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## LEVKO REVUTSKY AND MAKSYM RIL'SKY: VERGES OF COLLABORATION OF CLOSE FRIENDS

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У статті йдеться про дружні взаємини двох видатних представників української культури ХХ ст. – композитора Л. Ревуцького та поета М. Рильського, про їхній світогляд, творчу співпрацю, діяльність у науковій сфері, служіння високим етичним ідеалам людства.

**Ключові слова:** композитор, М. Лисенко, Л. Ревуцький, поет, М. Рильський, українська музика, опера «Тарас Бульба», «Ода пісні», українська народна пісня, обробка народної пісні.

В статье идет речь о дружбе двух выдающихся представителей украинской культуры ХХ в. – композитора Л. Ревуцкого и поэта М. Рильского, об их мировоззрении, творческом содружестве, деятельности в научной сфере, служении высоким этическим идеалам человечества.

**Ключевые слова:** композитор, Н. Лысенко, Л. Ревуцкий, поет, М. Рильский, украинская музыка, опера «Тарас Бульба», «Ода песне», украинская народная песня, обработка народной песни.

The article is devoted to friendly relations of two prominent representatives of Ukrainian culture of the twentieth century – the composer L. Revutsky and poet M. Ryl'sky, their outlook, creative collaboration, activity in the field of science, serving to high ethical ideals of humanity.

**Keywords:** composer, Mykola Lysenko, Levko Revutsky, poet, Maksym Ryl'sky, Ukrainian music, opera *Taras Bul'ba*, *Oda Pisni / Ode to the Song*, Ukrainian folk song, adaptation of folk song.

The figures of Levko Revutsky and Maksym Ryl'sky occupy such honored and prominent place on the Ukrainian artistic Olympus, that they constantly come into the notice of researchers, and their work from time to time becomes the object of studies of researches at different levels: books and the hundred articles have been written about them, movies were made and some theses were supported. During their life they did not only go alongside, but were true friends, partners, coauthors. Their friendship was quite often publicly underlined, so there is no surprise, that the theme of L. Revutsky's and M. Ryl'sky's relationship so or so has been touched by the authors of monographs about them (T. Sheffer [20], M. Byalik [2] and other), as well as in the sections of collective monograph *Ryl'sky and Music* [8] and some articles. The priority in the detailed exposure of this theme belongs, indisputably, to V. Kuzyk – the long-term researcher of the creative heritage of Revutsky brothers: one of her articles has even the same name: *Maksym Ryl'sky and Revutsky brothers* [5]. At the same time, taking into account multidimensional and many-sided nature of the human and creative relations of those two giants of the Ukrainian culture, this theme is

inexhaustible and never will lose its actuality. Our researches of these relations need such directions: the similarity of vital and creative ways, long-term friendship, co-authority and especially their joint work above Lysenko's inheritance.

While being different and original, Levko Mykolayovych and Maksym Tadeyovych have at the same time much general features, that brought them similar and were predestinated with the likelihood at vital circumstances and publicly cultural with the terms of environment in which they have been grown and formed. They both held the greatest positions (as academicians, members of Supreme Rada of Ukraine), they were the holders of some orders, they were glorified as classics (the complete works of the both have been published) respected in society acknowledged people's favorites. Both were the real encyclopaedists in the widest sense of this word, «both in relation to the display of various abilities» and in relation to the «volume of knowledges, variety of vital, social-public and spiritual interests» [3, p. 5].

Almost coevals, they both were born in the respected noble familiars, since early years educated in a peasant folklore environment, where the Ukrainian folk song was

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appreciated with special piety. Both became early orphans and remained on the care of elder brothers, who enjoyed the enormous authority by them and had the influence upon their education. Both had exceptional musical capabilities which showed up in early age («Presumably, I was born either as a musician, or as a poet», – M. Ryl'sky talked about himself). Therefore both remove «in science» to Mykola Vitaliyovych Lysenko, who played an outstanding role in forming their world view and remained for life the absolute authority for them. «Direct student of M. Lysenko – L. Revutsky is indebted a great deal to his teacher», – wrote M. Ryl'sky about his adopted brother, but he could say just the same and about himself [11, p. 30].

It was Dmytro Mykolayovych Revutsky – «their teacher of literature» [16], who promoted the acquaintance of both artists – at that time the youths, inspired with dreams – in the Naumenko's gymnasium on the Velyka Pidval'na street during 1909–1912.

«As a matter of fact, it was at that time an outstanding boldness, that Dmytro Mykolayovych acquainted us with the Ukrainian dumas», – Maksym Tadeyovych recollected later. Actually, it is also the merit of Dmytro Mykolayovych, that a young poet Maksym Ryl'sky joined the groupment of neoclassics, Dmytro «infected» Maksym with this «illness» of his high school pupils [6].

It was exactly Dmytro Mykolayovych, who welcomed M. Ryl'sky's attempts in the translating and accustomed him to the translations of the classics' vocal world (in particular, *The Firrier* by Yo. Brahms, *The Soldier* by R. Shuman, *The Lirnyk* by F. Shubert, filled up the repertoire of cycle *The Vocal demonstrations*, that D. Revutsky held in 1920-ties on the base of M. Lysenko High music-dramatic institute in Kyiv), and later on – of the opera librettos (not to mention that M. Ryl'sky during 1930–1940-ties carried out the duties of the head of literature department in Kyiv Opera house!).

The Teacher was keenly interested in the process of his translation and contributed to his popularization: «Did you get Lesya Ukrainka and Pushkin (*The Copper Rider*)? What is your impression from Ryl'sky's trans-

lation?» [4, p. 20]. As M. Ryl'sky recollected, he made friends «closer with Levko Mykolayovych in the next twentieth» [17, p. 399].

The Revuckiana of M. Ryl'sky's publicism expanded over two decades: from the appearance of the first article *Levko Revutsky* (in the magazine *Young bolshevist – Molodyi Bilshovyk*, 1941) [12], to the last – *To 75-th Revutsky's Anniversary* – in the newspaper *Evening Kyiv*; on February, 21 1964 (the extended variant – in a magazine *The Soviet Music – Sovetskaya Muzyka* [9]).

From M. Ryl'sky's very vivid, picturesque and expressive flashbacks we know, as Levko Revutsky looked in the time of his youth: «I remember him yet as a student. Serious, restrained, with a deeply secret smile, with clear, soft and a bit sly eyes; he is in my memory more frequent after the pianoforte» [14, p. 360].

He was short-spoken, but while pronouncing something, he often struck his partner with the accuracy, and sometimes with the exactly Ukrainian humour. He remained serious and restrained, sitting at a piano. «In the families, where we met with Levko, one liked music, and he came forward both as an accompanist or as a performer of his own or someone's works. He never betrayed those qualities that were peculiar also for his composer's activity: strict taste, dislike for external effects» [17, p. 399].

M. Ryl'sky characterized a Revutsky-pianist very professionally: «He graduated from the piano class, and his pianism, the special admiration in a pianoforte inner voice seems to me characteristic for him and unites him with his teacher Mykola Lysenko» [14, p. 360]. And he adds also a thoroughly objective, but justly high estimation at Revutsky as the creator of scale forms: «Although Levko Revutsky makes himself distant from that, to think the world almost exceptionally in pianoforte images, as Chopin had it, or almost exceptionally in the choral soundings, as we see beyond Leontovych. Levko Mykolayovych loves human voice, loves a song and at the same time he is a wonderful symphonist <...> Exactly it gave him an opportunity to create such pearl of our symphonic music, as his Second symphony. Not only wherein

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Revutsky in this symphony directly takes a folk theme, but also in all work we feel breathing of folk breasts. The field beauty, nobleness of folk heart is reflected in every beat of the symphony» [14, p. 361].

M. Ryl'sky recollected their common work at opera *Taras Bul'ba* and editorial work with M. Lysenko's complete works as follows: «I admired him, when he prepared the musical version of Lysenko's *Taras Bul'ba* with sincere homage to his teacher, with the keen understanding of his style and with the complete armament of modern technique [14, p. 36].

M. Ryl'sky whatever would be discussed by (in the dotted line or more thoroughly and in the unfolded manner), he necessarily reminded his friend [10]: be it about art in general (the fundamental article is *The Basic Lines of the Ukrainian Soviet Art*) or about music in particular, be it about war and creation (newspaper *Communist*, 1942), whether on the repertoire of artistic collectives (*About Our Artistic Businesses* in a newspaper *Literature And Art*, 1944; *The Holiday of Folk Talents* in a newspaper *True of Ukraine*, 1949), or on the glorified friendship of people and as an example pointed L. Revutsky's song *The Eagle's Family* on his own text [11].

Certainly, M. Ryl'sky did not forget to write the articles for the mass media on the occasion of L. Revutsky's anniversaries (60, 70, 75 years old). Nevertheless these were not panegyrics with infinite laudations, but warm «portrayal» flashbacks-essay, with the objective estimation of his creation, with accents on the highest achievements: «L. M. Revutsky is a very peculiar and original artist, free of pursuit after a novelty for the sake of novelty. This line is peculiar, in particular, for his pianoforte works.

By the way, Revutsky has in a high measure a peculiar pianist feeling, reflected in his songs and in romances, and in his choral works. A self-demanding artist, active citizen, wonderful comrade, teacher, musician-thinker, scientist-academician, Lev Mykolaiovych Revutsky, is dear and near to all of us» [17, p. 401].

The System tried to break them both. Imprisoned, punished, held their family mem-

bers as hostages. And in order to survive, they had to obey (at least outwardly, in publicly expressed loyalty). However the internal resistance was very perceptible: Revutsky was concentrated on pedagogics, Ryl'sky – on translations of the world classics.

Maksym Tadeyovych appreciated very-high just Revutsky's pedagogical talent and ability: «I am glad, when I see grey bright-eyed Levko, surrounded by his talented students, whose whole phalanx can make a legal pride of Revutsky-teacher» [14, p. 362]; named him the Teacher, «who devotes all his soul to the matter of education of young composer's gifts» [17, p. 401]. Of interest are also his observations as to the pedagogical receptions of Revutsky-teacher in the composition class: «He did not any suppress – and he doesn't suppress now either – by his opinions and persuasions, how hard and clear they would be, by his enormous erudition.

I remember, he improvised somehow the arrangement of a folk song after a person had played quite a poor one. Everybody was surprised with the unique penetration in a spirit and style of folk creation, radiated with this improvisation, remarkable simplicity and at the same time richness of pictorial means, that are peculiar to all his song treatments (remember the *Galych songs*, *Podolyanochka* with their transparent, easy, as though elusive and at the same time very deep pianoforte accompaniment, *Perepilon'ka Arrived* and others» [17, p. 401].

In spite of the proximity of their perception of the world, their vital positions, at last, their amities and much time, spent together, their mutual «creative brief-case» was not numerous: a few songs, romance and symphonic poem. Nevertheless there is the dramatic history behind the every creation, as well as global vital, philosophical and humanism collisions: life and death, power and artist, artist and society, sense of patriotism and others like that.

However, the L. Revutsky's songs on M. Ryl'sky's poetry reflect at the same time the history of the country, in which they both had happened to survive fortunately with quite a dear price: the System has put them both on service and compelled to glorify it.

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So, choir *On Ferrous Doors* (1925) has become an example of mastering the genre, that has been new for them both – that of a mass song (to the Day of workwoman on March, 8). The song about Stalin *From the Mountains and from the High* (1935), as it is known, became an original «indulgence»: it actually saved the life for them both, because it pleased the «leader of all people» [7, p. 22]. To say objectively, it has become the best one among all the great amount of all praises and magnifications. It is indebted to the fact, that an old Cossack song *Ouch, from at Mountains... a Falcon Took off* was taken for its basis.

The line of the «payed off» works was continued by majestic *Song about Party* (1949, the first part of the collective cantata to the XVI congress of CPSU) and *The Glorious Party* (1960) – similar not only after their names, but also after their hymn-glorial turns.

Notably, it is a «song», that has become a keyword in many creative «results»: *Song of Red Sisters* (1938), *Song (Galychanka Chernobrova, 1939)*, *Song About Donbas* (1951), *Our Song* (1956, sacred to the children of metallurgists from the South region). While characterizing L. Revutsky's creation, M. Ryl'sky wrote: «Song, the folk song, – it is the key to Revutsky's creation <...> Levko Mykolayovych attitude is marked with the deferential attention to folk melos» [14, p. 360].

The poet could describe himself with those words too. It is not for nothing, that folklore-like melodies in choral exposition (with the elements of folk polyphony) appeared consonant to the folklore-like verbal lines (for example, *Hey, the Sun Has Not Climb Yet – A Collective Farm Sowing*, 1940). Quite not by a chance, their works at once became a repertoire (certainly, due to an operative print and the distribution of them in numerous musical miscellanies).

The choir *Hey, the Slavs!* was the contribution to the memory of Ryl'sky's father Tadey, and at the same time it was determined immediately with the poet's own work at the Slavonic committee. The analysis of the enumerated songs gives rise to the thought, that they have been such a success due to the circumstance, that the authors were not

merely the connoisseurs of the Ukrainian folk song heritage, but they have also sung a lot of folklore samples personally.

M. Ryl'sky characterized Revutsky's receptions of folk songs' arrangements with enviable mastership: «He is usually very scarce in accompaniments, as if he is afraid to deafen, to hide the voice of a song from a listener. Sometimes he uses a folk harmonization, overheard by himself (*Perepilon'ka Arrived*). And sometimes, when the text of a song requires it, an artist affords luxurious juicy paints and draws a whole polyphonic picture (*Perepelichen'ka nevelichen'ka*).

Meanwhile Revutsky falls nowhere out from folk style, because the folk style – it is also his style too» [14, p. 361]. The romance *Millet Harvested*, is, from one side, a melancholy autumn picture, and from the another – a contemplative lyric poetry, full of philosophical reflections about the sense of life and of the sorrow after the past, that are so peculiar to both L. Revutsky and M. Ryl'sky.

As the obvious reflection of M. Ryl'sky's and L. Revutsky's close cooperation above Lysenko's *Taras Bul'ba* one can point to *Taras Bul'ba's Monologue* (1961), that is a scene of a large scale with recitative arioso, that resembles an opera episode. M. Ryl'sky's and L. Revutsky's author style has been revealed here in the full scope – in those folk dumas, that once so skilfully sang «Miksha» (Dmytro Mykolayovych Revutsky).

The monologue «absorbed the personal features of epic folk genres, where the chant lyric melodious links are organically combined with free recitatives-improvisations of verbal text and melody», – as B. Filts, Revutsky's graduate student, has rightly noticed [15, p. 182]. It is to mark in this connection, that exactly M. Ryl'sky as the director of Institute of Art Studies, Folklore and Ethnography (presently is M. Ryl'sky Institute of Art Studies, Folklore and Ethnology, NAN of Ukraine), invited L. Revutsky to supervise graduate students and to be a member of the Specialized Scientific council for the support of Thesis).

Indisputably, one of the best, «the most perfect standards of musical embodiment of M. Ryl'sky's poetic word» [1, p. 231] is *The*

*Ode to Song* (1956) – a large vocal-symphonic composition. It's interesting, that the first variant of this poem (and its musical registration as a masculine choir) has become the already mentioned *Our song*, written in 1928 to the tenth anniversary of M. Lysenko's High music-dramatic institute [1, p. 229]. Although the dedication to Lenin is pointed at the printed edition *The Ode to Song*, the explorer of Revucky brothers' creation V. Kuzyk insists truly that this work had been written to the 35th anniversary of the Musical society named after M. Leontovych, up-diffused and raided by System, and to the 75th anniversary of the birthday D. Revutsky, who died tragically.

While analysing *The Ode to Song*, M. Byalik has observed here the intonations of the Russian songs of *Ey, ukhnem!* and *You are a Victim (Vy Zhertvoyu Pali)*, popular in revolutionary times. It can be admitted, that the intonation source is more generalized – there are European funebre marches (especially it is perceptible in the large orchestral prologue).

The musical-poetic dedications of the friends were intimate and numerous. So, Maksym Tadeyovych wrote: «I remember one interesting case. It was on my birthday, that he, together with other guests, somehow visited me. The friends-poets have written to me a humorous congratulation in poems. Levko made music to it. The moment of the performance of this «ode» has come. Lev Mykolayovych sat down at the piano, put notes before himself. And suddenly he began to become confused, hammered, though playing his own, not very difficult music, and finally stopped playing.

We were so surprised: what was the matter? The fact was, that my old upright piano, that has been tuned one and a half or, possibly, a tone below. Having an absolute pitch, Lev Mykolayovych saw the designation of one sounds on a paper – and inwardly heard them, – but the piano produced something other. So the «ode», as I seem to remember, has not been played» [7, p. 400]. In 1959 M. Ryl'sky welcomed his friend with a sonnet *The Fate Has Put to You the Gift of Songs In a Cradle*. «In this poem, – M. Ryl'sky wrote, –

I aimed (and it seems to me, I succeeded) at marking for the most personal features of a remarkable man, with whom I am tied with long-term friendship, and with whom not once I have had to work <...> Lev Revutsky <...> in truth is a national composer, and every <...> who could hear, for example, his Second symphony, could feel the breathing of free Ukrainian steppe, charming of the Ukrainian song. His poem-cantata *The Shawl (Khustyna)* on Shevchenko's text is fulfilled with the deep understanding of the most majestic genius. And I am proud, that I have a right to name him: my friend Levko» [17, p. 401]. And Levko Mykolayovych could say just the same.

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