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UDC 78.01

DOI: 10.17674/1997-0854.2015.3.063-072

THE FIGURATIVE AND IMAGINATIVE WORLD IN THE PICTORIAL ART AND MUSIC OF M. K. ČIURLIONIS*

The name of Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis (1875–1911) is primarily associated with his picturesque visual canvases, which are unique, impressive and enigmatic. His music is much less known (in comparison to his paintings), even though, according to the fundamental research of Vytautas Landsbergis “M. K. Čiurlionis’ Oeuvres (The Spring Sonata)”¹, the master’s musical legacy consists of 345 musical opuses!

M. K. Čiurlionis’ artistic “countenance” has been defined by two lines of character having motivated V. H. Karatygin, the outstanding musical critic of the beginning of the 20th century, to title his article “In the memory of the Artist and Composer M.K. Čiurlionis”². And still, *do those two lines really coexist in a harmonious manner* in the imaginative world of Čiurlionis? This question must be raised, because the balance between the two art forms is rather ambiguous. For example, there are frequent declarations of the congeniality between Čiurlionis’ music and visual art works, which justifies direct parallels between works pertaining to different various pieces of art various pieces of art. Such parallels are most often evoked by the “musical” names of his pictures: *sonata* (“Sonata of Starts,” “Sonata of Sun,” “Sonata of Sea,” “Sonata of Summer,” “Sonata of Spring,” “Sonata of Serpent,” “Sonata of Pyramids”), *symphony* (“Funeral Symphony”), *ballade* (“The Black Sun Ballade”), and *prelude*.

Among the varied and controversial viewpoints regarding the *significance of various types of art* presented in the works of Čiurlionis,

the musical dominant was the one to excel during the lifetime of the master. “They seemed to me to be music fastened to the canvases with paint and lacquers,” – this is what artist A. P. Ostroumova-Lebedeva asserted about his paintings³. The poet, literary critic and founder of the journal “Apollon” S. K. Makovsky considered his paintings to be “nothing else but graphic illustrations for musical compositions”, thereby, evaluating Čiurlionis’ musical works higher than his paintings⁴.

The opposite opinion was expressed in a no less distinct manner, suggesting that Čiurlionis’ art work was considerably different from his music and that Čiurlionis the artist was more significant than the composer, as was asserted, among other people, by early 20th century literary critic and poetry theorist V. F. Chudovsky, who said: “He is an artist to such an extent that he must be understood particularly as a painter, after which the rest of his works would become clear”⁵.

The significant literary figure, symbolist poet, playwright, literary critic and philosopher Vyacheslav Ivanov took up the middle position, advocating *synthesis of the arts*: “The pictorial elaboration of elements of visual contemplation, following a principle derived from music – this is, in our opinion, what his method comprises. <...>. The visual impression for him becomes the equivalent of a musical theme and develops itself analogously to the development of the latter. We remain in the world of forms, but they are unfolded before us as musical sounds”⁶.

Such apparent contradictions of evaluation are hardly surprising, since the question of interaction of the arts presented in Čiurlionis’

* This translation into English is by Aziz S. Gyuliev, edited by Dr. Anton Rovner.

heritage presents a challenging and complex issue. Without making any pretence of disclosing the issue, I shall touch only upon one of its aspects: that of artistic imagery, i.e. *to what extent are the images generated by the different forms of art similar or different.*

We must start with the question of *what kind of images do they present in themselves*, and what are their characteristic features. In order to find the answers to these questions, it is worthwhile to focus on those images which, on the one hand, are revealing for the master and, on the other hand, induce to a comparison with each other. In Čiurlionis' oeuvres, the themes of the "forest" and the "sea" are especially indicative.

Forest-images in the works by Čiurlionis

The forest is one of the most penetrating themes in Čiurlionis' creative works, which is understandable enough, since, according to the folk perceptions he was brought in, all of Lithuania was essentially a forest.

In 1900–1901 the master composed the symphonic poem "Miške" ["In the Forest"], and in 1903 he painted the oil picture "The Music of the Forest." Their chronological proximity presumes a congeniality of images, but does this really happen in this case? The music is inelaborate and does not conceal its song sources of intonation (*Example 1*), though developed symphonically in an unhampered way. One can perceive in it open space and the gentle fluctuation of air. The composer used the following words to describe the music to his friend: "It begins with soft, widely spaced chords resembling the quiet and broad whisper of our Lithuanian pine trees"⁷.

The lyrical utterance unfolds itself in a calm and unhurried way. The atmosphere formed in it reminds both a description of nature and the emotional effect caused by its contemplation. At the same time, the general emotionally balanced state admits some agitation and calming down, albeit, avoiding drastic transformations of the overall statistic image. The impression conveyed to us by the symphonic poem is

that of emotionally specified musical scenery permeated by a sense of delicate romantic lyricism, which the composer admires and marvels in.

Does one of Čiurlionis' first paintings "The Music of Forest" ("The Murmur of the Forest", "Forest Music", 19048) (*Painting 1*) correspond to the sound of the aforementioned music? Its coloration is perceptibly gloomier than that of its musical prototype, since almost the entire canvas is intersected by dark concise vertical lines of "ship-like" pine trees. However, besides the age-old mighty trees, another image calls to our attention – that of Light, will and warmth. It streams from a great distance away, looking through the trees and cutting through the stockade formed by them. The dark forest presents merely one of two images here, moreover, contrasting ones.

While making an effort to describe the forest, one observes that it is "not real". The straight lines of trees stretching out to the firmament are too flawless in shape, and their contours, bereft of branches with pine-needles, are too schematic in appearance. The images of the hardly predictable Baltic expanse and scattered sunshine are, likewise, too generalized. With a minimal amount of realistic details, the images acquire significance and metaphoricity. M. H. Etkind makes the assumption that "the black vertical lines are not tree trunks at all, but the strings of a wondrous harp, which are strummed by the wind"⁹. It is possible that these are depictions of symbols of the everlasting entities of the Existence, while the contrasting images present nothing other than the richness of Existence. In any case, the landscape was not drawn "from nature" and is not a realistic reproduction of life.

The bent tree in the foreground creating a gap of light in the midst of other trees is especially expressive and "stereo-metric." Does this not present a symbol of decay and withering? One can hardly fail to notice a striking resemblance, both visual and conceptual, between the painting and the third pastel from the cycle "Funeral Symphony": the same bare stems



disappearing upwards in the skies, along with a bent large tree, the sun shining from afar; only in the latter picture there is a funeral procession walking in a mournful mood (*Painting 2*). The death images of and destruction of powerful, native and original elements making way for renewal hovered in the air at the beginning of the 20th century, especially on the threshold of the revolution. They were also present in the consciousness of Čiurlionis, who in many of his paintings, including “The Music of Forest,” was also trying to break away from the chains of the departing past and look into the bright expanses of his native Lithuania and Mankind.

As we can see, the imaginative world of the painting is completely different and, one can say, more complicated: as opposed to the musical composition, which is monolithic in its imagery; two figures live there, moreover, contrasting ones, and their natures are distinct – symbolic and giving rise to the mutual reflection of various semantic meanings. For this reason, it does not suffice for us to concur prematurely with Etkind and assert that “the painting is either an illustration to this (the musical symphonic. – L. K.) poem, or an artistic parallel to it.”

Čiurlionis is the creator of another eminent work of art – a pastel drawing titled “The Forest” (*Painting 3*). The pine trees with lengthy tree trunks depicted on it are even more conventional with their contours vanishing in the hazy mist. Appearing ghostlike, they remind to a greater degree of kings adorned with crowns walking ceremoniously (this favourite theme of the artist also comes back in “The Journey of the King’s Son” and “The Journey of the King’s Daughter”). The symbolically depicted forest becomes a source for fairytale and mythological associations.

The comparison of paintings with “forest-related” subject matter has proven that the living milieu and environment depicted in the master’s creative works, so dear to the heart of Čiurlionis and the Lithuanian people, is perceived in different ways: the music delivers a direct impression, coloured with vivid human emotion, while painting is associated with

the visualization of images of another type – symbolic, fairytale, fantastic and mythological.

Images of the Sea in the Works by Čiurlionis

Let us analyse the way M.K. Čiurlionis managed to disclose another subject, which he was no less fond of – that of the sea.

The painter devoted much of his time and artistic endeavour to the sea. As a result of this he created his paintings “Sonata of the Sea”, “The Seacoast”, “The Sea at Night”, “Ships”, “The Cliff Over the Sea”, “Yachts,” as well as a few sketches called “The Sea.” The sea constantly merges together in his pictures with other subject matter, as well. The musician also eternalized the sea in his musical symphonic poem “Jura” [“The Sea”], his three-movement piano cycle with the same name and the prelude for piano, “By the Sea”.

The symphonic poem “Jura” [“The Sea”] (1903–1907) is a large-scale musical composition for orchestra and organ lasting over 30 minutes in duration. Nevertheless, it is not possible to discover in it a number of images, which is typical for a large-scale opus. The entire symphonic poem presents an explication of the sea. Herein is presented the element of water, manifesting itself as unending, powerful, eternally existent and capable of changing constantly its mood, involves some elements of illustration (the figurations in the high-pitched registers of the wind instruments recreate the effervescence of the sea foam). The composer managed to mould a rather realistic and integral image of powerful, omnipotent force. Once again, just as in the case of the musical image of forest, notwithstanding the mobile character of the depicted phenomenon of nature, the image depicted is static; it does not undergo any thorough development or transformation. Veneration and admiration for the titan strength – therein lies the musical hypostatis of the sea characteristic for Čiurlionis.

Three emotional states of the sea succeed each other in the three-movement cycle of piano pieces, “The Sea,” opus 28 (1908). In this music

the sea is not as powerful or entrancing as in the symphonic poem. It is “chamber-like”, lyrical and deeply felt by the human being (*Example 2*). The prelude for piano “By the Sea,” likewise, resembles pictorial sketches of landscapes. However, the principle of depicting the sea by means of the piano in many respects remains the same as that in the symphonic poem.

So how did Čiurlionis the artist perceive the sea? His famous “Sonata of the Sea” (“Sea Sonata,” 1908) can tell us about his apprehension.

At first sight, the triptych of paintings seems to be absolutely musical, and the pictures themselves were endowed with typically musical titles: Allegro, Andante, Finale. In reality, one deals with the three stages of unfolding of an artistic concept, quite remote from the idea conceived for and implemented in the musical composition.

Čiurlionis does not draw *plein-air*s, and his sea is remote from possessing realistically depicted landscapes. The image he has created is complex and polyphonic¹⁰, since it is possible to find “concealed voices” in it, standing for the association of the main image with accompanying ones (for example, the shadow of the seagull in “Allegro” (*Painting 4*): this is an ordinary sea bird, a common attribute of a sea landscape, but this also presents a personification of an idea – particularly as a seagull. It is particularly the “seagull as a splendid idea” is how the artist interpreted this sea bird. Finally, the seagull for him is an autobiographic creature (the depiction of a bird spreading its wings was used by him as a graphic element for the first letter of his signature. Čiurlionis called his beloved wife Sophia “my white bird”. Allusions to the emotional depression experienced by him obtained the poetic comparison to “the bird of darkness”). This semantic stratification expands the boundaries of the image, making it more volumetric, which was not necessary for the musical “marine work”.

The polyphonic qualities inherent in Čiurlionis’ work are also revealed by “scale counterpoint,” displayed in the enigmatic

underwater world of “Andante,” in which a sailing ship is resting on somebody’s attentive soft palm of the hand (*Painting 5*), the “counterpoint of temporal situations,” which is disclosed in the selfsame “Andante” by the light shining out from the windows of houses of a city sunk under the sea a long time ago; this is the phosphorescence of lights of ships swaying on the horizon or giant candelabums, appearing as the shining of two suns simultaneously, “spatial counterpoint,” which can be observed in the combination of independent compositions overlapping one on top of another and shining through each other, and it provides a combination of two perspectives in which the sea is represented in “Allegro”: from a bird’s eye panorama, disclosing distant hills with trees growing on them; in the direct immersion into the seething waves; upon the viewing of its minutest “quantas,” resembling either water drops or pearl and amber necklaces, or, perhaps, bundles of fishing net entwined together (the preserved pencil sketch of this painting evokes such an analogy). The sea is depicted as being overly close, relatively close and overly distant on the canvas, but the three expositions hulking up over each other violate the law of perspective.

A musician looking at the paintings would also notice imitations: the repetition of the idea expressed in the triptych the spatial and temporal shift. Thus, in “Allegro” the wave crests multiply in the contours of the hills, while the bubbling foam devolves into a chain of drops (“imitation in augmentation”). In “Finale” the powerful, distraught wave bulwark virtually recreates in its appearance the outlines of the boats resurfacing from out of the sea depths (once again, in multiple augmentation) (*Painting 6*), while in the wave peaks crowning the bulwark one could recognize the curves of waves consolidated in the foreground of the ripples.

Since the analysis of the triptych discloses a series of consistent patterns, it might seem that the sea depicted in the painting is very musical. In truth, the graphic techniques applied by the artist and the arrangement of artistic space resemble musical techniques in many ways. Nonetheless,

the result of these techniques is distanced from the domain of music: the resultant image does not unfold in time, does not live in a “linear” fashion, and essentially does not “live” – it is stock-still and abstractive, acquiring the status of a sign or symbol. Another meaning-bearing process manifests itself, as a result of which the picturesque image of the sea expands and leads to the point at infinity in terms of its semantics. Such symbolism is likewise apparent in many of Čiurlionis’ other paintings.

In this respect, another detail poses itself as being remarkable. In “Finale” the powerful all-shattering wave discloses the graphic symbol of Čiurlionis’ initials – MKC. (*Painting 7*). Their location (in the middle of the painting) does not correspond in the least with a typical attribute of the visual arts – the artist’s signature, which is usually placed at a peripheral side of a canvas. In the painting the force of nature, ready to descend, resembling a certain raving, possessed mythological divinity, seems to identify the victim it has chosen to chastise – in this connection, there appears yet another conceptual aspect of the image – namely, the autobiographical. Thereby, the monogram in the “Sonata of the Sea” paves the way for the comprehension of the philosophic problem of life and death.

From the Artistic Image – to the Artistic Subject

The aforementioned comparisons provide sufficient material for further reflection, in which I shall try to base myself on theoretical elaborations of music content. The theoretical ideas of musical content, which are expounded as an integral concept in a special study¹¹ as an integral conception, also deal with musical depiction. For instance, the “*subject matter*” for musical images is classified by me as something aimed at the Human Being, the World and the specificity of Music as an art. If we examine Čiurlionis’ artistic imagery of the musical and artistic works compared by us in terms of their subject matter, we will discover that the musical images are localized within the

paradigms of “the Human Being” and, partly, “the World,” whereas the images present in his paintings are contained exclusively within the aspect of “the World.”

Let us go onwards. The artistic images are aimed at disclosing a certain *artistic theme* (*topic*). The author’s classification within the sphere of music has disclosed three types of topics: purely musical ones, existent solely in musical compositions (advancing something specifically musical, for example, clearly demonstrated means of expression, a demonstrated musical technique, etc.); the pan-artistic subject matter applied in different types of art (“emotion”, “portraiture”, “landscape”, “artist and society” or “artist and power”); universal, panhuman themes developed not only in art, but also in science, religion, ethics, philosophy (“human beings and fate”, “the fight of Good and Evil”, “self-affirmation in action”).

If we correlate Čiurlionis’ works examined above with the classification of subject matter, we discover that Čiurlionis’ musical compositions are “pan-artistic,” since the imagery connected with them is typological and traditional for different types of art. The composer is not interested in the prospect of either researching the language of music or in demonstrating his virtuosic ingenuity – in other words, the purely “musical” theme is not in the least attractive for him. Likewise, his musical images, as it had been proven earlier, are not inclined towards any kind of generalization. In regards to his paintings, the situation is quite different: offering the artist’s personal visions of what is Life and Death, Good and Evil, Ideals, History, Culture, the native land etc., his paintings refer in their subject matter to the pan-human sphere of religion and philosophy, gravitating towards the highest level of generalization and equating art with other forms of human cognition.

One more methodological angle – the Aristotelian triad of “*lyricism-epos-drama*” – helps reflect on Čiurlionis’ legacy. These categories have been thoroughly elaborated in the domain of aesthetics, according to which epos is, as a rule, a narration about real or mythological

events which happened long ago, taking place within the chronotope of infinity and eternity, *drama* is a dynamic unfolding of action based on cause and effect in a restricted structured space and the present time, while *lyricism* is the perception of the world by the human being and his response to reality in the space correlated to the human being and to the time modes of “present”, “past” and “future”. *In examining Čiurlionis's oeuvres through the prism of significant aesthetic categories, one must acknowledge that his music is the embodiment of lyrics, whereas the images in his painting are picturesque, significant and symbolic, which relays them to epos.*

The principal difference of image-related artistic reference points in his music and his paintings becomes especially evident in the ambiguous situations of choice. Thus, Sophia Kymantaitė-Čiurlionienė's literary text for the choral fughetta “Autumn” (“The Falling of Yellow Leaf”), besides containing traits of lyrical landscape (“Autumn. The yellow leaf flies, flies... brought up by the sun and chased by the wind”), disposes to a transition into the realm of philosophizing (“And the earth accepts all those who have completed their earthy course... our life is just a moment”). However, the music does not yield to this kind of temptation, but preserves its image-bearing artistic paradigm, retaining the sad feeling caused by the withering of nature (*Example 3*).

On the other hand, some of the themes revealed in the paintings, which assert the implementation of emotion – “Anger I” and “Anger II”, “Grief (I)” and “Grief (II)” (“Sadness”, “Yearning”) – turn out to be aimed at expressing something different from the movements of the soul or the heart. The subject matter aspiring to lyricism is resolved by means of symbols, abstractions and an ambivalent mysterious atmosphere developing in utterances of epic amplitude.

So, let me sum up.

Starting out from similar titles and comparing opuses which unwittingly “having something in common” with each other, the conclusion can be drawn that there is hardly

any direct correspondence present between paintings and musical compositions. In music there is the “forest”, the “sea” and “autumn”, there are preludes, sonatas and fugues, but these do not correspond in a straightforward manner with the paintings bearing identical names. Čiurlionis seems to have felt the sufficient “musical quality” of his paintings and the “viewable” illustrative quality, presented in his music in harmless dosages. Consequently, he did not indulge in the vain hope of creating of literally perceivable images of his favourite subject matter.

So, is the distance between his music and paintings veritably enormous and insurmountable? Of course, it is not so. Our intuitive perceptions of “musical” and “picturesque” qualities in the related arts are not groundless, but, nonetheless, we must remember that the aforementioned categories are revealed in certain ways.

Indisputably, the interpenetration of music and pictorial art is evident in many aspects. Thus, the musicality displayed in paintings is apparent in the incorporation of some genres (sonatas, symphonies, fugues and preludes), compositions (the sonata-symphonic cycle and fugues), techniques of form-generation (imitation) and dramaturgy (“polyphonic” versatility). It is also appropriate to mention about the picturesque qualities displayed in the music, bearing in mind the influence of genre (strict graphic elements of a melodic pattern, the soft “watercolour effect” of his short instrumental pieces) and techniques (polished linearity). Nevertheless, analysis of imagery and subject matter displayed quite different results: art is rather autonomous in them. For this reason, when speaking of the “musical quality of the paintings” and the “picturesque quality of the music,” one must be aware of where and how the aforementioned features are revealed. Bearing this in mind, we cannot but agree with Lithuanian poet Eduardas Mieželaitis, who asserted the following: «... Čiurlionis is everything: music, colours and poetry. But the key point of his legacy is the idea»¹².

NOTES

¹ Landsbergis V. V. *Tvorchestvo Čurlyonisa (Sonata vesny)* [Čiurlionis' Oeuvres ("Sonata of Spring")]. 2nd publication. Leningrad: Muzyka Press, 1975. 280 p.

² Karatygin V. G. *Poeziya idey. Pamyati khudozhnika-kompozitora M. K. Čurlyonisa* [The Poetry of Ideas. In Memory of Artist and Composer M.K. Čiurlionis]. *Teatr i iskusstvo* [Theater and Art]. 1912. No. 18, pp. 377–380.

³ Ostroumova-Lebedeva A. P. *Avtobiograficheskiye zapiski. 1900–1916* [Autobiographical Notes. 1900–1916]. Moscow; Leningrad: Iskusstvo, 1945, p. 109.

⁴ Makovsky S. K. M. K. Čurlyonisa [M. K. Čiurlionis]. *Apollon*. 1911. № 5, p. 23.

⁵ Chudovskiy V. A. M. K. Čurlyonisa (*otryvki*) [M. K. Čiurlionis (Extracts)]. *Apollon*. 1914, No. 3, p. 20.

⁶ Ivanov V. I. M. K. Čurlyonisa i problema sinteza iskusstv [M. K. Čiurlionis and the Issue of Synthesis of the Arts]. *Sobr. soch.: v 4 t.* [Collected Works in 4 vol.]. Under the editorship of D. V. Ivanov and O. Deshart.

Bruxelles: Foyer Oriental Chrétien, 1979. Vol. 3, pp. 151–152.

⁷ Citation from: Landsbergis V. V. Op.cit. P. 83.

⁸ Many works of Čiurlionis have variants of names.

⁹ Etkind M. H. *Mir kak bol'shaya simfoniya* [The World as a Great Symphony]. Leningrad: Iskusstvo, 1970, p. 14.

¹⁰ See: Fedotov V. M. *Muzykal'nye osnovy tvorcheskogo metoda M.K. Čurlyonisa: avtoref. dis. ... kand. isk.* [Musical Fundamental Concepts of M. K. Čiurlionis' Creative Method: Thesis for Dissertation for Phd of Arts]. Petrozavodsk, 1996. 28 p.

¹¹ Kazantseva L. P. *Osnovy teorii muzykal'nogo sodержaniya* [Fundamentals of the Theory of Musical Content]. Astrakhan: Volga, 2009. 367 p.

¹² Mieželaitis E. B. *Mir Čurlyonisa* [The World of Čiurlionis]. Mieželaitis E. B. *Kontrapunkt* [Counterpoint]. Moscow: Izvestiya, 1971, pp. 442.

EXAMPLES

Example 1 “Miske” (“In the Forest”)

Example 3

О - сень. Лис - ток по - желте - лый ре - ст, ре -
La - ras ra - gel - tes nu.krin - ta. sau - les au - gin -
О - сень. Лис - ток
La - ras ra - gel -

Па - да - ет - лист, го - ни - мый вет - ром.
Krin - ta la - ras ša - ka siu - buo - ja.

- ст, солн - цем вара - щен - ный, вет - ром го - ни - мый.
- tas, vé - jo nu - skin - tas, vé - jo nu - tas, vé - jo nu -

по - желте - лый ре - ст, вет - ром го - ни - мый, го -
- tes nu.krin - ta, sau - les au - gin - tas, vé - jo nu -

Example 2 “Jura” (“The Sea”) opus 28 No. 1



Painting 1. The Music of the Forest



Painting 2. Funeral Symphony (III)



Painting 3. The Forest



Painting 4. Sonata of the Sea (I)



Painting 5. Sonata of the Sea (II)



Painting 6. Sonata of the Sea (III)



Painting 7. Čiurlionis' signature

**Художественный образ:
параллели живописи и музыки М. К. Чюрлёниса**

В статье предпринят сравнительный анализ групп живописных и музыкальных произведений Микалоюса Константинаса Чюрлёниса на одну тему («лес», «море»), свидетельствующий о том, что прямого соответствия картины и музыкального произведения не получается. Анализ показывает, что Чюрлёнис тонко ощущает достаточную «музыкальность» картин и безопасную для музыки «зримую» иллюстративность. Бесспорно, думается, взаимопроникновение музыки и живописи в целом ряде аспектов. Так, музыкальность в картинах опознаётся в использовании некоторых жанров (сонаты, симфонии, фуги, прелюдии), композиций (сонатно-симфонического цикла, фуги), приёмов формообразования (имитация), драматургии («полифоническая» многоплановость). Правомерно говорить и об изобразительности в музыке, имея в виду влияние жанра (суховатую «графичность» мелодического рисунка, мягкую «акварельность» инструментальных миниатюр), технику (отточенную линейность). Анализ же образности и тематики показал другое – в этом отношении искусства довольно автономны. Потому, говоря о «музыкальности картин» и «живописности музыки», следует отдавать себе отчёт в том, где и как именно проявляются эти качества. На основе сопоставления становится ясным, что интуитивные чувствования «музыкальности» и «живописности» в родственных видах искусства имеют под собою почву, однако прямые аналогии неправомерны.

Ключевые слова: Чюрлёнис, музыкальная живопись, «лес» и «море» в творчестве Чюрлёниса

**The Figurative and Imaginative World
in the Pictorial Art and Music of M. K. Čiurlionis**

The article carries out a comparative analysis of the categories of artistic and musical compositions by Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis on one subject (“the forest” and “the sea”), bearing witness to the fact that no direct correspondence between the respective paintings and musical composition comes out. Analysis shows that Čiurlionis perceives in a delicate manner the “musicality” of his paintings and the “visible” illustrative qualities present in music in harmless doses. There is a sense, however, that the mutual penetration of music and painting is indisputable in a whole set of aspects. Thus, the musical quality present in the paintings is discerned in the artist’s appellation to a number of musical genres (sonatas, symphonies, fugues and preludes), compositions (the sonata-symphonic cycle, the fugue), form-generating techniques (imitation) and dramaturgy (“contrapuntal” polyvalence). It is, likewise, appropriate to speak of depictive qualities in music, having in mind the influence of genre (the dryish “graphical” quality of the melodic line, the soft “watercolor” quality of the short instrumental pieces) and technique (well-turned linearity). However, analysis of the imagery and the subject matter showed otherwise – in this regard, the two arts are absolutely autonomous from each other. For this reason, when speaking of the “musicality of the paintings” or the “pictorial quality of the music,” one must realize in full, where and how precisely do these qualities reveal themselves. On the basis of this juxtaposition it becomes clear that the intuitive perception of the “musical” and “pictorial qualities” in these related arts hold some validity, however direct analogies are essentially invalid.

Keywords: Čiurlionis, musical painting, “the forest” and “the sea” in the music of Čiurlionis

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