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On the Semantics of Music and Plastic Walts Intonation in Maurice Ravel's Works

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The article describes the idea of style-forming importance of danceability in Maurice Ravel's works. His constant interest in the dance genres and created mediation principles for the original dance models are crucial in building the individual image of his works, i.e. they serve as the style's factors. The article investigates the specificity of semantic and structural reflection of the waltz's choreographic and music features in Ravel's thematism and compositions. A number of his works in various ways expresses choreographic and music components of the intonation prototype as well as the experience on it being mediated in the author's works written in the 19th century. Alongside with this, Ravel enriches the genre's stylistics with new shades of imagery, lexical units and performance techniques. In Ravel's waltzes the plastic gesture possesses a higher semantic information value; the music form development reveals its special metaphoric symbolism.

Keywords: waltz, dance prototype, genre semantics, image and content side of the plastics, dance symphonization.

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Dance as a genre prototype of thematism dominates in Maurice Ravel's (Fig. 1) music throughout his whole creative career, from the very early opuses of the 1890s ("Ancient Minuet", "The Soundscapes") to his last work – a cycle of songs "Don Quixote Loves Duchene" (1932). Being based on dance sources these works are included in all the spheres of Ravel's music except for the cantatas.

For Ravel danceability has become the most important way of artistic generalization¹. As the concern over a number of compositions has shown, the inclusion of one or other in the context

and specific way of indirect reflection of its choreographic components in the music language for the composer means tools of realizing the idea-image intention and of clarification of its deeper meaning sometimes. The very fact of systematic and diverse use of dance rhythms and the ways of musical reconstruction of the dance's content and structure components of are significantly relevant in the individual Ravel's style formation. Moreover, the reliance on dance genres becomes one of his dominants.

Ravel's method of dance implementation in the music is characterized by the desire for

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reflection diversity represented in a wide range of dance genres different by their historical, national and social affiliation as well as in a variety of interpretations of one and the same dance. The composer comprehends the dance as a very flexible, “plastic” genre, “responsive” to any tasks of creation. By playing with particular changes (shades of meaning intensification or weakening) or transformations (reframing) of the initial semantics of this or that dance prototype, Ravel “expands” its semantic borders. In that way, the genre’s content mobility as often as not is expressed within one composition.

In the process of dance genres mediation in the music thematism Ravel relies on a rich cultural and historical tradition aroused in his professional music career. The development of deep perspective of historical associations contributes to the semantic specification of the music image. At the same time, adaptation of others’ experience in one’s style is combined a lot with the evolution, reframing and sometimes with rejection of this experience².

For the first time ever Ravel addressed waltz in his piece in “Conversations Between Beauty and the Beast” from the piano suite “Mother Goose” (1908-1910). Still, to its full extent the waltz was shown in the piano cycle “Noble and Sentimental Waltz” (1911)³ in which romantic traditions came alive and one can feel inner closeness towards the world of Schubert’s, Chopin’s and Liszt’s waltzes combining a lyric-poetic expressiveness with elegance, brilliancy and virtuosity. Certain analogies with the waltz suites composed by J. Strauss II also arise⁴. At the same time, this music bears a distinct mark of its century. Diffusion between old and new means of the music language, combination of classical rules of formation and functional logic of the mode-tone system with the tonality principles based on dissonance and complicated



Fig. 1. Maurice Ravel'

by the metro-rhythmic organization suggest classifying the “Waltzes” as an example of neo-classicism.

Eight waltzes united into the cycle are different in their nature. Still, despite the diversity of emotional nuances, the waltz suite is characterized by a unique integrity and unity. It is supported by a number of unifying reasons: a solemn and bright intrada (Waltz #1) and generalizing epilogue (Waltz #8) form a frame; the image and conceptual arches (Waltzes ## 1, 7, 3 and 6), similarity of the harmonic language which integrates the consonant and dissonant tonalities in all the pieces⁵; the device *attacca* which unites the third, fourth and fifth waltzes. But the most important thing which merges separated waltzes into one organic unity is a generalized intonation of the work (a proto-intonation⁶) coloured with nostalgic tones. In these bright and inspired pieces one can hear a special attitude of the author towards the past (to the “period of waltz” in the 19th century in particularly) as to a certain ethic and aesthetic ideal. Each waltz resembles a vision turning back to the past and reminding either of fragrant feelings of naive happiness and joyful fun, or a kind smile, or sorrow and regret about the lost harmony of beauty and morality, about the fairness of human relationship gone forever. Apparently, there is no coincidence in the title

given by Ravel to this piano cycle. People are usually characterized by the most valuable things in the relationships – by referring their nobility and naturalness in feelings expression (in our observation, it is the very way of how the adjective “sentimental” should be interpreted in this case) – to the past times.

The generalized intonation extracts the feature of choreographic prototype represented in this case by not an ordinary, but ballet waltz with its complex and diverse choreographic lexis (such conclusion is explained also by the features of plastic intonation reflected in the music as well as by the very fact of Ravel's ballet originated on the piano cycle music). An unparalleled uniqueness and particular charm of the choreographic plastic in “Noble and Sentimental Waltzes” are determined mainly by such characteristics as elation, simplicity and lightness extenuated by the composer with an amazing ingenuity, elegance and flavor. A gust

into another – ideal – world and pursuance of fading dream are that “main gesture” of most of the cycle's dances.

All the waltzes, excepting the first one and certain fragments in the seventh, are characterized by almost ethereal and ephemeral sound. It seems as performing all these *pas* the dancers only slightly touch the ground. Such impression is created particularly due to a unique decision for the texture. The later is transparent, simple by its details and audible with all the lines and colors, accents and nuances. The formula of waltz accompaniment often has a “light” variant, for example, in higher register than usual (Waltz #2 bb. 1 – 8, 17 – 24, 33 – 40; Waltz #3 bb. 1 – 8, 25 – 30, 33 – 40, 48 – 56; Waltz #5 b. 1 – 4) and chord verticals change with either monophonia (Waltz #2, the same bars) or diaphonia (Waltz #5, b.1 – 4, Waltz #6), or with well balanced figuration (Waltz #3; Waltz #54 excluding b. 25 – 30, Waltz #7 bb. 19 – 38, 47 – 50, 67 – 130, 139 – 142):

Waltz #2



(left-hand part)

Waltz #3



(left-hand part)

Waltz #5



(left-hand part)

As often as not the harmonic figuration develops specifically: it is either given in wide or

super-wide position (Waltz #4), or covers quite a large range – three or four octaves (Waltz #7):

Waltz #4



(left-hand part)

Sometimes the chord figuration is replaced by one sound moving through different octaves in the upward-and-downward direction imitating reverberation (Waltz #3 b. 33 – 56; Waltz #6 bb. 31 – 32, 35, 36; Waltz #8 bb. 17 – 19, 41 – 42). In these cases, due to the specific timbre-register colour the chord sounds are arranged in different spatial coordinates causing an impression of removal, lightening and levitation, and it seems like the dance per se as well as the dancers lose that clearness in figures and become illusory ones.

Such effect is strengthened by the sound deafness (commonly there are different p-shades; soft pedal sound) and by the special softness, delicacy and lightness of the piano touch which, according to many remarks in the music text, (*leger* – lightly, *doux et expressif* – soave and expressive, *soutenu* – elevate, *très doux et un peu languissant* – very softly and and slightly dolefully, *très lointain* – very remotely) is assumed by the composer.

Contrary to the “lighter” accompaniment, in some waltzes the melody is heavier in the texture; it represent a movement by “chord chains” (Waltz #3 b. 33 – 72, Waltz #4 and #5 b. 15 – 18, Waltz #7 b. 19 – 38, Waltz #8). Still, for the slow dynamics and generally for the high register these phonic complexes merely strengthen the brilliance of sounding without loading the texture.

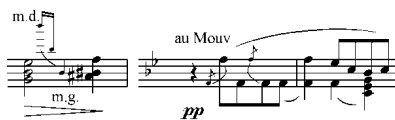
A great importance in Ravel's cycle is given to the devices which can be referred to reproduce flying and soaring movements. One of them is a novel way of the sound articulation originally pointed out by Ye. Nazaikinskii: “In musical notation this device is written as slurs running from sound to pauses” (Nazaikinsky, 1972: 154). By joining the sound with the consequent pause, the composer marks a necessity to listen to how the tone and the whole overtone range disappear in the silence and fade in the space. Such device together with a gradual volume weakening to *pp* creates a sense of levitation, ephemerality of the dance moves (Waltz #4, bb. 2, 4, 10, 12; Waltz #7 bb. 2, 19, 22, 31; Waltz #8 bb. 1 – 4, 45, 47).

The same impact is made by short texture units formed by a quick octave slip (by one or more). These units can be of different variants: a downward octave slip by short time values (♪) followed by a pause; two downward steps in a double octave; octave slips with the register shifts; multidirectional octave steps; octave motion in the form of a grace note slurred with the pause. A quick step to octave or octave grace note in the context of weakened dynamics imitates a reverberational resonance and gives fullness and lightness to the sound. The texture's phonic suggest considering the nature of dance moves imitated in the music – their wideness, coverage and, at the same time, about their extraordinary simplicity.

Waltz #8



Waltz #2

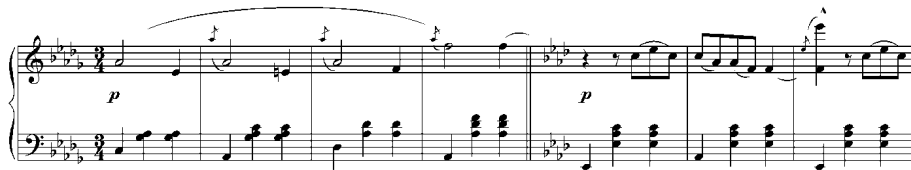


Interestingly, similar but not so much delicately framed devices can be seen in some waltzes by the romantic composers such as in "German Dance" #5

by F. Schubert ("Six German Dances" D 820), in *Des-dur* Waltz (op. 64 #1) by F. Chopin and in The Flowers Waltz, in the ballet "Naila" by L. Delibes.

F. Chopin op. 64 #1

L. Delibes, The Flowers Waltz in "Naila"



The plastic in moves, style of performance are linked to their emotional content. Many waltzes are marked with the spirit of elegiac dreaming; there are languor and dedication to the world of poetic dreams in their sounds.

In this sense, the expression of harmony is of the utmost importance here. It seems like a tangy and colourful dissonant succession embodies that languorous sweetness of dreams. Quite often such chord successions rely on different forms of the functional inversion technique aimed at psychological shifting from an abutment to non-abutment, at replacing of a centripetal orientation of functional attractions by a centrifugal one.

The nostalgic intonation which unites the cycle's pieces, the entity of composition techniques modelling particular elements of the choreographic lexis and the performance manner are coupled to a bright uniqueness of

each miniature both in the emotional content and plastic image expression.

The picture of a flashy gorgeous ball and the atmosphere of festive liveliness are reflected in Waltz #1 and similar fragments of Waltz #7 (bb. 51 – 66, 143 – 158). This waltz stands near to Schubert's bravura-solemn waltzes (## 4, 12 op. 18; #1 op. 77; #3 op. 127), to the reframed theme from the "Invitation to the Dance" by C.M. Weber. A joyful excitement and sometimes emoting feelings are expressed by Ravel through the quick tempo, bright dynamic sound colours (*f*, *ff*), full-toned dense texture and emphasis on each part of the bar. The waltz's orchestral variant mainly uses the *tutti* sounding. The role of bright accord as the result of the tertian texture chords' complexity added by supertonics, alliteration and polyfunctional layers is also significant.



Specific features of the dance plastics are translated primarily through the rhythm. The energy and momentum of dance moves are realized in Waltz #1 (as well as in Schubert's works mentioned above) through the prevailing

rhythmic scheme formula $\text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩}$ combined with one- sound or chord frequency. Wide melodic motions to the third-beat in the rhythmic figure – the upward motion to the quinte or duodecimo (b. 1, 2 and similar ones), downward motion to

the seventh (b. 45 – 52) – mark a rushing and impulsive nature of the dance. The celebration fuss, excitement and free moves relating to them are reproduced in the music through unexpected register shifts, compression and de-compression of the texture and also through the time flow irregularity. The active move parts in which an essential role is given to authentic harmonic configurations interchange with the static parts. Thus, the accompaniment of b. 9 – 14, 67 – 74 include the harmonic configuration $V-IV_{43}^{3-10/3}$ /*a-moll* by drone in fifth, while in the melody sophisticated with duplications one and the same (with little changes) motive is repeated.

The waltz's middle part (b. 21 – 60) is characterized by the tension forcing supported by: multiple frequencies of the motives and phrases and sequence dynamic based on the melodic “spinning” figure associated with a dance twirling. The tonal-harmonic fluctuation strengthens the impression of the dance's anarchy; its rhythmic intercrossing caused by the “spinning” motive variations (b. 31 – 32) creates a fast-motion effect. The evolution dynamics culminates in the b. 45 – 60. Owing to the increase of harmonic rhythm frequency, to the functional inversion technique expressed in the form of a long-repeated chain of minor major seventh and ninth chords taken in a tritonic interrelation and upward chromatic voice progression the sounding gets a shade of aspiration and impulsion.

The spirited and covered with poetic sadness Waltz #2 (the only minor waltz in this cycle) most clearly demonstrates the author's intonation colored with that nostalgia. The absorption which determines the drama and composition's specificity also brings this waltz closer to the “Forgotten Waltz #1” by F. Liszt⁷. The piece's structure cannot be attributed to any classical scheme⁸; certain themes are separated by semi-cadences and leave the impression of some unspoken words.

The waltz starts with a theme which later appears three more times (bb. 1 – 8, 17 – 24, 33 – 40, 49 – 56). The flagging minor tertian intonations (transformed into the upward minor-second during the third development) accented with a gradual decline in the dynamics; the harmony's sharpness⁹; glooming intonation of oboes in the orchestra version add a melancholic and mildly languid character to the theme.

This opening theme provides a rough idea about the dance plastics in Waltz #2. The downward tertian motions in the melody correlate with evenness and softness of the moves. The accompaniment is more vividly characterized by such choreographic features of *pas* as lightness and featheriness. The waltz accompaniment organized through the octave motion in syncopated rhythm $\downarrow \downarrow$ seems to reproduce a light fixed leap or delayed lift.

The second theme with its songs like elegiac intonation reminds of Chopin's *a-moll* and *h-moll* waltzes. Still, it is different from Chopin's minor fragments by a tender, brightened and elevated sounding owing to a strict diatonicism of Dorian mode, texture transparency, weakened dynamics and special melodic picture. Smoothly wriggling melodic line seeks to stay on a particular pitch: at first it turns all the time back to the tone *a* (II), then to the tone *d* (V). Due to a short grace note on the tonic quinte which together with the basic tones forms wide intervals (from the quarte to octave); the melody seems to freeze at one level and move at the same time (b. 13 – 15). Such technique which reproduces the effect of a dancer soaring in the air can be compared with a dashing pose of arabesque or a delayed lift.

Some “ambiguity” of the harmony, i.e. an imbalance between the functional bass logic which establishes the tonic-dominant relations by the I-V motion and high voices of the texture based on I_7 and II_{43}^{3-5} shifts gives to the second theme unsteadiness and intangibility of the

figures. The melody's rise towards the sound *f*² in cadence creates an impression of its fading similarly to a ghostly image faded in the memory haze.



After re-development of the initial theme, there surprisingly¹⁰ is a new theme showing the image which attracts by its virtuous purity and fragility. Here the light and soaring moves are depicted even more vividly. Numerous repetitions of the highest sound (*c*³) and increase of its length due to the grace notes seem to express the desire of dancers to “stay in the air”. This effect is deepened by an upward chromatic glide of the accompanying chords. The high register, clear figure, *pp* dynamics, coolish timbre of the solo-flute in orchestrating give an impression of extraordinary dance freedom.

On revised developments all the three themes change their appearance acquiring new sound colors (it can be explained by the change of mode, register, dynamics, harmonization or melody) likewise our memory tries to recollect some half-forgotten and slipping images in our consciousness.

Waltz #3 resembles a fragile, pure and naive world of childhood. This piece continues the line of “toy” waltzes written by Liadov and Brahms, “Snuffbox Waltz” by Dargomyzhsky¹¹. The rhythmic balance of melody, ostinatness of the rhythm formula ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ or ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ (and ostinatness of the melody-rhythmic image in the middle part) in the accompaniment, organ point on the VI degree lasting for sixteen bars, strict periodic sequence of caesuras and squareness of combinations reflect an automatism of doll-like moves. The “simple” texture (a harmonic figuration with a pause on the third beat is

used instead of the traditional form “bass – two chords”), weakened dynamics, detailed articulation involving the use of light *staccato* and *arpeggiato*, localization of the melody and accompaniment mainly in the high register – all these things express the mechanic nature of moves made by fragile toy-like creatures. In “Adelaide of the Flower Language” the instrumentation becomes an important expressive means as well: the melody is produced generally by the woodwinds in the high tessitura; the accompanying strings quite often use *pizzicato*; among brasses and drums only two horns and triangle are involved.

Simultaneously, a “puppet” plastic is full of delicate grace and charm achieved by the harmonies’ spiciness and also by a subtle game of rhythmic accents and hemiola. Thus, in b. 1 – 4 the rhythmic accent is found dispersed: in the right-hand part it falls on the first beat, in the left-hand part – on the second one (this is facilitated by a long length, melodic peak and *staccato* picking). In the b. 5 – 7, 13 – 16, 25 – 32 two-beat motives which cause disturbance in the metric inertia are used; the last is interpreted as a faint and idle attempt to overcome that determinism in a clock-work move.

The blithe and cheerful “toy” waltz is replaced by a fanciful, enigmatic and slightly hazed with illusive visions and dreams **Waltz #4**. On the image structure this waltz closely echoes the wistful first theme from the “Forgotten Waltz #1” by F. Liszt. One can find similarities in the intonation as well: the

theme development based on the variation of merely one motive which creates the effect of fascination or entrancement; the accompaniment's simplicity and transparency; tenuous piano gradations; the tonic and harmonic variability still caused by other in Liszt's works tools.

The harmony in Waltz #4 represents elliptic chains of smoothly disharmonizing accords which only in the sentences' end are resolved into a consonance belonging each time to a novel tonality, like a shape-shifting ghost. The main role here is given to the minor major ninth chord enriched with a complex of non-chord sounds. Owing to the chord's phonic features¹² and long existing harmonic tension there is an image of an unending quest for something luring, but inaccessibly distant, elusive and inconceivable. Considerable importance in the creation of such a guttering, ephemeral image is also attached to a specific principle of melodic development. The head motive is repeated each time with certain

modifications: a downward intonation of the minor sixth now expands up to the major sixth or to reduced seventh, then narrows to the perfect quinte, major third, perfect fourth, or changes its pitch position.

The effect of elusiveness is intensified by a certain metrorhythmic structure of the piece, analogues to which can be found in J. Brahms's waltzes "*Schwarzer Wald, dein Schatten*" from "New Love Songs Waltzes" (op. 65 # 12), "*Am Gesteine rauscht die Flut*" from "Love Songs Waltzes" (op. 52 # 2), yet within another context: the German composer expresses in his waltzes a commotion of the spirits and profound sorrow. Going against the bar segmentation, the repetition of $\downarrow \cdot \uparrow$ formula in the upper texture creates binary beats, while the lower texture keeps the triple metric inertia. The polymetry "hidden" by the notation adds unstableness to the metric structure and gives ambiguity and uncertainty to the rhythmic intonation.



Waltz #4 quite specifically embodies the plastic elements of the dance prototype. Certain music lexemes allow understanding the elements of choreographic lexis. These might include the waltz's head intonation—a wide downward motion in dotted rhythm followed by a reverse to the initial or nearby sound. Such reverse movement impulses associations with the *balance*.

The triplet fragment (b. 7 – 8) briefly covering more than a tridiapason ($d - f^3$) forms a heliciform path: extended parts of upward motion on the minor reduced seventh chord sounds interchange with short parts of downward

motion. Such melodic relief together with a lively speed and orchestrating¹³ allow us to compare this thematic element with the dance move *tours chaînés*; following A.Ya. Vaganova "suddenly rushing chain of small circles" (this title is a derivative from *tour* – a turn and *chaîne* – a chain) (Vaganova, 2000: 158). *Chaînés* is performed in a fast way and diagonally directed.

In the melody picture of the initial phrase (b. 17 – 20) that formed a basis for the sequence in the waltz's middle part one also can identify the plastic image. The phrase includes two two-bar motives: one rests on a "swinging" figure, the

other – on a “twisting” one. Here, it is possible to compare it with another typical waltz move – *dos à dos* (a balance with the turn where the partners change their positions).

The final tone in Waltz #4 gives a rise to a quivering, full of uncertain desires and vague feelings Waltz #5 which little by little seems to be taking its real shape. Gliding harmonies with changeable tonalities *E-dur*, *C-dur*, *Fis-dur*, *as-moll* enriched with complex alterations are most significant here; the melody which is pictured relying on singing for the reference tones: III degrees in *E-dur* (b. 1 – 8) and *C-dur* (b. 9 – 12). As V. Tsukkerman observes “a spinning mode of the melody is, so to speak, performed “in place” and that is why it is copped and deprive of an “expression” (Mazel, Tsukkerman, 1967: 105). In Ravel’s waltz this feature of the melodic picture is accented through numerous one-motive repetitions and slow tempo. In “Adelaide and the Flower Language” the pallet of expressive means grows with timbre colours of the instruments leading the melodic line: a sensuous sounding of the English horn; soft and delicate – of the oboe and strings.

A museful aspiration is also expressed in the changeable and dynamic rhythmic structure of the waltz. Ongoing syncopation represented through the accent shifts from non-reference parts of the bar and violation of the concord principle between the harmony and metre (resolution into the buttress is made on the weakest 3rd beat) as well as through periodically appeared polymetry (in b. 19 –20, 23 – 24 the lower layer pulses in a three-beat metric signature 3/4; the upper one is two-beat – 6/8) create this metric imbalance. The syncopated rhythm has one more aspect of expressiveness: due to it the waltz theme acquires the width of melodic breath. Alongside with the melodiousness it outlines another genre prototype – arioso.

The plastic side of the waltz is shown quite generally without any details. The melody’s relief

based mainly on the twirling moves; the rhythmic features mentioned before; *Presque lent* tempo suggests that the basic move in this waltz is a slow smooth spin.

The music in a scherzo **Waltz #6** is likely inspired by the memories of young and reckless time. Short upward motives in which the minor-second intonations are followed by a sharp leap to the seventh (or sixth sometimes) edged with a dissonant accompanying chord and *staccato* picking reveal a flighty and flirty moves, graceful leaps similar to a butterfly flitting from one flower to another as in *pas de chasse* (a lissome low leap upward with one lag seems to try to catch up the other) and *pas sissone* (a diverse group of leaps from two legs to one). The motives mentioned above create an upward-directed sequence with a permanent step variation (62 – 44 – m3 – 63 – m3 – 44). In this way, the melody’s upward motion, its insistence for obtaining higher peak is resisted by the contrary intonations linking the sequence units, what dynamicizes the melodic development. As the result the melody has a helicoid frame and quite a wide range (*gis – d³*). In this regard there are associations with the *pas* performed diagonally. This is the very course which enables with the most complete expression of the dance’s rapid dynamic.

The one-bar motives time and again are changed with soft and pathetically rounded two-bar ones performed in *legato* played sometimes with retardation and, thus, associated with slow sliding steps, facile flourishes and delicate body inflections bb. 7 – 8, 19 – 20, 22 – 23, 25 – 26, 27 – 28)¹⁴. Such shifts reflect unexpected changes in the mood.

While creating the image of a dynamic, free and freakish dance the role of rhythmic outlined through spontaneously arising contradictions between the metric and episodic¹⁵ accents is no less important. The shift of accents now to the third beat (its weight is maintained by the texture

intensification and the melodic pitch – b. 1, 3, 4 and etc) and then to the second beat (where the syncope is – b. 2, 6 and etc.) releases the melodic development off the power of melodic regularity¹⁶.

The insight into the world of poetic dreams and sweet feeling of anticipation are heard in **Waltz #7**. Short rounded introduction phrases sequenced on the backdrop of the tone *c* ostinato repetition in syncopated rhythm sound tenderly, somnolently and charming due to their “soaring” endings (according to the notation, the ending

chord in each sentence should by and by “fade” in the space) as well as to an increased triad chord prevailing in the harmonic pallet.

The waltz's head theme involves a state of romantic interest in something vague and distant, to something fading. In this case, the upward chromatic motion with parallel accords (the phonism $y_{B_{53}}$ dominates) in the beginning of both sentences and the wide upward motions to the sixth and seventh in the end are essential. The high register and weakened dynamics also play a great role:



The theme's features mentioned above relate to simplicity and soaring dance moves indirectly expressed in the music. Most vividly these features are seen in the arabesque figures (its form lines “shine” through the motive created by the upward motion in the sixth volume and following second fall, b. 24 – 25) and delayed leap (in b. 19 – 22, 31 – 32, 34 – 35 and etc the upward sixth leap prefaced with a contrary-directed second motion ends with the tone repeated with different pickings – *staccato* and then *tenuto* – and a separating pause what forms an effect of free-falling or soaring in the air).

Meanwhile, the choreographic plastics is characterized by evenness and roundness of the moves demonstrated through a wave-like picture of the leading melodic line which reveals a synthesis between the vocal and dance roots of this theme. It reflects that similarity with the genre model in Schubert's waltzes ## 11 and 12 from the “Sentimental Waltzes” and in Chopin's waltz *Des-dur* op. 70 #3 which are as well close to Ravel's works on their image structure. Apart from this,

Ravel borrows and inventively transforms some particular devices: the crossing rhythm (b. 27 – 28, 36 – 37 and others) and accentuation of the sixth intonation associated with Schubert's *D-dur* waltz; a freaky twisted relief of the melodic line resembling the *G-dur* waltz's naturally running melody. Some common features link Ravel's Waltz #7 to Chopin's *Des-dur* waltz: the initial motive of Chopin's composition where one can catch a slight leap with posing which then becomes the most pronounced and expressive intonation in Ravel's waltz; the middle voice chromaticization, parallelism of the voice movement and deliverance of the texture's lower plan.

The seventh Waltz's trio (*Un peu plus animé*) which encapsulates the image of illusive and fading dream, indeed quite creatively translates such technique as polymetry firstly used in the waltz genre by Chopin in *As-dur* op. 42. In the texture of Ravel's waltz trio two autonomous layers are differentiated. The right-hand part plays a lively waltz on 6/8, the chords of which belong to the sphere of sharp tonality (*E-dur* followed by

Fis-dur). The left hand part contains resonances (merely accompanying) of smoother waltz in 3/4 with slow harmonic pulsation and another tonality (*F-dur* followed by *G-dur*). Appearing as the result of plans shifting polymetry and polytonality with a slight accent vibration and peculiar conflicts between sound chains lay on the sounding that ghostly enigmatic flavor. It allows suggesting a choreographic equivalent to the trio related to the plastic polyphony: for example, with different dance movements performed by different partners.

Waltz #8 named by Ravel as an epilogue units all thematic elements of all the previous waltzes. The cycle's ending part as well as the second waltz relies on the principles of "memory drama" of Liszt's "Forgotten Waltz" which acquire there even more bright and original appearance.

The eight waltz stands out among other pieces of this cycle by its utmost freedom in the form structure. The genesis of music thought seems to be enslaved not to the logic, but to the composer's whim and imagination: the consciousness randomly "jumps" from one event onto another; recalled images slip and spontaneously replace each other.

The themes of previous waltzes are fragmented here: they are perceived as short reminders of the themes developed before. Thus, the theme of Waltz #4 has appeared twice in the form of a laconic four-bar structure (bb. 17 – 20, 37 – 40); in the third and fourth works it is represented rhythmically reduced and narrowed to the two-bar (bb. 41 – 42, 59 – 60). A fragment from Waltz #6 is also cut up to the two-bar in 25 – 27, 52 – 54 and four-bar in 50. The only time when a short phrase from Waltz #7 appears is the b. 51 – 52; as a reminiscence of Waltz #1 there is the motive based on the combination rhythmic formula in bb. 42 – 44, 60 – 61.

Besides, the themes' elements are shown as being "corrupted" – with the changed rhythmic

picture, shifted accents and "inaccurate" reproduction of the melodic line with another register. The memory seems to be trying to reconstruct the real profile of images, but they are hardly seen through the veil of time, staying vague and blurred. This impression is strengthened by a very slow dynamic (as exemplified in such remarks of the author as *pp*, *ppp*, *sourdine*, *très lointai* (very distantly)) and speed fluctuations.

In the mosaic of thematic fragments a great importance is given to the theme derivative of the 1st and 2nd themes in Waltz #2. Framing the final waltz's composition and connecting short fragments from different waltzes it becomes a refrain of the content. There is a loud nostalgic proto-intonation of the cycle – regret about the noble and glorious past time, about missed harmony and beauty. The melody filled with downward octave bounces and slurred octave grace notes as if records these high leaps with posings in the air, for example, *entrechat* (a leap with outstretched legs crossing one another for several times) or *sissonne ouverte* (a backward, backward and sideward leap when one leg opens back in *arabesque or attitude*). The most prominent features of these *pas* are soaring, lightness and featheriness.

The choreographic poem for the symphonic orchestra "Waltz" (Fig. 2) might seem to have most in common with the piano cycle "Noble and Sentimental Waltzes". Both these works are composed for a stage waltz which is contrary to an ordinary one enriched with the elements of classical choreography¹⁷; there is an obvious reliance on the principle of suite's composition peculiar to Strauss's waltzes. Similar to the piano pieces, these waltz-episodes are different on their characters. Still, there is a completely different proto-intonation which determines its image and content shape as well as the fact that the suite principle should be through-developed and

another character of the dance plastic mediated by the music intonation.

The episodes of festive, bravura and, sometimes, gorgeous nature take a leading position in this group of waltzes. A monumental orchestric *tutti* of the second (13 – 18), fourth (26 – 30), seventh (36 – 41) and eighth (41 – 46) waltzes engage the listener into the atmosphere of a ball hall with its fabulous brilliance, grandeur, noise and “thunder music”¹⁸. Still, neither a flame of feelings, nor a joyful happiness are expressed in these chapters, but rather a flush by that luxury, mindless hedonism and exultation coming up to a madness.

The Fourth Waltz's theme is based on the rhythm formula typical for the ♩ ♩ ländler. The rhythmic figures centered around the combination rhythm formula (♩ ♩ | ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ | ♩ ♩; ♩ ♩ ♩; ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩) combined with the chord texture can be found in many other ländlers and waltzes composed by F. Schubert: for example in #9 op. 117 (Seventeen ländlers), ## 4, 6 op. 117 (Eight ländlers), ## 3, 7 op. 18 (Eight ländlers), in Waltzes #4 op. 18, #1 op. 77 and others; in J. Strauss's waltzes such as “Tales from the

Vienna Woods”, “The Blue Danube” (Waltz #1, Cadence). Similar as in the “Tales from the Vienna Woods”, in Ravel's waltzes the dance rhythm is loaded with an additional energy. Due to the combination rhythm formula being repeated here for three times, in the initial two-bar the ländler figure compresses like a string and there is a metric accent shift (in the first-bar to the third beat, in the second bar to the second beat). Such rhythm adds an impetuous or even, to some extent, imperative feature to the sounding. In this context, the dynamics increases by a progressive upward movement on the chromatic alteration of horns and trombones, followed by a rapid rise of strings and woodwinds covering the range of four and a half octaves: *Fis – h*³.

Within the same context the metric infrequency also acquires a particular expressive effect. The accents' specific position which creates an illusion of two- and three-beats being interchanged in the initial bars of both sentences is explained by a spontaneous, unrestrained, Dionysian nature of the dance. There is an idea of chaos, without any goal or meaning, which reflects that ecstasy caused by the reckless life. The moves and poses in this dance are simple and even, so to speak, rudish, a little bit heavy and lack any poetics or grace.

Thus, the theme's initial five-bar where the rhythm is emphasized (a monorhythmia of brasses intensified with side-drums) and the melodic picture is neutralized and evoke associations with such “grounded” moves of a folk dance (ländler) as stamping. The upward jump by a quinte after such rapid rise of the strings and woodwinds and equally rapid *glissando* of the strings backwards (b. 4 – 8 after 26) virtually reproduce a forceful and breadth leap and an idle attempt to stay in the air. The image of impetuous twirling spin is caused due to the downward sequence in which the motive's melodic picture (with an up-down-up direction) seems to draw a turn.



Fig. 2. Illustration to the choreographic piece “Waltz” by Jacques Ravel



Moreover, the lyric nature of second and sixth intonations in this context is offset: repeated for three times in a tempo allegro, a duo of the strings and woodwinds and powerful accompaniment of the brasses and drums the motive loses its lyric nature. The ending of another part is also noteworthy: as if the waltz stops suddenly through the accented cadence built on the landler's rhythm formula (b. 29 – 30).

A bright and ecstatically delight **Waltz #7** develops as a dance dialog in which several pair are involved. Its theme is built on a regular change of contrastive motives.

In the opening fanfare motive a wide downward decline onto the quinte (in the author's piano transcription – onto the twelfth), the lower sound of which is stressed through the repetition and clear dissonant harmony of the altered leading seventh to the VI degree resembles an energetic leap as *cabriole*. While doing this leap one leg should be thrown up-forward and side-backwards, and the other kicks it from below for one or more times. A tough dotted rhythm, tight chord structure, high-power sounding of the whole orchestra "translate" that unique power of the leap.

Another figure is reconstructed in the second motive. A flexible chromaticized melodic line based on the change between upward and downward motions creates an impression of light sliding steps and turns. The dynamic crescendo and focus on the high register in accompanying voices outline the moves' rapid nature. The melody's position made by the woodwinds and strings in the lower register suggests that the main *pas* of the waltz is performed by male-dancers (and the leaps under the fanfare motive – by she-dancers correspondingly).

The 2nd chapter of this episode is based on another distribution of moves between the partners. The tutti motives become more forceful and pathetic: the quinte motion is interchanged by the octave one, the chord texture – by the octave-unisonous one. Here, one can find the outline of higher and more energetic man leaps, Vice versa, the chromaticized three-bar motives sound more lyrically and soulful due to their subdued sonority, timbre of flutes and horns in the high register, increased melodic chromaticization: thus, they are associated with the woman choreography (u. 36 – 41).

The eight episode's theme in this waltz "chain" is marked with a light lyricism and heartiness which is greatly maintained by the upward sixth intonation which leads the melody, major mode, warm and smooth timbres of violoncellos and clarinets, and slow dynamics. On its intonation and rhythmic frame it is similar to the themes in "Spring Voices" by J. Strauss (b. 101 – 122) and "Tales from the Vienna Woods" (Waltz #4, b. 18 – 50).

At the same time, the waltz's music "spellbinds" the listener by its monotony. The melody's rhythmic melody is characterized by nearly endless frequency of one rhythm formula. The rhythm's ostinatness deepens by the repetition of one and the same melodic device accompanied by figured pedal in the beginning of each phrase. Obviously, the dance's plastic structure is monotonous in the same way. The waltz's melodic line each phrase of which starts with a two- or three times repetition of the melodic and rhythm formula (the upward sixth intonation followed by the downward smooth motion in ♩|♩ rhythm) and finishes in ♩|♩, outlines one of the waltz's figures which

combines *balance* (wagging) and *tour* (one long step and two short ones in a turn). Frequent *pas* turns into something automatic and hollow-hearted. The principle of gradual inclusion of new orchestric instruments which leads to a fabulous *tutti* sounding in the end of the waltz as well as a huge dynamic momentum (from *p* to *ff*) produce an effect of the whole stage space filled with dancing pairs involved into a delightfully mad, monotonous spinning in the waltz (Notation Appendix, example 74, 75 u. 41 – 46). It is worthy to note that many lyric waltzes (1, 2, 8, 10) ends with a powerful and dazzling sounding of the whole orchestra, where the scale of *tutti* endings extends every time: from the cadence part in the first waltz to a big part in the eighth (Waltz #1, 1st bar to 13; Waltz #2 b. 16 – 18, Waltz #8 b. 45 – 46; Waltz #10 b. 53 – 54). The personal and sacral seems to be sinking and fading in the whirlpool of luxury, idle enjoyment and useless pleasures of the high life.

The related drama logic is revealed in Waltz #5. The texture's simplicity and muffled sonority of the theme, modest tempo, diatonicity of the cantabile melody, soft timbres of the horn, flute and violins – all these create the atmosphere of a calm estrangement. The melody's wave-like structure is associated with quit and slow moves, such as *balanse*, for example, or with a combination of various *tours* (turns) – slow and long (*tour lent*) in b. 1 – 4 and consecutive semi-turns (*tour chaines*) in the 5th and 6th bars.

But the context discovers there something other. Again, as in Waltz #8, the fundamental principle of the theme development is the ostinato frequency of a texture unit. The melodic line is built as a multiple repetition of one and the same motive based on the configuration of incomplete ninth chord, IV degree; in the second sentence – on the duo-dominant ninth chord that is associated with the moves monotony or automatic character of repeated gestures. This

impression is supported by unchanging rhythmic picture, sparsity of the harmonic pulsation (the harmonic rhythm's scale in b. 6 – 8) as well as a continuous wave-like movement on the chromatic gamma in the violoncello part. The cello's part is comprehended as being separated from the leading voice due to more detailed rhythmic segmentation, another scale and thematic structure (the frequency chain 2+2+2+2 in comparison with bridging in the melody) and intonation neutrality. Consequently, there are visions of polyphony in the dance's plastic picture. One can imagine that dancing pairs are posed in "circle-in-circle" way. The dancers of inner circle (the line of cellos) move faster. In general, the intonation drabness, focus on the statics in the development can be considered as a plastic sign of the "hollow" and uninspired spinning (b. 30 – 34).

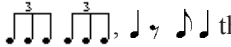
Being full of a dreamy melancholy and fragile tenderness, Waltz #3 (probably, in solo) is understood as a lyric intermezzo in the chain of bright bravura and free social waltzes. Similar to the second and fifth waltzes of the piano cycle, this episode of the symphonic poem possesses other shades of meaning. Thus, the dance's plastic expressed through the music is also unique.

In this sense, the theme's melodic structure here seems to draw the dance move formed on interchanges between two figures – *arabesque* and *balance*. Owing to the dotted rhythm the motives particularly emphasize long upward motions to reduced octave and minor sixth which are likely to be compared with the arabesque (doing this move the body stands on one leg and the other one, being straightly stretched, is lead backwards up to 90°). The fourth jump, which finishes each motive, together with its tertian motion in the opposite way resembles the *balance*. The melody develops sequently and moreover both the movement inside the parts and the general one are down-directed.

The nature of melody development also reflects emotional and semantic structure of the music and dance plastics. In the upward motions as the parts start, in the theme repeated in an octave higher, in the chromatic movement up in the English horn and fagot as the interval ends – there are romantic desire and endeavor for the ideal. At the same time, invariably downward melody seems to grow weaker, slip away expressing the state of mind lost love and faith. Obviously, the moves here have the same nature, i.e. weak and gutless. Presumably, the arabesque is performed on one's tiptoes, but completely on the feet as a sign of spiritual "earthiness" (b. 18 – 22).

The second part is colored with gloomy tones. The minor mode, intonation of lesser sixth and tritone, lamento phrase endings add a shade of hopelessness and despair to the theme. The melody picture provides an argument for the choreography being changed. The arabesque seems to become lower (the jump's size decreases); it is likely to be performed *plie* (on a bent leg). This plastic phrase ends with a deep and unduly long *plie* presented as if in a faraway dreaminess: the minor-second intonation "stretches" due to the first sound being fixated by the half-length and accent. Keeping the same tempo there is an impression of slowing dance.

Waltz #10 (b. 50 – 54) which closes the first chapter of this choreographic poem leaves a dual impression. ON the one hand, the theme performed by the woodwinds trio (small flute, flute and clarinet) reproduce a delicate, freakish and changeable image. It echoes the toy-and-snuffbox waltz from the piano cycle. A certain set of tools – rhythmic flexibility, broken pattern of the melody with lots of rises, high register and light *staccato* – realizes the plastic picture dominated by quick stepping – *pas couru* (the upward move in triplet rhythm) and grace leaps broking the move line – *brise* (the motion for long intervals in different directions).

On the other hand, such liveliness of gestures and moves might hide their emptiness and obscure fatuity of the action. A combination of other expressive devices identifies one more semantic level. Due to the dynamic's verve including those striking strengthening and weakening of the volume, syntactic fragmentation caused by multiple pauses and developed passages by harps in the endings and to march-like rhythmic figures  the theme acquires an absurd and grotesque sounding.

The comic implication can be more clearly "understood" within the accompaniment. The waltz's typical accompaniment is absent here. The composer as if deliberately point out that poorness and "hollowness" of the texture's accompanying layer. Using numerous ways different instruments "play over" a particular sound (trills of violas, cellos followed by fagots and horns), octave motion (downward grace-note motions of oboes, rises of small bells, register-shifted upward motions of second violins) and quart motion (flageolet downward skips of first violins). Indeed, the octave motives of the second violins and small bells have different characters and do not synchronize with the introduction; the oboes' motives are "stretched" due to the pauses (b. 50 – 51). As the result, there is a moment of "disorganization" and an effect of disordered moves damaging the dance's choreographic picture. The gestures and dance figures seem to become meaningless and to lose the relation with those heartfelt moves which generate them. By and by the dance becomes a vacuous, mechanistic spinning that is clearly observed in the powerful sounding of all the instruments which bluntly repeat one and the same motive with a round-shape melodic outline (b. 53).

The logic of formation in the symphonic poem is extremely closely linked to the dance's composition pattern and its drama. The waltz's geometric picture, its main silhouette, is a circle.

The dance develops as a double spin about itself (about the “Self”) and around the hall. The intonation process in Ravel’s “Waltz” also has a circle orientation. The poem’s structure has two parts. The second part following the first one without any caesura starts with the same entree and does not contain new themes. At the same time, being developed, the former themes are dramatically changed and expressed in other contrasts identifying new shades of the meaning. This allows drawing an analogy with a new round of the circle. In the composition’s code the sounding breaks abruptly on the rotating melodic-rhythmic figure (a laconic unisonous ritornelle of the whole orchestra is not interpreted as a complete end). Thus, the form appears to be broken and directed to the next stage of that cyclic motion.

The dance’s drama is determined by the symphonic poem’s conception which can be articulated as perturbation and frustration of a person who has lost their spirituality and chosen a hard and fated path of enjoyable, but meaningless pastime ahead of the impending disaster. The vector of drama development is put from a delightful hedonism of waltzes in the first part to a tensely dramatic atmosphere of the second part and tragic breakdown in the code.

The feeling of a fatal whirl, of a catastrophic spinning in the second part arises because of impetuous and continuous interchange in the waltz themes, coherence of short motives taken from different waltzes. Almost all the waltzes here are significantly reduced in comparison with the first part, and some of them (#3 and #6) leave only certain intonations. Thus, the music time in the poem’s second part seems to be compressed and the process of time flowing dynamicizes. Moreover, the sounding tension is intensified as the result of harmonic imbalance, sonorous effects (in the coda) and orchestric and dynamic *crescendo*, reflecting the atmosphere tenseness

and tragic presentiment. The choreographic poem’s second part includes the bravura waltzes which lose their splendor and festive glory and come across in the new quality – their sounding is dramaticized. The lyric waltzes are either displaced by the bravura ones or transformed. Particular importance is assigned to the lyric fifth and eighth waltzes which sound unreduced and by following each other create a wide-scaled episode. Originally representing soullessness, mechanisticity, meaninglessness and hollowness of the routine, these waltzes “strip” their aggressive and destructive essence in the second part¹⁹. The fifth lyrical waltz is made pronouncedly rough in the same part: it emphasizes each sound of the melody played by trombones and horns escorted by the orchestric *tutti* in *ff*. Obviously the dance’s moves are forced; they become sharp and automatic.

Drawing the conclusion it is worth to note that contrary to Ravel’s works written in a minuet genre where a visual side of the choreographic prototype dominates²⁰, the waltzes, vice versa, focus on its emotional and expressive aspects. Presumably, that is why in the “Noble and Sentimental Waltzes” and “Waltz” much brighter and sophisticatedly express the image-semantic side of the plastics and the dance’s graphics is “seen” quite clearly²¹. Indeed, in Ravel’s waltzes a plastic gesture is characterized by a higher semantic informative value; the music form development reveals its unique metaphoric symbolism.

A significant role of such expressed dance moves as a delayed lift in the pose of flying arabesque and fixed high leap which become a sign of romantic desire for the ideal is determined by the generalized nostalgic and dreamy piano intonation of the “Noble and Sentimental Waltzes”. Their features – phenomenal lightness, soaring and upward-looking view – are reproduced by Ravel through the set of individual techniques:

by slurring the sound with the following pause; the fast motion by octave or the octave grace-note imitating a reverberation echo, “soaring” motion of the melody, wide upward motions to the sixth or seventh marked by the repetition of the upper sound, rhythmic accent and specific pickings. The same importance is given to a pure, “simplified” texture with a distinctive picture and specific timbre-rhythmic color of the accompaniment formula, deaf sounding, softness and easiness of the piano touch, different manifestations of the harmonic and rhythmic imbalance. In Waltz #2 and #8 the nostalgically colored author's intonation appears both at the level of drama and composition: in particular logic of the music development related to the “poetics of memories” and, consequently, in the form freedom.

The most crucial tool to implement the idea of the “Waltz” is the plastic image of an “arabesque and fatal spinning”²², realized in the music thematism at the syntactic (in some motives and melodic picture as if outlining a turn) and compositional level (a cyclic focus of the form development). The twisting figure which dominates in the dance's lexis and picture, in the “Waltz” remains a sign of idleness, moral emptiness and soullessness.

The music drama's concentration on the key generalizing idea rising up to a philosophic conception and the images modification revealed

in the dynamic ongoing thematic development allow considering symphonism as a specific feature of the “Waltz's” inner structure. Its genre intonation appears to be very wide: keeping the style and relying on the suite principle in composition, Ravel encapsulates the image antitheses in intensively developed action compared to the sonant *allegro* or sonant-symphonic cycle.

The suiteness is overcome by a consequent process of modification of the music material: from the new qualities maturation inside the lyric themes in Part I – they acquire that hollow and monotonous sounding which reflects the automatism of uniformly repeated gestures; or the shade of despair and hopelessness; or a grotesque character – to their complete rethinking in Part II where they are enriched with the rough energy and represented as the image of devastating forces. These parts are closely interconnected and operate as the stages of single process. The second stage characterized by the themes development stems from the first one as a repetition on the new level and, thus, performs the “spiraling” movement. In this way, on the problem depth and seriousness, on the method of thematic development and the formation dynamics the “Waltz” can be compared with a drama symphony that allow speaking about symphonization of the dance.

¹ The notion of “artistic generalization” is understood here as equal to the notion “generalization through genre” scientifically pioneered by A.A. Alshvang. This means an ability of genres to “express “indirectly” emotions, thoughts and undeniable truth” (Alshvang, 1964: 100), i.e. to perform a semantic function of a certain segment of the music text (particular theme, chapter or form part) or of the whole work.

² To sample, in “The Waltz”, a choreographic poem, reproduction of lexis elements of Schubert's and Strauss's waltzes in the context of drama mode of reflection has determined that expansion of the range of their image and semantic meanings.

³ Later, the cycle was orchestrated by the composer and served as a music base for the ballet “Adelaide and the Flower Language” (written by M. Ravel, libretto by M. Ravel and N. Trukhanova).

⁴ Alongside with common characteristics there is a cardinal difference: in Strauss's waltzes the suite is a joint one merging the principles of repeatability and single-partness, “Noble and Sentimental Waltzes” contains a separated suite.

⁵ Following Yu. N. Kholopov.

⁶ Following V.V. Medushevskii (Medushevskii, 1993:14-27, 259).

⁷ Three various themes underlying the “Forgotten Waltz #1” by F. Liszt are characterized by the ephemerality of sounding; they give an impression of unsteadiness and intangibility of the images. The music plot's development is determined by the memory poetics and has a spontaneous nature. The sequence of music events in the waltz's composition does not follow the plot: one theme being uncompleted shifts into the other. The principle of composition ellipse (following V. Bobrovskii) violates the natural order of “telling”. A double repetition of V-degree and fermata pause on this sound in the concluding

- episode creates an illusion that the music does not stop, but fades or disappears. All these cause a game effect with the plot time through particular devices: pauses and cut of the time flow, time laps and throwbacks to the past.
- ⁸ In the waltz's structure one can note some features of a complex two-part form (a rondo-shape form).
- ⁹ Double sequence transition of the great minor seventh chord (I₇) and expanded common chord (chromatically added neighboring consonance) create sections of tonal ambiguity and an effect of searching for the principle.
- ¹⁰ The second theme, mechanically expected here, does not appear; there is no way to get the keynotes of *b-moll* tonality as it is supposed to be.
- ¹¹ It is worthy to note here, that Ravel adored mechanic toys and music boxes; like a captured child he tried to get into the mystery of how any mechanism or automate work. To some degree it was reflected in Waltz #3's music.
- ¹² The minor seventh and tritone involved into the chord's structure enrich the sounding with sharpness and determination, and the minor third acoustically marked in the upper voices – with greyness and mystery.
- ¹³ In the symphonic orchestra version this passage is performed with the instrument s characterized by a light and clear timbre and specific mobility, e.g. with harp, clarinets and flutes.
- ¹⁴ In the orchestra version the lyric expressivity of these motives is stressed sometimes by a touching sound of solo woodwinds – oboe (bb. 19 – 20, 21 – 22) and clarinet (bb. 25 – 26, 27 –28).
- ¹⁵ The notion of “episodic accents” was introduced by V.N. Kholopova. She identifies two types of accents – a metric which occurs on the strong beat and episodic (local) one which is resulted from the “accents shift from the metrically abutment to metrically non-abutment moment of the bar (Kholopova, 2002: 143-144).
- ¹⁶ A number of features in the sixth waltz's intonation solution, namely, the fast tempo, syntactic fragmentation, graded relief of the melodic line, alternation of intensification and weakening of the tension bring it closer to the piece “New Doll” by P.I. Tchaikovsky form the “Children's Album” based on the waltz rhythm. These works are also similar on their emotional state in general.
- ¹⁷ Let us remind that the “Waltz” was designed to be choreographically performed. Ravel in his letter to E. Ansermet on October 20, 1921, asked him to “mention in the programmes that it is a “choreographic poem” written for the stage” (Ravel au mirior de ses Lettres, 1988: 134).
- ¹⁸ “Eugene Onegin” by A.S. Pushkin, Chapter 7.
- ¹⁹ Such interpretation of the symphonic poem's conception corresponds with M. Marnat's comprehension who, agreeing with the social implication of the composition and with its reference to the social environment of the First World War, sees the “Waltz” as a protest “against the emotional poorness, against the evil forces and against Thanatos's triumph in this world” (Marnat, 1986: 483). Such interpretations were inspired by the composer's words about the “Waltz”: “The work I'm going to start now, is not a miniature, but a grand waltz [sic!], as a tribute to the memory of the great Strauss, not to Richard, but to Johann” (form the letter to J. Marnold, 1906). “I intend this composition as a sort of apotheosis for the Vienna Waltz which is merged by an increasing and overwhelming whirl. I can imagine this waltz in a hall of the Emperor's palace, in about the 50s of the last century (form the autobiography, 1928) (Ravel au mirior de ses Lettres, 1988: 44, 195).
- ²⁰ More details about the reflection of vision and spatial features of the dance prototype in the melodic graphics, textures, composition structures of Ravel's minutes are introduced in the previous article (Bass, 2011: 458-459).
- ²¹ The choreographic prototype's prevails in other works characterized by the waltz basis: in “Conversations Between Beauty and the Beast” form the piano suite “Mother Goose” and in the waltzes of opera “The Child and the Wizard” (Scene II).
- ²² The description of the “Waltz's” main image mentioned by Ravel in his autobiographical notes dictated to Roland-Manuel in 1928.

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О семантике

музыкально-пластической интонации вальса

в произведениях Мориса Равеля

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Содержание статьи определяется идеей о стилеобразующем значении танцевальности в творчестве Мориса Равеля. Систематическое обращение Равеля к танцевальным жанрам, выработанные им принципы опосредования первичных танцевальных моделей играют значительную роль в формировании индивидуального облика его произведений, то есть выступают как факторы стиля. В статье исследуется специфика отражения в тематизме и формообразовании сочинений Равеля хореографических и музыкальных свойств жанра вальса на семантическом и структурном уровнях. В ряде произведений получили разнообразное претворение хореографические и музыкальные компоненты интонационного прообраза, а также опыт его опосредования в творчестве композиторов XIX века. Вместе с тем Равель обогащает стилистику жанра новыми оттенками образности и лексическими элементами, новыми исполнительскими приемами. В вальсах Равеля пластический жест обладает повышенной семантической информативностью, в процессе развертывания музыкальной формы раскрывается его особая метафорическая символика.

Ключевые слова: вальс, танцевальный прообраз, жанровая семантика, образно-смысловая сторона пластики, симфонизация танца.

Научная специальность: 24.00.00 – культурология, 17.00.00 – искусствоведение.
