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## Synergism of Music and Word in Polyphonic Forms of Choral Works a Cappella by Modern Russian Composers

Natalia V. Koshkareva  

State Musical and Pedagogical Institute named after M.M. Ippolitov-Ivanov,  
36, Marksistskaya Str., Moscow, Russian Federation, 109147

 [nkoshkarevav@gmail.com](mailto:nkoshkarevav@gmail.com)

**Abstract.** The article is devoted to the consideration of a polyphonic choral composition as a polycode text, in which literary and musical texts as paralinguistic means contain heterogeneous information and add additional shades to the content of the score, i.e., the musical text as a whole. The novelty of the study lies in the fact that for the first time, synthesizing scientific achievements of linguistics and musicology, the polyphonic forms of a cappella choral works are analyzed as polycode texts. Due to the specifics of the choral art form as a musical and performing art, the nature of the perception of a musical text is multimodal. For performers who ‘decipher’ and ‘voice’ a musical notation, a musical text has one visual mode. For listeners, multimodality characterizes the practice of communication in terms of auditory, linguistic, spatial and visual resources, for example, the auditory mode when listening to a work without a visual range, or a polymodus complex when listening with a visual range. This refers to listening to music while simultaneously viewing the musical text of a work, observing the process of public performance, which in modern practice is often accompanied by a specially selected video sequence. The leading paradigm is the synergy of literary and textual sources and polyphonic form in works for a cappella choir by contemporary Russian composers. Based on the differentiation of the structure of a literary and textual source, the attribution of polyphonic forms of motet, madrigal, fugue and fugato is the subject of the work, while the goal is to form a research picture based on a close ‘polyphonic’ connection between word and music. In polyphonic analysis, it is important to determine the content of choral compositions and the composer’s method of dealing with the structure of a text source. A whole poem can be taken as the basis of a musical work (an example is the text-musical forms of motets and madrigals), one strophe, one line, one word (the analysis of fugato and fugue becomes the evidence base). An interesting case is the use as a text base of a polyphonic composition of individual syllables and phonemes (preludes and fugue-vocalizes) and a ‘silent’ performance — with a closed mouth. Thus, it is proved that the musical text is a complex multimodal complex in which the main information is conveyed by semiotically heterogeneous components. It is concluded that, on the one hand, a literary text influences the choice of a polyphonic form, on the other hand, it is often a static text that does not have an external plot development in the context of polyphonic dramaturgy and form and acquires internal dynamics of development to expand its semantic field.

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## Синергизм музыки и слова в полифонических формах хоровых произведений А CAPPELLA современных отечественных композиторов

Н.В. Кошкарёва  

Государственный музыкально-педагогический институт имени М.М. Ипполитова-Иванова,  
109147, Российская Федерация, г. Москва, ул. Марксистская, д. 36

 nkoshkarevav@gmail.com

**Аннотация.** Полифоническая хоровая композиция рассматривается как поликодовый текст, в котором литературный и нотный тексты как паралингвистические средства являются носителями разнородной информации и вносят дополнительные оттенки в содержание партитуры, то есть музыкального текста в целом. Новизна исследования: синтезируя научные достижения лингвистики и музыковедения, полифонические формы хоровых произведений а cappella анализируются как поликодовые тексты. В силу специфики хорового вида искусства как музыкально-исполнительского природа восприятия музыкального текста мультимодальна. Для исполнителей, «расшифровывающих» и «озвучивающих» нотную запись, музыкальный текст имеет один модус — визуальный. Для слушателей мультимодальность характеризует практику коммуникации с точки зрения аудиальных, лингвистических, пространственных и визуальных ресурсов. Например, аудиальный модус при прослушивании произведения без визуального ряда, или полимодусный комплекс — с визуальным рядом. Имеется в виду слушание музыки с одновременным рассмотрением нотного текста произведения, наблюдением за процессом публичного исполнения, которое в современной практике часто сопровождается специально подобранным видеорядом. В качестве ведущей парадигмы выступает синергизм литературно-текстовых источников и полифонической формы в произведениях для хора а cappella современных отечественных композиторов. Основанное на дифференцировании структуры литературно-текстового источника, атрибуция полифонических форм мотета, мадригала, фуги, фугато составляет предмет работы, тогда как целью является формирование исследовательской картины, основанной на тесной, «полифонической» связи слова и музыки. При полифоническом анализе важно определить содержание хоровых сочинений и метод обращения композитора со структурой текстового источника. За основу музыкального произведения может быть взято стихотворение полностью (примером выступают тексто-музыкальные формы мотетов и мадригалов), одна строфа, одна строка, одно слово (доказательной базой становится анализ фугато и фуги). Интересным случаем становится применение в качестве текстовой основы полифонической композиции отдельных слогов и фонем (прелюдии и фуги–вокализы), а также «безмолвное» исполнение — закрытым ртом. Таким образом доказываем, что музыкальный текст есть сложный мультимодальный комплекс, в котором основная информация передается семи-

отически разнородными компонентами. Сделан вывод о том, что с одной стороны — литературный текст влияет на выбор полифонической формы, с другой — часто статичный, не имеющий внешнего сюжетного развития текст в контексте полифонической драматургии и формы обретает внутреннюю динамику развития и расширяет свое семантическое поле.

**Ключевые слова:** поликодовый текст, мультимодальность, музыкальный текст, нотный текст, литературный текст, полифонические формы, современная хоровая музыка а cappella, тексто-музыкальная форма, мотет, мадригал, fuga, фугато

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## Introduction

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the rapid growth in the amount of visual information in the modern field of communication aroused interest among scientists and linguists in non-verbal means that accompany written speech. Particularly great importance is attached to the graphic design of the text. This led to the nascence of the concept of a ‘polycode’ text. Features of polycode texts were studied by Yu.A. Sorokin and E.F. Tarasov [1], E.E. Anisimova [2], N.M. Dugalich [3], L.S. Bolshakova [4] and others. As a matter of fact, hereinunder we will use the term *polycode text* (for more information about terminology see: N.V. Novospasskaya, N.M. Dugalich [5]).

It should be noted that beginning from the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, we can observe the publication of works devoted to the theoretical understanding of choral works from the point of view of the interaction of words and music. First of all, let’s name the books: *Word and Music in Vocal and Drama Genres* by A.S. Ogolevets [6], *Analysis of Choral Works* by K.N. Dmitrevskaya [7], *Vocal Forms in the Course of Analysis of Musical Works* by I.V. Lavrentieva [8], *Music and Poetic Word* by V.A. Vasina–Grossman [9; 10], *Word and Music: Dialectics of Semantic Relations* by I.V. Stepanova [11]. The beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century marks the appearance the fundamental work by V.N. Kholopova *Forms of Musical Works*, which focuses on the fact that «vocal musical forms require their own method of analysis <...> Capturing the meaning of words, it becomes a method of analyzing the entire vocal composition as a whole» [12. P. 13–14]. In the development of this idea, young researchers present works directly devoted to the interaction of musical and verbal series: *Theoretical problems of text-musical form* by G.A. Rymko [13] and *Musical allegory in the choral work* of S.I. Taneev by V.P. Tereshchenko [14]. In addition, a number of scientific studies related to choral music touch upon the

synergism of words and music among the leading aspects: *Choral composition in modern Russian music* by N.V. Koshkareva [15] and *Choral vocalization in Russian music: genre and style features* by V.V. Krasov [16]. A highlight was the publication of G.V. Grigoryeva's textbook *Musical forms in the choirs of S.I. Taneev* [17]. Using the example of S.I. Taneev's choral music, the proposed manual clarifies the methodology for analyzing works of the choral genre, gives recommendations for analyzing syntactic structures of a poetic text and music, and examines the characteristic features of vocal forms that are typical not only for this composer, but also for many others. Besides, interesting examples of scientific theories are associated with the development of this problematics in the field of philology, for example, *Polyphony of the word in a literary text: based on the work by J. Joyce "Dubliners"* by A.S. Golovkina [18] and also as a synthesis of philology and art criticism, for example *Choral vocalization and mono-vocalism* by V.V. Krasov [19] and "Music as a constant of Russian literature" by I.V. Stepanova [20].

The value of these works is in deepening and clarifying the methodology for analyzing choral works based on the synthesis of two arts — poetry and music, both in figurative and emotional terms, and in the constructive field. Continuing this direction, this article chooses polyphonic works for a cappella choir by Russian composers of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries as the object of analysis. The novelty of the study lies in the fact that, synthesizing the scientific achievements of linguistics and musicology, the polyphonic choral composition appears as a *polycode text*, in which *literary* and *musical texts*, as paralinguistic means, are carriers of heterogeneous information and introduce additional shades into the content of the score, that is, the *musical text* as a whole. We give reasons for the hypothesis that the relationship between literary and musical text lies in their flexible mutual influence, forming a *polycode text*. On the one hand, the poetic source influences the structure of the polyphonic form, on the other hand, the artistic word itself, immersed in the context of the polyphonic texture, acquires new semantic facets.

### **Choral Composition as A Genre of a Polycode Text**

The genres of polycode texts are diverse, and their list is constantly expanding. In terms of impact on various senses, polycode texts can be divided into three groups: *visual*, *auditory* and *audiovisual*. As an example, let's have a closer look at audiovisual polycode texts of modern polyphonic compositions for a cappella choir.

Due to the specifics of the choral art as a musical and performing art, the nature of the perception of a musical text is *multimodal* [21]. For performers who 'decipher' and 'voice' a musical notation, a musical text has one mode — visual. For listeners, multimodality characterizes the practice of communication in terms of auditory, linguistic, spatial and visual resources (for example, the auditory mode

when listening to a work without a visual range, or a polymodus complex with a visual range). This refers to listening to music while simultaneously viewing the musical text of a work, observing the process of public performance, which in modern practice is often accompanied by a specially selected video sequence, and so on. In general, any musical text can be attributed to polycode texts, since it includes verbal, visual and sound information. Polycode texts, like ordinary texts, have a number of features, such as integrity, the category of modality, the category of time and the category of locality [1].

If we analyze a choral score as a polycode text, then it should be noted that it can combine verbal, iconic and audio components, which form a single integral system among themselves, and therefore they are perceived by the addressee as a community of elements [22]. The verbal component can be represented by both written and oral text (including the part of the reader in the choral composition), which also allows it to be attributed to the audio component. This means that the choral composition as a *polycode text* can be differentiated into *literary* and *musical texts*, acting as paralinguistic means and being carriers of heterogeneous information, introducing additional shades into the content of the score, that is, the *musical text* as a whole [23].

### **Paradigm of Artistic Relations of Literary and Music Text in Polyphonic Forms of Choral Compositions**

The choral composition in its typical form appears as the result of the interaction of the characteristic features of two arts — music and poetry. Each of these arts brings to the choral work not only the strength of its content resources, but also aspects of form shaping. If the changeable, ‘associative’ aspect of poetry tends to liberate music from strictness, from refined and typified structures and schemes, then the rhythmically organized form of a literary text directly affects the structure of the musical form. The complex dialectical interaction of constructive and destructive formants of the architectonics of the musical form of a choral composition can be expressed in relief and in various ways. Let us turn to the attribution of polyphonic forms of motet, madrigal, fugue, fugato in works for a cappella choir, differentiating the structure of the literary text source.

Most often, the literary basis of a choral work is the full version of the poem (sometimes composers exclude one or even several strophes). This allows most fully reflecting the meaning of poetry, the features of the plot structure. In terms of polyphonic genres, especially madrigals and motets, we can speak of musical architectonics, the specific feature of which is determined by the structure of a poetic text, that is, the *textual-musical form*. For example, in A.A. Korolev’s *Madrigal* to the verses by A.A. Blok, the writing technique is focused on a strict polyphonic style. The exception is the last unprepared detention. The symbolism

of A.A. Blok is consonant with madrigal poetry, singing the ideal image, an unattainable dream.

The poem by A.A. Blok, which became the basis of the musical madrigal, was written on December, 08<sup>th</sup> 1908 and are not titled. The structure of the poem is rather loose, it consists of two six-line refrains. The musical material, following the poetic source, is saturated with various themes. For each eight-syllable line of the poem, A.A. Korolev composes a separate small theme (VI. Protopopov) or *soggetto* in the spirit of the interpretation of the theme in the 16th century, which gives the work maximum richness and variety, leading to a through form. Due to the repetition of the first minor theme at the end of the work, the effect of reprise is created. But, as was often the case in the ‘madrigal form’, the final section does not always repeat the material literally. So here, too, the initial musical phrase is carried out in a rakish inversion (bass and tenor part — bar 16). At the end of each of the six musical strophes, a cadence construction is given, accompanied by a rhythmic stop (the only exception is the end of the fourth strophe, which merges with the beginning of the fifth). This was typical of Renaissance madrigals. The final constructions are quite lengthy, they are chains of concords (polyphonic consonances) and are written in the technique of monorhythmic counterpoint (*contrapunctus simplex*). Such constructions can be compared with dots in symbolist poetry.

The *motet form* becomes the key to the solution of the choir *The Swan, the Crayfish and the Pike* by A.T. Grechaninov to the text of the fable by I.A. Krylov [24]. The high art of the composition of the work, the birth of a new genre of musical fable, is manifested in the fact that «the actions of the characters are symbolized by the independence of the voices of the polyphonic fabric» [25. P. 342]. Thus, at the very beginning of the work, in the first two measures (A.T. Grechaninov skips the first three lines of the poetic text), an endless canon sounds, where the *proposta* is presented in the parts of sopranos and altos (dubbing into thirds), and the *risposta* is presented in the tenors’ part, ending in words *together, three* (in the eighth measure) in a symbolic homophonic-harmonic construction. The second part of a complex three-part reprise form begins with a four-voice fugato (*they climb out of their skin*). After the second presentation of the theme and the answer, there is an interlude with canonical sequences in all choral parts except for the bass one (bars 25–30). After long imitative roll calls, the voices unite in a homophonic-harmonic sound.

In the second section of this part, on the words *the cart is still no move*, a stuck cart is sounded — the “trampling on the spot” semitone *a -gis* in the bass part becomes the background for the main theme in the three remaining choral parts. Interestingly, this arrangement of musical material is not constant. In the next phrase, the initial background is transposed from the bass part to the soprano and tenor parts, and the melody is transferred to the alto part (bars 42–43).

The third section begins with new material — a *stretto* introduction of a new topic on the words *The luggage would seem easy for them*. All the heroes are depicted

in the key of D-dur with graphic means of choral texture: Swan — chord texture, romantic-lyrical melodic line, directed upwards (bars 49–52); Cancer — imitative holding of a downward broken second movement (bars 53–57); Pike is a melodic line of contrast structure: the word *pulls* is musicalized by an ascending stroke, which abruptly breaks down by a pure octave at the words *into the water*, leading to a general choral unison on the sound *cis* (bars 58–62).

The reprise sounds in the key of Fis-dur. The canon, from which the chorus began, is presented in an abbreviated form, leading to a climax, which contains the final phrase of the fable, which has become a popular expression *And things are still there!*. Following the poetic text, A.T. Grechaninov singles out the final words with a homophonic-harmonic warehouse of choral texture, subsequently confirming them with a five-fold imitation in all voices (altos-basses-tenors-soprano-basses) and a solemn chord of the Fis-dur triad.

*One strophe of a literary text* often becomes used by composers to write a fugato (expositional or developmental type). For example, in the fugato of the expositional type of the choir *Executed* by D.D. Shostakovich, the initial strophe of the poem of the same name by A.M. Gmyrev lay down: *In this dreary and stuffy cell, two wrestlers lived out their last days*. On the whole, the theme forms a nine-bar period (4 bars + 5 bars), but its internal structure is polyphonic. The monophonic introduction of the bass part resembles the beginning of a fugue. This is emphasized by the traditional support of the theme elements on the quarter frame. The interval range of the theme is as if clamped “in the thes” of a minor sixth. The introduction of tenors with a tonal response turns into a “dialogue” of two male voices, which changes the perception of a monophonic beginning from a fugue to the beginning of a Russian song in a natural minor key characteristic of folklore. I.K. Kuznetsov notes that «this form of the melodic formation of the theme by Shostakovich contains features that make it related to both Western and Russian polyphony» [26. P. 132]. The subsequent introductions of altos and sopranos are built similarly to male voices. In general, the use of fugato allows ‘drawing’ a musical picture of the limited space of a prison cell. A different kind of fugato of a developing type is laid down in the first part of Y.A. Evgrafov’s concerto for choir *Proverbs in C*. Here, the quadruple holding of the theme ‘*Joy to a man in the answer of his mouth, and how good the word is in time*’ seems to strengthen the power and spirit of the singing. Polyphony in V.Y. Shebalin almost always acts as an active, effective principle in the dramaturgy of a work. The fugato of the developing type in the choir *The Grave of a Fighter* to the verses by M.Y. Lermontov (op. 47, No. 1) concentrates chromatic intonationally unstable turns, creating an atmosphere of anxious foreboding, excitement: *And the dead man’s cheeks are pale, as the face of his enemies turned pale when alone he appeared, alone among their ranks*.

*One line*, in many cases, takes the form of a choral fugue. As an example, let us consider the vocalization of R.K. Shchedrin’s *Willow, Willow*, where the

syntagma acts as the verbal basis of the composition. According to V.V. Krasov, «the introduction as a literary text of only a brief verbal turnover, repeated many times in whole or in part, concisely concretizes the semantic subtext of music, although it does not give grounds for its figuratively unambiguous interpretation» [16. P. 93–101]. In the text itself, there is no development of the action, which leads to the expansion of figurative-associative links. So, the willow becomes both a symbol of sadness and strength, more broadly — with Russian nature, with Russia with centuries-old cultural traditions. Thus, a rather short verbal text acquires a multi-parameter meaning in the form of a fugue.

It is interesting to regard the use of *individual syllables of the text and solmization* in polyphonic works for chorus a cappella [16. P. 83]. Such a technique introduces an instrumental element into vocal forms, which often leads to the birth of a sonorous texture. Examples are the preludes and fugue-vocalises by V. Barkauskas, T.I. Korganov, Yu.A. Falik. As an example, let us consider *Prelude and Fugue in C-dur* by T.I. Korganov. In the instructions, the composer gives different options for singing the prelude and fugue: the composition can be solfegged or sung in any convenient syllables. The prelude immediately tunes in to a cheerful mode, which will be preserved throughout this small polyphonic cycle. The prelude anticipates the fugue in many ways: primarily in structure, since it contains the features of the fugue. This is expressed in the fact that the author uses a monophonic theme, bright and recognizable, running throughout the prelude, in different voices. In addition, the author works with the theme in accordance with the law of the fugue genre: he uses such techniques as inversions (bar 49) and the sounding of the theme in a different voice, inversion of the main theme (bar 49), sounding of the main theme and its inversion in another part at the same time. Thanks to various strokes (at the beginning — *marcato*, then — *legato*), the theme changes its character from the dashing character of a folk dance to the character of a lyrical lingering song. The classical one-dark three-part fugue was written in the classic-romantic traditions with characteristic types of counterpoint: the theme in the increase in the bass part (bar 32), which allows the melody to sound more solemn, the inversion technique in the soprano part (bar 19) allows coming to the finale of the fugue, admitting doubling and vertically reversible counterpoints. The main stretta bears witness to the composer's polyphonic mastery and gives the fugue a scherzo character.

In variations on basso-ostinato in the choir *Thermometers that have fallen to zero* from Y.A. Evgrafov's choral oratorio *Autumn Cry of a Hawk*, one syllable *bom* is used, a typical element symbolizing bells in Russian music.

There are polyphonic choral works where composers *do not use literary text at all*. This refers to vocalizations for the choir, performed with a closed mouth. Such an example is the fugato in the Prologue of the choral oratorio to the verses by I.A. Brodsky *Autumn Cry of a Hawk* and the Epigraph from the choral concerto



to the texts of V.T. Shalamov *Children's Literature* by Y.A. Evgrafov. In the latter case, the conductor decides for himself which sounds the choir should exhibit. A lot depends on the choice here: the associative series can be unlimited.

### Conclusion

Polyphonic forms (fugue, fugato) provide ample opportunities for a rather embossed reflection of the structure of a literary and textual source in choral music. First of all, this is achieved due to the possibility of constant repetition of the same words (or phrases) in imitating voices. Let us note that imitative polyphony is characterized, on the one hand, by the expression of the most generalized ideas, and, on the other hand, by purely private sound-pictorial episodes. Both these extreme cases are equally far from the consistent disclosure of a detailed literary plot. It is no coincidence, therefore, that the verbal range of most choral fugues and fugatos is limited to a minimum of phrases or even words, and sometimes is completely absent. If the composer aims to achieve a really audible embodiment of a fairly detailed verbal text, then, as a rule, he uses various textual and musical forms (motet, madrigal). Summarizing what has been said about the form-building and figurative-semantic functions of choral polyphony, it should be noted that in the field of musical form it acts primarily as a factor in the complication of details and dynamization of the structural process, and in the field of verbal content — as a parameter for identifying the main idea, generalization, and expansion of semantics of literary text source. However, the generalizations that have gone very far, the concentration of the expression of the leading idea of a poetic text, has as its logical limit the switching of the listener's attention from the textual sphere to the purely musical sphere in the course of artistic discourse. Sooner or later, a moment may come when a few and often repeated words already practically fall out of the field of hearing, cease to attract attention.

Thus, the choral score is a *polycode text* in which the transmitted information is encoded by semiotically heterogeneous components, that is, by verbal and non-verbal means, which together represent a certain structure that is distinguished by the manifestation of the interdependence of its constituent parts in the content and formal aspects. In polyphonic analysis, it is important to determine the content of choral compositions and the composer's method of dealing with the structure of a text source. A whole poem can be taken as the basis of a musical work (an example is the text–musical forms of motets and madrigals), one stanza, one line, one word (the analysis of fugato and fugue becomes the evidence base). An interesting case is the use of a polyphonic composition of individual syllables and phonemes (preludes and fugue–vocalises) as a textual basis, as well as a 'silent' performance — with a closed mouth. It can be concluded that, on the one hand, the *literary text* influences the choice of *polyphonic form*, on the other hand,

an often *static* text that does not have external plot development in the context of polyphonic dramaturgy and form acquires internal development *dynamics* and expands its *semantic field*.

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### **Сведения об авторе:**

Кошкарёва Наталья Владимировна, кандидат искусствоведения, профессор, заведующая кафедрой дирижирования академическим хором, Государственный музыкально-педагогический институт имени М.М. Ипполитова-Иванова; *сфера научных интересов*: поликодовый текст, мультимодальность, музыкальный текст; *e-mail*: nkoshkarevav@gmail.com  
ORCID: 0000-0002-4578-6591.

### **Information about the author:**

Natalia V. Koshkareva, Ph.D. in Art History, Professor, Head of Academic Choir Conducting Department, State Musical and Pedagogical Institute named after M.M. Ippolitov-Ivanov; *Research interests*: polycode text, multimodality, musical text; *e-mail*: nkoshkarevav@gmail.com  
ORCID: 0000-0002-4578-6591.