

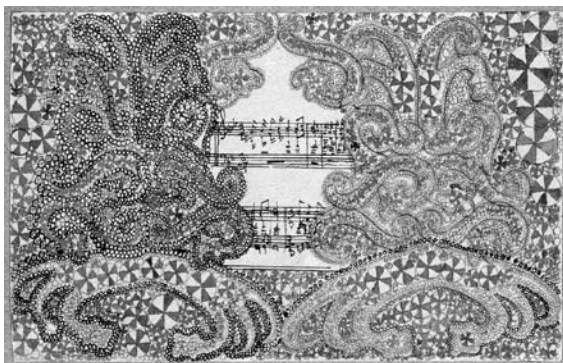
## A Sketch of Art Nouveau Signs in M. K. Čiurlionis' Music

Examining M. K. Čiurlionis' paintings and music scores more than once one gets the impression that ornament is important in his work. Although ornamentation as a theory and practice is not something that was discovered during Čiurlionis' lifetime it was made significant by the system of modern art style where it became an active part of stylistics at the end of the 19th and the beginning of 20th century. This component was also approved by Ferdynand Ruszczyk, Ksaverij Dunikowski, Konrad Krzyżanowski, teachers at the Warsaw Art School, who took their works to the secession exhibitions in Vienna, and at the same time taught it at school. From that time elements of ornament appeared on Čiurlionis' canvases and in music, never leaving them later. Aleksis Rannit in his paper *M. K. Čiurlionis. Pionier de l'art abstrait* delivered at the Second International Art Critics Congress in Paris in 1949 emphasised the links of Čiurlionis' paintings with modern art. In Soviet times Mindaugas Nasvytis (1972), Jonas Umbrasas (1975, 1977) Jarmila Doubravová from Czech (1995), also John E. Bowlt (1986), Christoph Brockhaus (Brockhaus, 1987, p. 590), Renate Heidt-Heller (Heidt-Heller, 1989, p. 9) and other art critics also observed such links.

Rasa Andriušytė-Žukienė has discovered the first ornaments in Čiurlionis' drawing sketches. For instance, she found stylised floral forms on the cover of the book *Poezys* in the 1903–1904 book of sketches.<sup>1</sup> Graphic ornaments – carefully drawn in a thin line sketches of spray, pearls, fish scales, stars, waves or clouds, lilies, tulips, thin nets etc. are widely used in sonata cycles and works done in St Petersburg such as *Sonata of the Sun* (Andante and Scherzo), *Sonata of the Spring*, *Sonata of the Summer*, *Sonata of the Sea* (Allegro, Finale), *Kings' Fairy Tale*, the triptych *Fantasy*, *Offering*, *Altar*, *Noah's Ark*, *Sonata of the Pyramids*, *Rex*. Nevertheless, the apogee of the numerous ornaments must have been reached by Čiurlionis on book covers and vignettes (incidentally, a rather popular genre of secession art form) as well as in drawings of initials. It seems that the vignettes created by Čiurlionis were pervaded by his preference for secession-style planes or decorated lines or by the passion for ornamentation as they surpassed many Art Nouveau-style vignettes in Europe by the abundance of ornaments.



M. K. Čiurlionis. Vignette for the Lithuanian folk song "Oi giria, giria, girele žalioji" (1909), Čg. 143.



M. K. Čiurlionis. Vignette for the Lithuanian folk song "Anoj pusėj Nemuno" IV (1909), Čg 148. The vignettes were taken from the Archive of the M. K. Čiurlionis National Museum of Art in Kaunas.

In Čiurlionis' musical notography it is possible to observe almost visually intersecting, bending, moving curved or sharp angular lines of note texts. There are other forms of images in notography that are very different from the end of the 14th century French or Spanish colourful *Ars subtilior* hearts or harps on scores although similar with their certain intention, refinement or visuality. The ornaments of Čiurlionis' music textures are different from the manner of multiple rhythmical-texture models used in the fioritures of Bach's or Chopin's concertos, nocturnes, etudes. Somehow foreseeing the still-to-come Andrzej Panufnik's notographic visuality, the nature of Čiurlionis' musical plasticity, the power of construction and the associations they evoke once again testify to the relativity of differences of art material and the universality of artistic thinking.

<sup>1</sup> Basing on Rasutė Žukienė's Report "Ornaments and Figures: M.K. Čiurlionis as *Art Nouveau* Painter" delivered in the International Week of M.K. Čiurlionis' Studies "World and Čiurlionis" in Druskininkai on 2–8 August 2010. For an internet version of the report please see: <http://www.dienosnaujienos.lt/211370-rasa-andriusyte-zukieneornamentai-ir-figuros-m-k-ciurlionis-ir-art-nouveau/visa-naujiena>

The exterior of the ornament decor and formal suggestivity of his musical compositions originated in the artist's imagination and was influenced by Jugendstil, Art Nouveau, characteristics of secession fashions and style that existed in the artist's surroundings where he lived.<sup>2</sup> It depends on how we define "ornament" in Čiurlionis' musical texts; we can be far from how the concept is defined by traditional theory of music dealing with mordents, trills, grupettos, turns, appoggiaturas, others. Meanwhile in Čiurlionis' music it is born spontaneously from the visual imagination that enters with its own logic notography texts, creates new multilayeredness, draws curves of plastic lines, "recitals" without any other narrative motivation. Like in Čiurlionis' paintings, in music too symbolism, relative decorativeness become apparent, the textures are restrained by the strong silhouette-contour line and "drawn" elements appears. If we consider it in this way and pay attention to the art when Čiurlionis lived, one more miraculous source of the creative code appears in the audio process. For instance, Čiurlionis makes a transparent but strong ornamental construction in the texture of *Subatos vakarėlis* VL 286 second variation's ostinato lacework of fifths-sixths, throws over it a chromatic middle voice veil and places above it, "softly" and cosily, a folklore melody. Nevertheless, the rhythm of the placing of the bass part elements, constant repetition and the symmetricity of those elements look like a folk pattern (Example 1).

On the other hand, the nature of extra musical ornament intarsias (It. *intarsio* – a mosaic worked in wood) in Čiurlionis' music becomes apparent when one realizes that they are not substantiated by the features characteristic of musical Jugend style. Writing about them, Hans Hollander pointed out the symbolism of the melody, the wonderful ornamentation of its line (Debussy melody), timbre and orchestration (R. Strauss), exotic elements of foreign cultures (pentatonics, the *Gamelan* drumming, the whole tone scale). H. Hollander attributed some composers who appeared on the distinguishing margin of impressionism and expressionism: A. Scriabin, A. Schönberg (*Gurrenlieder*, *Pierrot lunaire*), B. Bartók (*Bluebeard's Castle*), A. Berg, G. Mahler, R. Strauss to Jugend Style alongside all works of Debussy (Hollander, 1975, p. 78-79, 91). Jaroslav Volek (1970) who supplemented Hollander defined Jugend style in music as an intermediate style between impressionism and expressionism, mentioning the variation principle and the colours of the "local" shades, clear melodic contours and polyphonic structures (Volek, 1970; Doubravová, 1995, p. 566). Despite certain common features, the technology and emotion of the ornamental layer in Čiurlionis' music was in clear opposition to the secession arabesques of the melodic line in *The Afternoon of a Fawn* by Debussy. However, dealing with it, it is necessary to pay attention to the fact that in Čiurlionis' music like in his paintings, the purity of the secession was rather obscure. Here various ideas and techniques were piled on top of one another, and elements of secession modern art conformed with expressionism and constructivism in the movement towards modernism. An exceptional Čiurlionis-style peculiarity of all this abundance was a powerful interaction that "united itself into one cluster"; not a mix of differences that destroyed one another but surprisingly brought together everything into a new norm of artistry.

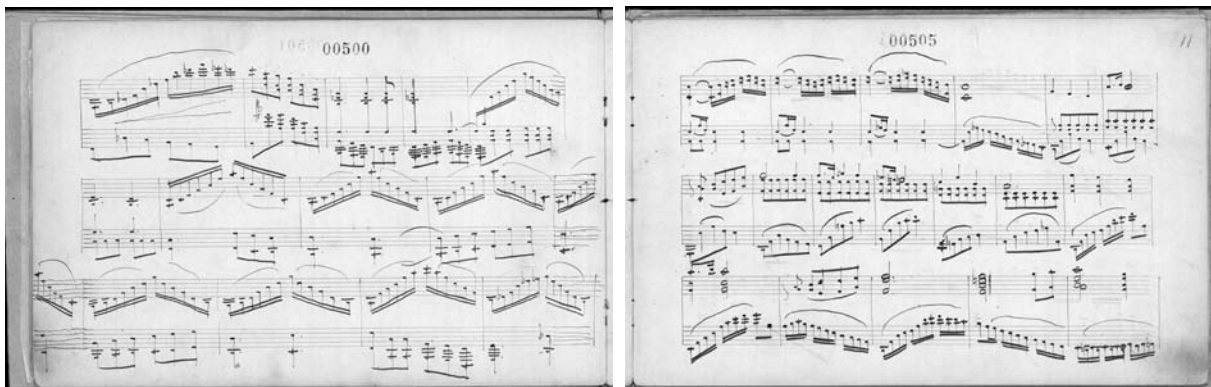
Example 1. M.K. Čiurlionis makes a transparent but strong ornamental construction in the texture of *Subatos vakarėlis* VL 286 (1905–1906) second variation's ostinato lacework of fifths-sixths.

<sup>2</sup> This style emerged in English, Belgian, Austrian architecture and art in approximately 1893–97. The Modern Style in Lithuania has emerged as an exterior phenomenon, which came from Russia, Poland and Germany. Due to this reason, there were three trends of the style in Lithuania – Modern, Secession and Jugend, which all can be summarised as the Modern Style. The main task of the Modern Style was to dissociate from historical forms and schemes as well as to prepare for modern century XXX, to create a new style. Inspiration was drawn from nature, organic world, the detail being highlighted was a plastic line and ornament. The Modern Style reached Lithuanian with a delay – since the beginning of century XX, and existed till the First World War.

The main task of modern art or Jugend was to separate itself from historical forms and schemes, and to prepare to create a new style for a modern 20th century. Looking at the development of secession from a most general point of view, two stages of development are distinguished; the early period that “speaks” the language of biomorphic decor of natural origin, and the later period that is characterised by geometric stylisation and ornaments of rational forms that were becoming abstract. Waves of ribbons, motifs of woman’s hair (C. Debussy *La fille aux cheveux de lin*) formed by elegant lines, or bunches and garlands of favourite flowers – water lilies, tulips – were recognised as natural, material ornamental elements of secession. All this was enriched and adorned by the figures of birds and women, winged fairies, exotic beings, masks, and movements of a stylised dance. Rasa Andriušytė-Žukienė has singled out the years 1905 and 1906 as a boundary that marked in Čiurlionis’ paintings a move from associative, visual, natural ornaments to more abstract, with no substance, more constructive, although there is no completely abstract ornamentation in the painter’s pictures and stylised details are recognisable. Thinking along these lines, we will discuss some musical ornament intarsias, which testify that there are also examples of both “natural” and “abstract” ornamentation in Čiurlionis’ piano pieces.

The first examples can be analysed not only by the curved forms of secession but based on a more fundamental *Tonmalerei* or “word painting” tradition that strove for non-musical means of expression for a long time. These theories and practices supported descriptive analytic tradition, while a similar intention in the art of music was born in the time of Orlando di Lasso and was expressed through picturesque figures (*hypotyposis*) characteristic of music rhetoric. Basing on sound configurations – high tones, low tones, rising tones, falling tones, moving in circles, jumping, zigzags, punctuation, etc. – composers could model visual images and associations in the scores. The 18th-century Italian theoretician and composer, G. Riccardi (1703–1790) taught that “high pitches ‘draw’ tall things, while low sounds draw short things” and expected such a creative solution depicting the images of the sun, stars, sea and others<sup>3</sup>. To put it in other words, specifically arranging, modelling musical tones in space, their configurations were able to “draw” circles (a crown, the sun, a ring), triangular (the All-Seeing-Eye), fast tirates – passages up and down – the passage of a bullet in the air, descent into a grave and other images.

Paying attention to all this, we will be able to observe such secessionist elements – sea wave motifs not only in Čiurlionis’ paintings but also in his music. Essentially, they can be also looked at as the continuation of the fashion of *imitazione del concetto delle parole* (expression of the idea of a word) that appeared in the Renaissance as picturesque figures of rhetorical character “drew” waves favoured by secession in scores at various times – from Bach (cantata *Schleicht, spielende Wellen*, BWV 206), Liszt (*Fountains of the Villa d’Este*), Smetana (*Vltava*), Debussy (symphonic poem *The Sea*), Wagner (introduction to *The Rheine Gold*) to Čiurlionis’ symphonic poems *The Sea* and the cycle *Marès*. A single wave or several of them that cover the surface of notation can be seen in the second movement *Andante* of the early Sonata in F major (1898, Example 2, the manuscript):



**Example 2.** M. K. Čiurlionis. Texture of the early Sonata in F major for piano (Warsaw, 1898).  
The Manuscripts of M.K. Čiurlionis’ pieces for this article were taken from the Archive of the M. K. Čiurlionis National Museum of Art in Kaunas (Cm 7 (3); 00500; 00505).

Here are at least three variants of the favourite motif of the wave (an image) in art of the early 20th-century: the wave in Prelude D minor, VL 239 mentioned by Vytautas Landsbergis and Vítězslav Mikeš (an article “Art Nouveau: parallels in the piano music of: V. Novak, J. Suk and M. K. Ciurlionis”, 2003). The latter noted that the

<sup>3</sup> Quoted from: *Жл.: Музыкальная эстетика Западной Европы XVII–XVIII веков*. Составитель В.П. Шестаков. Москва: Музыка, 1971, с. 135. See: Judita Žukienė. Retorinė figura: istoriniai pokyčiai. *Menotyra*, 2003, Nr. 1 (30), p. 6.

figure of the wave in the general de-thematised process produces other waves that are similar to it which gives the whole piece the impression of ostinato. The motif and its expansion can be compared with Art Nouveau perception of ornament as decor and a symbol at the same time. Vítězslav Mikeš, who compared Čiurlionis' modern music with Josef Suk and Vítězslav Novak's secession, observed such examples in Čiurlionis' Prelude Op. 14 No. 2, the secession curve contour and counterpoint ornamentation in the theme of Fugue B VL 345 (1909).<sup>4</sup> Čiurlionis also composed the large wave of this piece in the reprise-coda in the manner of *Tonmalerei*. In it the composer augments a great mass of "water" using the chain consisted from first inversions of chords and reaching the huge height of top – an interval of undecima, the eleventh, or compound fourth ( $d^1-g^2$ ). The little ornament of nona-size wavelets are intertwined in its rising and falling (Example 3):



**Example 3.** The waves in Prelude D minor, VL 239 (1903):

M.K. Čiurlionis also composed the large wave of this piece in the reprise-coda in the manner of *Tonmalerei*

In Čiurlionis' later work the natural, biomorphic forms of a wave gradually move away from the initial way of representation – a wave contour is modelled by figures of more complicated drawings, they become more conceptual. In *The Stormy Sketch* VL 311 the wave is created by means of ostinato interval construction (Example 4). The fact that it was important for Čiurlionis and he focused on it is demonstrated by his favourite manner to separate it by strokes of chromatic "lines" (second part of the measure).

**Example 4.** In *The Stormy Sketch* VL 311 (1907) the wave is created by means of ostinato interval construction. The manuscript of the *Stormy Sketch* VL 311 (Cm21, p. 240)

<sup>4</sup> Examining Prelude in D minor (op. 12 Nr. 1, VL 239, of 1903) Vítězslav Mikeš wrote: "The little motif is split up by the method of fragmentation, (i. e. by the method of the leitmotif), which is freely turning into the method of de-thematisation. The latter essentially manifests itself, in the words of Ch. S. Peirce, as the "index substitution of the theme". The figure produced by the dethematisation process then "weaves through" the whole piece and evokes the impression of ostinato. We might compare the motif itself and the way it is developed with the concept of Art Nouveau ornament as both decor and symbol at the same time" (Mikeš, 2003). Quotation from an article: "Art Nouveau: Parallels in the Piano Music of V. Novak, J. Suk and M. K. Ciurlionis" by Vítězslav Mikeš (Mikeš, 2003).

The constant “surge” of the minor second–major seventh in Čiurlionis’ Prelude VL 308 (1907) can also be associatively linked to the contour of the secession wave. Just at that time, from 1908 the intention to model biomorphic ornaments from specially made interval constructions is seen in Čiurlionis’ piano pieces. In Prelude VL 324 the waves “painted” by Čiurlionis are even very visual, precise and geometric and even synesthetical. The biomorphic symmetrical semicircle of 14 elements as though a graphic spray in his pictures consists of small details, minor sixth and minor second, which are multiplied. The latter element (minor sixth and minor second) that is seen in Čiurlionis’ various compositions is as though constantly “inspected”, permuted Pcs [0, 4, 5], the name of the set 3–4. The composer arranges this segment strictly in a circle of fifths, therefore, it sounds from all 12 chromatic pitches. Incidentally, Čiurlionis “drew these “waves” at the beginnings of the autograph, which undoubtedly substantiates the intention of the drawing in the manuscript. The contour of the sound wave becomes more abstract, more constructive and absolutely symmetrical. Čiurlionis obtains the symmetrical break of the wave changing the direction of the intervals of the contour in the opposite direction. The natural form of the wave that is as if “alive” is beating, it rises and falls, creating the impression of a “sounding picture” favoured by Art Nouveau. In this way the composer resolves the tension between the movement of natural forms and crystals of abstract image. By the way, Čiurlionis had already employed the static form of the major sixths–seconds (d.6 + d.2 + d.6) in the reprise-coda of the earlier Prelude VL 301 (Example 5).



**Example 5.** In Prelude VL 324 (1908) the waves “painted” by M.K. Čiurlionis are even very visual, precise and geometric and even synesthetical. The Manuscript of Prelude VL 324 (Cm16, p. 00668)

Čiurlionis set himself an even more complicated task of creating a more intricate compositional “wave” in Prelude VL 327 written in 1909. There the contour of the wave is better hidden and is not so obvious. It seems that the composer had the idea of progressively expanded intervals – fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, reduced octava – as the rising, extending the contour of bass and “augmenting” the wave as a means of bending the curve (see Example 6). The polyphonic imitational form in the essentially small 14 measure piece whose both themes just like in Haydn’s polyphony are exhibited together; later they are imitated by the same pairs from the dominant (g), VII degree (b), and comes back three times in tonic. The upper theme, as though proportional canon, repeats the initial interval (fourth, fifth), a 6-tone chromatic centre is placed in its middle and, as if an arc, the beginning is repeated. Short interludes (end of 4th measure–beginning of 5th, end of 7th) and small code can be heard. The impression that the piece could have been left unfinished may be gained as the middle voice sometimes disappears towards the end of the piece. In the last but one measure Čiurlionis purposely composes a rhetoric pause – *ellipsis* – that is omitted in later publications of Čiurlionis’ work. The texture of an ornamental wave can be also seen the 1908 cycle “The Sea” of small landscapes VL 317 a, b, c that was performed at the concert of “Evenings of Contemporary Music” on 28 Jan. (10 Feb.) 1909.

**Example 6.** M. K. Čiurlionis. Compositional “waves” in Prelude VL 327 (1909), the idea of progressively expanded intervals. The Manuscript of Prelude VL 327 (Cm16, p. 00671)

The etymology of the Latin word *ornamentum* shows that rhythmically repeated geometric and graphic elements have been long perceived as an expression of man’s sense of beauty. However, besides subtle, easily recognisable stylised natural plant ornament that created warm and cosy modern Art Nouveau beauty, the more abstract, “colder” geometric beauty of the details of straight lines that were similar to the “style of practical usefulness” (*Nutzstil*) promoted by Otto Wagner and his pupils was not inferior by their secessional expression. It was not by chance that the period of modern was called *la belle époque* (the epoch of beauty) for its graceful, soft, cosy, curved forms, as well as for their “coldness” of their geometric forms, fresh impressions. If “material ornament” still reminded of romanticism with its recognisable motifs then the more abstract, more formal ornament of “nonmaterial reality” was developing in the direction of creating constructivist pure forms.

Unlike works of art that that make it possible to draw the limits of the beginning of a more abstract ornament (1905 and 1906), experiments in music took place parallelly in the two types of ornament, which makes it impossible to precisely separate both forms of ornament as regards time.

Čiurlionis created immaterial ornament of geometric forms rationally with interval forms and plastics of cold beauty. To achieve this, Čiurlionis used various material, for instance, chromatic or more rough octatonic lines, from which he made abstract figures, geometric ornaments, arranged in sharp angles. Prelude VL 341 may serve as an example of how the “broken” bass construction is formed by octatonics (Example 7):

**Example 7.** Prelude VL 341 (1909), an example of how the “broken” bass construction is formed by octatonics

The composer also makes as though a fine metal secessional lacework, a layer from his favourite elements – fifths and sixths (their simultaneous sounds are heard in Čiurlionis’ chord) and their combinations. This ornamental figure in its freer form already appeared in Prelude VL 248 in 1903; however, later it became more strict and acquired “more pure” and intentional forms. In Prelude VL 272 precise compositional work is seen in both details of the ornament and in the whole composition: the massive ornament of fifths–sixths is supported by a bottom contour – a line. This structural frame gradually descends down the “staircase” of chromatic pitch sound sequence (Example 8). The elements of the ornament move in pairs, they cross one another, there is combinatoric permutation (mirrors, retrogrades) as though drawn with a feather (he drew ornaments in vignettes in Indian ink) or graphic ornaments drawn with the tip of a brush (Scheme 1).

**Example 8.** M.K. Čiurlionis. Prelude VL 272 (1905): the massive ornament of fifths–sixths is supported by a bottom contour – a line.

**M.K. Čiurlionis. Preludas (Prelude) VL 272 (1905).  
Boso ornamento schema (5- kvinta; 6 – seksta)  
The ornament in the bass (5 – fifth; 6 – sixth)**

$$\begin{matrix} 5 & 5 & 6 & 5 & | & 5 & 6 & | & 6 & 5 & | & 6 & 5 & | & 6 & 5 & | & 6 & 6 & | & 6 & 6 & || \\ 6 & 6 & 5 & 6 & | & 6 & 5 & | & tr. & 6 & | & 5 & 6 & | & 5 & 6 & | & 5 & 6 & | & 5 & 3 & || \end{matrix}$$

$$\begin{matrix} 5 & 5 & | & 6 & 5 & | & 5 & 6 & | & 6 & 6 & | & 6 & 5 & | & 5 & 5 & | & 6 & 5 & | & 6 & 5 & || \\ 6 & 6 & | & 5 & 6 & | & 6 & 5 & | & tr. & 3 & | & 5 & 6 & | & 6 & 6 & | & 6 & 5 & | & 5 & 6 & || \end{matrix}$$

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**Repriza (recapitulation)**

$$\begin{matrix} 5 & 5 & | & 6 & 5 & | & 5 & 6 & | & 6 & 5 & | & 6 & 5 & | & 6 & 5 & | & 6 & 6 & | & 6 & 6 & || \\ 6 & 6 & | & 5 & 6 & | & 6 & 5 & | & tr. & 6 & | & 5 & 6 & | & 5 & 6 & | & 5 & 6 & | & 5 & 3 & || \end{matrix}$$

(toliau rankraštis nutruksta)

**Scheme 1.** M.K. Čiurlionis. Prelude VL 272 (1905): the elements of the ornament move in pairs, they cross one another, there is combinatoric permutation (mirrors, retrogrades), etc.

The sketch is interrupted in bass when the measures of the fourth reprise are heard, the ornaments returns to the beginning, although the composer had lost right hand part already at the beginning of 14th measure. Nevertheless, the beginning of the reprise is modelled, while the ornament form acquires the function of architectonics, marking the whole construction and adorning the basic “supports”.

For Impromptu VL 298 (1906) hat was written a year later and dedicated to Bronislawa Wolman (Dla B.), Čiurlionis again employs the same figures; however, he makes the geometric form of the bass part more complicated – with “hemiola” conflict.<sup>5</sup> In the frame of the 3/4 meter measure the pairs of the elements of the same ornament cross systemically the borders of metric lines, move from one group or pair in the frame of one measure thus changing the direction of the modelled ornament figures” (Example 9, Scheme 2).

<sup>5</sup> It might also be observed later version of the ornament of the similar trioline figures within a 3/4 metre composed in “Sea” prelude VL 318 in 1908.



**Example 9.** M.K. Čiurlionis. *Impromptu* VL 298 (1906) that was dedicated to Bronisława Wolman (Dla B.)

M.K. Čiurlionis. *Ekspromtas (Impromptu)* VL 298 (1906)  
 Boso ornamento schema (5 - kvinta; 6 - seksta)  
 The ornament in the bass (5 – fifth; 6 – sixth)

$$\begin{pmatrix} 6 & 6 & 5 \\ 5 & 5 & 6 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} 6 & 6 & 5 \\ 5 & 5 & 6 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} 6 & 6 & 6 \\ 5 & 5 & 5 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} 6 & 6 & 6 \\ 5 & 5 & 5 \end{pmatrix} ||$$

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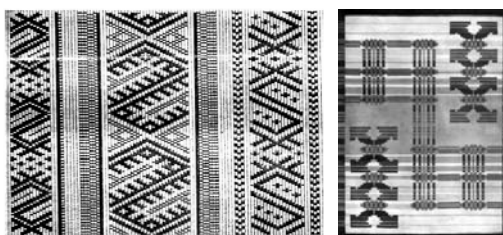
$$\begin{pmatrix} 6 & 6 & 6 \\ 5 & 5 & 6 \end{pmatrix} || \begin{pmatrix} 6 & 6 & 6 \\ 5 & 5 & 5 \end{pmatrix} ||$$

$$\begin{pmatrix} 5 & 5 & 5 \\ 6 & 6 & 6 \end{pmatrix} || \begin{pmatrix} 6 & 6 & 5 \\ 5 & 5 & 6 \end{pmatrix} || \begin{pmatrix} 6 & 6 & 6 \\ 5 & 5 & 5 \end{pmatrix} || \begin{pmatrix} 6 & 6 & 6 \\ 5 & 5 & 5 \end{pmatrix} ||$$

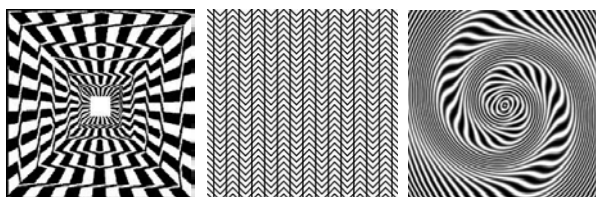
(toliau rankraštis nutrūksta)

**Scheme 2.** M.K. Čiurlionis. *Impromptu* VL 298 (1906): the pairs of the elements of the same ornament cross systemically the borders of metric lines, move from one group or pair in the frame of one measure thus changing the direction of the modelled ornament figures

There is a strange optic ornament peculiarity in the early 1903 Prelude VL 248, VL 272, and Impromptu VL 298, which depending on the angle of looking at it adds the perspective of the first and second images. In preludes VL 248 and VL 272 the ornament element can divide the measure in half or move from the second part of the measure. In Impromptu VL 298 he moves the centre of the figure to the beginning of the measure (first and second parts), or, to the contrary – moves to the second part (second-third parts). All this happens depending on the physiology of hearing/seeing, even psychology, the suggestion of the optical illusion (Examples 10, 11):



**Example 10.** The patterns of Lithuanian linen fabrics



**Example 11.** Op(tical) art of XX century



The expression of Čiurlionis' ornament could be called a syndrome<sup>6</sup> of geometric compositions in the patterns of Lithuanian linen fabrics or pre-optical forms. Op art (from *op(tical) art*), a style of modern abstract art that evolved from constructivism and neo-impressionism was publically legalised at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1965 at the exhibition "Responsive Eye". The Chicago-based painter, Kazys Varnelis, and Kazimieras Žoromskis, the master of optical impressionism, who immigrated to America but later returned to Lithuania, made great contribution to the second Op art wave. It is hard to say how Čiurlionis himself looked upon his own notographic texts. Nevertheless, looking from the future perspective the premise can be drawn that the graphics of white and black musical texts became material for his optical experiments. It is not by chance that many Op art works were created only in black and white, which he filled with the kinetics of natural movement and created the illusion of static life. The lacework compared to the bass in Prelude VL 272 changes the direction: the ornament's bass "dots" here climb up chromatically; besides larger blocks of ornament are repeated at a higher structural level in the composition. Here, Čiurlionis' manuscript also stops, but there are no signs of any reprise and he would have hardly wished it at all (it was written in by the editor V. Landsbergis).

Although speaking about abstract musical ornaments we spoke about Op art, Jarmila Doubravová basing herself on the links between painting and music mentions Čiurlionis next to J. M. Whistler as a precursor of Jugend-style (she mentions A. Gaudi, A. Beardsley, H. van de Velde ir A. Mucha as greater artists). So far in studies about M. K. Čiurlionis' musical work very little attention has been paid to the reflections of modern art (secession, Jugend-style) at that time in Austria, Germany, Belgium, Poland, Russia and Lithuania. Nevertheless, it is likely that the refinement and constructive strength of the line of this style art, the decorative cosiness of the expression of ornament were close to Čiurlionis. This conclusion is suggested by the impression that Richard Strauss' music made on him with its decorativeness of secessional expressionism, rich textures and layers. Why did he copy Strauss' scores by hand in Leipzig? Namely because for about a quarter of the century until Čiurlionis' death there were many features that resembled Art Nouveau aesthetics in Strauss' music: refined ornaments and curved lines that were linked with the rich orchestral texture rising from the compact mass of contrapuntal constructions.

The mannerism of secession line or motifs of natural ornaments that look rather organically in the whole composition can be seen in M. K. Čiurlionis' work. It was part of the time and surroundings of the artistic space where he lived – Leipzig, Warsaw, Vilnius and St Petersburg. There are no doubts that turning from Gewandhaus towards Tomannerkirche, he saw on *Reichsstraße in Leipzig the impressive building with elephant heads in Jugend-style. Moreover, it is not for nothing that when he lived in Warsaw modern was coming to the culmination in Poland (1905–1910)*, while in Vilnius, two buildings of the Russian secession and classicism were raising – the building of the state bank and Petras Vileišis' residential house in secession and neo-baroque style designed by August Klein. Living in Vilnius, Čiurlionis was able to admire the stylish samples of decorative secession – the House of the Signatories and the White Štralis Cafe, Smaževičius' house, the building of the Merchants' Club, private and rented apartments.<sup>7</sup> He could see the unique curved window and door forms, balconies and staircases with plant motifs from cast metal, secession stucco ceiling decor – freezes, rosettes, wallpaper or coloured stove tiles that came from Vienna secession or design workshops.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> The second wave of optical art was significantly contributed by Kazys Varnelis (1917–2010), master of optical impressionism, who created in Chicago and emigrated to USA; however, but by Kazimieras Žoromskis (1913–2004) when returned to Lithuania.

<sup>7</sup> In 1909, there was "Exhibition of Accommodation Arrangement". A special catalogue was published for the exhibition where analytical articles and surnames of the authors introducing their jobs were published.

<sup>8</sup> Speaking about secession buildings and interiors of the beginning of century XX in Vilnius, Nijolė Lukšionytė-Tolvaišienė emphasises that in order to make the building unique, no details of models and cast metal were circulated; individual, non-repeating decorative elements were created for every house. "Especially expressive fences of embossed metal for stairs, balconies, openwork of gates of entrances, doors decorated with carvings and metal plastic, windows separated by decorative painting on the frame. In lobbies and stairwells there are unique model, wall and floor tiles. Decor of the living buildings is very moderate – it was required by the modern aesthetics" (Lukšionytė-Tolvaišienė, 2000, p. 164–165).

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## Santrauka

### M. K. Čiurlionio muzikinio moderno eskizas

M. K. Čiurlionio dailės sąsajas su modernu menu pabrėžė N. Vorobjovas (1938), A. Rannitas (savo pranešime „M. K. Čiurlionis. Pionier del' art abstrait“, 1949), sovietiniai metais – M. Nasvytis (1972) ir J. Umbrasas (1975; 1977), vėliau – čekė J. Doubrovová (1995), taip pat J. Bowlitas (1986), Ch. Brockhausas (1987), R. Heidt-Heller (1989), R. Andriušytė-Žukienė ir kiti dailėtyrininkai. Tačiau ornamento gausos apogėjų Čiurlionis, ko gero, pasiekė kurdamas knygų viršelius, vinjetas – piešinius knygos (skryniaus, dalies) pradžiai ar pabaigai papuošti bei inicialus. Čiurlionio muzikinėje notografijoje pastebime beveik vizualiai susikertančias, išraižančias ar išlankstančias natų tekstą, lenktas arba aštriai kampuotas, tekstą organizuojančias linijas. Čiurlionio muzikinės plastikos pobūdis, konstravimo galia ir keliamos asociacijos dar kartą rodo meno medžiagos skirtumą reliatyvumą bei jo meninės mąstysenos universalumą.

Ornamento dekoras ir formali sugestija į Čiurlionio muzikines kompozicijas, matyt, įsismelkė iš dailininko vaizduotės ir jo aplinkoje gyvavusio jugendo, *Art nouveau*, secesijos madų ir stiliaus bruožų. Čiurlionio muzikoje, panašiai kaip ir dailėje, ryškėja simboliškumas, sąlygiškas dekoratyvumas ir „piešiami“ elementai, faktūras ima žaboti stipri silueto-kontūro linija. Taip žvelgiant į Čiurlionio epochos meno aktualijas, garsiniame procese atsiveria stebuklinga dar vieno kūrybos kodekso versmė. Vis dėlto ekstramuzikinė intarsiška (it. *intarsio* – medžio inkrustacija medžiu) ornamentu prigimtis Čiurlionio muzikoje nėra pagrįsta muzikiniam jugendui būdingais bruožais.

1905–1906 metus Andriušytė-Žukienė yra nurodžiusi kaip ribą, nubrėžiančią Čiurlionio paveikslų slinktį nuo asociatyvios, vizualios, gamtinės ornamentikos į abstraktesnę, „bedaiknę“, konstruktyvesnę, nors visiškai abstraktaus ornamentu Čiurlionio

drobėse nėra ir stilizuotos detalės yra atpažįstamos. Taip struktūruotai mąstant galima aptarti kelias muzikinio ornamento intarsijas, aiškiai rodančias, kad fortepijoniniuose Čiurlionio kūrinuose esama ir „gamtinio“, ir „abstrakčiojo“ ornamento pavyzdžių. Pirmieji pavyzdžiai gali būti tyrinėjami vadovaujantis ne vien secesijos lenktų formų įspūdžiu, bet remiantis fundamentalesne *Tonmalerei* (vok. „tonų tapyba“) arba *Word painting* (angl. „žodžių tapyba“) tradicija, kuri nuo seno siekė nemuzikinės garsų raiškos. Patyrinėjus melodinio fragmento kontūrą partitūrose (plastiškai išlenkta smulkių natų figūra), secesinių jūros bangų motyvų pastebima ne tik Čiurlionio tapyboje, bet ir muzikoje. Štai bent septyni XX a. pradžios mene itin populiarus „bangos“ motyvo (vaizdinio) variantai. Preliudo d-moll, op. 12 Nr. 1 / VL 239 (1903), bangos idėją, apie kurią yra kalbėjęs V. Landsbergis ir kiti tyrėjai, paremia ir Vitézslavas Mikešas.

Vėlesniuose Čiurlionio kūrinuose gamtinės, biomorfinės bangos formos ima pamažu tolti nuo pirminio „vaizdavimo“ būdo – bangos kontūras modeliuojamas jau ne greitų, išlenktų pasažų būdu, bet sudėtingesnio piešinio figūromis, konceptualiau. „Audringajame eskize“ (kaip jį vadina Landsbergis; VL 311, 1907, Varšuva) „banga“ kuriama ostinatinės intervalinės konstrukcijos būdu.

Su secesinės bangos kontūru gali būti siejamas ir nuolatinis mažosios sekundos–didžiosios septimos „bangavimas“ Čiurlionio Preliude, VL 308 (1907). Tačiau ketinimas biomorfinius ornamentus kurti iš specialiai modeliuojamų intervalinių konstrukcijų Čiurlionio fortepijoniniuose kūrinuose ypač akivaizdus nuo 1908 m. Jo Preliude VL 324 (1908, spalio 14, Sankt Peterburgas) bangos „nupieštos“ labai vizualiai, tiksliai, geometriškai ir net sinesteziskai. Dar sudėtingesnis, įmantresnės kompozicinės „bangos“ kūrimo uždavinys, matyt, Čiurlionio buvo iškeltas apmąstant ir komponuojant Preliudą VL 327 (1909, vasario 10, Sankt Peterburgas). Galima įtarti, kad progresiškai plėtojant intervalų – kvarta, kvinta, seksta, septima, sumažintoji oktava – idėją Čiurlioniui kilo kaip boso tempimo, bangos „auginimo“ – kreivės išlenkimo priemonė ir paskata. „Bangos“ ornamentinės faktūros rastume ir simfoninės poemos „Jūra“ partitūroje, 1908 m. sukomponuotame mažų peizažų cikle „Jūra“, VL 317 a, b, c, kuris buvo atliekamas Sankt Peterburge „Šiuolaikinės muzikos vakarų“ koncerte 1909 m. sausio 28 d. (vasario 10 d.).

Geometrinės formos „badaiktį“ ornamentą Čiurlionis kuria gana racionaliai, jame atsiranda abstrakčios intervalinės formos ir šalto grožio plastika. Tarsi dailių secesinių metalo ažūrą jis pina sluoksni iš pamėgtų elementų – intervalinių struktūrų, chromatinio ar oktatoninio garsaileio sekų, iš kurių jis konstravo abstrakčias figūras, geometrinius aštrių kampų ornamentus (žr. preliudus VL 341, VL 272, taip pat Ekspromtą VL 298, dedikuotą Bronisławai Wolman (Dla B.). Ir ankstyvajame Preliude, VL 248 (1903), ir VL 272 (1905), ir Ekspromte, VL 298 (1906), susiduriame su keista optine ornamento ypatybe, kuri, priklausomai nuo matymo, teikia pirminio ir antrinio vaizdų perspektyvą. Preliuduose (VL 248 ir VL 272) ornamento elementas gali skaidyti taktą pusiau arba persislinkti nuo antrosios takto dalies. Ekspromte (VL 298) jis perkelia figūros centrą į taktų pradžią (pirmąją ir antrąją dalis) arba, atvirkščiai, – paslenka į antrąją pusę (antroji ir trečioji dalys). Ir visa tai vyksta priklausomai nuo girdėjimo / regėjimo fiziologijos bei paklusimo optinės iliuzijos sugestijai. Tokio Čiurlionio ornamento raišką galima pavadinti lietuviškų lino raštų geometrinių kompozicijų sindromu arba preoptinėmis formomis.

Sunku pasakyti, kaip į savo notografinius tekstus žiūrėjo pats Čiurlionis, bet žvelgiant iš ateities perspektyvos galima daryti prielaidą, kad braižoma baltos–juodos spalvų muzikinių tekstų ženklų grafika jam tapo savotiškų optinių eksperimentų medžiaga. Juk neatsitiktinai daugelis oparto darbų yra vien baltos–juodos spalvos kompozicijos, kurias pagyvino prigimtinio judesio kinetika. Kalbėdami apie abstrakčiuosius muzikinius ornamentus moduliavome oparto pusėn, tačiau J. Doubravová, turėdama galvoje tapybos ir muzikos sąsajas, Čiurlionį mini kaip jugendo pirmtaką greta J. Mc Whistlerio, svarbesniems šio stiliaus kūrėjams ji priskiria A. Gaudi, A. Beardsley, H. van de Velde'ą ir A. Muchą. Čiurlionio muzikinės kūrybos tyrimuose kol kas beveik neskirta dėmesio to meto Austrijoje, Vokietijoje, Belgijoje, Lenkijoje, Rusijoje ir Lietuvoje pasireiškusio modernio (secesijos, jugendo) atspindžiams. Bet panašu, kad šio meno linijos rafinuotumas ir konstruktyvus „stiprumas“, dekoratyvus ornamento ekspresijos jaukumas Čiurlioniui buvo artimas.