

Wandering Through the Fascinating World of the Operetta of Ion Hartulary-Darclée

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Abstract: *In the first two decades of the twentieth century, the Romanian composer, Ion Hartulary-Darclée was captivated by the range of the sparkling genre of the operetta, putting his entire imagination, creativity, skills and knowledge at the service of this musical genre. His works quickly passed the test of the public, the premieres being well received in Italy, both by music lovers and by specialists, which is why he was nicknamed the Italian Lehar. His operettas launched an eclectic style, which is a good starting point for inspired melodies to develop delicate feelings which are released in an atmosphere with a lot of liveliness and quality cheerfulness, being created in Italian. Retiring to Romania, Ion Hartulary-Darclée also chose to write the Romanian version of his operettas, some of them being staged in Bucharest. His works did not pass the test of time decantation, because today they are unknown and unsung.*

Key-words: *Ion Hartulary-Darclée; operetta; verism; twentieth century*

1. Introduction

The genre of the operetta has origins that are lost in time, but it intertwines with the art of theatre, music, dance, has always opened her heart by promoting optimism, self-confidence, delicate, chivalrous feelings, the manifestation of joy being promoted by cascades of laughter, at the shadow of which the critical spirit often took refuge. With this cultural phenomenon of unwavering support from the general public, Europe became acquainted at the end of the nineteenth century with the French music community, which designated Offenbach as a profet. The need of *hamur*[merriment] of the Habsburg Monarchy created a prosperous environment in Vienna for the development of the genre. The Viennese operetta triumphed through the beauty of the melodic lines and by connecting the buffoonery borrowed from the French with the Austrian sentimentality. With the debut of Johann Strauss – the son, the grand operetta became one of the characteristic expressions of Vienna’s music and theatre, of the grace and fantasy of the Austrian spirit, to which was added a certain nobility, appreciated to this day throughout the world.

The pathway sprinkled with adventures of the operetta genre, also included Romanian experiences, advancing naturally from the vaudeville to operetta, in a setting and atmosphere in which the processing of folk song was suitable. The vaudevilles and operettas of the nineteenth century represented the starting point of the Romanian musical theatre, which was highlighted by an artistic physiognomy with national specificity, that detached itself through the picturesque musical language and local costume, the cheerfulness and lively rhythm of patriotic songs and folk dances. Although time has passed, their beauty is still intact; even though they seem simplistic to us today, they have a certain documentary value.

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2. Composer of Romanian origins. The Italian period

When the foundation of cult music was raised in the Romanian landscape through the genre of operetta, on July 7th 1886 in Paris, Ion³ Hartulary-Darclée was born in a Romanian family. Raised in a musical environment, the young Hartulary was captivated by the sound art, especially the one involving musical theatre. He began his musical studies in childhood, at the National Conservatory of Music in Paris, where between 1903-1909 he was a pupil in harmony of Xavier Leroux and Émile Pessard, André Gedalge in counterpoint and Charles-Marie Widor in orchestration. Between 1909-1911, he expanded his musical knowledge in another great cultural musical centre (in Milan), where he was an apprentice in composition under the tutelage of Amedeo de Sabata and Victor de Sabata⁴. He borrowed the eponymous Darclée from his mother⁵, a world-famous soprano, the one who interpreted for the first time Puccini's *Tosca*, Mascagni's *Iris*, Catalani's *La Wally*, creating no less than twelve absolute premieres.

The first compositions of Ion Hartulary-Darclée were dedicated to musical theatre. This is the catalogue⁶ of his creations for stage music:

1. *Jartiera* [*The Garter*] (1909, revised in 1968), a one-act comic opera, with a libretto by Carlo d'Ormeville, premiered in Milan.
2. *Capriciu antic* [*Antique Caprice*] (1911), comic opera in 3 acts, with a libretto by Carlo Zangarini, premiered in Milan, *Diana* Theatre.
3. *Amorul mascat* [*Masqued Love*] (1913), opera in 3 acts, with a libretto by Carlo Zangarini, premiered in Torino, *Alfieri* Theatre.
4. *Anonima Potin* [*Anonymous Potin*] (1916), operetta in 3 acts, with a libretto by Carlo Vizzotto and Gioacchino Forzano, premiered in Milan, *Diana* Theatre; the operetta was revised and staged under the name *Amazoana* [*The Amazon*] (1921), with a libretto by Angelo Nessi, premiered at Genoa.
5. *La Signorina Sans-Façon* [*The Young Lady Without Manners*] (1920), operetta in 3 acts, with a libretto by Angelo Nessi, premiered in Venice, *Malibran* Theatre.
6. *Miracolul cameliilor* [*The Miracle of the Camellias*] (1927), lyrical fairy-tale, with a libretto by Angelo Nessi, premiered at Locarno.
7. *Margery* (1927), operetta in 3 acts, with a libretto by Giuseppe Cortesi and Ion Hartulary-Darclée, premiered at Venice, *Malibran* Theatre.
8. *Zig-zag* (1928), operetta in 3 acts, with a libretto by Carlo Lombardo, premiered at Milan, *Dal Verme* Theatre.
9. *Operetta* (1929), operetta in 3 acts, with a libretto by Luigi Bonelli, premiered at Milan, *Lirico* Theatre.
10. *Atlantic-City* (1930), fairy-tale operetta, with a libretto by Amichatis, premiered at Barcelona.

³ He can be found also as Ivan (Yvan) or Giovanni.

⁴ Teodorescu, N. 2012. *Hariclea Hartulary-Darclée*. Brăila: Editura Opinia, p. 72.

⁵ In honour of the famous soprano born in Brăila, in 1995 was established the International Canto Competition *Hariclea Darclée*.

⁶ Cosma, V. 2001. *Muzicieni din România. Lexicon* [*Musicians of Romania. Lexicon*], vol. 4. Bucharest: Editura Muzicală, pp. 24-27.

Enchanted by the vogue of the operetta in the beginning of the twentieth century, Ion Hartulary-Darclée dedicated himself to this musical genre and knew glory in his age, being considered by the musical critics as a *Lehar of the Italian operetta*. All his lyrical opuses were created during the period in which the composer activated in Italy (1909-1930), a time in which he founded and organized his own lyrical company. For two decades he composed a number of ten works on Italian librettos, operas and operettas that were staged in Italy, Switzerland, Spain and South America. Most of the times he participated actively in the staging of his own creations, asserting himself as a conductor endowed with remarkable and efficient qualities.

He lived surrounded by great European composers of lyrical theatre, through the prism of his mother's activity. He has a richness of memories, dates and events in which he participated, testimonies of the successes of his mother, being present in the hall at almost all the performances of the famous soprano. He had photos with dedications from the great composer Puccini: *to my dear friend Coco*⁷, or *My beloved Coco* are two telling dedications from the author of *La Boheme*.

Raised during his childhood in the fertile artistic environment of verist Italy of the end of the nineteenth century and educated in the lyrical theatre climate represented by composers as Leoncavallo, Mascagni, Catalani, Puccini, but also the great singers Enrico Caruso, Titta Ruffo, Francesco Tamagno, Emilio de Marchi and Eugenio Giraldoni, Ion Hartulary-Darclée was a gifted composer, who had taste and fantasy, qualities that were filtrated through thorough studies and rich experience.

3. Composer of national essence. The Romanian period

In full creative maturity, Ion Hartulary-Darclée retired in Romania, where he activated for a quarter century as first conductor of the Symphonic Orchestra of Radio, being the one who also formed the Studio Radio Orchestra in Bucharest. Meanwhile he continued to compose, knowing very well the resources of the instrumental ensemble, from which he obtained remarkable effects. In the Romanian time, he composed works in the symphonic, vocal-symphonic and choral genre and he was the first writer of mass songs that represented Romania after the release⁸. Ion Hartulary-Darclée quickly adapted to the Romanian environment, understanding that you do not manage to evade historical and social determination, therefore music must reflect the feelings, tremors, nostalgia and aspirations of any man that comes from different historical periods and geographical areas.

The composer was attached to the symphonic poems *Vârful cu dor* [*The Peak with Longing*], *Picturi de Grigorescu* [*Peintures of Grigorescu*], *Visul lui Bălcescu* [*The Dream of Bălcescu*] and *Uvertura în stil clasic pe trei teme moldovenești* [*The Ouverture in a Classic Manner on Three Moldavian Themes*]. These pieces acknowledge his symphonist quality and especially his quality as a Romanian composer, with all its thinking and emotion. In these compositions, the themes have a logical development, the melody is evocative and lyrical and the harmonies are clear and compelling. The programmatic character is present, that is enriched by Romanian moldavian folklore rhythms, due to his family's origin. The wide melodic arches, the stable orchestration, the diveristy and inventiveness usage of instrumental colours and the impressive technique of form construction, asserted him as a true postromantic, a real lyrical presence with nostalgic outpourings, in the modern twentieth century. However, the European public recognized him through his music devoted to the lyrical scene.

⁷ *Coco* was a nickname used by family or friends of Ion Hartulary-Darclée.

⁸ Catalan, G. 2010. *Teatrul și muzica în România în primii ani de comunism* [Theatre and Romanian music in the first years of Communism] (II), Bucharest: Revista Arhivelor, p. 207.

In addition to composing and conducting, Ion Hartulary-Darclée made numerous radio shows and also, as an homage to his mother, he wrote with the musicologist George Sbârcea the book named *Darclée*. The volume received the *Ciprian Porumbescu* prize of Romanian Academy (1962) and was printed in Romanian, German, Russian and Hungarian. Through this work, the life and activity of the one that was named *The Carpatian Nightingale*, was known internationally.

At the age of 83, after a lifetime of accomplishments that was carried out in two stylistical periods (the Italian and Romanian), Ion Hartulary-Darclée entered the world of shadows on April 2nd 1969, in Bucharest.

4. The Collection of Arias and Duets from Operas and Operettas

Printed at Musical Publishing House in 1967, *Culegerea de arii și duete* [*The Collection of Arias and Duets*] extracted from operas and operettas of Ion Hartulary-Darclée, contains twelve arias and nine duets that were taken from six original compositions. The twenty musical moments are written for soprano voices (subreta, lyrical soprano or spinto-lyrical soprano), tenor voices (lyrical tenor, youngster tenor) and also lyrical mezzosoprano voices. Considering the different range of voices, the entire musical material is divided as follows:

1. For tenor voice:

Lamento of Filiberto from the opera *Capriciu antic*

Balada[*Ballade*] of Filiberto from the opera *Capriciu antic*

Madrigal from the operetta *La Signorina Sans-Façon*

Romanța[*Romance*] of Albert from the operetta *La Signorina Sans-Façon*

Improvizația[*Improvisation*] of Harry from the operetta *Margery*

2. For soprano voice:

Aria de dragoste[*The Love Aria*] of Monna Zilia from the opera *Capriciu antic*

Intrarea lui Kelly[*Kelly's Entrance*] from the operetta *Amorul mascat*

Ariade adio[*The Goodbye Aria*] of Pensée from the operetta *Amorul mascat*

Cântec de leagăn [*Lullaby*] of Pensée from the operetta *Amorul mascat*

Farandolla of Lily from the operetta *La Signorina Sans-Façon*

3. For mezzosoprano voice:

Cântecul de dor[*The Longing Song*] of Livia from the operetta *Margery*

4. Soprano-tenor duets

The Duet *Reminiscență* [*Reminiscence*] between Leon and Pensée from the operetta *Amorul mascat*

The Comique duet between Litvina and Van Ruppek from the operetta *La Signorina Sans-Façon*

The Duet *În Ploaie*[*In the Rain*] between Margery and Tully from the operetta *Margery*

The Lyrical Duet between Margery and Harry from the operetta *Margery*

The Dreams Duet between Clairon and Mino from the *Operetta*

The Duet of the Roses between Ida and Fox from the *Operetta*

5. Mezzosoprano-tenor duets

The Comique Duet between Maud and Savoff from the operetta *Amazoana*

The Duet *Gloriosul Tully*[*The Glorious Tully*] between Livia and Tully from the operetta *Margery*

The Duet in Mexico between Mercedes and Tully from the operetta *Margery*

The collection does not point out from which act is every musical moment is extracted and we do not have access to general sheet music or canto-piano reductions at our disposal to be able to deepen our research⁹. We do not know the subjects of the operas/ operettas, the action or development of the intrigue, the social condition of the characters or their evolution. But the music speaks for itself, the two variants in which the music can be interpreted, the Italian or Romanian language, giving us some clues about the situation in which the characters can be found. The veristic musical language is highlighted in the melodic lines and the harmonic complex. The use of the medium register in particular requests large melodic arches, that gradually accumulates tension and rises to sonic peaks, to the acute, the elevation of these moments provoking a fair dosing of the air and a good support of the air column. The manner of singing in *legato* and the flexibility of the agogic framework are of the same veristic affiliation, the metamorphoses of the tempo following closely the evolution of the melodic line, of the accumulation of tension, followed naturally by the active relaxation. Through the contrasting diversity of the tempo (such as *Cake Walk*¹⁰, *Scottish*¹¹, *Foxtrot*¹², slow¹³ or fast waltz¹⁴, *passo doble*¹⁵) or by inserting a Russian folksong¹⁶, a musical journey is configured on the meridians of a fascinating world of the sparkling genre of the operetta. The inspired songs, the delicate feelings, the energy and quality cheerfulness makes this collection a quality tool for the student-singers and in general, for the lyrical artists, who can approach a tender repertoire, both vocally and scenic.

5. Conclusions

Ion Hartulary-Darclée's operas and operettas were written in Italian in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Leaving Italy and settling in the country from which his family took root, the composer wanted to make his operettas known in Romania, for which he turned to Horia Furtună and Victoria Moraru to make Romanian versions of his works. Although they had found their natural setting in Italy in the first decades of the twentieth century and had an immediate impact on the public, they did not adapt to the taste and orientations of the Romanian public, the subjects of his operettas not being related to the Romanian environment. To this form is added the fact that, at that time, the musical language of Romanian works of this genre was in a lower stage of development. In the Romanian Radio shows, several arias and duets were broadcast, offering a miniature image of his inspired music, of his eclectic style. Ion Hartulary-Darclée satisfied the thirst for entertainment of the European public with the help of a learned, educated and polished language in traditional music schools, and his preoccupations were among the most diverse and spontaneous. Although of Romanian origin, he created more than all other composers or promoters of Italian operetta, building his own style, original and at the same time attractive. The nickname of *The Italian Lehar* made him known in the history

⁹ From the lexicon of Viorel Cosma we found out that the sheet music of Ion Hartulary-Darclée were printed in Italy at publishing houses such as Bogani, Lorenzo Sonzogno, Eduardo Sonzogno, Parva Faviile, Carlo Lombardo.

¹⁰ Hartulary-Darclée, I. 1967. *Arii și duete din operete* [*Arias and Duets from Operettas*]. Bucharest: Editura Muzicală, p. 23.

¹¹ Ibidem, p. 66.

¹² Ibidem, p. 91.

¹³ Ibidem, p. 11, 43.

¹⁴ Ibidem, p. 103.

¹⁵ Ibidem, p. 131.

¹⁶ Ibidem, p. 84.

of universal musical theater, the chronicles of the early twentieth century praising him in this way.

With a rich culture, Ion Hartulary-Darclée was interested in the variety of styles and orientations. Verism, as a style, deeply influenced the artistic formation of the composer and hence some relatives with the melody, the harmonies, with the verist type orchestra. He belonged to the family of musicians that included Catalani, Mascagni, Puccini, Leoncavallo, but *because he was a relative from distant Romanian Iași, he allowed a tone only his own, which protected him from epygonism*¹⁷.

A melodist par excellence, a follower of the sound discourse of romantic essence, mastering with authority the vocal style of the lyrical theater, Ion Hartulary-Darclée is undoubtedly one of the leading representatives of Romanian and universal operetta, and his music deserves all the effort to be rediscovered and rendered to the general public. His works have not passed the test time, because today they are unknown and unsung.

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¹⁷Sava, I. 1982. *Amintirile muzicienilor români. Dialoguri, evocări, confesiuni [Memories of Romanian Musicians. Dialogues, Evocations, Confessions]*. Bucharest: Editura Muzicală, p. 138.