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*Guitar Concept in the Modern Art Space:
Music, Literature, Media*

SUMMARY

The article analyzes the concept of the guitar in the evolutionary processes of modern art. A comparative analysis of the concept in the correlation of *media – literature – music* has been made, which allows us to follow the symbolism of the guitar not only as a musical instrument but also as a certain marker of the sensual world of a person, of his experiences, and emotions. The example of world art used in the article (primarily Western European), proves that this symbol is unique to the culture of Spain, praised in literary texts (F. Lorca), and is also a part of the global cultural space, for example Ukraine (V. Sausyura, V. Holoborodko, V. Molotkov). Media reflection on the symbolism of the guitar is valuable. It is about the use of the guitar image on advertising posters of musical events during the Russian-Ukrainian war (2022–2023). This proves the dominance of the guitar concept in the modern art space of Ukraine, during the greatest upheavals in the independent history of this country.

SANTRAUKA

Straipsnyje nagrinėjama gitaros samprata, vykstant evoliuciniams šiuolaikinio meno procesams. Atlikta lyginamoji sampratos analizė, atsižvelgiant į medijos, literatūros ir muzikos koreliaciją, leidžia stebėti gitaros, ne tik kaip muzikos instrumento, bet ir kaip žmogaus jausmų pasaulio, jo išgyvenimų bei emocijų ženklą, simboliką. Pasitelkiant pasaulinio meno (pirmiausia Vakarų Europos) pavyzdį, įrodoma, kad gitaros simbolis unikalus Ispanijos kultūrai, išaukštintas literatūriniuose tekstuose (F. Lorca), be to, jis yra pasaulinės kultūrinės erdvės, taip pat ir Ukrainos, dalis (V. Sausyura, V. Holoborodko, V. Molotkovas). Vertinga yra žiniasklaidos refleksija apie gitaros simboliką. Ji susijusi su gitaros simbolio vartojimu reklaminiuose muzikinių renginių plakatuose, vykstant Rusijos ir Ukrainos karui (2022–2023 m.). Visa tai rodo, kad gitaros koncepcija vyrauja Ukrainos moderniojo meno erdvėje, ypač patiriant didžiausius sukrėtimus šios šalies nepriklausomybės istorijoje.

RAKTAŽODŽIAI: samprata, meno erdvė, literatūra, muzika, žiniasklaidos komunikacija, gitaros simbolis.

KEY WORDS: concept, art space, literature; music, mass media communication, symbol of the guitar.

INTRODUCTION

The problem of stylistic attribution of musical creativity and its products is considered one of the most relevant, controversial, and in-demand in art history. One such product – important for the modern art space and little studied in humanitarian science – is the guitar. Our scientific interest in this instrument is explained by several factors: (1) the study of the evolution of the guitar in the modern cultural space; (2) analysis of the “language” of the guitar in various types of artistic communication; (3) the influence of the guitar on modern literary and musical art; (4) the expression of the author’s identity during musical guitar accompaniment (“guitar solo”); (5) the concentration of musical life around popular instruments, including the guitar. And another factor in the analysis of the image of the guitar was the war in Ukraine, in which Ukrainians are also fighting on the “cultural front” (Botvyn et al. 2022). The guitar became an indispensable attribute of this war because Ukrainians while staying in bomb shelters found the strength to sing and to survive.

It was not for nothing that the French naturalist G. Buffon said that “a style is a person”, and therefore the guitar became such a style for many Ukrainians during mass attacks. Scientific reflection before writing this article was the work of Ch. Isaacson, in which the questions of “musical outlook” during the war are developed (Isaacson 1920).

To analyze the evolution of the image

of the guitar, we studied the art space in the triad of artistic communication *music – literature – media*, to prove that the guitar is not just an image, but also an artistic concept that permeates the global cultural world. In the interrelation of these three types of artistic communication, we will attempt to show why the guitar is chosen to reveal the inner world of a person, the manifestation of his emotions, and influence consciousness – both individual and mass.

Thus, a whole era of the guitar culture is formed in the conditions of war, which can become the locus of the general guitar culture developed at the time by A. Bennett and K. Dawe. Researchers are convinced that “guitar music can be sexy, soothing, melancholy or manic, but it nearly always brings people together and creates a common ground even if this common ground is often the site of intense social, cultural, economic and political negotiation and contest” (Bennett, Dawe 2020).

And therefore, we can say that playing the guitar during anxiety is also an emotional state, which allows you to sing with a powerful sense of fortitude, courage, and struggle. Additionally, with the help of the guitar, remakes of popular compositions are created, that acquire special meaning during the war. The guitar as a symbol is skillfully used in other forms of art as well, such as literature, embedding in the texts all the same attributes – sadness, expression, and strength of spirit.

SYMBOL → CONCEPT: LANGUAGE MARKERS
OF CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION

The cultural transformation that develops in the context of the Digital Age theory vividly demonstrates the changes for modern art as well (Levin, Dan 2021; Sujon, Dyer 2020). Accordingly, the symbolization of certain types of art or their products determines the dominant parameters of *the modern art space*. In our opinion, such symbols include the guitar, which, on the one hand, has its roots (Spanish *guitarra* – a stringed musical instrument of the lute family), on the other hand, this symbol actively infiltrates other cultures, for example, Ukrainian. A parallel can be drawn with similar symbols, e.g., of China (*guqin*), Ukraine (*bandura*), etc., which are celebrated in literature, used in music, and broadcast in the media far beyond the borders of their countries (Zhang 2023; Berezutska 2020). This led to the reinterpretation of the national musical instrument in the context of world culture (Geertz 1973), when the symbol begins to be conceptualized and perceived not only as an achievement of the local, but global cultural space.

A concept is understood as a stable linguistic or author's idea that has a tradition of existence and subsequent wide replication. The well-known Polish researcher A. Wierzbicka (1997) devoted her works to the interpretation of *the cultural concept*, emphasizes the verbal meanings that hold modern culture:

“On the contrary, some words can be studied as focal points around which entire cultural domains are organized. By exploring these focal points in depth, we

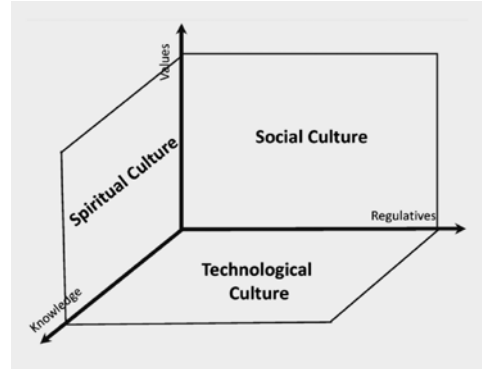
may be able to show the general organizing principles which lend structure and coherence to a cultural domain as a whole, and which often have an explanatory power extending across a number of domains” (Wierzbicka 1997: 17).

Such cultural concepts include musical instruments going beyond their traditional use – music. The criteria proposed by the researcher to define the “keyword – concept” for culture have become axiomatic and belong to the value orientations of communicators. A potential “keyword – concept” must meet the conditions of precedent in culture, frequency of use in a certain artistic field, the presence of a significant number of phraseological units with this concept, wide use in literary texts, music, as well as in proverbs, paremies, aphorisms, etc.

If we superimpose this matrix on the concept of a guitar, we can also say that it is a popular image in musical works and literary texts, with which winged sayings are formed, there are many communicative genres that use this “keyword – concept”. We have a whole hypercultural model that uses the concept in different cultural dimensions. In this context, we recall the three-dimensional projection of the cultural space, successfully developed earlier (White, Carneiro 1949).

The guitar can easily fit into this model, which will also indicate enormous possibilities for this instrument to form a culture in the triune relationship “*technological culture – social culture – spiritual culture*”, the main axes of which are knowledge, values, and rules.

If we talk about the lists of basic cultural concepts (according to Yu. Stepanov – cultural constants), they are often commensurate with the value orientations of society – *freedom, eternity, life, death, love*, etc. We believe that these axiological dominants are present in the image of the guitar. It is obvious that the sound image of the instrument is a concept related to the general development of musical art, it transforms over time, but it also touches the soul and heart with its strings. Therefore, today, in many spheres of instrumental art, we are faced with an interesting phenomenon of coexistence and mutual influence of several sound images of one instrument (for example, an acoustic and an electric guitar), which significantly expands the



range of possible solutions for a composer, performer, and even interpreters who use the image of a guitar in other types of art. From this point of view, the concept of the guitar becomes interesting for research in a multicultural society – In music, in literature, and in the media.

This will be discussed further.

THE GUITAR IN LITERATURE: WHAT IMAGES DOES IT FORM?

It is obvious that world literature, especially, in the Spanish language, uses the image of the guitar as a national musical instrument. The greatest manifestation of the imagery of the guitar can be seen in the works of F. Lorca, a Spanish poet, and musician. He was so attached to the guitar that he even asked to “bury him with the guitar in the sand” (poem “Memento”). Together with the guitar, the accompanying images are the most visible – a dagger, a gypsy song, and a bullfight, which seem to reinforce the main image of the guitar. It is about the poetry “La Guitarra”. The poet paints a symbolic picture of the world, which consists of both: visual and sound pictures – images depicting the world through the eyes of a Spaniard. It was this vision that

helped inscribe the elements of the national worldview into modern images of democratic Europe. The image of the guitar in poetry is a whole series of visual and auditory associations. Let’s follow it in a comparative aspect (in Spanish in the original, Ukrainian in the translation of V. Stus, and in English in the translation of C. Franzen).

Note that the guitar, like any other instrument, is part of the sound world of music, which, in turn, is a reflection of a certain image of the human microcosm, its symbolic meanings, the meaning of which is located within the person (see psycholinguistic works on music therapy, an important element of which is the guitar – Volzhentseva 2017; de Witte et al. 2022).

<p>Empieza el llanto de la guitarra. Se rompen las copas de la madrugada. Empieza el llanto de la guitarra. Es inútil callarla. Es imposible callarla. Llora monótona como llora el agua, como llora el viento sobre la nevada. Es imposible callarla. Llora por cosas lejanas.</p>	<p>Починається плач гітари, розбиваються дзбани ранку. Починається плач гітари. Гамувати її – не варто. Не вгамуєш її – намарне. Монотонно, ніби хвиля, плаче гітара, ніби вітер над снігопадом, плаче гітара, не вгамуєш її – намарне.</p>	<p>The weeping of the guitar begins. The goblets of dawn are smashed. The weeping of the guitar begins. Useless to silence it. Impossible to silence it. It weeps monotonously as water weeps as the wind weeps over snowfields. Impossible to silence it. It weeps for distant things.</p>
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In Lorca, the guitar as a living being is inscribed in the surrounding world, it is a part of this world. Water, wind, sand, clouds – the environment in which it exists, i.e., the guitar cries – it is alive, and therefore personified. Here everything pulsates, and breathes: *ніби хвиля, плаче гітара, ніби вітер над снігопадом, плаче гітара // como llora el agua, como llora el viento, sobre la nevada // as water weeps, as the wind weeps, over snowfields*. We see a complete metaphorization of Lorca's po-

etic text (and an analogy in translation). The dominant trope that forms the entire artistic text is the personification of the guitar: it is a living being, it is, therefore, an artistic category.

This ability to broadcast the feelings of the hero through the guitar was also transmitted in the poetry of other Ukrainian authors – Volodymyr Sosyura and Vasyl Holoborodek. In their individual poems, the guitar is also a central image. See in the original language:

<p><i>Коли потяг у даль загуркоче, пригадаються знову мені дзвін гітари у місячні ночі, поцілунки й жоржини сумні...</i></p> <p><i>Шум акацій... Посьолок і гони... Ми на гору ідемо через гать... А внизу пролітають вагони, і колеса у темі цокотять...</i></p>	<p><i>гітара дівувала ревнувала до струмка квіти ходили у місячному танку закохані цілий вечір піаністовими пальцями грали коло хат на клавішах лавок</i></p>
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As you can see, the guitar enlivens the text, making it more sentimental and

sadder. In the first poem (V. Saussure "When the train roars in the distance"),

the description of native landscapes resonates with the description of feelings. And here the “ringing of the guitar”, which is associated with the warmth of the fire, playing a guitar solo on a quiet evening, helps. In the second poem (V. Holoborodko “The Guitar Surprised”)

the general picture of the evening village with houses, benches, a stream, flowers, and the moon is described by the author in accordance with an irrational perception of the world and using the sentimentality of the guitar as an image of a “song under fire”.

THE GUITAR AS AN INTERPRETATION OF FAMOUS MUSICAL WORKS

Like the image of the guitar in literature, this concept is actively used in the music industry. During the war, we see a lot of remakes that were created specifically to perform in times of need (even rhythmically fast compositions were made into lyrics). It is also a psychological factor for the Ukrainian performer and the listener – to reproduce their pain through lyrics. The same compositions became popular for performance in the bomb shelter: from the

folkloric “Oy in the Meadow Red Viburnum” and “Oy in the Cherry Orchard” to pop-popular compositions “Chervona Ruta” by V. Ivasyuk, “Only She” by T. Chubai, “Without a Fight” S. Vakarchuk, “Let there be spring” by M. Barskikh and others.

A separate important factor in singing to the guitar was the relative physical compactness of the musical instrument. We often see the guitar in bomb shelters, where Ukrainians descend during air raids.

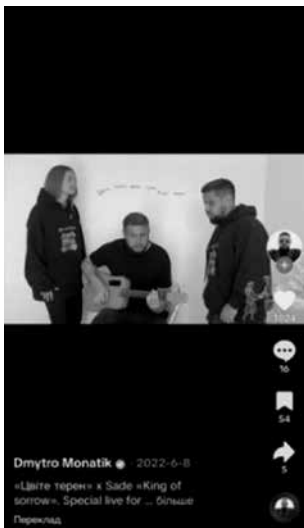
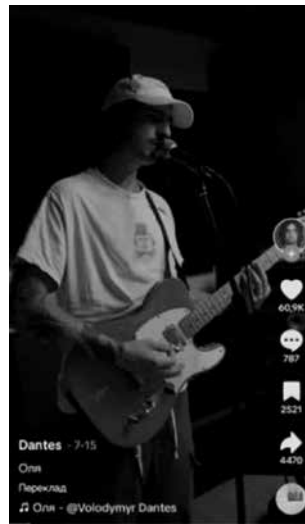
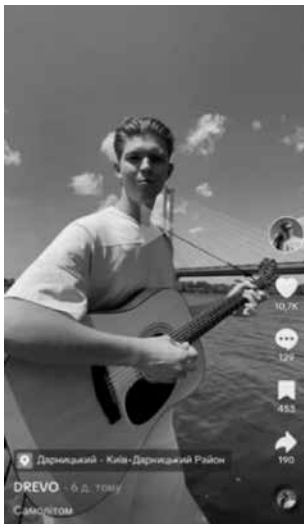


Photo by @zolochivnet (“Nursery in the bomb shelter”) and Dnipropetrovsk State University of Internal Affairs (“Competition of patriotic songs in the bomb shelter”)



Guitar music is becoming mainstream, which is clearly visible in the popular Tik-Tok network. Ukrainians often interestingly re-sing well-known songs, in which the guitar becomes an addition to the performer’s image. Gui-

tar solos were performed by famous performers (Taras Chubai, Svyatoslav Vakarchuk, Monatik, etc.) and beginners (Drevo, Adam, Dantes, etc.), which we learn from the open pages of the Tik-Tok network.



From public pages of Ukrainian musicians (Tik-Tok)

It is important that the performers use the guitar not only at chamber-type concerts but also when meeting with military personnel, singing in the fresh air to the sound of cannonade. We also

consider this to be a psychological moment of approaching the listener, which deftly fits into the musical theory of “sounds in the air” (Östersjö 2020).

GUITAR IN VISUAL MEDIA: WARTIME CONCERT POSTERS

It seems that art during the war does not develop or develops slowly. Instead,

Ukrainians, as a strong nation, could not but pour all their experiences and pain

into artistic works – songs, fiction, and painting. One of the features of this war was concerts in the subway, which were held despite the shelling of Kyiv, the capital of Ukraine. This forms the concept of musical ecology when even on the most troubling days, art saves the situation: “war unavoidably has a huge impact on the myriad rhythms that constitute every day, polluting the acoustic ecology. <...> Drawing on examples from Ukraine, this research argues that individuals can resist

this disruption and effectively change, however briefly, their acoustic ecology through music” (Clark 2023).

Concerts accompanied by a guitar were also held. In our opinion, it reflects the rhythms of war, when the strings of the guitar touch the strings of the soul. So, for example, already in 2022, the National Philharmonic of Ukraine held concerts with the participation of the quartet of guitarists “Kyiv” and Andriy Ostapenko.



As you can see, the advertising posts are made in a restrained minimalist style, and the emphasis is on the intimacy of the concerts. In addition, the musical program reflects the mood of the war: classics and lyrical works are

played here. Concert programs with an emphasis on the violin are dominant in the musical space of the war period (see advertising posters of the Kyiv Planetarium and Transcarpathian Philharmonic).



The minority of the events is also transferred with the purpose of its implementation: financial support of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. In this way, Ukrainians combine both aesthetics and a good deed in an artistic evening.

Separate concerts honor the classics of guitar art, such as Volodymyr Molotkov, a world-class teacher and guitarist. The commemorative evenings, which were held among fans of guitar art without advertising, are also indicative of the

struggle of Ukrainians not only for their independence but also for their identity. Such concerts did not gather many people, but they had a clear task – to popularize the guitar art of Ukraine.

CONCLUSIONS

As we can see, the modern art space of the world is permeated with the symbolism of the guitar, which is actively used in various types of artistic communication. Thus, the image of the guitar was conceptualized in the literature. The highest manifestation of guitar symbolism can be traced in Spanish poetry, especially in the work of F. Lorca. He is a musician himself, and therefore he managed to convey all the features of this instrument. In fact, the poet “revived” this image, and gave it a new sound. The image of the guitar in his work is a whole constellation of visual and auditory associations. *A heart wounded by five blows* is both a metaphorical image of five fingers creating a song and the longing of a lyrical hero who either performs or listens to a song performed by a guitarist. This is also a visual image of *a beautiful female body*, which is traditionally compared to this instrument. The guitar-pulse is the personification of the lyrical hero’s life, which is not eternal, but that’s how he wants to live. And it is the guitar that gives strength.

Not only in Spain but also in Ukraine, the image of the guitar is important for the modern artistic world (see the poetry of V. Holoborodko and V. Sosyura, comprehensively analyzed by us). Perhaps, it is the image of intimacy, as well as longing, with which the sounds of the guitar are permeated, that is key for the realities of Ukraine (after all, the mentioned poetry was written in times of difficult social transformations for Ukrainians). Similarly, today, when Ukraine is fighting for its independence, the image of the guitar is often used to musically accompany the difficult life during the war and at the same time highlight the strength of spirit that is present in Ukrainians. Therefore, even in wartime, guitar concerts are held (see the advertising posters mentioned by us), which allow Ukrainians to remain strong and invincible in the future.

In our opinion, we should talk about the guitar as a whole concept that permeates the art space of the modern world.

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