Timbre in The System of Musical Text Semantic Organization

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Abstract: The article examines timbre as a fundamental element in the semantic organization of the musical text, considering its multidimensional nature and functional role within the system of musical expression. The study synthesizes theoretical approaches developed in musicology, acoustics, and psychoacoustics, highlighting the interdisciplinary character of timbre research and the absence of a unified terminological framework capable of fully describing its complex nature. Particular attention is paid to the historical evolution of timbre from a secondary parameter of sound to an independent expressive and structural component of musical composition, especially in the context of Romantic and twentieth-century music. The research outlines key classifications of timbre, including distinctions between real and illusory timbre, instrumental, harmonic, registral, and textural timbres, as well as dynamic aspects such as timbral intensity, permanence, and polychromy. The concept of timbre coloration (timbre coloristic complex) is analyzed as a synthetic category integrating acoustic, structural, and perceptual parameters of sound. Special emphasis is placed on timbral dramaturgy as an intonational process that shapes both the expressive content and the formal development of musical works. The article also addresses the relationship between timbre and musical form through vertical, horizontal, and diagonal parameters, demonstrating the structural and semantic potential of timbre in shaping musical syntax and compositional logic. As a result, timbre is interpreted as a multifunctional element capable of performing differentiating and integrative roles within the musical system. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of timbre as a communicative and meaning-generating factor in the formation of the artistic space of the musical text.

Keywords: timbre, timbre dramaturgy, timbre-intonation organization, timbre coloration, acoustic and art history approaches, polyparametricity.

Introduction

In contemporary musicological discourse, the study of timbre occupies a significant place due to the growing recognition of its role in the formation of musical meaning and structure. Theoretical reflections devoted to the phenomenon of timbre demonstrate considerable diversity and multidimensionality, confirming both the relevance and complexity of this field of research. Despite numerous studies conducted within the frameworks of musical acoustics, psychology of perception, and musicology, the theory of timbre remains an open and evolving domain, characterized by the absence of a unified conceptual and terminological system capable of fully explaining its multifaceted nature.

Historically, timbre was considered a secondary attribute of musical sound, primarily associated with instrumental color rather than structural organization. However, beginning in the nineteenth century, particularly within the aesthetics of Romanticism, timbre gradually acquired the status of an independent expressive resource. Composers increasingly began to perceive musical texture in its timbral specificity from the earliest stages of creative conception, which led to the emergence of timbre as an essential component of compositional thinking. In twentieth- and twenty-first-century music, timbre has evolved into one of the central parameters of musical language, capable of influencing form, dramaturgy, and stylistic identity.

Modern research approaches timbre as a complex, polyparametric phenomenon that integrates acoustic, structural, perceptual, and semantic dimensions. Within this context, timbre functions not only as a characteristic of sound but also as an active organizational element capable of shaping musical syntax and contributing to the creation of artistic meaning (Jiang et al., 2020). The increasing importance of timbral dramaturgy and timbre-based compositional strategies reflects the transformation of timbre into a key factor in the semantic organization of the musical text.

The aim of this article is to analyze timbre as a multifunctional component of musical language and to reveal its role in the formation of semantic structures within the musical text. The study focuses on theoretical approaches to timbre classification, its interaction with musical form and dramaturgy, and its function as a communicative and meaning-generating element within the artistic system of a musical composition.

Theoretical discourse of timbre studies

Theoretical reflections devoted to the phenomenon of timbre are considerable and multifaceted. The quantitative and qualitative cross-section of works in this scientific and research field confirm its relevance, especially at the current stage of development of musicological knowledge, and also indicate its problematic nature, ramifications, complexity, inexhaustibility, openness. Therefore, today it is difficult to speak of the theory of timbre as one that has already been finally formed.

Scientists distinguish three directions of studying timbre in music: acoustic (musical acoustics), psychological (psychology of musical perception) and art history (instrumentation, history of orchestral styles) (Barthet et al., 2011). The outlined interdisciplinary panorama shows that the current state of timbre studies, despite significant scientific achievements, does not yet allow for the development of a single and holistic terminological system capable of fully embracing the complex nature of timbre and correctly reflecting all its manifestations. At the same time, the diversity of the authors' approaches and interpretations of the phenomenon under study create conditions for identifying leading semantic landmarks – those main lines that determine the further development of timbre theory.

The fundamental importance in the formation of scientific ideas about timbre belongs to the concept of B. Asafiev, who characterizes it as a primary element of intonation of musical meaning and perception of the character of music, indicating that "timbre is a living intonation in the boundless shades of instrumental sound expression" (Asafyev, 1971, p. 240). According to the researcher, it directly affects both the process of musical formation and its result, because the intonation of musical meaning is determined by the properties of instruments, their material, tuning, and performance technique (Asafyev, 1971, p. 31).

Until the beginning of the 19th century, the timbre aspect had almost no influence on the construction of a musical work and remained on the periphery of the composer's attention. However, with the expansion of the orchestra's capabilities, timbre gradually becomes one of the factors in the formation of a musical composition. The practice of first creating music as a piano sketch and then orchestrating it is becoming less common: Romantic composers increasingly imagine the musical fabric in its timbre specificity from the very beginning. This indicates their growing sensitivity to timbre expressiveness and the intonational nature of sound. As a result, timbre appears as a full-fledged artistic resource in the aesthetics of Romanticism.

In B. Asafiev's opinion, the formation of timbre as one of the leading means of musical expressiveness occurred through the awareness of its role in creating imagery and revealing the sound-color qualities of music. The researcher outlines two directions within which the understanding of timbre as an intonation-expressive quality is most fully manifested (Asafyev, 1971).

The first direction is timbre-figurative, and it is associated with the figure of Hector Berlioz, for whom thinking in the categories of timbre and orchestral sound was organic. In his poetics, timbre appears as intonation, which forms a new level of orchestral dramaturgy. Researchers often separated the mastery of Berlioz as an instrumentalist from the intonation essence of his music, reducing it to programmatic or descriptive imagery. However, programmatic was for the composer only a means of overcoming academic traditions and a path to new timbre thinking, where timbre acquired an intonation nature.

The second direction – timbre-expressive – is traced in the work of F. Chopin. The composer represents a sphere that stands in complete opposition to orchestral thinking – the field of pianism. Chopin proved that the piano can function as a "speech of timbres", extremely sensitive to the smallest shades of expressiveness. The principles of piano writing are based primarily on the auditory sensation of timbre intonation and the inner sense of its expressiveness (Benade, 1990).

The broad and theoretically realized interest in the expressive possibilities of timbre, characteristic of the aesthetics of romanticism, contributed to the emergence in the 19th century of a specific technique, which can be defined as the personification of timbre. This technique, which belongs to the sphere of timbre dramaturgy, manifests itself when a certain timbre quality in combination with specific thematic structures acquires a stable figurative-semantic function, that is, it is personified, and later becomes autonomous, turning into an independent sign in the musical whole. As the further development of musical art testifies, such an approach becomes a characteristic feature not only of romantic musical thinking, but also organically passes into the semiological model of modern composer's creativity. The role of timbre in the hierarchy of sound expressive means is constantly growing. Becoming one of the key components of the musical system of the 20th century, it acquires a new status - a specific musical means capable of independently performing meaningful and constructive-organizational functions (Boulez, 2006). Timbre, along with harmony, rhythm and texture, acts not only as the color of sound, but also as a powerful form- and tempo-forming, and sometimes

style-forming factor in a musical composition. In this context, the role of timbre as a form of associative signification becomes particularly noticeable, which gives grounds to interpret a separate instrumental or orchestral timbre as a kind of "representative" of a certain era. This approach gives individual timbre qualities a stable figurative and semantic function, transforming them into autonomous signs in a musical work, and lays the foundation for further theoretical understanding of timbre in the music of the 20th–21st centuries.

Timbre conceptualization in contemporary musicology

In modern musicology, an approach to timbre has developed as a complex multidimensional phenomenon that encompasses both the characteristics of a single sound and the general nature of the sound of an instrument or voice. Being one of the basic features of sound, along with pitch, loudness and duration, timbre is considered as its specific “coloring” and differentiator. It is timbre that makes it possible to distinguish sounds of the same pitch and strength depending on the instrument, voice or method of performance. Articulation and sound production technique play a particularly important role in the formation of timbre quality, together with dynamics and register, as specific timbre-forming means (Elliott et al., 2013). Thanks to them, it is possible to distinguish individual elements of a musical whole – a melodic line, bass or harmonic vertical. In this sense, timbre functions not only as a characteristic of sound, but also as a means of structuring musical fabric, which allows delimiting phrases, strengthening or softening contrasts, and also emphasizing similarities or differences in the development of musical material.

Researchers in acoustics and psychoacoustics, while agreeing that timbre is a subjective characteristic of sound quality, also emphasize the importance of objective parameters that influence its assessment. These include spectral composition, features of the transient processes of the fundamental tone and overtones, as well as a number of additional physical and physiological factors: inharmonicity of overtones, distance to the sound source, nonlinearity of equal loudness and amplitude sensitivity curves of hearing, etc.

A significant contribution to the understanding of the complex nature of timbre has been made by studies focusing on the interaction of acoustic properties and auditory perception. Such works emphasize that the complex nature of timbre and the vagueness of its parameters are manifested in the difficulties of creating an accurate and universal physical description of sound. In fact, the only reliable way to fix timbre quality in musical notation remains the indication of a specific instrument or voice for which it is intended to be performed. This indicates that timbre is largely related to the “objectivity” of the sound image, and its designation in musical text is a form of such objectification.

One of the important aspects of systematizing knowledge about timbre is its classification. Traditional approaches often distinguish between real and illusory timbre. Real timbre focuses on the sound of a single instrument or group of instruments, while illusory timbre is formed through a combination of various register, harmonic, textural, or complex techniques. At the same time, individual elements of the timbre structure do not exist autonomously: their separation destroys the integrity of perception, and none of the constituent components can reproduce the full synthetic sonority.

Within the framework of the classification of timbre, its structural and physical-acoustic aspects are distinguished, which allow for a more detailed description of the formation of sound. These types include instrumental, harmonic, register and textured timbres. Instrumental timbre is formed due to the physical properties of the instrument and the way it sounds (Howard et al., 2007). Harmonic timbre

is determined by the composition of the consonance and the mutual arrangement of sounds in harmony. Register timbre emphasizes the role of the instrument's register in the timbre of the sound, and textured timbre is formed due to the interaction of the elements of the texture of the work, which creates a synthetic perception of sound. In addition, the classification of timbre also takes into account sensory characteristics: timbres can be perceived as sharp or soft, heavy or light, brilliant, transparent, light, etc.

To systematize the considered theoretical approaches to timbre classification and to clarify the functional diversity of timbral phenomena, the main types of timbre and their analytical characteristics are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1 - Main Types of Timbre and Their Functional Characteristics in Musical Text Organization

Type of Timbre	**Defining Characteristics**	**Structural Role in Musical Texture**	**Semantic Function**
Instrumental timbre	Determined by physical properties of the instrument and sound production techniques	Differentiates instrumental voices within the texture	Forms associative links with instrumental identity and stylistic features
Harmonic timbre	Defined by the vertical structure of chords and harmonic combinations	Differentiates instrumental voices within the texture	Contributes to expressive coloration and harmonic meaning
Registral timbre	Based on the pitch register and its acoustic coloring	Creates contrast between registers and emphasizes melodic or bass lines	Enhances emotional intensity and spatial perception of sound
Textural timbre	Formed through interaction of musical layers and voice distribution	Integrates melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic elements into a unified structure	Supports dramaturgical development and thematic interaction
Real timbre	Produced by an identifiable sound source (instrument or voice)	Establishes clarity and stability of sound identity	Represents concrete sound imagery
Illusory timbre	Formed through combined registral, harmonic, or orchestral techniques	Creates composite sound effects and synthetic textures	Generates symbolic and associative semantic meanings

Source: developed by the authors

The summarized data presented in Table 1 demonstrate that timbre operates on multiple structural and semantic levels simultaneously. Each type of timbre contributes not only to the acoustic differentiation of sound elements but also to the formation of expressive meaning and dramaturgical

coherence. Such classification confirms the polyfunctional nature of timbre and highlights its ability to integrate separate components of musical texture into a unified semantic system.

Timbre can be considered from the position of modality, which includes, firstly, the principle of applying timbre-spatial possibilities established in practice, which are formed in the process of compositional formation of a work, and, secondly, the psychological attitude towards the stability or variability of the semantic load of timbres, timbre layers, timbre functions and timbre purpose, which determines the compositional logic (Zou Wei, 2015). This approach allows evaluating the interaction of timbre elements and their contribution to the formation of a holistic musical image (Denisenko, 2005, p. 36).

Another approach, which distinguishes between pure and mixed timbres, the presence of timbre density and sparseness, as well as timbre sharpness and softness, allows analyzing the internal texture of the sound material and the interaction of its elements (Ishchenko, 1977, p. 7). Pure timbres create a feeling of transparency and clarity, while mixed ones create a feeling of complexity and multi-layered sound. Density and sparseness determine the perception of mass and saturation of the musical flow, and sharpness and softness form dynamic contrast and emotional coloring. Thanks to this approach, it becomes possible to assess their role in the formation of both the compositional-dramaturgical and figurative-semantic structure of the work.

Zharkov (2017) expands the existing classifications and suggests paying attention to the acoustic moment in timbre, which depends on the difference in overtones, resonator, etc., between different instruments, as well as the instrumental representation, the features of the registers of instruments related to articulation and fingering, its differentiation by families, the musical qualities of the instrument's sound related to a specific period, type of orchestration, era, composer's style, and its dramatic interpretation.

Timbre dynamic aspects

The considered approaches to the classification of timbre can be supplemented by a dynamic aspect, which concerns the development of timbre structures within the orchestral texture. Orchestral timbre structure is considered as a set of timbre elements of a specific orchestral text, and timbre dynamics defines a “system of timbre connections in a certain structure” (according to R. Kabyalis), where local (micro-level) and form-forming (macro-level) phenomena are observed. Dynamic aspects of timbre allow for detailed classification and link it with structural and compositional processes: among them, timbre intensity, permanence, affinity, homogeneity, polychromy and symmetry are distinguished.

To clarify the dynamic characteristics of timbral development within orchestral texture and to demonstrate their functional diversity, the principal parameters of timbral dynamics are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2 - Dynamic Parameters of Timbral Development in Musical Texture

Parameter	**Definition**	**Structural Function**	**Expressive and Dramaturgical Role**
Timbral intensity	Formed through registral tension and layering of timbral elements	Increases density and saturation of sound texture	Enhances dramatic tension and expressive culmination

Timbral permanence	Stability or continuity of timbral presence within a musical section	Maintains coherence of timbral structure	Supports thematic unity and structural integrity
Timbral affinity	Relationship between related timbral elements forming hierarchical structures	Organizes primary and secondary timbral layers	Creates perceptual unity and associative continuity
Timbral homogeneity	Formation of timbral complexes with similar acoustic characteristics	Establishes uniform sound fields	Produces stable and balanced sound imagery
Timbral polychromy	Continuous change of timbral coloring within the musical texture	Introduces variability and contrast	Intensifies expressive diversity and dynamic development
Timbral symmetry	Mirror-like distribution of timbral elements within texture	Creates structural balance and proportionality	Reinforces formal clarity and aesthetic harmony

Source: developed by the authors

The parameters presented in Table 2 reveal the dynamic nature of timbral organization and demonstrate that timbre functions not only as a static sound characteristic but also as a process unfolding in time. The interaction of these parameters contributes to the formation of large-scale structural processes and enhances the dramaturgical continuity of musical development. This dynamic perspective allows timbre to be understood as an active compositional factor that shapes both local and global levels of musical form.

Timbre intensity is formed due to register tension and timbre layering: the first reflects the differences of individual registers of the instrument, the second - the number of timbre duplications. Polychromy characterizes the structure of the sound fabric, where the smallest elements constantly receive new timbres. Permanence is manifested in the ability of timbres to form mixed or monochrome structures, and affinity is manifested in the creation of a hierarchical system that includes the main timbre, the main timbre layer, and pedal elements. Homogeneity is manifested through the formation of timbre complexes, the boundaries of which are determined by the differences between instruments, and symmetry is associated with the mirror reflection of pitch elements, which ensures the unity of the structure (Kabyalis, 1989).

Horizontal timbre structures include aspects of imitation, accentuation, transmissions and parallelisms. Timbre imitations can be carried out within a family of instruments, homogeneous groups or between heterogeneous timbres. Timbre accentuation is manifested in clearly distinguished accents due to short-term duplications, and parallelisms - in the formation of a timbre layer through the mirror reflection of texture lines (Kabyalis, 1989). Thus, the dynamic approach to timbre organically complements previous classifications (real/illusory, instrumental, harmonic, register, texture timbre,

etc.), allowing to assess not only the static properties of sound, but also its development and interaction of elements in time and space of the composition.

Another important parameter of timbre is the concept of timbre coloration, which is considered as a synthetic total sounding of a fragment of musical fabric. It combines various factors that influence the sound character of a work: instrumental composition, features of articulation and sound production, register arrangement of consonances and timbre complexes, as well as textural solutions. Thus, timbre color appears as a complex of interacting components that forms a holistic perception of sound and acts as an important musical tool along with harmony and texture.

In the process of modern theoretical understanding of timbre phenomena, it is proposed to distinguish between timbre as a characteristic of a specific instrument or voice and timbre coloration as the general coloration of the sound of a fragment of a work, which includes many elements. Tiwari et al. (2026) Timbre coloration concentrates on itself synthetic perception: it summarizes various aspects of sounding - instrumental timbres, articulation, register arrangement, interaction of consonances and timbre complexes, as well as textural solutions - creating a specific "sound appearance" of the work. At the same time, the instrumental component is preserved in both timbre and timbre coloration, which emphasizes their integrity.

The timbre coloration system is usually divided into two interconnected components: timbre-instrumental (primary) and textural (secondary, synthetic). The first is formed by a set of acoustic parameters that do not depend on the individual perception of the listener, and covers the timbre composition of the musical fabric (mono-timbral or mixed), types of sound production and articulation, register arrangement of consonances and timbre complexes (Ferrer & Eerola, 2010)). The second component is associated with the results of the mental activity of consciousness and appears as an integrative level of generalization of various elements of the musical fabric, forming a holistic perception of timbre color. In this sense, timbre color is considered as a generalizing category that combines acoustic, structural and sensory aspects of timbre and opens up the possibilities of analyzing both local and synthetic properties of sound in orchestral and ensemble compositions.

The timbre aspect of a musical work is closely related to its form. This idea has become key in many musicological investigations that investigate the relationship between timbre, form and thematism, as well as their functional significance. Three main parameters can be distinguished that help to trace this interaction: vertical, horizontal and diagonal. The vertical of timbre reflects the separation of sounds within the texture, the horizontal – the distribution of timbre colors along the form, and the diagonal demonstrates how the development of timbre interacts with voice guidance, forming a holistic musical line. Due to these parameters, timbre acquires the role of not only an acoustic phenomenon, but also a structural element of the composition, which emphasizes contrasts, integrates voices and instruments and contributes to the creation of a holistic dramatic effect (Kashyrtsev, 2021).

Zharkov (2011), considering the issue of the interaction of timbre and musical syntax, explores their coincidence and discrepancy in different parts of the form. The scientist emphasizes that timbre reveals other means of expression, emphasizes their meaning, and also combines them in a textural plan. All interactions of various elements (from cultural to linguistic) that affect the level of timbre syntax are conventionally divided by the musicologist into external (contextual) and internal (textual). External (contextual) can also be conventionally divided into historical and stylistic.

In the historical ones, in turn, Zharkov (2011, p. 15) distinguishes the folowing:

- "general" principles of orchestration in the music of the European tradition;

- historical traditions;
- traditions of individual composer schools (conditionally "geographic").

The internal type of interaction, according to the researcher, consists of:

- in the complex subordination of general syntactic structures and timbre syntactic elements;
- in the interaction of individual timbre syntactic elements, as well as a complex process when individual timbre syntactic structures at many points acquire intertextual features in the twentieth century (for example, the timbre syntax of A. Webern or the timbre-sonor layers of K. Penderecki).

Timbre is closely related to the dramaturgy of a musical work. This idea is developed by S. Korobetskaya. Based on the solid statements of B. Asafyev, the researcher understands timbre dramaturgy as "the intonation process of the figurative and expressive formation of the artistic meaning of a musical work, implemented in the system of timbre relationships" (Korobetskaya, 1994, p. 4). Timbre dramaturgy is a multi-component complex that actively interacts with various means of musical expressiveness.

Korobetskaya approaches timbre as the main organizing factor of musical dramaturgy, assigning certain semantic meanings to individual orchestral groups. This system consists of two main aspects – figurative and meaningful and form-forming, that is, it is considered through the role of timbre, on the one hand, in revealing the figurative content of the work, and on the other – in forming its form. The figurative and meaningful meaning is realized through timbre semantics, which is the consolidation of a certain semantic meaning or psychological state by individual timbres and their combinations in combination with textural and genre complexes in a certain context of development (Korobetskaya, 1994, p. 5).

The structure of the orchestral vertical of the work is determined depending on the section of the musical composition. For example, the exposition of the sonata form is characterized by pure timbres, the development is characterized by complex timbres and sharp timbre-dynamic contrasts, which enhance the figurative and thematic conflict. The reprise and coda are further dynamized due to instrumental transformations, and thematic development is accompanied by relief timbre development. At the same time, between the main themes of the composition there are timbre connections that have a unifying function (Holmes, 2012). Therefore, the leading driving force in timbre dramaturgy is timbre development, in the process of which the formation of the composition form occurs.

As to the functioning of timbre dramaturgy, Korobetskaya (1994, p. 6) defines it as follows: timbre exposition is the impulse of timbre development, and its final stage is timbre reprise. The first stage of timbre-figurative development occurs in the introduction and exposition. In the following sections of the form – development, reprise and coda, the diversity of timbre meanings, their possible interpenetration and timbre-semantic summary are revealed. The researcher also notes that the structure of the sonata form and the corresponding timbre functions often do not coincide. This means that timbre development is not always limited only to development, and the presence of a thematic reprise does not always correspond to timbre. Therefore, often the functions are limited to only two: timbre exposition and timbre development.

Timbre acts as an active factor in creating the canvas of an orchestral work. Like pitch, duration, and loudness, it determines the characteristics of musical sound and serves as a means of realizing the drama of the work. Certain timbres can be associated with specific characters or parts of the plot, acquiring programmatic symbolism and figurative and semantic autonomy. (Kaur, K., & Beri, N., 2026)

As a result, timbre becomes an equal component of the musical system, an important link in dramaturgy, and a significant component of composer's writing, integrating into such elements of the orchestral score as texture and orchestral vertical.

Problematic discussions within timbre role in musical sense intonation

The presented considerations, which include long-established, traditional and more modern approaches, largely reveal the range of basic problems of timbre studies and at the same time allow seeing the attraction of researchers to various differentiations and classifications of timbre, which is explained by the complexity and multidimensionality of this phenomenon. Summarizing the above, we can speak of the presence of a narrow and broad understanding of timbre, which means its interpretation, respectively, as a property of a separate sound, i.e. as its simplest quality, and as the nature of the sound of an instrument or voice as a whole, i.e. as a complexly organized concept. Such an understanding of timbre is also associated with the growth of the semantic significance of the coloration of instruments (phenomena of this order are leittembre, timbre dramaturgy) and as an accentuation of the coloristic coloration of sound, which encompasses all forms of sonority that arise as a result of the coordination of a multitude of sounds and other elements of the phonic layer (McAdams, 1999). This division leads to the separation of the phenomena of pure and illusory timbre, as well as to the division of the concepts of timbre and timbre color. In this case, both illusory timbre and timbre color are formed by a total (complex-syllabic) sound color.

Zharkov (2017), emphasizing the impossibility of a universal definition of timbre, proposes another differentiation of it, conditioned by other criteria than those presented in this subsection, from the point of view of it from the outside, but also one that corresponds to broad and narrow (more precise, special) approaches. This research differentiation arises at the border of different disciplines, as a result of the various manifestations of timbre, which were discussed above. The researcher emphasizes the need to formulate an “acoustic” and “musicological” definition of timbre. The first, in his opinion, should explain the acoustic specificity of timbre and satisfy specialists in the relevant discipline, the second should establish the specificity of the use of timbre in a musical work, explain its functioning as an element of musical language, emphasize the complex nature and interaction with other means and accordingly arrange musicologists. In addition to fulfilling these requirements, both definitions should not contradict each other (Zharkov, 2017, p. 95-96). The above allows Zharkov, remembering the already existing acoustic definition (“subjective characteristic of sound quality, thanks to which sounds of the same pitch and intensity can be distinguished from each other”), to propose the following musicological one: timbre is “an objective spectrum of sound, which manifests itself as an element of musical language, which is aimed at the instrumental (vocal) embodiment of sound in musical language and is aimed at the fusion of phonic, coloristic, textural, thematic, compositional and semantic components in their artistic and acoustic integrity” (Zharkov, 2017, p. 98). Accepting this definition as the main one, let us highlight a few more positions that are common to the given research panorama:

- the complexity, polyparametric nature of timbre is emphasized with an emphasis in its composition, first of all, on such components as pitch, duration and intensity of sound, which are most commonly used in the presented definitions;

- the integrating function of timbre is revealed, which determines the coloristic and form-forming aspects of the work;

• the functioning of timbre as a leading factor in the composition and dramaturgy of the work is emphasized;

• the possibility of timbre both to influence the interaction of elements in the work and to depend on them is indicated.

All this helps to understand that timbre in a musical work appears as a simultaneous phenomenon, capable of independently performing meaningful and constructive-organizing functions; it is based on a sequence of elements that have a certain meaning and have a certain structural organization. In addition, to see its duality:

• the ability to be both a differentiating means that ensures the distinction of elements of musical language, and a generalizing one at the phonic level, contributing to the fusion of all components of sound;

• the ability to function as a full-fledged element of musical language, as an independent lexeme, and as a parameter of elements of musical language (according to O. Zharkov).

Such inclusion of timbre in the system of relations of elements at the micro- and macro-levels allows us to understand that it is an effective means that is closely related to the language and form of a musical work. At the same time, the development and transformation of timbre within the work is associated with the transformation of its sound and acoustic structure into a semantic one. The latter requires a special systematic textual study.

Timbre as an important factor in the intonation of musical meaning is the basis of the entire process of intonation development and semantic organization of a musical text. These processes cover several levels at once: from sound to intonation-lexical unit and style sign, that is, directed from the introverted to the extroverted aspects of the work, moving from internal composite semantic structures to external connections and symbolization of meanings. Under these conditions, timbre, which associatively connects extra-musical meanings with its sound prototype, acts as a representative of certain information, which results in the need to comprehend it as a communicative means. The study of these phenomena and processes is directly related to the clarification of their role in the meaning production of a musical text, with the comprehension of intratextual transformations and intertextual migrations. In addition, it allows determining the author's position in the formation of the artistic space of the text, understanding the most general and author-individual patterns of the semantic organization of the musical text, and, therefore, forming a deeper understanding of the author's artistic world.

Conclusion

The conducted study confirms that timbre occupies a central position in the system of semantic organization of the musical text and functions as a complex polyparametric phenomenon that integrates acoustic, structural, perceptual, and semantic dimensions. The analysis of existing theoretical approaches demonstrates that timbre cannot be reduced solely to a physical characteristic of sound, since its artistic realization involves interaction with compositional, dramaturgical, and stylistic processes.

The historical evolution of timbre reveals its gradual transformation from a secondary attribute of sound coloration into an independent expressive and form-generating component of musical language. Beginning with the Romantic period and continuing into twentieth- and twenty-first-century compositional practice, timbre acquires the status of a meaningful structural element capable of influencing musical form, thematic development, and the creation of expressive imagery. In this regard,

the concept of timbral dramaturgy becomes particularly significant, as it reflects the dynamic unfolding of musical meaning through the interaction of timbral elements within the compositional structure.

The classification approaches considered in the study — including distinctions between real and illusory timbre, instrumental, harmonic, registral, and textural types, as well as dynamic characteristics such as timbral intensity, permanence, and polychromy — demonstrate the diversity of analytical perspectives and confirm the multidimensional nature of timbre organization. The concept of timbre coloration is identified as an integrative category that synthesizes individual timbral components into a unified sound image.

Thus, timbre appears as both a differentiating and integrative element of musical language, capable of organizing musical material at micro- and macro-levels of structure. Its ability to transform acoustic phenomena into semantic constructs determines its role as an effective communicative means within the artistic space of the musical text. The results of this study contribute to the development of theoretical foundations of timbre research and open perspectives for further investigation of its structural and semantic functions in contemporary musical practice.

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