



A Brief Analysis of Romanticism in French Musical *Mozart-l'Opéra Rock*

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Abstract: The French musical *Mozart-l'Opéra Rock* is a romantic musical genre work with Mozart as the narrator. It premiered in 2009, with lyrics by Dove Attia and others, composed by Vincent Baguian et al. Romanticism is an ideological and cultural movement, like realism, both are the product of Western bourgeois society in the 18th and 19th centuries. Romanticism takes the pursuit of ideals as its creative focus, and creates fantastic artistic images with strong subjective lyricism. In terms of expression, fantastic fantasy, strong contrast, brilliant colors, high rhythm, exaggerated language, and bizarre plots are often used. The text analyzes the romanticism from three aspects: the creative group of the work, the lyrics and lines, and the stage performance.

Keywords: *Mozart-l'Opéra Rock*, romanticism, musical

1. The Romanticism of *Mozart-l'Opéra Rock*

1.1 The romantic style

The term Romantic first occurred in the 12th century and spread in the 17th century. It has been used by classical and traditional writers in various countries to criticize illusion and lack of reason. And the term Romanticism was born in the middle of the 17th century. In the 20th century, it was gradually recognized and derived various branches of art categories.

The romantic style is the creative method of romanticism in art. It exaggerates life artistically through rich imagination, emphasizing the display of personal ideals and surreal spiritual freedom. It uses a highly unrealistic imagination to suggest, symbolize or insinuate the social problems of the era at that time. Secondly, it is a highly subjective artistic creation method, which pays attention to the change of subjective feelings to the objective environment. Third, it has a lofty reverence for naturalism and an extreme yearning for the spirit of liberalism. Its expression includes fantastic fantasy, strong contrast, brilliant colors, high rhythm, exaggerated language, bizarre plot and so on.

1.2 The romantic creative team

Mozart-l'Opéra Rock, which premiered in Paris in 2009, was written by Dove Attia and François Chouquet, with music by Vincent Baguian and Patrice Guirao, and lyrics by Dove Attia, Jean-Pierre Pilot, et al.

The producers, Dove Attia and Albert Cohe, had both switched their careers. Albert was a medical student, but participated in the rehearsal of musicals such as *Don Quixote*. After being invited to watch a rehearsal for *Notre Dame*, he decided to work on creating musicals and then found Dove Attia, with whom he had collaborated on a biography of *Carl Lewis*. After earning a DEA degree in Paris, Dove returned to his alma mater to teach mathematics and physics, and also worked as a journalist and writer, but he has always maintained a high passion for art. The two spent several years producing the musical *The Ten Commandments*, and it was a great success, and then they have created a number of works, including *Gone with the Wind*, *The Wizard of Oz* and so on.

Not only the producers switched jobs, but the directors, leading actors and composers were all cross-border. Olivier Dahan was a film director who has made several biographies of celebrities, such as *La Vie Rose*. The actor Mikelangelo Loconte, who starred in this play, was an Italian rock singer who didn't know much about French. Composers were not all musical composers, who was born in a medical family. He was admitted to the Paris Royal Academy of Music in just a few years, and won awards such as choreography. He later studied film score, jazz arranging and piano at the Berklee College of Music. After graduation, he returned to the Paris Royal Academy of Music to teach courses such as harmony and fugue, and also conducted classical music as a conductor. In this play, his work consisted mainly of arranging and adapting some of Mozart's representative repertoires, as well as composing instrumental pieces for ballet and comedy.

Influenced by such a creative team, it's no surprise that *Mozart* has become "a true revolution in the musical world". The fusion of people from various fields is bound to bring about a variety of collisions and sparks. Firstly, the work is mainly based on pop rock to express a composer in the classical period, which seems like the wrong button on a shirt, which is very romantic. Then in the work, the pop singing method is mainly used, and the soprano aria is added, which is also very fresh.

In addition, the rock band is placed on the stage, wearing modern clothes, which collides with the classical style stage and sparks both contradictions and sparks.

The romanticism of the work is also related to the national character of the main creative group. Gaul, which belongs to France, is a country with Latin-Roman culture as the main body and is influenced by Pan-Germanic. The Latin people love the beauty of soundness, balance, simplicity and elegance, while the Germanic people tend to be introspective, self-critical, and prone to metaphysical speculation. Therefore, the work's overall style is more inclined to indulge in indulgence, always full of laughter, even if he encounters setbacks, he returns to the optimist style after the end of the song.

2. Romanticism in the text

2.1 The romanticism in the storyline

As the main creators is composed of non-musical major's professionals, the compose of script is not based on the traditional musical perspective.

In *Amadeus*, where Mozart's life is shown with flashback styling, the biography shows people a tragic story of Antonio Salieri who let a superstar fall off because of jealousy and hatred. In *Mozart! das Musical*, the creators told the story of a tragic ordinary man who spent his life pursuing freedom and creating music. These two works are basically in the form of biographies, and the stories full of realism are presented in the way of interludes.

Mozart-l'Opéra Rock breaks the traditional shackles, jumps out of the traditional plot techniques, and shows the capricious and free Mozart in a typical French romantic way. Dove captures the characteristics of Mozart's freedom, focusing on the life of Mozart from the age of 17 to 35, and concentrating on Mozart's spirit.

The story begins with the succession of Colloredo. Although Mozart's live comfortably, his music inspiration and theme are deeply shackled, and Colloredo contempt for Mozart's music. He fired Mozart for his proposal of traveling around the world to hold concerts. While traveling around the world with his mother, he was attracted to Aloysia Weber who only coveted his talent. After all his money was cheated by the Weber family and his talent also hit the wall at the same time, his mother unfortunately passed away of illness.

Whereas the blow of ideals, family affection, and love didn't defeat him. After a brief depression, he relied on his will to ignite his fighting spirit and continue to move forward bravely. He is mortal, but he can radiate mythical vitality. It's romantic. It's the heart of the storyline as well.

2.2 The romanticism in lyrics

From the beginning of the play, a rock song, *Penser l'impossible* sung, is sung by old Mozart and his daughter: "Penser l'impossible avant tout; Brûler nos prisons dorées; Oser l'utopie jusqu'au bout; Seuls les fous nous ont fait avancer," Then Mozart sings *Le Triblion* in the tavern: "Je suis un libre-penseur; un trublion, un emmerdeur; messieurs les juges, les procureurs; non, je n'ai cure de vos assises; je suis assis sur votre honneur; et vos valeurs que je meprise." It is not difficult to see the Mozart family's disdain for power, their challenge to the secular and their desire for freedom. After suffering a triple setback, he says, "Mais je ne cederai rien, J'irai jusqu'au bout de ma musique, jusqu'à vous! Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart trahi, humilié, vous salue bien." Then he moves on. When he is in Vienna, he sings *Place je passe* with hope. When his life seems to come to an end, he and Salieri sing *Vivre à en crever* together: "S'il faut mourir, Autant vivre à en crever; S'il faut mourir, Sur nos stèles, je veux graver, Que nos rires Ont berné La mort et le temps. There's no doubt that the whole play contempts for the secular, the powerful and the death. This spiritual connotation fully reflects the freedom and optimism of the French.

3. The romanticism from stage performance

3.1 The building of roles and characters

The romantic feature is very typical in the building of the roles' characters. Mozart lived in the classicism period of the 18th century. The styles of that period were dominated by the delicate, gorgeous and complicated Rococo style, and exaggerated shapes and bright colors were used extensively. The male look is dominated by toupee, pigeon wings and bag wig, with a lace-trimmed blouse inside, elaborate and intricate cuffs, knee-length slim-fitting pants, long white stockings and shoes with buckle tabs. Ladies either piled up tall wigs, or wear wide-brimmed hats, corsets, petticoats and bell-shaped dresses of different colors. Brilliant colors are one of the characteristics of romanticism.

There are also many modern styles in the works, such as the jester Rosenberg in clown makeup, and modern dancers when reflecting his inner monologue. The fact that the clothing is not completely limited by the background of the times also

makes the whole work more casual, making romance and freedom more harmonious. After the death of Mozart's mother, a group of dancers in bizarre costumes and ballet costumes appeared on the stage. They symbolize the world in Mozart's heart, which is absurd, ironic and bizarre. This fantastic fantasy is also the crux of the Romanticism.

And Mozart's model breaks the tradition of the classicism period. His clothes are mainly black punk style, contains black lace shirt, black tights, without exaggerated wig, but have exaggerated smoky eye shadow. His outward looking is a portrayal of his inward disposition. His thoughts and his music are very advanced. In his heart, he always maintains his own pursuit of music and wants to break free from the shackles of the outside world. His youthful feeling comes from his rebelliousness, and this is the romantic reflection of the character building on Mozart's character.

3.2 The stage setting and imagery

The stage set of this work is imageable and there are few concrete stage props. In addition to the necessary scene replacement, there may only have a piano, several chairs, a sofa, etc. When expressing the inner world of the characters, there is no stage setting, apart from the strange shapes. The stage is changed by the lights, and the contradictions and conflicts are interpreted by the actors, which gives the audience a great space for imagination. Therefore a great space for imagination can leave to the audience.

For example, after experiencing the death of his relatives and the humiliation and betrayal of Aloysia, Mozart sings *Je dors sur des roses* to fight against fate. When he is singing, there is only two props in the stage: one red light (which is following the modern dancer), and a chasing light (which is shining on Mozart). The dancer, who symbolizes the rose, stabbed Mozart and waked him up.

Another example is *Comédie Tragédie*, which is sung by Mozart who roams around Vienna, in which there is a clown who tortured Mozart and a bel canto aria. The clown represents the suffering and torment in Mozart's life, while the soprano represents the voice of the secular.

After Salieri listened to Mozart's opera *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, the lights turned from blue to red, and entered the song *Le bien qui fait mal*, and a group of dancers in black appeared, tearing Salieri and throwing Mozart's score on the ground. These dancers in black can be regarded as Mozart's notes. Salieri is deeply impressed by Mozart's talent, and appreciated for Mozart's music. But the opposition to his own identity made him very painful.

When Mozart died in the end, the dancer in white beside him matched Mozart's movements, and Constanze rushed to Mozart but was stopped. It can be seen that the dancers in white beside Mozart symbolize angels and wings, and finally the golden gate signifies heaven. The whole layout symbolizes the passing of Mozart.

These images often require readers to do fantastic imagination, which is also the characteristic of romanticism.

4. Summary

In addition to what is listed in the text, the romantic color of *Mozart-l'Opéra Rock* has a lot of details for the audience to consider and reflect, including the shape of Salieri. There are countless discussions about Salieri in history, and some people judge him as the culprit of "murdering" Mozart, but in this work, he cherishes Mozart, nonetheless, the shackles of the world make his heart full of contradictions. He came to visit Mozart before his death and promised to help him complete the first draft of *Requiem aeternam*. Whether this setting is an adjustment for the romanticism of the work, and the reason why Salieri's modeling in this play is different from that of traditional society, remains to be considered.

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