line in the form of a solfeggio and by carefully analysing its intervals and tonal framework. Beating the measure indicated by the composer is imperiously necessary in order to grasp, from the very beginning, the rhythmic structure of the melodic discourse, at the same time with its metrical support.

The melodic-rhythmic approach of the score is the extremely important first stage in the subsequent construction of the entire edifice of sounds encompassed by the opera aria, the eluding of which can lead to the emergence of intonational or rhythmic accidents that become very hard to overcome later.

### **COURSE 4**

The harmonic context of the vocal approach. The antique arias

In order to reach the essence of this course, it is necessary to remember the first notions of musical harmony: the main pitches of a key, the manner in which chords follow one another in the tonal-functional harmony, the common note as connective element in the chords' progression, the appearance of alliterations by means of accidental sounds or of those sounds which lead the music towards the realm of another key.

Knowing the relationships between the keys is extremely important in order to understand how the composers' perception has changed during music history in regard to the expression of emotions through modulation. Whereas in the Italian Baroque and the Classicism we usually encounter modulations in closely related keys, in time they gained in intrepidity, as did the expression of sentiments and experiences through music.

The analysis of the harmonic context of the vocal approach relies strictly on the score, highlighting the main moments which collaborate in creating the antique arias, the introduction and the continuation of the recitative, its climax, as well as the conclusive part.

### **COURSE 5**

The polyphonic context of the vocal approach. Preclassical arias.

This course relies on the main notions of polyphony acquired in the homonymous course. These notions are remembered concomitantly with the score analysis, in order to provide an immediate practical application of all the concepts comprised in the opera aria.

In the aria of the Italian Baroque – which we call antique aria – the polyphony appears most of the times in the form of musical motifs which surface creating a *question and answer* effect. This effect is noticeable in the dialogue of the voice with the instruments – the orchestra or the piano reduction, in our case – as well as within the instrumental play alone, between the various instruments in the orchestra and the voices of the piano accompaniment.

Being fully aware of these moments is particularly important in order to understand the manner in which singing is related to the instrumental performance and how they collaborate in developing the musical expression.

## **COURSE 6**

The melodic-rhythmic approach of the score. Methods of score reading

Each musical score evinces its own melodic and rhythmic features. Nevertheless, the method of reading the wonderful construction of sounds is always the same, and the student goes through the same invariable stages every time. Only the student's level of musical training may lead to the exclusion of certain incipient stages that they may skip without jeopardizing the final result, due to their previous knowledge.

This course must be reconstituted periodically especially during the first study years, with the precise goal of providing the students with the possibility to gradually acquire an automatic reading of the score through solfeggio, through beating the measure and overlapping the literary text over the melodic embroidery.

## **COURSE 7**

The Italian Baroque

The Italian Baroque covers the period 1600 - 1700, building a connective bridge between the music of the Renaissance and that of the Classicism. Its main feature is the very rich ornamentation, the polyphonic structure that encompasses the concept of tonality, for the first time in music history.

The main composers we shall study in the first year are: Antonio Vivaldi, Alessandro Scarlatti, Domenico Scarlatti, Claudio Monteverdi, Tommaso Giordanni, Giacomo Carissimi, etc.

Besides the appearance of tonality, the Baroque brought generated changes of the music notation and increased the size and the diversity of the musical forms.

## **COURSE 8**

The study of the proposed repertoire

The first stage in the study of the repertoire proposed in our course in singing is preferably the audition of the materials that the students have to learn, performed by prestigious singers. This stage offers the possibility to obtain an overall image of the point where all educational stages should converge.

The second stage is to determine the publishing house that published the aria to be studied, since it is a known fact that scores differ from case to case and they are not always acknowledged by the conductors with whom the singer may collaborate in the future.

The third stage requires the placing of the aria in the work's entire context, becoming familiar with the character who sings the aria, their characterization, as well as their relationships to the other characters.

## **COURSE 9**

### Landmarks of performance

In outlining the performance of an opera aria it is very important to focus on the fact that the respective moment belongs to a character, is contained in a libretto, has clearly defined features, with well determined feelings and experiences. The moment of the aria, which is extracted from the whole, must be well known to the singer so that they are able to confidently express what the composer and the libretto writer decided together.

It is also necessary to know the way in which the character is related to the other characters and what their role is in the development of the action.

The fourth stage of the study consists in deciphering the melodic texture of the score by means of solfeggios, and concomitantly decoding the rhythmic structure by clearly beating the measure of the musical piece.

## **COURSE 10**

### The Italian Baroque

We believe it is necessary to return to a remembrance of the basic elements that build the foundation of the Baroque music, since it is a very important stage in the history of music, a stage impacted first and foremost by the appearance of tonality.

The course relies on the essential knowledge acquired in the general course in music history, a context in which we would like to mention such composers as Antonio Vivaldi and Claudio Monteverdi.

Vivaldi was born in Venice in 1678 and died in 1741. During his life he composed numerous instrumental works and over 40 operas which were performed in the theatres of Venice, Mantua, and Vienna.

Monteverdi lived between 1567 and 1643. He was considered the first important representative of modern opera and reached a level of recognition and celebrity far beyond any of his contemporary colleagues.

## **COURSE 11**

### Voice and accompaniment in the preclassic aria

The accompaniment of the preclassic aria outlines and at the same time provides the harmonic support for the development of singing seen as monodic development. Whereas in the beginning accompaniment relied on the structure of ciphered bass, which offered the instrumental players the chance to display their creativity, in time the instrumental accompaniment became clearly delineated, and the opportunity to improvise appeared only on the vocal level, especially in the case of the *da capo* arias.

It is important to analyse the harmonic support from the point of view of the relationships that emerge between the various keys and their mode – major or minor – and the expression of the feelings and experiences captured by the music.

## **COURSE 12**

The pre-classic aria – German and Italian repertoire. Comparative study.

Due to the complexity of the Baroque music, especially that written by the German composers, in the first year of study we approach only fragments from Handel's Baroque opera. The vocal difficulty of the Baroque scores, the necessary technique, the ambitus amplitude, as well as the very rapid tempos of certain pieces from the German repertoire have led us to the decision that their performance should only be studied in a later year, when the students' knowledge should be sufficient to ensure an evolution appropriate for the musical values involved.

The comparative study of the Italian and German Baroque pursues exactly the disclosure of these differences, which may be minute in the eyes of non-connoisseurs, but very important in the development of a young singer's vocal abilities.

Whereas in the Italian music, the notion of polyphony only appears in the form of short question-answer moments, the harmony and the polyphony found in the works of German composers is much more complex and requires a high degree of knowledge of the general music theory even in order to merely understand it, not to mention sing it.

## **COURSE 13**

The vocal articulation in the context of instrumental performance

It is a known fact that, in the Baroque, the difference between the approach of vocal art in comparison to instrumental art is almost ungraspable.

The voice was considered an instrument like all the others in the orchestra, causing the text to be structured in the manner of syllable-sound, with the exception of melismatic garlands, which are sung in fact on one vocal, but develop along an impressive number of measures without leaving space for any breath.

This is how the notion of Baroque breath emerged in the vocal technique, a type of breath that can interrupt this line of melodic interlacements - most of the times structured through ascending or descending sequences that respect the principles of musical phrasing.

## **COURSE 14**

Recapitulation

## **YEAR I**

### **SEMESTER II**

#### **COURSE 1**

Repertoire selection. Audio-video landmarks

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#### **COURSE 2**

The melodic and rhythmic analysis of the score

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#### **COURSE 3**

Approaching vocal singing in a harmonic context

The importance of this course is revealed by two aspects:

1. By means of the harmonic context the student can find their within the musical space of the piece in order to utter a correct vocal discourse as far as intonation is concerned
2. By acknowledging the harmonic substratum we provide the emotional connection desired by the author between the literary and the musical text

After the moments dedicated to the introduction or to the instrumental interlude, the singer must be aware of the harmonic context, in order to reach the correct sound from where they can begin their melodic approach which sometimes starts from the tonic, the third, the fifth or the seventh of the chord located in the piece's musical substratum.

The progress of the harmonic interlacements expose the key points of the aria, which must be treated according to their importance (for instance the modulation, the avoided cadence, etc.).

## **COURSE 4**

The Italian Baroque opera. Overview

The need to acquire a deeper knowledge of this important stylistic age in music history makes it necessary to teach the course in Baroque and its main representatives periodically.

Their works left their mark on the subsequent development of this musical genre that lies at the foundation of both the major course in singing and the closely related course in singing accompaniment.

Beside Vivaldi and Monteverdi the student should also be informed about such composers as G. Caccini, T. Giordanni, A. Caldara, etc., whose works, even though not completely preserved and not performed in their entirety on the stages of the world's musical theatres, have incontestably affected the later evolution of the opera genre.

## **COURSE 5**

General notions of style

From a stylistic point of view, each musical age has its own clearly defined features, which stem from a certain "revolt" or "unsatisfaction" related to the evolution that was taking place in the realm of the time's musical works.

Thus, the Baroque established the notion of *tonality*, an evident reaction to the modal context that pervaded the musical works composed at the time.

In terms of style, the Baroque is characterized by equilibrium, clarity, absolute control of the metric framework of the vocal and instrumental parts, and no deviations are allowed from this framework except in the area of the recitative – which, by means of a clear expression of the text affords the dramaturgical disclosure of the piece – or in the cadential area where the singer is allowed a certain freedom of expression.

## **COURSE 6**

Landmarks of performance

This course aims to develop the student's abilities to perform compared analyses of the same piece of music sung by various singers, to comprehend the fundamental elements which contribute to the technical and musical accomplishment of their concept of performance.

It is very important that the students learn how to follow certain aspects of the performance, the ones that make the difference and are the effect of each particular singer's personality traits.

1. Phrasing the melodic line: enveloping the discourse in musical segments built in accordance with the principle of the natural concatenation of the musical sounds in a close relationship to the meaning of the literary text.

2. The dynamic space of the analysed piece

3. Agogics

4. Articulation of the literary text.

## **COURSE 7**

The novelty of singing in the Italian Baroque

There are two tendencies in performing the Baroque opera:

1. The concept according to which both the vocal and the instrumental elements are subject to the manner in which they were approached at that time

2. The concept according to which singing and the instruments borrow the characteristics of the approach manner of the contemporary age.

Both are frequently embraced by singers and conductors from all over the world, since each concept has its own pros and cons.

The novelty of the Italian Baroque singing is given by the very fact that the human voice is treated just like any other musical instrument, capable of the same achievements, the same virtuosity, many times taken to extremes through the tempo that can impress by rapidity or, on the contrary, by a slowness that is difficult to maintain from the technical point of view.

## **COURSE 8**

The accompanied voice in the works of 16<sup>th</sup> century composers

The relationship between voice and instrumental accompaniment can be defined as a complex one, as the instruments interact with the human voice on the harmonic level, in the form of an absolutely necessary support, and on the emotional level as well, by revealing the entire dynamic range, the terraced structure, from the lowest intensity up to nuances of forte and fortissimo.

In the works of 16<sup>th</sup> century composers, the voice is obviously approached in the same manner as an instrument, mostly a wind instrument, a fact revealed by the way in which singing is presented, as the vibrations of the voice borrow a lot from those of a wind instrument from the same age.

Also, the musical structure of the phrases, many times developed without obvious moments reserved for breathing, betray an instrumental approach of the voice.

## **COURSE 9**

The accompanied voice in the works of 16<sup>th</sup> century composers

The vocal works of Caccini, Vivaldi, Caldara, Giordanni

Giulio Caccini was born in 1551 and died in 1618. He was a composer, as well as a singer and an instrumental player. His works mark the passage from the Renaissance to the Baroque.

Antonio Caldara lived between 1670 and 1736. He composed in 1710 the opera *La costanza in amor vince l'inganno* who was first staged in Mantua. He is remembered in music history due to his cantatas, oratorios, and operas with librettos by Metastasio.

Antonio Vivaldi is the most representative of the Italian Baroque composers who created music for voice with instrumental accompaniment. Vivaldi was born in Venice in 1678 and died in 1741. He composed, beside numerous instrumental pieces, over 40 operas with representations in the theatres of Venice, Mantua and Vienna.

## **COURSE 10**

The recitative in the Italian Baroque opera

The Baroque recitative represents the main architectonic groundwork on whose structure we erect the dramaturgy of the musical piece. The opera action evolves through the recitative - the place where the dialogues of the characters take place. The recitative explains certain situations, emotional states, experiences, which lead to the natural development of the libretto.

Whereas within the aria we consider the presentation of a sole situation, the structure of which serves as basis for the entire moment, the recitative marks precisely the dramaturgical context of the piece in its evolution.

For this reason, the vocal characteristics of the recitative's performance are different from those of the aria's. In the recitative, the text must be clearly enunciated, the articulation must be precise, the musical sentence or phrase must be guided according to its literary meaning, in order to understand the direction that the composer follows in developing the opera as a whole.

## **COURSE 11**

Landmarks of performance  
Approaches in individual study

The first stage in the study of the established repertoire of the major course in singing is preferably the audition of recordings of the materials that the students have to learn, performed by prestigious singers. This stage enables the formation of a comprehensive view of the whole picture that the subsequent educational stages should converge towards.

The second stage requires a decision on the publishing house that printed the score to be studied, as it is a known fact that the scores differ from case to case and the conductors with whom the singer may work in the future may not always agree to the same variants.

The third stage requires the placing of the aria's moment within the opera's overall context, becoming familiar with the character who sings the aria, characterising them, as well as their relationship to the other characters.

## COURSE 12

### Specific ways of expression in Baroque music

Baroque music is characterized by the absolute intertwining and intermingling of the vocal and instrumental concepts.

In the Baroque, the voice is not treated any differently from the instruments. Articulation, phrasing, dynamics, agogics, everything is subject to the same rules, whether we analyze the evolution of the accompanied monody of the human voice or the orchestral accompaniment.

Since we treated articulation and phrasing in the previous courses, we shall briefly refer to the Baroque dynamics. As in the case of the harpsichord, which does not possess the technical ability to develop a *crescendo* except in a terraced manner, the human voice accomplishes a rise in intensity from *piano* to *forte* in the same manner.

The metrical liberties are accepted only in the clear context of the final cadences, where the performer is truly provided with the possibility to improvise, nevertheless abiding by a certain harmonic succession, and, preferably, by the resumption of certain motifs encountered in the course of the aria.

## COURSE 13

### Notions of style

The Baroque innovations become apparent due to the emergence of the *basso continuo*: A type of accompaniment with a notational system called *ciphared bass*, provided by a bass instrument and a keyboard instrument.

*Omofonia* – music for a melodic instrument with a similar rhythmic accompaniment. Development of dramatic genres such as the *opera*. Clear and linear melody.

The *concertato* style, which is a sonorous contrast between the orchestra and the voice or the instrumental solo.

Vocal parts with a clear virtuosity character, meant for the evaluation of the singers' vocal acrobatics.

The appearance and development of the *cadence* usually placed close to the finale of the piece or of a piece thereof.

## COURSE 14

### Recapitulation of the materials studied during the semester.

## **YEAR II**

### **Semester I**

#### **COURSE 1**

##### Repertoire selection

Selecting the repertoire is a very important process, accomplished in a close collaboration with the professor, according to the vocal features of each particular student. The repertoire is established so as to serve an immediate purpose determined by the two professors in view of the harmonious, gradual, and stable development of the students.

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#### **COURSE 2**

##### Audio-video landmarks

During the auditions the students follow the score closely, so that the content and difficulty of the analyzed pieces may be evaluated correctly.

The information received by means of the audio and video materials is extremely valuable especially if the performances belong to prestigious names in the field of arts, be they world famous singers or conductors whose musical concepts have brought them recognition on international stages.

In these auditions it is important to track not only the quality and the features of the singing, but also elements belonging to style and performance. Thus, we analyse the tempo, the dynamics, the manners of phrasing, agogics, etc.

#### **COURSE 3**

##### The melodic-rhythmic reading of the score

Regardless of the student's level of musical training on entering the second year, the stages of their education are invariably the same, as variations appear only in the context of their knowledge of the music theory, which can be advanced or merely general.

The study of each score starts by approaching the melodic line in the form of a solfeggio and by carefully analysing the intervals and their tonal framework. Beating the measure indicated by the composer is imperiously necessary in order to grasp, from the very beginning, the rhythmic structure of the melodic discourse, concomitantly with its metrical support.

The melodic-rhythmic approach of the score is a first very important stage in the subsequent construction of the entire edifice of sounds encompassed by the opera aria, the eluding of which can lead to the emergence of intonational or rhythmic accidents that become very hard to overcome later.

#### **COURSE 4**

Tradition and innovation in 18<sup>th</sup> century aesthetics

*Music makes man escape himself and the world (...), being God's most beautiful revelation.* (Goethe)

The classical aesthetics tends towards simplicity and clarity of expression, towards logical treatment of themes, avoiding strong contrasts and excessive details, aspiring towards a harmonious whole. The law of equilibrium is the one that governs the classical musical construction, and the action of dramatic works follows the rule of the three unities: of place, time, and space.

The theme of dramatic works must be unitary, it must happen in the same place, during one day. In theatre as well as opera new and realistic genres are born: opera buffa, comical plays and Singspiel. The vocal-instrumental ensembles no longer played in the noblemen's salons, but in public spaces, where access was usually charge free.

#### **COURSE 5**

The tonal-functional framework of classical music. Analysis.

Whereas the stylistic directions of the Baroque imposed a tendency towards the monumental and the grandiose, with an evident taste for rich ornamentation, in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the musical writing became simplified, out of a desire to confer language an increased expressiveness.

The melody is accessible, natural, the rhythms are ordered and the symmetry square (the principle of seven-beat phrases), the harmony is consonant and the timbral range very rich.

The principles of tonality are strictly observed, the harmonic series clearly reveal the structure of the classical architecture. Most of the times, the modulations tend towards first degree tonalities, the minor modulations are frequently preferred also due to the modal major-minor contrast.

#### **COURSE 6**

Landmarks of performance

## Modes of analysis. Expressivity and liberty in performance

The performance of classical music abides by clear rules, is subject to well defined norms that emerged as a reaction to the specific Baroque stylistics.

In Classicism, the exteriorization of feelings, be they happy or sad, was considered completely inappropriate, so that they had to be expressed in a measured, balanced manner, without allowing for excesses: wigs hid the hair, which was considered the expression of shameful sexuality, the excessive powdering of the face was meant to provide a uniform facial expression, while the excessive expression of the feelings was considered totally contrary to the traditions of the time.

Just as dances strictly abided by certain movements, this tendency towards control and discipline left its mark on all works of art, regardless of the genre approached. The singer's liberty of performance was limited to phrasing and to a very small extent to the dynamic concept of the studied piece.

## **COURSE 7**

### Classicism. Stylistic coordinates of classical music

The stylistic period we wish to analyse is that of the Viennese Classicism, because in music history it represents the quintessence of the classical spirit through the works of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven.

This period expands from 1781 – the year when Haydn composed the 6 quartets op. 33 to 1827, the year of Beethoven's death.

The musical genres improve and the melody tends to simplify, revealing the influence of the traditional folk music in the structure of the epoch's melodic discourse.

Like all other artistic trends that emerged throughout history, Classicism renounces the specific musical features of the previous one, the Baroque, replacing the grandeur and the monumentality with simplicity, elegance, and equilibrium between the elements that provide the architectural construction of the musical space.

## **COURSE 8**

### Analysis of the classical recitative

The course is based on analyses and uses the musical scores as support. Thus, at the beginning of the course we shall undertake a historical overview of the Baroque recitative, especially of the Italian Baroque, the stylistic age studied in the first year.

In Classicism, the recitative preserves the great importance it had in the Baroque, because of the fact that it confers continuity upon the dramaturgy of the musical piece. In the recitative's area the dialogues between the characters take place, certain situations are explained, the action develops from the intrigue until the denouement.

The underlayers of the voice, the harmonic context contains architectonic elements which support the character's melodic enterprise, illustrating, through the harmonic colour, the emotion that the libretto's development requires.

There are certain rules connected to the manner in which the vocal melodic path is phrased - there is no breathing unless the musical interruption coincides with the literary one - or the fact that the final third of the musical phrase transforms into a descending tetrachord, if the poetic sense allows for it.

## **COURSE 9**

The classical aria in the context of the whole score

Unlike the recitative, in the classical opera the aria marks a moment when the composer chooses to develop a state, a sentiment that stands out dominantly in that particular point of the action's development.

The action driven by the recitative reaches a point which the composer chooses to treat with increased importance, in order to attract attention upon the emotional state experienced by the character at that particular moment.

## **COURSE 10**

The Classicism. Stylistic and architectural evolution.

From the perspective of style, each musical age appears as a reaction and a "mutiny" against the compositional habits of the previous period. The Baroque grandeur is replaced in Classicism by simplicity, and the pleasure of revealing melodiousness inspires composers to use traditional folk songs as well.

Whereas in the Baroque polyphony relied massively on complex forms such as the fugue and the *da capo* aria, in Classicism we repeatedly encounter arias structured according to an A-B-A pattern, where the B modulates towards another related first degree tonality, only to return to the initial sounds, resuming the themes of the section A motifs.

Even if the A-B-A structure is related, in architectonic terms, to the Baroque *da capo* aria, classical composers leave their specific mark by adopting certain motifs from section A alone, without copying it identically, developing variations meant to enrich the emotional-colouristic range of the musical piece.

## **COURSE 11**

The tonal relationships in the classical aria. The modulation

The modulation is a compositional procedure used in classical opera in order to attract the listener's attention to the changes of inner experiences the character goes through during the singing of the aria. By means of the specific colour of each key, the author suggests and develops the emotional state experienced by the character at that particular moment.

The relationship between *major* – light, joy, liberty, élan, and *minor* – sadness, pain, tears, is well-known and has been used by composers since times immemorial. The suspense or surprise moments are depicted in many cases by means of the avoided cadence, I-IV-V-VI, and the cadential zones usually stop on the 5<sup>th</sup> level of the developing tonality.

Depending on the intensity of the feelings that undergo changes, the author of the music uses modulating inflections or even modulating approaches, but nevertheless there persists an obligation to return to the initial tonality by the end of the aria.

## **COURSE 12**

Vocal articulation in its relationship to the instruments

Whereas in the Baroque the difference in the approach of the singing as compared to the instruments was, in many ways, hardly perceivable, in the classical period the singing gained ground; however, this cannot be seen as an important evolution in conceptual terms, but rather as a manner of presenting the accompanied monody.

The voice is the carrier of the poetic message and thus has an advantage over the instruments in revealing the work's content of ideas. Hereafter the articulation is preponderantly syllabic, that is, to each note is assigned one syllable, except in the cadential zone located at the end of the median part or at the end of the aria.

The instruments provide a resonant harmonic space, and only rarely become a dialogue partner, as the orchestral interludes provide the emotional support of the sonorous architecture of the whole.

## **COURSE 13**

The Baroque aria – the Classical aria. The conceptual parallel

Like in the Baroque, the arias are preceded by a recitative, sometimes rendered only by the character who is going to sing the aria, at other times by several characters who lead the action up to the point where the composer feels he must focus on the inner experiences of one of them with the help of the aria.

The differences between the Baroque and the Classical arias are perceivable first and foremost on the levels of style, musical content, and harmonic structure. The melody is more easily perceivable, and the emotion of the feeling that animates the aria is felt through the evolution of the tempo and the changes of the harmonic substratum – modulating inflections or modulations.

In this context we must refer to Beethoven's vocal scores, which stand out within the Viennese Classicism due to the difficulty they reveal, precisely because of the syllabic articulation, of the register within which the vocal endeavour unfolds and, last but not least, of the manner in which Beethoven builds the orchestral accompaniment.

## **COURSE 14**

Recapitulation

## **YEAR II**

### **SEMESTER II**

#### **COURSE 1**

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#### **COURSE 2**

##### Audio-video landmarks

During the auditions the students follow the score closely, so that the content and difficulty of the analyzed pieces may be evaluated correctly.

The information received by means of the audio and video materials is extremely valuable especially if the performances belong to prestigious names in the field of arts, be they world famous singers or conductors whose musical concepts have brought them recognition on international stages.

In these auditions it is important to follow not only the quality and the features of the singing, but also elements belonging to style and performance. Thus, we analyse the tempo, the dynamics, the manners of phrasing, agogics, etc.

#### **COURSE 3**

##### The Italian *bel canto*. History

The term *bel canto* (i.e. beautiful singing) was used for the first time in music history at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, referring to a certain approach of singing in relation to opera music or sacred music.

Later on, the term reappeared in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when it received a new dimension, especially in Italy, turning into a model of performance with clearly stated features.

These features are obviously focused on an excessive attention paid to the vocal side, in fact as an evolutionary process following the classical age, when the approach of the human voice was not much different from that of an instrument.

In this period, the singers were given maximum liberty and importance in shaping their own melodic approach, and were often allowed even to contribute by changing the score presented by the composer.

#### **COURSE 4**

The Italian bel canto. The analysis.

The Italian bel canto gained ground in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, particularly through the works of Gioachino Rossini (1792 – 1868), Vincenzo Bellini (1801- 1835) and Gaetano Donizetti (1797 – 1848).

Their works are superlative examples of this style of singing which arrived at a *maximum maximorum* between 1805 and 1830.

The bel canto was characterized by the perfection of the vocal equilibrium, the well-contoured legato, a generous ambitus of the vocal range, the agility and flexibility of the human voice. The operas stand out by means of long soloistic passages, with rich ornamentation and cadential moments which last longer than anything that had been seen before.

#### **COURSE 5**

The harmonic universe of the Italian bel canto

From the harmonic point of view, the orchestra provides the space of development for the vocal melody, becoming an indispensable support for the age-specific vocal acrobatics.

The harmonic colour, the key are influenced by the state of mind that the composer wishes to reveal at a certain moment of the opera. Like in the Classicism, the situations abounding in enthusiasm and happiness undoubtedly call for a major key with luminous harmonies, and the ones located at the opposite pole of the human emotion call for minor keys, mostly with sharps, which build the framework of sounds appropriate for the inner experiences of the opera or sacred music characters.

The harmonic interlacements follow the natural trajectory of the tonal-functional stability, the arias always start from the tonic, and after the subdominant and the dominant are reached, the return to the tonic is absolutely clear.

#### **COURSE 6**

Stylistics landmarks

An extremely important moment in the singing student's education is the audition. The information they receive through auditions is imperatively necessary, and the compared analysis is one of the most important methods of study for a musician. For this reason, this theme is treated during two entire classes.

The students do not always know what to pay attention to when listening to the musical pieces they have received for study. The audition and the analysis must focus on the vocal and on the musical point of view.

In regard to the vocal side, the student must become aware of the technical manner through which the singer solves the problems encountered throughout the piece: the manner in which the voice is maintained through the air flow, the use of the resonators, the spaces created by opening the throat, etc.

## **COURSE 7**

### Stylistic landmarks

From a musical viewpoint, the audition is the main method of information on the multitudinous existent trends of performance, which on the one hand have been influenced by the school of arts, and on the other by the conductor's requests as a person responsible for the musical product.

The main goal of the auditions is to provide an overall view of the musical pieces studied, which should comprise stylistic, melodic, harmonic, dynamic, and agogic aspects, avoiding the imitation or copying of performing cues before the musical and literary text has been perused and filtered by one's own personality. During the Italian *bel canto*, we can admit to certain adopted traditions which refer to the cadential parts or to the accomplishment of supplementary coloraturas as compared to the initial score; however, publishing houses have to a great extent taken care of this extremely delicate issue and present at the end of the score the recommended variants, with the exact purpose of preserving the spirit of the age and not giving in to the temptation of vocal acrobatics that lack both meaning and content.

The musical phrasing, the discovery of that particular point where the intrinsic energy of the sound successions converge, as well as the overlapping of the literary text in a manner that will enable prosody and melody to build a unitary whole full of emotion and expressivity, are the main targets of the auditions; when the students also watch the recordings, they gain an additional advantage in terms of bodily language which is extremely important and suggestive in the case of opera performances and also of piano accompanied recitals.

## **COURSE 8**

### The Romanticism. History

The emergence of a musical trend must be understood from various viewpoints. Each new musical trend in performance drew its stamina from the social context of the respective age, from the ceaseless changes that human society is subject to, which have always left their mark on all human forms of manifestation, and implicitly on art, with all its accessibility towards the visual or the musical side, by means of painting, sculpture, music, dance, or, most of the times, by means of the music genre that gathers them all into a wonderful metamorphosis called OPERA. Each musical trend appeared as a contrasting expression of everything that had existed before regarding the general concept of a work of music. For instance, in Classicism the voice was still considered an instrument, and the compositional approach paid an absolute tribute to this phenomenon. In *bel canto*, on the contrary, the voice is presented as the absolute leader of the musical process, and any singing fantasy is readily embraced as long as it highlights the singers' vocal qualities. Whereas in the Classicism the expression of feelings was barred by aristocratic principles, by equilibrium and elegance, in Romanticism the composers gave free rein to the manifestation of inner experiences, turning the complexity of the rendered emotions into the very ideology of the musical trend. The voice was endowed with facets never known before, with colours pertaining to an enriched

range, to a generous dynamic spectrum, all being seconded by an orchestra that turned from accompanier (as in the Italian *bel canto*) to an ever more present and more efficient partner in shaping the artistic expression.

## **COURSE 9**

Landmarks of performance  
Vocal versus instrumental performance

As I was saying at the end of the previous course, the relationship between vocal and instrumental singing had an extremely sinuous path along the history of music composition. The Baroque viewed the human voice and the musical instrument as two components with similar features in the composition of opera scores, and the only supplementary attribute of the voice was its capacity to enunciate the poetic text. This aspect is easily observed due to the manner in which the singer's musical phrase is written, a wonderful interlacing of sounds full of meaning and clarity of ideas that nevertheless leaves no break for the singer to breathe. In Classicism things became slightly simplified, the voice was no longer so suffocated by the instrumental counterpoint and things tended towards that harmonic and dynamic accompaniment that reached its peak in the *bel canto*. It is precisely this peak that in the Romanticism generated another vision of the role that the orchestra or the accompanying piano should have in shaping a work's content of ideas and emotions. Thus, the instrument became a partner with equal rights in shaping the aesthetic-musical image of a composition, through modes of expression located in the harmonic space – much more intrepid harmonies used in key moments of the epic development – in the dynamics' space – through contrasts that had been hard to imagine in the previous epoch – but particularly through the musicalagogics, an element that became compulsory in clearly and expressively revealing the poetic meaning comprised by the literary text. The Romanticism did not treat emotion as an aesthetic component which should lightly radiate from the music's agglomerated content of sounds, but as a purpose in itself of the entire compositional unfolding, a *sine qua non* of the Romantic ideology.

## **COURSE 10**

The analytical and practical study of the score

The cyclic presence of this course must be regarded as a periodical and necessary return to the "origins". Regardless of a student's level of musical education, the first encounter with a music score must follow the same path - a path tedious for some, smoother for others. In principle, the path has 4 stages:

1. The solfeggio of the music score. We recommend the repetition of this stage of study until the student reaches fluency and confidence. Beating the measure is absolutely necessary for the correct performance of the melody and the awareness of the rhythm.

2. The rhythmic reading of the literary text. The correct pronunciation of the literary text, regardless of the language it was written in, is extremely important, and its overlapping the rhythmic component supports awareness of the manner in which two of the three components of the vocal musical space mingle.

3. The concomitant rendering (even though the term is a bit pretentious in this context, we avoided the use of the term execution) of the three components: melody, rhythm, and text.

4. The translation of the literary text is always a spiny matter because of the superficiality that the students treat it with. “It is about...” are always the words that betray an erroneous approach of this aspect without which the artistic expression cannot be conceived. The text has to be translated word by word, as each word has its own colour, density or consistency depending on the context.

## **COURSE 11**

### The Romanticism in the evolution of music history

As I was saying in the previous courses, each musical trend has its roots in the composers’ desire to prove to their contemporaries and to outline for the posterity that the modes of expression employed by their predecessors are not longer adequate, as human society evolves, and so do its emotional needs, and the manner in which the elements that make up the aesthetic-musical space of a music work are treated no longer correspond to the requirements of the presence. Classicism emerged as a desire to simplify and disburden the musical discourse of the load of the polyphonic context and to present it in the form of the accompanied melody. Romanticism in its turn appeared due to a desire to show that from underneath the white powder of the faces the redness of emotions is allowed to come to light, be it caused by love or hate, happiness or despair. All of the sudden, everything that was latent in Classicism became exacerbated in Romanticism, reaching a climax. Everything was meant to serve an utterly clear expression of the inner experiences stated in the literary text, which were augmented by the much more suggestive harmonic space and by the load offered by the colouristic range of the musical dynamics. The relationship between the music and the text was organic; new means of expression were discovered that could develop the sound effects necessary for shaping the content of ideas; the importance of the pause in music increased – the surprise effect or the amplification of a moment’s gravity; the succession recitative-aria-recitative duet-final ensemble was given up and composers strove for a more natural succession of the events’ presentation without paying tribute to an architectural scheme established beforehand.

## **COURSE 12**

### Specific modes of expression

Considering the specificity of our specialization, namely the practical character of the classes, the target of this class must be a student’s capacity to decipher the ideas in the message of a musical composition and to identify the modes of expression specific to each particular stylistic age. From the analysis of the musical score and of the 5 primordial elements that compose it the student can get a deeper understanding of the emotional range of the experiences depicted by the author, since, after all, the goal of any artistic performance is to transmit a message, an energy that may resonate with the soul of the audience it addresses. The elements mentioned above are: the melody, the rhythm, the literary/poetic text, the harmony and the relationship with the instruments. The novelty of the modes of expression allows first of all for a broader permissiveness in terms of the interior dynamics of the musical phrases, a dynamics that refers both to the variety of auditory nuances employed and the innermost movement of the musical phrase. In Romanticism, this intrinsic malleability of the sounds’ structures became a manifesto of the desire to become liberated and unchained and renounce any patterns, be they social or musical. For this reason, the Romantic music is

sometimes difficult to sing correctly during school, due to the fact that it evinces a high degree of technical difficulty which places it, in our educational endeavour, after the Baroque and the Classicism. And after years and years of interdictions in expressing one's "bursts of energy" which music seems to dictate sometimes, when the moment of their acceptance has arrived, courage itself might require a supplementary revival.

### **COURSE 13**

The vocal cadence and its incorporation in the instrumental performance

One of the most spectacular elements of the vocal singing comprised in the melodic-musical space is the cadence. It is undoubtedly also one of the favourite parts of almost all singers; and how could it be any different when all music stops, when the universe of the stage freezes expecting what is going to be the sum of all the capacities and qualities of an opera singer. Such qualities and quantities belong to the vocal ambitus, the vocal agility, and particularly to the clarity of intonation. Even if it seems to have a somewhat reduced size in comparison to other means of expression, the cadence appears in the compositional space of the opera genre in several circumstances with different roles in each of them. For instance, there are cadential motifs that merely prolong the utterance of a word, in order to endow it with a little more flavour and loveliness, if it belongs to a feminine score, or elements defining the ridicule or the irony, if they are assigned to masculine characters. These cadential motifs recognized due to the fact that they rely on several musical sounds and only one vocal, must be rendered within a perfect rhythmic framing, which should not impair the musical discourse or hinder its natural development. The cadence emerging at the end of an internal segment of the general form of such a moment as an aria, a duet, a tercet, etc. is characterized by the fact that, even if it contains all the specific elements, it has a short temporal span and is somehow organically incorporated in the vocal-instrumental musical context. The most popular is, obviously, the one that we mentioned in the beginning of the course, namely the one that does not underlie temporal rigours, but, depending on the stylistic age it pertains to, is meant to amplify the emotion of the moment where the action stopped (Romanticism) or merely to display the singer's impressive vocal technique (*bel canto*). In this case the instrumental part has nothing to say and must stoically wait for the completion of the sound garlands and hope that they will agree with the initial harmonic space, since, the longer the cadence, the more evident the mastery of the singer who stays anchored in the tonality.

### **COURSE 14**

Recapitulation

This class wishes to be a remembrance of the main goals of this course, of the expected outcomes, of the obtained outcomes, an evaluation of the student's autonomy level after graduating this semester. The class progresses as a performance of the programme studied during the semester in the same circumstances as a public performance, as the student's performance is recorded within a class which allows several students to listen to and evaluate one another.