

Summary

Latvian composer residing in Canada, Imants Ramiņš (1943), in full flourish of his life and creative activity, now has reached the zenith of recognition – his music in all continents is being performed by outstanding artists (for example, chamber choir and symphony orchestra of Vancouver, Stockholm chamber choir, chamber choir *Ave Sol*, State choir *Latvija*, choir *Kamēr...* etc.), it sounds in prestige concert halls of the world, in festivals, radio programs, etc.

The scores by I. Ramiņš have been issued by such music publishers as *Boosey & Hawkes*, *Gordon V. Thompson Music*, *Walton Music* etc., as well as several CDs have been produced (*Songs of the Lights*, 1992, *Earth Chants*, 2002, etc.). Music reviewer Joan Reintaler from *The Washington Post* places the children opera *The Nightingale* created in 2004 by I. Ramiņš (libretto by James Tucker, based on the motives of the fairy tale by H. C. Andersen) alongside with such famous children operas as B. Britten *Noyes Fludde* and E. Humperdinck *Hänsel und Gretel* [25].

The way of I. Ramiņš towards so wide recognition and the key to success of his music are outlined by this article. I. Ramiņš represents the Latvian émigré generation which left Latvia in early childhood and had to develop their identity in complicated circumstances – having Latvian roots they had to find their place in cosmopolitan society.

I. Ramiņš studied composition in Toronto University with the Latvian composer T. Ķeniņš and in Salzburg Mozarteum with C. Bresgen. Excellent Canadian and European academical, pedagogical and musical education, his inborn intelligence and overtness of his personality has facilitated natural integration of manifold culture and music traditions into his compositions. There is a spirit of folklore and spiritual chants of Russian, Ukrainian, Chinese, Japanese, North America Indians, Canada Eskimo and other nations. On the other hand, powerful influence of Latvian melodies in childhood has determined the distinctive mentality of his music. The composer is a brilliant melodist with a positive vision towards the world, that is reflected by, for example, the most performed and recorded composition by I. Ramiņš – *Ave Verum Corpus* (1972), which was influenced by music of W. A. Mozart.

There are several features in the compositions of I. Ramiņš similar to his former teacher T. Ķeniņš – love towards music of J. S. Bach and interest in early polyphony traditions, purity of form and at the same time metro-rhythmical flexibility characteristic of the French school. Moreover, in the assessment of music reviewers both authors are mentioned as representatives of conservative style which is more characteristic to the creative work of I. Ramiņš. However, instrumental genres dominate in compositions of T. Ķeniņš, but in compositions of I. Ramiņš – vocal genres, int. al. choir compositions both with and without accompaniment.

Gentle and introvert intelligence of I. Ramiņš have something in common with life of a provincial town, its tranquil peacefulness of landscape that arouses a flight of phantasy and a view of an observer. It is a reflection of both Latvian world outlook and lyrical aspect of French and other national schools (romanticism, impressionism). Medium, warm timbres most reminding his humanity is of great significance in music of the composer. In the functional aspect of a form particularly original is the initial phase of a composition: mainly it is not perceptible as energetic announcement of the leading idea, as a confirmation, but rather as a shy and sincere address. Composer loves to begin a composition with separate voices of ensemble or solo, respectively a recital of one voice, that is connected with particular, static type of melody (motives of narrow spectrum and their ostinato or modified repetitions – Magnificat No. 1, *Ceļā / On the way*). From the aspect of rhythm as characteristic of many commencements of I. Ramiņš, predominance of a iambic beginning can be mentioned, where the first sound is initiated by a short eight- or quarter pause creating an effect of thrilled breath. Although in his composition technique comparatively traditional means of expression are used based on musical heritage of the past, I. Ramiņš` music is notable for its specific, colourful timbres and lyrically delicate particularity of expression.

Literatūra

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