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A MUSICAL ANALYSIS OF CHORAL SONGS FROM THE COLLECTION "WHO SINGS, MEANS NO EVIL" BY BEKIM RAMADANI

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Abstract

Choral singing represents singing by a group of singers led by a conductor. Choral music can be sung with or without instrumental accompaniment. The construction of choral compositions can vary depending on the composer's style. Therefore, every choral piece differs from one another according to the construction and its expressive elements. In this paper, we will focus on choral singing and choral compositions.

The form of our work is the analysis of choral pieces based on some points of the musical expressive tools such as harmony, structure, texture, tempo and musical meter.

We have used 16 choral songs by different authors and characters. It is a compilation of songs published in one book (2011, Skopje) entitled "Who sings, means no evil" ("Kush këndon, keq s'mendon") Compilation of Choral Songs" by Bekim Ramadani, whose material we used for our study and our analysis. This book also contains audio material of the 16 choral songs.

The choral songs summarized in a book by the author are largely based on the folk music culture of various local and foreign cultures and traditions, processed and stylized in different ways, depending on the style of the author.

The purpose of our paper is to give importance to this genre of musical interpretation – the choral interpretation genre, to actualize the functioning of this form of musical structure since it has been neglected in recent years by cultural institutions and music professionals.

Keywords: Choir, Choral singing, Musical analysis, Expressive musical elements, Musical style, Composers

1. Introduction

Choral singing is one of the oldest forms of singing featuring the ensemble formed by a group of singers led by the conductor. Choral singing enables a sense of harmony and cohesion, enables the individual to become part of a group's shared success and strongly develops a sense of collectivization. This form of singing best reflects the culture and the tradition of a nation or a country. Choral creations are also a musical form that greatly enhances the folklore treasure of different nations and cultures. This form of singing reflects the rural idyll,

the soul and the naivety of the broad masses of villagers who lived in mountainous and rural areas or in the cities, where each is characterized by its own features of expressive artistic and musical elements, using different folk modes, tones, diverse harmonies, rich musical dramaturgy, thematic contrast, characteristic meter and rhythm, various textures, rich thematic refinements, tempo and various forms. It doesn't mean that the choral song reflects only the folk tradition. It can also have the concept of a completely modern spirit and artistically styled depending on the composer and his creative style.

2. A musical analysis of choral songs

In our work, we have used 16 choral songs by different authors and different contextual characters. It is about a compilation of songs published in a book (2011, Skopje) entitled "Who sings, means no evil" ("Kush këndon, keq s'mendon") Compilation of choral songs (ISBN-978-608-214-055-1) by Bekim Ramadani whose material we have used for our analysis and study. This book also has audio material of 16 choral songs.

The choral songs summarized in a book by the author, are largely based on the popular musical culture of various local and foreign cultures and traditions, elaborated and stylized in different ways depending on the authors' style.

The purpose of our paper is to give importance to this genre of musical interpretation - the choral interpretation genre, to actualize the functioning of this form of musical structure because it's been neglected in recent years by cultural institutions and music professionals. Therefore, with this paper, we want to promote an initiative for the forming of choral formations by cultural institutions and music professionals, as this form of music ensemble is one of those that best reflects and presents the culture of a nation, country or a city and the functioning of a choral ensemble strongly influences the creation of genuine musical artistic values, educates the public and elevates their music taste.

The songs included in this compilation are:

- 1. "Erdhi prilli ç'u shkri bora"-Anonymous
- 2. "Dola në bahçe"-Vinçenc Gjini
- 3. "La Bamba"-Ritchie Valens & John Halton
- 4. "Një lule"-Rexho Mullaj
- 5. "Ay giz"-Hayri Akay
- 6. "Çorapët e burrit"-Lorenc Antoni
- 7. "Momiçe mallo gjavollo"-Stefan Milan Gajdov
- 8. "Nën një rrasë atje mbi krua"-Çesk Zadeja
- 9. "O sole mio"-S. Strokina
- 10. "Ani këndon gjeli"-Gjergj Kaçinari
- 11. "Chae shukarye"-Dragan Shuplevski
- 12. "Drandofillja e vogël"-Mark Kaçinari
- 13. "Oh Susanna"-Anonymous
- 14. "As një erë nuku fryn"-Kosta Osmanlli
- 15. "Humoreska"-Kiril Makedonski
- 16. "Un'e mjera kam pas drashte"-Zef Çoba



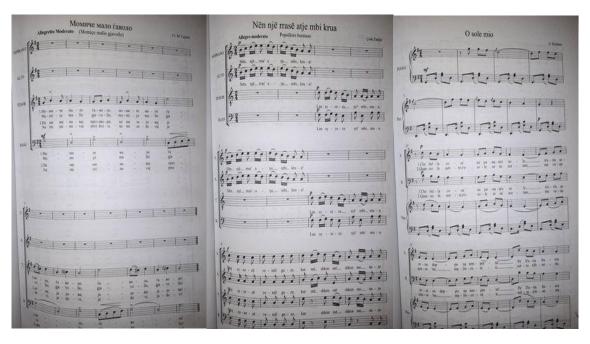
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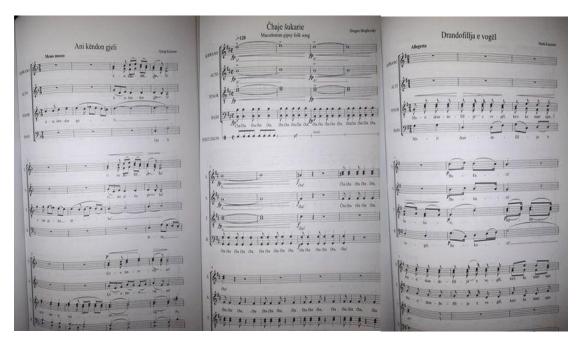
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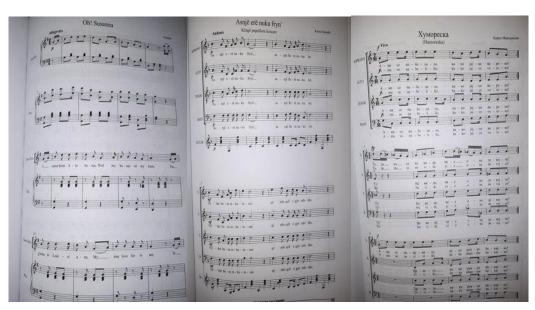
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1. Erdhi prilli ç'u shkri bora

The first song "Erdhi prilli ç'u shkri bora" with an anonymous author, is written for a men's choir. It is a Lab song of Himara province.

Harmony - the song is in folk mode - pentatonic.

The structure of the song is strophic.

Texture polyphonic.

Tempo Vivace-Rubato

Meter-3/4.

2. Dola në bahçe

This song is composed by the author Vinçenc Gjini for a mixed choir.

Harmony-D major.

The structure of the song is simple two-part.

The texture is polyphonic and homophonic.

Tempo is Andante.

Meter-7/8 (3+2+2).

3. La bamba

Song of Mexican genre, adapted for mixed choirs with piano accompaniment, composed by Ritchie Valens & Jon Halton.

Harmony-C major.

The structure is strophic with connecting parts that play the role of the refrain.

The texture is homophonic.

Tempo is Moderato, Latin Rock beat.

Meter-4/4.

4. Një lule

Of author Rexho Mullaj, for soprano and mixed choir.

Harmony-the song is built into a folk minor.

The structure of the song is entry with strophic form.

The texture is with one voice, with many voices, and homophonic.

Tempo-Allegro.

Meter is combined 4/4,3/4, 2/4,3/4, 4/4, 2/4, 3/4,4/4.

5. Ay giz

Is a Turkish choral song for mixed choir from the Turkish author Hayri Akay.

Harmony - tonality is in E minor.

The structure is built from a series of sentences similar to one another in terms of melodic content.

The texture is with many voices and homophonic.

Tempo is Largo (40bpm).

Meter-2/4.

6. Corapët e burrit

Song for solo soprano and mixed choir by the author Lorenc Antoni.

Harmony-G major.

The structure -fragmented structural processing.

The texture is with many voices, polyphonic.

Tempo is variable Allegro, Meno mosso, Allegro, Vivo, Largo, Presto.

Meter-2/4.

7. Momiçe mallo gjavollo

Song based on Macedonian folklore by the author Stefan Millan Gajdov, composed for mixed choir.

Harmony-G major.

The structure of the song is structural fragmentation with elaboration on the main theme that appears first.

The texture is homophonic, polyphonic and with many voices.

Tempo is Allegretto Moderato.

Meter-2/4.

8. Nën një rrasë atje mbi krua

Choral song for mixed choir processed based on Berat folk music by the author Çesk Zadeja.

Harmony of the song is in natural A minor that preserves the authenticity of the eolic modus.

The structure of the song is strophic with a refrain (in the form of dialogue).

The texture is homophonic.

Tempo is Allegro Moderato

Meter - 2/4.

9. O sole mio

Neapolitan song arranged by the composer S. Strokino for piano and mixed choir.

Harmony-G major.

The structure of the song is strophic with a refrain.

The texture is with one voice and homophonic.

Tempo is Andantino

Meter-2/4.

10. Ani këndon gjeli

The composer Gjergj Kaçinari has adapted this song for mixed choir.

Harmony-F major.

The structure is strophic and fragmented on thematic processing.

The texture is homophonic with many voices.

Tempo is Meno mosso, Moderato

Meter is combined 7/8 (3+2+2), 4/4.

11. Chaje sukarije

Choral song based on the gypsy music folklore arranged by the Macedonian composer Dragan Shuplevski for the accompaniment of darbuka.

Harmony-B minor.

The structure of the song is two-part, with entry and connecting parts between the two main thematic materials.

The texture is harmonic and homophonic.

Tempo is Allegro (120bpm)

Meter-2/2.

12. Drandofillja e vogël

Song for mixed choir by the author Mark Kaçinari.

Harmony - G major.

The structure - this is a simple two-part song with contrasting content

The texture is homophonic, with many voices.

Tempo - Alegretto.

Meter - 2/4, 9/8.

13. Oh, Susanna

An American western song for piano, solo tenor and mixed choir. The author is anonymous.

Harmony-G major.

The structure of the song is strophic with a refrain.

The texture is with one voice, homophonic

Tempo is Allegretto.

Meter-2/4.

14. Asnjë erë nuku fryn'

Processed choral song of Korça origin by the author Kosta Osmanlli, composed for guitar and mixed choir.

Harmony-F major.

The structure of the song is strophic with a refrain.

The texture is homophonic.

Tempo is Andante.

Meter-4/4.

15. Humoreska

Choral piece by the Macedonian author Kiril Makedonski composed for mixed choir.

Harmony-the song is built on the modes of Macedonian folk music.

The structure - identical and variable word verses are presented.

The texture is with many voices and homophonic.

Tempo is Vivo, Largo

Meter is built in 7/16 (2+2+3).

16. Un'e mjera kam pas drashte

Harmony-the song has folk harmony.

The structure of the song is strophic with elaboration.

The texture is homophonic with many voices.

Tempo is Allegretto

Meter is rich and combined 9/8 (2+2+2+3), 2/4, 9/8, 2/4, 9/8.

3. The presentation of our analysis through tables

Table 1. The type of choral interpretation

| Men's choir | Mixed choir | Mixed choir with instrumental accompaniment |
|---|---|--|
| 1. Erdhi prilli ç'u shkri bora- Anonymous | Dola në bahçe-Vinçenc Gjini | Mixed choir and piano 1.La bamba-R. Valens, J. Halton 2.O sole mio-S. Strokina |
| / | 2. Ay giz-Hayri Akay | Mixed choir and darabuka 3.Chaje shukarie-Dragan Shuplevski |
| / | 3. Momiçe mallo gjavollo- Stefan M. Gajdov | Mixed choir and guitar 4.As një erë nuku fryn'- Kosta Osmanlli |
| | 4. Nën një rrasë atje mbi krua-Çesk Zadeja | Mixed choir and soprano 5.Një lule-Rexho Mullaj 6.Çorapët e burrit-Lorenc |

| / | | Antoni |
|---|--|-----------------------------------|
| / | Ani këndon gjeli-Gjergj Kaçinari | Mixed choir, piano and tenor solo |
| | | 7.Oh Susanna-Anonymous |
| / | 6. Drandofillja e vogël- Mark Kaçinari | / |
| / | 7. Humoreska-Kiril Makedonski | / |
| / | 8. Un'e mjera kam pas drashte-Zef Çoba | / |

 Table 2. Harmony of choral songs

| Tonal harmony | Folk harmony | | | |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| 1.Dola në bahçe (D major)-Vinçenc Gjini | 1. Erdhi prilli ç'u shkri bora (pentatonic)- Anonymous | | | |
| 2. La bamba (C major)-R. Valens, J. Halton | 2. Një lule-Rexho Mullaj | | | |
| 3. Ay giz (E minor)-Hayri Akay | 3. Nën një rrasë atje mbi krua-Çesk Zadeja | | | |
| 4. Çorapët e burrit (G major)-Lorenc Antoni | 4. Humoreska-Kiril Makedonski | | | |
| 5.Momiçe mallo gjavollo (G major)-Stefan M. Gajdov | 5. Un'e mjera kam pas drashte-Zef Çoba | | | |
| 6. O sole mio (G major)-S. Strokina | / | | | |
| 7. Ani këndon gjeli (F minor)-Gjergj Kaçinari | / | | | |
| 8. Chaje shukarie (B minor)-Dragan Shuplevski | / | | | |
| 9. Drandofillja e vogël (G major) – Mark Kaçinari | / | | | |
| 10. Oh Susanna (G major)-Anonymous | / | | | |
| 11. As një erë nuku fryn' (G major)-Kosta Osmanlli | / | | | |

Table 3. Musical structure of choral songs

| Strophic | Strophic with refrain | Strophic with processing | Two-part | Verse of sentences | Structural fragmentation |
|---|--|--|--|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Erdhi prilli ç'u shkri bora- Anonymous | 1.La bamba-R. Valens, J. Halton | 1. Momiçe mallo gjavollo- Stefan M. Gajdov | 1.Dola në bahçe- Vinçenc Gjini | 1.Ay giz- Hayri Akay | 1.Çorapët e burrit- Lorenc Antoni |
| 2. Një lule-Rexho Mullaj | 2.Nën një rrasë atje mbi krua- Çesk Zadeja | 2.Ani këndon gjeli-Gjergj Kaçinari | 2.Chaje shukarie- Dragan Shuplevski | 2. Humoreska- Kiril Makedonski | / |
| / | mio-S. Strokina | mjera kam pas drashte- Zef Çoba | 3.Drandofillja e vogël-Mark Kaçinari | / | / |
| / | 4.Oh Susanna- Anonymous | / | / | / | / |
| / | 5.As një erë nuku fryn'- Kosta Osmanlli | / | / | / | / |

 Table 4. Texture of choral songs

| Polyphonic | Homophonic | Combined |
|---|---|---|
| 1.Erdhi prilli ç'u shkri bora- Anonymous | 1. La bamba-R. Valens, J. Halton | Polyphonic & homophonic 1. Dola në bahçe-Vinçenc Gjini |
| / | 2. As një erë nuku fryn'- Kosta Osmanlli | With one voice, with many voices and homophonic 2. Një lule-Rexho Mullaj |
| | | With many voices and homophonic |
| | | 3. Ay giz-Hayri Akay4. Humoreska-Kiril Makedonski |
| | | 5. Un'e mjera kam pas drashte-Zef Çoba6. Ani këndon gjeli-Gjergj |
| / | / | Kaçinari 7. Drandofillja e vogël-Mark Kaçinari |
| | | With many voices and polyphonic |
| / | / | 8. Çorapët e burrit-Lorenc Antoni |
| / | / | Homophonic, polyphonic and with many voices 9. Nën një rrasë atje mbi krua-Çesk Zadeja |
| | | 10. Momiçe mallo gjavollo-Stefan M. Gajdov |
| | | With one voice and homophonic |
| / | / | 11. O sole mio-S. Strokina12. Oh Susanna-Anonymous |
| | | Harmonic and homophonic |
| / | / | 13. Chaje shukarie-Dragan Shuplevski |

 Table 5. Tempo of choral songs

| Largo | Meno mosso | Andante | Andantino | Moderato | Allegretto | Allegro Moderato | Allegro | Vivo | Vivace |
|--------------------------------|---|--|--------------------------------|---|---|---|---|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Ay giz- Hayri Akay | 1.Ani këndon gjeli- Gjergj Kaçinari | 1.Dola në bahçe- Vinçenc Gjini | 1.O sole mio- S.Strokina | 1.La bamba- R. Valens, J. Halton | 1.Momiçe mallo gjavollo- Stefan M. Gajdov | 1. Nën një rrasë atje mbi krua- Çesk Zadeja | 1.Një lule- Rexho Mullaj | 1.Humoreska- Kiril Makedonski | 1.Erdhi prilli ç'u shkri bora- Anonymous |
| / | / | 2. As një erë nuku fryn'- Kosta Osmanlli | / | / | 2.Drandofillja e vogël-Mark Kaçinari | / | 2.Çorapët e burrit- Lorenc Antoni | / | / |
| / | / | / | / | / | 3. Oh Susanna- Anonymous | / | 3. Chaje shukarie- Dragan Shuplevski | / | / |
| / | / | / | / | / | 4. Un'e mjera kam pas drashte- Zef Çoba | / | | / | / |

 Table 6 Meter of choral songs

| 2/4, 2/2 | 3/4 | 4/4 | 7/8 | 7/16 | Combined |
|--|--|---|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| | | | | | meter |
| 1.Ay giz-Hayri Akay | 1.Erdhi prilli ç'u shkri bora- Anonymous | 1.La bamba- R. Valens, J. Halton | 1.Dola në bahçe-Vinçenc Gjini | 1.Humoreska-Kiril Makedonski | 1.Një lule-Rexho Mullaj (3/4, 4/4, 2/4) |
| 2.Çorapët e burrit- Lorenc Antoni | / | 2. As një erë nuku fryn'-Kosta Osmanlli | / | / | 2.Ani këndon gjeli-Gjergj Kaçinari (7/8, 4/4) |
| 3.Momiçe mallo gjavollo-Stefan M. Gajdov | / | / | / | / | 3.Drandofillja e vogël- Mark Kaçinari (2/4, 9/8) |
| 4.O sole mio-S.Strokina | | | | | 4. Un'e mjera kam pas drashte-Zef Çoba (9/8, 2/4) |

| | / | / | / | / | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5. Oh Susanna- Anonymous | / | / | / | / | / |
| 6.Nën një rrasë atje mbi krua-Çesk Zadeja | / | / | / | / | / |
| 7. Chaje shukarie- Dragan Shuplevski (2/2) | / | / | / | / | / |

4. Conclusions

From the analysis of these 16 choral pieces of various authors, summarized in a book by the author Bekim Ramadani, we have come to these conclusions:

- **by type of interpretation,** most of the choral songs belong to mixed choir, without instrumental accompaniment (8 songs), 7 choral songs are for mixed choir with instrumental accompaniment and only one song belongs to the men's choir;
- **by type of harmonic approach**-11 choral songs have tonal harmony and 5 songs have folk harmony;
- **Structure-**of the choral songs is diverse: strophic (2 songs), strophic with refrain (5), strophic with elaboration (3), two-part (3), verse of sentences (2), structural fragmentation (1);
- **The musical texture** of the choral songs is polyphonic (1 choral song) homophonic (2), and combined (13);
- **Tempo** is diverse, different tempos are used in the songs which are composed in Allegretto tempo;
- **Musical meter** is diverse: 2/4, 2/2, 3/4, 4/4, 7/8, 7/16, and combined meter where most of the songs (7 choral songs) are composed in two-part meter 2/4, 2/2.

References

- [1]. B.Ramadani. *Kush këndon keq s'mendon* (Choral song compilation), qendra kulturore informative, Skopje, 2011.
- [2]. B.Ramadani. Kush këndon keq s'mendon (Compact disc (CD), BIR, Tetovo, 2011.

The songs presented and analyzed in this compilation are:

- [1]. "Erdhi prilli ç'u shkri bora" Anonymous
- [2]. "Dola në bahçe" Vinçenc Gjini
- [3]. "La Bamba" Rutchie Valens & John Halton
- [4]. "Një lule" Rexho Mullaj
- [5]. "Ay giz" Hayri Akay
- [6]. "Çorapët e burrit" Lorenc Antoni
- [7]. "Momiçe mallo gjavollo" Stefan Milan Gajdov
- [8]. "Nën një rrasë atje mbi krua" Çesk Zadeja

- [9]. "O sole mio" S. Strokina
- [10]. "Ani këndon gjeli" Gjergj Kaçinari
- [11]. "Chae shukarye" Dragan Shuplevski
- [12]. "Drandofillja e vogël" Mark Kaçinari
- [13]. "Oh Susanna" Anonymous
- [14]. "As një erë nuku fryn" Kosta Osmanlli
- [15]. "Humoreska" Kiril Makedonski
- [16]. "Un' e mjera kam pas drashte" Zef Çoba