



## VOCAL - CHAMBER CREATIONS BY THE COMPOSERS OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA ON THE CONFLUENCE OF THE 20th-21st CENTURIES

*CREAȚIILE VOCALE DE CAMERĂ ALE COMPOZITORILOR  
DIN REPUBLICA MOLDOVA LA CONFLUENȚA SEC. XX-XXI*

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**Rezumat:** În articol se propune o caracterizare generală a creațiilor vocale de cameră ale compozitorilor din Republica Moldova la hotarul dintre secolele XX-XXI. Sunt enunțate premisele istorico-sociale, care au adus la o dezvoltare vertiginoasă a muzicii camerale, unde se reflectă fenomenele procesului de tranziție: revizuirea valorilor și autoidentificării naționale. Autorul face o scurtă analiză a romanțelor și ciclurilor de romanțe, scrise de compozitorii autohtoni, care au contribuit la dezvoltarea muzicii de cameră în perioada enunțată. În centrul atenției sunt creațiile vocale de cameră ale lui V. Rotaru, Z. Tkaci, T. Zgureanu, B. Dubosarschi, O. Negruță, cât și a compozitorilor din generația mai tânără: E. Mamoț, G. Ciobanu G. Mustea. Autorul de asemenea a manifestat interes și pentru creațiile vocale de cameră a celor mai tineri și perspectivi autori: S. Pislari, O. Palymski, A. Bojoncă etc.

**Cuvinte-cheie:** muzică vocală de cameră, creații vocale de cameră, cicluri vocale, text poetic, compozitori, romanță, poezie.

The creativity of the *composers* of the Republic of Moldova on the border of the 20th-21st centuries identifies a number of important tendencies, characteristic of modern intellectual culture. According to I. Ciobanu-Suhomlin, the range of compositional creativity /.../ differs by unprecedented diversity. New names appear, the style and theme of the *composer's* works are updated significantly, the priorities of the musical genres are revised, new means of expression are developed, but those found previously fit into a modern musical context" [1, p.13]. Really, the border of the 20th-21st centuries represents a new stage in the development of national music. The works composed in this period differ by the pluralism of style interpretation. The genre system of composing music is multifaceted and vo-

lumatic, including not only the traditional genres of the "academic" areas, but also a variety of mass and everyday music as well as music of religious-cult destination. The musical language is enriched and renewed, the composition techniques is transformed.

To a considerable extent this music phenomenon is associated with objective historical realities: socio-cultural changes, transformation of values. Not aiming at the analysis of causal relationships in the changes that have occurred, we state an obvious fact: rethinking the ideological and aesthetic basis of their work, many *composers* move from the genre scale of symphonic and theatre music, preferring the *chamber* area.

At this time many native *composers* call for the creation of *chamber-vocal works*. The musicians of older

generation continue to create *romances* and *vocal cycles*, and these musicians are especially those who firmly occupied a worthy place in the musical history of the Republic of Moldova: Z. Tkaci, V. Rotaru, T. Zgureanu, E. Doga, O. Negruța, G. Neaga, B. Dubosarschi. More and more insistently is felt the influence of the middle generation in the *chamber - vocal* genres: G. Mustea, G. Ciobanu, E. Mamot, M. Stârcea, M. Afanasiev. There appear names of young promising *composers*: S. Pîslari, A. Bojoncă, O. Palymski, I.Iakimciuc and others.

*Poetical texts* for the *chamber - vocal works* are borrowed by the native *composers*, from creations of different poets. The importance of the *poetry* of the classics of the national literature is traditionally great. Moldovan authors show particular attention to the lyrics and even to the prose of M. Eminescu. In this regard we could point *romances* and cycles of *romances* by E. Doga, B. Dubosarschi, G. Neaga, V. Rotaru, D. Kițenco, T. Zgureanu, V. Burlea, Z. Tkaci and of some other *composers*.

Special place among them belongs to the *chamber - vocal works* by T. Zgureanu. The *composer* himself characterizes his attitude toward the last of the romantic poets of the 19th century: „M. Eminescu is an interminable source of inspiration for *composers*, artists and theatergoers /.../ In my creations I am often inspired by his *poetry*, beginning with his *romances*...”[2, p.9]. The poems of the national classics formed the basis of two early vocal miniatures by T. Zgureanu – *The Desire (Dorința)* and *The Lake (Lacul)*, created in 1983. Later, in 2005, the *composer* wrote the cycle *Appear to Give Light (Apari să dai*

*lumina)* of four *romances* on poems by M. Eminescu, dedicated to the singer I. Cvasniuc.

M. Eminescu's *poetry* was also close to another Moldovan *composer*, the world-famous romantic – E. Doga. At this bases of his *chamber - vocal cycle* from 1985 *Your Dealy Loved eye (Ochiul tău iubit)* there were poems, written by the poet in different periods of his life. The vocal cycle consists of six *romances*, and represents the evolution of a feeling of love from the first romantic dreams, to the sad and nostalgic memories of unfulfilled dreams.

The lyrics of the great national classic also became a source of inspiration for the *composers* of the younger generation. Two *romances* on the poems by M. Eminescu *The Desire (Dorința)* and *Poem-ballad (Poemul-baladă)* - were written by A. Bojoncă. S. Pîslari appealed to the poet's creation in the romance *If Years Could Pass (De-or trece anii)*. O. Palymskii created a *chamber-vocal cycle* on the basis of 6 sonnets by M. Eminescu<sup>1</sup>. An original method of interpretation of M. Eminescu's artistic heritage was found by G. Ciobanu. In his *chamber -vocal composition* *May be in Autumn (Poate la toamnă)*, the *composer* used passages from M. Eminescu's letters which allowed him to show clearly the entire depth of the conflict between the poet's personality and the world.

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<sup>1</sup> What are notable in this composition are the performing personnel: the voice, flute and fortepiano, the compose assigns a specific dramatic function to each of them: the vocal party takes the role of the author of the narration, the flute is identified with a distant star, and the fortepiano comments the happenings.

Besides the literary heritage of M. Eminescu, native *composers* use as poetic basis for their *chamber-vocal* works the *poetry* by V. Alecsandri, V. Micle, E. Bucov, G. Bacovia, B.P. Haşdeu, L. Codreanca examples of modern poet's work.

At the same time it should be mentioned that on the border of the 20th-21st centuries the *composers* from the Republic of Moldova give considerable and increased attention to the *poetry* of other nationalities. B. Dubosarschi draws his inspiration from classical Russian literature, being the author of epigrams cycle on poems by A. Pushkin. V. Beleaev created a vocal cycle based on the *poetry* by A. Pushkin. O. Negruţa applied to the *poetry* by E. Asadov and A. Pushkin. M. Stîrcea wrote *The Vocal Cycle (Ciclul Vocal)* on the *poetry* of A. Blok. V. Slivinskii wrote *Nice fellow travelers (Приятные попутчику)* on the *poetry* of M. Tsvetaeva. Poems by B. Akhmadulina formed the basis of the triptych of *Romeo and Juliette*, created by G. Kuzmina.

Z. Tkaci used texts in Hebrew and Yiddish in her works. The result of this creative collaboration with the poem M. Lemster became the triptych *The History of the Walking Stick (История дорожного посоха)* for baritone and piano. Z. Tkaci wrote two *vocal cycles: His Good Name (Имя доброе свое)* and *Tea with the Stars (Чай со звездами)*.

An exponential characteristic of *chamber* and *vocal* works of national *composers* in the recent decades is the expansion of the poetic palette to the Far East, which is rich in its diversity. Thus, a *vocal cycle* for baritone and piano, based on works by Chinese poets of the Middle Ages, was created

by V. Beleaev. In the *vocal cycle The Ninth Moon (A noua lună în cer)* for mezzo-soprano, English horn, percussion and *Katay Tayama Songs* for mezzo soprano, English horn and percussion, G. Ciobanu refers to fragments of classical Chinese and Japanese *poetry*. Thus, the *composer* uses the text in the Chinese and Japanese languages, transforming their phonic paint into a special color timbre.

Describing the poetic basis of *romances* and *vocal cycles* of national *composers* from the period we are interested in, we should note another interesting fact. Sometimes is important for *composers* that the author of the lyrics should be a poetess. This refers to Z. Tkaci and V. Rotaru. So, V. Rotaru often said, that the poems by the poetess seemed to him more sincere and more lyrical. The *composer* wrote *romances* to the verses by L. Codreanca, T. Braga, L. Svetlaia, N. Pesetscaia. Z. Tkaci confidently believed that women's *poetry* was close to her own aesthetics. For the creation of the cycles *I Do Not Want to Make Plans Ahead (Я не хочу загадывать вперед)* and *Extinct Fires (Потухшие костры)*, Z. Tkaci was inspired from the collection of *poetry* by M. Metleaeva and also by E. Slezinger's early poems.

The sphere of love lyrics is one of the leading and richest in the *chamber - vocal* creativity of the Republic of Moldova on the border of the 20th-21st centuries.

*Composers* are attracted primarily but the experience of a personal nature. Thus, sad memories of the lost feelings sound in the romance by E. Mamot *I Feel As I am Loosing You (Eu simt cum te pierd)* on the poems by N. Matcaş. In another essay by E.

Mamot on the verses of the same poet - *Let's Hide From the World (Hai lumii s-o tacem)* the author refers to his beloved with a request to hide her passion from the entire world, protecting their feelings, as the most valuable gift given by life. The pieces of music *Be Mine Just For One Night (Numai o noapte să fii a mea)* by Buzila on the verses of P. D'Allik and *Oh, Give Me Your Fiery Lips (O, lasă-mi gura ta de foc)* on the verses by V. Cioranu are full of passion and confessions of love. The *romances* by T. Zgureanu *You, My Love (Tu, iubito)* on verses by D. Matcovschi and *I Miss You (Mi-e dor)* on the poems by L. Bărlădeanu are permeated with a sense of sadness.

A tender image of the mother and maternal love, hidden memories of home and homeland are also major themes in many *chamber - vocal works* of native authors. They sound emotionally in the vocal cycle by V. Rotaru *Mother's Doinas (Doine de la mama)* on the *poetry* by T. Braga, in the romance *Oh, Mama (O, mama)* by V. Burlea on the verses from M. Eminescu, in the *romances* by E. Doga *Your Face, Mom (Maică, fețișoara ta)* and *Parents Home (Casa părintească)*, on verses by G. Vieru, in *Doina (Doina)* for voice and piano by E. Mamot, based on poems by G. Vieru.

Emotional feelings caused by the images of the surrounding nature, formed the basis for a lyrical-landscape miniature vocal cycle by G. Mustea *Spring (Primăvara)* on poems by G. Vieru. The *poetry* of I. Podoleanu inspired K. Rusnac to create the lyrical *romances* *When Autumn Comes (Când vine toamna pe la noi)* and *I Look at snowdrifts Lie (Mă uit cum zac troiene)*. The *romance* *The bird of*

*Sorrow (Pasăre de dor)* by E. Mamot is a fine landscape sketch, in which lyrical memories and melancholy love are identified with the sadness and autumn changes in the outside world. The image of autumn nature, colored by philosophical shades, is also present in V. Rotaru's musical heritage. For instance, in the *romances* of the vocal cycle based on verses by G. Bacovia, autumn is associated not only with the time of year when the winds blow and the leaves fall from the trees, but with the end of life, the approach to the hour of death.

Philosophical reflections on life and death also belong to some *romances* by E. Mamot. In the work *Cranes Are Calling Me (Mă cheamă cocorii)* based on poems by N. Matcaș is conveyed a person's mood, who is alone with his thoughts and feelings in the last moments of his life: the landscapes of the sunny summer in the mind of the lyrical hero are replaced with the pictures of cold winter, life passes before his eyes, like shots from a film. Appeal to the inner world of any person, thoughts of vastness of life and time were embodied in another romance by E. Mamot on verses by St. Gramma *It Would Be Enough For Me (Mi-ar fi de-ajuns)*, which reflects the attitude of a person who perceives himself as a particle of the universe. In romance *And the Ray Went Out at Night (Și s-a stins în noapte raza)* by T. Zgureanu, on a poem by G. Furdul, the twinkling sunlight can be identified with the finest fibers of the human soul and the sunset of life is associated with a gradual going out of the sunlight in the night sky. Retrospective interpretation of life is typical of Z. Tkaci's late *chamber-vocal art*. The *romances* from the cycles *Extinct*

*Fires (Потухшие костры)* and *I Do Not Want to Make Plans in Advance (Я не хочу загадывать вперед)* are permeated reflections on the meaning of life and the limits of life's journey.

At the same time, the desire to reveal the inner world of any person, to comprehend the delicate psychological movements of the soul, the desire to touch the eternal truth, made many native *composers* turn to religious texts. A striking example is the *chamber - vocal composition* by T. Zgureanu *Praised Be, Mary (Slăvită fii, Marie)*, based on a text from the Bible. V. Burlea also created a religious text *Prayer (Rugăciune)* for voice and piano. Religious themes are also present in the works of other *composers*: D. Kițenco *Ave Maria (Ave Maria)* for soprano, clarinet and organ, *Alleluia (Aleluia)* for soprano, saxophone and pianoforte, *Alleluia (Aleluia)* for countertenor and harpsichord, M. Stârcea – *Psalms (Psalm)* on poems by T. Arghezi and others.

The Conversation genre of *chamber - vocal music* in the Republic of Moldova on the border of the centuries is represented by *romances*, songs and *vocal cycles*. In this respect, each of the *composers* treats these genres according to their individual style.

Thus, for example, V. Rotaru is one of those who almost always combines *romances* in small *vocal cycles* and gives them appropriate names. Each of the four *romances* of his vocal cycle *Mother's Doinas (Doine de la mama)* by T. Braga reveals one of the facets of the rich inner world of a man who devotedly loves his native land, its nature, its people and art. Five *romances* of the vocal cycle based on poems by V. Lebedeva impress by the colorful landscape, poetic

world apprehension. The vocal cycle on a poem by D. Dajin for baritone and pianoforte is dedicated to heroic and patriotic themes. The vocal cycle for mezzo-soprano on poems by G. Bacovia is filled with images of philosophical discussions about life, death and immortality.

Speaking about the *chamber - vocal music* of the Republic of Moldova on the border of the 20th-21st centuries we cannot but mention the creative heritage of Z. Tkaci. The genre of the romance accompanied her throughout her career. In her late work, Z. Tkaci more and more often turns to the genre of the vocal cycle, making it perhaps the leader in her work. Among the most detailed conceived concept can be attributed to *From Moldovan Poetry*<sup>2</sup> (*Din poezia Moldovei*), created in 1983, which reveals the themes Man and Nature, Man and His Homeland. Five *romances* of the *chamber - vocal cycle Love me, my dear (Полюби меня, хороший)*, based on poems by L. Doroshkova (1987) differ by clean, bright colors as well as by an optimistic mood. The more extensive and profound cycle *Your Good Name (Numele său sfânt)* based on poems by O. Driza (1989), encompassing the poet's six poems is characterized by a widely set theme *Man and His People*. The appearance of this cycle had a landmark character. It summed up the already established creative tenden-

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<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that the cycle of Moldovan poetry exists in another performing version (for voice and chamber orchestra). Orchestrating the support part, Z. Tkaci sought to bring the composition outside the framework of the chamber genre, to expand the range of expressive means and to symphonize the cycle.

cies and long search of the *composer*. At the same time here are denoted some new facts that differ by a serious and rigorous tone, dominated by harsh tones, which will find their expression in Z. Tkaci's subsequent works.

A significant place in this panorama of *chamber - vocal music* works of the Republic of Moldova belongs to G. Ciobanu. Besides the already named *romances* of the vocal cycle *The Nineth Moon (A noua lună în cer)* and the essay *May be in Autumn (Poate la toamnă)* based on M. Eminescu's letters, G. Ciobanu composed the work *Forgotten Songs (Musical offering to Dosoftei), Cântări uitate (Închinare muzicală lui Dosoftei)*, for base (baritone) and instrumental ensemble. A remarkable aspect of this work is the vocal interpretation that is equal to the value of the instrumental voice.

In *chamber - vocal creation* of G. Ciobanu another composition presents great interest, it was written for voice and *chamber ensemble - Sound Etude N4 (Studiu Sonor N4)*, subtitled *From There (De dincolo)* or mezzo-soprano as well as an original compo-

sition for three groups of instruments: woodwinds - flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, strings-violin, cello, percussion. Unlike the tree previously created purely instrumental *Sounds Etudes (Studii sonore)*, here is introduced the vocal part that sounds the poems of Moldovan poet Trajan. According to E. Mironenco, "...This is very sad lyrics, marked by the finest shades of introspection in the sense of endless grief /.../. G. Ciobanu extremely carefully treated the text and found its adequate realization /.../ in the field of *chamber music*. G. Ciobanu actually invented a new genre of *Sounds Etudes (Studii sonore)*, that corresponds to the processes occurring in the space genre of contemporary music" [3. p. 133].

Thus, the individualization of art-making, characteristic of contemporary *chamber vocal music* of the Republic of Moldova indicates the presence of its inexhaustible potential further development, associated with the implementation of the creative possibilities of various authors, the interaction and mutual enrichment of different spheres of the national genre of music.

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