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Late Romantic Reflections by Valentin Bibik

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Abstract

The article considers the ways of recreating the stylistic properties of late romanticism in the symphonies of the Ukrainian composer V. Bibik (1940–2003). The master's openness to contacts with various national cultures manifested itself in the circumstances of his life and in the breadth of artistic interests, among which the musical traditions of late romanticism occupied a special place. The affinity of V. Bibik's composing individuality to the romantic worldview is confirmed by the emphasis on the personality beginning, the monologue nature of the utterance, the sharpness of the reaction to the dissonances of life. Neo-romantic tendencies in the art of music of the last third of the last century stimulated the "meeting" of the modern Ukrainian author with the spiritual and aesthetic heritage of the 19th century. The path traversed by V. Bibik in this direction reflects the gradual maturation of the composer's creative dialogue with the heritage of the previous culture: from the first obvious responses to late romanticism in the *Fifth Symphony*, through the testing of its recognizable features on the national-Ukrainian material in the vocal *Sixth Symphony* to the poems by T. Shevchenko to a kind of "triptych" of symphonic concepts of the *Seventh* – the *Eighth* – the *Ninth*. In them, stylistic signs of late romanticism cover all levels of artistic structure (spiritual, meaningful, dramaturgic, compositional, form-building, and thematic). At the same time, the composer is not engaged in modelling certain genre, stylistic parameters, but transforms the borrowed musical realities into signs, including them into his own ideological imaginative concept. As a result, they turn from "strangers" into "friends", organically entering the individual stylistic context of the author. The constancy of V. Bibik's artistic and aesthetic reference points can be judged by the author's subsequent unnumbered Symphonies to the texts by M. Tsvetaeva and J. Brodsky, respectively. Their performing group – a vocal solo and a symphony orchestra – refers to the late romantic experiments of creating a special genre variety: the orchestral vocal cycle.

Keywords: Dramaturgy, thematicism, traditions of late romanticism, Valentin Bibik's symphonic triptych, individual stylistic context.

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Introduction

The Ukrainian composer V. Bibik (1940–2003) can rightfully be considered a “citizen of the world.” For many years he worked at Kharkiv Institute of Arts³ as Professor, held the position of the Head of the Composition Department, and headed the Kharkiv branch of the Union of Composers of Ukraine. A new stage in the life and work of V. Bibik (since 1994) is associated with St. Petersburg Humanitarian University of Trade Unions (Professor, Head of the Department of Musical Art) and St. Petersburg Academy of Arts, and the last, after moving to Israel (since 1998), with Academy of Music of Tel Aviv University (Professor, he taught composition). The recognition of V. Bibik’s talent is evidenced by the title of laureate of the Second International Composing Competition named after Ivanna and Maryan Kots (1992; second award, the first was not awarded) (Kyiv Music Fest, 2004), ACUM award “The Composer of the Year” (Israel, 2001) (Muzyka, 2014). V. Bibik’s music often sounded in concert halls in Ukraine, Russia, Israel, and the USA, at many music festivals, invariably arousing the interest of performers, listeners, scientists, and musical critics. Among the performers there are Ukrainian, Russian, American musicians (Discogs, 2020; Classic-online.ru, 2020). V. Bibik’s close contacts with Joel Sachs, an American pianist, the founder and conductor of the modern music ensemble *Continuum*, are evidenced not only by the invitation of the group of the musicians with a concert program to Kharkiv as part of a tour in Ukraine (1990), the organization of a creative meeting with musicians, but also a “return visit” of the composer to New York to participate in the celebration of the 30th anniversary of this performing community. At the concert, for the first time, a cycle to the verses by A. Blok *Premonitions* for the voice and instrumental ensemble, specially written for *Continuum*, was performed (Yusipey, 2010). After his untimely death, the memory of V. Bibik was honoured by the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra under the direction of Zubin Mehta and the Music Nova band with a concert compiled from the composer’s compositions (Haaretz.com, 2011). The Sikorski publishing house published *Seven Miniatures* for the string orchestra op. 20 (1978) and *Sonata* for the button accordion (1986) (Sikorski, 2020).

V. Bibik’s creative work of different genres attracted the attention of many researchers. If the monographic essays deal with symphonic, concert, chamber-vocal compositions of the composer (Mizitova et al., 2006), then in numerous articles, materials of scientific conferences, candidates’ theses and masters’ theses, a wide range of problems is touched upon. Let us outline just a few of them: the evolution of the author’s manner of writing (Kononova, 1985), the interpretation of the symphony genre (Zolotovickaya, 1988; Zynkevych, 2005), the features of the cycle of preludes and fugues (Zaderatskyi, 1980; Miroshnichenko, 2002; Piaskovskyi, 2012), the vocal (Ivanova et al., 1993; Verkina, 2008) and piano (Lozovaya, 1995; Verkina, 2004; Novikov, 2016) music, including that in the aspect of interpretation, etc.⁴

V. Bibik’s extensive creative heritage includes more than 150 opuses, including 16 symphonies for the chamber and symphony orchestras, many concerts and chamber ensembles for different instrumental groups, vocal cycles, and the opera called *The Running*. Closely connected with Ukrainian culture, the composer, however, was far from the manifestations of ethnography in music, neo-folkloristic ideas, and the limitations by the national artistic context as a whole. Creating vocal compositions, he looked for sources of inspiration in Ukrainian – T. Shevchenko, A. Voloshchak, G. Gdal, and Russian – A. Fet, A. Akhmatova, O. Mandelstam, poetry, and in recent decades he increasingly turned to verbal texts of psalms. Wanting to keep up with the times, V. Bibik was always

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⁴ The library of Kharkiv I. P. Kotlyarevsky National University of Arts contains about 70 works, not counting publications in newspapers.

sensitive to the emergence of new trends in the art of music, while not adhering to any of its specific “wings”. In his youth, like other representatives of his generation, the composer actively mastered the innovations of the 20th century, and in his mature years, signs of the musical tradition of the 19th century are clearly indicated in his compositions, which objectively became a response to the neo-romantic searches of the modernity. The purpose of this article is not to consider the process of transforming the ideas and realities of late romanticism into the phenomena of individual style. The purpose of the study is seen in the disclosure, on specific examples, of the manifestation of late romantic reflections of V. Bibik as a way to convey the author’s word. The *Fifth*, the *Sixth*, the *Seventh*, the *Eighth* and the *Ninth* symphonies of the composer were chosen as the material for the article; in them the connection with the above-mentioned musical-historical tradition has acquired the most obvious form.

Methodological Framework. The article uses the methods of historicism, style analysis, comparative studies, as well as compositional, dramaturgic, intonation and thematic perspectives of the study.

Results

On the way to comprehending the semantic and stylistic secrets of late romanticism

In the activity of appropriating the creative behests of romantics, first of all, later ones, one cannot but see the action of the author’s inner motives. This is stipulated by the consonance of his frame of mind and a long-gone historical era. V. Bibik is a composer of a pronounced introverted nature. Almost each of his compositions is perceived by the “inner speech” of the creator, acute emotion and sometimes painful meditation. The composer’s tendency towards meditative expression, unhurried but energetically saturated development of musical thought is indicative, which corresponds to the similar properties of the compositions by R. Wagner, A. Bruckner, and G. Mahler.

It is legitimate to speculate about the mediating influence on V. Bibik of the personality and compositions of D. Shostakovich, in whose author’s monologues the threads connecting two centuries of musical history are clearly traced. It is noteworthy that the late romantic reflections of the Ukrainian composer were preceded by the *Fourth Symphony*, written *in memoriam* in 1976, following the death of D. Shostakovich, with a double – poetic and thematic – quotation from the *Fourteenth Symphony* created by the Great Master.

The pole to psychologically tense states in V. Bibik’s compositions is tender, chaste, light lyrics, which constitute an important part of the artistic space of the composer’s music. It manifested itself most consistently in his vocal cycles to the words by A. Blok, O. Mandelstam, G. Aiga and others. The author prefers the genre of the song in that its sense which is inherent in the Austro-German *Lied* from F. Schubert to J. Brahms. Devoid of sensitivity, but confidential in intonation, this kind of lyrics provides a “solemn distance” between the author of the utterance and its addressees.

V. Bibik does not stylize the music of the Austro-German romantics and does not model its components. He “transforms” the components of an already established historical style in the context of an individual, author’s one. According to V. Syrov, “transformation” is “an absorption, binding of heterogeneous elements on the basis of dramatic and intonation reformations”, in contrast to “modelling”, that is, revealing a “stranger’s” style, a dialogue with the model (1994, p. 65). N. Gulianytkaia calls this type of creative awareness “monologized”, which means the strengthening of the author’s beginning in a musical composition – as opposed to dialogization, which preserves the “original relationship of two pieces of music” (2014, pp. 132–133).

V. Bibik's inclination to meditative utterance, to endowing it with the function of the semantic centre of cyclic composition, so characteristic of the late romantic author's "word", declared itself already in the *First Symphony* for the large symphony orchestra, op. 1 (1996). In a three-part composition, the fast middle movement is framed by the slow ones, akin to the prelude and the postlude. However, the composer's first large instrumental canvas, evoking obvious associations with the world of musical romanticism, is the *Fifth Symphony* for the same performing group, op. 34 (1978). Its restless, impulsive, sometimes infernal character simultaneously refers to the biblical motives of the Last Judgment, and to the "demonic" imagery of German romantic operas, the numerous scherzos by R. Schumann, J. Brahms, G. Mahler, to the images from Dante's *Inferno* in the symphony by "Weimar" F. Liszt. V. Bibik refers to a two-part cycle: *Sostenuto – Presto*. These tempo comparisons, at first glance, reproduce the traditional semantic pair-opposition "meditation – action". At the same time, the energy of movement, inherent in the second part, reproduces the element of scherzo nature, which allows one to see in it the properties of the ludic beginning. On the other hand, *Sostenuto* lacks a constant dwelling in the depths of psychological states. Here, the lyrical episodes are periodically opposed to ominous and aggressive ones. The heavy tread of the IV trombone and tuba, which reproduces the motive of the sequence of *Dies irae*, becomes a symbolic expression of the "forces of evil". In turn, the Gregorian chant focuses the second intonation, which acquires a monothematic meaning within this part. Let us remind that mono-thematicism presupposes the formation of themes from a single source and, as a special technique, objectively goes back to the composing practice of the period of late romanticism.

The two-movement structure of the *Fifth Symphony* reveals the antithesis of the lyrics and the "evil" scherzo. It refers to the core opposition of romantic personal utterance, in particular to G. Mahler's symphonic concepts. Suffice it to mention the *Ninth Symphony* of the Austrian master, where the doubled scherzo – the middle movements – is framed by the external ones which are meditative at their basis. In the 20th century, this kind of antithesis is inherent, for example, in the *Sixth Symphony* by D. Shostakovich (*Adagio* and two playing movements), and in the Austro-German tradition – the *Second Chamber Symphony*, op. 38 by A. Schoenberg (*Adagio* and scherzo *Con fuoco*). It was started back in 1906, during the period of the historical relevance of late romanticism, and was completed in 1939 (Vlasova, 2007, p. 357). This gives the right to consider V. Bibik's *Fifth Symphony* in a wide range of intercultural relations, emerging from the late romantic ideas.

The idea of the *Sixth Symphony*, op. 38 (1979) seemingly interrupts the emerging late romantic vector of the movement of the composer's thought. The fragments from the heritage of T. Shevchenko, selected as the textual basis, allow attributing it to the national-Ukrainian line of creativity of V. Bibik. However, in this composition the author is not so much a citizen-patriot as a lyricist; he gives preference to lines borrowed from the poet's personal correspondence, and provides his opus with the subtitle "Thoughts, my thoughts". The source of late romantic allusions here is the performing group: the symphony is intended for the soprano, bass and a large symphony orchestra. Parallels arise with *The Song of the Earth* by G. Mahler and the *Fourteenth Symphony* by D. Shostakovich. At the same time, considering the genre features of Mahler's creation, I. Barsova is inclined to his characteristic proposed by B. Walter: "a symphony in songs" (1975, p. 300). On the contrary, the principles of symphonic dramaturgy prevail in D. Shostakovich's symphony. V. Bibik offers his own version of a vocal-symphonic utterance, giving it features inherent in the liturgy – but outside the stylistic attributes of spiritual genres (Mizitova et al., 2006, p. 24). At the same time, associations arise with the lyrics of the composer's chamber-vocal cycles, which are always "lifted" above daily routine.

For many years the type of vocal symphony remained the only experience of this kind in the composer's creative work. Only at the beginning of the 1990s it was continued in two symphonies (without a serial number), which made up a kind of a "diptych": for the mezzo-soprano and a large symphony orchestra to the verses by M. Tsvetaeva, op. 83 (1990) and for the soprano and a symphony orchestra to the words by J. Brodsky, op. 86 (1991). By limiting the vocal part to one soloist, the connection with the vocal cycle becomes even more obvious. Thus, a special genre line, woven into the polyphonic fabric of V. Bibik's multidimensional artistic world, is formed in his symphonic heritage.

When comparing the *First*, the *Fifth* and the *Sixth* symphonies of the composer, one finds the gradual growth of his creative ideas, one way or another in contact with late romantic art. This process reaches its culmination zone in the *Seventh* – the *Eighth* – the *Ninth* symphonies. Their combination forms a kind of integrity that has the properties of a "triptych". From this point of view, the activation of neo-romantic tendencies in the art of music of the last third of the 20th century is perceived only as a "catalyst" of the composer's inner motives. External factors allowed V. Bibik to make a leap from the unconscious or intuitive – to the conscious operation of individual components of late romantic culture, their multiplication and systematization.

The concept of the "inner man"⁵ and its implementation in the symphonic triptych by V. Bibik

In the "lyrical scenes" – this is how the "triptych" of the *Seventh*, the *Eighth* and the *Ninth* symphonies can be called – there is no "cosmogony" that distinguished some of V. Bibik's previous symphonies, first of all, the *Third* and the *Fourth*. At the same time, their content is not limited to the actual lyricism of states/experiences, but contains the Universe of the personality. He is presented not as a "private person", as a separate individual, but as a container of the world *das All*, as if turned inward, into the depths of the human "I". In fact, such a concept of cognition/self-cognition goes back to the romantic identification of the macro- and microcosm, which in the considered symphonies created by V. Bibik is imprinted on all the components of the artistic structure, its hierarchically conjugated levels: genre, thematic, semantic, dramaturgic, and compositional ones. This allows seeing in them the most mature examples of the composer's late romantic reflection.

The universe of the "inner man" is constantly in a state of metamorphosis, which corresponds to the lyrical nature of music itself. A. Losev is even inclined to identify the essence of this type of art with the phenomenon of becoming, which, according to the philosopher, is "*the last foundation of the art of time*, that is, the last foundation of music itself" (1991, p. 323). In turn, N. Berkovskiy calls "the incessant stream of life" as the foundation of the aesthetics of romantic writers (1973, p. 31). In the late romantic style, the eternal variability of the state/experience was embodied in the "endless melody of form" – not only by R. Wagner, with whom it is usually associated, but also by F. Liszt, A. Bruckner, G. Mahler, and R. Strauss, having become a typological sign music of the last third of the 19th – early 20th century. "The infinity of metamorphoses" – the self-awareness of the personality, the ways of monologue expression, intonation and thematic transformations – defines the artistic world of the "triptych" in question. It is united not only by the late romantic messages of the author, but also by the unfolding of a cross-cutting "lyrical plot".

⁵ The concept of "inner man" was introduced into the aesthetics of verbal creativity by M. Bakhtin. The scientist considers it in opposition to the concept of "outer man". The criteria for the differences are: the ways of artistic reflection (expressive – impressive), attitude to the basic laws of the world order (temporal – spatial), the nature of value (the individual whole of the soul, being formed "in the self-awareness and awareness of another," – plastic, pictorial) (Bakhtin, 1979, pp. 89–91).

The initial phase of the multidimensional narration is the *Seventh Symphony*, op. 50 (1982). Its content and dramatic focus is largely programmed by the performing group chosen by the composer – the string orchestra, the organ, and the timpani. The author preserves the semantic meanings that have been fixed in them in the course of musical and historical practice. As a result – there is the emergence of figurative and semantic oppositions, including “the momentary – the eternal”, “the personal – the social”, “the human – the fatal”, in other words, of those types of connections that are capable of providing multi-vector intra-plot relations. However, with all the expressive possibilities of the instrumental complex of the *Seventh Symphony*, he nevertheless comes into conflict with the “gigantism” of the late romantic orchestra.

In the subsequent parts of the “trilogy”, written for a large symphony orchestra with the use of characteristic and colouristic timbres, it is removed. Thus, the instrumental composition of the *Eighth Symphony* includes the celesta, vibraphone, piano, bass clarinet; the *Ninth* – the alto flute, harp, bell, etc. The author’s focus on the individualization of the sound image of a musical composition coincides with the general trend in the composing practice of the 20th century. At the same time, the need to enrich the timbre palette of an orchestral opus through the use of unusual instrumental colours objectively goes back to late romanticism. Suffice it to recall the “Wagnerian tubes” in A. Bruckner’s symphonies, the rod and cow bells – in G. Mahler’s, the windmill and organ – in the symphonic poems by R. Strauss, etc. It is noteworthy that V. Bibik’s *Eighth* and *Ninth* symphonies are not about an alternative to a large symphony orchestra, but about expanding its.

In the composition of each of the parts of the “trilogy” the author adheres to the principle of non-regulation, which, first of all, refers to the genre line of G. Mahler. V. Bibik’s *Seventh Symphony* contains three movements, not so much contrasting with each other as complementing each other. As a result, the artistic whole appears as a set of different modes of poetic expression. The composer supplies separate parts of the cycle with such remarks, which initially adjust the perception to a certain character of musical eventfulness and its energetic message. Thus, the first of them is preceded by the author’s indication *Allegro. Agitato. Rubato*, where *Allegro* means the activity of the flow of musical speech rather than its speed; *Agitato* – the level of emotional tone; *Rubato* – freedom of breathing, impulsiveness and unpredictability of dramaturgy movement. The final movement of the cycle, along with the designation of the tempo – *Moderato*, includes a clarifying definition: *Carrezando*, that is, “tenderly”, “gently”. Only in the middle section of the symphony there is the generalized *Andante* remark.

The functional logic of the three-movement composition is revealed in the system of cause-and-effect relationships with the dominance of the dramaturgy of the goal. *Allegro* is pierced with the energy of overcoming. It is born from the interaction of dramatic and lyrical episodes and does not receive release or outcome. V. Bibik does not refer to the sonata form, however, uses the sonata principle of organizing the musical process, which refers not only to the classical methods of form-building by G. Mahler, but also to romantic compositions of the ballad and poem type. The dramaturgic “dots” in the last bars of *Allegro* determines its openness into the depths of the cycle, requiring either the continuation of the plot intrigue, or the resolution of the emerging contradictions. *Andante* becomes the focus of dramaturgic events, contrary to expectations. Here the oppositions identified in *Allegro* grow into antitheses, and they are not so much overcome as they are reconciled at the end of the peripeteias. Let us remind that the functional variability of the links of the symphonic cycle, when it is the slow movement that assumes the role of the dramaturgic and semantic centre, acquired typological significance in the period of romanticism, especially in the late period. However, in contrast to, for example, the symphonic *Adagio* by A. Bruckner, *Andante* in the *Seventh Symphony* by V. Bibik

becomes not so much the bearer of the author's confession, as a field of collisions of polar forces. As a result, it actually plays the functional role that in the genre canon belongs to the sonata *Allegro*. In this context, the third part of the cycle is perceived as a consolation coda. Memory recalls a similar "afterword" of romantic vocal and instrumental cycles – from *Of the Brook's Lullaby of the Stream of The Fair Maid of the Mill* by F. Schubert to *Adagio*, which closes the *Ninth Symphony* by G. Mahler. The continuity of the dramaturgic development, the staging of the plot process throughout the three parts of the composition, the subordination of their ratios to the rhetorical triad *i:m:t* – along with other factors – give the *Seventh Symphony* a resemblance to a one-part poem-type composition.

In the *Eighth Symphony* V. Bibik returns to the two-part structure of the *Fifth: Andante – Allegro*. However, like the previous cycle of the *Seventh*, they are welded together by a single line of figurative-dramaturgic development, which, together with the use of a cross-cutting thematic complex, allows interpreting the form of this opus both as a cyclical one and as a contrasting-composite one. Thus, in the composer's symphonic work, there is a steady tendency to create a multi-stage whole, permeated with a single thought. In other words, the idea of an "endless melody of form" is being realized at a new turn of the musical-historical development. In this regard, it is advisable to refer to O. Sheludiakova's understanding of the function of melody in the late romantic style: "Melody in this era is perceived as the exponent of the main semantic beginning of the composition, <...> as the centre to which all the main 'threads' of the composition are drawn, through the prism of which harmony, texture, and composition are perceived" (2006, p. 5). According to the scientist, the term "endless melody" "expresses not only the phenomenon of Wagner, Rachmaninoff, Brahms melos, but also the most important, although perhaps not fully realized artistic task of late romanticism" (2006, p. 5). We see as fundamental the conclusion made by O. Sheludiakova about the melodization of form, as a result of which its procedural becoming is ensured. The properties of late romantic melody ("panmelodism") noted by the musicologist are fully inherent in the considered symphonies by V. Bibik. These qualities allow the composer to construct an artistic whole under the sign of continuity, to realize the idea of the continuity of the lyric time-space of the personality.

The most consistent embodiment of the functional and dramatic cohesion of all sections of the composition is found in the one-movement *Ninth Symphony – Pastorale*, op. 75 (1989). Owing to this, the characteristic cyclical discreteness of the genre is being overcome. The folding of a large-scale musical concept into this kind of form is traditionally associated with the poem nature of Liszt's type; at the turn of the 19th – 20th centuries it received the development in the compositions by R. Strauss. At the same time, on the way to a symphonic poem, there are experiments of compression of the cycle in the creative work of F. Liszt's historical predecessors. In particular, F. Mendelssohn's *Scottish Symphony* is often considered to be one-movement (Pitina, 1990, p. 65), and R. Schumann's *Fourth Symphony* contains all the signs of a contrast-composite form. If this line found its continuation in the *Home Symphony* by R. Strauss, then the one-movement *Chamber Symphony*, op. 9 by A. Schoenberg inherits the compositional principles of monocyclic (poem type) structures. Despite this, in the creative practice of the 20th century, a special kind of one-movement symphony was formed. It is not associated with a symphonic poem and is represented in the works of composers of different national cultures and artistic directions, for example, Finnish (the *Seventh Symphony* by J. Sibelius), Russian (the *Twenty-first* by N. Myaskovsky), and Ukrainian (*Larga* by Ye. Stankovich). In this context, V. Bibik's *Ninth Symphony* is read simultaneously as the reflection on a late romantic poem (the peculiarities of stylistics, figurative content, the presence of a pastoral-idyllic *Andante* episode with the image of "forest horns" in the composition) and as the belonging to a certain tradition of the 20th century. From within the author's evolution, *Pastorale* turns out to be the result of a step-by-step movement from quasi-poem nature, through the contrast-composite two-movement nature to a one-movement

structure itself. In dramatic terms, the arch is thrown towards *Moderato. Carrezando* of the first part of the “triptych” (of the *Seventh Symphony*).

One of the notable features of the compositions under consideration is the multistage tempo and agogic scales within individual parts. As a result of the change of semantic signs, there arises a special algorithm of the dramaturgic process, acquiring a wave-like character. This pattern correlates with similar phenomena in romantic music. In it, unexpected decelerations and accelerations, sudden switching to another state/experience, spontaneously arising moods, influx of memories and associations give rise to a feeling of uneven flow of musical time, its impulsiveness or elongation, to the point of the illusion of “disappearance”. A number of examples of this kind can be found in the symphonies by F. Mendelssohn, F. Liszt, J. Brahms, P. Tchaikovsky and others. Semantically coloured temporal amplitude arises, reflecting the multi-vector nature of the author’s monologue and, at the same time, serving the purpose of the time order, its quantization. Thus, in the first part of V. Bibik’s *Seventh Symphony*, the logic of building the whole is subordinated to the change of the episodes of *Allegro. Agitato. Rubato. – Meno mosso. Comodo. Sereno. – Allegro. Agitato. – Meno mosso*, etc., in the second – *Andante* lyrics “explodes” with the episodes of *Anima and Con forza*, which serves as the basis for penetrating into the slow section of the cycle of the conflict beginning. Tempo and semantic shifts are observed in the first part of the *Eighth Symphony*, and, in rather compressed spatial and temporal limits: *Andante, Moderato, Pochissimo più mosso, Allegro molto, Sostenuto, Prestissimo, Agitato*, etc. Temporal and semantic mobility is inherent in the one-part Ninth Symphony, opening the multi-dimensional nature of the author’s lyrics: *Sostenuto, Comodo, Moderato, Larghetto*, etc.

The “infinity” of the musical form in V. Bibik’s symphonic “triptych” is ensured, as in the works of the late romantics, by the thematic unity of each of the parts of this “macro-cycle”. This is achieved through reminiscences, variation transformation of thematic units, and their derivation. In *Allegro* of the *Seventh Symphony*, the complex of lyrically coloured themes sprouts from a single source, which evokes certain associations with the features of the leitmotif system of R. Wagner’s *Tristan and Isolde*. The fatal formulas appearing here as a figurative antithesis in the parts of the double basses and timpani penetrate into *Allegro* of the second part of the cycle, thereby ensuring the dramaturgic unity of the entire composition. In the *Eighth Symphony*, V. Bibik refers to the type of organization of the musical process that took shape in the late romantic period. I. Barsova denotes it as “intonation plot”. By intonation plot, the researcher means a specific way of form-building, similar to the composition of a plot in a novel. Its basis is formed by motives and themes with an immanent musical meaning and certain functions that interact and undergo metamorphoses. These motives and themes have their own exposition, development and exhaustion, cover various voices of texture, and provide continuity and multi-vector nature of the movement of the main idea of the author’s spiritual and artistic concept (Barsova, 1975, p. 377). The intonation plot of the first part of V. Bibik’s *Eighth Symphony* is made up of six themes, which, in turn, are united by features of similarity: playing around thirds accords, coupling of a second and a third in a descending movement, reminding *Dies irae* motive, and a quasi-melodic unfolding. This method of theme formation refers to the leitmotif system of the tetralogy *Ring of the Nibelung* by R. Wagner, however, outside of any figurative and thematic allusions. Each of the exposed *Andante* themes goes its own path of semantic transformation. For example, the original theme is initially dispersed in figuration, then is activated and involved into the event circle of culminating zones as a carrier of fatal semantics and reminds of itself in the last bars, appearing in the guise of a theme-ghost. In its turn, *Dies irae* motive, barely guessed at the moment of exposure, subsequently splits into two polar images: the fatal and the lamentable. In the *Ninth Symphony*, the source of the “plot nature” is the original theme. It has a poly-semantic character due to the combination of elements with different figurative and semantic colouring. The triad framework, lying

at its basis, the purposeful iambic formula potentially contains the energy of action; on the contrary, the second move to the fourth higher step serves as a sign of meditation nature, generating a circle of diverse associations – from the well-known romantic motive of the question to the “Tristan” yearning/expectation. The symbolic character is inherent in other lexemes of the musical language of the “triptych”, not only melodic, but also rhythmic and timbre ones. For example, the theme-melody opening *Allegro* of the *Seventh Symphony* contains a lyrics sign, consisting of two elements-semes: the diminished triad of d-moll in the aggregate of its reference points corresponds to the images of expectation in romantic music, and “hanging” on the introductory tone sound – the formula of the question. The combination of the details, similar in meaning, but different in its modes, gives birth to an imitation of a sigh. As a sign of poetic lyrics, *Andante* of the *Eighth Symphony* uses the plastic of the three-beat movement, reminding of the genre “emblem” of the 19th century – the waltz. In *Pastorale*, *quasi*-triple rhythmic group, the phonics of low brass, the timpani strikes, the ringing of the funeral bell resurrect pictures of mourning processions or frightening visions of death, and the expressive cantilena of the French horn focuses almost all the semantic roles of the instrument that have arisen since the time of the *Pastoral Symphony* by L. Beethoven and received an almost comprehensive implementation in the grandiose orchestral canvases by G. Mahler.

The way of composer’s reflection, characteristic of V. Bibik, is similar to metonymy. It is aimed not at reconstructing the musical realities of the past, but at activating the memory mechanism. Owing to it, the used symbolic detail revives in the consciousness not only the artistic impressions once obtained, but also the aesthetic and emotional experiences associated with it, which guarantees the adequacy of the recipient’s reading of the author’s “message”.

Conclusion

The considered “triptych” of V. Bibik’s orchestral compositions does not exhaust the composer’s contacts with late romantics. Shortly after the end of *Pastorale* (the *Ninth Symphony*), his already mentioned symphonies with the participation of a singing voice appear. The question arises about the reasons for the author’s refusal to assign serial numbers to them. Perhaps one of them is rooted in the originality of the genre profile of both the compositions. Called “symphonies”, they clearly inherit the genre type of orchestral vocal cycle that goes back to the experience of H. Berlioz, and then becomes widespread in the creative work of Austro-German composers in the last third of the 19th – early 20th centuries, regardless of whether such content was primary or became the result of the author’s arrangement. Let us name the names of G. Mahler, R. Strauss, A. Schoenberg (Vlasova, 2007, p. 138). D. Shostakovich’s appeal to it is also significant.

V. Bibik’s late romantic reflections were not transitory, stimulated only by new trends in contemporary composer practice, but they fully revealed the nature of his artistic worldview and creative individuality. “The dialogue of epochs”, which is so characteristic of the musical art of the 20th and early 21st centuries, in the considered symphonies by V. Bibik turned into the monologue, a form of the author’s speech, and the “strangers” turned into “friends”; there was, as it were, the absorption of late romantic spiritual and aesthetic experience by the creative style of the modern composer. In the symphonies presented in the article, a certain vector of connection between the present and the past is established as a manifestation of the continuity of artistic culture, when the ideas and realities of the past epoch reveal their actual value in a different historical time. The late romantic reflections in V. Bibik’s symphonies are evidenced by:

- the type of content – the self-disclosure of the complexity of the author’s “I”, the intensity of his intellectual and emotional inner life, conceptuality which is implying the coverage not only of the microcosm of a single individual, but also of the problems of the individual as such;

- the compositional and dramaturgic principles – the gravitation towards the cross-cutting nature of the construction of the cycle, as a result of which a *quasi*-poem or contrast-composite one-part form arises;
- the musical “plot formation” – up to the implementation of the techniques of “intonation plot”;
- the theme formation – using variation transformations, derivative, figurative transformation;
- the lexical “dictionary” – the perception of units of the late romantic linguistic thesaurus as semantic and stylistic signs of the era.

Thus, we can state the stability of V. Bibik’s late romantic reflections, which confirms the depth of his spiritual and aesthetic ties with the historical phenomena of musical culture.

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