РАЗДЕЛ XX. ИСКУССТВОВЕДЕНИЕ

Li Yaxun

The genre of the vocal cycle in contemporary Chinese music

*Russian State Pedagogical University named after A.I. Herzen
(Russia, St. Petersburg)*

doi: 10.18411/sr-10-12-2020-53

idsp: sciencerussia-10-12-2020-53

Аннотация

Статья посвящена рассмотрению жанра вокального цикла в творчестве современных китайских композиторов Ван Цзяньчжона, Ли Инхая, Дина Шан Дэ. Материалом для статьи послужили нотные издания циклов Ван Цзяньчжона 'Пять стихов Ли Цинчжао', Ли Инхая 'Три стихотворения династии Тан', Дина Шан Дэ 'Dianxi Poem Collection' (Сборник стихотворений Дианси). Музыкаловедческий анализ данных произведений позволил сделать вывод, что в этих циклах есть синтез двух пластов – мелодии, которая развивается по законам пентатоники, - и гармонии, которая демонстрирует владение китайскими композиторами многими новациями музыкального языка XX века. Поэтическая сторона циклов показывает глубокую связь с общекультурными, философскими и национальными традициями Китая. Китайские композиторы ввели в европейский жанр яркий национальный колорит: интонационный, поэтический, мелодический, тональный, что, безусловно, обогатило жанр «вокального цикла» в целом. Комплексное рассмотрение вокальных циклов Ван Цзяньчжона, Ли Инхая, Дина Шан Дэ в статье «Жанр вокального цикла в современной китайской музыке» проводится в России впервые.

Ключевые слова. Композитор, философия, цикл, жанр, вокал, поэзия, мелодия, гармония, пентатоника, тональность.

Abstract

The article is devoted to the consideration of the genre of the vocal cycle in the works of contemporary Chinese composers Wang Jianzhong, Li Yinghai, Ding Shang Dae. The material for the article was the musical editions of Wang Jianzhong's cycles 'Five Poems by Li Qingzhao', Li Yinghai 'Three Poems of the Tang Dynasty', Dina Shang Dae 'Dianxi Poem Collection'. Musicological analysis of these works made it possible to conclude that in these cycles there is a synthesis of two layers - melody, which develops according to the laws of pentatonic, and harmony, which demonstrates the mastery of Chinese composers in the innovations of the musical language of the XX century. The poetic side of the cycles shows a deep connection with the general cultural, philosophical and national traditions of China. Chinese composers introduced a bright national flavor into the European genre: intonation, poetic, melodic, tonal, which undoubtedly enriched the genre of the "vocal cycle" as a whole. A comprehensive examination of the vocal cycles of Wang Jianzhong, Li Yinghai, Ding Shang Dae in the article "The Genre of the Vocal Cycle in Contemporary Chinese Music" is held in Russia for the first time.

Keywords. Composer, philosophy, cycle, genre, vocals, poetry, melody, harmony, pentatonic scale, tonality.

Introduction

The history of the vocal cycle genre in European music began in the 19th century. In Chinese musicology, however, this genre has not yet received its specificity and correct terminological definition. Therefore, let's turn to Russian sources and first of all introduce a

terminological clarification: «a vocal cycle is a cycle of romances or songs united by a common idea, as well as musical themes» ...

The concept «vocal cycle» is similar to the poetry cycle in literature [13, p.438]. Ludwig van Beethoven's cycle «To a Distant Beloved» (1816) is considered to be the beginning of this genre. The era of 19th century's romanticism with heightened and in-depth attention to the internal condition of a person, to all the nuances of his internal life associated with love experiences, contributed to the development of the genre «vocal cycle». In sequence, such iconic opuses as *The Beautiful Miller's Woman* (1823) and *The Winter Path* (1827) by Franz Schubert, *The Love of a Poet and The Love and Life of a Woman* (1840) by Robert Schumann, *Farewell to St. Petersburg*, «Mikhail Glinka (1840)», «Five Songs to the Poems of Matilda Wesendonk» (1858) by Richard Wagner were created in European music.

The end of the 19th century, the Russian «Silver Age» with an unprecedented development of poetic creativity, as well as the 20th century, with the search for deep connections between the poetic word and the musical equivalent, ensured the further development of the "vocal cycle" genre. In Russian musical art the genre of the «vocal cycle» is represented by such composers as P.I. Tchaikovsky, M.P. Mussorgsky, S.V. Rachmaninov, S.S. Prokofiev, D.D. Shostakovich, G.V. Sviridov, V.A. Gavrilin, so the picture of the genre of «vocal cycle in China» is, for now, terra incognita in the Russian cultural space.

For filling this gap we turned to the works of famous contemporary Chinese composers: Wang Jianzhong (1933-2016), Li Yinghai (1927-2007) and Ding Shang Te (1911-1995). A complex consideration of the vocal creativity of these composers is conducted in Russia for the first time.

The purpose of this article

To introduce unknown information about the vocal cycles of modern Chinese composers, such as Wang Jianzhong, Li Yinghai, Ding Shang Te into the Russian scientific circulation; to show, on the one hand, their originality, connection with national traditions, on the other hand, to pay attention to the compositional technique corresponding to the achievements of the XX century.

Literature review

Literature in Russian on this issue is not numerous: Li Yun. Piano creativity of Wang Jianzhong in the context of national traditions and modern musical thinking "// Abstract of the dissertation. arts. Novosibirsk, 2019.22 p.; Wu Na. Ding Shang Te's piano music: a combination of the Chinese national tradition with modern techniques of European writing // Dissertation for the degree of candidate of art history / St. Petersburg, St. ON. Rimsky-Korsakov, 2009.316 p.; Huang Ping. The influence of Russian piano art on the formation and development of the Chinese pianistic school. SPb, «Asterion», 2009; Li Yaxun, Samsonova T.P. The vocal cycle "Five verses by Li Qingzhao" by the modern Chinese composer Wang Jianzhong: poetic meaning and musical embodiment // Colloquium - journal № 17 (41). 2019. Warszawa, Polska.p.38-49; Khokhlov Yu.N. Schubert F. // Musical encyclopedia / ed. Yu.V. Keldysh in 6 v.. Moscow: Soviet Encyclopedia, 1982. V.6.

In addition to literary sources, *the notes of the vocal cycles of the composers Wang Jianzhong, Li Yinghai, Ding Shang Te were studied*: Wang Jianzhong "Five Poems of Li Chinzao"; Li Yinghai. Fifty folk songs for piano; Li Yinghai. Three Poems of the Tang Dynasty; Ding Shang Te. (Dianxi Poem Collection).

Methodology

The article "The genre of the vocal cycle in contemporary Chinese music" uses the methods of historical, cultural, source study, musical theoretical and comparative analysis.

Main part

Wang Jianzhong is one of the most famous composers in China, who has received the title of «great leader,» «patriarch,» and «guardian» of traditional Chinese music. In China, separate critical and analytical articles have been written about the composer, in Russia his

name is generally unknown [10, p.22]. An exception is Li Yun's dissertation (Russian State Pedagogical University named after A.I. Herzen, 2019), dedicated to the piano work of Wang Jianzhong - this is the first appeal to this composer in Russia [10]. Wang Jianzhong's vocal cycle «Five Poems of Li Chinzhao» is interesting from different points of view - the construction of a musical form, the embodiment of poetic and musical ideas, the preservation of artistic traditions and their innovative application in modern harmonic language. The cycle is written for high voice and piano. The composer Wang Jianzhong turned to the refined, symbolic poetry of antiquity, to the poems of Li Chinzhao (1084-1151), a poet who lived in the Sunn era (960-1279) [4]. From an interview with composer Wang Jianzhong: «I wrote this work in 1981. I preferred Li Chinzhao's poems because it seems very flexible and lyrical, but at the same time bright and intense. Li Chinzhao was a talented poet, but her life was difficult and she went through many misfortunes. I have chosen five songs to outline her life experiences in general terms: from the spoiled rich girl, happy in her youth, to the ending of life in the dark and dull years of solitude. This is the basic figurative concept of the cycle» [3]. The eminent Chinese poet Li Chinzhao has created many poems that are rare in grace and depth. Therefore, they are of great importance - these are the beauties of nature, and innermost dreams, and reflections on the purpose of man. The collection received the expressive title - "Stanzas from faceted jasper". In lyrical miniatures, completeness of form is combined with some understatement. It seems to be like the reader find himself inside the picture, where a wonderful world appears before him. A millennium later, Li Chinzhao's poetic lines carry the reader from the past to the present. And now, in the 21st century, comes an understanding of the philosophy of traditional Chinese culture with these verses, where nature is viewed as a single part of life, where the direct connection between man and nature is highlighted in every possible way – «the unity of heaven and man», which, generally, should have improved the internal essence of a person» [9, p.38-43].

The name of every song is a symbolic, poetic and imaginative program, where from song to song the meaning of the whole cycle is revealed: the life of a woman's soul from happy youth to lonely old age. The song titles symbolize the life of a Chinese woman: 1) «As in a dream», 2) «Washing by the stream», 3) «Drunk under the flowers. The Lost Husband», 4) «Fishermen - Proud Dreams», 5) «Speak Slowly». The last song "Speak Slowly" is the most tragic in terms of mood and condition of mind. Interlinear translation of the poetic text speaks shrilly about the heavy thoughts of a passing life: *«How can you sit alone, sitting by the window, until night falls? During this twilight period, it rains again, drops flow down, and it breaks the heart. How can this situation be summed up in one word «grief»? [1].»*

The composer uses here one of the ways to play drum, which is brilliantly reproduced in the piano part.

Wang Jianzhong. Song «Speak Slowly» № 5 from the cycle «Five Poems of Li Chinzhao» [1]

The tragic drum rhythm, with the hard cluster harmony of the 20th century, creates a cosmic sense of the past in the present.

The feature of this vocal cycle is in the fact that a bright national flavor is introduced into the classical European musical form «vocal cycle»: intonation, poetic, melodic, tonal. There was an amazing synthesis of two musical layers - a melody that whimsically moves according to the laws of pentatonic and harmony, which demonstrates the composer's possession of European harmonic innovations of the 20th century (clusters, extended tonality, chromatic harmony, etc.). The poetic side of the cycle shows a deep connection with the general cultural national traditions of China, the philosophy of human life and nature, the psychology of a wide range of emotions in the movement of the female soul [9, p. 43].

The famous contemporary Chinese composer, music theorist and public figure **Li Yinghai** (1927-2007) created about 200 works in vocal genre, it's varied in subject matter, content and musical embodiment. These are famous songs in China, such as: «Flower», «A Look at the Map of the Motherland», «Fight for One», «Song of the Boat», «Iron Tree of the Millennium» and many others. The study of folk songs prompted Li Yinghai to make numerous arrangements for it. He collected old songs from different regions of China. Thus, Li Yinghai's «Fifty Folk Songs», arranged for piano, show the entire microcosm of Chinese vocal intonation in a piano arrangement. This composition by Li Yinghai is considered one of the most significant achievements of Chinese contemporary music [6].

Li Yinghai's vocal cycle «Three Poems of Tang Dynasty Poetry» reveals other features of his work. The composer turned to ancient Chinese poetry, filled with deep meanings, where traditional culture was refracted in the modern European musical language. The vocal part and piano accompaniment develop independently of each other. The harmony of the piano part is filled with chromaticism, altered combinations, clusters, it is colorfully sonorous. On the other hand, the vocal part is set out in the traditional system of pentatonic scales and it's close in character to Chinese folk tunes.

The names of these three vocal miniatures are poetic: №1. «Spring Morning» (*Wind and rain didn't stop, Flowers don't know how many of them fell ...*); №2 «Poplar on the night bridge, next to the monastery»; №3 «Tower in Guan»: (*The sun sets behind the mountains, the Huanhe flows into the sea ...*) [7]. The cycle was created in 1982. The composer's mastership was highly appreciated in China: that cycle was awarded the Golden Prize in the composition competition of Chinese musicians at the National Higher Institute of Art in 1988.

Ding Shang Te (1911-1995) is the largest composer of modern China, who determined the development of musical culture of the country in the 20th century. His field of activity was very extensive: a composer, performer, theorist, teacher, public figure. Ding Shan Te's creative heritage represents contemporary classical music of China: «36 opuses of choral, chamber, vocal, piano music and 25 unpublished or published opuses without assigning a number» [15, p.4]. During the years of study at the Shanghai (1928-1935) and Paris Conservatories (1947-1949.) Ding Shang De developed as a highly professional musician of the modern type, committed to the traditional music of his country deeply, but at the same time embracing widely the European innovations of composer writing in the avant-garde direction of the 20th century. He was strongly influenced by French music, namely Nadia Boulanger (1887-1979), who was a composer, pianist, organist and a great teacher, with whom Ding Shan Te studied in Paris.

Ding Shang De's vocal cycle «Dianxi Poem Collection» is dedicated to the glorification of the natural beauty of the southern province of China - Yunnan, which means «cloudy South». Ding Shang Dae's cycle was written in 1984, there were 5 diverse vocal pieces for soprano piano accompaniment: №1. «To look into the distance»; №2. «The Woman Sani»; № 3. «Husband and wife are fishing in a boat»; №4. «Butterfly in the spring»; № 5. «Camellia». In the names of these vocal miniatures we can see a single thematic line - this is

an immersion in a special corner of nature, which has been considered since ancient times and is considered to this day one of the most beautiful and picturesque places in China. Each play reflects the life philosophy of nature and man in its title, moral and ethical ideal that has been unshakable in the social outlook of the Chinese nation for millennia.

The last piece of the "Camellia" cycle is the most avant-garde in musical terms. The composer uses boldly introduction the technique of *polytonality* from the first bars of the piano, combining the As-Dur tonality in his right hand, and E-Dur in his left hand, a rather rare technique in vocal music with piano accompaniment:

*Ding Shang Te. Vocal cycle (Collection of poems by Diansey). The fifth piece "Camellia". Piano introduction ..
In the right hand is the As major, in the left hand: E-Dur [2].*

At the same time, the polytonal writing technique doesn't make the music disharmonious, but heightens the feeling of tension and gives a coloristic and sonorous sound to the whole work. The graceful vertical direction of different major tonality in the left and right hands creates a kind of unified harmony. Throughout the song, the right and left hands use syncopated and melodic rhythms in different measures of the piece alternately. It creates a feeling of constant movement and swaying of the entire musical texture. Ding Shang Dae's vocal cycle «Dianxi Poem Collection» is a unique example of the integration the national spirit, traditional thinking and modern compositional innovations that combine harmonic, rhythmic and melodic searches of the European direction of the XX century.

Discussion and conclusion

The appeal to the works of Chinese composers Wang Jianzhong, Li Yinghai, Ding Shangde in the Russian musical space is quite remarkable, because it shows the expansion and convergence of various musical cultures in the globalization of the modern world and the interest in classical music of the 21st century on different continents. There are few publications about Chinese composers in Russia today. Complex consideration of the vocal cycles of Wang Jianzhong, Li Yinghai, Ding Shangde in the article « The genre of the vocal cycle in contemporary Chinese music » is carried out in Russia for the first time.

Results

We can mark that European notation came to China only 100 years ago, and until now notation is taught using Arabic numerals in elementary schools and colleges of China. Considering these historical facts, it can be stated that the path traversed by modern Chinese composers in mastering the European techniques of composition of the 20th century was very intensive. Over the century, the composer's musical thinking, compositional technique has been enriched, the use of various European genres has expanded, including the genre of the «vocal cycle». In the presented vocal cycles, Chinese composers use widely all the capabilities of the piano, which was «imported» from Europe about a hundred years ago. The piano accompaniment contains many harmonic innovations of the 20th century, while the melodic line doesn't lose its connection with traditional culture in poetry and in its development according to the laws of the pentatonic scale. Mastering the classical European musical model «vocal cycle», Chinese composers introduced a bright national flavor into the

European genre: intonation, poetic, melodic, tonal, which enriched undoubtedly the genre of the «vocal cycle» as a whole.

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Liu Ya Wei

China and Russia – «The Great Silk Road» - the interpenetration of cultures in composing in the 21st century

*Russian State Pedagogical University named after A.I. Herzen
(Russia, St. Petersburg)*

doi: 10.18411/sr-10-12-2020-54

idsp: sciencerussia-10-12-2020-54

Аннотация

Статья посвящена состоявшейся в 2018 году в Китае премьере симфонического произведения российского композитора Виктора Плешака «Дунь Хуан». В этой связи рассматривается проблема взаимопроникновения культур на основе их интеграции и стремления к мирному сотрудничеству. Подчеркивается актуальность такого рода культурных инициатив между странами. Отмечаются особенности музыкального языка данной симфонии: введение в классический состав симфонического оркестра китайских народных инструментов (пипа, эрху, шен). Как особенность музыкального языка симфонии отмечена способность российского композитора проникнуть в суть характерных ладов китайской музыки и создать крупное симфоническое произведение с национальным колоритом при отсутствии прямого цитирования китайских народных мелодий.

Ключевые слова. Симфония, культура, пентатоника, инструменты, мелодия, колорит.