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**S.S. PROKOFIEV'S SPIRITUAL VIEW OF LIFE
AND ITS PROJECTIONS IN CHOIR CREATIVE ACTIVITIES**

The paper is devoted to the analysis of genesis and specific character of S.S. Prokofiev's spiritual view of life, his relations with the Russian spiritual and religious and philosophical tradition, as well as to their projections in cantata oratorical compositions of the composer.

Keywords: S.S. Prokofiev's choir creative activities, cantata, oratorio, archetypes of the Soviet culture, Christian Science.

Back in his days N. Berdyaev, thinking about the essence of genius and talent, noted the following: "The nature of genius is always revolutionary. Talent functions in the middle of culture with its sciences and arts. Genius functions at the ends and at the beginnings and see no bounds. Talent is obedience. Genius is confidence. Talent is "worldly". Genius is "from the other world"" [cit. ex: 8, p. 50]. In particular, S.S. Prokofiev was such a genius, who in his authentic universal creative work could reach the unattainable altitude, having showed the world unusual strength of human spirit. This is evidenced by not only his opuses, being characterized according to A. Lyakhovich "semantic heterophony", but also by the whole creative-performance activity of this author. I. Vishnevetskii in his fundamental monography about S.S. Prokofiev noted, that this outstanding genius of the XXth century "was more than composer, more than harmonious person incarnating in sound a myth about victory of heroic effort over rigid chaos. He did not fit in whole in the musical and historical time allowed, being yet while alive transformed into the living proof of celebration of endless, extremely self-motivated talent over the troubles of mortal consciousness over the historical circumstances" [2, p. 680].

Inexhaustibility of S.S. Prokofiev, semantic depth and multidimensionality of his compositions, optimism repeatedly noted by the researchers, animalism, animal spirits as emotional semantic "dominant" of the overwhelming part of his inheritance, determined by T.V. Safonova as "sounding metaphysics of light" [17, p. 293] - all this in total defines a necessity to study both genre stylistic specific character of his creative work and spiritual worldview position of the great classicist of music of the XXth century.

The question of S.S. Prokofiev's worldview, of his spiritual religious position, genesis which ascends to the orthodox tradition, taken by him in the childhood and enriched later with philosophical hunting of his epoch, always was one of the most disputable. Among the reasons caused the situation like that an essential role belongs not only to ideological attitude

of the native musicology of the Soviet period, giving in this case preference to the analysis of “S.S. Prokofiev’s aesthetic views” [10], but and positions of the composer himself. “In questions related to the deepest layers of his personality, his own inner world, S. Prokofiev was a private person. Touching upon the religiosity, he writes: “In general, the secrecy of nature in questions, close to the heart, was demonstrated over here and all the struggle for religious I bore inside, not sharing and discussing with anybody” [17, p. 293].

In accordance with the publication of new materials and documents, associated with the composer’s comprehensive activity [14], as well as with his Diaries, only in recent decades of the present time there appeared works written by T. Safonova, O. Devyatova, Yu. Kreinina [9] and others [17, 18], who put in the centre of attention studies of philosophical and metaphysical component of his personality. A. Schnittke’s words were as a peculiar message in this process of “S.S. Prokofiev’s new opening”, he said in early 90s of the previous century: “For too long this the most serious music was judged by its insolent shell, not paying attention to the deeply felt essence. People saw the carnival shine of the external world, not taking into attention the seriousness, namely, strict seriousness, not allowing suffering to spill over to the world and flood everything around” [1, p. 212]. Nevertheless, there is a question little-studied on the influence of the composer’s world view and his religious convictions on creative work, in particular, on the choral, in other words, on that sphere of activity, which is genetically and typologically linked to the area of spiritual generalisations most of all. The aforesaid determines the urgency of the research in this paper, the subject of which is focused not only on the generalization of information on S.S. Prokofiev’s spiritual and religious position, but also in the projection of its ideas in the cantata oratorical music of the composer.

Thinking about spiritual component of the composer’s creative work, R. Ledenev, in his time, pointed the following paradoxical property of S.S. Prokofiev’s personality: “If many artists experienced inspiration, meeting powerful collisions of the reality, then apparently Prokofiev had his own autonomous “feed system”, followed the inner sources, not “the main topic of the day” [11, p. 2], although many his compositions objectively are formally linked to the realia of his epoch. According to A. Schnittke “this man saw the world in other way and heard it in other way. ... Deep abysses of the reality were never avoided in his mind by all-taking sun” [1, p. 211]. The sources of S.S. Prokofiev’s “sunniness”, his “feed systems” was the native spiritual (orthodox) tradition adopted by him in the childhood.

According to the records in the diaries as well as to the materials of “The Autobiography”, the future classicist of the XXth century’s music was brought in the family in the atmosphere of the traditional respect to the religion, interest to the Christianity. “Since the childhood I have been taught religion”, wrote later S.S. Prokofiev [15, p. 174]. Upper secondary education supposed fair knowledge of the Books of the Old and the New Covenant. And although according to the external factors of behaviour and statements S.S. Prokofiev did not demonstrate strongly-pronounced commitment to the dogmatic theology of Orthodoxy, nevertheless, searches for spiritual religious orienting points, linked finally to the native spiritual tradition, accompanied almost all stages of his creative biography.

In this context the demonstrative is the fact, that beginning with 1920s, living in France, S.S. Prokofiev actively visited meetings of the Christian Science community, preaching the American spiritual teaching, created by Mary Baker Eddy (1821-1910). She is known as the author of the book called “Science and Health with Key to Scripture” (1875). According to its idea, “treating diseases shall be carried out not by means of medicines, but like Jesus Christ by spiritual influence on human” [14, p. 81]. The activity of this community, therefore, was quite multidisciplinary, namely, from the therapeutic and psychological (at the level of autogenous training) to the Christian predication. Receiving certain medical and psychological aid, S.S. Prokofiev along therewith showed interest to the spiritual and Christian component of this teaching. According to Yu. Kreinina, the composer recognized, that “it is necessary to start with the changes in the world view, that is with the understanding and conscious application of ideas of the “Christian Science”. A decade earlier, Prokofiev enthusiastically adopted Schopenhauer’s ideas on a way to reach the psychological balance, but the German philosopher did not suggest practical methods for its achievement. The teachings of “the Christian Science” successfully combined therein both philosophical and religious concept, and practical methodologies to improve psychophysical state” [9], which Prokofiev did need at the period of time, suffering from severe overloads in the concert-performance and creative activity.

Therefore, S.S. Prokofiev’s appeal to this teaching was quite logical. Passion for his ideas became not only the source of the emotional and psychological stresses “release” associated with his very “busy” schedule, but also showed the further spiritual evolution of the composer. “He came to this teaching ... due to the early conceiving over philosophic questions, reading Kant’s and Schopenhauer’s books, developing idealistic ideas of the

composer's world, God, and human ... In "the Christian Science", according to the right thought of the son Svyatoslav, S. Prokofiev "was attracted by no means of purely religious, but precisely philosophical part". In this teaching he found the source of recommendations for self-analysis and self-control, much-needed for an artist and any human" [8, p. 49]. This generalization attests to the fact that "the Christian Science", basic provisions of its concept made together with the German philosophy and spiritual positions of the native culture of the turn of the XIX-XX-th centuries the "links" of S.S. Prokofiev's worldview system, being formed during the entire his life.

A peculiar result of the composer's thoughts were formulations of his thesis-imperatives (1935), having become a certain key to the understanding of spiritual essence not only of his personality, but also his creative activity. Let us give some of them: "Being demonstration of intellect, I am able to strong creative thinking. I am ostents of love, which supports my unflinching interest to my creative work. The individuality is given to me for the creation of Beauty". "I live in pleasure, despite of troubles, since the confrontation therewith shows the reality of life" [16, p. 1156-157]. "Complaint habit (depression) is a fraud, generated by deathful brain, consequently, it has no power over me, because I am the manifestation of life, in other words, of the moral courage" [19]. "Divine cause, generating all consequences, known to us, is a proof of divine power, divine energies, we completely reflect in our act and ability; We show our strength, energy, power as well as we show other qualities, given by the God such as love, honesty, wisdom [18, p. 19].

All the statements mentioned above show the obviousness of S.S. Prokofiev's understanding of human essence as a bearer of the Divine Spirit, and, correspondingly, spirituality of his creative activity, that is expressed in the following words of the composer: "I am the expression of the Spirit, who gives me the strength to resist everything that is materialistic" [14, p. 82].

It is curious, however, to note that the above "theses" of the composer reflect not only the assimilation of the positions of the "Christian Science", but also the influence of the Russian philosophy of the turn of the XIX-XXth centuries, quite familiar to S.S. Prokofiev. T.V. Safonova, studying the composer's world view in general and his spiritual components, notes, that "in Prokofiev's arguments there is no discrete abstraction: the concepts of "spirit" and "life" here are inseparably associated. In this life spirituality and spirit vivification, being approved and consciously declared by the composer, there is a deep connection with the

national tradition, with the peculiarities of the Russian mentality, most prominently expressed in the Russian religious and idealistic philosophy” [17, p. 294-295].

Prokofiev’s position in this context to some extent is found to be comparable to “the philosophy of the integral life of spirit”, presented, in particular, in the works of A. Losev, noted the following: “The aim of the original, creative philosophical thought was always to discover not discrete, intellectual truth, but the truth as a way to life ... the mission of our creative philosophical thought was to approve an integral religious philosophy against the rationalist dissection” [12, p. 211]. The optimistic view of life, the genesis of which composer’s world view ascends to the idea of “divine predestination of the world” and an opportunity to overcome evil therein, unites the composer’s world view with the Russian religious philosophical tradition. The parallel made by T.V. Safonova also excites interest in understanding of the phenomenon of the rational in the ideas of the Russian religious philosophy and S.S. Prokofiev’s position: “In contrast with the abstract Ration [Western philosophy], the Russian original philosophy by means of anthropomorphical Logos comprehends irrational and secret depths of space by a certain and living mind, inseminated by Beauty and Love. S. Prokofiev’s records afford us ground to consider his views precisely as the following understanding of the Mind: “Being the demonstration of Mind, I am able to strong creative thinking. I am ostents of Love, which supports my unflinching interest to my creative work. The individuality is given to me to create the Beauty”” [17, p. 295].

Generalization of such kind of the comparisons of S.S. Prokofiev’s spiritual and creative theses and the Russian philosophical and religious traditions allow T.V. Safonova in her thesis research to generalize the essence of world view and world perception of the composer in such a manner: “He proves himself as a true artist, simulates his own ideal world, namely, generally harmonious and positive, although not void of existential abysses. This does mean avoiding the world, complete negligence thereof, but “highlighting” therein eternal atemporal meanings and concentration precisely on this levels of existence ...” [18, p. 15].

Such kind of “highlighting” eternal themes and archetypes characterizes S.S. Prokofiev’s choral creative activity. It is represented predominantly by genres of cantata and oratorio. Studying their typology in the context of the so-called of the “great style” of the Soviet music of 1930s and 1940s I. Vorobiev characterizes them as “universal” genres, smoothly synthesized the qualities, popular in this epoch and carrying out “newly pious

mission". According to the generalizations of the researcher, "under the conditions of rehabilitation during the totalitarian epoch of "the theocentric concept of the universe" (where, if to rephrase M. Aranovskii, a Human historical was transformed into a Human mythological, religious) cantatas and oratorios became an analogue of masses and liturgies" [5, p. 77, 78], keeping "genre's memory" in new social and political and historical conditions.

Also worth highlighting is the fact that playing a role of "genre dominants" of the "great style", precisely cantata and oratorio to the maximum extent concentrated therein basic archetypes of the Soviet culture, for example, characters of the Chief, Father, Mother's Hero, more often united by the theme of hymnal glorification. Analysing a sacral specificity of spiritual component of the socialist realism culture, Hans Günter pointed out that "totalitarian countries include religious symbols into the propaganda repertoire, and to a certain degree represent a new religion. Their political "liturgy of crowds" soaks up the reconsidered church ceremonies; analogue of the church calendar with the peculiar thereto annual cycle of holidays is built into the annual cycle of the country's life, and religious prototypes are projected onto worldly persons" [7].

S.S. Prokofiev's choir creative work is associated precisely with this genre sphere and its theme. Many of his compositions by the historical conditions of creation are immediately associated with the Soviet realia of 1930s-1940s and corresponding "government order". The aforesaid, for example, refers to the "occasional" cantatas, composed by the XX-th anniversary and XXX-th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution, as well as to the cantata "Zdravnitsa", created on the occasion of I. Stalin's anniversary celebration. Inspired by the communistic "rhetoric" of the mentioned period, but distinguished by vivid and qualitative music material, these compositions, on the one hand, bring reproach upon the composer on the part of the further researches of his creative activity, causing allegations of conformism.

On the other hand, according to the observations of I. Vishnevetskii, "Prokofiev always emphasized, that he composed qualitative, that is non-one-dimensional music. And where is depth, there is an opportunity for free interpretations, independent meanings. space for myth" [cit. ex: 3, p. 119]. In this case, compositions like that, according to A. Lyakhovich, acquired the property of "semantic heterophony", imaginable as "splitting"

of semantic unity into various (sometimes dissonant) semantic lines without contrasting with each other” [13].

An illustrative example in this case is “*Zdravnitsa*” cantata within which, according to the observations of I. Vorobieva, “mythological totalitarian chronotope” and associated therewith archetypes of the Soviet culture neighbours with a “model of liturgical ceremony”, antiquity of folk wedding tradition, supplemented by strongly-pronounced typological properties of genres of glorifying cantata, encomiastic canticle, Te Deum and Gloria [see: 4]. And, according to A. Lyakhovych, “*Zdravnitsa*” “is not completely fit in the axiology of “the Soviet /anti-Soviet” artistic discourse”, since it “boggles the imagination neither with satire, nor with irony, nor unmasking, but with the high-minded spiritually driven lyrics, poetry and voluptuous beauty of the blossoming world” [13], the embodiment of which in definite episodes of cantata is “seraphic” melodies, symbolizing, according to T.V. Safonova, “characters of absolute beauty ..., bright, creative, sacral” [17, p. 296], composing, as it was mentioned before, spiritual semantic axiological priorities of S.S. Prokofiev’s creative activity in general.

Spiritual aspects of the composer’s view of life are obvious in his other opuses. Thus, in “Alexander Nevsky” cantata and in the cinematic soundtrack to “Ivan the Terrible”, later rearranged in the form of oratorio, S.S. Prokofiev appeals to famous historical personalities, whose ideas and mythological “aureole” turned to be in demand in the Soviet history in 1930s-1940s. Simultaneously, every of them left quite remarkable imprint on the religious history of the Ancient Rus-Russia at the level of protectors of Orthodox. A figure of Alexander Nevsky, canonized by the Orthodox Church in this context is especially impressive. Let us note that along with the historical, “film looking” nature of cantata and events it based on, the composer nevertheless built the intonationally dramaturgical plan of this composition, relying on one of basic theses of his activity: “My creative activity is out of time and space” [7, p. 42], thus, reaching out not only and not so much to historical realia as to the eternal spiritual values, found out in the fight between good and evil. It is characteristic that at the intonational level it is realized through the obvious opposition of vocal-melodic factor with its entire broadness of its folk spiritual genesis and principle amelodism (characteristics of enemy as an embodiment of evil). The first (melodism) became one of the determining factors of S.S. Prokofiev style, while the second, according to L. Gakkel, “was not a part of his life accord” [6, p. 5].

S.S. Prokofiev's cantata oratorical inheritance brings also one more essential eternal subject up, namely, the subject of childhood, became of the determining in the composer's creative activity in various genre spheres. The interest therein in many ways is defined by its meaningfulness, associated at the sacral level with the characters of pureness, sincerity, confidence, warm-hearted, which eventually impressed S.S. Prokofiev's personality and, simultaneously, always were highly estimated within the Orthodox cultural and ethical tradition. Interest in the characters of childhood in many ways was defined by the temper of the composer himself. "He is a child in his trust in life; he is a child, since he treats the world "as the closest, beloved companion and friend", noted L. Gakkel. Thinking about the role of "child's ethics" in Prokofiev's life and creative activity, the researcher stated, that for the composer himself "... redemption was to create in such a manner, as he did, truly it was redemptive to bear "infant attitude toward the world". Does every genius possess "infantile constitution" (as P. Florensky believed)? In any case, Prokofiev had it, providing that "infant constitution provides the genius with objective view of life, not centripetal... and that is why it is integral and real" [6, p.4-5].

In the sphere of choral music, the characters of childhood in real and timbral quality are presented in the oratorio "On Guard for Peace", in the suite "Winter Fire", as well as in the cantata "Ballad of a boy who has remained unknown". In colossal oratorical idea of the first composition, devoted to the theme of peace, one of the most important "heroes", representing it, is a choir of boys and its nameless soloists. "Semantic heterophonicity" of this composition is demonstrated in parallel co-existence, on the one hand, of the real ground, meaningfully representing a school "lesson devoted to peace" (No. 5 "We Do Not Need a War"), a dialogue between mother and child (No. 7 "Berceuse"), on the other hand, in atemporal spiritual symbolic subtext of timbre of a children's choir and children's solos, saturating the whole oratorio and causing associations with angelic singing. We can associate therewith No. 6 "Doves of Peace", bringing to mind not only P. Picasso's "Dove of Peace", but Also its Christian prototype. The simplicity and melodism of musical language of the oratorio is also illustrative, having embodied S.S. Prokofiev's intentions in the mature period of creative activity to the so-called "new simplicity" [see: 14, p. 90-91].

The other mentioned above S.S. Prokofiev's choral compositions are also associated with the theme of childhood, however, showing at the same time individuality of its interpretation. If the suite "Winter Fire" is focused on the reproduction of "signs" of "happy

childhood”, then “Ballade about a Boy, Remained Unknown” discovers tragic dramatic side of childhood, singed with the war. On one hand, “Ballade about a Boy...” (just like a verse of P. Antokolskii, being its textual basis) narrates about the real historical events of the middle of the XXth century, more specifically, about the theme of children’s military orphanhood, consciousness of sorrow of losing family members, that together became a source of fast growing up of a small human with “grown-up eyes”, generating a demand for retaliation for the childhood taken by the war and the death of the nearest and dearest.

On the other hand, genre and figurative semantic specificity of “Ballade about a Boy...” discovers genetic relation with spiritual archetypal “roots” of the European cultural and historical tradition just like the culture of S.S. Prokofiev’s epoch. Essential idea of this composition is actually focused on the idea of revenge for the childhood abused and ruined by the war, causing certain associations with the Old Testament tradition of revenge. Simultaneously, the fight between good and evil clearly specified in the cantata there is one more Biblical association: moral courage of the main nameless hero (not a physical factor) becomes a source of his superiority over the enemy, causing analogies with David and Goliath confrontation, as well as with the New Covenant Epistle of Paul the Apostle: “For my power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12 : 9). Interaction of the distinguished spiritual semantic “layers” of this cantata with their obvious biblical orientation is found to be smoothly associated with the typologies of Passion music, ballades, hymnal cantata (in the final part).

Summarizing the above, it should be noted that S.S. Prokofiev’s inner spiritual world, full of optimism, orientation to the inner spiritual transformation, is immediately associated with spiritual philosophical traditions of the Russian culture, naturally adopted by him in his early days and transformed later in his compositions, including in the compositions for choir. “What is important, is not whether he followed the beliefs of the Christianity, but that he in his “true being”, whose only testimony is his music, the composer followed the other world, “lived” (inner spiritually) in another world, more specifically, in the world of ideal values, and in this regard, in his focus on the highest, absolute being the composer is close to the spiritual intentions of the Russian religious-idealistic philosophy and in a broad sense, on the Christian traditions of the Russian culture in general” [18, p. 22].

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