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## WEWNĘTRZNA TEATRALNOŚĆ CYKLU HUGO WOLFA „WŁOSKA KSIĘGA PIĘŚNI”: ASPEKT PERFORMATYWNO-INTERPRETACYJNY

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**Adnotacja.** W artykule omówiono zjawisko teatralności w muzyce w kontekście cyklu kameralno-wokalnego „*Italienisches Liederbuch*” austriackiego kompozytora Hugo Wolfa. Zwrócono uwagę na aspekty teatralności w muzyce – widowiskowość, aktywność i początek gry. Wyjaśniono różnicę między teatralnością wewnętrzną i zewnętrzną, w szczególności w twórczości kameralnej i wokalne H. Wolfa. Ważnym aspektem interpretacji performatywnej jest dwuwarstwowa semantyka wewnętrznej teatralności, semantyczne dekodowanie „plastyczności spektaklu i teatru” (według T. Kuryshevej). Zaakcentowano specyfikę wykonawczą wewnętrzną teatralność w cyklu „*Italienisches Liederbuch*”: akcję w grze, grę między prawdziwym i subiektywnym światami; dialog „solista – akompaniator”, „wykonawca – wykonawczyni”; indywidualizację, subiektywizację; możliwość nieskończonego wdrażania znaczeń, co wydobywa głębokie warstwy semantyczne „brzmiącego” i „niebrzmiącego” tekstu interpretowanego.

**Słowa kluczowe:** teatralność, teatralność wewnętrzna, Hugo Wolf, *Italienisches Liederbuch*, performance, interpretacja.

## INTERNAL THEATRICALITY OF HUGO WOLF’S CYCLE “ITALIENISCHES LIEDERBUCH”: PERFORMANCE AND INTERPRETATION ASPECT

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**Abstract.** The article considers the theatricality in music in the context of the chamber and vocal cycle “*Italienisches Liederbuch*” by composer Hugo Wolf. Attention is paid to aspects of theatricality in music – spectacle, effectiveness and the beginning of the game. The difference between internal and external theatricality is clarified, in particular, in the chamber and vocal work of H. Wolf. An important aspect is considered the two-layer semantics of internal theatricality, the semantic decoding of “spectacular-theatrical plasticity” (according to T. Kurysheva). Emphasis is placed on the performance specifics of internal theatricality in the cycle “*Italienisches Liederbuch*”: game action, the game between the real and subjective worlds; dialogue “vocalist – accompanist”, “performer (he) – performer (she)”; individualization, subjectivization; the possibility of infinite deployment of meanings, which reveals the deep semantic layers of “sound” and “soundless” interpreted text.

**Key words:** theatricality, inner theatricality, Hugo Wolf, *Italienisches Liederbuch*, performance, interpretation.

## ВНУТРІШНЯ ТЕАТРАЛЬНІСТЬ ЦИКЛУ ГУГО ВОЛЬФА «ІТАЛІЙСЬКА КНИГА ПІСЕНЬ»: ВИКОНАВСЬКО-ІНТЕРПРЕТАЦІЙНИЙ АСПЕКТ

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**Анотація.** У статті розглянуто феномен театральності в музиці у контексті камерно-вокального циклу «*Italienisches Liederbuch*» австрійського композитора Гуго Вольфа. Звернено увагу на аспекти театральності в музиці: видовищність, дієвість та ігрове начало. З’ясовано різницю між внутрішньою та зовнішньою театральністю, зокрема, у камерно-вокальній творчості Г. Вольфа. Важливим аспектом виконавської інтерпретації є двошаровість семантики внутрішньої театральності, семантичне декодування «видовищно-театральної пластичності» (за Т. Куришевою). Акцентується увага на виконавській специфіці внутрішньої театральності у циклі «*Italienisches Liederbuch*», зокрема на ігровому дійстві; грі між реальним та суб’єктивним світами; діалозі «вокаліст – концертмейстер», «виконавець – виконавиця»; індивідуалізації, суб’єктивізації; можливості нескінченного розгортання смислів, що виявляє глибинні смислові шари «звучного» і «незвучного» інтерпретованого тексту.

**Ключові слова:** театральність, внутрішня театральність, Гуго Вольф, *Italienisches Liederbuch*, виконавство, інтерпретація.

**Introduction.** Shakespeare's famous formula has long entered our lives: "all the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players"; it has become a capacious metaphor for the conventionality of social and domestic human behavior, a symbol of psychological hypocrisy. At the intersection of the real and theatrical worlds, different points of view came into convergence, each of which was endowed with its own model of external representation. It is no coincidence that the phenomenon of theatricality, the mission of which is to discover the inner multidimensionality of the human personality, the inexhaustibility of its spiritual and creative potential, indicates the consideration of this concept in culture, including music, outside the theater. Today there are many studies on theatricality and theatricalization in music. In this context, the most well-known investigations are done by T. Kurysheva (Kurysheva, 1984), G. Hansburg (Hansburg, 2012), O. Osoka (Osoka, 2011). In musicological research, V. Konnov (Konnov, 1988), P. Voelfioes (Voelfioes, 1960; 1970), T. Reznitskaya (Reznitskaya, 2013) and others have already paid attention to the theatrical component in H. Wolf's chamber and vocal works. However, there are still almost no studies in this perspective in which theatricality, in particular internal, and its manifestation are considered in terms of performing interpretation in the cycle "*Italienisches Liederbuch*" by Hugo Wolf.

**The aim** is to consider the phenomenon of inner theatricality of Hugo Wolf's chamber and vocal cycle "*Italienisches Liederbuch*" from the point of view of performance and interpretation aspect.

**Materials and methods.** The research material is based on the chamber and vocal cycle "*Italienisches Liederbuch*" by the famous Austrian composer Hugo Wolf, in particular the analysis of the songs "*Auch kleine Dinge können uns entzücken*", "*Wenn du, mein Liebster, steigst zum Himmel auf*". The research methodology is based on philosophical, cultural, psychological, musicological explorations, as well as methods of historical and cultural, hermeneutic, semiotic, analysis and synthesis, comparative studies, which allows a comprehensive consideration of the problem presented in the article.

**Results and discussion.** First of all, it is necessary to turn to the first of the scientific works, where this phenomenon is thoroughly and holistically considered in the context of musical art, namely – T. Kurysheva's study "Theatricality and Music" (Kurysheva, 1984). The author of the work gives a definition of theatricality in music<sup>1</sup> and considers it through the prism of three principles: 1) spectacle; 2) effectiveness, it means, movement in time, connected with the temporal unfolding of events; 3) presence of the game basis, its ambivalence, which, in our opinion, speaks of the inseparable relationship of reality and conventionality, which, in fact, generates theatricality in music.

It is also necessary to note important aspects of musical theatricality, which T. Kurysheva calls "internal" and "external" theatricality. And if the "external theatricality" is characteristic of stage genres, the "internal" has a more hidden character, manifested in almost all musical genres and as "a musical and stylistic device can erase the boundaries of genre style, <...> provoking many of them to interaction and mutation" (Kurysheva, 1984: 64). In the context of the subject of our article, it should be noted that it is in the chamber and vocal work of Wolf to a greater extent internal theatricality is seen, because it «occurs when the semantic emphasis is transferred from music-supported verbal development of content to internal musical reflection of ideas and images generated by words. What is more, this reflection is carried out by "showing"» (Kurysheva, 1984: 70).

As for the spectacle as one of the key characteristics of theatricality, T. Kurysheva, paraphrasing V. Meyerhold, says the following: "through the "image of movement", which is modeled, through plasticity, music transfers space into time". The point is that music as an expressive art carries only the "image of movement", both open and veiled. But the most important remark of the author of the famous work, which is important for our article, concerns the "two layers of the semantic plan of "plastic" signs: they characterize the emotional state through the manifestations of movements and reproduce the image of movement itself" (Kurysheva, 1984: 120). That is, due to musical rhythm (rhythmic pulsation, accents), meter, tempo, their patterns and expressive capabilities, as well as timbre, harmony, texture, etc., is the semantic decoding of this second, invisible layer, which according to T. Kurysheva is called "spectacular-theatrical plasticity" in music. All these properties determine the plasticity of music, convey various emotional states from anxiety and rapid pressure to alienation, contemplation and hopelessness.

Naturally, the first two sources of theatricality in music (spectacle and effectiveness) are connected with the beginning of the game. Since we refer the work of H. Wolf to *Spätromantik* of Austro-German musical culture, it is appropriate to mention the idea of F. Schiller that creating a "second aesthetic reality" romantic demiurge artist plays (Schiller, 2016). Another thinker, J. Huizinga, analyzing the game element of culture in different epochs, comes to the conclusion that "Romanticism originates in and out of the game" (Huizinga, 2004: 214), and it is, above all, a game of moods. In music, as in the game, the world is doubled, because next to reality there is another reality. And, therefore, we can talk about theatricality in music as a direct game action, a game between the real and subjective world. It should be noted that Hugo Wolf's "*Italienisches Liederbuch*" vividly demonstrates this doubling of the world – images and types of Italian folklore are reproduced in German, the Austrian composer embodies southern moods and feelings, lyrical (yet domestic!) plots are interpreted in this way different worlds, distant realities and a new reality emerges.

Music uses the theatrical rule of time period, where the game of time and game with time take place. Therefore, any musical composition, as an "art form" (according to T. Kurysheva), exists in four periods of time in artistic forms of time: 1) ontological ("real" according to T. Kurysheva); 2) modeled by the composer; 3) modeled by the performer and 4) the psychological time of the listener's perception. It should be noted that the time modeled by

<sup>1</sup> Kurysheva T.: "Theatricality is a non-musical principle (basis), free from direct and indispensable connection with theatrical genres, the stage and aesthetics of imagination, born under the influence of spectacular art forms, and directing creative work in its artistic manifestations for the art of the XX century" (Kurysheva, 1984: 63).

the performer is on the border with psychological time, as both are determined by the “internal properties of the perceiver, his experience, imagination, temperament” (Kuryshva, 1984: 153). In addition, the game of time (or with time) in all its forms depends on the era in which a composition is placed ontologically.

It should be noted that Kuryshva rightly remarks that “violation of the usual in the musical material harmonic techniques, rhythm, timbre, texture, melodic development, etc., <... > can create a sense of game that corresponds to the style of theater performance. Moreover, the more expressive the intentionality and conditionality, the stronger the game effect” (Kuryshva, 1984: 138). Thus, the manifestation of the “game” of internal theatricality does not violate the musical logic of dramatic development, it compensates for the abstractness and immateriality of musical images, their formation, allows the performer to be in different spatial and temporal planes. In the chamber and vocal compositions of H. Wolf, the latter aspect often creates the effect of alienation, as an observation from the side; a certain dialogue of the character with himself, with God, another person, nature; transition to another time and space, accompanied by tempo and rhythmic contrast, change of motor skills to extended sounds, etc.

Undoubtedly, any performance is directly related to the content of the musical text. Based on the concept of V. Kholopova, we should note that there are three vectors of understanding the meaning of music: musical hermeneutics, musical semantics and the theory of musical content (Kholopova, 2007), where musical hermeneutics is interpretation of music, musical semantics is the meaning of music phenomena, musical content is an expressive and semantic essence of music (Kholopova, 2014). But when it comes to compositional work where the musical and poetic components are equal, as, for example, in the chamber and vocal work of H. Wolf, there is an effect of double glazing, because the word acquires special meaning in Wolf. The composer’s sensitive and respectful attitude to the poetic word creates special conditions for *Lied* performers. This is due to the sound of the German language, with its large number of consonants, multi-syllable words, which to some extent affects not only the structure of the melody, rhythmic and intonational components, but also the performance style. In our opinion, such features also affect Hugo Wolf’s interpretation of *Lied*’s inner theatricality. In this context, the content of internal theatricality, its semantic and figurative content depends, on the one hand, on the work of the performer on “use in the text”, which is “analytical return of the text to context” (Zemtsovsky, 2002: 102), and on the other – from the richness of intuition and individuality of the performer. In addition, Leopold Spitzer points to the “use of musical means to create a balanced relationship between word and sound” (“*eines ausgewogenen Wort-Ton-Verhältnisses*”) (Spitzer, 2003: 1).

According to the world-famous singer Dietrich Fischer-Diskau, the composer never chose low-quality literary text for *Lied*; for him the content and appearance are equally important. He always consciously focused on the choice of texts on the famous poets of the past – J. Goethe, J. Eichendorff, E. Mörike. As the singer notes, “When you perform Wolf’s songs, you take responsibility not only to follow the composer, but also to carefully read the poem that underlies the song. I was sometimes accused of paying too much attention to the word – but prosecutors forgot that the proportion of the word varies depending on the chosen program. And the duties of the interpreter also include the need to understand *what* is suitable and for which composer it is suitable. For me, as a performer, the word does not play any special role at all, it just has to serve the music properly” (Rubenchyk, 2007).

The piano part plays an equally important role in the creation of inner theatricality in H. Wolf’s chamber and vocal compositions, because it often performs the “task of end-to-end development of thematicism, performing a unifying, architectonic function” (Reznitskaya, 2013: 142). The dialogue “performer-vocalist – accompanist” is not devoid of game theatrical component, and sometimes outright spectacle, as *Lied*’s concert performance is often accompanied by movements and gestures of vocalists addressed to the accompanist or listener; the use of the accompanist as “visible/invisible” in the plot of the character; using a certain detachment or, conversely, emphasized insight and/or extreme emotionality. That means, the game dialogue takes place not only at the level of hidden internal theatricality, but also frankly open external. Each of the *Lied*, improvised by the performers, becomes a miniature theatrical action, the spectacle, in which there are different layers of meaning, combining all the above-mentioned forms of game of time and with time.

The inner theatricality in H. Wolf’s chamber and vocal work is connected with the appeal “inside oneself” (Rappoport, 1972: 334), provoking the performer-interpreter to individualization, subjectivization; it opens the possibility of infinite unfolding of meanings, reveals deep layers of meaning, which, according to O. Yakupov, “are almost not subject to direct observation, potentially containing the most valuable information of the artistic order” (Yakupov, 2017: 44). Due to the inner theatricality, *Lied*’s images consist of a plexus of hints, which is a shell of unspoken and spoken, “sound” and “soundless” according to M. Arkadiev (Arkadiev, 2012), in search of “horizons of meaning” (H. Gadamer) there is a process of “extending the boundaries” of the interpreted text.

So, let’s consider the interpretation of two songs of the *Lied* genre from “*Italienisches Liederbuch*” (part I, 1890–91; part II, 1896), which was Hugo Wolf’s last major composition in the *Lied* genre. The literary basis of the cycle was a collection of Italian folk poetry translated by Paul Heyse, among which the composer was most interested in *rispetti* – tiny poetic expressions of love addressed to a loved one. For Wolf, these compositions were significant for the evolution of his own work. In correspondence with Emil Kaufmann, the composer wrote: “I consider “*Italienisches Liederbuch*” the most original and artistically complete of all my compositions” (Lobanov, 2016: 60).

The cycle, consisting of 46 small masterpieces, opens a new world – the world of ordinary people, their feelings and destiny. As you know, in his vocal cycles “literary composer” (“*der literarische Komponist*”) sought to convey not only the specific content of the poetic text, but also to accurately reflect the individual artistic style of the poet, author of the literary source. Folk poetry was the impetus for a new creative task – to reproduce not

the image of a particular poet, but – more broadly – the characters, types, national identity of the people. Features of the form and content of short poetic *rispetti* led to the concentration of thought, simplicity of musical language and refined form of “*Italienisches Liederbuch*”. Trying to look into the soul of the Italian people, Wolf created laconic sketches of Italian life, bright characters, manners, experiences of heroes, though not devoid of ethical depth and sublime philosophical context inherent in the Austrian and German romantic song. In this way the composer achieves the combination and harmonious coexistence of two creative dominants of the Italian cycle – the simplification and compression of the semantic content.

The idea of focusing on trifles as specific sources of true value and harmony of human life, wise acceptance of the reality of a huge and everywhere beautiful being is proclaimed in the first song of the cycle “*Even a little can be beautiful*” (“*Auch kleine Dinge können uns entzücken*”) that is the epigraph to the whole book.

As for the melody of the cycle in general, Wolf adheres to his favorite declamation, although at the same time we can feel the influence of Italian melody. It should be noted that “*Auch kleine Dinge können uns entzücken*” is distinguished among others by a long melody in the Schumann spirit. Based on the poetic source and striving for maximum correlation of all components of musical form and intonation, rhythmic, syntactic components of the poetic text, the composer turns in this case to the song-arias intonation type of melody, which alternates recitative and romantic intonations. The small four-bar piano introduction with descending intonations and counter-ascending arpeggios seems to depict the iridescent glow of pearls in the necklace. In general, the accompaniment of the *piano* part is mostly sustained within the framework of the pianissimo dynamics, over which a refined and dreamy, sometimes touching, vocal line is superimposed.

Unlike many of his compositions, when Wolf “paints” the role score in detail with a large number of remarks, here the composer is limited to a few wishes about the manner of performance (*Langsam und zehr zart* – *slowly and very gently*) and marks the desired tempo deviations. However, the hint to the performer is contained in the moving and graceful rhythmic pattern of the vocal part, dotted, as if with short sighs, eighth and sixteenth pauses.

In our opinion, the brilliant performance of this composition by the German opera and chamber singer *Diana Damrau* and the pianist *Helmut Deutsch* is a model of the performer’s interpretation of Hugo Wolf’s songs. The performers fully reproduced the composer’s idea, thanks to which the latter acquires an audible and sometimes visible form, which is the most important achievement, because, according to the researcher of the composer P. Voelfioes, “it is in Wolf’s ability to make the visible audible, and in the audible to capture the outlines of the visible, and here is the secret of the multifaceted clarity that turns each of his songs into a well-defined isolated phenomenon” (Voelfioes, 1970: 66). Diana Damrau skillfully recreates a lyrical monologue with a recitative and chanting central phrases. The melodically flexible and singing recitative in her performance is full of colorful subtle nuances. Particular attention is drawn to the singer’s interpretation of the “inner” space of the composition, which actually unfolds the plot of the song – simplicity and restraint, a wise view of the universe and acceptance of reality in all its manifestations. This, according to T. Reznitskaya, “allows us to accurately determine the image embedded in the song and find the necessary means of implementation for its realization” (Reznitskaya, 2013: 140).

Following the author’s instructions on the character (*Langsam und zehr zart*) and dynamics (*piano*) of the performance, reproducing an exquisite rhythmic pattern in a filigree way, the singer faithfully and with real pleasure reproduces the image of the composition, the brightest moment of which is a quiet climax (*Denkt an die Roseinie, wie klein ist – Just think of the Rose, how small it is*), when in an effort to detail the “smell” of each word and image, the performer reaches the final *piano*.

Speaking about the theatricalization of the song genre, we invariably state that Wolf’s wide use of the principle of dialogicity as a certain form of game. However, it is usually about embedding elements of dialogue at the micro level, it means, within the song. As for the “*Italienisches Liederbuch*”, the numbers of the cycle are similar to the lines of dialogue, the characters of which broadcast the full range of love experiences. The alternation of male and female songs – a dialogue of male and female characters – takes the action beyond a separate issue of the cycle, referring to the duet constructions of the opera genre. *Rispetti* are greetings embodied in an artistic form, which in itself implies the presence of a dialogue. Thus, the appeal to this genre of folk poetry also contains a desire for dramatization.

Having a dialogue, presence and “involvement” in the action during the performance of a partner on stage, silent, but not less effective responses at the level of gestures and facial expressions clearly demonstrates the performance of a cycle of Italian songs already mentioned by *Diana Damrau* and German opera singer *Jonas Kaufmann*. The construction of their performance, the order of alternation of songs, the level of stage interaction turn the concert performance into a dynamic and spectacular theatrical performance.

The topic of love, without a doubt, occupies a central place in Wolf’s chamber and vocal lyrics. The gradations of emotional experiences associated with the lyrical message of feelings presented in the vocal miniatures of the “Italian Book of Songs” are extremely diverse: outright declarations of love and cruel denials of reciprocity, tender or passionate appeals, and ironic, sometimes sarcastic, responses. However, the unifying factor is that all the “love experiences of the heroes of the cycle are presented not in statics, but in an extremely dynamic spiritual movement” (Konnov, 1993: 19).

The song “*When, my dear, you ascend to heaven*” (“*Wenn du, mein Liebster, steigst zum Himmel auf*”) belongs to the second part of the “*Italienisches Liederbuch*”, written in 1896. This is another example of a combination of *arioso* and declamatory principles, due to the attempt to multi-layered reflection of the content of the song. The composer combines the aria melody of lyrical feelings with a pronounced speech color of the declamatory style. It is a deeply intimate and at the same time sublime revelation, which wonderfully reduces not only the feelings

for the beloved, but also the religious feelings that the heroine of the song feels. “*Wenn du, mein Liebster, steigst zum Himmel auf*” is both an appeal and a dream, and a religious and philosophical statement that brings the feeling of love to the level of the divine essence of existence and complete union with the universe:

And when the Lord God sees the suffering of our love...

In one common he will pour two hearts,

And the heavenly flame will shine in paradise

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*Und sieht der Herrgott unsre Liebesschmerzen...*

*Zu Einem Herzen fügt er zwei zusammen,*

*Im Paradies, umglänzt von Himmels flammen.*

In the vortex of end-to-end development, there is a dynamic movement from the dream state of the heroine of the song through her appeal to her beloved, which, gradually gaining more and more expression, turns into an appeal to God. Each line of the poem and, accordingly, each musical phrase, like a step in a relentless game of moods, in the ascending emotional movement: from *piano* – to *fortissimo*, from melodious arias – to eloquent, almost ecstatic recitation, from wandering melody chromatisms and alterations – to sure scale. The emotionality of the heroine’s last utterance reaches the level of a fiery celestial radiance and culminates in the final chords of the piano part.

The performance of this song requires first of all attention to the reproduction of the pervasiveness of development at all levels – words, melodies, subtle nuances of pitch intonation, dynamics, emotional component – because only then there opens the prospect of embodying multilayered content of the song that combines sublime and earthly, sacred and profane, reality and “another reality”. At the same time, the most important sign of pervasiveness is the movement – according to T. Kurysheva, it is “the basis of spectacular and theatrical plasticity”.

Thus, the results and materials of the article devoted to the analysis of the performance interpretation of the songs of the chamber and vocal cycle “*Italienisches Liederbuch*” by Hugo Wolf can be used in further research and exploration.

**Conclusions.** The following properties of theatricality of musical art are revealed in the article: spectacle, effectiveness and presence of the game basis, which speaks of theatricality in music as a direct game action, a game between real and subjective world, being and otherness. Hugo Wolf’s “*Italienisches Liederbuch*” vividly demonstrates such a doubling of the world, a dichotomy – different worlds, distant realities are combined and a new reality emerges.

A characteristic feature of Wolf’s chamber and vocal work is the inner theatricality, which is revealed by shifting the semantic accents from the external verbal development of the content to the internal musical reflection of ideas and images. In this context, an important aspect of the performer’s interpretation is considered – the two-layer semantics of internal theatricality, the semantic decoding of Hugo Wolf’s “spectacular and theatrical plasticity” of “*Italienisches Liederbuch*”. Freedom of “game” allows the performer to be in dissimilar space and time planes, often giving the impression of alienation, observation from the side; dialogue of the character with himself, with God, another person, nature; transition to another time and space, accompanied by tempo and rhythmic contrast, change of motor skills to extended sounds, etc. Due to the internal theatricality of the image of the “*Italienisches Liederbuch*”, there is a possibility of infinite unfolding of meanings, which reveals the deep semantic layers of “sound” and “soundless” interpreted text. And the most important in the essential meaning of “live” performance is the process of “translation”, “recoding” of semantic content into sound.

Thus, the spectacle and game dialogue take place both at the level of hidden internal theatricality and open external. The stage interaction takes place between the performers of the women’s and men’s parts, between the singers and the accompanist, thanks to which each of the songs becomes a miniature theatrical action, a spectacle in which there are different layers of meaning. The cycle in general is built on the principle of dialogicity – numbers are similar to replicas of dialogue (alternation of men’s and women’s songs).

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