

ORCHESTRATION OF PROPER PIANO PIECES AS A SELF-INTERPRETATION

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SUMMARY. The study is focused on the problem of composers' self-interpretation in the orchestrations of their own piano pieces. This specific case of a creative re-thinking contains not only adaptation of a piano score to orchestral instruments, but also adding new semantic meaning, sound atmosphere and texture principles as well as further development of initial music idea.

For the analysis two pieces of Maurice Ravel and Borys Lyatoshinsky – two prominent masters of orchestration and piano miniature of 20th century, were chosen. Their approaches are distinguishably different: (a) the detailed reordering of the initial idea from an “instrument Piano” to an “instrument Orchestra” (Ravel); (b) throughout development with essential changes firstly within piano means, than by orchestral means in the genre of Symphony (Lyatoshinsky).

Keywords: creative re-thinking, self-interpretation, self-orchestration

Introduction

The concept of interpretation can be extended to many causes both in music and scientific thinking. The common background there might be reordering of some product of thinking – from philosophical conception to short piano piece. There are many musicological works about performers' interpretations; however, the problem of composers' self-interpretation is not so popular and developed. Human thinking, as a rule, has a habit of

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interpreting certain *outer* things, but the existence of a creative mind is able, almost with necessity, to work *on itself*, including a possibility to reorder and to re-think its own achievements.

Development of the creative personality includes a demand to reveal a hidden potential of previous works. A vivid example of such a situation is the orchestration of one's own piano pieces. Therefore, it would be useful to analyze some examples of self-orchestration. We choose two of them: "Alborada del gracioso" by Moris Ravel and the beginning of the Fourth Symphony of the prominent Ukrainian composer Borys Lyatoshynsky.

Orchestration of a piano piece includes such skills as acquirement of resources of musical instruments, their combinations and balance, wide variety of their sounding etc. In addition, arrangers must take into account the principal unlikeness between piano texture and the orchestral one:

- short sounds of piano and long-extended notes of the strings and winds;
- a large range of a piano and essentially limited ranges of the most of instruments;
- right pedal of the piano and its approximate imitation in the orchestra;
- exchanging too specific piano figurations to proper orchestral means.

However, an orchestration of proper piano pieces adds other problems to the previous ones. Besides technical items, a composer must become an interpreter of his proper past, his results of creativity. Sometimes for him it is enough to render a piano piece to an orchestral presentation; but in many cases the mighty opportunities of orchestra inspire him to essentially new achievements in his musical thought.

The **main purpose** of this research is detection of self-interpretation principles in such orchestrations. Appropriate **tasks** are:

- choosing of musical pieces of XX century, an époque of very distinguished piano and orchestra means;
- A comparison of composers from neighboring times and different national schools. That's why we chose the compositions of Maurice Ravel (1875-1936), France, and Borys Lyatoshynsky (1895-1968), Ukraine;
- Preliminary analysis of texture, intonation and sonic resources of chosen pieces;
- Systematic description of orchestral means embodying composers' ideas in each score;
- Deriving the conclusions about approaches on self-interpretations of both composers.
- The methods used in this research are:

- Comparative analysis of piano notes and orchestral score;
- The next level comparative analysis – i.e. the comparison of Ravel's and Lyatoshynsky's approaches to their self-orchestration;
- V. Moskalenko's method of comparison of intonation model and its embodiment in different interpretations².

Overview of publications

There are many issues about the creativity of M. Ravel and B. Lyatoshynsky. However, most of them concern ideas about their creative methods in general and less of this span of literature is about their orchestration. Certainly, investigations about Lyatoshynsky are mostly of Ukrainian origin. Moreover, only a few papers are exploring self-orchestration.

The closest to our problem is work by Samuel Winter "Orchestration as (re)composition chez Ravel & Koechlin"³. This comprehensive paper contains valuable ideas:

- about piano "as a compositional tool as they both used the instrument to form and develop their [Ravel's and Koechlin's] ideas" (Winter. p.2);
- about Ravel's usage of the terms "orchestration" and "instrumentation", as Manuel Rosenthal recalls, "*instrumentation is when you take the music...and you find the right kind of instruments...they go along very well, and the sound is good but that is all. But orchestration is when you give a feeling of the two pedals at the piano: that means that you are building an atmosphere of sound around the music, and the written notes – that's orchestration*" (Winter. p.6). This was mentioned in one of his composition lessons given to him by Ravel;
- his analysis of "The bark in the ocean" reveals an idea of non-literal art design treatment by Maurice Ravel – e.g. creating the same atmosphere by another means (orchestral despite the piano one).

Last point corresponds with V. Moskalenko's concept of intonation model, which is similar for its embodiment in different interpretations (Moskalenko, 2013)⁴

² Moskalenko, Viktor Москаленко, Віктор. *Leksii z muzychnoi interpretatsii Navchalnyi posibnyk Лекції з музичної інтерпретації Навчальний посібник (Lectures on musical interpretation: Study guide)*. Kyiv, 2013.

³ Winter, Samuel. "Orchestration as (re)composition chez Ravel & Koechlin". In *MUS – 30037: Paris Project. Sunday 21st April 2013*.

Another author, Murray Augustus Allman⁵, 1958, analyzed the peculiarity of Ravel's orchestration, including self-orchestration of some piano pieces. However, "Mirrors" ("The reflections") are absent among them. Allman accents on non-literal treatment of piano texture in orchestrations of the same compositions. His conclusions are very simple: "Ravel's style is typical of the French impressionistic composers with the exception that level extended the uses of the instruments. The use of the strings on tonal patterns rather than the melody, and the woodwind on the melody is characteristic of the style. The impressionistic composer usually combined parts of different characters, such as ostinatos, with the melody in contrast to the contrapuntal style of the classicists. In transcribing a composition from the piano to the orchestra Ravel never transposes, except in the case of transposing instruments. He quite often adds sustained chordal accompaniment in the orchestral version and adds *tremoli* and harmonics to the parts. He nearly always makes a greater degree a contrast in the dynamics in the orchestral versions than in the piano versions." (pp. 131-132).

There are many investigations of Lyatoshynski's creativity⁶. A. Plotkina (Plotkina, 2011)⁷ "examined the features of interpretation of early work B. Lyatoshynskiy and also style-specific of his piano creation"; she pointed out, that pieces from the cycle "Reflections" contains not only the subject of reflection, but also the "prism" as a reflecting device. However, this mark has no support with analysis.

Oleksander Kozarenko⁸ sets the transformation of main "Reflections" theme into primary theme of the Fourth Symphony with the wide row of

⁴ Moskalenko, Viktor Москаленко, Віктор. *Leksii z muzychnoi interpretatsii Navchalnyi posibnyk Lekcii z muzychnoi interpretatsii Navchalnyi posibnyk. (Lectures on musical interpretation: Study guide)*. Kyiv, 2013.

⁵ Allman, Murray Augustus. *An Analysis of Maurice Ravel' S Technique of Orchestration*. Thesis for the degree of master's in music, B. M. E. Denton, Texas August 1958.

⁶ Novakovich, Myroslava Новакович, Мирослава. *Moderni horyzonty muzychnoho svitu Borysa Lyatoshynskoho (do 125-littia B. Lyatoshynskoho) Модерні горизонти музичного світу Бориса Лятошинського (до 125-ліття Б. Лятошинського) (Modern horizons of Borys Lyatoshynsky's musical world (to the 125th anniversary of B. Lyatoshynsky)* In *Ukrayins'ka muzyka 2020/1* (35) pp. 65-74. *Українська музика 2020/1* (35) С. 65-74.

⁷ Plotkina, Alla Плоткіна, Алла "Stylovi osoblyvosti tsyклу «Vidobrazhennia» B. Lyatoshynskoho Сильові особливості циклу «Відображення» Б. Лятошинського" ("Stylistic features of the "Reflection" the cycle of B. Lyatoshynsky). In *Culture of Ukraine. Issue 32 Культура України. Випуск 32*, 2011.

⁸ Kozarenko, Oleksandr Козаренко, Олександр. "Pro deiakі universalii muzychnoho svitu Borysa Lyatoshynskoho" "Про деякі універсалії музичного світу Бориса Лятошинського" ("About some universals of the Lyatoshynsky's musical world") In *Visnyk of the Lviv University. Series Art Studies. Issue 16. Pt. 1. pp. 33–37. Вісник Львівського університету. Серія мист-во. 2015. Вип. 16. Ч. 1. С. 33–37*

thematic links within Lyatoshynsky's music heritage (Dazhd'bog theme in his opera "The Golden Ring" as well as the theme from 2nd part of "Slavic concerto" and its metamorphosis into second subject group of the Third Symphony; "Mourning prelude" and the 2nd part of his Quintet). Kozarenko pointed out "about the composer's creation-rearrangement of his own musical world according to certain universal laws discovered by him" (Kozarenko, p.3).

However, it was impossible to find the literature especially about self-orchestration of the chosen pieces – very typical for approaches of Ravel and Lyatoshynsky.

A comparison of Maurice Ravel, France, and Borys Lyatoshynsky, Ukraine might be interesting and productive. Both were the masters of orchestration; therefore, they were able to perfectly convey their intensions in music; both of them wrote piano cycle, whose titles are connected with *reflections* – respectively, "Reflections" by Boris Lyatoshynsky and "The Mirrors" by Maurice Ravel. However, despite similar names, the conceptions of these compositions are quite different.

Maurice Ravel is one of the most prominent masters of orchestration. For him an orchestra was such an obedient instrument as a piano with more timbre and texture opportunities. His cycle of piano pieces "Miroirs" ("The mirrors") was written in 1904-1905. From his own words, "the word 'mirror' should not lead one to assume that I want to affirm a subjectivist theory of art. A quotation from Shakespeare helped me to formulate a completely opposite position": (Julius Caesar, Act I, Scene 2) Cassius: I'll tell you, good Brutus. And since you know you can see yourself best by reflection, I'll be your mirror and show you, without exaggeration, things inside you that you can't see. Thus, we have a pictorial description rather than a subjective expression of feeling". Therefore, every piece is a clear mirror of some phenomenon, exactly reflected. Consequently, we have the concrete names of pieces. Another case reveals "Reflections" by B. Lyatoshynsky: there are no titles of pieces, any image associations but strong thematic links between them. Respectively, Ravel gives a series of images, Lyatoshynsky – throughout dramatic conception. In the last case we can hear *transforming* reflections, not *exact* ones.

This difference between approaches has an influence on authors' orchestrations.

Ravel's "Alborada del gracioso" is a bright Scherzo-like part of the cycle with vivid Spanish spirit⁹. A couple of details point out not only to piano as a basic timbre. We can see many features of guitar sound within

⁹ The Ravel's term "atmosphere" even better, considering commonality factor between piano and orchestral variants of the "Alborada".

the musical text: short and sharp arpeggios, metal-like sounding major sevenths and diminished octaves, fast repetitions as in measure 43 and in similar places. But there are essentially other elements: the melody, especially in the fragment *Plus lent (m. 71)*; also, in the mm. 12-13 based on long notes with vocal-like articulation. At the measure 107 Ravel wrote “le chant très expressif” [“very expressive singing”], so that he intended to excess the pure piano sound by special means. A large span of the piano texture also gives an impulse for the wide-sounding orchestral embody.

So that orchestral score presents a huge set of instruments: triple set of woodwinds, full brass group, rich assortment of percussions (crotales, triangle, tambour de Basque, castanets, side drum, cymbals, bass drum, xylophone), two harps and string group.

The very first measures show a predominance of plucked sounds: *pizzicato* of the strings, *près de la table* of harps. In such a way Ravel gives an analogue of guitar sound. Bassoons from m. 6 mixed with the harps and violins and altos *pizzicato* demonstrate the process of vocal sound formation from pseudo-guitar collective timbre. The spirited accentuation of a pianist is transferred into accented and doubled notes on main beats.

From the rehearsal mark 1 an imitation of guitar becomes less literal: the melody is provided by oboe; a part of accompaniment is assigned to violins and altos *arco*. However, harps, cellos and basses are still using guitar-like *pizzicato*. An adjunction of brass and percussion instruments takes place from [3]¹⁰, with total *arco* of strings within the *tutti*. Even then two harps keep the initial timbre idea. From the rehearsal mark [5] the return of plucked sounds took place, with addition of fast repetitions of the muted trumpet. Despite the unlikeness of this sound to the sound of guitar, the metallic buzz is like guitar’s frequent iterance of notes. The same could be noticed about muted horns before [6]. Extending of guitar’s repetitions to orchestral means is confirmed in [6]: very fast repeating of *A flat/G#* by harp 1 is doubled by 1st of the flutes. Thus, a typical guitar playing is imitated as if zoomed under a microscope for ears (if such devise could exist).

The middle part of “Alborada” begins from [9], with solo of the 1st bassoon. After several measures it is accompanied with chords divided between strings’ harmonics and plucked sounds of harps and strings *pizzicato*. There is an extreme contrast between spatial locality of bassoon solo and scattered notes of the strings. On this example we can see, that in this piece Ravel intends not only to imitate guitar by orchestral means, but also to make an association with a human voice. It is the most probable reason of preference bassoon and oboe as main soloists (to a lesser extent

¹⁰ The indicating the appropriate rehearsal mark.

– English horn – [1], [30 – with bassoons]): to bassoon, as there, and to oboe and English horn. These instruments all have a double reed, which is like humans' vocal cords by their function in the formation of sound. By adding various percussions, especially castanets, the orchestration depicts a traditional situation of Spanish musical life. However, the aim of the orchestration is essentially wider. One of the author's variants of the titles is "Morning Song of the Clown". Therefore, one can hear sounds like laughter: triple tongue of flutes ([6] [27]) and trumpet ([5] [27] [26]), as well as tongue tremolo of the flutes ([25]).

Growing activity of percussions in [32] has an analogue not only in Spanish tradition, but also in such component of piano sound as knocking of the keys. However, likeness to the sound of a guitar and a voice is more evident in transparent measures of the score. In the *tutties* one can hear a typically orchestral sound, arising from the previous texture as its symphonic generalization.

The primary piano version of the "Alborada" contains all these meanings implicitly within piano timbre. The orchestration extends its almost monochromatic sounding into the polychromatic one. Thereby, piano and orchestra versions of the "Alborada" are related as two parallel variants of the same design: simpler vs. more complicated and detailed. They do not form a continuous line of development from the chronological first piece to the next. Accordingly, to platonic philosophy, we could mark it as two hypostases of one idea – without fundamental significance of their Time succession.

We can see another approach to self-orchestration in the musical heritage of Boris Lyatoshynsky, a prominent Ukrainian composer of the XXth century. His piano cycle "Reflections", written in 1925, has essentially another conception, then "Miroirs" of Maurice Ravel, despite similarity of their titles. The famous French composer had combined several images without intensive dramaturgy and thematic links between the pieces. The name "Reflections" in Lyatoshynsky's cycle means both an analogy with *optical reflections* and reflections (i.e. *hard collisions of the self-awareness*) inside human inner world. Therefore, analysis of the "Reflections" shows **a principle of reflection as a main structure trend of the cycle**. From one miniature to another Lyatoshynsky reveals several phases of main theme's rethinking:

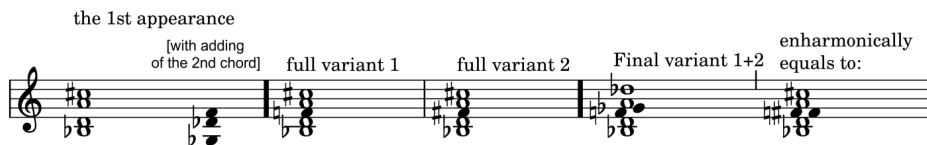
a) from 13th measure of the Third piece as a reminiscence with more intensive texture;

b) in the Sixth piece some important elements of the main theme appear in the ironic context, with texture, twice descending from massive chords to primitive octave doublings in the lowest part of the range (as a mini prophecy of the Fourth Symphony conception);

c) at the end of the Seventh piece the main theme attains the most intensive and complex sounding.

The first chord of piece 1 is a basic chord of the entire cycle.

Picture 1

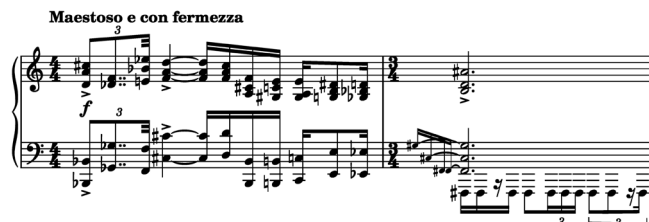


The main chord variants

This chord appears partially in many chords of the cycle and completely in pieces 1, 3 (in the middle part, see *full variant 1*), at the beginning of the 4th piece (from E-flat), in the main part of the 5th piece, at the beginning and middle of the 7th piece (*full variant 2*) and in its Coda, **Maestoso**. The final variant of this chord ends this final piece and combines both two full variants, enharmonically.

Thereby, structural reflections of the first chord and the first piece are the framework of the whole composition and its development. Moreover, there is rhythmic transformation of the first phrase in the bass of the m.2:

E.g 1



Lyatoshinsky B. "Reflections". Piece 1, measures 1-2

Next three phrases become shorter and shorter, as the reflections in a corridor of mirrors. The 2nd half of the piece contains an exact inversion of the upper voice of the first half of it. Almost all chords are derived from the first chord and consist of major 7, major 3, perfect 5 or, sometimes, their inversions.

These features are important for further orchestral interpretation, because:

- The phonic quality of the intervals (major seventh and minor ninth) on **ff** (bright, sharp and metallic sound) fits to brass instruments;

- Extremely profound and rhythmic bass in the 2nd measure and in similar measures fits to bass percussion instruments;
- The principle of progressive shortening of the structures as fragmenting reflections is more suitable for long-sounding orchestral instruments rather than short-sounding piano. This factor causes better contrast of time calibers in the orchestra;
- Massive and voluminous **ff** corresponds to a greater extent to orchestra than to piano;
- Trend to oppose different types of sounding is better embodied in the orchestra than in piano.

Thereby one can see the essential orchestral potential of the piano piece.

Moreover, the evolution of the main theme to the ending of the Lyatoshinski's piano cycle demonstrates the growth of texture intensity, towards almost orchestral complexity. The next logical step was made by him in 1964, with the beginning of his Fourth symphony for great orchestra.

This Symphony is mostly founded on the initial theme – the same as in “Reflections” for piano. However, this self-citation is not too literal.

Core chords are provided to brass instruments, according to their bright and sharp sounding even in the piano version. The bass of the chord is also doubled by bass clarinet, bassoons, and contrabassoon. This feature of the orchestration adds to every chord the simultaneous contrast between ^(a) more muffled but massive bass and ^(b) upper levels of the chord vertical as irregular harmonics of this bass.

Lyatoshynsky added whistling passages in the parts of the strings and treble woodwinds – closer to the version from the 7th piece of “Reflections”. Therefore, the very beginning of the 4th Symphony may be treated *as a kind of a sequel of the piano cycle*. This hypothesis fits to the main tendency of the cycle “Reflections” – strengthening of the main theme by the distance (see pieces 1, 3, 7¹¹). The next step of this trend might be only in exceeding piano sound, and Lyatoshynsky carried it out in 1964.

In the orchestral version of the theme one can see very distinctive rhythmic extension (compare example 2 with succeeding example 3).

¹¹ Except piece 6

E.g. 2

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system includes staves for brass (3), brass+cl.b.+bassoons (3), strings, and woodwinds (6). The second system includes staves for brass (3) and timpani (3). The notation is dense, with many beamed notes and complex chordal structures. There are annotations for 'brass', 'brass+cl.b.+bassoons', 'strings', 'woodwinds', and 'timpani'. The score is in 4/4 time and features various rhythmic values, including triplets and sixteenth notes.

**Lyatoshinsky B. Symphony № 4. Measures 1-3
(selection of the score)**

There are more complicated chords than in the piano version – maybe because the composer wasn't limited by possibilities of two hands of a pianist. However, it also has an aesthetic explanation: striving to overloaded and formidable sound.

The second phrase, unlike the piano version, is even longer than the 1st. Nevertheless, the next phrases are shortening more rapidly just in the orchestral version. From the 3rd phrase the theme loses its main active initial part and moves to the bass register. The mixing between brass and woodwind instruments became more and more intensive, string group disappeared. Such a behavior (descending and weakening) of the theme corresponds to the 6th piece of the piano cycle. On the other hand, strings together with treble woodwinds have the same function – making the intensive whirlwind of lighter sound mass than brass one. Herewith, diagonal ascending movement of the strings is essentially more amplitudinous (4 octaves) than upward movement of clarinets, oboes, and flutes. Then, we can point out timbre disintegration between brass winds and other orchestra groups. Integration between strings and woodwinds is incomplete because of dissimilarity of their span and desynchronization.

Percussion instruments have specific functions:

- doubling of other parts, as Bass drum, Side drum and Triangle
- rhythmic reflection of the measure 1 in the Timpani part.

At the end of the introduction Tam-tam emphasizes the lowest point of the process and sounds as a specific timbre shadow of the brass (by its metallic nature).

The first subject of Allegro moderato is a horizontal reflection of the main theme.

Picture 2

Transformation of the main theme into the first subject of the 4th Symphony. Measures 30-32

It is very important to consider the context of the 4th Symphony of Borys Lyatoshynsky. The main theme is crushed step by step losing its formidable and massive sounding. A texture dramaturgy of the Symphony is also aimed for transformation of the initial chordal monolith to multilevel polyphonic. It happens accordingly with the tendency within the theme: the progressive descent, disintegration into fragmentary reflections. This tendency was overcome in “Reflections” for piano; however, it takes revenge in the Fourth Symphony. The theme contains self-programming of such evolution, for example, the first subject group of the 1st part (see example 4).

Offloading of the main chord is also included in the conception of the 4th Symphony – until the major triad from b-flat, ending the score. It is essential that main chord could be represented as a sum of major triads, rooted from the notes **B-flat, D, F#** – i.e. as a triple reflection of **B-flat, D, F#**.

Picture 3

The image contains two musical staves. The left staff is titled 'derived chords' and is divided into two sections: 'asymmetrical' and 'symmetrical'. It shows a sequence of chords on a treble clef staff. The right staff is titled 'possible genesis of the Chord' and shows a sequence of chords, with two instances of a chord labeled 'enarm.' (enharmonic).

The main chord as a complex of reflections

The logic of descending reflection, thereby, had influence on the conception of the Symphony, and orchestration also took part in it. The most rough and intensive sounding of brass chords has a reflection in three forms:

1. Chord of the strings **C# – F – A – B-flat – D**, as a reflection of the previous brass chord **C#-F-A-D**, moving by the chord's sounds. Adding the **B-flat** corresponds to the main chord set;
2. Parallel chords of the woodwinds, based on the part of the main chord (**A – B-flat – D – F**), moving by half steps to add strength to ascending strings' passage;
3. The rhythm sequence in the tympani part, m. 2 (see example 2).

Thereby, the main "sound subject" (brass group with the bass woodwinds) has two timbre projections: (1) spatially extended and less massive (strings and treble woodwinds) (2) spatially compressed in one pitch (tympani).

Quoting O. Kozarenko, we have the evidence of Lyatoshynsky's ability and strove to permanent self-transformation, deep changing of sound images – from titanic growth to disappearing.

Conclusions

1. Ravel emphasized enrichment of sound versatility and complexity in his orchestration. So did Lyatoshynsky; even more, he essentially enlarged dramatic possibilities of the theme. Therefore, it is a situation of respectively, a representational and processual approach to the self-interpretation;
2. Both composers derived their orchestrations from sound qualities of the piano pieces:
 - a. M. Ravel – from sharp and short guitar-like sound image to plucked timbres as well as from vocal-like phrases to bassoon and oboe solos;

- b. B. Lyatoshynsky – from massive, quasi-metallic and acute vertical structures of the piano texture to brass chords; from rapid passages of Piece the 7th to fast-moving transitions of woodwinds and strings; from knocking bass in the piano piece to timpani embodiment of this element;

3. The Ravel's approach to the orchestration of his "Alborada del gracioso" demonstrates the principle of parallel co-existence of two versions of the same piece. The Lyatoshynsky's approach to the orchestration of his "Reflection No1" demonstrates the principle of further development of the earlier piece. It is not the parallel version, but the sequel.

4. We can see **two approaches** of a composers' rethinking and self-reflection:

- a. An **adaptive** one, as in the case of Ravel: the design got another form according to the alternative set of instruments; moreover, the caliber of art approach increased. However, the conception remains the same: in fact, the Scherzo piece in Spanish manner with post-impressionist harmony;
- b. A **transformational** (designed for effective transformation) one, as in the case of Lyatoshynsky: previous forms of the theme are changing permanently, varying its character towards more formidable and complex one through the piano cycle "Reflections", than to more and more disintegrated sound image through the Fourth symphony by Borys Lyatoshynsky.

5. According to the Ukrainian musicologist's, Victor Moskalenko's concept:

- a. Ravel's approach to self-orchestration is based on the **intonation reproductive** way of interpretation - i.e. to another mirror (orchestral despite piano one) image of the same intonation model.
- b. Lyatoshynsky's approach to self-orchestration is based on the **intonation productive** way of interpretation - i.e. based on intensive and dramatic inner reflections of his dynamic creative mind.

6. Further perspectives of the research are:

- a. Studying of other self-orchestrations of different authors, including Ravel and Lyatoshynsky.
- b. Studying self-reediting of the scores, such as Stravinsky's versions of "Petrushka".
- c. Development of philosophical items about self-rethinking of one's creativity as an existential problem.

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