

The Musical Portrait

One of the most ancient genres of the fine art – a portrait – has the analogs in literature, theater, cinema and music. In art, the great value is attached to a portrait. Thus, outstanding philosopher Hegel believed that “painting progress ... is the emergence of portrait”¹. Great Russian critic Vissarion Belinsky has noted fairly that “on a portrait made by the great painter, the person is more similar to himself than even at his reflection in a daguerreotype for the great painter’s sharp lines deduced outside everything that is concealed in the person and that, maybe, makes secret for this person”².

Musical portrait is a musical and artistic image of a particular person, both really existing (pre-existed) and fictional, which has become a central theme of a work or its large and relatively independent part.

Being little developed in musicology, musical portrait provides many research problems. We will focus on the following: *the typology of musical portraits, ways of musical portraiture, features of self-portrait in music.*

Portrait learning is more productive when we compare music to the related kinds of art and literature. If we ask a question of what reproduces a portrait, we will see a high degree of conventionality and generalization of musical portraits, in contrast to the concreteness of the pictorial and sculptural ones. So, many personality parameters that are essential for pictorial, sculptural and literary portraits – such as the appearance of man, his deeds, actions and thoughts – are in music either almost embodied or secondary in importance.

The pictorial, sculptural and literary portraits first catch the outward appearance of the model. External manifestation of man in the portrait is important not in itself, but in its relationship with the inner world. However, it is difficult to show in music the external manifestation of man, which leads to an overbalance of the internal properties of the individual. Depending on the properties of the individual which are reproduced on a portrait, the following **typology of musical portraits** is made up³.

The semantic space of the pictorial and literary portrait develops in the direction going from the outer to the inner, coinciding with the movement from the seen attributes to the inner properties of the personality. The musical portrait – because of the specifics of music – immediately accentuates the deepest personal properties and first of all recreates *emotion* of the personality (harpsichord pieces by Francois Couperin and Jean-Philippe Rameau, many operatic arias). The emotion captured by the composer can identify a human condition: dream, memory, meditation, etc. Of course, the portrait-emotion does not give 3-D representation about the prototype. However, the emotion, guessed exactly by the composer, is a ground to let the hearer’s imagination run away further, let him fancy further the integral portrait on the basis of the principle “pars pro toto”.

Certainly, the emotion itself, and how it manifests itself, can tell a lot about a person. And yet emotions are only “a silhouette”, a sketch which is not made in detail and which catches only the first impression of the original. However, the unpretentious “sketch” can turn into a carefully executed “painting” with the extensively drawn hero. Prototype is presented on it as a multi-faceted personality with a lot of properties. In addition to the inherent structure of his feelings, we learn also human mentality, particularities of his behavior and social self-expression. This, more capacious type of portrait is a *portrait-character*.

The portrait, reproducing the properties of the personality’s character, largely owes its existence to the theater. It was there that the characters were developed and their typology was formed: “a hero”, “a comical personage”, “a simpleton”, “an evil genius”, “a noble father”, etc. Character types that were found in the theater, gradually fill in the operatic stage as well.

The practice of creating theatrical-musical patterns has also enriched instrumental music. The specifying role of the gesture-intonation is important for such a portrait (impulsive Kiarina by Schumann, funny-girl Juliet, restless Mercutio, thoughtful Friar Lawrence in “Romeo and Juliet” by Prokofiev, chronicler Pimen monotonously driving pen on parchment in “Boris Godunov” by Mussorgsky, a famously marching soldier by Stravinsky). The word is also significant here, helping us to reproduce the speaking manner of the original (“The Chatterer” by Prokofiev, some Dargomizhsky’s romances and Mussorgsky’s songs, portrait-arias in “The Dead Souls” by Shchedrin). Acuteness and hyperbolization of the character properties is the way, leading to

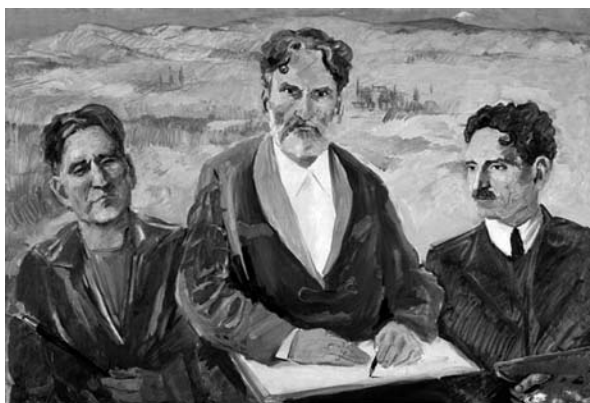
¹ Гегель Г. В. Ф. Лекции по эстетике. Гегель Г. В. Ф. Соч. М., 1958. Т. 14. Кн. 3. С. 74.

² Белинский В. Г. ПСС: В 13 т. М., 1956. Т. 6. С. 526–527.

³ More on this, see: *Казанцева А. П. Музыкальный портрет*. М., 1995.



Example 1. Lorenzo Lotto. *Triple Portrait of a Jeweler*. Approx. 1530



Example 2. Martiros Saryan. *Self-Portrait. Three ages*. 1942

the idealizing or grotesque portrait (“Two portraits” by Bartók, “The Peepshow” by Mussorgsky, “The Little Antiformalistic Paradise” by Shostakovich).

A man is recognized not only in the “stopped instant”, but in his life. A person’s life “compressed” at a small segment of time can be reflected on a portrait – a *portrait-biography*. The pictorial portrait, in particular connecting two–three images of the same personality, aspired to similar effect, as in a picture “Triple Portrait of a Jeweler” by Lorenzo Lotto (Example 1) and in “Venus with a Mirror” by Velasquez and Titian.

However, perhaps the greatest achievement of the portrait-biography is its time deployment, the connection of time-distanced instants of life seized by it. Thus is “Self-Portrait. Three ages” of the great Armenian painter Martiros Saryan, on which the young man at the right is holding a palette, the mature artist at the left compresses a brush in his hand, and in the center the elderly master fixes his sharp eyes directly at the viewer (Example 2). Thus the man in the portrait-biography as if lives long life.

The similar occurs also in a detailed musical portrait-biography. Episodes of the life of portrayed, which characterize a person, line up each other. In the symphonic poem “Don Quixote” by Richard Strauss each variation draws a scene of the novel of the same name by Cervantes: “The fight against windmills”, “Meeting with a herd of sheep”, “Don Quixote’s conversation with the armourbearer” etc. Together, they are built in an integrated portrait.

Besides, the portrait-biography, in addition to the depiction of the man’s life episodes (“A Hero’s Life” by Richard Strauss), can recreate the atmosphere the man lives in (the symphony “Pirosmani” by Sulkhan Nasidze, where the genre and stylistically contrasting fragments create the music “picture” of Old Tbilisi).

The large-scale portrait-biography can comprise elements of plot, which sometimes takes place in the operas and ballets, called after the name of the main character. Though, only those of them can be considered the actual portrait, in which the plot is aimed at the deep exposure of the central personality (operas “A Human Voice” by F. Poulenc, “Waiting” by Arnold Schoenberg, “Diary of a Madman” by Yuri Butsko; ballets “Per Gunt” by Schnittke and “Confession” by Edison Denisov), in contrast to the self-movement of intrigue involving the characters in action (the opera “The artist Mathis” by Paul Hindemith). Symphonic compositions, bearing a certain name, in which the bearer of the name personifies the more conceptually important philosophical generalizations, come out beyond the “framework” of the portrait (poems by Liszt, “Manfred” by Tchaikovsky). This is “something which is much greater than a portrait”.

The essence of the portrait as the image of the man is specifically revealed in the different kinds of art. In contrast to a pictorial and sculptural portraits, that depict man’s figure and face and in contrast to the descriptions of man’s appearance, habits, actions and a way of thinking in a literary portrait, musical portrayal uses peculiar **means**. Here are some of them.

The absence of peculiar outward signs of the person portrayed is compensated by the *programme title*, referring the composition to a certain man. As such, these compositions are often dedicated to the well-known musicians (numerous compositions, dedicated to the memory of J.S. Bach, Dmitry Shostakovich).

From the preceding arguments it has become clear that the program word (“Aida”, “Carmen”, “Giselle”) does not necessarily guarantee portraiture as a composer’s creative intention. Implying seemingly portraying titles – “Eugene Onegin” and “The Queen of Spades” by Tchaikovsky – does not mean in practice that the composer conceived the portraits of Eugene Onegin and Countess. We should not forget that the functions of the program word are more diverse than a direct indication to the “subject” of depiction.

In addition to the word, the *picture* can perform the program function. In the orchestral “Fifteen children’s portraits by Auguste Renoir” by Jean Francaix, the French composer of the twentieth century, it is easy to compare the musical portraits of plays “Miss Grimpel with a blue ribbon in her hair”, “Portrait of Madame Charpentier with children”, “The Two Sisters (On the Terrace)” etc., with the paintings by Renoir.

In the portrait-biography “Fifteen Mysteries of the life of Mary” by the Austrian violinist and composer Heinrich Ignaz Franz von Biber for violin and basso continuo (late 17th century) the program in the form of an engraving with the text of the Bible is prefaced to each of the fifteen sonatas and final passacaglia (Example 3).

In a series of modern composer from St. Petersburg *Boris Tishchenko* “*Twelve Portraits*” for organ, later reworked into octopartite suite “*Portraits*” for piano in four hands (1996) each of the plays is anticipated by the photography of portrayed person: the composer Dmitry Shostakovich, composer Andrei Petrov, conductor Evgeny Mravinsky and other musicians or people close to the author. The start page of organ self-portrait, titled “I myself” is given below (Example 4).



Example 3. The engravings for: H. I. F. von Biber. Sonata No 1 in D minor. The Annunciation

Example 4. Boris Tishchenko. *I myself*

There is an author in the photograph. He looks somewhat younger than the age in which the organ cycle was created. He is at the piano, which means not only a tendency of the portrayed to music and to the writing, but also defines a critical angle for his creative expression – Boris Tishchenko was a brilliant pianist, who played on the concert stage both his opuses and compositions of colleagues-contemporaries. By itself, the choice of photographic material proves that the composer had resorted to show not a documental accurate visual equivalent of himself, but tried to appear as he wanted to be in the eyes of his contemporaries.

The photograph fixed the glare of attentive eyes, concentration and some intensity of face. The latter quality is converted in music to the intensity of acute dissonant tissue and multiplied in the gloomy and austere flavor, in the steady self-assertion of the monogram *B* (the first letter of name: Boris). As we can see, an image, placed in the note text, is optional, but it is a meaningfully important component which helps to form an integral artistic image of the piece.

In making a portrait, especially of a musician, of great importance are the *thematic-musical facilities and techniques*. Irreplaceable here are monograms (BACH, DSCH and others) and leitmotifs (in the “Don Quixote” by Richard Strauss, “Two Portraits” by Bartók), which make the “depicted person” more precise. Indicative is also lyrically thematism with expressive cantilena, recitative or recitative-cantilena confession-melody (Chopin’s Nocturnes).

On the portrait, the composer often recreates “spirit”, the color of prototype’s music, the signs of his beloved genres, artistic images, etc. It is worthy of recalling the words of Francis Poulenc: “My music: it’s the picture of me”. That’s why such signs of the musical creative work of the man portrayed as quotations, stylizations, allusions, etc. are desirable. They recreate the style image of the musician portrayed (“Chopin” and “Paganini” in Schumann’s “Carnival”), or artist, who lives in a corresponding style-musical epoch (“Botticelli”, “Rodin”, “Picasso” from the “Three Graces” by Sergei Slonimsky, “Pirosmani” by Sulkhan Nasidze).

As for *dramaturgy*, a contrast is often quite effective tool. With it the composer reaches a multifaceted and epic description of the person, the allocation of a portrait of the context, of the “outside world” (the dramatic-lyrical introductions to the dance-song variations of Chopin, Alyabiev, Gurilev, Glinka). The contrast is essential in the “drawing” of group portrait, which represents a union of personalities or “the sum of individualities”, as the Soviet art critic Yakov Tugenkhold said. This is formed in a multicomponent suite (the piano “Portraits of the girls” and the orchestral “Fifteen children’s portraits by Auguste Renoir” of Jean Frances, “The Twelve portraits” for the organ of Boris Tishchenko), opera (Quartet from “Rigoletto” by Verdi and duet fragment from the third scene of “Eugene Onegin” by Tchaikovsky).

Of special attention of the researchers is how the composer depicts himself and how his **self-portrait** appears. Among the latter are an emotion-portrait (the pieces of English virginalists “Giles Farnaby’s Dream”, “His rest” and “His humor” by Giles Farnaby, “Doctor Bull’s my self” by John Bull, “Munday’s Joy” by John Munday, “Johnson’s Medley” by Edward Johnson; as well as “Self-portrait” by Gyorgy Ligety, “Self-portrait” by Rodion Shchedrin), a character-portrait (the double portrait of Robert Schumann, his “The poet speaks” in the final of the piano cycle “Kids Scene”), a biography-portrait (“A Hero’s Life” by Richard Strauss, Symphony No. 15 by Dmitry Shostakovich, The First String Quartet by Bedřich Smetana titled “From My Life”, “The Diary of a trip to the Austrian Alps” by the Austrian-born Ernst Krenek, “Auto collage” by Antanas Rekašius, “Lebenslauf” by Alfred Schnittke), where the life of the composer is equaled to his career.



Example 5. Andrew Bilzho with self-portrait

The originality of self-portrait consists in the fact that the artist depicts himself as he wants to be seen. Composer tries to show the best in himself, most – from his point of view – socially valuable. This, and the fact that the music less adjusts to comic, gives almost complete absence in music of self-grotesque, self-caricatures, self-parodies, that is found in the fine arts (in the 19th century there are self-caricatures of Alexander Orlovsky, Pavel Fedotov, later – Aristarkh Lentulov, Pablo Picasso, Georges Rouault, Vasily Shukhaev and Alexander Yakovlev, Andrey Bilzho, “trying on” himself Brezhnev’s eyebrows, Beria’s glasses and Stalin’s mustache (Example 5) and in literature (autobiographical essays of Mark Twain, humoresques by Yaroslav Gashek “Soul of Yaroslav Gashek tells: “How I died” and “How I met with the author of the obituary of me”, ironic “Travel Essays” by Karel Čapek). Perhaps the rare exceptions of “pose ridiculing of myself” (José Ortega y Gasset) in music are the vocal Shostakovich’s opus “Preface to the complete collection of my works, and a short reflection about this preface on the words of Dmitry Shostakovich” and “Volokos” (Sokolov in inversion) for piano by Ivan Sokolov.

The history of the portrait continues. It has long been beyond the arts and become in demand by science: anthropology (the skulls reconstruction of Mikhail Gerasimov), linguistics (“a speech portrait”), law (“a verbal portrait”), criminalistics (“an identikit”), psychology (“ego-image”, “ego-concept”), sociology (“sociological portrait”) etc. The fact that, according to art critic Mikhail Alpatov, “the history of the portrait reminds of the existence of the human race”⁴, it is as endless as the inexhaustible human life and the man himself.

⁴ Алпатов М.В. Эпохи развития портрета. *Проблемы портрета*. М., 1973. С. 22.

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3. More on this, see: Kazantseva L.P. *Musical portrait*. Moscow, 1995.
4. Alpatov M.V. The epochs of portrait. *Problems of the portrait*. Moscow, 1973. S. 22.

Santrauka

Muzikinis portretas

Vienas iš seniausių vaizduojamojo meno žanrų – portretas – turi savo atitikmenis literatūroje, teatre, kine ir muzikoje. Skirtingai nei tapytojų ir skulptorių sukurti portretai, fiksuojantys žmogaus veidą ir figūrą, skirtingai nei literatūrinis portretas, kai aprašoma žmogaus išvaizda, įpročiai, poelgiai, jo mintys, muzikinis portretas kuriamas ypatingomis priemonėmis.

Taikomojo meno ir literatūriniam portretams aktuali portreto ir originalo panašumo problema muzikoje virsta portretuojamojo atribucijos problema. Portretuojamajam būdingų išorinių požymių nebuvimas kompensuojamas programine antrašte, kuri susieja kūrinį su tam tikru žmogumi (pavyzdžiui, kūriniai, skiriami D. Šostakovičiui atminti), taip pat stilizacija, atkuriančia portretuojamojo muziko („Shopin“ ir „Paganini“ R. Schumanno „Karnavale“) arba tam tikro muzikinio stiliaus epochoje gyvenančio menininko („Botticelli“, „Rodin“, „Pikasso“ iš S. Slonimskio „Trijų gracijų“, S. Nasidzės „Pirosmani“) stilistinių veidą. Nepakeičiami šiuo atveju portretuojamųjų muzikinės kūrybos ženklai – citatos iš jų kūrinių, monogramos, aliuzijos ir pan., žodžiu, tai, kas patikslina „vaizduojamąjį objektą“.

Vaizduojamojo meno ir literatūrinio portreto prasminė erdvė atskleidžiama einant nuo išorinių požymių prie vidinių, nuo matomų atributų prie asmenybės vidaus savybių. O muzikiniame portrete dėl muzikos specifikos iškart akcentuojamos giluminės asmens savybės ir pirmiausia sukeliama *emocija*, emocinis asmenybės tonas (Couperino ir Rameau pjesės klavesinui, daugelis operų arijų). Tiksliai pagauta emocija – tai pretekstas pasitelkti fantaziją ir, remiantis principu *pars pro toto* (lot. dalis vietoj visumos), baigti kurti portretą.

Klausytojams lengviau atpažinti tą portretą, kuriame perduodami asmenybės *charakterio* bruožai ir gausu įvairialypių asociacijų. Čia labai svarbu sukurti muzikinius teatrui būdingus tipažus („lyrinis herojus“, „komiškas personažas“, „naivuolė“ ir pan.), kurie labai praturtina ir instrumentinę muziką. Svarbus ir patikslinantis intonacijos-gesto vaidmuo („Džiuljeta mergaitė“, „Merkucijus“, „Pater Lorenzo“ S. Prokofjevo „Romeo ir Džiuljeta“, taip pat žodžiai, padedantys atkurti originalo kalbinę manierą (S. Prokofjevo „Pleputė“, arijos-portretai R. Ščedrino „Mirusiose sielose“). Charakterio bruožų užaštrinimas, hiperbolizavimas – tai būdas, padedantis kurti idealizuojantį arba karikatūrinio stiliaus portretą (B. Bartoko „Du portretai“).

Pats visapusiškiausias yra tas portretas, kuriame atspindėti žmogaus gyvenimo epizodai (R. Strausso „Herojaus gyvenimas“), kai perteikiama atmosfera, kurioje jis gyvena (S. Nasidzės „Pirosmani“), – tai portretas-*gyvenimo aprašymas*. Plataus masto portretas-*gyvenimo aprašymas* vis dėlto skiriasi nuo neportreto. Portreto ribas peržengia „vardinės“ simfoninės drobės, kuriose konkreiti asmenybė skatina konceptualiai svarbesnius filosofinius apibendrinimus (F. Liszto poemos, P. Čaikovskio „Manfredas“) – tai „daugiau nei portretas“. Prie portretų kategorijos neretai priskiriamos pagrindinio personažo vardu pavadintos operos ir baletai, kurių siužetinė linija sutelkta kuo giliau atskleisti pagrindinę asmenybę (A. Šnitkės „Peras Giuntas“, E. Denisovo „Išpažintis“, F. Poulenco „Žmogaus balsas“, F. Glasso operos).

Kai kompozitorius nori vaizduoti patį save, tada kuriamas *autoportretas*. Jų būna įvairių, pavyzdžiui, portretas-emocija (anglų virdžinalistų pjesės, R. Ščedrino ir G. Ligeti „Autoportretas“), portretas-charakteris (R. Schumanno dvigubas portretas), portretas-*gyvenimo aprašymas* (R. Strausso „Herojaus gyvenimas“, D. Šostakovičiaus 15-oji simfonija, A. Rekašiaus „Autokoliažas“, A. Šnitkės *Lebenslauf* (gyvenimo kelias), kai menininko gyvenimas prilyginamas jo kūrybiniam keliui).

Autoporteto savitumas yra tai, kad menininkas jame pateikia save tokį, koks norėtų atrodyti. Kompozitorius stengiasi parodyti tai, kas jame geriausia, kas, jo nuomone, visuomeniškai vertinga. Ši aplinkybė (ir tai, kad komiškas muzikai vis dėlto ne toks būdingas) nulemia situaciją, kad beveik visai nėra muzikinių autošaržų, autokarikatūrų, autoparodijų. Štai pora negausių išimčių – D. Šostakovičiaus vokalinis opusas „Įžanga į mano kūrinių pilną rinkinį ir trumpas pamąstymas apie šią įžangą pagal D. Šostakovičiaus žodžius“, I. Sokolovo „Volokos“ fortepijonui.

Garsinis portretas suvokiamas kur kas produktyviau, kai muzika susiejama su kitomis meno rūšimis ir literatūra. Klausytojas turi suprasti, kad portretui – skirtingai nuo konkretumu pasižyminčių skulptūrinių kūrinių – būdingas didelis sąlygiškumas ir apibendrinimas. Muzikinio atvaizdo imlumas ir daugiaspektiškumas priartina jį prie literatūrinio portreto.