

Beyond the Dogma of a 'National Style':

*Dance-Type Narration
in Stanisław Moniuszko's Operas*

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ABSTRACT

A privileged position in discourse on 19th-century opera is occupied by narration concerning the emancipation of national styles. In order to work out a fresh approach in scientific study of this subject, it seems crucial that we should abandon the ethnocentric perspective. This was one of the main postulates of Jean-Marie Pradier's utopian project of ethnoscenology. Importantly, Pradier also stressed the physical aspect of all stage practice. In the times of Rossini, Verdi, Gounod and Moniuszko, the physicality of the spectacle was associated not only with singing, but also with choreography. The links between 19th-century opera and its broadly conceived dance component are the subject of a highly inspiring essay by Maribeth Clark, whose arguments, theses and conclusions we also present here in detail.

Stanisław Moniuszko's operatic style is commonly associated with Polish dance rhythms. Still, salon dance should also be considered, apart from national dances, as one of the keys to the composer's entire oeuvre. In a study of his stage works from both the Vilnius and the Warsaw periods, the dance idiom will not be limited to the presence of dance rhythms in the protagonists' arias or to the ballet sections. Dance qualities can be discerned in Moniuszko's music on a much deeper, fundamental level of the construction of operatic narration. Dance is frequently a hidden mechanism that serves as an axis of development for the presented events or as an element that organises the dramaturgy of entire scenes and instrumental passages.

This paper is an attempt to take a fresh look at the role of the dance idiom in Moniuszko's operatic narrations, an initial reconnaissance, in which I point to the sources of the composer's inspirations and illustrate my theses with specific examples.

Key words: Stanisław Moniuszko, Maribeth Clark, Jean-Marie Pradier, 19th-century opera, salon dances

1.

The 19th century brought a rapid rise in nationalistic ideologies and a previously unheard-of emancipation of regional centres of culture. Its legacy includes a set of ready-made templates for the perception and evaluation of art, including operatic works and their composers. The century saw not only the enormous success of Italian composers (Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti, Verdi) on operatic stages, but also that of the masters of the French opera (now gradually restored to our collective memory, such as Auber, Adam, Hérold, Halévy, Meyerbeer, Gounod), as well as of eminent outsiders (or provincial artists, as sceptics might call them), who developed in the shadow of the greats, far from Europe's leading cultural centres. Stanisław Moniuszko (1819–1872), 'father of the Polish opera', belongs to that latter group.

In order to properly appreciate such figures, historians of 19th-century music and opera created a convincing, popular type of narration (still deeply rooted in our consciousness today, and disseminated, among others, in

many handbooks), which claims that the 2nd half of the century saw the emancipation of the so-called 'national schools'¹ or 'national trends'². Their representatives formed a new colourful stylistic panorama, which was ostensibly conceived in opposition to the two 'leading' universal European styles of the 18th and early 19th centuries: the Italian and the French one³. This was supposed to correspond to the wider political context of the peripheries gaining independence and of their quiet rebellion against the centres of authoritarian power (of which cultural colonialism was always an emanation), situated in the capitals of the multi-ethnic empires.

The distinction into the (historically) gradually eroding cultural 'centres' and the 'peripheries' which were gaining impetus and derived pride from their separate identity – can hardly be questioned. One must also remember, however, that the so-called 'national composers' were never completely cut off from cosmopolitan European trends, because each 'periphery' had its own music institutions and opera companies that intensely propagated the

1 Cf. A. Chodkowski (Ed.), (1995). *Narodowe szkoły w muzyce* [The National Schools in Music]. In: *Encyklopedia muzyki* [Music Encyclopedia]. Warszawa: PWN, p. 596: "the directions which became distinguishable in the mid-19th century in the music of many countries emphasised native elements under the influence of the awakening sense of national identity. Music began to draw inspiration from local folklore, while operas and symphonic poems frequently referred to scenes and events from the nation's history." A similar approach is represented by Naďa Hrková in: N. Hrková (Ed.), (2010). *Dejiny hudby V: Hudba 19. storočia* [History of Music V: 19th-Century Music]. Bratislava: Ikar, pp. 51–54, 66–72. Cf. also: E. Dziębowska. O polskiej szkole narodowej [On the Polish National School]. In: Z. Chechlińska (Ed.), (1971). *Szkice o kulturze muzycznej XIX wieku* [Notes on 19th-Century Music Culture]. Warszawa: PWN, pp. 13–32. According to Dziębowska, the notion of the 'national school' is a fluid one. She defines it as "a set of features typical of the musical culture of a given national environment."

2 Cf. *Muzyka drugiej połowy XIX w. Narodowe kierunki w muzyce* [Music of the 2nd Half of the 19th Century. National Directions in Music]. In: B. Muchenberg, (1989). *Pogadanki o muzyce*, Vol. 2. Kraków PWM, pp. 108–227.

3 Alfred Einstein mentions a "nationalistic idea" and "national dialects." Cf. A. Einstein, (1965). *Muzyka w epoce romantyzmu* [Music in the Romantic Era], M. Jarocińska & S. Jarociński (Transl.), Warszawa: PWN, pp. 32–34, 88–94. Einstein writes: "in the course of the 19th century, Romanticism awakened every nation, one by one, from the largest to the smallest [...] until, exaggerated, it became exhausted or underwent a sudden transformation into provincialism." (ibid., p. 34).

mainstream European repertoire⁴. 'National composers' only aimed at these institutions opening up to their own works, promoting them and introducing them into the European concert and opera repertoires. In other words, they strove to guarantee a lasting and prominent place in the local repertoires for their own compositions – a position superior to that of the imported works – and to obtain institutional support for their attempts to gain recognition in the European art market as well as a place on the musical map of Europe at that time. In the case of programmatic works and operas, these endeavours were naturally also associated with propagating their mother tongues as well as contents and values which directly reflected their respective national identities.

Accepting this 'ethnocentric' approach and way of thinking meant that we failed to notice those fundamental qualities that the **19th-century stage practices** in different countries had in common. Regrettably, the literature of the subject to date tells us little about the characteristics of operatic spectacles in that period. Publications have been dominated by purely ideological issues. We are overly sensitive about defining the separate identities of various operatic 'nationalisms', and this has led us to overlook their shared foundations and the higher-level elements that they have in common. We have in fact forgotten that, despite all its internal diversity, the operatic style in every period always has its coherent set of recurrent and, in a sense, universal qualities.

2.

Ballet is – apart from the visual component – **one of those aspects of 19th-century operatic spectacles that have been most neglected in the literature of the subject.** Today ballet is considered as a minor and facultative supplement to the opera, and is frequently left out from present-day stage productions and recordings. Such a flippant approach to the phenomenon of dance may be the result of a different academic education. Suffice it to say that in Poland the curricula of five-year musicological studies, in which history of the opera is an obligatory subject, carefully omit history of the ballet, so that students only learn about dance at classes of ethnomusicology, from an anthropological perspective. However, this present-day neglect of the ballet, however we might judge it, is the exact reverse of its high status

in the past (not only in the 19th century). In those days, dance was a universal, ritualised social practice, which functioned as an integrating factor, creating space for various social interactions; not only facilitating making new acquaintances, but also planning and effecting marriages, doing business and building social alliances. Most of all, dance confirmed and reinforced the social hierarchy. Jean-Marie Pradier, a controversial French theatre studies expert and an inspiring visionary scholar, stresses the important role of choreography in all stage activities, reviving Marcel Mauss's view that dance was the prime source of all arts ("la danse est à l'origine de tous les arts"⁵). Opera would also not have come into being without dance. 19th-century opera without dance is simply incomprehensible. For these reasons, dance must be restored to its proper place in opera studies.

Naturally, it would take many years and the publishing and conference effort of a veritable galaxy of scholars researching various aspects of 19th-century music theatre – to put this ambitious postulate into practice. The aims of the present paper are much more modest. At the present stage of my rather intuitive reconnaissance, all I hope to achieve is a change in our approach to dance elements in operas considered as belonging to the so-called national current. In particular, I will study the operatic works of Stanisław Moniuszko.

3.

Before we move on to the gist of the matter, let us exploit Pradier's thesis concerning **the physical nature of all stage activity**. The 'physicality' of operatic spectacles in Moniuszko's times was associated both with singing and with the choreographic aspects. It is common knowledge that *foyers de la danse* were in integral part of leading operatic institutions in 19th-century Paris, Warsaw, Petersburg, and other cities. Their culture-building function was not limited to their purely artistic impact, but also concerned manners and social life. The ballet-based *divertissements* were usually a permanent part of the spectacles, and the detailed listings of dance numbers and their performers took up a significant proportion of space on operatic posters. Even in those music theatres that had no ballet, echoes of **polkas, waltzes, galops and quadrilles** could be heard in scenes made up of arias,

⁴ Cf. R. Cannon, (2012). Nationalists: vernacular language and music. In: *Opera (Cambridge Introductions to Music)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 218–239.

⁵ J.-M. Pradier, (2001). L'ethnoscénologie. Vers une scénologie générale. *L'Annuaire Théâtral*, No. 29, p. 58. Pradier refers to Chapter V of Mauss's handbook of ethnography, cf. P. M. Mauss, (1947). *Manuel d'ethnographie*. Paris: Payot.

choirs, duos and ensemble sections. The dependence of (especially French) opera on dance at that time was, however, of a much more profound nature. One could say that 19th-century opera emanated dance, and, on the other hand, it was dance that determined its shape. The dance pulse could become the paramount mechanism of the entire spectacle and a hidden source of its *élan vital* on the stage.

4.

Much less obvious for us today is the fact that dance also determined **the style of the reception of operatic spectacles**, shaping the sensitivity and aesthetic needs of the audience. Let me refer here to some passages from the US scholar Maribeth Clark's extremely inspiring work⁶, whose revealing insights deal with the Parisian repertoire of the 1st half of the 19th century, but seem to have universal relevance as well:

Parisian music journalism from the 1830s and 1840s suggests that audiences for lyric and choreographic works in Paris – comic and serious, Italian and French – potentially experienced them as dance, reshaping, relocating, or even destroying the meaning of the original phenomenon⁷.

This attitude of the audience was reinforced by the practice of promoting operas by means of various dance arrangements. These adaptations and medleys of melodies (*potpourris*), especially quadrilles⁸, played on the piano at bourgeois houses or by amateur and professional orchestras in ballrooms, salons, parks and on promenades – created a **sympiotic relation between opera and salon**

⁶ M. Clark, (2002). The Quadrille as Embodied Musical Experience in 19th-Century Paris. *The Journal of Musicology*, Vol. 19, No. 3, pp. 503–526.

⁷ Ibid., p. 503.

⁸ The quadrille is a multi-part figural dance belonging to the group of the so-called *square dances*, which calls for the knowledge of five constant choreographic figures bearing the 'programmatic' names of: *le Pantalon*, *l'Été*, *la Poule*, *le Trénis* (also sometimes called *la Pastourelle*), and *le Finale*. The various music sections that accompany these figures have different time signatures, both duple (2/4) and triple (6/8) time. In this way, the quadrille frequently combines waltz (3/4 or 3/8) and polka (2/4) rhythms. The dance was therefore distinguished from others primarily by its five-part choreographies (reflected in its five-part formal construction), and not by the rigid rhythmic patterns. According to Maribeth Clark, the quadrille became omnipresent in the phonosphere of Paris in the 1830s, which bothered many critics, who saw in it a phenomenon detrimental to French music and musical taste (ibid., pp. 504–508).

dances. This unlikely marriage looked very much like a misalliance, since it **blurred the boundaries between high and popular art**. Operatic masterpieces underwent crude simplification in this way. (Richard Wagner later strongly opposed this practice as a proponent of the opera's elitist and sophisticated character.) The situation can well be illustrated with Maribeth Clark's quotation from the French press:

La majeure partie du public parisien danse presque toujours un opéra avant de l'avoir entendu au théâtre. Les oeuvres de nos compositeurs ont donc deux débouchés pour gagner la popularité: s'ils ne frappent pas directement notre sens auditif, ils traversent nos jambes pour arriver à l'oreille⁹.

[The Parisian audience for the most part nearly always dances the opera even before they hear it in the theatre. The works of our composers have two ways of achieving popularity: If they cannot reach our sense of hearing directly, they strive to reach our ears through our legs.]

Using such 'base' body parts as legs to get acquainted with operas is what we may find surprising nowadays, since we usually start not with our legs, but with our eyes, specifically – by reading a summary of the libretto in an opera guide. Even though of all the Parisian music theatres only the Opéra (Académie de Musique) had the privilege of staging ballet scenes and works belonging to the *ballet-pantomime* genre, **dozens of pieces staged at the Opéra-Comique became the subject of dance adaptations**, too. They were music comedies with spoken dialogues (the so-called *dialogues parlés*). Daniel F.E. Auber, the uncrowned king of the genre, who frequently worked in a team with the skilful librettist Eugène Scribe, was also the favourite composer of Stanisław Moniuszko. Auber made a huge success and an impressive fortune, but was not always praised by the critics. Maribeth Clark shows how the latter criticised Auber for not caring sufficiently about the musical quality of his operas, but only focusing on their future dance adaptations. The French School of Composition – associated for a long time with Auber as the director of Paris Conservatory – became recognisable, among others, owing to the repetitive rhythms and regularly shaped phrases, viewed as those qualities that gave dance music its popularity¹⁰.

Admired by Moniuszko, Auber was an ambivalent figure for Wagner. The German composer respected Auber as the author of the great opera *La muette de Portici*, but held the latter's comedies in low regard, and voiced

⁹ *Le Ménestrel* of 23rd March 1834 (quoted after M. Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 503, footnote 2).

¹⁰ M. Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 520.

these objections in his posthumous tribute to Auber, openly pointing to the dance roots of the Frenchman's operatic style:

Why we not only could never warm to this genre – to which Auber also ended by limiting himself – but could do nothing with it as a model of aplomb, nay, speaking strictly, of correctness in its style, was to become quite clear to me when I discovered in Parisian life itself that very element which had repelled us so instinctively in its idiosyncrasies of melody and rhythm. The singularly uniform build of all this comic-opera music, particularly when the sprightly orchestra has to animate and keep the stage ensemble together, had long reminded us of the structure of the square dance: if we attended one of our full-dress balls where the real quintessence of an Auberian opera was played as a quadrille, we suddenly found the meaning of these curious motives and their alternation so soon as we heard each movement called aloud by its proper name: *Pantalon*, *En avant deux*, *Ronde*, *Chaine anglaise* and so forth¹¹. But the Quadrille itself was a weariness to us, and for that reason this whole comic-opera music wearied us also; one asked oneself how the lively French could ever find amusement in it? But there was just the rub: we did not understand these Parisian operas, because we knew not how to dance the *contredanse*; and how the latter is done, again, we never learn in Paris itself till we see the 'people' dancing. Then, however, our eyes are opened: of a sudden we comprehend everything, and in particular the reason why we could have nothing to do with the Comic Opera of Paris¹².

Wagner's aversion for the commoners' dance rhythms that penetrated deep into the French operatic style of the time found its expression in the famous scandal accompanying the Parisian premiere of *Tannhäuser* in 1861, directly provoked by Wagner's initial refusal to include ballet, and eventually by the inclusion of the dance sequence in the wrong place.

5.

It may come as a surprise that in the early 1840s, after the 23-year-old Stanisław Moniuszko had already presented publicly his first works for the music theatre, he was not considered as a 'national' composer, but as an imitator of the popular French masters of the *opéra-comique*. This is well illustrated by a passage in Stanisław August Lachowicz's feature article of 1842, which I quoted

a few years ago¹³. He characterised Moniuszko's output with several terms that he believed adequately pointed to the composer's indebtedness to the French operatic style: "gaiety", "lightness that does not preclude dramatic qualities", "song-like character, grace and naivety – the ingredients of a good French opera."¹⁴

All of Moniuszko's style can well be considered as a case of cultural transfer, which naturally adjusted the borrowed components to the Polish cultural code¹⁵. In Moniuszko's case, it was an adaptation of selected stylistic qualities of the French opera¹⁶. As I mentioned before, the French operatic style of that time was saturated with dance elements.

Discussing dance in the context of Moniuszko's output of operas is nothing new and is unequivocally associated with the national style. The introductory choral polonaise and the mazurka that closes the first act of *Halka*; the choral cracovienne and the mazurka from Act Four of *Straszny Dwór* (*The Haunted Manor*); the polonaise passages sung by the Sword-Bearer and the Stolnik (Pantier) – the examples are numerous and well-known. Still, if only we could get rid of our stereotypical associations and look again at all of Moniuszko's vaudevilles and operas without using the prism of interpretative dogma, we would notice how dance narration is immanently embedded in both Moniuszko's works from the 'national canon' and those less known and seldom performed ones that we could call 'apocryphal' with regard to their status in culture. What is more, the list of Moniuszko's 'operatic dances' proves longer than expected. True enough, the Vilnius and Warsaw audiences and critics first of all spotted and remembered the Polish dances that were the closest to their hearts. However, the set of 'dance templates' that underlie the musical forms of Moniuszko's opera

¹¹ Wagner confuses the names of figures that are part of the quadrille 'proper' with those of its 'mutated' form called *Les Lanciers* and of the *contredanse*.

¹² R. Wagner, (1897). *Prose Works: Vol. 5. Actors and Singers*. W. A. Ellis (Transl.). New York: Broude Brothers, pp. 44–45 (the original German text was published in the *Musikalisches Wochenblatt* in November 1871; Auber had died in Paris under the Paris Commune, on 13th May of the same year).

¹³ Cf. G. Zieziula, (2015). From *Betty* in French to *Die Schweizerhütte* in German: the foreign-language operas of Stanisław Moniuszko. *Muzyka*, No. 4, p. 72. Stanisław August Lachowicz's feature article: S. A. Lachowicz, (1842). Moniuszko. *Tygodnik Petersburski*, No. 80, pp. 541–542.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Cf. G. Zieziula, (2013). Moniuszko i Paryż. *Muzyka*, No. 3, pp. 79–80. I refer in this article to research by Stefan Keym.

¹⁶ In some cases, the Italian opera as well. Both of Moniuszko's *opere serie* – *Halka* and *Paria* – apply the *solita forma* convention, in which scenes are based on the *cantabile* – *cabaletta* sequence. Moniuszko's adaptations of the Italian operatic poetics have been discussed in my text dedicated to his operas, included in the (multi-authored) publication: R. D. Golianek (Ed.), *Moniuszko 200. Kompendium* (forthcoming).

is not limited to the polonaise, the mazurka and the cracovienne. As in the case of Auber, whose style the Polish composer frequently strove to imitate, even in such operas as *The Haunted Manor*, *Flis* (*The Raftsmen*), *Verbum nobile* and *Hrabina* (*The Countess*), which are saturated with national elements, we often hear echoes of a lively polka, a galop or a waltz, sometimes also – of a cotillion, a quadrille, *Les Lanciers*, or even an old-fashioned minuet.

6.

At this point, let me refer to several music examples that will illustrate the dependence of Moniuszko's operatic narrative on the broadly conceived dance quality. They can also be found in his flagship 'national' operas from the Warsaw period.

I will start chronologically, with *The Raftsmen* (1858), which appears to be Moniuszko's only national opera without noblemen among the persons of the drama. The action is set in plebeian circles, among poor fishermen from Warsaw's Powiśle district as well as the Vistula river raftsmen, whose parts draw on national motifs (*Zosia's Dumka* and *Franek's Song* with choir introduce a kujawiak-like mood, while the fishermen's chorus sings in krakowiak rhythms). This is contrasted with the musical portrayal of the barber Jakub, a 'man of the world', who is characterised by means of salon dances rhythms – those of a polka and *Les Lanciers*. In the ninth scene of this one-act comic opera, the dance motif becomes part of the dramatic situation:

JAKUB [to ZOSIA]
[...]
You will go [with me] to the theatre,
and to Sz wajcarska Dolina [Warsaw's entertainment park¹⁷];
sometimes to Saska Kępa [Warsaw's right-bank entertainment area]
we will cross over in a canoe.
I will take you to a **ball**
and we will dance there
for this is what I like!
I am a born dancer.
If I like a girl
I dance the **mazurka** with her
and most of all, I like the **polka**,
in which I'll never lose the beat!
(*he dances a polka*)
And then one chooses a maiden
to dance the fashionable

¹⁷ Both notes in brackets in the libretto quotation come from the English translator.

Les Lanciers!

(*he dances Les Lanciers*)¹⁸

Equally obvious theatricalisations of dance situations are introduced in *The Countess*, where the libretto facilitates the use of such concepts. The first two acts, entitled 'The Salon' and 'The Rehearsal', take place at a ball held by the eponymous Countess. The form of the overture is less clear; it does not follow the sonata form or that of the typical operatic *potpourris*. It opens, as we remember, with a fanfare motif (3/4, in B-flat major, *Moderato*)¹⁹, followed by a slow section (6/8, F major, *Andantino*).

Later come 'ball dances'; first, several repetitions of a waltz (whose airy rhythms are echoed in Bronia's first *Song*), and then the military trumpet calls, which foreshadow the energetic rhythms of a polka-galop.

This form draws directly on the five-part dramatic structure typical of the *pas des deux* in classical ballet:

- *entrée* and an *adagio* passage danced together,
- male soloist's variation,
- female soloist's variation,
- *coda* and a closing section danced together.

Notably, in Moniuszko's works the cosmopolitan salon dances can play an integrating and constructional role, also in the so-called *kontuszowy* operas (about the Polish nobles). It is the polka (and not, for instance, the mazurka) that functions as the musical framework in *Verbum nobile*. Its lively rhythms, known from the overture, unexpectedly return in the opening and the close of the final quintetto of Michał, Zuzia, their fathers, and the servant Bartłomiej: *Zakończone nasze troski...* [*Our Troubles Are Now Over...*]

In *The Haunted Manor*, the lively galop-polka functions as a *stretta* that sums up the whole and ends with a masterful *imbroglio* in the finale of Act Two, starting with the Sword-Bearer's song *A był to dzielny zuch, podobny lwiej naturze* [*He Was Brave As a Lion*] (2/4, C major, *Allegro*), followed by a nonetto.

¹⁸ *Les Lanciers* (a quadrille 'mutation') from the group of *square dances* naturally cannot be danced alone – and so Stanisław Bogusławski's stage directions are at odds with the salon dance practice of the day.

¹⁹ This motif draws on the melody of a well-known song composed during the November Uprising of 1830-31: *Bywaj dziewczę zdrowe, Ojczyzna mnie woła* [*Goodbye Girl, My Fatherland Is Calling Me*], which is a symbolic foreshadowing of the future fate of the handsome petty country gentleman Kazimierz, who at first courts the selfish and capricious Countess, but abandons her to fight for his fatherland.

[Allegretto]

scherzando

JAKUB

J. Bę-diesz by - wać w te - a - trze, w Szwaj - car - skiej Do -

scherzando >

J. li - nie, Na Sa - ską Kę - pę cza - sem czó - ło - łem - kiem się po - pły - nie, I na

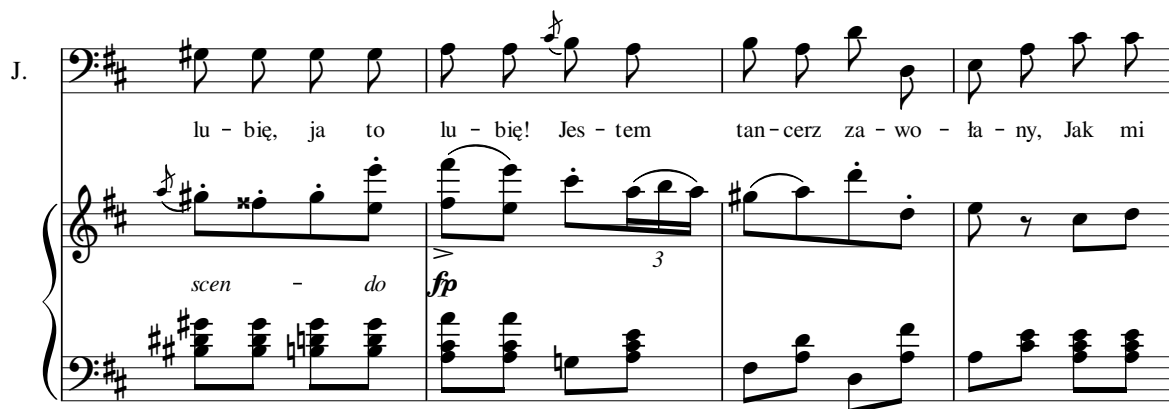
Musical example No. 1. Stanisław Moniuszko. *The Rhapsody*. No. 10, Jakub's Arietta, bars 61–130 (piano-vocal score).

J.



bal cię za - pro - wa - dzę, tam to puś - ci - my się w ta - ny, Ja to

J.



lu - bie, ja to lu - bie! Jes - tem tan - cerz za - wo - ła - ny, Jak mi

J.



się po - do - ba któ - ra, Da - lej - że z nią do ma - zu - ra, Na - de

Continued

Musical example No. 1. Stanisław Moniuszko. *The Rafisman*. No. 10, Jakub's Arietta, bars 61–130 (piano-vocal score).

(tańczy polkę)

J. *wszyst-ko pol-kę lu-bię, Ni-gdy tak-tu w niej nie zgu-bię!*

scen - do *fp* 3

Po-tem

J. *rallent.*

pan-nę się wy-bie-ra Do mo-dne-go, do mo-dne-go lan-sje -

rallent.



Continued

Musical example No. 1. Stanisław Moniuszko. *The Raftsmen*. No. 10, Jakub's Arietta, bars 61–130 (piano-vocal score).

Allegro

J. ra!
(tańczy lansjera)

scherzando

f *p* *dolce* *f*

p *dolce* *f* *ff*

Andante

p *p* *f*

Continued

Musical example No. 1. Stanisław Moniuszko. *The Raftsmen*. No. 10, Jakub's Arietta, bars 61–130 (piano-vocal score).

Moderato

Andantino

Musical example No. 2. Stanisław Moniuszko. *The Countess*, Overture, bars 1–16 (piano-vocal score).

Allegro moderato

pp

dolcissimo

Musical example No. 3. Stanisław Moniuszko. *The Countess, Overture*, bars 45–56 (piano-vocal score).

Allegro

dim.

ppp

Musical examples Nos 4a and 4b. Stanisław Moniuszko. *The Countess, Overture*, bars 328–348, 364–372 (piano-vocal score).



Continued

Musical examples Nos 4a and 4b. Stanisław Moniuszko. *The Countess*, Overture, bars 328–348, 364–372 (piano-vocal score).

[Allegro] *scherzando*



The musical score consists of four systems of staves. Each system has a grand staff (piano) and a vocal staff. The piano part features a steady accompaniment with chords and moving lines. The vocal part has a melodic line with some grace notes and slurs. The tempo is marked [Allegro] and the mood is *scherzando*. The piano part starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic.

Musical example No. 5a. Stanisław Moniuszko. *Verbum nobile*, Overture (*Scherzando*), bars 96–112 (piano-vocal score).

[Allegro moderato. Molto gioioso]

Zuzia

se - le. *[mp]* Ja - ko ma - ra, na -

S
A

pp Hej pa - nien - ko! to nam go - dy, hej - ze

Chór

T
B

[p]

Z.

- - - dłu - gich lat -

S
A

to się ra - dość zda - rza, kiej cię pa - nicz zwa - wy,

T
B



Musical example No. 5b. Stanisław Moniuszko. *Verbum nobile*, No. 10 *Finale*, bars 222–230 (piano-vocal score).



Z.
 S.
 A.
 T.
 B.

- - - - - wie - le
 mło - dy wie - dzie do oł - ta - rza!
 - - - - -
 - - - - -

Continued

Musical example No. 5b. Stanisław Moniuszko. *Verbum nobile*, No. 10 *Finale*, bars 222–230 (piano-vocal score).

In the same opera, we can also find an example of how dance can be used to differentiate the characters of dramatic figures. *Tempo di Menuetto*, introduced in Act Two at the beginning of No. 8 (Damazy and Hanna's duettino *Gdzie postawić to naczynie...* [*Where Shall We Put This Vessel*]) to characterise the aging barrister, is cleverly contrasted with the waltz rhythm that accompanies the part of the Sword-Bearer's daughter. It turns out that Damazy, who tries to impose an archaic dance pattern on the girl he courts, cannot keep up with the young and quick-witted Hanna, so we can see from the beginning that his courtship is doomed to failure.

*

The dance elements of Moniuszko's musical style directly influenced the physical, stage dimension of his operatic spectacles. One cannot help the impression that what often comes to the foreground in the course of the spectacle is not so much the dramaturgy of stage events as the logic of the dance figures. It is the dance narration (not the dramatic development) that determines the

'movement of the bodies' on the operatic stage. This is evident, among others, in Moniuszko's *The Haunted Manor*, where at least at several key points of the action the singers move like puppets driven by a ruthless dance imperative. The impression is so strong that foreign audiences not acquainted with this work might find it surprising (having read the libretto) that the culmination does not come at the crucial moment suggested by the librettist (the solution to the mystery of *The Haunted Manor*), but with the musical climax in the form of the *Mazurka* in Act Four.

Dance narration proves to be an extremely significant element of Moniuszko's operatic style and one of the factors that decide about the distinguishable character of the stage works composed by this 'father of the Polish opera'. Even so, we have no comprehensive studies dedicated to this problem to date. Researchers dealing with Moniuszko's oeuvre have for a very long time either ignored this subject or approached it from one side only. Admittedly, Moniuszko's operatic style has been associated with dance rhythms for a long time, but only the Polish dances were discussed. Such a selective stance

[Allegro]

Miecznik

A był to dziel - ny zuch, po - dob - ny lwiej na - tu - rze, gdy

M.

szło nam wspak wy - trwa - le zno - sił bu - rze, wśród

M.

bo - ju rą - bał w puch, nie lę - kał się choć czar - ta i

M.

wiem, że tak wy - cho - wał sy - nów dwóch.



Musical example No. 6. Stanisław Moniuszko. *The Haunted Manor*, Act II, No. 11, *Finale*, bars 243–259 (piano-vocal score).

Hanna

Damazy

Tempo di Menuetto

H.

D.

Tu - taj,

Gdzie po - sta - wić to na - czy - nie?

spiesz!

Czy i pa - ni tak - że wróż - by

Musical example No. 7a. Stanisław Moniuszko. *The Haunted Manor*, Act II, No. 8, *Duettino*, bars 1–17 (piano-vocal score).

H. 

D. 

spiesz!

Czy i pa - ni tak - że wró - by

H. 

D. 

Ja naj - pierw - sza.

chcesz?

A - le na co tru - dzić

H. 

D. 

rącz - ki próż - ną pra - cą?

Continued

Musical example No. 7a. Stanisław Moniuszko. *The Haunted Manor*, Act II, No. 8, *Duettino*, bars 1–17 (piano-vocal score).

Hanna

mp

Nim u - wień - czę two na - dzie - je, niech pan

p

H.

pil - nie o - kiem szu - ka, jeś - li z wos - ku się u -

rit. *a tempo*

H.

le - je pań - ski fra - czek i pe - ru - ka



Musical example No. 7b. Stanisław Moniuszko. *The Haunted Manor*, Act II, No. 8, *Duettino*, bars 55–63 (piano-vocal score).

resulted from a deep-rooted habit of subordinating the study of Moniuszko's oeuvre to the supreme category of 'nationalism in music'. This consistent (though not always quite conscious) reduction of the entire musicological

discourse on Moniuszko to the national myth seriously limited our perception of the phenomenon under study²⁰. What was overlooked most of all was that the operatic style that became the Polish composer's trademark was shaped by salon dances.

When discussing Moniuszko's stage works from both his Vilnius and Warsaw periods, we should not reduce the study of dance elements to the presence of dance rhythms in the protagonists' arias, duets, ensemble and choral scenes, or to the ballet sections. In Moniuszko's oeuvre, dance plays a much more profound and fundamental role; it is a major principle of constructing operatic syntax, and an element which integrates the libretto action with music and the visual component into a lasting and coherent whole. Dance also frequently functions as a hidden mechanism that propels the course of the action, with march rhythms as its only counterpoint. Dance organises the dramaturgy of entire scenes and instrumental numbers, such as overtures and intermezzi.

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²⁰ Academic studies in the area of historical sciences are susceptible to the influence of literary conventions and ideological agendas, which lower the credibility of historiographic writings. This gave rise to the postmodernist criticism of historiography found in the publications of such authors as, among others, Hayden White and Frank Ankersmit (cf. P. Małochleb, (2014). *Przepisywanie historii. Powstanie styczniowe w powieści polskiej w perspektywie pamięci kulturowej* [Copying History. The January Uprising in Polish Novels and in Cultural Memory]. Warszawa-Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, pp. 13–28). Polish musicological discourse after World War II has been under the constant pressure of similar view-distorting factors.