Abstract: The present study focuses on the Hymns of the Holy Liturgy by Saint John the Chrysostomos for a men’s choir, soprano and children’s choir by the composer Teodor Zgureanu; he draws his inspiration from the monody of Byzantine origin. The melodies he creates are original; in some of the parts/sections of his Liturgy he only suggests oriental themes, while in others he faithfully reproduces the features of the psaltic monody (a modal sound structure, characteristic of psalm echoi, gradual and undulating scalar profile, specific formulas and cadences). The musical devices he uses are reminiscent of practices in the church choir singing (the ison, the dialogue between the soloist and the choir in the antiphonal manner); the harmonic devices consist of free harmonic non-functional relations, simple and double ison, motif sequencing a.s.o.

Key-Words: the Republic of Moldova, Teodor Zgureanu, choir liturgy, monody in the psaltic style

1 Introduction

After the year 1812 when Moldova was incorporated in the Russian Empire, in the part of this region beyond the river Prut (currently the Republic of Moldova) religious music was performed in Russian, which then became the official language in administration, education and religion; religious music thus followed the Russian-Ukrainian model of church choir singing, especially in the cathedrals in the large cities. In the rural areas, however, as well as in the Romanian monasteries located in Bessarabia, the religious service was still performed in Romanian, while traditional Romanian psaltic music of Byzantine origin was being used in the service. After the union of Bessarabia with Romania (1928) and its subsequent separation (1940), Romanian became once again the official language of the religious service; this stimulated the creation of a new liturgy repertoire in Romanian. One of the major musical personalities of the period between the two wars was Mihail Berezovschi; he is considered to be one of the founders of the Bessarabian musical school of composition and conducting.

After World War II, as the communist atheistic regime took over the power in Romania, both the creation and performance of religious music were prohibited. Overt inspiration from religious music and themes was acceptable only after 1990, when in Romania a new climate was obvious, which brought about political, social, cultural and religious changes. Many composers of the time created pieces belonging to choir religious music, such as Serafim Buzilă [1], Vladimir Ciocal, Teodor Zgureanu [2] and Nicolae Ciocal [3]. Some of them also created vocal-dramatic religious pieces intended for the concert hall: Teodor Zgureanu (the oratorio Noaptea Sfântului Andrei/Saint Andrew’s Night), Vladimir Ciocal (Requiem for a female Choir, soloists and organ, 1995, Stabat mater for a female choir and string orchestra, 1997), Magnificat (2003) [4].

2 Thesis Statement

From the rich musical material with an explicit religious theme composed after 1990, we have chosen for the present paper a recent choir liturgy piece by composer Teodor Zgureanu, namely The Hymns of the Holy Liturgy by Saint John the Chrysostomos, which is inspired from the monody of Byzantine tradition. The present paper is the stylistic analysis of several of the musical sections of the liturgy, which are illustrative of the compositional style of the Bessarabian composer.
3 Argumentation of the topic

A personality of contemporary music in the Republic of Moldova, Teodor Zgureanu (born in 1938)[5] was a conductor, professor and composer; he specialized in particular in lay choir creation (folklore adaptations); after 1990 he also composed religious, choir and vocal-symphonic music. One of his major choir liturgy creations is The Hymns of the Holy Liturgy by Saint John the Chrysostomos [6]. This piece is intended to be performed mainly in the concert hall; it is written for a male choir of equal voices (tenor I and II, bass I and II), but it also contains solo parts for the soprano and bass, as well as parts for a children’s choir (in one section only). The composer selects only the most important parts of the Orthodox Liturgy [7]. In this piece (completed on August 28th 2009, as the composer himself mentioned on the last page of the manuscript), Teodor Zgureanu aimed – as he recently stated in an interview in a TV show [8] – at recreating the oriental atmosphere, of Byzantine influence, characteristic of Orthodox liturgy music. Thus, he created his own special, highly original, musical universe. In certain pieces (Come worship, One Holy, In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, A Mercy of Peace, He Is Blessed) he makes use of a melodic invention based on musical motifs containing specific intervals, such as the augmented second, or a specific gradual and undulating profile, which lend the musical discourse an oriental flavour to be found also in the music of Byzantine influence. In other pieces (Holy God, The Heruvikon Hymn, God Have Mercy, We Praise Thee), the composer creates a melody with no direct relation to the psaltic tradition; it is characterized by dissonant (diminished fifth, augmented fourth) or large (augmented sixth) interval jumps, which, however, are related to modal music. In this piece several choir songs can be recognized, where the Byzantine monody is faithfully recreated in terms of both intervalllic structure and melodic profile (It Is Truly Meet, Our Father, Hallelujah!). Only one piece (Praise the Lord) seems to bear more influence from Russian choir church music, in terms of both melody and harmonic adaptation, which are both tonal in nature, and of the type of dialogue between the male choir, the children’s choir and the solo recitativo parts of a basso profondo.

3.1 Come Let Us Worship

In this choir piece, the composer distributes the melody to the soloist soprano, whose part is harmonically sustained by, or is in a dialogue with, the male voice groups. In terms of form, Come Let Us Worship consists of a sequence of four phrases (A, B, C, D); it opens with the answer Amen! (m. 1 - 2) sustained a on G minor dominant and tonic chords, in the next part, the last chord is sustained by the tenors (m. 2-4) and basses (m. 2-7) as a harmonic pedal. At m. 2 the soloist soprano begins singing on the text "Come let us worship" (phrase A, m. 2-6), on a musical motif starting from D (m.2), followed by a major sixth leap, then a diminished second, perfect diminished fifth (dotted quarter note and quaver) and ends with a gradual ascent to G, on a chromatic profile which reminds of the second plagal mode on Pa (D). The motif sung by the soloist is immitated (m. 4-5) by the tenors’ group, with certain variations and in sequence:

Fig. 1

The tenors continue to sing the ison (m. 6-7), while the basses begin the next phrase, B (m. 7-14), with the text "And let us fall unto Christ". From m.8 on up to m. 12, the musical discourse is distributed in turns between the soloist soprano and the two male voice groups in a manner reminiscent of antiphonal singing specific to psaltic music:

Fig. 2

Phrase B concludes through the reunion of the voices and of the soloist in an harmonic isorhythm on the text "unto Christ" which is repeated (m. 13-16):

Fig. 3
The use of large consonant interval jumps: the third, perfect fourth, as well as of dissonant intervals (diminished fifth), gives the musical flow a sound which is more dramatic than its usual expression in the melodies specific to church music of either Western or psaltic origin. On a vertical chord level, phrase A ("Come let us worship") maintains its position in the G minor tonality – the harmonic version, while in phrase B ("And let us fall unto Christ") the chords are freely concatenated, with no restriction from the principles of classic harmony. Also, the composer resorts to chords in which he introduces sounds which are alien to the chord (usually the augmented sixth, for example at m. 9, first beat, at other times it is the second or the fourth etc.). The chords are no longer conceived of as built on the various steps of a certain tonality; they should be considered as three chordal units bussed on the respective sound (with the thirds or added sounds as its basis), presented in their direct form or in various inversions. Taking this into account, this is how phrase B proceeds in its vertical chord level:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chord on the pitch</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>Ab</th>
<th>Bb</th>
<th>Ab</th>
<th>Gb</th>
<th>Eb</th>
<th>Bb</th>
<th>Gb</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Measure</td>
<td>7-8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the relations between these chords, it can be seen that the composer does not aim to create a succession based on the principle of the fifths or of modulation (associated to tonality) or any other principle related to modalism.

In the following phrase, C (m. 17-22, see figure 3), "Son of God, redeem us", the melodic conductus intoned only by the soloist now uses an expression of intense prayer; it progresses along four measures in a rhetoric of the type ascensio-descensio, starting from A through Db and then back to A. The composer supports this expressive generous melodic conductus through chordal alternation of the male voices between the three chordal units on the sound A and Gb; these sounds can be also found in the melodic conductus or are close to them (as a harmony of three chordal units).

The phrase D (m. 22-27), "You Who have risen from the dead", reproduces the melody of the preceding phrase C; this time it is intoned by the tenors (the ascensio motif); the basses answer (with the descensio motif) on the vertical level and so the chords of A and Gb are formed again. The repetition of the text "You Who have risen from the dead" is done in a different manner, in an isorhythm, on the chords Eb-Ab-Gb:

In phrase E (m. 27-42) "to those who sing to You Hallelujah!", the musical discourse moves towards the melodic climax by the male choir, which is chordic, isorhythmic, prolonged on the corona (m. 30):

The exultation "Hallelujah!" follows, in a manner similar to the dialogue of voices between the soloist and the male voice groups (as it happens in the antiphonal singing), sustained through chords either on the harmonic pedal (m. 31-32, 38-39), or on the chords A and Gb in alternating successions:

Besides the deep feelings of the main melody, the surprising element in this initial choir piece of the Hymns of the Holy Liturgy by Saint John the Chrysostomos is the treatment of the chords of the harmonic chord relations as independent harmonic entities, whose values is more in terms of sonority than of chordal function. Also, the dissonances are left unresolved, which is in contradiction with the principles of classical harmony. One argument in favor of this idea is the fact that, although the key signature would indicate Bb or G minor, the piece begins in G minor and yet it ends in F major; as we have seen, along the piece, chords on other pitches are also used (Gb, Ab, Bb).

Come let us worship is representative of T. Zgureanu’s view on Bessarabian contemporary choir music for the liturgy through both the
originality of the melodic conductus of modal influence and the harmonic-polyphonic devices that are suggestive of the practices of psalm chanting (ison, the dialogue between the soloist and the choir in an antiphonal manner).

3.2 The Heruvikon Hymn

In the Heruvikon only the male voices are used; however, they are not used in the manner of classic harmonic choirs in Russia, but in a manner that alternates the instances of vocal tutti with the unison and the antiphonal performance of the voice groups. The melody, which begins in Molto adagio, is the composer’s creation; thus, he wished to express convincingly the religious feeling through a gradual melody profile (sometimes an augmented second is used, a sound reminiscent of oriental psaltic music at m. 5, 7-8, 10-11, 23):

Alternately, interval jumps are used (for example, an unexpected descending augmented fourth, m. 8), in order to emphasize certain important words or ideas. This focus on the religious text is accomplished through various methods, either related to tone colour, or sheerly melodic, or of a combined – melodic and harmonic – nature. On a vertical chord level, the composer resorts to a free juxtaposition of chord relations, without any restrictions such as those set by the classic resolve of dissonances. The important element here is the sound resulting from chord relations and their ethos. This idea will be illustrated through the presentation of chord relations in the last two phrases (m. 25-31 and 31-33 respectively):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chords on pitches</th>
<th>Eb</th>
<th>Cb-Gb</th>
<th>Ab-Cb</th>
<th>Ab-Cb</th>
<th>Gb-Db</th>
<th>Db</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Measure</td>
<td>25-26</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>31-33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the first presentation of the phrase “Who mystically the Cherubim represent” (m. 1-6), the melody is sung by the 1st tenor and sustained through chords by the 2nd tenor and the bass voice group; the melodic conductus is mainly ascending. To introduce a novel element, on the second repetition of the text “Who secretly the Cherubs represent” (m. 7-13), the composer leaves the melody to be performed only by the bass voice group, in a unison of eighths inspired from the motifs used previously; however, the motifs are not repeated identically (as on m. 7-8 we can recognize the sound structure of the first chromatic mode on C, specific to folk Romanian music). On m. 11-12, a sequence of the earlier chromatic motifs is used on a fifth interval.

The meaning of the text is emphasized through the use of illustrative chords, for instance that in the end of the first part of the heruvikon, in the phrase “all the worldly cares” (m. 27), where major three chordal units are used on the sounds Cb and Gb in an authentic relation of a descending fifth, which creates a brighter more balanced sound in comparison with the darker dissonant sound at the beginning of the phrase (m. 25-26), when minor chords were used.

The melodic climax occurs with the words ”let us cast” (m. 31-33), with a predominantly ascending melodic conductus performed by the basses in a zig-zag profile; the motifs are then taken over by the tenors in a similar manner; the phrase has a final cadence on a dissonant chord in Db with an added second extended through a corona (m. 33). The answer ”Amen!” is also interesting due to its plagal cadence Eb-Db (similar to that used in some folk songs in Banat).

The Heruvikon by Teodor Zgureanu is a modern liturgy creation where an original melodic invention is apparent; the melody was adapted by using modern harmonic methods, which do not fit into the Western classical system.

3.3 It Is Truly Meet, Our Father, Halleluja!

In these prayers of great importance in any Orthodox liturgy, the composer aims at creating a musical atmosphere which is closer to the singing of Byzantine tradition and different from that in the Russian Orthodox churches, which had come to permeate church singing in Moldavia and Bessarabia as early as the times of abbot Paisie Velicicovski (end of the 18th century). To achieve this, the composer Teodor Zgureanu resorts to a melody of psaltic influence which he adapts by using specific methods.

In the Axion It Is Truly Meet, the bass sustains a simple harmonic pedal on A serving as the ison, while the soloist intones the melody, which is of a modal type with a sound structure similar to the first authentic mode.
The modal centre of the scale is on pa (D) which, for reasons of vocal register is transposed on the sound A. The melody uses the ondulatory profile of a psaltic type belonging to the stikhera style, characterized by melismas, which in this piece are accomplished through exceptional rhythmic formulas (triplets, m. 6-7, 42). In the end, the composer repeats the first musical idea of the Axion (m. 2-6), slightly altered, on the text "You, True Mother of God" as a form of reprise, a device method frequently used in psaltic pieces of this type.

For expressive purposes, the final phrase “We praise Thee” is repeated twice as a coda; in the second repetition, the ambitus of the scale is extended to the low pitches (from pa to low di, which in this case means from A to D, through the transposition by a fifth) on the prolonged ison of the low bass voice:

The psaltic origin of the melody, belonging to the first authentic mode (as in the Axion), transposed from pa (D) to vu (E), can be recognized in the choir piece “Our Father”, too. The ison is used again, sustained by the divided bass group and performed in parallel eighths on the base E or the subtonic D of the mode. The highly expressive and suggestive melody construction is of a psaltic type, in the stikhera style, with relatively short melismas. The composer uses ornaments specific to the music of Byzantine inspiration, such as the double appoggiatura (with its origin in the transcription of the consonant neume omalon).

In Hallelujah! which follows the reading from The Apostles, the composer succeeds in suggesting the Orthodox church monody by using a melody based on a motif of the ondulatio type which uses the diminished second interval (m. 2, 3, 4):

This initial motif is then transformed and adapted and set in sequences on various steps (from an ascending fifth, m. 6, to an ascending third, m. 10):

As the main method for harmonic adaptation of the monody, the composer also uses the ison, however, this time it is a double ison, at the interval of a fourth, intoned by the divided group of basses. With respect to the manner of leading the voices, the composer uses the antiphonal singing, as the melody is taken over from one voice group to the other, accompanied by the ison.

4 Conclusions
Through his creation The Hymns of the Holy Liturgy by Saint John the Chrysostomos, the Bessarabian composer Teodor Zgureanu has managed to substantiate the meritorious initiative of
revaluating and employing originally the expressive potential of the source he used, namely psaltic monody, by using modern musical methods (non-functional free harmonic concatenations, a simple and a double ison, motif sequencing a.s.o.). This musical potential has been less used as a source of inspiration in the musical creation of the composers from the Republic of Moldova in the latter half of the 20th century.

References:
[7] Veniți să ne închinăm/Come let us worship, Doamne miluiește/Lord have mercy, Sfinte Dumnezeule/Holy God, Alilua/Halleluja!, Unul Sfânt/One Holy, Măreșe Ție/We praise Thee, Doamne miluiește/ Lord have mercy (the second version), Îmmul Heruvic/Heruvikon, Pre Tatăl, pre Fiul și pre Sfântul Duh/Unto the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, Mișa păcii/A mercy of peace, Bine este cuvântat/Blessed is He, Pre Tine Te lăudăm/We praise Thee, Cade-se cu adevăra/It is truly meet, Tatăl nostru/Our Father, chinonicul Lăudați pre Domnul din ceruri/the koinonikon Praise the Lord in the highest, Și s-a arătat nouă [Bine este cuvântat, n.n.]/And was revealed unto us [Blessed is he], Lumină lină/Tender light, Întru numele Domnului, [Fie numele Domnului, n.n.]/In the name of the Lord [Blessed the name of the Lord, [Apolisu, n.n.] and Mulți ani trăiască/ May he live long. Teodor Zgureanu, Înmuriile Sfintei Liturghii a lui Ioan Gură de Aur, Chișinău, Ed. Pontos, 2010.
[8] The TV show Templu musical/Musical Temple, broadcast on November 2009 on the TV channel of the Republic of Moldova.