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Huiwen XIAO

Postgraduate Student of Creative Graduate School of Ukrainian National Tchaikovsky Academy of Music, Architect Gorodetsky St., 1-3/11, Kyiv, Ukraine, 01001

ORCID: 0000-0002-9977-4027

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BETWEEN THE PAST AND THE FUTURE: ABOUT LU XUN'S ARTISTIC INNOVATIONS (BASED ON THE LITERARY ORIGINAL SOURCE OF SHI GUANGNAN'S OPERA «REGRET FOR THE PAST»)

The article analyzes the work of the classic of Chinese literature, Lu Xun, an outstanding writer, publicist and public figure of the beginning of the XX century. Deep knowledge of the realities of his time is present in Lu Xun's compositions as the most important component of artistic consciousness. Central attention is paid to the analysis of the story «Regret for the Past. Juansheng's Notes» («Shang shi»), which served as the literary basis for the libretto of Shi Guangnan's opera «Regret for the Past». The authors of the libretto were playwrights Wang Quan and Han Wei. The work argues for the choice of the topic, analyzes the system of artistic images, socio-historical context, reveals the key style innovations of the writer Lu Xun.

The cross-cutting problem of the research is the problem of assimilation of Western European compositional experience in Shi Guangnan's work. In this aspect, socio-political and artistic trends of the last third of the XX century in Chinese culture are studied; a panorama of genre varieties of Chinese opera of the 1980s is reproduced; the process of including Chinese chamber opera in the world musical space is analyzed.

Based on the material of the opera «Regret for the Past», specific trends in the development of Chinese musical theater in the 1980s are studied at the level of plot, stage decision, acting, costume, musical language, instrumentation, and vocal techniques. It is noted that the main feature of the opera «Regret for the Past» is the combination of the principles of Western European opera and nationally colored melodies. It is emphasized that the opera «Regret for the Past» (1981), written during the «reforms and openness» policy, is extremely important for the history of Chinese opera.

The article pays special attention to the analysis of the documentary side of Shi Guangnan's life and work. Despite the fact that the importance of this composer in the history of Chinese music is rated quite high, and his vocal compositions are still popular with listeners, it cannot be said that Shi Guangnan's work has been sufficiently studied in Chinese musicology. The analysis of scientific studies devoted to the composer reveals a number of contradictions in them, as well as excessive politicization of ideas about the composer's life and work.

Key words: Shi Guangnan, Lu Xun, «Regret for the Past», «openness era», modern Chinese music, Chinese opera, biographical studies.

Хуївен СЯО

аспірантка творчої аспірантури другого року навчання, кафедра історії світової музики, Національна музична академія України імені П. І. Чайковського, вул. Архітектора Городецького, 1-3/11, м. Київ, Україна, 01001

ORCID: 0000-0002-9977-4027

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МІЖ МИНУЛИМ ТА МАЙБУТНІМ: ПРО ХУДОЖНІ НОВАЦІЇ ЛУ СІНЯ (НА МАТЕРІАЛІ ЛІТЕРАТУРНОГО ПЕРШОДЖЕРЕЛА ОПЕРИ ШИ ГУАННАНЯ «ЖАЛЬ ЗА МИНУЛИМ»)

У статті аналізується творчість класика китайської літератури Лу Сіня – видатного письменника, публіциста та суспільного діяча початку ХХ століття. Глибоке знання реалій свого часу виступає у творах Лу Сіня як найважливіший компонент мистецької свідомості. Центральну увагу приділено аналізу оповідання «Скорбота за минулим, або Записки Цзюаньшєна» («Shang shi»), яке послужило літературною першоосновою для лібрето опери Ши Гуаннаня «Жаль за минулим» (1981). Авторами лібрето виступили драматурги Ван Цзян та Хан Вей. У роботі аргументується вибір теми, аналізується система художніх образів, соціально-історичний контекст, виявляються ключові стильові новації Лу Сіня-письменника.

Наскрізною проблемою дослідження є проблема асиміляції західноєвропейського композиторського досвіду у творчості Ши Гуаннаня. В даному аспекті вивчаються суспільно-політичні та мистецькі тенденції останньої третини ХХ століття в китайській культурі; відтворюється панорама жанрових різновидів китайської опери 1980-х років; аналізується процес включення китайської камерної опери у світовий музичний простір.

На матеріалі опери «Жаль за минулим» вивчаються специфічні тенденції розвитку китайського музичного театру 1980-х років на рівні сюжету, сценічного рішення, акторської гри, костюма, музичної мови, інструментарію, вокальних технік. Зазначається, що головною особливістю опери «Жаль за минулим» є поєднання принципів західноєвропейської опери та національно забарвленої мелодики. Підкреслюється, що опера «Жаль за минулим», написана за часів політики «реформ і відкритості», має надзвичайно велике значення для історії оперного мистецтва Китаю.

Особливу увагу у статті приділено аналізу документального боку життя та творчості Ши Гуаннаня. Незважаючи на те, що значення даного композитора в історії китайської музики оцінюється досить високо, а його вокальні твори й досі популярні у слухачів, не можна сказати, що творчість Ши Гуаннаня глибоко досліджена в китайському музикознавстві. Аналіз наукових робіт, присвячених композитору, розкриває ряд наявних у них протиріч, а також надмірну політизацію уявлень про життя та творчість композитора.

Ключові слова: Ши Гуаннань, Лу Сінь, «Regret for the Past», «епоха відкритості» сучасна китайська музика, китайська опера, біографічні дослідження.

Introduction. After more than a hundred years since the birth of Lu Xun, a universally recognized classic of Chinese literature of the XX century, a writer, playwright and publicist, his work continues to inflame public thought. In domestic art history, Lu Xun is called the «Chinese Gogol» – an outstanding «sculptor» of human characters.

Statement of the problem. In the last half century, the assertion of the indisputable authority of Lu Xun in mainland China is connected not only with his ideological legacy and creative skill, profundity and versatility of his compositions, but also to a large extent with an increase in interest in the life and work of Lu Xun as a publicist, due to political factors. Analyzing the artistic processes taking place in China, it is necessary to take into account the influence of the dominant ideology. As it is known, the socio-political component has always played a decisive role in the creation and implementation of creative projects of Chinese national artists. Despite the global integration phenomena that distinguish the culture of modern China, including the sphere of musical and theatrical art, the elements of politicization to this day determine the fundamental vectors of the development of the nation.

Understanding this phenomenon is especially important in the context of understanding the role

and significance of the artists that are so-called «approved» by the authorities. The creative personalities of the writer Lu Xun (Chinese 魯迅/鲁迅, Lu Xun; 1881–1936)¹ and the composer Shi Guangnan (Chinese 施光南, Shi Guangnan, 1940–1950), certainly are among the «official» flagships of China's national art of the XX century. Separated by almost half a century of history from each other, both artists worked in the flow of the renewal of traditional genres and stylistic means. Different worlds, different styles, a radically different political situation... Nevertheless, the fates of Lu Xun and Shi Guangnan were forever intertwined thanks to one story, very short in size – «Mourning for the Departed, or Juansheng's Notes» («Shang shi») – often translate «Regret for the Past. Juansheng's Notes». In 1981, Shi Guangnan's opera «Regret for the Past» (伤逝) was written on the plot of this literary composition, timed with the 100th anniversary of the writer's day of birth. The libretto was written by Wang Quan and Han Wei.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Lu Xun is one of the most active public figures, whose life was itself a novel², and the books have

¹ The real name of Lu Xun is Zhou Shuren (Chinese: 周树人).

² Lu Xun was born in a landowner's family. In 1902, he graduated from the «School of Mines and Railways» in the city of Nanjing and was sent to continue his education in Japan, where he joined the educational move-

been translated into dozens of languages around the world. Lu Xun's prose reflects the experience of the extraordinary life of the writer himself. Deep knowledge of the realities of his time acts as the most important component of his artistic consciousness. In this regard, researchers of the second half of the XX century talk about the difficulty of translating the writer's compositions (Fedorenko, 1974, p. 362). Only the greatest professionals in their spheres manage to convey the subtle game of Lu Xun's prose in the language of translation.

Today in China, Lu Xun-studies is one of the important areas of literary and journalistic research. Research is well developed in quantitative and qualitative terms in several aspects: the life and work of Lu Xun, the ideological basis of the writer's work, literary, culturological, philosophical and aesthetic analysis of the author's compositions. In China, in the twenty years since the end of the «extreme left» period, more than sixty monographs have been published, more than a thousand separate scientific articles have been published, and since 1977 and 1980 two special scientific journals, several annual scientific bulletins, and several types of bibliographic indexes have also been published based on the study of Lu Xun's work. Thanks to the large-scale work of Huang Yinan, it is possible to recreate a complete picture of the modern «luxuniana» (Huang Yinan, 2001, p. 14)³.

ment of Chinese students. He acted as a translator and publicist. In Japan and at home, Lu Xun participated in the preparation of the Xinhai Revolution (1911–1913). In 1913, Lu Xun wrote his first short story «The Past». In 1918, he published the story «Diary of a Madman» (a kind of version of M. Gogol's «Notes of a Madman»), which is considered the first composition of new Chinese literature. Later, the collections «The Call» (1923; it included Lu Xun's most popular novel «The True Story of Ah Q», in which he criticized the social passivity of the oppressed masses), «Wandering» (1926), «Wild Herbs» (1927, a collection of prose poems), «Old legends in a new way» (1936, a collection of satirical and heroic tales by Lu Xun, in which he criticized the negative phenomena of his time) and others.

Lu Xun is the author of a large number of articles on important events in the life of China and other countries: the collections «Hot Wind» (1925), «Under the Luxurious Canopy» (1926), «Let's Talk About the Weather» (1934) and others. He did a lot to popularize foreign literature in China, including Ukrainian. Lu Xun translated T. Shevchenko's «Testament», compositions by M. Gogol, M. Saltykov-Shchedrin, A. Chekhov, and others. He dedicated the novella «The Comedy of the Ducks» (1922) to his friend, a writer of Ukrainian origin, a native of Eastern Slobozhanshchyna (Kurshchyna), who wrote in Japanese and Esperanto, Vasyl Yeroshenko. Translated by Lu Xun and with his additions, in October 1921, the chapter on Ukrainian literature from the «General History of Literature» by the German literary critic H. Karpeles was published in the «Xiaoshuo Yuebao» magazine. This publication led to the beginning of Chinese translations from Ukrainian.

Lu Xun's compositions were published in Ukrainian translation in separate editions in 1953, 1957, 1958, 1961, 1981, as well as in periodicals.

³ In the dissertation, Huang Yinan demonstrates in detail the various research approaches to the work of Lu Xun, distinguishing between works of art and journalistic orientation. Among the most significant, the author names the works of the famous Chinese literary critic Feng Xuefeng (冯雪峰), in which a thorough study of the creative path and literary skill of Lu Xun was carried out (Feng Xuefeng. Literary creative path of Lu Xun (1881–1936).

The figure of the writer attracted serious attention of foreign researchers and writers after he became the leader of the League of Chinese Left-Wing Writers in 1931⁴. From the 1930s to the present day, more than one hundred and fifty scientific articles and dozens of monographs have been published on the study of the life and work of Lu Xun. Among them are the works of famous sinologists, translators and literary critics specializing in the field of oriental studies: V. Alekseev⁵, V. Petrov⁶, L. Pozdneeva⁷, V. Semanov⁸, V. Sorokin⁹.

The time when Chinese opera was synonymous with exotics is far in the past, and opera scholars tried hard to find common trends in the history of the development of national and Western European musical theater. Thanks to the joint efforts of Chinese young postgraduate researchers and European authoritative musicologists, at the moment we have an impressive picture of the evolution of genre and style processes in the musical art of China. First of all, we should

Changsha, 1980) and Zhou Xiashou (周作人) (Zhou Xiashou. Characters in the stories of Lu Xun. Beijing, 1957.

⁴ *The League of Left-Wing Writers* (Chinese: 中国左翼作家联盟), commonly abbreviated as the Zuolian in Chinese, was an organization of writers formed in Shanghai, China, on 2 March 1930, at the instigation of the Chinese Communist Party and the influence of the celebrated author Lu Xun. Other prominent members included Ding Ling, Hu Feng, and Mei Zhi.

The purpose of the League was to promote socialist realism in support of the Communist Revolution, and it eventually became very influential in Chinese cultural circles. Lu Xun delivered the opening address to the organizational meeting, but he became disillusioned when it quickly became clear that he would have little influence.

Other members included leaders of the Sun Society and the Creation Society, and Zhou Yang, who became Mao Zedong's favorite literary figure and after 1949 zealously enforced political orthodoxy. The League articulated theories on the political role of literature that foreshadowed Mao's influential Yan'an Talks on Literature and Art, and engaged in running debates with the «art for art's sake» Crescent Moon Society.

Due to the League's prominent political views, it was quickly banned by the Kuomintang government. On 7 February 1931, the government executed five members of the League: Li Weisen, Hu Yepin, Rou Shi, Yin Fu, and Feng Keng. They are known as the Five Martyrs of the League of Left-Wing Writers.

The League was disbanded voluntarily in 1936. This was mainly in order to encourage authors to unite across political boundaries and face the rapidly increasing threat from Japan.

⁵ Алексеев В. М. Наука о Востоке. Статьи и документы. Москва: ГРВЛ. 1982. 536 с.

⁶ Петров В. В. Лу Синь. Очерк жизни и творчества. Москва: Гослитиздат, 1960. 383 с.

⁷ Позднеева Л. Лу Синь. Жизнь и творчество. Москва: Гослитиздат, 1959. 412 с.

⁸ Семанов В. И. Эволюция китайского романа. Конец XVIII – начало XX в. Москва: Наука, 1970. 343 с.

Семанов В. И. Лу Синь и его предшественники / ред. В. И. Федоренко. Москва: Наука, 1967. С. 3–6.

⁹ Сорокин В. Ф. Формирование мировоззрения Лу Синя. Москва: Изд-во вост. лит., 1958. 198 с.

Сорокин В. Изучение новой и современной китайской литературы в России. *Духовная культура Китая: Энциклопедия: в 5 т. / гл. ред. М. Л. Титаренко; Инт-т Дальнего Востока. Т. 3. Литература. Язык и письменность.* Москва, 2008.

highlight the thesis of Chen Ying¹⁰, Sun Lu¹¹, Dai Yu¹². Some aspects of this topic are covered in Zhang Lizhen's dissertation «Modern Chinese opera (history and development prospects)», the main storyline of which is the difference between traditional Chinese opera and its European genre «analogue» in the work of contemporary Chinese composers¹³.

Creativity of Shi Guangnan did not remain aloof from the scientific search. As the most profound and versatile, his work is considered in the works of Wu Mingming¹⁴. The author focuses on the composer's song heritage, and also clarifies the biographical details of his life path, since there are many inaccuracies in this area at the moment.

Goals of the article. Not only the creative portrait of Shi Guangnan needs to be detailed – many of the composer's major compositions today require new approaches, both from a research and performing perspective. Thus, **the relevance** of the chosen research topic is due to the need to rethink the historical role of Shi Guangnan as an adherent of the idea of assimilating Western European experience on the powerful foundation of traditional art.

The aim of the work is to reveal the modern aspects of the meaning of the opera «Regret for the Past», which has become the fruit of a virtual creative tandem of two outstanding representatives of Chinese culture of the XX century – Lu Xun and Shi Guangnan.

The aim of the work predetermines **the main objectives** of the study:

- to study the development of musical and theatrical art in China during the «period of openness and reforms»;
- to analyze the socio-public and artistic trends of the last third of the XX century in Chinese culture;
- to analyze the artistic and journalistic compositions

of Lu Xun from the point of view of their connection with the European literary tradition;

- to recreate the panorama of genre varieties of Chinese opera in the 1980s;
- to identify the characteristic style features of Chinese chamber opera;
- to reveal the process of including Chinese chamber opera into the global musical space.

Theoretical and methodological foundations of the work are determined by the interdisciplinary nature of the study, due to the synthetic nature of the opera. Appeal to this topic required the study of not only musical specifics, but also the coverage of a broad cultural context, which was necessary to understand the meaning of the synthetic phenomenon of the genre of lyric-psychological Chinese opera of the last third of the XX century.

To achieve the mentioned objectives, a set of following *methods* was used: comparative-historical, musical-theoretical and the method of holistic analysis of a musical composition.

Results of the research. Shi Guangnan is called the «singer of the time» and «folk musician» in almost all works devoted to him. These definitions speak of the importance of the composer's personality for the musical culture of China in the «epoch of openness» that came after the «cultural revolution», and arouse research interest in the musician.

Shi Guangnan is part of a new generation of composers and musicians who were educated in their homeland after the founding of New China. After the defeat in October 1976 of the Gang of Four¹⁵ it was the compositions of Shi Guangnan that expressed the mood of people, their joy in connection with the coming of a new period of time – the «epoch of openness». As one of the most pro-

¹⁵ *The Gang of Four* (Chinese: 四人帮) was a Maoist political faction composed of four Chinese Communist Party (CCP) officials. They came to prominence during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) and were later charged with a series of treasonous crimes. The gang's leading figure was Jiang Qing (Mao Zedong's last wife). The other members were Zhang Chunqiao, Yao Wenyuan, and Wang Hongwen.

The Gang of Four controlled the power organs of the CCP through the later stages of the Cultural Revolution, although it remains unclear which major decisions were made by Mao Zedong and carried out by the Gang, and which were the result of the Gang of Four's own planning.

The Gang of Four, together with general Lin Biao (who died in 1971), were labeled the two major «counter-revolutionary forces» of the Cultural Revolution and officially blamed by the Chinese government for the worst excesses of the societal chaos that ensued during the ten years of turmoil. Their downfall on October 6, 1976, a mere month after Mao's death, brought about major celebrations on the streets of Beijing and marked the end of a turbulent political era in China.

Their fall did not amount to a rejection of the Cultural Revolution as such, but it was organized by the new leader, Premier Hua Guofeng, and others who had risen during that period. Significant repudiation of the entire process of change came later, with the return of Deng Xiaoping at the 11th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party and Hua's gradual loss of authority (Gang of Four. URL: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gang_of_Four).

¹⁰ Чэнь Ин. Китайская опера XX – начала XXI века: к проблеме освоения европейского опыта: дис. . канд. искусствоведения. Ростов-на-Дону, 2015. 174 с.

¹¹ Сунь Лу. Китайская народная опера: к проблеме становления и развития жанра: автореф. дис. кандидата иск.: 17.00.03. Ростов-на-Дону, 2016. 29 с.

¹² Дай Юй. Элементы традиционной культуры в новой китайской музыке «периода открытости»: дис. ... канд. искусствовед. Нижний Новгород, 2017. 238 с.

¹³ Чжан Личжэнь. Современная китайская опера: история и перспективы развития: дис. кандидат искусствоведения. Санкт-Петербург, 2010. 149 с.

¹⁴ У Минмин. Композитор Ши Гуаннань: к постановке проблемы биографических исследований в китайском музыковедении. *Актуальные проблемы высшего музыкального образования*: Российский государственный педагогический университет им. А. И. Герцена. Санкт-Петербург, 2020. С. 69–75.

lific songwriters in the country, Shi wrote a number of songs, which won the hearts of millions of Chinese. His works, including *In the Field of Hope*, *Turpan's Grape Was Ripe* and *Toasts Song*, have proved popular with young and old alike, thanks to their catchy melodies and folk tunes.

After graduating from the *Central Conservatory of Music* in Beijing, Shi worked at the China National Symphony Orchestra, and his portfolio contained a full range from pop songs to operas and ballets.

Shi Guangnan's contribution to the musical culture of China is also significant as a contribution of a public figure. In 1984, he joined the Chinese Communist Party. In 1985, he became the youngest among the 15 Vice Presidents of the Chinese Musicians Association. In the same year, the «Favorite Songs of Modern Youth» vote was held all over the country, and out of 30 selected and awarded songs, three belonged to Shi Guangnan. In 1986, Shi Guangnan was elected Vice Chairman of the All China Youth Federation. He becomes a close friend of young people from musical, literary and artistic circles, unites many famous musicians, poets and performers around him.

The recognition of the great historical significance of the composer Shi Guangnan for Chinese music is expressed not only in the definitions «singer of the era», «folk musician» that accompany every mention of him, but also in many signs of public memory of the composer. Among them are the following: the opening of the Square and the Concert Hall named after composer Shi Guangnan in the city of Jinhua; the transformation of the Music Conservatory of the Pedagogical University in Zhejiang Province into the Music Conservatory and Research Institute of Music and Culture named after Shi Guangnan in 2017; holding symposiums dedicated to him («Musical creativity and performing skills of Shi Guangnan» at Zhejiang Pedagogical University on April 16, 2017), holding conferences. In 2018, at the celebration of the 40th anniversary of reforms and openness, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council solemnly congratulated 100 reform pioneers. Among them was the only composer – Shi Guangnan.

An important sign of the unceasing popularity of Shi Guangnan's music is the fact that to this composer there was dedicated a new opera by a mod-

ern Chinese composer Guan Xia¹⁶ «Mulan Psalm», staged at Chongqing's Shi Guangnan Grand Theater on May 10, paid homage to Shi Guangnan on the 75th anniversary of his birth¹⁷. «A great composer's legacy is beyond music. Though it has been 25 years since he died, I can still feel him whenever I listen to his music,» says Hong Ruding, the late composer's widow, who came to the show at Shi Guangnan Grand Theater. Guan Xia, president of the orchestra and also the composer of «Mulan Psalm», says: «What makes Shi's songs so popular among different generations is his integration of folk music, such as the Tibetans and the Uygurs. He absorbed various music elements by working for years in remote villages across China and basing his composition on local folk music» (China Daily, 2015).

It should be said that the appeal to the heritage of Lu Xun gave considerable weight to the creative searches of Shi Guangnan. A predominantly songwriting composer, Shi Guangnan opened up new opportunities for the development of academic vocal music in China.

The innovation and popularity of the opera «Regret for the Past» is certainly rooted in the choice of plot. The lyrical theme, brightly colored with social notes in Lu Xun's story, turned out to be surprisingly in tune with the mood of society in the last third of the XX century. There were historical reasons for this.

As you know, during the years of the «cultural revolution» the literature of mainland China received one of the most painful blows in its entire history of many thousands of years. The intelligentsia was subjected to mass repressions and labor re-education, writing became kind of a dangerous business. Literature recognized by the authorities became only a form of political propaganda, and everything else was mercilessly cut off by censors.

The legendary Chinese prose writer Mao Dun wrote that at that time «eight plays and one writer» remained on the shelves, and indeed, published

¹⁶ *Guan Xia* (traditional Chinese: 關峽) (born June 30, 1957) is a Chinese composer of contemporary classical music. Guan was born in Kaifeng, and graduated from the China Central Conservatory in 1985. He has been the director of the China National Symphony Orchestra until 2018 and involved in a number of Chinese national committees working with musicians. His important works include the operas *Sorrowful Dawn* and *Mulan Psalm*, several symphonies, *Earth Requiem*, a piano concerto, and the *Symphonic Overture No. 1* (also known as *Symphonic Ballade 'Sorrowful Dawn'*), which is very popular in the concerts in China. He is also famous for composing TV series soundtracks, some of which were orchestrated as concert pieces, including *I Love My Family*, *Fortress Besieged*, *Little Dragonboy*, *The Years of Intense Emotion*, and *Soldiers Sortie*.

¹⁷ Under the baton of Li Xincao and jointly performed by China National Symphony Orchestra and the PLA General Political Department Song and Dance Troupe, the opera featured high-profile Chinese soprano Lei Jia and tenor Zhang Yingxi.

authors could be counted by hand. The «Cultural Revolution» set modern Chinese literature many years back. The powerful flow of translated literature that swept over China at the beginning of the XX century turned out to be blocked, turned the worldview of Chinese writers upside down, prompted literary reforms and presented many bizarre combinations and genres. The ban was imposed not only on all Western literature, but also on the compositions of Soviet authors – relations between the two countries were rapidly deteriorating. The average Chinese reader only had access to the texts of Hao Ran and Mao Zedong himself.

After the death of the «Great Pilot», in just a year and a half, the economic and political course of the PRC changed. Finally, came the time for the «policy of openness», and with it a new round of development of modern Chinese literature began – the emergence of the so-called «literature of scars». The intelligentsia gradually began to return to their ordinary activities – teaching, writing, journalism – but the nightmares of the past constantly weighed on them. The first literary trend in post-Maoist China was finally formed by 1978, and its name – the literature of scars – it received after the release of Lu Xinhua's story "Scars"¹⁸, which was published in the newspaper «Literary Bulletin». Later, such authors as Liang Nan, Lu Xiuzhen, Li Tao and others worked in the same direction¹⁹.

«Literature of scars» is «the confession of a humiliated and offended generation that just needed to speak out» (Ivlev, 2012). All the compositions in different settings (city, village, school) deal with similar problems, and all pose the central question: *how to live on?*

Due to the fact that this type of literature has become epoch-making, convincingly reflecting the period of rethinking the role of the Cultural Revolution, the movement of «literature of scars»

had a strong influence on artistic culture as a whole. The emergence of «literature of scars» led to the formation of Chinese lyric opera. The opera «Regret for the Past» (1981) by Shi Guangnan is a typical composition of this genre. This composition «was once rated as one of the four rare classical Chinese operas of the XX century» (Lan, 2012, p. 87). In it, the author successfully uses fragments of Juansheng's memories based on Lu Xun's original. Juansheng and Zijun are the main characters of the opera, they play equivalent roles in it. Zijun arias are the most important fragments of the opera, which contribute to the development of the plot and the resolution of dramatic conflicts. They not only embody the typical features of the heroine, but also contrast with the image of Juansheng.

The composer refused to divide the performance into acts; instead of that he used the idea of incarnating the four seasons, which was present in the literary source: «Spring», «Summer», «Autumn», «Winter». Obviously, this technique emphasized the connection between the features of the plot, the type of artistic images and the features of the musical composition, presenting variability as an idea of the opera structure. This technique, as Zhu Linzi writes, strengthened the aesthetic unity of literature and music in the opera, the interaction of literary and musical forms: «Combining with musical structures, poetic forms also color the narrative in different shades of feelings and emotions, emphasizing plot modulations» (Zhu Linzi, 2021, p. 97). At the same time, in each separate action, literature and music are again intertwined in the style unity. Thanks to the titles of the actions, the audience can imagine the plot of the composition in advance. Such a plot perspective creates a spatial and temporal frame of action and stimulates aesthetic associations. So, a full-fledged dramatic denouement, associated with descriptions of the main features of the era, which are expressed in this opera, also corresponded to the aesthetic and taste specifics of the theater of that time.

Conclusions. The 1980s belong to the early period of the creation of the new Chinese opera. Its genres were guided by Western models. However, they were original interpretations not of modern Western operas, but rather of their classic-romantic predecessors. According to Zhu Linji, due to the differences in the phases of development of opera culture in the West and in China, as well as the experimental nature of Chinese opera, these

¹⁸ In 1977, in the People's Literature magazine, there was published Liu Xinwu's story (Liu Xinwu, Chinese: 刘心武; born June 1942) «Class counsellor» (also translated as «The Class Teacher»; Chinese: 班主任). In the center of the story are children whose psyches have been crippled by the years of the «cultural revolution» (children's cruelty in its most hypertrophied version), and a teacher who is trying to help them. At first, the composition ran into a wall of silence: no one knew how to evaluate such an open criticism of the bygone regime. Later, a heated discussion broke out: critics believed that the composition of Liu Xinwu was immoral and licentious, and the author should be sent to the village to improve. And, perhaps, it would have happened if the writer had not found influential defenders, with the help of whom he eventually received national recognition – the post of editor-in-chief of «Folk Literature» and the National Prize for the best story of the year.

¹⁹ The most prominent representatives of the literature of «wounds and scars» are the «Chinese Shalomov» Zhang Xianliang (convicted in 1958, rehabilitated only in 1979) and the «Chinese Solzhenitsyn» Wang Meng (imprisoned in 1957, rehabilitated in 1978). The fate of the latter was especially successful – from 1986 to 1989 he served as Minister of Culture of the PRC.

compositions have some «looseness» of plot composition and incoherence of musical parts, the emotional expression is «also not always convincing»: «Obviously, the creators of operas were more interested in the scale of the stage action than in the desire to embody the depth of the emotional world,» the author writes (Zhu Linji, 2021, p. 98). Nevertheless, the brightness of the musical characteristics of the characters in Shi Guangnan's opera «Regret for the Past» became the basis for the expressive dramaturgy and well-built composition of the opera.

Thus, the opera «Regret for the Past» concentrates the characteristic features of the Chinese

musical theater of the late XX century and the composer's work in general. The composition synthesizes Western opera and urban song tradition at the level of language, stage decision, characters and actors. The opera demonstrates the tendency of turning to social issues, characteristic of the Chinese culture of the newest time, along with modern technologies and means of embodiment of the lyrical plot. Oriented to the Western audience, Shi Guangnan's «Regret for the Past» resonates widely in different countries, and at the same time, it represents an important experience of modern opera on a lyrical plot and is relevant for Chinese art.

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