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ON THE AESTHETICS OF KLAPA SINGING

SUMMARY

Participants in klapa singing, particularly the singers, spontaneously discuss their own musical aesthetics on various occasions. Their internal rules, conceptions and evaluations are the subject of this research. The author considers klapa group aesthetics in the processes of learning music and in public and private performances. Today, the musical knowledge in klapa singing is largely transmitted formally through sheet music. The lead singer – the first tenor – is expected to give an exceptionally personal interpretation in public performances, while group co-operation is what is most highly valued in the performance of the other singers. The internal notion and conception of klapa fusion intertwines aesthetics and ethics, unifying the musical content and the social values and ideals. Klapa fusion aspires to creating perfect co-ordination in the performance of homophonic klapa songs, while it is a metaphor for the friendship between the singers at the same time. Since klapa harmony is based on the consonant, largely major, chords of western art music, it enables the creation of ringing chords of rich overtones. Klapa fusion is fully accomplished in private – largely intimate and relaxed – situations in which the singers strive to create overtones. It is most powerfully expressed in quiet klapa (*sotto voce*) singing. Overtone fusion represents a sound sensation that evokes diverse and intense emotional and spiritual experience among the singers, but also among their listeners. Its sound also interweaves with the notions of antiquity and heritage that dominate the identity discourse of klapa singing.

Key words: klapa singing, aesthetics, ethics, fusion, overtones