

Italian Art Song “Se tu m’ami”: Take Angela Gheorghiu Singing Version As An Example

Ling Yang^{1*}

¹ College of Art, Northeast Electric Power University, Jilin, China

Email Address

324460642@qq.com (Ling Yang)

*Correspondence: 324460642@qq.com

Received: 11 December 2023; **Accepted:** 12 January 2024; **Published:** 3 February 2024

Abstract:

Between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, Italian composers produced a great number of excellent vocal works, these art songs reflect a range of historical, progressive time content, and these art songs have been through three or four hundred years of history, it is still loved and respected by the majority of vocal music learners. “Se tu m'ami” is an art song by the Baroque Italian composer Giovanni Battista Pergolesi, it is also one of the songs that many vocal music learners must sing. The song “Se tu m'ami” is melodious, it explains the heroine’s feelings to the shepherd boy, the song implies the shepherd boy in a witty and graceful tone, the heroine does not love him. Among them, the creation technique of scherzo is closely related to comic opera. This article mainly takes the version of Angela Gheorghiu singing as an example, analyze the vocal skills and methods needed to sing this song, as well as the skills and rules that need to be paid attention to, aiming to provide reference and help to vocal learners, especially soprano.

Keywords:

“Se tu m’ami”, Angela Gheorghiu, Music Analysis, Singing Processing

1. Introduction

Italy is the birthplace of European classical opera and bel canto singing, and it has a very excellent tradition of music development. Because of the unique pronunciation rules of Italian language, Italian classical art songs have a better prerequisite, and is considered the most suitable language for singing. The Baroque period was an important period in the early musical development in Europe. During this period, many excellent composers and works were born in vocal music, many of which are still loved and respected by Chinese and foreign singers. The vocal music works of the Baroque period are characterized by rich content, wide themes, diversified structure of musical forms and more decorative sounds, the requirements for sound are more standardized and rigorous, which is called the golden age of bel canto in history. Among the musical works of the Baroque period, the theme of vocal music works involves a wide range of contents, mainly divided into the following categories.

First, religious themes. Second, the theme of secular life. Third, the subject matter of Greek mythology. The art song “Se tu m'ami” studied in this paper belongs to the theme of secular life, which uses the creation technique of scherzo and has the characteristics of comic opera. [1]

2. Song Background

2.1. The background of the Italian art songs

Art song is a vocal genre of western chamber music, which is a general term for the lyric songs prevalent in Europe from the 18th to the early 19th centuries. In the 16th century, the Italian Renaissance was at its peak. During that period, a large number of classic art songs appeared in Italy, composer Giovanni Battista Pergolesi is one of the representative figures. Musicians took “humanism” as the center of creation, and created vocal solo works with piano accompaniment, namely Italian classical art songs, at the same time, people also skillfully combined drama, music and stage performances to form the original art form of opera in Europe, and effectively led to the rapid development of Eurovision art. By the 17th century, music began to break away from the shackles of religious music and pay more attention to the expression of the characters. A large number of artists with poetry as the theme, around a series of love, family love and other humanistic life, created a large number of excellent art songs. [2]

2.2. Song Creation Background

“If You Love Me” is an Italian song written by the Italian composer Giovanni Battista Pergolesi (1710-1736), Pergolesi is a vocal music master at the end of the Baroque, he created many widely circulated works in his lifetime, Se tu m'ami is one of them, this song tells the story of the heroine to express her love to the shepherd boy and some of the psychological activities of the heroine. The vocal music songs of the Baroque period largely exist with a component of flaunting technology. However, in several representative works of Pergolesi, the singing requirement of the heroine is not very high, and it can be created in the vocal area of the public singing. The song has a beautiful melody and a strong emotional expression, music creation and performance singing form has a very unique form, use of love to depict the characters, show the emotions between men and women, the content of the lyrics has distinct lyrical characteristics. The B part of the song is a scherzo style with the characteristics of an Italian comic opera. Giovanni Battista Pergolesi the interact drama “La serva padrona” represents the birth of the Italian comic opera.

Italian comic opera: an Italian opera with comic content in the 18th century. In contrast to the positive opera, it is often based on real life, and is usually divided into two acts. The characters in the play are divided into two categories: front and interesting, the latter plays the bass. There is no dialogue in the play, more use of recitation, duet and often small chorus finale. For example, Rossini's “Il barbiere di Siviglia” and so on. [3]

3. Profile of Singer

3.1. Profile of singer

Gheorghiu was born in 1965 to an ordinary family in Yazad, a small town in Moldova, Romania. Her father, a train driver, loved music and often listened to classical music on the radio station in his spare time. Under the influence of such a family atmosphere, the teenage Gheorghiu loved singing, and could imitate some opera songs played on the radio stations. At the age of 14, Gheorghiu entered the famous Aniescu Cultural Palace in Bucharest to learn singing from the vocal music teacher Mia Barbu. Gheorghiu made her debut in 1980 at age 15 as Susanna in "The Wedding of Figaro". In 1983, Gheorghiu was successfully admitted to the Bucharest Music Academy and began to receive formal music education. During the years of study and life, she not only worked hard to study singing skills and opera scripts, but also read widely to enrich herself. Everything comes to him who waits, in 1988, Gheorghiu officially played Mimi in "La Boheme" at the Bucharest National Opera, which is also her graduation drama. Because of the great success of the performance, Gheorghiu graduated from the Conservatory first.

After graduating from the Conservatory of Music, she returned to her country. Through repeated performances and won many awards, she gradually became more and more famous in her country. The chance to make her famous was a competition held in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, and she was known by the audience after the TV concert of "Outstanding Young Singer in Europe", so that people began to pay attention to the Romanian soprano with her beautiful appearance and extraordinary singing talent. In 1992, the opera "Don Juan" starring Gheorghiu was performed for the first time in the National Theatre of Covent Garden. Her wonderful and moving singing and exquisite mastery of the characters and characters perfectly interpreted the role of - Cerina, which was well received by the audience. It was this concert that made Gheorghiu officially start with an international performance. In the same year, Gheorghiu first on the Vienna State Opera in Donizetti's famous opera "Love glycol" in the stage performance, she boldly showed the Adina in her heart, compared with the shy and reserved one of Donizetti's era, Gheorghiu's vivid performance makes people refreshing and brings the audience a different feeling. Her performance are more innovative, showing Ardina's audacity and intensity, and is more modern, giving the audience visual and auditory stimulation. Especially in the face of Namolino, Gheorghiu will be to its hatred and pity is very deep, touching, got the audience appreciation. Later, at the Vienna Opera House, Gheorghiu also played the role of Mimi in The Bohemian and Anne in Fastave. Through these two performances, she received a warm response from the audience. God will not live up to anyone who works hard, when the world famous conductor Solti watched her performance in Covent Garden, was moved by her role of Mimi, greatly appreciated. Later, Gheorghiu and George Solti worked at the Royal Opera House on Verdi's famous opera "La Traviata". Gheorghiu's performance of Violeta is tender but some frivolous temperament, the character and inner emotional fluctuations are very precise expression. The impact of the collaboration was very large, the BBC executives were deeply moved by Gheorghiu in a rehearsal, the premiere live broadcast and release records. It was the first time ever that an opera performance was broadcast live on television, and Gheorghiu became an overnight sensation. DECCA recorded and released records for another session, since becoming the most revised opera recording in 30 years. [4]

Gheorghiu has also summed up a lot of experience through each performance. In her opinion, music needs to be innovative, and as a singer, it also needs lifelong learning and constantly discovering new worlds in learning. Because of this, she has

been trying to challenge and break through herself. In her opinion, every performance she experiences has some new challenges. In different countries, different climate and temperature differences, different audience aesthetic appreciation, different stage environment, different diet changes, for the already famous Gheorghiu, the pressure is countless times higher than the ordinary singer. But Gheorghiu did it, with his best singing, excellent singing skills, and in opera and concert. In the eyes of many Westerners, China is a mysterious country, and it is so ancient and beautiful that it attracts countless people to explore it. In recent years, Gheorghiu has also successfully held many concerts in China, and has been loved by the Chinese people. In October 2014, Gheorghiu started a tour mode in China. Gheorghiu performed romantic music and opera arias from the Baroque period to the twentieth century. In the concert, she also sang a Romanian minor tune in her hometown for the Chinese audience. Through her voice performance and the flow of music and language, she instantly made everyone feel the different charm of folk music. [5]

3.2. Gheorghiu's singing characteristics

Very rigorous singing attitude. Smart and self-disciplined, he will choose the works and opera characters that suit him and can control according to his actual situation.

(1) Good musical literacy and extremely high artistic accomplishment. Formal system of music education, their own musical talent, the acquired efforts.

(2) Be endowed with both beauty and talent. A combination of beauty and a voice. Gheorghiu's voice is relaxed, soft and smooth, clean sound quality, pure and tension.

(3) Various singing styles. Good at dramatic lyric soprano, also can sing the flower wall soprano works.

4. Analysis of Musical Form

“Se tu m'ami” is an ABA single-trilogy structured song. The third part of the song is a complete reproduction of the first part. Measure 1–24 are in period A, Measure 25–42 are in period B and 43–67 are the complete reproduction part of period A.

Se tu m'ami G. B. Pergolesi
(1710–1736)

Andantino $J=58$

Se tu m'a-mi, se tu so-spi-ri sol per me, gen-til pa-stor,-

ho do-lor de' tuoi mar-ti-ri, ho di-let-to del tuo a-mor!

Ma se pen-si che so-let-to io ti deb-ba ri-a-mar,

pa-sto-rel-lo, sei sog-get-to fa-cil-men-te a t'in-gan-nar!

Pa-sto-rel-lo, sei sog-get-to fa-cil-men-te a t'in-gan-nar, fa-cil-men-te a t'in-gan-nar!

Figure 1. “Se tu m’ami” 1 .

In the Figure 1, the melody of the first phrase (measures 1-6) is in semiquaver and quaver down sequenza, and accompanied by the contrast between strong and weak, fast and slow. Although the melody is sequenza down, the strength is gradually stronger and stronger. It was easy to see the strong and weak treatment here is matched to follow the meaning of the lyrics. The main idea of the lyrics is: “If you love me, suppose you sigh for me for the gentle shepherd boy.” From the perspective of the tone, the strength of the singing should be from the strong, and slowed down in the last two sections. Because of the slow processing in the last two sections of the first phrase, a tempo (back to the original speed) is marked in the second phrase (measures 7-10). Measure 7-8 and 9-10 are two phrases of the second interval sequenza. The main idea of the lyrics is: “I am sorry for your distress, and I am happy for your love.” The two phrases also make a comparison between strong and weak, and the treatment of weak sound is to pave the appearance of the next phrase. In the third phrase (measures 11-14), there is a major sixth jump at the beginning, this type of large span jump often requires sufficient breathing to support it, and with semiquaver as the main downward melody sequenza, the strength also changes from *f* to *mf*. Combine the meaning of the lyrics: “But if you think I only have love for you.” A slow treatment was performed in measures 13-14. The fourth phrase (measure 15-18) and the fifth phrase (measure 19-24) the main idea of the lyrics is: “Shepherd boy, please don’t deceive yourself, please do not believe it.” The author uses the style of a scherzo to compose the melody.

25 *p*
Bel - la ro - sa por - po - ri - na og - gi Sil - via sce - glie - rà ,
29 *cresc.* *f*
con la scu - sa del - la spi - na do - man poi la sprez - ze rà ! Do - man poi la sprez - ze rà !
33 *cresc.* *f*
con la scu - sa del - la spi - na do - man poi la sprez - ze rà ! Do - man poi la sprez - ze rà !
37 *mf* *p*
Ma de - gli uo - mi - ni il - con - si - glio io per me non se - gui - rò ;
41 *mf*
non per - chè mi pia - ce il gi - glio, gli al - tri fio - ri sprez - ze rò.

Figure 2. “Se tu m’ami” 2.

Figure 2 is “Se tu m’ami” B paragraph, the main idea of the lyrics is: “The beautiful and lovely purple rose, which Silvia took with the spur today, and was set aside tomorrow. I will never remember the advice of those men. It’s not because I love lilies that I alienate other flowers.” In this line of lyrics, we can see that it is the heroine who expresses her deep love for the shepherd boy, and only loves the shepherd boy alone. Therefore, there is no large span in the jump of the notes in this paragraph, as if to tell

the heroine's heart to the shepherd boy. Paragraph B appears in the form of a scherzo, in contrast to the theme of the song, the front and back paragraphs are gentle, telling, while the middle paragraph is playful and cheerful. Scherzo is characterized by lively rhythm and fast speed, and this music usually adopts unique tone, novel rhythm, dramatic transition and strong and weak contrast to create a humorous musical effect.

13 *mf a tempo* *ritard.*
Se tu m'a-mi, se tu so-spi-ri sol per me, gen-til pa-stor,
19 *mf a tempo* *p*
ho-do-lor de' tuoi mar-ti-ri, ho-di-let-to del tuo a-mor,
25 *f* *ritard.*
ma se pen-si che so-let-to io ti deb-ba ri-a-mar,
31 *scherezoso a tempo*
pa-sto-rel-lo, sei sog-get-to fa-cil-men-te a t'in-gan-nar!
37 *p*
Pa-sto-rel-lo, sei sog-get-to fa-cil-men-te a t'in-gan-nar,
43 *p* *ritard.*
fa-cil-men-te a t'in-gan-nar!

Figure 3. "Se tu m'ami" 3.

The third part of the song is in the present part (Figure 3). "Reproduction" can bring the feeling of echo, symmetry and stability to the whole song, and has the function of summary and generalization. The whole song is not only from the strong and weak comparison, but also through the pace of the comparison. Paragraph B of the song appears in the style of scherzo, which makes the format of the whole song more rich, reflecting the characteristics of Giovanni Battista Pergolesi comic opera.

5. Singing Processing

Gheorghiu in terms of singing breath, the use is very flexible and full, the sound is very clear and accurate, and the resonance is deep and depressed. Angela Gheorghiu, it is not strictly according to the strength marked in the score, it can be seen that her understanding of music is closer to the characters. At the end of each downward phrase, she handles it in a weakening way. When singing in B, the mood and strength of the two paragraphs will be compared. When singing in B, Gheorghiu's tone is sometimes firm and sometimes melancholy, the tension of the singing is also fully shown in the B paragraph. Gheorghiu The timbre is unified, and the bass area is solid and full of timbre gives people a sense of power. In vocal music teaching, the teacher often compares the vocal range to a high-rise, and the bass area is the foundation of the high-rise. Whether the foundation is stable and solid determines how high the floor can be built, that is, the bass is solid and vigorous, the easier the high pitch area

is. Gheorghiu's solid basic skills enable her to sing high notes and long-range range span, giving people a relaxed, relaxed and enjoyable feeling. [6]

Gheorghiu's breath exchange point is mainly at the end of a line, or a phrase pause place, the breath exchange is more regular. The place of adjustment will only changed slightly to suit the lyrics and composers. Gheorghiu is a singer with solid singing skills, and every role she plays on the stage has impressed deeply on the audience. Her beautiful voice and skillful singing skills are all very impressive. A wonderful singer is one of the best instruments, and the singing makes the instruments play a moving melody. Georgius grasped the essence of singing, focused on the sound, and sang a beautiful voice.

Thus, to grasp the singing with strong emotion, and the dramatic performance in the music is inseparable. The singer's interpretation of the role should permeate the inner feelings into the hearts of the audience. Only the clever combination of the story plot and the performance can depict the artistic image with distinct personality.

6. Conclusions

The Romanian singer Angela Gheorghiu is the most charming and beautiful soprano in the opera world today. Her "Se tu m'ami" is one of the Italian art songs worth learning. Her voice is relaxed, the singing state of the whole person is very relaxed, the support of the breath is very stable, in the strength of each sentence processing is very comfortable. When singing, we can learn from the Angela Gheorghiu processing method, but the author suggests that everyone's timbre is unique, do not blindly imitate the timbre of others, to sing their own unique timbre is the most precious. Not all singing artists are suitable for everyone. In the process of learning, they should think mentally and find a suitable method for themselves can they get twice the result with half the effort.

Italian is a descendant of classical-Latin and Greek-nature, formally formed around 1200. Many terms in music are marked in Italian. It is not only the world language of vocal art, but also the common language of fine art, drama and dance. The beauty and perfection of the Italian pronunciation is its greatest advantage, and therefore it is the most suitable language for singing.

Italian classical art songs are wonderful flowers in the history of world vocal music, realizing the perfect combination of sound and language, so in today's vocal music teaching, teachers can use the pronunciation of Italian, Improve students "voice science, cultivate students" good stage performance ability. In a word, the Italian art songs in the classical period have an extremely important influence on today's vocal music teaching, and play a positive role in improving students' artistic accomplishment.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

Funding

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial or not-for-profit sectors.

References

- [1] Jia, J.Y. On the style and singing characteristics of the vocal music works during the Baroque period. *House of Drama*, 2020, 15, 33-34.
- [2] Chen, J.N. Analysis of the singing career and artistic characteristics of Romanian soprano Angela Georgiu. *Northern Music*, 2013, 06, 42-43.
- [3] Zhang, L.Z.; Zeng, H.Z. Romanian soprano, the singing characteristics and artistic journey of - Angela Georgiou. *Northern Music*, 2020, 22, 1-12 + 18.
- [4] Nie, Y.L.; Sun, J.; Zhu, Y.R. Music appreciation of the next ten lectures. Taiyuan: Shanxi People's Publishing House, December, 2012, 57-58.
- [5] Wang, J.X. Singer singer Gegiu and Stratas. Business Culture (Academic edition), 2008, 07, 91.
- [6] P.M Mala di Audi [Italian] Caruso [M]. Page 148.



© 2024 by the author(s); licensee International Technology and Science Publications (ITS), this work for open access publication is under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0). (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)