

I. Eltek

EVOLUTION OF INTERPRETATION OF IVAN FRANKO'S POETRY IN MYROSLAV SKORYK'S WORKS: FROM NEOFOLKLORISM TO EGALITARIANISM

One of the consecutive interpreters of I. Franko's poetry is Myroslav Skoryk. The dialogue between the two artists began with the cantata «Spring», symphonic choreographed poem «Stone Breakers», and the culminating step was the opera «Moses». Hermeneutic analysis of these opuses allowed to compile their following characteristics: harmonization of «high» and «popular», «modern» and «traditional», which is typical for positions of «egalitarian» art; significant complication of musical language. Musical frankiana of Skoryk opened a new trend in rendering philosophical meaning in Franko's poetry for future generations of composers.

Keywords: Ivan Franko, egalitarianism, music frankiana, Miroslav Skorik.

The creative figure of Ivan Franko is an integral part of Ukrainian and European culture. His philosophical, journalistic, artistic heritage and his role in the development of public view and political thought still remains relevant and important for Ukrainian national consciousness at the present stage of consolidation of Ukrainian national identity within the state itself and the integration of the state into the global community.

In the 60s of the 20th century an update of musical thinking system is seen in the works of Lviv composers associated with reframing of aesthetic goals and aspirations to fit Galician, and more – Ukrainian culture into the Western European context. More than a century afterwards Galician composers discover again their spiritual guide and mentor in the person of Ivan Franko. Upheaval of artistic awareness, diversity of composing techniques and dialog of different styles and eras contributed significantly the enrichment of the musical Frankiana of late 20th – early 21st centuries with qualitatively new reading and reinterpretation of Franko discourse in modern terms. In the works of contemporary Lviv composer, the Hero of Ukraine, winner of the National Taras Shevchenko Prize of Ukraine Myroslav Skoryk, Franko's code has found its 'second wind' with the composer's rendition significantly differing from most 'Soviet stamps' or simplified so-called 'patriotic' templates.

Important aspects of musical interpretation of Franko's poetry were most thoroughly covered in musicological writings by S.Liudkevych, M.Zagaikevych, S.Pavlyshyn, L.Kyianovska, A.Tereshchenko; some provisions are considered as well in the explorations by

O.Kozarenko, L.Yarosevych, L.Parkhomenko, Y.Yakubyak. However, the question of musical Frankiana of late 20th – early 21st centuries has found mostly fragmentary scientific implementation in the above mentioned works, among which L.Kyianovska covered the topic consistently. To study the philosophical spectrum of images and symbols of Franko's poetry, the author examined literary works of Y.Hrytsak [2], O.Zabuzhko [3], Y.Harasym [1], V.Schurat [11] and many others.

Thus, the basis for thorough coverage of the question put in the article is a detailed analysis of the literary source and tracking the key aspects of the composer's interpretation of semantic codes that formed the basis of philosophical concepts of Franko's poetry.

Art movement associated with 'trying on' new aesthetic benchmarks, finding a compromise between 'high' and 'popular' art, has directed the creative genesis of Lviv composer school of late 20th –early 21st centuries to search for a modern interpretation of Franko discourse that would meet the requirements of the new Ukrainian society.

The most profound and consistent interpreter of poetic world of Ivan Franko is undoubtedly Myroslav Skoryk. This dialogue between the two artists and the two epochs began with Skoryk's thesis – namely, the cantata 'Spring' which he wrote in 1960s at the finishing of the Lviv Conservatory (now – M.Lysenko Lviv National Music Academy) in the class of Adam Soltys. In this work, which caused a great resonance in the artistic life of the institution, the author is quite close to the well-established tradition of Galician musical Frankiana.

This work was the beginning of a long process in the development of the composer's individual style that formed under the prism of the 'new folk wave' and was fully revealed in the works of the second half of the 60s. However, even in this early attempt of the composer's pen M.Skoryk already shows some features of his individual style of writing, peculiarities of his artistic system and a new perception of poetic philosophy of the glorified poet.

The composer chose five poems from the cycle Spring Songs (collection 'From peaks and lowlands') which, in allegorical form, depict not just spring awakening of nature, but 'spring of the whole nation'. So, the first verse Winter Was Wondering stands for awakening of people and joyful expectation of the coming of spring. Next poetry Thundering in which 'millions are waiting for a happy change' enables the understanding that it is impossible without the arrival of

the first spring thunder and lightning storms from which the fertile rain should appear to sprinkle dry land. The third poem *Arise, Farmer, Arise* is a call for national intellectuals that it is time to sow the 'golden grain', and for the people not 'sleep away' the blessed harvest ('Hey, brothers! Those who have pure heart, strong arms and sincere mind – wake up!'). This story plot is continued in the fourth and the fifth verses that speak to the Ukrainian people – 'Show green, native field, Ukrainian tith' and 'Oh land, my all-fruitful mother' where the symbolic unity of the people and the land hide the genetic code of the nation – Ukrainian sons of soil. In the view of this reading of Franko's poetry M.Skoryk adheres relevant musical expressive way.

Consciously avoiding a detailed musical theoretical analysis of cantata *Spring*¹, we will focus on outlining some interesting composer's findings in musical rendition of I.Franko's poetry. One of them, above all, is the usage by M.Skoryk various sound depicting effects to enhance the symbolic Franko's verses. So, in the first part a breeze reflected in words 'a windstorm passed' is accompanied by stormy passages going along with the theme and gradually fading, 'flying' away; 'breathing of icy lips' is effectively imitated by chromatic ascending scale in the part of violins. Primary theme-call 'Thundering' from the second part through the method of simulation polyphony receives echo effect, and in the third part the intermission of the main motif last notes in music orchestra part creates a spatial sound effect that 'sweeps' in the air. In the fourth part at the words 'nature is waking up' the composer uses unique modal and tonal techniques that create an inimitable sound depicting effect. Even at the level of the composite structure of individual parts and dramaturgy in general M.Skoryk reaches close relation to the literary source: in Part 1 there are variant-theme and variations that are traditional for Ukrainian folk songs, underlining folklore principle; in Part 2 signs of rondeau and variant-couplet form which depicts a few circles of spring storms and struggle; in Part 3 there is scherzo which transmits a joyful mood of spring nature; in Part 4 there is double fugue of two themes with the first to describe how 'nature is waking up', and the second is similar in structure and tone to *haivka* (a kind of Ukrainian ritual spring song); Part 5 is composed on contrast, with allusions to earlier parts, which is a unifying factor of the cyclic cantata structure.

¹ The analysis of this work in its fullest version is rendered by L.Kyianovska in the monograph 'Myroslav Skoryk: Man and Artist' (Lviv, 2008).

On the contrary to popular assertion in the Soviet era that patriotism should be delineated only by traditional depictive means in music, M.Skoryk in his attempt to forward to 'mass' audience already in the first addressing to Franko's poetry not only overcame common stamps prevailing in society but managed to rehabilitate and bring to a wider audience true philosophical meaning of Franko's word.

Symphonic-choreographic poem *The Rock Breakers* was written by the composer in 1967 on libretto by V.Narodenko appealing to another page in the work of Ivan Franko, the 'revolutionary conflict' as claimed by the Soviet Franko researchers. However bright symbolic music content of M.Skoryk leads the listener already for the second time to new aesthetically inspired reflections that do not fit into the frames of Soviet understated interpretation of revolutionary omens in the poetry of Ivan Franko. As noted by Maria Zahaikevych, "The ballet *The Rock Breakers* was first staged in 1967 in Lviv as a part of ballet trilogy *Pre-Dawn Fire*." [4, 168]. Conceptual design and in the same time an organizing factor of this trilogy was thematic orientation of poetry of Taras Shevchenko, Ivan Franko and Lesia Ukrainka (which were the literary background) on the consciousness of the Ukrainian people and call for the awakening from the 'stony dreaming'. However the ballet *The Rock Breakers* in performance of troupe of Taras Shevchenko Kyiv Academic Theatre of Opera and Ballet (choreographer – A. Shekera) declared itself the next year to be a complete and self-sufficient work.

Unusual for a ballet was not only the form of the symphonic poem built on the principles of sonata allegro. The composer refuses to use dance genre elements and concise depicting tone painting characteristic of the ballet style of writing, while using emotional and expressive musical language inherent largely to dramatic symphony. This allowed M.Skoryk to dispel certain surface-revolutionary halo that had been hanging over for many years above the poem *The Rock Breakers*. Already in the slow entrance a gloomy fagott theme which is actually the main theme of the work describes that very 'vision strange' in which empty and somewhat 'muted' octaves in the part of basses and harps reach the effect of spatiality, echoing the scene which opens in front of Franko in this dream – namely 'a measureless but barren, open plain'. Intonational commonness of this main motif with all the other ones creates a resumptive image of rock breakers in which each next theme only deepens the central image of the ballet. The

second theme of the entrance in part of cellos and violas not only enlightens the image but also activates the initial movement with a sharp syncopated rhythm dropping down 'free-will bonds', through which the servants became 'the slaves of choice'.

The bulk of the work begins at once with the dynamic development of a rhythmically intensive theme depicting tireless work and struggle, serving the first theme of the main part. Its characteristic rhythmical formula 'impends' practically all nodal places in the poem. The second main theme of the part, no doubt, was inspired by Franko's following lines, "At this we all as one our sledges raised on high; A thousand thundering blows crashed down upon the rock. On every side we saw the shards of granite fly, The rock crack off in blocks. With ceaseless, desperate shock, We hammered on with strength that nothing could defy." Each of the first beats of this forceful and and focused vibrant theme is accompanied by severe 'strikes' of the chords. Built on timbre sequence of pipes and strings, in its culmination it provides appearance of an collateral part that enters without any prior preparation or chord. This surprisingly lyrical theme embodies the feminine in a symphonic poem and corresponds to those lines of the poet, "And every one knew too, that in the world we'd left Behind us for these chains and sweat and toil forlorn, Were mothers, sweethearts, weeping wives and little ones bereft." In the ballet this image is reinforced by appearing on the scene of female mourners who symbolically unite in mourning dance. The exposure ends with returning to the main theme of the entrance as a dramatic enhancement of the image of tone breakers who are preparing for a decisive battle.

Development of the poem appears at the intersection of extreme dramatization of musical expression and a grand internal discharge that seems to us most consonant with the relief painting that Franko depicts this way, "Like roaring cataract or battle's bloody din, Our sledges kept on thudding with exhaustless might. New footholds every moment we never failed to win. Though many a one of us fell crippled in the fight, We onward pressed, for naught could shake our discipline." Unexpected moment in the development and the so-called point of 'golden division' is the emergence of a new marching theme that is close due to its imaginative themes and hard driving movement to the 'invasion theme' from Shostakovich's symphony. In the work under examination it is a so-called 'curse theme', a curse which is given by 'friends and enemies, pitying or in scorn' to the stone breakers, as well as 'our purpose, and the cause'.

Reprise is a major culmination of the whole poem and the highest composer's embodiment of Franko's idea, "What though the world forgets, or even us disowns! We'll rend that prisoning rock, we'll pave a broad new strand! New life shall come to man, though it come o'er our bones"! On top of this sound waterfall there is the second main theme of the part, held by unison of the entire orchestra. Last dissonant chords to fff, as a symbol of the last stone breakers' strokes, cut off with another sudden piano. Against the background of worrison and mournful tremolo of strings there sounds a collateral part of flute, and then the hautboy as the tragic image of all mothers, widowed women, orphaned children, and Ukraine itself, remaining without her heroic stone breakers.

In this highly spiritual, ideological and philosophical rendition of the poem *The Rock Breakers* of Ivan Franko M.Skoryk was the first to approach the idea of 'the golden grain' of anthropocentric philosophy of the world, which is so carefully cherished by the Ukrainian poet on home soil in the context of the future national revival.

Opera *Moses* written on a libretto by B.Stelmakh (2000) has become that very 'promised land' to which M.Skoryk had been breaking the path during 40 years and brought to its full expanse the whole Ukrainian people, and besides that embodied into life two most important covenants – of his father and I.Franko, who had managed to awake national intellectuals for Ukrainian self-recognition in European culture. The premiere of this work took place with the blessing of the Pontifical on June 23, 2001 under the direction of the author at S.Krushelnytska Lviv Academic Theatre of Opera and Ballet. The monograph by Liubov Kiyanovska 'Myroslav Skoryk: Man And Artist'[6] submits a detailed analytical analysis of the opera. Therefore, in this paper we have focused primarily on issues of interpretative compliance and differences in philosophical reading of Ivan Franko and Myroslav Skoryk.

Genre base of the opera is a parable that according to its 'composition type is close to the opera-oratorio' [6, 507]. The overall structure of the opera consists of a prologue, two acts and an epilogue. Considering two artistic approaches to interpretation of the biblical story, we will define commonness and difference in its rendering and, what is important, in the context of our study topic, musical interpretation of the poem of I.Franko *Moses*. Yes, there are scenes in the opera that do not have a specific literary outline in the poetic work. It is a scene of love of Leah

and Yehoshua 'Dawn', and the scene of the golden calf in the first act that were inserted by the libretto author and the composer precisely because of opera thinking position.

Peculiarities of the Bible story rendering in literary interpretation by I.Franko and musical one by M.Skoryk can be traced already in the characteristics of main figures. The image of Moses in Franko's poem consists of three main areas: a biblical prophet, a spiritual 'awaker' of the nation, and an autobiographical image of Ivan Franko himself (in late romantic interpretation a Messiah-Poet). In M.Skoryk's musical interpretation the triunity of the image from the position of 'universal – national – individual' is preserved, but unlike Ivan Franko's rendering there is emphasis on the first two positions and a clear division between Poet and Prophet.

Allegory of Franko's image of the people referred to by Moses has a triple meaning presented by the poet to understand this image: Israelites; Ukrainian people; people as a separate national community of intellectuals in whose heart God has enclosed a 'creative force' that pursues them to a 'designated city'. Note that the poem includes another image of children to whom Moses speaks and they are 'so happy to listen'. This is the image of the next generation. M.Skoryk forms his objective view on the tendencies immanent in modern globalized society in the early 21st century: confrontation of 'heaven and earth' in the spiritual world; subjective vision of opera national fundamentals, barely expressed allusion to the national 'Music Dictionary'; understanding of image of people as a universal one at the present stage of human development – the attraction to self-identification and self-cognition (which is not present in the literary source).

Through the medium of 'dark forces' (real ones – Abiram and Dathan, and supernatural – Azazel and false mother Jochebed) I.Franko opens before the people a 'terrible future of Ukraine in the twentieth century including the Holodomor of 1932-33, Executed Renaissance of national intellectuals, Solovki prison camp and wars' [6, 525]. In the characteristic of the 'dark' forces the composer uses multidivisional system of the leading motif and extensive and varied expression techniques: the leading motif of disbelief and doubt of Abiram (broken dissonance melodic lines and ragged phrases) often accompanied by the pipe leading motif which characterizes the 'evil' forces; onomatopoeia of 'hissing serpents' which is illustrated through

orchestral colors; 'diatonicism-chromaticism' emphasizes the confrontation between Moses and Azazel at the scene of temptation. The appearance of God marks in Franko's poem and, accordingly, in Skoryk's opera not only dramatic interpretation, but as well a kind of testament of the poet himself and his vision of a tough yet bright future of Ukraine. In addition, M. Skoryk emphasizes the encrypted code of figure '3' in the poem of I. Franko which is religious and symbolic for Christians around the world. This is reflected in three persons of Moses, and in the triple determination of the people, as well as in cross-cutting development of the three-part structure both in the prologue and in the central scene of Moses in the first act, and also in three waves of temptation starting in the second act.

Individual style and artistic legacy of the composer can confidently correlate with the tenets of 'egalitarianism²' in modern art. Liubov Kyianovska defines 'egalitarianism in music' as a “special ideological basis of artistic expression that provides balance between elite (high academic) style and massive democratic statement that can be understood by a wider audience. Likewise, this art that appeals to tradition enters into dialogue with it and transforms different, often contradictory levels of consciousness and approaches in modern cultural dimensions.” [7, 381].

Opera Moses shows not only completely new stage in the musical rendering of Franko's poetry, but returns to the roots of Franko's philosophy and is a kind of 'challenge' for the society and a starting point in rethinking their spiritual, aesthetic and wider – national values in the vortex of globalized bustle of the 21st century. These categories are consistently implemented by the composer by means of musical expression at all levels of the musical organization of the operatic canvas.

Analytical review and hermeneutic analysis of Skoryk's opuses to the verses of Franko allows summarizing the following characteristics: coordination of 'high' and 'popular', 'modern' and 'traditional', which is a typical position of the 'egalitarian' art; significant complications of musical language; using items of 'intonation vocabulary of the epoch' of the Western music in late 19th – early 20th century, that is in Franko's time.

² Egalitarianism (fr. égalitarisme, from French égalité – equality) – a concept that offers forming a society with equal opportunities in management and access of material benefits for all its members. The opposite of elitism.

Creative genius of M. Skoryk enriched the musical Frankiana of late 20th – early 21st century with qualitatively modern interpretations which mark 'fin de siècle' of postmodernism in Ukrainian music and, using the new term, become the first examples in its 'egalitarian' art. Specificity of the composer's accents, original concepts of interpretation of poetic speech and its symbolic values indicate semantically capacious musical reading and deep hermeneutic, structural analysis of the literary source.

Musical Frankiana of M. Skoryk not only continued the trend of musical interpretation of Franko discourse that was formed in the Galician music school at the end of the 20th century, but also opened up new horizons for the rendition of philosophical values in the poetry of I. Franko for future generations of Ukrainian composers.ⁱ

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ⁱ In this article fragments of the following translations of I. Franko's poem The Rock Breakers were used:

1. Amateur translation by Alexander Yakushev (see <https://gist.github.com/alexander-yakushev/6617061>)
2. Translation by Percival Cundy (see http://www.franko.lviv.ua/ifranko/english/the_pioneers.htm)