

# STYLISTIC DIRECTIONS THAT INFLUENCED THE ARRIVAL OF THE SYMBOLIC SPIRIT IN SOLO SONGS OF ALBANIAN COMPOSERS DURING THE YEARS 1944-1991

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## СТИЛИСТИЧНИ НАСОКИ, ОКАЗАЛИ ВЛИЯНИЕ НА СИМВОЛИСТИЧНИЯ ДУХ В СОЛОВИТЕ ПЕСНИ ОТ АЛБАНСКИ КОМПОЗИТОРИ В ПЕРИОДА 1944-1991

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**Abstract:** Symbolism in solo songs of Albanian Composers written in the second half of the twentieth century. My thesis presents a research on symbolism in the solo songs by Albanian composers written in the second half of the 20th century. The main aim of this research is to break down symbolism and some other aesthetic elements into solo songs form of the Albanian musical artistic community that was living and creating at a time of doubts and censorship, the era of totalitarian monist undemocratic communist ideology. Symbolism as a spirit in Albanian music art has been little elaborated, but there are no publications or books that elaborate on symbolism in musical art in general, especially research on solo songs. This thesis requires sensitivity of approach, knowing the reason for the emergence of symbolism in the works of these composers. The symbolism in Albanian literature and professional

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music in the second half of the 20th century reflected the spirit of the Albanian artist. This is the main reason why I decided to do a study in this field. Another reason for my determination on this topic is my professional-concert journey which is concentrated on the solo songs of the Albanian composers. From the research in this area, we can conclude that symbolism in Albanian professional music of the second half of the 20th century has bold harmonic hues, similar to developed European and world countries, but has its characteristic or distinctive qualities. Another characteristic that makes the difference in the creativity of this period of Albanian music is the embodiment of the literary style of symbolism.

**Keywords:** Symbolism, solo songs, Albanian composers, ideology, communist.

**Резюме:** Дисертационният ми труд, част от който е настоящият текст, представя изследване на символизма в соловите песни на албански композитори, написани през втората половина на XX век. Основната цел на това изследване е да обособи символизма и някои други естетически елементи в соловата песенна форма на албанската музикална художествена общност, която живее и твори във време, изпълнено с рискове и цензура, в епохата на тоталитарната монистична недемократична комунистическа идеология. Символизмът като идеен дух в албанското музикално изкуство е слабо разработен, няма публикации или книги, които да разглеждат символизма в музикалното изкуство като цяло, а още по-малко – изследвания върху соловите песни. Такова изследване изисква деликатност на подхода, както и информираност за причината за появата на символизма в творчеството на тези композитори. Символизмът в албанската литература и професионална музика през втората половина на XX век отразява духа на албанския творец. Това е основната причина, поради която реших да направя изследване в тази област. Друга причина за ориентацията ми към тази тема е професионално-концертният ми път, който е съсредоточен върху соловите песни на албанските композитори. От проучванията в тази област ста-

ва ясно, че символизмът в албанската професионална музика от втората половина на XX век има смели хармонични нюанси, подобно на музиката в развитите европейски и световни страни, но има и свои характерни или отличителни качества. Друга особеност, която откроява разликата в творчеството на албанската музика от този период, е претворяването на литературния стил на символизма.

**Ключови думи:** Символизъм, солови песни, албански композитори, идеология, комунистически.

One of the main musical stylistic directions that influenced the coming of the symbolic spirit is undoubtedly the impressionist style. Symbolism was born as a reaction to the naturalism of the impressionist current, and besides symbolism impressionism is always mentioned as a precursor phenomenon.

The word 'impressionism' is derived from the French word 'impression'. It is a philosophical and aesthetic term, borrowed from the French painting of Claude Monet – Impression, Sunrise. Impressionist-style musical works are usually written in smaller musical forms (pianist miniatures and solo songs). One of the typical forms of symbolic spirit is precisely the solo song, which reflects the singularity of the sound and the introspective rather than the pompous and obvious interpretation.

If we refer to the master of sound Claude Debussy, who emphasized instrumental color and the color of the instrument tones, we can easily understand the similarity of the stylistic approach of impressionism and symbolism. Debussy wrote in an article of *La revue blanche* in 1902, music should not be confined to producing Nature more or less exactly, but rather to producing the mysterious correspondences which link Nature with Imagination which is quoted in the book *Mallarme: The Poet and His Circle*” (Rosemary Lloyd, Coronell University Press, 1999, p. 154)

Debussy's creative individuality influenced a wide range of composers who created in the symbolistic spirit, relying on many segments that characterize creative individuality.

A musical criticism expressed by the Italian press for Albanian

composer Tish Daija, whose work we will analyze, sends us to the parallel lines of the symbolic and impressionistic spirit.

Marash Hajati (1934-2013) in the book „Tish Daija” (2005) mentions an article in the newspaper *Il Giornale* (21.1.1990) where he says: „We can only praise the seriousness, the taste, the commitment that opens the right key to symbolic and gestural interpretation...”

The symbolic image had reached the spectator, the music critic had unraveled every compositional subtlety, and the performer’s stage interaction in this sense of symbolic spirit and its identification was also very important.

Marash Hajati (1934-2013) in the book „Tish Daija” (2005) mentions an article in the newspaper *Il Giornale* (21.1.1990) where he says: „I would call Tish a huge personality who transmitted music within his DNA”.

One of the greatest figures in Greek musicology, but also of European level researcher Jorgo Leocakos, not only highly appreciates the composer Tish Daija’s musical creativity but also analyzes his stylistic aspect. „Tish remained particularly open to the experiences he received from the outside world with astonishing aristocratic grandeur. In Vienna in 1985, when he went for treatment, entered in the customs, and traditions and as much as he could into the music of Schoenberg, Berg and Webern, strictly forbidden at that time in Albania. Tish Daija – the coryphaeus of Albanian music.” (Marash Hajati, „Tish Daija”, Publisher: Erik botime, Tiranë, 2005, p.237).

We have again an element that strikes us in the footsteps of the impressionist style where the creative individuality as Debussy expressed was in his inner landscape, even to Tish Daija, this landscape of emotions was in every cell of his body, and this creative individuality in the symbolic spectrum is a multidimensional art.

Debussy has given music unique examples of fusing different art elements. In addition to being an impressionistic musical language, reflecting expressions of impressions experienced by various natural phenomena, it also represents the inner world of the artist’s soul, as well as the symbolism that results from an internal spiritual revolt against established political circumstances that made it impossible the artist has freedom of expression, originates in the inner emotional experience.

Against the broad spectrum of the impressionist ideal that seeks emotional depth in art, in the semantic instinct we have a symbolic color combination.

Impressionist composer Debussy emphatically exhibits a symbolic approach to the application of silence to musical works, and to the symbolic breakdown this coincides with Mallarme's works, which uses pauses and empty spaces in his poems. Many symbolists share the idea that art must focus on the tones of musical sounds because music was thought to be the most emotionally deporting aesthetic medium.

While in impressionist inspiration we have the use of some musical expressive tools, such as: pentatonic scale, full tone scale, rich harmonies, special instrumental color combinations, melody of far-exotic landscapes, in symbolic inspiration is to find the musical and figurative language.

Symbolists find new events in the harmony of sounds, in word order and in rank, in the richness of rhyme and in the prosperity of different rhythms. They revive old patterns and forms such as folk verses, old romances, primitive cult poems, cries and lullabies, while French impressionism emerges as the first formalist current in bourgeois art, which denies the social content and idealization of art and literature, breaks away from sound national and folk traditions and, instead of deeply reflecting the world and real life, it aims primarily to present directly subjective and instantaneous impressions, subtler sensations, personal experiences and illusions of the artist or writer.

The poetic language of the symbolists also begins on a new path. Everyday language, just like themes, has no place here. Bold metaphors, great freedom in sentence construction and ordering, and unusual poetic vocabulary are key features of the symbolist's language. The most important source of ideas and images for symbolists is also picturesque romanticism with its unusual plots. An important influence in shaping this trend is German romanticism, attracting symbolistic artists with its mystical tales.

We have as an example Richard Wagner's „The cycle of the rings” consisting of „Rheingold” (Rhine's gold) up to the *Götterdämmerung* (Twilight of the gods) is filled with symbolism in the form of leitmotifs

each phrase symbolizes a musical leitmotif, but it is worth analyzing the musical symbolism that Wagner uses in these works.

His ideal was to create a complete synthesis of the various arts and especially the full connection between poetry, drama and music, and opera was exactly the form that would link the different arts to the synthesis. Here we have a point in common with the symbolism that puts it at the forefront the dramatic action, then the music as a reinforcing means of verse comprehension. He also took subjects of content from German legend and mythology. (Engjell Berisha, „Historia e muzikës”, Publisher: Libri shkollor, Prishtinë, 1999, p.114).

The opera „Tristian and Isolda” in which the author finds the symbolism of love analogous to his love, where clearly see his bold, harmonious movements in rich chromatics. In the Richard Wagner’s operas require a great deal of concentration and skill breaking down into the philosophical symbolism of a series of leitmotifs that permeate their contents. In the Symbolic Spirit we can say that the expressionist style with lighter colors was also influenced by merging them into the symbolic nature.

The ‘romantic’ basis of impressionism lies in the intent that only extra-musical inspirations of a particular kind of visualization and programming can transform everything into a picture and that the impression is made to sound. Impressionism is primarily a style of figurative art, while music mixes the elements of tonal painting with the description of the experiences presented in the painting. The main factor of the different paintings and atmospheres reflected through the music is the harmony; the emphasis is on the coloristic value of the tone.

The melodic element in the music of impressionism has become short phrases and motifs, so the main focus of the composer is not on the form of music, as it was on classicism and romanticism, but on sound. Instruments that create sound colors that leave unusual musical impressions present impressionism. The impressionist style is almost entirely related to a great creator; with Claude Debussy, whose work develops and is modeled on style and culminates.

Some Albanian composers of the second half of the twentieth century influenced the textual content frames the art of nineteenth-

century, where folk creativity and secular art overwhelmingly dominated the sacred art. Not to be outdone is the direction of romanticism which had some features that matched the symbolistic spirit, such as small forms – miniature pianos, solo songs, mostly as incomplete songs.

The piano is the favorite instrument of the romantics as it is in the symbolic spirit, where solo songs are accompanied by this instrument. One of the basic features of romantic art is the predominance of emotions, the personal freedom of the artist, and this symbolistic individualism was intended to be applied by symbolic artists in their works.

The romantic harmony was rich in bold modulations, the lyrical tone observed in the solo songs of this period coinciding with the symbolistic lyricism of the twentieth century.

Obviously there are many distinctive features between these broad conceptual directions. Romanticism focused on irrationality, strong subjectivism and rich imagination and dreaming, while symbolism sought to reflect the depth of reality using stylistic figures. But in the context of relying on traditional melody we have a common and very important point in cultivating and upholding national values.

In describing the main stylistic features of the Albanian composers of the second half of the twentieth century made by musicologist Spiro Shetuni, the creative individuality is said to have been formed based on traditional melodic-modal subject matter, traditional counterpoint, and traditional harmony.

„Çesk Zadeja has as the main individual feature of his music, the proud epics; Tish Daija – enthusiastic lyric; Nikola Zoraqi – dramatic lyric; Tonin Harapi tone the lyrical, often anthem lyric; Kozma Lara-dramatic lyric; Simon John – the dramatic epic; Feim Ibrahim – the heroic epic; Limoz Dizdari – the passionate broad lyric; Shpëtim Kushta – anthem epics; Thoma Gaqi – The Deep Dramatic Epic”. (Spiro Shetuni, „Muzika profesioniste shqiptare-dukuri e shekullit XX”, 2014, p. 5)

Another stylistic direction that influenced the symbolist spirit in the compositional aspect is expressionism, which departs from the principles of traditional aesthetics and previous rules for tonality, so that chords, dissonance, and consonance have a completely new radical treatment and have nothing to do with the logic of earlier eras. This is the

period of the cult of dissonance and atonal music. This new spirit was first used by Arnold Schönberg.

Feim Ibrahimimi, who was a student of Tish Daija in the field of composition, was a composer who secretly experimented with atonality as a compositional structure of the 20th century, challenging himself to dodecaphonic and avant-garde dimensions, phenomena banned in the communist system. His works of this stylistic material emerged entirely after 1991. He invited to Albania popular avant-garde figures such as Gerhard Stabler, who would be inspired by Albanian folk music, will use its elements in his creativity.

With this research we have managed to decipher or decompose the figure of symbolism in the solo songs of Albanian composers of a certain period of time that mainly includes the year of communism in Albania. Through the chain of research methodology, comparative methodology and analytical methodology that includes micro and macro structural analysis of the works as a whole, we have achieved the desired results. This result also refers to a detailed research of the semantic language which is used in the verses of solo songs. The semantic language intertwined with the symbolism which refers to the literary and musical art have characterized the form of the solo song of the Albanian composers of the second half of the twentieth century.

In the research methodology which in our case analyzes the causes and consequences of a certain phenomenon we have come to conclusion that symbolism as a stylistic figure it came not only as a result of the ideology of socialist realism of communism but also as a result of aesthetic taste and creative individuality. Albanian composers who are part of this study have linked the creative element of their individuality colored with the originality of the melorhythmic characteristics of their origin. Through other stylistic directions which are the forerunners of the symbolic spirit, a natural stylistic approach of symbolism has been achieved.



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