

Musical images as a reflection of the artistic universalism of Marc Chagall

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Abstract

Music is the most important philosophical and aesthetic category in the artistic consciousness of Marc Chagall. Musical images in his work relate to intrinsic concepts such as love, life, inspiration, comfort, harmony and beauty. They connect the artist with his past, his ethnic roots and, at the same time, with world artistic experience, forming the basis of his understanding of religion, history and culture. In the works of Chagall, music takes on a ceremonial and ritual significance; it accompanies major events in the life of individuals and society, and encourages a spiritual quest. Images of musical instruments and musicians abound in Chagall's drawings, paintings and stained glass panels. They reflect the artist's polymodal thinking, allowing his visual works to restore a complete picture of the world, of which an integral part is sound. The most common elements in Chagall's musical iconography are violins floating in the air, cellos, humans, the biblical kings David and Solomon holding a harp, trumpeting angels and animals playing musical instruments, as well as klezmer ensembles, popular and symphonic orchestras. The musician is Chagall's metaphor for a creator, the alter ego of the artist, due to which such images bear a conventional-symbolic character. The artist captured in his works a broad palette of dynamic nuances and varied orchestration. He recreated the characteristic features of simple and combinatory musical genres, appealing to folk, spiritual, classical, popular and jazz music. His works are characterized by procedure, tempo, rhythm and vivid imagery. Having started by representing klezmer tunes in his artworks, Chagall went on to pay tribute to composers of various eras, styles and national schools, celebrating their achievements in the grand musical pantheon that decorates the ceiling of the Paris Opera. The artist also gave attention to famous mythological and biblical musicians, such as Orpheus and David, thus covering the entire history of Western music from ancient times to the present day, and all areas and genres of musical art, nationally and internationally. This is indicative of the universalism consistency and comprehensiveness of all of Chagall's artistic representations.

Keywords

Artistic universalism, Fine art, Klezmer music, Marc Chagall, Musical iconography