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# Bandura in the Late 1990s and Early 2000s Compositions by Maryna Denysenko Genre and Stylistic Context of Ideas

# Бандура у композиторській творчості Марини Денисенко кінця 1990-х — початку 2000-х Жанрово-стилістичний контекст задумів

Abstract. The article summarizes the use of bandura in the compositional ideas of Maryna Denysenko, a famous Ukrainian composer (1962-2022). The nature of the bandura use in the artist's works suggests the process of the academicization of the instrument. Engaging bandura in the Winter and Spring play and in the August the Sickle cycle, Maryna Denysenko makes this instrument a mediator between the musical material of a non-folklore nature and the folklore themes declared in the programmatic titles of the works. In general, Denysenko's results demonstrate high mastery of compositional technique and artistic perfection, corresponding to contemporary musical trends. This once again confirms the urgent need to revive and explore her work. The analysis of Maryna Denysenko's works featuring bandura revealed the following stylistic features of the composer's creative method: a tendency to a programmatic approach, to the realization of folklore themes without explicit references to the characteristics of traditional genres of Ukrainian folklore in the musical language, and to a pronounced integrity of the composition. Her ideas in the field of instrumental bandura are characterized by the use of decentralized harmonic systems and modality in the principles of the harmonic basis of her compositions. These are the regularities of constructing colorful intonational material based on movements of seconds as the main structural microelements. The components of the author's style of the instrumental chamber works with bandura were revealed, including the exchange of roles between bandura and piano at certain moments of the work; elaborate composition with the dominating improvisation; a significant role of polyphonic techniques (use of equirhythmic counterpoint, various imitations, canons with two or more voices); numerous instances of inventive sound imagery (for example, the depiction of the sounds of drops and gurgling water in the third movement with the help of bells, a xylophone, or the layering of aleatoric techniques of bandura performance and pizzicato strings).

Keywords: Maryna Denysenko, academic bandura, Winter and Spring, August the Sickle, genre and stylistic dimensions of creativity.

#### Introduction

Maryna Denysenko represents the constellation of artists who entered the scene of Ukrainian music in the 1980s and 1990s. Her compositional work is associated with new trends in Ukrainian art of the turn of the twenty-first century, namely, postmodern art, the importance of each element of the system, spontaneity, chamber nature, and presentation at international music venues. However, at present, M. Denysenko's work rarely becomes

the subject of scientific research and thus undeservedly remains "in the shadows." After the composer's death, this work will be the first posthumous comprehensive research of her role in the chamber and symphonic music for bandura, which constitutes the relevance of this paper.

#### Aim of the paper

The paper aims to create conceptual ideas about the stylistics of M. Denysenko's works for academic

bandura. The following **objectives** are set: to consider the composer's creative method on the example of her works with the participation of the academic bandura; to analyze the genre and style features of such works as *Winter and Spring* for bandura and piano, *August the Sickle* for bandura, strings, and percussion; to determine the specifics of using bandura in the artist's work.

#### Literature Review

Currently, only a few works cover the life and work of M. Denysenko; these are short scientific papers, usually focusing on a particular aspect of her activity. Olena Berehova (Beregova, 2022) was the first to attempt performing a generalization of the aesthetic orientation of Maryna Denysenko's work and to describe the stylistic features that the composer's music acquired throughout her career. Nataliia Morshchakova delves into the specifics of the composer's timbre thinking in works with the bassoon (Morshhakova, 2016; 2017). Morshhakova considers M. Denysenko's creative experiments in connection with the composer's theoretical views on timbre expressed in her academic works. Karina Rikman, analyzing M. Denysenko's Panegyric 1 (Rikman, 2002) and Panegyric 2 (Rikman, 2008), focuses on the issues of musical eventuality. In addition to these individual works, Karina Rikman analyzes, among others, M. Denysenko's work The Longest Sutra (Rikman, 2007) from the same perspective. Iryna Druzhga's work (Druzhga, 2021) examines the complex performing and expressive elements of Maryna Denysenko's music for bandura. The scholar highlights the role of bandura in the context of the composer's artistic design and therefore addresses many complex compositional issues.

#### **Results and Discussion**

It is known that Maryna Denysenko was a very versatile person—as a musician, in addition to composing, research work was also present in her life. She was a wellknown and respected musicologist, authoring numerous academic publications. Another sphere of her activity was teaching. However, her interests went beyond music. She also contributed to Ukrainian culture in the literary field. She was very interested and well versed in literature, as illustrated by the fact that she even wrote book reviews, for example, on Oleksandr Apalkov's non-fiction piece (Denysenko, 2021, October 4), and had publications in literary almanacs. However, for M. Denysenko, according to a renowned composer and friend Oleksandr Kozarenko (O. Kozarenko, personal communication, October 27, 2022), the main thing was creativity. It was manifested in literature as well—she wrote poems, and even published a poetry collection, Journey (2015). Maryna Denysenko authored a significant number works of various genres original, non-trivial in their musical language and ideas: symphonic, chamber ensemble, instrumental chamber, and choral pieces, the aesthetics of which accumulates

such essential features of the Ukrainian national mentality as "lyricism, sincerity, cordocentricity, and poetic worldview" (Beregova, 2022, p. 98).

Winter and Spring for bandura and piano. Instrumental and chamber style. The original play Winter and Spring for bandura and piano was composed by M. Denysenko in Kyiv in January 2000 (the data is indicated in the composer's fair copy of the full score, Igor Savchuk's personal archive). The composer dedicated it to her friends, Lubomyr Shevchuk and Igor Savchuk, who later became the first performers of this work. During this period of her creativity, Denysenko had a tendency to neostyles, in particular, neo-impressionism, which determines the watercolor-like nature of this work. The play Winter and Spring is a laconic characteristic sketch. The theme of the change of seasons and the winter and spring meeting refers to the corresponding motifs in Ukrainian folklore. Still, the composer does not intentionally quote folklore sources neither she introduces explicit features of calendar and ritual songs in the work. In this case, a symbolic "hint" to Ukrainian folk art is the bandura in the score, combined with an academic instrument—the piano.

In the play, paano and bandura are engaged on an equal basis. This is expressed in several ways. First, both instruments are used simultaneously throughout the piece. Second, the nature of the musical material (the movement's general tone, playing techniques, and specific rhythmic patterns) does not change depending on the instrument. Third, throughout the piece, there is an exchange of sorts in the functions of the material: in the form at a temporal distance (for example, between bars 8–10 and 34–36), as well as within the same structure—in the complementary movement, when the material of one instrument sets off another (for example, bars 12–14), or in direct echoes (bars 1-2)<sup>1</sup>. This interaction reveals: a) the formation of piano and bandura as a single complex, the timbre characteristic of which, arguably, becomes one of the essential qualities in this work, b) the dialogic nature of the instruments in their joint timbral "fusion," c) interpretation of the bandura that goes beyond the traditional folklore style.

Analyzing this work, the researcher Iryna Druzhga writes about the instances when Denysenko "uses improvisation as the principle underlying the composition" (Druzhga, 2021, p. 142). The importance of this cannot be stressed enough, as improvisation is a defining feature of this work, constantly manifesting itself at different basic levels of its structure. Thus, there is no clear theme—one can only observe certain features inherent in a particular section of the work. At the level of pitch organization, Maryna Denysenko uses a decentralized fret system, which, again, illustrates more freedom in this aspect than if it was the same

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> This is still about the function of the material, and in this case, there is no intonational exchange between the instruments, only a rhythmic echo.

tonality. In addition, the music of *Winter and Spring* does not have a rigid metrical grid<sup>1</sup>; thus, the division into "bars" in this work is moderately arbitrary. The composer marks these multi-scale constructions mostly with dotted lines, which roughly divide the musical material into certain "blocks" and facilitate coordination of the ensemble members. The rhythm in the piece includes many figures with note values (from triplets, for example, in bar 26, to nonuplet in bar 24, etc.), to which are added dotted (bars 1–2) and syncopated rhythmic patterns (bars 37–38). This ultimately results in the appearance of elements of polyrhythm (bars 9–10). In addition, the work contains unrhythmic fragments (bars 13–16). The composer also uses the techniques of controlled aleatoric of the internal form (Kohoutek, 1976, p. 241–243), for example, in bars 28–30.

The form of the work is quite fluid and plastic, yet it is structured in accordance with its programmatic title. Thus, the piece has two main sections presenting the images of Winter (Adagio) and Spring (Allegro). An introduction precedes the first section. The final section is the concluding one. The introduction (bars 1-7) is preparatory. It represents the cross-cutting principle of improvisation that underlies the work (this is expressed even in the author's note improvizato). At the level of the parameters of the organization of the musical fabric, the introduction tests the material of the following sections. First, the rhythmic component should be noted—it is dominated by fragmentary figures. Reverse dashes (sixteenths and eighths with a dot) followed by a delay of the last sound, as well as figures of "running" with sixteenths, ending in a long sound (sometimes using "free slur" that refers to the impressionistic interpretation of sound colors), will frequently appear in the next section. This rhythmic pattern does not imply a relief melody. Hence, the intonation here is more likely to be characterized by "bursts," passages with an orientation towards specific pitch points. However, it is possible to distinguish typical movements of seconds followed by a tertiary move in one direction. Along with the register dispersion of these motifs, there are elements of pointillism, which are also present to some extent in the first movement. At the end of the introduction, the piano part uses aleatoric techniques that will be inherent in the second section of the work.

In addition, the introduction contains features that do not belong to a specific section of the work but are common for the entire play. For example, the introduction sets the soundscape and the basic foundation for all sections. However, throughout the work, it undergoes modifications in different sections, and this is already foreseen in the introduction: in the first measure, two variants of the *F* sound appear (*F* and *F sharp*), and at the end of the opening, in addition to the *E* sound, *E flat* appears. Thus, the sound series of the introduction is the following (Example 1).



Example 1

Due to their frequent and rhythmically emphasized use, certain sounds of this sound system acquire the meaning of specific harmonic supports (in the introduction, these are primarily *F sharp* and *E flat*). The harmony emerges without rigid centralization, the degrees of which "dictate," which consonances will arise in the vertical dimension. In this context, it may be argued that Denysenko uses a modal harmonic system. The introduction also sets up another feature that applies to the entire work, which lies in the pointillistic texture techniques and the presentation of the material. In the work, specific intonation fades into the background so that the timbral qualities of the whole come to the fore. This illustrates the phenomenon of the so-called "emancipation of timbre" that characterizes many pieces of twentieth-century music (Tsenova, 2007, p. 54).

The register situation in the introduction can be viewed ambiguously. Denysenko uses various active movements in the lower, middle, and upper registers. The following two sections of the work tend to develop certain specific registers. Therefore, the introduction simultaneously sets them off with its register saturation and, on the other hand, again summarizes the features of the following sections.

An exciting feature of the opening section, which reveals the dialogic interaction between bandura and piano, is the complementarity of the movement in the parts of the instruments. They not only rhythmically "give way" to each other but have a complementary direction of motion. Thus, the downward movement of the piano is balanced by the upward trend of the bandura and vice versa. The same is true in regard to the registers—bandura and piano mirror each other's registers.

Thus, it transpires that the introduction is a rather extensive section of the form, which illustrates the prominent feature of the whole work—the principle of improvisation,. In essence, it presents crucial features of the following sections of the work and at the same time moderately shades the beginning of the first section. In addition, it sets the general basic features of the entire piece—the sound system, the modal design of the harmony, and the similar nature of the interaction between piano and bandura.

The first section (bars 8–23) is the Adagio. The composer aimed to create a frozen image of a frosty winter. The section can be divided into three constructions, which are certain phases of development.

The first one (bars 8–11) is characterized by a more significant influence of the introduction material in terms of rhythm and intonation (for example, there are alternations of seconds and tertiaries in the same direction of movement, as mentioned above). At the beginning of the first section, there appears the harmony that served as the backbone of a significant part of the introduction—a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The work contains only one bar with a certain size—bar 34 by 2\4.

small diminished septa cord with a quartet (E - G - A -B flat -D). In the future, harmony will repeatedly play a unifying role, as noted by I. Druzhga (Druzhga, 2021, p. 143-144). Denysenko makes a relatively smooth transition from the introduction. However, the music acquires new features consistent with the program of the piece. The music seems to be trying to "break free" register-wise: the musical material is mainly concentrated in the middle-upper register, and the lower register sounds are used to create spatiality of sound. The soundscape of this section is generally very mobile. In this particular construction, it is expressed in the variability of the sound F (sometimes F sharp, sometimes F natural). In this fragment, bandura comes to the fore in the part in which rhythmically colorful material is presented with continuous movement. The "prickly" plucked timbre probably carries an almost pictorial load in this case, conveying a touch of frost and the dazzling glitter of snow. The piano plays an accompanying role. Its material is based on the reverse-dotted figures with free slurs mentioned above, which implies a long-smoldering fading of sound that creates the background of "sounding silence."

The subsequent development (bars 12-18) is associated with a more significant "retreat" into the middle-upper register. However, the technique of spatial filling does not disappear due to the occasional use of individual low-register sounds. The use of free rhythm also marks the construction—the score contains only sketched note heads without rests, so the performers adjust the rhythm during the performance. Most importantly, this fragment is associated with a change in the nature of intonation-moderately fragmentary, angular motifs turn into solid melodic phrases passed from part to part. There are even variants of phrases (the intonation material of the bandura from bar 13 is played with some changes by the piano in bar 16) and imitations (bandura's proposta in bar 12—piano's risposta in bar 13). However, they are intertwined with the previously used pointillistic "bursts" in the reverse-dotted rhythm. For the first time in the work, peculiar chromatisms appear here—the use of different variants of the same degree in succession, which gives the effect of "fragility" in the melodic lines (special attention is drawn to the semitone movements of F sharp — F natural by the bandura in bars 12, 16, and by the piano in bar 13). This is how the process of gradual restructuring of the sound system and preparation of its new version, which is stabilized in the second section, is manifested.

The third construction (bars 19–23) is transitional between the first and second sections. The lower register (especially in the bandura) starts to be actively involved. The rhythmic figures described above still appear occasionally but they are gradually replaced by others. Thus, durations of uneven note value are substituted with the durations with even note value. The texture changes quite significantly: if earlier it was figurative and scattered, later on, it is more linear, with a chordal core, which is melodized. The latter

can be seen as a feature of romantic thinking. The rhythmic and chordal structure contributes to a more explicit and rigorous organization of the instruments' sound, which will be maintained at the beginning of the second movement. In bar 23, this principle is violated. Polyrhythm is introduced, and the vertical again becomes only a resultant. Still, the composer brings the sound closer to the second section (for example, sextets in the Adagio tempo will sound like triplets in the following Allegro, etc.) The preparation of the second section is also completed regarding the sound system—the *F sharp* finally disappears from use, and the F sharp begins to play a special role in the order. In addition, the flow of the first section into the second is facilitated by harmony. Its changing flow is based on a minor, major septa cord with a quartet (C - E - F - G - B flat), the harmonic basis for the beginning of the following form section.

The second section (bars 24–33) contrasts the first in tempo—Allegro. However, as in the case of the introduction and the first section, M. Denysenko again makes a relatively flexible connection between the sections. Following the program, this can be interpreted as conveying a smooth change of seasons.

In this section, two fragments should be distinguished—from the initial four bars and the next six bars, which differ in their interpretation of means and techniques. However, they are ideologically united in reflecting this movement's main image. In contrast to the frozenness of the winter part of the work, the idea of spring is presented as incredibly active, lively, and uninhibited. Uniform, almost without dashes, strictly prescribed rhythm at the beginning of the section (bars 24–27) contributes to the impression of a more precise flow of metrical accents. Interestingly, the improvisational freedom of using nonuplets, septoles, and other figures in polyrhythmic combinations is preserved. Still, it is moderated by the almost everpresent triplets that orient this frantic whirlwind of durations. Such "constant" figures produce a more coherent vertical structure, which gives the polyphonic whole a sufficiently cohesive and organized feel compared to the introduction or the first two constructions of the Adagio section. Given that in the opening bars of this section, there is the only consonance of the minor, major septa cord mentioned earlier; it is the rhythmic component that comes to the fore here and becomes an expression of almost primitive energy, which is further emphasized by the transition to the lower register dominating the entire section. It is symptomatic that the piano here acquires a more percussive sound.

From bar 28 until the end of the section, the techniques of controlled aleatorics dominate. The fragments include many rhythmic figures of free note value, dotted lines, and syncopations, are looped, both in the part of a single instrument (piano in bars 29–30, bandura in bar 33) and both parts simultaneously (bars 28, 32), which gives a minimal opportunity to calculate the final sound. Still,

this approximation of the notation produces the maximum freedom of sound, which is figuratively appropriate because spring is associated with revival, movement, and openness. It is not surprising that it is in this section that non-standard methods of playing instruments are introduced—quasi glissando on the bandura body, "playing on the soundboard, under the piano soundboard" (the composer's remark), playing on the piano strings. The set of atypical playing techniques is also complemented by an instruction to play glissando on the piano "on any black keys," which shows how the composer, in the conditions of aleatoric, still follows the emerging sound colors. Thus, this technique becomes a thoughtful means of emphasizing the author's intention.

The beginning of the final section (bars 34–43), which can be interpreted as a reprise or coda of a twopart form, is marked by the composer with the appearance of metrical clarity and a brief muting of the piano part. Later on, the standard timbre of this instrument (after the previous play on the strings) and the high register return. However, the section manifests itself even more as it contains material of a synthesizing nature. In bars 34-35, the material from the beginning of the first section returns. However, it should be noted that this material is not repeated in the literal sense—its contour sketches are transferred, i.e., the characteristic texture pattern, approximate rhythm, typical intonation "bursts," and the phonism of a minor, diminished septa cord. It is interesting that in comparison to bars 8–10, the instruments seem to have exchanged the roles and functions of the material—now the piano plays the overtones—"bursts," and the bandura creates the background (tremulous sound), again, using reverse-dotted figures. In bars 37-38, bandura uses syncopated figures from the second section. The acquired elements from the Allegro section also include aleatoric techniques for the piano in the low register and an unconventional method of sound production—playing the body for the bandura.

The piece is quite dynamic and thoughtful despite its apparent improvisational nature. The conventionally thematic arches (between the introduction and the final section with the rearrangement of the initial material between bandura and piano) contribute to a significant "bonding" of the form, and the variable fluidity in the sound structure gives a remarkable development to the work.

The ways of presenting the material on the piano and bandura and the techniques of playing them indicate an interest in their timbre and coloristic side, their use as instruments with vast possibilities of modern sound production.

In terms of style, this particular piece illustrates the tendency to combine different things organically and synthetically. For this specific work, the composer, as seen from the analysis, accumulated impressionistic features and features of other styles of twentieth-century music, particularly pointillism. The fact that the timbre component took a leading position in the work makes it similar to the sonority. It becomes a manifestation of current trends in raising the status of timbre at the end of the twentieth century, which M. Denysenko notes herself (Denysenko, 2007, p. 198).

While concluding this analysis of M. Denysenko's excellent play, the results of the symbolic logic in the work should be pointed out. Operating the images from the programmatic title of the work, it may be stated that at the end of the play Winter and Spring meet. However, despite many elements of the second section included in the conclusion, the winter imagery, with its pointillistic features and "frozen" background effects (extended sonorities with free slurs in the score), still persists. Thus, M. Denysenko has figuratively built the work according to the well-known logic of "thesis—antithesis—synthesis," reflecting the duality of the transitional zone of the seasons.

August the Sickle for bandura, strings, and percussion instruments. Features of genre and style. Very little is known about the circumstances of the creation of this work. The only precise information is the year of its composition, 1997. Based on M. Denysenko's oeuvre, this work reflects the composer's love for small forms, the transition from the pompous, extensive symphonic genres to the orchestral chamber sphere.

The cycle *August the Sickle* consists of five small orchestral sketches. This interesting individual genre correlates with the tradition of romantic instrumental cycles.

The summer cycle from the theme of the agricultural calendar unites the works of August the Sickle. Giving programmatic titles to the works was a stylistic feature of M. Denysenko, therefore, she emphasized the folklore tendency with colorful titles for each part of the cycle. Two parts (the first and final) have a more specific programmatic nature, which is related to the religious and ceremonial side of the last summer month. Thus, Part I is titled "Makoviya..."2, which refers to the feast of the Holy Martyrs Maccabees (August 14) highly honored in traditional Ukrainian culture. Part V, titled "August the Sickle" hints at the harvest theme. The fact that this title was chosen as the title of the entire cycle suggests that this theme is unifying for all parts, even though the titles of parts II and III have a generalized folk-poetic orientation. Thus, Part II is titled "Popovna Kalyna...", and Part III—"Summer by the Water..." The title of Part VI is also formally unrelated to ritual imagery—it is called "Kaniv," which refers

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> In the bar 34, the time signature appears.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> In M. Denysenko's manuscript score, the titles of the first three movements are given with an ellipsis at the end of the title. Arguagbly, the program titles are related to a certain literary (probably poetic) source or several sources and contain the initial phrases of lines of text. Unfortunately, these primary sources are yet to be determined.

to a Ukrainian city of outstanding history and culture: it was already a large town in the times of Ancient Rus, serving as a meeting place for princes with Polovtsian ambassadors; and in the nineteenth century it became the burial site of Taras Shevchenko (*Kaniv: 7 istorychnyx mist ta mistechok* (n. d.)), and also became an essential motif of Ya. Pluzhnyk's poem-reflection *Kaniv*. For M. Denysenko, Kaniv was of particular importance, the composer visited it to rest and work in her family estate, and eventually died there.

In general, the pieces of the cycle are very picturesque, and this is ensured, among other things, by the colorful performing cast: bandura, strings, and percussion. The composer introduces a unique instrument designed to reproduce the sounds of birdsong, the "nightingale."

The use of bandura, as in the case of *Winter and Spring*, is the most vivid illustration of the folklore motifs of the cycle. Still, it plays functionally alongside other instruments rather than standing out as a primary one. The stringed instruments are presented in their typical composition for an orchestra—first and second violins, violas, cellos, and double basses. Two solo violins also stand out. In addition, at certain moments, the entire string group appears as an ensemble of soloists due to the numerous *divisi* in all parts. However, percussion requires special attention. Since there is an immense number of their varieties worldwide, examining the choice of instruments by the composer is especially interesting.

First, it is noteworthy that in the cycle August the Sickle, Denysenko introduced many instruments of a distinctly decorative nature—large and small bells, triangles (metal and wooden), as well as rhythmic and melodic percussion—tempo blocks and exotic bongos². In addition, the score includes an instrument with powerful melodic capacity, the xylophone, and a less common but highly characteristic flexaton. Among the distinctly noise-making instruments, tom-toms³ and rattles should be mentioned.

Thus, the score contains an extensive range of percussion instruments, both common in orchestral practice and atypical, which reveals the composer's interest in creating unique timbre combinations. In addition, the percussion instruments presented in the cycle are very diverse in construction and pitch quality. There are idiophones and membranophones with precise pitch and rhythmic and melodic percussion instruments without an accurate pitch. When choosing instruments, the author preferred idiophones, mostly metal ones. This already foreshadows a particular "brilliance" in the sound of the cycle's numbers. In addition, it may carry a specific archaic semantics—the clanging of metal in ancient, in particular, pagan cultures was considered to be in contact with the otherworld, scaring away evil spirits or attracting good ones, so instruments like bells were even used in rituals (Frazer, 1923). It may be assumed that this way, the composer emphasized the folklore motifs usually associated with the archaic.

In general, the unusualness of the ensemble composition is immediately striking. Still, it should be noted that in the twentieth century, the individualization of performing groups became a characteristic feature of music (Tsenova, 2007, p. 53–54), so in this, M. Denysenko joins the current trends of contemporary compositional creativity.

In the first part—"Makoviya"—the composer does not yet use percussion, so the basis of the polyphony are the stringed instruments (a familiar role for them), which are later joined by bandura. Despite this, she is looking for opportunities to diversify the timbre palette of the work. Thus, the parts of the stringed instruments are replete with various playing techniques—from the typical arco and pizzicato to playing near the stand (*sul ponticello*) and playing with the bow shaft (*col legno*). Moreover, they are almost always used in layers vertically and often change from part to part, which creates a unique and changeable timbre flavor.

In metrical terms, the number "Makoviya" is imbued with the harmony of movement and agility, which may even evoke associations with a simple step or walk. This is ensured by a significant reliance on the uniform movement of the eighths<sup>4</sup> and the even note value, manifested in all voices, and emphasized in the metrical grid, adding elasticity to the music<sup>5</sup>.

The composer's solution for the texture that arises in this arrangement is more interesting than as a simple

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> O. Andreeva refers to this wind instrument as an instrument "for the occasion" (Andreeva, 1990, p. 54).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> In the composer's manuscript, bongos are not listed in the instrumentation at the beginning of the score but their use is mentioned in the middle of the musical text (at the end of the "Kaniv" number). However, the use of these instruments is not mandatory. The composer remarks: "Tempo blocks may be used instead of bongos."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> In the score, Denysenkoonly indicated the number of tom-toms—two—but there are no instructions for time signature. However, the nature of the notation suggests that they should be of different time signatures, which allows the composer to use them both as noise-making (as happens in most cases when the tom-toms sound simultaneously) and as rhythmic and melodic instruments (when they sound alternately, for example, two bars before the letter Q in the 4<sup>th</sup> movement of the cycle).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> This in no way excludes other rhythmic figures from use but, first, in any rhythmic pattern, the movement is mostly in eighths, and second, in the vast majority of cases they are subjected to an even note value.

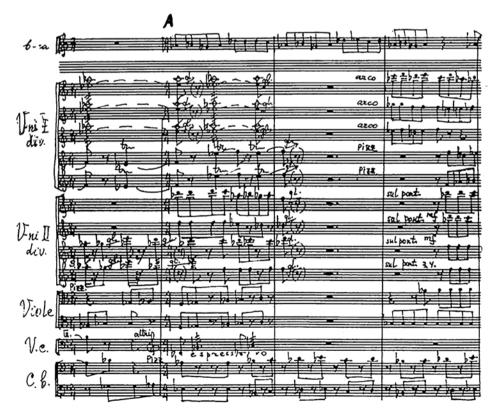
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> In general, in the cycle *August the Sickle*, the composer always writes out time signatures. Despite the fact that sometimes they are variable (for example, at the beginning of No. 4 of "Kaniv" the time signatires 2\4, 3\4, 5\8, 4\4 appear), their presence makes the polyphonic whole much more organized, which contrasts with what we observed in the play *Winter and Spring*.



Example 2

chordal one. M. Denysenko managed to give the music a remarkable liveliness by using equirhythmic counterpoint—the texture seems to be woven from polyphonic lines of individual voices, which together almost constantly produce a chordal vertical (on the same basis, even cellos and double basses are involved, which simultaneously serves as the basis of polyphony). Interestingly, in this case, the intonational material of the voices does not consist of extended melodic structures but of a limited set of individual chants-motifs and phrases. In principle, this forms the intonational basis of the overall piece. The ascending movement of seconds, on which the intonational

layer of the number is mainly based, should be emphasized. They are presented in a sequential development (e.g., in the second part of the first violins *divisi* in bar 5, the second part of the second violins *divisi* in bar 6, etc.) and participate in numerous imitations at different intervals and with varying intervals of the introduction of propostas and rispostas (e.g., imitation in prima with a difference of one eighth between the first and third parts of the second violins *divisi* in bar 3; three-voice reproductions in quart and octave by the violas *divisi* and partially by cellos and double basses in bars 17–18 with a variable difference of a quarter or two quarters). Accordingly,



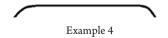
Example 3

the musical fabric is saturated with a large number of techniques of orchestral presentation that reveal a flexible interaction between the parts—transfers (for example, in the first and second parts of the second violins in *divisi* in bar 1, then similarly in the other two parts of the second violins in bar 2) and echoes (for example, in the three violas in *divisi* in bars 16–18).

As for the thematic side of the work, there is no formally structured thematicism. Incompleteness, an open ending<sup>1</sup>, is, in fact, a feature of this cycle. This incompleteness is also manifested in the structural blurring of the themes. However, the composer uses techniques that indicate the germs of a thematic piece. In the beginning (bars 1-9), in the introduction, the strings have chants: the above-described second step up, which is included in the imitative and sectional movement (bars 1, 3) and the motif of repeating the sound of *D* flat followed by a downward movement by a second and a tertian, which is perhaps the most striking motivic element in work. It is often emphasized in the orchestra by duplications at different intervals (e.g., in bar 2, there is quintuple recurrence by the second violins, and in bar 33—both quintuple and octave duplication by the first violins). These two elements are well illustrated in the first four bars of the work (Example 2).

They appear scattered in different parts. In bar 10, bandura that enters seems to gather these chants, "melting" them into a coherent melodic line, though not structurally complete (Example 3).

Thus, the described effect of various means of expression and thematic work gives impetus to the processes in the piece. Paradoxically, this number is characterized by something other than the dynamism of the overall development with an apparent step-by-step approach. It is possible to outline the initial phase more or less accurately—approximately bars 1–16—but the *motus* and *terminus* phases are defined rather conditionally because, in terms of the methods of working with the material, they hardly differ from the initial one. The process of unfolding in work can be conventionally depicted as a curve, as shown in Example 4.



There is no pronounced culmination here—the development is very smooth. Thus, it is interesting to see how linear fluidity and dynamism are combined in unfolding the whole number. The tools described above are usually included in this process and help realize linearity and energy of the development. However, two factors most clearly

embody these two seemingly opposite qualities: the pitch structure and the density of the orchestral presentation. At the beginning of the work, a sound system is set that is maintained until the end of the piece. Its appearance is shown in Example 5.



Example 5

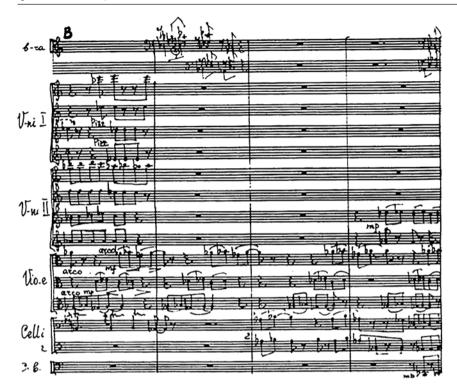
The frets are rather variable. The sounds of *E flat* and B flat may be distinguished, which play a greater or lesser role at certain moments of the work. For example, at the beginning of the piece, the quintet of these sounds in the low strings becomes the harmonic backbone (example 2), and from bar 15 to bar 19, there is more critical position of B flat. However, more typical in the number is "wandering" of sorts along a given sound system, and this is an essential feature that affects the resulting vertical. As it is evident from the example, in its essence, the soundscape of the number is diatonic, which sends a certain "non-conflict" to the sound of the polyphony built on its basis. This allows the composer to freely unfold the musical material despite the uncertainty of the supports and their discrepancies in different voices, often due to imitations. Therefore, as I. Druzhga writes, "the composer remains faithful to the modal principle in harmony" (Druzhga, 2021, p. 139).

Such a stable situation in the harmonic dimension is maintained by isolated cases of sounds outside the given sound system. These sounds, which can be called chromaticisms in relation to a given harmonic system, usually appear for a short time. For example, in bars 21-22, the sound of G in the bandura appears as an auxiliary sound of melodic figuration and does not significantly change the "modus" of the sound.

Thus, the pitch structure is the stable component that keeps the music of the whole number in one sound "field" and retains the impression of a specific static despite the variety of techniques of thematic development and orchestral presentation.

On the contrary, changing the density of the orchestral presentation is a device that acts oppositely. In this case, it is the fact that "the timbre and texture possibilities of the orchestra emphasize the staging of events in time" (Stronko, 2013, p. 50). First (bars 1–4), the strings without the violins are introduced, sounding alternately (5 to 8 parts sound together), so the sound is quite transparent. Then, starting from bar 5, the first violins are added (with a fifth *divisi*), and with the introduction of the bandura in bar 10, an orchestral *tutti* sound (not taking into account the nightingale). Thus, there is an accumulation of instruments, which (apart from the thematic work described earlier) enables identifying the introduction and results in enhancing the dynamics of the process.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> It would be appropriate to point out that the numbers, according to the author's instructions, should be performed *attaccus*, which to some extent determines the openness of the finals of the parts. This should lead to the beginning of the next play of the cycle.



Example 6

Throughout the work, composer works with the density of the orchestral presentation. The sound generally has two significant "dips"—in bar 11 and bars 17–19. While the first is short, the second seems more critical—it divides the work into two sections. While an equirhythmic counterpoint dominates the first, the second intensifies diagonal movement while maintaining the same technique. This is due, for example, to a more explicit display of imitations. Example 6 shows that the imitations in the strings are not interfered with, and a slight orchestral *crescendo* emphasizes them.

This section is generally characterized by more significant variability in texture density and mobility in connecting or disconnecting the instruments. Thus, similarly to the principles of building intonational material and polyphonic techniques in the first section, the dimension of orchestral presentation makes it possible to mark the subtle features that distinguish the initial stage of development in work from the following "movement."

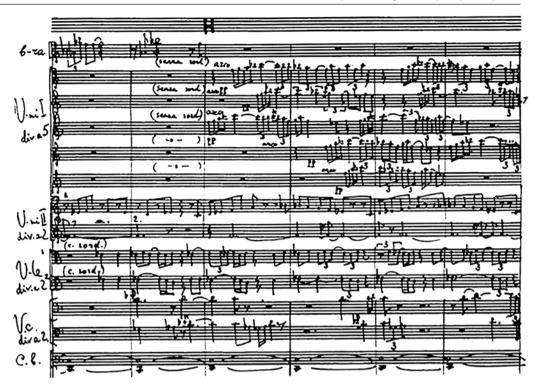
In addition, the enormous role of changing the density of the orchestral presentation is revealed at the end. After the *tutti* in bar 33, there is a sharp reduction in the number of parts involved, followed by a relatively rapid orchestral *diminuendo*<sup>1</sup>. At the same time, the intonational material

of the string parts does not change at all and does not acquire the features of cadence, so only the orchestral presentation signals the end of the work.

Thus, it is the "play" with the density of the orchestral texture that becomes the means that diversify the sound throughout the work and constitutes internal "dynamic waves" in it.

The second movement—"Popovna Kalyna..." is equally energetic and mobile but this is realized in music in contrast with the first movement. The imagery side of the music becomes crucial, and Denysenko subordinated all the expressive mean to this objective. The work illustrates a real bird choir, the voices in tune with each other. This determines the choice of instruments, with almost all used for sound symbolism. In addition to strings and bandura, several percussion instruments appear in the score: bells, tempo blocks, and flexaton. The first instrument was introduced to create a deep background sound, on the "spill" of which "bird choirs" sound. This secures the music from being too "dry" or "fluid." In addition, the last two instruments are suitable for adjusting to the presented imagery. For example, the tapping of the tempo blocks can be associated with the woodpecker's chirping. The timbre of this wooden instrument also immediately refers to images related to the forest and trees; that is, it conditionally outlines the location in the context in which the birds' singing could be heard. The flexaton, with its specific sounds, is included in the score as an instrument suitable for imitating a small birds' chirping. Although limited in divisi compared to the first movement, the strings still carry the primary material and are actively involved in sound imitation. This is true even for the low strings at some point (e.g., the double

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Orchestral *diminuendo* does not exclude the introduction of new instruments, although this is less typical. This is the unusual situation, because with the general reduction of the string parts, a nightingale is added, whose trills add more peace to the music, which is already texturally more transparent. Another reason for the introduction of this instrument will be discussed in the context of the second part of the cycle.



Example 7

bass in bars 35–36¹). Bandura once again stands in line with the other instruments and joins them in weaving the sound-scapes. The nightingale is also featured in this movement. In this piece, it turns out to be the instrument that vividly embodies the figurative dominance of the work—the other instruments imitate the bird, and this instrument almost "is" it. However, in addition, in the context of the second movement, it becomes clear that the introduction of this instrument at the end of the first movement serves as a means of smoothly connecting it to the second movement.

The given sound direction of the music leads to a more colorful and complex rhythmic structure. There are syncopations and various combinations of rhythmic patterns of the paired and free note values. As a result of such changes, the precise definition of the vertical is significantly weakened, and the main processes are primarily concentrated in the melodic dimension. The metrical grid remains in the work but it is leveled mainly due to the complexity of the rhythm and its various combinations in different voices. The second work of the cycle differs from the previous one in terms of the metro-rhythmic parameter. Unsurprisingly, the texture in this arrangement becomes pronouncedly polyphonic and impresses with its polymelodic combinations of voices.

The intonation side is entirely aimed at conveying the sounds of birds' singing. The lines of the parts are based on intonations within the second-tertiary range, which are realized in different rhythmic conditions (for example, rhythmically constant movement of seconds in the second part of the first violins in *divisi* in the first

bars; second-tertiary intonations in combinations with sixteenths in the first violins in divisi in bars 28-29). The repetition of sounds followed by a jump to an interval of different widths is also a characteristic "pattern" for the piece (for example, in bars 1-7 in the first part of the first violins *divisi*; in bars 15–17 for the bandura). Numerous times there is an ascending passage with anchoring on the upper sound (for example, by the second violins in bar 12 or by the first violins in bar 24). The resemblance to birdsong is achieved by the total repetition of these motifs or their frequent appearance in different parts after a certain period. In the same vein, even more, complicated polyphonic techniques are used—imitations and even canons based on variants of these motifs. Thus, in the first four bars from the letter H, there is a small principle in the prima between the first and third parts of the first violins divisi, joined by an imitation in the second part. Later on, the material of these three parts turns out to be a three-voice proposta, to which by the third-fifth parts of the first violins correspond with a visual rearrangement of the material of voices in the score<sup>2</sup> (Example 7).

It is symptomatic that the score is replete with many overlaps between the instruments. This explicitly illustrates equality in their engagement: for instance, in bars 30–31, the ascending passage is first performed by the third-fifth part of the first violins *divisi* and then imitated by the bandura,

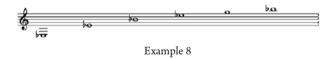
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> We start the numbering of the bars in each part anew.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> This is done to ensure that each part of the first violins performs in a three-voice rhapsody "in a new role" and, accordingly, to enhance the effect of echoes. In addition, this creates a spatial effect as a result of the seating of the orchestra, which involves placing the violin performers on the opposite sides from the conductor.

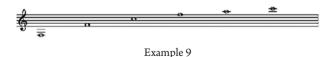
duplicated by the first part of the first violins. Thus, in both bars, there is the violins' timbre, which is layered with the effect of the bandura's plucked timbre. By such methods of orchestral presentation, bandura is included in a single complex with the strings, enhancing the brilliant sound of the motif that is repeated in pitch.

If combining bandura with violins is more or less common because they are the instruments with the exact nature of the sound source—the strings—the next timbre complex is much more unique. It also involves bandura; however, in combination with tubular bells. This occurs on bars 14–19, coinciding with the first appearance of the bandura in this piece.

Moreover, it is interesting that the instruments are used in relatively distant registers, which, in theory, should not create a tendency to combine these timbres. Still, this obstacle has been overcome in an inventive way. The musical material of the bells' part is based on two sounds with a second distance—*E flat* and *F*. The bandura part initially also contains only two sounds—A flat and B flat at a distance from a note in a medium-high tessitura, combined into repeated motifs. Later, other sounds appear but the sound of *B flat* remains an organ point. When bells sound, the acoustic side of the sound is generally very significant. The spillover strikes on this instrument cause audible resonances. Several initial sounds of the natural scale that arise from the sound of *E flat* in the small octave of bells have a B flat, including the second octave, which is a frequent sound in bandura (Example 8).



Thus, the bandura seems to amplify the sound of the overtone that is important for the bells, creating a "sound crown" of sorts. Moreover, the composer specifically singled out this timbre complex because other instruments in these bars fade into the background. However, in terms of pitch, the violins are also included in the acoustic complex with the bells—their parts are based on the sounds of F1 - C2 - F1, which are in the natural sound series of the corresponding sound of the bells (Example 9).



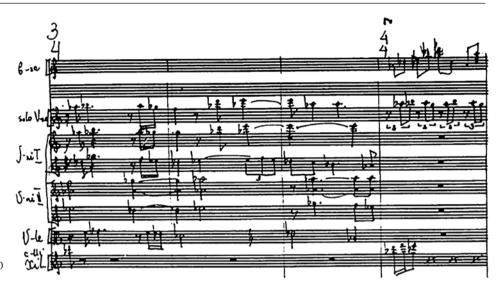
This piece generally becomes more dynamic as a result of exciting timbre combinations, a large number of contrasts in the role of instruments in the orchestral texture, its density (e.g., the set of eight parts in bar 23 is abruptly joined by five parts of the first violins in bar 24 with an imitative combination that evokes visual images of the flight of swarms of birds),

and variety of its layers (the previously quoted fragment exemplifies this: there is an orchestral background, or bars 20–31, where the double basses have an orchestral pedal). The waves of development are more tangible, and there are also timbre arches. Thus, tempo blocks and a nightingale appear at the beginning and end of the piece, marking them as such. This illustrates the importance of contrasting the cycle's first and second numbers for the composer.

The third movement—"Summer for Water..." may be considered the lyrical center of the entire cycle. If the role of rhythm was significant in the previous pieces, here the intonation becomes critical. The intonation layer in this piece is based on a gradual movement, which, in principle, makes it similar to the previous ones. The reference to the first part is particularly noticeable because, for example, the bells in bars 2-3 almost entirely (in a moderately colored manner) quote the melodic line that was the basis of "Makoviya..." The descending sectional movement of seconds upward, which appears here repeatedly (for example, in the second violin solo in bars 31-32), also played a significant role in the opening number of the cycle. However, these intonational elements now sound softer. If, in the first movement, the fast pulsation of the beats made them relatively discrete, here it becomes possible to emphasize greater coherence. For example, in bars 13-14 (Example 10), most of the instruments duplicate the intonationally expressive melody, and only the second violins lead a rhythmically complementary line that only unobtrusively emphasizes the first and last beats of the bars. In addition, they create a harmonic filling, that counterpoints the role of the melodic component.

Example 10 illustrates one of the conductions of the melodic phrase to which the main thematic work in the piece is linked. It accumulates the characteristic of the movement of seconds, thus, both the thematically vivid and the background material have the same intonations, contributing to the work's monolithic nature. This melodic structure is a cross-cutting theme in the piece. At first, it is "concealed"—in the middle of the texture of the first violins (bars 1–2) and moderately obscured by other elements that draw attention to themselves—the solo violin's curly line, the bells' silver counterpoint, etc. However, it is brought to the fore in "all its glory" when in bar 9, this intonational material (transposed) is played with a tertian compression and in a multi-octave duplication of violins and viola. Texturally, this fragment is constructed similarly to the one illustrated in Example 10. Throughout the work, the main melodic structure is carried out in different rhythmic variants (for instance, in the version with triplets—for the first violins in bars 36–37).

In addition to its chant-like beginning and lyrical imagery, the piece also has a powerful sound component, which stems from its title. Therefore, the composer decided to saturate the piece with sounds representing the water element.



Example 10

At first, this is immediately evident from the renewal of the percussion instrumentation—new characteristic instruments are introduced into the score: bells (already mentioned), xylophone, triangle, and rattles. For these instruments with a sonorous sound, this is a "golden age" because they convey the sounds of water drops in a colorful way like no other. This also applies to the flexaton and, of course, the bandura.

The sound elements are included in the number and the introduction of the bells in bar 2 when it is still superimposed on the sound of the chant material. Then the sound line continues with the appearance of *ostinato* figures on the xylophone in bar 12 and becomes more extensive starting from bar 16 when bandura strumming is added to its trembling sound.

Bar 16 arguably marks the beginning of a new section, because the composer uses techniques that bring the sound imagery to a new level. In addition to the instruments already described<sup>1</sup>, she ingeniously involves a layer of strings in the sound imitation. Four parts of the first violins *divisi* quietly play small melodic "patterns" of wavy graphics on pizzicato. Moreover, the rhythm is not written out in them, which gives the composer permission for a specific disordered sound. By this, Denysenko "painted" not only water drops but also its gurgling sounds. Bandura's aleatoric techniques add to the chaotic sound, which actively contributes to "the closeness of the sound picture to the natural sound environment" (Druzhga, 2021, p. 141).

Subsequently, when lyrical, musical material appears, the glittering of the xylophone remains present, enhanced by the "bursts" of the *glissando* flexaton and the noise of the rattles.

The strings' chanting thematic material at the end also appears on the xylophone—in bars 29–31 and bars 39–41 with duplications in different intervals.

Thus, the specificity of this number is in the very natural interaction of seemingly opposite imaginative spheres—the spiritual, human one associated with melody and the "neutral" images of the natural environment. While these two spheres seem to exist separately at first, in the end, the themes of the lyrical sphere merge with the part of the instrument that represents nature. This "humanization" of nature adds a romantic touch to the work's imaginative palette.

The fourth movement of the cycle—"Kaniv"—echoes the first one with its rhythmic elasticity, based on the constant movement of the eighths. The set of rhythmic patterns in this number even contains direct borrowings from "Makoviya...". The most noticeable is a "syncopation" involving pauses (Example 11).



However, in other respects, this part is in stark contrast to all the previous ones.

First, the instrumental composition should be mentioned. The violins, which played a key role earlier, almost completely disappeared from the group of strings. Only at the end for three bars do the second violins join in, and from bar 34 to the end, the first violin solo with an aleatoric glissando line sounds. This is probably how the composer decided to introduce the imitation of a mosquito peep because, together with the sul ponticello technique, which generally gives a buzzing sound, it sounds very characteristic. Now the primary musical material is entrusted to the low strings, which give the music a heavier sound. The percussion also changes: the delicate melodic instruments of the previous section are replaced by banging tom-toms and a wooden triangle, and at the end, are supplemented by bongos (bars 35-37).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The exceptions are the bells that appear only at the beginning and end of the piece, accentuating them.

In accordance with the instrumentation, there is a sharp "roll" to the lower register with its darkened colors. While it is natural for cello and double bass, it is not characteristic of bandura. In the opening bars, it dissolves among the cellos, duplicating them. Throughout the piece, the bandura often dissolves in the string sound, coloring the timbre with a sharper plucking attack. Still, sometimes it is audible, for example, in bars 20–21, when it sounds against the background of rhythmic accompaniment by only double basses and a wooden triangle.

The differences in intonation are very noticeable in "Kaniv." Jumps—by a quart or a sextuple—become rather standard here, making the melodic lines more unrestrained than the "polite" movement of seconds that dominated earlier. The melodic material that may be conventionally labeled as thematic is primarily based on angular jumps. It is played several times in its basic form (by the first cello in bars 14–15) and in variations (by the bandura in bars 20–21).

Overall, this quick piece is shorter than the previous ones, therefore, it seems even in the tone of development. However, it can be divided into two sections according to its "thematic" richness. The first (bars 1-19) focuses more on presenting conditionally thematic material. The second (from bar 20 to the end), starting with a varied initial material, "splits" it—by the end of the number, only its motifs appear. It should be noted that starting from bar 31 (bandura) and bar 31 (all other parts) and until the end, the music becomes increasingly diluted due to discontinuities in rhythmic clarity, the appearance of moderately improvisational moments in the rhythm and free glissandos in the bandura. The changes in the music of the ending are emphasized by the sounds of "mosquito peep" and the only appearance of bells and xylophone in the work. The latter again parallels with "Makoviya..." because, like the nightingale in the first number there, the xylophone in "Kaniv" links the *attacca* to the next movement.

The last part, "August the Sickle" is the shortest (only 18 bars), yet very vivid. It is characterized by imagery, not devoid of humor, and has a rather original sound. The performing cast for the final piece is unusual—it is significantly limited. Only two solo violins remained from the pompous group of strings and bows. The only percussion instruments are the xylophone and tempo blocks. Traditionally, this lineup is complemented by the bandura and the nightingale, an invariable attribute of imagery associated with nature. There is a contrast with the previous piece—all the selected instruments have a high register, which gives the sound lightness and transparency.

Denysenko decided to diversify this short piece with trills (for violins), tremolos (for bandura), and a significant amount of *glissandos*, which appear in all parts simultaneously. Interesting timbre effects are associated with the latter. For example, the *glissando* in tempo blocks in bars 11, 14, and 16 creates associations with the whistling of a sickle

or scythe. Despite its unusual features, as for the final movement, this part creates a specific arch in the cycle.

The number has a lively movement, ensured by the almost constant running of the eighths. This also emphasizes the measured passage of time. Such metrical features are inherent primarily in the first number of the cycle, so the arch is triumphant in this respect.

However, the most pronounced is the thematic arch. The musical fabric of the fifth number of the cycle is entirely based on the central thematic formation from "Makoviya ..." Initially, this material moderately varied in comparison to the first piece (the first sectional element is expanded) and is played four times by the xylophone. Then, starting from bar 7, it does not appear at all. Its second element with a characteristic repetition of the D flat sound is found in the bandura in bar 8, in the first violin solo with unison-octave duplication by the bandura in bar 10, and again in the octave presentation by the bandura in bars 14-17. It also appears in an abbreviated version by the first solo violin in bar 10 and bar 12 by the second solo violin. In a varied form, the melodic element appears again in the first violin in bars 11-12. Interestingly, almost all of these passages follow the metrical conditions that would dictate this melodic structure if it was to be performed in full, which maintains the sense of ostinato movement. The counterpoint that occurs in the second violin solo in bars 8-12 is related to the ascending sequential movement of seconds characteristic of the first movement. In bars 13–16, solo violins perform the same material ostinato, and the second violin decorates it with glissando. In this number, there is no pitch-fixed intonation that does not come from the first number of the cycle. The concentration and composure of the material even exceed that of the opening movement.

Therefore, the last musical number rounds out the cycle and completes it while retaining its unique features.

The entire cycle *August the Sickle* "cemented," as was the play "Winter and Spring." There are always some connections between the parts of the cycle, which are manifested in the thematic or purely intonational field and the metrical relation. These parameters work both in combinations and in substitution, as, for example, in the fourth movement, when the second intonations seem to cease playing a unifying role but the elastic rhythmicity still makes the number related to the others. In this regard, even the contrast between the pieces, which is intended to be a factor of dynamics, performs a unifying function because it reveals the pattern of the cycle: the extreme numbers (No. 1, 4, 5) have a rhythm as a supporting means of expression; the middle ones (No. 2, 3) rely more on the melodic beginning.

In addition, the plays of the cycle are united by the path that the conventionally thematic material takes. An interesting detail is that the process of "assembling" this melody, which occurs in the first movement, is then realized at the level of the entire cycle. In the middle movements, almost nothing remains of the material—only in the third movement intonations of seconds in the sequential movement hint at it. The melody seemed to be reduced to its original state in the introduction of "Makoviya..." In the concluding part, it was "assembled" and even raised to a higher level, representing an evolution.

It should also be noted that the cycle has a constructive idea permeating it. In the first number, there is an accumulation of various tools. This is accompanied by an increase in bars—37 in the first, 41 in the second, and 45 in the third. Starting from the number "Kaniv," there is a tendency to radically reduce the orchestral composition and the "dimensions" of the parts. Thus, the fourth number consists of 38 bars, and the last one, as mentioned above, of 18. It can be assumed that this is only a random phenomenon but it may be significant in the context of the harvest theme. Such patterns may be analogous to crops that grow and then are harvested. Then it becomes even more understandable why the composer included *August the Sickle* in the cycle title.

Summarizing the whole cycle *August the Sickle*, the characteristic tendency of the modern use of orchestra instruments, including bandura should be pointed out. In addition, Denysenko engages timbre mixtures and various combinations into a single complex of instruments that seem to be very far apart in their constructive and timbre characteristics.

Given the program of this cycle, which has a connection to folklore, Maryna Denysenko does not try to operate with convex features that would refer to the musical language of Ukrainian folklore. This work illustrates a stage of an inevitable evolution of the composer's style, which is noted by O. Berehova: "... from the direct quotation in the early period of her work (for example, the Ukrainian folk song Cherry Blossom < ... > The Longest Sutra), author's arrangements of Ukrainian carols and shchedrivkas (Shchedrivka for tuba and piano, Two Christmas Canons for flute, bassoon, and piano, arrangement of the carol Peahen steps for piano, etc.) to more indirect forms of working with folklore material, in particular, such as stylization, the introduction of specific Ukrainian instruments into the score..." This approach of M. Denysenko is likely in line with her theoretical opinion on this issue. Thus, for her, "ethno-code is one of the types of modality that in the mind of the author (composer) evokes certain linguistic and semantic patterns, allusions, psychological and stylistic analogies, and finally, rhetorical figures, the origin of which is deeply rooted in folklore sources, language (poetic and musical) and the core ideas of certain ethnic groups" (Denysenko, 2010, p. 298).

Bandura in the creative concepts of Maryna Denysenko. In order to better understand the status of the bandura in the context of M. Denysenko's creative experiments, it is necessary to review the processes that occured in bandura performance in the twentieth century.

Among the varieties of contemporary music performance, bandura creativity is one of the most active and intensively developing spheres. At the beginning of the twentieth century, one could hardly imagine bandura adapted to performing academic music due to its design features and the general mode of performance on this instrument, still closely associated with folk music. The first step towards the academicization of the bandura was the emergence of the practice of translating academic works for this instrument. Iryna Druzhga, who focuses on the modern bandura studies, states that probably the first person who started making such translations (the works of European classics were used for the arrangements) was the famous Hnat Hotkevych (Druzhga, 2021, p. 58). V. Kabachok, Y. Yutsevych, A. Bobyr, M. Helis, Y. Pukhalskyi, S. Bashtan, V. Herasymenko, and other prominent artists continued expanding the performance repertoire of bandura. Their work encouraged the expansion of bandura performance tools and the inclusion of "outside" tools. For example, while in the traditional performance mode, the performer's left and right hands were used, playing, for example, arrangements of Baroque music broke this performance cliché. This critical stage in the development of bandura art became the basis for the transition to a new level.

In the second half of the twentieth century, Ukrainian traditionalist composers started focusing their attention on the timbre and expressive potential of bandura. Independent academic works for this instrument appear. At first, composers and performers tested new means of playing in the classical-romantic key. In this context, the works of M. Dremliuga may be mentioned, in which a combination of folk and professional composer's stylistics with the latter inheriting from the traditions of M. Lysenko (e.g., *Duma*, suites, sonatas for bandura solo) could be traced. The use of the bandura in the works still has a distinctly national flavor.

Over time, connecting the bandura to the musical processes of contemporary experimental creativity gradually intensified. For example, in the sonata in memory of K. Myaskov for bandura solo, composed by M. Zubytskyi, several unconventional playing techniques are used, such as various percussion effects and elements of theatricalization: foot stomping, vocalization of the bandura player during the game, etc. Such precedents contributed to the process of bandura's expansion beyond the nationally defined area of musical discourse, as exemplified by Yuriy Oliynyk's Concerto No. 6 for two banduras and orchestra, titled *Antiphonal*, which refers to the traditions of the Venetian multi-choral concert. In this context, the historical determination of bandura specificity in the above-analyzed works by M. Denysenko becomes more understandable.

The national flavor in the play *Winter and Spring* and the cycle *August the Sickle* is presented symbolically. Based on the folklore orientation of the program content of the works, the bandura, which, as O. Berehova puts it,

"can be considered a Ukrainian cultural image" (Beregova, 2022, p. 97), does not seem accidental. However, the composer's musical language of these works does not give any apparent grounds to suggest the author's following the features of folk-song or folk-instrumental creativity. In practice, the musical material of the bandura is autonomous from its national and stylistic features. The composer approaches it as an ordinary academic instrument equal to others. Hence, bandura functions as a connecting link between music filled with European musical vocabulary and Ukrainian folklore images to which the programmatic titles refer.

The academic nature of the bandura is evidenced, first of all, by the specificity of the texture in both works. While in Winter and Spring, the bandura acts as an equal "interlocutor" of the piano, in the cycle August the Sickle, bandura becomes a part of the orchestra. Subordinated to the orchestral presentation, bandura changes its role according to the composer's musical objectives: from a bright melodic part, sometimes as a solo, and even as a bearer of thematic material (for example, in the first and fifth movements) to the function of harmonic filling, background (for example, in the third movement). The fact that the composer puts the bandura on par with the other instruments of the orchestra emphasizes the fact that, for the most part, the bandura in the cycle is notated on one sheet of music, which, of course, means a narrowing of the texture that can be recorded. The composer hints that there should not be too much of this instrument, that it should not compete with the orchestra but rather be a part of it.

Denysenko is most interested in the original timbre of the bandura. Attention to timbre coloring becomes another critical feature that characterizes the use of the bandura in her works. The technical specificity of the instrument gives initial impetus for such experiments. Thus, in the instrument literature, bandura has no damper device and sounds free until it is entirely attenuated (Khashhevatska, 2008, p. 76). In certain eras, for example, in classical and romantic music, where the variability of chords and their functions should be displayed (especially if the frequency of harmonic pulsation is high), this feature of the bandura can be considered a disadvantage. Still, the works by M. Denysenko, on the contrary, use the opportunity to obtain luxurious sonorities merged from several passages, chords in a row, etc. In the score of Winter and Spring, this is clearly illustrated by the use of free slurs, which are precisely intended to create a precedent for "hanging" on the resulting sonority. In August the Sickle bandura often performs melodic passages and passages of various doublets and chords that produce a colorful resonant sound that the bandura performer can only muffle after a rhythmic stop. The colorfully vivid moment in the second part of the cycle, when the bandura comes into acoustic contact with the tubular bells, which were described in detail previously, exploits this specific feature of the bandura. The same is true in regards to the aleatoric techniques

of playing with free movement in the direction indicated by the composer, up or down. The plucking sharp attack of the bandura's sound more than once becomes the basis for its use in all kinds of duplications (such as in the second and fourth movements).

In addition, M. Denysenko goes further and "dissects" the bandura by using non-traditional ways of playing it—glissando, playing with a mute, striking the soundboard, etc. The fact that such techniques are used indicates an interest in the timbral range of the bandura and the composer's desire to release its timbre without regard to its traditional sound of folk music.

Thus, the use of bandura in creative ideas demonstrates the process of academicizing this instrument, which is manifested in the use of bandura along with other instruments (piano, strings, percussion), in complexes with them, as well as in the ways of presenting musical material and specific playing techniques that reveal the composer's interest in the uniqueness of the bandura's timbre and its variants.

#### Conclusions

When analyzing M. Denysenko's works with the bandura, the following stylistic features of the composer's creative method were revealed:

- 1) The tendency to a programmatic nature. This is expressed in the composer's love for giving programmatic titles to her works.
- 2) The tendency to realize folklore themes without explicit references to the features of traditional genres of Ukrainian folklore in the musical language.
- 3) Tendency to pronounced integrity of the composition. It is achieved in different ways—by building the entire texture on a common material (rhythmic, intonational), as well as by introducing arches, elements that "smooth" the transition between parts (texture, timbre "patterns," etc.).
- 4) Organization of the musical fabric that reveals the timbre and coloristic features of the instruments (for example, the individuality of the instrumental compositions in both works, drawing attention to the tone by weakening the role of rhythm, etc., standard means of expression in *Winter and Spring*), as well as their ability to "come into contact" with other instruments (for example, the dialogic nature of the instruments in Winter and Spring or the timbre complex "bandura and bells" in the second part of *August the Sickle*).
- 5) The use of decentralized harmonic systems and modality in the principles of the harmonic basis of the works.
- 6) The regularities of constructing colorful intonational material that are still based on the movement of seconds and refer to the overall structure of the piece as bricks to a building.

In the play *Winter and Spring,* individual features of M. Denysenko's works with the bandura are:

- the exchange of roles between bandura and piano at certain moments of the piece,
- the thoughtfulness of the overall structure with the dominance of improvisation (manifested in the consistent construction of the work according to the principle: "thesis—antithesis—synthesis," which occurs both at the figurative and purely technological levels).

The cycle *August the Sickle* is characterized by the following features:

- a cross-cutting constructive idea of splicing in the first three movements (expressed in the accumulation of instruments, an increase in the number of bars) and cutting in the last movements of the cycle (expressed, respectively, in the reduction of instruments and the reduction of the volume of movements), which can be associated with the splicing and harvesting of crops at the harvest according to the program title of the cycle,
- extensive use of purely orchestral means (methods of presentation, construction of texture) to dynamize the unfolding of musical material in time, its staging (for example, in the first part of the cycle, the variability of the orchestral texture becomes a factor in activating movement,

contrary to the static of the uniform pitch and intonation structures).

- the significant role of polyphonic techniques (the use of equirhythmic counterpoint, various imitations, and canons involving two or more voices),
- numerous instances of inventive sound imagery (for example, the depiction of the sounds of drops and gurgling water in the third movement with the help of bells, a xylophone, or the layering of aleatoric techniques of bandura playing and *pizzicato* strings).

The nature of the use of bandura in the works by Maryna Denysenko testifies to the process of the academicization of the instrument. Using the bandura in the play *Winter and Spring* and the *August the Sickle* cycle, Denysenko makes the bandura a mediator between the musical material of a non-folklore nature and the folklore themes declared in the programmatic titles of the works. In general, her musical pieces demonstrate high mastery of compositional technique and artistic perfection, corresponding to contemporary music trends. This once again confirms the urgent need to revive and explore her work.

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#### Савчук І., Білянська Т.

## Бандура у композиторській творчості Марини Денисенко кінця 1990-х — початку 2000-х: жанрово-стилістичний контекст задумів

Анотація. Здійснено спробу узагальнення використання бандури в композиторських задумах Марини Денисенко, відомої української композиторки (1962–2022). Характер використання бандури в творах мисткині свідчить про процес академізації інструмента. Використовуючи бандуру в п'єсі «Зима та весна» й циклі «Серпень-серп», Марина Денисенко робить бандуру своєрідним посередником між музичним матеріалом нефольклорної природи та фольклорною тематикою, заявленою в програмних назвах творів. Загалом твори М. Денисенко демонструють високий рівень володіння композиторською технікою й художню довершеність, що відповідає актуальним тенденціям в сучасній музиці. Це ще раз підтверджує крайню необхідність відроджувати й досліджувати її творчість. При аналізі творів Марини Денисенко за участю бандури було виявлено такі стилістичні риси творчого методу композиторки: тяжіння до програмності, до реалізації фольклорної тематики без явних посилань на риси традиційних жанрів українського фольклору в музичній мові, до вираженої цілісності композиції. Для її задумів у полі інструментальної бандури характерне використання децентралізованих ладових систем, модальності в принципах ладової основи творів. Такими є закономірності побудови різнобарвного інтонаційного матеріалу, який, утім, спирається на секундові ходи як на основні структурні мікроелементи. Було розкрито компоненти авторської стилістики камерно-інструментальних творів за участю бандури, серед яких — обмін ролями між бандурою і фортепіано в певні моменти твору; продуманість цілого при домінуванні імпровізаційності, значна роль поліфонічних технік (використання еквіритмічного контрапункту, різноманітних імітацій, канонів за участю двох і більше голосів); численні факти винахідливої звукозображальності (наприклад, зображення звуків крапель і булькотіння води в третій частині за допомогою дзвіночків, ксилофона, або нашарування звучання алеаторних прийомів гри у бандури і струнних pizzicato).

Ключові слова: Марина Денисенко, академічна бандура, «Зима та весна», «Серпень-серп», жанрово-стилістичні тири творчості.

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