FILM MUSIC IN THE WORKS OF CONTEMPORARY UKRAINIAN COMPOSERS

The purpose of the article. The research is related to the study of film music of contemporary Ukrainian composers. It is a specific genre layer in Ukrainian music culture of today. The author tries to define the problem field of cultural studies of film music of Ukrainian composers and identify some aspects of its understanding (film music as a sound reality of culture, communicative function of music and sound image, etc.). Research methodology lies in the use of comparative methodological principles as well as system and musical-historical methods. The above methodological approach allows to study the applied (by its origin) composing sphere in perspective of representation of contemporary culture and reveal national and cultural identity of film music of Ukrainian composers. The scientific novelty of this study consists in the expansion of notions of the "secondary" field of Ukrainian composers’ works, which is a significant part of our culture and often reflects the major trends of its development. "Music for Films" is a constant of the works of Ukrainian authors, but this issue has yet become the subject of a special scientific discussion.

Conclusions. Film music of Ukrainian composers of the second half of the XX century and today represents a specific phenomenon, characterized by heterogeneity of functional and stylistic manifestations. If, in some cases, music created for a film, is only a special case of manifestation of the creative talent of the composer (as Boris Liatoshynsky, Miroslav Skoryk, Valentyn Silvestrov), in others – we are dealing with real experts in this area, whose works in their bulk are connected to the "production" of music for films (Vladimir Guba, Oleg Kiva).

Keywords: film music, composer, cinema, contemporary culture, music culture.

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In the rich and diverse world of Ukrainian musical culture of the XX century, the professional composers’ art is of the utmost importance because it represents the national academic tradition. Our familiar and traditional concepts of national identity and the originality of the Ukrainian music are inseparably connected with the names of such Ukrainian composers as Boris Liatoshynsky, Igor Shamo, Myroslav Skoryk, Vladimir Guba, Valentyn Silvestrov. Certainly, we are familiar primarily with the traditional genres of musical art, constituting the basic and undoubtedly the most valuable part of the listed above composers’ creative heritage like symphonies, operas, chamber music and choral works.

However, there is another, less serious form of musical creative work of almost each of these composers, which reveals another side of their talent. It is film music, or “film score”, which is a kind of “applied art” in music, and which can be characterized as a “constant value” of the Ukrainian composing practice of the second half of the twentieth century and the present time. Ukrainian composers turn to this musical genre rather frequently. However, this issue has not become a subject of scientific discussion yet (the articles covering issues of film music written by the Ukrainian authors are not numerous). One of the most interesting and considerable experience in this respect was an attempt of Ukrainian art critic Olga Litvinova to describe Ukrainian music. Her catalogue “Music in the Ukrainian cinema” was issued in 2009 in Kiev. Litvinova listed all the authors who wrote music for films, shot at the Ukrainian film studios covering the period from silent movies to the present day.

Cinema is one of the most extensive layers of contemporary culture. This kind of art became an essential part of modern life. Thus, the film music can be of unquestionable relevance for research as an integral part of cinematic art, which is one of the most popular kinds of modern art.

The art of cinema is one of the youngest and most popular forms of artistic creativity in the twentieth century culture, which due to its synthetic nature is in the “access zone” of mass cultural consciousness. Influencing on different receptors of our perception, cinema actualizes the eternal themes of human existence in the "convenient" form. Contemporary researchers more and more often consider the art of cinema in the light of impact and perception theory, discovering the specific functions of each of the constituent elements of effect, produced by cinema. Therefore, musicians’ interest in musical component of the film is natural. This interest includes cultural and musicological approaches to the analysis of a soundtrack, which carries certain conceptual and semantic functions.

We know that such famous composers as L. Revutsky, V. Kozenko, Y. Meitus worked at the Ukrainian film studios. Boris Liatoshinsky composed music for 14 motion pictures (such as "Karmelyuk", "Liberation", "Taras Shevchenko", "Grigory Skovoroda" etc.).

Composer Igor Shamo wrote music for nearly 30 feature, documentary and animated films. The composer collaborated with many film directors, such as Vladimir Braun, Sergei Parajanov, Anatoly Slesarenko, Victor Ivchenko, Les Shvachko Timofey Levcuk. The most famous films with music written by Shamo are "The Duma about Kovpak", "Flower on the rock" and "Andries" and "Shine, my star". The World War II theme takes a significant place in his creative work. He wrote the ballads "The immortal garrison" "There is a mound over the Volga", "The Ballad of Soldiers", "Front-line soldiers", "The Ballad of brotherhood", "Heroes of the city", "Recall friends." The songs about war also sound in many films, for which the composer wrote music, e.g. "They were known only by sight," "Far from the Motherland", "Night before the dawn", "From the Bug to the Vistula River", "The Ballad about Kovpak", "The Carpathians", "The commander", "Rockets should not take off" and many others.

Myroslav Skoryk is the author of the music for more than 40 films, among them "Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors" (director Sergei Parajanov, 1964), "Life-giving Water" (directed by Grigory Cohan), "Personal life" (directed by Vladimir Dovgan), "The High Pass" (dir. Vladimir Denisenko) and others. The most famous film music written by Skoryk is the well-known "Melody in a-moll" from the movie "The High Pass". The film director, not sharing the interpretation of the film script, imposed by the Soviet censorship, asked Skoryk to write the music for the film that could "tell" the audience something that was impossible to show. Initially, this music was written for flute and piano, but later the composer made a transcription for violin and piano and a version for violin and orchestra. "Melody in a-moll" is often used for commercial purposes without the author’s permission. For example, it was used in a Russian-Ukrainian co-production, television series "A Milkmaid from Hatsapetovka" (2007).

Valentin Silvestrov wrote music for films too. This composer represents not only modern Ukrainian music, but is also significant for European musical culture. Silvestrov’s works are studied well enough. However, in Ukraine his film music has not been the subject of a special study yet. The composer wrote music for more than ten films, including "A Pushy Man", "Rooks", "The Garden of Gethsemane" (directed by Rostislav Sinko) and "Time to Leave" (dir. Francois Ozon).

V. Silvestrov worked with a famous European art-house film director Kira Muratova. In Muratova’s films Silvestrov refers to the artistic principles of postmodern culture. Silvestrov wrote music for such films as...
“The Tuner” (2004) and "Chekhov's Motifs" (2002). His music as a constituting expressive-semantic element of the so-called intellectual cinema is of a great cultural interest. Here the function of the film score is to create the completeness of audio-visual integrity, which is always complicated in Muratova’s films.

Composer Oleg Kiva (1947-2007) is also famous for his numerous experiments in the area of “applied” genre of film music. Having graduated from the Kiev Conservatory in 1971 (class of Miroslav Skorik), he wrote not only ballets, chamber cantatas, concertos for piano and orchestra, symphonies, chamber and choral works, but also music for feature films and television series. The most famous films with the music written by Oleg Kiva are “Hearts of three” (based on the novel by Jack London, 1992), the Ukrainian-Swiss film "Dead End" (1998), as well as the popular television series "The Countess de Monsoreau" (1997), "Kill the snake", "The Doll", "Ashes of the phoenix". In total, Kiva wrote music for 36 films. Since the 1990s, writing music for “soap operas”, so popular in modern mass culture, became the dominant tendency in his creative activity. Kiva mostly wrote music for films made by Russian directors, for example, Vladimir Popkov. Cooperation with this film director was a peculiar creative collaboration, as in most films directed by Popkov Kiva’s music is used.

Another interesting personality who certainly deserves attention in the world of Ukrainian film music is Vladimir Guba. He is a composer who, in fact, specialized in writing film music. It constituted the major part of his creative work. Having graduated from the Kiev Conservatory in 1977, (he studied in the classes of Liatoshynsky and Shtogarenko), he worked as a music editor at the studio "Ukrkinohronika". Guba is the author of music for more than forty films (both fiction and documentary as well as animated films). The most famous of them are "Olesya", "Zakhar Berkut", "Kashanka" (1970s), "Tomorrow Begins Today" (1983), "More Than Love" (2010), the animated films "Bright personality" and "Disposable eternity" (2000s). At the present time, the composer is an honorary member of The Ukrainian Association of Cinematographers, as well as the Creative Union "Cinematography of the Slavic peoples."

Music written by a famous young Ukrainian composer Alexander Shchetinsky (b. 1960) also can be referred to the cinematographic art. In the late 1980s, he was one of the organizers of contemporary chamber music festivals in Ukraine and Russia. Shchetinsky is the author of the music for two films made by a young Ukrainian director Igor Podolchak, who nowadays represents a line of experimental cinema in Ukraine. The film “Las Meninas” (2008) was the first Ukrainian project, which took part in the Rotterdam Film Festival in 2008. Later, this film was presented at over 27 international film festivals. Rejecting the linear plot development, the director seems to draw the audience into a strange atmosphere of the film. Here he suggests to the viewer the role of “an invisible observer”, devoid of any deliberate aim to perceive what is happening. Thus, the audience at some point stops feeling the line between self-reflection and the reflection of the film characters. Exactly in this point of “blurring of lines”, the association between the film and the painting by Diego Velazquez with the same title becomes apparent. Since the main character of the film (Mother) is a former cellist and her Son learned to play the piano when he was a child, much of the music was written specifically for these instruments. Without completely discarding the traditional use of background music in the film, the director and the composer focused attention on its independent role. Music in this case is like a counterpoint to the video. In many scenes, the music comes to the forefront. It is connected to the noises, both natural and artificially created, mounted on musical principles. Therefore, the entire music score of the film can be regarded as an integral sound installation. For the 15-minute film scene which does not contain a single word, representing Son’s memories and delirium, Shchetinsky created Sonata for Cello and Piano. It is an independent composition, which can be performed separately from the film. Stylistic music palette is rather multifarious, as well as multi-dimensional semantic structure of the film. The music contains baroque, classical and late-Romantic allusions, multiple serialism and sonoristics. However, the composer claims that he avoids the collage combination of different styles but makes an effort to integrate and synthesize them.

In the film “Delirium” (2012), the director and the composer had originally planned to use Dies Irae (Day of Wrath) as a part of the Catholic Mass. Therefore, he wrote six complete instrumental parts, named after the sections of the Latin text of the Mass respectively: Dies Irae, Quantus tremor, Mors stupebit, In gemisco, Tubamirum and Lacrimosa. At the same time, Shchetinsky confined himself to symphony orchestra, without using either text or vocals. Due to avant-garde stylistic means the music did not illustrate directly what was happening on the screen. In addition, the use of the names of the Mass parts appeals to the principles of surrealism and thus makes the aesthetics of the film completely developed. However, in the process of work the authors decided to use only two musical pieces – Mors stupebit at the beginning of the film (opening credits) and Dies irae at the end. During the film, we do not hear music. The only exception is a prayer, the recitation of the priest, where the text of Dies irae is used (the composer himself was involved in dubbing of this episode). Due to this, the initial and the final musical fragments have acquired an additional dramatic importance. The music at the beginning performs the function of tuning on the appropriate aesthetic “wave”, and the final sounds like a semantic generalization. At the same time, the prayer of the Priest specifies this range of the problems.

Thus, we can come to the conclusion that film music takes a very important place in the works of Ukrainian composers of the second half of the XX century and the present time. In some cases, film music is only a particular manifestation of composer’s creative talent, for example, Boris Lyatoshinsky, Miroslav Skorik and Valentin Silvestrov. In the others, we are dealing with real professionals in this field. Most of their
works are connected with the "production" of music for the cinema, and the examples are Vladimir Guba and Oleg Kiva. The term "production" is used here deliberately because an abundance of music for the TV series, for example, Oleg Kiva’s works, shows the relevance of Ukrainian composers’ practice to the cultural context of our time. In this sense, we should mention the interaction of the creative personality of the composer, brought up on classical music tradition, with popular genre of cinema. One more interesting aspect of the study of film music written by Ukrainian composers is the influence of national traditions of directors, with whom they collaborated. The films mentioned above can be a proving example that Ukrainian composers wrote music for film directors, representatives of different national traditions, such as Russian, Georgian (Sergei Paradjanov), French (François Ozon) and Ukrainian.

The problem of Ukrainian film music in stylistic aspect of modern cinema can be a completely separate subject of research. The music written by Valentin Silvestrov and Alexander Shchetynsky to the films directed by Kira Muratova and Igor Podolchik is a good example of it. Problems of studying film music can be extended in other directions, as this area of composing in Ukraine is represented quite well. We have only tried to give some outlines of this phenomenon, which can be of great interest for the contemporary Ukrainian culture study.