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HEORHIY TKACHENKO AND INFORMED PERFORMANCE PRACTICE ON THE TRADITIONAL BANDURA

The goal of this study is to focus on informed performance practice of the traditional bandura playing of Heorhiy Tkachenko, regarding his activities on the bandura, to note the g interest growth in informed performance practice on the bandura, and the differentiations of this phenomenon as it grows in popularity.

The methodology of the research is grounded in historic, systemic, sociological and cultural approach and related methods of scientific study, in particular, a historic-chronological analysis of the playing technique of H. Tkachenko, specifically, the method of systematic classification and complex analysis that informed performance practice in Ukrainian culture. There is a study and analysis of the technique and repertoire of H. Tkachenko and his followers, particularly his performance legacy of traditional kobzar repertoire. A general characterization has been made of the repertoire of H. Tkachenko that encompasses his performance of dumas, psalms and kants historic songs and instrumental dances.

The materials used in the preparation of this study include books and articles about the folk bandura, about and by H. Tkachenko and his followers and audio and video recordings made by the author. Separate conclusions and generalizations were made on the basis of personal interaction with the subject.

The scientific novelty of the work is the introduction into scientific circulation of a comprehensive organological and ergological analysis of the activity of H. Tkachenko and his followers, the systematization of the technique used by Tkachenko, the growing tendency toward informed performance practice on traditional Ukrainian folk instruments in Ukraine.

About the playing technique used by HeorhiyTkachenko on the 21 stringed authentic folk bandura. Authentic performance practice technique and the movement to perform historically and culturally informed traditional repertoire on the folk bandura.

Conclusions: The results of the study contribute to a better comprehension of the features of traditional bandura repertoire performing on the 21 stringed authentic folk bandura, the playing technique used by Heorhiy Tkachenko on the 21 stringed bandura, authentic performance practice technique and awareness of kobzar heritage in general.

Key words: Heorhiy Tkachenko, Veresai, bandura, kobza, kobzar, historic reconstruction, dumas, technique.

In recent times the playing of the multi-stringed bandura has become very popular in Ukraine and its diaspora. Amongst the players and audience the interest in authentic or historical informed performance practice is growing, and there is an emerging necessity for a closer study into this phenomenon.

The organological study of informed performance on the bandura is a relatively recent one. The first study focusing on the performance practice of the kobzars and bandura is M. Lysenko's study into the artistry of blind kobzar Ostap Veresai (1873). It was the first ethno-organological study of its kind.

Hnat Khotkevych in his paper of 1902 was the first researcher to note that kobzars of different areas of Ukraine exploited different playing techniques and had repertoire that was differentiated according to their particular geographic region. His findings were often repeated in the publications of scholars many of whom had little understanding of bandura playing technique.

By the mid 20th century traditional bandura playing disappeared in Ukraine, being replaced by modified instruments and playing in an enhanced "Academic" style that was developed by the conservatory trained musicians.

Herorhiy Tkachenko was the last carrier of the authentic kobzar traditions, particularly traditional playing technique and repertoire. His students and followers, in particular V. Kushpet and M. Budnyk kept the style and published a number of short studies on the system that Tkachenko used. In recent times, interest in informed and authentic performance practice on the bandura has become a topical subject.

Heorhiy Tkachenko as an artist and a musician left a considerable legacy, in particular his bandura playing legacy. His playing technique was similar to the traditional playing technique used by the kobzars of Sloboda region in the early twentieth century (holding the bandura, tuning, hand positions, repertoire, and system of improvisation, etc.) (Tkachenko, 1995).

A significant contribution to the decoding of the bandura techniques used by H. Tkachenko was made ethnomusicologist S. Hrytsa, who carefully transcribed his bandura accompaniment, and was although done by a person who did not play the bandura, was able to accurately transcribe them so that they are suitable for playing the folk bandura with only insignificant editorial changes (Hrytsa, 2002a; Hrytsa, 2002b).

Tkachenko's diatonic bandura used an un-tempered tuning. In an incident related to the author, the blind authentic bandurist Alexander Trius related a case when Tkachenko arrived for a performance during a period of severe frosts and his instrument was totally un-tuned. He was aided by a tsymbaly player who tuned his instrument with the aid of an electronic tuner, indicating the accuracy of his tuning using the electronic tuner. When the instrument was tuned however, Tkachenko realized that the instrument was impossible to play because it did not sound good. The perfect un-tempered intervals of the bandura were replaced by tempered ones, which were somewhat out of tune. Tkachenko had to retune his bandura in order to perform.

In recent times interest has re-awakened regarding the various traditional methods of playing the bandura. According to HeorhiyTkachenko, there were only two methods of playing the traditional folk bandura, the so-called "sighted" method and the "blind" method.

In his opinion the difference between these methods is not only due to the physiological characteristics of sighted and blind people, but also their specific mental complexes in relation to their musical instruments. Performing methods were optimally adapted to the capabilities of each group of performers (Tkachenko, 1995, p.113).

HeorhiyTkachenko (1995) used the blind manner of the bandura playing which was often referred to the method as "Zinkiv" and believed that this manner of playing the bandura is more natural for blind performers as they do not need to look at the strings, because the playing style is extracted sensually and optimally convenient.

The Sloboda kobzars H. Honcharenko, P. Drevchenko, I. Kucherenko, S. Pasiuha, as well as some kobzars from the town of Zinkiv in the Poltava region, such as Khvedir Kholodny played in this manner. "We are of the Zinkiv science", - testified kobzar P. Drevchenko in the early twentieth century; "and this statement was said with great pride" - wrote H. Khotkevych (2007a, p.50).

The town of Zinkiv is administratively located today in the Poltava oblast, but not too far from the other Poltava centre of kobzar art in Myrhorod. Today the city is 8 kms from the border of the Sumy oblast and 15 km. from the Kharkiv oblast. In 1803, the city was part of the Chernihiv governorship, but was in fact considered part of an area called Sloboda Ukraina.

At the end of the nineteenth century there were no more kobzars in the city of Zinkiv and it is difficult to speak in detail about the Zinkivkobzar tradition. The most famous kobzars from the outskirts of Zinkiv were Khvedir Hrytsenko-Kholodnyi (1814-1889), and the guildmaster of the Sloboda Kobzar Guild, Havrylo Vovk (Zelinsky) (1750-?); the later one was born in Zinkiv but moved to Sloboda Ukraine. We can assume that the term "zinkivska science" came into use on Sloboda Ukraina from this particular kobzar. From an illustration drawn by P. Martynovych it is clear that the kobzar Khvedir Kholodny held his instrument and played it as a Sloboda kobzar in the early twentieth century. Hnat Khotkevych also noted that Khvedir Kholodny played in the "Kharkiv" manner where his left hand played on the treble strings and the right on the basses (Khotkevych, 2009b, p.50). Other Poltava kobzars who lived around the town of Myrhorod, held the instrument in a different manner, as did the Chernihiv kobzar T. Parkhomenko.

In the opinion of H. Tkachenko (1995), the peculiarity of the "Zinkiv manner" of playing the bandura was that *"the bandura is placed vertically on the left knee and the body is placed over the heart so that the direction of the sound of the bandura and the voice was one and the same. On the traditional bandura both hands could play both on the trebles and on the basses"* (p.113).

In this manner of playing the bandura used by H. Tkachenko, the thumb of the right hand played only on the basses and sub-basses, and the third finger of the right hand produced a melody on the shorter treble strings. The second finger of the right hand episodically played harmonious notes on certain chords and occasionally would play some melody notes. On the left hand, the 2nd and 4th fingers would play intervals together or broken, mostly in parallel motion to the thumb of the right hand. Sometimes these fingers led the tune in the ascending movement and played rising glissandi passages. The first, third and fifth fingers of the left hand were not used, and the 4th and 5th right hands also did not take part in playing. All strings played with a rest stroke (*apoyando*), that is, after playing a certain string fingers would rest on the adjacent string. This method of articulation is convenient for the blind, because the hand "knows" where it is located after playing each string, and is ready to play the next string. It differs sharply from the Kyiv academic technique, where the finger "plucks" the string using a free stroke (*tirando*), without touching the neighbouring strings, a system that was adapted for use by sighted performers (Mishalow, 1982, p.24).

The authentic or reproductive movement of playing the folk bandura is growing in popularity in Ukraine. This movement was initiated by Heorhiy Tkachenko in the early 1980's and his followers and students continue this tradition.

Heorhiy Tkachenko studied the folk bandura from the Sloboda kobzar Pavlo Hashchenko in the 1920's on a 21-string bandura and kept to the principles of this performing manner without any perceptible technical changes. A growing group of adherents and performers have formed who play the traditional folk instrument in the manner that he played. This group has also revived the playing of similar instruments such as the Veresai bandura (often called a kobza), the Ukrainian Hurdy-gurdy (*lira*) and the torban. The majority of followers of Heorhiy Tkachenko consisted of intellectuals and professionals of who usually had little professional music training. Primarily these were historians, architects and archaeologists, although in more recent times Tkachenko's traditional manner of playing has interested some professional bandurists.

The method of playing bandura used by HeorhiyTkachenko (1898-1993) differed significantly from the technique used by modern academic bandurists of Kyiv school. Tkachenko considered himself a student of Sloboda kobzar Petro Drevchenko (Hrytsa, 2002a, p.173).

Tkachenko held the bandura so that the bandura soundboard was parallel with the body of the performer, just like in the Sloboda kobzars. The instrument was placed and supported on the left thigh. The neck of the instrument was pressed into the left shoulder. A belt was used to make the instrument more secure during its exploitation.

In order to perform dumas, Tkachenko tuned his instrument into a natural minor scale - usually d-moll (example number 1). The basses and treble strings

were tuned as they traditionally by Slobodakobzars, on the root of chords I, IV, V of the treble string tuning. Sofia Hrytsa writes however, that in the performance of H. Tkachenko there is a perceptible increase in the use of the note cis' in the voice. The accompaniment seems to sidestep the use of this note when it appears in the vocal melody. Tkachenko explained the increasing use of this note in the melody as a device to add "pity" (*podavatyzhlosty*) (Hrytsa, 2002a, p.184).

Example No. 1:

Bandura tuning used by H. Tkachenko for the accompaniment of the dumas.



To perform more “happy” melodies, humorous songs and dances, Heorhiy Tkachenko retunes the 7th note of the diatonic row a semitone higher from b flat to b. The main tone centre shifts in happy melodies from d to g and the mixolydian mode. The bass strings were not returned, and as a result, the supporting chords of the IV degree are replaced by the chord of the II degree (example number 2).

Example # 2:

Tuning used by H. Tkachenko for dance melodies.



Tkachenko used the right hand for performing the melodic function. The third, and occasionally the second fingers usually played a melody. The second finger sometimes performed a harmonic function - an additional note in cadence chords (example number 15). The thumb played the lowest function - tonic, sub-dominant and dominant.

Example No. 3:

The main chords used in the bandura accompaniment by H. Tkachenko.



In example 3 the notes on the upper stave are played by 2-3 fingers of the right hand. On the lower stave, the upper two notes were played with the 2-4 fingers of the left hand and the lower bass strings with the thumb of the right hand.

Only the 2nd and 4th fingers were used by the left hand. They were often played in what would normally be the position of a third, in combination with the lowest strings on the bandura, these intervals sounded both in the thirds and in the fifths. The left hand was played mostly in tandem with the thumb of the right hand. Sometimes the fingers of the left hand would play an upward glissando, ending the glissando on either the tonic or on the subdominant. The third finger of the right hand usually played a melody in unison with the voice. In the performance of dumas the bandura also played instrumental introductions, interludes and postludes (Mishalow, 1982, p.24).

Volodymyr Kushpet and Kost Cheremsky consider Heorhiy Tkachenko a direct follower of the tradition of Slobodian kobzars. Among all the turmoil that bandurists underwent in modern times, only Tkachenko retained the most characteristic features of the traditional kobzars.

When comparing his repertoire with that of Tkachenko's teacher's, some general observations can be made.

H. Tkachenko's repertoire included 8 dumas. Tkachenko performed all the traditional dumas of the Slobodian group, such as: "About the poor widow," "About sister and brother," "About Alexei Popovych," and "About the brothers of Ozov." He also had in his repertoire the dumas "About Marusia Bohuslavka" and "Captives lament", which were in the repertoire of the kobzar P. Hashchenko. In addition, the repertoire of H. Tkachenko included two other dumas absent from his teacher's repertoire and which were not performed in Sloboda region, namely, the дума "About Fedir the homeless" and "About the Samara Brothers". He performed both dumas in the same manner as his other dumas that is using the same melodic elements and accompaniment. These dumas could only be distinguished by their texts. The text of "About Fedir the homeless" H. Tkachenko took from the transcription made by M. Lysenko from the kobzar O. Veresai, and the text of the дума "About the Samara Brothers" was taken from the version transcribed from the Poltava kobzar Mykhailo Kravchenko. Melodically, Tkachenko's interpretation of those two dumas was not similar to the variants sung by Ostap Veresai and Mykhailo Kravchenko, but comparisons of the text shows that a close affinity existed.

There is a kinship in the performance of the dumas by H. Tkachenko and the transcriptions of those that were performed by the bandurist Vasyl Shevchenko. Shevchenko had learned his dumas from the Poltava kobzar Mykhailo Kravchenko from Myrhorod. We know that H. Tkachenko was in close contact with V. Shevchenko when both lived in Moscow. It is known that H. Tkachenko studied the bandura from him. There were four dumas in the repertoire of V. Shevchenko: "Samara Brothers", "Captive's Lament", "Azov

Brothers", "About the Poor Widow". All the aforementioned dumas were in the repertoire of H. Tkachenko.

When comparing the psalms and the chants, one can notice that Heorhiy Tkachenko's repertoire included only a small number of traditional psalms that were used in the repertoire of the Sloboda kobzars. Individual works from his repertoire, which existed in Sloboda Ukraine, include "About the death of the Cossack," "There is no truth in the world," and Skovorodian psalm "Every city's temper and rights". The others - "On a terrible trial", "My Jesus, the Exalted", "Mykolai" and "About the Prodigal Son" were not performed in Sloboda Ukraine. They were however recorded by M. Lysenko from O. Veresai. One can conclude that HeorhiyTkachenko, in order to expand his repertoire, studied and included these works from M. Lysenko's publication. We know that Tkachenko had in his personal library M. Lysenko's publication.

Although some consider Heorhiy Tkachenko to be a real kobzar, one can more accurately characterize him as a folk-reproductive bandurist, that is, a person who reflects the authentic (primary) singing-kobzar tradition in the urban (secondary) environment based on specific scientific foundations. Recently, the interest in the recreation of traditional playing on the folk bandura is undergoing a revival. A similar parallel approach to informed performance practice is also noted in the vocal culture, which has gained popularity in the late 70's of the twentieth century. This movement in the Soviet Union first started in the Baltic States, then Russia, and in the 80's was introduced to Ukraine. At that time, the "Drevo" ensemble was established under the leadership of Ye. Yefremov in Kyiv, "Slobozhany" and "Muravsky Shliakh" under the direction of H. Lukianets, V. Osadcha were established in Kharkiv and other similar groups, such as "Horlytsa" "Otava", "Volodar", "Drevo" and "Dyke pole" (Bench-Shokalo, 2002, p.104). The most active authentic performance ensembles operate in Kyiv, Kharkiv and in southern Ukraine. In the western Ukraine this type of creative activity has not yet gained appropriate recognition or dissemination. One can observe that the range of activities of the reproductive kobzar movement topologically coincides with the activity and interests of authentic folk-reproductive vocal ensembles.

The folk-reproductive movement of kobzar performance by the students and followers of Heorhiy Tkachenko created an organization around which they called the "Kyiv kobzar guild". It included Mykola Budnyk, Mykola Tovkailo, Volodymyr Kushpet, Taras Kompanichenko, Mykola Plekan, Taras Sylenko, Vasil Snizhny, Mykhailo Khay, Valentyn Nahnibida, Andriy Kabaliuk, V. Khodakivskiy, Rostyslav Zabashta. Later a similar group was established in Kharkiv – Serhiy Zaharetz, Kost Cheremsky, Nazar Bozhynsky and others. There is a small group of adherents of authentic kobzar traditions outside of Ukraine in North America. These include Victor Mishalow, Julian Kytasty, Valentin Moroz (Junior), Brian Cherevyk, Yuri Fedynsky, Adam Turjansky and Mykhailo Liakhovych.

The artistic activity of the reproductive kobzars is a notable phenomenon in contemporary musical art. In conditions of gradual extinction of traditional culture, these performers revive interest in a specific authentic kobzar style; preserve their sound image in a civilized urban environment, which is increasingly moving away from original folk culture. In addition, in the way of organization, repertoire and manner of singing and playing, they are in opposition to the more dispersed sphere of culture - the academic style of bandura performance.

Folk-reproductive bandura players continue to perform the traditional repertoire and revive folk-based ones that have been partially preserved - works that have often been forgotten. The aesthetic parameters of their activity seem to be fixed; however, it is probably too early to draw conclusions as to whether the authentic manner of playing the bandura will remain and how the impact of concert hall will affect it. To date, there have been two emerging trends among the reproductive kobzars. One is to improve their stage performance to be more entertaining, and the second to a strict adherence to the traditional canons of authentic performance.

Representatives of the first direction are inclined to use a concert manner of singing, introduce unconventional repertoire that may deviate from traditional parameters, use a well tempered tuning of their instruments tuned with the aid of an electronic tuner, use artificial nails, and learn new repertoire using printed notes, etc. This group has a growing tendency towards “academizing” the folk bandura – including the teaching of authentic instrument performance in tertiary education establishments and participating in contests and competitions.

The second group strictly adheres to traditional parameters such as intonation, folk temperament in tuning, traditional authentic repertoire, folk singing in a non-academic manner of execution, and the conglomeration of audio-motor-visual channels of tradition transmission. This group is skeptical of the academizing the traditional bandura, because such processes have already once overthrown the authentic kobzar tradition in the twentieth century.

The revival of interest in informed performance of traditional kobzar music makes it possible to draw some parallels with the development of history informed performance of music played on the harpsichord and lute music in the West.

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ГЕОРГІЙ ТКАЧЕНКО І ВИКОНАВСЬКА ПРАКТИКА НА ТРАДИЦІЙНІЙ БАНДУРІ

Метою дослідження є висвітлення діяльності Георгія Ткаченка, а саме виконавської практики гри на традиційній бандурі, підкреслення зростання інтересу до практики виконання на бандурі, диференціація цього явища.

Методологія дослідження заснована на історичному, системному, соціологічному та культурологічному підходах та відповідних методах наукового дослідження, зокрема, історико-хронологічному аналізі ігрової техніки Г. Ткаченка, методі систематичної класифікації та комплексному аналізі вивчення техніки й репертуару Г. Ткаченка та його послідовників, а також традиційного кобзарського репертуару.

Матеріали, використані при підготовці даного дослідження, включають книги та статті про народну бандуру, про твори з репертуару Г. Ткаченка та його послідовників, аудіо- та відеозаписи зроблені автором.

Науковою новизною роботи є уведення до наукового обігу всеосяжного органно-ергонологічного аналізу діяльності Г. Ткаченка та його послідовників, систематизація методики, використаної Ткаченком, зростаюча тенденція до виконавської практики виконання на традиційних українських народних інструментах.

Результати дослідження сприяють осмисленню особливостей виконання традиційного бандурного репертуару на 21 струнній аутентичній бандурі та осягненню кобзарської спадщини в цілому. У результаті дослідження отримано загальну характеристику репертуару Г. Ткаченка, виявлено виконавські особливості дум, псалмів і кантів, історичних пісень та інструментальних танців.

Ключові слова: Георгій Ткаченко, Остап Вересай, бандура, кобза, кобзар, історична реконструкція, думи, техніка.

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ГЕОРГИЙ ТКАЧЕНКО И ИСПОЛНИТЕЛЬСКАЯ ПРАКТИКА НА ТРАДИЦИОННОЙ БАНДУРЕ

Целью исследования является освещение деятельности Георгия Ткаченка, а именно исполнительской практики игры на традиционной бандуре, акцентуация на росте интереса к практике исполнительства на бандуре, дифференциация данного явления.

Методология исследования основывается на историческом, системном, социологическом, культурологическом подходах и соответствующих методах научного исследования, в частности историко-хронологическом анализе игровой техники Г. Ткаченка, методе систематической классификации и комплексном анализе изучения техники и репертуара Г. Ткаченка и его последователей, а также традиционного кобзарского репертуара.

Материалы, использованные при подготовке данного исследования это книги, статьи о народной бандуре, о произведениях из репертуара Г. Ткаченка и его последователей, аудио- и видеозаписи сделанные автором.

Научной новизной работы является введение всеобъемлющего органо-эргонологического анализа деятельности Г. Ткаченка и его последователей, систематизация методики, использованной Ткаченком, растущая тенденция к практике исполнительства на традиционных украинских народных инструментах.

Результаты исследования способствуют осмыслению исполнительских особенностей традиционного бандурного репертуара на 21 струнной автентической бандуре и постижению кобзарского наследия в целом. В результате исследования получена общая характеристика репертуара Г. Ткаченка, выявлены исполнительские особенности дум, псалмов и кантов, исторических песен и инструментальных танцев.

Ключевые слова: Георгий Ткаченко, Остап Вересай, бандура, кобза, кобзарь, историческая реконструкция, думы, техника.