

# On the Artistic Characteristics of Vocal Singing Forms in Western Operas

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**Abstract:** As a shining pearl in the treasure house of world culture, Western opera carries rich emotional expression and unique artistic charm in its vocal singing form. The purpose of this paper is to reveal the important position and role of vocal singing in Western opera by deeply exploring its artistic characteristics in operatic art. Starting from the three major vocal forms of solo, duet and chorus, this paper analyzes their artistic characteristics and their expressions in opera, in order to provide reference for related research.

**Keywords:** Western opera; Vocal singing form; Artistic features

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## 1. Introduction

Since its birth, Western opera has attracted the attention of countless audiences with its unique artistic charm. As a core component of the art of opera, vocal singing plays a pivotal role in showing the character of the character, promoting the development of the plot, and creating the stage atmosphere. From the author's own point of view, this paper will combine relevant literature and theoretical analysis to deeply discuss the artistic characteristics of vocal singing forms in Western opera.

## 2. The artistic characteristics of solo singing and its performance in opera

### 2.1. Definition and classification of solo singing

Solo singing is the most common form of vocal music in Western opera, usually sung by the leading role or important role. Directly conveying the inner world and emotional experience of the characters through their personal singing, solo singing plays a pivotal role in opera. There are various forms of solo singing, mainly including recitatives and arias. Recitative is mainly used to narrate the plot of the story, with a simple melody and strong language, similar to recitation; The aria is the soul of opera, known for its complex melody, wide vocal range and strong emotional expression, often appearing at key nodes in the development of the plot, profoundly showing the emotional fluctuations and depth of thought of the characters.

### 2.2. Analysis of the artistic characteristics of solo singing

#### 2.2.1. The directness of emotional expression

Solo singing directly conveys the emotions of the character through the singer's voice, without the need for external

words or movements. This direct expression allows the audience to intuitively feel the joys, sorrows and sorrows of the characters, so as to understand the inner world of the characters more deeply. In opera, solo singing often becomes a key node in the emotional explosion of the character, and through the power of the singer's voice, the emotional state of the character is directly transmitted to the audience, triggering the audience's resonance and emotional resonance.

### **2.2.2. Individuality and artistry**

Each singer has a different understanding and interpretation of the role, which allows the solo singer to show a unique personality and artistry while maintaining the basic melodic framework. Singers use their vocal qualities, singing skills, and emotional investment to give their characters unique vitality and charm. This kind of individuality and artistry not only enriches the artistic connotation of the opera, but also provides the audience with a more diverse aesthetic experience.

### **2.2.3. The combination of technology and emotion**

Difficult solo parts, such as arias, require a high level of singing skills that can be perfectly integrated with emotional expression. On the basis of maintaining a stable voice and pure timbre, singers need to accurately and vividly present the emotional state of the characters through delicate timbre changes, dynamics control, and speed adjustment. This combination of technique and emotion not only tests the professionalism of the singers, but also reflects the unique charm and value of the art of opera.

## **2.3. Examples of solo singing in opera**

Take Puccini's opera *Turandot* as an example, in which the heroine Turandot's aria "Nobody Sleeps Tonight" is a solo piece with great artistic charm. Known for its complex melodic lines, wide vocal range, and strong emotional expression, this aria has become a classic in opera. Through exquisite singing skills and affectionate emotional investment, the singer vividly presents Turandot's inner contradictions and struggles, longing and fear of love and other complex emotional states, so that the audience can appreciate the beauty of music while more deeply understanding the inner world of the characters.

## **3. The artistic characteristics of duets and their performance in opera**

### **3.1. Definition and form of duet**

Duet singing is another important form of vocal music in Western opera, where two or more characters are sung together<sup>[1]</sup>. It is not only an important means of emotional communication between characters, but also an important way to show the development of the plot and the relationship between the characters. There are various forms of duets, including duets, trios and even multiple singing. Through the interweaving and dialogue between different voices, the duet shows a unique artistic charm and expressiveness in the opera.

### **3.2. Analysis of the artistic characteristics of duet**

#### **3.2.1. Dialogue and conflict**

The characters in the duet engage in dialogue and confrontation through singing, showing each other's emotional entanglements and collisions of ideas. This dialogue and conflict not only enhances the tension and attractiveness of the plot, but also provides the audience with a deeper understanding of the plot. In the duet, the voices of different characters are intertwined and contrasted, forming a unique musical language, so that the audience can more intuitively feel the emotional entanglements and ideological differences between the characters<sup>[2]</sup>.

#### **3.2.2. Harmony and texture richness**

Duets require singers to form a harmonious and unified overall effect while maintaining the independence of their respective voices. This richness of harmony and texture not only tests the professionalism and teamwork ability of the

singers, but also provides a richer listening experience for the audience. In duet, the harmonic relationship and texture changes between different voices have become one of the important means to show the character's personality and emotional state<sup>[3]</sup>.

### **3.2.3. The simultaneous development of emotions and plots**

The duet often unfolds as the plot progresses, pushing the plot forward through the changes and interweaving of the singing. In the duet, the emotional entanglements and ideological collisions between the characters often become the key nodes to promote the development of the plot. Through their superb singing skills and affectionate emotional investment, the singers closely combine the emotional state of the characters with the development of the plot, so that the audience can enjoy the beauty of music while having a deeper understanding of the development of the plot and the relationship between the characters.

### **3.3. Examples of the performance of duets in operas**

Take Verdi's opera *Rigoletto* as an example, and the duet "Fickle Woman" is a duet piece with great artistic charm. Known for its beautiful melodic lines, rich harmonic textures, and deep emotional expression, this duet has become a classic in opera. Through their superb singing skills and affectionate emotional investment, the singers vividly present the emotional entanglement and ideological collision between *Rigoletto* and *Gilda*. In the duet, the interweaving and dialogue between different voices forms a unique musical language, allowing the audience to more intuitively feel the complex emotional states between the characters and the development of the plot.

## **4. The artistic characteristics of choral singing and its representation in opera**

### **4.1. Definition and function of choral singing**

The chorus is the main form of expression of the mass role in Western opera, which is sung by multiple singers. It is not only an important means to create a stage atmosphere and portray the environment, but also an important way to show collective strength and emotion. Through the form of chorus, opera can present a grander and more spectacular stage effect and emotional atmosphere.

### **4.2. Analysis of the artistic characteristics of choral singing**

#### **4.2.1. Large-scale and magnificent**

The chorus is known for its large line-up and grand acoustics. In opera, chorus is often used to represent large-scale scenes or specific environments, such as war scenes, festival celebrations, etc. Through the form of chorus, opera can quickly create a solemn, majestic or lively atmosphere, so that the audience can be shocked both visually and audibly.

#### **4.2.2. The collective nature of emotional expression**

The chorus conveys a common emotional experience and values through collective singing. In opera, the chorus often represents the voice and position of the masses, and expresses the yearning and pursuit of justice, love, freedom and other beautiful things through collective singing. The collective nature of this emotional expression not only enhances the appeal and cohesion of the opera, but also provides the audience with a common emotional resonance and value identity.

#### **4.2.3. The creation of scenes and atmospheres**

Choral singing is often used in opera to represent a specific scene or atmosphere. Through the ups and downs of the singing voice and the richness and diversity of harmonic textures, the chorus can present vivid pictures and scenes to the audience. These pictures and scenes not only enrich the visual expression and emotional connotation of the opera, but also provide the audience with a more intuitive and vivid way to understand the plot.

### **4.3. Examples of choral singing in opera**

For example, in Wagner's opera *The Ring of the Nibelungen*, the choral part of the opera is of great artistic value. In this opera, the chorus is widely used to depict large-scale scenes such as war scenes and celebrations. Through a large line-up of singers and grand acoustic effects, the chorus quickly creates a solemn and majestic atmosphere. At the same time, through the ups and downs of the singing voice and the rich diversity of harmonic textures, the chorus presents the audience with vivid war pictures and celebration scenes. These images and scenes not only enhance the visual expression and emotional connotation of the opera, but also provide the audience with a more in-depth and intuitive way to understand the plot.

## 5. Conclusions

To sum up, the vocal singing form in Western opera has become an important part of opera art with its unique artistic charm and expressiveness. The directness and individuality of solo singing, the dialogue and conflict of duet, and the grandeur and collectivity of choral singing together constitute the rich connotation and artistic characteristics of the vocal singing form of Western opera. These characteristics not only reflect the unique charm and value of opera art, but also provide valuable experience and inspiration for future generations to study and inherit opera art. In the future development of opera art, we look forward to the emergence of more excellent vocal singing forms and works, bringing more colorful aesthetic experience and cultural enjoyment to the audience.

## Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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