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MODERN UNDERSTANDING OF VARIETY VOCAL ARTS IN 1970S – 1980S

Abstract: *this article provides an analysis of the main processes in the soviet variety vocal art in the 1970s and 1980s. The research of the soviet variety vocals in this time period is significant to form an objective view of the nature of the Russian variety in present day. The purpose of this essay is in reviewing the changes of the soviet and Russian variety emotional content as a significant part of its development and to determine its nature.*

Keywords: *variety vocal art, musical culture, variety song, genre, art.*

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СОВРЕМЕННЫЙ ПРОЦЕСС ОСМЫСЛЕНИЯ ЭСТРАДНОГО ВОКАЛЬНОГО ИСКУССТВА В 1970–1980 ГОДЫ

Аннотация: *в статье представлен анализ основных процессов советского вокального эстрадного искусства 1970–1980-х годов. Исследование советского эстрадного вокального искусства этого периода имеет большое значения для объективного представления о сущности российской эстрады на современном этапе. Цель данной работы заключается в том, чтобы рассмотреть в качестве важнейшего фактора развития советского и российского эстрадного вокального искусства метаморфозы его эмоционального содержания и определить их сущность.*

Ключевые слова: эстрадное вокальное искусство, музыкальная культура, эстрадная песня, жанр, искусство.

This article provides an analysis of the main processes in the soviet variety vocal art in the 1970s and 1980s. The research of the soviet variety vocals in this time period is significant to form an objective view of the nature of the Russian variety in present day. The processes characterizing the major idea and genre crisis this field has experienced in the 1990s and its consequences to this day have their beginning in this period. It is important for the modern variety singers to understand the origins of their art form. To obtain such an understanding, it is necessary for the modern sciences related to the issues of variety development to be as close as possible to the objective value of this art form in the Soviet era. Modern professional performers community in Russia is characterized by polarized opinions on the subject – a large amount of teachers and musicians idealize the more popular branches of the soviet variety (including those that have bloomed in the 1970s), while another side rejects it as completely obsolete and, as such, having no value. The purpose of this essay is in reviewing the changes of the Soviet and Russian variety emotional content as a significant part of its development and to determine its nature.

Art is expressive creations viewed as a unique form of collective consciousness, a kind of spiritual comprehension of reality. Let us review the Soviet variety art of the 1970s. At that time, it was a rather diverse collection of conceptual and stylistic branches. Its most important feature is that some of them are supported officially, promoted and protected from other genre elements by a powerful government system.

The chief genre among them is the one built on the academic models of vocal art of the time. In other words, a genre close in style, performance technique, ideas and, of course, emotional content to the academic vocals. It should be noted that the vocal styles and images of the significant Soviet variety performers of the 1970s, such as I.D. Kobzon, M.M. Magomayev, M.V. Kristallinskaya and many others are very close to the ones accepted in academia. Many of these performers, for example M.M. Magomayev, had had professional academic training and most of them made use of the O shaped closed voice formation, precise phrasing and other singing ele-

ments in line with the academic standards, which was relevant to the repertoire inherited from the formulas of Russian romance and opera rhythm and intonation and harmony, and, due to the specific genre system, mixed with variety and jazz features. It should also be noted that all performers who have used this model used to have a high level of professional skill. Among those who have been allowed to reach the masses via radio and television were creators, whose contribution to the world arts should be considered. One of such creators is M.M. Magomaev.

For example, let us examine the final round of the chief media event in the field of variety arts – television festival «Song of the Year».

If we consider the final round of the «Song «79» festival, the first thing to note, despite the diversity of styles and genres, is the aesthetic similarity of the performances. One could say that the audiences have been shown a sort of «oratorio» with clearly defined elements of the variety styles. This performance showcases very well the adherence of the aesthetics to the academic principles of vocals. It can be seen on all layers, from the dramaturgy (the performance is opened and closed with choir), musical language, costume design (tendency for the formal) to the songs' emotional content. Interestingly enough, the performance lacks energetic song-and-dance stages. All music is filled with emotions that can be described as elevated, romantic, jovial, pathetic. Emotional restraint is a key feature of the performance's narrative.

It would be unthinkable to have one of the participants execute energetic and expressive movements. Just as it would be unthinkable to include such vocal techniques as screeching or growling. Balance and elevation are the key features of the performance's emotional content.

A relevant question is how well does this emotional content reflect the needs of the masses?

It is important to understand that the audience of an industrial society cannot be homogenous, including their emotional needs: «Multiple factors affect the audience's aesthetic tastes and wants. For example, age groups represent different generations, growing up in different social and cultural environments, and so having different aesthetic and artistic needs based on different life styles». The fact that the variety arts

have increased their stylistic diversity in the USSR of the 1970s confirms this. This decade is the age of bard songs, underground rock bands and musicians, groups aiming to adapt the progressive tendencies of the Western musical culture.

In particular, the latter category begins to attract a large part of the audience -- young people seeking new ways and methods of emotional self-expression in the constantly shifting social and cultural environment. It makes sense that such genres as bard songs, Western rock and pop music provided space to express a new spectrum of emotions and creations as art with its own audience.

To summarize, it should be noted that bard song (which attracted interest not only from the young people but for many representatives of an older generation, mostly the intelligentsia class) has become a space for expressing romantic melancholy, longing, sarcasm and other emotions distant from the jovial exuberance and pathetic tragedy prevalent in the official Soviet variety songs. However, it is wrong to think that the emotional spectra did not mix. Nevertheless, bard song is characterized by direct emotional expression without following strict aesthetic guidelines.

Rock and pop music unlocked an even bigger emotional spectrum with much higher degree of emotional reactivity via art, which is especially important.

It's impossible to say that the officially supported variety music completely lacked the festive feeling, however it was restrained, without the explosion of emotions. Specifically, it has attracted the young people in the process of social and cultural changes. Among other things, it includes changes in the view of time, tempo of life, etc. A.I. Gromakov writes, «together with the development of society, formation of new traditions, social institutes (family, church, state), music establishes its own traditions as a form of art reflecting a person's image, their social needs, affecting the formation of new social groups» [1]. Not finding emotional satisfaction in the official variety, a large part of the youth rapidly popularized underground branches of the variety arts.

What can we see in a similar performance from ten years later, in 1989, just a year away from the fall of the USSR? In terms of style, the final round of the «Song of «89» festival is immediately different from «Song of '79». First of all, we see the

much wider diversity of styles. In 1989, the chief variety event of the country had featured pop and rock songs in folk rock and soul styles. Among the performers invited is I.V. Talkov, possibly one of the most unique rock musicians of his age, whose creations mixed the traditions of the bard songs and progressive rock (synthesis of melancholy and expression) both in terms of musical content and performance. Many stages involve energetic dance numbers. Many stages, compared to 1979, have incorporated scenic components. Performers' scenic image and vocal technique represent great diversity and, despite the clear attempt to replicate the image of the Western pop and rock singers, also aim to reflect the creative individuality of each performer.

As such, the emotional spectrum has also become more diverse. Of course, it serves as an attempt to make the variety arts more relevant for the younger audiences. But if the necessary transformation has been made, why did variety suffer such a heavy crisis in the 1990s leading to the irrelevancy of the Soviet age heritage?

We find three reasons for this.

One. An attempt to integrate the new tendencies in the officially supported variety arts. As we can see, this performance does not represent the more radical but also more popular musicians and bands. For example, the band Kino is not invited. In other words, the diversification of the emotional spectrum and the increased emotional reactivity through the vocal techniques in the official performances have been accomplished, but it still did not resonate with the audience needs. variety

Two. It is not hard to notice that if we compare the Soviet official variety and Western variety, the former is far behind in adapting progressive branches. Official variety will never represent hard rock and heavy metal, although it was them that attracted the aesthetic and expressive needs of the European and American youth in the 1980s.

Lastly, the third reason is that the Soviet variety singers, who have tried themselves in new branches, were behind the Western performers. It is an upsetting and difficult to accept by most – including modern musicians – fact that, however, remains hard to dispute.

The reason of this gap in performative skill in pop and rock genres is once more rooted in the official variety being too conservative. The inability to practice the performative skill for the audience, to receive criticism, rejection and acceptance and then establish based on this new performative schools has become a significant reason for the crisis of the 1990s, fighting against which is still ongoing, although successful.

From everything mentioned above, we have made two conclusions.

Best examples of the Soviet variety arts should be researched by the modern Russian students and professional performers as one of the most important treasures with artistic, aesthetic and didactic value.

The establishment of new performative schools in the present day should be done while taking into account the negative experience of the past and the necessity of making them open systems, integrating new creative ways.

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