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# Impressionism in Ukrainian Music

## *Impresionizmas Ukrainos muzikoje*

### Abstract

Impressionism was the first modern stylistic trend that explicitly defined itself in Ukrainian music. The periodization of this phenomenon was determined: 1900–1910s – the first period (renewal of the means of tonality, harmony and texture in range of romantic tradition), the 1920s – the second one (the interaction between impressionism and other styles – expressionism, neoclassicism, folklorism), from the 1960 to the 1980s – the third one (on the one hand the regeneration of the tradition of the beginning of the century, on the other hand a new phenomenon where the means of traditional impressionism are connected with sonorous music, aleatory music, pointillist music, minimalism). The appearance of impressionism in Ukrainian music featured some elements of the individual style of Juliusz Zarębski, Mykola Lyssenko, Jakiv Stepovyj (emancipated dissonances, ninth chords). During the first period we can observe the features of this style in works by Theodor Akimenko (*Star Dreams*, *The Pages of Fantastic Poetry*, *Urania*) and Vasyl Barvinsky (piano preludes, piano trio, romance *In the Wood*). This period was an early adoption of means, support of the romantic melody and accuracy of structure. The second one was a mature expression of the impressionistic features, of instrumental character of melody, of mosaic form (vocal cycle *The Moon Shadows*, piano cycle *Reflections* by Borys Lyatoshynsky, Symphony No. 2 by Lev Revutsky, Sonata for violin and piano, romance *Spring Day* by Mykola Kolyada, romance *In Dream Time* by Antin Rudnytsky). During the third period we can see an interaction of impressionistic features (especially the tendency for static form) with sonorous music, minimalism in the works by Gennadij Glazachov, Youri Shevchenko, Volodymyr Shumejko, Alexander Shchetinsky, Alexander Gugel and Volodymyr Skuratovsky. So impressionism has reflected the tendency of renewal of music language in the context of development of Ukrainian music.

**Keywords:** impressionism, Ukrainian music, style, static form, Akimenko, Lyatoshynsky, Revutsky.

### Anotacija

Impresionizmas buvo pirma moderni srovė, palikusi gilesnį pėdsaką Ukrainos muzikoje. Nusistovėjo tokia šio reiškinio periodizacija: 1900–1920 m. vyko tonacinės sistemos, harmonijos, faktūros atsinaujinimas remiantis romantine tradicija; 1920–1930 m. impresionizmas ėmė sąveikauti su kitais stiliais – ekspresionizmu, neoklasicizmu, folklorizmu; 1960–1990 m. buvo atgaivinta amžiaus pradžios tradicija, bet tuo pat metu formavosi nauja srovė, kurioje tradicinės impresionizmo išraiškos priemonės jungiamos su sonorizmu, aleatorika, puantilizmu ir minimalizmu. Pirmuoju laikotarpiu impresionizmo pirmavaizdžiais laikytini kai kurie to meto ukrainiečių kompozitoriai – Juliuszo Zarębskio, Mykolos Lysenko, Jakivo Stepovyjo (disonansų emancipacija, nonakordai) – individualaus stiliaus elementai. Impresionistinio stiliaus bruožų taip pat galima aptikti Teodoro Akimenkos („Žvaigždžių sapnai“, „Fantastinės poezijos puslapiai“, „Uranija“) ir Vasylio Barvinskio (preliudai fortepijonui, fortepijoninis trio, romansas „Girioje“) kūrinuose. Šiuo laikotarpiu buvo perimamos naujos išraiškos priemonės, bet išsaugoma romantinė melodija, laikomasi aiškios kūrinių struktūros. Antruoju laikotarpiu impresionizmo bruožai įgijo brandžiausią išraišką, melodika įgavo instrumentinį pobūdį, o kūrinių forma tapo mozaikiška (pavyzdžiui, Boriso Liatošinskio vokalinis ciklas „Mėnulio šešėliai“, pjesių ciklas fortepijonui „Atspindžiai“; Levo Revuckio Simfonija Nr. 2; Mykolos Koliados Sonata smuikui ir fortepijonui, romansas „Pavasario diena“; Antino Rudnyckio romansas „Svajonių laikais“). Trečiuoju laikotarpiu vyko impresionistinių bruožų (ypač būdingų statiška formai) sąveika su sonorizmu ir minimalizmu – čia išskirtini tokių kompozitorių kaip Genadijus Glazačiovas, Jurijus Ševčenko, Volodymyras Šumejko, Aleksandras Ščetinskis, Aleksandras Gugelis ir Volodymyras Skuratovskis kūriniai. Taigi impresionizmas Ukrainos muzikoje daugiausia siejamas su muzikos kalbos atsinaujinimu.

**Reikšminiai žodžiai:** impresionizmas, Ukrainos muzika, stilius, statiška forma, Teodoras Akimenka, Borisas Liatošinskis, Levas Revuckis.

The first decades of the 20th century was an important period in Ukrainian culture development, when a new generation of artists appeared and we can see influences of modern styles in works by them. There were symbolism (in poetry, prose, drama) and impressionism (in painting, poetry, music).

These influences were not casual, so long as young people were educated in the European culture centres – Paris, Krakow, Munich, Vienna and Prague – and had the opportunity to know of modern tendencies. For example, Theodor Akimenko, who was rich in the experience of French composers, returned from Paris; representatives of

western Ukraine Vasyl Barvinsky, Nestor Nyzhankivsky, Mykola Kolesa, Stefania Turkevych and Roman Simovych, who were students of the composition class of Vítězslav Novák, returned from Prague.

In addition, impressionism became gradually known in Russia and Ukraine owing to concert programmes, therefore it attracted the serious attitude of music critics. So the society “Evenings of Modern Music” (Večera sovremennoj muzyki) together with the Imperial Russian Music Society (Imperatorskoje Russkoje Muzyka’noje Obschestvo) held an elucidative mission. During of these concerts works by Debussy, Ravel and Dukas were performed for the first time

in Russia. An appraisal by the critic Nikolaj Shipovich about a performance of *Sea* by Debussy in Kiev may be a revealing example of the perception of works by impressionists: "... the piece is very expressive in instrumentation and rich in harmonic thought. The truth of musical expressivity has been brought here to high perfection, and all the plot of the tone-poem is marked with full relief" (Shipovich 1990: 71). Also the critic stresses the impressionistic character of this style of work and explains its particularities related to the manner of impressionism painters: "A phonic mozaic will be put before you, a line of separate harmony, melodic and timbral touches, still, put in such order that you can get an impression of one or another moment in a picture planned by a composer" (Shipovich 1990: 73). Such wide-ranging descriptions reflected interest in the new stylistic direction: there was a true desire to understand the essence of its message to contemporaries.

### Presentiment of Impressionism.

Presentiment of impressionism in Ukrainian music is observed in some works by Juliusz Zarębski, Mykola Lyssenko and Jakiv Stepovyj. The cycle *Roses and Thorns* (*Trojandy i ternii*) for piano, Op. 13, by **Juliusz Zarębski** (1854–1885) – a Pole by origin who was born in Zhytomyr and belongs to both the Polish and Ukrainian cultures – was written while the composer was staying in Mainz in 1883, notably almost ten years before *Faun* by C. Debussy. It is notable for the refinement of romantic manner with the inclusion of some elements which would acquire the status of stylistic features of impressionism. Communication with F. Liszt, his piano professor, and the influence Liszt's individual style promoted such a situation. The virtuoso cycle *Roses and Thorns* in five movements opens the second period of his works revealing a "forming of personal composing manner and searching for colouring effects" (Travkina, Shamajeva 2008: 133). Specifically, in the initial theme of the first piece the texture is reminiscent of *Waldestrauschen* by Liszt, which shows the intention to make the role of background more expressive through the brilliance of its harmony – major triad with added fourth. In the second piece the comparison of secondary seventh chord with major seventh and minor triad with flattened fifth and sixth with organ-point gives the effect of phonic colour. The section *Piu lento* is very interesting: the melodic pulsation of texture put on the distant bass, introduces a short moment of rest, statics that go into a romantically agitated flow. Later texture would be come the dominating means of expressivity in impressionism. This example clearly demonstrates the presentiment of this. An interesting parallel with *Moon Light* (from *Suite Bergamasque*) by Debussy, written apropos seven years

later, is observed in the fourth piece. This concerns the succession of secondary seventh chord with the minor third and diminished seventh chord, masked by figurations. Such a common character of harmony elements tell us about the colouring idea to renew musical language, which was in the air, gradually filling visible lines and reforming all the system of musical means.

The established thought about **Mykola Lyssenko** (1842–1912) as a national classic and cultural worker in some way prevents the understanding of the power of his personal charisma which was sensitive to the past and modern times.

Before analysing the works by Lyssenko from 1900s there is a need to look at his post-conservatory period. The piano piece *Dream* (*Mrija*), Op. 12 (1876) directs the listener to sphere of light meditation and contemplation with the changing of soft emotion nuances and mood of light-heartedness. Although, romanticism means are only used here, the piece shows a tendency of impressionism. The smoothing of contrasts between form sections and texture themes, and stressing of instability in the main melodic tune underline such particularly.

Later Lyssenko would revert to the development of the meditation subject area in his miniatures *Moment of Fascination* (*Moment zacharuvannja*), Op. 40 No. 2 and *Impression of a Joyful Day* (*Vrazhennja vid radisnogho dnja*), Op. 41 No. 2 (both 1902). In the first one the melody is concealed in the pulsating texture, the initial harmony chain consists of secondary seventh chords with minor third and tonic triad with sixth has a colouring effect. In the second one the author applied the ninth chord – the symbolic element in impressionism. Interest in it becomes more active in the romance *Come, come to me* (*Pryjdy, pryjdy*, a poem by Olexandr Oles', 1906), where this chord is used as the focal point on the strong beat with stop. In the other romance based on O. Oles' poem *Asters* (*Ajstry*, 1907) such a tendency makes further progress. The comprehension of vitalism in poetic lines appears as a colouring change of the secondary dominants and the involvement of secondary seventh chord with major seventh.

Lyssenko's younger contemporary **Jakiv Stepovyj** (**Akimenko**) (1883–1921), who graduated from St Petersburg Conservatory under Rimsky-Korsakov, was also attracted by Olexandr Oles' innovative poetic refinement. The vocal cycle *Mood Songs* (*Pisni nastroju*), Op. 6 (1907–08) is the result of such a situation. For example, in romance *In the flowers was my soul* (*V kvitkach bula dusha moja*) for the romantic music stylistics (the texture resembles Rakhmaninov's models) especially the colouring qualities of the secondary seventh chord with minor third, augmented triad and dominant major ninth chord are stressed, sometimes the tonic is skillfully masked (because of its conversion to a weak beat).

In Prelude E major, Op. 10 No. 3 for piano, Stepovyj realized mood concentration, basing it on the melodic line coloured by movement of parallel chords being in no functional dependence one from the other ( $E^5_3 - D^5_3 - C_{D7} - B^5_3 - A^5_3$  etc. in sequence).

In this way, basing it on the particularities of the typical features of romanticism, Stepovyj sometimes used phonic effects of seventh chords for more expressive interpretation of poetry in romances and melody in instrumental compositions.

However, the influence of impressionism in this period of time is visualized sequentially and variously in works by Theodor Akimenko, Mykola Shypovych and Vasyl Barvinsky.

### The First Period of Impressionism in Ukrainian Music

The elder brother of Stepovyj **Theodor Akimenko** (1876–1945) graduated from St Petersburg Conservatory under Rimsky-Korsakov. It is clear the first period of his works were developed under the influence of romanticism. Simultaneously, here we can feel an individual tendency for selection of some means, stressing the state of contemplation, a static stay in one mood, with fixation colouring moments as an echo of registers, spatial characteristics of sounding in the piano piece *Fantastic Tale* (*Fantastychna kazka*), Op. 23 No. 1.

Between 1903 and 1905 Akimenko stayed in Paris where he became acquainted with works by French composers-impresionists and for the first time he tried to apply some new means, particularly in the piano compositions *Urania*, Op. 25 and *Games*, Op. 34 we discover experimentation with texture possibilities. In Paris Akimenko also took a great interest in astronomy thanks to his friendship with the French astronomer and writer Camille Flammarion. This ardour had a substantial effect on the subjects of his works. Probably the influence of Scriabin had a place here too, with whom at that time he maintained friendly relations.

After returning home, Akimenko, as a diligent pupil of the impresionists, continued to assimilate the experience of the new melodic and texture thinking in Kharkiv between 1906 and 1912. The composer wrote the piano cycles *Stars Dreams* (*Zoryani mriji*), Op. 42, (1907) and *The Pages of Fantastic Poetry* (*Storinky fantastychnoji poiziji*), Op. 43, (1908), in which a range of impresionistic images generated by the impression from contemplation of the sky and stars, and by the desire to interpret the poetry of the night in music was directly reflected. In the piece *Moon light* (*Misyachne syajvo*, No. 1) figuration is the main means forming a static image of moonlight. Delicate tune arabesques, which are not individual enough as themes, arise from this figuration.

We can observe a typical feature of impressionism – the borderline between figuration and melodic line is obliterated, they blend in a single textural complex fulfilling the thematic function. The final piece *Shepherd Star* (*Zorya pastucha*) demonstrates the composer's interest in the effects of space: the melody has wide leaps of the seventh octave, and the texture contains distant bass sounds and chords consisting of two perfect fifths.

The cycle Op. 43 piece *Soul Complaining* (*Dusha plache*, No. 2) is distinguished by the presentation of a phonic character of chords without resolution (augmented triad, secondary seventh chord, ninth chord). The charm of the night landscape, the mysterious rustling and the endearment of space, stars and heaven is reflected in the piece *Moonlight Song* (*Pisnya misyachnych promeniv*, No. 9). The texture pulsates as a living organism; its permanent triplet flow with involvement of the pentatonic scale that is supplemented with secondary seventh chords in the upper register.

**Nikolaj Shipovich** (1881–1944), who was more well-known as a music critic through his articles in the Kiev press between 1910 and the 1930s, also made a personal contribution to the development of impressionism in Ukrainian music. Among his not numerous works the piece *Faun* (1918) for symphony orchestra is significant from the point of view of the colouring manner. Its programme, concentrated in the epigraph (“In patches of moonlight, in picturesque shadows of slumbering trees this strange sad creature dances lonely: the depths of the forests child”) and in the subtitle “dance of incarnate nature”, and also in the composer's genre definition as “symphonic silhouette”, explains an obvious convergence with typical features of impressionism. The genre identification “silhouette” explains the intention to outline only image outlines without their development. Finally, the mythic character depicted by N. Shipovich is often requested in the music of this style.

The composer used the timbres of flutes and violas for the description of Faun, charging them with conducting of the theme in unison in the first section of the piece. The melodic line has a static character; the first sentence is “frozen”: the intonation structure stays within the limits of the major second. The unvaried figurations of the background in harp, the first violins and partly the first violas were added here. Based on the altered chords progressions without resolution they create a vibration effect of the surrounding nature, its silent response *con tristezza* as the mood of Faun stays melancholy

In the middle section Faun's strange dance is depicted, it is a remarkable revival of the motion *con moto*, the appearance of ternary time, and the main point is a timbral change of the God of Forests description (bassoon, strings, clarinet and bass clarinet). Thus, Shipovich fixed for the woodwinds the function of the representation of Faun's

image, which brought him up to standard of comprehension of timbre personification as important achievement of orchestral colouring in impressionism.

The other representative of impressionism in the Ukrainian music, **Vasyl Barvinsky** (1888–1963), as a composer formed in the Prague school, studying composition under Vítězslav Novák from whom he adopted the Czech national tradition – a combination of the national music particularities with achievements of the modern age (Pavlyshyn 1990: 82). V. Barvinsky wrote just impressionistic works during his training in Prague (1907–1915).

Among the works of this period in which the features of impressionism show themselves the most brightly are: the children's piece for piano *Frog's Waltz*, Preludes for piano in E minor and in F sharp major and the romance "In Wood" (*V lisi*) based on a poem by Bohdan Lepkyj, a trio in a minor (second part). An analysis of these works shows the particularity of impressionistic features manifest in Barvinsky's individual style: a special admiration for the transparent, pure, gentle colours in which one can see modal thinking for the harmony because of the selection of the texture means.

Somewhat separately in the series of mentioned works there is **Prelude in E minor**. It can be seen as an original mirror of the young composer's intensive searches in which all the spectrum of his passions of that time were reflected. An echo of Ukrainian folk songs and of Scriabin's ecstasy climaxes are heard here, as well as an impressionistic refinement of musical images. Simultaneously this Prelude gives a key to the comprehension of the development of the composer's next works. The transparent, songful (like a folk song) melody of the piece is represented in an uncommon textural design: harmonization by chords of the sixth, occasionally by seventh chords, in the upper register melody is represented by octaves – all these live and "breath" by boundless space. From a modal point of view there is a modal changeability in the coda: E minor – G major (genetically originated from Ukrainian folk songs) is connected at the same time which gives substance and an effect of two tonal centres. So first and foremost there are its phonic features.

However, in the presence of general impressionistic organization of the music texture (the broadening of the special boundaries on the four staves, the colouring the logic of tonal palette, the ellipses and the variety of the point pedals) there is an important theme ending for the first time. It is similar to an "alien body" owing to its textural design: after a solemn, majestic chord texture consisting of some layers there is folk supporting-voice "embroidery" of the separate lines. On the one hand, there is a particular symbol, an indication of a folk prototype by which the theme is evoked. On the other

hand, the composer, having united these two different textural layers in the boundaries of one theme, successively confronts them, obviously feeling (and allows the listener to understand that) their incompatibility: subsequently similar to folk melody end of the theme is "cut off" as it something that does not blend with general development of an image. At this point the key to the comprehension of Barvinsky's next creative development is concealed: if in this contradiction mentioned in "Prelude" is decided in favour of impressionism, then later the composer resolutely returns in the contrary direction. He aspired to connect organically his own individual manner with the folklore sources. In the composer's consciousness a folk song certainly appeared in the concrete fact of its living existence, which is connected with this or that character texture (in particular the supporting voice in choral singing). So, the support for the folklore base in the imagination of Barvinsky comes into a conflict with the textural models formed by impressionism. With this we can explain Barvinsky's refusal of the impressionistic means in his next works. It should be noted that the impressionistic experience of his early works did not pass without leaving a trace: a music facture in the works of last period was enriched by fresh harmonic details and original phonic effects.

The influence of impressionism in the works from 1900 to 1910s in the first place, can be observed in a renewal of modal, harmony, texture, partly timbral thinking. At once the traditional classical and romantic systems do not radically change nor are they destroyed: an enrichment of means by impressionism features with the conservation of the romantic tradition is the particularity in pieces by Ukrainian composers. This period prepared the ground for the next one interpreted as a "time of national renaissance" in the history of Ukrainian music.

### **The Second Period of Impressionism in Ukrainian Music**

The second period (1920s) demonstrates a wide stylistic panorama in different fields of art. The short-term existence of the Ukraine state's independence, entailed the process of national and cultural renaissance, started by Ukrainian intellectuals and the politics of Ukrainization, carried out in Ukraine under the Soviets as the officially declared direction after the XII Congress of the Communist Party (1923) served as a stimulus for such creative energy. Optimism and belief in the reality of building a new society caused a search for the answer to the question how modern art must be. This question made an appearance in the discussions of artists' circles. It became evident in the activity of many aesthetic associations, often with opposite ideas.

Among them the Association of Modern Music occupied the leading positions. Boris Lyatoshynsky was the chief of it in Kiev between 1922 and 1925. An acquaintance with the achievements of modern music in the USSR and abroad was an aim of this association. Thus, during the 1920s playbills of concerts in Kiev looked like a kaleidoscope of works by such artists as Debussy, Ravel, Scott, Respighi, Falla, Casella and Albeniz.

Musical and historical demonstrations (1923–1926) devoted to modern music by the pianist Grigorij Beklemishev were popular at that time. After 1924 a lecture-demonstration about French impressionists was read by the musicologist Arnold Alshvang in Kiev. Some works by Debussy and Ravel were performed by the choir *Dumka* under the conductor Nestor Horodovenko in 1925. The piano duet Vladimir Horowitz – Heinrich Neuhaus performed scores transcriptions of *Daphnis et Chloé*, *Rapsodie espagnole*, *Iberia*, *Sirènes* etc.

All this stimulated and broadened Ukrainian composers' outlook; this made their search more intensive in the area of musical expression. For example, the features of expressionism can be found in works by Boris Janovsky, Boris Lyatoshynsky and Józef Koffler; a tendency for Urban-Music is represented in compositions by the Kharkiv group of Mykola Kolyada, Yulij Meitus and Vladimir Nakhabin; the direction of neofolklorism was developed in scores by Lev Revutsky, Mykola Kolyada and Mykola Kolessa.

In the heritage of some composers we can discover a vivid embodiment of impressionism lines, for example, in music by B. Lyatoshynsky, Th. Nadenenko, L. Revutsky, M. Skorulsky, V. Kostenko, M. Kolyada, A. Rudnytsky, N. Nyzhankivsky, M. Kolessa and R. Simovych.

**Boris Lyatoshynsky** (1894–1968) studied composition under Reinhold Glière in the Kiev Conservatory. He was a founder of a modern Ukrainian composers' school: among his students were Valentin Silvestrov, Leonid Hrabovsky, Lesya Dychko, Ivan Karabyts and others. He wrote two operas, five symphonies, three tone-poems, many instrumental and vocal compositions, and arrangements of folk songs. His early, student works yet are full of Russian composers' influence – Borodin, Glazunov, Tchaikovsky, Rakhmaninov, and Scriabin because their music occupied a dominating place in concert programmes. Their creative manners were a very popular example for imitation at that time. At the end of Lyatoshynsky's studies in his first symphony we can feel Scriabin's influence<sup>1</sup> (not in ideological direction but only in the affecting of sound particularities). This work became a turning-point in Lyatoshynsky's development, who from the beginning of the 1920s gradually began to free himself from alien influences and started demonstrating his particular author's manner.

The active participation of Lyatoshynsky's in the work of the Association of Modern Music was an important

catalyst in a process of crystallization of his individual music language (Shevchuk, Jakymenko 1992: 445). The range of Lyatoshynsky's music images changes: expressive and very tense passions occupy the main place here, they are brought together in critical contradiction, sometimes in antagonism.

Correspondingly his music language experiences a radical renewal. Instead of diatonicism the composer "appeals to complication of modal systems" (Samokhvalov 1972: 12), through which in some works of this period a tonal centre is actually absent or disguised. The base of harmony is not formed of triads but it is formed of seventh chords, ninth chords, chords of non-triad structure and compound sound complexes consisting of several layers. Accordingly the melodic line became more broken and tense, acquiring sharp contours. For its interval structure there are typical jumps on the tritone, major seventh, major and minor ninth. In general in the 1920s Lyatoshynsky's style drew together with expressionism although without an extreme manifestation (exaggeration of horror pictures or the passions of powerless obedience to faith).

At the same time we can observe a tendency to impressionistic strivings in the works from 1922 to 1926. They are naturally blended in the general situation of Lyatoshynsky's works during the 1920s, thus the particularity of the impressionism principles of interpretation are shown here by the composer. In my opinion, the following works concern impressionism. These are: four romances *Moon Shadows*, Op. 9 (1923, based on poems by Verlaine, Sievierianin, Balmont and Wild), two romances *My dreams in Loneliness Fade*, *Moon*, Op. 10 (1924, based on poems by Shelley in translation by Balmont), the romance *Ozymandias*, Op. 15 (1924, based on a poem by Shelley in translation by Balmont). Partly impressionistic signs are retraced in these compositions for chamber ensemble: String quartet No. 2, Op. 4 (1922), the piano cycle *Reflections*, Op. 16 (1925), Sonata for violin and piano, Op. 19 (1926).

So, in the 1920s Lyatoshynsky actively used the impressionistic means for creating a special image circle (the images of changeable, short transient moods; fantastic, unreachable dreams; delicate, silent secret emotions, born by symbolists' poetry and its enigmatic, cool and capricious "moon" colour): a melody as an arabesque; series of parallel unresolved chords; changeable, irregular rhythm with the frequent use imbroglia; the typical textural images – harmonic figurations as vibrating patterns, the prolonged bass pedals, inclusion of a large space with marking sonorous "futilities" inside. But in contrast to Debussy's inclination to the non-semitone scale Lyatoshynsky used the broadened 12-sound system (an exception is mentioned *Intermezzo* from the Second quartet).

His melodic lines and harmony do not avoid intensive sounding but stress it. So he often used minor second,

secondary seventh chord with major seventh and dominant major ninth chord.

So, in the works by Lyatoshynsky we can observe a thoroughly mature and organic handling of impressionism means, combined with other achievements of the modern composer's technique.

**Lev Revutsky** (1889–1977) was an elder contemporary of Lyatoshynsky, who also studied composition under Reinhold Glière. However, the determinant in his formation as a composer was the atmosphere of his native home and an acquaintance with Mykola Lyssenko, the founder of Ukrainian classical music, in 1903.

On the one hand, Revutsky's supported the national traditions of Ukrainian music. On the other hand, he desired to enrich it with the achievements of modern European music, which determined the creative strivings of the young composer. Impressionism exactly of all trends of modern music became the closest to the subtle, dreamy nature of the composer.

*The Second symphony* (1927) by Revutsky is considered by right to be the zenith of his works. An analysis of the syntheses of the national mentality with the impressionistic features, which helps to disclose the depth of the artist's intention, may be one of the keys for understanding this symphony. Its image-bearing world naturally demonstrates this combination. The images of nature, fascinating pictures of the native landscape are combined here into an all together indivisible whole with the rich inside world of a man, who does not conceive of himself as out the nature. A similar bond impresses us in the poetic texts of the ancient Ukrainian folk song in which all development of the plot is built on the permanent parallels between the phenomena of a nature and the life of a man, where a girl is compared with a guelder rose, a young man with a curly oak, where a married couple's faithfulness is personified in a couple of pigeons and a woman's grief in the image of the cuckoo...

There, on the hill, on the silk grass  
There were sitting a couple of pigeons.  
From the mountains a falcon has flown,  
Ruined, severed the pigeons from the couple.

We can see the similar result in the symphony by Revutsky. Three parts of it represent three different landscape pictures written every time with a new light. The morning with the first sun rays reflected by a rainbow in the drops of an early-dew; the night is depicted by the mild, pastel tones; the day is filled by rich, bright colours. At the same time there are also three seasons of the year – spring, summer and autumn – which in folk mentality are associated with a human life: childhood with its first trial of wings; youth covered by a charm and the poetry of love;

a maturity filled with the energy of labour and the reaping of its fruits. But first of all there are three states of the soul: a joyful, amazed one, which opens the world for itself with admiration; a placid or tender, dreamy one, which is plunged to contemplation and an energetic vital one, which is attracted to the general flow of mass gaiety.

All the above is attained by a new interpretation of folklore based on the light of impressionistic experience. The symphony is based on folk tunes (with the exception of the first theme from the Part I), taken from the popular collection by the Ukrainian folklorist Klyment Kvitka *Ukrainian Folk Melodies* (published in 1922). The selection of the folk tunes principally confirms a new attitude to folklore, a search of its consonance to modern music thinking.

From this aspect the first theme from Part I is the most interesting and impressive. As Revutsky confessed, this melody appeared as a memory of *vesnianka* (a genre of Ukrainian folk songs which are sung during spring), that he heard in his childhood. Actually it does not have a clear source but in some ways there are evident links to the intonations of the song *Oji, vesna, vesnytsia* (Oh, spring, spring). As subtle colours two transparent chords appear in the introduction. A fresh and fluctuating harmonic sequence of the subdominant ninth chord and the first inversion of II degree seventh chord in E major, the gentleness of an orchestral colouring (2 Cl., Fag., Cor., Arpa, V.-c.) with a light timbre of a harp give rise to an awakening and expectation of a sense. Then, the first theme appears in bassoon on the twinkling, vibrating background of strings figurations *con sordino* as if penetrated by the air flows.

At once it intrigues because of its mysteriousness and originality in the modal aspect. The changeability of the vibration between two supports *d sharp* and *g sharp*, which only at the end clears by the tonal centre *E* major, gives to the theme some vagueness and at the same time significance, an opportunity to a different modal interpretation is the next development. Thus, in the following part with the part of English horn, the modal base is slightly complicated by the displacement of the triplet tune on a semitone down. The second one as a canon is decked by a sextolet figure with a base on the secondary seventh chord with minor third. In the development section the theme is in the natural *e* minor. The beginning of the reprise gives an effect of polytonality. This means a bearing tone *g* is emphasized in the theme while the figurations of the background are in *a* minor.

The intonation structure of the theme is the same original one. The foundation of its period of six bars is a short two bars tune which further is played modifying in volume of a diminished fifth. The narrow range of the five sounds tune is connected with the archaic layers of Ukrainian ritual folklore. At the same time its capricious

rhythmical organization with a permanent displacement of the accents inside the bars is conducive to its changeable significance.

The second theme<sup>2</sup> is more real in character and more clearly outlined in both structure and tonality. Revutsky also enriched it with a colouring trait: a flattened variant (*g sharp, g*) as a mordent beside with natural V degree exists here. Its harmonic foundation is also rich, stressed by important melodic bases and a culmination of the theme. In this way, the semantic sound *f sharp* in both cases is supported by the diminished seventh chord, but its climax and its abatement are supported by the ninth chord and the dominant seventh chord.

Thus, already in the very structure of the themes – modal, intonation, rhythmical – the principles of the next expansion of the music images, namely their colour modifying, constant re-comprehension by modal, harmonic, textural, dynamical and rhythmical changes, are laid. Owing to this the main images appear every time in a new light creating a wide circle of moods and passions which is continually fluctuating between the poetical contemplation of nature and the inspired world of human passions.

In this aspect the timbre modifying is important. An image sense of the themes changes every time connecting it with a specific timbre of an instrument. In this way at the beginning the mysteriousness of the first theme is stressed by the bassoon middle register saved from a sharp typicality. The next canonic calls-over of a clarinet and English horn obviously carry “a plain air” character with the same effect by the flowing moving of the strings. This theme, represented by the strings in the high register, at once switches “the action” to the inside world of the human passions: it gains the passion of an excited utterance. In the development section an interaction of different devices with modifying re-comprehension especially creates a very plastic substance. In the episode *Tranquillo* the dynamic level abates after climax and in the background the continuous chords of the first theme is played placidly by the violoncellos and the contrabasses in *a* minor as a concentrated meditation. Suddenly an unexpected switch to another space, to another temporal dimension arises here. The intonations of the first theme dissolve in the fluid, airy figurations of a flute on the minor triad in the second inversion, in the augmented triad, in the secondary seventh chord with a major seventh background. It seems like a stopped moment and should be admired for its connection to a similar substance of the coda as a semantic arch. The character of the last one is clear and brightens up, the figurations, which are founded on the augmented triad and the diminished seventh chord, are a rarefied atmosphere of “melting away” sounds.

The second part of the symphony – *Adagio* – is a bright picturesque tone canvas: the night landscape is illuminated

by the shimmering of light rays from the moon. The first section is marked by the stereophonic effect of the sound substance; it is reached by means of the unisons on a two octaves distance. At the beginning we can observe the tremolo background in the parts of the violins I and the violas, then the theme is superimposed by the flutes and bassoons unisons in the same disposition.<sup>3</sup>

The particularity of this episode is its fantastic character, mainly motivated by using whole-tone scale elements (in the key *c* minor with the Phrygian nuance the melody descends from dominant) and melodic minor (*g* is as a temporary key-note). In Mikhail Bialyk’s opinion, such originally used means – moving around a tonic fifth – is characteristic to the Ukrainian epic strains, especially to the “dumas”. The Phrygian mode elements which are presented in the melody too, are characteristic to Ukrainian lyrical songs. Thus it apparently becomes a special Ukrainian mood of this fragment (Bialyk 1973: 141). The most valuable is the natural syntheses of the Ukrainian folk sources with the rich range of expression of impressionistic means which was discovered by Revutsky in the first and second parts of the symphony.

Therefore, in art music of the 1900s to the 1920s impressionism as one of the many components from various artistic backgrounds introduces its important unique nuance. Its clear, festive life perception turned out to be related to the general vitality of artists of that time – their joyful animation and faith in the future, which at the beginning of the 1930s with “starting of the mass non-intellectual process” (Hryhorij Kasjanov), was destroyed.

Beginning from the 1960s a particular return to values of the past arose because of interest in the inherent quality of sound not only as a colour, but also as an entering into the essence of music phenomenon. So, we can say about the tendency of neoimpressionism (a term coined by Halyna Kon’kova) that it is a phenomenon which holds a common tradition (Debussy, Ravel) and a certain one (works by Ukrainian composers from the 1900s to the 1920s). Generally, the connection with neoromanticism as a trend of modern life is a special feature of it.

The tradition of “classical” impressionism, the line of connection with folklore, sonority music, aleatory music, pointillism, minimal music are characteristic features of neoimpressionism. In my opinion the connection between impressionism and sonority music is put into effect through colouring: the first one is a colour as a single (the colouring of one chord), the second one is general (the colouring of music texture blocks). Statics is a common element between minimal music and impressionism. It is represented by the repeated repetition of a pattern (in the first case) and as a visual principle of the music flowing with inside mutability (in the second one).

In the works by Ukrainian composers we can observe a lot of neoimpressionism manifestations. These, among

others, are: the tone-poem *Edelweiss* (1960) by Gennadij Glazachov; *Suite pastorale* for two flutes, two oboes, vibraphone and harp (1981) and the vocal cycle *The Gold Writing* (Zoloti pys'mena, 1983) by Yuriy Shevchenko; the chamber cantata *Forest Music* (*Lisova muzyka*, 1977–78) by Valentin Sylvestrov; the vocal cycles *Pastels* and *Enharmonic* (both 1967), *Cantate of Carpatians* for choir a capella (Karpatska kantata, 1973–76) by Lesya Dychko; *The Second Ukrainian Carpathian Rhapsody* for symphony orchestra (Ukrainska karpatska rapsodija No. 2, 1973) by Lev Kolodub; *Intermezzo diatonico* for string orchestra (1983) and *Four Carpathian Pastorals* for chamber orchestra (1978) by Volodymyr Shumeiko; *Folk-Suite* for two pianos (1992) by Zhanna Kolodub; *Dedication to Debussy* for flute, bassoon and piano (1998) by Olena Leonova; the suite *In Memory of Ravel* for piano (2005) by Vladimir Skuratovsky etc.

The analysis of some of the works mentioned by Ukrainian composers gives a reason to affirm that the assimilation and experience of impressionism was adopted on their national ground. On the whole this process, having departed from romanticism's aesthetics, was a rather active search for new expressions of musical means and a renewal of music thinking, marked by composers' interest in colours in sounding, in quickly changeable moods and also in the static character of a music flow. These composers made a valuable contribution for the development of Ukrainian music, together with Debussy, having the desire to keep an ideal of beauty untouched in its different manifestations.

## References

- <sup>1</sup> It is obvious that this influence had happened through Lyatoshynsky's teacher Reinhold Glière whose imitation of the Scriabin's manner was an expressive style component. In 1910 Glière graduated from Moscow Conservatory and his stay in the music atmosphere of Moscow was a determinant in that aspect.
- <sup>2</sup> The folklore source is a song *Oij ne zhal' meni ta ni na koho* (I don't regret whom).
- <sup>3</sup> There is used a melody of the folk song *Oji Mykyto, Mykyto*.

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## Santrauka

Tarp daugelio kitų įvairios kilmės meno krypčių impresionizmas suteikė ypatingą, savitą atspalvį XX a. pradžios Ukrainos muzikai. Giedra, gyvenimo džiaugsmu spinduliuojanti impresionistinė muzika pasirodė itin artima vitališkumui trykštantiems to meto menininkams, atliepė jų džiaugsmingą sujudimą, tikėjimą ateitimi XX a. ketvirto dešimtmečio pradžioje, kol ji pakirto netrukus prasidėjęs „masinio intelektualinimo procesas“ (pasak Hryhorijaus Kasjanovo).

Išanalizavus kai kuriuos minėtų ukrainiečių kompozitorių kūrinis galima tvirtinti, kad perimtos impresionizmo įtakos juose buvo derinamos su nacionalinės muzikos tradicijomis. Visą šį asimiliacijos procesą, prasidėjusį dar romantizmo estetikos aplinkoje, lydėjo gana aktyvios naujų išraiškos priemonių paieškos, atsinaujinantis muzikinis mąstymas, augantis kompozitorių dėmesys garso spalvai, greitai kintančioms nuotaikoms ir muzikos tėkmės statiškumui. Kaip Claude'as Debussy, savo kūryboje aukščiausiu meniniu idealu laikydami grožį, kad ir kokios skirtingos būtų pasirinktos išraiškos formos, minėti kompozitoriai svariai praturtino Ukrainos muziką ir paspartino jos raidą. Nusistovėjo tokia šio reiškinio periodizacija: 1900–1920 m. vyko tonacinės sistemos, harmonijos, faktūros atsinaujinimas remiantis romantine tradicija; 1920–1930 m. impresionizmas ėmė sąveikauti su kitais stiliais – ekspresionizmu, neoklasicizmu, folklorizmu; 1960–1990 m. atgavinta amžiaus pradžios tradicija, bet tuo pat metu formavosi nauja srovė, kurioje tradicinės impresionizmo išraiškos priemonės jungiamos su sonorizmu, aleatorika, puantilizmu ir minimalizmu.