

## **The Aesthetics of Russian Symbolism as Demonstrated in Sergei Protopopoff's Vocal Cycles "Youth" and "Poem of Love"**

Sergei Protopopoff (1893-1954) was a Russian modernist composer who was prominent in the 1910-1920s, alongside Nikolai Roslavetz, Alexander Mosolov, Arthur Lourié, Gavriil Popov, Vsevolod Zaderatsky and a host of others. These composers developed innovative styles featuring modernist harmonies and textures, all of which were very much connected with the leading artistic aesthetics of that time period. The music of some of these composers shows strong influence of late Scriabin by its innovative, dissonant sonorities, along with late - Romantic textures and emotional expressive language – such as Nikolai Roslavetz and Alexander Mosolov. Others developed more abstract, intellectual types of languages, featuring atonality and quasi-pointillist textures – such as Arthur Lourié in his piano pieces "Syntheses" and "Forms in the Air" and Jefim Golyscheff in his String Trio. Still others developed Neo-classical styles featuring theatrical textures and depictive qualities of music – these included Vladimir Deshevov. The musical styles of these composers were quite varied, most of which had strong correspondences with the leading trends in literature and the visual arts of that period, including Symbolism, Futurism, Cubo-futurism, Constructivism and others.

Protopopoff was a pupil of the Russian music theorist, Boleslav Yavorsky (1877–1942), who was famous for having developed the theory of modal rhythm, an original conception of music history and many other ideas related to harmony, form, semantics and other fields of music theory. Protopopoff began his studies with Yavorsky in 1913 and then followed him to Kiev to study with him there during the years 1918–1921. Throughout his life, Protopopoff remained a devoted follower of Yavorsky, having helped popularize the latter's theoretical ideas. In the 1920s the composer wrote modernist music the harmonic language of which had a system of pitch organization derived from Yavorsky's theory of modal rhythm. At the core of Yavorsky's theory was the tritone or diminished fifth which resolved to a major third (b-f, C-E), an extension of this progression created a double-progression of a perfect fifth resolving to a minor third by means of the passing interval of a diminished fifth (D-A, d-sharp, a-flat, G-E). Various combinations produced the different "Yavorsky modes," such as the major, minor, augmented, diminished and chain mode. A further extension of this system involved presenting each of the "Yavorsky modes" along with its tritone transposition, which resulted in "double - modes" or "duplex - modes," as Yavorsky and Protopopoff called them, using the Latin term. The "duplex - modes" were used by the theorist and by his pupil for analyzing late 19th century romantic and early 20th century modernist music, especially such composers as Liszt, Rimsky - Korsakov and Scriabin. Yavorsky claimed that these modes were capable of analyzing and defining the pitch structure of all the possible types of music, including folk music, the standard classical music repertoire, 20th century modernist music and even microtonal music.

Protopopoff's application of the "Yavorsky modes" in his music involved extracting symmetrical horizontal scales, of which most frequently used were the octatonic scale (called the "tone-semitone" mode or the "Rimsky - Korsakov mode," since it was used in a conspicuous manner in Rimsky - Korsakov's opera "Kaschei the Immortal"). Along with the "stable" notes comprising the symmetrical scales, his music also contained "unstable" notes, essentially falling outside those used in the scales. Those played the role of the "dissonant" notes, similarly to accidentals in diatonic music. A surprising comparison could be made between the harmonic laws of Protopopoff's music with those of Messiaen's music, especially since the latter had symmetrical scales in his musical compositions, such as "Vingt regards sur l'enfant Jésus" and the "Quartet for the End of Time," and also presented them as the most important components of his theoretical system as described in his book "Technique de ma langue musicale" ("Technique of my Musical Language").

Protopopoff's modernist period spans from 1917 to 1932. The first composition pertaining to his modernist period, the song cycle "Youth" set to the text of Sergei Lipsky was written in 1917. His vocal cycle "Poem of Love" set to poems by Alexander Pushkin, written in 1928–1932 was his last modernist work. Both song cycles demonstrate strong parallels with the Russian Symbolist aesthetics of the early 1900's. Other works by Protopopoff written during this period include his three piano sonatas, three vocal works written to the

texts of Russian fairy tales (being longer than the art songs and possessing decisively theatrical features, they form a separate musical genre, different from the art songs), “Two Songs to the Poems of Pushkin,” a separate song to the text of Sergei Lipsky “The Legend” and a vocal composition for voice and piano on an anonymous historical religious text “The Poem about the Intercession.”

Altogether, the list of the works of his modernist period is quite small, especially in comparison with his late period (spanning from 1932 until his death in 1954) which included a much greater quantity of music with more varying genre forms. However, in the early 1930s Protopopoff, similarly to all of his colleagues working at that time, was forced by the Soviet government to abandon his modernist style and to adopt a traditional, post-Romantic style which was quite generic in its manner, devoid of the originality marking the music from the composer’s modernist period.

As has been stated before, Protopopoff’s music of his modernist period contains stylistic and aesthetical features which could be compared to those of the leading artistic and aesthetic trends of his time. On one hand, features of the Symbolist aesthetics could be found in the composer’s works of this period. On the other hand, one could also trace such features which could be identified with the Futurist, Cubo-Futurist and Constructivist aesthetics as demonstrated by the poets and visual artists active during those years. The traits which could be identified with the Symbolist movement are present in the extended type of Romanticism in the composer’s works, inherent in the post-Lisztian romantic textures (especially those of the piano) modified by the modern, dissonant harmonies, producing a new exalted type of expression.

Features of Symbolism could be found in the verbal inscriptions in his music instructing the musicians how to perform the pieces, very much in the vein of late Scriabin and Prokofiev. Stylistic traits which could be identified with Futurism and Cubo-Futurism include harsh, dissonant textural sonorities, a certain static quality of the modernist harmonies created by the symmetrical scales and, most notably, lengthy static textural blocks which tend to be replaced with different types of textural blocks. This results in a “geometric” type of quality of form, which corresponds greatly to the innovations in the abstract visual art created at the same time in Europe and Russia. It is especially surprising how the composer was able to incorporate into his music simultaneous manifestations of romantic and anti-romantic tendencies in the same sections of musical compositions, the latter existing parallel to the former, yet not connecting with them. The composer’s three piano sonatas combine romantic instrumental textures and passionate emotional language with an anti-romantic sound world, manifested in sound, harsh, dissonant sonorities, percussive pianistic sound effects and a calculated architectural rendition of form. The vocal compositions set to folk tales and historical texts combine Romantic expression with a theatrical type of depiction of external events and, likewise, anti-romantic approaches to form and texture. The art songs, as a rule, tend to demonstrate solely romantic traits, almost entirely devoid of anti-romantic ones.

The Russian Symbolist movement is an offshoot of 19th century Romanticism, which differs greatly from the French Symbolist movement. At the core of both the Russian and French Symbolist movements is a renunciation of the realist aesthetics and an aspiration towards the domain of the lofty, otherworldly, remote and mysterious. The Symbolist aesthetics applies symbols as representation of the metaphysical, celestial realities, which ordinary everyday human language is incapable of expressing. Among the chief proponents of Russian Symbolism are poets Alexander Blok, Andrei Bely, Vyacheslav Ivanov, Konstantin Balmont, Zinnaida Gippius and Feodor Sologub.

The Russian Symbolist movement expressed itself in music in a much more indirect manner. It involved a continuation of Romantic tendencies with added modernist features, frequently innovative harmonies combined with a Romantic instrumental texture. Other traits of this movement in music included vocal settings of poetry by Symbolist poets as well as compositions of programmatic type, pertaining to literary works by Symbolist authors. According to Tamara Levaya, composers representing the Symbolist trends in music, frequently turned to more conventional poetry of the 18th and 19th century and expressed them in more indirect, vague and mystical expressive means, suggesting a more multi-layered semantics.

Two great early 20th century Russian poets, Alexander Blok and Andrei Bely, were the greatest contributors to the Symbolist aesthetics. Inspired by the Russian late 19th century philosopher Vladimir Solovyov, who developed ideas of Sophia, the Divine Wisdom in his poems and philosophical writings, both Blok and Bely claimed to have visions of “the Beautiful Lady,” a feminine divinity whom they both had visions of in the year 1900, three years prior to their actual meeting in person. This feminine divinity, bearing obvious resemblance to Vladimir Solovyov’s concept of Sophia the Divine Wisdom, was supposed to have brought the beginning of a new era of spirituality into the world. As a result, Blok’s early poems, written during the years 1900–1904,

many of which were published in a volume of poetry titled “Poems about the beautiful Lady,” frequently include exalted hymns of praise to this divine femininity. Some of these poems actually sound like religious hymns and have an almost ecstatic tone to them; others have the appearance of love poems to a woman, albeit slightly more exalted than usual. As the years passed, Blok’s depiction of the feminine aspect in his poems gradually becomes less celestial and more earthly, albeit still elevated and inspired. The poems of his middle period (taking place during the years 1904–1908) portray the Beautiful Lady in more earthly colors. She becomes a noble lady urging a gallant knight going off to battle to be true to her, a queen whose servants and pages are in love with her, a mysterious “unknown lady” seen by a gentleman at a restaurant, Solveig from Ibsen’s *Peer Gynt*, and so forth. Blok’s third and final period of his poetic work, beginning in 1908 and continuing until the end of his life in 1921, is marked by gloomy, tragic moods, a sense of despair and morbidity. His poems frequently describe a woman leaving the poet or being unfaithful to him, or the poet leaving a woman and being unfaithful to her. There are frequent contrasts between the remembrance of a joyful past which had gone forever and the view of a bleak and entirely hopeless present and future. One of his poems, written in 1915, states this contrast between the glorious times of 1900 and the dismal present rather starkly:

Year after year passed,  
And I, blind and silly,  
Dreamed in my sleep only today  
That she has never loved me.

I was only a chance acquaintance for her,  
I was merely a passerby on her way,  
But her childhood ardor died down,  
And she said farewell to her.

Yet my soul is filled with the same love,  
And minutes with others are poisoned for me.  
The same thought and the same song  
I dreamed in my dream today.

Although this emotion also matches the difficult relations Blok had with his wife after a happy early marriage, the main subject of the poem, nonetheless, has been perceived by many people as the symbolic representation of the spiritual entity which according to Blok and Bely, revealed herself to them in 1900 and the years after that, which they thought would bring a new religion into the world, and which after a number of years gradually became lost to them. Equally revealing were the words of Andrei Bely in 1907: “We thought that we would be prophets, but we became merely poets.”

Alexander Scriabin is considered to be the chief proponent of the Russian Symbolist trend in music. Whereas Blok and Bely started their poetic work with exalted spiritual moods which gradually subsided, Scriabin’s case was different. Having started as a Romantic piano composer of a lyrical vein following the tradition of Chopin, he gradually developed an interest in esoteric literature, especially works by Elena Blavatsky, and as the years passed, his ardor only intensified, as did his music, which gradually became more and more ecstatic and, as a result, more complex and chromatically dissonant, until he abandoned diatonic harmony and developed his own harmonic system of pitch organization based on central chord sonorities (such as, for instance, the famous “Prometheus” chord). Similarly to Blok and Bely, Scriabin also perceived the arrival of a new era of spirituality, and considered himself as the Messiah of this new religion. His untimely death cut him off in the middle of his most large-scale project: the composition of the “Prefatory Action” which was supposed to precede the “Mystery” that was meant to bring humanity to a willful annihilation in ecstasy.

Other composers whose styles pertain to the Symbolist aesthetics to various degrees include Rachmaninoff, Adrian Shaposhkinov, Nikolai Tcherepnin, Anatoly Lyadov, Nikolai Roslavetz, Nikolai Obouhov and Ivan Wyschnegradsky. Most of them combined innovative (or relatively innovative) musical techniques with a clearly expressed longing for the sublime, spiritual, otherworldly realms. Whereas Rachmaninoff, Shaposhnikov, Tcherepnin and Lyadov remained relatively traditional in their musical language, Roslavetz, Obouhov and Wyschnegradsky developed modernist experimental musical languages which were chiefly meant to depict the composers’ striving for the spiritual or, at least, to new, nonstandard means of expression.

Among the important features of the Symbolist aesthetics was a semantic expression of vague, ambiguous emotional states, as opposed to clearly defined emotions, such as happiness, sadness, etc. The composers affiliated with the Symbolist trend wrote vocal and instrumental programmatic music on the texts of Symbolist poets. However, an even more marked trait of Symbolist composers, as noted by Russian musicologist Tamara Levaya, was take poems by Classical and Romantic poets with more straightforward messages and to interpret them in a semantically ambiguous manner, adding shades of meaning which the poets did not imply.

Protopopoff's two song cycles "Youth" set to poems by Sergei Lipsky and "Poem of Love" set to poems by Alexander Pushkin stand out in the composer's musical output as being the closest of all to the Symbolist aesthetics, albeit each of the two song cycles interpreting Symbolism in different ways. Both works incorporate the composer's new harmonic style based on Yavorsky's modes. However the song cycle "Youth" presents an example of an early stage of development of the composer's modernist style, having been composed in 1917. The harmonies and the textures resemble middle- and late-period Scriabin, Debussy and Ravel. Unlike most of Protopopoff's modernist-period works, they contain central vertical sonorities, bearing resemblance to altered or extended dominant harmonies, and make extensive usage of the whole-tone scale.

The emotional mood of the three songs is very light and airy, depicting a magical otherworldly domain and the sense of exaltation it arouses. The cycle consists of three poems, "The Day Before," "The Daisies" and "Do you know?". The poems were written by Sergei Lipsky, a poet who has been virtually forgotten in Russia, about whom no information has yet been found. The poems bear a close resemblance to poetry of Blok and other poems of his time. They are filled with subtle emotion and convey a delicate type of symbolism, portraying subject matter which could be interpreted as symbolizing something more remote and subtly elevated by means of referring to everyday situations.

The poem in the first song "The Day Before" describes a young man remembering how he parted in a hurry with the woman he loved the day before and the woman reacting coldly and heartlessly when meeting him the following day. It is especially interesting to follow how the harmony follows the outline of the subject matter of the poem. The song is in a rather simple binary form. The first half of the song starts with Protopopoff's extended chromatic harmony passing beyond diatonic tonal centrality, yet containing mild harmonies, chiefly based on the whole-tone scale and an abundance of passing "accidental" notes falling outside the central harmony. However shortly into the second half of the song, the tonality changes into a much more diatonic-sounding sonority of half-diminished seventh chords, held statically throughout the course of one or several measures and then presented at transpositions up or down major seconds. This parallel usage of complex seventh chord harmonies reminds very much the harmonies of Debussy's music.

The second song, "Daisies," exists not only in the original version for voice and piano, but also in another version for soprano, violin, cello and piano, composed by Protopopoff in 1918. This latter version presents virtually the only chamber work by the composer written during his modernist period. The poem describes a girl plucking the petals of a daisy to determine whether the man she loves returns her love. Hence the phrase repeated numerous times in the poem in the manner of a rondo: "He loves me, he loves me not." This phrase is depicted by a memorable rhythmically defined motive, which first appears in the instrumental texture (in the version for soprano and piano it comes in the piano, whereas in the chamber version it appears in the violin), and then is clearly presented in the soprano part with the words. The poem has a subtly emotional and at the same time impressionistic imagery, describing the girl's busy fingers plucking the daisy's petals in a hurry, the twilight fading, the reeds rustling, the girl's heart beating and cheeks burning. Towards the end of the poem the girl determines that the man does not love her, so tears start appearing in her eyes. The form of the work is a complex rondo form, the musical main theme appearing whenever the words "He loves me, he loves me not" are stated, and the subsidiary themes coming in during the poetic description of the surrounding scenery and the girl's outer manifestation of her intense emotional state. The harmonies, though falling outside the domain of diatonicism, are still relatively "consonant" in their pitch structure, denoting the whole-tone scale and quasi-dominant harmonies. Whereas the main theme or "A section" contains a greater abundance of chromatic passing tone pitches, making the harmony more complex during the statement of the girl's guessing of whether the young man loves her, the subsidiary sections have much more clear and "consonant" dominant-sounding harmonies, extended in a static manner for several measures, during the phrases of description of the surroundings. [See Example 1.]

The poem in third song “Do you know?” is very emotionally expressive and at the same time moderately innovative in its construction. It contains three questions, posed in the beginning, the middle and the end of the poem, resembling the medieval rondo form: “do you know?”, “do you sense?” and “did you understand?”. The poem asks an identified person whether he remembers the meeting with his beloved woman, how her breast expanded, how the bushes rustled, how the trees looked the other way when they kissed. The entire poem is written in the interrogative form, which brings an additional amount of emotional intensity to it. The song has a complex form, essentially ternary in its overall form, but combines this with noticeable refrains which do not coincide with the boundaries of the aforementioned ternary structure, bringing in a parallel structure of rondo. Obviously, the “A section” occurs during the time that the three questions are stated by the soprano. In addition there are more frequent recurrences of a smaller-scale theme in the piano part, which has an emotionally uplifting rhythmically subtle figure in the upper register. The harmony resembles that of the second song and the first half of the first song in its non-diatonic, moderately dissonant quasi-Impressionistic whole-tone scale and quasi-dominant harmony sonorities, joined by the “complementary” pitches falling outside the central harmonies. Thus the semantic connection between the poetry and the music connected by the latter depicting the former in a subtle and versatile way, while the poetry in its descriptions of situations that are comprehensible to us indicates at more subtle, elevated realities falling outside our earthly means of perception.

Example 1. Song cycle “Youth” *Daisies*

Сергей Липецкий *Vivo* 200-208 **Ромашки** Сергей Прокофьев

Voice

Лю - би - ли, не

Piano

*Vivo* *mezzo* *piano*

6

Voice

лю - би - ли... Сколь -

Piano

9

Voice

зат - ле - пост - жи бо - ло - саж - ны - е.

Piano

Protopopoff's last modernist work, the song cycle "Poem of Love" also carries traits of Symbolism. Here, his modernist style clearly begins to dissipate. The harmonies gradually lose their relatedness to Yavorsky's modes and acquire more diatonic qualities, while the textures resemble traditionally 19th century Romantic music. The overall mood is decidedly gloomy and foreboding of future tragedies. Protopopoff adds much more vague and ambiguous semantic content to the emotional expression of the songs than is present on the poems. Thus, similarly to the earlier cycle "Youth," Protopopoff likewise adds a symbolic, metaphoric dimension in the message of his three songs. Here the tendency of the Russian Symbolist composers to add more subtle, ambiguous semantics to poems with more literal clear-cut meanings is demonstrated most effectively. Pushkin's poems, written to women he loved at various stages of his life, convey rather unambiguous literal meanings of affections to the actual girls he knew. However emotionally saturating, the texts of the poems state literally what they mean. Protopopoff, on the other hand, not having had any relationships with women at that time, brought in much more emotionally condensed semantics into the poems, interpreting them in a much more extended manner than Pushkin had intended. Whereas Pushkin's poems all contain very youthful ardor, Protopopoff complements it with very a mature tragic type of reflectivity, inherent to a person of advanced years – although Protopopoff was respectively 35 and 39 years old when he wrote the songs.

The first two poems of the cycle "O Virgin-Rose, I am in Fetters" and "My Days Trudge Slowly Along" were written in 1928. Their semantic message could be interpreted as foreboding of a catastrophe. The third and last poem of the cycle "I had Loved You," written in 1932, could be seen as depicting the aftereffects of the catastrophe, foreseen in the first two songs. Curiously enough, Protopopoff's semantic interpretation of Pushkin's poems brings to mind the symbolism of Blok of the feminine aspect, which was present and exalted in the poet's early-period poems and then tragic, unfaithful and distant in his dismal poems of his third period. The expression Protopopoff brings to the poems by means of his music seems to suggest that the composer was interpreting the women to whom Pushkin addressed his love poems not as earthly women but as symbols of super-human spiritual entities which the poet – and, following him, the composer – were yearning for and languishing due to the tragedy of the impossibility of attaining them. This resembles to a great degree Blok's interpretation of the feminine aspect in his poetry as a representation in images familiar to most people of certain supra-terrestrial realities incomprehensible to ordinary humans.

Pushkin's poems are much simpler and more lucid in their structure and in their semantics than Sergei Lipsky's, the first and third poem containing two verses and the second containing three. As a result, Protopopoff's songs from the "Poem of Love" cycle are simpler in their structures than the songs from the cycle "Youth." The first two songs are in ternary form, with a slightly more complex structure in the first song, where the subsidiary theme from the middle section briefly returns in the middle of the recapitulation, adding a tint of rondo form, and the third song is in a freely interpreted binary form.

The first song, "O Virgin-Rose, I am in Chains" has a plaintive and at the same time enigmatic mood. [See *Example 2.*] The poem addresses a girl, whom Pushkin calls "virgin-rose," states that the poet is "in chains" and likens him to a nightingale, "the feathered king of birds" singing of his affection to a rose and his "life in sweet captivity". The beginning of the song presents an ornamental melody with a slight amount of Asian exoticism. This same melody, first sounding in the upper voice of the piano, is then presented in the voice singing a vocalization. The harmony, though non-diatonic, presents a diffused rendition of harmony based on a symmetrical scale, since a great many "unstable" sonorities are present, and a strong implication of diatonicism, at least in its extended form, is present. The subsidiary theme in the middle section is decidedly more diatonic: it features a major seventh chord with the sixth degree of the scale in the bass and the other three pitches virtually outlining the tonic g-sharp minor triad, while the soprano virtually sings a diatonic melody in the aforementioned tonality. It is in this section that the words about the nightingale are sung by the soprano. The chromatic harmony and the quasi-Asian exotic melodicism returns in the recapitulation section, with just a brief deviation back to the subsidiary theme for a few brief measures in the middle of that section, before finally returning to the primary theme. Obviously, the music is much more gloomy and plaintive than the poem, there is actually very little in it to suggest interpretation of a love poem, while the hints of Eastern melodicism obviously bring in the composer's personal interpretation of the poem, his suggestion that the situation described in the poem could have happened in the Middle East or Central Asia.

Example 2. Song cycle “Poem of Love”. *O Virgin-Rose, I am in Chains*

О дева роза, я в оковах

Сергей Прокофьев

The musical score is presented in three systems. The first system shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The second system includes the Russian lyrics "с нежной лаской" and the German translation "mit zarter Liebkaosung". The third system continues the vocal and piano parts. The score includes dynamic markings such as *p*, *pp*, and *mf*, and a tempo marking of quarter note = 96.

The second song “My Days Trudge Slowly Along” [See Example 3.] is a setting of a poem written by Pushkin in 1816, when the poet was only 17 years old! The poem, though possessing a steady regular rhythm, is written in an exaggeratedly melodramatic and hyper-emotional manner, virtually describing a powerful adolescent infatuation. Especially pungent are the lines “Each moment in my languid heart multiplies all the woes of an unhappy love,” “I shed tears, my tears are a consolation” and, especially the final lines at the end of the poem: “My love’s torment is dear to me. Though I die, I shall die loving.” However the music, though expressing the emotional state of anguish in the poem, fails to portray amorous feelings of an adolescent, suggesting to a greater degree morbid forebodings of a person in ripe age. The straight-ahead ternary form of the music roughly matches the three-verse structure of the poem. The primary thematic material outlines major seventh chords with the bass on the sixth degree of the scale in A minor, alternating each measure with its transposition up a tritone – d-sharp minor, while the vocal line presents irregular ascending and descending motion in small intervals of seconds and thirds, suggesting a turbulent emotional state. It is the subsidiary thematic material in the middle section which presents pungently dissonant sonorities, with wider intervallic leaps in the vocal line, intensifying the morbid agitated mood. In the recapitulation the primary material returns in a more subdued mood, then gradually intensifies to a loud dramatic ending, denoting the emotionally inflated mood of the words: “Though I die, I shall die loving.”

Example 3. Song cycle “Poem of Love”. *My Days Trudge Slowly Along*

Медлительно влекутся дни мои

Сергей Прокофьев

The third song “I had Loved You” was written three and a half years after the other two – in January 1932. [See Example 4.] The poem, being a particularly famous one in Russian literature, expresses the poet’s parting with a woman he loved and memories of his past love for her. This is a rough translation:

I had loved you. Maybe my love  
has still not fully abated in my soul,  
but let it not disturb you any longer.  
I do not wish to sadden you with anything.

I had loved you languidly and hopelessly,  
languishing either with reticence or with jealousy.  
I had loved you so sincerely and gently,  
as may God let you be loved so by another.

Since the poem has always been extremely well-known in Russia, it has always presented a challenge for a composer who wanted to set to music to avoid a hackneyed interpretation. In the case of Protopopoff, his semantic interpretation of it in his song, once again, surpasses the content of the poem’s meaning. The time of its composition presents an important key to understanding its emotional content. It was composed after the crackdown on contemporary art by the Soviet government, as was enforced in December 1931. It is especially valid to assume that Protopopoff’s interpretation of this poem of parting mirrors the composer’s own farewell to his modernist style in which he wrote for fifteen years, to the “Yavorsky modes” which were the basis of his harmonic style, of and to the era of the Silver Age of Russian culture to which he pertained. This becomes especially clear if one examines the song in greater detail.

The plaintive, melancholy mood of the song, continuing the line of the previous two songs, has a much more resigned air. The harmonic content of the song is especially revealing. It shows Protopopoff’s modernist harmony based on the “Yavorsky modes” in simultaneous counterpoint with diatonic minor harmony, the latter determining the diatonic melody in the soprano line. The “Yavorsky mode” harmonies, featuring the intervals of tritones, major sevenths and minor ninths, however, are presented in a “textbook” demonstrative



manner, suggesting that they no longer present the predominating aspect of the harmony, but coexist with the diatonic harmonies. Especially revealing is the “quotation” of the complex progression of a “Yavorsky mode” – the perfect fifth passing through a double-diminished fifth and resolving into a minor third) – at the words “disturb.” This presents a blunt testimony of the song being a farewell to Protopopoff’s own modernist harmony and to its Yavorsky mode foundations! In the second half of the song, its sorrowful mood is enhanced by the downward stepwise motion in minor seconds in the bass, presenting what was called the “catabasis” and used by Baroque composers to depict tragedy and death. One of the most famous usages of this progression was in the “Crucifixus” from J.S. Bach’s “Mass in B Minor.” An emotionally intense culmination in of a high point in the soprano line is achieved on the words “sincerely and gently” with a smaller and calmer one appearing on the word “God” before the music subsides into a final F major ending.

Thus, Protopopoff was able to develop the Symbolist trend in his music in two totally different ways – in his earliest modernist work, the song cycle “Youth” and in his final modernist work, the song cycle “Poem of Love.” Following the Symbolist tendencies, he was successful in expressing in a symbolic manner the poetic intentions of the two poets whose texts he set to music – Sergei Lipsky and Alexander Pushkin. In the case of Lipsky, the poet’s intentions were to bring in a Symbolist metaphor for realities familiar to us, and to see them as representations of phenomena unfathomable by our earthly perceptions, and Protopopoff enhanced this hidden symbolism by means of the expressive qualities of his music. In the case of Pushkin, one of the most famous and most classic Russian poets, the composer was able to use the poems which, expressive as they were, clearly aimed at describing concrete situations in the poet’s life, and expanded their semantics by bringing in hidden, complementary, ambiguous meanings which were clearly absent in the poet’s conception, but which worked perfectly well in the contexts of the expressivity of the songs. Most importantly, in both cases he was able to come up with satisfactory artistic results and compose songs which merit to be known better and to be performed more often.

**Example 4.** Song cycle “Poem of Love”. *I had Loved You*

The image displays a musical score for the song cycle "Poem of Love" (Я вас любил) by Protopopoff, set to lyrics by Alexander Pushkin. The score is presented in five systems, each containing a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 72. The score includes various musical notations such as dynamics (p, f), articulation (accents), and phrasing slurs. The lyrics are in Russian and are written below the vocal line. The score concludes with a final F major ending.

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## Santrauka

**Rusiško simbolizmo estetika S. Protopopovo vokaliniuose cikluose „Jaunystė“ ir „Meilės poema“**

S. Protopopovas (1893–1954) – rusų kompozitorius, vienas iš trečiojo dešimtmečio modernistų, tarp kurių buvo ir N. Roslavecas, A. Mosolovas, A. Lourie bei G. Popovas. XX a. antrą ir trečią dešimtmetį visų šių kompozitorių kūryboje pasireiškė novatoriški stiliai. Protopopovo kūryboje modernistinis laikotarpis truko nuo 1917 iki 1932 m. Pirmasis jo modernistinis kūrinys – dainų ciklas „Jaunystė“ pagal S. Lipskio tekstus – parašytas 1917 m., o paskutinis – „Meilės poema“ pagal A. Puškino eilėraščius – sukurtas 1928–1932 m. Abiejuose cikluose išryškėjo pirmo dešimtmečio rusų simbolizmo estetikos bruožai.

Rusų simbolistų judėjimas – XIX a. romantizmo atšaka – labai skyrėsi nuo prancūzų simbolistų judėjimo. Ir rusų, ir prancūzų simbolizmo pagrindas – realizmo estetikos atsisakymas ir polinkis į visa, kas didinga, kilnu, tolima ir paslaptinga. Simbolizmo estetika pasitelkė simbolius perteikti metafiziniais ir dangiškiems vaizdiniais, kurių kasdienė kalba negali išreikšti. Pagrindiniai rusų simbolizmo atstovai buvo A. Blokas, A. Belyj, V. Ivanovas, K. Balmontas, Z. Gippius ir F. Sologubas.

Muzikoje rusų simbolizmui būdingas romantizmo tendencijų tęstinumas įnešė modernistinių bruožų, o neretai ir novatoriškų harmonijų, susipynusių su romantizmui būdinga instrumentine faktūra. Kita simbolizmo išraiška muzikoje buvo vokaliniai kūriniai pagal poetų simbolistų eilėraščius ir programinio pobūdžio kompozicijos, susijusios su poetų simbolistų kūryba. Pasak T. Levajos, simbolizmo kryptčiai atstovaujantys kompozitoriai linko prie įprastesnės XVIII–XIX a. poezijos ir jai perteikti naudojo perkeltines

ir daugiaprasmes išraiškos priemonės, suteikiančias semantikai dar didesnio daugiasluoksniškumo.

Pagrindinis rusų simbolizmo atstovas muzikoje buvo A. Skriabinas. Tarp kitų kompozitorių, kurių kūrybos stiliai susiję su šia estetika, paminėtini S. Rachmaninovas, A. Šapošnikovas, N. Čerepninas, A. Liadovas, N. Roslavecas, N. Obuchovas ir I. Vyšnegradskis.

Modernistinei S. Protopopovo muzikai būdingos kelios skirtingos ankstyvojo XX a. stilistinės tendencijos, tarp jų simbolizmas, futurizmas, kubofuturizmas ir konstruktyvizmas – visos išryškėjusios rusų mene pirmaisiais trimis XX a. dešimtmečiais. Jo stilius išsiskiria novatoriška harmonine kalba, kuria jis kuria naudodamas savo mokytojo muzikologo B. Javorskio dermių teoriją ir iš jo dermių išgaunamus simetrinius garsaeilius. Naujos šių rusų kompozitorių harmoninės sistemos buvo simbolistinės estetikos išraiška. Trijose fortepijoninėse sonatose Protopopovas derino romantinę instrumentinę faktūrą ir aistringą muzikinę kalbą su antiromantiniu skambesiu, pasireiškiančiu garsiais, aštriais, disonansiniais sąskambiais, perkusiniais pianistiniais efektais ir gerai apskaičiuota architektūrine forma. Jo vokaliniuose kūriniuose pagal liaudies pasakas ir istorinius tekstus jungiama romantinė išraiška, įvykių atpasakojimo teatrališkumas ir, kaip ir sonatose, antiromantinis formos ir faktūros traktavimas.

Dainų ciklai „Jaunystė“ pagal S. Lipskio ir „Meilės poema“ pagal A. Puškino eiles iš viso kompozitoriaus kūrybinio palikimo išsiskiria tuo, kad labiausiai priartėja prie simbolizmo estetikos, nors kiekviename cikle ji pasireiškia skirtingai. Abu veikalai atspindi naują kompozitoriaus harmoninės kalbos stilių, pagrįstą Javorskio dermėmis. Cikle „Jaunystė“, kuris yra kompozitoriaus modernistinio stiliaus ankstyvojo periodo pavyzdys, harmonija ir faktūra primena vidurinę ir vėlyvąją A. Skriabino, C. Debussy ir M. Ravelio kūrybą. Emocinė visų trijų dainų nuotaika lengva ir nerūpestinga, vaizduoja nuostabų anapusinį pasaulį ir perteikia dvasinio pakilimo jausmus.

Paskutinis S. Protopopovo modernistinis kūrinys – dainų ciklas „Meilės poema“ – taip pat turi simbolizmo bruožų. Tačiau jame modernistinis stilius jau aiškiai prablėšęs. Harmonija praranda sąsajas su Javorskio dermėmis ir įgauna daugiau diatoninių savybių, o faktūra primena tradicinę XIX a. romantinę muziką. Vyraujanti nuotaika niūri ir grėsminga. Emocinei dainų išraiškai kompozitorius suteikė dar daugiau miglotumo ir daugiaprasmių semantinio turinio, nei yra pačiuose eilėraščiuose, o dainų prasmei pridėjo simboliškumo ir metaforiškumo.

Pirmi du ciklo eilėraščiai – „O rože nekaltoji, supančiotas esu“ ir „Mano dienos lėtai slenka“ – sukurti 1928 m. Jų semantinė prasmė gali būti interpretuojama kaip baisios nelaimės nuojauta. Trečias ir paskutinis ciklo eilėraštis „Aš tave mylėjau“, parašytas 1932 m., gali būti suprantamas kaip nelaimės, pranašaujamos pirmose dviejose dainose, pasekmių pavaizdavimas. Įdomu tai, kad jo sukūrimo laikas sutapo su cenzūros įsigalėjimu ir modernizmo mene, literatūroje ir muzikoje uždraudimu, kuris Tarybų Sąjungoje truko nuo 1928 iki 1932 m. Tai, kas A. Puškinui reiškė atsisveikinimą su mylima moterimi, S. Protopopovui tapo atsisveikinimu su modernistiniu stiliumi, su sidabro amžiumi Rusijos kultūroje, o ypač su Javorskio dermėmis, kuriomis penkiolika metų rėmėsi jo harmoninė kalba.