

**Opera Multimodal Translation: Audio Describing Karol Szymanowski's *Król Roger* for the Liceu Theatre, Barcelona<sup>1</sup>**  
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**ABSTRACT**

This paper discusses the use of audio description for opera working from a previously developed and tailored model that has been used in multimedia translation since 2005. It analyses the various integrated functions of this form of visual performance translation for the visually impaired, and explains the stages involved and what each stage entails. This is followed by a case study carried out at the Liceu Theatre in Barcelona involving the performance of Karol Szymanowski's *Król Roger*. The stage direction and set design of this opera are two key aspects of the production which are integral to an understanding of the plot and how it is conveyed through the language of music and words. This performance illustrates how one can make the best use of techniques designed for audio description—here, particular emphasis is given to the understanding, the conceptualising and the emotions expressed in the opera. It also underlines how the most important scenic information during the performance can be conveyed in such a way that it becomes accessible, functional, useful and easily perceptible to the listener who cannot see the stage directly. The audience is thus able to better appreciate and understand the performance as a whole.

**KEYWORDS**

Audio description, accessibility.

Translating opera is a complex activity and a source for interesting analysis in four different translation modalities: the text which is sung, the libretto, surtitles and audio description. The first—which has been described as singable interlingual translation—poses a number of specific problems, as the translator is not only concerned with the text itself, but must also adapt the translation to the melody and rhythm of the music (Gorlée 1997 & 2005). In contrast, translating librettos and formulating surtitles are common translation tasks nowadays and have become indispensable for any major opera house of renown (Low 2002 and Desblache 2004). In the last decade, opera has also endeavoured to make itself more accessible in a range of ways. These include providing audio description, a recent translation practice which is becoming increasingly prevalent in the field of opera.

Audio description (AD) is one of numerous undertakings directed at providing people with a range of disabilities greater access to and enjoyment of the performing arts. In the case of opera, AD is aimed at the visually impaired and designed to facilitate a comprehensive appreciation of artistic performances which incorporates both sound and visual dimensions, i.e. in formats such as cinema, theatre and opera.

This article discusses the use of audio description in opera, and extends

previous studies and research in this field such as those conducted by Orero and Matamala (2007), Cabeza and Matamala (2008), Orero (2007), York (2007). The first section summarises the relevant aspects of stage direction of an opera to demonstrate the need for opera audio description. The second section focuses on the various functions involved in audio description. Which processes are involved? What are the corresponding stages and what are the implications of each stage? These are the main questions addressed here, before moving on to look at one particular case study in the following sections—the performance of Szymanowski's *Król Roger* at the Liceu Theatre in Barcelona—, in which optimal use is made of audio description.<sup>2</sup> The article focuses on two of the major constitutive elements of opera: music and mise-en-scène.

In Karol Szymanowski's music drama *Król Roger*, the stage direction and set design are essential to the understanding of the plot, and the language of music and words. Given that opera is a multi-semiotic audiovisual performance, it is impossible for those suffering from either visual or hearing impairment to fully enjoy and appreciate it in its unadulterated form. The special characteristics of *Król Roger* make the need for access to all the visual and oral information in the performance even more important, since it is a difficult opera to follow. Consequently, *Król Roger* not only illustrates the need for audio description for the visually impaired but is also a prime candidate for demonstrating the virtues of audio description for a general audience. While AD does not claim to be a substitute for the striking impact of the visual elements on the senses, it can at least attempt to remain faithful to the poetic spirit behind them.

### **1. Why is audio description necessary in opera?**

An opera performance entails stage direction of a theatre drama whose script is sung, in part or in its entirety, with orchestral accompaniment, which means that opera or music drama blends music and theatre into a single performance. So, we are dealing with a comprehensive performance, or in the words of Richard Wagner, an all-embracing art form that brings together other artistic representations found in the visual arts: performing arts, music and literature. Nevertheless, the music and text of an opera or music drama are the nucleus around which all the other art forms involved revolve.

To quote the words of Roland Barthes (Barthes 1964: 258) in reference to the theatre, an opera performance is "a veritable polyphony of information [...], a dense arrangement of signs", which encompasses melody and musical harmonies, the tone and timbre of the singers, words, facial expressions, gestures, movements on stage, makeup, hairstyling, costumes, props, stage set and lighting. This coexistence of different "signs" which comprise a music drama can take very distinct forms. When

combined, these signs may be used to clarify, reinforce, complement or even contradict each other to emphasise a particular aspect of the opera.

The specific nature of this branch of the performing arts, i.e. the extraordinary fusion of all the elements involved in assembling an opera, highlights the fundamental role of the entire visual dimension of the performance and how closely it is linked to the music. The absence of this visual dimension can only lead to a fragmented understanding of the work. Consequently, audio description is indispensable for people who are visually impaired: it offers them additional support to enable them to appreciate opera more fully, and to delve deeper and immerse themselves in the operatic world.

## **2. The audio description process**

If opera encompasses multiple layers of concomitant signs, then the primary role of the audio describer consists of providing the visually impaired spectator with this entire “polyphony of information” (Barthes 1964: 268) which is visually represented and inaccessible to them. However, the task of the audio describer, as we shall see, goes far beyond a merely explicative or descriptive role.

The first efforts carried out in this area of translation adopted three quite different approaches. The first is what York (2007) has dubbed “audio introduction.” The audio description is produced and recorded, and distributed by the opera house. This allows visually impaired members of the audience to listen to the information before the live performance. The second adhered strictly to the music score, a perfectly valid approach given that opera is above all regarded primarily as a music form. This second approach attempted to avoid excessive interference by the audio describer, which could distract the listener’s attention and result in them losing track of the musical continuity of the opera. The audio describer therefore only spoke during the exclusively instrumental passages. The third approach prioritised understanding the performance, and provided the listener with extensive information, and allowed for overlapping with the passages sung by the performers (Orero 2005).

Research carried out at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (Orero and Matamala 2007, Cabeza and Matamala 2008, Orero 2007) has led to a new audio and audio description model: it combines audio introduction (York 2007) with live audio description (Matamala 2005) and audio subtitling (Orero 2007). This new approach attempts, on the one hand, to provide the listener with all the necessary information to be able to follow the opera (plot, costumes, set design, movement of the actors on stage and even the surtitles), but given in a condensed form so as not to overload the listener with information. On the other hand, it proposes avoiding overlapping as much as possible in an attempt to preserve opera

as an essentially music form. This article proposes this new AD approach which is, in effect, a continuation and further study of audio description as a form of translation in opera performances.

Audio description involves various functions and stages. The three most prominent functions are: documenting, explicating and translating. First, the audio describer needs to provide a documented summary of information about the opera: notes on the history of the work and its author, and other information which could be pertinent, depending on the opera in question. The second function—explicating—aims to give a succinct plot summary of the music drama. Taken together, these two functions are not strictly speaking audio description, since both types of information can be compiled beforehand without the audio describer being directly involved during the performance, so they effectively represent a further contribution by the audio describer or an extension of their task. Nevertheless, as will be seen shortly, since the plot of an opera is directly related to most of the other stage direction elements involved, it is in fact a crucial aspect, a starting point from which to tackle the third and most depictive AD function: translating. The main objective is to give a spoken account of all the visual information contained in the performance, i.e. the set design, the costumes, the movements of the actors on stage as well as the surtitles. So, while this function involves “reading,” “describing” and a particular understanding of the source to be translated (as in all translations in which the translation itself plays an active role), it equally means “interpreting” which always leaves its mark on the translation.

These functions can be seen in each of the stages of audio description:

- Initial audio introduction. This includes all three functions: documenting, explicating and translating—describing and interpreting.
- Introduction to the act about to follow: explicating and translating function—describing and interpreting.
- Audio description during the opera performance: translating function—describing, reading and interpreting.

However, we should not forget that each opera has its own idiosyncrasies and the audio description needs to be flexible enough to adapt itself to each *mise-en-scène*: give priority to one function or another accordingly, emphasise one or another to various degrees, or give priority to the music on some occasions and to the content on others.

The following section deals with one particular audio description project for the music drama *Król Roger* performed at the Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona (November 2009). This is a complex opera not only in terms of its plot and literary style, but especially because of its musical attributes,

which meant giving priority above all to the descriptive and interpretive function of the translation in order to allow the listener access to all, or at least many of the elements so that they could better appreciate this opera. First, the opera is contextualised and summarised before an analysis of the audio description, adapted to the peculiarities and difficulties posed by this opera, is given.

### **3. *Król Roger*: music and text**

*Król Roger* is inspired by the classic Greek tragedy of Euripides's *The Bacchantes*. The original text is based in 14th century Sicily, ruled by King Roger. The plot presents a fight against the forces of pleasure and sensuality, embodied in the figure of a shepherd. Both the king and his court have to fight and question established moral norms.

#### **3.1. Symbolism and poetic form in the libretto**

Jaroslaw Iwaszkiewicz was commissioned to write the libretto by Szymanowski in 1918. Around the same time, Szymanowski had written a novel, *Efebos*, set against a hedonistic background with obvious autobiographical references, which to a large degree foreshadows the themes in this opera. This collaboration was fraught with difficulties, as the composer rejected a significant part of Iwaszkiewicz's text and finished the final part himself.

In terms of structure, the libretto follows a single plot line, while the dialogue abounds with symbolic references. Descriptions are always a far cry from the material world, with continual departures into the sublime, the imprecise, idealism and myth. Furthermore, the opera's striking images are laden with mysticism, with conspicuous references to the typical themes and rhetoric peculiar to *fin-de-siècle* literature: primordial elements such as water, fire, wind, night, flowers, sensual pleasure, and expectation. The text tends to transcend the real world through dream. Irrespective of the surtitles shown to the public, the text has a very distinctive style and its literary qualities cannot be overlooked without doing a serious disservice to the essential artistic qualities of the opera.

Symbolism in musical terms is a concept which has been given little consideration in theory and in music aesthetics. It tends to be discussed in general terms, or with reference to expressionism, impressionism or the Decadent Movement. However, Symbolism helps us to define the essence of the libretto, in as much as it refers to an aesthetic that was already going out of fashion by the time *Król Roger* was composed, but which the composer incorporates along with other literary and musical references. Szymanowski uses different musical and literary references, especially the harmonic treatment and post-Wagnerian music chromatism

developed by French Impressionism. From a literary perspective, the libretto portrays anti-Naturalist aesthetics and thematic issues which belong to French and Belgium Symbolism. The *oeuvre* builds a plot around abstract ideas suggested by images reminiscent of Jean Moréas's work, who defined this aesthetic movement—Symbolism—as the “enemy of teaching, of declamation, of false sensitivity, of objective description,” and pointed out that “its form itself is not the ultimate goal but rather expressing the Ideal”:

Ainsi, dans cet art, les tableaux de la nature, les actions des humains, tous les phénomènes concrets ne sauraient se manifester eux-mêmes; ce sont là des apparences sensibles destinées à représenter leurs affinités ésotériques avec des Idées primordiales.<sup>3</sup> (Moréas 1886:1-2).

An example serves to illustrate this point and enable us to better the symbolist nature of the libretto. In the second act of *Król Roger*, when the seductive presence of the Shepherd has taken over the imagination of the king and all his court, threatening the peacefulness of the kingdom, the dialogue is laden with ambiguous omens:

King Roger: “The pale stars burn uneasily in this green sea sky.” (Act II):

Edrisi: “The light puts the swans to sleep, the weary stars are reflected in the pools.” (Act II).

Queen Roxana, in contrast, is quick to dispel any omens of danger as she intercedes in favour of the stranger. However, her speech only serves to heighten the unsettling atmosphere:

Roxana: “Tonight the eagle will not hunt even the smallest bird; the serpents sleep around lily stalks; goodness flows down to us from the white flame of the planets. Ah!” (Act II)

### 3.2 The music in *Król Roger*

The music in *Król Roger* is exuberant, and complex rather than homogeneous, reflecting tendencies and influences, at times contradictory, in addition to a variety of styles. The harmonic features of the musical lines are brimming with dissonance which goes beyond the bounds of tonality, as can be heard in the most well-known precursors: Strauss' *Salomé* and *Elektra*, and equally in works by his contemporaries such as Schoenberg and Bartók. Even the voices are sometimes given a violent treatment, while at other moments imbued with lyricism. This has the effect of breaking up the melodic line—as in the case of Roxana's aria (in the “*Oriental*” Act),<sup>4</sup> an unforgettable melismatic piece which expresses sensual pleasure—, in which the voice is given a harsh treatment and

often is nothing more than just a simple cry. All of these works share a common musical structure and can be classified as expressionist, since they stretch the limits of tonality.

From a historical perspective, we can identify a group of works which were forerunners of this trend: *Pelléas and Mélisande* by Debussy (1902) inspired by Maeterlinck's play; *Salomé* by Richard Strauss (1905), inspired by the tragedy of the same name written by Oscar Wilde, as well as his *Elektra* (1909), based on the book by Hugh von Hofmannsthal; *Ariadne and Bluebeard* by Paul Dukas (1907); *King Arthur* by Ernest Chausson (1895-96); *Bluebeard's Castle* by Béla Bartók (1911) and *Die tote Stadt (The Dead City)* by Erich W. Korngold (1920), based on the novel by Albrecht Rodenbach, *Bruges-la-Morte*.

A major feature of *Król Roger* is that it alternates between what is termed Wagnerism—which primarily highlights the narrative force of the myth—and musical impressionism. Wagnerism consists of developing a theme—leitmotif—linked to a recurring poetic content which gives a global structure to the work, through repetitions and modulations, a technique frequently used in *Król Roger*.

It is commonly known that Wagner attempted to turn opera into a total artwork (*Gesamtkunstwerk*) in which different means of artistic expression are coordinated structurally and comprehensively, such as music, scenic language, visual arts and poetry. Wagner defended the theory that Greek tragedy had represented, retrospectively, the combination of these distinct elements, which later were to become independent disciplines. In fact, Wagner was highly critical of the prevailing opera of his time; he accused it of subordinating non-musical elements to the music, particularly the drama. Wagner gave great importance to those aspects of an opera performance which set the atmosphere—stage lighting, sound effects or the seating arrangement. He aimed to focus the audience's attention on what was happening on stage, and thus accomplish total immersion in the drama. The synthesis of this ideal came at the end of his career when he conceived the idea of establishing his own opera theatre in Bayreuth (*Bayreuth Festspielhaus*), created in 1876, and devoted exclusively to performing his music dramas.

Impressionist music creates a musical texture which tends to eliminate melodic lines, or at least render them in a very imprecise manner. Melody becomes fragmentary, evoking the pure and essential, which creates an ambience of sound rather than musical continuity. Traditional harmonies based on tonal sequences are absent, and are replaced by more unusual scales, such as pentatonic scales. Thus a mosaic of layered sounds and chords is created in a non-functional manner, producing a sonorous colouristic and chromatic impression, to the detriment of the melodic line. Although *Król Roger* is directly influenced by impressionist techniques, it

does not break entirely with tonality; Szymanowski also draws on other contemporary influences, such as the rhythmic drive found in Igor Stravinsky's music.

How *Król Roger* is conceived musically illustrates an explicit tension between very different musical styles, and these are used for dramatic reasons closely linked to the libretto and the stage direction. The stylistic changes which can be seen in each of the opera's three acts serve as one example, encompassing the musical conception and inspiration as well as the dramatic and scenographic elements. The first act (known as the "Byzantine" act), is dominated by major tones or more rounded tonalities; the second (the "Oriental" act) is imbued with an oriental air and sensuality, in which the score opens with chromatic lines tending towards atonality—clearly influenced by Debussy and Ravel; while for the most part in the third act (the "Greco-Roman" act), one hears predominantly minor tones with incursions into atonality. Dramatic movement on stage and the set design closely reflect these changes in musical style. Music and visual experience in performance go hand in hand. The ultimate effect of the audio description is the creation of emotions, since it provides information about the visual performance and *mise-en-scène* which is perceived along with the signing and music: a holistic experience is thus achieved.

#### **4. Audio description in *Król Roger***

The opera *Król Roger* is one of the cases where audio description is indispensable for the visually impaired – and also for the general public who attend the opera without having read any basic information about the plot and its *mise-en-scène*. Its musical composition, as explained in the previous section, makes this a difficult music drama to follow. To be able to understand this opera, prior information about set design, stage direction and surtitles is crucial.

The audio description provided for *Król Roger* comprised an initial audio introduction and short introductions to each act. Apart from comments on the work and composer, these included a description of the set design and the costumes, all of which related to an interpretation of the work. Then, during the opera itself the audio description focused on the stage direction—the movements of the actors on stage—and once again highlighted the set design with additional audio surtitles when the dramatic tension of the opera so required.

While all the audio description functions discussed in the second section of this article appear in the *Król Roger AD*, it should be stressed that the interpreting function was the basis for drawing up the script. This opera is permeated with symbolism in both musical and textual languages and its plot goes far beyond a simple explanation of the events. An interpretation

of these events is required in order to give meaning to what is happening on stage, because both the music as well as the symbolic language of the surtitles of the libretto provides the audience with some sensory impressions of how to relate to the opera. The audio describers, were working from a verbal language that essentially appeals to the senses, and translating it into a language that appeals to the intellect, while attempting to remain faithful to the poetic features which run through the work, while at all times maintaining its initial magic. Below is a short extract from the AD script. Here, the listener is given an interpretation, in a language which is easy to understand and yet full of images, in an effort to respect the poetic spirit running through the opera's music and text:

(1) His feelings of unease are well founded and in the distance we hear Roxana's song, a song which lets you sense the queen is now under the Shepherd's spell. These feelings take on a tangible form when the queen appears in a red costume, the colour of fire and of blood, the inner fire of man and of the Earth, and which lies beneath the lush green landscape.<sup>5</sup>

In the performance of *Król Roger* at the Gran Teatre del Liceu, the set design by Raimund Bauer provides the key to unlocking the profound meaning of this opera. The austere stage, stripped almost entirely of props, has to represent all the atmospheres and places in which the story unfolds. Since the stage set remains the same throughout the opera, it is the colours and lighting which provide the ambience. In fact all the emotions, and even part of the plot, are conveyed with only seven colours: black, white, blue, green, gold, yellow and green. Colours give the main clues to a meaningful interpretation of the opera. Consequently colour was one of the main considerations when composing the AD script:



**Fig. 1 The shepherd, dressed in drag, stands in red against the rest of the cast who are dressed in black burkas.**



**Fig. 2 The shepherd comes in and a strip of green colour begins to spread on the stage**



**Fig. 3 Bloody bodies after the final massacre**

(2) The king consents, and the Shepherd appears. He begins to praise the virtues of his god, a new god. At this moment the entire flight of stairs is illuminated in a green light. Green is the colour of vegetation, the beginning of life, the coming of this promising God. The Shepherd's words echo this suggestion. He says: "Wear a crown of ivy and carry a cluster of grapes."<sup>6</sup>



**Fig. 4 Green dominates the stage**

(3) These feelings take on a tangible form when the queen appears in a red costume, the colour of fire and of blood, the inner fire of man and of the Earth, and which lies beneath the lush green landscape. Roxana moves off stage and the

shepherd appears with a grotesque mien. His red costume is identical to hers, demonstrating his command over the queen. Red slowly begins to take over the stage until the entire stairway becomes one great red light. At the same time Roxana appears on stage along with the choir who slowly peel off their black burkas to reappear before the audience dressed in red.<sup>7</sup>



**Fig. 5 Król Roger in black and the shepherd and Roxana dressed in red drag**

(4) He appears as the god Dionysus with his entire body painted gold. His appearance on stage is befitting a god, striking and spectacular: Dionysus emerges from a burst of flame.<sup>8</sup>



**Fig. 6 Dionysus appears on the stage**

(5) The King has resisted Dionysus' charm, and with all that he has lived through, he will give praise to King Apollo, king of light, and accordingly to the rational man who can think for himself. This last song to the sun is performed on stage, with a beam of yellow light that grows brighter along with the music until it becomes a circle of intense yellow light like the sun. Roger then cries out: "I shall tear out my heart and offer it to the sun."<sup>9</sup>

The most relevant issue of the AD offered for this opera is the interpretative process—which clashes with some schools of AD (Snyder 2008; the audience—both the visually impaired and the general public—is guided by the AD commentary<sup>10</sup>. The description selected and interpreted some key visual issues which allowed enjoyment and understanding: to provide an accessible opera. The AD in this case, served to disambiguate, to explain the locked code and final meaning of a complex representation, in which hermetism was heightened by the music.

Finally, it should be added that the audio description could be heard through a personal headpiece throughout the opera. This optional service proved to be indispensable to the visually impaired audience<sup>11</sup>, and this subjective AD approach was conscientiously adopted as being guided by the demands of the musical features of *Król Roger*. This opera is characterised by its harmonic dissonances which go beyond the bounds of tonality, and is a clear example of an opera which is difficult to follow. Consequently, the help of the audio describer proved crucial in enabling the visually impaired members of the audience to follow and interpret the plot and thus envisage the stage. The following is a short example of how the AD allows the plot to be understood/allows the audience to imagine the *mise-en-scène*:

(6) The king washes himself with water in an act of self-purification.<sup>12</sup>

In contrast, there are many passages during the opera that are essentially instrumental, which allow the audio describer to intervene with hardly any text overlapping.

*Król Roger* is a clear example where audio description is indispensable for the visually impaired to be able to understand this opera. After each performance with AD, special care is taken to meet visually impaired members of the audience and to have an informal discussion. This feedback system has been adopted following the results from previous attempts at having a more rigorous feedback system through questionnaires (Matamala 2005, Matamala 2007, Matamala & Orero 2007).<sup>13</sup>

Conversations with the users after the performance put us in a position to assess its reception. Comments were positive, and indicated that visually impaired audience members favoured this AD intervention, as opposed to those who criticised it since they enjoyed a more comprehensive and meaningful performance as a result of this interpretive approach. In this particular case, the AD was mainly based on the set design and stage direction of the work, the key to drawing up a script which fused the plot,

music, language and all the staged visual elements, offering a comprehensive and condensed vision of the opera.

## 5. Conclusions

Throughout this article we have analysed the characteristics of audio description in opera. We have discussed its functions and stages, at all times following the model drawn up by the *TransMedia Catalonia* research group at the UAB. Accordingly, we have adopted a *modus operandi* which provides an audio introduction, a brief introduction to each act and an audio description during the opera, as well as reading the surtitles aloud—while taking special care to avoid offering AD over singing or important musical passages. This model attempts to provide the listener with an overall picture that covers the visual scenic elements comprised in the opera apparatus—space, set design, costumes, movement of the actors—, relating them to the plot and its interpretation. Szymanowski's opera eloquently illustrates the way in which one can make the best possible use of techniques designed for audio description, as illustrated by its musical, scenic and visual characteristics and values in the stage direction by David Pountney and the set design by Raimund Bauer. It also shows how the most important scenic features that appear during the opera can be made functional, useful and easily perceptible for those members of the audience who cannot see the stage directly.

Finally, it should be noted that working with *Król Roger* shows us that audio description has to be flexible enough to adapt to each opera and *mise-en-scène*, depending on the corresponding musical characteristics, stage direction and set design, plot and deeper meaning.

## Acknowledgment

We would like to thank David Bofill, official photographer of the Liceu Opera House, for the photographs.

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<sup>1</sup> This research has been partly financed by the Catalan Government funds 2009SGR700.

<sup>2</sup> The AD text was written by Anna Corral and Pilar Orero for the Barcelona Opera House Gran Teatre del Liceu in 2009.

<sup>3</sup> "In this art, the scenes from nature, human actions, and all real world phenomena cannot be represented as themselves; they are perceptible appearances created to show their esoteric affinities with primordial Ideals." [our translation]

<sup>4</sup> In this opera acts are named as: "*Byzantine*" Act, "*Oriental*" Act, "*Greco-Roman*" Act.

<sup>5</sup> La seva inquietud està plenament justificada i de lluny sentim el cant de Roksana, un cant que deixa intuir que la reina es troba ja sota l'encanteri del Pastor. Aquesta intuïció es fa palpable quan la reina apareix amb un vestit vermell, color de foc i de sang, color del foc central de l'home i de la terra, i subjacent a la verdor del paisatge."

<sup>6</sup> El rei accedeix i es presenta el Pastor que comença a lloar les virtuts del seu Déu, un nou Déu. És en aquest moment en que una llum verda il·lumina tota l'escalinata. El verd es el color del regne vegetal, del naixement de la vida, de l'arribada d'aquest nou Déu prometedor. Les paraules del pastor van en el mateix sentit, diu: "Va coronat d'heura i porta un gotim de raïm."

<sup>7</sup> Aquesta intuïció es fa palpable quan la reina apareix amb un vestit vermell, color de foc i de sang, color del foc central de l'home i de la terra, i subjacent a la verdor del paisatge. Roksana surt de l'escenari i arriba el pastor amb un aspecte esperpèntic. El seu vestit vermell és exactament igual al d'ella, manifestant així el domini que aquest té sobre la reina. Paulatinament, el vermell va apoderant-se de l'escenari fins que tota l'escalinata esdevé una gran llum vermella. Paral·lelament, apareixen sobre l'escena Roksana i el cor que a poc a poc es va desempallegant de les burkas negres per reaparèixer davant l'espectador revestits de vermell.

<sup>8</sup> Apareix com el Déu Dionisi amb tot el cos cobert de pintura daurada. La seva aparició en escena és digna d'un Déu, és impactant i espectacular: de l'explosió d'una flama de foc surt Dionisi.

<sup>9</sup> El Rei ha resistit a l'encanteri de Dionisi, i amb l'experiència viscuda, lloarà al rei Apolo, al rei de la llum i consegüentment a l'home racionalista que vol pensar per ell mateix. Aquest últim cant al sol es representarà sobre l'escena amb un punt de llum groga que va creixent al igual que la música fins a formar un cercle de llum groc intens com el sol i Roger exclama: "M'arrençaré el cor net i l'oferiré al sol."

<sup>10</sup> Though it may seem an unusual practice, at Liceu Opera House, those who accompany the visually impaired request an ear piece to listen to the AD. This is a fact which has

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been noticed evenly in all opera performances in the past five years.

<sup>11</sup> Visually impaired audience attending Liceu opera performances always requests the AD service.

<sup>12</sup> El rei es renta amb aigua per purificar-se.

<sup>13</sup> Matamala and Orero set up an audio description reception project where questionnaires were given to visually impaired audience at the end of three different operas to test user satisfaction while testing different AD styles—offering different degrees of AD from audio introduction -at one end of the scale—to audio subtitling. The first questionnaire showed a 10/10 level of satisfaction, which showed the lack of critical appraisal. The second questionnaire was reworded but user satisfaction continued to gain maximum score 10/10. A third questionnaire was drafted, again with contradictory questions, but audience insisted in giving top marks. For this reason it was decided to take the feedback approach commented in this article.