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View on Vocal Compositions by Jānis Zālītis as a Phenomenon of New Modernistic Demands within Latvian Musical Culture

Žvilgsnis ī Janio Zalyčio vokalines kompozicijas kaip ī nauju modernizmo iššūkių apraiškas Latvijos muzikinėje kultūroje

Abstract

Jānis Zālītis (1884–1943), one of the students of Jāzeps Vītols in the St. Petersburg Conservatory, has gone down in the history of Latvian music as a critic and concert reviewer, a public figure and only then as a peculiar composer with original thinking. He was probably the first Latvian artist who tended to break the bonds to the harmony of the romantic paradigm and gladly entwined more sophisticated and rough vertical structures towards the modernization of musical language. Together with his younger counterparts Jānis Kalniņš (1904–2000) and Volfgangs Dārziņš (1906–1962) he pointed to a possible way to new moods, to new images and to new musical means of expression.

The musical oeuvre of Zālītis, which is not large, matured and culminated during the first 30 years of the 20th century. Choir (up to 30) and vocal (40) music were the quantitatively dominated genres as well as the main input of his progressive and new ideas. First of all, these ideas were observed in a range of images and chosen verses, stories, which to Latvian audience were so unexpected and strange.

Taking into account the fact that the stylistic of expressionism was absolutely a new tendency for Latvian music, this paper observes the transnational impact to musical language of Zālītis both from the West as the East, but primarily, focused on the new imagery and stylistic demands of Zālītis' musical language itself.

Keywords: expressionism, impressionism, modernism, Latvian music, Jānis Zālītis, art song, choir music, *Art Nouveau*.

Anotacija

Janis Zalytis (Jānis Zālītis, 1884–1943) – vienas iš Jazepo Vytuolio studentų Sankt Peterburgo konservatorijoje – Latvijos muzikos istorijoje žinomas daugiausia kaip muzikos kritikas ir koncertų apžvalgininkas, kultūros veikėjas ir tik paskiausiai kaip originalaus mąstymo, savitas kompozitorius. Ko gero, jis pirmasis iš latvių kūrėjų pasiryžo ištrūkti iš romantinės harmonijos paradigmos ir modernizuoti savo muzikos kalbą, pasitelkdamas įmantresnes šaižesnio skambesio vertikalias struktūras. Drauge su jaunesniais kolegomis Janiu Kalniniu (1904–2000) ir Volfgangu Darziniu (1906–1962) jis nužymėjo kelią naujų būsenų ir įvaizdžių, naujų muzikos išraiškos priemonių paieškoms.

Zalyčio kūryba nėra gausi, ji subrendo ir pasiekė aukščiausią meninę kokybę XX a. pirmais dešimtmečiais. Joje gausiausi chordinės (iki 30 kūrinių) ir vokalinės (40) muzikos žanrai, čia taip pat labiausiai pasireiškė naujos, progresyvos meninės idėjos. Jų naujumą pirmiausia rodė dainoms pasirenkama poezija ir įvairūs įvaizdžiai, kurie latvių publikai tuomet pasirodė gan netikėti ir netgi keisti.

Turint omenyje, kad ekspresionizmas Latvijos muzikoje tuo metu buvo visiškai nauja stilistikos srovė, straipsnyje aptariamos įvairios įtakos, kurias Zalytis perėmė iš Vakarų ir Rytų. Tačiau pagrindinis dėmesys skiriamas naujiems Zalyčio muzikos įvaizdžiams ir stilistinei raiškai.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: ekspresionizmas, impresionizmas, modernizmas, Latvijos muzika, Jānis Zālītis (Janis Zalytis), daina, chordinė muzika, *Art Nouveau*.

Introduction

In 2014 Latvian musicians particularly were remembering the 130th anniversary of Jānis Zālītis. Therefore, I would like to point out the significance of his personality both in the social life at the time of the Republic of Latvia (1918–1940) as well as his distinctive musical language, which despite the small number of compositions, has promoted the development of Latvian music culture and has influenced every successor as well.

During the first half of the 20th century the situation of accepting and involving contemporary and modernistic means of expressions in Latvian musical culture was rather complicated and ambiguous, and could be understood and noticed not so much in the context of Europe with extremely

new and modern approaches of music conception at this time, but particularly in the local context of Latvian music culture. Almost every Latvian composer of this time graduated from the St. Petersburg Conservatory and several from the Moscow Conservatory. Jāzeps Vītols (1863–1948) was also a student and later a colleague of Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov at the St. Petersburg Conservatory. As the founder of the Latvian Conservatory and its most prominent person, he strongly protected the traditions of classical forms, genres and national romanticism. Therefore, the process of transition from the romantic mood to new searches came very gradually and carefully in the musical works of Vītols and others without a transparent focusing on radical modernistic demands.

Hence there were only a few composers who tended towards the musical means of expression, which were

unusual to the context of Latvian musical culture. These were Jānis Kalniņš (1904–2000) and Volfgangs Dārziņš (1906–1962) both of whom emigrated from Latvia in 1944, as well as Vītols in some vocal chamber music compositions and certainly Jānis Zālītis. He was probably the first Latvian artist who tended to break the bonds of the harmony of the romantic paradigm and gladly entwined more sophisticated and rough vertical structures towards the modernization of musical language. Together with his above-mentioned younger counterparts he pointed to a possible way to new moods, to new images and to new musical means of expression.

1. Insights into the life and musical interests of Jānis Zālītis

Jānis Zālītis (1884–1943) was born in Nītaure (Vidzeme) and in 1899 went to Rīga to learn music under Emīls Dārziņš (1875–1910), the famous Latvian national romantic composer, whose contribution (vocal music: choir song and art songs) certainly had an influence on the selection of Zālītis' musical genres. During the period from 1904 to 1915 the young composer studied at the St. Petersburg Conservatory, first of all in the organ class under Lui Homilius, and then in a special composition class for several years under the supervision of Vītols. Unfortunately, he could not graduate from the class of so-called "practical composition" due to a lack of money.

A very important social activity of Zālītis was connected with the Latvian National Opera. He was the director of the Opera for two periods (from the beginning of 1919 to 1922 and from 1926 to 1928). Under his leadership the Opera staged and premiered the largest number of operas in the Opera's history. In addition, the Opera's artists covered for the lack of a concert hall with many symphonic and chamber music concerts.

Zālītis also spent a lot of time and effort as a music critique and concert reviewer, he had to prepare reviews for the newspaper every morning. From 1907 till his death in 1943 his reviews were published in several newspapers, among them were *Latvija, Dzimtenes vēstnesis (Homeland Messenger)*, *Baltija, Līdums (The Clearance)*, and later he was a consistent reviewer for *Jaunākās Ziņas (The Latest News)*. During Soviet times Zālītis wrote in such prominent newssheets as *Cīņa (The Struggle)* and *Padomju Latvija (Soviet Latvia)*.

Many musicologists have reasonably recognized that musical criticism by Zālītis was the most prominent and assertive evaluation of musical culture of this time, and whose articles broadly reflected the panorama of musical life. History has accepted his opinion about young composers, different concerts and performances. Taking

into account the fact that the analysis of this plentiful heritage is not a subject of this article, I will focus my attention only on his aesthetical positions, range of musical interests and empathies to point out the main impacts on his musical oeuvre.

In this context Zālītis was very interested in modernistic music trends at the very beginning of the 20th century. He was able to make out and distinguish which compositions were an expression of the creativity of a composer's spirit, and which were the result of an ungifted constructivist's sweat. Primarily Claude Debussy and the adorable Alexander Scriabin marked the range of his sympathies in music, later it was supplemented by Ravel, Stravinsky, Prokofiev, Honegger, Shostakovich and Szymanowski. However, he was not keen on music by Arnold Schoenberg, considering it as "non-artistic compositions with lacking of the intuition, animation and keenness"¹ (Graubiņš 2009: 19). Zālītis also wrote with commendation about music by Paul Hindemith. In his memoir *Manas atmiņas un atziņas (My Memories and Opinions)* that was found recently (in 2008) in Uppsala, Sweden, the composer wrote:

Among mentioned composers my deeper affection attributed to Scriabin – vibrations of his psyche have the most impact on my musical aspirations. But I have avoided simulacrum, therefore I have refused to related ideas in music. Also from my student years my favourite composers are Debussy and Ravel, and Karol Szymanowski from Poland, that until nowadays fascinates me with his delicate style and natural perfect compositional technique (Zālītis 2009: 27–28).

Several times in letters as well as in critiques the author mentioned himself as a decadent – but why and in which way? As we know, decadentism is mostly connected with some kind of decline after the culmination; a crisis of morality and renunciation of socially realistic and national themes. Furthermore, at the beginning of the 20th century Latvian musical critique named as a Decadentism such a differential phenomenon as an impressionism, as well as compositions by Richard Strauss, Alexander Scriabin. And, of course, Zālītis did not accept such an untypical reading of this term. Thus he wrote:

It is customary to call anyone a decadent, who in some way has diverged from the conventional envelopment of paternity, who doesn't follow those "good examples" blindly, but tries to achieve his own mode and means of expression, more or less by himself.²

These words also refute every reproof of the composer's untypical and "strange" musical language.

For every artist the most rigorous critic could be expected from his authority – a teacher. And regarding Zālītis his teachers Dārziņš and Vītols wrote the best reviews. For example, Dārziņš, one of the first critics

in Latvian musical culture, in the newspaper *Balss (The Voice)* on 21st October 1906, admits that about the young composer he can say only the best words.

The guidelines of character: powerful imagination, good taste and – that couldn't have been expected from a beginner – a quite high, developed technique, which evidences that the latest events in modern music literature are not extraneous for Zālītis.³

Also Vītols in *St. Petersburger Zeitung* on 12th February 1913 considered that:

Ambitions to use all means of modern harmony in art songs by Zālītis are crowned with undeniable success. [...] It has conquered the audience with freshness, unconstrained illustration and vital colors.⁴

or:

[..] because Zālītis is the freshest and the most naughty not only among our young authors, but the richest one among composers–colorists.⁵

And, finally:

An aristocrat in art, he cultivated his own musical language until the final point of “I”, until the sounding accent, that is unusual to the Latvian nation of ploughmen.⁶

This active and extensive range of public duties is a reason for the “lazy” and sporadic nature of music creativity. The composer used to create very slowly, making different variants, which could be exchanged after the first publication or premiere. Because of this, he avoided large-scale forms and genres at all. In addition, many of his compositions were premiered during his life, but had not been published or had been preserved without composing year, whether others had survived as sketches or had even been lost. These factors still make it difficult to unambiguously comprehend, as well to chronologically and systematically study the contribution by Zālītis.

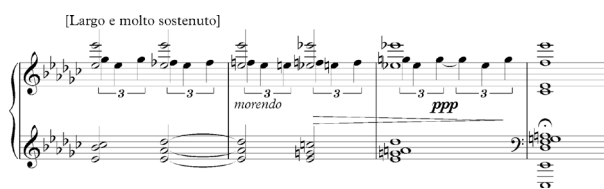
2. Some significant points of musical creativity by Jānis Zālītis

The period of musical creativity of Zālītis lasts from the early 20th century (1905) till the year of his death, 1943. His musical oeuvre is not large; however, particularly vocal (over 40) solo and choral music *a cappella* (up to 30) are the quantitatively dominated genres as well as the main input of progressive and new ideas. Notably that musical oeuvre by Zālītis is not impossible to divide into several periods – it matured and culminated during the 1930s. This period was supplemented with up to ten folk song arrangements for solo voice with piano (1925–1935). However, at the very

beginning of the composer's activity, about ten piano pieces in the romantic mood were created (1906–1914); among them is one piano sonata in four movements (composed in his years of study but not completed).

2.1. Typical compositional elements of art songs

To gain the best understanding of the musical language of Zālītis one has to focus our attention on two quantitative and artistically significant spheres of vocal music genres – art song and choir song *a cappella*. Notably, the composer started with a genre of art song, as the most romantic, most subjective and also most democratic genre as well. Very quickly the romantic mood with its typical subjects of the love lyric, symbols and elements of nature, emotional reflections on different parts of the day and seasons was supplemented with fairy songs for children (*Krauklis [The Raven]*, *Rīts [The Morning]*, *Ziedu nakts [A Night of Flowers]*, *Rudenis [Autumn]*, *Eglīte [The Christmas Tree]* and *Eža kažociņš [The Fur Coat of a Hedgehog]*). Also very real and important social problems (*Meitenes dziesma [The Song of Girl]* and *Karavīra līgaviņa [The Bride of the Soldier]*) were entwined. However, as an indicator of expressionism in the songs' poetry the most expressive, unusual feelings as well as untypical situations and characters gradually were at the forefront. For example, one of the first solo songs by Zālītis (written in 1906) *Ceļinieks (The Wanderer)* with verses by the well-known Latvian poet Jānis Poruks (1871–1911) from the title seemed to be very romantic. However, the song is full of resignation and strange feelings of being in cemetery during the nighttime. This particularly expressionistic scene has similar musical expression in dissonant and aural “strange” sounding – atonal harmony, parallel seventh chords, whole tone chords as well as ending with a whole tone chord – *E flat, d flat, f, g, a, c flat*¹ (see Example 1).



Example 1. Jānis Zālītis, Jānis Poruks, *Ceļinieks*, closing bars of piano postlude⁷

The next notable expressionistic art song *Mēnessērdzīgais (The Sleepwalker / Noctambulant, 1910–1913)* reveals the well-known kind of morbid somnambulism – a strange desire to climb on the roof, to watch stars with closed eyes during nighttime. It is known that all these moods, symbols and perception of the world found a vivid expression particularly during this period of time. Involuntarily we find and compare these characters in *Pierrot Lunaire* by Schoenberg, *Wozzek* by Berg, etc. The prelude of the

Misterioso, andante con moto

Example 2. Jānis Zālītis, Kārlis Skalbe, *Mēnessērdzīgais*, the beginning prelude of piano part

22 [un poco piu mosso]

pār jumtiem trauk - ties tīk, pār ko-rām kāpt, pār

25 *f* tor-ņiem mē-nes - nī - cā sū - po - ties un ak - lām a - cīm zvaig - znēs

30 lū - ko - ties

38 *mf* *mp* *marc.* *8^{va}*

cres. *con.* *sostenuto* *fff* *a tempo*

42 vār - dā ma - ni ne - sau - ciet, kad stai - gā - ju ar se - ju bā - lu: tik

45 sma-gi man no jum-ta krist un pa-mest zvaigz-ņu mig-lu tā - lu.

p *mf* *espressivo*

Example 3. Jānis Zālītis, Kārlis Skalbe, *Mēnessērdzīgais*, the culmination and the end of the song. Text translation: *I like to climb on roofs and to swing over towers in moonlight and stare at the stars with blind eyes. O, don't talk to me during my walking: it is so heavy to fall down from the roof and to leave the distant mist of stars.*

piano part in *The Sleepwalker* is displayed as rhythmically stable and slow, but in the block chord verticality it is a very unstable and insecure march (as the sleepwalker really is). The harmony (the main key is D major) from the very beginning is balanced between E major/minor and D major, and as a sequence rises up to minor thirds, revealing the major-minor system guidelines, then diminished tonality, and very easily and quickly moving away from this "stability" towards sequential development provoked ambiguous tonality (see Example 2).

The solo part joins, while the piano is still playing the first variation of the previous march. However, the singing line is emotionally distanced from the piano activities. At the moment of the first culmination displayed in the piano part, there is some kind of breakthrough of the sleepwalker, after which he sings in an emotionally involved way, intercepting the basic sounds from the previous two piano sections (D sharp – from E major/minor and D – from D major), achieving the second culmination and expressing the main wish of the sleepwalker to stare the stars even though his eyes are closed. Afterwards the piano part tries to illustrate this moment of staring with the block chord rising up to the third and fourth octave, balanced in F major, G flat major and B flat major (see Example 3). The small final section returns to the beginning texture. Two phrases of the solo part seem to combine two different ways of singing from the beginning and middle part, but between these two phrases the author in the piano part tries to warn

Very intimately

Kad

6 ta - va ma - zā ro - ka man sār - tu ro - zi nes, man

10 šķiet: tā tum - ša lies - ma iz ta - vas dvē - se - les.

Example 4. Jānis Zālītis, Fricis Bārda, *Roze*, the beginning of the song

that climbing on the roof can be fatal, in bar 44 including a small interlude with a *Dies irae* quotation (see Example 3).

The very close understanding of A. Scriabin's style was expressed in a vocal miniature *Roze* (*The Rose*, 1915) in a very subtle German bar form. The symbol of a dark flame provokes the plain vocal line to adjoin the atonality of the accompaniment, which is achieved by ellipse chords. Chromatically more intense melodic lines in the piano accompaniment contrast with the quite modest though delicate vocal line (see Example 4).

As the most expressive I would like to highlight the expanded and largest art song by Zālītis, the ballad *Uguns Milna* (*Bludgeon of Fire*), which shows extraordinary interpreting of the well-known poetry by Anna Brigadere. The ballad is full with fresh and rough harmony, balanced between tonality and atonality. The elevated declamatory in the vocal line is supplemented with notes of the necessary emotional expression for the singer. However, the stable rhythm of the vocal line, based on quarter notes and repeated tones reveal the main function of the singer is first and foremost to narrate and recite the story and to let the each word be heard with some kind of separation from the main events. The composer even created and developed his own form of *Sprechgesang*, achieving a singing and speaking technique interchangeably as well as simultaneously.

Therefore, I have to admit that between the two main elements of the ballad, the piano accompaniment and the vocal part, very often the principal role of description and illustration of the events and activities is allocated to the piano part. For example, the hand swish, the moment of sitting and thinking of the protagonist of the ballad Viesturs, as well as the stalking of the enemy crusaders and scene of fighting with fire, the burning flame are reflected in the variable and susceptible piano part. It makes a real scene, in which the solo part mainly functions as an explanation, with a chromatically intensive or large interval jumping filled declamation.

Consequently, the principal means of searching for new, modern and contemporary horizons of musical sphere for Zālītis take the form of tonality and verticality – the harmony. The above-mentioned vocal miniatures show the most typical ways of expression, which are common to the largest number of compositions by Zālītis. There are:

1) A chromatically intense and dissonant melodic curve in the piano line, which contrasts with the rather modest, abstracted and even diatonic vocal line. The bright examples of such a contrast counterpoint of two lines are *Mēnessērdzīgais* and *Roze*.

2) The typical manner of verticality construction is split tone using. For example, diatonic tones of consonant chords are supplemented with their alteration and make dissonant intervals – diminished and expanded octave etc. The composer widely uses acoustically equivalent intervals

to them – especially the major seventh and minor ninth. Very often the author fills those with the fourth, achieving the quartal harmony, which as is known, was developed in the early 20th century as a result of the breakdown and re-evaluation of tonality. As the main way of music developing is the use of irregular resolutions of chords, transposing, modulating and modified sequences, which most frequently transfer the theme up or down and break down the boundaries of tonality. Hence, in a context of Latvian musical culture Zālītis was an innovator in the field of harmony and tonality within the genre of the art song.

2.2. Specificity of choral music

The genre of the art song were composed from the early study years till the end of composer's life, but choral songs *a cappella* appeared only from 1910, when over half of his art songs had already been created. During the following years relations between the composer and the art song or choir song became changeable. Very quickly Zālītis achieved his own style and manner of expression within the genre of choral song too – a concise, sometimes even monumental mood with an illustrating colourful soundscape and a traditional diatonic basis that is most opened to talk to a larger audience.

The themes of the choral songs are very close to the solo miniatures – there are nature sceneries, which are supplemented by nostalgia, praising of the motherland or emotional experiences of humans (*Kā oši šalc* [*As Ashes Whistle*], *Birztaļiņa* [*Birch Grove*] and *Kad nakts* [*At Night*] as well as *Vasaras nakts* [*Summer Night*]). They are some significant patriotic and unpretentious songs in a folk style, which were composed for theatre plays and in the short-term became very popular. One of them is *Kārsēju, vērpēju un audēju dziesma* (*The Song of Combers, Spinners and Weavers*) for female choir that was composed in 1912 for the play *Uguns un nakts* (*Fire and Night*) by Rainis. Another significant song for the theatre is *Katordznieku dziesma* (*Convicts' Song*) for male choir, composed for the play *Augšāmcelšanās* (*Resurrection*) by Leons Paegle which became the most sung song by Zālītis during his lifetime.

There are some affective and touching *in memoriam* choral compositions. One of them is *Pie koklētāja kapa* (*By the Bard's Grave*, up to 1913) for mixed choir, dedicated to the unexpected death of the composer's teacher and colleague Emīls Dārziņš. The musical material of this song is reminiscent of the choral music style of Dārziņš – a diatonically simply vocal cantilena of choir parts. Another *in memoriam* song is *Dārgās ēnas* (*Cherished Souls*, 1922), dedicated to victims of the First World War. Events and horror of the war as well as nostalgia inspired the author to choral compositions with emotional darkness, pain and resignation as well as long and deep reflections: *Ceļš uz dzimteni* (*The Way to My Homeland*), *Tā vēsma* (*The Divine*

SOPRANO ALTO
no - birst rū - ta, no

TENOR BASS
No - birst rū ta, no - birst as - tra,

6 *molto lento e con espressione*
- birst as - tra... Sirds tik grū - ta,

10 *morendo*
sirds... tik grū - ta, tik grū - ta.
sirds tik

Example 5. Jānis Zālītis, Rainis, *Sirds tik grūta*, closing bars.
Text translation: *The Rue is falling off, the aster is falling off, and The Heart is so heavy.*

Spirit), *Tev šie lauki* (*These Fields are for you*). One of the most popular is *Sirds tik grūta* (*The Heart is So Heavy*, 1915) with well-known lyrics by Rainis. This composition tends to involve the innovations of the musical language of art songs. Somber and hopelessness are achieved by declining vocal lines, Phrygian mode, melancholic retentions, non-chordal tones and non-dominant dissonant chord progressions as well as a quartal harmony. At the beginning of the 20th century this manner of composing became a real challenge for every choir in Latvia (see Example 5).

Hope after the events of the First World War and belief in a free and independent motherland is expressed in the song *Kā sniegi kalnu galotnēs* (*Like Snow on Mountain-tops*), that was based on very popular verses by Jānis Jaunsudrabiņš, which were also used by other contemporary composers – Jāzeps Mediņš, Pēteris Barisons, Leonīgs Vīgners, etc. The period of 1920 to 1921, when Zālītis was working as the director of Latvian National Opera was rather positive and optimistic, and probably initiated him to focus on this sanguine and bright poem. The author tried to achieve a thoroughly composed effect within the framework of the ternary form. An impressionistically colourful harmony from a modest motion attains the bright culmination in the middle section, comparing the snow whiteness to the clarity of human hearts, with sequential progressions from C sharp major through B major and C sharp minor getting

[poco a poco più mosso e brioso]
(6/8)
driz mig las at - stās tos un sau - li at - sta - ros, un

ALTO
TENOR
BASS
un

f
Driz to - mēr mig las at - stās tos un vi - ņi sau - li at - sta ros,

6 *ff*
vi - ņi sau - li, vi - ņi sau - li, un vi - ņi sau - li

9 *fff*
at - sta - ros, at - sta - ros, at - sta - ros...

12 *fff*
at - sta - ros, at - sta - ros, at - sta - ros.

Example 6. Jānis Zālītis, Jānis Jaunsudrabiņš, *Kā sniegi kalnu galotnēs*, the fragment of climax in the middle part. Text translation: *very soon a fog will leave and they will mirror the sun*

to the climax in D major and stopping on the dominant ninth-chord to E major/minor in a very narrow setting (see Example 6).

The most well-known choral composition is the ballad *Bīķeris miroņu salā* (*The Goblet on the Isle of the Dead*) for mixed choir, composed in 1912. The philosophical poem by Jānis Poruks is full with common, fantastic and mystic symbols. The story of this song is rather expressive and dramatic, however here the composer chose completely different means of expression – opposite to vocal chamber music. The images of the sea and mountain of amber and the gold goblet are made in an impressionistic manner and contrasted with the souls of the dead, which symbolize the pain and suffering of humanity. This alternating between two contrasting lines – expressionistic passion and painfulness from the one side and calm impressionistic observation from the other – is an infrequent phenomenon called *Art Nouveau* or Jugend style.

mp \leftarrow \rightarrow mf \rightarrow \rightarrow \rightarrow f
(♩ = 108)

SOPRANO
Lai-stās sta - ri, lai - stās sta - ri, sau - lei lē - cot, kad

ALTO
mp \leftarrow \rightarrow mf \rightarrow \rightarrow \rightarrow f

23 *sostenuto* *Maestoso, molto sostenuto. ff*
mos - tas dzē - rā - ju - ga - ri, kad mos - tas dzē - rā - ju ga - ri.

27 [*piu mosso, forte*] [*piu mosso, forte*]
Sau - lei le - cot, dzies - mai ska - not,
Sau - lei le - cot, dzies - mai ska - not,

32 [$\text{♩} = 50$] *sempre ff*
dzies - mai ska - not pār
sempre ff
dzies - mai ska - not pār jū - - ru,
sempre ff

34
jū - ru, ga - ri uz bi - ķe - ri stei - dzas,
ga - ri uz bi - ķe - ri stei - dzas

Example 9. Jānis Zālītis, Jānis Poruks, *Bīķeris miroņu salā*, the middle section. Text translation: *While the sun is rising, its rays shine brightly and the souls of drinkers wake up*

in dissonances, expressionistic colours and poly-functional effects within the diatonic verticality.

Conclusions

As known, Jānis Zālītis confirmed himself mostly in the field of vocal music, in the art and choral song genres, where the main “cause” and impulse is poetry. The composer chose verses particularly selectively and, very often, without traditional poetic rhyme, pointing out the narration as the primarily specificity. It follows that the author did not prefer the one particular poet, but chose verses by many different poets. Notably, that in the context of comparatively concise musical oeuvre, Zālītis was very fastidious to the poetry and during his creativity he used verses had from up to 30 Latvian poets, among them the most popular are:

- Aspazija
- Jānis Akuraters
- Antons Austrīņš
- Fricis Bārda
- Rūdolfs Blaumanis
- Pēteris Blaus
- Anna Brigadere
- Jānis Ezeriņš
- Jānis Jaunsudrabiņš
- Kārlis Jekabsons
- Kārlis Krūza
- Atis Ķeniņš
- Zinaīda Lazda
- Eduards Lejgalietis
- Leons Paegle
- Andrejs Pāparde
- Vilis Plūdonis
- Jānis Poruks
- Rainis
- Augusts Saulietis
- Kārlis Skalbe
- Kārlis Štrāls
- Eduards Treimanis – Zvārgulis
- Eduards Veindenbaums and others.

During the period of the first half of the 20th century Zālītis was a very singular personality in Latvian musical culture. He was able to create and develop his own style, which was particularly progressive and modern in the context of the environment in Latvia. Being interested in all new demands and stylistic innovations, the Latvian composer in his own musical language combined completely opposite ways of writing such as impressionistic colourfulness diatonic writing as well as the expressionistic perspective of tonality and atonality, dissonant diatonic verticality and emancipation of chromatism. For example, in early compositions (among them are mostly art songs) the harmony is very intense and variable. Later this fastness

becomes diminished and higher proportion is assigned to diatonism. Therefore, the colourfulness of verticality became the most important mean of expression. Among different chords the most typical is a phonism of augmented triads, diminished octaves and bar repetition. There is also no shortage of the harmony of the fourth in music by Zālītis.

The choral songs by Zālītis make quite a different sonic experience. In this genre of music he speaks in a stylistically opposite way – full of the impressionistic and diatonic manner. The harmony in choral compositions by Zālītis is as variable as the texture. Consequently, in choral music the composer uses the mood of expressionism in a more “polite” and objective perspective that is quite opposite to expressionism itself. For example, the modest and distanced vocal line very often seems to be “not involved” in the action. This manner of combining two concrete opposite styles, including some degree of abstraction is named as ‘modest expressionism’, Jugend style or *Art Nouveau*. Estonian musicologist Leo Normet (1922–1995) distinguishes the style of Zālītis as well as his Estonian contemporary colleagues (Mart Saar, Juhan Aavik, Heino Eller) as a prolongation of symbolism, extracting contours of *Art Nouveau*.

The incoming of this style in music did not take much time – impressionism paved the way for it. Both of these styles can warp within creative works by one composer [...] Ideally, impressionism needs the immediately fixation of the seen things and therefore is a more subjective phenomenon. However Art Nouveau requires the feeling of distance between subject and object that is inevitable, taking into account decorating tendencies of the entirety. Therefore, Art Nouveau is the artistic direction with objective nature⁸ (Normet 2005: 18).

The laconic but very sophisticated musical oeuvre by Zālītis, especially the untied musical language of vocal miniatures and untypical composed choral scores were very complicated and difficult to learn and to stage. However, probably due to this innovative and modernistic musical language in context of Latvian musical culture it was able to achieve the high level of contemporary choral music – one hundred years later.

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Santrauka

Janis Zalytis (Jānis Zālītis) buvo vienas pirmųjų Latvijos kompozitorių, pasiryžusių ištrūkti iš romantinės harmonijos paradigmos ir modernizuoti savo muzikos kalbą, pasitelkdamas įmantresnes šaižesnio skambesio vertikalias struktūras. Drauge su jaunesniais kolegais Janiu Kalniniu (1904–2000) ir Volfgangu Darziniu (1906–1962) jis nužymėjo kelią naujų būsenų ir įvaizdžių, naujų išraiškos priemonių paieškoms modernioje Latvijos muzikoje.

Zalytis studijavo Sankt Peterburge, du kartus buvo paskirtas operos direktoriumi (1919–1922 ir 1926–1928). Jis taip pat buvo vienas žymiausių ir įtakingiausių to meto muzikos kritikų, savo recenzijas spausdino įvairiuose Latvijos dienraščiuose. Zalytis ypač domėjosi XX a. pradžios modernistinėmis srovėmis – nuo Claude'o Debussy iki jo adoruojamo Aleksandro Skriabino. Vėliau jo mėgstamų kompozitorių gretas papildė Maurice'as Ravelis, Igoris Stravinskis, Sergejus Prokofjevas, Arthuras Honeggeras, Dmitrijus Šostakovičius ir Karlis Szymanowskis.

Zalyčio kūrybinė veikla truko beveik keturis dešimtmečius nuo XX a. pradžios iki kompozitoriaus mirties 1943 m. Kūrybinis jo palikimas nėra itin gausus, jį sudaro daugiau kaip 40 solinių dainų, apie 30 kompozicijų chorui *a cappella*, apie 10 liaudies dainų išdailų (1925–1935) ir maždaug tiek pat kūrinių fortepijonui (1906–1914). Kompozitoriaus kūrybą būtų galima suskirstyti į kelis laikotarpius, iš kurių paskutinis, brandusis, tenka XX a. ketvirtam dešimtmečiui.

Pirmiausia kompozitorius išbandė savo jėgas kurdamas dainas solo balsui dėl šiam žanrui būdingo romantiškumo, subjektyvumo ir demokratiškumo. Romantinę nuotaiką kuriančias tipines dainų temas, tokias kaip meilės lyrika, gamtos gaivalai ir simboliai, emocijų būsenų atspindžiai skirtingu paros ar metų laiku, netrukus papildė pasakų motyvais sukurtos dainos vaikams. Dainų tekstuose neapsieita ir be aktualios socialinės problematikos. Zalyčio dainose išryškėjo būdingieji ekspresionizmo poetikos bruožai, tokie kaip išraiškingi, neįprasti jausmai, netipiškos situacijos ir personažai. Dauguma jų kupinos rezignacijos, keistų pojūčių, kurie aplanko būnant kapinėse naktį, žvelgiant į liepsną ar pamačius nakvišą. Šios ekspresionistinės scenos dainose įkūnijamos atitinkamomis muzikos išraiškos priemonėmis, disonansišku, „negirdėtu“ skambesiu – atonalia harmonija, aliteracijomis, paraleliniais septakordais ir pan.

Pirmosios Zalyčio kompozicijos chorui *a cappella* buvo sukurtos apie 1910 m. Chorinių dainų temos labai panašios: gamtos peizažai, nostalgija ir tėvynės šlovinimas, emociniai žmogaus išgyvenimai. Kaip ir solinėse dainose, choriniuose kūriniuose kompozitorius gana greitai atrado individualų

stilių ir braižą – taupiomis priemonėmis perteikiamos net ir pačios monumentaliosios temos, atvirai bylojančios didelei auditorijai. Taigi stiliaus požiūriu Zalyčio chorinė muzika atrodo gan vientisa, o tradicinės muzikos išraiškos priemonės čia naudojamos dar įmantriau, atskleidžiant polifunkcines ir disonansines diatoninės vertikalės galimybes.

Dainose chorui kompozitoriaus muzikos kalba skamba kitaip negu jo solinėse dainose: ekspresionizmas čia įgyja „mandagesnį“ ir objektyvesnį atspalvį, skirtingai nei tuo pačiu stiliumi sukurtose dainose balsui solo. Pavyzdžiui, santūri, lyg iš šalies dainos turinį pasakojanti vokalinė partija atrodo tarsi „nedalyvaujanti“ kūrinio veiksmė. Šios tendencijos užuomazgų esama jau solinėse miniatiūrose, o vėliau ji pasireiškė ir kompozicijose chorui. Tokį požymių derinį galima apibūdinti kaip *Art Nouveau*, jugendo stilių ar nuosaikų ekspresionizmą.

Svarbiausią postūmjį vokalinės muzikos kūrybai suteikia poezija. Kompozitorius itin dėmesingai rinkdavosi eiles savo muzikai ir labai dažnai pirmenybę teikdavo neeiluotai poezijai, tuo išskeldamas pasakojimo svarbą. Pažymėtina, kad dėl tokio kompozitoriaus išrankumo net ir palyginti negausioje vokalinėje jo kūryboje galima aptikti bemaž trisdešimties latvių poetų eiles. Apimtimi nedidelė, bet labai įmantri Zalyčio kūryba – ypač nesuvaržyta muzikos kalba parašyta vokalinės miniatiūros ir netipiškai sukomponuotos chorinės partitūros – buvo gana sunkiai įkandama to meto atlikėjams. Turbūt dėl pernelyg novatoriškos, modernios muzikos kalbos Latvijos muzikinės kultūros kontekste Zalyčio kūryba chorui pripažinta kaip aukščiausio meninio lygio chorinė muzika tik šiais laikais – prabėgus beveik šimtui metų.