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**«CANTANTA TALE OF THE BOY WHO REMAINED UNKNOWN»  
BY S. PROKOFIEV: GENRE AND MYTHOPOETIC ASPECTS**

*The article under consideration is concerned with the analysis of semantic and figurative genre and stylistic aspects of the cantata by S. Prokofiev «Cantanta Tale of the Boy who Remained Unknown», considered within the framework of the culture of socialist realism mythopoetics of the first half of XX century.*

**Key words:** *cantata, cantata tale/ballad, archetypes of the Soviet culture, cantanta-oratorio creative work of S. Prokofiev.*

" I am the manifestation of life, which gives me the strength to resist all unspiritual» [quote .: 14]. These words on the level of creative credo belong to the outstanding musician of the twentieth century, Sergei Prokofiev, whose identity is genetically associated with the Russian and the Ukrainian musical and cultural-historical traditions. One of the defining qualities of genius is his inexhaustibility. It is not accidentally that so wide collection of works dedicated to the works of Prokofiev, is constantly updated with new research focused on the comprehension of the multidimensional sense of his heritage, thereby forming, according to T. Safonova, "new" hermeneutic circles", bringing us to a deeper and more adequate understanding" of the creative work of the author [12, p. 3]. Such a spiritual and semantic comprehension and understanding requires at the present transient stage not only the personality and work of Prokofiev but also his epoch associated with the typology of social realism, as evidenced by numerous contemporary cultural, philosophical, philological and musicological research. In the framework of their national cultural and historical tradition of the mid-twentieth century can be considered not only from the standpoint of spiritual reconsideration of the epoch but also in the context of the "long time" (according to M. Bakhtin) of the national culture.

Vocal and choral creative work by S. Prokofiev (as well as other composer's works) is its essential and integral part. According to E. Voitsitskaya, "only now, at a

certain historical distance it is time to explore the phenomenon of Soviet Prokofiev" [3, p. 115]. In the wide collections of Prokofiev's creative work there are considered (in private issues) only a few choral works of the composer, which is often viewed as the "document of the epoch", partly like Aesop's "destalinization" and so on. However, not only holistically-generalized approach to study the cantata and oratorio heritage of S. Prokofiev, setting its genre and stylistic evolution has been put aside, but mythopoetical, archetypal, spiritual and semantic basis of the part of the composer's creative work mentioned. Data on poetics quality of choral creative activity by S. Prokofiev has not yet become the scope of research in the national musicology. At the same time, according to the observations of I. Vishnevetzkyi, "Prokofiev has always emphasized that he is writing quality music, i.e. multidimensional. And where there is the depth there is the possibility of free interpretation, beyond the control of the senses, a space for myth" [quote: 3, p. 119], and add, for the realization of "the theme of ethical beauty" serving, according to M. Aronofsky, as the dominant semantic marker of mature works of Prokofiev [2, p. 214]. All this creates conditions for the detection of the "inner "self" of the artist... as the subject that is implicitly carrying a archetypes of national consciousness, the historical and cultural memory" [12, p. 9]. Designated spiritual and semantic aspects of creative work of Prokofiev combined with demand for his choral works in the world of modern performance practice caused the timeliness of the topic of the presented article, the subject of which is focused on the identification of the genre and the specifics mythopoetic cantata "Cantata Tale of the Boy Remained Unknown" (quote 9) which to date has not become a subject of basic musicological generalizations.

Creation of the given work in 1942 – 1943 years was connected with the Great Patriotic War, which explains the appeal of the composer to the poetry of his contemporary P. Antokolsky, which became a kind of dramatic chronicler of the epoch. Commenting on the work on this piece, the composer notes the following: "Focus of the cantata is on excited tale of a boy whose mother and siter was killed by Nazis, and he was deprived from happy childhood. The soul-stricken boy is getting

courageous. During the retreat of the enemy he detonates a car with fascist command with a grenade. The name and fate of the boy remained unknown but the fame of his brave deed flies over rear area and front, and calls forward". "I wanted to – added Prokofiev – make cantata rapid and dramatic" [9, p. 470].

"Cantata Tale of the Boy ..." is a detailed one-part vocal-symphonic poem for soloists (dramatic soprano and dramatic tenor), chorus and orchestra. Assessing this cantata by S. Prokofiev repeatedly pointed out that he gave to "his boy" much of "heart and soul" [11, p. 2], which defined its status as one of the most striking works of the mature composer. However, performing the fate of "Cantata Tale of the Boy ..." was quite complicated. The product was duly appreciated only after the composer's death, and has been currently experiencing its performing "Renaissance." All this, in our opinion, due not only to the innovative nature of the musical language of the composition, but also notes above the "multidimensional" composer's style, always maintain a balance between the relentless search for new and bond with the spiritual, cultural and historical heritage of the past.

Thus, on the one hand, "Cantata Tale of the Boy ..." (as well as a poem by P. Antokolsky) faces the real historical events of the mid-twentieth century, and more specifically – to the subject of child war orphanage, awareness of the grief of loss of native people, all of which became the reason for fast growing of a small man with the "adult's eyes," giving rise to the need for retribution in some form or another of his taken away childhood, and the death of the closest people.

The above mentioned in fact has given rise to a particular topic in the Soviet culture of the 40s of the twentieth century – "war and the children", which received a variety of artistic imprint primarily in poetry (A. Barto, S. Mikhalkov, B. Pasternak, K. Simonov, A. Tvardovskiy, S. Marshak, N. Korzhavin etc.) It was continuing to preserve its relevance in the post-war decades, covering also movie-making (A. Tarkovskiy "Ivan's Childhood").

To this figurative and semantic field is adjoined "The Ballad of the boy ..." by S. Prokofiev. Deep realism of imprinted tragic-heroic fate of its protagonist, a visible illustrative inherent individual episodes of this work enable us to identify it with

some operatic opus by S. Prokofiev. The above author of "swiftness" and "dramatism" of cantata reflected in the features of its solo voice parts, far removed from the familiar to the genre of cantata expanded arias-monologues. They are characterized by "fragmentation, cinematic, "tape" of narrative" [9, p. 472] as indicative not only for the individual style of the composer, but also for musical and historical tradition of mid-twentieth century in general.

At the same time, genre and figurative semantic specific character of «Cantata Tale of the Boy...» reveals a genetic relationship with the archetypal spiritual "roots" of European cultural and historical tradition, as well as the culture of the epoch of S. Prokofiev. All said above is quite naturally, as Socialist Realism was formed at the height of neomythological consciousness and, according to the definition of A. Gangus is "not aesthetics and creative method. It is ultimately disguised religion, a form of subjective idealism, mystical religiosity "[quote: 10, p. 22], which it should be added, has originated a series of typical its archetypes – Father, Mother, Enemies and, above all, the Hero [see. more on this: 6]. With the latter, it is considered, to fully correlate the image of the protagonist of cantata by S. Prokofiev which is analyzed.

Significative idea of «Cantata Tale of the Boy...» is actually centered around the idea of retribution for profaned and war-torn childhood, causing certain associations with the Old Testament tradition of revenge. According to the latter, "the Israelites had a law of retribution; "An eye for an eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot ..." (Ex. 21: 24, 25). The law, therefore, sets the boundaries of retaliation, which could not exceed the damage caused... In the Old Testament there was a principle of blood revenge, when the right of retribution was granted to a man himself".[8] The New Testament and the subsequent history of Christianity will make some adjustments in the understanding of the meaning and spiritual essence of the concept of revenge and retribution, leaving the superiority in this matter to the God, and later – to the state. However, within the culture of the twentieth century, in particular, social realism, determined principle of the Old Testament suddenly finds its relevance, often determining the motivation of actions of its protagonists and the "spirit of the epoch", especially of the war period.

The said above demonstrates the poetry of the above-mentioned authors, in which the theme of revenge and retaliation, along with patriotism, take one of the main place in the works of wartime. It becomes a kind of semantic leitmotif spell-poem "Vengeance" by P. Antokolsky:

"Vengeance, vengeance! You're so poured out  
The terrible storm of military air,  
So justified, so lifted,  
That nobody will escape you.  
But thou be blessed! "[1, p. 41].

In the poem of A. Tvardovsky "Retaliation" reflections of the author about the high concept of honor have direct and unambiguous analogy with the original source of the Old Testament:

"Its [the honor] testament is short and severe,  
And no one will have dispute with us here:  
Yes death for death!  
Yes, blood for blood!  
Grief for grief! "[13].

In «Cantata Tale of the Boy...» by S.Prokofiev young nameless protagonist, led by this principle and its unchildish comprehension, avenging his lost childhood and death of his close people.

One of the core ideas of the work under consideration is also such a demonstrative for mythopoetic tradition confrontation between Good and Evil. It should be noted that in the initial situation the forces representing this eternal conflict are too unequal: against hordes of enemy paramilitary units associated according to P. Antokolsky with "mannequins" were standing defenseless mother and sister of the main protagonist of the cantata, that accepted sacrificial death an the boy himself became an orphan. Finally, it was he, his spiritual strength (but not a physical factor) became the source of its superiority over the enemy, turning the boy, imperceptible for people around, "in a gray cap" into the legendary personality, which again causes a certain analogy with the Old Testament, in particular, the confrontation between

David and Goliath, as well as the New Testament epistles of the Apostle Paul: "For my Strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12: 9); "The God chose the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to shame the strong; and plain things of the world and destroyed and trivial chose the God to shame the meaningful things..." (1 Cor. 1: 27-28).

Narrative-semantic specific character of «Cantata Tale of the Boy...», focusing also on the idea of spiritual transformation of its main character/protagonist, and it can be correlated with the process of initiation. According to the fundamental research of K. Clark dedicated to the analysis of Soviet literature of the Stalin's epoch, "structural axis" of the novel of that time became "tribal initiation" common to traditional cultures. At the same time the main character in his search for ways to achieve the lofty goals "accepts help from the older and more conscious friend, who has passed by himself the similar path before" [7]. Protagonist of Prokofiev's cantata, "forgot how to cry" and realized "the death of childhood", took a similar path in specific extreme conditions of war, inhumane deprivation. Therefore, the process of "growing up", the transition to another stage of life, greatly accelerated, and as a "godfather", opening the tragic realities of life, the death of relatives and war. In the end, the protagonist of the works of Prokofiev, as well as the characters of the Soviet Romance Studies of the first half of the twentieth century, consciously striving for their goals, "reached social and collective integration rather than individual identification" [7]. The above said in many ways defines and indicative of the cantata non-personalism of the main character, whose name (and age) remain unknown, and that is confirmed by the general name of the work, in which the personality of the character is actually retreating before his quality as a medium of a particular social and spiritual ideas. It should also noted that the narration in the cantata of S. Prokofiev constantly conducted by a third party.

The abovesaid in many ways defines the epic tone of the final part of the «Cantata Tale of the Boy...». The drama and realism of the initial narrative ultimately opposed the final part of the work, in which the protagonist's death as such is neutralized. Rhetorical questions "whether he was killed?", "Where is he now?"

remained without answer and eventually faded into the background, giving way to a spiritual understanding of the act of bravery of the young hero, taking on the aura of the legendary person, over whom the death had no power.

Determined spiritual and semantic aspects of the works of S. Prokofiev and are connected also by its genre and style and intonation characteristics. Typology and semantics of cantata, at the author's definition level focuses the listener on a range of images and ideas, connected, regardless of the cantata type (spiritual and secular), with high spiritual and moral order. At the same time, according to the observations of I. Vorobiov, "cantatas and oratorios in Stalin's epoch were representative of the dominant aesthetics (socialist realism), and the mythology of the state" [4]. As a result of their evolution, called the scope of the genre, from the mid-1930s began to perform the function of "the dominant genre" style of Soviet music or rather "grand style" [4, p. 3]. Cantata of S. Prokofiev, with all its external contact with the typology of the designated genre style, however, appeals to the deep historical and spiritual "roots" of the genre that enables to relate this work also with the traditions of the German Passion music. The function of the narrator-storyteller in this work covers not only the part of dramatic tenor but also soprano solo and chorus.

Spiritual and epic overtones of S. Prokofiev's is significantly added by its one more genre determination imprinted directly in the name of the composition – the cantata tale/ballad. The mentioned genre as we know had quite a long history of development, covering the period from the Middle Ages to modern times, and a variety of national "model". Goethe view in the ballad synthesis of the epic, dramatic and lyrical. In case of all diversity of genre invariants of the ballad, nevertheless, the conflict of the protagonist and circumstances to the subsequent moral and ethical total, its tangency to secret were always the semantic center of this typology. It is complemented by the use of various forms of repetition, as well as the use of a certain understatement, often manifested in the final narrative. The mentioned evidence are fully manifested in the «Cantata Tale of the Boy...» of S. Prokofiev, in which the dramatic story of a nameless boy-hero (this thesis becomes a kind of refrain of the story) finally acquires sense of the epic legend about the national avenger

symbolizing force and firmness of spirit of the people at the times of heartrending historical hardships.

The principles of the analyzed dramatic cantata of S. Prokofiev based on abovementioned accentuating semantic anatomies the opposition of the images of Enemy and Hero. The first is one of the most representative archetypes of Soviet culture. The total image of fascism occupies a special place here. According to L. Gudkov, "is the most important and powerful in the moral image of the plan and the identification of the enemy ... for the mass consciousness in Russia these images define the traumatic limit of humanistic. In the propaganda rhetoric the Nazis have always been an absolute measure of the negative. Reduction of these images meant unconditional characteristics of inhuman, immoral and evil". [5] By analyzing the problems of the archetype of the culture of the Stalin era, H. Gunther discover its genesis in ancient religious cults. According to the researcher, "based on the Manichean worldview arises phantasmagoria of invisible kingdom of evil, chaotic anti-world, where there is the same as in the real world, but with a minus sign. One is struck by the proximity to the demonological representations of the Middle Ages, according to which the slaves of Satan are antagonists of the heavenly hierarchy and the enemies of a man. Characteristically, in the Old Church (and in general in the Russian Orthodox tradition) the word "enemy" means the devil. Since the nature of the enemy is lie, they do not have a real incarnation. The enemy appear in a mask in front of people... "[6].

Designation of the fully correlated with generalized way of fascism in S. Prokofiev's cantata on texts by P. Antokolskiy. The poet associate his impersonality with the "mannequins", surrounded by roaring functioning military equipment. Musical characteristics of this image appeals to the underlined marching, rigidity (at the level of the sinister grotesque), the essential role of drums, the abundance of hard quart intonations. Tonal bases of the given episodes tends either to whole-tonality as a sign of "the other", infernal (in the interpretation of Tchaikovsky), or to atonality.

A fundamentally different seems characteristic of the protagonist and his world of values. Despite the generality, it still differs in great richness of expressive



techniques. Its defining qualities – vocal, appeal to a broad melodic breath, as well as the expressive recitation supplemented by timbre-performing specifics of dramatic tenor and soprano. In the most tragic episodes of the cantatas (for example, the figure 15, depicting the moment of return of the boy home and awareness of the death of his close people) tensions due to the interaction vocal style musical expressionism and genre intonation signs of weeping-wailing. An essential aspect of the musical material appears quite clearly expressed its tonal foundation and reveals a consistent movement from minor scope to the obvious dominance in the final part of the cantata C-dur and A-dur. The abovementioned dominance in its epic beginning, symbolizing a new spiritual status of hero-avenger is manifested in reference to the "major" metric (3/2) and the appropriate duration, more moderate pace, in strengthening the role and importance of the type of vocal melodies and choral beginning, uniting all participants of the action. Significant genre basis becomes a choral foundation, combined with hymn, all of which ultimately enlarges and elevates not only the image of the hero, who became a legend, but the significance of its associated spiritual idea of sacred revenge for the desecrated country.

"Find in everything great meaning" – these words of Optina Elder Nectarios are not only a spiritual covenant facing the contemporaries and descendants, but also are a kind of symbol of cognitive installation of national culture. Awareness of its national identity, depth and inner hidden meaning, formed over many centuries, and particularly intense – in the twentieth century – has not lost its relevance today. Vocal and choral works by S. Prokofiev, is not only an important page of its heritage but also summarizes the most important spiritual and semantic aspects of the native culture of the last century. Joining them allows insights into the processes in the culture of the past and present, which reveal artistic creativity through deep transformation of human nature.

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