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**«THE SILENT» AND «THE INVISIBLE» IN THE ASPECT
OF THE VALUES OF HOLY MINIMALISM (BASED ON WORK
OF VICTORIA POLEVA AND PHILIP GLASS)**

**«БЕЗМОВНЕ» ТА «НЕЗРИМЕ» В АСПЕКТІ ЦІННОСТЕЙ
САКРАЛЬНОГО МІНІМАЛІЗМУ (НА МАТЕРІАЛІ ТВОРЧОСТІ
ВІКТОРІЇ ПОЛЬОВОЇ ТА ФІЛІПА ГЛАССА)**

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In the context of the musical culture on the verge of the XX and XXI centuries, the phenomenon of «new simplicity», which goes back to the aesthetics of minimalism, is being discussed with unceasing activity. Despite the impressive scale of compositions created within the framework of this

aesthetic (Arvo Pärt, John Tavener, Henryk Górecki, Alan Hovhaness, Sofia Gubaidulina, Giya Kancheli, Hans Otte, Pēteris Vasks and others), it is extremely difficult to create some style universals of this trend. The reason is seen in the complexity and practical irreducibility to a common denominator of the phenomenon of human mystical experience, which is the foundation of sacred minimalism. Spiritual landmarks and achievements of the individual cannot be compared or typified a priori. At the same time, there is nothing more attractive than experiences of this kind. For centuries, philosophers and artists have tried to comprehend and put in accessible forms the breakthroughs of spiritual ascetics into the invisible. But in this is precisely the uniqueness of the sacred dialogue, that communication takes place, as it were, «in one direction»: with the well-known forms of prayer, i.e. requests «from below», and «answers» can only be assumed.

In the work of Victoria Poleva and Philip Glass, two contemporary musicians belonging to different national cultures and traditions, there is a common grain – the desire to reveal the secret of spiritual transformation. The musical opuses of Victoria Poleva and Philip Glass impress with their radical difference rather than similarity. The main focus of the Ukrainian author's attention is focused on choral genres, the idea of spiritual dialogue is especially vividly found in the compositions O fervent prayer for soprano and women's choir a cappella (2007), Symeon's Word on the text by Symeon the New Theologian for soprano, mixed choir and symphony orchestra (2002). A steady feeling of an indestructible spiritual core pervades all the author's compositions – whether they are instrumental «pictures» (Null for symphony orchestra (2006), Nenia for violin solo and orchestra (2004), ONO for orchestra (2004), Transforma, diptych for ensemble of soloists and orchestra (1993), Langsam for orchestra (1992, rev. 2009) or luminiferous choral compositions based on canonical texts (Mother of Light (2003), Offering to Alipy of the Caves (2010), Christ is Risen (2009), The Symbol of Faith (2008), Beatitudes (2003)), An offering to Pärt (2003), An Angel proclaimed (2001), David's Psalm 50 (2000), Light chants (2000). Philip Glass is best known for his vocal stage compositions and film scores². He is the author of

² Glass has composed many film scores, starting with the orchestral score for *Koyaanisqatsi* (1982), and continuing with two biopics, *Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters* (1985, resulting in the String Quartet No. 3) and *Kundun* (1997) about the Dalai Lama, for which he received his first Academy Award nomination. In 1968 he composed and conducted the score for director Harrison Engle's minimalist comedy short, *Railroaded*, played by the Philip Glass Ensemble. This was one of his earliest film efforts. The year after scoring *Hamburger Hill* (1987), Glass began a long collaboration with the filmmaker Errol Morris with his music for Morris's celebrated documentaries, including *The Thin Blue Line* (1988) and *A Brief History of Time* (1991). He continued composing for the *Qatsi trilogy* with the scores for *Powaqqatsi*

more than twenty operas, among which *Einstein on the Beach* (1976), *Satyagraha* (1979), *Akhnaten* (1983) are widely popular. However, with all the divergence of genre and aesthetic vectors, the fundamental levels of meaning of these composers are identical. The desire to explain and compare the creative achievements of Victoria Poleva and Philip Glass in a single value space determines the relevance of the chosen research topic.

Each of these authors has their own bright and unique history of sacred searches, which not only were reflected in their music, but also became its fundamental principle. With regard to the compositions of Victoria Poleva and Philip Glass, it is legitimate to talk about the original unity of the spiritual and musical principles. Moreover, the key sense-forming factor is the assumption or premonition of the final result. In the tense pre-waiting for spiritual revelation at the culmination of the cantata *Symeon's Word* by V. Poleva or the opera *Akhnaten* by P. Glass, all expressive possibilities are accumulated for the sake of the final breakthrough into the «invisible» (P. Glass) and the «silent» (V. Poleva). In a number of compositions by Ukrainian and American composers, such a dramatic principle is traced, in which the driving impulse is not the text (verbal, visual, symbolic, biographical...), but the will to achieve the transcendent. Complex chains of «sacred events» are initiated by a premonition of the finale – a grandiose and poignant in terms of acuteness of living «sacred silence». If for P. Glass the meaning of the concept of spiritual transformation of a person is revealed through the system of Buddhist values³, then for V. Poleva the philosophy of

(1988) and *Naqoyqatsi* (2002). In 1995, he composed the theme for Reggio's short independent film *Evidence*. He made a cameo appearance—briefly visible performing at the piano—in Peter Weir's *The Truman Show* (1998), which uses music from *Powaqqatsi*, *Anima Mundi* and *Mishima*, as well as three original tracks by Glass. In the 1990s, he also composed scores for *Bent* (1997) and the supernatural horror film *Candyman* (1992) and its sequel, *Candyman: Farewell to the Flesh* (1995), plus a film adaptation of Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent* (1996).

³ In the book of memoirs, the composer emphasizes the importance of personal communication with various gurus (yogis, monks, spiritual teachers of India and Nepal), who helped him open «the door to the world of the invisible» [1, p. 211]. The pilgrimage to the countries of the East opened a new page in Glass's life. Having found «the entrance to the desired world» [1, p. 214], he visited India almost every year for 35 years, where he studied meditation, breathing techniques, mantra chanting, visualization techniques and understanding of sacred texts. Glass likened composing music to insight, often associating it with the visualization of an idea: having experienced an «apparition», the composer had «just to find a musical language» [1, p. 28], able to express what he heard inside himself.

Orthodox hesychast monks⁴ is in the first place. In the modern socio-cultural space, both Buddhism and Hesychasm⁵ acquire a new relevant meaning.

According to the researchers, the music of the post-minimalist direction, the aesthetics of which is certainly close to Victoria Poleva and Philip Glass, cannot be perceived with the artistic and psychological attitude, attached to the European composer school («what is then?»). «It is impossible to observe it, as we observe the musical development in a Beethoven symphony or Webern's miniature, – writes A. Korobova, – one must stay in it, plunge into it, like contemplating a candle flame or into the sounds of rain, the murmur of a stream...» [2, p. 47]. At the same time, this is music «out of form»: «It is above the world, above consciousness and at the same time inside it <...>. Minimalists are constantly developing, everything is permeated with movement. But we can say that minimalist music is cosmic: after all, when we look at the Earth from space, we see only general outlines and think about the fate of the planet, and not about the fate of insects that swarm down there. Minimalism is a view from above» [3]. However, the specificity of sacred compositions by V. Poleva and P. Glass lies precisely in the fact that the musical flow created by the composers is highly targeted. In the cantata *Symeon's Word* by Victoria Poleva and the opera *Akhnaten* by Philip Glass, there is such an intensity of dynamic growth that, with its

⁴ *Hesychasm* (from the Greek ησυχία – peace, silence, calmness, tranquility, peace, solitude, a solitary place) is understood in a broad sense as an ascetic doctrine of inner spiritual concentration with the help of certain meditation techniques, developed by the early Christian hermits of the IV–VII centuries (St. Macarius Egyptian, St. Hesychius of Jerusalem, St. John of the Ladder, Abba Dorotheos, St. Isaac the Syrian, St. Anthony the Great, Macarius the Great, John Chrysostom, Deacon Evagrius of Pontus, St. Nilus of Ancyra, John Cassian, Ephraim the Syrian, Symeon the New Theologian, Gregory Palamas and others).

⁵ Hesychasm was actually discovered at the end of the XIX century in the works of historians F. Uspenskiy, P. Syrku and K. Radchenko. In the religious-philosophical and theological works of S. Bulgakov, P. Minin, archim. John (Ekonomtsev), the ideological content of hesychasm was revealed. In the context of a comparative analysis of philosophical and mystical traditions, I. Meyendorff, A. Safronov, E. Torchynov addressed the phenomenon of hesychasm. All Christian denominations have sent the recognized researchers in this field in recent decades. Among the most authoritative names these should be singled out: Fr. Vasyl (Kryvoshein), Fr. Kyprian (Kern), V. Lossky, Fr. John Meyendorff. At the center of modern theological and philosophical discourse are the studies of the philosopher and mathematician S. Khoruzhy. Following V. Solovyov, N. Berdyaev and P. Florenskiy, S. Khoruzhiy brings into the orbit of philosophy a new meaning embedded in the experience of the monastic tradition of hesychasm [5, 6].

superdimensionality, overcomes the boundaries of its own psychophysical form and acquires the quality of transcendence.

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