

**“CIRCLE WITHOUT A CIRCLE LINE”:
ON THE SPECIFICS OF THE SPATIAL ORGANIZATION
OF MUSIC OF MAXIM SHALYGIN**

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INTRODUCTION

The desire to go beyond the boundaries of tradition, norms, and institutions characteristic of previous eras at the beginning of the XXI century is connected with a fundamental change in the attitude to musical sound, to musical speech, to space and time in music, its textured organization, more precisely, to a creative change in the idea of musical fabric as such. The direct consequence of this change, in its turn, was an increase in composers' interest in timbre, academically non-traditional colorings, scales, polyharmony, various layers, glissandos, noise effects, extreme dynamic and unusual articulation gradations. The individual work of modern composers with sound, timbre and texture has repeatedly expanded the field of modern sonorics¹.

Gradually, a completely different, compared to the traditional, concept of musical sound crystallized – not as a means of expressing something separate from it and connected with the mental reactions of a person to the surrounding world, not as a representative of other entities, but as an independent, even self-sufficient, value, as “a worthy object of aesthetic contemplation”. Sonorous sound, according to the famous researcher of

¹ The etymology of the word “sonorica” goes back to the Latin *sono* – to sound, to ring. In the 1950s, the Polish musicologist Józef Chomiński introduces the concept of sonoristics (*sonorystyka*) as “a certain compositional technique in which purely sound qualities are the shaping factor of a musical composition” [Chomiński, J. Z. *Sonorystyka*. *Mala encyclopedia muzyki* / red. J. Chomiński. Warszawa: Muzyka, 1981. S. 965–966]. To designate the phenomenon of timbre and acoustic colorfulness in the music of the XX century, art historians and composers use various terms that are close in meaning. The most common were: “music of sonorities” (*Klangmusik*) by R. Ficker [Ficker, R. *Primare Klangformen*. *Jahrbuch der Musikbibliothek Peters für 1929*. Leipzig: C. F. Peters, 1930, p. 27]; “sound planes” (*Tonfläche*) by R. Traimer [Traimer, R. *Béla Bartòks Kompositionstechnik*. Regensburg: Bosse, 1967. S. 32]; “cluster technique” by H. Cowell [Cowell, H. *New musical resources*. N. Y.: Cambridge University Press, 1930. P. 117]; “static composition” (*Statik Komposition*) by K. Stockhausen [Stockhausen, K. *Von Webern zu Debussy*. *Bemerkungen zur statistischen Form*. *Texte zur Musik*: in 10 Bänden / hrsg. von D. Schnebel. Köln: Schauberg, 1963. Bd. 1. S. 75]; “sound-mass technique” by E. Varèse [Cope, D. *New musical composition*. N. Y. – L.: Collier Macmillan, 1977. P. 22].

modern music I. Godina, creates its own world of beauty, aesthetically valuable: “It is a source of beauty that impresses the imagination with the unusualness and novelty of sound colors”².

Bright sonorous colors were added by the leading composers of the second half of the XX – early XXI centuries, among which György Ligeti, Krzysztof Penderecki, Sofia Gubaidulina, Valentyn Sylvestrov, Svyatoslav Lunyov, Joep Franssens, Erkki Olavi Salmenhaara, George Crumb and others are invariably leading. As K. Stockhausen said “Actually, we learned to listen in a new way. Compared to the past, we definitely need a sound microscope”³.

Maxim Shalygin – is Ukrainian-Dutch composer – goes a different way than many others. At the same time, his discoveries largely echo the ideas of Svyatoslav Lunyov, Victoria Polevá, Joep Franssens and other musicians. Possessing a visual gift and a bright aphoristic style of thinking, M. Shalygin does not encrypt anything in his music. On the contrary, he is frank and eloquent, but the symbolism of his musical speech requires special emotional effort. “Spiritual quests always involve some degree of confidence”, said Svyatoslav Lunyov about Shalygin, senior colleague and definite authority⁴. “Confidence in something that exists beyond the surface of this material world. Something beyond the horizon, beyond the borders

² Годіна І. В. Типологія сонорного інтонування в стильовій поезії сучасних українських композиторів : автореф. дис. ... канд. мистецтвознавства : 17.00.03. Одеса, 2017. С. 8.

³ Соколов А. С. Музыкальная композиция XX века: диалектика творчества. Москва : Музыка, 1992. С. 58.

⁴ Svyatoslav Lunyov (born April 19, 1964 in Kyiv), is a Ukrainian composer. He began his music education at the age of seventeen, discovering the world’s music classic. In 1986 he gets his first degree in engineering. In 1986 he was recruited and served in the military in Hungary for two years. 1988: aged twenty-four, Lunyov admitted to Kyiv State P. Tchaikovsky Conservatory and started his education in composition. Then he continued there for his Post-graduate studies from 1998–2001. Since 2000, Lunyov is a lecturer in the faculty of composition at the Music Information Technologies Department of Kiev Conservatory.

For his entire career, Lunyov encompassed all genres of serious music, including chamber, choral, vocal, piano, electroacoustic and film music.

One of the most representative compositions is *Panta Rhei* – an utopia for big symphony orchestra. This piece – is a hymn to elements of live and non-living nature. In addition to that, it is a look at the idea of emergence and evolution of life through the idea of detuning an unison. *Panta Rhei* consists of three parts and lasts 53 minutes.

In the last years Lunyov explores writing electroacoustic, symphonic and ensemble works. Also he works on stage genres and music for films. As a composer and sound artist, he is interested in a new sounding and such ways of music lasting and composition forms, where movement and static are combined in a new way. His works are performed not only in concert halls, but in art galleries, open-air happenings and other informal stages.

of the visible. Transcendence and reunification with oneself are two phases of being. The true artists of all times have been pilgrims on this road. Maxim Shalygin is one of them, not following the footsteps of his predecessors but heading for the same destination”⁵.

Many modern composers are interested in the idea of searching for transcendental reality. But where are its roots? What is its nature? What are the ways to display in real time? How is movement formed in sacred music? Is it a spiral? Full-stop? Silence? Or an avalanche? Many metaphorical comparisons can be picked up, but one still cannot catch the moment of transition into the sphere of spiritual space. Today’s time has such a level of tension that the ringing of the sacred is caught as if involuntarily, consciousness is aimed at finding a spiritual dialogue, because without this it is impossible to keep humanity.

1. The problem’s prerequisites emergence and the problem’s formulation

The relevance of the chosen research topic is due to the need to expand the understanding of the role and possibilities of sonorous technique in displaying images of a transcendental nature.

The aim of the study is to determine the semantic essence of the phenomenon of sacred space and time in Maxim Shalygin’s choral cycle “Marian Antiphons”.

To achieve the goal, the following tasks were set:

1) to characterize the current approach to the concept of sacred space and time in the composer’s practice of the beginning of the XXI century on the material of the choral cycle “Marian Antiphons” by Maxim Shalygin;

2) to reveal the conceptual and technological foundations of sonorous technique in the aspect of displaying the transcendental sphere of images.

3) to identify and argue the author’s approach of Maxim Shalygin to the reproduction of canonical texts in choral music, analyze the content load of the visual component of the musical text of the cycle “Marian Antiphons”.

The methodological basis of the study was made up of theoretical works devoted to the development of the phenomenon of musical style, author’s style in music, certain aspects of musical intonation, in particular, the problem of the relationship between such concepts as “sonorics” and “sonorous intonation”. Reflections on the current state of musical matter, caused by complex internal processes of the second half of the XX century, stimulated the creation of various theoretical concepts of sonorics. Particular value and interest lie in the fact that they belong not only to musicologists-

⁵ Maxim Shalygin. URL: <http://maximshalygin.com/> (Last accessed: 16.12.2022).

researchers, but also to composers. One of them is the concept of P. Meshchaninov, called by the author “The Evolutionary Theory of Music”, which arose in the late 1960s – early 1970s⁶. The process of development of musical-acoustic systems, outlined by P. Meshchaninov, prompted Y. Kholopov to create his theory of sonorics in the early 1980s. O. Maklygin was engaged in further development of the problems of sonorics in his work “Sonorics in the music of Soviet composers”⁷. In 1994, K. Bolashvili’s Ph.D. thesis was defended on the topic: “Sonoristic means and problems of a large instrumental composition”⁸. Certain aspects of the sonorous technique were also considered by other scientists, in particular, T. Kyuregyan, V. Zaderatsky, I. Kuznetsov, N. Kovalinos, B. Medushevsky, E. Nazaykinsky. Among the foreign works, the studies of Polish musicologists – V. Malinowski (“Problems of sonoristics in Karol Szymanowski’s “Myths””)⁹, A. Prosnak (“Problems of sonoristics on the example of Chopin’s etudes”)¹⁰ can be singled out.

The work uses traditional musicological methodology, which involves the use of historical-style, genre-stylistic, textological and comparative-typological methods. Aesthetic-cultural and historical-comparative approaches are involved. Considering the specifics of the topic, the research methods are also aimed at the analysis of the “synthetic” forms of intonation we discovered in the musical material and include an analytical study of their components (timbral, rhythmic intonation, dynamic, textural).

2. Composer Maxim Shalygin: the image of a person on the road

Maxim Shalygin (born January 30, 1985 in Kamianske) is a Ukrainian-Dutch composer, conductor and performer. Being a typical representative of the modern school, Shalygin synthesizes various teaching methods and approaches. Maxim Shalygin started studying composition seriously with Irina Ivashenko at the age of 16. In 2004, together with Boris Tishchenko he trained for one year at the N. Rimsky-Korsakov St. Petersburg State

⁶ For a summary, see: Холопов Ю. Н. Музыкально-теоретические системы: учебник для историко-теоретических и композиторских факультетов музыкальных вузов. Москва : Композитор, 2006. 632 с.

⁷ Маклыгин А. Л. Сонорика в музыке советских композиторов. Москва, 1982. 70 стр.

⁸ Болашвили К. Сонористические средства и проблемы крупной инструментальной композиции : автореферат дис. ... кандидата искусствоведения : 17.00.02. Москва, 1994. 30 с.

⁹ Malinowski, W. Problem sonorystyki w «Mitach» Karola Szymanowskiego. *Muzyka*. 1957. № 4. P. 26–48.

¹⁰ Prosnak, A. Zagadnienia sonorystyki na przykladzie etud Chopina. *Muzyka*. 1958. № 1. P. 14–26.

Conservatory (RU). He received his first Master degree in 2010 at the National Music Academy in Kyiv (UA). One year later, in 2011, Shalygin received his second Master degree at the Royal Conservatory of The Hague (NL), where he studied with Cornelis de Bondt and Diderik Wagenaar. At the moment, he is living and working in the Netherlands¹¹.

Creative portrait of Shalygin is composed of many vector lines: Shalygin's compositions include chamber, vocal, symphonic, electro-acoustic music, as well as music for theater, ballet and film. His debut album *Lacrimosa Or 13 Magic Songs* was released in 2018. In 2019 he released two albums *Canti d'inizio e fine* for a solo cello performer who can feel, play, sing, scream, moan, swear, breathe, squeal, whisper, bleat, hiss, dream and *Todos Los Fuegos El Fuego* for saxophone octet (Amstel Quartet and Keuris Quartet). His well-known capacious and symbolic video sequences for his own compositions: "Angel" for violin and cello (Music is in memory of Giya Kancheli); "Suite – homage to Alfred Schnittke" for 3 celli; "More tender, than the tenderness itself" – From the Songs of Holy Fools; "Agnus Dei" for voice and piano; "While combing your hair" for mixed choir; "Intermezzo" for piano solo.

Composer makes the traditional array of playing techniques wider, not so much by resorting to 'extended techniques', rather is out at unfolding the sounds of the instruments in all their congenial sonority. Shalygin's compositions include a wide range of techniques with a psychological insight and spirituality. Neither academic formulas hence, nor avant-garde radicalisms, but rather a self-conceived scale of playing techniques in its own right that never severs the ties with sonority, and thus allows for maintaining a thoroughly tonal language.

¹¹ Shalygin has participated in many international competitions. For his "Letters to Anna" symphony for violin solo he obtained an honorable mention at the 2012 Gaudeamus competition. In the same year his music was selected for Lars von Trier's "Gesamt" project. Shalygin was a composer-in-residence in Izolyatsia [UA], Storioni Festival [NL] and Soundsofmusic Festival (NL). His works have been performed at many famous venues and music festivals worldwide, including Muziekgebouw aan 't IJ, Concertgebouw, TivoliVredenburg, Zuiderstrandtheater, Gaudeamus Muziekweek, Cello Biennale Amsterdam, November Music, Soundsofmusic, Wonderfeel, Dag in de Branding [NL], hcmf [UK], New Music Edmonton [CA], GAIDA Festival (LT), Gogolfest, National Philharmonic of Ukraine [UA], CIME/ICEM [US] and many more. Leading contemporary music ensembles who have performed his works include Amsterdam Cello Octet, Netherlands Radio Choir, Askø/ Schönberg, Amsterdam Sinfonietta, Nederlands Kamerkoor, Insomnio, Nieuw Ensemble, Slagwerk Den Haag, DoelenKwartet, Amstel Quartet, Kamerorkest van het Noorden.

3. “Marian Antiphons” for 12 voices by Maxim Shalygin as a reflection of current composer’s searches in the field of sonoristics

Any appeal of the composer to cult texts always presupposes the author’s personal understanding of the nature of the sacred – not speculative, but real, in the entire volume of deeply individual upheavals that exist in personal spiritual experience. Despite the absolute subjectivity of this experience, its authenticity is not in doubt. And this is the main feature of the vast majority of spiritual opuses – the content conveyed in them is a priori not subject to critical evaluation. We accept the author’s “version” as the only one possible in this particular image and energetic “plot” for the simple reason that the listener has no grounds for an evaluative view – he is out of *dialogue* with the sacred and his conclusions are subject to the logic of the *observer* of the process. In other words, no one is able to authenticate the sacred experience of another person. This is as true as the fact that one cannot go beyond one’s own human nature.

Brought up by the mystical “Parsifal” of Richard Wagner, the minimalist magnetic opuses of Philip Glass, the light, almost weightless chants of Victoria Polevá and the entire centuries-old history of displaying the presence of the Divine in music in general, we have formed a fairly stable – one might say, unshakable – image of the sacred sacrament. Initiation to hesychia¹² (“*Tabor Light*”)¹³ in the understanding of the majority is inseparable from the difficult spiritual practice of self-overcoming – acts of asceticism, i.e. everything that destroys the fetters of the “earthly flesh” – physical, astral, mental...

However, in the mystical dialogue with the sacred, there is another pole – the opposite – the same invisible and incomprehensible *goal* for a person, outside the aspiration to which there is no point in spiritual efforts. And if we assume that the search for the sacred consists of completely different steps and there is no path of spiritual efforts to it? What if the divine reality opens up simply because it *exists*, and just an open readiness is enough? What if it is enough to close the “curtain” and a world of completely different forms and laws will open up?

¹² From old-Greek, ἡσυχία, hesychia – “calmness, silence, solitude”. Hesychasm is a Christian mystical worldview, an ancient tradition of spiritual practice that forms the basis of Orthodox asceticism.

¹³ In Eastern Orthodox Christian theology, the Tabor Light (Ancient Greek: Φῶς τοῦ Θαβώρ “Taboric Light”; Georgian: თაბორის ნათობა) is the light revealed on Mount Tabor at the Transfiguration of Jesus, identified with the light seen by Paul at his conversion. As a theological doctrine, the uncreated nature of the Light of Tabor was formulated in the 14th century by Gregory Palamas, an Athonite monk, defending the mystical practices of Hesychasm against accusations of heresy by Barlaam of Calabria. When considered as a theological doctrine, this view is known as Palamism after Palamas.

Such strange and inconceivable questions are born when immersed in the total power of the sounds of “Marian Antiphons” by Maxim Shalygin. In his spiritual cycle, the author frankly demonstrates an alternative view of the phenomenon of dialogue with the transcendent.

The composition was written in 2016¹⁴ and belongs to that sphere of the composer’s creative interests, in which attention to the nature and matter of the sacred world is manifested most prominently.

The cycle “Marian Antiphons” for 12 voices consists of four extended choral compositions united by the traditional sequence of prayers: *I. Alma Redemptoris Mater. II. Ave Regina caelorum, III. Regina coeli, IV. Salve Regina*. But the Latin text is perhaps the only thing that connects this composition with the canonical tradition. Before the listener there unfolds a panorama of something so large, complex, filled and majestic that it is difficult for him to find a name. The world that the composer touches is hardly correlated with the ideas of the maternal cult developed over the centuries. It is incomprehensible due to, first of all, its volume – this reality is many times larger than a person is able to cover with his consciousness. Incomprehensible and integral at the same time, the divine world depicted in music sharply marks the boundaries of the earthly and heavenly. Before the “face” of the deafening integrity of the Divine presence in “Marian Antiphons” there is no place for personal expression of will – you either participate or totally deny everything.

This kind of authorial radicalism is characteristic of Maxim Shalygin as the composer. This is a musician with a deeply conscious vision of musical history and a developed artistic position.

In “Marian Antiphons” for 12 voices by M. Shalygin there is no preparation for the meeting with the sacred. Suddenly and point-blank, some unimaginably inhuman, inaccessible sound space falls on the listener. Neither time nor vector guides matter. You are attracted beyond your will... We seem to find ourselves at a dead end when in this loud stream of sounds we do not find anything habitually familiar to the "human" – earthly – ear. There is no metrical or ladotonal reference point – there is an avalanche of sounds layered on top of each other, which, with its power, is carried away in all directions at once.

It would be very tempting and simple to explain the colossal tension of this choral ongoing cluster in a generalized expression of human redemption. *I. Alma Redemptoris Mater*. But the prayerfulness that is understandable to the ear has a clear vector of appeal from the bottom up, and here there is a dome that opens up over everything and all at once.

¹⁴ First performer: Alter Ratio. Premiere: 4th June 2017, Co-Cathedral of St. Alexander, Kiev, UA. Commissioner: Alter Ratio with financial support of the St. Thomas Aquinas Institute of Religious Sciences in Kyiv (Ukraine).

*Alma Redemptoris Mater, quæ pervia cæli
Porta manes, et stella maris, succurre cadenti,
Surgere qui curat pópulo: tu quæ genuisti,
Nátúra mirante, tuum Saintum Genitórem
Virgo prius ac postérius, Gabriélis ab ore
Sumens pecrumer illud Ave*¹⁵.

M. Shalygin, as it were, recreates a picture of a universal redemptive deed through the image of the total unity of heaven and earth, without dividing the world into people and gods. His sacred is strength, power, everything that is beyond being.

In the second part – *Ave Regina caelorum* – contact with the sacred is more understandable and somehow familiar. In the subtle facets of choral sonority, the listener, as it were, opens up the other side of the power and grandeur of the world – its innermost peace and freedom.

*Ave, Regina caelorum,
Ave, Domina Angelorum:
Salve, radix, salve, porta
Ex qua mundo lux est orta:*

*Gaude, Virgo gloriosa,
Super omnes speciosa,
Vale, o valde decora,
Et pro nobis Christum exora*¹⁶.

¹⁵ English translation:

*Loving Mother of the Redeemer,
who remains the accessible Gateway of Heaven,
and Star of the Sea,
Give aid to a falling people
that strives to rise;
O Thou who begot thy holy Creator,
while all nature marvelled,
Virgin before and after
receiving that "Ave" from the mouth of Gabriel,
have mercy on sinners.*

¹⁶ English translation:

*Hail, O Queen of Heaven.
Hail, O Lady of Angels
Hail! thou root, hail! thou gate
From whom unto the world a light has arisen:
Rejoice, O glorious Virgin,
Lovely beyond all others,
Farewell, most beautiful maiden,
And pray for us to Christ.*

The feeling of a huge space arises due to the extreme “expansion” of high and low voices in the registers. The melodic figurations that periodically appear in the middle voices further emphasize the sound volume of the whole.

In the third part of the cycle – **Regina coeli** – the human “polyphony” suddenly acquires a new quality – a certain specifically functioning “spiral” is formed inside the complex plexus of voices. Over a long period of time, the vector orientation of the musical movement gradually emerges – something that did not exist before. If in the previous parts thinking with giant spheres “without edges” and a designated center created the effect of total cosmic unity, then with the advent of “characters” – pronounced choral solos – centripetal energy comes to the fore, twisting sound rays into a conditional focus figure. The gathering of all choral lines forms the climax of the movement.

*Regina caeli, laetare, alleluia;
Quia quem meruisti portare, alleluia,
Resurrexit, sicut dixit, alleluia:
Ora pro nobis Deum, alleluia*¹⁷.

The most luminous, almost imperceptible, is the music of the final part of the cycle – **Salve Regina**:

*Salve, Regina, Mater misericordiae,
vita, dulcedo, et spes nostra, salve.
Ad te clamamus exsules filii Hevae,
Ad te suspiramus, gementes et flentes
in hac lacrimarum valle.
Eia, ergo, advocata nostra, illos tuos
misericordes oculos ad nos converte;
Et Jesum, benedictum fructum ventris tui,
nobis post hoc exsilium ostende.
O clemens, O pia, O dulcis Virgo Maria Salve,
Regina, Mater misericordiae,
vita, dulcedo, et spes nostra, salve.
Ad te clamamus exsules filii Hevae,
Ad te suspiramus, gementes et flentes
in hac lacrimarum valle.
Eia, ergo, advocata nostra, illos tuos
misericordes oculos ad nos converte;*

¹⁷ English translation:

*Queen of heaven, rejoice, alleluia.
The Son you merited to bear, alleluia,
Has risen as he said, alleluia.
Pray to God for us, alleluia.*

*Et Jesum, benedictum fructum ventris tui,
nobis post hoc exsilium ostende.*

O clemens, O pia, O dulcis Virgo Maria ¹⁸.

Without using the visualization it is difficult to explain the logic of lowering sound layers from top to bottom. Like computer graphics techniques, choral “glare” and “stripes” descend from top to bottom and change their color and density. The final is the most static in the traditional sense, but the most dynamic part of the cycle in terms of energy concentration. The sound canvas constantly plays with different colors, without repeating in shapes and shades. Glissanding, the choral voices kind of cloud over the void between Heaven and Earth, and as they approach low registers, the sound density increases, and the dynamics grows.

It should be said that for M. Shalygin the visual image of music is no less important component than its sound nature. Both from the author’s statements of the composer, and from his personal artistic experiences, there is a clear tendency to “draw” the musical series. The inseparable unity of musical and visual principles has a special – conceptual – meaning for the musician.

In this regard, a vivid parallel to the music of Maxim Shalygin is the work of *Aurora Gasull* – Master in Music Creation and Sound Technology (Universitat Pompeu Fabra) and specialised with a Master in Computer Animation and Image Synthesis (Universitat de les Illes Balears)¹⁹. Born

¹⁸ English translation:

*Hail, holy Queen, Mother of Mercy,
Hail our life, our sweetness and our hope.
To thee do we cry,
Poor banished children of Eve;
To thee do we send up our sighs,
Mourning and weeping in this valley of tears.
Turn then, most gracious advocate,
Thine eyes of mercy toward us;
And after this our exile,
Show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
O clement, O loving,
O sweet Virgin Mary.*

¹⁹ In 2018, she took part in the experimental film programme run by the Fundación Juan March (Abstraction in Motion 1921–2012), accompanying Hans Hinterreiter’s exhibition at the Foundation’s premises in Palma and its abstract art museum in Cuenca (Museo de Arte Abstracto Español).

In 2019 offers a selection of works at The Screen Inside, a programme of screenings in the foyer of the CCCB devoted to artistes who use the cinema as an instrument to express the world of dreams or the imagination.

Letters from the forest was screened at the FLUX Author Video Festival at the Santa Mònica Arts Center in december 2019.

Screening at the Convent de Sant Agustí on february 2021.

Screening presented by the Flux Club at the Antic Teatre on february 2021.

in Barcelona, cellist and member of a number of chamber groups up to 1990, she first approaches visual arts through photography, drawing and painting. She gains experience in multimedia with interactive design and does a Master in Musical Creation and Sound Technology (Pompeu Fabra University) and finally specializes in 3D with a Master in Animation and Image Synthesis at the University of the Balearic Islands.

After a few years of work (animations, infographs and graphics for the TV, advertising, architectural representations, virtual sets and virtual characters in real time), she starts exploring the abstract image in movement using music as a theme for animations, as well as learning formal musical language, timber and rhythm of music to develop her visuals. At the moment, she is developing a series of animations that act as portraits in a traditional style. They convey the physical aspect of interior states of mood and of nature through movement and transformation, in perpetual motion and according to a common formal aesthetic, through traditional digital animation tools and code.

Among her most striking works there are the following: “Un Sourire” by Olivier Messiaen²⁰, “Prelude I” (BWV 846) by J.S. Bach²¹, “The Summer of the Heat beginning of Symphony No. 5” by Valentyn

²⁰ Aurora Gasull: “Since I was young I’ve been fascinated by Olivier Messiaen and his music, the composer and ornithologist who could hear colours and see music. I chose Un Sourire even though I realised the depth of his music was beyond my capabilities, nevertheless in the firm belief that I would enjoy immersing myself in his language and investigating guided by his influence.

The visual begins by focusing on the melody; the tritones at the beginning give way to the part with the triangle which then leads to the rhythmic passage, which is the transition from the absence of time or time eternal to reality, from geometry to colour... From here on, my aim was to work on the harmonic depth using masses of colour, following the melody’s intimate discourse with all its doubts and contradictions, except in the passage where the camera takes over” [URL: <https://www.aurora.cat/portfolio/unsourire/>] (Last accessed: 18.12.2022)].

²¹ Aurora Gasull: “I’ve tried working with this Prelude in many different ways for a long time now, attempting to balance the horizontal discourse with the vertical colour of each chord. Finally I ended up creating a chromatic piece, beat by beat. I used the initial white to start up and end the piece. I decided on blues-greens for the chords of C Major and reds-yellows for those of G Major, intuitively finding the way to move from one side to the other. I don’t believe in establishing any fixed correspondence between notes and colours but find it more real to listen to my own intuition and open myself up to imagination, in spite of the bewildering task of having to choose.

The camera has no perspective and frames a two-dimensional space, with the lowest notes at the bottom and the highest at the top, like in written music although the 5 voices are not always represented. I had a lot of doubts concerning the direction to be taken by the sound’s energy. Finally, the present remained on the right while the trace left by memory is depicted moving towards the left” [URL: <https://www.aurora.cat/portfolio/preludicromatic/>] (Last accessed: 18.12.2022)].

Sylvestrov²², “4th movement of Sonades de la calor del foc” by J.M. Mestres Quadreny²³.

There is also an interesting parallel with the Dutch composer *Joep Franssens* (born 13 January 1955). Being a representative of the post-serial generation of Dutch composers, Franssens uses tonal means and an accessible idiom without neo-Romantic features, even if the pathos-laden, highly emotional nature of his music appears to contradict this endeavour. In his compositions, which include chamber music, choral and orchestral compositions, Franssens aims at a synthesis of monumentality and euphony and is initially guided by J. S. Bach and the compositions of György Ligeti such as *Lontano* and *Atmosphères*. Later a trend towards radical austerity become apparent under the impact of American minimalist music, East European mysticism (e.g. Pärt) and the symphonic pop music of the 1970s such as Yes and Genesis, culminating in the static diatonicism of the ensemble work “*Dwaallicht*” (1989) and the serene counterpoint of “*Sanctus*” for orchestra (1996, rev. 1999). The instrumentation gradually shows a preference for warm, luxuriant colours.

Although Franssens’ multifaceted musical style does not make it easy to classify him, he is often considered as a representative of the so-called New Spirituality in the Netherlands. NTR (Dutch public Television) created the

²² Aurora Gasull: “Listening to the 46’ of Sylvestrov’s Symphony No. 5 means being transported to a universe of pure, intense emotions in a place with its own skies and meadows. Working on the whole symphony would have been a dream come true but, at the same time, an impossible dream due to its length and my inexperience. But it was also out of the question to cut out and use just a fragment, as the themes start to emerge after a long process. My only option was to use the beginning and then stop at a point where the orchestra is almost silent, just over a minute’s worth but highly representative.

I decided to base my work on a picture by another Ukrainian, Iosif Shkolnik, Abstract Composition, because of its direct invitation to movement, thereby concentrating solely on movement and transformation” [URL: <https://www.aurora.cat/> (Last accessed: 18.12.2022)].

²³ Aurora Gasull: “In 2009 I attended the homage to J.M. Mestres Quadreny at the Auditorium of La Pedrera. I wanted to work on musical randomness, which meant abandoning classical digital animation and writing code to generate visual processes. I chose the 4th movement of Sonades de la calor del foc because of its forcefulness.

The composer uses randomness for the frequencies throughout the three parts of the movement. In the first part, I represented each instrument by constructing a series of rectangles that alter their individual sizes at random; a mechanism capable of indefinitely generating different proportions without repetition. After a bridge, there’s an episode of extreme, dynamic contrasts. Here the animation technique is based on physical behaviours and the cubes move like sparks in a closed-off, turbulent fire. In the long final part there’s a transition towards silence and a return to the initial mass of sound; the silences come in at random until achieving total silence, afterwards symmetrically returning to the beginning” [URL: <https://www.aurora.cat/> (Last accessed: 18.12.2022)].

documentary “The Third Ear” on this international movement, where participated such composers as Arvo Pärt and Giya Kancheli. In his music Franssens has the aim to express the Universal; his sources of inspiration should be found among such writers and philosophers as Fernando Pessoa and Baruch de Spinoza. In a rich tonal language his music evokes strong emotions by the public, both unacquainted with contemporary classical music as well as experienced listeners²⁴.

CONCLUSIONS

The sound space of “Marian Antiphons” is organized in such a way that emptiness and non-manifestation are excluded from the music. All four choral compositions are solved according to the principle of covering the ultimate boundaries of sound. In the name of creating a holistic, inseparable, flowing sphere, throughout the cycle, the composer used numerous variants of the most diverse sonorous textures (in particular, cluster vertical, linear texture, moving horizontal layer, sonorous layer). The fourth chorus, as the final one, combined all textural features together.

The main factor contributing to the stratification of the musical fabric is the increased importance of timbre and other means closely related to the coloring of the sound: articulation, register arrangement, etc. This “discovery” of depth and space is carried out to the cycle of M. Shalygin at two levels: 1) at the level of the element, that is, sound, its internal

²⁴ Joep Franssens (1955) studied composition at the Royal Conservatory in The Hague and continued his studies at the Rotterdam Conservatory, where, in 1988, he concluded his study period with the Composition Prize.

Franssens’ music has been performed globally. He has worked with choirs such as the Swedish Radio Choir, BBC Singers, Latvian National State Choir, Finnish Radio Chamber Choir and Netherlands Chamber Choir. The latter took Franssens’ music on tour through Europe and the USA in 2000 and 2001, led by the Estonian conductor Tõnu Kaljuste. Multi-laureate pianist Ralph van Raat has his music on his repertoire since 2000. The first movement of the cycle *Harmony of the Spheres* has been selected for the ISCM days in Maribor (Slovenia) in September 2003, performed by the BBC Singers conducted by Stephen Betteridge. In the fall of 2012 this work sees its 100th performance by Sinfonia Rotterdam and Conrad van Alphen. The complete cycle is staged again in the fall of 2014 by the Croatian Radio-Television Choir (HRT-choir) with conductor Tonči Bilić.

Well-known conductors like Yakov Kreizberg, Tõnu Kaljuste, Lucas Foss, Gerd Albrecht, Vasily Petrenko, and Daniel Raiskin performed his works with Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra, Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, Lodz Philharmonic Orchestra, Latvian National State Orchestra, Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra and Tallinn Chamber Orchestra. He received commissions from, amongst others, Rotterdam Art Foundation, Eduard van Beinum Foundation, De Doelen, Dutch Radio (ZaterdagMatinee), SNS Reaal Fund and Netherlands Symphony Orchestra, which gave the world premiere of *Bridge of Dawn* (Second Movement) in Spring 2013.

organization; 2) at the level of the structure of the composition – multi-parameters, leading to the disunity of sound elements, each of which is located in a stereophonically “stratified” musical fabric.

Within the spheres of each of the parts of the “Marian Antiphons” cycle, the sound potential is constantly growing, reaching such limits that exceed the limits of the physical parameters of human attention. Circle without a circle line – this is how you can conditionally designate the essence of the compositional principle of this composition. Moreover, no matter what size or coverage the sounding sphere is – a room, a hall, a country, a planet or a point – the removal of graphic boundaries makes it identical to the scale of the Cosmos.

SUMMARY

The article is devoted to the problems of sonorous technique in the choral compositions of the contemporary Ukrainian-Dutch composer Maxim Shalygin. On the example of the four-part cycle “Marian Antiphons” for 12 voices, various aspects of the influence of sonoristics on the integral dramaturgy of the composition are considered. The increased importance of timbre and other means closely related to the coloring of the sound (articulation, register arrangement, etc.) is emphasized. Problematic vectors and specific features of the composer’s choral style are revealed in the projection on the spiritual problems of creativity. Various parameters of musical texture are studied in detail, together with the influence of non-specific musical means on the dramatic structure associated with sound extraction techniques. The interaction of these components is analyzed in terms of expressing the essential nature of the transcendent in music.

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