

## SYNCRETIC TRENDS IN CONTEMPORARY WESTERN EUROPEAN VOCAL AND CHORAL ART: THE CHALLENGE OF TODAY

NATALIA GREBENUK<sup>1</sup>, OLENA BATOVSKA<sup>2</sup>, YANA KYRYLENKO<sup>3</sup>,  
TAMARA TESLER<sup>4</sup>, RAFAIL HASANOV<sup>5</sup>

**SUMMARY.** The aspects covered in the article proved the topicality of the research, in particular the analysis of contemporary Western European vocal and choral art presented the meanings embedded in the musical work, programmed interactive dialogue in the author-performer, listeners system, clearly demonstrating its syncretic trends in the modern conditions of development. The article reveals the essential features of syncretic trends of Western European contemporary vocal and choral art, indicates their significance for society. The foregrounding of the research is aimed at activating not only the creative mastery of certain boundaries, but also the expansion of the boundaries of personal experience. The aim of the research is achieved, namely the mechanism of integrating creativity of the representatives of contemporary Western European musical art in relation to art space is revealed on the example of creativity of the Italian composer Sciarrino, Italian composer Berio, Spanish composer and pianist Simarro. A retrospective coverage of the history of musicological thought in European humanities is presented, syncretic tendencies in modern Western European vocal and choral art are identified, its discourse is proposed as a challenge to the present. The study involved the following research methods: observations and conversations. The obtained research results can be further used as a developed model of forming vocal and choral thesaurus, which is in line with the current state of music, vocal and

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<sup>1</sup> Professor, Doctor of Arts, Kharkiv National University of Arts named after I. P. Kotlyarevsky, 11/13, Constitution Square, Kharkiv, 61003, Ukraine, [natalia.teaching1979@gmail.com](mailto:natalia.teaching1979@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup> Professor, Doctor of Arts, Kharkiv National University of Arts named after I. P. Kotlyarevsky, 11/13, Constitution Square, Kharkiv, 61003, Ukraine, [bathelen85@ukr.net](mailto:bathelen85@ukr.net)

<sup>3</sup> Associate Professor, PhD in Arts, Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University, 18/2, Bulvarno-Kudriavska Str, Kyiv, 04053, Ukraine, [kyrylenko.yana78@gmail.com](mailto:kyrylenko.yana78@gmail.com)

<sup>4</sup> Senior lecturer, PhD in Art Studies, Kharkov State academy of culture, 4, Bursatsky uzviz, Kharkiv, 61057, Ukraine, [tamara\\_\\_voice336@gmail.com](mailto:tamara__voice336@gmail.com)

<sup>5</sup> Lecturer, Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University, 18/2, Bulvarno-Kudriavska Str, Kyiv, 04053, Ukraine, [liafarvongasah@gmail.com](mailto:liafarvongasah@gmail.com)

choral culture. Analysis of the peculiarities of the current state of choral art in Western Europe in the 20th — early 21st centuries is a promising area for further research.

**Keywords:** Choral art. Harmonisation. Musical Art. Vocal work. Artistic image. Syncretism in music.

## Introduction

Syncretism is a typical feature of original art. Its semantic load is as follows: all the elements of various arts (singing, music, dance, verbal art) are an indivisible whole. The following modern types of art are syncretic: movies, shows, concerts of many musical groups due to the visual component (behavior on stage, costumes, special effects). All this science considers as synthetic art. Syncretic art includes operetta, and opera to a lesser extent. The syncretism of musical art in educational discourse is a fact of historical development of music.

The integrative potential inherent in the syncretic nature of musical art is one of the main factors in the processes of genre formation. The results of the development of modern Western European vocal and choral art are a stylistic renewal of genres, for example, rock opera, rock melody recitation, rock performance, concept album is no exception). The system approach revealed the role of individual components of choral music of Western Europe in the 20th — early 21st centuries, the latest qualities, and forms of performance presentation of contemporary choral art<sup>6 7</sup>.

Today, in the context of the renewal of society, the role of the creative foundations of the human personality is growing, its spiritual wealth is determined by the diversity of its aesthetic views and interests. Interest in contemporary Western European vocal and choral music plays an important role here. It demonstrates the unity of intellect and soul not only of the composer but also of the performer. The very process of cognition of objective reality is living contemplation and abstract thinking, as well as practice. This means that sensory processes are sensations and perceptions. They play a very important role in learning about the surrounding world. This is the starting point in the process of cognition. Contemporary Western European vocal and choral art is no exception. Such music makes it easier to learn to perceive sensually and get the impression of beauty in the modern world.

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<sup>6</sup> Palkina, Iryna. *On the definition of "rock art"*. *Kulturno-Mystetski Obrii*, 1, 2016, pp. 64-67.

<sup>7</sup> Bondar, Yevheniia. *Artistic and stylistic synthesis as a phenomenon of modern choral creativity: monography*. Astroprynt, 2019.

Contemporary Western European vocal and choral music contributes to the assimilation of their content through experience<sup>8</sup>.

Today, the process of mastering syncretic discourse in contemporary Western European vocal and choral art its parameters of openness, which interpret modernity as a transitional period, mix and reveal its boundaries. This is an art analysis. Syncretism is a profound concept, so it is used in all branches of the humanities, but the integrity of such a complex phenomenon remains central, so the manifestation of its individual components is only a coincidence of the development process. In this case, the syncretism of contemporary musical art is revealed as a transforming factor that gives reality its necessary integrity. The semantic significance also acquires color, as syncretism is nourished not only by national origins, but also assimilates the world tradition of syncretic sensations in its various manifestations.

The problem of the synthesis of musical art has given grounds to the topic of our research. To date, science has not fully understood the problem of synthesis of musical art of Western Europe in the 20th — early 21st centuries, because its manifestation is contradictory and has its own characteristics. As a result, the limits of the functional capabilities of contemporary Western European art have expanded as much as possible. Its content combines not only a variety of facts, but also ambiguous and contradictory processes and trends in its development in modern conditions. Contemporary vocal and choral art is no exception, which has entered a stage of global crisis. Special changes concern the practical and theoretical foundations of vocal and choral art.

The topicality of studying the syncretism of the artistic imagery of contemporary Western European art lies in the coverage of the little-known page of musical culture of the said period. It demonstrates the synthesis of the arts, covers its content, reveals itself as a transforming factor that gives contemporary Western European art integrity and meaningfulness.

Today in the field of musical art of Western Europe of the 20th — early 21st centuries as a holistic phenomenon in terms of distance learning and global isolation of modern society because of Covid-19 over the past year and a half, the issue of the peculiarities of the vocal practical work of the choral class is in the stage of formation of the practical basis of choral performance, as it has undergone significant changes largely due to objective reasons. The issues of focusing on the descanting of the choir class, work on the song repertoire, its analysis and artistic performance, revealing the

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<sup>8</sup> Popovich, Nataliya, and Burkalo, Svitlana. *Experience of realization of the competence approach in continuous professional training of the teacher of music of the progressive European countries*. Musical Art in the Educological Discourse, 1, 2016, pp. 14-19.

features of the mechanism of influence of musical art on the development of personality are debatable but not global. This is a very globalization process that has rapidly changed the cultural environment. Analyzing the vocal coach of various genres of singing, it is worth paying attention to the work under various modern techniques.

The representative of the American Academy of Music is Ukrainian Yevhenia Diachenko. In her work, she uses such techniques as ImproviNation, Estill Voice Training, Vocal Power. These are quite attractive and functional techniques, namely the training of the muscles of the vocal apparatus. They work if you follow all the requirements of the instructions for conducting a vocal class. This is a kind of musical and physiological method. Trainings are held on one convenient note. Trainings make a person get rid of complexes, promote the maximum sound of the voice, influence the formation of its timbre. These are Western methods, they are characterized by an innovative approach, work with the voice clamps, change the way of thinking, especially musical, open to vocalists a lot of interesting things about the structure of the vocal apparatus. Their main priority is a healthy voice of the singer. Techniques allow working online.

Alejandro Martinez, an American singer, musician, TV presenter, and punk guitarist, follows the same style of singing and similar performance techniques. Enrique Iglesias, Spanish singer, songwriter, actor, producer mastered this singing technique well. Peculiarities of singing according to such techniques are a free voice, a loud sound, various singing techniques, which are based on the mechanics of Joe Estilla's singing. The methods clearly allow to understand how to achieve resonance in vocals.

Choral singing as a performing form of musical art in Western Europe of the 20th — early 21st centuries in modern conditions of development (because of Covid-19) does not occupy its rightful place in musical culture. The situation changed not so long ago, with the beginning of the pandemic, while it was of exceptional importance in the development of musical culture of the world before the pandemic. Today, society is not developing harmoniously, even though a phenomenal feature — a new artistic integrity can be traced in modern choral creativity, due to the orientation of culture towards uniting while maintaining its plurality.

The appeal to musicological thought in Western European humanities has become topical. The relationship with the range of its problems is especially important because serious changes are taking place in the development of historical science. Therefore, modern Western European vocal and choral art, despite the great genre and style diversity, which is characterized by individual compositional reflection of the universal musical artistic epochs; as well as the inherent tolerance of stylistic trends, is not

pronounced during quarantine. The reflection of the artistic process was seriously influenced by the system and its structural levels: choral creativity, participants in the artistic process, the organization of the artistic process. Serious changes concern the professional level of the choral collective, based on the following parameters: creativity, tradition, self-fulfillment of its members, which turned out to be quite difficult under the conditions of quarantine because of Covid-2019.

Many scholars studied the issue of the development of modern Western European vocal and choral art, in particular the manifestation of its syncretic trends. These are Holley<sup>9</sup>, Farting<sup>10</sup>. The syncretism of modern Western European vocal and choral art is currently the focus of many modern scholars, including Shevchenko<sup>11</sup>, Hatsenko<sup>12</sup>. It is not only a question of renewing performance capabilities, but also of expanding them as a challenge of today. These authors and teachers focused their attention on the problem of establishment of vocal schools.

Referring to the experience of his own development as a vocalist of musical theatre, Holley<sup>13</sup> identified important competencies in each field. It is the mastery of styles; quite confident understanding of how the voice works in different genres — classical and modern, how developed technical skills and abilities are, how the performer applies specific “vocal qualities” to the chosen style; whether the performer’s range is fully used and whether it develops through different vocal styles. This also includes the voice longevity and its vocal stability. One of the important competencies is the voice universality in many areas of singing, as well as the ability to experiment with such areas as monologue, improvisation, comedy, etc.

Having reviewed foreign literature in the field of choral and vocal pedagogy, we can say that world pedagogy is rich in theoretical and practical research on the methodology and methods of teaching the modern vocal art. Therefore, the study of foreign experience and its implementation in the development of a model for the formation of modern choral and vocal-performance thesaurus is topical.

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<sup>9</sup> Holley, Gary. *From Classical to Music Theatre: A Vocalist's Experience*. (Doctoral thesis). South Brisbane, Queensland Conservatorium, 2016.

<sup>10</sup> Farting, Stiven. *History of art from ancient times to the present*. Vivat, 2019.

<sup>11</sup> Shevchenko, Nataliia. *Synthesis of singing manners in Ukrainian music of the late XX - early XXI centuries*. (PhD Dissertation). Odesa, A. V. Nezhdanova Odessa National Academy of Music, 2015.

<sup>12</sup> Hatsenko, Halyna, Yurchuk, Vadym, et al. *European schools of academic singing: specifics of interaction*. Image of the modern pedagogue, 1, no. 196, 2021, pp. 106-109.

<sup>13</sup> Holley, Gary. *Cited Work*.

The end of the 20th — beginning of the 21st century is characterized by the fact that in many European countries, the movement of so-called partnership projects of various creative organizations at educational institutions that actively cooperate in the cultural and artistic sphere has gathered pace. The fundamental work of Hatsenko<sup>14</sup>: *European Schools of Academic Singing: The Specifics of Interaction* covers the issues of interaction between modern Western European schools, in particular modifying singing principles. Syncretic manifestation concerns the gradual modification of the bel canto principles, which established with the development of the seria opera. This rather close connection with Western European traditions testifies to the exchange of experience of representatives of various schools, which in turn accumulates the achievements of art centers. Vocal and choral education in modern Western European schools is represented by independent work on the song, learning words and melody, learning the basics of musical literacy, mastering the technique of reading music at sight, encouraging music-making. Therefore, the beginning of the 21st century is a period of innovative changes in the field of general music education. A striking example is the introduction of new projects, the main purpose of which is to form vocal and choral skills necessary for solo and ensemble music-making<sup>15</sup>.

Today, a significant influence on their formation is exercised by modern Italian singing practice. It has passed not only a complex, but also a multifaceted path of its formation and development, so it is of great interest to modern researchers of Western European vocal and choral art. The achievement of the Italian school is the use of sound cover on the upper part of the voice. As for the influence of the Italian vocal school on the development of modern Western European vocal art and its singing practice, at the beginning of the 20th century Italian traditions become a standard and are perceived as pan-European. The peculiarity of their functioning is the levelling factor of not only nationality but also ethnicity of the singer.

Antoniuk called the representatives of the “pan-European” or “Italian school of singing” the most leading singers of the 20th century. The most famous musicians of modern Italy are Luciano Berio, Bruno Maderna, Sylvano Busotti, Luigi Nono. Everyone has personal style, performing skills, a diverse way of artistic and stylistic embodiment of the national specifics of the genre. Antoniuk believes that ‘the singers of this school include the Spaniards Caballe, Carreras, Domingo; Greek Callas; Bulgarians Shristoff, Ghiaurov; Australian Sutherland; Ukrainians Solovianenko, Kondratiuk, Kocherha,

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<sup>14</sup> Hatsenko, Halyna, Yurchuk, Vadym, et al. *European schools of academic singing: specifics of interaction*. Image of the modern pedagogue, 1, no. 196, 2021, pp. 106-109.

<sup>15</sup> Idem.

Miroshnychenko, Lukianets; Russians Obratsova, Arkhipova, Nesterenko, Atlantov; Argentine Cura<sup>16 17</sup>.

Despite the significant spread of the Italian school, several schools have formed in European culture, which are characterized by slightly different principles of performance. It is appropriate to pay attention to the Austro-German and French vocal schools. The French vocal school uses declamation as a basis. Other attributes appear in it gradually. In the 20th century, Dugamel emphasizes the need to avoid singing on the support, and instead cultivate an “emotional timbre” that will help convey complex figurative musical works. The Austro-German vocal school developed due to the reforms of the opera house founded by R. Wagner. The leading feature was the culture of declamatory singing. Wagner’s performers had to sing at the limit of their performance capabilities, much attention was paid to the timbre, which becomes an expression of psychologically complex images. Conversational singing is the basis for the performance of works by avant-garde composers of the 20th — 21st centuries<sup>18</sup>.

It is also necessary to note the development of the Russian vocal school, the essential characteristics were folk traditions, as well as the achievements of Italian singing practice. ‘Characteristic features of the Russian classical vocal school: simple, sincere, heartfelt performance, rhythmic sophistication of melodies. Masters of the Russian school of solo singing have always found deep expressiveness of the word, logically correctly shaded, which is pronounced clearly and indirectly, in the in organic unity with the melody’<sup>19 20</sup>.

Each generation of artists continues and enriches the traditions of their predecessors. They try to solve current problems of modern Western European vocal and choral art in their own way, focusing on new original musical and stage forms, in tune with modernity. They reveal the theory, history, aesthetics of modern Western European vocal and choral art, while the cornerstone is the problems of performance, which are not sufficiently studied. This is a personalization of the performer’s style, his/her skill.

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<sup>16</sup> Katok, Danya. *The Versatile Singer: A Guide to Vibrato & Straight Tone*. (Doctoral thesis). New York, The City University, 2016.

<sup>17</sup> Cherkasov, Volodymyr. *Reforming general music education in Great Britain*. *Musical Art in the Educological Discourse*, 4, 2019, pp. 22-28.

<sup>18</sup> Mroziak, Jordan. *Exiles on Main Street: A Pedagogy of Popular Music Through Technology and Aesthetic Education*. (Doctoral thesis). Pittsburgh, Duquesne University, 2017.

<sup>19</sup> Batyuk, Inna. *Contemporary choral music: theory and performance: textbook*. Lan, 2015

<sup>20</sup> Kulaha, Tetiana. *Innovative ideas of teaching pop vocal in the context of solving the problem of domestic vocal pedagogy*. *Mountain School of Ukrainian Carpaty*, 22, 2020, pp. 121-125.

Urgent problems of modern musical art are covered in the scientific activity of Kavun<sup>21</sup>. His scientific works outlined the historical and theoretical aspects of the formation of vocal art. Aspelund<sup>22</sup> considered the development of vocal skills of the singing voice. Many studies have influenced the relationship between music and dance, which later became the subject of research by composers, choreographers, art critics. This category of scholars has carefully studied the history and development of dance choreography. Besides, the following scholars supplemented and expanded the background of scientific and theoretical research in choreography as an art science: Denisov<sup>23</sup>, Zhyvohliadova<sup>24</sup>. They have repeatedly tried to analyze the syncretism of music and movement. Music is embedded in the very nature of plastic art. The only action for movement and sound in time is evenness and uniformity. As for the issue of gesture, it is rhythmic, appropriately musical. According to Bogdanov-Berezovsky, it is fundamental in the connection between music and plastics.

Many scholars, Kordovska<sup>25</sup>, have demonstrated their analytical view on the identification of syncretic tendencies in modern Western European vocal and choral art. They considered the mechanism of integrating creativity of representatives of the newest Western European musical art into the Ukrainian art space. Kordovska<sup>26</sup> was interested in the latest Western European music. Many of her research results are based on the analysis of the work of modern Italian composer Charrino. In her scientific works, she carefully considered the mechanism of integration of the work of representatives of modern Western European musical art in relation to the Ukrainian art space. The subject of our research significantly complemented the research of the above authors, allowed to understand the peculiarities of the modernization of contemporary Western European vocal and choral music.

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<sup>21</sup> Kavun, Viktor. *Historical and theoretical aspects of the formation of vocal art*. International journal: Culturology. Philology. Musicology, 1, no. 8, 2017, pp. 160-164.

<sup>22</sup> Aspelund, Dmitriy. *Development of the singer and his voice*. Planet of Music, 2016.

<sup>23</sup> Denisov, Andrey. *On the relationship "quotation-context" in a piece of music*. Yuzhno-Rossiyskiy muzyikalnyy almanah, 7, 2016, pp. 13-21.

<sup>24</sup> Zhyvohliadova, Daryna. *UNESCO Strategies in the Development of International Cultural Cooperation*. Culture and contemporaneity, 1, 2017, pp. 109-116.

<sup>25</sup> Kordovska, Polina. *Western European modern music in the artistic space of modern Ukraine (on the example of the work of S. Sharrino)*. Artistic Culture. Topical Issues, 16, 2020, pp. 125-129.

<sup>26</sup> Idem.

The aim of our research is to analyze contemporary Western European vocal and choral art, the manifestation of its syncretic trends in modern conditions of development, to reveal their essential features and to show their significance for the society.

This aim was achieved through the following objectives: reveal syncretic trends of musical art on the example of creativity of modern composers in the modern art space; analyze the specifics of representational works in our research on the example of the creative work of Sciarrino; test Western European vocal and choral music to identify syncretic trends as a challenge of today.

### **Methods and Materials**

To develop a clear idea of syncretic trends in modern Western European vocal and choral art, that is the artistic image of the composer and performer, the article reveals the features of contemporary Western European vocal and choral art, focusing on its syncretic trends under the modern conditions of development. This approach allowed revealing their essential features, pointing to their importance for society. As a result of clarifying certain issues on the topic of the article, the understanding of syncretic trends in contemporary Western European vocal and choral art gradually becomes more and more detailed. In the end, we get an integrated picture, which reflects its essential characteristics.

This study was carried out as follows: the theoretical foundations of the research problem were substantiated, namely the syncretism of artistic imagery of contemporary Western European vocal and choral art and its features; it was followed by processing, analysis, and generalization of the main characteristics of the organization of vocal and choral work of students, the real state was assessed and the dynamics were monitored, the general conclusions of the research were drawn.

Scientific, methodical, and practical experience of organizing the educational process in the class of solo singing and choral class was summarized to confirm the hypothesis that preparing students for vocal and pedagogical activities is more effective if the work on vocal works rationally combines didactic, general and special musical principles, methods and means of teaching, taking into account the current level of development of vocal and choral art. The research methodology also included the use of comparative and systemic methods. The directions of stylistic development of contemporary Western European vocal and choral music are analyzed through the comparative method. The article involved the method of unity of logical and historical.

## Results

The use of various methods allowed to significantly increase public interest in contemporary Western European vocal and choral art. Musicians believe that modern music exists regardless of the level of our understanding and perception. This contrast is represented by different vocal styles, academic and non-academic vocal and choral music, such as the famous modern jazz duo of world-famous musicians — European jazz stars, horn player Arkady Shilkloper and pianist Vadym Neselovsky from Odessa. The latter lives in the United States today.

Familiarity with the music of contemporary Western European composers is intended for different listeners and their level of perception. The process of listening to any modern piece of music has its own peculiarities it is perceived as a huge variety of sounds. Most of them are stable. As a result, they simply attract attention. In this situation, a person can go from empty to full state. It always shows articulation, growth of elements, sound energy and its density. This idea belongs to Sciarrino, a famous Italian composer.

Regarding the peculiarities of Italian music of the late 20th — early 21st centuries, it is extremely heterogeneous and diverse. Having lost its prestigious position on the European Olympus, Italian music began to show itself in an original and bright way from the middle and end of the 20th century. The history of European new music was introduced by the following representatives of the post-war avant-garde: Luigi Nono Luciano Berio, Jacinto Chelsea. The creative work of four rather weighty Italian composers of the end of the 20th — the beginning of the 21st centuries is worth special attention.

Let us pay attention to the conceptual and aesthetic attitudes of Billini, Sciarrino, Francesconi, and Romitelli. They continue the ideas of the post-war avant-garde. Composers have repeatedly projected these ideas into their own artistic contexts. The key figure of modern Italian music is Sciarrino, the composer. The basis of his sound philosophy is the search for perceptual levers of perception, as well as the ability to control the subconscious<sup>27 28</sup>.

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<sup>27</sup> Lavrova, Svetlana. *Salvatore Sharrino and others. Essays on Italian music of the late XX - early XXI century*. Publishing house of the Vaganova Academy of Russian Ballet, 2019.

<sup>28</sup> Mdivani, Tatyana; Hlopova, Valentina; et al. *European music of the academic tradition: essence, origins, current state (on the example of the work of composers of Russia and Belarus)*. Belorusskaya nauka, 2017.

Salvatore Sciarrino is an Italian composer. As for his creative work, it is considered a classic of new music. He has a very original creative concept, which addresses the threshold states of sound. The limits of this state are silence. The composer's professional activity took place in the framework of electronic music. As for the creative heritage of Sciarrino, it is constantly replenished with new works, which currently represent the golden repertoire of many opera houses. A few words about the composer's concept. Today it is quite a bright and original example of a combination of tradition and novelty. His creative search contains preliminary norms. The content of the conceptual dominant of the composer's work is optics. It allowed a different view of the musical heritage. According to the composer, the transition from empty to full is a gradual filling of space. Processes of this nature stand out in the flow of traditional music because they arrange the sounds according to their defined spatial criteria. This is the basis of the stratification technique. There is a tendency to chaotic and inhomogeneous aggregation in the process of accumulation. Energy increases, it seems that time accelerates during such processes. In perception, such a process is reduced. As for the difference between accumulation and multiplication, it begins with the degree of perception of balance and order that they embody. Accumulation is chaotic, irregular, inhomogeneous, asymmetric. Multiplication is ordered in itself; it is relatively regular and consists of homogeneous elements (that is according to the principle of reproduction of the primary sound object<sup>29</sup>). This is how the composer designed his artistic context, interpreting it in his own way.

The Italian composer Berio studied the connection between verbal and musical language in the space of musical composition, as well as the process of their mutual transformation. He demonstrated a new kind of genres with traditional symbols, revealed the special meaning of the usual genre definition: "symphony", "opera", "sequences"<sup>30</sup>.

The work of our contemporary Luca Francesconi, who studied at Berio in the period from 2008 to 2011, is consonant with his ideas. In the composer's understanding, culture is a tool that is passed down from generation to generation, which has come down to us, allowing us to rethink the modernity. Classical music, created by the power and depth of human intelligence, is the result of an analysis of the individual's relationship with the world. Rethinking cultural heritage, abandoning radical methods in musical composition, conceptualism and noise make up the creative "credo" of Francesconi<sup>31</sup>.

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<sup>29</sup> Lavrova, Svetlana. *Cited Work*.

<sup>30</sup> Idem.

<sup>31</sup> Lavrova, Svetlana. Salvatore Sciarrino and others. *Essays on Italian music of the late XX - early XXI century*. Publishing house of the Vaganova Academy of Russian Ballet, 2019.

The idea of concentrating on the energy of the performing gesture is topical for the above artists of contemporary Italian music, who were chosen due to the commonality of creative ideas, their diverse and vivid embodiment, reflecting the multifaceted world of the new Italy at the turn of the century.

Contemporary Spanish music is represented by the most popular musical performance styles, including Flamenco, Giotto, Zarzuela, Bacalao, Indie, Pop, Classical songs. Therefore, there is a huge space for fans of modern music to study it. Syncretic trends as a current challenge in the musical plane can be traced on the example of the popular style of Giotto and others. A striking representative of contemporary Spanish music is the composer and pianist Juan Antonio Simarro. He works in the genre of popular music. Contemporary Spanish music and the work of Simarro is quite emotional and easy to perceive. It is sensible in terms of artistic perception and choice. Its formation is aimed at the direction and system of motivations, as the perception of musical art is associated with a variety of acts of thinking and experience, and his creative work shows that modern music exists independently of our understanding and perception. This manifests the individualism of Simarro as a composer. Modern Spanish vocal and choral music is characterized by the following vocal effects, such as full and half-distortion, growl, rattle, subtone, diaphragmatic vibrato, adding breath to the vocal sound (breathiness), wheezing or creaking (scream), ornamentation technique (running), etc.

By expanding the field of aesthetic consciousness by means of modern vocal and choral Western European art due to new knowledge about unknown contemporary composers, the historical background of their work, motivation to self-evaluation and analysis of their works, we influence the process of developing students' self-awareness. Today, they are future vocalists and vocal teachers, conductors, choir members in the university education system, who form professional competencies, which ensure the success of vocal and pedagogical concert and performance activities, in the process of working on vocal works and choral scores of different levels of complexity, different styles and genres. As practice shows, students at the initial stage of their vocal performing and pedagogical career experience certain difficulties when independently forming the repertoire, choosing the appropriate forms, methods and means of its assimilation. The presence of such a problem encourages scientists and teachers-practitioners to explore the methods of working thoroughly and comprehensively on vocal works, which contribute to the effective preparation of students for choral and vocal-pedagogical activities. However, this problem is insufficiently covered in art history, scientific and pedagogical literature, which proved the topicality of our study.

Contemporary Western European vocal and choral art has a powerful emotional charge, contributes to the state of empathy (musical empathy) towards heroes depicted in the works, events, which in turn generates empathy for the social solution of national problems posed by the composer, further becoming the subject of reflection and admiration for the student.

The humanistic orientation of music of the 20th and 21st centuries become a priority direction in musical and aesthetic education. It is characterized by a general tendency to merge European and non-European cultures. It is expressed in the intrusion of jazz intonations into contemporary European art. Of course, this raised it to a fundamentally new level. Improving the socialization of the individual requires deepening the content of musical and aesthetic education designed to stimulate spiritual needs based on humanism — the meaningful context of musical influence<sup>32</sup>.

Artistic strategy in the situation of postmodernism on the example of Western European vocal and choral art in the modern conditions of its development has shown the characteristic blurring of the boundaries of both artistic genres and trends, eliminated the separation of mass culture from the elite. For example, the author is removed from the viewer (reader). In turn, practicality, and individualism, characterizing modern Western European vocal and choral art, emphasized its dynamism, destroying the established ideals of human behavior. Syncretism manifested itself in the realization of a multitude of new ideas, namely the freedom of the creator, the absence of restrictions on self-expression, innovative pursuits in the field of musical language. The tendency to synthesis of various arts kept the development. Individuality and unpredictability in the process of performing works of any style indicates the ability to experiment in the “search” for personal “sound”, as well as own performance manner. Therefore, the practical potential of modern Western European vocal and choral art is expressed by a positive perception of the process of development of musical hearing and memory, as well as musical thinking through personally valuable music-making using music that the student likes and clearly identifies<sup>33</sup>.

Our study practically allowed students to get acquainted with the stylistic features of works from the “carriers” of a particular style of music. These were not the teacher’s stories through conscious and unconscious learning, which involves observation and discussion, but listening and imitation of works of contemporary vocal and choral Western European art,

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<sup>32</sup> Hmyrina, Svitlana. *Methods of students' work on vocal works in the class of solo singing*. Musical Art in the Educological Discourse, 4, 2019, pp. 77-83.

<sup>33</sup> Neboha, Olesia. *Kyiv school of solo singing in the middle of the XX century as a phenomenon of European vocal performance*. Bulletin of KNUKiM. Series: Art History, 38, 2018, pp. 206-214.

and only then discussing their features. In this way, self-learning and creative self-realization intensified, which take place through the integration of listening, performing, improvising a piece of music. The above and own performance experience improve the content of vocal pedagogy. Therefore, the current stage of development of musical culture testifies to the innovative achievements of choral and vocal performance, which in turn are distinguished by their diversity and multi-vector focus. Contemporary Western European vocal and choral art proclaims the relativity of truth and values, vividly demonstrating distrust of authority, deconstruction, performance, and irony. Today it is expressed in two opposite trends. On the one hand, it is a clear commercialization of concert life, apologetics of a variety of entertainment, not excluding escapism, narcissism, the dominance of the sensual over the rational in the musical perception. On the other hand, the desire to revive compensatory and saving principles, rehabilitation of musical creativity in today's conditions concerns such concepts as reflection, intuition, overinterpretation of the appeal to the poetic word, maximum sensory reflection.

As for modern choral music, its special feature is a dialogue directed by the rehabilitation of meanings. It quite successfully combines a variety of styles and comprehension of the diverse. It traces the predominance of the sensual over the rational choral music has clearly manifested itself in contemporary Western European vocal and choral art, deintellectualizing musical perception, excessively embodied it. Practically, it provoked action therapy as opposed to word therapy. In this way, the key stylistic trends of modern choral music of Western Europe of the 20th — early 21st centuries were revealed, which, in turn, demonstrated many evolutionary changes in the figurative sphere and in the selection of musical and expressive means.

Innovative aspirations and retreat from the usual ways of expression are today an incentive not only to search, but also to test radically new forms of music presentation. The choral opuses of Muzhchyl, Stankovych and many others became vivid examples of experimental innovations of modern compositional work and their successful introduction into performing practice. The masterful performance of works represented elements of various types of art: painting, choral, cinematographic, opera and theatrical.

Today's choral performance practice is characterized by the so-called innovative plane. It is a kind of combination of modes of various art genres, including theatrical one. It is clearly manifested in the use of acting techniques (finger clicks, facial expressions, clapping hands, stamping feet, movements of all members of the choir or group, a free placement of the choir, improvisation). The next manifestation of syncretism in contemporary Western European vocal and choral art is performance. It combined the

possibilities of both theatrical and fine arts, including symbolic attributes, unreality, outrage, tactility, as well as the presence of the author-character, etc.). Its consequence is an unconventional use of a wide range of color and sound paints. The same applies to the active use of articulation and stroke techniques<sup>34</sup>. Manifestation of syncretism of contemporary Western European musical art can be observed on the example of musical performing version of the work. It is based on a musical interpretation, which includes the “composer’s work” and the “performer’s work”. The mechanism of creative interpretation of a musical work is as follows: understanding of the work, its comprehension, performance version on the stage and its full embodiment. Individual style of professional activity is an important factor of professional improvement in the process of mastering a piece of music, but it is already a creative level.

Performing interpretation differentiates the function of composer and performer. The manifestation of syncretism in musical performance interpretation (vocal and choral Western European practice) is characterized by its originality and identity. The work of art of both the composer and its performer is a qualitatively new reality created by man. It quite successfully combines two worlds — objective and subjective. The essence of the syncretism of the artistic imagery of the work is an insufficient reflection of reality, in practice it is a fictional fantastic vision. Artistic image is a product of imagination and fantasy. It is characterized by ideological and emotional impact on the person. In the art of music, the artistic image has more power than the surrounding reality. In practice, the imagination compensates for the satisfaction of many needs. In the art of music, it is a conflict between reality and the ideal aspiration of man.

As a result, the above-mentioned new qualities in the subject of modern academic choral music provoked the next need — the composers’ search of appropriate means of notation. Dubinets<sup>35</sup> revealed this question in her scientific works. She believes that such a need for innovations in choral writing applies to cases where music is radically different from the conventional notion and practically does not fit into the framework of the existing notation. Modern choral music is characterized by such a feature as stylistic tolerance. It involves combining many meanings. The most important are the following: the restoration of memory, the revival of the long-forgotten.

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<sup>34</sup> Stanislavska, Kateryna. *The phenomenon of choral theatrical performance in modern musical culture*. Music and life, 2011.

[http://www.rusnauka.com/8\\_DN\\_2011/MusicaAndLife/5\\_82154.doc.htm](http://www.rusnauka.com/8_DN_2011/MusicaAndLife/5_82154.doc.htm)

<sup>35</sup> Dubinets, Elena. *Made in USA: Music is everything that sounds around*. Kompositor, 2006.

As for the movement of musical culture in the direction of not only new syncretism, but also synthesis, as well as verbal-conversational and audio-visual discourses in concert activities, it paved the way under modern conditions for a harmonious combination of right-hemisphere (visual image) and logical conceptual mechanism of thinking. This solved the following problems:

1. Overcoming the clip perception of a musical composition, considering its fragmentary nature, chaos, the effect of spatial and temporal ideological closeness. The musical work is intellectualized through its interpretation by the performing author in this way. The performing author comprehends the work and popularizes it as much as possible as a significant event based on the principle of temporal semantic long-range interaction.

2. Manifestation of syncretic trends in contemporary Western European vocal and choral art provided conceptuality, logic, development, concert action based on audio, drama, meaningfully distributed their semantic conceptualization, reaching the visual and acoustic counterpoint of both stage and visual clusters of musical composition.

3. Programming internal and external dialogue in the author—performer—spectator system, to comprehend the semantic potential of the work, its reading of variant interpretation, complete in accordance with the requests of the public, considering the spirit of the time, history of writing, involving significant biographical motivations.

4. The stylistic plan of musical discourse in contemporary Western European vocal and choral art is a symbol of freedom, which has its own semantic connotation, place, and function in this cultural space. It determines the specifics of the dialogue. This, in turn, is a reproduction of the spirit of the era, which deeply presents the author's concept (the image of what is not included in the composition, the sound of what is hidden in the musical text).

5. Modern musical discourse in contemporary Western European vocal and choral art provides interactive communication of the public, author, performers through the organization of interrogation, programming of creative provocation, appeal, verbal shock therapy, brainstorming, use of nonverbal means of influence.

## **Discussion**

Based on the study and analysis of scientific literature, we have identified the following components of the manifestation of the corresponding interest: psychological comfort, emotional expressiveness, performance, creative fulfilment.

The ability to sing together, rhythmically, clearly, simultaneously change the tempo, enter, and stop singing, clearly follow the metro-rhythm of the work testifies to the skill of the vocal and choral ensemble.

An extremely important aspect that is considered in the process of mastering vocal skills, regardless of belonging to a particular school, is the expansion of the voice range, which should be interpreted as a common tool to perform works of various composers. This is the formation of various vocal manners, the techniques are no exception — recitation, classical and conversational singing. At the same time, the singer's self-development, and his/her readiness for dialogue with other performers is important. 'Polystylistic coverage of modern academic vocal music is possible provided the freedom of creative thinking and, of course, the ability to universally use the voice, which performs the role of a musical instrument in this case<sup>36</sup>.

The basis of choral singing is the purity of intonation, the achievement of which is the most important goal of working with the team. It should be aimed at educating interval and mode hearing. Practice confirms that subtle musical and auditory sensations and skills are best developed during choral singing.

Given that the vocal and choral ensemble is specific in its internal nature, and therefore the performance of the work, the transfer of the composer's idea will be refracted on the subjective factor of participants and leader, as each performer has his/her own individual worldview, level of thinking, etc. The performer determines the ideological and semantic content of the work, its artistic qualities through the prism of personal vision, and performs the work in accordance with his/her artistic and technical and performance capabilities<sup>37</sup>.

However, certain shortcomings of the work cannot be motivated by subjective factors, as individual influence has certain limits. Therefore, the task of the leader is to ensure that the participants, due to their emotional nature, do not impoverish the content of the performance, but add new colors to the artistic image of the composer's idea.

The conductor must remember: no matter how simple the task at first glance, its fulfilment always requires maximum focus and mental concentration. Not only musical theoretical training, but also awareness of the specifics of working with such a group plays an important role in mastering the elements of pre-rehearsal technique (the ability to feel the inner music or imaginary unfolding of the musical image of the work in time).

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<sup>36</sup> Shevchenko, Nataliia. *Synthesis of singing manners in Ukrainian music of the late XX - early XXI centuries*. (PhD Dissertation). Odesa, A. V. Nezhdanova Odessa National Academy of Music, 2015.

<sup>37</sup> Denisov, Andrey. *On the relationship "quotation-context" in a piece of music*. Yuzhno-Rossiyskiy muzyikalnyy almanah, 7, 2016, pp. 13-21.

The socio-pedagogical content of the vocal and choral ensemble is an organic combination of artistic and educational processes, giving them an artistic and aesthetic orientation. The solution to this problem in many respects is related to the repertoire around which the work of the leader is built. The works intended for performance must first correspond to the optimal capabilities of the participants (performance technical capabilities, general development, and perception). As practice shows, complex works should be accepted for performance very carefully, considering the prospects of working on them. However, light works are not always a stimulus for professional growth of the team.

The choice of works is largely determined by the fact that vocal and choral performance is an activity characterized by public performances. Therefore, the band's repertoire should also perform a public function. When compiling the repertoire, it is necessary to consider the fact that the vocal and choral ensemble is mostly numerous. This means that the leader must deal with the appropriate number of individuals in the process of practical vocal and choral work, which encourages the search for "universal" works. In other words, it is necessary to select such works that could be used when working with a category of people of different ages and different performance experience. The selection of works should allow the leader to constantly adhere to the harmony in learning and the principle of unity of artistic and technical. It is known that the formation of the worldview of the participants, the expansion of their life experience is due to the understanding of musical works, their ideological orientation.

The concept of the ideological level of works should not be considered separately from the concept of its artistic value. Only those works unite and inspire people who have a real artistic meaning. The task of the repertoire is to develop and improve the musical and figurative thinking of the band members, their creative activity, as well as to enrich the intonation listening experience. This goal can be achieved only through the renewal and expansion of musical material. It should be different in subject matter, genres, artistic means of language structure. Diversity in themes and images should be combined in such a way that it would be impossible to compare concert programs similar in composition.

Thus, the current state of choral art in Western Europe of the 20th — early 21st centuries is characterized by the following factors:

1. Quite a large gap between professional choirs of high-performance qualification and the weak development of traditional forms of Western European choral culture: choral singing and school singing environment.

2. Acquaintance with the current state of Western European choral art, its renewal and stages of formation as an integral part of European choral culture. This is where the priority tasks facing domestic pedagogy and culture follow from: raise choral art to the proper level.

The study managed to fulfil the following objectives: identify syncretic trends of musical art in the modern art space; test the first steps of Western European vocal and choral music to identify syncretic trends as a challenge of today. Summarizing the above, we can conclude that the main task facing the creative team and its leader can be accomplished only if there is understanding between them.

## **Conclusion**

The article is the first to study syncretic trends in modern Western European vocal and choral art, proves their importance as a leader in the modern concept of choral art, analyses the multilevel phenomenon of artistic and stylistic synthesis.

It is proved that in the modern choral music of Western Europe of the 20th —beginning of the 21st centuries is characterized by the individual composer's refraction of musical modes of various artistic epochs, as well as the tolerance of stylistic directions is characteristic.

The theoretical analysis established that the development of the emotional sphere of personality by means of contemporary Western European vocal and choral art acts as a process of gradual enrichment and differentiation of emotional experiences, expansion of verbal representation of emotions and feelings, the range of objects that evoke an emotional response, the ability to control one's emotions and feelings. It is proved that the development of the emotional sphere of personality by means of contemporary Western European vocal and choral art is provided under the following conditions: creating an atmosphere of friendliness, mutual understanding, and trust; enriching the content of the dialogue with situations that activate the emotional sphere of the individual; involvement of all participants in the dialogue in creative activities.

This manifests the syncretism of art. It is confirmed that contemporary Western European vocal and choral art significantly changes the level of development of the emotional sphere. The reason is that the emotional and figurative sphere of musical works evokes artistic and aesthetic experiences. The mechanism of influence is that these experiences are embodied in musical performing and musical creative activities. This is how emotions, feelings, and emotional expression are formed. Regarding the effectiveness

of the developed methodological model and step-by-step methods of forming the organization of vocal and choral work, the training of students was carried out during four stages. These are motivational, information and projective, executive, and productive, as well as reflexive and evaluative stages.

However, the study did not reveal all aspects of the issues that we identified. Those issues that reveal the impact of various types of art on the development of the emotional sphere of the individual require thorough elaboration. The comparative analysis of the role of contemporary Western European vocal and choral music in the process of the formation of vocal personality in the context of professional teaching of singing of various artistic directions (academic direction, folk, and pop), where the ethno-art aspect of the national vocal school at various levels of the artistic whole is revealed. The involvement of various ways of artistic and stylistic embodiment of national identity and features of the genre also requires special attention. It is necessary to demonstrate the dependence of performers and their song repertoire on the intonation experience of their contemporary environment, which, of course, significantly affects the singing style and improvisational technique.

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