

## “THEATRE OF SOUND” – A MUSICAL CHALLENGE A. BAKSHI

Putecheva O.A.

*Kuban state medical university, Krasnodar, e-mail: putecheva.olga@mail.ru*

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The article is devoted to a unique creative model, the so-called “Theater of sound”, formed in the work of the Moscow composer A. Bakshi, reflecting not only the author’s worldview, but also the direction of the development of musical art of the early XX1 century in Russia. “Theater of sound” represents a decisive transformation of musical material, which incorporates a variety of artistic discoveries in the field of literature, theater, choreography at the intersection and interaction of various trends. This phenomenon is harmoniously integrated into the mainstream of the creative aspirations of the Western masters. The philosophical aspect of the “Theater of sound” is the modeling of a new sound reality and a new sound matter, organically connecting electronic sounds, natural, prepared. The new sound space is recognized as the basis of the transition to the artistic paradigm of synthetic character.

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**Keyword:** “Theater of sound”, “instrumental theatre”, transformation of sound matter, installation, musical challenge, prepared instruments, performativity

The formation of a new musical phenomenon “Theater of sound” is due to the dynamic cultural shifts of the early XX1 century. Contact with Western musical discoveries leads to the crystallization of domestic innovative techniques, the development of principles, lying at the intersection of arts. The powerful influence of literature, theater and choreographic plastics allowed to expand not only the sphere of musical expression, but also to enrich it with new content.

“Theater Sound” that defines the direction of the composition A. Bakshi, a little mentioned phenomenon, unexplored, requiring a comprehensive study. In this regard, there is a number of relevant aspects to the study of the origins, parallels, analogies of this phenomenon not only on the Russian soil, but also in Western musical culture. This explains the purpose of this article – the formulation of the concept of “Theater of sound”, the identification of the characteristic features of the creative method inherent in it. To achieve this goal, a number of tasks are put forward:

- a) indicate the origins of “ sound Theater”;
- b) draw Parallels with Western musical works;
- c) to present the essential features of the phenomenon.

There is no doubt that in the domestic instrumental music of the twentieth and the beginning of XX1 century was influenced by the experiments of eminent composers-the pioneers, the music systems which go beyond the established patterns in art.

The researchers write about the “Western impulse” [5, p. 201], pointing to the innovative ideas of M. Kagel, J. Cage, K. Stockhausen, J. Kram, M. Monk, who, breaking academic traditions, brought new ideas about the possibilities of musical art. It’s a special musical language, which is pure musical possibilities

expands to “sound institutions”, actively incorporating electronic sounds, naturalistic, man-made.

Innovation is achieved due to the contamination developed related types of art tools, their transformation into new soil, which encourages musical experimentation.

Music and sound matter is recognized and used as a means of transforming reality, and the work is created as a model of alternative existence. The development of a new sound space is a means of movement, a transition to a new artistic paradigm.

It is always a challenge aimed at establishing contact, dialogue with the public, taking the form of political action (“Requiem for Anna Politkovskaya”), the improvisational mindless game of happening (“Listening To Mayakovskiy”), the shocking catastrophic recreations of sound explosions of action (“Games in Installations”).

Along with the artistic and sound events, the plastic possibilities of the word are used. In a direct appeal to the word, we see a philosophical-hermeneutic tradition: the task of the artist is to listen to the word, syllable and even letter, to stimulate collective consciousness. Starting with J. Cage becomes the material of art life itself in its infinite manifestations, as well as the creative imagination of A. Bakshi, using a variety of material. In his compositions echoes of the experience of F. Glass, La Monte, M. Monk with their minimalist reduction, contamination of spatial effects are heard. This type of works takes different forms-instrumental theater, performance, happening, installation, which are currently crystallized and received theoretical justification in the works of prominent Western and domestic art theorists. Aron Bederson analyzing the work of M. Monk said: “It uses a new vocal dictionary, shouts, screams, sighs, even the language-in new ways, creating your

own meaningless language and turning it into musical form” [7, p. 76].

American historians and theorists of performance art, Rosley Goldberg, Clare Bishop, Eric Fisher-Lichte and a number of other theorists contributed to the study of this phenomenon. So, K. Bishop devoted her research to the installation, she notes: “instead of making a self-sufficient object, artists began to work in certain places, where all the space was interpreted as a single situation, which includes the viewer... this led to the use of this word for works that used all the space as “installation art” [8, p. 10]. The main features of participatory art K. Bishop sees the collectivity, communication, and procedural. “The main motor of the total installation, what it lives by – is the cranking up of the wheel of associations, cultural or everyday analogies, personal memories’. In other words, the installation prompts conscious and unconscious associations in the beholder” [8, p. 16].

Erika Fischer-Lichte has focused on the aesthetics of the performative. The most profound justification of performativity was given by Rosley Goldberg in her work “The Art of performance. From futurism to the present day”, in which many pages are devoted to Russian art.

The most musically grounded and studied genre is the instrumental theatre, on the basis of which A. Bakshi’s “Sound Theatre” is developing. A significant contribution to the study of the new genre was made by the Russian scientist Petrov V.O., whose work is called “Instrumental theater of the twentieth century”. The researcher not only gives a definition of this phenomenon, his attention is focused on the study of the origins, theory and history of the genre, in which “in addition to the musical series that supplies musical information, there are other series associated with the dramatization of the performing process...These elements can be used independently and comprehensively. In the latter case, the performance of the opus is likened to a full-fledged instrumental performance. All the events happening on stage, must be recorded in the score” [4, p. 3].

The legality of the installation of experiments in the Theater of Sound “with new artistic means, sometimes not previously owned by the artistic sphere, is beyond doubt. The meaning of “Theatre of Sound” in opposition to orderliness, predictability, the old music and the unpredictability, the seeming randomness of experimental music that is by cracking, shocking, inversion transformerait musical matter.

The philosophical aspect of Sound Theater is the modeling of a new sound reality, where the semantic unit is a separate sound. The sounding point as an extremely small value is filled with meaning and weight. Deepening in the reality of the individual sound characteristic of musical pointillism, where the sound is likened to the individual expressive one. But if in pointillism separate components are not connected by a single content and meaning, then in the Theater of Sound from point to point, from sound to sound, a single field of development gives the sound material integrity with consequences and predetermination arising from each state, characterizing the connections and logic of hierarchies.

The ideas of the theater of sound crystallize at the peak of the wave, denoting the movement from the “conventional theater” Meyerhold – Brecht, through the theater of the absurd Beckett, which marked the movement of departure from the verbal beginning. For theater, music is attractive by its propensity for abstract vision, sense of form and structure. For music, action and space taken from the theater are important.

“Instrumental theater or theatre instruments – this is the same phenomenon that is closely associated with healing the need of provocation, which is in our world...Apparently so attractive experiments, hoaxes, and extreme of the action of John Cage and Mauricio Kagel, Franco Donatoni, Silvano Bussotti Wlodzimirz Kotansky, which is entirely directed against most totalitari-European musical systems” [2].

The abrupt transformation of the parameters of all musical dimensions overcomes the evolutionary path of development and leads to the expansion of the musical language, which is like a revolution or revolution in musical thinking.

“Musical speech becomes in itself an infinite transformational and structural discursiveness”, – said F.K. Karaev [2]. On the dynamics, mobility and variability indicates R.S. Osminkin, stressing that “in the context of the overall “de-material” turn of the product like things to work as process” [3, p. 122], the role playing and improvisational beginning.

Unlike instrumental theatre, the concept of “Theatre of Sound” has not yet been formulated. If musicologists study the phenomenon of instrumental theater from the point of view of the development of the processes taking place in the works of composers, it should be noted that the objective processes of visualization and dramatization are not accidental, they are also largely associated with counter trends in

the field of theatrical art, aimed at reducing the role of the verbal beginning and the meanings behind the word.

According to Western researchers, among the key problems of composers who think in terms of avant-garde aesthetics is the search for new relationships between music and words.

The peculiarities of the "Theater of Sound" are related to the fact that it lies at the intersection of two trends – on the one hand – visualization and verbalization of the instrumental performing process, and on the other hand – abstraction and reduction of the verbal beginning (words) in the field of dramatic stage genres. Let us try to present the characteristics of the new phenomenon. A. Bakshi understands "Theatre of Sound" as a field of dialogue between music and theatre. "The Theater of Sound may include and miniatures, and great performances – the size doesn't matter" [1, p.10].

"Sound Theater" is a phenomenon that is included in the field of musical actionism, now widely spread, along with such genres as instrumental theater, happening, performance, action, game structure, art media, multimedia. Visualization and gaming element brings the area of choral theatre, also develop national musical culture.

If in the instrumental theater the works are intended for stage performance, then in the "Theater of Sound" the one-dimensionality of the site is overcome and the playing principle that breaks the conditionality of the scene is enhanced. The "Theater of Sound" is distinguished by the strengthening of theatrical action, the search for Director's decisions and the drama of space. Musical and plastic tendencies are of great importance, increasing attention to tempo-rhythm, sense of structure, plasticity.

It should be noted that this area includes several genre varieties, as the action of the "Theater of Sound" unfolds in different conditions. "Theater of Sound" can be represented as a kind of instrumental music when several soloists-instrumentalists act within the framework of a chamber opus (Trio "Drama", "Shakespeare-concert for violin and orchestra", "He and She. Piece for the violinist and the violinist").

The "Theater of Sound" exists as an integral part within the dramatic performance, in this case other laws come into law – the laws of the stage art of a single synthetic whole. This we see in the performances based on the works of F. M. Dostoevsky "Karamazov and hell", "Double".

Reducing the meaning of the word in the drama theatre makes it necessary to use the mu-

sical principle more widely as a means of not only enhancing expressiveness, but also concretizing the content. In this regard, the theatrical works of A. Bakshi are indicative, where the sound works brightly and expressively, which is found in such his performances: "More van Gogh", "Transformation", "Marriage", etc.

The principles of "Theatre Sound" Bakshi can act in great works of mystery in nature, involving the expressive possibilities of the synthesis of many art forms. In this case, the composer refers to the construction of many-part works, such as "Polyphony of the World", "From the Red Book".

"Theatre Sound" there is no literature, no script, libretto, summaries of contents. This, of course, does not mean that there is no plot. But it is presented by musical and plastic means and is not translated into conceptual language. Literature for me is not a field of attraction and a point of repulsion" [1, p. 9]. The rejection of the word concretize the idea, demanded to access a method that would set the direction of the movement of thought, having application in the literature and theatre of the grotesque, irony, absurdity, farce, etc. In order to push the semantic boundaries of a literary framework, these methods contribute to superconductivity, volume and symbolic perception of the sound information. An important achievement of musical works is the desire to adequately reproduce the methods that have proven themselves in literature, theater for the approval of new principles of "Theater sound". This is followed by sound experiments.

The "Theater of Sound" moves away from the semantic certainty of the word, verbal expressiveness does not interest him. "The "Theater of Sound" is not connected with the word. This is the main difference from the traditional status genres: opera, operetta, musical. Characters share not replicas, and intonations. Moreover, intonation can be not only playing musical instruments or singing, but any sound – the shuffling feet, coughing, etc. All can be arranged pitch, rhythm and, most importantly, semantic [1, p.10].

Work with literary sources is different, but the main thing is not the literal following of the literature, but any form of generalization, significant abstraction, it can be:

- a) use of a plot or an individual plot lines, the individual semantic areas of development actions;
- b) reflection of the general sense, the concept of the work;
- c) allusions, representation of individual images, states, reflections, sounds of action,

dreams, somehow reminiscent of the plot, the motives of spiritual vicissitudes.

Features of the Theater of Sound are based on the discoveries of music of the twentieth century: sonoristics, concrete music, electronic music experiments. The sound replaces the text, it is meaningful and, carries a certain musical content. The sound acts as an actor, as a storyline, as a characteristic of the actors, as a state or leitmotif.

In the Theater of Sound there is no rigid hierarchy of subordination: the main character is a secondary role, an episodic role. Each character is important, has a special meaning, even if it is represented only by sound. Sounds can be not only music, but acoustic, naturalistic, and it is better that musical instruments have been issued not the usual classic sounds of the orchestra, and the exotic sounds close to the sounds of concrete music.

Another important feature of the Theater of Sound is that the instrumentalists are not frozen figures, but moving actors, and the actors that break the plane vision of the scene.

Space in the "Theater of Sound" plays an important role, as well as the resulting spatial solutions, volume. "In the volume space of the "Theater of Sound", the performers can be located anywhere in the hall – on the stage, next to the viewer, behind him, above him and even below him. This makes it possible to hear several different music at the same time, which can go at different rates, with different dynamics, etc" [1, p. 9].

The "Theatre of Sound" takes a lot from the instrumental theatre, but the actors are characterized not only by traditional musical means and their action on the stage, but also by the sounds of the extra-musical sphere, such as rustles, creaks, knocks, howls, moans, and roars. But if the instrumental theater allows the use of words, speech, the "Theater of Sound" deliberately leaves the conceptual explicitness of words. Words lose their meaning, even if they are present in the "Theater of Sounds".

The words undergo decomposition, transformation, re-arrangement, opening of new sounds, and, consequently, new meanings. In the Theater of Sound, a semantic game with the word and inside the word itself is possible. From a single word grow, swell new meanings. The main task – to escape from the univocity of sense, to get away from the original vision, to give meaning to the kaleidoscopic echo in the game, in combinatorics to open a new and unexplored side of the image, to give a polyphony of meanings when a word, a phrase implying, to leave unsaid the text and forced the thought

to flee in several directions. New meanings are accentuated by non-musical sounds. The techniques of "Sound Theater" are adequate to the techniques of stage action-repetition, alternation, transposition, interaction. Thus, the sound is detected, becomes visible and tangible. Connections and relationships are essential, meaningful and can be found in large time intervals or gaming spaces, where the sound does not necessarily arise under the laws of determination flowing into another conditioned, and after significant periods of time as it hangs outside space and time.

The composer is proficient in various techniques of musical writing (aleatorics, sonoristics, concrete and electronic music) and uses them in his works, but comes to the idea of moving deep into the sound matter and the possibility of composing musical primordial principles, that is, composing the sound itself, sound material for each specific product.

A. Bakshi is an artist who has an extremely subtle sense of sound matter, subtle nuances and vibrations, echoes and oscillations; not only timbres, but also their components are important for him. Sound for him is something complex, multi-component, consisting of a variety of colors and sound backgrounds, layers, levels. Those sounds that we imagine noise, he hears as three-dimensional complexes of different sound mixtures. Hence the possibility of choosing for each product its special sound structures.

The theater of Sound is associated with a close attention to a particular sound, the disclosure of its multiple parameters, giving a deepening of the musical idea due to the wealth of means of expression used. It is literature and theatre that give a powerful impetus to the composer's work. He knows literature and has a keen sense of psychological twists and nuances. That is why his works are allusions to well – known subjects of classical works of literature and theater.

It is significant that many composers come to the idea of volume and variety of sound. On the multi-sound writes the German composer N. Tsapf: "for artists of sound or for so – called musical creators today opens a range of musical parameters, which was previously simply unimaginable...these include: time (duration), frequency (pitch) – amplitude (dynamics). As for the parameters that are amenable to comparison and verification, this could include more instrumentation, different techniques of the game and the space (in other words: time, frequency, amplitude, tools, acoustics, interpretation)" [6, p. 20–21].

Each parameter can be analyzed and the scope of its application can be traced. In terms of comparing the Theater of Sound with similar phenomena (performance, happening), it is possible to point to the importance of timbre in it, and Bakshi often refuses from the traditional classical sounds of the European orchestra in favor of prepared instruments, performance in a special rarely used way and introducing rare instruments into the score or specially created for this case.

The "Theater of Sound" is a work that is not only musically heard, but also visually provided from the point of view of the Director's plan by the co-authors, so improvisational sections are few and their action is not supposed to involve the viewer. Theatre of Sound-Director's theatre, where the composer designs all levels: 1) micro level (split sound) 2) macro level-drama, interacting lines 3) mega-level-directing and the project as a whole.

The "Theater of Sound" is different from the happening, which is based on the randomness, unpredictability of the game and the actions of the audience. But what is common is the element of absurdity that arises from the clash of reality and virtuality. The model under study is also different from the performance, which has a complete structure, may involve the introduction of elements of randomness, absurdity. All of these genres differ in the degree of improvisation, logic and controlled game behavior.

Summarizing the above, we can say the following: the "Theatre of sound" is the leading creative model of the Moscow composer A. Bakshi and acts as the most adequate means

of conveying his vision of the world picture. This creative method is harmoniously integrated into the wide context of the revolutionary transformation of musical matter. It is fully correlated with the creative aspirations of Western musical pioneers at the level of techniques, methods and features of artistic thinking, intersecting with the non-musical phenomena of literary and theatrical spheres. Being the leading artistic model in A. Bakshi's work, "Sound Theater" has absorbed the most significant and highly artistic principles, which expand the possibilities of content in music.

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