

THE CONCEPT OF SIMPLICITY IN DETERMINING THE AESTHETIC AND SEMANTIC INTENTS OF MUSICAL ART (ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE STYLE TENDENCY OF “NEW SIMPLICITY”)

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Abstract: The article explores the concept of simplicity in its categorical meanings. Particular attention is paid to simplicity as a semantic intention of contemporary musical art. In musicological verbal use, the concept of simplicity is customary to denote the qualitative characteristics of a wide variety of phenomena. The self-evident meaning laid down in this concept has not often become the subject of interest in musicology. However, as composer practice shows, the aesthetics of simplicity has been an actual idea of musical creativity since the 1970s and determines the style profile of modern academic music. The article attempts to define the meanings of simplicity as a philosophical, ethical, and aesthetic category in projection onto European musical art. Fundamental ones, in this case, were the following positions due to the study of the concept of simplicity in a broad interdisciplinary context. The first is the identification of simplicity with Truth, Good, and Beauty as attributes of the Divine principle, represented in philosophy and aesthetics from ancient times. The second is the understanding of simplicity as an indispensable condition for the clarity of meaning, its accessibility for the recipient. The indicated semantic markers of simplicity (Truth, Beauty, Clarity) open up the possibility of reasonably clear musicological ideas about what simplicity is in music, what its aesthetic value is, and why the phenomenon of simple music turned out to be so relevant for composers at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries.

Keywords: Complexity, Musical aesthetics, Musical language, Musical semantics, New simplicity, Simplicity.

1 Introduction

“Simplicity”, “simple” is present as a cross-cutting concept and qualitative characteristic in European philosophical and aesthetic discourse from the earliest historical eras, which is due to its ontological status in philosophical knowledge. It is presented in the well-known paired dialectical category simple-complex, reflecting the polar sides of integral phenomena and processes of reality in their universal connections. If we consider the concept of simplicity in a logical-semantic bundle with the concept of complexity in a series of paired categories such as part-whole, finite-infinite, single-general, similarity-difference, quality-quantity, form-content, then it is a verbal-conceptual analogue universal laws of the organization of being. Since the categories of dialectics are traditionally viewed in philosophy as “the steps of understanding the world,” the concept of simplicity can be understood as one that contains the unity of ontological and epistemological meaning.

The universalism of this category determines its relevance for modern scientific thinking, which proposes to consider simplicity as a special methodological principle, which along with heuristics, coherence, logic, and other features, is based on the idea that the compactness of presentation, conceptual integrity, the ability of the researcher to simplify and “fold a complex idea”, making it clear to the layman, is one of the criteria of scientificity [10, p. 60].

The methodological potential of the concept of simplicity in this case indicates the original principle of “cutting off” all the superfluous, redundant in the presentation of the scientific concept, which implies a clear author's idea of its semantic core and structural-functional logic. The ability to verbally reflect the clarity of the meaning of an idea presupposes a high level of scientific thinking of the researcher, his ability to generalize broadly, knowledge of the subject “from within” and developed communication skills, providing the ability to “translate” special content language. Simplicity, of course, in this case, can be considered as the highest level of scientific thinking and authorial style of the researcher, a manifestation of his professional skills. In this context, simplicity can be seen as a kind of guarantor of the preservation of the holistic image of the scientific concept, originally existing in the mind of the researcher (by analogy with ancient *eidos*), which encourages his

rational-logical knowledge, and which has the ability to “dissolve” in analytical activity.

2 Materials and Methods

Philosophers, trying to answer the question of what is “simple” and what is “complex”, proceed from a logical statement that “...something must correspond in reality” to these concepts [11, p. 167]. Attempts to determine the specific properties of “simple” and “complex” are found in philosophical discourse from its earliest times.

Obviously, one can speak of “simple” only taking into account “complexity” as its opposite. This is exactly what Plato does in his dialogues, distinguishing between “simple” and “complex”, primarily in the ontological aspect. Taking into account the general context of Plato's philosophical doctrine, we can conclude that the “simple” is interpreted by the ancient philosopher as eternal, unchanging, divine, true, and, therefore, the One. “Complex”, in turn, is understood as changeable, unstable, secondary in nature, since simplicity in the ontological sense precedes complexity. The same idea sounds also among the Neoplatonists, who use the concept of simplicity as a synonym for the ideality of the Single Origin, from which a complex and varied complex of many phenomena originates.

For Aristotle, only that which is characteristic of the mind and is devoid of matter is simple. The simplest thing, according to Aristotle, is that which is not subject to any definition and is self-evident, respectively, it is not determined by scientific knowledge, on the contrary – everything else is subject to determination through the simple. Accordingly, only such a definition can be true that, from a multitude of properties and causes, comes to the indivisible and simple. This understanding of simplicity as a category of thinking follows from the general teaching of Aristotle about beauty and goodness. Therefore, when Aristotle speaks about “simple good”, it should be understood as a synonym for ideal good, devoid of any material diversity: “simple good” is opposed to “multiple evil” [1]. At the same time, the very concept of simplicity is considered by the philosopher as “something that should be said without adding anything” [1]. Losev specially focuses on the concept of “simple”, which is basic in Aristotle's teachings: “The principle of beauty and the principle of morality are characterized by Aristotle using the term “simple”, that is, he speaks of “good in simple way” and “simply about beautiful” [15, p. 191]. The well-known aphorism of the Ukrainian philosopher G. Skovoroda “Truth has a simple speech” is also consonant in meaning.

Simplicity as a concept reflecting the divine essence is present in the theology of St. Augustine. Despite the fact that no categories are applicable to God, since “He is good without quality, great without quantity, ubiquitous without place, eternal without time” [25, p. 8], it “unlike everything finite, has a predicate of immutability and, as a correlate of the latter, simplicity” [25]. The idea of the absolute simplicity (or immutability) of the Divine Being is the central idea of his entire apophatic theology.

Almost following Plato, Nikolai Kuzansky notes that simplicity is a property of God: “...in the kingdom of God, where simplicity and peace surpass all perception, there can be no difference” [12, p. 13]; “God is not the root of conflicting concepts; he is simplicity itself, which is above any difference” [13, p. 286]. But simplicity, according to Nikolai Kuzansky, is a characteristic not only of divine being. It also characterizes the essence of everything and phenomenon. Thus, simple being is the essence and unity of a thing, while in relation to God, it is also infinity, the fusion of opposites, necessity. Complexity, in turn, is understood by the Renaissance philosopher as the opposite of simplicity and is characterized through multiplicity, finiteness, chance. From the above philosophical reflections, it is clear that simplicity as a property of the Divine essence is identified, first

of all, with the absence of diversity, plurality in it, that is, the quality that is correlated with the quantitative principle. As a consequence, such characteristics as finiteness and mutability, which are ontologically inherent in complexity due to its specific properties, are not characteristic of simplicity. The latter are increasingly becoming objects of modern philosophical discourse, in which a very specific task is indicated: to answer the question what is “complexity”? [18].

The philosophical understanding of “the complex” is reduced to the following provisions, summarizing the main characteristics of this category:

- The first definition of complexity is diversity (the presence of differentiated parts, their different types and a different number of these types);
- The second necessary definition of complexity is the internal interconnection of parts with each other (the greater the variety of connections – their number, types and directions – the more complex the thing), this is the complexity of the form;
- In the ontological sense, complexity is associated with the probability of the formation of a system in a random way from the initial elements;
- Taken together, the complexity of matter and the complexity of form shape the complexity of the whole;
- Understood in this way, complexity acts as a quantitative characteristic of a thing. At the same time, it is also a qualitative characteristic: a “complex” thing is one that is viewed as heterogeneous, as a set united into something one [18].
- According to philosophers, “...the situation is more complicated with the characteristic of the simple” [11], however, it is quite possible to determine its manifestations. These include the following implications:
- A thing is simple if it contains the required minimum of parts and connections;
- The logical idea of simplicity – the absence of internal and external diversity;
- Simplicity can be understood as a quality or essence that is not divisible, “simple” is the whole as such, considered without regard to parts;
- Qualitatively, the idea of the simple is that the principle of diversity becomes insignificant. A thing appears not only as one, but also as indifferent to its own diversity;
- Simplicity is also a quantitative characteristic of a thing. In a logical sense, the simple and the complex differ not quantitatively, but in that they are opposites [11].

From the above statements, we can conclude that complexity and simplicity are objective, although relative. For modern philosophers, this issue is extremely relevant, in connection with it, the problem of the antithetics of “simple” and “complex” is investigated in the light of their mutual transformations – the simplicity of complexity and the complexity of simplicity [9]. Complex in one respect may be simple in another. Complex in structure can be simple in function. It is necessary to distinguish between internal and external simplicity and complexity. A thing can be outwardly simple, but inwardly complex. The complex can be simplified to a certain limit, which is the “simple of the complex” (in the formulation of Hegel [10]).

In this context, the experience of comprehending “simplicity” and “complexity” as qualitative indicators of the musical language by composers, presented, for example, in the literary heritage of Nikolai Medtner, is very remarkable. In his famous book “Muse and Fashion” (1935), there are reflections on the balance of simplicity and complexity in music, and the author applies these concepts both to the musical language and the meaning of musical expression in general. According to Medtner, the language of music, as that which arose from the idea of expressing the “truth of the unsaid”, initially possesses such properties as unity and simplicity: show the same centralization and consistency in their striving for unity and simplicity” [17]. Thus, Medtner understands simplicity as a natural quality of the musical language, which naturally follows

from the original meaning of the musical expression: “Music hums about the unsaid” [17]. At the same time, the unsaid (Divine or True), as philosophers say, is simple and one in its essence. Here the idea of the identity of external and internal, form and content arises. Further, Medtner notes that “for the unsaid, not words are needed, but meanings” [17]. If the meaning is understood as the inner ideal content, idea, essence, purpose of something, then the musical language should have the instrument that allows all of its values to be realized in sound form, and then the antithetics of “simple” and “complex” comes into its own, since the meanings, which N. Medtner speaks about, “...are contained in the coordinated complexity of musical sounds” [17]. The complexity of the internal structure of the musical language is the reverse side of the simplicity of its sound image, and the clarity of the musical meaning is the reverse side of the diversity of the interaction of the elements of the musical language. Complexity as “a set combined into one thing” [17] is an indispensable condition for simplicity.

The antinomy of the simple-complex is the subject of the philosophy of I. Kant, in the center of which, there are the cognitive capabilities of the human mind, which is faced with the insoluble contradictions of the universe (the so-called antinomies). Like the rest of the antinomies (limited space, freedom and causality, as well as the presence of God), “...it describes the dramatic collision “of the cosmological dispute of reason with themselves” [8, p. 217]. The detailed reasoning of the German philosopher regarding the cognitive abilities and capabilities of “pure reason” was initiated by the idea that in the world “everything is simple and everything is complicated”. The main property of the “simple”, according to Kant, following ancient philosophy, is indivisibility: the indivisible (simple) can be found only in the world of things in themselves, which is the opposite of the world of phenomena of reality.

Philosophical interpretations of the “simple” can become the object of special research, since at each historical stage the comprehension of this category acquired increasingly more semantic nuances. For us, the main content vector of the concept of simplicity, which is present in classical philosophical knowledge, is important: simplicity is an integral attribute of the One Being (God, Divine), unknowable by the human mind; simplicity as a qualitative characteristic of integrity-indivisibility is a form of being of the highest Truth as the primary cause of being in general. The logical meaning of simplicity as a quality and/or essence lies in its opposite of complexity.

3 Results

Identified with the Divine essence, the concept of simplicity naturally has an ethical meaning, which has been realized since ancient times in organic unity with aesthetic assessment (Aristotle's doctrine of the good and the beautiful, for example), which gives grounds to consider simplicity as both aesthetic and ethical categories. However, both of these spheres of humanitarian knowledge (ethics and aesthetics) at the present stage of their development state the fact that “...the term “simplicity” has not yet entered the main conceptual apparatus of ethics ...it should be about the term, and not about random word usage in a wide variety of contexts” [26, p. 175-176].

In aesthetic discourse, which is most relevant for the study of the phenomenon of “new simplicity” in musical art, the term “simplicity” does not have a special definition, it is absent as a heading of reference and encyclopedic literature, as well as in alphabetic subject indexes of didactic or research literature, but, at the same time, acts as an unchanging, constant “companion” of the main aesthetic categories of beautiful and beauty. This semantic conjugation is paradoxically reflected in information sources of non-academic status, while specialized knowledge does not yet offer theoretical developments of simplicity, especially its established aesthetic theory. Let us quote from Wikipedia: “Simplicity is a property, quality or condition to be considered simple and elementary in composition. Often, it denotes beauty, purity, or clarity. Simple things are often easier to explain and understand than complex things. Simplicity can mean freedom from difficulties, stress or confusion. Simplicity

can also refer to a simple way of life [23]. This definition of the concept is of interest to us; of course, it is not possible to consider it as a scientific definition: the description of simplicity present in it is extremely abstract: each of its components does not reflect the essential properties of simplicity, but at the same time points to those images of the “simple” that are “fixed” in everyday consciousness. In such a context, beauty, purity, and clarity are of the greatest interest, which correlate in their conceptual and semantic meanings with simplicity and have subject specificity. The question arises: What is the basis for such a presentation of simplicity as a synonym for the concepts of aesthetic (beauty) and ethical (purity) character, as well as the qualitative characteristics of the clarity and certainty of the expression of meaning (clarity)?

The answer, which is on the surface, is a collective cultural experience, reflected in countless examples of folk wisdom, exemplified by such well-known truths as “Simplicity is half happiness” or “God rests in simple hearts”. In proverbs and sayings, examples of understanding simplicity as the highest virtue are recorded in abundance, as that moral and ethical principle that is associated with purity of thoughts and a kind heart, spontaneity and a worldview that is harmonious in its integrity and excludes such manifestations of human nature as cunning, hypocrisy, cruelty. In a generalized sense, the listed personality traits fit into the well-known biblical truth “Be like children” (Matt. 18:3), “for the Kingdom of God belongs to such” (Mark 10:14). However, popular wisdom also gives another image of simplicity, representing the reverse side of this phenomenon: “Simplicity is worse than theft,” “People disappear from simplicity,” etc.

Namely from such a “simple” form of describing simplicity as a property of human nature A. Zimbuli starts off, trying to outline its moral and value aspects [26]. Based on a rather impressive number of biblical sayings, which include the concept of simplicity, proverbs and sayings, dictionary definitions of this concept and related to it, A. Zimbuli points to the fundamental semantic heterogeneity of the “simple” and outlines the problem field of possible ethical research in three directions: about simplicity mind (thoughts), simplicity of feelings, behavioral simplicity [26, p. 179]. The conclusion to which the philosopher comes is very attractive in its objective concreteness, because it identifies those characteristics of the life-everyday manifestations of a person that allow us to speak of him as a “common man”: “...in the moral and value perspective, simplicity is a desire and the ability of people to fit into the world as benevolently, calmly, confidently and unscrupulously as possible” [26, p. 175].

With a deeper consideration of the ethical and aesthetic meanings of simplicity, it becomes clear that they have always been present in the discourse of these areas of humanitarian knowledge, but not always on its surface. Moreover, delving into the history of European aesthetics turns out to be the only way to clarify the meaningful meanings of the concept of simplicity as an aesthetic category, since folk wisdom in this case does not give practically any examples of understanding the beautiful, beauty as simplicity. The only help of a non-scientific nature here is the creative experience of artists – writers, poets, painters, musicians – which in their author’s statements directly reflects the understanding of the essence of beauty and beauty in art. An example of such judgments can be the words of Leo Tolstoy from a letter to Leonid Andreev: “Simplicity is a necessary condition for beauty. The simple and the artless may not be good, but the uneasy and artificial cannot be good” [6]. We find similar statements in Gustave Flaubert – “Everything that is beautiful is moral”; the thought of Leonardo da Vinci that “simplicity is an extreme degree of sophistication” is also famous.

Simplicity, as already noted, is not a special aesthetic category, but this concept is often present in the descriptions-characteristics of such categories as content, form, beauty. So, in the Poetics of Aristotle, there is a classification of myths into simple and complex, depending on the presence of twists and

turns in them and recognition as a plot “transition from ignorance to knowledge” [4]. Likewise, Aristotle divides the plots of tragedy into complex and simple ones and understands them as different dramatic principles. Aristotle’s striving to typologize compositional techniques is due to his understanding of form as the principle that creates matter: namely an internal principle leads an object to its perfection; it is the essence, and the stimulus, and the goal, as well as the reason for the formation of diverse things from uniform matter.

Since ancient times, thinkers and artists have tried to define and describe, formulate the “laws” and “rules” of beauty, among which such characteristics as harmony, perfection, measure, proportionality, order, symmetry, proportion, number, rhythm, specific proportions, line types, specific ratios of parts and whole, etc. were found most often [4, 154-155]. The concept of simplicity in these characteristics was not always present, but the fact that beauty from the very origins of the aesthetic ideas of European man was understood as a manifestation of the Divine principle, as a visible sensual form of the Divine essence, suggests that simplicity is a qualitative characteristic of beauty a priori (Plato, Aristotle). In the Middle Ages, the concept of the divine origin of beauty dominated (presented in the treatises of Tertullian, Augustine the Blessed, Thomas Aquinas, Francis of Assisi): God, spiritualizing matter, gives it aesthetic properties; the beauty of anything is a consequence of its spiritualization by God. Thomas Aquinas argued that the beautiful contributes to the suppression of man’s earthly desires and facilitates his path to faith. This, according to the philosopher, is facilitated by the formal qualities of beauty, among which, along with harmony and wholeness, there is also clarity – they directly affect a person, opening him up to the opportunity to perceive Divine beauty in a sensible form and experience it.

In the aesthetic concepts of modern times, the concept of simplicity appears with a certain constancy, but it never acquires a categorical status. It is noteworthy that its semantic meanings, which were discussed earlier, are present in the concept of clarity, which can be viewed as a cross-cutting one in Western European aesthetics of the Enlightenment and classicism. So, for example, Descartes proclaimed simplicity as an indispensable condition for a full-fledged aesthetic perception: the object of aesthetic pleasure should be simple, devoid of disproportion [22, p. 186]. In music, for the French philosopher, the analogue of simplicity was stable consonances, which he preferred over unstable ones – “so that the ear would not get tired and the perception would be natural” [22, p. 187]. Diderot believed that the beautiful is cognized by feeling, and not by reason; accordingly, the basis of the beautiful is the sensory perception of the harmonious proportions of an aesthetic object (“the unity of the whole” [6, p. 107]). Therefore, he argued that the main condition for the perception of beauty is the measure in the subordination of those parts that make up a harmonious unity: “the poverty of relations reduces beauty, and excessiveness destroys it, because it harms clarity and cannot be captured in unity” [4, p.19]. This statement implies a certain quality of the compositional form of an aesthetic object, which ensures its clarity for perception, and indicates the extremes of manifestation of this qualitative indicator (poverty and excessiveness), which by itself implies a certain intermediate, optimal for clarity option, in which the measure is observed. If we understand “simple” as something that does not require variety and is indivisible in its essence (as was discussed earlier), then we can assume that Diderot spoke about a certain simplicity and naturalness of expression, about that simplicity of form that does not “distort” the content with its sophistication, because “true harmony appeals not only to the ear, but also to the soul that conceived it” [6, p. 107].

The concept of clarity is cross-cutting in the aesthetics of Nicolas Boileau, who argued that there is no beauty outside of truth. The great theorist of classicism defines the main criteria of beauty as truth – clarity and obviousness; in his opinion, “everything incomprehensible is ugly” [20, p. 75]. Explicating these truths in the field of artistic creativity, he formulates the main features of the beauty of a work of art: clarity of content

and, as a result, clarity of embodiment: the principle of clarity applies not only to the whole, but also to its parts [20]. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, defending the enlightenment ideas of loyalty to nature, also demanded from contemporary art a certain simplicity of style: the elimination of false pathos and excessive heroic pathos, sincerity of expression, clarity. The concept of "noble simplicity" is present in the aesthetics of Johann Winckelmann, who contrasted it with the pomp and pretentiousness of Baroque art. Later, Friedrich Schiller also believed that the basis of beauty is simplicity.

We find similar judgments in the aesthetic reflections of the Italian poet Giacomo Leopardi, who already in the 19th century reflected on the discrepancy between the external pretentiousness of a work of art and the very idea of beauty on the example of music. He writes that the source of pleasure in music is "...adornments, agility, changeability, agility, quick succession, alternation and variety of sounds or tones... – everything that we like due to its difficulty ...due to unusualness, that is, things that do not have nothing to do with the beautiful" [14, p. 381]. "Even the least expressive and simplest music," he writes, "from the very first moment gives the soul rest, lifts it up or touches it ...and plunges the listener into the abyss of countless vague sensations, makes him cry ...awakens thoughts and feelings in him completely arbitrary... Let us beware of mistaking the pleasant for the beautiful" [14, p. 382]. It is noteworthy that, understanding harmony and melody as "natural", essential manifestations of music, Leopardi asserts the impossibility of novelty in musical art without "violations" of these basic linguistic foundations of music: "...absolute novelty in music cannot be anything other than a violation of harmony ...where it comes to pure harmony and melody, novelty is almost impossible" [14, p. 390]. This observation is strikingly consonant with the creative positions of contemporary European composers representing the style of "new simplicity", who rejected the idea of novelty as the main intention of musical creativity, from creating a "new" one as that semantic vector of the composer's professional activity that determined the historical evolution of European musical art from the New time (John Tavener, Arvo Pärt, Vladimir Martynov, Georgy Peletsis, Valentin Silvestrov, Victoria Polevaya, Anton Batagov, etc.). If we understand harmony in Leopardi's words in a more general sense – as a metaphor for the original semantic unity of its language, conditioned by the objective nature of Music (as a sensual-material form of the musical Logos), then any "influence" of the composer's creative individuality on it can be regarded as "violating novelty" in relation to this integrity. Actually, this is what V. Martynov, V. Silvestrov, G. Pelecis, V. Polevaya point to in their numerous verbal texts about the fact that they follow the path of creating not so much new but rather simple in their work. This path is due to the principle of "accepting" Music as an intonation flow, or the immense value for the composer of the inner hearing of its (music) voice and its 'germination' in the author's consciousness [16].

Directly in the field of musical aesthetics, the isolation of the concept of simplicity as such a characteristic of the musical language and the form of a musical work, which is a condition for clarity of perception, is also revealed. Already at the earliest stage in the development of musical and aesthetic thought, Plutarch's treatise *On Music* uses the concept of simplicity, which (along with the "sublime") is used by the author as a positive characteristic of "old" (ancient) music. Moreover, opposing the "old" music to the modern, the latter, in the interpretation of the author of the treatise, reveals qualitative characteristics correlated with such indicators of the "complex" as the diversity and variety of connections of internal parts ("motley", "loose" and "empty") [22, p. 55]. Modern "theatrical" art, according to Plutarch, in pursuit of novelty is losing its loftiness [22]. Boethius also at the beginning of the 6th century reproached contemporary music with "variety" and "complexity" [22, p. 96].

In the era of *Ars Nova* in musical aesthetics, an attempt was made to classify musical art on the basis of simplicity and complexity as its qualitative characteristics and moral and ethical

ideals. John de Muris (Jean de Meur) divided instrumental music into simple (which corresponds to modesty and reverence) and complex (i.e., obscene). The first corresponds to traditional church music (*ars antiqua*), the second to modern (*ars nova*) [22, p. 128]. The ambiguous in its categorical position of the French music theorist is of interest to us precisely because of the semantic concretization of "simplicity" and "complexity" in the art of music as it was understood in the 14th century. In the light of the aesthetic ideals of the so-called "new" music, I. de Muris identifies complexity with chromaticism and small rhythm, which constituted the expressive idea of "false", "fictitious" music (*ficta musica*), created by chromatic raising and lowering of the scale steps. Accordingly, simplicity was associated with diatonic melody and uniform rhythm - this type of musical expressiveness was regarded by the supporters of *Ars Nova* as "homogeneous simplicity", contradicting "a fine and beautiful harmonious combination" [22, p. 130] of elements of the musical language, based not only on numerical patterns, but also on the composer's irrational ideas. Later, a follower of Descartes, French mathematician, philosopher and music theorist Maren Mersén, abstracting from the ethical context of musical art, very clearly outlined the main signs of beauty in music: simplicity and clarity. "We know from experience that things that are understood at first glance give us more pleasure, and not those that give a vague impression" [22, p. 190].

The question of simplifying the technique of musical composition and the clarity of musical meaning was raised quite often by musical aesthetics during the Renaissance. This was due to the understanding of the principle of creative freedom - both composer and performing ones: textured "décor", acceptable in the vocal-choral polyphonic style and reached its apogee by the end of the 16th century, significantly complicated the sound appearance of music and the perception of melody, harmony, and rhythm as the basics of musical expressiveness, especially as it concerned the clarity of the meaning of the verbal text. In essence, on the basis of realizing the contradiction between the complexity of the external form and the meaningful meaning contained in it, the idea of a new monodic style arose, realized in *Dramma per musica*, which, not without reason, can be considered as a "new simplicity" of the 17th century model, because its authors advocated a revival in the musical art of true expressiveness, which was lost in the course of the rational and technological principles of the polyphonic style. "The Florentine opera by Peri and Caccini is undoubtedly a model of new music," writes K. Dahlhaus on this occasion, "however, outside the historical influence that emanated from it, it would have remained a tribute to antiquity, an experiment along with countless others... *Monodia Caccini, nuove musiche 1601*, is sharply different from what she herself ...rather with unexpected avarice and poverty, than with positively new; progress, if any, is based in this case on reduction. Yet, the fact that monody is rightfully perceived as the new music of the 17th century, is due to the consequences that flowed from it. The return to primitiveness has become a prerequisite for a long and far-reaching development... The new, which the concept of new music indicates, is not commensurate with what it is, but with what it may be. The poverty that accompanies it is at the same time a prediction of future wealth" (our italics - OO) [5]. This expanded thought of Dahlhaus, in our opinion, explains the deep meaning of the artistic discovery of the representatives of the Florentine *camerata*, which in a historical perspective in some way anticipates the creative intentions of the "new simplicity" of the last third of the 20th century.

4 Discussion

German art critic K. Budt defined artistic simplicity as "the most sensible sequence of means based on intuitive penetration into the essence, to which everything else should serve" [2, p. 253]. As an example of artistic simplicity, he mentions the technique of graphic drawing by A. Dürer and his contemporaries, who depicted shadows and volumes with the same wavy line as the outlines of the figure itself. It is emphasized that simplicity, in this case, is achieved by combining visual and expressive means, the unity of the object and the technique of its visualization. This

example is very illustrative of the understanding of simplicity as a qualitative characteristic of a work of art in accordance with indivisibility as its immanent property. We find a similar point of view in V. Silvestrov, who claims that melody is the metalanguage of music to which it is doomed due to the fact that namely with the help of melody it is embodied in sound form, melody is the means that ensures its existence in the sense-material form, i.e., the melody is identified with the music as such. It can be argued that the melody in this sense restores the boundaries of the language of music and the subject of which it speaks, that, according to Silvestrov, were transformed and lost in the works of avant-garde composers and should be revived. The main thing in this restoration is the idea of the unity of meaning and method of its musical expression, their fundamental “commonwealth” in the plane of meaningful relations. Accordingly, the melody is a sound expression of simple but very important truths, such as Beauty and Harmony, which, according to the composer, should not disappear from human life or from music in general.

Similarly, Pelecis argues about the melodiousness of music as a natural property that was lost in the composers of the 20th century: this loss was due to the desire of composers to talk more about the troubles of the world than about its beauty and harmony. This turned, according to the composer, into a rather disappointing situation when “art descended from heaven to earth” (in his own formulation, [Art descended from heaven]). This explains his desire to revive the harmony of musical language through consonance, which becomes for him the main “tool” to create clear in its tonal and harmonious definition of musical compositions based on variant transformations of the original, very simple, thematic (which led to the definition of his authorial style as “new consonant music”). The principle of simplicity in the music of Pelecis is realized through a literal coincidence of meaning and method of its musical realization: consonance as a form of musical melody embodies the idea of melody, thus removing any other layers of meanings, avoiding their diversity and interaction due to their absence. That is, we observe the principle of unity of meaning and those expressive means that denote it, which generates a certain type of musical semantics, when a musical symbol (consonance) coincides with its meaning (melody as beauty and harmony). On the one hand, we can talk about the limitation of the semantic field of a musical symbol, because it is narrowed due to the identity of the sign and its meaning; on the other hand, it is extremely extended, because consonance in the system of musical language of a modern composer has fundamentally different meanings than consonance as an attributive element of the musical art of classical epochs, to which this composer refers.

A similar situation is described in the famous story of H. L. Borges Pierre Menard, author of *Don Quixote*, which describes the story of the writer, who set himself the task of reproducing the style and text of Cervantes, to convey them through the worldview of the human of 20th century. Despite the fact that he creates his text as a reproduction of some chapters from Cervantes' book on his own behalf, this reproduction excludes the semantic coincidence of the original model and its variant: Cervantes' author's word is placed in another context (subjective-personal and objective-cultural) and, accordingly, is filled with these contextual meanings. The consonant music of Pelecis illustrates the general pattern in the symbolization of musical language: “simultaneous reduction of the boundaries of expression – compositional reduction of reception, which gives it more conciseness (aphorism) – and expansion of its semantic possibilities, continuation of the semantic series to infinity [21]. As Samoilenko notes, some of the secondary author's decisions acquire a universal character and become an integral part of the style of the epoch as “that which is repeated, that is reproduced” in it. They transfer <...> into “primary signs” of the musical meaning <...>” [21].

The outlined properties and qualitative characteristics of simplicity as a philosophical and aesthetic category are manifested at different levels of compositional logic in musical works representing the style of “new simplicity”. Thus, at the

level of musical themes, there is a fundamental lack of “plurality” of its structural elements: in this case, the lack of a quantitative set of elements of a musical theme that ensure its structural division is indicative. The conciseness of the main musical theme, its brevity and intonation homogeneity, excludes the use of classical types of musical theme as a structural unit of musical form (sentence, period). Instead, the function of the main theme is performed by “small” structural units of musical language – a motif or phrase that is quite limited in the possibilities of structural division due to at least its small scale, which correlates with indivisibility as an attributive property of simplicity (*Stabat Mater*, *Opus Posth*, *Schubert-quintet*, *Seasons* by V. Martynov, *Für Alina*, *Mirror in the Mirror*, *The Deer's Cry*, *Tabula Rasa*, *Da pacem Domine* by A. Pert, *Endorphin Music*, *Freezing Cascade* by Pelecis, *Justby* by Leng, etc.).

Easily recognizable tokens and phonemes of classical-romantic music are often used as the basis of themes, which give the music of “new simplicity” a nostalgic tone and demonstrate metastyle thinking of modern composers, operating with archetypal formulas of musical language as metalanguage categories (posthumans and bagatelles, kitsch music, *Silent Songs*, *Melodies of Memory* (in *Memory of O. Vustin*) by V. Silvestrov, *Autumn Music*, *30 Preludes for Piano*, *Blooming Jasmine*, *Concertino bianco* by G. Pelecis, *La Belle Musique*, *Three Little Symphonies* by O. Krivolop, *Sirin-sonata* by V. Poleva, *The Last Alchemist*, *Selected Letters of S. Rachmaninoff* by A. Batagov), which may also indicate the manifestation of authorial anonymity as a creative method - in this case, “foreign” musical material sounds especially deliberate and creates the effect of affected musical expression, euphoric experience of “the end of composers' time” (Beautiful music, Music tragic, sometimes sad, *Die Zeit*, *Liebliches Lied*, *Incantations* by O. Rabinovych-Barakovsky or more restrained, but not deprived of the direct expression of the composer's right to appropriate “foreign” word *Gulfstream* by V. Poljova).

In this regard, Khrushcheva notes: “Metamodern melancholy and euphoria converge in a special “new sentimentality” metamodern, which is filled with nostalgia for the fact that there was no euphoria desire to find a new meaning, it often has a touch of sacredness – it is not accidentally that concepts such as Vladimir Martynov's “sacred space” and Arvo Pärt's sacred minimalism arise. In both of these (so dissimilar) cases, the sacred is outside the confessional and even the actual religious framework, and appeals to timeless and universal hopes” [8]. This idea largely explains the genre-compositional orientations of some composers of the “new simplicity”, who appeal to the primary-genre ritual-ritual sphere as a “language code” of the sacred meaning of music, free from authorial individualism and personifying the natural essence of music as energy flow. The author's concepts of such mysterious opuses of Martynov as *Night in Galicia*, *Children of Otters*, *Singapore*, *Games of Angels and People*, *Exercises and Dances of Guido* or *Pilgrimage to the Land of Angels* by M. Shukh are constructed in this way. In fact, the genre sphere of choral music, which acts as a priority for composers of the “new simplicity”, indicates the principle of reproduction-repetition of primary genre canonical forms as “themes and figurative dominants” of music, which provide movement “...of musical idea from form to the content – and further – to the style, allowing the latter to become “more spiritual” and “broader” than the genre itself” [21, p. 16-18]. Therefore, the stylistic diversity of choral opuses by A. Pert, V. Martynov, V. Silvestrov, V. Poleva, M. Shukh, O. Kneifel, J. Tavener, H. Guretsky, D. Leng, I. Moody can be considered as examples of composers “variations on meaning” (existential antinomy of Eternity – the vital determinism of mortal man) by stylistically concretizing the conventionality of the genre in the interaction of ideal and relevant in the value-semantic space of musical art (according to O. Samoilenko) [21, p. 23].

As for the fricative-harmonic level of music of the “new simplicity”, it is formed taking into account the obligatory condition of consonance, fricative definiteness of sound space (in which, according to Khrushcheva's observation, the melancholy-euphoric minor [8]) prevails, which “accumulates”

in the process of metrorhythmic and textural modifications of the original theme, and thus contributes to the formation of a consonant sound form of the musical composition. Pelecis speaks very convincingly about this principle of “total harmony”: “Everything I do – and Martinov, and Karmanov, and many others - is the anthem of euphony” [3]. Examples of this statement can be quite different in style works, which combine fricative-tonal clarity or neutral diatonicity as the main element of expressiveness of musical language and musical semantics.

Methods of developing “simple” musical themes are based on a variant presentation of the source material (which is similar in its functions to the pattern in the minimalist technique). From this, the features of the metrorhythmic level of the musical composition are formed, which are due to the technique of repeated repetition-variation of the main theme, in many respects similar to repetitiveness, but they have some differences. Repetitive technique in this case should be considered in the broad context of individual-composer interpretations of ancient techniques of musical composition, American minimalism, Christian liturgical singing and folk traditions (*Da pacem Domine, Fratres* by A. Pert, *Commandments of Bliss, Passionslieder* by Martinov, *Mother of God Here I Stand*, by M. Lermontov, *Funeral Icoses* by J. Tavener, *Symphony No. 3* by H. Guretsky, *I lie, Little Match Girl Passion* by D. Lang). Multiple repetition of the same motif or phrase determines the statics of intonation procedurality and contributes to the state of immersion-dissolution in the acoustic space, the gradual “exclusion” of the listener from the outside world.

In the technique of multiple repetitions, which composers in each case interpret individually, the principle of the absence of melodic and rhythmic diversity as a “diversity” of the elements of the whole, which is inherent in complexity, is established. This is the main pathos of repetitiveness as a compositional technique of minimalism, which manifested the simplification of musical language by minimizing the means of expression and the acquisition of music through these new transcendent meanings. Musical composition, based on multiple repetition of the original pattern, does not have a clear division into sections of form (especially contrasting): its expressive meaning lies in creating the sound equivalent of a continuous energy flow, musical space-time, in which there are no “signs” of life reality (simple-complex, fast-slow, loud-quiet, far-near, etc.). This largely ensures the “impartiality” of music, which V. Poleva speaks of her works [16], and which is a fundamental concept of religious and spiritual practices (hesychasm, Buddhism) and a defining characteristic of liturgical music. In this respect, the rich style of V. Silvestrov is also very revealing, which is very far from the classical type of repetitiveness, but which reveals the same idea of “impartiality”, that explains the composer’s opinion that his bagatelles are intended to open “internal hearing”, bring the hearer and the performer close to a special harmonious mental state.

The lack of melodic and metrorhythmic diversity and a specific type of musical-thematic development determines a certain type of musical drama, which also represents the idea of fundamental indivisibility: conflict drama, sanctified by the history of European music is replaced by monodramaturgy (V. Bobrovsky’s concept), in which the main way of musical development is a repetition (or so-called additional comparison) of images that are different sides of the same essence (Revelation by Pelecis, Prayer to the Holy Spirit for cello choir by O. Kneifel, Correspondence by V. Martinov – G. Pelecis, piano cycles of bagatelles by V. Silvestrov, piano preludes by G. Pelecis, etc.).

The compositional techniques of the “new simplicity” are very different: each composer finds his own version of the musical-technological realization of the idea of simplicity in music, but each of them has increased complexity – whether it is a highly rationalized technique of A. Pert or J. Tavener, or deprived, at first glance, any manufacturability “weak style” of V. Silvestrov, or thus modified repetitiveness in V. Martynov, O. Rabinovich-Barakovsky, and G. Peletsis, which creates the effect of the

absence of any technique in the usual sense of classical music composition of the European tradition (in the latter case, as V. Silvestrov notes, “...it is felt that the composer rejects everything in general and passes to the mantra system”) [19]. Silvestrov’s characterization emphasizes the orientation of these composers to the stylistics of the primary genre sphere of musical art in its ritual applied sense, which has been repeatedly emphasized not only by V. Martinov, but also by A. Pert, J. Tavener, H. Guretsky, and others.

5 Conclusion

Thus, we come to the conclusion that the concept of simplicity has a rather voluminous field of meaning, because in European culture it “permeates” various spheres of human existence - human cognitive activity, its ethical manifestations and aesthetic experience. Existing in dialectical unity with complexity, simplicity as a qualitative-quantitative marker can nevertheless claim the status of a moncategory, which is an invariable attribute of such categories as Truth and Beauty, an indispensable condition of their sensual expression, a form that provides clarity of their ontological meaning.

The meaningful complex of the concept of simplicity, formed in the European philosophical and aesthetic discourse, is decisive for understanding the stylistic bases of the “new simplicity” as a direction of composer’s work at the turn of the 20th-21st centuries. The main properties of simplicity (lack of diversity of elements and the consequent principle of indivisibility), which are inherent in it as a philosophical and aesthetic category, act as attributive manifestations of Truth and Beauty in the sensory-material form. Philosophical and aesthetic meanings of simplicity are actualized in the stylistic complex of the “new simplicity”, determining its specificity at the levels of musical themes, principles of its development, texture, drama, compositional-structural and musical-lexical ones.

The belief of the composers of the “new simplicity” that the Truth is simple, of course, is not a discovery, because at all times composers and performers sought to find and know it, and each had his own one, and each had his own face, and to many creators it opened in its simplicity only at the end of life. But the fact that the representatives of the “new simplicity” separate the “simple” from the “complex” (without excluding their antinomic unity) and define simplicity as the semantic intention of musical creativity - is certainly thought-provoking, because, as one can see from more rather than a brief digression into the history of philosophical and aesthetic understanding of the essence of simplicity, it is of exceptional importance not only for the compositional work of the last third of the 20th century, but also for the ontological horizons of musical art in general.

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