

## ART

# THE MAIN TENDENCIES AND STAGES OF THE QUARTET GENRE FORMATION IN UKRAINE

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DOI: [https://doi.org/10.31435/rsglobal\\_ws/31012020/6903](https://doi.org/10.31435/rsglobal_ws/31012020/6903)

## ARTICLE INFO

**Received:** 15 November 2019

**Accepted:** 10 January 2020

**Published:** 31 January 2020

## KEYWORDS

stylistics,  
chamber instrumental music,  
genre of quartet,  
Ukrainian string quartet.

## ABSTRACT

This article is devoted to the historiography of the Ukrainian string quartet. The article presents a detailed description of three musical and artistic ideas of the quartet genre – “timbre and coloristic”, “virtuoso technical” and “semantic”. The author presents the examples of implementing these three musical and artistic ideas in the works of composers of different eras and national school. It is emphasized that the nature of the string quartet is revealed at the intersection of global categories of genre and style in music, which are adapted through corresponding traditions of art. These categories can be divided into historical, inherent in different schools, as well as “personal”, individual. The author of the article identifies three main stages of the quartet genre formation in Ukraine: “neoclassical”, “neo-folklore” and “polystylistic” and characterizes their main tendencies. The time frames of these three stages are outlined comparing to the development stages of the quartet genre in Europe. The article contains the examples of reproducing the basic tendencies of the quartet writing style as well as the technical means of performing practice, which appeared to be dominant in this or that period of time. The most striking examples of quartet pieces from the point of view of genre, epoch and national stylistics are analyzed.

**Citation:** Chystiakova Daria. (2020) The Main Tendencies and Stages of the Quartet Genre Formation in Ukraine. *World Science*. 1(53), Vol.3. doi: 10.31435/rsglobal\_ws/31012020/6903

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## 1. General features and forms of existence of the quartet genre in the music of the Modern age (three musical and artistic ideas)

### 1.1. The timbre and coloristic idea of the quartet genre

Based on the study of young Ukrainian scholars, three musical and artistic ideas of the quartet genre can be singled out. The first one is the timbre and coloristic idea, where the attention of a composer is focused on the general sound picture of a music piece – its timbre and “color” of sound, according to M. Manafova (2011). The quartets of this group are present in the works of B. Bartok, according to G. Kosenko (2018). The author of this paper notes that his six quartets are a “vivid illustration” the composer’s desire to discover a new timbre and coloristic concept in this genre. First, according to this concept, each of the quartets is different through “individuality and freshness of colors”; and secondly, the composer is more interested in the ultimate result of the timbre interaction between the instruments rather than identifying the individual qualities of each part. Among the means of creating the original timbre coloring in the general sound of the quartet works by B. Bartok, the author distinguishes the following (Kosenko, 2018):

- the usage of various playing and bowing techniques, among which are the original author's ones: *pizzicato alla Bartok*, *pizzicato-glissando* (e.g. the 4<sup>th</sup> movement of the Fourth Quartet), *tremolando* (the 2<sup>nd</sup> movement of the Sixth Quartet), *glissando*, *con sordino*, *con legno* and others;

- the usage of phonic means, particularly in terms of texture, register, mode and harmony, supplementing the timbre and technical means (this refers to all six quartets by B. Bartok) – frequent usage of high positions, dissonances, including the so-called “out-of-tune” in unison, different accentuation in sequences of “chords-columns” (in the spirit of I. Stravinsky);
- varying and complicated meter and rhythmic structure through the usage the changing meter, syncopes, rhythmic polyphony (as an example, the author refers to the 1<sup>st</sup> movement of the Second Quartet, and “Scherzo” from the Fourth Quartet);
- imitation of drums sounding (*pizzicato* in the lower register, which resembles the hits of the bass drum in the 2<sup>nd</sup> movement of the Second Quartet), plucked percussion (various types of *pizzicato* in 4<sup>th</sup> movement of the Fourth Quartet), as well as some wind instruments, in particular, flute and bassoon.

### 1.2. The “virtuoso technical” idea of the quartet genre

The second musical and artistic idea focuses on the intentions of composers to reveal the internal resources of the instruments, the performance technology that aims at implementing a certain artistic content. This aspect of quartet music is represented in the work of P. Hindemith, the author of six quartets like B. Bartok. First, talking about their stylistics, the attention is drawn to reconsidering the functions of the instruments in a quartet ensemble. P. Hindemith redirects the traditional virtuoso and technical advantage of the first violin and cello in the classical version of this genre to viola, whose part becomes dominant in this regard. This was due to the specialization of P. Hindemith as a performer, who not only masterfully played the viola, but was also considered a virtuoso violist among his contemporaries, which once again proves the performing aspect of the bowed string quartet genre to be the dominant one (Kosenko, 2018). The emphasis on the concerto principles is the typical feature in P. Hindemith's quartets, which corresponds to the general idea of virtuoso competition between the instruments as the thematic and textural materials are developed within a music piece. Most often in the quartets by P. Hindemith, viola is the solo instrument (e.g. the 2<sup>nd</sup> movement of the First Quartet, the 3<sup>rd</sup> movement of the Second Quartet, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> movements of the Third Quartet, and the 1<sup>st</sup> movement of the Fourth Quartet). In this case, the viola part becomes equal to the 2<sup>nd</sup> violin in the general tendency to keep the parts in balance within the polyphonic texture, which is common for this composer (Kosenko, 2018).

### 1.3. The “semantic” idea of the quartet genre

Reviewing the third musical and artistic idea, its dominant feature is reflecting the figurative content of the quartet music piece through the timbre qualities of the instruments. This idea is most clearly represented in the works of D. Shostakovich, who created fifteen quartets. We can see it through the fact that the composer transferred not so much of a concerto dialogue principle to the quartet genre, as it was in the quartets of P. Hindemith, but rather the actual symphonic conception, which he is fond of. In the quartets of D. Shostakovich, the dramatic component is the dominant one, which is reflected in different interpretations of the timbre qualities of instruments – they become universal and even interchangeable in terms of figurative and semantic functions. The “images” of instruments are quite often “personalized”, reflecting the creative personality of specific performers, to whom this or that quartet music piece is devoted. Such specific figurative and stylistic system leads to the expansion of the expressive capabilities and playing techniques within each part, as well as the sound texture as a whole. In particular, according to G. Kosenko, this is relevant for the viola part, to which Shostakovich constantly adds the *espressivo* remark, which involves playing with a juicy “deep” sound (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> movements of the First Quartet, 3<sup>rd</sup> movement of the Third Quartet, 3<sup>rd</sup> movement of the Fourth Quartet, and the 1<sup>st</sup> movement of the Fifth Quartet). There is a large number of fragments with a “heavy” marked playing style, using accents (4<sup>th</sup> movement of the First Quartet, 1<sup>st</sup> movement of the Second Quartet, 2<sup>nd</sup> movement of the Third Quartet, 1<sup>st</sup> movement of the Fifth Quartet), rough chords (3<sup>rd</sup> movement of the Third Quartet) (Kosenko, 2018).

In general, the “semantic” model of the quartet genre, proposed by D. Shostakovich, is a generalizing, universal, able to absorb two previous ones – “coloristic” (B. Bartok) and “virtuoso” (P. Hindemith). For this reason, we can consider the “quartets-symphonies” (such a term can be used for the quartets by D. Shostakovich) as basic examples for the work of many composers-symphonists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, including Ukrainian ones. Models of the quartet composing, identified by G. Kosenko, are not genitive varieties at all. But, according to the author of this paper herself, they serve only as “rods” around which other examples of music works created the string quartet during that period are grouped together, though these examples may have some adjustments to national, regional, chronological peculiarities (Kosenko, 2018). In particular, the author treats the following

composers as the followers of the Timbre and coloristic idea, although they may have different orientations in music writing: O. Glazunov, M. Ravel, A. Berg, D. Milhaud, H. Villa-Lobos, G. Batsevich; among Ukrainian composers – M. Skoryk, A. Gaidenko, G. Tsitsalyuk, O. Grinberg (Kosenko, 2018). The author of this article considers the desire to achieve new color effects through using the special playing techniques to be a common feature of the quartets created by the above-mentioned composers (for example, in the quartet with the indicative name “Twinkling”, O. Grinberg used a number of playing techniques which he specifically wrote down in the score). The effects of imitating other stringed instrument techniques, such as the *rasgeado* (played on balalaika and guitar) in the 4<sup>th</sup> movement of the Seventh Quartet by O. Glazunov).

A number of peculiar playing techniques can be found in quartets of H. Villa-Lobos, which were created almost at the same time with the quartets of B. Bartok, but on another intonational basis. These include, in particular, the *battendo coll'arco* (2<sup>nd</sup> movement of the First Quartet), *saltellato* (4<sup>th</sup> movement of the Second Quartet), *sul ponticello* (Finale of the Second Quartet), *left hand pizzicato* (2<sup>nd</sup> movement of the Third Quartet), *pizzicato sonoro* (4<sup>th</sup> movement of the Sixth Quartet), etc. (Kosenko, 2018). We can observe a similar picture of the timbre and coloristic idea embodied in the quartet genre in the works of D. Milhaud – the author of 18 quartets (one more than L. van Beethoven created). Despite the stylistic diversity and dispersion in the time of creation (from the 1910s to the 1940s), the quartets by D. Milhaud mainly tend to distinguish the color and timbre qualities of instruments. According to D. Rubtsova (2013), they are characterized by a linear polytexture, which was typical for the polytonal thinking of the composer, the dissonant “rigidity” of the quartet chord, where harmonic combinations appear from the interaction of virtuoso instrumental parts. In fact, none of the quartet ideas exists in its pure form as it is always combined with others. Nor can it characterize the quartet music pieces of individual authors.

## 2. The formation of quartet genre in Ukraine ("neoclassical" stage)

The quartet genre in Ukraine dates back to the Quartet d-moll composed by M. Lysenko in 1868, and then appears in the works of R. Glier, O. Gorelov, P. Sinitza, M. Kalachevsky, V. Barvinsky, B. Lyatoshinsky, D. Sichinsky (Rubtsova, 2013). This stage chronologically covers the period from 1920 to 1950 and differs from the general neoclassical trend, according to G. Suvorivska, by focusing on the academicism (Suvorivska, 1991). We can observe this, in particular, through the predominance of quartet cycles such as Viennese classical ones that consist of three or four movements. According to M. Borovik (1979), this general tendency is divided by the set of the genre and stylistic features into the following types: Scriabin and Impressionist style (Second quartet of B. Lyatoshynsky, three quartets of M. Gozhenpud), "contemporary" style, according to the definition by L. Raaben (1963) (First Quartet by D. Klebanov, Third Quartet by B. Lyatoshynsky, First Quartet by G. Taranova, Quartet by I. Belza) and folkloristic style (Borovik, 1979). The latter implies the usage of folk songs, generally, in the form of the quoted or variationally developed material. This means that the level of neo-folklore is not reached on that stage, where "neo" means a new technique in writing. The examples are the quartets composed by the “fathers” of Ukrainian music mentioned above, from the Quartet by M. Lysenko, "Seven Songs" for string quartet by M. Verikovsky, “Variations on the Kupala Theme” by F. Kozitsky – to the quartets by P. Glushkov, “Suite on Polish themes” by A. Soltis, Fourth Quartet and “Suite on Ukrainian themes” B. Lyatoshynsky. Similar music pieces were created in 1950's, as the first stage of the genre's development was at end. This reflected in such examples as “Ukrainian Suite” by O. Znosko-Borovsky, “String Quartet based on haivka<sup>1</sup> songs” by O. Hnatyshin, “Ukrainian Quartet” by V. Podvala.

Here we should also mention the descriptive type, which is common for a number of Ukrainian quartets of that period. For example, Quartet No. 1 “Juvenile” and Quartet No. 2 with an epigraph “To the poetry of Ivan Franko” by V. Borisov, First and Second Quartets by O. Filippenko, Quartet No. 2 “1905” by M. Titz). As we observe the appearance of the descriptive music in the works of Ukrainian composers, it is interesting to see how they interpret the genre name of “quartet”. The word often defines only the number of participants, whereas the genre forms are specified as “suite”, “variations”, and “poem”. As for the examples, the researchers, in particular A. Utina (2012), G. Kosenko (2018), refer to the “Suite to Ukrainian themes” by S. Drimtsov, “Variations for quartet”

<sup>1</sup> Haivka is a Ukrainian folk song performed during Easter.

by S. Bohatyryov, "Suite for Quartet" by V. Barabashov, "Retro-suite for Quartet" by M. Karminsky, "Lyrical Poem" by M. Zherbin, and "Youth Poem" by N. Yukhnovska.

Such changes in the genre sphere did not mean the genre "explosion" (Shapovalova, 1984). They were rather a reflection of the multi-genre tendencies that arose back then in the world chamber and instrumental music and led to the creation of the genre "hybrids". The genre of quartet was also influenced by these tendencies. In the Ukrainian music of the 1950s, the trend was to create the concerto-like quartet music pieces and micro-cycles based on the existing patterns. The examples of such music pieces are "Gavot" by G. Taranov, "Andante" by A. Kogan, "Meditation" and "Lyrical Pages" by O. Teplitsky. The "hybrid" line is embodied in quartets-variations, descriptive quartet pieces and cycles, such as the previously mentioned "Variations on the Kupala Theme" for string quartet by F. Kozitsky, "In memory of Leontovich" quartet by D. Klebanov (Utina, 2012).

### **3. The quartet genre development in Ukraine during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (the "neo-folklore" stage)**

#### **3.1. General tendencies of the 1960s**

The next stage in the evolution of Ukrainian bowed string quartet coincides with the periodization of chamber instrumental genres formation, proposed in the study of G. Suvorivska (1991). It covers the period from 1960s to 1980s and can be characterized as a "breakthrough" of new performing and technological means in various spheres of music, among which the chamber and instrumental music was one of the most prominent. Researchers, in particular O. Zinkevich, note that this period was exceptionally diverse in the sense of genre and style, since it simultaneously represented "different generations, different types of thinking and style, different angles in the disclosure of the national folk elements and values" (Zinkevich, 1982).

This was the period of 1960s when Ukrainian composers, even those who defended the existing traditions, were able to try and use the new styles and the latest "technologies" of writing in terms of harmony, texture and form, which are the main indicators of the artistic principles within a musical style, according to S. Skrebkov (1973). As noted by G. Utina (2012), the innovations in the genre of quartet were related to the desire of making it more descriptive. This would include not only the traditional Soviet-era "dedications" or tributes to the prominent figures of Ukrainian culture (for example, Quartet No. 3 by M. Titz, devoted to the memory of V. Lenin, and Quartet No. 2 "In memory of Taras Shevchenko" by V. Rozhdestvensky). There are also many examples of other descriptive "sub-genres": ethnic sketches ("Caucasian watercolors" for string quartet by N. Yukhnovskaya), music inspired by deep philosophical meditations and generalizations, including the topics that were not used before ("String Quartet on M. Roerich's paintings" by T. Khmel'nitskaya, "Glorification of the Four Elements" by K. Tsipklenka and "Dialogue with Self-reflection in the Mirror" by I. Nebesnyi).

#### **3.2. Neo-folklore line of development and the genre of *memory***

The neo-folklore line begins to develop due to existing descriptive music trends. It coincides with the aesthetics and poetics of the new "folk wave", which appeared with the "Carpathian Concerto" by M. Skoryk in the instrumental music. Back then, the main peculiarity of neo-folklore quartet genre was the absence of a definite quotation of folk examples. This was offset by reproducing the typological peculiarities of a mode and a rhythm that come from archaic and more recent Ukrainian folk sources (for example, "Suite for string quartet" by G. Tsitsalyuk in four movements: 1<sup>st</sup> mvt. "Circle dance"; 2<sup>nd</sup> mvt. "Uvyvanets<sup>1</sup>"; 3<sup>rd</sup> mvt. "Song"; 4<sup>th</sup> mvt. "Chabarashka<sup>2</sup>") (Utina, 2012). At that time, Ukrainian folk intonation became one of the leading factors in renewing the quartet writing. On this basis, various quartet music pieces appeared. There the quartets that are based on the quoted material (Quartet by V. Hubarenko, where the theme of the circle-dance song "A my proso siyaly" is used in the 2<sup>nd</sup> movement). Another type of quartets includes those that have the corresponding generalized name, which refers to a certain region (for example, the "Bukovinsky<sup>3</sup>" quartet by P. Ladyzhynsky). There are also the quartets of the experimental content, where such authors as L. Dichko, E. Stankovich, I. Karabits, G. Lyashenko, V. Kireyko establish a real "dialogue with folklore" (Utina, 2012).

The transformations of chamber instrumental genres that took place in this period, in particular the changes in quartets for bowed string instruments reflected a general "reappraisal of values" that

<sup>1</sup> Ukrainian folk mass pair dance, in which dancers show their skill and flexibility.

<sup>2</sup> Ukrainian folk dance.

<sup>3</sup> Bukovina is a historical region in Central Europe, today divided between Ukraine and Romania.

preceded the formation of the Ukrainian post avant-garde period movement, which began to appear in the early 1970s. Ukrainian quartet classics (1920s - 1930s) was based on synthesis of different writing styles that originated from the music of O. Scriabin, S. Rachmaninov, K. Debussy (Second and Third Quartets by B. Lyatoshinsky). But now, the researchers indicate that the “Neoclassicists” of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, such as Hindemith, D. Shostakovich, S. Prokofiev are coming to replace them; among the Ukrainian composers – B. Lyatoshinsky himself. The examples are Quartet by O. Kiva devoted to D. Shostakovich, Quartet No. 3 by Y. Ishchenko, dedicated to B. Lyatoshinsky (Utina, 2012).

The intense involvement of the *memory* genre in the quartet style shows a retrospective direction in its stylistics, which left its imprint on the writing techniques and the form of music pieces. Some of them are of a direct styling, while others combine the styling with interpretations in the spirit of *in modo retro* stylistics, which was popular during 1970s – 1980s. Along with this, some contemporary (for that time) writing techniques were used in the Ukrainian quartets of the late 1960s to 1980s. The most popular was sonoric technique; aleatory was used occasionally (Utina, 2012). Quartets composed by such masters as V. Silvestrov, L. Grabovsky, E. Stankovich, I. Karabits, V. Zagorsky, J. Vereshchagin contain a lot of “linguistic innovations” (Zinkevich, 1982). These include a variety of texture forms used in sonoric music – sound “points”, “speckling”, “lines”, “spots”, and “ribbons” – sometimes written as exact pitches, sometimes marked with special graphic aleatoric signs (Maklygin, 1992). The latter once again confirms the ability of the quartet genre to be on the “front line” of writing, stylistic and technical innovations, coupled with the constancy of its compositional structure, which even in the experimental works of the above-mentioned composers tends to a sonata-cyclic one. It should be noted that the Ukrainian string quartet is not an exceptional phenomenon in the general system of the genre existence. It reflects the general features of this system in an authentic interpretation proceeding from the country-specific instrumental culture – both folklore and academic.

#### 4. "Polystylistic" stage of Ukrainian quartet development

The signs of this stage appear in the late 1980s. Two lines of development, more precisely, two interpretations of this phenomenon appeared at that time. They were proposed in the famous report made by A. Schnittke at the 7<sup>th</sup> International Music Congress in 1971 (Schnittke, 1971), and in the article on the works of I. Stravinsky (Schnittke, 1973). According to A. Schnittke, the first development line is based on using stylistic quotes. They form the basis of a special writing technique – a collage in the form of using the “borrowed” styles and music pieces within a single music piece. For such a semantically and syntactically “stable” genre as string quartet, the form of a collage is not appropriate. Most likely, the multi-genre elements are meant to be used, as exemplified by the descriptive quartet suites. The second development line is more generalized; it refers to the fact that any music, as noted by A. Schnittke, is polystylistic in the sense that there are always some “references” to one or another musical style. The exact quotation is not used though, however, it is very close to it (Schnittke, 1971).

For the genre of quartet with its stable academic base, the methods of collage polystylistics were not that common. Such methods relate more to hybrid genres, as well as to librogenres (free genres); and the only sign of a bowed string quartet they have is the number of participants. Therefore, it is not relevant to identify the modern stage (the third one, according to our classification) as a standalone important period of Ukrainian quartet development. An important thing to emphasize here is the coexistence of various quartet styles, both generalized (epochal, national, genre) and individually author’s ones, in a single time-space. G. Utina covers this issue in the above-mentioned article – the author considers the period of 1990s – 2000s to be the modern stage of Ukrainian quartet formation (Utina, 2012).

The general tendency of this stage appears as the combination of quite different models of a bowed string quartet, which becomes apparent in its paradigmatic “cut”. First, Ukrainian composers retain a strong interest to the genre of quartet, which is reflected in the works of composers from different generations and artistic preferences, such as Y. Ishchenko, M. Skoryk, V. Bibik, V. Zubytsky, O. Krasotov, Y. Babenko, E. Donduka, V. Ronzhin, Y. Gomelskaya, O. Shchetynsky. Secondly, considering that interest, G. Utina states that “...modern Ukrainian composers produced both the music pieces which were traditional by their design, and those which had their individual genre relations according to the composer’s ideas (Utina, 2012). The latter proves that the composers tried following different directions in their work. The examples of such artistic searches are the following: Sketches for string quartet “Vixi” by V. Runchak, “White Square” by V. Pilyutykov, “The Spiritual Chorales” by B. Filts, “Melody from Taras Shevchenko’s diary” by L. Kolodub,

“Expressions” by G. Havrylets. The “emblem” of experimental quests in the genre of quartet is the music piece by O. Grinberg entitled “Twinkling”.

This particular word could indicate the current state of how the genre of quartet is developed in Ukraine. This is, indeed, somewhat like a stylistic “twinkling” when there are no distinct style boundaries within a single music piece, or between different pieces composed even by the same author. The quartet “Twinkling” by O. Grinberg was created in the early 1990s when Ukrainian composers had a great interest to sonoric music. According to G. Kosenko, the quartet reflects “...the idea of the variability and brevity of events and phenomena that surround us, calling a certain aesthetic reaction of the composer who embodies his attitude to the world through the available art of instrumental sounds, in this case, the string instruments ” (Kosenko, 2018). An arsenal of writing methods for implementing this idea involves a number of special techniques, most of which are described in the textbook of V. Muzhchyl (2015) who studied the acoustic structure peculiarities of a sound formation in the music of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (on the example of bowed string instruments). The use of these techniques in O. Grinberg's “Twinkling” once again demonstrates the close connection between semantics and technique in the string quartet genre, and secondly, the “openness” of this genre to various innovations. These qualities seem to make him it the “title” kind of chamber instrumental music.

**Conclusions.** Such a stylistically stable genre as a string quartet in Ukrainian music has evolved taking into account the world practice of its existence. It is mostly the writing technique factors, which were combined with stable formal constructions, including the cyclic and the single-movement poem one, were changed and got new embodiment. However, with the cultural and social implication in mind, the Ukrainian string quartet reflected the main tendencies of the national stylistics formation stages.

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