

Composer's works of Nicolay Chiolak

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Abstract: *This article is devoted to N. Chiolak who is one of the most famous contemporary musicians of the Republic of Moldova. He is a vivid example of the successful and talented combination of a conductor, a composer and a pedagogue (Balaban 2014, 7). N. Chiolak has been the Chair Head of the Ismail Pedagogical Institute, the Chair Head at the Academy of Music, Theatre and Fine Arts for 15 years and a pedagogue at the Academy for 44 years. The article describes N. Chiolak's becoming a composer. He is the author of the Church music, the secular works for variously structured choirs, the music for voice, piano, organ, cello, etc.*

Key-words: *Nicolay Chiolak, composer, conductors, teachers from the Republic of Moldova.*

1. Introduction

Nicolay Mihalovich Chiolak is one of the most famous contemporary musicians of the Republic of Moldova who combined the talents of a conductor, a composer and a pedagogue.

Choral music is an important part of N. Chiolak's heritage. As a composer, he possesses developed vocal and choral intuition, understanding of origin and expressive possibilities of singing voice. His choral works for choir are marked with nobility and expressiveness of vocal sound. Deep in meaning they show author's exacting attitude towards the poetic text which represents for him an essential element projected on the texture, shape and dynamics. The preference is given to mixed choirs a cappella.

2. N. Chiolak's creative works — musical works, genres, analysis

These are the choir works of hymn character (*Viva University* (2000), etc.); the choir works with deep anti-war pathos (*Soldier*, lyrics P. Krucheniuk (1982), *The Ballad about War and Peace*, lyrics N. Chiolak (1985)); fine, gently contoured lyrical miniatures (*Vocalise* (1980), *Lullaby*, lyrics G. Vieru (1987), *Love Song*, lyrics

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N. Chiolak (1995), *Lyrical Meditation*, lyrics N. Chiolak (2012)); philosophical reflections on the life meaning (*Time* (1977), *Birds in palms*, lyrics A. Pidsooha (1977)); joyous, full of life and optimistic choir work *About Komsomol*, lyrics N. Chiolak (1978); miniatures reflecting nature images (*Give Me, Land*, lyrics A. Pidsooha (1977), *The Joy of Spring*, lyrics N. Chiolak (1995)); popular heroic epos (*A Song about Codreanu* (1982)); 2 choir works, lyrics A.S. Pushkin (*Who Stopped You, Waves* (1995), *Rise up, Fearful* (1999)); the works on religious subjects, etc. (In 1823 when Alexander Pushkin was in southern exile in Odessa, he wrote a poem *Who stopped you, waves*, which reflected his political views. *Rise, the fearful one* is the 7th chapter of his poem *Imitation of Koran* written by the poet in 1824. A.S. Pushkin approached to the Islam world during his travelling to the North Caucasus, the Crimea and Bessarabia. The composer's interest to these works appeared due to the fact that they were written by Pushkin during the southern exile, and Southern Bessarabia (Ismail region) was exile for N. Chiolak's ancestors of his mother's branch who was a representative of Chernigov branch of Rurik dynasty).

Each work is connected with author's certain world outlook ideas. From author's point of view, apparent contradictions are connected with "the ascent". Despite the fact that the subject of his choir miniatures is diverse, N. Chiolak considers himself a church composer. In his opinion „world view is changing, but the ideals remain". The composer says, „In secular music, I did not stop for a long time, as the secular world did not give the spiritual satisfaction. I was attracted by something sublime, unearthly... I realized that Christianity, spiritual music is the saving way for me and others and now I am in peace with myself". The titles of some articles about N. Chiolak characterize and reflect his interest to the spiritual side, his aspiration to convey supreme truth by means of music: *To oneself — through the temple* (Pojar 2001, 6), *Praise the name of God* (Pojar 2002, 3), *The Soul of the temple* (Burlacova 1993, 3), *Bless the Lord, oh my soul* (Barabanshikova 1996, 3), *The spiritual need* (Dercaci 2001, 3), *Spirituality and music* (Chernishova 1992, 3), *To the eternal values* (Pojar 2008, 3), *Blessed are angelical souls* (Balaban 2002, 21), *The leitmotif of praise of heaven, or The shadow of the future* (Balaban 2006, 65, 89), etc.

The love for God has manifested and embodied in church music as well (Balaban 2008, 68). The most important church works of N. Chiolak are the following *Liturgy*, published in 2001 and *All-night Vigil* published in 2005.

In 2008, 15 out of his 16 choir concerts for choir were edited in a separate digest titled *Church hymns*. In 2010 it was edited the work of religious and choir theme — lyrical and philosophical cantata for baritone, choir and piano verses of *The poem about John of Damascus*.

Liturgy for mixed choir of N. Chiolak is dedicated to the two thousand anniversary of Jesus Christ birth. The composer says, „I was internally getting ready to celebrate 2000 years of Christ birth, and thus the idea to glorify Christ — the Saviour of the world was born in my mind...". The great church celebration caused

the hymnist character of *Liturgy*, and the conceptuality of dedication was decisive for its solemn purpose during the festive divine service. Thirty parts of chants for choir *a cappella* formed voluminous cycle on texts of Biblical psalms. The composer remarks, „In *Liturgy* all parts are obligatory during the divine service. First of all, it was composed for the divine service, thus my *Liturgy* has the maximum number of parts”. The regulation of the parts succession is subject to the course of divine service.

The unity of all parts of the cycle is determined by distinctive perception of church poetry and inner creative process of composer who follows Eastern Christian tradition in musical interpretation of eternal values but is not laden with Orthodox conservatism. Having refused the Liturgical original sources, whose structural role is significant, the composer gained greater freedom of canonical prayers interpretation. Composer's personal sensation of church texts musical sound coincided with the intonational basis of Russian religious and folk songs sources, and in some parts of *Liturgy* there are Moldovan national motifs. *Liturgy* by N. Chiolak with all its intensive artistic richness and emotional expressiveness of music style and language, however, is not beyond the liturgical requirements and fits the canons of the Orthodox Church music.

All-night Vigil for mixed choir by Nicolay Chiolak includes chants of services — *Vespers* and *Matins*. Filled with humbled spirit of repentance chants of *Vespers* by N. Chiolak demonstrate the author's self-denial and at the same time the coolness of belief. In these church chants, the author recognized the necessity of perpetual aspiration to heaven. In accordance with the included chants, *Matins* by Chiolak is the service of joyous deed, the laudative service.

In the *All-night Vigil*, the composer included the separated chants which had been composed within several years (2000–2003) and initially had not been conceived as parts of the cycle. Later on (in 2005) they were included in the work. These are such obligatory chants for *Vespers* and *Matins* as *Come, let us bow; Bless the Lord, oh my soul* (psalm 103); *Blessed is the man; Quiet light; Now absolving sins; The song for Blessed Virgin Mary; Praise the name of God* (psalm 134, 135); *Since my youth; Having seen the Christ resurrection; My soul aggrandizes God; You are much blessed; Virgin Mary* etc., which are connected only with the regulation of the parts succession.

The chants of *All-night Vigil* by N. Chiolak are easy to be understood and at the same time are very profound. Initially designed for the kliros singing, compositions are composed in strict religious spirit of Orthodox divine service of music stylistics and correspond to the church requirements. Understanding deeply the particularity of canonical art, the composer created the chants which became the means inspiring to pray.

„I share the view of Vladimir Martinov: the difference of the concert singing from the church one is in deep influence of the Holy Scripture text on congregation. Here it is not necessary vivid bright emotional beginning, theatrical effect, intricacy,

innovation of musical language and so on but simplicity, restraint, prayer fullness which contribute to relinquish of world vanity and help people to pray”, — thus the composer defines the high spiritual significance of art. These words precisely explain the task of his art, moral values orientation, which is the essence and the meaning of all his life: to embody eternal values of goodness, justice, mercy and humanity. (N. Chiolak underlines his principles of composing church music as following: „First of all to believe in God (to have faith) and be a religious person; to study century-old heritage of this genre. Before beginning of embodying the planned, the respective actions which purify the spirit of all the bad are necessary: prayers, lent, good deeds.

Before composing, the music one has to read very attentively the selected lyrics applying the experience of thoughtful meaning analysis.

The creation of musical thesis should be harmonically combined with profound comprehension of divine texts. At the beginning of each workday and at the end of it the God should be thanked, He is addressed for prayer help. A composer should be always devoted to his credo and principles which should be maximum filled with Gospel meaning and only then the music is truthful”).

The genre of choral concert which is spiritual in origin and mostly secular in existence, being in constant development and transformation, having established in the rank of the liturgy, has a special place in composer’s creative work.

Like the most of the XX–XXI centuries composers, besides canonical genres N. Chiolak includes in *Liturgy* the paraliturgical genres which though are not provided by the statute are approved for performing in the church. (After sacrament chants make a certain part in a big cycle of *Liturgy*, they are after sacrament verse and before the sacrament of parish and clergy. The subject of these chants is defined by Tipicon. Only those after sacrament verses have to be sung which are based on lyrics close to the subject of the divine service). These are the after *Sacrament chants*, which mostly represent a concert of spiritual music for mixed choir *a cappella* and the genres functionally replacing it (the concert) such as *troparion for Saint Nicholas*, *kontakion (I bring to You my touching singing; To be glad...)* prayers relevant the Saint psalms, repetition of canonic chants of *Liturgy* and *All-night Vigil*. In 2008 it was published a digest of after *Sacrament verses* (consisting of different number of parts) written by N. Chiolak during last 20 years.

His after *Sacrament chants* more or less can be attributed to the genre of concert but in some cases quite conditionally.

Nevertheless, they have the following characteristics of concertizing: the use of solo timbres, and presence of contradistinction and differentiation of soloist and choir points; in the choir part there is the type of vocal setting based on the dramaturgy of timbre and acoustic, pitch and structure contrasts; the use of performer’s masterly possibilities; the principle of through-composed development of the idea, which is realized according to the specific conception, the number of parts and figurative contents comes to the foreground. What concerns secular

genres, the digest chants *Church hymns* are traditional in texts choice, style limits as well as in cast and emotional and figurative content.

Among the unpublished works of the composer there are harmonized church melodies (*For you, Lord; So great; On the road, in a crown of thorns; It is Me, the resurrection; Holy Mother; What do You use me for; A prayer, etc.*), folk arrangements.

Nicolay Chiolak is the author of light and life-asserting works for children's choir with piano accompaniment: *The time circle* (2010), choir works *Sun, sun, fair master* (2011), *How are you, the Sun* (2011), *Little spring, little spring* (2011), etc.

He composed the following works for voice and piano: *Sun, simile at us* (1987), *Vocalese* (1999), *Vocalese nr.2* (2002), *What's the time for me* (2001).

The composer's instrumental music is presented in the digest of piano works titled *Compositions for piano* among which there are the following ones published in 2009: *Six preludes-reminiscences; Five bagatelles; Three musical pictures; Romance; Novelette; Soul elegy; Waltz of hope; Dedication; Musical gift* (in memoriam P. Sokovnin, 2000). There are some unpublished works such as for piano — *Elegy* (2004), *Chant of victorious love* (2011), *Cheerful walking* (2011); for piano and violoncello *Romance* (2003), *Romance* (2005); for violin and piano — *Melody* (2012) and *Dance* (2010); for organ — *Dedication* (in memoriam G. Strezev, 1995), *Prelude for organ* (2011). All these compositions captivate with tender light lyricism and melodic richness.

3. Conclusion: the performing of N. Chiolak's works and the received awards

Among the performers of N. Chiolak's vocal and instrumental compositions there are Mariana Chibotari, Alina Dumbrava, Irina Panurina, Anna Strezeva, Valentina Komissarova, Ivan Kvasniuk, Dmitriy Chiolak (Dmitriy Chiolak is the younger son of N. Chiolak, bass-oktavist for whom *Vocalese* were written), Nadejda Chiolak (Nadejda Chiolak is the granddaughter of N. Chiolak. She plays the violin works *Melody* and *Dance* which were composed especially for her), etc.

N. Chiolak is a participant of International festivals *New Music Days* where his piano compositions were performed at 4 festival's editions.

Separate parts of *Liturgy, All-night Vigil*, concerts for choir by N. Chiolak are periodically performed during the divine services at various Orthodox churches and other Christian churches in Moldova, the Ukraine, Russia, Romania, Italy. Composer's works make part of repertoire of such choirs as *Credo* (conductor V. Boldurat), choral chapel *Moldova* (conductor V. Budilevskiy), chamber man's choir (conductor E. Diachenko), mixed student's choir *G. Musicescu* (conductor V. Chiolak), man choir of the church *Candlemas* (conductor V. Chiolak), academic choral chapel *Doina* (conductor N. Chiolak), various children's choirs, etc.

In June 2010 the composition *Oh, sweet Holy Mother* was sung by the choir of Balti State University *Aleco Russo* (conductor S. Kozak) at International contest in Hainovka, Poland. This performance was awarded he 2nd prize.

In July 2011 the other composition *From my youth time* was included in the programme of International contest *Laudate Dominum* (Vilnius, Lithuania) by the student's chamber choir *Renaissance* (conductor O. Filip) which brilliant performance won Grand Prix.

Nicolay Chiolak has many decorations for his creative and community activity: the distinctions of *Socialist Competition Winner* (in 1977 and 1980), *Excellence in Culture of Moldova Soviet Social Republic* (in 1986) and *Eminent Worker of High School of USSR*; *Honorable Mentions* of the Ministry of Culture of Republic of Moldova (in 1996 and 2006), Moldovan Music-Choral Association (in 1980), Musicians Union of Moldova (in 2006), Ministry of Education of RM (in 2010); Medal *Labour Veteran* (in 1989) and Medal *Saint Paisius Velichkovsky* from Orthodox Church of Republic of Moldova (in 2011).

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