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Features of the Embodiment of National Color in B. F. Gienko’s Piano Quintet “Triptych”

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Abstract

This article examines contemporary chamber music performance through an analysis of the piano quintet *Triptych* by B. Gienko, a prominent twentieth-century Uzbek composer. The work represents a distinctive synthesis of the Western classical chamber music tradition and elements derived from Uzbek national folklore, creating a musical language that reflects both established European compositional practices and the cultural identity of Uzbekistan. This integration is particularly evident in the character and development of the thematic material, rhythmic language, modal and melodic features, and textural organization of the composition.

The study focuses on the ways in which Gienko incorporates national musical elements within the conventional structure and expressive framework of the piano quintet. Particular attention is given to the interaction between the piano and string instruments, the treatment of thematic ideas, contrasting textures, rhythmic patterns, and the articulation of musical climaxes. These compositional characteristics significantly influence the interpretive and technical demands placed upon performers.

Through an examination of the work’s musical language and performance considerations, the article demonstrates how an understanding of its national stylistic elements can contribute to a more informed and authentic interpretation. The analysis also highlights the importance of recognizing cultural and historical contexts when approaching contemporary chamber repertoire. Ultimately, *Triptych* provides a valuable example of how Uzbek national traditions can be creatively integrated into the chamber music genre, expanding its expressive possibilities and contributing to the broader development of twentieth-century musical culture. It further considers how performers may balance stylistic authenticity with technical precision and expressive freedom in performance.

Keywords: quintet, Uzbek music, violin, piano, ensemble, chamber works, development, recapitulation, usul, texture, rhythm.

Annotatsiya

Ushbu maqolada XX asrning taniqli o‘zbekkompozitori B. Giyenkoning “Triptix” nomli fortepiano kvinteti tahlili orqali zamonaviy kamera musiqasi ijrochiligi masalalari ko‘rib chiqiladi. Asar G‘arb mumtoz kamera musiqasi an’analari hamda o‘zbek milliy folklori unsurlarining o‘ziga xos sintezini ifodalaydi. Buning natijasida Yevropa bastakorlik amaliyoti va O‘zbekistonning madaniy o‘ziga xosligini birdek aks ettiruvchi musiqiy til yuzaga kelgan. Bu uyg‘unlik, ayniqsa, mavzu materialining xarakteri va rivojlanishida, ritmik tilida, lad-ohang xususiyatlarida hamda asarning fakturaviy tuzilishida yaqqol namoyon bo‘ladi.

Ushbu maqolada Giyenkoning fortepiano kvintetini an’anaviy tuzilishi va ifodaviy doirasiga milliy musiqiy unsurlarni singdirish usullari tahlil etiladi. Fortepiano va torli cholg‘ularning o‘zaro hamohangligi, tematik g‘oyalarning bayoni, kontrast fakturalar, ritmik bezaklar hamda musiqiy kulminatsiyalarning ifodalanishiga alohida e’tibor qaratilgan. Mazkur kompozitsion xususiyatlar ijrochilardan talab etiladigan talqiniy va texnik mahoratga sezilarli ta’sir ko‘rsatadi.

Maqolada asarning musiqiy tili va ijrochilik xususiyatlari tahlil qilinib, uning milliy uslubiy unsurlarini anglash yanada chuqur va haqqoniy talqinga qanday yordam berishi ko‘rsatib o‘tilgan. Shuningdek, tahlilda zamonaviy kamer repertuariga yondashishda madaniy-tarixiy sharoitni hisobga olish muhimligi ta’kidlanadi. Xulosa qilib aytganda, “Triptix” asari o‘zbek milliy an’analarining kamer musiqasi janriga ijodiy singdirilishi, uning ifodaviy imkoniyatlarini kengaytirishi hamda XX asr musiqa madaniyatining umuman rivojlanishiga hissa qo‘shishining yorqin namunasidir. Unda ijrochilarning uslubiy haqqoniylikni texnik mukammallik va ifodaviy erkinlik bilan qay tarzda uyg‘unlashtirishi mumkinligi masalasi ham ko‘rib chiqiladi.

Kalit so‘zlar: kvintet, o‘zbek musiqasi, skripka, fortepiano, ansambl, kamer asarlari, rivojlov, repriza, usul, faktura, ritm.

Аннотация

В статье рассматриваются особенности современного исполнительства в области камерной музыки на примере анализа фортепианного квинтета «Триптих» Б.Гиенко, выдающегося узбекского композитора XX века. Произведение представляет собой своеобразный синтез западноевропейской традиции классической камерной музыки и элементов узбекского национального фольклора, формируя музыкальный язык, в котором органично сочетаются устоявшиеся европейские композиторские принципы и культурная самобытность Узбекистана. Данное сочетание особенно ярко

проявляется в характере и развитии тематического материала, ритмической организации, ладовых и мелодических особенностях, а также в фактурной структуре произведения.

Основное внимание в исследовании сосредоточено на способах, посредством которых Гиенко включает национальные музыкальные элементы в традиционную структуру и выразительную систему фортепианного квинтета. Особое внимание уделяется взаимодействию между фортепиано и струнными инструментами, трактовке тематических идей, контрастным фактурам, ритмическим структурам и оформлению музыкальных кульминаций. Эти особенности композиторского письма во многом определяют интерпретационные и технические задачи, стоящие перед исполнителями.

Анализ музыкального языка произведения и особенностей его исполнительского воплощения показывает, что понимание национально-стилистической специфики «Триптиха» способствует более осмысленной и аутентичной интерпретации сочинения. Исследование также подчеркивает важность учета культурно-исторического контекста при обращении к современному камерному репертуару. В конечном итоге «Триптих» представляет собой яркий пример творческого взаимодействия узбекских национальных традиций и жанра камерной музыки, расширяя его выразительные возможности и внося вклад в развитие музыкальной культуры XX века. Отдельное внимание уделяется вопросу о том, каким образом исполнители могут сочетать стилистическую аутентичность с технической точностью и свободой художественного самовыражения.

Ключевые слова: квинтет, узбекская музыка, скрипка, фортепиано, ансамбль, камерные произведения, разработка, реприза, усуль, фактура, ритм.

Boris Fyodorovich Gienko (1917–2000), People’s Artist of the Uzbek SSR and a member of the Union of Composers of Uzbekistan, devoted his creative life to the study, preservation, and promotion of Uzbek national music. His compositional output may be regarded as a musical reflection of his homeland, portraying images of nature, human emotions, and national character through the integration and reinterpretation of traditional folk songs and melodies. Gienko’s close connection with folk music was further strengthened by his proficiency in playing the bayan and dombra and his participation in a folk-instrument orchestra, where he gained

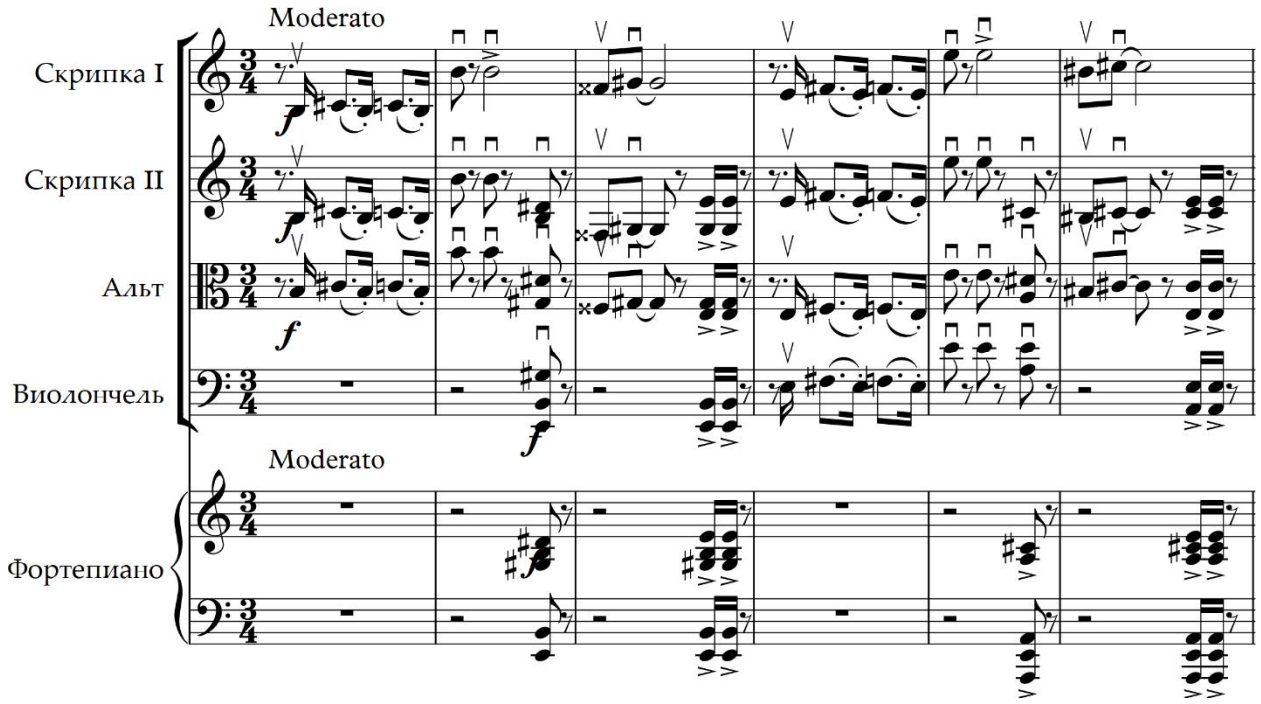
firsthand experience with the distinctive musical traditions of Uzbekistan. This familiarity subsequently influenced his compositional language, as he incorporated characteristic themes, melodic intonations, and elements derived from Uzbek folk music into his works.

His piano quintet *Triptych*, composed in 1964 for two violins, viola, cello, and piano, represents a significant contribution to the development of chamber and ensemble music in Uzbekistan and reflects the evolution of Gienko's chamber-music style. The quintet is introduced by an epigraph drawn from the poem *"Homeland, Do You Hear…"* [3, 62] by the Uzbek poet Turab Tula, establishing a strong poetic and national context for the work. "The work is characterized by contrasting musical images, dramatic moods, and vivid tonal colors, which unfold progressively through a principle of continuous dramatic development. Its stylistic language reflects the influence of Russian, Western, and Soviet classical traditions, while its rhythmic and intonational structure remains closely rooted in the modal characteristics of Uzbek music." [2, 180] The richness of the quintet's melodic language is further enriched by characteristic modal-harmonic elements of Uzbek music and by musical imitations of traditional folk instruments.

The three movements of the quintet—"Aria," "Scherzo," and "Finale"—may be understood as genre scenes that evoke the natural landscape and cultural identity of Uzbekistan. The work unfolds through a progression of contrasting moods, moving from the lyrical and contemplative atmosphere of the first movement, through the lively and distinctive energy of the "Scherzo," to the dramatic intensity of the "Finale" [1, p. 317]. Unifying the entire composition is a recurring theme of love for the homeland, a characteristic feature of B. Gienko's musical language. "The work juxtaposes romantic exaltation with lyrical expression, dramatic intensity with apotheosis, and epic breadth with distinctive genre elements." [2, p.180]

The first movement of *Triptych*, “Aria,” serves as the lyrical center of the work, engaging the listener through its distinctive sonority, rich musical language, emotional depth, dynamic contrasts, and varied modes of expression. The intensity of the musical development, combined with the expressive portrayal of human emotions and experiences, shapes the movement’s distinctive expressive character. In this sense, “Aria” may be described as a song-like poem of lyrical and dramatic content.

The movement begins with a brief *Moderato* introduction in which the strings present a recitative-like theme marked by an elevated and declamatory quality.



The theme is built from short anacrustic intonations, each punctuated by a piano chord at the close of the motive. This creates a dialogic texture, as the thematic material alternates between the strings and piano. The introduction moves through E–A Mixolydian, F-sharp minor, and C-sharp minor, with these contrasting tonal areas reinforcing the juxtaposition of the musical images. A six-bar transition, derived from the preceding intonational material, leads naturally into the principal theme of the first section, presented in *Andante cantabile* in E major.

The song-like theme is first introduced by the violin, characterized by broad phrasing and predominantly smooth, conjunct melodic motion. As the melody unfolds, its expressive contour expands through wider intervals, including leaps of an octave, seventh, and sixth. Despite these larger intervals, the theme maintains its lyrical, cantabile quality and is subsequently taken up by the cello in an inexact canon. The piano provides a delicate accompaniment, with soft chords in the right hand and octave counter-lines in the left.

In the second statement, the theme is presented by the viola and first violin, while the second violin and cello enrich the texture with arpeggiated harmonic figures. At the same time, the piano writing gradually becomes more sonically saturated, intensifying the harmonic texture. The passage reaches a climax on E in the third octave, after which the dynamic level gradually recedes. The first violin then completes the thematic statement over a subdued string accompaniment supported by soft piano chords.

A brief *dolce e con tristezza* transition, derived from the song-like intonations of the opening, leads to the middle section of the "Aria," where two contrasting themes evoke Uzbek song and dance traditions. The first, lyrical theme unfolds in G Aeolian, while the second, dance-like theme is in E Phrygian. The piano's minor-mode *usul* pattern introduces an anxious undertone, transforming the violin's lyrical line into an increasingly tense and tragic expression.

In the following episode, the dance-like, folk-inspired theme is presented in unison by the ensemble. String pizzicato and light piano staccato evoke traditional plucked instruments. Over an arco accompaniment, the piano introduces an *mf cantabile* melody with distinctly Uzbek intonations, which gradually intensifies from a plaintive mood to an increasingly emphatic and impassioned climax.

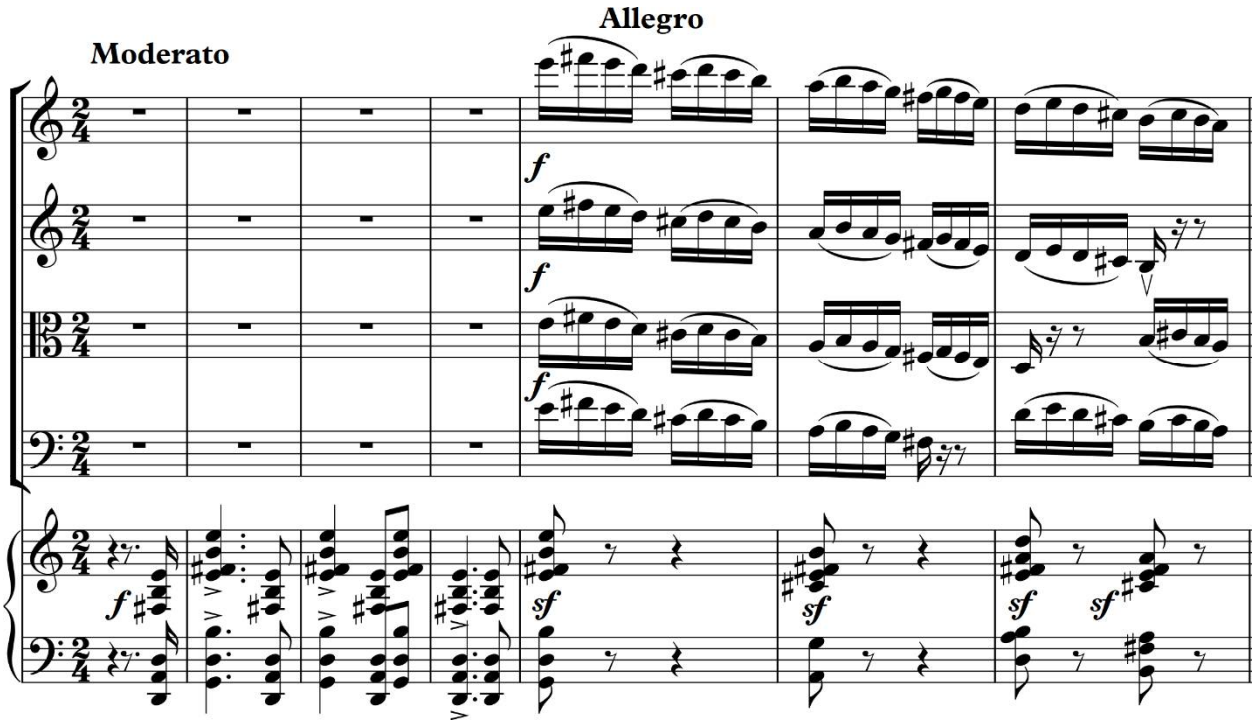
The theme then passes to the violins in octaves, supported by piano chords and bass octaves. The texture gradually thickens as additional voices and wider

registers are introduced. The cello develops an independent thematic line, while the viola provides harmonic support and the piano bass adds a counter-line in the low register. A gradual increase in dynamics and tempo (*poco a poco cresc. e acceler.*) leads to the first climax, marked *ff* (*auj*).

The *Andantino* section connects the middle and concluding sections of the movement, with contrasting exchanges between strings and piano gradually relieving the accumulated tension. The concluding *Grave* begins with a restrained, solemn string theme at *p*, which passes to the piano and grows from *mf* to *f*. A wave-like crescendo leads to the *Maestoso* coda in E major, culminating in *fff*. The broad registral expansion, increasingly dense chordal texture, and combination of piano triplets with the expansive string theme create an epic culmination. For the performer, the passage requires sustained control of dynamic growth and sonority to convey its sense of continuous development and ultimate triumph.

The movement’s dramatic conception is reinforced by the expansion of register, variation of thematic material, interplay between polyphonic and homophonic textures, use of Uzbek modes, and imitation of folk-instrument timbres. These techniques contribute significantly to the national character of Gienko’s musical language.

The second movement, “Scherzo,” depicts a festive folk scene. A *Moderato* piano introduction imitates the sound of the *karnay*, followed by an energetic *Allegro* in rondo form.



The principal refrain, based on a folk-dance rhythm, moves through contrasting modal and tonal areas, including A and F Mixolydian, while displaced accents and syncopation create rhythmic instability and a sense of polyrhythm. The first episode in G major develops contrasting rhythmic patterns of the piano *usul*, alternating syncopated and regular figures with exchanges between piano and strings.

The second refrain introduces greater polyphonic activity, including a canonic entry between viola and violin, while pizzicato accompaniment and changing piano registers enrich the texture. Motivic variation and successive changes of key—B-flat major, F minor, C major, and A-flat major—further diversify the musical color. The performer should emphasize the modal character and distinctive coloration created by these tonal and modal shifts.

The second episode changes to *Andantino molto grazioso*, B minor, and 6/8 meter. Its lyrical, song-like theme, presented initially by the viola and second violin, evokes a graceful folk dance. Pizzicato cello and *una corda* piano bass suggest the sound of timpani, while the transparent texture creates an intimate, dreamlike

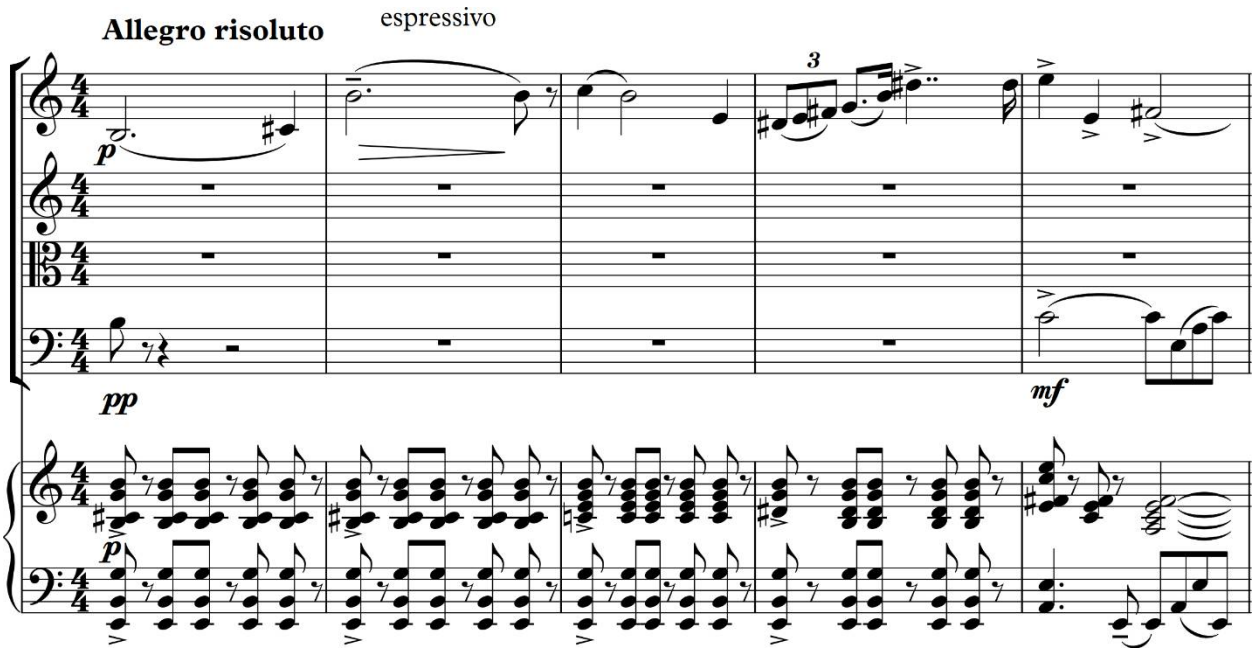
atmosphere. The gradual addition of voices and intensification of dynamics lead to a monumental climax, abruptly interrupted by a return to *p*. The subsequent *poco a poco perdendosi e ritenuto* restores the lyrical mood. These rapid contrasts require the performer to maintain flexibility in articulation, dynamics, and pacing.

A *sostenuto* piano solo connects the lyrical episode to the recapitulation, which unexpectedly introduces the folk dance “Raks” in A Mixolydian. Presented at *ff* by the strings in unison over the piano *usul*, the theme recalls the refrain and restores the festive atmosphere of the Scherzo. Rhythmic displacement and ascending string passages lead to the third refrain. Here, the shortened theme appears in the piano across three octaves, creating greater registral breadth and reinforcing the movement’s humorous and virtuosic character. The coda shifts to 6/8, generating a whirlwind of motion that abruptly breaks off on six *sf* chords before a playful *Meno mosso* reference to the refrain.

Throughout the “Scherzo,” continuous motion, abrupt contrasts, and frequent changes of texture, dynamics, meter, and rhythm drive the musical development. The national character is reinforced through unison writing, parallel fourths and fifths, *usul* patterns, and timbral imitation of traditional instruments through pizzicato and muted strings” [4, p. 201]. These elements function not only as local color but also as recurring structural and dramaturgical devices that unify the movement.

The quintet’s finale is cast in sonata form and serves as the work’s most vivid and powerful dramatic culmination. “Contrast and continuous development form the foundation of the finale’s conflict-driven dramaturgy. Despite its intense energy and dramatic force, the movement maintains a strong sense of structural logic and balance, reflecting characteristic features of B. Gienko’s compositional style” [3, p.79].

The finale opens with a brief six-bar *Andante* introduction whose song-like melody, supported by arpeggiated accompaniment and shaped by fermatas and *ritenuto*, evokes a prelude-like atmosphere. This lyrical opening is abruptly interrupted by the rhythmic chords of the *Allegro risoluto*, which establish the energetic principal theme. Its tension arises from wide seventh and sixth leaps, augmented-triad motion, triplet figures, and chromatic descent.



The theme intensifies through successive statements, moving from chordal writing to triplet arpeggios and eventually to the strings, while the piano maintains the rhythmic formula. Repeated E's with *crescendo e ritardando* culminate in an abrupt *sff* interruption. Exchanges between piano and strings lead through a brief recitative and tremolo passage into the secondary theme group.

The secondary group contrasts the preceding dramatic material with two lyrical themes. The first, marked *Meno mosso, e poco pastorale*, is a gentle string melody shaped as a dialogue among the instruments. The second recalls the lyrical intonations of the first movement and unfolds as a broad, aria-like melody that gradually grows from tender lyricism to powerful declamation" [5, p. 31]. Through variation, sequential development, tonal contrasts, and rhythmic intensification, the

theme acquires increasing dramatic force. A brief closing theme, related to the principal theme of the “Aria,” concludes the exposition and releases the accumulated tension.

Contrast between opposing dramatic and lyrical spheres forms the principal developmental principle. The dramatic theme returns abruptly at *Allegro risoluto*, first in the strings and then in the piano, where pulsating chords and fanfare-like gestures intensify the sense of urgency. This is followed by a lyrical *Meno mosso, doloroso* episode in which the melody passes among the strings over a subdued piano accompaniment. The reappearance of the characteristic rhythmic formula restores the dramatic momentum. In the subsequent development, a rhythmically transformed *usul* in the piano bass combines with rapid sixteenth-note figures passed between piano and cello, creating a dense polyphonic texture. The dramatic theme is transferred to the violins and viola in unison, followed by a second lyrical *Moderato* episode derived from the secondary theme. This contrasting passage provides a transition into the recapitulation.

In the recapitulation, the composer unites the quintet’s principal thematic ideas, intensifying their solemnity and sonic breadth. The finale’s main theme shifts from minor to major, while the dynamics expand from *p* to *ff*, the accompaniment from duplets to triplets, and the tempo from *Allegro* to *Maestoso*. The secondary themes likewise undergo transformation, moving from lyricism toward greater solemnity. Through compression and rapid thematic transitions, Gienko unifies the contrasting material and reinforces the work’s formal coherence [6, p. 59]. The sonata form’s progressive intensification toward the final climax requires a carefully graded performance approach. The exposition should begin with restraint and clarity, with each thematic statement gradually increasing in dynamic weight, sonority, and emotional intensity. The development should sustain this momentum through controlled contrasts and accumulating tension, while the recapitulation

should broaden the sound and strengthen the expressive emphasis. The performance should therefore maintain a continuous trajectory toward the final climax, with smooth transitions and a clear sense of increasing dramatic and emotional force.In the finale's coda, Gienko recalls two themes from the first movement, "Aria": its *Moderato* introduction and *Grave* coda, both in E major. Dense piano chords, *ff* dynamics, string accents, rapid figurations, and *sf* tutti chords drive the music toward its final culmination. These thematic and structural connections unify the three movements, transforming the coda into an apotheosis of the work's emotional development. The synthesis of Uzbek national intonations with European formal principles gives *Triptych* its distinctive artistic identity.

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