

Space and Time in Art

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Przestrzeń i czas
w sztuce

Introduction

Wstęp

The rapid transformation of the present day society, the global processes of social development influence the values, ideals and philosophy of young people. And in that sense, the attention to the past and the access to the cultural heritage of previous generations give an opportunity for the deeper understanding of art. The laws of beauty created over millennia appear also in such forms as space and time, i.e. as architecture and music.

Widely known Schelling's idea that the "architecture is music in space, like frozen music", encourages to consideration of the individual parallels and intersections of these art forms in different historical periods [1, 2]. The principle of picturesqueness "one after another" is here very important. We also emphasize that this article does not aim at uncovering the specificity of these art forms at the level of theoretical concepts along with their functions and styles. Our main goal is to show some other opportunity to influence the emotional sphere of young people and enrich their artistic perception of works of different art forms.

Gothic style in music and architecture

Styl gotycki w muzyce i architekturze

Today many interesting aspects of the Gothic style in architecture can be found – only from the scientific point of view or in terms of the medieval conception. Nevertheless, the most unusual, in our opinion, and surprisingly solid description of Gothic art is the music of the German composer Robert Schumann, created a century and a half ago. It is the fourth part of the Third Symphony 'The Rhine', inspired by the Köln cathedral.

History has preserved to our time Peter Tchaikovsky's opinions about the music of this part of the symphony. According to him, "Nothing more powerful and better has come from any artist. The Köln cathedral has been built for ages, but only one page of the great musician, inspired by the majestic beauty of the cathedral, will leave for future generations the feelings of a similar immortal monument as the church itself".

It may be supposed that the musical composition of Robert Schumann was to some extent influenced by another important work of Gothic style, i.e. the Wrocław Roman Catholic cathedral under the invocation of St. John the Baptist (Figs 1, 2).

Of course, the period of the Gothic art style in architecture and the time of the creation of the Schu-



Fig. 1. Cathedral under the invocation of St. John the Baptist in Wrocław, a fragment

Ryc. 1. Katedra p.w. Św. Jana Chrzciciela we Wrocławiu, fragment

mann's music are divided by centuries, but this difference of time and space gives the young people another lesson of understanding these kinds of art in their originality and the greatness of their creators.

Music and architecture in 19th century

Muzyka i architektura w XIX wieku

For the understanding of space and time in art, the music of Claude Debussy should be taken into account, his two preludes – „Sunken Cathedral” and „Gate of Alhambra” are examples of intersection of music and architecture. The only difference is that the former one is connected with the ancient Breton legend, and the second one is inspired by the masterpiece of the late Mauritanian architecture, located on the eastern outskirts of Granada in Spain.

„Sunken Cathedral” by Debussy is the musical narration of the ancient city Ys which was inundated by the sea. According to the legend, sometimes at dawn, the Cathedral rises from the water and one can hear the bells ringing and the polyphonic singing of the choir. Then unexpectedly the Cathedral again disappears in the depths of sea and nothing disturbs the following centuries of silence. The sacred character of the music may remind to some people the Byzantine architecture, whereas other listeners

imagine the architectural monuments of the Renaissance. They all, in our opinion, are right, since this music creates a generalized representation of space and the aesthetic origin of architecture form.

The music of the prelude „Gate of Alhambra” as well as the architectural masterpiece are an expression of beauty of different arts. Here the ornamental and decorative capriciousness of both works are blended, resulting in the disappearance of time and in the creation of a rare form, which can be considered as „mobile space” and „frozen time”.

It should be pointed out the composer has given the name „Gate of Alhambra”, and not merely “Alhambra” to his work. Therefore the listener has the opportunity to imagine and to see something unusual inside the walls of the palace. This fact adds to „Gate of Alhambra” some kind of a musical poetry, in accordance to words of the composer himself: “music exists for the indistinctness”. One can say that the palace as an architectural work shows things which were not shown in the music, and for a moment the time is stopped by the space.

Another interesting example of the intersection of music and architecture concerns the friendship of famous Russian artists – the composer Modest Mussorgsky and the architect Victor Hartmann. They were connected not only by mutual respect, but also by the aim to achieve “new bounds of the boundless art”.



Fig. 2. The architectural detail of the cathedral under the invocation of St. John the Baptist in Wrocław

Ryc. 2. Detal architektoniczny katedry p.w. Św. Jana Chrzciciela we Wrocławiu

Modest Mussorgsky was moved by sudden death of Victor Hartmann. A posthumous exhibition of the architect's art works, attended by Mussorgsky, inspired the composer to create a cycle „Pictures from an Exhibition”. In the preface to the second edition of this musical composition, the works of Victor Hartmann, taken during his trip to Europe were mentioned. According to V. Stasov, it was „... lively, graceful outline ... a lot of scenes, styles, shapes of everyday life, caught from the environment – on the streets and in churches, in the Paris catacombs, and the Polish monasteries, in the Roman streets and villages of Limoges”

The work „Old Castle” of Mussorgsky's cycle characterizes the synthesis of space and time. It is a response to Hartmann's watercolor, which was made under the influence of Italian architecture. Grandeur with a touch of mild sadness and the representation of music and architecture create a picture of symmetry, harmony, and even the color. Emotional and aesthetic effect is enhanced because there are three distinctive stages of perception – the architecture (one of the castles of Italy), painting (watercolor of architect) and music (work of the composer). This extraordinary reflection of the architectural monument in other kinds of art is important and enriches the feelings of spectators and listeners.

„Golden Gate of Kiev” is a sketch of Victor Hartmann, who made it to the architectural design

for the Kiev city gate. The project was made with the aim of reviving the image of the Kiev city as the capital of ancient Russia; this plan was achieved by using suitable line proportions (Figs 3, 4). And Modest Mussorgsky presented this idea with his usual talent. In music there is the „Russian soul” – bells and folk songs, celebrations and festivities, and the composer's love for the Fatherland. These both works of different art forms induce so close feelings that one may suppose a joint and simultaneous creativeness of architect and composer.

Conclusion

Wnioski

In the history the intersections of two different kinds of art – architecture and music are to be found. Of course there exist more time- space parallels in works of art than are shown in the present paper, however it should be hoped that the understanding of intersections of various art kinds is important in the development of young people and may offer some help in their education.

Photos made by Anna Borcz

Zdjęcia wykonała Anna Borcz

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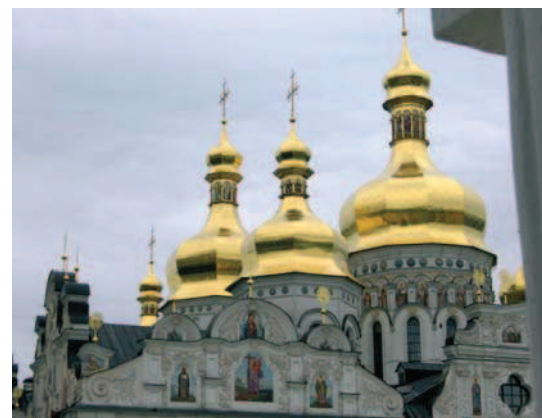


Fig. 3. The Orthodox church in Kiev

Ryc. 3. Cerkiew w Kijowie



Fig. 4. Golden Gate of Kiev, bars of the entrance

Ryc. 4. Złota Brama w Kijowie, krata wejściowa