

## INTERPRETATION OF THE PSALM GENRE IN THE WORKS OF JAROSLAV ZATLOUKAL AND EUGEN SUCHON

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**SUMMARY.** The article defines the originality of the concept and genre metamorphoses of the psalm on the example of "The Subcarpathian Psalm" by J. Zatloukal and the cantata "The Psalm of the Subcarpathian Land" by E. Suchon. The artists chose the psalm as an example of a universal genre, radically updating its canons in both figurative and formal aspects, which corresponds to the artistic trends of the XX century. Their works demonstrate a secular model of the genre, which is characterized by filling the poetic structure of psalmody with a specific historical meaning. The comparison of two works allows considering the specifics of the interpretation of spiritual, ethical and historical aspects in art in the unity of their content and form. It has been determined that the dialogic form of the poetic text, its appealing character and sublime oratorical tone correspond to the specifics of the psalm genre. In E. Suchon's interpretation, we can observe the stylistic emancipation of the musical language from the canons of any church or romantic fascination with folklore.

**Keywords:** psalm, cantata, J. Zatloukal, E. Suchon, Subcarpathian Rus.

Throughout the course of civilization, humanity has created many spiritual values, including artifacts with a special status: they have become the core that formed a system of worldview ideas, cultural symbols and ritual practices. One of such texts is the Psalter, a collection of prayerful poetry that not only formed the basis of the Judeo-Christian religious tradition, but has been expressing the rich spiritual experience of man's search for God, truth and the meaning of life for over three thousand years. Despite its

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archaic nature, the Psalter is perceived as an endless dialogue between the soul and the Lord, so poets and composers have shown constant interest in this collection (after all, even the original version of the psalms provided for musical sounding of the text) from ancient times to the present.

The content of the psalms have unlimited semantic potential, due to which every recipient, regardless of era, age or worldview, will find something relevant to themselves, their time, to the realization of their own position. Interest in the Psalter grows significantly in times of crisis in history, when humanity faces the problem of spiritual choice, the search for truth, strengthening in faith. Such culminating moments of deeper knowledge and interpretation of the Psalter were the Reformation, the early XX century, and the present. As the M. Varakuta notes: "Undoubtedly, modern composers' special interest in the psalm ... genres can be explained by humanistic universalism and inexhaustible wisdom, historical narrative and the variety of the Psalms lyrical feelings".<sup>2</sup>

It is worth noting that the attitude to the original text source has changed over time. Artists of different eras interpreted the Psalter in different ways: religiously and canonically (translating poems into their native language in order to adapt them to religious practice or the educational process), poetically (literary poetic paraphrase), and exemplary (creating their own poetry based on the Psalter). The exemplary approach to the interpretation of the psalms led to the transformation of the genre in both the content and formal senses, since the main task of the artist is not a historical reconstruction of the sacred text, but a depiction of the present or his own spiritual search through the prism of the context of the original source. Although this author's position is far from canonical, it can be justified by the poet's desire to contrast the contradictory everyday life with eternal spiritual values. This is how psalms devoid of religiosity were created, aimed at criticizing political regimes or focusing readers' attention on social problems of modern times. The term "psalms" in this case is conceptual: it defines the parameters of reflection on the relationship between the sacred and the profane, the personal and the social. Such an example of interpretation can be found in the works of G. Trakl, I. Bachmann, B. Brecht, T. Bernhard, J. Zatloukal, and others. The genre of psalms constantly attracts the attention of philological researchers, theologians, and philosophers. Mostly, their works are related to studies of the canonical texts of the Psalter. Regarding the work of modern poets who turn to the genre of psalms, there is not much scientific research. In particular, the work of J. Zatloukal was not the subject of a special study.

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<sup>2</sup> Varakuta, Maryna. "Genre Evolution of the Psalm and Ecclesiastical Miniature." In *Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai Musica*, 67, Special Issue 1 (July 8, 2022), p. 118.

E. Suchon's cantata was considered, mainly, in comparison with the works of Z. Kodai. Our objective is to determine the originality of the concept and genre metamorphoses of the psalm on the example of "The Subcarpathian Psalm" by J. Zatloukal and the cantata "The Psalm of the Subcarpathian Land" by E. Suchon.

The research methodology is based on historical, genre, stylistic and typological methods, which allow revealing the specifics of the interpretation of the psalm genre in the works of J. Zatloukal and E. Suchon on the basis of a wide range of factual material.

The works of Jaroslav Zatloukal (1903-1958), a Czech poet, critic, publicist, teacher, are focused on social issues. The poet entered the active creative process in the 30s of the XX century, a period of severe economic crisis and political instability in Europe, which determined the dramatic nature of the artistic images of his work and the expressive manner of expression. The artist was particularly interested in the eastern district of the First Czechoslovak Republic – Subcarpathian Rus, its culture, nature, self-awareness of the population.

This region, which was the farthest from the capital and became a part of the Czechoslovak Republic in 1919, aroused great interest among the citizens of the republic because of its picturesque nature and unique culture, since the vast majority of the population of the region were Rusyns (Ukrainians) who had preserved the ancient traditions of their ancestors. The Czechs and Slovaks perceived the region as both "theirs" and a kind of "exotic" in their own country. However, this district was characterized by a catastrophic lag in terms of economic development compared to other regions. Moreover, the frequent change of political regimes had a negative impact on the national self-awareness of Rusyns, which gave the writer I. Olbracht (K. Zeman) the reason to call this region "the land without a name".<sup>3</sup>

J. Zatloukal not only frequently visited the region, but also headed the Bratislava "Society of Friends of Subcarpathian Rus" (1935-1938) and edited the magazine "*Podkarpatská Revue*" (1936-1938), which highlighted all aspects of the region's life. The poetic work of J. Zatloukal became a mouthpiece for the proclamation of important civic ideas of the artist. The main characters of his poems – opryshkos, loggers, salt miners, beggars – cause compassion because of their disenfranchisement and inability to resist the conflicts of life. A vivid example of this is his collection "Wind from the Polonynas",<sup>4</sup> which culminates in "Podkarpatský žalm", in which the Czech poet comprehends

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<sup>3</sup> Olbracht, Ivan. "Země bez jména: reportáže z Podkarpatska" (*The Land without a Name: Reporting from Subcarpathian*). Praha: Otto Girgal, 1932.

<sup>4</sup> Zatloukal, Jaroslav. "Vitr s polonin" (*Wind from the Polonynas*). Bratislava: Podkarpatoruske nakladatelstvi, 1936, p. 67.

the tragedy of Subcarpathian Rus through the prism of the psalm genre and seeks a way out of the social and spiritual crisis.

J. Zatloukal's reception of the psalm genre coincides with the position of the English writer and theologian C. Lewis: "The Psalms must be read as poems; as lyrics, with all the licences and all the formalities, the hyperboles, the emotional rather than logical connections, which are proper to lyric poetry. They must be read as poems if they are to be understood."<sup>5</sup> Based on the principle of genre memory, the text of the "Subcarpathian Psalm" rises above the everyday life, becoming a symbolic expression of ethical experiences focused not on local but on human problems.

The content of "The Subcarpathian Psalm" by J. Zatloukal is devoid of religion. It paradoxically combines a metaphorical vision of the world and a naturalistic depiction of the poor life of the region. The poet marks the artistic space of the work through clearly defined geographical coordinates: in addition to the title, the hydronym Chorna Tysa is also introduced. Moreover, the dramatic moment of Egan's murder is mentioned,<sup>6</sup> which specifies the historical moment of the action: "Where Egan's shadow / still rises for the last time / before the shot of the morning".<sup>7</sup>

The author appears as an eyewitness to the troubled times, mourning the suffering of the people, protesting against injustice. The author's voice is characterized by strength, passion and an incendiary manner of expression, which, according to D. Bonhoeffer, are typical of the Psalter.<sup>8</sup> Specificity in the reproduction of evil is combined here with biblical symbolism; intonations of complaint – with intonations of anger, shame, guilt; despair – with hope. This technique indicates a kinship with the lament psalm. It is worth noting that 66 of the 150 psalms in the Psalter are laments, the subject matter of which is related to both personal and civil suffering. As the C. Broyles notes: "A lament does not simply bemoan a negative life situation. Laments are pleas to God to change current circumstances."<sup>9</sup> In this case, J. Zatloukal does not call for prayer for the purpose of protection, but seeks to awaken

<sup>5</sup> Lewis, Clive Staples. *Reflections on the psalms*. London, 1958, p. 3.

<sup>6</sup> Edmund Egan (1851-1901) – the economist, emissary of the Hungarian government, initiator of the "Verkhovyna Economic Action" aimed at improving the standard of living of residents of Verkhovyna villages. The successful launch of the "Egan's Action" provoked resistance from local moneylenders and led to his murder.

<sup>7</sup> Zatloukal, Jaroslav. "Vitr s polonin" ("Wind from the Polonynas"). Bratislava: Podkarpatoruske nakladatelstvi, 1936, p. 67.

<sup>8</sup> Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. "Life Together / Prayerbook of the Bible". *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works*, vol. 5, trans. Daniel W. Bloesh and James H. Burtness, ed. Geoffrey B. Kelly. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996, p. 147.

<sup>9</sup> Broyles, Craig C. *The Conflict of Faith and Experience in the Psalms: A Form-critical and Theological Study*. Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 1989, p. 14.

the people's sense of dignity and desire to defend their rights: "How many steps back / and how long will the sower / sow the tears? / So let's set the sails / of the young age / on the earth that has covered / the song-psalm with rags".<sup>10</sup> The poet acutely felt the turning point of his time, its catastrophic nature, felt the threat to humanistic ideals on the eve of the Second World War, but did not resort to cheering patriotic slogans.

The poetic text of the Psalm was composed by J. Zatloukal in 25 stanzas written in free form. The beginning of the stanzas is anaphoric – each begins with the word "Earth", thus the lyrical hero addresses the people. It is the dialogic form of the text, its appealing character and sublime oratorical tone that correspond to the specifics of the psalm genre.

G. Hunkel, in his study of the psalms, identified their special structure, which is determined by the peculiarities of the Jewish poetic tradition and the genre prototype. In particular, according to the German theologian, a lament psalm contains the following structural elements: an appeal to God; a complaint; an expression of trust; praise and worship to the Lord.<sup>11</sup> J. Zatloukal generally follows the following dramatic line: from an epic introduction – through a mournful story-complaint – to a hopeful, appealing conclusion, but in a secular context. In the first two stanzas, the poet depicts a majestic, gloomy, cold mountain landscape: "Earth / under the eternal drizzle / days of blizzard whistling / from the foot of the centuries / not to rise higher / but mountains are to the clouds / under the march of flocks and ages / mountains in winds appear".<sup>12</sup>

It is worth mentioning that the psalm contains a pastoral topic based on biblical texts. For the most part, the topos of forests, pastures and fields represent an ideal image of the land, which is contrasted with the inhumane world in which people have become sleepwalkers tormented by hunger, disease and work. Within the narrative, the image of the earth takes on a tragic sound, since the war still reminds us of terrible memories: "Earth / weapons are being plowed out of you / and ammo and bones / and pieces of military cloaks / dreams and curses are under you / and years without defeat / shadows without defeat / a field of time in a plague-like whirlwind / an eternal bandaging station / with fireworks of death".

Throughout the story, the nature of the images becomes more and more gloomy and dramatic; J. Zatloukal resorts to metaphors that reflect the

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<sup>10</sup> Zatloukal, Jaroslav. "Vitr s polonin" (*Wind from the Polonynas*). Bratislava: Podkarpatoruske nakladatelstvi, 1936, s. 67.

<sup>11</sup> deClaisse-Walford, Nancy L. "Introduction to the Psalms a song from ancient Israel". St. Louis, Mo. : Chalice Press, 2004, p. 20.

<sup>12</sup> Zatloukal, Jaroslav. "Vitr s polonin" (*Wind from the Polonynas*). Bratislava: Podkarpatoruske nakladatelstvi, 1936, p. 57.

most acute social and political problems of the peasants: "earth /... you are like a bone gnawed / from a European kennel", "crowned with smoke and thorns / you go with a plea / on the field of eternal battle".

In the final part of "The Subcarpathian Psalm", the author expresses his belief that the people will be able to rise up against evil and lawlessness, which is expressed in revolutionary vocabulary: "the fallen forest does not dry out / rises in the barricade noise", "the rebellious song penetrates into the psalm", "the dynasty of fear rises from the ashes", "you are the goal / that in a ragged body / responds with the word of a fighter". The active calls to action are supported by images of a blooming spring and a fruitful autumn, as a great dream and grace for the peasants.

If we analyze the content and structure of each stanza, we can also observe a connection with the Psalter. The different number of lines in a stanza contributes to greater freedom of expression and does not limit the emotional range of the narrative. To characterize the submissive people, J. Zatloukal uses synonymous parallelism, which is inherent in most of the "Psalms of David". According to D. Bonhoeffer, this feature of Jewish poetry gives the reader more time to think about the idea.<sup>13</sup> For example: "Earth / a place forgotten by God / with blond ears of grain / with dawns of poppies / pilgrims go hungry and barefoot / under the high miter of the sun / flowers are drowsy from the drizzle / a sleepy procession goes / in prayerful submission / in unblunted grief".<sup>14</sup> In addition, the author's attempts to achieve greater saturation of the acoustic space of the poem prompted him to use synthetic parallelism: "You are the earth / that brings out / its lean power / on a scarce furrow / the eternal sower walks / scattering tears / dreams of harvesting the clear fate".<sup>15</sup>

Thus, the entire "Subcarpathian Psalm" by J. Zatloukal consists of parallel constructions, is characterized by special imagery and metaphorical expressions in order to enhance the meaning of words and focus the reader's attention. Thus, the work is closer to the ancient Hebrew psalmic tradition.

E. Suchon (1908-1993), a Slovak composer, teacher, musicologist and public figure, entering the period of maturity, clearly understood his own mission – to shape national identity through music, to encourage listeners to a deeper knowledge of history, as well as to draw attention to ethical and social issues. This is evidenced by the themes and program titles of his

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<sup>13</sup> Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. "Life Together / Prayerbook of the Bible". *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works*, vol. 5, trans. Daniel W. Bloesh and James H. Burtness, ed. Geoffrey B. Kelly. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996, p. 123.

<sup>14</sup> Zatloukal, Jaroslav. "Vitr s polonin" (*Wind from the Polonynas*). Bratislava: Podkarpatoruske nakladatelstvi, 1936, p. 58.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*.

opuses: "Symphonietta Rustica", "Balladic Suite", "Krútnava", "Svätopluk", "Pictures from Slovakia", "O horách", etc. In 1937, the composer got acquainted with the above poetry by J. Zatloukal and began working on the cantata "The Psalm of the Subcarpathian Land".<sup>16</sup>

Among a wide range of musical genres, E. Suchon chose the cantata because this genre perfectly represents civic ideas or the comprehension of historical reality. In addition, the memory of the genre connects the cantata with the sacred music of past centuries, which gives it a lofty status and is also appropriate in terms of the work's title.

The monumental performing cast of "The Psalm of the Subcarpathian Land" reinforces the significance of the idea: a mixed choir, a large symphony orchestra and a tenor solo. The soloist personifies the image of the singer and is also associated with the author's voice. All performing groups of the cantata are equal, and the role of the orchestra is enhanced, which brings this work closer to a vocal and choral symphony.

E. Suchon uses the full poetic text of the "Subcarpathian Psalm" translated, with the author's permission, into Slovak, but subordinates it to the logic of the music's development: there are some repetitions of phrases, some lines are omitted.

The composer composes a free poetic form of a cantata with features of a tripartite structure, with orchestral interludes, tempo, timbre and thematic contrasts as the means of division. According to T. Horkai: "The psalm is rhapsodically extensive and late Romantic eloquent".<sup>17</sup> The cantata develops according to the principles of sonata drama, respectively, the sections are internally contrasting, their development is undulating, directed to the culmination at the end, which is a sign of dramatic symphonism. Polyphonic techniques are also the important means of dynamizing the development.

The intonational composition of the work's melody expresses the composer's complete freedom, unlimited by either the canons of church music or folklore traditions. It is worth noting that in the early XX century, Czech composers who were involved in creating soundtracks for feature films, documentaries and landscape video magazines tried to present the topos of Subcarpathian Rus through quotations or arrangements of folk

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<sup>16</sup> Chalupka, Ľubomír. Eugen Suchoň. Žalm zeme podkarpatskej kantáta pre tenor, miešaný zbor a orchester op. 12 (*Eugen Suchon. The Psalm of the Subcarpathian Land for tenor, mixed choir and orchestra*). *Hudobný život (Musical life)*, 1999, roč. 31, č. 11, p. 15.

<sup>17</sup> Horkay, Tomáš. "Psalmus Hungaricus a Žalm zeme podkarpatskej. Svetské a duchovné v tvorbe Eugena Suchoňa a Zoltána Kodályja". (*Hungarian Psalm and Psalm of the Subcarpathian Land. Secular and Spiritual in Works of Eugen Suchon and Zoltan Kodai*). URL: Psalmus Hungaricus a Žalm zeme podkarpatskej. Svetské a duchovné v tvorbe Eugena Suchoňa a Zoltána Kodályja – Mgr. Tamás Horkay, PhD. (horkaytamas.sk) (date of access: 21.07.2024)

melodies. As a representative of the modernist generation of artists, E. Suchon did not use such techniques. In an interview on Slovak television, he noted that he even wanted to get rid of the local emphasis of J. Zatloukal's poem and raise the issue of social oppression and the struggle for rights to a higher, universal dimension.

Obviously, the anaphors in J. Zatloukal's text prompted E. Suchon to use the principle of mono-themes. However, the composer does not repeat the main motif with the words "Earth", but conducts it consistently in different sections of the form, transforming it depending on the figurative load.

The initial motif of the introduction, in the pathetic sound of the unison of trumpets and trombones against the background of the rapid tiratas of the string group, serves as the figurative and intonational grain of the entire cantata. The ascending sequence of two perfect fourths (first – augmented and then – pure) forms a sweeping movement within a major seventh, and resembles a powerful exclamation. The intonations of the mono-grain later acquire independence: a septimal jump, depending on the direction of movement, symbolizes a pathetic call or an angry protest, a tritone movement transforms into a pure perfect fourth and, supplemented by a second motif, creates a broad sound perspective of the majestic Carpathian Mountains. It should be noted that these intonations also determined the harmonic language of the cantata: the chordal vertical is dominated by a sequence of parallel septacords with reversals, and quartacords are also the result of linear thinking.

The vocal parts are recitative in nature. Following the freedom of the poems' stanza, E. Suchon avoids periodicity, uses variable meter, irregular accents, and often interrupts the theme with pauses, which enhances the feeling of an excited, sincere monologue.

The first section of the three-movement form has sonata-like features. The main theme (Moderato, d-moll), prepared by a stormy introduction, embodies a dramatic picture of the natural elements. Due to the high tessitura of the choral parts, powerful *fff* dynamics and unison presentation, all attention is focused on the text, which is voiced in a wide range against the background of counterpoint of trombones and trumpets and rapid passages of the string group. The first culmination is emphasized by the thickening of the texture, rhythmic fragmentation, ascending sequences. After reaching the top, the choral parts turn into vocalism that imitate crying, the intonational basis of which is a diminished seventh and tritone.

The incidental part of the first movement of the cantata (Adagio, e-moll) is the lyrical center of the work. The composer emphasizes the incompatibility of the beauty of nature and miserable life. In addition to the tempo and figurative contrast, there is also a textural, timbre and dynamic contrast. The character of the sound acquires a pastoral, contemplative tone,



only female choral parts are used, which contributes to the softness of the sound. The solo violin against the background of transparent arpeggios of the harp indicate an impressionistic style.

According to the poetic text, modest and pious people live in Subcarpathian Rus, so, according to the specifics of the genre, E. Suchon adds song to the choral parts. The cantilena diatonic melody with parallel voicing is reminiscent of pilgrimage songs. The orchestral parts, due to the roll call of the woodwind instruments, provide the effect of spatiality. All voices of the texture are melodized, the harmonic language becomes more consonant.

The male choral parts at the beginning of the developmental section interrupt abruptly the dreamy intermezzo and bring us back to reality with its anxiety and suffering. The melodic contours of the vocal parts are sharpened. The tempo speeds up, the orchestral fabric is saturated with disturbing tremolo of string instruments and rapid passages, which enhances the dramatic character.

A huge increase in volume leads to a dynamicized reprise – a powerful sounding of the main theme in a rhythmic expansion and full-sounding tutti. The culmination zone is quite large in scale, the pathos of the drama goes beyond the scope of the voiced poetry, so the tension is relieved only in the orchestral interlude.

The second subject group in the reprise restores the tonal unity and returns to the sphere of elegiac lyrics. It describes the images of women and children left without the support of their breadwinners. The tempo slows down to Lento. Silent complaint, longing and regret are expressed in a melody close to psalmody. The tonal organ point and quiet dynamics have the effect of frozenness and hopelessness.

The beginning of the second movement of the cantata (Andante sostenuto, h-moll) is not contrasting. The extended orchestral introduction creates a sonorous effect: the fugato reflects the incessant passage of time. The theme is quite alert and gloomy, because it is voiced by the pizzicato of the double basses on *pp*. Its character is determined by a nervous rhythm: there is no metrical pulsation, each motif is separated by pauses. The ascending entry of other string instruments, together with tempo acceleration and rhythmic fragmentation, prepare the appearance of the prophet-soloist theme. His expressively intense exclamations express the anger of a person who sees the humiliation of dignity and accuses them of passivity. Pathetics and decisive impulse are provided, first of all, by the sharp, angular themes of the instrumental type. Jumps to the sextet, septet, and nona are perceived as a desire to awaken a hidden power. However, the modest recitation of the choir expresses resignation, reconciliation with fate, the patience of the

masses, and their disinterest in solving problems. The a cappella sound of the choral parts impresses with its simplicity and consonance, it is stylistically close to a church chorale.

The middle section of the second movement brings a strong contrast. The pastoral images determine the composer's use of the nocturne genre, where the mono-grain in the flute solo acquires a transparent, light character, and the arpeggiated harp accompaniment and triangle sounds provide spatial effects. It is worth noting that the authors of the "Psalm" endow the image of the dawn with the symbolism of hope and faith in salvation.

The bard's repeated call turns into a passionate, frantic cry. Rhetorical questions require ascending sequences, marcato strokes, great dynamic force, powerful orchestral support. And although the response of the chorus is still constrained, built like a psalmody on the same pitch, E. Suchon uses polyphonic techniques very successfully. The choral parts, starting with deep basses, rise with great resistance. Secondary layers of voices indicate a gloomy rethinking of the situation. The repetition of the material of the orchestral introduction to the second movement reminds us again of the passage of time.

The third movement of the cantata (*Piu mosso*, d-moll) – the dramatic culmination – symbolizes the gradual awakening of the people, and therefore has the form of a fugato. The resolute character of the theme is ensured by a clear, even rhythm and a Phrygian mode. The ascending direction of the voices (from bass to soprano), as well as the acceleration of the tempo, are a manifestation of hidden strength and defiance. In the culminating coda, all voices are reduced to powerful chords, and the rhythmic increase in duration enhances the significance and monumentality of the image.

The appeal to the masses prompted the composer to emphasize the role of the chorus as the main participant in the action, which gives the work its oratorical features. At the same time, the unification of the sections through the principle of mono-themes, the significant role of the orchestra, which has an independent function both in individual episodes and during accompaniment, indicate the principles of symphonism in the cantata.

In general, the work of artists of the Modernism period is marked by the search for various roles and possibilities of traditional genres. The creators also focused their attention on the genre of the psalm. During the first half of the XX century, "Psalm" by G. Trakl and P. Celan, "Psalmus Hungaricus" by Z. Kodály, "Symphony of Psalms" by I. Stravinsky, "De profundis" by A. Schoenberg, "Žalm zeme Podkarpatskej" by J. Suchon and many similar compositions have been published, which demonstrate the emergence of a new, secular version of the genre alongside the liturgical one.

Despite the title, neither the poetic work by J. Zatloukal nor the cantata by E. Suchon have a religious function. The specificity of the psalm genre embodiment by J. Zatloukal is expressed through filling the poetic structure of psalmody with a specific historical meaning. The biblical pathos of the poetry, its vocabulary and stylistics are actualized by the personal experience of the historical moment. For the poet, the search for earthly goods (freedom, dignity and well-being of the people) turns into a search for spiritual support and the highest harmony of existence, which makes J. Zatloukal's work similar to the Psalter. The use of the psalmodic structure of the stanzas is also symbolic.

In E. Suchon's interpretation, we can observe the stylistic emancipation of the musical language from the canons of any church or romantic fascination with folklore. By choosing the cantata genre, the artist fits organically into the tradition of embodying high ethical ideas through the synthesis of words and music in a monumental performance. The composer aims to reflect the pathetic tension of the poetic text as much as possible, so the drama of the work is based on contrasts that operate both at the level of large sections of the whole and at the level of microstructures of individual episodes. Another important role in the drama is played by the contrast between the soloist and the choral mass, as a comprehension of the role of the prophet in the fate of the people. A characteristic feature of the cantata is its monumentality; a wide sound space is organized by the strict logic of symphonic thinking, a synthesis of polyphonic and motive development. The composer managed to enhance the associativity and metaphorical nature of the images with musical means, reaching the height of artistic generalization of the contradictions of life.

Thus, both artists chose the psalm as an example of a universal genre, radically updating its canons in both figurative and formal aspects, which corresponds to the artistic trends of the XX century.

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