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Composer's "predictions", embodied in figurative and symbolic content of "Lyrical scenes" by Ivan Karabyts

Abstract. The study highlighted the chamber-instrumental work of Ivan Karabyts, namely a piece for violin and piano "Lyrical scenes" in the context of the musical and social life of modern times. The analysed sample of the violin piece was infrequently featured in the repertoire of violinists, moreover, the cycle has not yet been studied. The study aimed to interpret the content, in all its images and symbolism, used by the composer in the work. The study primarily analysed not the typical comparison and identification of the artist's compositional style with the work of the teacher, Borys Lyatoshynskyi, but a figurative and meaningful prediction of the socio-patriotic events of modern times, namely, the military actions in Ukraine, the rise of the conscious sincere patriotism, as well as an emphasis on the individual interpretation of symbolism and imagery in the analysed works. The study contained a subjectively substantiated scientific position regarding the figurative and symbolic content of the violin cycle of Ivan Karabyts, which was based on a performance-theoretical analysis and will become a promising subject of musicological discussions in the further spectrum of symbolism and imagery in the plane of the artist's creativity. The study highlighted and substantiated a list of musical and expressive means, which were used to embody the main tragic-fatum idea of the violin cycle, despite the primary perception of the programme title of the "Lyrical scenes". The obtained research results can be used in an educational course on the subject "History of Ukrainian music", and "Performance interpretation" in the violin class and the "chamber ensemble" class. The practical value of this research lies in its direct relevance to the teaching of violin performance in the "violin" class

Keywords: melodist; symbolism; imagery; chamber-instrumental works; violin

Introduction

As of 2024, there are no scientific studies in global musicology on the Ukrainian composer of the 20th-21st century, Ivan Karabyts, who was known far beyond the borders of the home nation. Despite this, the Ukrainian artistic space has numerous studies and global materials of a monographic type, covering both the artistic role and the legacy of a multifaceted artist. Among such works, it was worth mentioning the monograph on the composer by L.O. Kiyanovska (2015), "The garden of songs of Ivan Karabyts". The rest of the studies analysed various areas of composing, including chamber and instrumental creativity, however, "Lyrical scenes" as an example of a violin cycle were not yet studied. Notably, for the first time, this

work received a scientific justification from the standpoint of the existing figurative and semantic content, or even subtextual remarks appealing to the main semantic levels of the musical language. A highly successful emphasis of the research is not only the analysis of works for piano by the Ukrainian artist, but also the author's disclosure of the concepts of "phenomenon" and performing style as such. V. Ivanchenko (2003) analysed vocal and symphonic works, the content of non-program instrumental works, namely the Third Symphony of I. Karabyts. V.V. Kushch (2021) highlighted promising areas of research into I. Karabyts' works, namely pop songs and chamber vocal works. The scientist positions

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the composer's heritage as a representative component in the Ukrainian musical art of the late 20th era.

O.M. Batovska & T.S. Shapovalova (2021) analysed the first and only study of the vocal cycle of I. Karabyts, namely "From the songs of Hiroshima". The scientists revealed the fact of reception or borrowing by the composer of genres and styles inherent in the music of the East. This approach of the artist should be regarded as natural in the context of the territorial location of the city of Hiroshima and its cultural assets until the moment of the great tragedy. The researchers chose several artistic approaches as the main principle, namely semantic, that is, symbolic, as well as stylistic and architectural. The author was committed to Japanese stylistics, which artists defined in timbre, metric, rhythm, register and intonation, which is meaningful and well-argued in the context of the entire study. O.O. Kopelyuk (2018) analysed the factors of human and symbolic intimacy. Notably, the main studies of Ukrainian musicologists are oriented around piano works. The author compiled compositions around the piano works of Ivan Karabyts, highlighting the phenomenology of the author's style.

Despite the creativity of I. Karabyts, in 2019–2024 years, the national musicology bypassed both sides of modernistic works. At the same time, some mentions of the artist can be found on specialised music Internet pages, in particular, Musical-world published a fairly detailed article regarding the artist, based on a more modern vision contrary to biased traditional sources (Karabyts Ivan Fedorovych, 2024).

A highly successful element of the scientific study is the discovery of the musical components of the compositional technique of the 20th and 21st centuries, namely, aleatorics, dodecaphony, and sonoristics. The chamber-instrumental legacy of the author was analysed by D.V. Kharitonova (2018) in a study "Symbolism of the worldview of I. Karabyts" (on the example of the Sonata for cello and piano No. 1). A substantial basis for the formulation of the main scientifically based opinion of the article, namely, the presence in the cycle "Lyrical scenes" of certain specific images and symbols that are complexly formed into the figurative and symbolic content of the work, dictated by already existing studies of scientists concerning the existence of the concept of "musical-rhetorical figures", previously formulated and studied concepts of "semiotics" and "semantics".

Materials and Methods

Two scientific cognition methods were employed in the study: empirical, which involved a symbolic-figurative interpretation of the violin cycle based on already existing studies of musical semiotics, musical semantics, musical-rhetorical figures, and the historical method, which was used to appeal to related linguistic sciences, such as semantics and semiotics based on primary knowledge. Stylistic method was used, when systematising specific composer traits inherent not only to this work of the

chamber-instrumental genre, but also to other examples of his musical compositions; semantic – used to analyse the content part of the chamber-instrumental cycle; structural and functional – in the context of identifying the peculiarities of stylistics, intonation, structural construction, the role of each element of the musical language in the analysed piece of music; comparative – applied for comparison as a method in all possible aspects: in the musical language (academic principles and modern composer school), in the aspect of the chamber-instrumental genre with the participation of violin and piano as a duet, soloist and accompaniment, in comparison of the observance of the basics of the classical cycle, as its basic, then modern interpretation, in the formation of the specifics of the construction of the dramaturgy of the work.

Moreover, the method of generalisation was also used, as non-specific images and symbols were found in the violin cycle, but a general figurative and symbolic existential tendency. In the same aspect, the abstraction method was also used in certain scientific and subjective detachment from the existing studies of musical and rhetorical figures and various sign systems. As for the materials used in the research, they were based exclusively on the chamber-instrumental piece "Lyrical scenes" itself, analysed according to the available violin performance and theoretical experience. Theoretical elements related to the terminology "symbol", "sign", "semantics", "musical and rhetorical figures" were used from existing research sources, which are indicated in specific references. Considering the uniqueness and the first analysis of the considered work of the chamber-instrumental heritage of Ivan Karabyts – in the analytical text itself, references to literary sources are not placed, because it was carried out independently and has a unique meaning.

Results and Discussion

The figure of Ivan Karabyts (1945–2002), a contemporary Ukrainian composer, is widely broadcast by Ukrainian musicologists through the "prism of B. Lyatoshynskiy". I. Karabyts is denoted as a much deeper and more isolated and individual artistic personality than the "usual" "shadow aspect" description of B. Lyatoshynskiy. The artist's compositional heritage, notably the chamber-instrumental works, in particular for the violin, appears as the figurative and semantic centre that is positioned in the current artistic and social wave, which the artist predicted at the dawn. Even though "Music" for violin and piano was composed in 1972 and "Lyrical scenes" – 4 years earlier – these samples vividly reflect the emotional and social mood of the 21st century. It is logical to assume that the author of the chamber-instrumental piece exhibited in the year of its writing, 1970, all the existential "subtleties" of social attitudes, however, the main source of evil appears relevant even and in the 20s of the 21st century. That is why "Lyrical scenes" should be exhibited as an expressive reaction of a modern artist to the relevant events.

Symbolism and vivid imagery are characteristic of most of the works of I. Karabyts. At the same time, the potential of the two most prominent instruments of all artistic times – the violin and the piano – was revealed by the author on a deep aesthetic and philosophical level. The embodiment of the personal concept, problematic in an expressive presentation that appears in “Lyrical scenes” was relevant not only for the period of the writing of this work, but also in the twenties of the 21st century.

In general, the concept of symbolism has been present in music for quite a long time. Starting from the 80s of the 19th century, the trend was first formed in literature, closely intertwined with impressionism. The artists, who began to practice this style set a goal of embodying a deep meaning, forming an associative series and separate associations in the reader, as well as coverage of a certain phenomenon, object, or feeling in the multiplicity of their meanings. Writers set the goal of learning the secrets of nature and the world and sought the meaning of human existence, existence and purpose.

Mikalojus Čiurlionis (1875-1911) was one of the first composers, who turned to the artistic trend of symbolism, combining both writer and musician in one person (Povilioniene, 2013) Charles Edward Ives (1874-1954) exhibited the American version of musical symbolism in the context of the composer school of the 20th century (Ballantine, 1979). Elements of symbolism can also be traced in the works of Ukrainian musical classics Mykola Lysenko, Vasyl Barvinsky, Stanislav Lyudkevych, Fedir Yakymenko and Yakiv Stepovy, which were confidently asserted, according to the auditory and analytical baggage of own experience.

Given the fact that the initial period of the composer was influenced by free dodecaphony, which could be used freely express and search the individuality, then already in the 1970s, namely at this time, “Lyrical scenes” were written, the artist was already turning to philosophical embodiments and deep issues (Kiyanovska, 2015; Outstanding modern composer, 2024). The analysis of chamber-instrumental works of I. Karabyts highlighted the presence of various concepts, among

which the theme of the Motherland appears almost at the forefront. The moral duty of the author is closely intertwined with the civil position, and the specifics of the musical embodiment are centred around drama, sometimes tragedy, and appeal to primary genre forms: epic, lyric and drama.

The chamber-instrumental composition “Lyrical scenes” consists of four parts, where the first and third are active elements of the general cycle, while the second and fourth are moderately balanced. In general, analogies with the classical sonata-symphonic cycle, which included a four-part symphony and a quartet and a three-part sonata and concerto, are difficult to draw, since, in terms of the number of parts, this piece is closer to larger cycles, and in terms of duration (12 minutes), instrumental composition and degree of disclosure of figurative and symbolic content – up to the last two.

The considered sample of the chamber-instrumental work of I. Karabyts is, at the same time, both a solo work for the violin and a kind of duet, where each of the instrumental parts is significant for personality and philosophically filled. The outlined opinion is justified by the fact that, similarly to the part of the soloist, the part of the piano incorporated full content, which, a priori, can also individually convey the main idea, and not appear only as an accompaniment. Similar to the solo instrument, the author also endows the instrument with symbols-images, such as a sharp dynamic change, a gradual movement, which can be interpreted as purely gradual, and octave-gradual, with frequent pauses, a sharp change in texture, alteration, a laconic, fragmentary presentation of “broken melodic line”. Furthermore, the piano of I. Karabyts endowed additional symbolic elements, where it is worth highlighting a low tessitura, the use of a pedal on dissonant consonances, polyphonic techniques, as well as elements of thematic material that “transition” from the piano part to the violin part and vice versa. As a sample – a fragment after the violin cadenza at the end of the Second part of the cycle: in the piano part – a wide and low tessitura, “pedals”, dissonant chords and altered sounds. At the same time, such a musical language of accompaniment is characteristic of the entire work (Fig. 1).

Figure 1. Fragment after the violin cadence at the end of the second part of the cycle

Source: I. Karabyts (2020)

The first part, *Moderato capriccioso*, is initiated by the piano with its part, and after two laconic paused intonations, the solo instrument enters. At first glance, the

melodic drawing of the violin as such is absent, given the usual stereotypical linear parts, however, the melody, although vague, is saturated with chromaticisms and

interrupted by frequent pauses, it is still present and is even performed by the instrument twice, moreover, the second time – already at a different “intonational-emotional” level. This laconic “formula” demonstrated a cer-

tain symbolism, “reminding” and accentuating a certain thought, so far not so figuratively clear, but its character is already fully saturated with anxiety, drama and even fear (Fig. 2).

Figure 2. Part one, Moderato capriccioso

Source: I. Karabyts (2020)

In the performance aspect, the part contains complexities, such as frequent changes of metrorhythm, a combination of episodes with long notes (for 1 movement of the bow) and laconic staccato and non-legato paused intonations. The piano accompaniment appears texturally similar to the soloist’s part, requiring a quick reaction to the “mood changes” of the sheet music. In general, the figurative and semantic content of the first part is full of disturbing, sometimes, affective and hopeless states without excessive expression, however, with complete despair and hopelessness. In certain contexts, such states were characteristic of Ukrainians at the moment, when the war came to the Ukraine: these were moments

of complete shock and boundless astonishment, absolute unawareness of the existing situation, a whirlwind of endless thoughts and questions that were not subject to either structuring or grouping, and this chaos saturated the heads not only of the average person, but also of emotionally stable, balanced and reasonably conscious personalities.

The second part, *Andante rubato*, can be conventionally called “acceptance”, that is, even due to the lack of rational understanding of all the events happening around, the fact of the onset of war is accepted (Fig. 3). This negative-tragic complex, which includes many additional situations, events and driving consequences, is typical for the symbol “war”.

Figure 3. Part two, Andante rubato

Source: I. Karabyts (2020)

The short introduction in the accompaniment part symbolised a certain image of an avalanche: the first

harbingers of war resembled an uncontrolled mass of snow, dirt and stones, which inevitably move with great

speed, destroying everything in its path. The following lines, done by the soloist, symbolise endless questions to which there is no answer and there will be no answer. This imagery is formed by using the high range of the violin, gradual movement, dissonant intervals of narrow scope and the absence of basic supporting degrees, as a kind of hook or support to cling to. It is quite natural that the author appealed to the use of sharp intonations and tuning, which is more reminiscent of minor ratios, saturated with frequent alterations, dissonance and “accidental” sounds. Doom is symbolised by the prolonged sound, the retention of several sounds in the piano part, against the background of which the piercing intonations of the violin represent human crying and suffering.

In this part, imitation of human steps is present: a vague, asynchronous human walk, as if going nowhere – a certain symbolism of “escape”, which can be associated with the decisions of many people to *flee en masse* from those events that arose suddenly, unexpectedly, unpredictably. The sarcastic character chosen by the author described the probable events as best as possible. In general, the predominance of the *rubato* remark in the piece indicated the personification of a specific compos-

er an unstable image that can change depending on the general circumstances. An analogy of this image-symbol can be made with the actions of a person in a force majeure situation. In general, the parts of this section were built by I. Karabyts with a significant predominance of the soloist, while piano “pedals”, or traditional pauses, were used in the accompaniment. Therefore, it is possible to identify the violin with the human personality and its emotions, experiences, and sufferings, while the piano is primarily used as an illustrator of the entire tragic performance that takes place around this person. Due to performance difficulties, episodes with active use of pizzicato and “uncomfortable” flageolets in high tessitura were added to this part.

In *Allegretto*, the author actively used glissando in combination with staccato and legato episodes. This practice of different types of strokes in the context of dissonant and untuned intonations created an image of uncontrolled actions carried out by a person out of hopelessness and panic. The complex various types of violin techniques can be conventionally generalised into a certain symbol, behind which the specific, mentioned meaning is “hidden” (Fig. 4).

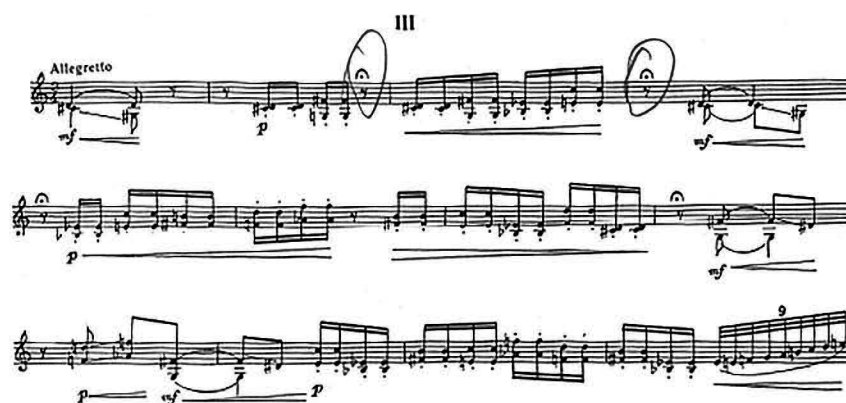


Figure 4. Part three, Allegretto

Source: I. Karabyts (2020)

For the first time in the entire work, the composer resorted to a harmonious, consonant sound between both parties, and this becomes a symbol of the solution to a difficult situation, however, such “islands” are too laconic and rare, testifying to the predominance of not only hopelessness, but also the present fate: double notes and dissonant intervals only emphasise it. Notably, the tempo-characteristic indication of the Third part is conditional, as this penultimate section is difficult to interpret, although the rhythmic and intonation repetitions at the beginning and end of the structural unit of the cycle provide a certain roundness of the form.

The composer defines the finale of “Lyrical scenes” as *Andante espressivo*, where the last element, which means expressiveness, characterises not only the

feature of the artist’s work, inherent in the 1970s and 1980s, but also echoes the element of the remark of the first part of the cycle, translated as “capricious” (Fig. 5). A relatively long introduction in the piano part of a mysterious, veiled character is made using the low and medium tessitura of the instrument and built from laconic intonation elements. The violin enters in a polar high range, hinting at the bright imagery according to the author’s intention: a long lyric song-cry, mournful and full of hopelessness. The chaos of thoughts and the trembling of the human soul were intensified, when the high range in the right hand appeared in the accompaniment part: elements of these intonations then appear in the violin part. This artistic approach symbolised an existing “survival” challenge and a constant reminder of the main life choices.

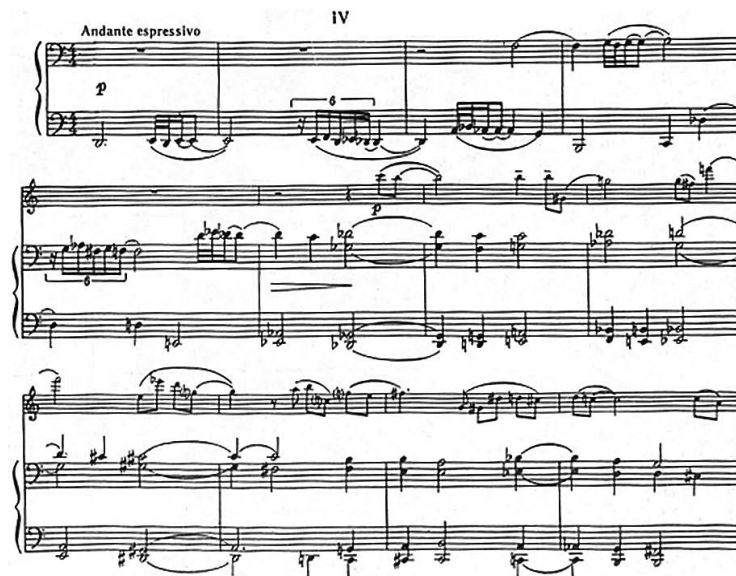


Figure 5. Finale, Andante espressivo

Source: I. Karabyts (2020)

In general, it is possible to draw a series of “symbolic images” or “figurative symbols”, which appear at the beginning of the work and pass throughout the entire three-part cycle, reaching their apogee and some tragic transformations at the end of the work, where the general climax occurs. This is the main dramaturgy of “Lyrical scenes”. It is worth noting that such reinterpretation, giving images and symbols of greater tragedy can also be noted in the works of previous musical and historical eras, in particular, L. Beethoven, however, this was denoted more clearly and transparently than in the violin work of I. Karabyts. This “transparency” is largely veiled by the manner of postmodernist compositional writing.

The last measures of the piece correspond to the stated remark as much as possible: the music is saturated with expression in the parts of each instrument, and the so-called melodic line is increasingly dramatised and leads to the emotional and intonational climax of the piece. Notably, it is built using traditional classical methods of composition, namely, high tessitura, powerful volume, excess of intonation “decorations” and accelerated tempo. After this active climactic zone, the imagery of which can be personified with active combat actions, comes calmness and pacification – similarly to the dawn after night. It is worth noting that I. Karabyts’s “Lyrical scenes” can be regarded as “dramatic”, as the author managed to reveal the inner drama, even the tragedy, not only of one character, but also of an entire nation (appealing to figurative and semantic landmarks, current issues).

In the context of chronology, the earliest of the studies presented, given the publication date of the monograph, the musicologist H. Yermakova (1983) appealed to the narratives of the government under which Ukraine was in 1983. The author emphasised such concepts as “devotion”, “loyalty”, “conscience” and “memory

of the Motherland”. The works of the artist also contained fragmentarily present aspects, although the main vector of creativity was built on different values using modern compositional techniques and means of musical expressiveness, which were discussed in the study. The study by O.M. Beregova (2015) on the specifics of compositional stylistics of I. Karabyts highlighted the main musical genres (symphony, concert, and oratorio), outlining the originality and originality of the musical language, and formulating the composer’s relevance to the “sixties” movement and national artistic awakening. Musicologist L.O. Kiyanovska (2017) created the first monographic book on the composer during the period of independent Ukraine (from 1991). The author exhibited the musical life of the second half of the 20th century and the creative work of I. Karabyts, analysed recent acquisitions by other composers: M. Skorykom, B. Lyatoshynskiy, R. Glierom, V. Silvestrov. Notably, active communication with the composer’s wife, Marianna Kopytsa, was substantial in writing the book.

O.M. Hurkova (2016) explored the artist’s work in the context of genre and style trends in Ukrainian music; the Second Piano Concerto by I. Karabytsa in the aspect of harmonic thinking – became the object of research by O.O. Kopelyuk (2018) – mentioned authors interpreted the compositional style and musical thinking of the artist, in particular, according to an individual vision, however, all works are united by the idea of revealing the special meaning that the author invested. A similar ideological content appears as “leitmotiv images” in the study by O. Markova (2003) and M.D. Kopytsia (2003). Such comparisons creatively matured from the perspective of the student’s adoption of the composer’s style of the teacher and mentor, and perhaps, due to the external similarity of the musical-figurative interpretation due to

expression, drama, the originality of harmonic thinking and the disclosure of the ideological content.

The research results highlighted the existence of certain images and symbols, embodied by the composer in the violin work and exhibited in the general system of musical figurative and symbolic content, even though the content of the work "predicts" the events of the present. The elaborated modern and more biased literature, written before the date of Ukrainian independence of 1991 can be used to highlight the following valuable statements from individual studies. The doctoral dissertation by O.O. Kapichina (2012) addressed the concept of musical semiosis, which was actively spread in the Ukrainian musical art of the 20th era, and also turned to the concept of semiotics. The history of the development and establishment of semiotics as a science was also studied by O.M. Balynska (2013). The author noted that semiotics includes not only a formalised part, but also a broad field of observation of facts, considering all cultural phenomena as sign systems and language phenomena. A. Zvarych (2012) studied musical language and indicated that its systematic nature lies in the combination of expressive means, harmony, and melody, which collectively reveal the characteristics of a musical work's content.

Researcher O.M. Kazakova (2013) in a collection of philosophical articles appealed to the semiotic sphere, defining it as an "anthropocultural phenomenon". In turn, Yu.V. Kovalchuk (2014) addressed this topic and determined the signs as the main semiotic category. O.M. Galuzevska (2005) actualised an important collaboration of two Ukrainian geniuses: I. Karabyts and B. Oliynyk, each of whom contributed to the development of Ukrainian vocal works. The study of musical semiotics highlighted its dual nature, encompassing both formalised structures and broader interpretations of cultural phenomena as sign systems. Musical language was recognised for its systematic combination of expressive means, harmony, and melody, which collectively reveal the content and meaning of musical works. Semiotics was also defined as an anthropocultural phenomenon, highlighting the role of signs as core semiotic categories and their influence on the development of Ukrainian musical art. Additionally, collaborative contributions to vocal and instrumental works emphasise the interplay between creativity and semiotic expression.

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Conclusions

The composer's "predictions" were used to interpret the chamber-instrumental work of Ivan Karabyts, an active follower of the style of B. Lyatoshinsky and a unique individual creator in one person, as a confessor of the musical aesthetics of symbolism, filled with images and deep philosophical meanings. The study determined the value of the following musical and expressive elements: frequent chromatisation, pausing, expression, frequent change of pace, strokes, rhythmic-intonational repetitions, rubato, rhythmicity, narrow scope and gradual movement – as figurative and semantic indicators of a concrete tragic-fatum content. On the other hand, the cycle of "Lyrical scenes" was used to interpret from the perspective of the ironic title in the context of all the tragedy of their veiled content.

The Ukrainian-language works of the first two decades of the 21st century, related to the concepts of musical semantics, musical semiosis, and the general concept of the semiosphere, were a significant artistic impulse in this study, as the main vector in this scientific article was the semantic load, embodied in an individual way in the figurative and symbolic content of a specific work. The analysis of these two works noted the difference in the interpretation of semiotics by the first author from an artistic position and the second from a philosophical one. The study analysed the specifics of the chamber-instrumental work of I. Karabyts "Lyrical scenes", interprets the images and symbols that the artist used through the prism of the musical canvas, which the author both separated and supported via musical semiotics. In general, all categories of musical semantics and semiotics, primarily signs and symbols interpreted by the composer in a chamber-instrumental piece, are embodied author's writing and modern musical and expressive means and techniques. Further research should address the positioning and function of symbolism from the perspective of musical semiotics in the figurative content of other works of the composer.

Acknowledgements

None.

Conflict of Interest

None.

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Аспірант

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■ **Анотація.** У дослідженні висвітлено камерно-інструментальну творчість Івана Карабиця, зокрема твір для скрипки та фортепіано «Ліричні сцени» в контексті музичного та суспільного життя сучасності. Проаналізований зразок скрипкового твору рідко з'являвся в репертуарі скрипалів, до того ж цикл досі не був вивчений. Метою дослідження було інтерпретувати зміст у всіх його образах і символіці, використаній композитором у творі. Дослідження зосереджувалося не на типовому порівнянні й ідентифікації композиторського стилю митця з творчістю вчителя Бориса Лятошинського, а на образному та змістовому передбаченні соціально-патріотичних подій сучасності, зокрема військових дій в Україні, піднесення свідомого широкого патріотизму, а також на акцентуванні індивідуальної інтерпретації символіки та образності в аналізованих творах. У дослідженні викладено суб'єктивно обґрунтовану наукову позицію щодо образно-символічного змісту скрипкового циклу Івана Карабиця, яка базувалася на виконавсько-теоретичному аналізі та стане перспективною темою для музикознавчих дискусій у подальшому спектрі символіки та образності в площині творчості митця. У дослідженні виділено й обґрунтовано перелік музично-виражальних засобів, використаних для втілення основної трагічно-фатумної ідеї скрипкового циклу, попри первинне сприйняття програмної назви «Ліричні сцени». Отримані результати дослідження можуть бути використані в освітніх курсах із предметів «Історія української музики» та «Інтерпретація виконавства» на скрипковому класі й у класі «Камерного ансамблю». Практична цінність цього дослідження полягає в його безпосередній актуальності для викладання скрипкового виконавства в класі «Скрипка»

■ **Ключові слова:** композитор; символіка; образність; камерно-інструментальні твори; скрипка