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The Music to Valentin Kataev's Fairy Tale *The Wishing Seven-Colored Flower* in the Space of Russia's and China's Screen Culture

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Abstract. The present article focuses on music in the space of screen culture. It discusses the interpretation of Valentin Kataev's fairy tale *The Wishing Seven-Colored Flower* [*Tsvetik-Semitsvetik*] that was presented in the following artistic projects: a) the short television film *The Wishing Seven-Colored Flower*, created in the late 1960s through the collaboration of composer Evgeny Krylatov, directors Garnik Arazyan and Boris Bushmelev; b) the animated film with the same title by Russian and Soviet director Mikhail Tsekhanovsky and Soviet composer Yuri Levitin (released in 1948); c) the animated film by Chinese director Cao Xiaohui and Chinese composer Lu Shiling (1974), whose title retains also a similarity to the original source title. In regard to Krylatov's and his colleagues' film, addressed to a children's audience, analyzing the interaction between the musical component of the film text, the video sequence, and the verbal-plot sequence clearly reveals Krylatov brilliant talent, his professionalism in the field of orchestral style and symphonic dramaturgy, as well as the organic synthesis of his inherent modern thinking — one that is recognizable by his composition techniques, as well as the traditions of the Russian musical classics. In a similar way, Yuri Levitin's music carries out a dramaturgical function when accompanying animate films, while demonstrating elements of contemporary compositional means (namely, the aleatory technique). Modern compositional techniques also appear in Lu Shiling's music, making themselves present in the texture of clusters as the main elements of sonorous sound. However, in contrast to the work of his Russian colleagues, the latter's music carries out a purely illustrative function in the animated film.

Keywords: film music, *The Wishing Seven-Colored Flower* (a short television film), animation (multiplication), ballet, choreographer Olga Tarasova, film director Garnik Arazyan, film director Boris Bushmelev, composer Evgeny Krylatov, composer Yuri Levitin, film director Mikhail Tsekhanovsky, film director Cao Xiaohui, composer Lu Shiling

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Introduction

It has been repeatedly observed that at the present time “representatives of the most diverse fields of the humanities are demonstrating an interest in film music.” [1, p. 151] At the same time, “the study of the principles of the existence of today’s media space, [the study] of the cooperation between the cinematic arts and the other artistic fields is a relevant area of research.” [2, p. 34] Bearing in mind the celebration in February, 2024 of the 90th anniversary of Evgeny Pavlovich Krylatov, a composer whose songs have been sung by many generations of children and adults who also had been children previously, in our research work, we are focusing our attention on the music written by the composer for the short television film *The Wishing Seven-Colored Flower* released in 1968. Along with directors Garnik Arazyan and Boris Bushmelev, who created the short television film *The Wishing Seven-Colored Flower* at the Maxim Gorky Film Studio, Valentin Petrovich Kataev also took a direct part in the creation of his film, having agreed to write the script for the movie and, for that purpose, to alter considerably the plot outline of his fairy tale taken as a basis. The main roles were played by Rita Muganova (acting the part of Zhenya), Svetlana Starikova (who played the roles Zhenya’s mother, as well as an old sorceress, a refined lady, the Queen of the Polar Star), and Timur Vaulin (as Vitya). It is noteworthy that the role of the photographer was played by one of the film’s directors, Garnik Arazyan.

It is important to emphasize that the composer’s turning to Valentin Kataev’s fairy tale was preceded by an animated film

released in 1948 that retained the name of the original source. This work was carried out at the Soyuzmultfilm Studio as the result of the combined efforts of director Mikhail Tsekhanovsky and composer Yuri Levitin. As for Krylatov, his musical portfolio already had included music for the ballet with the same title, composed as a diploma work at the Composition Department of the Moscow State P. I. Tchaikovsky Conservatory (by the time he completed his studies in Professor Mikhail Chulaki’s composition class). Staged at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow¹, that ballet became the first artistic work for both the composer and the choreographer and brought fame to both of them (for Olga Georgievna Tarasova, the ballet became her first independent production on the famous stage). As Larisa G. Rubanova writes, “the main cast of the ballet performance included the senior class of Evgeny Valukin at the Moscow Academic Choreographic College², the master having later become an Honored Artist of the RSFSR, Doctor of Art History, and professor at the State Institute of Theatrical Arts (GITIS³). Beginning with that performance several celebrated actors who studied at the latter institution have embarked on their artistic paths, including student Vyacheslav Gordeyev (in the role of the Ice Cream Man), who would later become a People’s Artist of the USSR and a professor at the GITIS, and Marina Leonova (who performed the role of the Lilac Petal), presently the rector of the Moscow State Academy of Choreography, a recipient of the title of People’s Artist of Russia, a Candidate of Art History, and a professor. The performance was successful.” [3, p. 212]

¹ Valery Levental and Marina Sokolova, Artists, Kamilla Kolchinskaya, conductor.

² Moscow Academic Choreographic College.

³ The State Institute of Theatrical Arts (GITIS) = Gosudarstvennyi Institut Teatral'nogo Iskusstva.

After a certain period of time, in 1974, an animated film with the same title was released by a Chinese artistic team: director Cao Xiaohui and composer Lu Shiling.

Let us dwell in detail on the music for the television film *The Wishing Seven-Colored Flower*, in the context of which, we shall also examine other creative projects, primarily works by Soviet and Chinese animators, with the aim to reveal the contact points between the different types of film music on the same plotline. Such experience is promising from the point of view of “research of the issues of musical exchange” based “on the principles of cross-cultural thinking.” [4, p. 119] It must be emphasized here that the present study of “film music comes down to functional-semantic analysis,” [5, p. 201] which incorporates the method of interpretation and the principle of intertextuality.⁴

**The Analysis of Evgeny Krylatov's Music
for the Television Film
The Wishing Seven-Colored Flower
Directed by Garnik Arazyan
and Boris Bushmelev**

The music by Evgeny Krylatov for the short children's film *The Wishing Seven-Colored Flower* based on the Soviet literary classic Valentin Kataev's fairy tale with the same title presents a remarkable example of an elaborate work of art. Krylatov's organic mastery of this genre, the brightness and expressiveness of his musical language, the precision of the interaction between the music and verbal-plot sequence, present the features demonstrated

in the film *The Wishing Seven-Colored Flower*, which is not a surprising phenomenon. The creation of this music was preceded by the creation of a whole series of film scores, starting from the very first movies: *We Live Here and Completely Seriously* (1956 and 1961, together with Alexander Zatsepin), and up to the films *The Summer of 1943* and *Such a Big Boy* (1966 and 1967).

The film opens with a scene that exposes its main protagonist, the girl Zhenya and the principal musical theme (*Theme 1*).

Episode 1 (00:00:08–00:00:54⁵). The girl Zhenya, while sitting at a piano, opens up her musical score and starts playing: at that moment we hear the sound of the first phrase of the theme (an incomplete four-bar phrase, demonstrating the technique of its formation: first the girl plays the first three measures, and then, after a pause, repeats the first two measures). Then the theme breaks off and the plotline begins: Zhenya's mother appears on the screen, reminds her to buy seven bagels, and tells her to walk in a dignified manner and not to read signboards on the street.

It is noteworthy that at first the theme is initially played in slow motion, as if “syllable by syllable,” with an Alberti bass in the accompaniment, as if commenting on and clarifying the ongoing situation in the film scene. This refers to the tedious music lessons at home, which seem so burdensome for Zhenya. The latter is confirmed by the sloppy-sounding musical “blots” — clusters sounded out by Zhenya before the beginning of the music-making. The principal theme

⁴ For more details on this issue, see: Chen Zizhan. Traditsionnaya muzykal'naya kul'tura v mul'tiplikatsii i kinematografe: k voprosu o dialoge Rossii i Kitaya [Traditional Musical Culture in Animation and Cinema: on the Issue of Dialogue between Russia and China]. *Muzykal'naya kul'tura glazami molodykh uchennykh: sbornik nauchnykh trudov* [Musical Culture Through the Eyes of Young Scientists: A Collection of Scientific Papers]. St. Petersburg: Asterion, 2022, pp. 89–100.

⁵ Here and onwards the time-codes of the film are indicated.

(*Theme 1*) is melodic and memorable, but, nevertheless possesses its own sophisticated type of organization and a whole number of peculiarities, the combination of which makes it possible to determine its polyvalent semantics (Example No. 1).

The melody of the theme is characterized by a highly developed and expressive pattern, wide range; multi-element motifs, which give it contrasts; the connections of motifs, the presence of hidden polyphony (hidden voices), the uniqueness of modal and rhythmic organization, as well as a certain multi-genre character (the combination of melodiousness, a romance atmosphere, a mediated marching character and dance qualities).

The structure of the theme in its full statement is a simple rounded binary form with a shortened recapitulation and an emphasis on the attribute of squareness characteristic of Russian musical mass genres — songs, anthems and marches: *aaba*: 8 measures + 8 measures / 8 measures + 4 (5) measures. The tonal plan is as follows: a melodic *B-flat minor* (the first section) — *D-flat major* with a “glimmer” of *B-flat major* (the middle section) — *B-flat minor* (the recapitulation). The modal variability intrinsic to the theme (minor — relative major) is characteristic of the song

genres in the Russian tradition (including folk songs and Soviet mass songs).

Let us examine the multi-component nature of the thematic organization of the song. The melodicism includes a hidden voice (in the first section of the theme and its recapitulation). The melodic core of the theme demonstrates a contrast between two elements: (a) suave ascending motion in parallel thirds based on the upper tetrachord of the melodic minor from scale degree V to I (1 measure) and (b) broad leaps (randomly both ascending and descending) in intervals of fifths, sixths, and sevenths (lasting 2–4 measures). The third element presents an imprecisely stated sequence (c) (lasting 5–6 measures), synthesizing the features of the first motive (in thirds) and the second (featuring the leaps) and emphasizes in its pattern the overall framework of the interval of a sixth. The fourth element (d) (lasting 7–8 measures) relies on ascending motion along the pitches of a first-inversion sixth chord.

There is also a contrast of motives present in the middle of the theme (17–24 measures). Its beginning is based on a variant of the motive based on thirds (forming the fifth element — e); the ending (the sixth element — f) is derived from motive d and presents ascending motion along intervals denoting triadic motion within

Example No. 1

Evgeny Krylatov. Music to the film
The Wishing Seven-Colored Flower. Main theme

The musical score is written in a single system with five staves. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo marking is 'Moderato'. The score is divided into sections labeled a through g. Section a (measures 1-5) features a melodic line with parallel thirds. Section b (measures 6-8) consists of broad leaps. Section c (measures 9-11) is a sequence of notes. Section d (measures 12-17) is a longer motif with ascending motion. Section e (measures 18-22) is based on thirds. Section f (measures 23-24) is derived from motif d. Section g (measures 25-27) is a final sequence. The score ends with a double bar line.

the range of one and a half octaves. The seventh element (**g**) is the most melodious in its character (measures 21–24), being very heterogeneous in its constituent components. There is a new micro motive present here, featuring rapid descending motion in perfect fifths (measure 21), followed by subsequent melodic “waves” formed by ascending leaps and descending motions along the pitches of chords (the *D-flat major* triad on measure 22 and two seventh-chord in *B-flat minor*: a diminished chord on the scale degree of the leading tone on measure 23 and a diminished chord on the scale degree of the raised VI on measure 24).

The figurative-emotional aspect of the theme is formed as a result of summation of the expressiveness of its constituent seven motives. First of all, we must mark its lyrical expressivity, akin to that in songs and romances — (the “song-like” intervals of thirds are present in motives **a** and **e**, the role of the framework based on the interval of a sixth with melodic suspensions is played by motive **c**; the interval of a sixth associated with the genres of a romance with suspensions in motive **b**; and the “wave resembling a romance” with melodic suspensions in motive **g**).

The motional element at the beginning of the theme, its *movere* quality (the Italian word meaning “to move”) contains features of vicarious marching — in the form of a light tread, interpreted in a uniform rhythmic pulsation with alternations of quarter and half notes in the first motive (**a**) in 4/4 time. Since this theme is associated with the image of the main protagonist, who is the young girl, its rhythm embodies a special type of motion — resembling those of dancing and “skipping.” The danceability and graceful plasticity of the image is reflected in the repetitions of the rhythmic formula of motive **e** from its middle section (it is particularly at the sound of this motive that the heroine walks down the street, dancing in **Episode 2**). The “jumps,”

so intrinsic to the motion of children, are manifested by the motives containing the leaps (**b**) and the “soaring ascent” along the pitches of the chord (**f**); its bold and somewhat mischievous character is expressed by the appoggiaturas. As further analysis of the film music reveals, the sound of the piano forms the timbral leitmotif of the primary theme, being associated with the image of the main protagonist.

To sum up, it becomes possible to define the semantics of the primary theme at different levels as follows:

1) the lightness, plasticity, fragility, and melodiousness of that theme make it possible for us to attribute it as a musical portrait of the young heroine of the film — the girl Zhenya;

2) the fanciful character of the pattern, the shimmering colors of the alternating major and minor modes, as well as the film plotline itself evoke associations of the delineated theme with a journey into a fairy tale world, which makes it possible for us to examine it from the perspective of magic (as evidenced by the portrait of the mysterious lady in a hat in the very first film frame, who turns out to be the Good Fairy);

3) considering the melodic and rhythmic particularity of the theme, the aforementioned *movere*, and its subsequent thematic transformations, it can be interpreted at the highest level of generalization as a reflection of the infinity and diversity of the process of life, a flux accompanied by changing events, including magical transformations.

Episode 2 (00:00:54–00:02:11). Zhenya with the set of bagels in her hand walks down the street dancing. Along with her, there are a few passers-by, a dog, a photographer, and an old lady with a bicycle in the frame.

Theme 1 sounds in an orchestral version. After a short introduction, the theme is performed in its entirety (as a rounded binary form)

by a solo piano accompanied by the rhythm group and electric guitars. In the final, recapitulatory section the timbre-recoloring technique is applied: the primary motive is transferred into the flute part and sounds an octave higher.

Episode 3 (00:02:11–00:03:06). The scene containing cyclists: a few street passers-by, a photographer, and Zhenya stop, observe and greet the participants of the bicycle race. The rapid movement of the cyclist cavalcade is accompanied by *Theme 2*, brightly contrasting with the first theme. Rapidly sounding in an orchestral performance with solo violins, possessing a swift motor quality, it connects the fanfare-signaling motive with the stepwise descending melodic figurations. At the same time, the figuration-based motive is derived from a similar micro-motive of the primary theme (**g**), which emphasizes the subtle motivic connections in the organization of the thematicism of the examined media text. A syncopated rhythm appearing during the theme's development provides it with a somewhat jazzy character.

Theme 2 performs a dual function: 1) that of depiction one, since the mobility and signal quality inherent in that theme illustrate the swiftness of the cyclists' run; 2) that of expression, since the energy, dynamism, brightness, and exuberance of that theme characterize the general atmosphere, in which the film action takes place — bright, optimistic, and evoking images of youth, adolescence, and childhood as a happy stage of human life.

The dramatically important role, the turning point, is played by the entrance of the piano timbre with the motive embodying the structure of the interval of a second, developing itself sequentially within the orchestral score. It is at this point that an event significant for the fairy tale occurs: the dog steals the bunch of bagels, after which the action once again focuses on the main heroine. In this instance, the piano performs the function of concretization,

emphasizing the main timbral component of the main theme.

Episode 4 (00:03:06–00:04:34). Zhenya runs after the dog, tries to catch up with it and take back the bagels; Zhenya loses sight of the dog, she finds it and loses sight of it again.

The basis of the musical accompaniment of the examined episode is provided by the sound of *Theme 1* significantly modified. The latter is characterized by the mood of unrest and a minor mode, as well as by a tenuous, discrete character, as the result of disarticulation and active sequencing of the motives (the first — **a** and the figuration based from the middle — **g**). The theme sounds as monophonic (it is played by a solo piano) against the background of ostinato-pulsating harmonic figurations in small durations (sixteenth notes) creating the effect of increasing tension. The ambiguous nature of the sound of the theme lies in its illustrative nature (depicting the girl running after the dog) and its expressive element (the anxiety and confusion gripping the girl). The main expressive role in the examined episode is played by the technique of genre reinterpretation of the theme: the elements of song and dance disappear in it, being replaced by a toccata quality (with its inherent motor features), evoking allusions to the Baroque style.

Most noteworthy is the effect of silence — the cessation of the sound of the music after the restlessly seething figurations, which form “fragments” of the theme: the silence effect reflects the girl's confusion (Zhenya looks around and does not know what to do). During an instance of total silence, a short fragment of *Theme 2* sounded (the cyclists appear in the film frame at that moment), as if recalling the prehistory of the depicted events.

Episode 5 (00:04:34–00:05:32). The girl's sadness (about the lost bagels). Being totally upset, she sits on the ladder steps, then walks down the street, crying, then sits down on a street bench.

The musical sequence is based on the sounding of *Theme 1*, which is reinterpreted in the spirit of refined, lyrical, romantic images. The main function of this theme is the expressive characterization of the heroine's state of mind. The motoric pulsation disappears completely in that theme, and it sounds in a nocturnal improvisational vein: the slow tempo, the solo piano, the re-harmonization (with deceptive harmonic progressions), the soaring character of the melody, the elements of polyrhythm, and the prelude-like texture in the accompaniment. The first motive (**a**) and the melodic element from the middle (**g**) are made use of in the development of that theme.

Episode 6 (00:05:32–00:11:40) Zhenya's meeting with the Good Sorceress and the beginning of wonderful events.

The examined episode begins with the sound of a synthesizer: an arpeggiated chord repeated twice, and an ethereal motive suspended without any resolution — the motif of a decomposed half-diminished seventh chord in second inversion, both of which accompany the sudden opening and closing of gates.

The atmosphere of miracles in the house of the sorceress is characterized by the “magical” re-coloring of the fragment of *Theme 1*: it sounds slowly performed by a synthesizer, close in timbre to the celesta (motif **a**). Of the musical attributes in the frame — a bell and a gramophone. Zhenya, like Alice in Wonderland, gets acquainted with the house of the sorceress and its inhabitants (the magic Goose, the Cloud Girl).

The next section of the episode (00:08:38–00:11:40) features the transformation of the Sorceress from an old woman into a young, elegant lady in a luxurious hat and her dance with the girl to the music sounded on a record. The theme performed by the orchestra is provided in a conventionally stylized “historical” sound: its quadruple meter evokes associations with the early French dances —

the *passepied* and the *bouffée*, as if transferring the action from reality to a “distant” magical world.

The appearance of the sorceress's assistant, the Cloud Girl, is complemented by the exposure in action of one of the main elements of its plotline — the magical Seven-Colored Flower that fulfills wishes. Its musical characterization is the *theme of the petal* (in Kataev's fairy tale and in Krylatov's ballet, the names of the colors of the petals appear — green, yellow, white, orange and others). In the music of the film, the petals are characterized by the timbral leitmotif of the synthesizer, the arpeggiated chord and the “floating” motives of the figuration illustrating the petals' “flight” and their magical power. With the help of the Flower and the magical “incantation” the Sorceress taught her, the main character of the film finds herself at home.

Episode 7 (00:11:40–00:19:52). The miracles continue. Zhenya makes six of her wishes come true with the help of the magic petals, but they do not bring her joy.

The episode consists of different sections, in which the miracles that the girl wishes for occur one after another: a broken vase becomes whole again, toys flow to her like a river, she ends up on the North Star, then returns to Earth.

The musical sequence of the episode is particularly notable for the following moments, important for the dramaturgy. In particular, in the section of “the invasion of the dolls and the toys” (from 00:14:46), the toccata-like version of *Theme 1* returns, the ostinato pulsation, “prickly” staccato and dissonant harmonies of which create the “terrifying” effect that frightens Zhenya.

The “outer space” scene is also illustrative (starting with 00:16:59): the journey along the North Star leads a girl and her companion, a boy playing astronauts in the yard, to a meeting with its queen. The musical basis of this scene

is comprised of *Theme 1*, modified in a “fantastic” manner: let us observe the timbral recoloring (with a synthesizer instead of a piano), the slowed-down tempo, the discrete character (the repetitions of short fragments — mainly, of motive **a**), the modal-tonal restatement (with the elements of the whole-tone scale instead of the melodic minor). The indicated scene also presents the dance of the queen of the North Star (first a solo dance, with a magical reflection of a fantastic rocky landscape in the water, then in a pair with Zhenya). It is noteworthy that the theme of the dance is based on the thematic version of the dance of the Good Sorceress with only one proviso. Whereas, at the beginning of the film it was given in the character of a stylized “in a historical manner,” then here, in the “cosmic” context (space is the future of humanity), it is presented in an emphatically modern form, being performed by the orchestra and danced in the character of a light Charleston dance.

Episode 8 (from 00:19:52 until the end) concludes the film. Zhenya, walking along the streets, meets a girl riding in roller-skates and a boy with an incurable illness sitting on a bench with crutches.

Zhenya’s reflections about what wish to choose for the last petal are accompanied by *Theme 1*: it sounds in a lyrical version, similar to the scene of the girl’s emotional experiences from **Episode 5** (the nocturnal, improvisational features, the solo piano, the slow tempo, the soaring melody, the expressive harmonies, including the deceptive harmonic progression). In this case, the reminiscence comments on what is happening in the frame, explaining Zhenya’s choice, when she with her pure childish heart decides in favor not of the pleasure of getting roller skates, but helping the terminally ill boy with the help of the magic petal of the Seven-Colored Flower.

From the point of view of dramaturgy, this is the main culmination of the film —

quiet, reflecting the moment of the moral, spiritual choice of the girl, one that is the most important for the personality of any human being, especially for a child. In this regard, we emphasize that this section of **episode 8** concentrates in itself the moral and educational potential of a film for children, which is subtly but convincingly accentuated in the music.

The moment of the miracle that occurred — when the boy stood on his feet and started jumping, and then ran — is accompanied by the modified *Theme 1* (starting from 00:22:25). It sounds in a hymnically transformed form — with a full sound, in an orchestral version, with the violins playing solo and the piano accompanying the theme with chord repetitions. The composer chose as the thematic basis of this section the most melodious, lyrically expressive romance-like motive of the main theme (**g**). Its life-affirming statement conforms to the classical traditions of Russian symphonic dramaturgy, reflecting the qualitative growth of themes in the process of development from the beginning of the work to a positive outcome (as expressed in the works of Alexander Borodin and Alexander Glazunov), which characterizes the historicity of Krylatov’s thinking, — in this case, his symphonic style, continuing the tradition of the Russian musical classics.

The dramatic function of the theme at this — it must be emphasized — culminating moment of the development of the plotline of the television film possesses an ambiguous character. On the one hand, the theme explains and comments on what occurs — the fulfillment of a miracle, a magic event. On the other hand, representing the main culmination (that is bright in its expression, of an overt type) and, at the same time, the result of the development of the “magical” plot of the film, it expresses the fullness of feelings, the life-affirming principle, the victory of the main principles in the personality of a human being — kindness, spiritual responsiveness, and humanism.

The film ends with shots of a cavalcade of cyclists, among whom we observe the happy girl Zhenya and the recovered boy (Vitya in the fairy tale) riding with them. In this regards, the opening shots of the final section are noteworthy, as they capture two pairs of children's legs actively pedaling their respective bicycles. The musical accompaniment to the conclusion of the film is presented by the cyclists' theme (*Theme 2*), affirming the images of childhood and youth as a happy stage in the rush of human life, which are filled with seething energy, dynamics, and joy. The cyclists' theme also appears in the final titles of the film. However, starting with the shot with the composer's name, it is the primary theme (*Theme 1*) that appears in the accompaniment, providing a completion to the musical text of the film by means of the technique of an arched frame. It sounds at a tranquil tempo, played by a solo synthesizer accompanied by the orchestra and the rhythm group. From the point of view of dramaturgy, it performs the function of generalization, a sort of epilogue, joining together the main semantic levels: as the manifestation of the girl's portrait, the sphere of magic, and the dynamic, joyful, bright and tireless run of life.

In conclusion to the analysis, let us highlight Krylatov's bright compositional talent, his professional mastery in the field of symphonic dramaturgy and his orchestral style, as well as the organic synthesis of his inherent contemporary thinking in the field of composition with the traditions of Russian classical music.

The Animated Film

The Wishing Seven-Colored Flower by Mikhail Tsekhanovsky and Yuri Levitin

Just as in the television film *The Wishing Seven-Colored Flower*, the animation created by Mikhail Tsekhanovsky and Yuri Levitin is dramatically divided into several episodes that are inextricably linked to each other. The film begins with an introduction, which provides

an exposition of the main "hero" of the film — the Flower. The mysterious timbre of the electrophone (the Ondes Martenot), accompanied in the high register by the piano and celesta, as if recreating the sound of the gusli, provides a special flavor to the theme of the Flower. The latter has the advantage of plagal harmonic progressions over the authentic. The first parallel period sentence of the introduction is set in *F major*, whereas in the second sentence we see a transposition to *A minor*, followed by a return to the main key. It is obvious that the structure of the melody, which abounds in leaps over wide intervals, such as sevenths and octaves is more of an instrumental than song-like character. In the development of the melody, the harmonic basis and hidden dissonant dominant (namely, the dominant seventh chord) are clearly perceptible, immanently imparting tension and instability / to the melodic statement (Example No. 2).

Example No. 2

Yuri Levitin. Music to the animated film
The Wishing Seven-Colored Flower.
The Flower theme



The musical form of this first section of the film, which marks the beginning of the action, is of a rondo structure. The girl Zhenya comes out of the store with the bagels. The exposition of her image is presented by a light, cheerful polka, accompanied by *pizzicato* strings, written in the key of *A-flat major* (Example No. 3).

Example No. 3

Yuri Levitin. Music to the animated film
The Wishing Seven-Colored Flower.
The girl Zhenya theme

In its first statement, the theme is assigned to a flute playing in the second octave⁶, and in the second statement of the musical material, the counterpoint of the trumpet is superimposed on the theme of the xylophone; however, due to the significant difference in their timbres and power of sound, the original theme takes on character of a supporting voice. After a short episode played by the string instruments, (against which the main heroine recites her text), the polka returns to its original character. The genre choice of this musical number in the film was not accidental. Thereby, the composer symbolizes the carefree world of childhood.

After the girl returns home, a calm, peaceful waltz (in *A major*) is played on the piano, stylized as a waltz by Chopin (Example No. 4).

Example No. 4 Yuri Levitin. Music to the animated film
The Wishing Seven-Colored Flower.
The piano waltz



In essence, the designated thematicism Levitin makes use of when creating the musical portraits of the Flower and Zhenya, ultimately becomes an intonational binding force for all the subsequent musical material. For the sake of argumentation, let us turn to individual examples. In particular, when the dog, wishing to “treat” itself to the bagels quietly creeps up to the girl, we hear the sound of the theme assigned to the bassoon and cellos in the small and first-line octaves, accompanied by an elastic rhythmic formula ♩ (in the key of

A major). At first, three ascending invocations stemming from the sound on the dominant harmony, gradually expanding in their range (part 4, m. 6, m. 9) instill fear into our hearts. However, already in the second measure of this section it becomes clear that the dog is not as frightening as it was initially thought. The music clearly suggests the intonations of the urban folk song “Po ulitse khodila bol'shaya krokodila...” [“A Big Crocodile was Walking Down the Street...”], which has been known since its creation in the early 20th century. This tune becomes a kind of leitmotif for the dog throughout the entire episode. Failing to notice the dog, the girl continues on her way. The solemn elastic march with the leading theme of the trumpet and the rhythmic support of the snare drum and the wood block is replaced by a slightly changed theme of the polka (played by the flute), in the countersubject of which we recognize the leitmotif of the dog, which passes as played by the bassoon and the *pizzicatos* of the low strings. The modal coloring changes from major to minor (*C minor*), along with the location of the video sequence. At the moment when the dog finally manages to steal the bagels from Zhenya, as a result of which the girl begins chasing the animal, the intonational germ of the polka is again revealed in the basis of the musical material of this episode. The music has an agitated character (being in the key of *F minor*).

In its turn, the musical characteristic feature of the old woman is based on the intonations of the theme of the Flower. It is presented in the initial key of *F major* and is repeated several times. At the beginning, the melodic

⁶ A similar technique was typical for Soviet academic dance music. We may recall the Polka from Dmitri Shostakovich's Ballet Suite No. 1, written a year after the release of the animated film (1949). Here it is appropriate to note that Levitin was a student of Shostakovich, in the creative collaboration with whom the director Mikhail Tsekhanovsky created the first Soviet animated opera based on the plot of *The Tale of the Priest and of His Workman Balda* set to the text of Alexander Pushkin's fairy tale.

line, saturated with melismas, is transferred to the English horn. When the topic of the conversation turns directly to the Flower, the timbre of the electrophone returns. Thereby, the theme of the Flower also becomes the theme of the Good Sorceress: in musical terms, they form a single entity.

It is interesting that the musical solution of the magical transformations caused by the girl's subsequent wish evokes associations with the motion characteristic of flight in the air. A similar sensation is achieved by the broken intonations of the initial polka in the aleatoric technique. In the case of Zhenya's instant return home, we have in mind a solo episode of the contrabassoon based initially on the sounds of the *A-flat major* triad with the subsequent gradual transition of the instrument to the extreme sections of the range with the addition of an electrophone and the timbres of the high woodwind instruments.

Similarly, the reflections on Zhenya's further actions are also accompanied by the allusive theme of the first polka. The sole difference is that the tempo becomes much slower, and the duple meter is replaced by a triple meter. The key (*A-flat major*) and the solo instrument (the flute) remain unchanged.

The musical similarity with the opening episode is also discernable in the first notes of the theme of the solo muted trumpet on the ascending sounds of the *E major* triad, depicting the significance of the girl walking with a doll. The theme assigned to this instrument has a similar intonational germ as does the polka, moreover, the dry accompaniment (the *pizzicato* of the strings on the beat and the wood block on the weak beat of the measure) emphasizes perfectly the pomposity of Zhenya's new female friend.

The repeated sound of the waltz melody is connected with the situation when only one petal is left remaining on the flower, and the heroine ponders about what to spend it on.

The music is noticeably enriched with new timbres (in the key of *A-flat major*). This time, the first performance of the theme is assigned to the xylophone, with the accompaniment of the *pizzicato* violins. During the second statement of the theme, the texture of the orchestra thickens, the melody is transferred to the violin group, and contrapuntal lines are introduced. Gradually the music brightens and the episode ends with an ascending motion of the solo xylophone, creating another thematic arch.

Finally, Zhenya's meeting with the boy Vitya is accompanied at first by an allusion to the flower theme, which is then transformed directly into the leitmotif itself. In the very short musical episode of the plucking of the last petal that follows, the echoes of the polka are heard, sounding at the moment of the heroine's magical teleportations. Later, at the moment of Vitya's recovery, the children play tag against the background of the polka opens the film (in the key of *A-flat major*).

Considering the fact that the Tsekhanovsky's and Levitin's film, *The Wishing Seven-Colored Flower* is the first screen adaptation of Kataev's fairy tale, it seems especially significant that in the tiny episode of the procession of the Dolls harnessed to the Wooden Horses (in *C minor*), against the background of the imitation of the clatter of hooves by the wood block, a short celesta line sounds, referring the listener to the Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy from Tchaikovsky's ballet *The Nutcracker*. Similarly, the March of the Wooden Soldiers (*A-flat major*), marked by the timbre of the cornet-a-piston, creates a reference to the *Neapolitan Dance* from Tchaikovsky's ballet *Swan Lake*, accompanied by the dry accompaniment of the percussion instruments.

All this makes it possible for us to admit that the music in Tsekhanovsky's and Levitin's film *The Wishing Seven-Colored Flower* carries out a dramatic function, connecting itself with the video sequence, complementing it

and providing commentaries for it. The composition is based on the juxtaposition of musical contrasts, the lyrical richness and the pictorial imagery of the musical material. At the same time, the composer mostly makes use of such dance genres as the waltz, the polka and the march to characterize the characters and the situations. The composer pays great attention to solo instruments of various timbres — piano, flute, trombone, trumpet, etc., which emphasizes the characteristics of the characters and situations.

The Animated Film
The Wishing Seven-Colored Flower
by Stage Director Cao Xiaohui
and Composer Lu Shiling

The film *The Wishing Seven-Colored Flower* based on the fairy tale by Kataev was created in 1974 and posted on the video hosting YouTube on December 20, 2018. Its production is associated with the Beijing Studio of Scholarly and Educational Films, which was founded on March 12, 1960 as one of the main producers of scholarly and educational films in China. We shall specifically stipulate that this work is the second turn of Chinese animators to a Russian plot. The first was the screen adaptation of the fairy tale *The Turnip* retold by Alexei Nikolayevich Tolstoy, directed by Qian Jiajun and composer Chen Ge, released in 1957.

Unlike their predecessors, who revised completely the film adaptation of the fairy tale *Turnip* made by director Sarah Mokil and composer Vassily Shirinsky, [2] the creators of the film adhere fully to the storyline, preserving its outline, although they provide

a few changes to the original.⁷ At the same time, the context existing in the Soviet animation film of 1948 in the Chinese version of Kataev's fairy tale is outlined sketchily, without any special details. Considerable attention is paid to constant conversational dialogues, partly overlapping the sound of the orchestra. The video sequence itself is more reminiscent of a video game. This impression is heightened by the sounding music: all the sounds of the orchestra are sampled by a computer program or reproduced by an electronic keyboard musical instrument and are quite limited in their instrumental color. Only the flutes and the violins stand out, in terms of timbre, as well as a few high percussion instruments.

The composer often gives his preference to a two-voice texture connecting the melodic pattern and the bass line. It is noteworthy that such musical and sound effects are more typical of modern video games. At the same time, the music in the film *The Wishing Seven-Colored Flower* possesses its own internal dramaturgy. The short musical introduction to the animated film already contains the main compositional techniques used by the composer: non-square structures of phrases and sentences; a large number of short phrases that do not transform themselves into sentences; long sustained chords in accompaniment; frequent use of ascending arpeggios; and a predominating use of high registers and duple meters.

The introduction begins with a wave-like, descending-ascending motion in the upper register on sustained chords in the key of *F-sharp major*, ending with a long trill in the flute. Subsequently, such a trill

⁷ Thus, the dog takes away from the girl Zhenya not bagels, as in the original version, but sausages, since, according to the opinion of the Chinese, bakery products do not whet the appetite of these animals. Zhenya offers the boy Vitya to play not a game of tag, since such a game is incomprehensible to the Chinese, but football. However, the most noticeable deviation from the author's text is the complete exclusion from the film of the famous refrain-spell "Fly, fly petal..." which slows down the rapidity of the development.

becomes a kind of leitmotif, symbolizing various transformations associated with the magical power of the Flower. The girl's trip to the store and her subsequent pursuit of the dog are accompanied by a fairly lengthy musical episode, beginning with a theme that can be conventionally called the "street theme" (Example No. 5).

Against the background of a resilient ostinato descending from the dominant tetrachord in the bass, providing motion to the music and symbolizing the bustle of a big city, a pentatonic tune sounds twice at first. Then a transformation of both its structure and metrorhythmic pattern occurs.

However, subsequently, this theme does not receive any further development, moving into general forms of motion with the incorporation of short wave-like intonations — "outbursts" from the introductory part.

The flower also possesses its own theme, which appears for the first and last time in the episode when the Sorceress gives the girl her plant. The intonational basis of this theme comes close to a lullaby. It seems that the choice in favor of the lullaby is made due to the fact that the gift was presented to calm and comfort the frightened, confused and crying child. The melody, written in the key of *B major*, rests on sustained chords. The effect of peace is enhanced by the plagal cadences in the harmony (Example No. 6):

The theme takes up only 15 measures and after a series of sustained modulating chord sounds, its four-bar fragment sounds again, but this time in the key of *B-flat major*, an octave higher than the original version, ending with ascending arpeggiated chords (triads and their inversions, as well as inversions of seventh chords). The latter are built on the sounds of a seventh chord on the III scale degree.

Example No. 5

Lu Shiling. Music for the animated film
The Wishing Seven-Colored Flower.
The Street theme



Example No. 6

Lu Shiling. Music for the animated film
The Wishing Seven-Colored Flower.
The Flower theme



A few measures later, a flute trill is superimposed on the line ascending along the sounds of the tonic sixth chord (on the sound of the upper mediant of the key), symbolizing the fulfillment of the girl's first wish. Her return home is accompanied by a theme intonationally close to the Flower theme, but presented even higher, in the key of *C-sharp major*. At the same time, the texture remains the same — a melody against the background of sustained chords, albeit, significantly shorter in duration.

At the moment when the girl tries to place the flower in the vase, the composer brings in a sonorous texture in the low register, as if foreshadowing an imminent catastrophe — the mother's favorite vase will fall and break. Against the background of the clusters, a short ascending scale-like motion of an intriguing rhythmic organization is heard: groups of 4+4 sixteenth notes continue in a 7+7 grouping, which fails to lead to the final point. This is perhaps the only episode when Lu Shiling made use of contemporary compositional techniques (Example No. 7).

The restoration of the broken vase is preceded by a short trill played on the flute on a note of the dominant harmony in the middle register, and the process of gluing the fragments together is accompanied by short ascending grace notes from the dominant to the tonic and ends with a trill on the II degree. The peaceful melody opening this section sounds again, providing it with a certain ternary quality.

The episode at the North Pole is realized by the composer in the parallel minor key

of the previous section, thereby avoiding creating a sharp contrast. The measured swaying of the bass, accompanied by the cymbal strikes, is interrupted by a response by the flute, as if imitating a gust of cold wind. The polar bears' chase of the girl is the only energetic episode in the music of the Chinese animated film. The melody in the low register (*B minor*) is accompanied by regular, fast beats of the bass drum, creating an unrestful mood. This swift run is abruptly interrupted by the trill of the flute — the girl, once again, finds herself in her home yard.

The scene of the "invasion" of the toys takes place against the background of the theme of the street. This time it is much shorter and ends with the usual trill — the fulfillment of another one of the girl's wishes, accomplished with the help of the flower.

The heroine's decision to use the last remaining petal for the sick boy is accompanied by the pentatonic tune, beginning the street theme, only at a noticeably slower tempo, which ends with a long trill on the dominant, as if preparing for further action. And so the petal is torn off. The flute trill sounds three times, moving along the pitches of the dominant-sixth chord in the key of *A-flat major*. For the first time, this leit-element is provided with the accompaniment of an arpeggio on a harp and ends with a brittle ringing, as if confirming the significance of the deed performed by the girl.

Against the background of the thematic material underlying the introduction to the animated film and the theme

Example No. 7 Lu Shiling. Music for the animated film *The Wishing Seven-Colored Flower*.
The use of modern composition technique (clusters)



of the street, children are happily spinning around on the lawn. This musical arch, similar to the Soviet animated film *The Wishing Seven-Colored Flower* of 1948, provides the construction with a relative completeness (roundness).

Summarizing the results of the analysis of the Chinese version of Valentin Kataev's fairy tale *The Wishing Seven-Colored Flower*, we highlight that throughout the film Lu Shiling strives to bring in the so-called "light" keys containing a large number of sharps, which gives the music of the animated film a unique flavor. At the same time, the connecting element of the music is the flute trill, which is never sounded on the tonic. The justification for such a compositional technique is that the fulfillment of the girl's wish does not exhaust the magic power of the Flower while at least one petal remains on the it. It is significant that the trills performed by the flute, seemingly separated from each other in time and therefore unrelated to each other, in fact add up to a single mode endowed with elements of the pentatonic scale, formed by flute sounds, which turns out to be the invisible thread on which the entire film is held:



Such an experience, in our opinion, testifies to the composer's commitment to traditional values: the pentatonic scale is actualized not only in the melodic line, directly registered by the ear, but also represents a "message" "written" into the musical composition. The latter is "read" only in the process of analytical work with the musical text. At the same time, the music in the Chinese version of the fairy tale *The Wishing Seven-Colored Flower* clearly demonstrates the desire of the Chinese compositional school to integrate the national musical elements with Western European achievements.

Nevertheless, despite a small number of discoveries, which include unique rhythms, the presence of thematic arches, and the use

of contemporary compositional techniques, including clusters and a whimsical rhythmic pattern, the music in the animated film *The Wishing Seven-Colored Flower* is illustrative in nature and does not play a significant role in the overall dramaturgy of the film. Therefore, the thematic material here is less colorful: it is devoid of development and is given in a simple texture in which there is a prevalence of the general forms of motion. Frequent use of prolonged sustained chords without a melodic line causes an unmotivated stop in the dramatic development.

In essence, the musical score presents a solid sketch. As the film director stated in a conversation with the author of the article, this state of affairs is the result of the objective circumstances that accompanied the creation of the film. Since the film was shot under the threat of being taken off production, everything had to be done very quickly, within an extremely tight time frame. Tense relations with Russia forced the authors even to change the name of the main character: instead of Jenny, an analogue of the Russian name Zhenya, the character in the Chinese animation is called Jane.

Another point that, in our opinion, impoverishes the musical series is due to the fact that the music sounding in *The Wishing Seven-Colored Flower* lacks a certainty of genre. We know that the Soviet musical pedagogical system, developed and implemented by composer, conductor, and pianist Dmitry Borisovich Kabalevsky (1904–1987), whose 120th anniversary falls at the end of 2024 (on December 30), was built on the basis of the "three pillars": dance, march, and song. It must be agreed that such genre guidelines were accessible and understandable to children. In the case of *The Wishing Seven-Colored Flower*, none of the genres were incorporated by the composer, except for the intonation of the lullaby, surmised in the theme of the Flower.

Conclusion

Concluding this study of the music written for the television film *The Wishing Seven-Colored Flower* and the animated films with the same title by composers Evgeny Krylatov, Yuri Levitin and Lu Shiling (who were working in creative tandem with directors Mikhail Tsekhanovsky, Garnik Arazyan, Boris Bushmelev, and Cao Xiaohui), we wish to emphasize: musicological analysis not only has spawned an understanding of the specific features of the composers' thinking, but also has demonstrated the presence of common elements in their works. The noted similarities are all the more remarkable because, as Mr. Cao Xiaohui admitted to us during a personal conversation, not one of the Chinese creative group's participants even suspected of the existence of the Soviet animated film with the same plotline; the fact is that there had been a strict ban on producing works under Soviet brands in China. The circumstances of that time explain the government's aforementioned particular pressure on the older generation of artists; the latter have withstood that pressure in order to preserve the material they had chosen and to complete the Chinese "retelling" of the Russian story — albeit, in rather cramped conditions. So, despite everything, the authors have deliberately introduced the image of the Good Sorceress into the space of the animation — the image, which corresponds to the image of a Russian grandmother (*babushka*) in a headdress and a skirt that are typical for Russians.

As a result, in accordance with what has been stated above, the existence of the Soviet film having contact points with the Chinese version of the fairy tale *The Wishing Seven-Colored Flower* can be considered not so much an accidental phenomenon as a demonstration of the unqualified closeness between the Russian and the Chinese peoples. This is also testified, particularly, by the fact that the girl Zhenya is dressed

in a red dress and footwear in both animated films. It is relevant to observe here that red symbolizes beauty and youth in both Russian and Chinese cultures. Being the favorite color for the Celestial Empire's inhabitants, red is also associated with festivities and happiness.

There are musical markers by means of which the situation of the Soviet and Chinese composers' dialogue, which has taken place through time and space, is formed, and they are the following: 1) the common musical instruments (the instruments of the symphony orchestra); 2) the presence of musical introductions in which the main thematic blocks are exposed; 3) the presence of leitmotifs "assigned" to the two main characters — the girl and the flower; 4) an appeal for the timbres of the harp, vibraphone, and bells to create a fantastic atmosphere; 5) the use of contemporary compositional techniques (the aleatoric technique in Levitin's work, and the use of clusters as the main elements of the sonorant sound in Lu Shiling).

This kind of experience corresponds perfectly to today's socio-cultural situation. This refers to the fact that the period 2024–2025 is defined by the decrees of both the President of the Russian Federation and the President of the People's Republic of China as the Intercrossing Years of Culture of Russia and China. Concretizing that type of thinking and basing ourselves on our study, we shall formulate the following provision. The distinctiveness of the peoples of both of these great powers is very significant, and the cultural dialogue between the two nations holds great promise. Drawing on their traditional values, the creators of the various versions of the fairy tale *The Wishing Seven-Colored Flower* by Valentin Kataev reach out to universal human values: hearty interest, (mutual) aid, and kindness. To illustrate the examined value priorities of the creators of the works, we wish to demonstrate a screenshot of the video production by the Chinese multinational technology conglomerate / holding

company “Tencent” (腾讯控股有限公司, Shenzhen), which in 2017 has also turned to Kataev’s fairy tale *The Wishing Seven-Colored Flower* and has created a video for the youngest viewers (see Il. 1). It is significant that the petals of the seven-colored flower are made in the form of hearts. Such a discovery (that detail of which is very much in the spirit of Professor Igor V. Kochubey’s doctrine of “telling details” [6, p. 167] should help future generation comprehend the importance of preserving what is truly human in people in all possible circumstances.



Il. 1. *The Wishing Seven-Colored Flower*. a fragment of the video by the Chinese Holding Company “Tencent” (2017)

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