

dziedātāju, gan komponistu un diriģentu veikums. Operteātra darbība, ieskaitot arī simfoniskos koncertus, sniedza fundamentālu ieguldījumu neatkarīgās Latvijas mūzikas vides attīstībā, un šī institūcija pastāvīgi atradās ne vien kultūras, bet arī politiskās dzīves centrā.

## SYMPHONIC MUSIC AT THE LATVIAN NATIONAL OPERA IN THE INTERWAR PERIOD

Terēze Ziberte-Ijaba

### Summary

During the development period of the modern European nations, the opera theatres, amongst other institutions, became symbols of their cultural identities. In the largest capitals of Europe (Vienna, Paris, Berlin) opera theatres acquired authority and prestige beginning already in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, maintaining their status of objects of state prestige after World War I. Meanwhile, opera music was one of the most important objects of national identity. Since the proclamation of the national independence of Latvia on November 18, 1918, the Latvian National Opera (1919, further LNO) became the most significant and only opera centre in Latvia. During the period between the world wars, the opera theatre was a Latvian music institution *par excellence*. It represented the state and was a prestigious institution that, amongst other activities, facilitated the creation of new music and served as a platform for the composers of Latvia, who, in accordance with the state-defined objectives of the LNO, realized their ideas in the genres of musical theatre.

The LNO symphony orchestra evolved as an accompanying collective and, even today, continues to primarily fulfil this subordinate role. However, the history of this orchestra illustrates its aspirations to achieve institutional independence. The symphonic music genre did not immediately take its rightful place in the repertoire of the LNO orchestra – initially the division of genres was rather unclear. Eventually, the symphonic music genre gained a higher level of autonomy at the opera theatre; however, institutionally it still remained closely related to the many manifestations of the opera music genre. The opera arias, ballet suites and overtures performed at the symphonic concerts of the world opera theatres are an integral part of their symphonic music repertoire.

The activities taking place at the LNO in the 1920s and 1930s illustrate a successful symbiosis between the orchestra's accompanying functions and symphonic musicianship. From the moment it was founded, the statutes of the Latvian National Opera envisaged not only preparations of opera productions but also the orchestra's participation in concert performances<sup>1</sup>. Throughout its existence, the LNO orchestra has been fulfilling this function, albeit with various levels of intensity

<sup>1</sup> Noteikumi par Nacionālo operu [Regulations of National Opera] (1919). *Valdības Vēstnesis* [Government Herald], September 30.

and success. Sometimes the orchestra has struggled to show that it has the right to present independent symphonic music concerts. The significance of symphonic concerts in the life of the LNO did fluctuate; however, its symphonic concerts were the proudest moments in the symphonic music life of Latvia between the two wars. Under the leadership of conductors Teodors Reiters, Emil Cooper (*Emīls Kupers*), Jānis Mediņš, Leonīds Vīgners, and others, the orchestra performed the greatest masterpieces of symphonic music with the participation of local, as well as international guests.

The role of the LNO orchestra in the musical life of Latvia between the world wars simultaneously illustrates both the prevailing social opinion of the “elite” nature of symphonic music and the “democratic” aspect of the genre.

### Literatūra un citi avoti

Arnolds, J. [Jēkabs Graubiņš] (1925). IV simf. koncerts. *Latvis*. 11. janvāris

Bekker, Paul (1936). *The Story of the Orchestra*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company

Cielēns, Fēlikss (1963). *Laikmetu maiņā: Latvijas neatkarīgās demokrātiskās republikas lielais laiks*. Stokholma: Memento

Cīrulis, Jānis (1926). Simfonisks koncerts Nacionālā operā. *Latvis*. 20. jūnijs

Čeže, Mikus (2008). Latvju opera un Jāzeps Vītols. *Mūzikas akadēmijas raksti* 4. Sast. Baiba Jaunslaviete. Rīga: JVLMA, 14.–49. lpp.

Eckardt, Guido Hermann (1925). Symphoniekonzert. *Rigasche Rundschau*. 12. Januar

Izglītības ministrija. Vietu cenas Latvijas Nacionālā operā 1926./27. g. sezonā. Latvijas Valsts vēstures arhīvs, 1632. fonds, 2. apraksts, 12. lieta

Kaktiņš, Ādolfs (1992). *Dzīves opera. Atmiņu tēlojumi*. Rīga: Liesma

-ks (1918). Latvju operas atklāšana. *Baltijas Ziņas*. 9. septembris

Latvijas Nacionālās operas statūti (1922). *Likumumu un valdības rīkojumu krājums* 1: 238.–240. lpp.

Lesiņš, Knuts (1937). Ko sniegs Nacionālā opera jaunajā sezonā. *Mūzikas Apskats* 4: 90.–92. lpp.

Lesiņš, Knuts (1938). Latviešu oriģināloperu, baletu un simfoniskās mūzikas svētku nedēļa Nacionālā operā. *Mūzikas Apskats* 7/9: 204.–205. lpp.

M. (1926). Nacionālā opera. *Latvijas Kareivis*. 10. marts