

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND RESEARCH
OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA
MINISTRY OF CULTURE OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA
ACADEMY OF MUSIC, THEATER AND FINE ARTS**

As a manuscript

UDC 784.087.68.071.2 (478)(043)

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**THE NATIONAL CHAMBER CHOIR OF THE REPUBLIC OF
MOLDOVA — PROMOTER OF NATIONAL CHORAL CREATION**

SPECIALTY 653.01–MUSICOLOGY (RESEARCH)

Abstract of the Thesis for Doctor's Degree in Arts Studies and Culturology

CHIȘINĂU, 2024

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Thesis defense will take place on **April 10th, 2024**, at **2.00 p.m.** in the session of the Commission for public defense of the doctoral thesis in arts within the Academy of Music, Theatre and Fine Arts: 87 A. Mateevici St., aud. 45, Chişinău, Republic of Moldova, MD 2009.

Thesis and Abstract may be consulted in the National Library of the Republic of Moldova (78 A August 31, 1989 St., Chişinău, Republic of Moldova, MD 2012), in the library of the Academy of Music, Theatre and Fine Arts (87 A. Mateevici St., reading room, Chişinău, Republic of Moldova, MD 2009), as well as on the websites <https://www.anacec.md> and <http://amtap.md>

The thesis abstract was sent out on March “_____”, 2024.

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CONCEPTUAL LANDMARKS OF THE RESEARCH

Actuality and importance of the research problem. In the cultural-artistic environment of the Republic of Moldova, professional choral singing enjoys a special place due to the traditions cultivated and assimilated in the region, but also thanks to its spread and development through the permanent activity of choirs within national-level profile institutions. Among the landmarks worthy of nomination at the present time are: The Academic Choral Chapel *Doina*, the Choir of The National Theater of Opera and Ballet *Maria Bieșu*, the National Chamber Choir, the Choral Chapel *Moldova*.

With reference to the appearance and development in our country of the chamber choir as a special type of choral formation, the studied data attests that there is not a sufficiently developed prehistory, and until the establishment of the National Chamber Choir, chamber choirs were only with the title of amateur. A first attempt to organize a chamber choir dates back to 1928, in Tiraspol (the then capital of RASSM) by the musician Nicolai S. Nenev, the choir consisted of 15–20 people. In 1930, the Choir was transferred to Chisinau to merge with the Symphony Choir led by V. Bulîciov within the *Doina* choral studio led by the well-known conductor from Odesa, K. K. Pigrov. The organization of this collective constituted an impetus for the evolution of the national choral art, but at the same time it suspended, for several more decades, the tendency to initiate some traditions of chamber choir singing.

The idea of founding a chamber choral collective in Moldova was launched and realized much later by the conductor Efim Bogdanovschi, who in 1972 formed the first Chamber Choir of the SSMR within The Trade Unions' Palace of Culture. Later, the model of such a choir was taken over by two disciples of the master: Valentina Boldurat, by organizing the Chamber Choir *Credo*, within the MAI (1995) and Natalia Barabanscicova by forming the Youth Chamber Choir *Rapsodia* (1998).

Among the mentioned groups, the National Chamber Choir (hereafter NCC) is the first and only professional chamber choir in the Republic of Moldova which was founded in 2002 as an artistic collective alongside the *Union Fenosa* Cultural Foundation of the private company of the same name. The initiative belongs to the then director of the above-mentioned company, patron Ignacio Ibarra — a personality with a noble education and an ardent lover of choir art. As conductor and artistic director was elected Iona Stepan, the head of the Academic Choir Conducting department of the Academy of Music, Theater and Fine Arts and the conductor of the Department's Mixed Student Choir. Although it enjoys a high appreciation on a national and international level and has a multilateral activity, a vast and varied repertoire, including the opuses of national composers, until now the NCC has not found its reflection in the research of national

musicologists, a fact that prompted us to study in detail the history, the repertoire, the concert activity and its specific interpretation.

The purpose of the investigation is to substantiate the role of the NCC in the valorization of autochthonous choir creation. Achieving this goal provides for the accomplishment of several **objectives**: determining the interpretive specifics of the chamber chorak formation; the brief reconstruction of the history of chamber choir singing in the Republic of Moldova; the multifaceted presentation of the NCC's artistic image and the appreciation of its role in promoting national music for choir; reviewing the artistic evolution of the NCC's leader, conductor I. Stepan; carrying out the complex analysis of the most representative choral creations signed by Moldovan composers from the NCC's repertoire; elucidation of the language and compositional procedures used in the analyzed creations; highlighting the specifics of the use of folklore in chamber choir music from the Republic of Moldova; revealing interpretive peculiarities and technical problems in the analyzed creations; proposing ways to overcome them, extracted from the repetitive process of the NCC.

The novelty and scientific originality of the thesis. The originality of the thesis is appreciated according to the multiple elements of its content: for the first time in autochthonous musicology, chamber choral creation is taken into consideration through the prism of its current interpretation by NCC; all the analyzed works were presented for the first time by the above-mentioned choir, and some of them for the first time became scientific objects, which allows the reconstruction of an integral image of the autochthonous choral repertoire; the thesis reveals important historical stages in the evolution of chamber choir art in the Republic of Moldova; characteristic features of chamber choir performance are researched and discovered; the forms of activity of contemporary chamber choirs are systematized and presented; a complex research method is used that involves both traditional musicological and stylistic-interpretative analysis of works made in accordance with the particularities of NCC's interpretation.

The obtained results contribute to the solution of an important scientific problem which consists in the scientific substantiation of the role of The National Chamber Choir in the promotion of autochthonous choral creation.

The theoretical importance of the thesis consists in elucidating and completing the concepts related to the specifics of the chamber choir, in general, but also of the NCC, in particular: *professional choral art; sound strategy; flexible voices; balanced sound; instrumental treatment of voices; artistic individuality; the theme of musical Hispanicity*. The theoretical-scientific contribution of the thesis is also manifested by the elucidation of some interpretive aspects characteristic of the chamber choir, the bringing to light of some particularities of interpretation of

the autochthonous choral repertoire, thus suppressing some confusions, assumptions or omissions in musicological science. Elaborating the analyzes of the choral scores allowed the elucidation of stylistic trends and the disclosure of the new creative conceptions of the composers from the Republic of Moldova. The systematization of the predominant genres in the NCC repertoire, the discovery of the image spheres of chamber choir music, as well as the practical suggestions derived from the work of the NCC under the leadership of I. Stepan constitute a valuable contribution to filling the existing gaps in the field of interpretive choral art.

The realization of the objectives of the work determined the research methodology of the synthetic nature. Thus, for the reconstruction of the evolution of chamber choral singing on the territory of our country, as well as that of the creative activity of the NCC and its conductor, directly, we resorted to the historical method. The study of the chamber choir art phenomenon, including the autochthonous choral creation, has put forward as a requirement the possession of an interdisciplinary theoretical base, focused on the overlap of different research methods. The empirical method was the basis of the accumulation and study of historical facts and scientific sources.

The complex analysis of the representative works from the national repertoire of the NCC required the synthesis of historical, empirical, analysis and synthesis methods. At the same time, the tools of several musical-theoretical disciplines were put to work, such as harmony, polyphony, theory of forms, theory of interpretive art, ethnomusicology, etc. The theoretical research methods interfered with those related to conducting practice and those aimed at vocal-choral interpretation techniques. The study and complex analysis of the creations of national composers involved the use of methods from the research field of linguistics, such as the lexical and semantic analysis of texts, thanks to which we were able to demonstrate the importance of the correlation between text and music, under the conditions of the mutual subordination of these two components in the analyzed scores.

Among the fundamental methods of scientific research, the observation helped us to reveal the operating principles of the NCC — as a type of chamber choral formation and to identify the artistic conception of the conductor I. Stepan regarding the treatment of the autochthonous creation for the choir, primordial, of the scores analyzed in the given thesis.

We mention that for the present research, the method of participatory observation played an essential role, since the author as an observer integrated in the NCC collective during 17 years of activity got to know, in depth, its existential specificity in order to create an image of it, with true, authentic NCC research as an object of musicological study is characterized as a qualitative approach under the aspect of the studied reality, highlighting unique, particular aspects of the

collective's activity. The principles and methodological strategies used gave priority to the comprehensive approach, from the inside, of unique phenomena, such as ways of practicing and solving interpretive difficulties encountered in the rehearsal process, capturing unique and unrepeatable moments of creation, etc. In the research process, the inductive method served as a support for data collection and analysis, for identifying research problem and presenting findings. The deductive method was the basis of the conception of the research problem, the elaboration of the investigation plan and the formulation of the conclusions.

The applicative value of the work. The thesis can serve as a basis for further scientific research dedicated to the national choral art. It can be used as teaching material in artistic education institutions for the subjects *History and theory of choral art, Methodology of choral interpretation, Choral practice, Choral class, Choral conducting*. The materials of the present work can be used by specialists from various fields: scientific, pedagogical, compositional, interpretative. The results of the research can be of real use in the work of choir conductors, in the process of establishing the choral repertoire and in that of the methods of interpretation of the creations. The works presented in the premiere can constitute a repertory base for other choral collectives, and the analysis carried out by the author can serve as a landmark of an artistic interpretation deciphered in this study.

Approval of the obtained results. The thesis was carried out within the Doctoral School of the Academy of Music, Theater and Fine Arts and was discussed during the meetings of the *Musicology, Composition and Jazz* department and at the meeting of the Profile Scientific Seminar in specialty 653.01 – *Musicology*. The results of the scientific research presented in the thesis were reflected in 9 publications and in the author's communications at the international scientific conferences organized by the Academy of Music, Theater and Fine Arts together with the *Mihai Eminescu* Romanian Cultural Institute, the Institute of Cultural Heritage and the Academy of Sciences of Moldova.

The volume and structure of the thesis: introduction, three chapters, general conclusions and recommendations, bibliography of 303 titles, 2 appendices (the table of creations of local composers from the NCC repertoire and the list of audio and video recordings of the NCC), 152 pages of the basic text, 25 musical examples and 10 tables.

Keywords: The National Chamber Choir, professional choral art, the specifics of the chamber choir, national choral music, methods of treating the choir, interpretive stylistics.

The author of this thesis expresses deep gratitude for the support and dedication of the late musicologist, **Dr., Univ. Prof. Galina Cocearova**, under whose guidance a substantial part of the present research was carried out. With special appreciation for professional choral art, throughout

her life she was present at, absolutely, all the concerts of the collective. The theme of the present research was an idea suggested by Mrs. G. Coccarova, in addition, the analytical sketches of the creations present in the given work, to a large extent, were carried out with her contribution.

THE CONTENT OF THE THESIS

The introduction determines the topicality and importance of the investigated problem, outlines the purpose and objectives of the work, summarizes the research methodology, reveals the novelty and scientific originality of the thesis, identifies the theoretical significance and the applicative value in this case, the presentation of information regarding the approval of the scientific results obtained.

In the first chapter entitled **Chamber Choir as an object of musicological study**, various aspects related to the study of the situation in the field of research are analyzed. Thus, subchapter **1.1. The evolution of the national choral art reflected in contemporary musicology** is focused on materials belonging to the autochthonous musicology regarding the establishment of the choral art in the territory of the Republic of Moldova, the stages of development and the prominent figures who shaped it. Among the authors who contributed considerably to the research of the targeted issue, we will nominate E. Nagacevschi, G. Ciaicovschi-Mereșanu, A. Boldur, G. Breazul, O. L. Cosma, D. Popovici, E. Mironenco, V. Melnic, L. Balaban, T. Danița etc.

The chapter *Evolution of National Choral Art in the 20th Century* signed by E. Nagacevschi in the collective monograph *Musical Art from the Republic of Moldova: History and Contemporaneity* offers us a panoramic view of national choral music, based on the historical principle, on the one hand, and on the delimitation of the sacred choral creation from the secular one, on the other hand. All stages of the evolution of choral art in the Republic of Moldova are presented in detail here. The stage of the establishment of choral art in the Bessarabian territory at the confluence of the XIX–XX is studied by T. Danița, whose work presents important data regarding the activity of amateur choirs of the time and their repertoire, methods of carrying out rehearsals, prominent personalities, etc.

With reference to the stage of affirmation of the autochthonous choral art and the notorious personalities in the field, both authors mentioned above, including the earlier researchers G. Breazul and L. Axionova, dedicated biographical studies to the conductor and composer G. Musicescu.

Alongside these, there are also the studies aimed at the contribution of the composer and conductor M. Berezovschi to the evolution of the national choral art signed by E. Nagacevschi, V. Boldurat, H. Barbanoi.

Subchapter **1.2. From the history of choral collectives, including the National Chamber Choir, and choir conductors from the Republic of Moldova** it is dedicated to the activity of choral collectives, as well as choir conductors from our country who influenced the development and evolution of choral art, including chamber art. Although these aspects are rather little reflected in the relevant literature, we still rely on existing dictionaries, encyclopedias and bibliographic editions.

The literature dedicated to national choir conductors from the second half of the 20th century – the beginning of the 21st century is modest enough, however, we can name at least two books related to the artistic activity of the “patriarchs” of choral creation from the Republic of Moldova — Efim Bogdanovschi and Gheorghe Strezev. The book of the famous choir conductor and pedagogue E. Bogdanovschi *О музыке, Con amore sempre!...*, published in 1998, belongs to the memoiristic genre containing a multitude of data, names, opinions, reflections of the conductor. In addition, the work contains some valuable observations of the conductor regarding the specifics of the chamber choir and his interpretation style based on his own experience.

The life and activity of another well-known representative of autochthonous choral art and pedagogy is described in Lidia Axionov's book *Георгии Стрезев: биографический очерк* (Gheorghe Strezev: Biographical Sketch). It contains data and memories of the author, which are supplemented by fragments of newspaper articles dedicated to the concerts and developments of the choral collectives led by Gh. Strezev, also gathering the memories of the conductor's contemporaries and disciples.

A separate layer of works is dedicated to local composers of the 20th century who simultaneously appeared as choir conductors, as an example serving the monographs signed by E. Moraru *Astral bells. The composer and conductor Teodor Zgureanu* and E. Gîrbu *The composer Vladimir Ciolac: Stylistic orientations in creation with religious themes*. In these sources it is eloquently demonstrated that the conducting side not only represents a component part of the artistic personality of the mentioned composers, but also directly determines their predilection for choral music genres. In these sources, certain visions of the authors regarding the interpretative style of the mentioned personalities are also outlined.

If we refer to the study of the activity of **The National Chamber Choir of the Republic of Moldova** and its **artistic director, the conductor I. Stepan**, we must admit that being one of the most representative professional level models in our country, the collective, however, did not enjoy the attention of autochthonous musicology. At the current stage, there are only some publications or concert chronicles in newspapers and media magazines, appearing in different periodical editions. Most of the sources are of a factual nature, the only exception being the article

Captiva muzicii corale (Captive of choral music) signed by G. Cocearova, in which the author reveals some characteristic features of the conducting style of I. Stepan.

The following subsection **1.3. Aspects of choral interpretation in the view of contemporary researchers** refers to the aspects of choral music interpretation as a separate branch of the theory and history of interpretative art, treated in various works, whose authors are conductors and theorists from the Republic of Moldova, from Romania, from the post-Soviet space, including, from the Russian Federation, from the countries of Europe and the USA. In addition, we consulted several extensive sources in English by H. Wilson, H. Higgings, D. Neuen, D. Jansson, B. Elstad, E. Doving. Among all, we will highlight two researches: *Choral Technique and Interpretation* by H. Coward and *Choral Techniques* by G. H. Lamb, both offering us an exhaustive treatment of various aspects related to choral technique, interpretive nuances, practical recommendations etc. In the same context, the *Treatise on Choral Singing and Conducting* signed by D. D. Botez is included, a work dedicated to all aspects of choral singing and conducting, including the specifics of the chamber choir.

Turning to the scientific and methodical sources from the Soviet and post-Soviet space, we must state that some of them still retain their scientific and didactic value. Among them we will list: *Хор и управление им* (Choir and its Management) by P. Cesnokov, *Руководство хором* (Choir Management) by C. Pigrov, *Хороведение и хоровуправление* (Choir Conducting and Choir Management) by G. Dmitrevski, *Работа над дикцией в хоре* (The Work on Diction in the Choir) by K. Vinogradov etc. I. Batiuk, in her work *Современная хоровая музыка: теория и исполнение. Essays*. (Contemporary Choral Music: Theory and Interpretation. Essays) systematizes and substantiates her own experience of her activity in the Chamber Choir of the Moscow Conservatory under the guidance of the famous artistic director and conductor B. Tevlin.

In Romanian musicology, it is worth analyzing the contribution of S. Gelman-Kiss, the author of several reference works, such as *Stylistic and Conducting Aspects regarding Romanian Choral Creation in the Second Half of the 20th Century*; *Imitative Polyphony in Contemporary Romanian Choral Creation*; *Modern Choral Timbrality: Analytical Applications to the Romanian Choral Creation from the Period 1960–1980*. The exhaustive edition belonging to D. Popovici, *Romanian Choral Music*, which contains new material regarding a wide list of personalities from different generations who contributed to the development of Romanian choral art starting from the second part of the 19th century to the 1960s. cannot go unnoticed either.

A separate group of sources represents the analysis of new choral performance procedures, such as *Новые приемы хорового исполнительства* (New Procedures in Choral Performance)

signed by B. Tevlin and the article signed by Iu. Holopov *Как петь новую музыку XX века* (How to Sing the New Music of the 20th Century).

The subchapter **1.4.** refers to **The national compositional creation for the choir in the view of modern musicology.** In the process of analyzing autochthonous choral creation, a solid methodological support is represented by V. Axionov's book *Stylistic Trends in Compositional Creation from the Republic of Moldova (instrumental music)*, in which the author proposes a multidimensional system for analyzing the stylistic aspects of autochthonous compositional creation based on the correlation of three categories: national, regional and universal, also implementing the notions of individual style and synthetic style. This system can easily be extrapolated to choral music.

V. Galaicu's monography *The Ethnic Dimension of Musical Creation (in the Light of the Romanian Tradition)* aims to determine the ethnic specificity of musical creation. Having a synthesis approach, based on studies belonging to musicology, philosophy, ethnography and ethnopsychology, the author describes the "romanian stylistic matrix" which combines different components, such as: "spatial vision", "time horizon", "the sense of movement" and "the romanian feeling of destiny". The scientific concept developed by the author can also be revealed in the creations present in the repertoire of the National Chamber Choir

Subchapter **1.5.** presents **Conclusions in chapter 1.**

1. After studying the relevant sources, we can state that the works in question have a considerable cognitive potential and contribute to the formation of a methodology relevant and appropriate to the theme of our thesis. Although we have revealed the presence of a fairly broad and well-developed methodological base, we can observe the fact that the role of NCC in the valorization of the national repertoire is not studied in national musicology. The authors' observations on the interpretative style of the NCC, the special musicological works dedicated to the choral creations included in the repertoire of the collective in question, require an analysis, systematization, generalization.

2. This argumentation leads us to the formulation of **the scientific problem proposed for solution**, which resides in the scientific substantiation of the NCC's role in the promotion of national choir music. Studying the artistic evolution, the repertoire, the interpretative style of the above-mentioned collective is a complex process that led to the establishment of the interpretative specificity of the NCC in the panorama of contemporary national choral art. At the same time, through the present research, the discrepancy between the indisputable artistic value and the important contribution of NCC to the propagation of autochthonous choral music and the insufficiency of their scientific research was removed.

3. Due to its centuries-old traditions, today choral music represents one of the most developed fields of professional interpretative art. Its development under the influence of various socio-cultural factors slowed down the process of emergency and development of this branch of musical culture. Unfortunately, the field of choral art is not sufficiently reflected in the studies of local musicologists. The scientific approach to the specifics of chamber choral singing remains, in fact, the *tabula rasa* of national science. In this context, the importance of the theme of our thesis is stated.

4. Regarding the national creation for choir at the contemporary stage, including that for chamber choir, we can appreciate the existence of a complex branch of scientific sources, in which different aspects of it are treated. In the works signed by local musicologists, we can find valuable observations and conclusions with reference to the stylistic and gender aspects of the targeted creations, the specifics of the compositional language, the architectural procedures, the treatment of the genres of church music of Western tradition (Catholic worship) and Eastern (Orthodox church worship), the assimilation of folk genres and, more broadly, of folk thought. These targeted sources provide us with some valuable methodological tools for the analysis of the national music creation at the contemporary stage.

5. Regarding the interpretative aspect, we must state the fact that here we find a significant discrepancy between a fairly large volume of existing sources dedicated to the theory or methodical aspects of choral interpretation and the lack of works by musicologists or native performers, which would concretely study the specifics of interpreting contemporary choral art. Synthesis of theory with contemporary national practice, thorough professional study of the experience of local choirs and conductors is a primary task of music science at the current stage.

The second chapter is dedicated to **The National Chamber Choir: history of the choir, repertory, artistic achievements**. The emergence of NCC is due to essential transformations of national cultural realities at the beginning of the 21st century. The *Union Fenosa* Choir was the first private artistic collective in the Republic of Moldova, which later changed from its initial status to the current one, becoming a state-funded formation — the National Chamber Choir — which operates within the public institution Organ Hall. In the group's activity we distinguish two periods, namely: March 2002 – January 2005 when the Choir operates under the auspices of the *Union Fenosa* Cultural Foundation; from January 2006 – until now, the group becoming a state artistic collective. The detailed trajectory of the NCC evolution carried out within the given chapter is based on the chronological principle.

Subchapter **2.1.** is entitled ***Union Fenosa* Choir (2002–2005)**.

The collective's beginnings are closely related to the *Union Fenosa Cultural Foundation (UFCF)* created on September 26, 2000 with the aim of carrying out a philanthropic activity; in 2002 the foundation moved from supporting separate musical events to establishing, for the first time in Moldova, a private chamber choir. Officially, the *Union Fenosa Choir (UFC)* was established on March 18, 2002, bringing together 34 young artists, students and graduates of the State University of Arts (currently AMTAP). The collective's first concerts took place on July 6 and 7 2002, confirming the collective's popularity on a national level.

The relatively short but fruitful period of operation of the targeted collective within the *UFCF* brought its fame in the country and abroad. *UFCF* promoted professional choral art, holding concerts in the capital of the Republic of Moldova and in various localities, took part in socio-cultural solemnities of national and European significance, released three *CDs of a cappella* choral music. The choir's concerts were presented in the form of charity acts, being an investment of the company in the cultural development of the Republic of Moldova. An important event in the collective's evolution took place on April 25, 2003, when, on the occasion of the Holy Easter holiday, F. Liszt's *Requiem* for male choir was performed, for the first time in Chisinau. Next it was the cantata *Cine scutură roua* (Who shakes the dew) for soloists, choir and orchestra by V. Zagorschi, on popular lyrics in the arrangement of Gr. Vieru, with the participation of the National Symphony Orchestra.

Another tradition established by *UFC* was the annual organization of concerts dedicated to *Hispanic Day* — October 12, during which creations of Spanish composers or with Spanish themes were addressed. This direction of the choir's activity was developed through the interpretation of the works of J. Ma Benavente, J. Rodrigo, M. Teresa Oller, J. Guridi, A. Hose, E. L. Chavarri, E. Sanches Fuentes, R. Noble, F. Alonso.

The assimilation of the Spanish repertoire also served as an impulse for *UFC*'s involvement in international tours and competitions. We will briefly list the collective's performances on an international level. Between September 18–22, 2002, *UFC* participates in the *International Choral Festival Europe and its Songs*, the 5th edition, which took place in Barcelona, where it won three important awards: *The Best Choir in the Mixed Choir Category* (up to 40 persons); the title of *The Best Conductor*, awarded to Mrs. I. Stepan; additionally, *UFC* won the *Grand Prize* as *The Best Choir of the Festival*.

In December 2002 *UFC* together with the Madrid Philharmonic Orchestra participated in a Christmas concert under the baton of the Spanish conductor Pascual Osa. On April 15, 2003, *UFC* took part in the concerts organized at the Real Iglesia de San Gines in Madrid, and in August 2004 — within the *International Festival of Habanere and Polyphony*, the 50th edition, Torrevieja.

We will add the *International Romantic Music Interpretation Competition*, held in 2003 in Vlahovo Brezi, Czech Republic, which brought the *Grand Prize* in the Mixed Choirs category, *Best Male Choir Award*; and the *Best Conductor Award* awarded to Mrs. I. Stepan. On November 15, 2003 UFC was invited to participate in the *Choral Music Competition in Avilés*, Asturias, and on December 30, 2003, — at the *New Year's Concert* in the Spanish city of La Coruña, together with the Symphony orchestra from Galicia.

So, within the first stage of existence, UFC formed a distinctive interpretative style; manifested itself on a national and international level; *the historical-stylistic directions of the repertoire* were drawn: pre-classical, classical, romantic, contemporary music; *a genuistic palette of the repertoire* was established (from the choral miniature — to the vocal-symphonic genres of proportions: *passion, requiem, oratorio, cantata*); choral creations signed for different compositions were approached — *a cappella*, with the accompaniment of organ, piano, orchestra, vocal-symphonic with the involvement of soloists. Under *the aspect of expanding the limits of academic music*, the specifics of the choir can be explained by the interest in non-academic music — be it folk songs (*habanera, carols, spirituals*), jazz music, *tango*, etc. There is an predilection towards the Spanish repertoire, towards *the theme of Hispanicity* was revealed.

The subchapter **2.2.** is addressed to **The National Chamber Choir (2006 – until now)**.

In January 2006, the collective of the *Union Fenosa* Choir was officially hired by the State Enterprise Organ Hall in Chisinau. New directions of activity of the choir also appeared, such as participation in artistic events organized in other cultural institutions, propagation of choral singing in the localities of the Republic of Moldova. In 2011, by order of the Government of the Republic of Moldova, the Organ Hall State Institution obtained the status of "national institution" and intrinsically the group was given the well-deserved title of National Chamber Choir, being the first and only professional chamber choral group in the country.

In the context of the NCC's active promotion of national choral creation, we mention the collective's involvement in multiple events organized at the Organ Hall in Chisinau. Thus, on October 6, 2006, in the concert with the title *From the Creation of Moldovan Composers* devoted to the *International Day of Music*, the following creations were performed: *Meditation* for mixed choir by T. Zgureanu, *Norii* (Clouds) by Z. Tkaci on lyrics by A. Roșca and 2 fragments from cantata *Cine scutură roua* (Who Shakes the Dew) by V. Zagorschi.

At the Jubilee evening of the composer and conductor V. Ciolac that took place on November 21, 2006, *Magnificat* for soloists, choir, organ and strings was performed. On May 16, 2008 NCC participated in *The Memorial Evening of Zlata Tkaci*, performing three choral miniatures on the lyrics of A. Roșca — *Arșită* (Scorching Heat), *Norii* (Clouds) and *Dulce plai*

(Sweet Leap). On November 10, 2011 two major works were performed for the absolute premiere: the choral cycle *Descânțece* by I. Iachimciuc and Carmina Daciae *De la Tiras până la Tissa* (From Tiras to Tissa) by T. Chiriac.

Another direction of activity of the NCC is the complete interpretation of lyrical masterpieces in a concert version, as an example serving two concerts held on September 20 and 21, 2006 with the presentation of the opera *Die Zauberflöte* by W. A. Mozart. The project was led by the British conductor C. Ward. On January 26–27, 2011, the public of the capital got to know, for the first time, the opera *La Clemenza di Tito* by W. A. Mozart in a concert version.

Another field of activity of the NCC, atypical for an academic music collective, presents the recording of the advertising spot of the *Moldcell* mobile phone company with the involvement of the choristers and the conductor of the collective, as sound material, the choral miniature *Ciocârlia* (The Lark), in the arrangement of I. Enache, is being chosen.

Genres of choral music of the Catholic tradition in the NCC's repertoire include, in fact, masterpieces of universal and national music of a wide historical-stylistic variety. On February 9, 2006, the oratorio *Messiah* by G. F. Händel was performed, in collaboration with the conductor C. Ward from Great Britain, on September 27, 2007, in the opening concert of the 2007–2008 season, the public was introduced to the *Lumières — Messe baroque du 21-ème siècle* for soprano, contralto (countertenor), chorus and orchestra by J. Loussier, Conductor C. Florea.

Sacred music of the Orthodox tradition is omnipresent in the NCC's repertoire, being exhibited in various concerts and festivals. For example, we will bring the programs of two *Sacred Music Concerts* presented on April 5, 2007 and April 26, 2021, respectively, both containing valuable creations of Russian composers: *К Богородице прилежно* (K Bogoroditse prilejno)...by A. Greceaninov, *Ныне силы небесныя* (Nine Sili Nebesniye) by N. Golovanov, *С высших призирая...* (S vishnih priziraya) by A. Arkhangelski, as well as the cycle for a *cappella* choir *Песнопения и молитвы* (Pesnopeniya i molitvi) by Gh. Sviridov.

Within subchapter **2.3. The artistic profile of the conductor Ilona Stepan** is studied the evolution of the professional career of the conductor Ilona Stepan, starting with university and post-graduate studies, as well as her rich creative and managerial potential, the manner of communication with the choristers and many other aspects.

Subchapter **2.4.** contains **Conclusions in chapter 2.**

The materials accumulated and exposed in chapter 2 allow us to state that NCC is a mature artistic collective that demonstrates an unprecedented evolution in the socio-cultural conditions of the Republic of Moldova in the last two decades. In a very short period NCC has demonstrated a

high level of interpretive mastery — both in the Republic of Moldova and on the international level.

1. The uniqueness of NCC is confirmed by the presence of a variety in the genuistic and stylistic palette of the repertoire, by its volume and versatility, by the trophies obtained at various prestigious international competitions, by assimilating some fields of choral art previously unexplored in the Republic of Moldova.

2. The evolution of the NCC demonstrated the appropriation of all types of artistic activity. The choir performs in concerts and festivals — both national and international, participates in various competitions, records and performs national and international premieres. The NCC has proven an indisputable flexibility in the interpretation of the repertoire within different interpretative compositions: from *a cappella* choral concerts, concerts with accompaniment (piano, organ, two pianos), as part of a vocal-instrumental chamber composition (with different instrumental groups, an eloquent example in this regard being *Carmina Burana* by C. Orff) and ending with the vocal-symphonic concerts held together with a symphony orchestra and soloists.

3. In addition, NCC members together with its leader are part of international opera projects, participating as choristers and, respectively, I. Stepan as a choir master in staging the universal lyrical repertoire. Here we distinguish three different forms. The first consists in the interpretation of fragments and choral scenes from the works of P. Tchaikovsky (*Мазена, Пиковая дама*); A. Borodin (*Князь Игорь*); G. Verdi (*Nabucco, Macbeth*); G. Bizet (*Carmen*); R. Wagner (*Lohengrin, Tannhäuser*). The second type of exploitation of the lyrical repertoire by the NCC consists in the complete interpretation of the works in the concert version. Thus, *Die Zauberflöte, La Clemenza di Tito* by W. A. Mozart, *Mozart and Salieri* by N. Rimski-Korsakov and others were presented on the stage of the Organ Hall with the participation of NCC. The third aspect of NCC's existence in the world of lyrical theater is the participation, fully, in the process of mounting and stage interpretation of lyrical masterpieces.

Enjoying beautiful experiences in this field, the collective presents performances directed in both classical traditions and in a modernized vision. The first experiences in the opera genre were focused on classical productions — *Il barbiere di Siviglia* by G. Rossini (Switzerland, May 2007), *Nabucco* by G. Verdi (Switzerland, November 2007) and others. We exemplify what was said before by the participation of the NCC collective and I. Stepan as choir master in the staging of the opera *Mazepa* by P. Tchaikovsky as part of an international creative team, together with the *Gaiety Theater* troupe from Ireland and soloists from the *Mariinsky Theater* in St. Petersburg and the *Bolshoi Theatre* in Moscow, Russia, under the baton of Belarusian conductor Alexander Anisimov. In the autumn season of 2009, the premiere of the opera *Macbeth* by G. Verdi was

launched under the direction of Dieter Kaegi, this time with soloists from Canada, the USA, Austria; the conductor being Marco Zambelli from Italy.

4. NCC's experiences in the field of the opera genre show a less specific side for chamber choral collectives. The participation of choristers as opera artists requires the development of skills in stage movement, dance, acting. However, the high professional training, the enthusiasm of the conductor and the choristers contributed to the assimilation of this form of activity which, rightly, enriched the artistic spectrum of the NCC collective and its leader.

5. Another side of the NCC activity is manifested by making audio recordings right from its initiation stage. Then, with the financial support of the *Union Fenosa* Foundation, three *CDs* appeared, the first of which contains the *live* recording of the debut concert; the second is dedicated to the *Requiem* for male choir by F. Liszt; and the third *CD* includes a program of choral entertainment which, likewise, constitutes the *live* recording made during the concert. The NCC's prints directly at the time of its performances, undoubtedly, certify his high technical and artistic skills and serve as a testimony to the interpretive quality offered to the public.

6. On the one hand, NCC has an extremely important role, being like a laboratory of practical artistic experiences for young generations of choristers and conductors. Based on the materials of the respective chapter, we affirm that several creations of proportions studied under the guidance of Mrs. I. Stepan were later performed under the baton of other conductors, especially those who represent the younger generation of conductors from the Republic of Moldova.

7. On the other hand, NCC has become an interpretative platform for musicians from abroad, a fact confirmed by multiple collaborations with renowned European conductors. Among them we mention: Patrick Strub, Germany; Didier Talpain, Pierre Migard, Christiane Portois, France; Crispin Ward, UK; C. Florea, Romania, Germany, currently established in the Republic of Moldova.

The chapter three is entitled **The autochthonous repertoire of the National Chamber Choir as a model for promoting national choral creation.**

The subchapter **3.1.** refers to **The creations of composers from the Republic of Moldova in the NCC's repertoire.** In the interpretive choir practice of the Republic of Moldova, the music of national composers is released periodically during regular concerts, premieres planned during the seasons or festivals *New Music Days*, *The Young Composers Competition*, *The International Choral Music Festival*, the choral festival *A ruginit furnza din vii* (The Leaf from the Vines has Rusted), creative evenings or jubilee concerts of composers.

In this regard, the genres of choral-symphonic music that belong to the Catholic cult are presented by the works of the composer V. Ciolac. Among them we list *Salve Regina* for mixed choir and soprano; *Magnificat* for choir, soloists, organ and string orchestra; *Requiem* for mixed

choir, soloists and orchestra, *Stabat Mater* for mixed choir and string orchestra and *Mass* for soloists, choir, string orchestra and organ. We add the only work of proportions that belongs to the Orthodox cult, namely *Всенощное бдение* (Vespers) by V. Ciolac.

Among the broad secular creations we distinguish the cantata *Cine scătură roua* (Who Shakes the Dew) by V. Zagorschi for choir, soloists and orchestra; *Chamber Symphony* for choir and orchestra and *Veritatis, absolutae ultimum verbum*, for choir and chamber orchestra by O. Palymski. The neo-folkloric choral cycles signed by T. Chiriac stand out — the cantata *De la Tiras pân' la Tissa* (From Tiras to Tissa) for mixed choir and group of chordophones, the musical fairy tale *Carmina Daciae* for the narrator, children's choir and small symphony orchestra written on verses by Gr. Vieru, short prose by S. Vangheli. They are joined by the *Descântece* (Enchantments) cycle on folk verses by I. Iachimciuc, the cantata *Oda devenirii* (Ode to Becoming) by Gh. Ciobanu on the D. Matcovschi's text *Acolo* (There).

Among the secular miniatures, both academic genres are distinguished, such as *Improvizație moldavă* (Moldavian Improvisation) by V. Zagorschi, *Arșiță* (Scorching Heat), *Norii* (Clouds), *Dulce plai* (Sweet Leap), *Lacul albastru* (Blue Lake), *Norii* (Clouds) by Z. Tkaci, *Meditație* (Meditation), *Ninge* (It Snows) by T. Zgureanu and the madrigal *Lumineze stelele* (Light up the Stars) for mixed choir by Gh. Mustea, as well as popular genres represented by *Dor, dorule* (Longing, Longing) and *Stăncuța* (The Daw) by G. Musicescu, *Ciocârlia* (The Lark) by I. Enache, *Puiul mamei* (Mother's Child) by C. Rusnac, etc.

The supchapter **3.2.** is dedicated to **The genre of choral miniature from the national compositional creation in the NCC repertoire.** In the first compartment **3.2.1.** of the subchapter **3.2.** are highlighted **the Procedures of instrumental treatment of the miniature choir *Ciocârlia* (The Lark) by Ion Enache.**

Having its origin in the fiddle art, *Ciocârlia* is one of the creations that identify the richness and beauty of national folklore. *Ciocârlia* signed by I. Enache preserves the authenticity of the melodic line, getting as close as possible to its original sound, being transposed for vocal interpretation. Written in a free form, the work consists of four sections and a *coda*.

From the very beginning, the choral texture is distinguished by a rhythmic-intonational stratification of the voices, so that each part has its role, and their movement constitutes the imitation of a certain instrument in the folk music orchestra. The sopranos certainly imitate the violins, through a movement structured in octaves in the *allegro* tempo that requires a *non-vibrato* manner of vocal delivery. The use of a light, narrow and sharp sound on the syllables *di-ri-di-ri* is stimulated by the vowel *i* which naturally gives the vowel sound the aforementioned qualities.

Conceived for an instrumental interpretation, the piece *Ciocârlia* does not have a literary text, the idea of creation being developed on the basis of typical nature sounds and noises. The author tackles a set of syllables, which he invents himself in order to enrich the sound material, but also to enhance the effect of the interpretation.

In the sound score of the miniature, non-musical sounds are also revealed, lacking indications of precise or approximate pitch, either deaf consonants (*s* imitates the whisper of the spring) or sonorous ones (*vj* imitates the roar of the wind). The composer includes several methods of imitating the sonority of folk instruments that must be played properly by choristers through vocally performed *glissando*, folk melismatics, etc.

The second compartment of the subchapter **3.2.** is **3.2.2.** and it refers to **Exploring vocal-choral procedures as means of treating the carol genre in the creation *Colo sus, colo mai jos* (Up There, Down There) by Dumitru Belinschi.**

The choral miniature *Colo sus, colo mai jos* signed by D. Belinschi is intended as a score for a *cappella* male choir for four voices with *divisi* up to eight voices. Conceptually, the piece stirs up more distant layers of the folk carol genre through the content and form of the verses which present an expression of the popular speech in dialectical notation, as well as through the chorus *Florile dalbe*. The creation is built in a strophic-variant form, specific to Romanian folklore. The variational principle is reflected in the structure of the theme composed of two motifs and an accompanying *zum-zum* layer which contributes to the unification of the lyrics.

The third compartment of the subchapter **3.2.–3.2.3.** is entitled **The text-music correlation in the miniature *Norii* (Clouds) by Zlata Tkaci on the lyrics written by Agnesa Roșca.**

The score *Norii* signed by Z. Tkaci is distinguished by the depth of the composer's inner feelings reflected in the poetic message sent by A. Roșca. A rich spectrum of images is framed in a tripartite form of type *A A1 A2 codetta*, which, from a certain objective, ensures intonational and modal-harmonic development, at the same time, contributes to the preservation of an unchanged psychological state.

The compositional mastery of Z. Tkaci is manifested through the skillful correlation of the poetic text with the musical one. Four quatrains of the poem are treated loosely in relation to musical architecture. Thus, in the initial section *A*, the first two quatrains of the poetic text are involved, and in the following, the literary text is subjected to deconstruction: the composer uses the procedure of repeating some phrases, and towards the end of the miniature, some words, through which the initial poetic structure is destroyed, creating a separate plane in relation to the musical composition.

The composer's advanced modal-tonal thinking is based on the frequent changes of tonal centers on the one hand, and on the preservation of the modal structure on the other. The extremes of the universe (“ the sky” and “ the sea”) are rendered by sustaining the double-octave organ point in the sopranos and basses — a less typical pairing for the choir, but so appropriate for creating this soundscape.

The subchapter **3.3. Large cyclic genres signed by national composers in the NCC repertoire** contains two compartments, including **3.3.1. The treatment of choral techniques in the *Descântece* (The Enchantments) cycle by Igor Iachimciuc.**

The *Descântece* cycle signed by I. Iachimciuc was written in May 1997, during his studies at the State University of Arts in Chişinău, under the guidance of the renowned composer V. Zagorschi. The integral character of the *Descântece* cycle is determined by its attachment to Romanian ritualistic folklore, frequently encountered in contemporary compositional creation.

Through the popular genre of enchantment, the composer I. Iachimciuc awakens, discovers and exploits the rich values rooted in popular music. The composer not only unites the multiple aspects of the pagan rite: the narration, the direct and indirect command, the comparison, the gradation, but also synthesizes several types of charms: “disenchantment” procedure pursues several purposes: “to untie”, “to bind”, “for predestined” and “to make motleys” whose particularities he reveals in a cyclical form structured in five parts, a form determined by the diversity of the selected texts. In essence, it presents the multilateral disclosure of one and the same rite — *enchantment*.

The interpretive possibilities of the choir are, in large measure, capitalized specifically in the development of the process of disenchantment. Here the polyphonic texture predominates, the voices being in a constant dialogue, which is often marked by the distribution of the elements of a certain theme, to several choral parts. The given procedure creates the effect of segmenting the melodic line, as a result, but it is reintegrated due to the successful interweaving of the voices. Sometimes the choral texture is based on the imitation of extramusical sounds in order to emphasize the magical aspects of the music.

From an architectural point of view, the opus presented focuses on the principle of cyclic form, carrying a unitary dramaturgical idea. A specific aspect of *Descântece* by I. Iachimciuc is the depiction of different hypostases of one and the same ritual — the enchantment. Viewed differently, the “disenchantment” procedure pursues several purposes: “to untie” (No. 1, 2), “to bind” (No. 4), “ for predestined” (No. 3) and “to make motleys” (No. 5).

The second compartment of subchapter **3.3.–3.3.2.** refers to the creation *De la Tiras pân' la Tissa* (From Tiras to Tissa) by Tudor Chiriac viewed analytically and interpretatively.

The creation for mixed choir, soloist and group of chordophones *De la Tiras pân' la Tissa* occupies an important place in the creation of the composer Tudor Chiriac, a prominent figure of contemporary musical culture in the Romanian area. The choir becomes a central performer (of the 12 component movements, 11 are choral and only one, in the form of *lamento*, involves the participation of the soloist (No. 5 *Vin flăcăi din străinie*) (The Lads are Coming from Abroad)).

Through choral resources, the development of musical discourse is achieved, involving the instrumental treatment of choral voices and innovative vocal processes that go beyond the area of musical intonation: the innovations of contemporary music are naturally combined with the language of Romanian folklore. The instrumental treatment of choral voices demonstrates the composer's intention to multiply the functions of the choir. Eloquent examples are presented in no. 6 *Cântec de voinicie* (Song of Bravery), where certain voices reproduce the sound of instruments that match their timbre, register and sound particularities, in general. The *soprano* and *alto* reproduce the effect of the sound of the trumpet, by saying the syllables *ta-ba-dam-pam-pam* in a consecutive display, the *bass* II imitates the trombones, supported by military tambouros with the help of the syllables *ta-ba-da-ba-da-ba-da*. *Drâmba* is imitated by *alto* on the syllable *biu*, pronounced nasally. Other examples of imitation of popular musical instruments are in no. 4 *I really miss my beloved*, where they imitate the cobza pie. In Song of Willpower (No. 6 *Cântec de voinicie*) there is the reproduction of three canines, performed by *soprano* II and *alto* II by means of non-sonorous onomatopoeias: *cii..*, *tss..*, *psss...* The score also involves various non-ordinary processes, such as non-musical, non-intonated sounds such as *glissando*, *Spreschstimme*, *clapping*, etc.

The subchapter **3.4.** contains **Conclusions in chapter 3.**

1. The use of folklore is a priority for contemporary musical composition, here, various folklore sources are found. Among the composers from the Republic of Moldova, T. Chiriac and I. Iachimciuc manifest two different visions of folklore, mostly reflected in the creations *De la Tiras pân' la Tissa* and *Descântece*, respectively. Their distinctive views of folklore led them to approach quite different folklore sources.

2. Thus, T. Chiriac used a peasant layer in which the theme of estrangement at different stages of life is also found, and I. Iachimciuc, therefore, resorted to an older source of popular tradition — enchantment — a specific form of pagan rite. Regarding the origin of the verses, *De la Tiras pân' la Tissa*, in addition to the authentic folklore texts, also includes processed models and even original verses from the poetry of local poets. In *Descântece*, on the contrary, the composer does not intervene to any extent on the popular texts, but even intends to highlight the genuine elements. More than that, with the aim of rendering their content and character as perfectly

as possible, he presents them in various forms and develops them through various technical methods. The composer also highlights several stages of enchantment: narration, direct and indirect command, comparison, gradation, etc. He synthesizes several types of charms: “to untie”, “to bind”, “for predestinated” and “to make motleys” whose particularities he reveals in a cyclical form structured in five parts.

3. The cyclical form is also realized in the work of T. Chiriac, which includes several movements based on the development of a common subject. The principle of the unitary form is a concern of both authors. Each of the above-mentioned opuses presents a dramaturgical idea developed in various poses that unite in a general conception. The completeness of the piece *De la Tiras pân' la Tissa* is due to the poem *Lai lăișor* written by Gr. Vieru presented in the extreme parts (I and XII) of the cycle — a balanced structure composed of two sub-cycles, divided by means of the solo number (No. 5 — Boys from Abroad are Coming). *Descântece* is structured on a pentapartite form, determined by the diversity of the selected texts, but in essence, they present the multilateral disclosure of one and the same object — the enchantment.

4. At the level of musical language, T. Chiriac uses quotes from the repertoire of professionals of the oral tradition. I. Iachimciuc, however denies from directly quoting musical examples, he reproduces the folkloric melody using some intonations, turns, modes, rhythms that reproduce specific sound effects, such as: the imitation of the rooster, the galloping of the horse, the flight of the “light bird” etc. Along with these, some extramusical elements such as clapping, shouting, whispering are displayed.

5. At the stylistic level, the means used for their exposure and development place *Descântece* in the stylistics of neo-folklorism. Some of the most characteristic elements used are the specific modes for the Balkan region, the chromatic and extended tonality, intonations and melodic turns representative of local folklore. In the presentation of the thematic material, the motivic technique, also specific to Romanian folklore, made according to the principles of micropolyphony persists. Often, thematic elements are exposed according to the *stretto* procedure.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research undertaken within the present thesis led to the solution of an important scientific problem which consists in substantiating the role of NCC in the promotion of autochthonous choral creation. By this, the given thesis makes its contribution to the liquidation of the discrepancy between the indisputable artistic value of the creative heritage of the National Chamber Choir, in general, and the national repertoire performed by this group, in particular, and completes the insufficiency of the scientific study of the NCC's contribution to culture national at the confluence of the 20th and 21st centuries.

The **scientific results** obtained consequently of the elaboration of this study are the following:

1. Conception of the creative profile of the National Chamber Choir, by establishing its history, repertoire and artistic achievements, which led to the confirmation of the concept of chamber choir as a special type of choir — a component branch of professional performing art. The specificity of the chamber choir, in general, but also of the NCC, in particular, is defined by certain characteristic notions: *sound strategy; flexible voices; balanced sound; mobility in creation; artistic individuality*, etc.

2. Demonstrating universalism as a characteristic direction of the NCC, a concept attributed both to the universality of the approached repertoire and to the multilaterality of its spheres of activity on a national and international level. Highlighting the repertoire of Spanish music and that signed by the composers of the Latin American countries as a unique feature, determined by the context in which the collective was formed and which generated the establishment of a particular direction, namely, the tendency towards the repertoire of Spanish music and, in a wider sense, towards *the theme of Hispanicity*.

3. Elaboration of the artistic profile of the artistic director and first conductor of the NCC — Iona Stepan. Defining her conducting style, by synthesizing the traditions and choral conducting schools followed: national, Soviet (Russian) and European (Romanian). The elucidation of the premises that determined the formation of I. Stepan's conducting style of a synthetic nature, by highlighting the vast concert experience, the multiple activities within the festivals, tours, projects, competitions, held in the countries of the European Union, to which are also added the collaborations with concert organizations international.

4. Enhancement, in the context of the analysis of the creations of national composers, of the language and compositional procedures used; highlighting the specifics of the use of folklore in the choral music from the Republic of Moldova; underline the traditional interpretive procedures and discovering the innovative ones; revealing the interpretive particularities of the studied creations.

5. Discovery, in the analyzed creations, several interpretive procedures — both traditional and innovative, such as various methods of treating the choir; the imitation by choristers of various onomatopoeic procedures and those of emitting extra-musical, unpitched sounds, which have the effect of widening the sound spectrum of the analyzed creations, on the one hand, but also capitalizing on the high-level interpretive possibilities of NCC, on the other side.

Among the most relevant **conclusions** obtained as a result of the research, we mention the following:

1. As a result of the given research regarding the artistic activity of the NCC, we demonstrated the following: the chamber choir is a special type of choir. It is more flexible, more select and differs from other categories of choirs in that it assigns itself a specific task — the implementation of a special sound strategy. Along with this, the need to identify the possibilities of each voice in particular, the creation of the uniform sonority of the individual choral groups and that of the choral *tutti* is outlined.

2. As a result of the research of the NCC's artistic career and activity, we deduced that the NCC's repertoire has universalism as its quality. It manifests itself in different ways: from the point of view of genres and forms, in terms of the stylistic affiliation of choral compositions and in terms of their assignment to one or another national school, etc. All these premises determined the accumulation of interpretation experience by the members of the choir and its conductor Ilona Stepan. This experience is also applied in the interpretation of the music of national composers.

Universalism is also manifested in NCC's activity throughout its history of over two decades, presenting itself through continuous experimentation of various types of extra — traditional activities. Among them we list: concert activity, recording of *live* performance, or *audio* and *video* in a studio, participation in international opera projects, involvement in shows with a program consisting of choral fragments of opera scenes, including the performance of choristers not only as singers but also as dramatic actors. We also highlight the contribution of NCC members in the poses of choristers and actors in the recordings of commercial spots.

In the same context of universalism, we also mention the treatment of the NCC as a creative laboratory for numerous foreign conductors, when the collective becomes a work platform for conductors belonging to different musical cultures, conducting schools and presenting various interpretative visions.

3. The artistic profile, development directions of the NCC, the interpretative specifics and the selection of the choir's repertoire are determined, to a large extent, by the talent and enormous work of the artistic director and first conductor of the NCC — Ilona Stepan. Her artistic evolution proves that as a conductor, she synthesized different traditions and schools of choral conducting: national, Soviet (Russian) and European (Romanian). The artistic personality of I. Stepan very organically combines the conducting technique inherited from the teachers-conductors C. Cobasnean and L. Axionova. The interpretative specificity, the attitude towards the repertoire, the mastery of rendering the sound and stylistic aspects of the choral composition, she took from Gh. Strezev. Thanks to her concert experience, multiple participation at European festivals and competitions, including those of Spanish choral art, thanks to her involvement in various projects and collaboration with international concert organisations, I. Stepan formed an universal vision on

how to treat creations from different eras and an individual style of music interpretation, also having a synthetic nature.

As a result of studying the particularities of Ilona Stepan's individual conducting style, we have systematized a few that characterize her in particular. Among them we will refer to the impeccable sense of musical style, the unique mastery of achieving a suitable sound of the compositional message, the technique based on precision, virtuosity and sense of measure, an appropriate diction and prosody, achieved in different languages and other proceed. As for the style of leadership of the collective, the singers and musicians with whom I. Stepan collaborates say that it is a democratic style. Her strategy is based on respect for each performer, on the one hand, and on a severe discipline, on the awareness of responsibility towards by the act of interpretation, on the other hand.

4. NCC's mastery, its artistic quality became an important incentive for the development of the national composition school. The history of NCC shows us that the most interesting choral or choral-symphonic works written by composers from the Republic of Moldova (V. Zagorschi, Z. Tkaci, T. Chiriac, Gh. Ciobanu, V. Ciolac, V. Burlea, M. Stârcea, I. Iachimciuc) were performed by NCC and included in the choir's repertoire, presented to the public both nationally and internationally, thus promoting national music creation.

As for the national repertoire, in the thesis we made a classification of the creations of national authors performed by the choir: author's works versus choral arrangements, pieces for homogeneous versus heterogeneous composition, *a cappella* works versus pieces with accompaniment; compositions based on verses by national poets versus those based on popular texts; secular or religious creations (belonging to Catholic and Orthodox worship); choral miniatures versus cyclic works of proportions, etc.

5. Based on the analyzed creations of national composers: *Ciocârlia* by I. Enache, *Colosus*, *colo mai jos* by D. Belinschi, *Norii* by Z. Tkaci on lyrics by A. Roșca, *Descântece* by I. Iachimciuc and *De la Tiras pân' la Tissa* by T. Chiriac, the interpretative possibilities of the choir were highlighted. In this thesis, several interpretive techniques are revealed — both traditional and innovative, which, in turn, have brought to fruition the interpretative capacities of the NCC as a contemporary chamber choir. Among the most important, we will mention various methods of treating the choir in the creation *De la Tiras pân' la Tissa* by T. Chiriac, which is based on imitating the sounds of different instruments either from the popular orchestra (drum, cinel, drum) or from the brass band (trombone, trumpet). In different musical contexts, by assigning the functions of soloist and accompanist to choral parts, T. Chiriac capitalizes on the vocal-timbral and technical peculiarities of the choir.

6. In the studied scores, we discover the interpretation of different types of choral texture, based on micropolyphony, heterophony, polyostinato, imitative and contrasting polyphony, polyphony of layers; skill in the interpretation (including *a cappella*) of the dissonant vertical under the conditions of the application of polymodal structures, expanded tonality, chromaticism, etc. In the creation *Descântece* by I. Iachimciuc, determined by the stylistics of neo-folklorism, the polyphonic invoice predominates, including micropolyphony. The voices are in a permanent dialogue which, often, is marked by the distribution of the elements of a certain theme, to several choral parts. Within the polyphonic writing, the composer manages to obtain the autonomy and freedom of the choral voices and extensively uses the dissonant vertical, which requires a special mastery from the choir.

Another interpretative problem refers to the imitation by choristers of various sonoristic procedures, which place high demands on the musicians in order to achieve impeccable articulation, a perfect skill in emitting the sound programmed by the compositional concept, an advanced rhythmic sense. We add the broadening of the sound spectrum of the analyzed creations by involving several techniques of emitting extra-musical, untuned sounds, which demand from the choristers and the conductor a perfect understanding of the specific expressiveness of these processes, the ability to reproduce them adequately, in accordance with the compositional concept. Not by chance, the premieres of several creations were made in close collaboration with the composers, as was the case with the release of the pieces by Z. Tkaci, by T. Chiriac, I. Iachimciuc and those by D. Belinschi, analyzed in this thesis. In this context, the ideas of the composers were discussed, clarified and therefore embodied in the most successful possible version.

Based on the elaborated conclusions and findings, we will formulate certain **recommendations:**

1. To continue research in order to capitalize on choral creations signed by composers from the Republic of Moldova, based on a wider area of investigation, the field of empirical material being widened by approaching a larger number of autochthonous choral opuses.

2. To initiate comparative studies related to the activity of chamber choirs in the region — Romania, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Serbia, Poland, the Czech Republic and other countries.

3. To include NCC in a European and world context by stimulating the appearance of scientific articles in specialized magazines from the countries of the European Union, the United States of America, Canada, etc.

4. Based on the consolidation and optimization of the thesis materials, to promote the unique interpretative heritage of the NCC by recording new video materials, by creating documentary films and their dissemination on *online* platforms; to update the *video* and *audio*

recordings made during the existence of the collective in order to preserve valuable data with reference to the creation, affirmation and evolution of the collective as a primary model of chamber choral collective in the Republic of Moldova.

5. To ensure the popularization of the NCC repertoire, including the creations of composers from our country, internationally, by organizing tours, participating in various international choral art events, including, and presenting master-classes.

6. Taking into account NCC's predilection towards the theme of *Musical Hispanicity*, to promote the repertoire made up of works by authors from Spain, Portugal, Latin American countries.

7. To return to the practice used during the existence of the NCC as well as the *Union Fenosa Choir* regarding the propagation of professional choral art throughout the territory of the Republic of Moldova, by creating special projects dedicated to the popularization of this branch of creation.

8. Based on the artistic profile of conductor Ilona Stepan researched and formulated in the thesis, to promote her contribution by organizing choral conducting masterclasses, their recording and subsequent use in the didactic activity of medium and higher artistic education institutions, in the activity of collectives corals from the Republic of Moldova.

9. To include the thesis materials in the context of teaching several disciplines in the institutions of higher artistic education: *Choral class, Choral repertoire, History of national music, Theory and history of choral art, Reading choral scores, Interpretive practice*, etc.

10. To strengthen the professional capacities of students from the Choral Conducting specialty by exchanging experience with NCC artists who have participated in international lyrical projects (creative workshops, trainings, etc.).

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ANNOTATION

Burlac Fedora. The National Chamber Choir of the Republic of Moldova — promoter of national choral creation. Thesis for obtaining the scientific degree of doctor in the arts and culturology studies, specialty 653.01 – Musicology, Chişinău, 2024.

Structure of the thesis: introduction, three chapters, general conclusions and recommendations, bibliography of 303 titles, 2 Appendices (the table of creations of Moldovan composers from the NCC repertoire, the list of audio- and videorecordings), 152 pages of the basic text, 25 music examples and 10 charts. The investigation results are reflected in 9 scientific publications.

Keywords: The National Chamber Choir, professional choral art, the specifics of the chamber choir, national choral music, methods of treating the choir, interpretive stylistics.

Field of study: musical art, choir creation from the Republic of Moldova, history of national choral art.

The purpose and objectives of the thesis. The **purpose** of the investigation is a multiaspectual research of the NCC' contribution to development of the national choir art in general and to valorization of the national choir repertoire, in particular.

The achievement of this goal presumes the realisation of several **objectives:** the determination of the interpretive specifics of the chamber choir formation; the brief reconstruction of the historical course of chamber choir singing in the Republic of Moldova; the multifaceted presentation of the NCC's artistic image and the appreciation of its role in promoting national choir creation; review of the artistic evolution of NCC' leader, conductor Ilona Stepan; carrying out the complex analysis of the most representative choral creations written by Moldovan composers from the NCC repertoire; reveal of the language and architectonics tools used in the analyzed works; highlighting the specifics of the use of folklore in chamber choir music from the Republic of Moldova; revealing interpretive peculiarities of the analyzed creations.

The scientific novelty and originality of the thesis: for the first time in national musicology, the artistic evolution of NCC and its conductor Ilona Stepan were researched; as well as the specificity of the treatment of the national repertoire in the interpretative practice of the NCC.

The obtained results contribute to the important scientific problem solving which consists in the scientific substantiation of the role of The National Chamber Choir in the promotion of autochthonous choral creation.

The theoretical significance of the study consists in completing the concepts related to the specifics of the chamber choir, in general, but also NCC, in particular: *professional choir art; sound strategy; flexible voices; balanced sound; instrumental treatment of voices; artistic individuality; the theme of musical Hispanicity*. The theoretical-scientific contribution of the thesis is also manifested through the elucidation of some performance aspects of chamber choir, revealing of performance peculiarities of the national choir repertoire.

The applicative value of the work: the results of the thesis can serve as a basis for further scientific researches devoted to choral art, being useful for specialists in various fields: scientific, pedagogical, compositional and interpretive. In the same way, the thesis materials can be useful as methodical-didactic and scientific support in the teaching of several disciplines: *Theory and History of Choir Art, Choral conducting, Choir class, Choir repertoire, Choir score reading, History of national music*.

The implementation of the scientific results was carried out in the context of the didactic and scientific activities within AMTAP' Singing and Conducting department, but also in the performance activity as an artist of the National Chamber Choir. The scientific results are presented in 8 national and international scientific conferences.

ADNOTARE

**Corul Național de Cameră al Republicii Moldova — promotor al creației corale autohtone.
Teza pentru obținerea titlului științific de doctor în studiul artelor și culturologie,
specialitatea 653.01 – Muzicologie, Chișinău, 2024.**

Structura tezei: introducere, trei capitole, concluzii generale și recomandări, bibliografie din 303 de titluri, 2 anexe (tabelul creațiilor compozitorilor autohtoni din repertoriul CNC și lista înregistrărilor audio și video ale CNC), 152 de pagini ale textului de bază, 25 de figuri (exemple muzicale) și 10 tabele. Rezultatele obținute sunt publicate în 9 lucrări științifice.

Cuvinte-cheie: Corul Național de Cameră, arta corală profesionistă, specificul corului de cameră, muzica corală națională, procedee de tratare a corului, stilistica interpretativă.

Domeniul de studiu: arta muzicală, creația corală din Republica Moldova, istoria artei de interpretare corală națională.

Scopul și obiectivele tezei. Scopul investigației constă în cercetarea multiaspectuală a aportului CNC la dezvoltarea artei corale naționale, în general, și la valorificarea repertoriului coral autohton, în special.

Realizarea acestuia prevede atingerea mai multor **obiective:** determinarea specificului interpretativ al formației corale de cameră; reconstituirea succintă a parcursului istoric al cântării corale de cameră în Republica Moldova; prezentarea multiaspectuală a imaginii artistice a CNC și aprecierea rolului său în promovarea creației corale autohtone; trecerea în revistă a evoluției artistice a conducătorului CNC, dirijorului Ilona Stepan; efectuarea analizei complexe a celor mai reprezentative creații și prelucrări corale semnate de compozitorii moldoveni din repertoriul CNC; elucidarea limbajului și procedeelelor componistice folosite în creațiile analizate; evidențierea specificului utilizării folclorului în muzica corală din Republica Moldova; reliefaarea procedeelelor interpretative tradiționale și descoperirea celor inovatoare; relevarea particularităților interpretative ale creațiilor studiate.

Noutatea și originalitatea științifică a tezei: pentru prima dată în muzicologia autohtonă au fost cercetate evoluția artistică a CNC și a dirijorului Ilona Stepan, precum și specificul tratării repertoriului în practica interpretativă a CNC.

Rezultatele obținute contribuie la soluționarea unei probleme științifice importante care rezidă în fundamentarea științifică a rolului Corului Național de Cameră în promovarea muzicii corale autohtone.

Semnificația teoretică a studiului constă în completarea conceptelor ce țin de specificul corului de cameră, în general, dar și al CNC, în mod particular: *artă corală profesionistă; strategie sonoră; voci flexibile; sonoritate echilibrată; tratare instrumentală a vocilor; individualitate artistică; tematica hispanității muzicale*. Aportul teoretico-științific al tezei se manifestă și prin elucidarea unor aspecte interpretative caracteristice corului cameral, scoaterea la iveală a unor particularități de interpretare a repertoriului coral autohton.

Valoarea aplicativă a lucrării: rezultatele tezei pot servi drept bază pentru cercetări științifice ulterioare consacrate artei corale, fiind utile pentru specialiști din diverse domenii: științific, pedagogic, componistic și interpretativ. Materialele tezei pot fi utile ca suport metodicodidactic și științific în predarea disciplinelor: *Teoria și istoria artei corale, Dirijatul coral, Clasa corală, Repertoriul coral, Citirea partiturilor corale, Istoria muzicii naționale*.

Implementarea rezultatelor științifice a fost realizată în contextul activităților didactice și științifice în cadrul departamentului Canto și Dirijat al AMTAP, dar și în activitatea interpretativă ca și artistă a Corului Național de Cameră. Rezultatele științifice au fost prezentate în cadrul a 8 conferințe științifice internaționale și naționale.

АННОТАЦИЯ

Бурлак Федора. Национальный камерный хор Республики Молдова — популяризатор отечественного хорового творчества. Диссертация на соискание ученого звания доктора искусствоведения и культурологии по специальности 653.01 – Музыкаведение, Кишинев, 2024.

Структура диссертации: введение, три главы, общие выводы и рекомендации, библиография из 303 наименований, 2 Приложения (таблица произведений отечественных композиторов из репертуара Национального Камерного Хора и перечень аудио- и видеозаписей), 152 страниц основного текста, 25 нотных примеров и 10 таблиц. Результаты исследования отражены в 9 научных публикациях.

Ключевые слова: Национальный Камерный Хор, профессиональное хоровое искусство, специфика камерного хора, национальная хоровая музыка, приёмы хоровой трактовки.

Область изучения: музыкальное искусство, национальное композиторское творчество, история хорового искусства Республики Молдова.

Цель и задачи диссертации. Цель работы состоит в комплексном исследовании роли Национального Камерного Хора в развитии отечественного хорового искусства, в целом, и освоении национального хорового репертуара, в частности. Достижение этой цели предусматривает решение нескольких **задач:** определение исполнительской специфики камерного хора; краткая реконструкция исторического пути камерного хорового пения в Республике Молдова; многоаспектное представление художественного облика хора и признание его роли в продвижении национального хорового творчества; обзор творческой эволюции художественного руководителя хора, дирижера Илоны Степан; комплексный анализ наиболее репрезентативных хоровых произведений молдавских композиторов из репертуара НКХ; выявление особенностей музыкального языка и композиционных приемов анализируемых произведений; определение специфики использования фольклора в хоровой музыке Республики Молдова; выявление традиционных и новаторских исполнительских приёмов, а также исполнительских особенностей анализируемых произведений.

Научная новизна и оригинальность диссертации: впервые в отечественном музыкознании были исследованы артистическая эволюция Национального Камерного Хора и его дирижёра Илоны Степан, а также выявлены особенности трактовки национального хорового репертуара в исполнительской практике НКХ.

Полученные результаты исследования вносят вклад в разрешение важной научной проблемы, состоящей в научном изучении роли Национального Камерного Хора в продвижении национальной хоровой музыки.

Теоретическая значимость исследования состоит в дополнении понятий, связанных со спецификой камерного хора в целом, и НКХ, в частности: *профессиональное хоровое искусство; звуковая стратегия; гибкие голоса; сбалансированный звук; инструментальная трактовка голоса; художественная индивидуальность; тематика музыкального испанизма.* Научный вклад проявляется и в освещении исполнительских аспектов, характерных для камерного хора, выявлении особенностей интерпретации национального хорового репертуара.

Практическая значимость работы: результаты диссертации могут служить основой для дальнейших научных исследований, посвященных хоровому творчеству, быть полезными для специалистов различных областей: научной, педагогической, композиторской и исполнительской. Так же материалы диссертации могут быть полезны в качестве методического и научного обеспечения в процессе преподавания ряда дисциплин: *Теория и история хорового искусства, Хоровое дирижирование, Хоровой класс, Хоровой репертуар, Чтение хоровых партитур, История национальной музыки.*

Апробация научных результатов осуществлялась в процессе педагогической, дидактической и научной деятельности в рамках департамента *Сольное пение и дирижирование* АМГИИ, а также в исполнительской деятельности в качестве артиста Национального Камерного Хора. Научные результаты представлены на 8 международных и национальных научных конференциях.

FEDORA BURLAC

**THE NATIONAL CHAMBER CHOIR OF THE REPUBLIC OF
MOLDOVA — PROMOTER OF LOCAL CHORAL CREATION**

SPECIALTY 653.01–MUSICOLOGY (RESEARCH)

Summary of the doctoral thesis in the arts and culturology study

Approved for printing: February 29, 2024
Offset paper. Offset printing.
Printing sheets: 2.0

Paper size: 60x84 1/16
Print run: 100 ex.
Order no. 27/24

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