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Text and voice: Aspects on hybrid voice techniques in the contemporary music theatre and composition of the original opera "The Fall of the House of Commons"

Abstract

The dissertation consists of an artistic and a research part. The first is the composition of an original opera titled "The Fall of the House of Commons", written by Alexandros Loutzis (Story, libretto) and Orpheas Aperghis (co-author); it is described as "a Sci-Fi opera based on material from an ever-closer reality" and contains two human and one virtual assistant (artificial intelligence) character. At first, I analyse the plot, symbolism, and motifs of the libretto and elaborate on how they shape some compositional principles that go across the piece. After examining the parallel evolution of terms 'voice' and 'Gesamtkunstwerk' in stage music after 1900, I connect them to my own work. I place voice to the centre of dramaturgy in my piece and form the research question of 'how can voice techniques and mediums underline the emotions and the human- digital status of the characters'. I examine the semantics of voice, vocal techniques in contemporary stage music, and the philosophical and scientific aspects on the dichotomy between human and machine in terms of vocal expression, connected to the terms of transhumanism, futurism, expressive AI, post-digitalism, and post-internet. Lastly, I analyse my dramaturgical decisions based on the text and the ways they are delivered by the voice, making a step-by-step documentation of the building of the virtual character as a result of experimenting in the studio with the singer(s), focusing on technical aspects (software, methodology).