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Padalko Viktoriia,

*Postgraduate Student, Institute of Contemporary Art
National Academy of Culture and Arts Management
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8542-5336>
dmz2121.vpadalko@dakkim.edu.ua*

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SEMANTICS OF TARAS SHEVCHENKO'S POETRY IN MUSICAL INTERPRETATIONS OF MODERN PERFORMERS

The purpose of the article is to demonstrate the process of transformation of semantic paradigm of musical interpretations of Taras Shevchenko's poetry in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war. **The methodology of research** combines general scientific methods with specific methods of musicology and literature. The use of historical and comparative methods, together with analytical method, made it possible to conduct a multidimensional analysis to identify the features of modern musical interpretations of Taras Shevchenko's poetry through the prism of socio-political transformations and to determine changes in them compared to previous interpretations. **Scientific novelty.** The analysis of musical versions of Kobzar's poetry in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war was carried out for the first time. Moreover, new and previously unanalysed song compositions have been added to the research related to musical Shevchenkiana. **Conclusions.** The creative heritage of the classics has always been a kind of tuning fork for the Ukrainian cultural space. Through the prism of the attitude towards it, it is possible to track both the internal transformations of the artists' creative worldview and the reflection of external challenges the whole country face. The research demonstrates the transformation of semantics of the poetry of Taras Shevchenko in modern performers' musical interpretations. It reveals not only changes, but also the process which explains why such changes appeared. The work also describes how interpretations expand the paradigm of meanings not only during their creation, but also in diachrony – after a certain time, when the socio-political context changes, thus the phenomenon of "interpretation of interpretations" appears. Through updating the semantics of Taras Shevchenko's poetry by modern performers, a kind of intergenerational dialogue is formed. This leads to demonstration of spatio-temporal connections, which, through modern media resources, present Ukraine as a country with its own centuries-old history and unique, original culture.

Keywords: musical interpretations of poetry, Ukrainian composers and performers, synthesis of music and literature, Ukrainian culture, vocal music, musical interpretation, Ukrainian poets, musical Shevchenkiana, pop studies.

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Семантика поезій Тараса Шевченка в музичних інтерпретаціях сучасних виконавців*

Мета статті – продемонструвати процес трансформації семантичної парадигми музичних інтерпретацій поезії Тараса Шевченка у контексті російсько-української війни. **Методологія** дослідження об'єднує загальнонаукові методи зі спеціальними методами музикознавства та літературознавства. Застосування історичного та компаративістичного методів, разом із аналітичним дало можливість провести багатовимірний аналіз задля виявлення особливостей сучасних музичних інтерпретацій поезії Тараса Шевченка крізь призму соціально-політичних трансформацій та визначити в них зміни в порівнянні з попередніми інтерпретаціями. **Наукова новизна** роботи полягає в тому, що аналіз музичних втілень поезії Кобзаря в контексті російсько-української війни здійснено вперше. До досліджень, пов'язаних із музичною Шевченкіаною, додано нові та раніше не аналізовані пісенні композиції. **Висновки.** Творчість класиків в українському культурному просторі завжди була своєрідним камертоном. Через ставлення до неї ми можемо простежити не тільки внутрішні зміни у творчому світогляді митців, а й відображення зовнішніх викликів, з якими стикається вся країна. У статті демонструється трансформація семантики поезій Тараса Шевченка в музичних інтерпретаціях сучасних виконавців. Висвітлено не тільки зміни, а й процес, який обумовлює їх. Також у роботі описано як інтерпретації розширюють парадигму значень не тільки при своєму створенні, а й у діячності – через певний час, коли змінюється соціально-політичний контекст, таким чином з'являється явище "інтерпретація

інтерпретацій”. Крізь оновлення семантики поезій Тараса Шевченка сучасними виконавцями утворюється своєрідний діалог поколінь. Завдяки цьому відбувається демонстрація просторово-часових зв’язків, які через сучасні медіаресурси презентують Україну як країну зі своєю багатовіковою історією та унікальною самобутньою культурою.

Key words: музичні інтерпретації поезії, українські естрадні виконавці, синтез музики і літератури, українська культура, вокальна музика, музична інтерпретація, українські поети, музична Шевченкіана, естрадознавство.

The relevance of the research. The poetic legacy of Taras Shevchenko from the time of its creation to the present day is one of the key links for a holistic understanding of Ukrainian identity. Moreover, through the prism of the attitude towards it, it is possible to track both the internal transformations of the artists' creative worldview and the reflection of external changes in the socio-political process. During different historical periods, Taras Shevchenko's poetry was influenced in interpretation. The poet's ideas were interpreted differently, the accents were changed, certain lines were removed from publications and even whole poems were banned. In the mid-1980s, on the eve of Ukraine's independence, musical interpretations of "Kobzar" began to appear massively to the general public clearly presenting the ideas of the author. Author-Poet of the Ukrainian nation, Author-Prophet.

In the context of modern historical events, the Revolution of Dignity, Russian aggression and full-scale war, the appeal to Taras Shevchenko's work acquires even greater importance. It is not only about the artistic value of creativity in general, but about the preservation and transmission of cultural memory.

Analysis of research and publications. The phenomenon of interpretation becomes the object of research by scientists from various fields of knowledge. A monograph by O. Kolesnyk is a significant work in creating the basis of the theory of interpretation in culture. The scientist carried out a conceptual synthesis of scattered studies on interpretation, analysed the cultural potential of performing arts, interlinguistic, intersemiotic and intertextual transpositions [4].

Various aspects of musical interpretation are covered in research by M. Heychenko and V. Moskalenko. The works of V. Redya and O. Frait are devoted to the peculiarities of the musical interpretation of poetic texts, the interaction of words and music. In the interpretation of key ideas and symbols from the poetry of Taras Shevchenko, the study of S. Smal-Stotskyi is a thorough work [5]. It is worth noting that his book "T. Shevchenko. Interpretations" until 2003 was published only in the diaspora (in 1934 and 1965).

Musical interpretations of Taras Shevchenko's poetry in the realm of academic

music are more often highlighted in the works of musicologists, as there as information about interpretations by pop performers can mostly be found only on personal websites of musicians, profiles in social networks, reviews of music critics, or directly in the musical compositions.

The purpose of the article is to demonstrate the process of renewal of semantic paradigm of musical interpretations of Taras Shevchenko's poetry in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war.

Main part. Ukrainian culture has such deep and strong roots bound with folklore, religion and national mentality itself that now, in the hectic time of challenges related to war, emigration, globalisation it appeals even more to traditions, works of national classics. Many images, beliefs from our mind come from the past, from our national heritage. It is undoubtedly that everything changes but there is something like "changing constancy". Traditional images, metaphors renew their meaning, build up a huge network of semantic shades. This also refers to musical culture. So that we can notice how the musical interpretations of Ukrainian classics' poetry changed throughout the time, reflecting not only the internal transformations of the artists' creative worldview, but also the external changes in the socio-political process.

As it was mentioned above, different historical periods with their politics and orders influenced Taras Shevchenko's poetry in interpretation. Therefore, musical interpretations of it also changed. The musical interpretations of some poems, for example, "Zatsvila v dolyni chervona kalyna" ("The red viburnum blossomed in the valley"), firstly were purely landscape and pictorial in nature.

The poem "A red viburnum blossomed in the valley" was written in 1849 and is a lyrical reflection of the author, because it was created not from nature, but from an imaginary idyllic image of his native land, "earthly paradise". Against the background of beautiful nature, the poet depicts the ideal of love and relationships of Ukrainian youth. Nature and its inherent freedom become a kind of centre of attraction in the work. Addressing it, the author criticises the "unnatural", imposed from the outside, which seeks to destroy this paradise.

The melodiousness of the poetry, the glorification of one of the central symbols for Ukrainians, viburnum, has always encouraged composers to create musical interpretations. Many artists turned to the poem: Dmytro Klebanov, Mykola Lysenko, Myroslav Skoryk, Yakiv Stepovyi, Ihor Shamo, and among the legendary performers was Borys Hmyria. Poetry found its embodiment in a wide variety of genres and styles. Musical interpretations of it are in the repertoire of both solo vocalists, choirs, and orchestras, instrumental ensembles...

One of the most famous musical interpretations, according to monitoring on the YouTube network, as well as to the frequency of playback at cultural events, are the songs with the same name, "The red viburnum blossomed in the valley", written by Arkadii Filipenko (1970s) [2, 44-45] and Bohdana Filts (late 1980s) [3]. Both interpretations are characterised by landscape, imagery, only that part of the poem that is a landscape lyric is used. However, even between these two interpretations, it is possible to trace the general direction and single out the tendencies of the development of the composers' musical thinking in the work with the poetic heritage of the classics.

Bohdana Filts' interpretation seems to bring us back to the major, full of hopes and expectations of Mykola Lysenko's one. Because in his followers' works, on the contrary, we observe minor intonations, sometimes wistful moods.

The phenomenon of the artists' creative worldview change, caused by Ukraine's gaining of Independence, significantly influenced the peculiarities of interpretations. Musicians have brought poetry closer to the modern listener, thanks to the genre and style break out they have expanded the amount of fans, which plays an important role in popularising the work of the classics. Interpretations of Taras Shevchenko's legacy began to gain a life-affirming principle in the description of Ukrainian destiny, and to combine folklore trends with various modern interspersions. In addition, musicians started to use the texts of the classics as separate quotes or as the whole lyrics in their compositions, to add their own thoughts and ideas to the meaning.

In 2005, the Poltava band "Trans-Former" (soloist – Valerii Melnyk) presented the song "Viburnum" ("Bloomed in the Valley") in Kaniv, at the festival dedicated to the anniversary of Shevchenko's reburial. This musical interpretation was included in the CD "Kobzar – forever" and witnessed changes in the creative approach of musicians to work on this poetry. The style of the

composition is determined by the direction, which the band works in – folk rock.

Unlike many previous interpretations, the song completely covers the text of the poem, which fully conveys Kobzar's ideas. Previously, only a part of the text was used, which made interpretations appear in a landscape-pictorial nature. The part about paradise was mostly absent, although Soviet literary critics wrote that there "the poet comes to a sharp anti-clerical opinion" [6, 239], which fully corresponded to the anti-religious direction of the social and political system of that time. A literary critic from the diaspora Leonid Biletskyi noted: "the poet further contrasts this natural paradise with what is preached by Moscow priests in the church... Moscow's official Orthodoxy, autocracy and nationalism (Moscow chauvinism), Shevchenko hated this "paradise" with all the strength of his soul" [8, 472-473].

It is interesting that interpretations change the paradigm of meanings, images and symbols not only in writing but also in diachrony. Let us consider the musical interpretation of the author of this research, Viktoriia Padalko, which appeared in 2018. "A red viburnum blossomed in the valley" is one of the songs included in the author's creative project "How the words of Ukrainian classics sing".

The interpretation is distinguished by a combination of a wide range of modern means of expression with Ukrainian traditions. Folk vocal elements are organically woven into the unusual rhythm of the vocals. The melody reflects the dramaturgy of the work – from the general to the specific – and vice versa, prompting the listener to deep philosophical reflections. Ukrainian nature appears alive and bright. The music adds sophistication with a kind of sunshine to its description. The chorus written by the author harmoniously combined with Taras Shevchenko's lines, and added peculiar intersections with Kobzar's ideas, as well as new semantic accents, which emphasised the relevance of poetry for modern listeners.

The song was dedicated to Ukrainians who are forced to live far from their native land because of difficult life circumstances, material hardship, or a whim of fate... In 2018, we could not even imagine that more than 9 million Ukrainians would be forced to leave the country due to a full-scale war. Therefore, today the song has expanded its meaning due to consonance with the events that we are in the centre now.

Let us turn to the poetry, which was not only influenced in interpretation, but also lost 84 per cent of its text due to the censorship.

The poetry “Thoughts of mine, O thoughts of mine” (“Dumy moi, dumy moi”) dates back to approximately 1840, when Taras Shevchenko completed his work on “Kobzar” and submitted the manuscript to censorship [7, 632]. The poem is a lyrical introduction to the young author’s first book, his passionate manifesto. The poet calls his poetic word as “thoughts” and sincerely wants it to be heard in Ukraine. In this poem, the author’s self-identification as a national poet of Ukraine clearly took place. That is why “Thoughts of mine...” was subjected to strict censorship. The situation is accurately described by the lines about poetry from O. Troinytskyi, a member of the Main Directorate of Censorship: “general opinion of it is hostile to the merger of Little Russia [“Malorossiiia”, the term used by Russia to describe Ukraine – Author] with Great Russia” [1, 117], “I would prefer to totally exclude the first introductory song: “My thoughts, my thoughts...” one cannot help but see in this part the reflection of the author’s sorrow about the current fate of Little Russia, since its subjugation under the power of Russia... In the poetic value of this song indicated by the censor and fully recognised by me, I see even more reasons for my proposed exclusion: precisely because of its poetic value, this song will be engraved in the memory of every Little Russian, who is sensitive to the heritage of Ukrainian old, and this should hardly be wished for the good of Ukraine itself” [1, 129].

Soon after, in 1860, lines 28 to 100 were removed from the poem. However, despite censorship and persecution, the original poem was distributed in lists, manuscript collections, both during the poet’s lifetime and after. The tsarist censors were right – the poetry of Taras Shevchenko became an integral part of the national identity of Ukrainians.

The romantic type of singing intonation of the poem “Thoughts of mine...” inspired many composers to write musical works. The poem was addressed by I. Bilykovskiy, S. Vorobkevych, Y. Kozak, Y. Stepovyi and others. Many bands and performers, such as “Fata Morgana” (2010), “Bandurbend” (2011), “Mandry” (2017), have included famous lines in their own musical projects. Poetry is often recited at International and All-Ukrainian competitions, such as “Taras Shevchenko unites nations”, the All-Ukrainian open competition of readers named after Taras Shevchenko and many others. In musical form, it is regularly performed at music festivals, TV shows, in particular, in “The Voice” project.

In 2022, the musical interpretation of the poetry “Thoughts of mine...” by Artem Pyvovarov and DOROFEEVA became one of the most

popular Ukrainian-language songs on the Internet, gaining 10 million views on YouTube in a month. The song is a part of Artem Pyvovarov’s project “Your poems, my notes”, which combined the author’s musical compositions on the poems of prominent Ukrainian poets. The text uses lines from poetry, some unchanged, and the others were adapted. Some lines were reinterpreted by the author and are rather a variation on the theme of Kobzar. The interpretation broadcasts the ideas of Taras Shevchenko, updates them for the modern listener and imbues them with new meanings. The longing for the Motherland resonates with Ukrainians who were forced to leave their native home and move abroad, fleeing a full-scale invasion. Thoughts about the fate of the country, its people, culture, under the threat of physical extermination, are more relevant than ever. Kobzar’s desire to convey his ideas to each of us was embodied in the bridge of the song as a call to unity for the sake of a bright, free future.

Conclusions. The research demonstrates the transformation of semantics of the poetry of Taras Shevchenko in modern performers’ musical interpretations. It reveals not only changes, but also the process that explains why such changes appeared. The work also describes how interpretations expand the paradigm of meanings not only during their creation, but also in diachrony – after a certain time, when the socio-political context changes, thus the phenomenon of “interpretation of interpretations” appears.

The creative heritage of the classics has always been a kind of tuning fork for the Ukrainian cultural space. Through the prism of the attitude towards it, it is possible to track both the internal transformations of the artists’ creative worldview and the reflection of external challenges the whole country face.

The research shows the direct dependence of musical interpretations of the works of the classics on socio-political changes. In the context of contemporary historical events, the Revolution of Dignity, Russian aggression and full-scale war, such interpretations are not only about the artistic value of creativity in general, but about the preservation and transmission of cultural memory. Through updating the semantics of Taras Shevchenko’s poetry by modern performers, a kind of intergenerational dialogue is formed. This leads to demonstration of spatio-temporal connections, which, through modern media resources, present Ukraine as a country with its own centuries-old history and unique, original culture.

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