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About the Genre Specificity of Instructive and Concert Vocalises

A unique branch of vocal performance is formed by specimens of the "wordless" vocalise – a musical genre formed in the countries of Western Europe and in Russia towards the mid-18th century. Situated beyond the perimeter of musicological thought, it nonetheless conceals numerous riddles. The latter include the structural and sematic organization of its two varieties: the instructive and the concert vocalises. Pertaining to one category, they remain individualized in their means of presentation and the specificity of their performance and, consequently, in the tasks which are set before the vocalist. Their expressive potential is formed in the process of interaction of musical and non-musical components, which require thorough attention. A separate problem is posed by the study of the genesis and historical evolution of the genre in the direction from applied specimens (the instructive vocalise) to artistic examples (the concert vocalise). The specificity of the vocal melody in vocalises is revealed through the prism of interaction between the acoustic, technical and expressive characteristic features of the singer's voice performing and the vocal "orphoepy." A typical feature for vocalises pertaining to the Russian and Western European vocal schools is its melismatically melodic thematicism. It is examined in the article in close connection with the varied forms of vocal and instrumental practice of music-making.

<u>Keywords</u>: musical genres, instructive and concert vocalises, the singer's voice, thematicism, musical compositions.

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О жанровой специфике инструктивных и концертных вокализов

Уникальной областью вокального исполнительства являются образцы «бессловесного» вокализа – музыкального жанра, сформировавшегося в странах западной Европы и России к середине XVIII века. Находящийся за периметром музыковедческой мысли, он всё ещё таит немало загадок. Среди них структурная и смысловая организация двух его разновидностей: инструктивного и концертного вокализов. Относящиеся к единому роду, они индивидуальны по способу бытования и специфике исполнения, а следовательно, по задачам, которые стоят перед вокалистом. Их выразительный потенциал формируется в процессе взаимодействия музыкальных и внемузыкальных компонентов, которые требуют пристального внимания. Отдельную проблему представляет изучение генезиса, исторической эволюции жанра в направлении от прикладных (инструктивный вокализ) к художественным образцам (концертный вокализ). Специфика вокальной мелодии вокализов проявляется сквозь призму взаимодействия акустических, технических и выразительных характеристик исполняющего её вокального голоса и вокальной «орфоэпии». Типологической особенностью вокализов, принадлежащих отечественной и западноевропейской вокальным школам, является фигурационно-мелодический тематизм. В статье он рассматривается в тесной связи с разнообразными формами вокальной и инструментальной практики музицирования.

<u>Ключевые слова</u>: музыкальные жанры, инструктивный и концертный вокализы, вокальный голос, тематизм, музыкальная композиция.

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n the history of musical culture there exist certain phenomena the perception of which Lis concentrated around quite obvious observations of their outward descriptions. Such is the phenomenon of vocalises, which represent a genre of vocal compositions performed without verbal texts and include both the "exercises in vocalization" and the "concert pieces." Thus, various works in their genres have developed the attitude towards vocalises as musical material or etudes for voice designated solely for the purpose of development of virtuosic vocal technique and not possessing any independent substantive meaning. Nonetheless, they comprise an unique domain related not only to vocal pedagogy, but also to performance practice. At that, the study of structural and semantic organization of the two varieties of vocalises - the pedagogical and the concert types, which pertain to a single category, but are individualized in their means of existence and specificity of performance - has remained on the periphery of researchers' thought. The attempt to make sense of the essence of the vocal genre as a unique artistic phenomenon prompts towards examining a set of important questions about the roles of the intra- and extra-musical, vocal and instrumental components in its genre content.

The original traits of the vocal compositions created during the course of several centuries by composers and pedagogues of various national schools1 has been formed at the intersection of vocal and instrumental practice of music-making. The development of the vocalise has been carried out in the direction from applied practice generating the basic regular laws (the typization of content and form) in the pedagogical vocalise, to their artistic manifestation in the concert vocalise². The emergence of the principle of vocalization devoid of words forming the "core" of the genre took place within the context of the 11th century Western European vocal-choral culture. An important condition for the emergence of vocalises was the emergence of the various national schools of vocal singing³. The flourishing of solo singing in opera, the instrumental concerto and the bel canto style lay at the foundation of the formation of the vocalise (from the mid-17th to the early 18th century). The turn toward the extra complicated virtuoso technique of vocal performance, the generalization of scientific knowledge of acoustics and the discipline of "vocalology" ("vokalovedenie" in Russian: a term of Yuri Rags), as well as the practical experience of the vocal-choral and instrumental intonating has led to the emergence of the concert vocalise (the 19th and early 20th century) genetically connected with the instructive variety. As a multifunctional phenomenon - an exercise in the formation of technically perfected singing and an autonomous artistic phenomenon – the vocalise has traversed a complex and a many-valued path of evolution the study which is conducive to an understanding of the genesis of this genre.

The specificity of the genre of the vocalise has been formed in close connection with the purpose of the two historically developed varieties – the instructive and the concert, which have interacted in the process of evolution. Thus, the applied role of the pedagogical vocalise in teaching vocal-technical skills to a singer portended the chamber-like qualities of its sound. On the other hand, the concert vocalise, which possessed artistic worth and was performed by the professional singer on stage, has posed a different challenge for him – to "line up" an interesting interpretation of a composition. Nevertheless, the pedagogical and the concert vocalise, which pertain to one category, possess common regular norms of thematic structure.

A through element for vocalises is the leading position of the vocal line with a concentration of technically complex components in the melodicism it demonstrates. Directed towards an interaction with the instrumental element, they bear witness to the role of the voice as a perfect instrument growing from one historical era to the next. The thought of the dependence of melodic organization of vocalises on the immanently musical components is not polemic, but deserves attention because it pertains to the methodologically crucial ones.

Thus, the specificity of the vocal melody in vocalises is determined in many ways by acoustic, technical and expressive characteristics of the voice performing it. At that, the peculiarity of "vocal speech," or "orthoepy" (a term of Vladimir Morozov) reflects the norms of singing pronunciation of musical sounds developed by vocal practice. Its individual possibilities – soundgeneration (gravity, mass, volatility of sound), smoothness of sound-leading, as well as temporal unfolding of vocal tones – are stipulated by the acoustic organization of the vocal apparatus of the singer. It conditions the phases of intonational life of musical sound – its reviviscence (attack), dynamic and timbral unfolding, and waning. The extension of the melodic phrases is in many ways programmed by breath, range, speed and rhythm of intonational "transference."

Let us emphasize that the "corporeality" of the vocal tone, in the opinion of Evgeny Nazaykinsky, is conditioned by the "physical concreteness of the voice - the really sounding instrument, the singer's vocal cords," and the named components are "quite perceptible by ear" [5, p. 141]. At that, it is particularly the timbre which carries out the "concretely-characteristic function, since it gives a perception of the personality" [Ibid.]. Other sound elements add perceptions of the person, "his or her manner of performance - intonating, the timbral tessitura and other physical real characteristic features of the voice or instrument" [Ibid.]. In this connection it is difficult to overestimate the role of exercises in vocalization in the formation of the timbral traits of the singer's voice.

Special interest is aroused by the universal non-musical components which are specific for each type of vocalise. Notwithstanding the fact that the vocalise is sung without words, its semantic organization presumes the importance of the sounds of speech: phonemes, morphemes and syllables. The phonemes contain semantically distinguishing features, for example, vocal vs. non-vocal features, hollowness vs. sonority, which participate in the process of sound-generation, the formation of the timbral characteristics of the voice, sound-leading. However, their role in the vocalise is not reduced merely to service functions. Without forming a cohesive lexical set, they participate in the organization of syntactical and semantic boundaries⁴ of the thematicism of the vocalise by means of the correspondence of the syntagmas of the verbal text in the language of the original to the melodic

motive. Researchers have observed that various national languages possess their own syntactic principles of articulation of speech, moreover, the pronunciation of the phonemes of vowels (a, e, i) in most European languages is not identical with each other. In this connection, the microelements of the word conjoined with the processes of breath aid the singer in perceiving the melodic syntax vocalises created by composers of various national vocal schools.

Simultaneously the phonemes and syllables carry out an applicative role of teaching the singer sound-generation and sound-leading. This is what the vocal orthoepy, the activization of the resonator apparatus of the singer and the presentation of his or her professional technical, expressive and virtuosic potential depend upon⁵. Moreover, the verbal components participate in highlighting the supporting melodic tones in the ornamental figures of the vocalise. As auxiliary elements of the contentrelated domain, they also play a phonetic role in the creation of emotional states. At the same time, the verbal peculiarities of the vocal orthoepy form the stylistic, nationally distinctive and communicative functions of the genre of the vocalise. As Liudmila Astrova observes, vocal speech becomes the expresser of a special "general or basic vocal emotion," i. e. the feeling that "arises as the result of performance or listening to vocal music with words irrespectively from the artistic emotions connected with the poetic and musical content of a specific composition" [4, p. 112]. The length or shortness of syllables pronounced conjointly (do, re, mi, etc.), regulates the expanse, forms vocal phrases and creates the emotional tone of the performance of the vocalise.

The aforementioned unique and universal functions of the phonemes and morphemes do not exhaust all the perceptions of the verbal components which separate the instructive vocalises from the concert variety. Thus, in one instance the role of the extra-musical components in the text of the compilations is taken up by the introductions, recommendations and commentaries which are connected with the didactic purpose of the instructive vocalises. In another case the elements of a different artistic system (the title headings and dedications) carry out a communicative role in the concert vocalises. They involve the listener, the performer and the composer into the process of co-authorship. In addition, the title may indicate the cultural context, as well as the national specificity. Thus, the

title of the "Aria (Cantilena)" from the "Brazilian Bachiana No. 5" for voice and eight cellos by Heitor Villa-Lobos, written in memory of J. S. Bach, draws our attention to the Brazilian color of the vocalise. At the same time, Maurice Ravel's "Pièce en forme de Habanera" alludes to the genre, as well as the Spanish cultural context. The title may also indicate at the stylistic references, for example, the romantic ones, with the synthesis of the arts typical for the style, generating new types of artistic utterance. These include the genres of artistic literature – the hymn, the ballad, the epic lay and others. The ability of ability to respond to impulses different in respect to its immanent musical resources expands the perception of the genre-related content, about the intense processes of evolution.

In the intonational and compositional structure of the vocalise – a brilliant representative of the era of homophony – the role of the principles of harmony is all too apparent. The cadential progressions, the harmonic pulsations, the modaltonal logic synchronize the intra- and extra-musical components of the thematicism of the instructive vocalise. Its square structures hearken back to dance music or to the strophic quality of poetical speech, which genetically is connected to song. In the intonational "groundwork" of concert vocalises the periodicity and regularity of the succession of motives create rhythmoplastic figures of preimages of genres. Thus, the cliché of the waltz in the second movement of Reinhold Gliere's Concerto for Voice and Orchestra forms an equable circular intonational motion which is organically continued by the "rounded" ternary-form composition. Naturally, the spectrum of action of the genre-related components is much broader, since it elucidates the artistic content of the "wordless" musical text.

Notwithstanding the fact that the vocal part in the vocalise presents that very relief which stipulates the form and the content of the musical whole, the melody pertains for the most part to the flat, non-relief type of thematicism. The ornamental type of intonating, close to the etude or prelude variety, is characterized by generality and dispersion of development. The intonational fluidity, modal-harmonic imbalance, variant-variational repetitions of one motive typical of the thematicism of vocalises testify of the predominance of the procedural element. And the musical text unites the general trait of artistic interpretation of emotions and expression by means of the dynamics of the intonational process⁶.

At the same time, the emotional atmosphere imprinted in vocal etudes or concert compositions without words differs considerably. Indeed, the lyrical tone of vocalises stems to the "genuine" (natural or living) emotions (Valentina Kholopova [9, p. 98]) with a motor-plastic, vocal or speech genesis. They are conveyed directly by the performer and are perceived by the listener. However, in the concert vocalise there is a predominance of a multilayer complex of "depicted" emotions stipulated by the artistic image. The emotional tone is modeled by the corporeal-sensual instrument – the human voice, which conveys the most intricate nuances of moods. Since it is formed by the singer's "body frame," the acoustic characteristic features of the orthoepy turn out to be connected to the utmost degree with psycho-emotional aspects. The raised question is rather complex, since the latter do not possess substantive concreteness and do not lend themselves to concise classification.

The specific features of the pedagogical and the concert vocalises is revealed in the genrerelated genesis of the thematicism and the singlecomponent compositional and dramaturgical rhythm (term of Victor Bobrovsky). This, the collateral subordination of the variants to one intonational idea in the instructive vocalises is stipulated by their applicative role – the affixation and securing of one vocal skill in each example. In the intonational prototypes of the instructive vocalises it is impossible to overlook the didactic component. For example, the vocalises with the virtuosic quasi-instrumental passages and ornamentation resemble in many ways 18th century opera arias and continue the aesthetics of bel canto. According to Eleonora Simonova "the foundation of all the ornamental insertions [arias. -I. A.] contains the same figures that are present in the exercises, which at that time served as important guides for singers" [6, p. 14]. And the synthesis of the cantilena with the virtuosity of the vocal line has become an indication of the singer's professionalism in the instructive vocalises of the past and the present, pertaining to the Russian vocal school, as well as vocal schools of other countries.

Having overcome the boundaries of an applied character and having extended its artistic potential, the vocalise has preserved its single-intonational foundation genetically connected with its instructive purpose. Nonetheless, in the

instructive and concert specimens of vocalises the single-element idea is manifested in different ways. In the first case the clichéd, incomplete and sketchy qualities of the thematicism create the impression for a preliminary sketch for a composition to be subsequently completed. The factors limiting the content range - the absence of measure-based organization, the hyperbolized repetition of the formulas and the inert qualities of the melodic motion of the sequences assist the singer in his or her sound and timbre generation⁷. In another case the vocal part acquires the role of an integral and completed verbal utterance, the fanciful and quasi-improvisational outline of which resembles an extravagant narrative plot unfolding before the viewer. Nonetheless, it is subservient to the principle of dynamic waves with the stages characteristic to it – a concentration of intensity, during the attack and before it. It forms the emotional tone of the composition, since the "wavelike type of development is the internal process organized in a particular way" [7, p. 29]. Despite the technically complex and virtuosic intonational structure, in the concert vocalises the performer solves his or her artistic challenges.

The wavelike process in each example is organized in an original manner. Thus, the process of "endless" intonational unfolding of the vocal part in Rachmaninoff's "Vocalise" fits into the harmonious architectonics of free binary form (with features of mirror symmetry). In the rare examples of concert vocalises expounded in sonata form, for example, the first movement of Gliere's Concerto for Voice, the monothematic musical material is formed by means of numerous and diverse sequences. The adopted dramaturgical compositional logic is conditioned by the purpose of the concert vocalise devoted to presentation of the synthesis of the virtuosic and the artistic potentials of the voice, thereby approaching in its capacities to those of a musical instrument.

As we can see, associated with the functions of the instructive and concert vocalises are their compositional and dramaturgical solutions. The simple and compound ternary forms, typical for vocalises, "preserve the memory" of the early historical aria *da capo*⁸. The richness of its structural types may be observed in the pedagogical and concert specimens of the vocalise, the compositional solutions of which are diverse. Thus, the principles of solo singing, the dialogueness and virtuosity put the vocalise closer to an instrumental concerto.

The intonational improvisational qualities and the fluidity bring it together with the refined genre of the poem, whereas the concentration within the melody of the brightest effects and the vocal sound-leading testify of the closeness of the vocalise to the musical elegy. Characteristic features of other genres in the dramaturgical compositional fabric of the concert vocalise expand its artistic field to a considerable degree.

The principles of concert performance allow the performer to demonstrate vividly his or her professional skills - the virtuosic and timbral possibilities of the voice, his or her artistry and many other things. Thus, virtuosic solo performance in vocal cadenzas without the participation of the partner and dialogic structures bring in the idea of a competition between the voice and the instrument. For example, in Gliere's Concerto the coloratura soprano competes with the orchestra and the solo clarinet. At that, the intonational specificity of the vocalise is demonstrated in the interaction of the vocal and the instrumental texts, expressed in the exchange of intonational lexis9. In this sense the duo of trills and roulades of the vocal and instrumental parts of Gliere's vocalise manifests an enormous spectrum of feelings of the lyrical hero.

The timbral dialogue between the vocal and instrumental segments of the musical text forms the process of an endless intonational formation and creates an entire set of artistic effects. Thus, the vocal cadenza with the quasi-glissando chromatic gliding in Ravel's "Piece en forme de Habanera" indicates the beginning of the recapitulation, while the alternating sound of the retorting passages in the vocal and piano parts in Stravinsky's "Pastorale" imitate the effect of an echo.

The question of the genesis of the concert vocalise also includes the semantical dimension, wherein the principles of monothematicism and solo singing create perceptions of the monologic qualities of the verbal utterance. However, it demonstrates in a no less convincing way by means of a dialogue which never develops into an argument and does not cause a transformation of the lyrical image, but instead recreates the lyrical hero's inner conversation. Indeed, the "genre modus" (a term of Marina Starcheus) of the concert vocalise is presented as a "peculiar outer expression of an inner vision and inner action, which in the musical text of a composition is reflected by a combination of outer fragmentation

with inner purposefulness, specific only for lyrical moods" [8, p. 50]. The conflict-free dramaturgy with intonational "self-motion," complemented with "descriptive" details, becomes an ideal form, which researchers correlate with a unidirectional monologic speech reflecting the emotional-cogitative processes of a personality. In a concert vocalise it is embodied by means of a synthesis of vocal-conversational, instrumental and plastic vocabulary.

The interaction of the vocal and instrumental elements in the concert vocalise reflect features of romanticism. In the intonational structure their synthesis was demonstrated in the extension of the registral scope and the quantity of used intervals (their chromatization and alteration), the speed of intonational transference. The indicated signs of sound imitation (mimesis) of musical instruments by the vocal sound have considerably expanded the content-wise scope of concert vocalises.

In conclusion of this article, let us note that the vocalise signifies a particular stage in the development of vocal genres. Its substantial domain is generated as the result of the intersection of the intra- and the extra-musical, the vocal and the instrumental elements. Conditioned by the needs of the practice of music-making, it has evolved from an applied function (the instructive vocalise) to the direction of extension of musical capabilities (the concert vocalise). The ornamental-figuration thematicism of vocalises, based on the variantvariational repetition of structural-semantic unit-motives, is connected with the directedness towards presentation of the virtuosity of the voice. It has also determined in many ways the syntactic and artistic organization of the thematicism of vocalises. Having traversed through the stages of its formation, the vocalise has formed itself in vocal practice as an autonomous genre. At the same time, it has demonstrated the capability of interaction with the genres of instrumental music. The vocalise has entered the 21st century as one of the bright and multifaceted genres capable of further subsequent transformations.



NOTES



- ¹ The leading vocals turned out to be the Italian (17th–19th centuries), the French (18th) and the Russian (mid-19th early 20th centuries). Among the composers who wrote concert vocalises were 20th century artists of world fame (Heitor Villa-Lobos, Reinhold Gliere, Maurice Ravel, Sergei Rachmaninoff, Igor Stravinsky) and lesser known Russian and Western composers.
 - ² About this see: [1].
- ³ Such, for example, was the "Schola Cantorum," established in Rome by Gregory I for the preparation of church choir singers. It became a model for schools for church choir singers connected with monasteries in Reichenau, Cologne, Paris, Lyons, Cambrai and St. Gallen (8th–10th centuries).
- ⁴ In the musical scores of the vocalises the boundaries of the motives are frequently reflected graphically, for example, as commas: one of them indicates taking a short breath, while two indicate taking long (lengthy) breaths.
- ⁵ The most convenient phoneme for vocalization is a, which is autonomous in its sound-generation, but is included in the syllables fa, la, ta. On the other hand, pronunciation of the vowel y is uncomfortable for

forming a vocal sound and sound-leading, which is why it is not used in vocalises.

- ⁶ Studies of figurational thematicism from the indicated positions is contained in numerous publications of the Laboratory of Musical Semantics (LMS). For example, see: [14].
- ⁷ See the exercises from the "Complete School of Singing" by Alexander Varlamov, "L'ecole de chant" by Dupré, and "Exercises in Perfection of the Voice" by Mikhail Glinka, where there is no measure-metrical organization.
- 8 See the ternary *da capo* form in Sergei Prokofiev's "Vocalise" and Igor Stravinsky's "Pastorale."
- ⁹ The clichés typical for the instrument bear information about its acoustic, technical and timbral peculiarities. They preserve the "memory" of performance (sound-emission, sound-leading, articulation), the conditions for its everyday existence, about the genre characteristics, etc. Study of various instrumental text through the prism of their interaction see in the publications of the Laboratory of Musical Semantics: [3; 10].



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