

Vox Humana of War:

*Ukrainian Art Music as a Mode
of Resistance (2022–24)*

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ABSTRACT

Since 2014, when the Russian war against Ukraine began, and especially after the full-scale invasion started, numerous cultural actions have emerged as acts of Ukrainian cultural resistance. Resistance studies are characterized by their interdisciplinarity, enabling the application of their methodologies across various fields. At the heart of resistance is a refusal to accept oppression. It has been observed that, during the war in Ukraine, composers and their creative works have been resisting both the wartime circumstances and the political narratives propagated by Russia. Generally, artistic creativity stands against the violence and death inherent in war, generating new meanings that reflect and capture the emotions, desires, and hopes of Ukrainians. This article examines theories of resistance to provide a framework for analyzing compositions dedicated to the theme of war, and explores the mode of resistance in Ukrainian art music. Specifically, I focus on the composition *Vox Humana* (2023) by Roman Grygoriv, written for an MRLS BM-27 Uragan missile and chamber orchestra. Uniquely, this work uses a missile fragment as a musical instrument, illustrating a meaning-making process within the resistance narrative that remains deeply relevant to Ukrainians today.

Keywords: Ukrainian contemporary art music, resistance, message, war, *Vox Humana* by Roman Grygoriv

INTRODUCTION

Living and creating during the time of war is a very distinct experience – one that Ukrainian artists are, unfortunately, enduring. Since 2014, when the Russian war against Ukraine began, and especially after the start of the full-scale invasion, numerous cultural actions have taken place as acts of Ukrainian cultural resistance. Below are but a few examples of the activity on the art music scene during the first months of the full-scale invasion.

24 February 2022, Kharkiv:

In the late morning of 24 February 2022, an American journalist captured a young boy on the grand piano in Kharkiv Palace Hotel playing Philip Glass's composition *Walk to School*. The city of Kharkiv was the first in Ukraine to wake up to missile strikes that very morning – the first day of Russia's full invasion. It is a child's peaceful reaction to violent intentions.¹

18 March 2022, Lviv:

The Myroslav Skoryk Lviv National Philharmonic resumes its concert season with a series of chamber concerts in an online format

'Ukraine–2022. Muses are not silent', held in support of Ukrainian musicians during the Russian military aggression. In this difficult time for all of us, musicians feel obliged to share their art and thus join the front line of resistance to the aggression of the Russian occupiers.²

25 April 2022, Kyiv:

On 25 April, at 15:00, an online concert to celebrate Easter began at St Sophia Cathedral. [...] The program will feature works by Johann Sebastian Bach, composers of his era and Ukrainian contemporary authors. 'The online concert in St Sophia Cathedral on the bright holiday of Easter is a symbol of the victory of Light over darkness, Good over evil, Life over death [...]', the organizers commented.³

These are just a few examples, among many, of artistic actions taken by art music professionals and amateurs alike, aimed at protecting and uplifting Ukrainians through musical culture and thus communicating Ukraine's story to the world through music. I maintain that collecting and analyzing these instances of artistic activity during this difficult historical period is the first step in creating a comprehensive history of Ukrainian artistic resistance during the ongoing war – where culture, like many other tools of war, serves both as a means of self-defense and as a weapon.

The role of culture as a weapon is clearly articulated by some prominent figures of Russia's cultural leadership. In his renowned 2022 interview, Mikhail Piotrovsky – director of the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg – stated:

Our recent exhibitions abroad are just a powerful cultural offensive. If you like, a kind of 'special operation'⁴ that many people do not like. But we are coming. And no one must be allowed to interfere with our offensive. [...] Shchukin and Morozov's exhibition in Paris is the Russian flag over the Bois de Boulogne.⁵

2 Myroslav Skoryk Lviv National Philharmonic, *УКРАЇНА-2022. Музи не мовчать (UKRAINE–2022. Muses are not Silent)*, [website], 2022, https://philharmonia.lviv.ua/announcements/ukraine_2022_muses-are-not-silent/, accessed 1 Aug. 2024.

3 MAXIMUM. Radio of the Unbreakable, *У Софіївському Соборі провели онлайн-концерт з нагоди Великодня (Online Concert Held in St Sophia Cathedral on the Occasion of Easter)*, [website], 2022, https://maximum.fm/u-sofiyivskomu-sobori-proveli-onlajn-koncert-z-nagodi-velikodnya-video_n203583, accessed 1 Aug. 2024.

4 I would like to remind readers that the term 'special operation' or 'special military operation' is the name Russia has given to its invasion of Ukraine.

5 Elena Yakovleva, 'Почему необходимо быть со своей страной, когда она совершает исторический поворот и выбор. Отвечает

1 Merje Laiapea, 'Mapping the Music in Ukraine's Resistance to the 2022 Russian Invasion', *Sounding Out!*, [website], 2022, <https://soundstudiesblog.com/2022/06/08/mapping-the-music-in-ukraines-resistance/>, accessed 1 Aug. 2024.

In Ukraine, the recognition of art, including music, as an important tool of resistance and political expression, came after the onset of the full-scale invasion, and this realization continues to evolve to this day.⁶ Despite ongoing debates, many Ukrainian composers hold the view that newly created compositions must reflect the war and its profound impact. To support this generalization, let me quote the words of the renowned middle-generation composer Zoltan Almashi (b. 1975). In his 2024 interview, he emphasizes: ‘...art for art’s sake died with the outbreak of the Russian-Ukrainian war. Art has again become an applied discipline. It serves the idea of memory, it becomes magic again, it helps to fight and win. This is my deep conviction.’⁷

Observing the creativity of Ukrainian composers after 24 February 2022, and analyzing their reflections on the theme of war has led me to pose the following key questions for my research: What methodological framework can be used to study these compositions? What are the specific characteristics of Ukrainian art music written during the current war? The answers to these questions emerged from my own memories of the first days and weeks of the full-scale invasion. Despite the fear and confusion, there was a strong desire to resist. Thus, I decided to apply the methodological framework of resistance studies to my research. Another reason for this choice is the composers’ own reflections on their return to professional activity after the initial weeks of the invasion.

The composer Roman Grygoriv (b. 1984) said the following in his 2022 interview, reflecting on his and his collaborator Illia Razumeiko’s (b. 1989) artistic position:

In the first hours, days, and later weeks of the war, Illia and I stopped being composers; we stopped being artists, and our profession didn’t matter. We were just people. It was probably in the third week,

when, while at the Ivano-Frankivsk Drama Theatre, we began to think about creating a whole composition, a performative sound installation.⁸

This composition was *Lullaby for Mariupol* (2022), dedicated to the tragedy of the Ukrainian city of Mariupol, which was at that time destroyed by the Russians.

Composer Olena Ilnytska (b. 1977) repeats virtually the same story:

When the war broke out, I was in Kyiv and was being evacuated to France. We played many concerts with musicians. I accompanied them, but I couldn’t write music. [...] I played a lot, but I couldn’t concentrate on composing. I had the feeling that I was in a cocoon, that my brain had turned into an acorn under the stress of the war.⁹

Later, in 2023, Ilnytska composed a large-scale piece, *To Victory*, for vocal sextet and symphony orchestra. The composition was commissioned by the renowned Polish conductor Roman Rewakowicz. Its premiere took place in 2023 during the *Ukrainian Music Days* in Warsaw.

On 23 March 2022, the composer Maxim Kolomiiets (b. 1981) wrote on his Facebook page:

All these weeks I have been trying to come to terms with the circumstances, to find my place in them. To understand what to do, like everyone else. I have come to the conclusion that endlessly absorbing the news is a futile and somehow not very heroic (to put it mildly) endeavor. That in these circumstances, just trying to do what you know how to do can be an achievement. Just staying human is a huge achievement. So, I had to remind myself that I am a composer. [...] I finished it [the piece] today. It is [...] metaphorical. And although it does not contain any explosions and horrors of war, it paradoxically corresponds to my inner state—the desire to remain human despite everything.¹⁰

Here the composer refers to a piece with a very poetic title, *I saw your reflection in the river’s mirror. You were on the other shore* for the bandura. Kolomiiets combines elements of the minimalist and tonal techniques to create a lyrical composition that reflects the sense of confusion and loneliness that many Ukrainians felt at the beginning of the full-scale invasion.

Михаил Пиотровский’ [Why it is Necessary to be with Your Country When it Makes a Historical Turn and Choice. An Interview with Mikhail Piotrovsky], *Rossiiskaya Gazeta*, [website], 2022, <https://rg.ru/2022/06/22/kartina-mira.html>, accessed 1 Aug. 2024.

⁶ I discussed some aspects of the relationship between music and politics in Ukraine in: Iryna Tkova, ‘Art Music and War: Ukrainian Case 2022’, *Musicologica Brunensia*, 58/2 (2023), 193–204.

⁷ Diana Kolomojets, “Мистецтво заради мистецтва померло разом з початком війни”. Композитор Золтан Алмаші про “Переможну” симфонію” [“Art for Art’s Sake Died with the Outbreak of War”. Composer Zoltan Almashi on the *Victorious Symphony*], *Zahid.net*, [website], 2024, https://zaxid.net/mistetstvo_zaradi_mistetstva_pomerlo_razom_z_pochatkom_vijni_n1578377, accessed 6 Aug. 2024.

⁸ Dzvenyslava Safian, “‘Lullaby for Mariupol’ Through the Creators’ and Participants’ Eyes”, *The Claquers*, [website], 2022, <https://theclaquers.com/en/posts/9336>, accessed 6 Aug. 2024.

⁹ Adelina Efimenko, ‘Музика — внеском у Перемогу’ [Music as a Contribution to Victory], *Zbruch*, [website], 2023, <https://zbruch.eu/node/116754>, accessed 6 Aug. 2024.

¹⁰ Maxim Kolomiiets, Facebook page, [website], 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/100000857561124/posts/pfbid0Sye-j82W6rMNF2CTDDqbGcTQdESWNjytHfoYAE4qM8rBsApNVr7dx9Y67jey7qG7VI/?mibextid=rS40aB7S9Ucbxw6v>, accessed 6 Aug. 2024.

In these and many other examples, there is a strong desire to resist circumstances and to go on living and working despite everything. It is significant that the term ‘resistance’ is frequently used in art history and esthetics studies that focus on artistic activity during the ongoing Russian war against Ukraine. This scholarship includes studies by Nazar Kozak,¹¹ Kateryna Iakovlenko,¹² Maryna Protas, Natalia Bulavina, and Igor Isychenko,¹³ Natalia Moussienko,¹⁴ Olga Sovenko,¹⁵ among others. In these and other studies, the term ‘resistance’ is usually used, however, in a general or everyday sense.

Contemporary art music has not traditionally been regarded as a tool of resistance. This is mainly due to the frequently challenging musical language of art music works, which is not widely known to or understood by the mass audience. Instead, studies of resistance often focus on protest songs, jazz, rock, traditional, and street music¹⁶. However, I believe that art music is also a powerful tool for transmitting messages of resistance.

Therefore, this article 1) examines theories of resistance to provide a basis for analyzing compositions dedicated to the theme of war, and 2) explores the characteristics of resistance in Ukrainian art music. Specifically, I focus on the composition *Vox Humana* (2023) by Roman Grygoriv, written for an MRLS BM-27 Uragan missile and chamber orchestra. Uniquely, this piece uses a

missile fragment as a musical instrument, illustrating the meaning-making process in a narrative of resistance that remains deeply relevant to Ukrainians today.

A MODE OF RESISTANCE IN UKRAINIAN ART MUSIC: KEY MESSAGES

Currently, resistance studies encompass various disciplines and primarily advocate interdisciplinary methodologies. As Mona Lilja and Stellan Vinthagen have observed:

Resistance studies could, and sometimes do, draw on the many specialist fields that at least tangentially engage with it: gender studies and feminism, queer studies, peace studies, political science, sociology, critical race studies, anthropology, pedagogics, psychology, media and communication studies, critical legal studies, heritage studies, design and crafts, and so on.¹⁷

Due to their interdisciplinary nature and diverse approaches, resistance studies have yet to establish unified methodological principles. Scholars continue to debate numerous definitions of ‘resistance’, its types and concepts¹⁸. At the same time, this context provides an opportunity to apply resistance methodologies flexibly to various case studies. My primary interest is in exploring and utilizing methodological frameworks that allow for the interpretation of art music compositions as gestures of resistance. As the basis for my reflections, I have chosen the definition of resistance proposed by Nandita Chaudhary, Pernille Hviid, Giuseppina Marsico, and Jakob Waag Villadsen, whose research emphasizes the meaning-making process, which is central to artistic activity:

Resistance is non-acceptance. This refusal always involves an active agent in opposition with something outside, an object, image, idea, person or group. From a developmental perspective, resistance is part of every meaning-making process involving two positions. When two (or more) people relate, they become the *Gegenstand* for

11 Nazar Kozak, ‘Art Resistance Against Russia’s “Non-Invasion” of Ukraine’, *East/West: Journal of Ukrainian Studies*, 9/1 (2022), 67–104.

12 Kateryna Iakovlenko, ‘Eyewitness to the Russian War in Ukraine: The Matter of Loss and Arts’, *Sociologica*, 16/2 (2022), 227–238.

13 Maryna Protas and Natalia Bulavina and Igor Isychenko, ‘Between Aesthetics and Imagination: The Ongoing Transformations of Ukrainian Art in the Times of the War’, *American Journal of Art and Design*, 8/2 (2023), 37–45.

14 Natalia Moussienko, ‘Культурна спадщина України в контексті російсько-української війни [Cultural Heritage of Ukraine in the Context of Russian-Ukrainian War]’, *Artistic Culture. Topical issues*, 19/2 (2023), 40–52.

15 Olga Sovenko, ‘The Technology of Communicative Resistance in Wartime: The Example of Ukraine in 2022’, *New Area Studies*, 3/1 (2022), <https://newareastudies.com/articles/10.37975/NAS.49>, accessed 6 Aug. 2024.

16 For example, these books discuss the power of music as a form of resistance: Ajay Heble, *Landing on the Wrong Note: Jazz, Dissonance, and Critical Practice* (New York, 2000); Noriko Manabe, *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised: Protest Music After Fukushima* (New York, 2015); Rafiki Ubaldo and Helen Hintjens, eds, *Music and Peacebuilding: African and Latin American experiences* (London, 2020).

17 Mona Lilja and Stellan Vinthagen, ‘Dispersed Resistance: Unpacking the Spectrum and Properties of Glaring and Everyday Resistance’, *Journal of Political Power*, 11/2 (2018), 213.

18 The following studies discuss, among other things, various definitions and approaches to resistance theory: Christine B. N. Chin and James H. Mittelman, ‘Conceptualising Resistance to Globalisation’, *New Political Economy*, 2/1 (1997), 25–37; Jocelyn A. Hollander and Rachel L. Einwohner, ‘Conceptualizing Resistance’, *Sociological Forum*, 19/4 (2004), 533–554; Johansson, Anna, and Vinthagen, Stellan, *Conceptualizing ‘Everyday Resistance’. A Transdisciplinary Approach* (New York and London, 2020); Mona and Vinthagen, ‘Dispersed resistance’.

each other's meaning-making. In such a situation, where persons make meaning of each other, they can either comply, resist each other or resist the resistance.¹⁹

For me, two elements are crucial to this assertion: 1) the definition of resistance as non-acceptance and 2) the resistance agent's opposition to something outside him- or herself. I have observed how, in wartime Ukraine, many composers strongly resist life's circumstances resulting from the war, as well as the political narratives propagated by Russia – both as individuals and through their creative output. Russia's political narratives, such as 'Ukraine is Russia', 'Ukrainians do not exist', and 'Ukraine was created by Lenin in 1922', are well-known. They constitute an attempt to rewrite both Ukrainian and Russian history in the light of Russian neo-imperialism, to negate Ukrainian identity, and to justify an armed attack on an independent country. Generally, artistic creativity opposes the violence and death inherent in war. This resistance generates new meanings that reflect and capture the emotions, desires, and hopes of Ukrainians. As Frank Möller observes: 'Art not only reflects realities around the artist; it also constructs these realities. [...] Resistance affects not only the intellect but also the senses. It can be grasped in its entirety only in a combination of intellectual and sensuous reception.'²⁰

A methodological framework for an analysis of resistance process has been proposed by Jocelyn Hollander and Rachel Einwohner,²¹ who identify three categories within the realm of resistance: 'actors, their targets, and interested observers, including researchers'.²² Developing this idea in the context of art music, the composer can be defined as an actor (or agent) of resistance; the audience serves both as an interested observer and the target to whom a work with a clear message is directed by a composer. A model of multi-leveled analysis, which requires interdisciplinary studies, is therefore formed. As applied only to the case of Ukrainian art music, it must include the following elements: 1) composers who, through their life and creativity, resist the war conditions

and ideas of Russian political propaganda that are alien to them, 2) various musical works that reflect the war in different ways and share messages important to Ukrainians, 3) audiences both in Ukraine and abroad. In my further discussion, I dedicate my attention primarily to the second element. This is because, on the one hand, all the composers I have mentioned express their Ukrainian identity and resist Russian aggression in every way possible. On the other hand, the interpretation of a composition's message is a very complex process, and in the circumstances of war it must consider, among other things, the specificity of audiences in Ukraine and abroad, the characteristics of the perception of the same work by these various listeners.²³ That is why each composition has to be studied in an individual way.

What, therefore, are the messages Ukrainian composers have been producing and conveying during these two years of full-scale invasion?

Works created during the current war in Ukraine provide a sensory engagement with, and construction of, our reality, thus contributing to the shaping of the national memory. Overall, many of the new compositions dedicated to the theme of war reimagine and depict ways of overcoming traumatic war experiences, manifested in various forms, such as mourning for the dead, dreams of victory, affirmations of life's continuity, a belief in light and the triumph of good, among others. The titles of many compositions can serve as examples supporting this assertion:

- *Rana (Wound)* (2022), an electroacoustic piece by Alla Zagaykevych (b. 1966),
- *Lacrimosa* (2022) for oboe, horn, two trombones, violin, and organ by Oleksandr Shchetynsky (b. 1960),
- *Contra Spem Spero! (Variation On a Waltz by Diabelli)* (2022) for violin and chamber orchestra/ensemble by Oleg Bezborodko (b. 1973),
- *My Dear...* (2022) – a cantata based on the poetry of Valeria Zhigalina for soprano, cello and piano by Kira Maidenbergh-Todorova (b. 1985),
- *Let There Be Light* (2023) for symphony orchestra by Bohdana Frolyak (b. 1968),

¹⁹ Nandita Chaudhary and others, 'Rhythms of Resistance and Existence: An Introduction', in Nandita Chaudhary and others, eds, *Resistance in Everyday Life Constructing Cultural Experiences* (Singapore, 2017), 5.

²⁰ Frank Möller, 'Music and the Aesthetics of Resistance', in Rafiki Ubaldo and Helen Hintjens, eds, *Music and Peacebuilding: African and Latin American experiences* (London, 2020), 182–183.

²¹ I would like to emphasize that this is only one of a number of possible concepts.

²² Hollander and Einwohner, 'Conceptualizing Resistance', 544.

²³ There is ample evidence for the different understanding of the same compositions in Ukraine and abroad. A few examples were given by the composer Roman Grygoriv in his interview: Stas Nevmerzhytskyi, 'Composer Roman Hryhoriv: "I survive only through art"', *The Claquers*, [website], 2023, <https://theclaquers.com/en/posts/11838>, accessed 6 Aug. 2024. The original interview was conducted in Ukrainian. In the English translation provided, the composer's surname was transcribed as 'Hryhoriv', whereas the correct spelling is 'Grygoriv'.

- *To Victory* (2023) for vocal sextet and symphony orchestra by Olena Ilnytska (b. 1977),
- *Go Where the Wind Takes You...* (2023) for symphony orchestra, based on the poetry of Olena Stepanenko by Iryna Aleksiychuk (b. 1967),
- *Concerto Grosso with the Positive* (2023) for choir, soloists, strings, harpsichord, theorbo, and portative organ (positive) by Evgen Petrychenko (b. 1976), based on the poetry of Viktoria Amelina and Volodymyr Vakulenko, both killed in the war, as well as verse by Roman Melish, Oleksandr Kozynets, and Nadija Kosarevych. The title of the work by Petrychenko features a word play, as the word ‘positive’ can be interpreted both as the name of a musical instrument (a small organ used in the composition) and as an indication of a positive, uplifting mood,
- Third Symphony *Victorious* (2024) for symphony orchestra by Zoltan Almashi (1975).

It is impossible to sum up all the tools that composers use to share the aforementioned messages. Verbal titles, programmatic commentaries and poetry are the most popular. Among others, I can also name the use of elements of traditional Ukrainian music (in the pieces by Shchetynsky, Aleksiychuk, Frolyak, and Zagaykevych), as well as quotations from very popular folk songs (for example, *Пливе кача*²⁴ in Ilnytska’s composition), and references to the march genre (works by Almashi and Aleksiychuk). One common method is to recreate a war soundscape, by e.g. imitating the sounds of air raid sirens (using various types of glissandi) or explosions (with percussion instruments such as drums or in other ways), which is the technique utilized by Shchetynsky, Maidenbergh-Todorova, Aleksiychuk, Petrychenko, and Almashi. In this manner, all means are directed towards clarifying the idea expressed by the composer in the title of the work. The use of understandable signs makes it possible to share the works with different audiences of art music lovers.

Overall, all of the aforementioned works by Ukrainian composers offer a unique reflection on the ongoing war. Their meaning-making processes are directly aimed at conveying key messages of Ukrainian resistance: our existence, our resilience, and our fight.²⁵

²⁴ *Пливе кача по Тисині* [A Duckling Swims in the Tisza] is a Ukrainian folk song that was used as a requiem for the heroes of the Ukrainian Revolution of Dignity (2013–2014).

²⁵ In their research, Hasan S. Tortop and Gvantsa Ghvinjilia have identified key creative, self-protective, and humanistic

THE HUMAN VOICE IN WAR: THE UKRAINIAN PERSPECTIVE

The composition *Vox Humana* by Roman Grygoriv (b. 1984) was written for an MRLS BM-27 Uragan missile and chamber orchestra at the end of April 2023. It is important to note that only the carcass of the Uragan missile was used, ensuring complete safety. The missile fragment, which is kept in a small private museum of military equipment and ammunition in the city of Irpin near Kyiv, was borrowed from the museum’s owner.

The idea of using the missile as a musical instrument occurred to the composer at the end of April 2023. Grygoriv, a double-bass player himself, experimented with the missile, producing various sounds using a bow. ‘It had a sharp and very piercing sound. For me, it sounded like death. You move the bow, and the rocket screams!’²⁶

The composer did not alter or prepare the missile in any way. The rocket’s carcass has three ribs, which can produce different sounds (high and low) when played with a bow; the glissando effect results from sounds gradually changing. Grygoriv used the carcass to create the desired sounds. Consequently, three works, titled *Vox Humana*, *Langsam*, and *Höllenpfeilstimme* (*The Voice of Hell’s Arrow*) were created and recorded on April 21, 2023, at St. Andrew’s Church in Kyiv,²⁷ a sacred place for all Ukrainians. The pieces featured the composer himself playing the missile solo, with the Kyiv Camerata Chamber Orchestra conducted by Natalia Stets (see Illustration 1). The recordings were published on the composer’s YouTube channel.

Next, I will focus on one of these works, *Vox Humana*, as an example of the composer’s shaping of the message of resistance in a specifically Ukrainian mode. Technically, it

ideas in Ukrainian music: ‘Amidst the ongoing conflict, Ukrainian musicians have embraced music as a powerful tool for protest, solidarity, and the preservation of cultural identity. Their musical activism has not only garnered international attention but also nurtured cooperation and support across borders, showcasing music’s ability to transcend cultural barriers and promote unity during challenging times’. Hasan S. Tortop and Gvantsa Ghvinjilia, ‘War and Music: a Discourse Analysis of Ukrainian Musicians’ Messages From a Transcultural Perspective’, *Journal of Music Theory and Transcultural Music Studies*, 2/1 (2024), 81.

²⁶ Nevmerzhytskyi, ‘Composer Roman Hryhoriv’.

²⁷ St. Andrew’s Church is a stunning Baroque church designed by the renowned Italian architect Francesco Rastrelli in the eighteenth century. Located in the heart of Kyiv, it is one of the city’s most iconic landmarks.



Illustration 1. Roman Grygoriv, *Vox Humana*.

is a controlled aleatory composition focused on guided improvisation. Grygoriv devised a plan for the piece and communicated his concept to the orchestra: the sound of the missile gradually intensifies, causing the sound of other orchestral instruments to rise similarly. The conductor guides the orchestra in transitioning from one sound to another.²⁸ While the composition's technical aspects are straightforward, its emotional impact is profound. The video plays a crucial role here. In the black-and-white footage, the baroque church's design is captured, the performers are dressed in black, and the composer is prominently featured playing the missile. In his interview, Grygoriv explains: 'It contains a message that is important to me. It is a human voice that I extract from a rocket. I transform it, and we demonstrate its energy, its history, and its pain.'²⁹

To me, *Vox Humana* is a highly significant work that reveals aspects of the Ukrainian mentality. The composer does not propose to use the missile as a weapon against our enemies. Instead, he transforms it into a musical instrument, aiming to address pain and calamity. In other words, a symbol of destruction is reimagined as a tool for emotional expression and catharsis.

In the context of resistance theory, these compositions are highly significant, not only for the messages they convey but also for their broad appeal and impact. The use of the rocket as a musical instrument elicits a strong response and resonates with a wide audience both in Ukraine and abroad. It is therefore hardly surprising that at the political Ukraine Recovery Conference, held in Berlin in June 2024, one of these compositions – *The Voice of the Hell's Arrow* for Uragan rocket and strings – was showcased.

CONCLUSION

This article presents a single case study, and the methodological framework used is not traditionally applied in art music studies. However, I believe the contemporary Ukrainian art music scene offers a unique approach to the issue of resistance. The theory and methodology of resistance studies provide a framework for highlighting the key messages that Ukrainian composers are conveying globally. These new works capture, disseminate, and preserve narratives that are crucial during the war. They contribute to the cultural memory of the period and become part of Ukrainian artistic heritage. As Grygoriv puts it:

²⁸ This process was described by the composer in his interview: Nevmerzhytskyi, 'Composer Roman Hryhoriv'.

²⁹ Nevmerzhytskyi, 'Composer Roman Hryhoriv'.

In many years, I would like people to perceive this music in the same way as the descendants of the Holocaust victims perceive the museum in Auschwitz. I would like people to see that there was a power of love, and that there were Ukrainians who conquered history.³⁰

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