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KONSTANTIN PETROSSIAN'S ACTIVITY IN THE YEARS OF ARMENIA'S INDEPENDENCE¹

Key words: Konstantin Petrossian, composer, conductor, pianist, public figure, Armenian Music Festival, chamber compositions.

Introduction

Konstantin Petrossian² is a composer, conductor, pianist, public figure and an awardee of the Movses Khorenatsi medal. He is the co-chair of the foreign **Commission at the Composers' Union of Armenia**, also serving as the president and artistic director of the Armenian Music Festival of Rhode Island. In the years of Armenia's Independence Konstantin Petrossian's career unfolded in the following main directions – creation, performance and public activities.

Creative Activity

The composer carried out a dynamic and multi-genre creative activity where chamber compositions prevailed. His works included the Sonatas for French horn and piano (1997), for flute and piano (2004)³, for oboe and piano⁴ (2006), for solo flute⁵ (2014, dedicated to Artashes Grigoryan), a Trio for flute, clarinet and piano (2002), the Octet for trombones (2017), the Nocturne for violin and piano (2014, dedicated to memory of Eduard Baghdasaryan), “The Duets” for guitar and flute (2000), “Tamzara” for Marimba (2016), “The Vocalise” for oboe and

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¹ Հեղինակությունն իրականացվել է ՀՀ ԿԳՆ գիտության կոմիտեի տրամադրած ֆինանսավորմամբ՝ 19YR-6E058 ծածկագրով գիտական թեմայի շրջանակներում:

² Information on K. Petrossian was taken from M. Rukhyan's monograph “Мир Константина Петросяна”. Рухкян 2018, 214.

³ See Պետրոսյան 2018, 28:

⁴ Պետրոսյան 2018, 2–19:

⁵ Պետրոսյան 2018, 12:

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piano⁶ (2016), “The Serenade” for cello and piano (2017), “For Lilit” for piano (2017), Scherzo for trombone and piano⁷ (2018)⁸. On September 22, 2019, a concert was arranged to celebrate Komitas’ 150th anniversary at the Carnegie Hall in New York. The author of the present article performed K. Petrossian’s piano piece “For Lilit” for the first time⁹. In this atonal piece, the composer uses the repetitive musical devices in his unique way. The intonation core of the theme is immediately engaged in the course of the music, the nature of which reminds of gradation. Despite the fact that the two parts of the play are built on the same intonation core, they further take a different course of development. The effect of tumultuous chaos is achieved through the asymmetric interaction between the rhythmic figures. At the end the incessant motion turns into such a piece where the tension is heightened through the layers of dissonant tremolo and Lombardic rhythmic figures succeeded by the powerful wave of clusters. The performer’s priority should be to master the whole arsenal of virtuoso expressive means of the piano performance.

The genre of symphonic music is represented by such pieces as “Contemplations” (1992) and “Elegy” (1992) for piano and orchestra, “Rhapsody” (1999) for a string orchestra, “Fantasy” for guitar and a string orchestra (2014), “Vocalise” created for cello and symphonic orchestra¹⁰ (2014), “Gyumri” for jazz orchestra (2018). To the choral genre belong the cycle of folk songs “Chimes of the Homeland”¹¹ for an a cappella women’s choir (2003) and “Mer Nor Hayastan” (2011, Our New Armenia) for choir and orchestra, the lyrics of which were authored by Aramayis Sahakyan. Moreover, the CD of the cycle of folk songs “Chimes of the Homeland” was released in 2007, and Candidate of Arts Alina Pahlevanian penned its preface.

⁶ Պետրոսյան 2018, 20–25:

⁷ Սոնատ 2018:

⁸ The trilingual list of K. Petrossian’s works was compiled by the author of the given article. Рухкян 2018, 67–82, 131–143, 198–211:

⁹ Although the work was first performed on June 8, 2019 at the release of M. Rukhian’s book “Мир Константина Петросяна” at the hall of Composers’ Union of Armenia. The play edited by the composer was performed at the Carnegie Hall.

¹⁰ Պետրոսյան 2016, 30–35:

¹¹ Պետրոսյան 2016, 100:

The composer's works are frequently performed both in Armenia and on such international renowned stages as the Carnegie Hall in New York, Lincoln Centre, etc. The music festivals and concerts dedicated to Armenian composers not only include K. Petrossian's works which have a rich performance history but also such pieces which have been created in the recent years.

In October, 2014, K. Petrossian's "Vocalise" written for cello and orchestra was performed for the first time by Aram Talalyan and the State Youth Orchestra of Armenia under the baton of Sergey Smbatyan at the festival "Armenian Contemporary Music" organized by the Composers' Union of Armenia. In April, 2016, the third "Premier" festival was held devoted to the Armenian contemporary music at which the Sonata written for solo flute performed by Artashes Grigoryan was premiered. Within the frames of the festival, the following three choral songs "Tamzara", "Sona Yar" and "Esor Urvat piter" from the series "Chimes of the Homeland" were also performed. On November 19, 2019, at the Armenian Contemporary Music Fifth Festival "Dedication to Komitas" Artashes Grigoryan (flute) and Anahit Dilbaryan (piano) performed the Sonata written for flute and piano for the first time.

On October 3, 2003, by the initiative of the Armenian Musical Assembly a concert devoted to K. Petrossian's works was given at Aram Khachaturian's House-Museum. At the concert the women's choir of the Yerevan State Conservatory after Komitas directed by Hovhannes Mirzoyan performed the folk songs for the first time.

On March 7, 2018, at the 19th Armenian Composers' Art Festival dedicated to Grigor Yeghiazarian's 110th anniversary and organized by the Armenian State Symphony Orchestra¹², K. Petrossian's No 1 Woodwind Quintet was performed. The work was performed by the woodwind quintet of the Armenian State Symphony Orchestra with Gevorg Avetisyan (flute), Tigran Vardanyan (oboe), Avedik Ghazaryan (clarinet), Nikolay Poghosyan (fagot), Armen Karagyan (French horn).

Performance Activity

It is common knowledge that K. Petrossian started his career as a performer at the age of 19¹³. However, in this period he extended the geography of his

¹² On the Armenian State Symphony Orchestra see Արտեմյան 2018, 300–309:

¹³ Ասատրյան, Արտեմյան, 2018, 138:

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concerts, continuing his prolific performance activities, playing on various reputable stages (among them in New York Carnegie Hall in 1990, 1997, 2013, etc.). It is noteworthy that in 1991 K. Petrossian performed at the first concert entitled "Ancient Armenia's New Music" at the Central Headquarters of the United Nations. The concert was given in honor of Armenia's proclamation of Independence. In 2012 he played at the "Merkel" concert hall of Lincoln Centre in New York. The concert entitled "Renaissance" was devoted to the 20th anniversary of Armenia's armed forces as well as the country's membership in the United Nations.

In 2015 K. Petrossian organized eight concerts to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide in cities like New York, Boston, Providence and New Jersey.

K. Petrossian is the founder and the artistic director of the Armenian Chorale in Rhode Island, the Armenian Chorale of Greater Worcester, Massachusetts, as well as the director of Boston's famous "Yerevan" Chorale and Orchestra. They regularly perform not only the masterpieces of world music, but also the gems of the Armenian music. Moreover, in 2019 the "Yerevan" Chorale and Orchestra of Boston was awarded Yerevan Mayor Gold Medal. The head of the Armenian Composers' Union Aram Satian was present at the award ceremony, where the alderman of the city council Artur Ispirian handed the medal to the artistic director, conductor of the "Yerevan" Chorale and Orchestra K. Petrossian.

In this period K. Petrossian actively cooperated with such world famous musicians as Lili Chookaszian, Lucine Amara, Barsegh Tumanyan, Ellada Chakoian, Razmik Papikian, Vagharshak Ohanyan, Garo Nshanian, etc.

Public Activity

The composer's public activity continued in this period as well. From 1990 to 1993, he was the co-chair of the Peace Foundation of Armenia (Eduard Mirzoyan the president), and due to his efforts foreign financial assistance was given to the figures of the Armenian culture, while young musicians were granted Peace Foundation scholarships.

Since 1995 up until now the competent public figure has been working under contract in the United States. Throughout this time K. Petrossian has never ceased to work for his country and for the development of Armenian music.

In 1997 he founded the cultural organization called the “Armenian Festival of Rhode Island”, and is still the head of the institution. The main goal of the organization consists in presenting with great mastery the various genres of Armenian music on a regular basis. Since 1997 up to now K. Petrossian has been organizing the Armenian Music Festival which unites both Armenian and foreign musicians. Maestro K. Petrossian is the director of the cultural and music departments at Saints Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Apostolic Church in Providence. His organizational work paid great attention to the custom of Christmas concerts which are widespread in the Western culture. The programs of Christmas concerts included not only Armenian religious music (Komitas, Yekmalyan) and songs written by Armenian composers, but also works by world classics (W. A. Mozart, G. F. Handel) and traditional American Christmas Carols.

In 2003 K. Petrossian became a member of the non-governmental organization the Armenian Musical Assembly¹⁴, initiating his active involvement in this union of fellow musicians. With his support the CDs of the Assembly composers’ works were recorded in the United States. In 2010 the “Accolade” CD of the Armenian piano music was released. The same year witnessed the occurrence of the CD release “Vision” dedicated to vocal music. The Library of Congress was also replenished by the notes of the Assembly composers’ printed works.

Being a member of the Composers’ Union of Armenia, he has been appointed a Co-Chair of the Union’s Foreign Commission since 2013. As a result, in 2014, by the initiative of K. Petrossian, Aram Satian (the Chairman of the Composers’ Union of Armenia) and Berch Chekijian (the director of the Armenian Museum of America¹⁵) a series of concerts dedicated to the contemporary Armenian chamber music was given in New York, Boston and Providence. Fifteen new works by various Armenian composers were performed at these concerts, which is regarded as an important step for the popularization of Armenian contemporary music. Since 2014 up to now joint concerts of Armenian music have been given at the Armenian Museum of America. On September 19, 2019, within the scope of this collaboration the author of the present article

¹⁴ On the Armenian Musical Assembly see Արտեմյան 2018, 171–179:

¹⁵ It is common knowledge that the Armenian Museum of America is situated in Boston.

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delivered a lecture and **performed at the concert dedicated to Komitas' 150th anniversary and to Armenian contemporary music.**

K. Petrossian has received various awards – in May, 2013, he was awarded Movses Khorenatsi medal by the decree of the third President of RA Serzh Sargsyan. In 2014 the Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II granted him the greatest reward St. Sahak-St. Mesrop Medal of the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin.

In 2018 the scientific board of the Institute of arts along with the editing and publishing board of the NAS RA decided to publish the trilingual (Armenian, **Russian, English**) monograph “The World of **Konstantin Petrossian**” written by the leading researcher of the Institute of Art of NAS RA, Honorary Worker of Arts of the RA, Doctor of Arts Margarita Rukhkyan. The preface of the monograph was authored by the deputy director of the Institute of Art of the NAS RA, Honorary Worker of Arts of the RA, Doctor of Arts, Professor, Anna Asatryan who was also the editor of the work. On June 8, 2019, the book was presented at the concert **hall of the Composers' Union of Armenia. While on September 20, 2019,** the book was also presented at Saints Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Apostolic Church in Providence, Rhode Island. **K. Petrossian's works were performed at the event.**

Conclusions

Konstantin Petrossian's career during the period of Independence of Armenia unfolded in the following main directions – creation, performance and public activities;

1. The composer carried out a dynamic and multi-genre creative activity where chamber compositions prevailed.

2. In this period he extended the geography of his concerts, continuing his prolific performance activities, playing on various reputable stages (among them in New York Carnegie Hall in 1990, 1997, 2013, etc.)

3. Since 1995 up until now the competent public figure has been working under contract in the United States. Throughout this time K. Petrossian has never ceased to work for his country and for the development of Armenian music.

K. Petrossian has made an undeniable contribution to the development of Armenian music. His artistic, performance and public activities abroad have undoubtedly added to the international popularization of Armenian culture and music throughout the diaspora.

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**ԿՈՆՍՏԱՆՏԻՆ ՊԵՏՐՈՍՅԱՆԻ ՍՏԵՂԾԱԳՈՐԾԱԿԱՆ
ԳՈՐԾՈՒՆԵՈՒԹՅՈՒՆԸ ՀՀ ԱՆԿԱԽՈՒԹՅԱՆ
ՏԱՐԻՆԵՐԻՆ**

ԱՐՏԵՄՅԱՆ Լ.

Ամփոփում

Քանալի քառեր՝ Կոնստանտին Պետրոսյան, կոմպոզիտոր, դիրիժոր, դաշնակահար, հասարակական գործիչ, «Հայկական երաժշտական փառատոն», կամերային ստեղծագործություններ:

Կոմպոզիտոր, դիրիժոր, դաշնահակար, հասարակական գործիչ «Հայկական երաժշտական փառատոն» հայկական մշակութային կազմակերպության նախագահ Կոնստանտին Հրանտի Պետրոսյանի գործունեությունը ՀՀ անկախության շրջանում ընթացել է հետևյալ հիմնական ուղղություններով՝ ստեղծագործական, կատարողական և հասարակական: Կոմպոզիտորը ծավալել է ակտիվ և բազմաթիվ ստեղծագործական գործունեություն, ընդլայնել ելույթների աշխարհագրությունը՝ հանդես գալով հեղինակավոր բեմահարթակներում, այդ թվում՝ Նյու Յորքի «Քարնեգի հոլում» և այլուր:

Անվանի կոմպոզիտորը 1997-ին ԱՄՆ-ի Ռոդ Այլենդ նահանգում հիմնադրել և առ այսօր ղեկավարում է «Հայկական երաժշտական փառատոն» մշակութային կազմակերպությունը: Հայաստանի կոմպոզիտորների միության անդամ Կ. Պետրոսյանը 2003-ին անդամակցել է «Հայկական երաժշտական համաժողով» հասարակական կազմակերպությանը, իսկ 2013 թվականից Միության արտասահմանյան հանձնաժողովի համանախագահին է: Նա նաև Փրովիդենսի Սուրբ Սահակ-Մեսրոպ հայ Առաքելական եկեղեցու մշակութային և երաժշտական բաժինների տնօրենն է:

ДЕЯТЕЛЬНОСТЬ КОНСТАНТИНА ПЕТРОСЯНА В ГОДЫ НЕЗАВИСИМОСТИ РА

АРТЕМЯН Л.

Резюме

Ключевые слова: Константин Петросян, композитор, дирижер, пианист, общественный деятель, «Армянский музыкальный фестиваль», камерные произведения.

Деятельность композитора, пианиста, общественного деятеля, основателя и председателя армянской культурной организации «Армянский музыкальный фестиваль Род-Айленда» Константина Петросяна в период независимости РА развивалась в трех основных направлениях: творческом, исполнительском и общественном. Композитор вел активную многогранную творческую деятельность, а также выступал с концертами в престижных залах, в том числе в «Карнеги Холле» и т.д.

В 1997 г. К.Петросян основал «Армянский музыкальный фестиваль Род-Айленда» и по сей день руководит этой армянской культурной организацией. В 2003 г. он стал членом Армянской музыкальной ассамблеи, а в 2013 году член Союза композиторов Армении Константин Петросян был назначен сопредседателем иностранной комиссии Союза. Он является также директором культурного и музыкального департаментов Армянской апостольской церкви Святых Саака и Месропа в Провиденсе (США).