

DLA Thesis

László Bartal

**The Significance of Oszkár Maleczky in the
Face of His Recordings and Criticisms**

Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music Budapest

Doctoral Program

Budapest

2014

The prehistory of the dissertation

This DLA-dissertation is dealing with the world famous Hungarian baritone singer, Oszkár Maleczky (1894-1972). After retiring, Maleczky, who was regarded as the best baritone buffo of his century, was slowly forgotten by his contemporaries and no one dealt with the recollection of his memory. This is a gap in today's researches in the history of performing arts, in which I am highly inspired to take part with this current dissertation. This inspiration is due to the words and lectures of my teacher, Oliver Nagy. This work is also considered to be the basis of a future monograph of Maleczky. Therefore, the aim of this thesis is to show the significance and the art of his undeservedly forgotten talent through the research and comparison of the scores and live radio- and TV-recordings between 1948 and 1960, and the study of contemporary and latter critical essays.

The structure of the dissertation

This DLA-essay is divided into three main chapters, the general introduction of the baritone voice type, roles and singers; the life and career of Oszkár Maleczky; and the analyses of five of his opera recordings. In the chapter of Maleczky's life I could reveal some formerly unknown

information from his living relatives, friends and disciples. His modest personality is also a great discovery, which can explain the wide spectrum, flexibility and durability of his singing skills.

The main focus of this DLA-essay is the record analyses. It is fortunate that in the Sound Archive of the Hungarian Broadcast Company there are about 60 records of him. I have chosen five records: *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, the *Fidelio*, the *Gianni Schicchi*, the *Don Pasquale* and the *Così fan tutte*. On these records he sang the protagonists: Sixtus Beckmesser, Pizarro, Gianni Schicchi, Don Pasquale and Don Alfonso.

Aspects of the analysis

The analyses are built on thirteen points of view:

1. Technique of the singing (by the place, organ of the voice)
2. Prosody
3. Intonation (clarity of the voice)
4. Volume of voice
5. Legato- or staccato-technique
6. Tools of humour by trembling the voice

7. Tools of being demonic
8. Stage play
9. Involvement in the role
10. Being a partner of the ensemble on stage
11. Cooperation with the conductor
12. Changes of his voice during the decades
13. Quality of his play

Results of the analysis

The present essay goes out to prove that Maleczky is the best Beckmesser of the century, and His Don Pasquale, Pizarro, Gianni Schicchi and Don Alfonso should also be considered exceptional. His voice could be heard in the highest (a') and deepest point (F) of its role even beside the biggest Wagnerian orchestra (like Beckmesser) or a transparent Mozartian ensemble (like Don Alfonso), in the slow farewell in *Così fan tutte* ("Soave sia il vento") or in the speedy duet in *Don Pasquale* ("Cheti, cheti immantinente").

His baritone used to be classified only as buffo baritone, although it can be considered dramatic baritone (like his Pizarro), bass-baritone (like his Don Pasquale) and buffo baritone (like his Don Alfonso) as well. The above

classification is justified by the fact that his voice was able to personify any character excluding lyric baritone roles (like Count Almaviva). His buffo playing is a very skillful one, but his demonic Pizarro was criticised as the best tyrant of the Hungarian opera stages. Gianni Schicchi is a rustic clown according to the libretto, but his Schicchi can be ironic, smart and harsh as well.

Conclusion

Finally, by the proof of the Maleczky-records it is considerable that he represents one of the highest points of Hungarian opera singing. His benevolent personality, large-scale repertoire and flexible and excellent quality of his voice could delight the audience for four decades. He left us a big heritage on the records, some of which would be worth publishing officially on compact discs or in other contemporary formats.

Analysed recordings

1. Donizetti: Don Pasquale

Date of recording: 1959. november. 24.

Place of recording: Magyar Rádió

Conductor: Erdélyi Miklós

Orchestra: Magyar Rádió zenekara

Coir: Magyar Rádió énekkara

Cast: Don Pasquale: Maleczky Oszkár, Norina: Gyurkovics

Mária, Malatesta: Melis György, Ernesto: Bartha Alfonz,

Jegyző: Nádas Tibor

2. **Beethoven: Fidelio**

Date of recording: 1948. november 8.

Place of recording: Magyar Állami Operaház

Conductor: Otto Klemperer

Orchestra: Magyar Állami Operaház zenekara

Coir: Magyar Állami Operaház énekkara

Cast: Leonore: Báthy Anna, Florestan: Rösler Endre, Pizarro:

Maleczky Oszkár, Rocco: Székely Mihály, Marzellina: Mátyás

Mária, Jaquino: Angyal Nagy Gyula, Minister: Koszó István)

3. **Puccini: Gianni Schicchi**

Date of recording: 1949 I. 13.

Place of recording: Magyar Állami Operaház

Conductor: Ferencsik János

Orchestra: Magyar Állami Operaház zenekara

Coir: Magyar Állami Operaház énekkara

Cast: Lauretta: Raskó Magda, Zita anyó: Palánkay Klára,

Rinuccio: Járay József, Gherardo: Angyal Nagy Gyula, Nella:

Dobay Livia, Betto de Signa: Reményi Sándor, Simone:

Kálmán Oszkár, Marco: Somló József, La Ciesca: Szilvássy

Margit, Spineluccio: Fekete Pál, Pinellino: Mally Győző,

Jegyző: Katona Lajos, Guccio: Kirvai Ferenc

4. **Mozart: Così fan tutte**

Date of recording: 1960

Place of recording: Magyar Állami Operaház (live TV
recording)

Conductor: Lukács Ervin

Orchestra: Magyar Állami Operaház zenekara

Coir: Magyar Állami Operaház énekkara

Cast: Ferrando: Bartha Alfonz, Guglielmo: Palócz László, Don

Alfonso: Maleczky Oszkár, Fiordiligi: Ágay Karola, Dorabella:

Sándor Judit, Koltay Valéria

5. **Wagner: Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg**

Date of recording: 1949. may 6.

Place of recording: Magyar Állami Operaház

Conductor: Otto Klemperer

Orchestra: Magyar Állami Operaház zenekara

Coir: Magyar Állami Operaház énekkara

Cast: Eva: Osváth Júlia, Walther: Simándy József, Sachs:

Losonczy György, Beckmesser: Maleczky Oszkár, Pogner:

Székely Mihály, David: Sárdy János, Magdalene: Budanovics

Mária