

Література

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Когут Т. В. Хоровые эпизоды оперы «Диалоги кармелиток» Ф. Пуленка в контексте духовного творчества композитора. В данной статье анализируются три хоровые эпизода из оперы «Диалоги кармелиток», в основе которых – богородичные молитвенные тексты (Ave Maria, Ave verum Corpus, Salve Regina). По стилистике указанные эпизоды близки хоровым духовным произведениям Пуленка, что обусловлено своеобразием сюжета оперы.

Ключевые слова: опера, хоровая музыка, молитвенный текст, Дева Мария, григорианский хорал.

Tatyana Kogut. Choral pieces from the opera «Dialogues of the Carmelites» by F. Poulenc in the context of composer's spiritual work.

Francis Poulenc repeatedly emphasized the spiritual and secular music to be two inseparable aspects of his creative work, which factually reveal his complex, contradictory and multifaceted personality. The combination of these two components can be observed in the opera «Dialogues of the Carmelites» (1957, Milan) being based on the dialogues from the Georges Bernanos screenplay.

“Dialogues of the Carmelites» is considered to be a unique opera not only in the creative work of Poulenc, but also in the history of the genre as a whole. The composer created a profoundly psychological drama, where the mystical moods of dusk season are intertwined, as well as the fears and sufferings of the Carmelites nuns in the dramatic days of the French Revolution are shown. Concurrently Poulenc illustrated the unchangeable nature of their spirituality, that spiritual core as opposed to human weakness, namely – their unwavering faith. An image of the woman overcoming her fear and doubts and consciously self-sacrificing

Despite hypochondria and illness caused by depression, the composer did not surrender his goal. One of his important reasons was the opportunity once again to honor the Virgin Mary, in whose patronage he firmly believed. It is important that the opera choral pieces are dedicated to the Mother of God for they play a crucial role in her dramaturgy.

“Ave Maria» / «Hail Mary» is a lyrical and contemplative, full of fair sorrow chorus (completes the 2nd scene of II act, serving a kind of summary); terminates the external action, embodying the sublime prayer-focused state of the nuns. The prayer «Ave Maria» is recognized to have acquired a special significance for the Christians. Attentive to the smallest details of the text, Poulenc dynamically and harmoniously highlights the words in which a premonition of the Carmelites’ death emerges. The word «death» is emphasized with the intense sound of the diminished seventh chord and the downward movement of the lower voice, followed by the calm and tranquility in the final «Amen».

“Ave verum Corpus» / «Hail the true body» (the 4th scene of II act) is one of the turning points in the dramaturgy of the opera (the priest notifies his expulsion). In the medieval hymn «Ave verum Corpus» Mary is revered as the Virgin who gave Jesus the human body. In 1952 for this text Poulenc created the miniature motet for three female voices on the order of the Pittsburgh women’s choir. Unlike the enlightened contemplative motet, the choral opera piece has a dramatically majestic character, as if embodying the premonition of disaster.

“Ave verum Corpus» is an ardent appeal of kneeling nuns, begging the Lord God and the Blessed Virgin for protection. In this miniature choral piece the composer also applies the responsorial principle of presentation: twice the priest solo close to the Gregorian chant is changed with the reserved chorale of nuns; the powerful «beats» of orchestra resemble bell toll.

The tragic climax of the opera, its dramatic denouement, is in the final 4th scene of III act when the Carmelites, one after another, tread on the scaffold, chanting the prayer «Salve Regina» / «Glory to the Queen.» It is interesting that with its dramatically tense sound this chorus acutely contrasts with the light motet «Salve Regina» created by the composer in 1941. In the execution scene this insightful appeal to the Virgin receives the brilliant embodiment, gaining the meaning of the dying nuns’ prayer.

The final scene of the opera is internally polysyllabic, created by means of parallel deployment of several lines:

1. The steady pulsation of the orchestra which stops at the end of the scene only with the arrival of Blanche.

2. The whirring sound of the crowd («mormorando» singing), which is an important layer of the texture.

3. The Carmelites' prayer in unison, reminding the rigorous and strict sublime church chant.

The whole development of the final scene is a huge wave of voltage rise, which is not followed by the ecstatic chanting of the prayer text. Like in many other spiritual compositions, this scene is crowned with the enlightened contemplative code, where the peace of mind is rediscovered.

In the choral pieces of the opera «Dialogues of the Carmelites» there are numerous parallels with the spiritual works of Francis Poulenc, above all, due to its unique plot. In the opera the composer used the texts, also appearing in his spiritual compositions. Importantly, in the opera Poulenc opted for the very texts which are the prayerful appeals to the Virgin.

The musical language of the opera choruses is close to the spiritual works of Poulenc:

- The choral texture prevails formed by means of combining the flexible melodic lines;*
- Use of the responsorial introductory song (alternating soloist introductory song and chorus replies)*
- A special antique coloring which is achieved due to the tune-harmonic and metro-rhythmic measures.*
- A peculiar indicator of the Poulenc's spiritual music (the same as choral scenes from the opera «Dialogues of the Carmelites»), which distinguishes it from the secular one is the use of the stylized Gregorian chant, a special prosody. This provides a rigor, elation and internal restraint to the sound.*
- Choral pieces «Ave Maria» and «Ave verum Corpus» remind the Poulenc's motets. A final chorus «Salve Regina» is close in its style to the vocal-symphonic works namely due to the magnitude, more complex composition, combination of several layers of texture developing simultaneously, significance of orchestral part and so on.*
- An essential feature typical for the Poulenc choral music on the whole, and appearing particularly evident in his spiritual compositions and choral scenes of the opera «Dialogues of the Carmelites» is an extremely subtle interpretation of the prayer texts, following their syntactic structure, highlighting the keywords. Subsequently, there can be observed a huge number of caesuras which, separating certain phrases of the text, allow to reveal more vividly its sacred meaning.*

Keywords: *opera, choral music, prayer text, the Virgin Mary, Gregorian chant.*