

# CONTRIBUTIONS OF J. C. FRIEDRICH VON SCHILLER TO THE ART OF OPERA

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**Abstract—** Known as a German poet and writer in Turkey, Friedrich von Schiller brought numerous works in different areas such as dramas, ballads, philosophic essays and lyric poems into the World literature during his 46-year life.

These works of Schiller becoming reputed with great dramas like “Die Räuber”, “Kabale und Liebe”, “Don Carlos”, “Wilhelm Tell” and “Maria Stuart” were rewritten as opera texts and composed by opera composers and librettists, and these works contributing to the art of opera as repertory have taken part in the World opera repertory as qualified ones.

In this study, the related literature to Schiller’s life and Works will be scanned, and by examining the works rewritten as opera texts and their composers, the importance of these works will be tried to be analyzed in terms of the art of opera.

**Index Terms—** opera, poetry, libretto, literature

## I. INTRODUCTION

Friedrich von Schiller, known in Turkey as a German poet and author, provided numerous works to the world literature in various types such as dramas, ballads, philosophical writings, and lyric poems which he wrote in his life of 46 years.

The works of Schiller who gained reputation with his great works such as “The Bandits”, “The Intrigue and Love”, “Don Carlos”, and “Wilhelm Tell” were transformed into opera texts and were composed by some opera composers and librettists and those works which contributed to the art of opera in the meaning of repertory gained their places as qualitative works in the repertory of world opera.

In this study, the necessary literature review related to the life and works of Schiller will be executed, the works which were transformed into opera texts and composed will be analyzed and the significance of those works in the art of opera will be analyzed.

## II. LIFE OF J. C. FRIEDRICH VON SCHILLER

Cevizci [1] states that Schiller is an important thinker of Romantic Philosophy Movement emerged in the first half of the 19th century in Germany and his full name is Johann Christoph Friedrich. He was born in Marbach on the coast of Neckar on 10 November 1759. He was grown up with his father who was a soldier and his five sisters. When his family moved to Ludwigsburg in 1766, Schiller started the classical local school called Latainschule. He wrote his first theatrical essays called “Absalon” and “Die Christen”. Schiller who started studying law in Stuttgart changed his branch later on and studied medicine and completed his education in the military academy as a doctor in 1870.

He completed his drama “Die Rauber” (The Bandits) in 1781 and published his work in the same year. In 1782, the “Anthologie Auf Das Jahr” which includes his poems was published. In 1783, he completed his work “Kabale Und Liebe” (The Intrigue and Love), and it was staged in 1784. Korner, a close friend of him, published all works of Schiller

between the years of 1812 – 1816. His poems called “Der An Die Freude (When You Love)”, “Rasignation”, “Die Götter Griechenlandes (Greek Gods)”, “Die Künstler (The Artists)” were published in 1786; his philosophical poems such as “Das ideal Und Das Leben (The Ideal and Life)”, “Das Verschleierte Bild zu Sais (The Veiled Picture in Sais)”, “Der Spaziergang (The Stroll)”, “Die Teilung Der Erde (The Allocation of the World)” were published in the journal of Thalia in 1788 and 1789 [4].

His story called “Verbrecher Dus Infame Eine Wahre Geschichte” was published with a different name in 1786.

In the July 1787, Schiller was introduced to Herder and Wieland who were the pioneers of German classicism. Especially, Wieland had positive and innovative impacts on Schiller. The most significant aspect of this introduction is the relationships between Schiller and Goethe. Thanks to his relationships with Goethe, he realized his deficiencies and mistakes and benefited from Goethe in every field.

Schiller who started teaching history in Jena in 1789, evoked admiration in Jena with his essay called “Geschichte Des Abfalls Des Vereinigten Niederlande” which describes the collapse of Holland. During the same year, his novel “Der Geistessehler” was published.

He married to Charlot von Lengfelt whom he met in 1790 and started a happy family life. One year after he got married, he caught the disease of tuberculosis.

Schiller gained the honors citizenship of French Republic with his work “Die Rauber” in 1792. During the same year, he published three essays “The History of Thirty Years War”, “Neue Thalia” and “Über Die Tragische Kunst”.

His first child was born in 1793. Again in 1793, the “Über Anmut Untwürde” was published. In 1795, the first issue of “Die Horen” was published. His famous essay which he wrote about literature “Über Naive und Sentimentalische Dichtung” was completed in 1795. According to Cevizci, his work “Letters Upon The Aesthetic Education of Man” was published in 1795 as well.

Schiller published the literature journal “Musenalmanach” between the years of 1796 and 1800. In 1797, he and Goethe published the journal “Xenien” which they criticized the literature world. At the same time, the year 1797 was the year when Schiller gained fame with “Baladan”.

Schiller died of pneumonia which was caused by tuberculosis on May 9, 1805 [4].

## III. THE WORKS OF J. C. FRIEDRICH VON SCHILLER

- Dramatic works
- The Robbers (1781)
- Intrigue and Love (1783)
- Fiesco’s Oath to Genua (1784)
- Könners Vormittag (1787)

Don Carlos (1787/1788,  
Trilogy of Wallenstein (1799)  
Maria Stuart (1800)  
The Maid of Orleans (1801)  
The Bride of Messina (1803)  
Wilhelm Tell (1803/1804)  
The Submission of Art (1804)  
Demetrius (Unfinished, 1805)

- Proses  
Dishonoured Irreclaimable (1786)  
The Ghost Seer (Unfinished)  
The Aesthetic Education of Man (Letters)
- Lyrical works  
Elegy on the Death of a Youth, Johann Christian Weckherlin (1781)  
Ode to Joy (1786)  
Indulgence (1786)  
Greek Goddesses (published first 1788, second 1800)  
Hector's Farewell (1790)  
The Veiled Image at Sais (1795)  
The Division of the World (1795)  
The Diver (1797)  
The Cranes of Ibykus (1797)  
Ritter Toggenburg (1797)  
The Glove (1797)  
The Path to Eisenhammer (1797)  
The Ring of Polycrates (1798)  
The Kite (1798)  
The Bail (1798)  
The Song of the Bell (1799)  
Naenie/ Nânie (1800)  
The Commencement of New Century (1800)  
The Feast of Victory (1803)
- Philosophical Papers  
Philosophy of Physiology (1779)  
Connection between Animal and Spiritual Nature in Man (1780)  
The Stage as a Moral Institution (1784)  
The Moral Utility of Aesthetic Manners (1795)  
On The Sublime (1801)  
On The Grace and Dignity (1793)  
On Simple and Sentimental Poetry (1795)  
The Pleasure we derive from Tragic Objects (1792)  
Letters of Augustenburg (1793)  
Letters of Kallias (1793)  
On Dilettantism / Amateurism (1799, with Johann Wolfgang Goethe)
- Historical works  
The history of Separation of United Holland from Spain (1788)  
What is the history of the World and why is it lectured? (26th May 1789-1790)  
The history of Thirty-year War (1790)
- Translations and adapted works  
Euripides: Iphigenie in Auris  
Stages of Euripides sahneleri (Scenen aus den Phönizierinnen)  
William Shakespeare: Macbeth  
Turandot (after Carlo Gozzi, 1801)  
The Nephew in the Role of Uncle (Comedy/after Louis-Benoît Picard, 1803)  
Der Parasit öder Die Kunst, sein Glück zu machen (Comedy, after Picard, 1803)

Racine: Phedre (1805)  
Deniș Diderot: Jacques le fataliste et son maître (Some parts were translated as "An Odd Sample of Female Revenge", 1785

- Published journals  
Wirtembergisches Repertorium  
Thalia  
Die Horen (1795) [14]

#### IV. THE WORKS OF J. C. FRIEDRICH VON SCHILLER COMPOSED AS OPERAS

- I Masnadieri (Die Rauber)

Schiller completed his theatrical work the Bandits (Die Rauber) which is the most significant drama work in 1781. This work which wasn't designed as a play at the beginning was performed as 5 acts and each act was divided into 2 or 5 stages. According to Aytaç [5] the first performance of this work which employs the spirit of the Sturm und Drang "romanticism" period was executed in Manheim Theatre under the direction of Wolfgang Heribert von Dalbergs with the name of its publisher in January 13, 1872. The main theme which Schiller presented in this work was the imagination of the conflict between the laws and the freedom. Moreover, the opposite of the proverb "The objectives legitimate the instruments!" [14].

The opera of Giuseppe Verdi I Masnadieri which means "The Bandits" is based on the drama of Schiller. The work whose Italian libretto was written by Andrea Maffei was staged for the first time in "Her Majesty's Theatre" in London on July 22, 1847.

##### Distribution of roles

Massimiliano, Count Moor	bass
Carlo, the eldest son of Massimiliano	tenor
Fraircesco, the youngest son of Massimiliano	baritone
Amalia, the orphan niece of Massimiliano	soprano
Arminio, the maid of count	tenor
Rolla, the senior member of gangs	baritone
Moser, the monk	bass
The chorus of robbers	

- Luisa Miller (Kabale und Liebe)

"The Intrigue and Love" is the drama written by Schiller which consists of 5 acts and was staged for the first time on April 13, 1784. This drama is about the ending of the sincere love between Ferdinand von Walter coming from a noble family and Luisa Miller who was the daughter of a musician as a result of traitorous conspirations.

The work with the initial name "Luise Miller" gained fame afterwards with the name of "The Intrigue and Love" upon the suggestion of the theatre player August Wilhelm Iffland. This work is the biggest classical work of the German drama and was taught in the literature courses at schools. It was composed by Giuseppe Verdi with the name of "Luisa Miller" in 1848 and it was turned into an opera by Salvatore Cammarano from Naples. The work was staged for the first time in Naples on December 8, 1849 [14].

While turning the work into an opera, Verdi planned the work as a three-act play and gave a different name for each act. In the interpretation of Verdi, the first act was called as

“love”, the second act was “the Intrigue” and the third act was “the poison” [3]

Distribution of roles	
Miller, a retired soldier	baritone
Luisa, the daughter	soprano
Kont Walter	bass
Rodolfo, the son	tenor
Federica, the duchess of Ostheim,	
Walter's nephew	mezzosoprano
Wurm, Walter's butler	bass
Laura, a village girl	mezzo soprano
A villager	tenor
Federica's duenna, families, bowmen, villagers	

- Don Carlos

Don Carlos is a dramatic poem consisting of five acts. Friedrich Schiller wrote this play between the years of 1783 and 1787. The drama deals with the political-social conflicts without getting to the core, the war of Holland state against Spain in the 17th century and the sincere social conspirations executed against the expectations of King Philipp the II. [14].

According to Altar, the opera Don Carlos which Giuseppe Verdi composed in French was staged for the first time in Paris on March 11, 1867.

Distribution of roles	
Filip II, (Filippo) King of Spain	bass
Don Carlos (Don Carlo), Crown Prince of Spain	tenor
Rodrigue (Rodrigo), Marquise of Posa	baritone
The Head of Inquisition Court	bass
Elisabeth from Valois	soprano
The Princess of Eboli	mezzo soprano
A Monk	bass
Thibault (Tebaldo), young maid of Elisabeth	soprano
A Voice from Heavens	soprano
The Earl of Lerma	tenor
The Messenger of Royalty	tenor
The Countess of Aremberg	no speech

Members of Parliament from Flandra, officers of the Inquisition, The Palace of Spain, men and women from the palace, the public, young servants, guards, monks – Chorus

- Guillaume Tell (Wilhelm Tell)

Wilhelm Tell is the last drama completed by Schiller. It was completed in 1804. It was staged in Weimar Royal Theatre on March 17, 1804.

Charlotte von Lengefeld who will be the wife of the author later on sent the book “Geschichten Schweizerischer Eidgenossenschaft” to Johannes von Müller in 1879 and caused Schiller was introduced to the legend of “Tell”.

In 1824, Gioacchino Rossini accepted the Directory of Italian Theatre and moved to Paris and wanted to stage a French play there. In accordance with his this demand, the lyric drama of Schiller “Wilhelm Tell” was based and libretto was formed and presented to the composer. Rossini prepared the sketch of the work in six months through excluding some scenes of the work and changing the places of some scenes. The last opera of the composer was staged in Paris on August 3, 1829 with the name of “Guillaume Tell” [3].

Distribution of roles	
Guillaume Tell	baritone
Hedwige, the wife	mezzo soprano
Jemmy, the son	soprano
Mathilde,	
a princess from Habsburg dynasty	soprano
Arnold Melcthal	tenor
Melcthal, the father	bass
Austrian governor of Gesler,	
Uri and Schwiz cantons	bass
Walter Furst	bass
Ruodi, the fisherman	tenor
Leuthold, the shepherd	bass
Rodolphe,	
the commander of Gesler's guards	tenor
A hunter	baritone
Villagers, shepherds, knights, young servants, women and soldiers	

- Maria Stuarda (Maria Stuart)

The work which Friedrich Schiller narrated the life of Mary Stuart the Scottish Queen consists of 5 acts. The play takes place on the last three days prior to the execution of Maria Stuart in Fotheringhay. Although Schiller alienated from the reality while discussing the topic from time to time, he tackles the historical status a deep comprehension and examines the problems caused by doing politics under the mask of justice, bringing the men of justice to heel through the power policy and ideological conflicts. In the play, Maria Stuart regarded the sentence of death as the redemption for her sins although she found the decision injustice and turned an external disaster into an internal victory. It is in harmony with the perception of Schiller related to tragedy, namely, the idea that the tragedy hero could morally reborn through giving up himself [6].

Its first show was performed in Weimar, Germany in June 14 1800. The play was the reference of the opera “Maria Stuarda” by Donizetti in 1834 [7].

Distribution of roles	
Maria Stuarda, the queen of Scotland	soprano
Elisabetta, the queen of England	soprano
Anna Kennedy, a friend of Maria	mezzo soprano
Roberto	tenor
Lord Guglielmo Cecil	baritone
Giorgio Talbot	bass
A messenger	tenor

- Giovanna d'Arco (Joan of Arc) (Die Jungfrau von Orleans)

The seventh work of Verdi, Giovanna d'Arco, is an opera of lyric drama consisting 1 prologue and 3 acts. The libretto of the work was written by Temistokle Solera based on the work of Schiller, “Die Jungfrau von Orleans”. The play was staged in Teatro alla Scala in Milano fir the first time on Februrary 15, 1845 [8].

Distribution of roles	
Giovanna	soprano
Carlo VII, King of France	tenor
Giacomo,	
shepherd and father of Giovanna	baritone
Talbot, an English Commander	bass
Delil, a French officer	tenor

French and English soldiers, French courtiers, villagers, nobles, angels, demons – Chorus

- The Bride of Messina (Nevěsta Messinská) (Die Braut von Messina)

It is the tragedical opera with 3 acts under the name of The Bride of Messina by Zdenek Fibich in order to present in a competition organized by the National Theatre in Prague between the years of 1882 and 1883. The libretto of the play in Czech language was written by Otacar Hostinsky based on the work of Schiller with the name of “Die Braut von Messina”. This opera which was composed in Wagner style received the grand prize in 1883 and was staged for the first time in the National Theatre on March 28, 1884.

This work which was regarded positively by the music critics in its first performance is regarded as the masterpiece of Fibich nowadays. However, the gloomy story of the work, its melancholic outline and sharp style prevented it from gaining a wider popularity [9].

Distribution of roles

Donna Isabella	contralto
Don Manuel	baritone
Don César	tenor
Diego	bass
Béatrice	soprano
Cayetan	bass
Bohemund	tenor

- Das Mädchen aus Domrémy (The Girl from Domrémy) (Die Jungfrau von Orleans)

The work called Das Mädchen aus Domrémy which was composed by Giseller Klebe and its libretto was written by his wife Lore Klebe based on a work of Friedrich von Schiller called “Die Jungfrau von Orléans” is an opera with 2 acts. This opera was staged for the first time in Stuttgart State Opera on June 19, 1976 [10].

Distribution of roles

Johanna	soprano
Karl VII. von Frankreich	tenor
Agnes Sorel, the darling	soprano
Dunios, Bastard von Orleans	baritone
Du Chatel and La Hire, the officer	baritone, bass
Der Erzbischof	bass
Raoul, the knight	tenor
Talbot, Lionel and Fastolf, English commander	bass and tenor
Fünf Ratsherrn aus Orleans	tenor and bass
Pater Klaus	baritone
Ein Herold	baritone
Ein Page	soprano

- The Maid of Orleans (Orleanskaja deva) (Die Jungfrau von Orleans)

The Maid of Orleans was composed by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky between the years of 1778 and 1779 and it is an opera with 4 acts and 6 stages.

This work was composed on a Russian libretto which comprises numerous sources such as Schiller’s “The Maid of Orleans” translated by Vasily Zhukovsky, “Jeanne d’Arc (Joan of Arc)” translated by Jules Barbier, the libretto of Auguste Mermet for his own opera and Henri Wallon’s “The Biography of Joan of Arc”. The 2.nd act which a ballet was

Distribution of roles

King Charles VII	tenor
The Archbishop	bass
The Pope	tenor
Dunois, a French knight	baritone
Lionel, a Burgundian knight	baritone
Thibaut d’Arc, Joan's father	bass
Raymond, Joan's betrothed	tenor
Bertrand, a peasant	bass
A Soldier	bass
Joan of Arc	soprano or mezzo-soprano
Agnès Sorel	soprano
Angel,	

solo voice in the choir of angels soprano

Chorus, silent roles: Courtiers and ladies, French and English soldiers, knights, monks, Gypsies, pages, buffoons, dwarfs, minstrels, executioners, people

- Die Räuber (The Robbers)

After the theatrical work called Die Rauber which Friedrich von Schiller wrote in 1781, Glasher Klabe composed a dramatic opera of 4 acts with the same name through writing a libretto on this work of Schiller. This opera which was staged for the first time in the world by Ensemble Deutche Oper am Rhein in Dusseldorf on 03.06.1957 with the name of “Die Rauber” [12].

Distribution of roles

The old Count von Moor	bass
Karl and Franz, his sons	dramatic tenor, character baritone
Amalia von edelreich, old moor's niece	dramatic soprano
Hermann, a nobleman	lyric tenor
Schweizer, a libertine, later a robber	character bass
A father	alto
Daniel, an old servant	lyric tenor
The libertines, later robbers, voices (backstage)	

- Wallenstein (Valdstejn) (Wallenstein Trilogie)

Wallenstein is a musical tragedy with 6 acts composed by Joramir Weinberger. The libretto of the work was written by Milos Kares based on the work called “Wallenstein Triplet” which Schiller wrote in 1799. This work was staged for the first time in Wien Operntheater on 18.11.1937 [13].

Distribution of roles

Wallenstein, Duke of Friedland, General of the Emperor's forces	baritone
Thekla, Princess of Friedland, his daughter	soprano
Octavio Piccolomini, lieutenant general under Wallenstein	bass baritone
Max piccolomini, his son, colonel in a regiment of cuirassers	tenor
Count Terzky, Wallenstein's brother-in-law, commander of a regiment	bass
Countess Terzky	soprano
Illo, Fieldmarshal, confidant of Wallenstein	bass baritone
Buttler, leader of a dragoon regiment	bass

Count Questenberg,	
imperial envoy	tenor
Wrangel, a Swedish colonel	bass
Gordon,	
commanding officer of Eger	tenor
Seni, an astrologer	tenor
A Swedish Captain	tenor
Soldiers, watchmen, monks, maidens etc	

#### V. CONCLUSION

Johann Friedrich von Schiller who came up as an important philosopher of romantic philosophy movement in Germany in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century gained reputation especially with his opinions related to art and education and the works he produced.

As well as his poems and philosophical essays which he dealt with topics such as the almighty creator, the world, human, nature, culture, art, aesthetics and reality; he also wrote theatrical plays which forms a base for his reputation which he deserves. When the executed study is analyzed, it is remarkable that Schiller's works which reveals the tragic and sad aspects of the life, mentions about the sorrow the human beings encounter and generally, ends in an unhappy end or death were tackled by the composers. The composers such as Verdi, Donizetti and Rossini etc. composed this tragic themed work which they turned into an

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