

INTERPRETATION OF A MUSICAL TEXT: TO THE QUESTION OF UNDERSTANDING THE AUTHOR'S INTENTION

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Abstract: The article deals with the phenomenon of musical text in the aspect of interpretation. The main idea of the study is the assertion that musical interpretation is the art of embodying the author's thought in sounds, reproducing the performer's own concept. Being a category of art history, this phenomenon implies not only a variety of performing schools, but also the aesthetic principles of performance, technological problems of approaches to the musical text, its understanding. The field of interpretation in the sense of performance realization has a completely unique dimension in music. However, the theoretical foundations on which the transformations of the author's text are based do not fully reveal the artistic meanings, their cognitive significance. Thus, the relevance of the issues under study is determined by the need for a theoretical study of the specifics of the interaction of the interpretive form (the author's text) and the ability to form images through the performer's sensory cognition as a product of new semantic contexts.

Keywords: interpretation; musical text; author's intention; comprehension.

1 Introduction

Within the framework of modern musicology, the problem of interpretation is one of the most traditional and important. Having a complex nature, it is, first of all, based on the general theory of comprehension.

Comprehension, the central concept of hermeneutics, according to F. Schleiermacher's concept, requires "an individual" talent of knowing" [20, p. 227] and is realized, on the one hand, in direct, chamber communication, on the other hand, in writing. Understanding is interpersonal in nature, so it is based on the similarities and differences of human characteristics, which makes the principles of identity and difference universal conditions of comprehension and understanding. Schleiermacher considers comprehension as a process in which the knowledge of the whole is born from the understanding of its parts (the idea of the hermeneutic circle).

The thesis of "a better understanding of the author and his work than he himself understands his work" is, according to Schleiermacher, the main one for the hermeneutic method: "to understand the language first as well and then better than its initiator", that is, to discover the hidden meaning in the obvious sense, to realize what for the speaker "remained unrealized" [20, p. 233]. So, for F. Schleiermacher, understanding is a way of discovering the meaning originally embedded in the text. For this process, the researcher also recognizes the following as important: defining the understanding of language as a fact of language and as thought; spontaneity of intuitive understanding and analyticity of explanatory. The unity of these aspects determines the integrity of comprehension. Connecting understanding and interpretation, the scientist emphasizes that the source of interpretation is misunderstanding: interpretation begins where understanding directly ends. According to the researcher, not only the interpreter has an intention, but also the artistic text itself [19].

Interpretology as a scientific discipline combines experience and demonstrates unity, the best achievements of theoretical and performing musicology. The problematic range of issues of modern interpretology consists of the following areas:

- The history of the instrument and its further evolution (organology);
- Performing and teaching activities of outstanding musicians (personalities);
- Performing semantics, or analysis of the performing text;
- Genre and style models of musical creativity;
- Co-creation of outstanding performers and composers;

- Methodology as a system of approaches and principles of scientific modeling of music, reflecting the content of the socio-cultural and historical contexts of the theory and practice of musical performance.

Nevertheless, not a single artistic phenomenon can be seen as comprehensively studied without considering its genesis and evolution. And today we can also state that the performing culture radically changes the dynamic parameters of music. Therefore, the study of the problems of interpretation of performing practices remains an important and significant task.

The voluminous and diverse literature on the study of the "musical language" made it possible to discover that the study of this issue is in its infancy. Not all conclusions made by the authors on this issue can be considered indisputable. The lack of a unified point of view gives reason to conclude that the theoretical study of the problem has not yet been completed and the objective need to deepen its theoretical understanding has long been ripe and is extremely relevant. At the same time, the "musical text" as a semiotic structure as a culturological problem has not been specially studied. However, the relevance of its research is now evident, firstly, due to the fact that the text is the highest unit of musical communication; moreover, it is connected with the needs of musical performing practice.

2 Materials and Method

The specifics of the subject of research required the use of interdisciplinary, art history, and cultural approaches. This made it possible to clarify the significance of details for the formation of interpretive conditions. To understand musical texts, we turned to the theory of musical content, with the help of which a method was established for interpreting a musical text in order to create artistic characteristics of a performing image in spite of only technical reproduction. In this regard, the following methods were used in the research:

- Comparative historical reconstruction, considering the formation and development of musical interpretation;
- Art history analysis, which provides a basis for solving the problem of the existence of the musical object itself in the space of a creative act;
- Musical-analytical method, contributing to the analysis of the language of music and semantic transformations in performing practices.

3 Results and Discussion

H.-G. Gadamer, developing the thoughts of F. Schleiermacher, indicated that interpretation begins with the representation given by tradition. Important ones in this process, according to the philosopher, are the prerequisites of understanding, which he divides into productive and unproductive. The essence of each of them is the possibility or impossibility of carrying out the process of correct understanding. Among the main features of this process, H.-G. Gadamer refers to the impossibility of unconditional understanding, its infinity, the inexhaustibility of the true meaning of an artistic work, mandatory readiness. The researcher explains the latter as follows: one cannot understand without a desire to understand, that is, without a readiness to be told something, every effort to understand is governed by a kind of expectation of meaning" [6, p. 273]. Also Gadamer talks about the emergence of a conflict between the expected and the given, which is always present in the process of understanding. In this connection, he emphasized: "In the process of creating a work, the artist overcomes the tension that arises between the expectations that come from tradition and the new habits that he introduces. The acuteness of the situation we are experiencing is undoubtedly evidenced by the peculiarity of the conflict and tension" [6, p. 274]. In this confrontation, which is namely an interpretation, two sides of the process converge: "our historical

consciousness and the tendency of modern man, in particular the artist, to reflect" [6].

Gadamer pointed out that "everywhere where ignorance and unfamiliarity are eliminated, the hermeneutic process of gathering the world into a word and a common consciousness takes place... The task of hermeneutics from time immemorial is to seek agreement, to restore it" [6, p. 269]. Understanding aimed at agreement, according to Gadamer, is carried out, first of all, in the form of a speech. It is non-rational, non-mechanical, holistic: "Understanding language is not understanding words by summarizing verbal meanings step by step, it is following the holistic content of the speaker" [6].

In his works, Gadamer tries to find the center of intersections of the subjective and the objective in any desire: "human existence in accordance with essential fulfillment is understanding", in other words, human relation to the world is understanding [7, p. 364]. This helps Gadamer to come to the conclusion that in the process of understanding and interpreting texts, all subjective points must be taken into account. Understanding is built taking into account language, traditions, level of education, etc.

The basic position of Gadamer's concept is a problem of linguistic environment. The researcher points out that it is the continuum in which the process of mutual agreement between the interlocutors takes place. "Any understanding is a linguistic problem" [6, p. 43]; "language is a universal environment in which understanding is carried out" [7, p. 452]. He claims that understanding occurs as an interpretation, that is, it has a dialogical character, in which the familiar and the unfamiliar, the traditional, the extrapersonal and the reflective, the individual, are correlated. When deciphering and interpreting, something "alien and dead" is transformed into "general simultaneity and accessibility" [6, p. 263–265].

Understanding is far from being reduced to the rational sphere, to the activity of the human intellect, to logical operations and analysis. It can be said that it is non-scientific and similar, rather, to artistic creativity. Thanks to the comprehension of statements, which is recognized as an interpretation, the incompleteness of their initial understanding is overcome. Understanding is the unity of two principles. Intuitive understanding of the subject, its "grasping" as a whole complements the foundations of direct understanding, followed by comprehension, which is denoted as interpretation, arises and strengthens. In interpretation, direct understanding is formalized and rationalized [7].

P. Ricoeur, as well as Gadamer, in the field of interpretation problems, actualizes the issue of historical and cultural distance, the relationship between the historical past and the reflective personality. The essence of the interpretive process, according to the scientist, is to "overcome the distance between the past cultural era to which the text belongs and the interpreter himself. Overcoming this distance, becoming a contemporary of the text, the interpreter can give himself meaning: he wants to make someone else's his own; therefore, he intends to achieve the expansion of self-understanding through the understanding of others" [18, p. 48]. Overcoming the cultural distance appears as the main work of interpretation; the reader, who is separated by this distance from a text alien to him, by overcoming the distance includes the content of this text to the current understanding that he possesses [18, p. 34]. Developing these thoughts, P. Ricoeur notes that "interpretation has its own history and this history is a component of the tradition itself"; "we interpret in order to illuminate, continue and thereby support the life of the tradition in which we ourselves are. This means that the time of interpretation in a certain way belongs to the time of tradition" [18, p. 58]. So, according to P. Ricoeur, interpretation manifests itself as the work of thinking, which consists in discovering the meaning, in its decoding.

Observing the nature of the word, M. Bakhtin notes that it manifests itself as an initiating understanding. It "stems from the nature of the word, which always wants to be heard, always seeks an appropriate understanding, does not stop at the nearest understanding, but pushes its way further and further

(unlimited). For a word (and, therefore, for a person) there is nothing more terrible than irresponsibility. Even a knowingly false word is not completely false and always involves an instance that will understand and justify at least in the form: "everyone in my place would also lie" [3, p. 306].

Like Gadamer, Bakhtin emphasizes the dialogic nature of understanding. It always belongs to it and is connected with orientation, "comprehension of the meaning that is spoken", degrees of activity in the corresponding movement, transitivity (the listener becomes the speaker). M. Bakhtin singles out the following important stages in the process of understanding: psychophysiological perception of a sign, its recognition, understanding the meaning of a sign in a certain context, active-dialogic understanding [3].

Thus, the theory of understanding, presented in the considered philosophical and hermeneutic works, develops towards the understanding of meaning-producing activity, when the epicenter of reasoning is not so much meanings but rather the process of their generation and the peculiarities of its flow.

Ricoeur emphasized the importance of being precise regarding the concepts of understanding and interpretation and suggested defining the first as "the art of understanding the meaning of signs that one consciousness conveys to another", and the latter - as "the interpretation of signs and texts recorded in writing" [18, p. 5]. In other words, interpretation manifests itself as a secondary, formative and, as a rule, rational component of understanding; is procedural and carried out with the help of mediation, acts as a certain reconstruction. Interpretation is a selective and, at the same time, creative mastering of an expression (text, work). It is carried out in the simultaneous unity of the cognitive (with a focus on objectivity) and the subjective, aimed both at understanding and at the "experience of creation" that is understood. The listed positions become especially relevant within the framework of the phenomenon of artistic interpretation.

Interpretation in the field of art belongs to the most complex cultural and semantic phenomena. It means any perception of a work of art, which involves active processing of received impressions and leads to a certain result - the creation of an aesthetic object. Both the author and the perceiver can act as an interpreter.

The specificity of the interpretation of musical art is determined by the presence of at least three subjective positions directly related to the existence of a musical work: composer - performer - listener. The relationship between the components of this triad is mobile and determined by certain factors, in particular, for example, the author's text belonging to an oral or written tradition or the conditions of modern academic culture. With the variety of forms of musical interpretation - compositional, listening, musicological, performing - considering all of them, the advantage to the last one is traced. Today, it is already clear that a piece of music should be considered in the unity of the composer's, performer's, and listener's interpretation, taking into account their peculiarities.

According to N. Korykhalova, the existence of a musical work is determined by three ontological forms (three forms of the work's existence). Among them, there are the following: potential (possible), virtual (as a set of performance realizations of a work that have already taken place), actual (as the existence of a work at a given moment in time, in a specific performance act that is perceived) [11, p. 148–149]. To the potential form of existence of a musical work, the researcher refers text notation fixation. Along with the other two forms, this is the "genetically primary" form. The actual form is opposed to the potential and virtual, the specificity of which is that it appears in the form of a "variant set" [11, p. 150].

Korikhalova emphasizes that "each element of a musical text - musical notation, verbal or graphic notation - due to its semiotic nature can be decoded within a certain field of meanings" [11, p. 161]. She considers the musical text as a second-order sign

system that serves to fix the “sound signs” of music. At the same time, the researcher emphasizes that “the product of the composer’s work is, first of all, music that sounds. Musical notation is only a neighborhood that allows the author to record the created, albeit a necessary means” [11, p. 145–146]. That is, the musical text, according to Korykhalova’s opinion, is a set of signs-symbols that form a code. The conventionality of this code is indicated by “the possibility of other ways of encoding musical thought” [11]. At the same time, the performer is always faced with the choice of a method of reading certain information. Namely this process of decoding is the basis of interpretation.

N. Myatieva, within her views on the phenomenon of musical interpretation, proposes the concept of “textual strategy”, which the researcher interprets as “a historically determined method of encoding musical information by the composer and subsequent decoding of the created written text by the performer” [15, p. 13–14]. At the same time, it is emphasized that its formation is “influenced by the socio-historical situation, musical discourse, musical style of the era, the level of development of notation, notational preferences of the composer” [15, p. 14].

Gadamer noted that the importance and relevance of the problems of understanding and interpretation are provided by their connection with the problem of the text. R. Barthes pointed out the openness, the semantic inexhaustibility of the text, in contrast to the work, which is closed, reduced to a certain and sufficiently comprehensive meaning. According to the researcher, the text appears as an endless semantic continuum, “perceived as a space where the process of formation of values takes place, that is, the process of meaning...” [2, p. 424]; the text is completely symbolic, devoid of a unifying center, open, and is the result of the co-creation of the author and the reader.

Contrasting the work and the text, Barthes emphasized that the text is the process of production of the work, both during writing (the author’s position) and during reproduction (the performer’s position). The text is not a structured signifier, but represents the conditions of creation of the work. The difference between a text and a work boils down to the fact that a work means a permanent structure, a finished production, while a text means the process of becoming a work. The text, unlike the work, is not subjected to genre classification, calculation, consumption, but is understood through its attitude to the sign, its own multiplicity, through self-satisfaction. The goal of text analysis is to establish the play of multiple meanings [2].

Thus, the text appears as a potential opportunity for multiple and diverse readings, a multivariable formation. Interpreting the text as a set of orders, Ricoeur notes that, firstly, it “can be likened to an object that can be looked at from different sides, but never from all sides at the same time” [18, p. 94]; secondly, the meeting with the recipient is important for it, that is, the moment of interpretation [18]. So, if a work of art is a text, then it needs its own reading, in which the interpreter acts as the interpreter of the meaning.

The text, as the center and moderator of the interpretive process, is always connected with the participants of this process, in particular, the author (composer) and the perceiver (performer, listener). At the same time, the relationship between the text and the author, on the one hand, and between the text and the recipient, on the other hand, become important. Of course, other relations also arise, but we do not take them into account. In the first case, attention is directed to the process of encoding the text and fixing its content. In the other, in the epicenter, there is the process of decoding the text, revealing its semantic components. “The main task performed by a composer is to translate his thoughts and feelings into a symbolic form, i.e., into musical notation, in which his experiences are objectified and fixed, which express his, this composer’s, attitude to the world. The skill and talent of a composer lies not only in his ability to find an artistically valuable content of an image, but also in the ability to embody this content in an adequate form, which will then be decoded first by the performer, and then by the listener of the musical work” [17, p. 89]. In other words, the author of the text creates a symbolic situation that has the possibility of

variable reading. At the same time, “the decoder more often turns to probabilistic solutions than the one who encodes. For the addressant, there is no problem of meaning, because he knows what he means by it, while the addressee, as long as he has no reference to the context, is forced to resort to probabilities; variants of his decisions” [9, p. 17].

So, in each text, connections are established at least two times: in the process of generating the text by the author of the work, and in the process of perceiving the text by the recipient. “In some cases, the results of these processes may not match, and then the structure and possibly the content of the text, restored by the recipient, will not match the structure and content of the text from the author’s point of view. This circumstance determines one of the main reasons for possible differences in the understanding of the text” [10, p. 57]. Yu. Lotman noted in this regard that “with the help of texts, it is impossible to convey a certain message with absolute accuracy, since the conditions under which both the addresser and the addressee would use identical “codes”, i.e., would have a single language experience, are unattainable” [13, p. 13–14]. In other words, there is no complete equivalence between the codes of addresser and addressee, composer and musician-performer, listener.

Ricoeur notes that “interpretation takes place where there is a complex meaning, and namely in the interpretation the multiplicity of meanings is revealed” [18, p. 44]. The perception of a musical work is related to the multilevelness of musical text signs and their relationships. The performance interpretation, like the listener’s one, reveals only some of the many meanings that the author has placed inside the musical text. Sometimes this can lead to a radically new semantic result. That is, the text acts not only as an endless unfolding of meanings, but also as the discovery of new ones. Thus, the artistic text is able to set a certain horizon of understanding, which can be expanded. The space formed by the horizon of understanding includes all essential parameters of the artistic text. The simultaneous coexistence of the possibilities of the space of understanding the text and the limitations imposed by the text determine a certain freedom of understanding. In addition, the semantic components of the text “are always also determined by the historical situation in which the interpreter is, and, therefore, by the entire “objective course” of history in general” [7, p. 357].

Therefore, interpretation as a process aimed at understanding or generating meaning, actualizes the special meaning of the latter. According to O. Losev, meaning is an infinite phenomenon that reveals itself through the symbolic [12]. M. Bakhtin notes its dialogic nature: “meaning always answers some questions. That which does not answer anything seems to us meaningless, removed from the dialogue. The meaning is potentially infinite, but it can be actualized only by encountering other (alien) meanings, at least with a question in the inner speech of the understander” [3, p. 350]. L. Vygotsky claims that the meaning of a word is the totality of what it evokes in the mind, and “is always a dynamic, fluid, complex formation that has several zones of different stability” [21, p. 369].

Meaning from the point of view of music is the world perceived and heard in musical sound (“the world through the text” [16, p. 28]). V. Medushevsky noted that the meanings are: “various, inexhaustible, unique. The meaning covers the general, “averaged” that is present in these senses, the meaning is always richer than the meaning...” [14, p. 26]. In a piece of music, the meaning lies in the intonation, as B. Asafyev points out. He interprets musical intonation as a special form of manifestation of thought in music and emphasizes the most important essential feature of music as “the art of intoned meaning” [1].

If to analyze the text as a continuous process of generating meaning, then as a result it becomes obvious that texts do not exist without interrelationships and cannot claim absolute novelty and originality. This actualizes the intertextual approach, as a result of which it becomes obvious that the texts are not whole at all, but contain fragments of other texts. The text is “the space of creativity, as the space of communication within the work (semantic connection of different fragments of the work),

and the space of intertextual connections" [2, p. 424]. The aspects of the text noted by R. Barth are reproduced in the phenomenon of "open work", according to the concept of U. Eco, for whom interpretation meant the process and result of obtaining meanings, as well as the comprehension of this result and the construction of one's own concept based on the extracted meanings.

U. Eco paid attention to the dual nature of the work of art. On the one hand, it was about a system of signs, the meanings of which are determined by a set of different codes, on the other - about a message that embodied the contradictory and indescribable richness of the world. Understanding the text from the point of view of the semantic connections of various fragments within the work and the content of intertextual connections is reproduced in the concept of "open work" proposed by U. Eco. The main property of the "open work" is the semantic "openness", which gives the recipients (listeners, readers, performers) a fairly wide freedom of interpretation, and accordingly contributes to the diversity of artistic results. At the same time, the degree of openness coincides with the freedom of interpretation, and not its arbitrariness, which encroaches on the semantic identity of the work [5].

Asserting that "no work of art is really "closed", ... each in its completeness contains many possible "readings"" [15, p. 26], Eco, means openness as the fundamental heterogeneity of the artistic text, which, however, does not mean structural disorder, anarchy of form. The researcher extends this approach to "openness" to most of his contemporary works, and the key property here is the propensity for multiple interpretations. As an example, Eco cites J. Joyce's novels, which are a vivid example of an "open" work in literature. This is especially true of his novels "Ulysses" and "Finnegan's Wake". Such intertextual works involve a connection with other texts, which is most often carried out with the help of various "references": from extensive clearly marked quotations to subtle allusions. The perception of an intertextual work is determined exclusively by the cultural baggage and analytical abilities of the perceiver. In this case, the final result is created by the recipient himself, and the work thus exists simultaneously in many versions. The form of such a work becomes fundamentally different - open, and the extensive system of intertextual references and the synthesis of "different types of thinking" make the work not amenable to unequivocal interpretations.

So, the complex organization and semantic multi-layeredness of the musical text, its initial readiness for multivariate reading, the difference between the linguistic, intellectual, emotional, and aesthetic thesaurus of the author and the perceiver, as well as their dependence as "co-authors" on the historical and cultural context, allow talking about an open multiplicity of interpretations of the text.

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