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CHAMBER VOCAL WORK OF ALEXEI STÂRCEA

**ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION FOR THE ACADEMIC DEGREE
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CONCEPTUAL LANDMARKS OF RESEARCH

Importance and relevance of the topic. The development of the musical culture of the Republic of Moldova cannot be imagined without the multifaceted activity of Alexei Gheorghievici Stârcea (1919–1974) – a composer, singer and vocal pedagogue, rightfully regarded as one of the leading figures of national music. More than half a century has passed since the composer’s death, yet his creative legacy continues even today to move human hearts. The works of A. Stârcea captivate through their sincerity and the diversity of artistic imagery, presenting the author as a vivid representative of twentieth-century art.

The creative legacy of Alexei Stârcea is extensive: he is the author of chamber-instrumental works and cantatas, and the creator of *the Heroic Ballad* — the first Moldovan opera on a historical-revolutionary theme. However, the preferred sphere of A. Stârcea’s artistic work was always vocal music, and within it – the genre of the romance (art song), which, according to E. Vdovina, „most fully corresponded to the characteristics of the composer’s creative nature. It was precisely here that the lyrical orientation of his talent was revealed in its entirety, his refined taste for the poetic word, his understanding of the technical and expressive possibilities of the voice, and his experience in vocal writing, based on a profound knowledge of the classical and contemporary chamber-vocal repertoire” [11, p. 55].

„Regarding the work of Alexei Stârcea, – E. Kletinici writes – it is associated with the realization, within Moldovan national art, of the traditions of musical Romanticism and Impressionism. Romantic tendencies are noticeable in various traits of his works: in the foremost importance of lyricism, in the portrayal of elevated and refined images, in the subtle perception of the states of nature and human experience, in the profound and organic fusion of music with poetry, and in the search for a melodic equivalent to the expressive poetic word (which was, as a rule, chosen with great taste)” [15, p. 88].

The above determined the individual character of Alexei Stârcea’s romance style. Its vocal works captivate with their inner dramatic expression and the combination of depth of content with the beauty and naturalness of form. As A. Aleabov notes, this was due to the “happy combination” of A. Styrcha’s talent as a composer and the giftedness of a performer [3, p. 17]. In 1957, he graduated from the Chisinau Conservatory in composition (class of Leonid Gurov). Before that, he studied singing with various teachers, including the renowned singer Lydia Lipkowska, and completed his vocal education in 1949 in the class of Alexei Mesnyaev. The fact that A. Stârcea himself was an extraordinary singer and vocal pedagogue inevitably influenced his music.

The work of Alexei Stârcea is not forgotten today. Since 1989, the Chisinau School of Arts – an educational institution with a 60-year history and one of the leading centers for children’s artistic education – has borne the composer’s name. It is particularly noteworthy that in Chişinău, a biennial festival-competition of academic vocal music named after A. Stârcea is regularly held. The event is organized under the auspices of the *Sergei Lunchevici* National Philharmonic, in cooperation with the Union of Musical Figures, and with support from the *Mihai Eminescu* Romanian Cultural Institute and other institutions. The competition has become one of the major events in Moldova’s musical life, serving as a principal arena for creative contests and showcasing the talents of young opera singers and vocal students from music schools. The competition program invariably includes romances by A. Stârcea, which have become firmly established in both the concert and pedagogical repertoire, remaining popular among performers and eliciting a lively emotional response from audiences.

Although the work of Alexei Stârcea occupies a special place in the musical culture of the Republic of Moldova and is of great importance for the development of young singers, it has still not been sufficiently studied by musicologists. Materials devoted to the composer’s work were mainly published in the 1960s–1980s [2; 3; 10; 11; 13; 15; 19; 25; 26; 28, etc.]. The music of A. Stârcea requires contemporary analysis, including from a vocal perspective. It is precisely the combination of musicological and performance aspects that forms the basis of the present dissertation, which defines the relevance and originality of the chosen topic.

Field of research: chamber-vocal music.

Aim of the dissertation: to create a comprehensive understanding of the vocal works of Alexei Stârcea based on a thorough study of his romances.

Research objectives:

- to conduct a musicological and performance analysis of the most prominent chamber-vocal works of Alexei Stârcea, which are frequently included in concert and pedagogical practice;
- to trace the process of the composer’s stylistic development, identifying the specific characteristics of each stage of his creative journey;
- to reveal the structural and expressive features of the romances, examining the relationship between the poetic and musical components of the text, as well as the characteristics of form and musical language; to analyze the interaction between the vocal and piano parts;
- to examine the characteristics of vocal interpretation of the works and to propose methodological recommendations for overcoming the most significant vocal challenges in performing the composer’s romances.

The scientific and practical novelty and originality of the dissertation consist in the fact that the chamber-vocal works of Alexei Stârcea are examined for the first time as the subject of a dedicated musicological study; for the first time, the composer's vocal compositions are presented from the perspective of performance interpretation. The practical aspect is demonstrated through stage performances by the author, whose programs include a number of chamber-vocal works of A. Stârcea.

Methodological basis of the dissertation. The theoretical part of the work combines two main scientific approaches: musicological and performance-based. General research methods such as observation and description, analysis and synthesis, induction and deduction were employed. Among the musicological methods, particular attention was given to the method of holistic analysis, which allows the content of a work to be revealed through the examination of its form in a broad sense, and to explore the specific features of its structure and musical language. Considering the creative aspect of the dissertation, a methodology characteristic of vocal performance practice was applied to the study of the compositions.

The theoretical foundation of the dissertation is based on studies from various areas of musicology. First and foremost, these are works related to the personality and creative work of Alexei Stârcea, which reveal the composer's life path, provide recollections of his contemporaries, and contain analytical essays on compositions of various genres, particularly vocal works. This primarily refers to E. Vdovina's monograph *Moldovan Soviet Romance*, one chapter of which is dedicated to the romances of Alexei Stârcea, as well as the essay *Faithful to the Romance*, published on its basis. In addition, attention should be drawn to the collection *A.G. Stârcea in Articles and Memories*, compiled by E. Vdovina, which features a biographical article by A. Alyabov, as well as articles and recollections by the maestro's associates – Z. Stolyar, V. Zagorskii, A. Gujel, his student M. Muntean, and others. As an appendix, the collection includes a list of the composer's works.

Among the works that discuss the creative output of Alexei Stârcea, including a number of his romances, mention should be made of the essay by E. Kletinich in the author's collection *Essays on Soviet Moldovan Composers*. The same book also includes a list of A. Stârcea's compositions, with a listing of his principal romances. Other publications include the essay by I. Milyutin in the collection *Composers of Soviet Moldova*, as well as the informational brochure *Alexei Stârcea. Personal index of literature*, published for the period 1945–1979.

A brief characterization of Alexei Stârcea's work, with an emphasis on his vocal compositions, is provided in the introductory article by Z. Stolyar, *The Maturity of Talent*, for the A. Stârcea sheet music collection *Lyric Pages*. Several vocal works exhibiting features of the song

genre (in particular, *Plai moldovenesc (Moldovan homeland)*, set to the poetry of G. Vieru) are analyzed in Z. Stolyar's monograph *The Moldovan Soviet Song*.

Some details concerning the life and work of Alexei Stârcea can be found in publications such as P. Rotaru's monograph *Muzica instrumentală și vocală de cameră (Chamber instrumental and vocal music)*, the interview by E. Tkach *Composer, singer, pedagogue*, and the article by the same author *Vigoarea talentului (The vigor of talent)* on the 50th anniversary of A. Stârcea; the article by A. Dănilă, *Operele compozitorilor din Moldova pe scena Liricului chișinăuian (2) (The works of Moldovan composers performed on the stage of Chisinau's Liric Theatre)*; articles by G. Chaicovschi-Mereșanu in the encyclopedic edition *Literatura și arta Moldovei (Literature and art of Moldova)* and in the bibliography *Compozitori și muzicologi din Moldova (Composers and musicologists from Moldova)*; as well as materials from the online exhibition prepared for the composer's centenary by the Bălți State University Alecu Russo Library.

The work of A. Stârcea cannot be considered outside the historical and cultural context, as presented in the literature on the historical and theoretical issues of 20th-century Moldovan music. In this regard, the collective monograph *Arta muzicală din Republica Moldova. Istorie și modernitate (Musical art of the Republic of Moldova. History and modernity)* is a valuable resource. Works by V. Axyonov play an important role in the theoretical study of the concepts of style and genre, including their application to Moldovan national music, as well as in exploring the connections between folklore and compositional creativity.

The fundamental monograph by E. Mironenco, *Compositional creativity in the Republic of Moldova at the turn of the 20th–21st centuries (instrumental genres, musical theatre)*, plays an important role in the scholarly understanding of various concepts and phenomena related to the development of musical creativity in the Republic of Moldova. It draws attention by addressing the issues of the genre situation in contemporary academic music, developing a stylistic concept, and, in particular, examining the problem of national style. The last of the mentioned aspects is closely connected with the characteristics of musical folklore, which to varying degrees permeate A. Stârcea's vocal works, especially in the second period (late 1950s–1960s). In connection with the genre and musical features of Romanian and Moldovan folklore, we note the works of L. Axionova, E. Florea, S. Tsircunova, V. Gilash, G. Oprea and L. Agapie.

The study of A. Stârcea's chamber-vocal works would be impossible without considering the poetic basis of the analyzed romances and familiarizing oneself with the personalities and works of the authors of the literary texts: Russian poets F. Tyutchev and A. Koltsov; Moldovan poets G. Vieru, A. Gujel, G. Vodă, V. Teleucă; as well as well-known poets from the national

republics: N. Khazri, V. Sosiura, R. Gamzatov, E. Miezhelaitis, J. Rainis, A. Sagyan and S. Kaputikyan.

The issues of vocal genres, the interrelationship of text and music, and the balance between vocal and piano parts prompted the author of the dissertation to draw on a number of theoretical studies on these topics. Their authors include D. Bakhtizina and L. Zagitova, V. Vasina-Grossman, L. Kulakovskii, I. Stepanova, J. Moore, E. Stepanidina and R. Fleming.

In line with the main subject matter are theoretical studies, textbooks, and teaching materials on music theory and analysis, addressing issues of melody, vocal forms, and various aspects of musical language. Their authors include T. Bershadskaya, I. Krivoshey, I. Lavrentyeva, L. Mazel, R. Slonimskaya, V. Kholopova, V. Zuckerman and I. Gagim. A special group is represented by works on the theory and methodology of vocal art, developed by authors such as L. Dmitriev, N. Malysheva, A. Burlui, and others. In the course of working on the dissertation topic, the works of A. Stârcea published in music collections were also used.

Validation of the results. The dissertation was carried out within the framework of the Doctoral school *Arte și studii culturale* at the Academy of music, theatre, and fine arts.

The practical part of the work is reflected in three solo concert programs by the author, presented in the Grand hall of the Academy of Music, Theatre, and Fine Arts:

1. *The soul bursts forth* (11.01.2023)
2. *Wait by the window* (15.12.2023)
3. *Illusions* (28.10.2024)

The concerts featured Natalia Lazicova (piano), Eduard Musteața (baritone), Andrei Otean (baritone) and Constantin Friptuleac (tenor).

The main results **of the theoretical research** are reflected in five articles published in specialized journals recommended by the *National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research*. The dissertation materials were presented at 3 scientific forums:

1. National scientific conference of doctoral students and supervisors, *Culture and Art: Research, Valorization, Promotion*, Academy of Music, Theatre, and Fine Arts, 09.12.2022;
2. National scientific conference of doctoral students and supervisors, *Culture and Art: Research, Valorization, Promotion*, Academy of Music, Theatre, and Fine Arts, 08.12.2023;
3. International scientific conference, *Artistic Education – Cultural Dimensions*, Academy of Music, Theatre and Fine Arts, 24.04.2024.

The practical and theoretical parts of the work were repeatedly discussed at the meetings of the Supervisory Committee. The dissertation was reviewed and recommended for defense by

the Supervisory Committee and the Scientific Council of the Academy of Music, Theatre and Fine Arts.

Practical significance of the dissertation. The results of the work can be used in courses such as *Singing, Lied/Chamber repertoire, History of National Music, History of Vocal Performance, and Methodology of Teaching Specialized Disciplines (Academic Singing)*. The knowledge gained during the work on the dissertation has been applied in the author's performance practice and teaching activities. The analysis undertaken allows for enriching and facilitating the work of vocalists on A. Stârcea's romances, and also provides a basis for a reasoned artistic evaluation of specific performance interpretations. The practical recommendations may be useful both for performers – singers and pianists – and for teachers at music schools, teaching in vocal classes, chamber ensemble, and accompanist classes.

CONTENTS OF THE DISSERTATION

Scope and structure of the dissertation. The work comprises 102 pages of main text, including an introduction, three chapters, general conclusions and recommendations. The introduction substantiates the choice of the dissertation topic, defines its relevance and significance, the object of research, objectives and tasks, the degree of novelty and originality, the methodological framework and theoretical basis, as well as its theoretical and practical significance, and provides information on the validation of the results.

Chapter 1: A. Stârcea's early vocal works (1940s – first half of the 1950s). Section 1.1 is dedicated to A. Stârcea's vocal works of the second half of the 1940s – romances written to his own lyrics (*Wait by the window*) and to poems by F. Tyutchev (*The day draws to a close*). Section 1.2 analyzes the vocal lyrics of the first half of the 1950s – romances based on poems by A. Koltsov (*If I meet You, The soul bursts forth*) and F. Tyutchev (*Evening*). Section 1.3 includes conclusions about the features of the composer's early career in chamber vocal music identified in:

In the early period of his creative work (second half of the 1940s – first half of the 1950s). A. Stârcea composed a small number of romances, but they have largely been preserved in concert and teaching repertoire. Working with poetic text, the composer aimed for its careful realization in music. He sensitively captured the nuances of the poems' content and sought to convey them through melodic flexibility, precise selection of intonations, and logical musical development. In addition, being a singer himself, the author relied on the fundamental principles of vocal performance and took into account the characteristics of the singing voice in his music.

The composer's turn to the poetry of F. Tyutchev and A. Koltsov, after several romances set to his own texts, reflects his search for literary material consonant with his creative worldview.

The main theme of the romances from this early period is the expression of lyrical feelings, often born from the challenging life circumstances of the protagonist. Sensual imagery frequently unfolds against the backdrop of the surrounding environment, which shapes the romantic pictorial quality of the music.

The composer realized poetic texts in various forms characteristic of vocal music: strophic (*The soul bursts forth*), simple two-part without reprise (*Evening*), simple three-part with reprise (*Wait by the window, If I meet You*), through-composed strophic (*The day draws to a close*). The use of these forms in each case stems from the structure and meaning of the literary material. The composer generally follows the structure of the poetic text, but sometimes, in order to achieve the desired emotional effect, he employs the technique of expanding the stanza through the repetition of lines or individual words, thereby emphasizing certain aspects of the content or of the lyrical or dramatic character.

Early romances demonstrate metrorhythmic diversity. They feature the use of syncopation, dotted rhythmic patterns, and time signatures uncommon in vocal music (5/4, 6/4, 9/8). Frequent use is made of changing meters, with time signature shifts occurring not only at section boundaries but also within sections, particularly at the openings of pieces. On one hand, this allows the composer a flexible approach to realizing the poetic text; on the other hand, it results in variability, fluidity, and continuity of musical development. In addition, unconventional techniques are employed, such as the mismatch between beat groupings and the meter, as well as discrepancies in intra-bar accents (up to polymeter) between the vocal and piano parts. These metrorhythmic features present certain challenges for performers.

Among the techniques of harmonic development, sequences and organ points play an important role. The use of dissonant, altered, and tone-enriched chords, major-minor devices, vivid chordal contrasts, and modulations to related and distant keys imparts particular expressiveness to the musical texture. This influences the structure of the melody, requiring the vocalist to interpret it with sensitivity to tonal and melodic nuances and to perform it with precision.

The musical texture of the romances is diverse in terms of dynamic shading: the composer employs a wide range of nuances, from *p* to *ff*, with multiple gradations (*crescendo, diminuendo*). The melodic line of the vocal part is rich in accents and *tenuto* markings, giving it a variety of articulation.

Almost all romances feature a calm, unhurried opening phase, which is followed by a more active, agitated development based on sequences. In the codas, material from the opening returns – this thematic recurrence provides the compositions with a cohesive musical and expressive unity.

A common feature of all works from the early period is the wide range required in the vocal part, which presupposes the singer's possession of ample breath support, precise tone production, cantilena, and the ability to respond quickly and accurately to large and awkward intervals. The placement of a significant portion of the melodic line in the upper tessitura (as in the romance *The soul bursts forth*) creates particular challenges for the singer, who must have solid vocal technique.

Each section of the form contains its own melodic climax – local or overall, prepared or unexpected – which must be appropriately realized by the vocalist with piano accompaniment. In some romances (*Wait by the window, If I meet You*), the melodic climax is introduced by stepwise motion, giving the singer the opportunity to prepare the upper note in advance; in others (*The day draws to a close, Evening*), the singer does not have this possibility. The variety of approaches to constructing the melodic line reflects A. Stârcea's artistic development and his explorations in the field of musical language.

The analysis of the early romances showed that throughout the first period of his creative work, A. Stârcea's compositional technique underwent a certain evolution, becoming increasingly complex and diverse. At the same time, works composed in different years of the early period exhibit common features, which can be associated with the gradual development of his style.

Chapter two: Chamber-vocal works by A. Stârcea of the late 1950s – 1960s. Section 2.1 reveals the characteristics of A. Stârcea's romances based on the poetry of A. Gujel (*Night on the Lake, Grapes of Moldova, Illusions, I Await You*). Section 2.2 is devoted to the romances of the 1960s set to the poetry of G. Vodă (*Winter Watercolor, Spring Watercolor, Windows*). Section 2.3 examines vocal works from the second half of the 1960s set to the poetry of G. Vieru (*Moldovan Homeland, Fiddler, hey!, Longing for the Homeland, Mother's Song*). Section 2.4 presents the conclusions on the development of the composer's style:

The period of the late 1950s – 1960s is marked by new features in A. Stârcea's chamber-vocal works. The poetic texts are provided by Moldovan poets such as A. Gujel, G. Vodă, G. Vieru, P. Zadnîpru, A. Busuioc, P. Cărare, and others. The romances of this second period, like earlier chamber-vocal works, convey a variety of lyrical feelings and landscape imagery, but alongside this, romances celebrating the native land also appear. At the same time, A. Stârcea turns to lyrical-dramatic poetry, foreshadowing the themes of certain romances from the next stage of his creative work.

As a structural basis, the composer primarily adopts strophic form, as well as binary and ternary forms with a varied reprise. In shaping the form of his works, A. Stârcea proceeds from the content of the poetic text; however, he does not always preserve the poetic structure, adapting it instead to the architectonics of the musical idea. All the poems, with the exception of *I Await You*, consist of

three stanzas – accordingly, the composer used tripartite structure as a organizing principle. Thus, the romances *Night on the Lake* and *Grapes of Moldova* contain three verses each; the romance *Illusions* is written in a simple three-part form: *a b a*₁. The poetic basis of the work *I Await You* consists of four stanzas, but even here the composer found an opportunity to use a three-part structure, expanding the reprise by including vocalise.

The romances of the second period are distinguished by a pronounced integration of song-genre characteristics. This is evidenced by the use of strophic form, the song-and-dance foundation of the thematic material, and the relative simplicity of both the vocal melodic line and the associated vocal-technical demands. Elements of folkloric genres are incorporated into the melodic line and the piano texture, saturating the music of the majority of these works with a distinctive national Moldovan stylistic coloration. The folkloric features of a number of romances are manifested through specific rhythmic characteristics, the alternation of parallel major and minor modes, the incorporation into the melodic line of characteristic scale degrees of traditional folk modes, and the use of melismatic ornamentation (including mordents and grace notes/appoggiaturas). The inclusion of passages that imitate various instruments of Moldovan folk ensembles (such as the cimbalom/hammered dulcimer and melodic instruments of the fluier type, traditional Moldovan shepherd's flute) often imparts an orchestral character to the piano part.

The melodic line of the works is flexible, at times flowing gently in the rhythm of a waltz or *hora mare*, and at other times unfolding leisurely in the character of a contemplative ballad. Vocalizes appear in the romances, seemingly continuing or “completing” the verbal text. The vocal writing in the romances is generally not complex, although the composer occasionally poses specific challenges for the singer in the form of high notes or passages spanning wide intervals – primarily occurring in the climactic sections. Overall, the vocal part is dominated by cantilena, occasionally giving way to a more recitative-like declamation. The melodies of the romances allow the singer to explore the potential of their vocal apparatus within relatively comfortable tessitura ranges. Not all works feature clearly defined climaxes, yet each provides the opportunity to create an emotionally expressive and logically constructed melodic line.

The piano interacts closely with the vocal part, not only accompanying the singer in chordal textures and providing a song-and-dance or ballad-like background, but also performing other important functions: in some cases, it doubles the vocal line, serving as an intonational support, while in others it acts as an equal partner in the duet. The piano's responses, imitations, and contrapuntal lines create a continuous dialogue with the vocal melody, generating a developed and emotionally rich musical texture. The piano plays a significant role in shaping various additional formal sections: introductions (to the entire piece or to individual strophes), interludes between

and within sections, and codas, which often, together with the introduction, form a thematic framing of the work's structure.

The musical language of the works from the second stage of A. Stârcea's creative output is characterized by considerable diversity. Depending on the expressive content of the romance and the specific challenges set by the composer, it may be simple or complex, closely aligned with folkloric models, or reflecting the modal and harmonic refinements of contemporary academic music. These characteristics were further developed by A. Stârcea in the subsequent period of his chamber-vocal creativity.

These features indicate the gradual refinement of A. Stârcea's chamber-vocal works in the late 1950s – 1960s, marking a new milestone in his compositional development.

Chapter Three: Romances by A. Stârcea of the last years (1970s). Section 3.1 is devoted to the embodiment of the lyrical dimension in the romances of the 1970s set to poems by N. Khazri (*Maternal hands*), V. Teleucă (*The storks are flying*), V. Sosiura (*The autumn birch*), and R. Gamzatov (*Joy, Linger*). Section 3.2 characterizes the philosophical dimension in the vocal output of the 1970s, based on poems by E. Mieželaitis (*Silence*), J. Rainis (*Take your heart...*), A. Sagyan (*Life will not stand still*), and S. Kaputikyan (*My heart*). Section 3.3 contains conclusions that make it possible to define the 1970s as a period of A. Stârcea's compositional maturity:

Romances by A. Stârcea from the 1970s mark a new stage in his creative development, demonstrating both intellectual maturity and a refined personal style. After a long period of exploration, the composer during these years brought his chamber-vocal work to a culminating peak. While in the 1960s A. Stârcea was drawn to romances with characteristics of the song, the chamber-vocal works of the 1970s are distinguished by their belonging specifically to the romance genre. This is evident both in the choice of poetic material and in the structural and musical-expressive solutions of the compositions. In the early 1970s, A. Stârcea sought to capture the poetic intent as precisely as possible and to convey it through his musical language. At the same time, he sometimes engages directly with the poet's text in order to highlight particular details within it.

In the 1970s, A. Stârcea increasingly reflected on the meaning of life, being drawn to poetic texts of a lyrical-dramatic and philosophical, and occasionally satirical, nature. Part of the romances from this decade belongs to works in which the lyrical element is represented in a variety of ways, while another part is primarily imbued with a philosophical dimension. At the same time, the lyrical and philosophical aspects sometimes intertwine in intricate ways, forming two interacting facets of the lives of the heroes of these romances, for whom the past, present, and

future, illusions and emotional experiences, depictions of the surrounding nature, and virtual images of past attachments are all significant.

The romances of A. Stârcea's final creative period are diverse in their structure, with the composer employing strophic, strophic-variation, two-part, and three-part forms. In shaping these forms, he approaches the underlying poetic texts with flexibility. In most cases, he does not follow the poetic text strictly, as was often the case in his earlier romances, but rather subordinates it to his own artistic concept: he divides quatrains and places their fragments in different sections of the compositions, adds repetitions of phrases and words from the text to highlight "key words," and to create the musical form he requires. In this way, the composer continues the explorations he began in the previous period.

The musical language of the romances from the 1970s became more complex compared to those of previous years. The musical texture is highly chromatic, the tonal foundation generally tending toward instability, and the harmonic vertical is constructed either by adding extra tones to triads or by creating functionally ambiguous, multi-component chords. In accordance with this pitch organization, the melodic line is structured in a way that demands from the soloist a well-developed ear and established vocal technique. The vocal part often allows the singer to display different facets of their vocal abilities, refine passages in the upper register during climaxes, and navigate wide intervallic leaps.

One of the distinctive features of the romances is the active interaction between the vocal and piano parts. The singer and pianist often form a unified ensemble, complementing each other. In many cases, the piano provides the vocalist with intonational support, which is especially desirable in the intricate contours of the melodic lines. Passages that remain understated in the vocal part are supplemented by the piano in the instrumental introductions to the pieces and their sections, in ritornellos, and through various linking passages and interludes. It is precisely the participation of the piano that often lends originality and distinctiveness to the forms of the romances, which might otherwise appear simple.

The study is concluded with *General Conclusions and Recommendations*, which summarize the findings of the research and outline potential directions for further development of the topic.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The scientific and creative project undertaken made it possible to examine A. Stârcea's chamber-vocal works from multiple perspectives, which occupy a central place in his creative legacy. The artistic component of the dissertation presented three concert programs, each including a selection of the most representative and frequently performed romances by A. Stârcea, widely used in both performance and pedagogical practice. In the theoretical part, the majority of the composer's chamber-vocal works were examined and analyzed from both musicological and performance perspectives. Thus, the primary objective of the dissertation was achieved: to create a comprehensive understanding of A. Stârcea's romances based on their musicological and performance-based study. The research conducted made it possible to draw the following general conclusions:

1. In the evolution of A. Stârcea's chamber-vocal music, three periods can be distinguished: the first spans the decade from the late 1940s to the mid-1950s; the second extends from the late 1950s to the end of the 1960s; and the third unfolds in the early 1970s. This periodization highlights the gradual refinement of A. Stârcea's compositional style and demonstrates the distinctive characteristics of each stage.

The analysis clearly demonstrates that the development of the composer's romances, spanning more than a quarter of a century, is reflected in the transformation of his figurative and stylistic preferences, the increasing complexity of his musical expressive means, and a flexible approach to musical form. A. Stârcea demonstrated a refined taste in selecting poetic texts that allowed him to express his innermost thoughts and emotions. It is precisely in works that reveal the inner world of the individual that the composer is particularly expressive throughout all periods of his creative activity.

2. In the 1940s through the first half of the 1950s, A. Stârcea composed romances to his own texts as well as to poems by 19th-century Russian poets F. Tyutchev and A. Koltsov. His early vocal works reflect the composer's harmonious worldview, his subtle connection with nature, and his ability to convey profound human emotions and experiences through its imagery. The works of the first period are characterized by emotional richness, melodiousness, and elaborate, colorful piano accompaniment. They reflect the composer's understanding of the vocal nature and expressive capabilities of the human voice.

3. In the late 1950s and throughout the 1960s, A. Stârcea based his romances on the poetry of Moldovan poets, including A. Gujel, G. Vodă, G. Vieru, P. Zadnipru, A. Busuioc, P. Cărare, and others. In the chamber-vocal works of these years, two main lines of development can be observed: on the one hand, a reliance on the genre conventions of the song, and on the other, the

cultivation of characteristics specific to the romance. In compositions belonging to the first line, a relative simplicity of musical means is noticeable, as well as the use of elements of Moldovan musical folklore—particularly in works that celebrate the composer’s native land.

The romances of the second line demonstrate the compositional techniques characteristic of the twentieth century. This is reflected in the increasing complexity of the modal aspects of the melodies, the enrichment of the harmonic vertical, and the polyphonization of the musical texture. This line was conditioned by the fact that, as a result of the “*thaw*” of the 1960s, Western European musical influences began to penetrate Moldovan academic music more intensively. Like other composers of his time, A. Stârcea felt the need to update his arsenal of expressive means, which found reflection in his chamber-vocal works.

4. In the third period, A. Stârcea turned to the poetry of the Soviet republics, including S. Yesenin, J. Rainis, E. Miezhelaitis, V. Teleucă, N. Khazri, R. Gamzatov, V. Sosyura, A. Sagyan, S. Kaputikyan, A. Keshokov, I. Pronchatov. Among the romances of the 1970s, ten works composed in 1972 stand out. They are not presented as a vocal cycle, yet they are closely related in spirit. The romances constitute lyrical confessions set against scenes of nature, dramatic reflections on life and its meaning, and calls to strive for human ideals. While differing from earlier vocal works, these later romances also share certain features with them, particularly with several compositions from the 1960s. In them, the line associated with the search for contemporary means of expression continues to develop.

5. Throughout his career, while refining the style of his romances and addressing ever-new expressive and technical challenges, A. Stârcea also demonstrated a profound understanding of the principles of chamber-vocal performance, thereby facilitating the most effective interpretation of his works by singers. In the flexible vocal melodies, coordinated with the piano accompaniment, A. Stârcea provided performers with the opportunity to fully showcase their technical abilities. The piano texture engages in a variety of interactions with the vocal line, sometimes providing intonational support and at other times facilitating a dialogic exchange of phrases. The piano also plays a significant role in shaping the form of the romances, enriching it with connecting passages, introductions, ritornellos, and codas.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Continue the study of A. Stârcea's chamber-vocal works by expanding the range of romances analyzed.
2. Develop methodological guidelines for the performance of A. Stârcea's chamber-vocal works.
3. Promote A. Stârcea's romances by regularly including them in both concert and pedagogical repertoire.
4. Initiate an anthological reissue of A. Stârcea's romances, currently published in collections comprising vocal works by various composers.
5. Examine the role of the *A. Stârcea Academic Vocal Festival-Competition* in the development of the musical culture of the Republic of Moldova.

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**THE PRACTICAL PART OF THE THESIS
(SOLO CONCERT PROGRAMS BY THE AUTHOR)**

CONCERT PROGRAM No. 1

Academy of Music, Theatre and Fine Arts,
Grand Hall, building 2

11 January 2023

THE SOUL BURSTS FORTH...

1. A. Stârcea / G. Vieru. *Mother's song* (*Cîntul mamei*)
2. A. Stârcea, / A. Gujel. *Domnika's song* from the opera *Heroic Ballad*
3. A. Dvořák / Ja. Kvapil. *Rusalka's Aria* from the opera *Rusalka*
4. A. Dvořák / A. Heyduk. *Když mne stará matka* (*I remember, mother, it used to be...*)
5. T. Khrennikov / A. Faiko and N. Virta. *Natalia's Aria* from the opera *Into the Storm* (*Бурю*)
6. A. Stârcea / S. Yesenin. *Don't smile crookedly* (*Не криви улыбку*)
7. A. Stârcea / F. Tyutchev. *The day is getting dark* (*День вечереет*)
8. S. Rachmaninov / G. Galina. *How it hurts me* (*Как мне больно*)
9. S. Rachmaninov / F. Tyutchev. *Spring Waters* (*Весенние воды*)
10. F. Lehár / V. Leon and L. Stein. *Duet of Hanna and Danilo* from the operetta *The Merry Widow*
11. A. Stârcea / G. Vieru. *Fiddler, hey!* (*Lăutare, măi!*)
12. A. Stârcea / A. Koltsov. *The soul bursts forth...* (*Так и рвется душа*)

Participating in the concert: **Natalia Lazicova** (piano), **Eduard Musteață** (baritone)

CONCERT PROGRAM No. 2

Academy of Music, Theatre and Fine Arts,
Grand Hall, building 2

15 December 2023

WAIT BY THE WINDOW...

1. A. Stârcea / G. Vieru. *Dor de plai*
2. A. Stârcea / A. Gujel. *Struguri de Moldova*
3. J. Brahms / G. Daumer. *Oh, turn your gaze* (*Ach, wende diesen Blick*)
4. R. Strauss / G. von Gilm. *All Souls' Day* (*Allerseelen*)
5. A. Rubinstein / A. Pushkin. *Night* (*Ночь*)
6. R. Shchedrin. *Natasha's aria* from the opera *Not Only Love* (*Misty Red Sun – Туманно красное солнышко*)

7. A. Stârcea / G. Vieru. *Plai moldovenesc*
8. A. Stârcea / A. Gujel. *The duet of Domnika and Toma* from the opera *Heroic Ballad*
9. P.I. Tchaikovsky / A. Apukhtin. *Crazy nights* (*Ночи безумные*)
10. S. Rachmaninov / A. Fet. *In the silence of a secret night* (*В молчаньи ночи тайной*)
11. M. Zherbin / L. Ukrainka. *The Last Flowers* (*Останні квіти*)
12. A. Stârcea / F. Tyutchev. *Evening* (*Вечер*)
13. A. Stârcea / A. Stârcea. *Wait by the window...* (*Жди у окна*)

Participating in the concert: **Natalia Lazicova** (piano), **Andrei Otean** (baritone)

CONCERT PROGRAM No. 3

Academy of Music, Theatre and Fine Arts,
Grand hall, building 2

28 October 2024

ILLUSIONS

1. G. Purcell. *Dido's Aria* from the opera *Dido and Aeneas*.
2. A. Stârcea / P. Zadnipru. *Do you remember* (*Îți amintești*)
3. A. Stârcea / A. Gujel. *Night on the lake* (*Noaptea pe lac*)
4. A. Stârcea / E. Miezhelaitis, translated by Yu. Levitansky. *Silence* (*Тишина*)
5. P.I. Tchaikovsky / A. Apukhtin. *Does the day reign* (*День ли царит*)
6. P.I. Tchaikovsky / I. Surikov. *Was I in the field but there was no grass...* (*Я ли в поле да не травушка была...*)
7. S. Rachmaninov / V. Hugo, translated by L. Mey. *They answered* (*Они отвечали*)
8. S. Rachmaninov, translated by A. Apukhtin. *Excerpt from Musset* (*Отрывок из Мюссе*)
9. Gh. Dendrino, *Duet Bertha and Ciprian* (*I love you – Te iubesc*) from the operetta *Let me sing* (*Lăsați-mă să cânt*)
10. A. Stârcea / A. Gujel. *I'm waiting for You* (*Te aștept*)
11. A. Stârcea / A. Gujel. *Illusions* (*Iluzii*)
12. A. Stârcea / N. Khazri, translated by A Peredreev. *Maternal hands* (*Материнские руки*)

Participating in the concert: **Natalia Lazicova** (piano), **Constantin Friptuleac** (tenor)

LIST OF THE AUTHOR'S SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS ON THE TOPIC OF THE DISSERTATION

2. Articles in scientific journals

2.3 In the journals included in the National Register of Specialized Journals (with indication of category):

1. Bugor, E. Romane de Alexei Stârcea pe versurile lui Anatol Gujel: structura imaginară, limbaj muzical, sarcini interpretative. In: *AKADEMOS*. Revista de știință, inovare, cultură și artă, **categoría B**. Nr. 2 (73), 2024. Chișinău: Academia de științe a Moldovei, imprimat la Blitz Poligraf SRL, 2024, p. 159–164. ISSN 1857-0461. E-ISSN 2587-3687.
<https://akademos.asm.md/index.php/akademos/ro/article/view/122>

2. Bugor, E. Three romances by Alexei Stârcea on the poems of Gheorghe Vodă: figurative structure, composition and vocal features. In: *Studiul artelor și culturologie: istorie, teorie, practică*. Nr. 1 (46), 2024. Chișinău: Notograf Prim, 2024, p. 59–64. Revista științifică, **tipul B**. ISSN 2345-1408.
<https://revista.amtap.md/2024/12/05/three-romances-by-alexei-starcea-on-the-poems-of-gheorghe-voda-figurative-structure-composition-and-vocal-features/>

3. Bugor, E. Камерно-вокальное творчество Алексея Стырчи 1970-х годов: лирические образы, композиционные и исполнительские особенности. In: *Studiul artelor și culturologie: istorie, teorie, practică*. Nr. 1 (48), 2025. Chișinău: Notograf Prim, 2025, p. 63–70. Revista științifică, **tipul B**. ISSN 2345-1408.
<https://revista.amtap.md/2025/11/04/6141/>

3. Articles in scientific proceedings

3.2. Collections of articles based on materials from international conferences:

4. Bugor, E. Романсы Алексея Стырчи на стихи Григоре Виеру. In: *Învățămintul artistic – dimensiuni culturale* : Conferința științifică internațională, 26 aprilie 2024. Chișinău : AMTAP, 2024, p. 62–70. ISBN 978-9975-176-05-7 (PDF).
<https://amtap.md/assets/pdf/%C3%8Env%C4%83%C8%9B%C4%83m%C3%A2ntul%20artistic.%20-%20Dimensiuni%20culturale,%202024%20.pdf>

3.4. Collections of articles based on materials from national conferences in the republic:

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ANNOTATION

BUGOR Elena. CHAMBER VOCAL WORK OF ALEXEI STÂRCEA.

**Dissertation submitted for the academic degree of Doctor of Arts
in the specialty 653.01 – Musicology (Professional Doctorate), Chişinău, 2026**

The structure of the dissertation includes: abstracts, an introduction, three chapters, general conclusions and recommendations, a bibliography comprising 118 sources. The main text consists of 100 pages and contains 24 tables and 43 musical examples. The results have been published in 5 scientific articles and presented in 3 concert performances by the author.

Keywords: Alexei Stârcea, vocal performance, chamber vocal music, musical form, imagery, poetic text, romance

Field of research: chamber vocal music.

Purpose of the dissertation: creating a comprehensive overview of Stârcea's vocal works based on a multifaceted study of his romances.

Research objectives: to conduct musicological and performance-based analyses of the most significant chamber vocal works by Alexei Stârcea that are frequently included in concert and pedagogical practice; to trace the evolution of the composer's style by identifying the specific features of each stage of his creative development; to reveal the imagery of the romances, the relationship between the poetic and musical components of the text, as well as the characteristics of form and musical language; to analyze the interaction between the vocal and piano parts; examine the distinctive features of the vocal interpretation of the works, to propose methodological recommendations aimed at overcoming the most substantial vocal challenges encountered in the performance of the composer's romances.

Scientific novelty and originality of the dissertation lie in the fact that Alexei Stârcea's chamber vocal works are examined for the first time as the subject of a specialized musicological study, and that the composer's vocal compositions are presented for the first time from the perspective of performance interpretation. This work aims to fill a gap in Moldavian musicology, where, to date, no theoretical work has been written on Stârcea's romances.

The novelty and originality of the artistic concept lie in the fact that the author's stage performances feature programs that include A. Stârcea's major chamber vocal works and are distinguished by a fresh interpretive approach to the musical material.

Practical significance of the dissertation: the research findings may be applied in academic courses such as *Singing, Lied/Chamber music repertoire, History of National Music, History of Vocal Performance*, and *Methods of Teaching the Specialized Discipline (Academic Singing)*. The analysis undertaken contributes to enriching and facilitating vocalists' work on Alexei Stârcea's romances and provides a basis for a well-founded artistic evaluation of specific performance interpretations. The practical recommendations may be useful to performers – both singers and pianists – as well as to instructors at education institutions teaching vocal, chamber ensemble, and accompanist classes.

Application of the research results. The knowledge gained during the work on the dissertation has been applied in the author's performance practice and teaching activities. The practical validation of the research was carried out through concert performances. The results of the theoretical research are reflected in scholarly publications and in presentations delivered at 1 international and 2 national scientific conferences held in the Republic of Moldova.

АННОТАЦИЯ

БУГОР Елена. КАМЕРНО-ВОКАЛЬНОЕ ТВОРЧЕСТВО АЛЕКСЕЯ СТЫРЧИ.
Диссертация на соискание ученого звания доктора искусств по специальности
653.01. – Музыкаведение (профессиональный докторат), Кишинев, 2026.

Структура диссертации: аннотации, введение, три главы, основные выводы и рекомендации, библиография из 118 наименований; 100 страниц основного текста, 24 таблицы, 43 нотных примера. Результаты опубликованы в 5 научных статьях и 3 концертных выступлениях автора.

Ключевые слова: Алексей Стырча, вокальное исполнительство, камерно-вокальная музыка, музыкальная форма, образный строй, поэтический текст, романс

Область исследования: камерно-вокальная музыка.

Цель диссертации: создание целостного представления о вокальном творчестве Алексея Стырчи на основе разностороннего изучения его романсов.

Задачи исследования: выполнить музыковедческий и исполнительский анализ наиболее ярких, часто включаемых в концертную и педагогическую практику камерно-вокальных произведений Алексея Стырчи; проследить процесс совершенствования стиля композитора, выявив специфику каждого из этапов его творческого пути; раскрыть образный строй романсов, соотношение поэтического и музыкального компонентов текста, особенности формы и музыкального языка; проанализировать взаимосвязь вокальной и фортепианной партий; рассмотреть особенности певческой интерпретации сочинений, предложить методические рекомендации по преодолению наиболее существенных вокальных трудностей при исполнении романсов композитора.

Научная новизна и оригинальность диссертации связана с тем, что в ней камерно-вокальное творчество Алексея Стырчи впервые явилось объектом специального музыковедческого исследования; в первый раз вокальные сочинения композитора представлены с позиции исполнительской трактовки. Работа призвана восполнить пробел, существующий в отечественном музыкознании, в котором до настоящего времени не создано ни одного теоретического труда, посвященного романсам А. Стырчи.

Новизна и оригинальность художественной концепции выражается в том, что в рамках сценических выступлений автора представлены программы, которые включают основные камерно-вокальные произведения А. Стырчи и отличаются новизной исполнительского подхода к музыкальному материалу.

Практическая значимость диссертации. Результаты работы могут быть использованы в учебных курсах *Пение, Lied/Камерный репертуар, История национальной музыки, История вокального исполнительского искусства, Методика преподавания специальной дисциплины (Академическое пение)*. Предпринятый анализ позволяет обогатить и облегчить работу вокалистов над романсами А. Стырчи, а также дает основание для аргументированной художественной оценки той или иной исполнительской интерпретации. Практические рекомендации могут быть полезны как исполнителям – певцам и пианистам, так и педагогам учебных заведений, преподающим в классах вокала, камерного ансамбля и концертмейстерского мастерства.

Внедрение результатов работы. Знания, полученные в ходе работы над диссертацией, нашли применение в исполнительской практике и педагогической деятельности автора. Практическая апробация осуществлена в рамках концертных выступлений. Результаты теоретических изысканий отражены в научных публикациях, а также представлены на 1 международной и 2 республиканских научных конференциях.

ADNOTARE

BUGOR Elena. CREAȚIA VOCALĂ DE CAMERĂ A LUI ALEXEI STĂRCEA.
Teză de Doctor în Arte, specialitatea 653.01. – Muzicologie (doctorat profesional),
Chișinău, 2026.

Structura tezei: adnotări, introducere, trei capitole, concluzii generale și recomandări, bibliografie din 118 titluri, 100 pagini ale textului de bază, 24 de tabele, 43 de exemple muzicale. Rezultatele cercetării sunt reflectate în 5 articole științifice și 3 recitaluri ale autoarei.

Cuvinte cheie: Alexei Stârcea, interpretare vocală, muzică vocală de cameră, formă muzicală, repere figurative, text poetic, romanță

Domeniul de studii: muzica vocală de cameră.

Scopul tezei constă în elaborarea unei viziuni complexe asupra creației vocale a lui Alexei Stârcea, axată pe o analiză multidimensională a romanțelor sale.

Obiectivele cercetării includ: realizarea analizei muzicologice și interpretative a lucrărilor vocale de cameră reprezentative ale lui Alexei Stârcea solicitate în practica concertistică și pedagogică; relevarea procesului de evoluție a stilului compozitorului, prin identificarea specificului fiecărei etape a parcursului său de creație; dezvăluirea aspectelor figurative ale romanțelor, corelațiilor dintre componentul poetic și cel muzical, trăsăturilor formei și limbajului muzical; analiza corespondențelor dintre partidele vocală și pianistică; evidențierea particularităților interpretării vocale a compozițiilor și formularea recomandărilor metodice pentru depășirea unor dificultăți vocale în interpretarea romanțelor compozitorului.

Noutatea și originalitatea științifică a tezei se datorează faptului că pentru prima dată creația vocală de cameră a lui Alexei Stârcea a devenit obiectul unei cercetări muzicologice speciale; în premieră, compozițiile vocale ale compozitorului au fost prezentate din perspectiva artei interpretative vocale. Lucrarea contribuie la completarea unui gol în muzicologia autohtonă, în care până în prezent nu a fost realizat niciun studiu teoretic dedicat romanțelor lui A. Stârcea.

Noutatea și originalitatea conceptului artistic se referă la faptul că, în cadrul recitalurilor autoarei, sunt prezentate programe care includ principalele lucrări camerale-vocale ale lui A. Stârcea și se disting prin noutatea abordării interpretative a materialului muzical.

Valoarea aplicativă a tezei. Rezultatele lucrării pot servi ca suport didactic în cursurile de *Canto, Lied/Repertoriu cameral, Istorie a muzicii naționale, Istorie a artei de interpretare vocală, Metodică de predare a disciplinei de specialitate (Canto academic)*. Cercetarea contribuie la lărgirea orizontului, completarea și facilitarea lucrului cântăreților asupra romanțelor lui A. Stârcea și oferă un suport pentru o evaluare artistică argumentată a unor tratări interpretative diverse. Recomandările practice pot fi utile atât pentru interpreți – vocaliști și pianiști, cât și pentru profesorii de canto, ansamblu de cameră sau măiestrie de concert, din diverse instituții de învățământ.

Implementarea rezultatelor științifice. Cunoștințele obținute în timpul lucrului asupra tezei și-au găsit aplicarea în practica interpretativă și activitățile didactice ale autoarei. Aprobarea practică a rezultatelor obținute a avut loc în cadrul evoluărilor scenice. Rezultatele cercetărilor teoretice sunt publicate în articole științifice, precum și în comunicările susținute la 1 conferință științifică internațională și 2 conferințe științifice naționale.

BUGOR ELENA

**CREAȚIA VOCALĂ DE CAMERĂ
A LUI ALEXEI STÂRCEA**

REZUMATUL TEZEI DE DOCTOR ÎN ARTE

**SPECIALITATEA 653.01 MUZICOLOGIE
(DOCTORAT PROFESIONAL)**

CHIȘINĂU, 2026

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