

**LIUDMILA N. SHAYMUKHAMETOVA***Scholarly-Methodical Center "Innovation Art Studies"**Ufa, Russia**ORCID: 0000-0002-1355-9677, i2018n@yandex.ru*

## **Semantic Transformations in the Musical Themes of Domenico Scarlatti's Clavier Sonatas**

The general precept for study within the semiotic sphere of Russian musicology and, in particular, of the Laboratory of Musical Semantics of the Ufa State Institute of Arts, is based on acknowledging music as a part of the communicative artistic system (<http://lab-ms.narod.ru/index/0-32>). The stable intonational turns endowed with stable meanings frequently encountered in musical texts, labeled as semantical figures, are essentially bearers of musical meaning. They are concretized by means of assimilating extra-musical phenomena and indications of the external world and, by penetrating into the musical text, organize the sign-related metaphorical mechanism of musical utterance. The study of the mechanism of semantical transformations of intonational vocabulary is especially important on the level of studying musical themes, since the intonational formulas migrating from one musical text to another reveal the "genetic code" of musical compositions and concretize the semantical perceptions of the performer and the listener.

In Domenico Scarlatti's sonatas for clavier the migrating intonational formulas may be observed most clearly on the level of the musical theme. It is particularly this segment of the musical text in the case of many composers which, according to Mark Aranovsky, presents "an object of heightened semantical concentration."

**Keywords:** Domenico Scarlatti, Domenico Scarlatti's sonatas, semantical transformations of intonational vocabulary, Laboratory of Musical Semantics.

*For citation:* Shaymukhametova Liudmila N. Semantic Transformations in the Musical Themes of Domenico Scarlatti's Clavier Sonatas. *Problemy muzykal'noj nauki/Music Scholarship*. 2019. No. 2, pp. 87–96. DOI: 10.17674/1997-0854.2018.4.087-096.

**Л. Н. ШАЙМУХАМЕТОВА***Научно-методический центр «Инновационное искусствознание»**г. Уфа, Россия**ORCID: 0000-0002-1355-9677, i2018n@yandex.ru*

## **Семантические преобразования в музыкальной теме клавирных сонат Доменико Скарлатти**

Общая установка исследований семиотического направления российского музыкознания и, в частности, Лаборатории музыкальной семантики Уфимского государственного института искусств основана на признании музыки частью коммуникативной художественной системы (<http://lab-ms.narod.ru/index/0-32>).

Устойчивые интонационные обороты с закреплёнными значениями, часто встречающиеся в текстах и именуемые семантическими фигурами, являются носителями музыкального смысла. Они опредмечиваются через ассимиляцию внемusicalных явлений и признаков внешнего мира и, включаясь в музыкальный текст, организуют знаково-метафорический механизм музыкального высказывания. Изучение механизма семантических трансформаций интонационной лексики особенно важно на уровне музыкальной темы, поскольку мигрирующие из текста в текст интонационные формулы выявляют «генетический код» произведения, конкретизируют семантические представления исполнителя и слушателя.

В клавирных сонатах Доменико Скарлатти мигрирующие интонационные формулы встречаются наиболее часто на уровне музыкальной темы. Именно этот сегмент текста у многих композиторов является, по словам Марка Арановского, «предметом повышенной семантической концентрации».

**Ключевые слова:** Доменико Скарлатти, клавирные сонаты Доменико Скарлатти, семантические трансформации музыкального языка, Лаборатория музыкальной семантики.

*Для цитирования:* Shaymukhametova Liudmila N. Semantic Transformations in the Musical Themes of Domenico Scarlatti's Clavier Sonatas // Проблемы музыкальной науки/Music Scholarship. 2019. № 2. С. 87–96. DOI: 10.17674/1997-0854.2018.4.087-096.

The sonatas of Scarlatti demonstrate vivid examples of the presence of two types of thematicism: the “concrete and characteristic,” on the one hand, and the thematicism of the “general forms of motion,” on the other hand. The present article examines the semantic phenomena of the first of these types.

### **The Migrating Intonational Formulas in the Context of the Characteristic Musical Theme**

The vocabulary of intonations forms a concrete system of commonly used signs established at the stage prior to the creation of the musical text. The transferal into musical texts of their direct or primary meanings within a musical theme results in the formation of the mechanism of connection of “sign – meaning – semantics.” In the themes of Scarlatti's Sonatas most frequently 2 groups of intonational formulas<sup>1</sup> may be observed:

1) semantical figures with fixed meanings of figural etymology which have migrated from the sphere of vernacular dance music [2; 10], 2) the semantical figures of the sonic nature representing the acoustic images of musical instruments or topically-situational examples of their usage (the subject of “music within music”). Both of these kinds of formulas establish the direct connection of the “sign-image” with the more complex combinations of signs [3; 4; 6; 9; 10], which result in sign-related metaphorical perceptions [8; 9; 12]. The rhythmic formulas of figurative origin condensed into a sign that appear in the sonatas are represented by a group of semantical figures which may be called “gallant vocabulary.” Use of such lexis may be observed, among other compositions, in Sonatas Nos. 89, 92 (Examples 1; 2).<sup>2</sup> These demonstrate soft choreatic intonations of secundal suspensions of women's courtesy dance motions, as well the “etiquette formula” of the bass,

corresponding to the characteristic motion of the men's courtesy "salutation and bow of the gentleman" in Sonatas Nos. 83, 89, 92, 167, etc. (Examples 1–4) [3; 4].

Such intonational formulas contain a visual-kinesthetic component, since they assimilate the plasticity of dance motions: reverences, steps, bowed, jumps, leaps and curtseys [2; 7].

The second type of formula with its fixed meanings is based on imitation of the sounds of musical instruments [3; 4; 6; 8]. Just like in the music of many of the composer's contemporaries, their acoustic images are conducive to the demonstrations of attributes of the pastoral and bucolic idyll, the subject of music-making, and are directed towards the creation of semantic representations connected with the manifestation of sonic realities of the objective world. Thus, Sonatas Nos. 87, 129, 173, 197 and many others incorporate the imitation of flute tunes, which elicit subjective and image-related perceptions from bucolic poetry (Examples 4 [No. 167]; 5 [No. 39]; 6 [No. 59]). The "sign of the bagpipe" is frequently brought into many of the sonatas as a situational sign of the "scene of action" in the subject of the village idyll (Sonatas No. 59; No. 91; No. 94 – Examples 6–8).

There are also images of other instruments present in many of the sonatas, for example, those of the lute (Sonatas No. 55 and No. 96) and the guitar (Sonatas No. 51 and No. 64), endowed with the arpeggiated texture characteristic to it (No. 55 and No. 96) and the special chordal-harmonic effect – the *acciaccatura* (No. 51, No. 64). The intonational formulas of acoustical nature frequently carry out the function of "direct" meanings, forming connections of the sign with artistic images on the level of perceptions in the context of musical themes. These include "fanfares"

and "horn signals." They gravitate towards the replication of spatial effects in Sonatas Nos. 19, 22, 62, (Examples 9; 12; 14), Sonatas Nos. 139, 158, 193 and possess a set of structural varieties in Scarlatti's original intonational "dictionary." The fanfare formulas are characterized by the progression throughout the tones of the major triad, frequently in the key of C major, creating the necessary conditions for the imitation of the appropriate timbres (Sonatas No. 19, No. 183 – Examples 9; 10). In Sonatas No. 166 and No. 179 one of the variants of the "fanfare" is reflected in textural stratifications as a characteristic tertial doubling, creating the effect of intensification of the volume of sound (Example 11).

Of all the varieties of the "*corni sign*"<sup>3</sup> the most frequent to appear in Scarlatti's sonatas is the "golden motion of the horns" appearing with the characteristic succession of intervals of "third-fifth-sixth" (Sonatas No. 22; No. 39; No. 50 – Examples 12; 5; 13; Sonatas No. 117, No. 160 and others). It creates the narrative directedness of associations with pictorial-figurative images of a hunt [9; 10].

Scarlatti's intonational vocabulary is also indicative as a phenomenon of the semantization of special cliché formulas of improvisational nature [5, p. 129]. The succession of "open" fifths and fourths creates a depictive-phonetic effect of tuning the strings of stringed instruments – the beginning of a narrative for instrumental music-making. The "tuning" formula, as it is known, has been widespread in piano music as generalized narrative and situational signs of instrumental music-making (Sonatas No. 62 – Example 14).

It is necessary to emphasize the semantic situations in which the intonational formulas create the metaphorical mechanism of linkage of semantical significations,

homogenous or opposite in their meanings, in various horizontal and vertical combinations. Thereby, in Sonata No. 133 it is possible to observe a *horizontal* semantic connection of homogenous rhythmic formulas, synonymous in their meanings, where one of them is a fanfare, while the other is a horn signal, the “golden motion”. In Sonata No. 39 the fanfare and the “golden motion” are unified within a common rhythmical context: the fanfare with the following doubling reinforcing its sound is organically interwoven with the horn signal, eloquently reflecting the situation and the place of action of the gallant scenes of the “royal hunt” (Example 5). Frequently it is possible to encounter a *horizontal* semantic connection of meanings that are dissimilar in their significations: one of the formulas imitates the sound of the fanfare, while the other one presents a “gallant figure” actively migrating from one musical text into another, reflecting the pliancy of dance courtesy motion with their initial meanings (Sonatas No. 183; No. 199 – Examples 10; 16). Musical segments which are opposite in their semantical meanings are frequently connected to each other in the context of a common tempo, not always intrinsic to each one of them. The tempos *Allegro* in Sonata No. 168 and *Allegretto* in Sonata No. 199 (Example 16), while not corresponding to the nature of the indicated formulas (especially the gallant figure), counterbalance the direct significations inherent in them, bringing them closer together in terms of their meanings.

Many of Scarlatti’s sonatas present the semantic situation of the *vertical* synthesis of semantic structures. In Sonata No. 94 (Example 8) they are the intonational formula of the *Sicilienne* and the sign of the bagpipe, homogenous in their meanings, generating the pastoral images of the village idyll. The artistic result of the perceptions

of the gallant “hunting” pastoral in Sonata No. 187 appears on the basis of the vertical (simultaneous) combination and brilliancy of the meanings of two formulas: the horn signal and the fanfare.

A specimen of the complex metaphor appearing on the intersection of the *dissimilar* meanings of the sign of the bagpipe, the horn signal, “gallant vocabulary” and in their vertical combination – is the theme of Sonatas No. 59; No. 81 (Examples 6; 19). An analogous mechanism of metaphorical combination of meanings appears in the pastoral pictures of Sonatas No. 117 and No. 181, as well as in many others.

Thereby, in the semantic conditions of the interaction of semantical migrating intonational formulas a developmental process is constantly being carried out by the constantly active mechanism of the connection of the theme with the musical image, which fulfils in the domain of generation of meaning the functions of concretization, generalization and metaphorization of musical thought.

### Mechanisms of Transformation of Intonational Formulas in the Musical Theme

The direction of meaning in the unfolding of the intonational formula is always determined by the conditions of the context. Its impact results in the appearance of transformations of direct and indirect meanings. Of special significance in this is the **genre-related distinctness** of the musical theme. The intonational lexis enters into various, at times even contradictory relations “of the whole with its parts” and generates new logical connections and semantic accents. At the same time, the meaning ingrained in the direct and indirect significations is subjected to various modifications. The



present circumstance may also be observed by means of semantical analyses of a number of themes of Scarlatti's sonatas in which it can be clearly seen how one and the same intonational formula may undergo various semantic transformations. For example, the "corni sign" in the form of the "golden motion of the horns" or fanfare frequently finds itself in a varied context of a certain theme defined by a certain genre: in particular, the minuet or the gigue, wherein it is possible to perceive a varied result of interaction between this significant unit and the theme's genre-related context. In the first case the intonational formula of the "*corni* sign" forfeits the direct signal meanings inherent in it, freeing itself, within the context of the minuet, from the forte dynamic mark typical for the sound of "horns" or Giga (Sonatas No.197; No. 50 – Examples 17; 13). The moderate tempo, characteristic of the minuet, transforms the formula of the "*corni* sign" in the direction of dissipation of the signification of heroism and the actualization of its lyrical component. This type of interaction of the formula with the context results in a new artistic outcome: a pastoral scene against the background of idyllic confluence with nature. By numerous examples of this kind it is possible to observe the universal regular occurrence of semantic modification of the lexeme: the *dissipation* of an individual meaning of direct and mediated meanings of the intonational formula within the new genre-related context of the theme.

In the second case, upon the incorporation of the "golden motion" into the context of the gigue the subordination of the direct meanings of the intonational formula to the genre-related context of the theme does not result in a contradiction of meanings. The context-related environment does not alter the intonational formula in either the structural or the semantic sense:

the direct meaning of the horn signal with the indications of imitation of timbre inherent in this sign are fully preserved in Sonata No. 22 (Example 12), Sonata No. 50 (Example 13), Sonata No. 179 (Example 11). Thereby, the interaction of the lexis with the context in many ways depends on the artistic (genre-related) precept, and this case has to do to a significant degree with the coincidence of meanings. The predominant dance-like quality of the gigue (the whole), combining itself with images-perceptions of the wandering hunting narrative evoked by the "*corni* sign," is organically connected with the identity of two perceptions: "the hunt = a game," essentially presenting a pleasant pastime on the bosom of nature. At that, the direct meanings of the *corni* do not fade, but are **levelled out**, becoming subservient to a new semantical result, peculiar to the given concrete theme.

The intonational formula in the context of the theme **ambiguous from the position of genre** manifests itself somewhat differently. As a rule, intonational formulas in this case are subjected to considerable transformations under the influence of non-sign-related elements of the musical text – the tempi, dynamics, articulation, i.e. the regulators of meaning that are superficial from the position of sign, impacting the intonational lexis and changing its direction of meaning. Thus, in Sonata No. 60 the primary meanings of the *Sicilienne* are determined by its characteristic rhythmic formula in the meter of 6/8, assimilating the pliability of the plasticity of a delicate manner of dance, as well as the characteristic textural indication – the "chainlike" voice-leading (parallelisms of thirds and sixths). The transformation of the meanings of the formula is taking place under the influence of a fast tempo not corresponding with the non-textual meanings of the *Sicilienne* and forming a secondary level of semantics in



it. As a result, the images of the pastoral, the airy lyricism and the amorous idyll inherent in the *Sicilienne* acquire new scherzo-like meanings in the conditions of the theme of Sonata No. 60.

The mechanism of the impact of the tempo, resulting in a lack of correspondence with the etymology of the direct meanings of the formulas, may be observed in Sonata No. 81 (Example 19) and in Sonata No. 100, in both of which there is a presence of lexis of etiquette formulas. The gallant figure of the courtesy in the fore-textual conditions had served as a sign of court dances, reflecting the pliancy of the gentle manner, of the “amorous play” between the gentleman and the lady. In the new context of the Allegro tempo, combining itself with other figures close to it in their meanings (the etiquette formula of the bass, the figures of curtsy motions), as well as with significations opposite in their meanings (signal intonations), the gallant figure loses its soft and fluent character, due to which there appears a new metaphorical artistic result: a secondary scherzo-like meaning.

In counterbalance to the mechanism of dissipation of meaning and the leveling of significations in the themes of Scarlatti’s sonatas there are processes of the **actualization** of the direct meanings of the lexemes by means of the direct impact of the regulator on the sign [8; 12]. Characteristic in this regard are the themes of Sonata No. 183 (Example 15) and Sonata No. 19 (Example 9), built on the intonational formula of the fanfare. The tempo (Allegro) and the key (C major) actualize the direct non-textual meanings of the intonational formula and endow the latter with the brilliant brightness of a trumpet sound.

A similar role is played by the tempo (Andantino), a regulator of the direct impact on the signification of the gallant figure in the themes of Sonata No. 89 (Example 1)

and Sonata No. 83 (Example 3), Sonata No. 173 (Example 18). Due to the ambiguity of genre in the thematicism the tempo actualizes the semantics of the gallant figure and its non-text meanings as the plastic sign of courtesy in dance.

Thereby, the conditions of the context are dictated by certain “norms” of living functions of the intonational formula in the creation of the musical image. The artistic and aesthetical result of the interaction between the contextual environment and the intonational formulas results in the formation of certain semantic situations: in one case it is the **leveling of** non-textual meanings of the formula: in the other case it is their demise; and, on the other hand, the **actualization** of the semantics of the sign.

In conclusion to the observations about the semantical transformations taking place within the characteristic, representative themes of Domenico Scarlatti’s sonatas, we become convinced that the composer frequently and actively makes use of the “commonly used” intonational lexis with a fixed circle of non-text significations. The intonational formula becomes involved in the context of Scarlatti’s sonatas, at the same time carrying out the connection with the objective world, narrative themes and images-perceptions. The mechanism of this connection is based on the composer’s choice of a particular semantical structure and his placement of it in a syntactically organized musical environment, in which the important factors of form-generation are the various semantical situation of interrelations between the sign and non-sign elements of speech. Only in their direct connection does the meaning of the musical theme disclose itself, the latter presenting an important constituent part of the process of analysis of content of any concrete musical composition.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The concept of “migrating intonational formulas” was brought into circulation in the research of semantic processes in Liudmila Shaymukhametova’s Dissertation for the Degree of Candidate of Arts: “Migriruyushchaya intonatsionnaya formula v semanticheskom kontekste muzykal’noy temy” [“The Migrating Intonational Formula in the Semantic Context of the Musical Theme”] [ 7].

<sup>2</sup> Here and below the numbering of the sonatas is cited according to the Hungarian edition: 200 Sonatas by Domenico Scarlatti. Urtext. In 4 volumes. Budapest, 1977–1979.

<sup>3</sup> About the direct expression of semantics and structure of the “*corni* sign” see in edition: [8; 12].

## EXAMPLES

Example 1 Domenico Scarlatti.  
Sonata No. 89. K. 277, L. 183



Example 2 Sonata No. 92. K. 282, L. 484



Example 3 Sonata No. 83. K. 266, L. 48



Example 4 Sonata No. 167. K. 478, L. 12



Example 5 Sonata No. 39. K. 140, L. 107



Example 6 Sonata No. 59. K. 201, L. 129



Example 7 Sonata No. 91. K. 281, L. 56



Example 8 Sonata No. 94. K. 284, L. 90



Example 9 Sonata No. 19. K. 72, L. 401



Example 10 Sonata No. 183. K. 514, L. 1



Example 11 Sonata No. 179. K. 502, L. 3



Example 12 Sonata No. 22. K 96, L. 465



Example 13 Sonata No. 50. K. 159, L. 104



Example 14 Sonata No. 62. K. 209, L. 428



Example 15 Sonata No. 55. K. 182, L. 139



Example 16 Sonata No. 199. K. 550, L. 542



Example 17 Sonata No. 197. K. 544, L. 497



Example 18 Sonata No. 173. K 490, L. 206



Example 19 Sonata No. 81. K. 261, L. 148







## REFERENCES

1. Aranovskiy M. G. *Muzykal'nyy tekst. Struktura i svoystva* [The Musical Text. Structure and Properties]. Moscow: Kompozitor, 1998. 341 p.
2. Bayazitova D. I. *Semanticheskie figury plasticheskoy etimologii v tekste p'es detskogo fortepiannogo repertuara* [The Semantic Figures of Plastic Etymology in the Musical Text of Pieces from the Piano Repertoire for Children: An Essay]. Ufa: Laboratory of Musical Semantics, 2007. 42 s.
3. Gordeeva E. V. The Practice of Ensemble Music-Making and the Baroque Clavier Musical Text. *Problemy muzykal'noj nauki/Music Scholarship*. 2016. No. 3, pp. 72–79. (In Russ.) DOI: 10.17674/1997-0854.2016.3.072-079.
4. Morein K.N. Acoustic Images of Musical Instruments in D. Scarlatti's Clavier Sonatas. *Problemy muzykal'noj nauki/Music Scholarship*. 2011. No. 2, pp. 165–170. (In Russ.)
5. Nazaykinskiy E. V. *Logika muzykal'noy kompozitsii* [The Logic of the Musical Composition]. Moscow: Kompozitor, 1982. 319 p.
6. Repina K. N. The Orchestral Score Attributes of the Text of Keyboard Sonatas by Domenico Scarlatti. *Problemy muzykal'noj nauki/Music Scholarship*. 2010. No. 2, pp. 194–203. (In Russ.)
7. Shaymukhametova L. N. *Migriruyushchaya intonatsionnaya formula i semanticheskiy kontekst muzykal'noy temy: avtoref. dis. ... kand. iskusstvovedeniya* [The Migrating Intonational Formula and the Semantic Context of the Musical Theme: Thesis of Dissertation for the Degree of Candidate of Arts]. Moscow, 1994. 24 p.
8. Shaymukhametova L. N. Migrating Intonational Formulae as the Phenomenon of Musical Thinking. *Problemy muzykal'noj nauki/Music Scholarship*. 2011. No. 2, pp. 18–26. (In Russ.)
9. Shaymukhametova L. N., Selivanets N. G. *Semanticheskie protsessy v tematizme sonat D. Skarlatti* [Semantic Processes in the Thematism of Sonatas by Domenico Scarlatti]. Ufa: Ufa State Institute of Arts, 1998. 60 p.
10. Shaymukhametova L. N. *Semanticheskiy analiz muzykal'noy temy* [Semantic Analysis of the Musical Theme]. Moscow: Russian Gnessins' Academy of Music, 1998. 265 p.
11. Curry B. Valency-Actuality-Meaning: A Peircean Semiotic Approach to Music. *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*. 2017. Vol. 142, Issue 2, pp. 401–443. DOI: 10.1080/02690403.2017.1361177.
12. Shaymukhametova Liudmila N. The Migrating Intonational Formula as a Phenomenon of Musical Thinking. *Problemy muzykal'noj nauki/Music Scholarship*. 2017. No. 1, pp. 61–73. DOI: 10.17674/1997-0854.2017.1.061-073.

*About the author:*

**Liudmila N. Shaymukhametova**, Dr.Sci. (Arts), Professor, Editor-in-Chief of the Russian Journal ICONI, Chair of the Scholarly-Methodical Center “Innovation Art Studies” (450106, Ufa, Russia), **ORCID: 0000-0002-1355-9677**, i2018n@yandex.ru

## ЛИТЕРАТУРА

1. Арановский М. Г. Музыкальный текст. Структура и свойства. М.: Композитор, 1998. 341 с.

2. Баязитова Д. И. Семантические фигуры пластической этимологии в тексте пьес детского фортепианного репертуара. Уфа: Лаборатория музыкальной семантики, 2007. 42 с.
3. Гордеева Е. В. Практика ансамблевого музицирования и клавирный текст барокко // Проблемы музыкальной науки. 2016. № 3. С. 72 –79.  
DOI: 10.17674/1997-0854.2016.3.072-079.
4. Мореин К. Н. Акустические образы музыкальных инструментов в клавирных сонатах Д. Скарлатти // Проблемы музыкальной науки, 2011. № 2. С. 165–170.
5. Назайкинский Е. В. Логика музыкальной композиции. М.: Композитор, 1982. 319 с.
6. Репина К. Н. Партитурные признаки текста клавирных сонат Д. Скарлатти // Проблемы музыкальной науки. 2010. № 2. С. 194–203.
7. Шаймухаметова Л. Н. Мигрирующая интонационная формула и семантический контекст музыкальной темы: автореф. дис. ... канд. искусствоведения. М., 1994. 24 с.
8. Шаймухаметова Л. Н. Мигрирующая интонационная формула как феномен музыкального мышления // Проблемы музыкальной науки. 2011. № 2. С. 18–26.
9. Шаймухаметова Л. Н., Селиванец Н. Г. Семантические процессы в тематизме сонат Д. Скарлатти. Уфа: Уфимский государственный институт искусств, 1998. 60 с.
10. Шаймухаметова Л. Н. Семантический анализ музыкальной темы. М.: РАМ им. Гнесиных, 1998. 265 с.
11. Curry B. Valency-Actuality-Meaning: A Peircean Semiotic Approach to Music // Journal of the Royal Musical Association. 2017. Vol. 142, Issue 2, pp. 401–443.  
DOI: 10.1080/02690403.2017.1361177.
12. Shaymukhametova Liudmila N. The Migrating Intonational Formula as a Phenomenon of Musical Thinking // Problemy muzykal'noj nauki/Music Scholarship. 2017. No. 1, pp. 61–73.  
DOI: 10.17674/1997-0854.2017.1.061-073.

*Об авторе:*

**Шаймухаметова Людмила Николаевна**, доктор искусствоведения, профессор, главный редактор российского журнала ИКОНИ/ICONI, председатель Научно-методического центра «Инновационное искусствознание» (450106, г. Уфа, Россия),  
**ORCID: 0000-0002-1355-9677**, i2018n@yandex.ru

