

Borys Liatoshynskyi and the artists of Lviv: epistolary notes to the biography of the artist

Борис Лятошинський і митці Львова: епістолярні примітки до біографії митця

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Abstract. The article looks into the cultural and artistic relations of the artists of Kyiv and Lviv based on the letters of Borys Liatoshynskyi. The role of Borys Liatoshynskyi in preserving the cultural significance of these artists despite Soviet cultural narratives is studied. The situation in arts was especially tragic after the 1948 decree “On the opera “Great Friendship” by Vano Muradeli”. The characters of Ukrainian artists of the Galytska school of composers — Vasyl Barvinskyi, Adam Soltys, Roman Simovych, Jozef Koffler, and Tadeusz Siegfried Kassern — have been reconstructed based on the correspondence.

The epistolary legacy of B. Liatoshynskyi testifies that Lviv runs through his creative path as a red thread, bringing into the orbit of our attention both personal relationships with the city (his visits, social life of artistic elite), and some collisions (often dramatic), which relate to the works of the artist. No city in Ukraine attracted the artist as much as Lviv: there he presented his works to a thoughtful listener and communicated with kindred spirits.

The tragic pages of rejection and persecution of B. Liatoshynskyi's largest works — the Second and Third symphonies — have been described and introduced into scientific circulation. The fate of the former appears to be the most tragic one in the history of Ukrainian musical culture during the Soviet times.

Having considered the correspondence of the B. Liatoshynskyi, we conclude that Lviv musicians always supported the artist in difficult years, appreciating his extraordinary talent. The feeling was mutual — B. Liatoshynskyi felt sincere, tender love for Lviv, its profound intellectual atmosphere, its people, and the ability to maintain the true friendship of spiritually kindred hearts.

Keywords: Borys Liatoshynskyi, epistolary heritage, letter, composers of Lviv, the union of Soviet composers of Ukraine.

The history of the city, in particular its artistic component, consists primarily of the people, facts of their life and work, which can be found only in countless sources, among which the epistolary (letters) is one of the most truthful. Source historians of the 20th century, especially during authoritarian times, at best recorded the object (letter), that was allowed for publication by the system or the social situation. Numerous documents of the epistolary genre were banned, and others were hidden by the owners and their descendants.

The practice of moving them out from scientific research formed a distorted view of the true course of the musical-historical process and therefore did not contribute to the completeness of its coverage. Therefore, the most urgent task for scientists is the search, research, and introduction into scientific circulation of these and new sources and their active involvement in the musical “Mendeleev table”, filling the gaps with reconstructed, truthfully reproduced situations, events, facts, names, previously unknown pages of biographies, human relationships.

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The tragic pages of rejection and persecution of B. Liatoshynsky's largest works — the Second and Third symphonies — have been described and introduced into scientific circulation. The fate of the former appears to be the most tragic one in the history of Ukrainian musical culture during the Soviet times. In the tragic 1930s this symphony, along with the Sixth Symphony by M. Myaskovsky and the Fourth Symphony by D. Shostakovich, was "arrested". Its premiere in 1937 did not take place in Moscow due to the death of S. Ordzhonikidze and nationwide mourning. However this did not prevent some Moscow critics from trying to "destroy" the work, which they had not even heard of. D. Zhytomirsky called it "extremely empty and far-fetched, [...] in the thunderous climaxes [...] one feels the author's unsupported claim to the depth of thought. [...], large philosophical scales." "Obviously," the article continues, "Liatoshynsky did not get rid of the heavy burden of formalism" [9].

These events caused severe mental trauma for the artist. B. Liatoshynsky tried to rehabilitate the symphony and bring it back to life in Lviv in the first post-war years. The letter dated November 3, 1947, refers to two concerts where, in addition to the Second Symphony, "Lyric Poem", romances "The Highest Happiness" (words by V. Saussyura), "Dawn" (words by M. Rylskyi) were performed for bass with a symphony orchestra. "Now as a composer, I have come to life, just a little," states B. Liatoshynsky in a letter to R. Glier, recalling his concert trips to Odesa and Lviv, which he was extremely satisfied with. "I'm now starting to tour. Today, November 3, I am going to Odesa, where I will have a concert on the 10th, so I will

be there all the holidays. There will be six rehearsals. The Second Symphony and other works will be performed. There is going to be a soloist [playing] two romances with an orchestra. At the end of this month, on the 23rd or 30th, there will be a concert in Lviv. In Odesa, they will give me a telegram about the exact date of the concert. I am very happy, of course, about these trips" [7, p. 351].

Later, the composer will tell in more detail about this tour: "So, I visited Odesa and Lviv. These concerts brought me great pleasure. Orchestras played well in both cities, but Lviv was probably better. Despite the fact that I am quite self-critical, in my opinion, everything was fine with me. There were no unnecessary problems, the orchestras understood me very well and played with great enthusiasm, not lethargy. In Odesa, work conditions were worse, generally speaking. as we were to rehearse in a small, cramped room, and only the dress rehearsal was in the concert hall. In Lviv, on the contrary, it is very good that all decisive rehearsals took place right on the stage of the conservatory hall, where the concert was held. Both orchestras tried very hard and generally behaved very diligently. There were even two of my concerts in Lviv — on Saturday evening, November 22, and on Sunday, November 23 in the afternoon for the so-called music lecture. After the evening concert, I took a photo with the orchestra. The only bad thing was that on the 22nd and 23rd it rained heavily, and because of that the audience at the concerts was small" [8, p. 353–354].

The further fate of this work is known: Ukrainian critics and some composers, after accusing B. Liatoshynsky of trying to include his work in the concert program, presented the Second Symphony as an example of formalism, and it "got into" the well-known resolution of the Ukrainian Communist Party of Ukraine in 1948.

Composer Tadeusz Mayerskyi from Lviv gave a different opinion of the Second Symphony: "I am extremely sorry that I did not have the opportunity to talk with you about your incomparable music, which is close to me, and could not express to you

my deep admiration for your talent and your skill. Your music belongs to the music of the great masters of the modern symphony, such as Scriabin, Strauss, Stravinsky, and Szymanovsky, and it shook me" [12] (translation from French, which B. Lyatoshynsky was fluent in).

The fate of B. Lyatoshynsky's Third Symphony was no less dramatic. Lviv can be proud of the fact that the idea of its creation belongs precisely to the time of the composer's stay in the city. Having processed the documents included in the first volume of the epistolary legacy of Boris Mykolayovych, we reviewed the dates of writing the Third Symphony and the emergence of its idea. In a letter to R. Gliere from Lviv dated May 1, 1940, we read that the composer had the intention to start work on the piece and at the same time had a premonition that "it will be scolded as well": "I am writing to you from Lviv, where I found myself once again involved in various matters of the Union [...] You are asking me about what happened at the plenum. I will say this about myself: as you remember, during the discussion about formalism, they quarreled a lot, in particular, they mixed my Second Symphony with dirt. Then they scolded me for the complexity, incomprehensibility, etc. Now they were scolding me for the opposite... I thought that you had already been shown the transcripts of the plenum, and you had already read exactly who and what was said there. Now, having returned from Lviv, I will rest, and then I will tackle Symphony No. 3, which I have intended to write for a year now, but circumstances do not allow. They will scold it too, of course, but again because of the complexity" [5, p. 301–302].

B. Lyatoshynsky's frequent trips to Lviv since 1939 are understandable, because as the head of the Union of Composers of Ukraine, he started playing active role in the admittance of composers from Halychyna into this organization. In the modern music history of Lviv, the two years preceding the beginning of the Second World War and the Nazi occupation of the city are characterized by dramatic epithets — "suffocating atmosphere", and "constant fear" [1, p.

118–119]. From the correspondence of Boris Lyatoshynskiy, we learn about his trips to Lviv to establish close contacts with local composers, trying to help them in printing their works, for example, a collection of arrangements of Ukrainian folk songs by Mykola Kolessa. A letter to R. Gliere dated March 2, 1941, testifies to B. Lyatoshynsky's desire to obtain funds in Moscow for the publication of works by Lviv composers, as well as for the organization of a series of their author's concerts: "I am asking you very much to help with the Music Fund of the USSR so it will accept the three additional applications from Ukrainian composers and one musicologist: Klebanov — Symphony, Faintukh — Cycle of arrangements of Jewish folk songs, Kolessa — Cycle of arrangements of Ukrainian folk songs, Dovzhenko — History of Ukrainian opera. There is still no answer, and it would be very important for us to know the result as soon as possible" [6, p. 306].

Borys Lyatoshynskiy developed a warm friendship with Mykola Kolessa, who even after the composer's death, often visited Kyiv, visited his wife Margarita, and niece Iya Tsarevich, trying to support the family. In different years Vasyl Barvinskyi, Adam Soltys, Roman Simovych, Joseph Koffler and Tadeusz Siegfried Kassern were frequent guests at the residence of Lyatoshynsky in Kyiv on Lenin street (now B. Khmelnytskyi).

The plenum of the organizing committee of the Union of Composers of the USSR, which is mentioned in the correspondence, was held in Kyiv from March 28 to April 5, 1940, and became Moscow's ideological and educational action against the artists of Ukraine. Little information about this event has survived: a small article in the magazine "Radyanska Musyka" (1940, No. 3) and two publications in "Sovetskaya Musyka" (1940). But, unfortunately, the transcript referred to in the epistolary legacy of B. Lyatoshynsky and R. Gliere in the form of two video films is kept in the St. Petersburg Archive of Literature and Art. The removed 31 pages of the document were preserved in a very damaged form, the most of them are difficult to read.

Despite this, it is known that 30 of the 60 works of Ukrainian composers of Halychyna were written by S. Ludkevich, A. Soltys, V. Barvinsky, Y. Koffler, T. Z. Kassern, and M. Kolessa. The initiative to involve their works belongs to B. Liatoshynskyi. Representatives of the “center of the Union” (I. Nestyev, D. Kabalevskyi, S. Shlifshtein, V. Muradeli, V. Shebalin, V. Bieliy) and artists from Ukraine — L. Revutskyi, F. Kozytskyi, Yu. Maytus, I. Belza, B. Liatoshynsky, T. Z. Kassern, Z. Lissa, V. Vytvytskyi, V. Barvinsky, M. Kolessa, and others discussed what they have heard at concerts. The works of the composers of Western Ukraine were sharply criticized in the speeches of the Moscow artists for their “withdrawal and alienation” (V. Surin), and depiction of “different currents” (V. Bieliy). They did not have features of folklore and democracy, though “the driving impulses of Soviet art are strong socialist relations that have been established” [14].

The works of B. Liatoshynsky were also criticized at the plenum, which caused the indignation of R. Glier. He was surprised that “he did not understand the importance that statements, criticism, advice, etc., of all those who performed in Kyiv, “great” (Moscow, Leningrad, etc.) composers [...], should have for the development of the compositional skill of Ukrainian composers”. “It offends me,” continues R. Glier, “that I did not hear about the high level of compositional skill of the composer-performers.”

A letter dated November 10, 1945, to R. Glier informs about the stay of B. Liatoshynskyi in Lviv where he discussed programs of concerts of Lviv composers that were to be held in Kyiv, as well as other forms of collaboration between artists. Through the correspondence, we also learn about one of these concerts, at which the works of S. Lyudkevich, M. Kolessa, and V. Barvinsky were performed, (the latter also gave an opening speech). On February 19, 1945, an article by P. Kozytskyi about this event appeared in the newspaper “Radyanske Mystectvo”. It should be noted that in 1945 Lyatoshynskyi did not hold the post of chairman of the Union of Composers, but performed these duties out of goodwill.

A sincere friendship was established between B. Liatoshynsky, T. Z. Kassern and Y. Koffler.

As Iya Tsarevich mentioned, at the aforementioned Plenum of the UCU in 1940, B. Lyatoshynsky passionately defended the creative method of Y. Koffler and T. Z. Kassern, which did not fit into the principles of the socialist realism method at that time. In the library of B. Liatoshynsky in Kyiv, many of their pianos and scores are stored, and presented to the owner as a sign of respect and gratitude. Some works were performed at concerts for the first time: Concerto for string orchestra and piano, Prelude by T. Z. Kassern, Sonatina and Variations for piano by Y. Koffler. The musical fabric of the works, modulating from post-romantic features to sophisticated atonal spheres of the worldview, did not correspond to the then Soviet aesthetic guidelines and threatened the lives of not only the authors of the pieces but also their defenders. Despite this, Borys Lyatoshynskyi made extraordinary efforts, overcoming serious difficulties in the process of writing the parts of the Concerto for String Orchestra. However, the official documents about their acceptance for publication mysteriously disappeared several times. In the letter, T. Z. Kassern is worried about the troubles that arose in connection with the preparation for the performance of his composition at the Plenum in Kyiv and expresses regret for “such difficulties”, and as moral compensation promises to treat the composer to two bottles of French wine “Grave » [11].

Recalling the 1930s of the last century, one cannot but say about the special creative and human relations between Boris Liatoshynsky and Antin Rudnytskyi. The latter left a memoir of how he and his wife Maria Sokil wished to go on tour to Lviv for a short while. In the early 1930s, B. Liatoshynsky and his wife were the ones who gave them shelter in the last days before leaving, inviting them to Vorzel, and were the only ones who saw them off on the station platform without fear of further persecution.

The orchestral parts of the dances from the “Golden Hoop” stored in the B. Liatoshynskyi Apartment-Museum bear the autographs of musicians

from Warsaw, Kaunas, Berlin, and London — the cities where these pieces were played under the direction of A. Rudnytskyi. But the composer learned about this much later, when after the opening of the “iron curtain” he received several letters from the maestro from overseas.

Then the Lyatoshynskys found out that the Rudnytskys live in Philadelphia, work at the Music Academy, and “you don’t want to believe what an astronomical number it is, when you count the years since we said goodbye to you at the Kyiv station until now!” A. Rudnytskyi was interested in Ukrainian affairs of Ukrainian musical culture, sincerely wished to have the scores of works by B. Lyatoshynsky, especially the Third Symphony, “Grazhyna” and “Slavic Concert”.

The latter is for his talented son, a student of Egon Petrie and the famous Rosina Levina of the Juilliard School. He recalls his creative successes with sadness, because “it is impossible to even dream of this works being performed here — writing musical works is a luxury for one’s own pleasure” [4].

It is also worth mentioning the first performance in Lviv of Three Dances from the opera “The Golden Hoop” “for the benefit of the unemployed orchestra of the city theater”. The concert was held under the auspices of the M. Lysenko Music Society with the most active support and conducting of A. Rudnytskyi.

In 1949, B. Lyatoshynsky finished, as he himself noted, a “spectacular and brilliant thing”, originally called “The Dancing Poem”. Subsequently, the poem was named “Reunification” and was dedicated to the tenth anniversary of the joining of the western lands of Ukraine to the eastern ones. “The orchestra likes it very much,” informed the composer in a letter to R. Gliere, wishing it to continue its active concert life. The period of its creation was for B. Lyatoshynsky one of the most difficult in his life. “As a composer, I am dead and I do not know when I will be resurrected” [7, p. 302], he stated bitterly after the campaign of moral and physical oppression had started against him. And again he received a rescue letter from Lviv: “At the request

of the composer B. M. Lyatoshynskiy, we, the composers of the city of Lviv, S. Lyudkevich, S. Pavlyuchenko, A. Soltys, and R. Simovych confirm that on March 15, 1948, in “Ukrainian Quintet” by composer B. Lyatoshynsky was performed at the open concert of the Lviv Philharmonic. The work was a great success both in the musical society and in the general audience that attended the concert. [Signatures]” [2].

It is difficult for the current young generation to understand that such “confirmations” could have cost the contributors their lives because the punitive sword of the system was already hanging over B. Lyatoshynsky in connection with the infamous resolution of 1948 “On the opera “Great Friendship” by V. Muradeli.”

The content of the epistolary of the 1960s, which is stored in the apartment of Boris Lyatoshynskiy, does not contain the drama of the forties. Friendly relations with Lviv artists only deepened. “We all remember very fondly,” wrote M. Kolessa in a letter from 1966, “your and Margarita Oleksandrivna’s stay in Lviv, in particular in our house: such meetings remain fond memories for a lifetime” [10].

Borys Lyatoshynsky was able to realize his love for traveling to distant countries, getting to know cultural traditions and the places where great composers lived, only in the last eight to nine years of his life. The artist was actively invited to be a member of the jury of many international competitions and festivals or as a member of delegations of the Union of Composers of the USSR (UC of the USSR) (no such trip could take place through Ukraine due to the policy of centralization and strict control). In his last years, the composer has acquired a new circle of friends: from Grazhyna Bacevich to the publisher T. Ohlevsky, the general director of the International Competition named after Marguerite Long and Jacques Thibault in Paris, Gonto de Biron, and many other musical figures of Western Europe.

After traveling as member of delegations from the UC of the USSR, Lyatoshynsky often stayed friends with fellow composers. Among them is Anatoliy Kos-Anatolskyi, whose correspondence

and memories particularly poignantly convey the inner state of mind of a fellow artist, whose greatness and depth he learned through communication. “The life of every true composer,” recalled A. Kos-Anatolskyi, “is an unfinished symphony. It breaks off over some unfinished score, where the soul fades away, full of dreams, joy and sorrow, high aspirations...” [13, p. 57].

In the correspondence of B. Liatoshinsky and the memories of A. Kos-Anatolskyi, their joint trip to Austria as part of a delegation, the desire to experience once again the places where Schubert stayed and died is mentioned. A. Kos-Anatolskyi sends a series of photos from this exciting trip to his colleague, signing them in German. We read A. Kos-Anatolskyi’s memory of this event: “The last night in Vienna. Late. The streets are almost deserted. Boris Mykolayovych takes my hand: “Let’s go to the house where Schubert died!” After a few blocks, we stop at a four-story apartment building. On the second floor, a window suddenly opened and a boy looked out. “Excuse me, where are Schubert’s windows?” we asked. “Here they are!” was the answer. We looked up at the two dark windows to the right. We didn’t talk about anything, we didn’t want to disturb those minutes

of night silence, in which the Unfinished Symphony sounded...” [3].

“I am sure,” B. Liatoshinsky notes in his reply letter, “that, like me, you will not forget our visit to the house of Schubert’s death on the evening of June 4. There were a lot of unforgettable experiences on this trip, and I feel that I would gladly go to Austria again to see what I have already seen and add to what I have not yet seen. Is this possible?” [15, p. 358]. B. Lyatoshynsky prepared for each such trip by re-reading the literature about the country, studying the smallest details of the life of one or another great artist there. In the same letter of B. Liatoshinsky, the tone of the contributor changes dramatically, when he writes with undisguised pain about the death of V. Barvynskyi (July 16, 1963) — a “real musician” who “experienced a lot of grief [...] after the war” [15, with. 358].

Conclusions

Having considered the epistolary of the great Ukrainian artist, we conclude that Lviv musicians always supported the artist in difficult years, appreciating his extraordinary talent. In return, he felt open, tender love for Lviv, its deep intellectual atmosphere, its people, and the ability to maintain the true friendship of spiritually kindred hearts.

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Маріанна Копиця. Борис Лятошинський і митці Львова: епістолярні примітки до біографії митця

Анотація. У статті на прикладі листів Бориса Лятошинського розглянуто культурно-мистецькі взаємини митців Києва та Львова. Досліджено роль Бориса Лятошинського у збереженні їхнього творчого обличчя в умовах радянських культурних наративів. Особливо трагічною склалася творча ситуація у зв'язку з горезвісною постановою 1948 р. «Про оперу «Велика дружба» Вано Мураделі». На підставі листування реконструйовано творчі постаті українських та митців галицької композиторської школи — Василя Барвінського, Адама Солтиса, Романа Симовича, Юзеф Кофлера та Тадеуша Зігфрида Кассерна.

Епістолярна спадщина Б. Лятошинського засвідчує, що тема Львова червоною ниткою проходить його творчою дорогою, залучаючи в орбіту нашої уваги як особисті стосунки з містом (приїзди, спілкування з творчою елітою), так і деякі колізії (причому, часто з драматичним присмаком), що стосувалися творів митця. Жодне місто України не притягувало так митця, як Львів, де він намагався репрезентувати вдумливому слухачеві свої твори, спілкуватись з духовно близькими йому особистостями.

В історії української музики описані і введені у науковий обіг трагічні сторінки несприйняття й переслідування наймасштабніших творів Б. Лятошинського — Другої і Третьої симфоній. Доля першої видається чи не найтрагічнішою в українській музичній культурі радянських часів.

Розглянувши епістолярій великого українського митця, підсумуємо, що львівські музиканти завжди підтримували митця у важкі роки, цінуючи його непересічний талант. Навзаєм — відверта, ніжна любов до Львова, його глибокої інтелектуальної атмосфери, людей і вміння підтримувати справжню дружбу духовно споріднених сердець.

Ключові слова: Борис Лятошинський, епістолярна спадщина, лист, композитори Львова, спілка радянських композиторів України.