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The Foundation of Sacred Music within the Framework of Jāzeps Vītols' Musical Creativity¹

Sakralinės muzikos įsitvirtinimas Jāzepo Vītolio muzikinės kūrybos kontekste

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Abstract

Jāzeps Vītols – one of the greatest Latvian composers – is also known as an important person in Latvian social life, a talented teacher, an authority as the head of the Latvian Academy of Music, Latvian National Opera and many artistic associations in Latvia, as well as in the Russian Empire. He is one of the first Latvian composers who worked in the field of sacred music with great variety and intensity. Reviewing his contribution, a broad field for research appears – both his active practical work, as well as the theoretical and even the philosophically theological conclusions he left, and, of course, his extensive oeuvre in various church music genres. Still, even when not considering the broad range and confirmed historical significance of the artistic work, the aforementioned field has still not been analysed in detail, and this article provides an important contribution for a common panorama of Vītols' creativity. The principle aim of the paper is to show and reveal how the Vītols' creativity in sacred music flourished and gradually overshadowed practically all other fields.

Keywords: Sacred genres, church music, Latvian music, Lutheran church, Jāzeps Vītols.

Anotacija

Jāzeps Vītols – ne tik vienas žymiausių Latvijos kompozitorių, bet ir svarbus visuomenės veikėjas, talentingas pedagogas, vienas iš šalies kultūrinio gyvenimo autoritetų, vadovavęs Latvijos muzikos akademijai, Latvijos nacionalinei operai bei daugeliui kitų Latvijos ir Rusijos imperijos meno organizacijų. Norint įvertinti jo indėlį, būtina apžvelgti daugelį sričių: aktyvią praktinę veiklą, paliktas teorines bei filosofines įžvalgas ir, žinoma, gausią, įvairius religinės muzikos žanrus aprėpiančią kūrybą. Vis dėlto, nepaisant meninės kūrybos įvairiapusiškumo ir pripažintos jos vertės, ši J. Vītolio veiklos sritis nebuvo išsamiai aprašyta. Taigi šis straipsnis reikšmingai prisideda pateikiant visą šio didžio latvių kompozitoriaus kūrybos panoramą. Pagrindinis rašinio tikslas yra parodyti, kaip J. Vītolio kūrybingumas išsiskleidė jo religinėje muzikoje ir palengva tiesiog užgožė kitas veiklas.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: sakralinės muzikos žanrai, bažnytinė muzika, Latvijos muzika, liuteronų bažnyčia, Jāzeps Vītols.

Introduction

Jāzeps Vītols is one of the greatest Latvian composers, a founder of the Latvian Conservatory (today – the Academy of Music), and one of the most important teachers of composition, who in his own creative works tried to achieve a perfect structure and a high artistic level of expression and asked the same of his students. During his active life, Vītols demonstrated his versatile talent in many other spheres: he was a rector of the Latvian Conservatory and a head of the Latvian National Opera from its very beginning. His authority was welcomed in many artistic associations at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, for example, as a member of the well-known music score publisher, Imperial Russian philanthropist and *meloman* Mitrofan Belyayev's "Fridays' coterie/group", a member of the University of Latvia Student Fraternity "Fraternitas Lataviensis", the Latvian Conservatory's Student Fraternity "Līgusoņi", the founder of the first society of Latvian composers – "Skaņražu kopa" (literally: a "group of music makers"), etc.

Consequently, Vītols, working in the field of sacred music, manifested himself with great variety and intensity. Reviewing his contribution, a broad field for research appears – both his active practical work, as well as the theoretical and even the philosophically theological conclusions he left, and, of course, his extensive oeuvre in various church music genres. Still, even when not considering the broad range and confirmed historical significance of the artistic work, the aforementioned field has still not been analysed in detail. Therefore, the principal aim of my research is to reveal these many-sided contributions and to proclaim Vītols as a founder of sacred music in Latvia.

Between sacred music history and practice

When considering Vītols' practical input in the field of sacred music, we first refer to the *Baznīcas mūzikas vēstures* (*Church Music History*) lectures at the Faculty of Theology of the University of Latvia, which were given periodically between 1926 and

1936 (Vītols 1964/1999: 80–81)². The collection of five notebooks of conspectuses, made while preparing for the above-mentioned lectures have not been published, and to this day remain in the archives of the Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music.

The composer's theoretical observations and conclusions about the history of sacred music and problems are periodically reflected in the press of his time as well. In this context, one has to admit that Vītols was one of the first who attempted to differentiate the various kinds of terminology that was in use during his time for the synonymous description of *sacred music* in Latvian musicology, attempting to clarify and systemize church music genres, as well as forming his own view on the varied history of church music.

A vivid and significant example of this journalism practise was written in 1928. Observing the development of sacred music in his article "Our church music" in the newspaper *Burtnieks*, Vītols notes that:

... after J.S. Bach, a masterful high quality sacred music gradually moved from church vaults to concert halls, leaving behind only inessential, formally stale remnants, and therefore it is time to work on artistically wholesome liturgy reconstruction and renovation.³ (Vītols 1928: 682)

His sacred large-scale works and miniatures completely confirm this position as well as reflect his ideas, intentions and expectations. The above-mentioned thesis by Vītols could be perceived as a *credo* of his creativity which also was transferred to future generations – not only among composers, but among other musicians and Lutheran pastors – his ex-students, and vividly expressed not only in the field of church music, but in greater and smaller concert halls as well.

As a result, under his professional supervision an entire generation of musically educated Lutheran pastors grew. In close collaboration with many of them, Vītols attempted to musically supplement, enrich and thereby reform the liturgy of overly German chorales used by the Lutheran church in Latvia, writing and arranging compositions for certain liturgical sections, vespers, cantatas,⁴ etc. He also took part in the first experiment with his ex-student and the Dean of the Kuldīga Lutheran Church Oskars Kārlis Sakārnis in preparing the Riga Radiophone translation of the two hour Easter Sunday service in 1935 from Kuldīga (a small town in the district of Kurzeme in the west of Latvia) church. Vītols' music was performed in various ways – as harmonisations of chorales, liturgical responses by the parish, choir songs and, at the end of ceremony, the cantata *Jesus by the Well*. As we know, these days it is a common tradition to see and to listen to a Sunday service on TV or radio. Vītols is considered to be the initiator of this tradition in Latvia.

The panorama of musical works

In the context of the composer's creative work in the religious genres, developed sacred compositions are woven throughout the entirety of Vītols' career – there are opuses with varied levels of difficulty and types of performers. The appearance of the religious genres in Vītols' creative works happened with chronologically fateful succession. Initially, his favoured form of expression was the **choir song** – in 1886, not long before completing studies at the St. Petersburg Conservatory under Professor Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, he composes the heartfelt miniature for mixed choir *Lūgšana (A Prayer)* with text by Russian poet Mikhail Lermontov. In turn, he also ended his creative work in the same way – at the end of his career in exile he composed religious patriotic miniatures.

From the 1910s, the choir music genre is supplemented by **chorale arrangements**. A serious and thorough effort was invested in the creation of music that was appropriate for church ceremonies – for example, *A Songbook for Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Congregations (Meldīju grāmata Latvijās evaņģēliski luteriskajām draudzēm)*, was published already in 1924. This book consists of Vītols' composed chorales as well as harmonisations and arrangements of well-known German Lutheran chorales. It is notable that Vītols' final compositions are more resigned patriotic chorale arrangements too:

- *When my Life's Sea is Covered by Thick Fog / Kad dziļa migla manu dzīves jūru sedz*, chorale arrangement S, A, violin and organ; traditional text, trans. by Teodors Grīnbergs; 1945.
- *A Latvian's Prayer, Roaming a Foreign Land / Latviešu lūgšana, svešumā kļīstot*, choral arrangement for mixed choir, text by Ella Verle-Andersons; 1945.
- *Great God, Who is Chosen by the Soul / Dievs augstais, dvēšles izredzētais*, chorale for three female voices, traditional chorale text for three women's voices; 1946.

Consequently, in the 1920s, religious art songs appear. Then, a vocal-instrumental combination of all three genres appears in the 1930s and 1940s in two liturgies, a vesper, as well as nine cantatas, Bible stories and oratorio type works. We should also note Vītols' time in exile, when the composer's searches focused on more specific liturgical music, and, for the first time in the history of Latvian religious music, an Evangelical Lutheran Church vesper cycle was created.

Reviewing the composer's activities, as well as evaluating the analysis of the compositional regularity of the most vivid opuses, a vital conclusion can be formed. During the composer's life, the curve of the

Table 1. A perspective of sacred genres in Jāzeps Vītols' creation's chronological output

Sacred genres	1880s	1890s	Early 1900s	1910s	1920s	1930s	1940s
Choir song							
Chorale, chant							
Art song							
Cantata, Bible scene							
Liturgy, vespers							
Oratorio							

development of his religious works forms as a long *crescendo* wave with a culmination at the end of his creative activity, when the greatest sacred music genre diversity and quantity can be observed (see Table 1):

Sacred music genres review

When reviewing Vītols' musical oeuvre, the field of sacred choir music becomes the most significant, quantitatively important as well as intensively developed sphere. For example, a choir miniature in the field of sacred music stands out as a basic and, at the same time, a more experimental genre. A development of this genre, with more than 40 compositions, forms the most extensive evolution. In the common context of sacred works by Vītols, covering more than 60 music pieces, it is two thirds of the entire output – a very impressive part of his sacred music creativity.

His favourite title in choir songs is *lūgšana*, *lūgšana*, *lūgums* (which could be translated as a *prayer*, a *plea*, an *invocation*). As mentioned before, his first sacred composition appeared while still a student – *A Prayer* for mixed choir with texts by Lermontov. After that was the more popular prayer – *A Plea to God* (1904) with texts by Augusts Kažoks and many other prayers:

- *A Prayer / Lūgšana* for mixed choir; text by M. Lermontov; 1886
- *A Plea to God / Dieva lūgums* for mixed/men's choir; text by A. Kažoks; 1904
- *A Latvian Prayer, Roaming a Foreign Land / Lūgšana latvietim, svešumā klistot* for mixed choir; text by E. Verle-Andersone; 1945
- *Let a Keen Prayer Rise / Lai kvēla lūgšana ceļas* for mixed choir; text by O. Vainags, (s.a.⁵)
- *A Small Person's Evening Prayer / Mazā cilvēka vakara lūgšana*; art song, Op. 58; text by F. Bārda; 1921, etc.

This list of prayers is supplemented by other compositions, the titles of which do not include the word

“prayer”, however the texts consist of an invocation to God:

- *Don't Let Me Drop in the People's Hands, Oh Lord / Neliec, Kungs, jel krist man ļaužu rokās* for mixed choir; Gerok-Neiken; 1894
- *Pelegrin's Night Song (You, who live in the sky) / Gājēja dziesma naktī* for mixed choir / also exists as an art song, W. Goete - J. Alunāns; 1899
- *God, Dear Father / Dievs, mīlais tētiņ* for female choir, R. Bērziņš; 1925
- *You, Who Live In Celestial Glory / Tu, kas debess godā mīti* for mixed choir, K. Jēkabsons; 1927
- *High God, Chosen By My Soul / Dievs augstais, dvēšles izredzētais* for female choir; 1946
- *Praised is the Highest God / Slavēts Dievs Visaugstākais* for mixed choir, S. Dies (s.a.)
- *Bless, God, This Mother Land / Svētī, Dievs, šo zemi dzimto* for mixed choir, L. Bērziņš (s.a.)

Contextually calm and bright choir music is renewed by several sacred choir compositions, created in the 1930s that, in terms of compositional proficiency, became a climax of this sphere:

- *David In Front of Saul / Dāvids Zaula priekšā* for mixed choir, F. Bārda; 1928
- *Dies irae* for men's choir, V. Plūdonis; 1930
- *Rekvīems/ Requiem* for men's choir, R. Bebrs; 1933

In Latvian music Jāzeps Vītols is known as a master of the **choir ballad** genre. The choir ballad stylistics with narrative elements, epic painting, high dramatic rises and romantic tempestuousness now appeared in the religious sphere. For example, the surreal choir ballad for mixed choir *a cappella* – *David in Front of Saul* (1928) – we could perceive this ballad as the beginning of the Bible scene genre in Latvian music.

However, Vītols wasn't the first composer of a Bible scene in Latvian music, as Andrejs Jurjāns in 1881 wrote his first cantata *A Feast of Belzatsar (Belzacara dzīres)* as his St. Petersburg Conservatory graduation work.

Tranquillo

Figure 2. Vītolis' *A Ray of a Peace*, organ part introduction

Andantino

Figure 3. Vītolis' *To God – Redeemer*, organ introduction

figure – *passus duriusculus*, that here is in the middle register and, when influenced by romantic harmony, is transformed into an expression of elegiac suffering and melancholy. As we know, this type of visualization of a shining star became important during 20th century music – in musical works by Ligeti, Tavener, Gorecki as well as among Latvian composers such as Ēriks Ešenvalds (b. 1977) and Rihards Dubra (b. 1964).

The next vivid example of descriptive visualization of this particular content is the art song *To God – Redeemer / Liberator* (*Dievam – atsvabinātājam*; text by Kārlis Ieviņš, 1928; see Figure 3). This composition impresses with its emotional straightforwardness and expressiveness that the composer, in an uncharacteristic manner, uses in the field of sacred music. It is confirmed in the instrumental introduction of this song – the eight bars of pedal point on *D* express all the ideas of this song. The pedal point is perceived as a foundation, basis, and even more – as a personification

of eternity and God himself. Normally, it seems that when using the pedal point, the harmony development is limited. However, it is quite the opposite – this method became a peculiar impulse for the composer's own independence. As a result, within the short prelude the composer makes five (!) digressions, constantly balancing between G major, D major, E minor and B minor. Therefore, the pedal tone that initially seems to be very restrictive and limiting, in reality provides a great support and addition, which allows it to be free. Contextually, this music example could be considered as the interrelations between God and a believer that are reflected in text. As we know, the further development of sacred music (particularly by sacred minimalism composers such as Pärt, Tavener, as well as many contemporary Latvian composers), perceives and uses the idea of pedal tone similarly, however – more intensively and deeply – as the personification and the presence of God within a composition.

The amplitude of the sacred genre has been significantly expanded by **large-scale scores**, including liturgical genres by Vītols. It is notable that they were all composed to be premiered during a church service and also make an important practical contribution. In creating compositions suitable for liturgy and ritual, the composer collaborated with many Lutheran church pastors as previously mentioned.

With this in mind, it is necessary to point out that Jāzeps Vītols was *the first professional Latvian composer*, who, though not involved in one particular church's activities, was not afraid to help and tried to improve the status of Lutheran church music. The issue of church music development had occupied the composer's mind also in his time in exile. In collaboration with other ex-students, as well as Lutheran pastor Ernests Sarkanbārdis, the first cycle of Lutheran vespers was created – for celebrant, parish, and organ – with *ordinarium* and *proprium* (or changeable) movements, depending on the phase of the church year. As Sarkanbārdis has admitted, an important new contribution in this cycle was pronunciation and accents according to the Latvian language. Although this cycle was performed at Christmas in 1946, in the Latvian refugee camp in Greven, Germany, unfortunately, the score was lost.

Vītols' non-liturgical sphere of vocal instrumental music is made of nine opuses: one oratorio, a Bible scene and seven cantatas. Particularly notable is the genre choice and some kind of genre *alternation, variability* and even a *mixture* of cantata, oratorio, *Bible scene* and liturgical drama; there is a sort of synthetic genre that today has various interpretations – as a mini opera scene or medieval liturgical drama, a static concert performance or as a supplement to a Lutheran church service. However, specific immanent lines of each genre here are not as clearly expressed and therefore can be discussed. As a result, many other cantatas and even the first oratorio work in Latvian music – Vītols' *Jesus in Nazareth* – could be considered as Bible scenes:

- *From a Forbidden Tree / No atzišanas koka* cantata for mixed choir, symphonic orchestra; V. Plūdonis; 1924
- *Sermon on the Mount / Kalna sprediķis* cantata for Bar, mixed choir, organ; 1935
- *Jesus by the Well / Jēzus pie akas* Bible scene, STB, mixed choir, organ.; O. Sakārnis and Holy Scriptures; 1935
- *Maria and Martha / Marija un Marta* cantata for SATB, mixed choir, organ; L. Bērziņš and Holy Scriptures; 1937
- *Jesus and the Sinner Woman / Jēzus un grēciniece* cantata for STBar, mixed choir, organ; L. Bērziņš; 1937
- *Cantata / Kantāte* for Bar, mixed choir, organ; E. Bergs and Holy Scriptures; 1937
- *For Consecration / Iesvētīšanai* cantata for female choir and organ; J. Kleinbergs; 1939

- *Jesus in Nazareth / Jēzus Nācētē* oratorio for STBarB, mixed choir and organ; K. Jēkabsons; 1942
- *Water of Life / Dzīvības ūdens* cantata for STB, mixed choir, organ.

Observations and remarks

When reviewing these scores, which, though many of them are not often performed, one has to point out some significant features that explain and justify the style of composing that is unusual for Professor Vītols: the choice of performers and music material.

First of all, despite his education and high ideals in music, particularly in the field of sacred and church music, the composer was **looking for suitability**. Very important factors for sacred compositions included: an appropriate ensemble, performance time / duration, and the level of difficulty of the musical language for a church performance, which were dependant on traditions and the audience – a parish. An appropriate selection ensures the natural inclusion of the musical piece in the ceremony.

However, as mentioned before, Vītols also created sacred non-liturgical music as well – which is very well known, emotionally expressive and performed rather often. In that way, one can see a broad range of music and genres among his sacred compositions – beginning with simple chorale arrangements and ending with refined (in a musical language sense) solo songs, sophisticated ballads or expansive vocal-instrumental opuses.

The second notable feature regards the principal mood of vocal-instrumental scores and their so-called **attempted emotionality** – a mostly narrative proclamation with an emphasis on prominence of positive radiation from the image of Christ, and a kind of distancing of the author's personal attitude. This opens up the possibility to interpret the relatively objectively created score, depending on the performing conditions by adding emotional subjectivity.

Thirdly, regarding vocal as well as choral music, an important role belongs to **text and verses**. The composer shows interest in the sacred texts of various Latvian poets (including Kārlis Jēkabsons, Fricis Bārda, Kārlis Skalbe, Jānis Kleinbergs, Kārlis Ieviņš, Teodors, Andrejs Pumpurs, Vensku Edvards), as well as foreign poets (Goethe, von Gerok, Held, Lermontov etc.). The composer also shows his preference for traditional religious texts – fragments from the Old and New Testaments, psalms and chorales. The assistance of Evangelical Lutheran Church ministers in arranging the verses requires a closer link to the traditions and canons of this confession.

And fourth, the ability to create a composition, which is *suitable to the potential of performers* (this mainly refers to congregation choirs and organists) that may not always be technically the most appropriate and, during the premiere, the most convincing artistically. The composer, being a very delicate connoisseur of the late-romantic style and new techniques, would appear to be fully prepared for these creation circumstances and, with just a few bars is able to show his independent and original *creativity*. For example, the complex and colourful harmony of the organ part in the oratorio and in the cantata “For Consecration”. In general, the texture of Vītols’ sacred works is responsorial, creating a form of dialogue between the soloists and the choir, as well as a block chord texture – occasionally refreshing it with counterpoint fragments. The usage of organ is mostly parsimonious and reserved – it performs an arrangement function with more visible colouristic individual solo episodes.

Vītols’ Latvian sacred music composers’ school

A question appears at the end of this article regarding the composer’s school and successors in the perspective of this sacred sphere. The changing of generations happened in a very difficult historical period for Latvia. Beginning in 1944, Latvian culture, including music, underwent not only a geographical, but also a thematic separation. In other words, music was developed within two separate realms or territories – composers, who lived in the territory of Soviet Latvia, and composers, who, owing to the political situation in 1944, had emigrated to other countries. This fact directly affected not just the state of sacred music, but all Latvian music culture – many very intelligent and talented people were forced to emigrate and continue their musical activities in so-called exile or had to keep silent in the sacred music sphere within the framework of the Soviet Union system. Therefore, all of Vītols’ Latvian students are divided into two groups.

The first group includes composers, who stayed in their homeland and, until 1943, had shown some kind of interest in sacred genres in their early compositions, but later they practically stopped composing sacred music⁶:

- **Lūcija Garūta** (1902–1977)
cantata *God, Your Land is Burning!*, 1943
- **Ādolfs Skulte** (1909–2000)
choral *Come to the Cross with Your Suffering / Nāc pie krusta savās bēdās*, s.a.

- **Jēkabs Graubiņš** (1886–1961)
A Prayer for men’s choir, 1938
Send me your Angel / Savu eņģeli man sūti for mixed choir (text by Tīrzmaliete), 1925
- **Leonīds Vīgners** (1906–2003)
Ave Maria for female choir, s.a.
Eternal / Mūžīgais solo with piano (text by Jānis Ziemeļnieks), s.a.
- **Jānis Ivanovs** (1906–1983)
Cantus monodicus. Gloria vocalise for mixed choir, 1979
A Prayer for men’s choir, 1938

In the second group there are composers who emigrated in 1944 from the territory of Latvia. Actually, every composer who lived abroad, feeling homesick, longing for relief, shelter and peace, seeking for some kind of eternal homeland and refuge, focused on sacred music genres and themes. Many of them also started to work in different churches – particularly in North America – the USA and Canada. Therefore, sacred music became a main activity – *bread and butter* for these composers. They could continue and develop the sphere of sacred music voluntarily and freely, enriched it with choir and vocal compositions, as well as large-scale works. So, a *taboo* on and a deficit of sacred music in Soviet Latvia was offset by the composers in exile, most of whom had found their refuge and work under the auspices of churches in democratic countries. We can observe this situation in the musical oeuvre of Vītols himself – he was also forced to emigrate and ended his compositional journey in Germany – Lübeck, where, during 1944–1948, he had been writing and arranging the above-mentioned chorales and vespers.

His most fruitful period of sacred music creation coincided with exile, as Vītols commented in one letter to his choir singer Paul Kunstmann in 1946:

... I’m very glad, that I’m honoured with commissions from holy priests: one needs new liturgy, other – even a whole oratorio. Within these works there isn’t much opportunity to create something truly new, but sacred music, in my opinion, has its own peculiar style, specifics, that are understandable for everyone. Nevertheless, hopefully these sounds could make someone else happy. Maybe it will seem like I want to earn “a golden chair in heaven” in my old age. However, it will not forgive my sins, which are like sand in the sea.⁷ (Vītols 1963/1999: 69)

Among these exile-composers I first should mention **Bruno Skulte** (1905–1976; the eldest brother of composer Ādolfs Skulte, who remained in Soviet Latvia) who, while living in the USA, created almost

40 sacred compositions – most of them are for different types of choir or art songs, but also some cantatas. The most popular is the cantata based on the politically and historically fateful poem⁸ by Andrejs Eglītis *God, Your Land is Burning! / Dievs, Tava zeme deg!* – Latvians' prayer for SATB, mixed choir, orchestra and organ (1950).

The next important composer is **Jānis Kalniņš** (1904–2000) – the son of the composer Alfrēds Kalniņš (1879–1951); he also remained in Soviet Latvia and therefore was tragically separated from his son. He developed sacred music in Canada mostly in the sacred cantata and oratorio genres, but overall created more than 20 different sacred compositions, among which the best known are:

- *When Jesus come to Birmingham / Kad Jēzus nāca uz Birminghamu* for 9-voice mixed choir, text by G.A. Studert-Kennedy, 1951
- *Symphony of Beautitudes / Svētlaimības simfonija* for B, mixed choir, symphony orchestra, 1953
- *Potter's Field / Asins tīrums* cantata for T, mixed choir, piano/organ/symphonic orchestra, text from Holy Scriptures and by John Oxenham, 1953

We should also mention **Viktors Baštiks** (1912–2001), while living in Great Britain and the USA, composed about three hundred (!) different sacred compositions, and **Tāivaldis Ķeniņš** (1919–2008), living in Canada, was very active in this sphere – he composed more than 30 sacred compositions for different performers:

- *A Prayer for Latvia / Lūgšana Latvijai* cantata for men's choir and organ, verses by Andrejs Eglītis, 1951
- *Daniel / Praviētis Daniēls* oratorio-Bible scene for ABar, men's choir, organ, 1956
- *Psalm 65* for solo and piano, 1959
- *Psalm 150* for mixed choir, 1970, etc.

Conclusions

The contribution of Jāzeps Vītols within the framework of Latvian sacred music is not just simply obvious. The role of his multiple activities within this sphere is itself worth noting, and does not require a context of many other activities and responsibilities. It is important to first point out the uniqueness of his action – Vītols was the first professional composer, who gave so much of his attention to this field of music. The levels of this attention were different and dependant on the functions of the sacred music in each specific case (dedication, liturgy, concert, religious verses etc.).

Being a highly-educated professional composer, Vītols was able to *descend from the heights of his artistic flight* and create not only very sophisticated and complicated sacred compositions (that he of course did), but also simple, even elementary music pieces for amateur church choirs, as well as making chorale and traditional songs arrangements for parishes as well. As a result, the composer created a strong foundation for Latvian-composed church music. Along with this achievement, he has worked on and developed a rather new genre in Latvian sacred music history – a Bible scene, that includes genres features of a cantata, a chorale, a motet, an oratorio, an art song, an organ pre-, post-, and interludes etc., and is able to be included within a framework of the ceremony of the Lutheran liturgy, as well as in a concert programme.

Being a very busy professor and rector of the Latvian Conservatory, Vītols still agreed to lecture at the University of Latvia on the subject of Church music history, which was, initially, a completely new and unknown *terra incognita* for him. However, working with high returns and sense of responsibility, he revealed for himself a new sphere of work. Excellent observations, revealing the errors, imperfections and so-called *blankspots*, which he felt a duty to address and point out to young Lutheran church pastors – his students. As a result, collaborating with a new generation of Lutheran pastors, Vītols could achieve great results and deal with deeply vital questions and problems, first of them was the Latvianization of German chants, chorales and liturgy singing, liturgy translations on Radio, and press publications.

This active and prolific work did not go unnoticed by Vītols' composition students – the most prominent of them continued to develop these ideas in the territory of Latvia, but especially intensively – in *exile Latvia* – working within churches and supplementing the absence of religious music genres in the homeland. As a result, the great example of working in the field of sacred music by Vītols himself developed into a compositional school, whose *fruits* are still topical and important today.

References

- ¹ This topics was first presented at the International Conference, dedicated to Jāzeps Vītols' 150th anniversary in October 2013, in Rīga, at the Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music. Then, an article in Latvian was published ("The (Re)View of the Sacred Music of Jāzeps Vītols"; see Jonāne 2016). This is an expanded English version of mentioned article focusing mainly on the sacred music school foundation and its followers as well.

- ² His lectures were given during the following study years: 1926/1927, 1928/1929, and in the longer period of 1931-1936.
- ³ ... mākslinieciski augstvērtīga reliģiskā mūzika pēc J. S. Baha darbības perioda no baznīcas velvēm pakāpeniski pārcēlusies uz koncertzālēm, atstājot baznīcas liturģijai tikai maznozīmīgas, formāli sastingušas paliekas, un tāpēc ir laiks strādāt mākslinieciski pilnvērtīgas liturģijas atjaunošanai un radīšanai.
- ⁴ Regarding these musical pieces, please see below.
- ⁵ *Sine anno* – creating year is not known.
- ⁶ Only the most significant sacred music examples are mentioned for each composer.
- ⁷ ... priecājos, ka mani ar saviem pasūtītajumiem pagodina svētie vīri: tam vajadzīga jauna liturģija, citam – vai pat vesela oratorija. Daudz jauna jau nevar tādos darbos nodibināt, garīgi mūzikai, pēc manas pārlicības, pieder savs īpatnējs stils, visiem saprotams vienkāršums. Bet varbūt kādu citu šīs skaņas tomēr iepriecinās. Gan izskatīsies tā, ka ar to vecuma dienās gribētu vēl izpelnīties “zelta krēslu debesīs”. Bet tie manus grēkus, kas kā smiltis jūrā, vairs atsvērt nevarēs.
- ⁸ The dramatically fateful poem *God, Your Land is Burning!*, written by poet Andrejs Eglītis had inspired three composers during a short but very tragic period of time for Latvians: the above-mentioned Lūcija Garūta wrote a cantata with this poetry in 1943 in the territory of Latvia, then in 1950 his own large-scale interpretation of this text was created by Bruno Skulte. And the third composer was Tālvāldis Ķeniņš, who used this text for his cantata *A Prayer for Latvia* in 1951.

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Santrauka

Jāzepo Vītolio veikla religinės muzikos srityje buvo labai intensyvi ir įvairiapusiška. Norint įvertinti jo indėlį, būtina apžvelgti daugelį sričių: aktyvią praktinę veiklą, paliktas teorines bei filosofines įžvalgas ir, žinoma, gausią, įvairius religinės muzikos žanrus aprėpiančią kūrybą. Vis dėlto, nepaisant meninės kūrybos įvairiapusiškumo ir pripažintos jos vertės, ši J. Vītolio veiklos sritis nebuvo išsamiai aprašyta. Aptariant praktinę J. Vītolio veiklą religinės muzikos srityje, pirmiausia minėtinos 1926–1936 m. reguliariai skaitomos religinės muzikos istorijos paskaitos Latvijos universiteto Teologijos fakultete. J. Vītolis buvo pirmas, kuris atsidėjo rimtam ir kruopščiam darbui kuriant muziką bažnytinei liturģijai. Buvo išleistas Latvijos evangelikų liuteronų bendruomenei skirtas giesmynas (1924), parašyta muzikos kai kurioms liturģinėms apeigoms, giesmių mišparams, kantatų ir pan.

Teorinės kompozitoriaus įžvalgos ir mintys apie religinės muzikos istoriją ir aktualijas nuolat pasirodydavo to meto spaudoje, taip pat buvo surinkti penki sąsiuviniai užrašų, parengtų ruošiantis paskaitoms minėtame Teologijos fakultete. J. Vītolis pirmasis pabandė atskirti įvairius to meto latvių muzikologijoje gyvavusius terminus religinei muzikai apibūdinti, siekė patikslinti ir susisteminti religinės muzikos žanrus, suformulavo savo požiūrį į sudėtingą religinės muzikos istoriją.

Kompozitorius parašė įvairaus sudėtingumo ir įvairioms atlikėjų sudėtims skirtų kūrinių religinėmis temomis. Visoje J. Vītolio kūryboje gausu tiek religinės muzikos, tiek labiau pasaulietinių kūrinių. Religinės muzikos žanrai kompozitoriaus kūryboje pasirodydavo dėsninga chronologine seka. Iš pradžių jo mėgstamiausia muzikinė forma buvo chorinės dainos, jos taip pat ir užbaigia Vītolio kūrybinį kelią.

Nuo XX a. 2-ojo dešimtmečio chorinę muziką papildė ne tik choralų aranžuotės, bet ir originalūs šio žanro kūriniai. Trečiajame dešimtmetyje pasirodo bažnytinės solo giesmės. Ketvirtajame ir 5-ajame dešimtmetyje kompozitorius ima derinti visus tris žanrus vokalinėse-instrumentinėse kompozicijose, parašo dvi-ias mišias, mišparus, devynias kantatas, bibliinių istorijų ir oratorijos tipo kompozicijų. Reikėtų paminėti tremtyje praleistą laiką, kai kompozitorius labiau susitelkė į liturģinę muziką, ir pirmą kartą Latvijos religinės muzikos istorijoje buvo parašytas evangelikų liuteronų mišparų giesmių ciklas. Apžvelgus J. Vītolio kūrybą ir apibendrinus ryškiausių veikalų kompozicinės sąrangos analizę, galima suformuluoti keletą išvadų. Per visą gyvenimą sukurtą religinę muziką galima palyginti su ilgu *crescendo*, kurio kulminacija – J. Vītolio kūrybinio

kelio pabaiga, pasižyminti bažnytinės muzikos gausa ir žanrų įvairove.

Kompozitorių įkvėpė ne tik įvairių Latvijos poetų (K. Jēkabsono, F. Bārdos, K. Skalbe, J. Kleinbergo, K. Ieviņio, A. Pumpuro ir kt.) eilės religine tematika, bet ir tradiciniai religiniai tekstai – Senojo ir Naujojo Testamento ištraukos bei choralai. Bendradarbiaudamas su pastoriais, J. Vītolis priartino poeziją prie evangelikų liuteronų tradicijų ir kanonų. Bažnytinei muzikai ypač svarbūs tokie aspektai kaip tinkamas ansamblis, atlikimo laikas ir atlikimui bažnyčioje pritaikytas sudėtingumo lygis, atitinkantis atlikėjų profesinį pasirengimą. Tinkamai atsižvelgus į šiuos aspektus, kūrinys natūraliai įsilieja į apeigas, o bažnyčios choras galės jį deramai atlikti. Dėl to J. Vītolio kūrybiniame palikime rasime įvairiausių žanrų religinės muzikos – nuo paprastų choralo aranžuotų iki sudėtingų (muzikinės kalbos atžvilgiu) solo giesmių ar stambių vokalinių-instrumentinių veikalų.

Aktyvi, vaisinga maestro veikla neliko nepastebėta J. Vītolio kompozicijos studentų. Kartų kaita vyko istoriškai itin sudėtingu Latvijai laikui. Nuo 1944-ųjų Latvijos kultūra, taip pat ir muzikinė, išgyveno ne tik geografinį, bet ir tematinį padalijimą. Kitaip tariant, to laiko muzika buvo sukurta dviejose atskirose teritorijose – Sovietų Latvijoje gyvenusių kompozitorių ir dėl politinių įvykių emigracijoje atsidūrusių kompozitorių. Todėl ir J. Vītolio studentai sudaro dvi grupes. Į pirmąją patenka Tėvynėje likę muzikai (Lūcija Garūta, Leonīdas Vīgneris, Jēkabs Graubiņis, Jānis Ivanovas), ankstyvuojų kūrybos laikotarpiu, iki 1943-ųjų, šiek tiek rašę religinės muzikos, bet paskui beveik jos nekūrę. Tačiau latvių egzodo kompozitoriai (Bruno Skulte, Jānis Kalniņis, Tāļivaldis Čeniņis, Viktoras Baštikas ir kt.), aktyviai darbavęsi bažnyčiose, užpildė religinės muzikos spragą gimtinėje. Taigi Jāzeps Vītolis veikla religinės muzikos srityje suformavo kompozicinę mokyklą, kurios vaisiai aktualūs bei svarbūs ir šiais laikais.