

## *ON THE DIRECTION WHICH MUSICAL CREATION SHOULD TAKE*

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A Talk to Creators  
October 25, 1968

I have called you creators here today to tell you in which direction musical creation should be developed for it to conform with the great leader's revolutionary thought on art and literature.

Recently some success has been achieved in musical creation.

However, many shortcomings are still evident, and these must be remedied.

Among the songs that have been composed recently. General Kim Il Sung Is Our Sun, The Azaleas of the Homeland and The People Sing of the Leader are very good. The Song of Mangyongdae and Mangyongdae Is the Cradle of the Revolution, which are song-and-dance pieces composed several years ago, are also good. These songs are suited to the sentiments of our people and are also easy to sing because their melodies are elegant and yet soft and gentle. Songs that are too jumpy with melodies that rise and fall too sharply, are both difficult to sing and unsuited to the sentiments of Koreans.

However, some composers still lean only towards professional tastes in composing songs. As a result, some songs are difficult to sing and do not agree with the sentiments of our people.

If composers are to produce good songs, they must, above all else, have a correct stand and attitude concerning music.

The great leader taught us that music, like all other forms of art, should serve the revolution and the people. Composers should bear deep in mind the great thought of the leader that musical art must serve the revolution and the people, and fully embody this thought in their creative work.

If songs are truly to serve the revolution and the people, they must, as the great leader taught us, be popular so that they flow with national sentiments and yet conform to modern aesthetic tastes. In other words, our songs should be based not on uproarious Western music, but on soft and lyrical Korean folk songs. They must be gentle and yet beautiful and elegant so that they suit the sentiments of our people living in the era of the Workers' Party.

As you creators yourselves know, having just listened to it, the song General Kim Il Sung Is Our Sun is based on a folk song. It not only reflects the burning admiration of the people of that time for the great leader, but also richly expresses the earnest desire of the people of today to hold him in high esteem and follow him for ever as the sun of the nation. Therefore, our people are fond of this song and enjoy singing it.

Creators should strive to sustain national characteristics when writing the lyric of a song or composing a melody. You should not restore

into to things from the old days or imitate them on the plea of preserving our national characteristics in musical composition. We should guard against both manifestation of flunkeyism and tendencies towards restorationism in the composition of music. If songs are to be popular and replete with national sentiments, yet suit modern aesthetic tastes, their lyrics should be written in verse form.

Creators should conduct a systematic and close study of the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung's outstanding, Juche-orientated thought on art and literature, master it and embody it fully in the creation of music. If they do so they will be able to create greater numbers of good songs which serve the revolution and the people. First of all, they must make great efforts to write songs that will make an active contribution to establishing the Party's monolithic ideological system among Party members and other working people. They must create better songs which express our people's infinite respect and reverence for the great leader, and also continue to discover and create songs related to his revolutionary past.

More of the revolutionary songs that were created during the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle should be discovered and popularized. Such songs not only hold an important place in the revolutionary and class education of our Party members and other working people but are also of great significance in arming them with the revolutionary idea of the leader and educating them to be loyal to him. The Revolutionary Song, Where Are We? and The Supporters' Song and other revolutionary songs are all famous. Those revolutionary songs that are already known should be arranged in a variety of forms into a chorus, instrumental music or orchestral music, and widely popularized.

Militant and revolutionary songs which act as a powerful encouragement to wide sections of the people in the revolutionary struggle and construction work should also be created in large numbers.

The Song of the Chollima Forerunners in the film *Spinner*, the songs *My Motherland Is as Beautiful as a Golden Tapestry* and *Death in Revenge to Our Enemy the US Imperialists* in the film *We Have Our Fatherland* are all very good: they are a powerful encouragement to the people in the revolutionary struggle and construction work. The more you hear these songs, the stronger will be your involuntary urge to rush forward, the fiercer will be your hatred for the enemy and the greater will be your fighting will. The great leader gave instructions that many such songs should be composed. He likes lively and militant marches.

In future, too, the creators of music should at all times bear in mind the instructions of the great leader and compose more marches and other energetic and militant songs which will make an active contribution to promoting socialist construction in the northern half of the country and making full preparations for the great revolutionary event of national reunification.

In addition to creating good songs, the choice of key for and the

arrangement of songs should be improved. However sentimental a song is, it cannot express rich emotions to the full and stimulate the interest of the people unless the choice of key for and the arrangement of it are satisfactory.

Let me cite an example. Two versions of the song General Kim Il Sung Is Our Sun have been recorded; one is in the key of E major, and the other is in the key of D major. I preferred the latter. However, the leader said that the former was better. He said that when the song was sung in a lower key, it was good in that it sounded gentle. He also said that on the other hand, it was less effective in expressing the people's eagerness. He went on to say that when the song was sung in a higher key, it was better for expressing emotions richly. I listened to the two versions carefully once more, and I realized that, as the leader had said, the song was better in E major than D major.

If we consider that the song General Kim Il Sung Is Our Sun tells of the people's fervent reverence for the leader, the song expresses the writer's emotion more vividly when it is sung in a higher key than in a lower one.

Listening to the song General Kim Il Sung Is Our Sun, I once again felt deep in my heart that the leader is a genius of art. After composing a song, creators should not simply hand it over to a singer, but use their intelligence to choose the right key, taking into consideration the musical range and characteristics of the singer. The creators of music should never forget that their creative work is not completed with the composition of a song, and that putting the song on the stage is also part of creation.

The accompaniment to and interlude in songs should also be arranged well.

In arranging the accompaniment to a song the principle should be observed of backing the song to give point to it and strengthening the depictive intention of the song. In many cases, however, when arranging accompaniments to songs, the creators resort unnecessarily to small devices. This practice not only prevents the appreciation of songs but also puts a varnish on its emotional content.

The accompaniment should not be a burden on the appreciation of a song. The accompaniment should cover the song skilfully and gently; the instrumental music between stanzas must retain the volume and characteristics of the music.

The instrumental break should not divert the emotional content elsewhere. You should direct the emotional content properly by bringing it to a crescendo before the next stanza is started. This principle should always be maintained.

The ability of singers should be improved.

The great leader said that, among the singers in the women's chorus of the Radio Art Troupe, which sings the song The People Sing of the Leader, the one who leads the chorus has a nice voice. Obviously he said this because she actually has a beautiful voice, but he said it mainly because she made a good impression.

The player of a musical instrument should also be attractive and make a good impression. He should, through his countenance, fully

express emotions that suit the ideological and thematic content of the given piece. The same is true of a singer. However good a song is, it will not impress the audience if the singer sings emotionlessly.

It is also necessary to choose the right singer.

The great leader said that, even when one and the same song is sung, it is better to hear women sing it than men. From now on, whenever I ask for audition music, you must bring me a version sung by a female singer.

It is advisable to encourage many female singers to sing songs for films.

So far as vocal sound is concerned, we should choose that which is beautiful and refined and suits the sentiments of our people. Those singers who performed vocal music in former days, employed such a hoarse voice that it was difficult to distinguish their sex. People of our times neither use a hoarse voice nor like hearing one. We must categorically reject singing in a harsh voice.

For musical art to progress we should develop instrumental music still further.

I have heard the instrumental music *The Snow Falls* performed by the National Symphony Orchestra. It seems to me that the legato is not quite correct. The legato must not be isolated from the main song. The melody of the legato should be derived from the original music and not from anywhere else.

Originally the Radio Art Troupe began the instrumental piece *The Snow Falls* with a clarinet. The dull performance of this music with a European woodwind instrument at the start does not quite suit the sentiments of Koreans.

Instrumental music should always flow softly and gracefully, and it should be performed mainly on stringed instruments.

From now on, woodwind instruments should be used as little as possible in instrumental music.

The use of the piano should also be reviewed. The piano does not stimulate the interest of people very much because it disrupts the melody when it is played. The frequent use of the piano in accompaniment is outdated and does not suit the tastes of our people. In future the piano should not be used in a performance or accompaniment by a single person. Songs should be accompanied mainly by a small instrumental ensemble.

An orchestra of our national instruments should be developed.

Some officials consider that, when film music is recorded with a Western orchestra, the invariable rule must be to use a dual formation orchestra. However, they think that when film music is recorded with our national orchestra, it is possible to do so even when the orchestra is not complete. They are gravely mistaken. This shows that the practice of neglecting our national orchestra has not yet disappeared from among our artists. A national orchestra should be formed for the Korean Film Studio.

You should try to combine national orchestra with Western instruments. It is a good idea to include an electronic organ and cellos in the orchestra for the film *Among the Villagers*. You should

not, on the pretext of combining national orchestra with Western instruments, dim the colour of our national orchestra, but maintain the principle of enhancing it.

The quality of musical recording should be radically improved. A great revolution must be effected in this respect when recording the music for the film *Among the Villagers*.

I will ensure that the equipment and people needed to improve musical recording are provided.

We must have able sound recordists. The sound recordist now working at the Radio and TV Broadcasting Committee seems reasonably able. So I inquired into how he is doing in his job and have been told that he is working well. He should be recalled to the Korean Film Studio and given the task of recording the music for the film *Among the Villagers*.

Creators should return the immense political trust and concern of the great leader by showing loyalty to him.

Socialist construction in our country has reached a high stage and our national economy is developing rapidly. Under these new circumstances one cannot carry out one's revolutionary tasks creditably merely by resolving to be loyal to the Party and the leader, and a man who does not fulfil his revolutionary duties cannot be called loyal to the Party and the leader. In particular, those who are working in the technical field can neither make a contribution to the revolution nor be faithful to the Party and the leader unless they are technically able.

Recently I called a senior official in charge of administrative affairs and let him listen to the song which I like best and the one which I dislike most. First I had him listen to my favourite song and asked: "What do you think of it? It's not so good, is it?" He stood up abruptly and answered: "No, it's not interesting." Then I asked him to listen to the one which I abhor most and asked: "What about this one? It's quite good, isn't it?" He again stood up and said: "Yes, it's excellent." That official merely says, "yes, yes," and is unable to distinguish between what is good and what is bad. This is not the kind of loyalty I want. He was unable to tell the good from the bad because he knows nothing about music. If senior officials have no knowledge of their own respective field, they will not know whether their work is proceeding properly or not. In the long run, the consequences will be grave.

Senior officials in the field of art and literature should study music tirelessly. Otherwise, they will be unable either to develop our music according to the intention of the great leader, or to carry out their revolutionary tasks with distinction.

The same is true for creators. However intense their loyalty to the leader is, they will not be able to produce good works if they are not technically able. Therefore, if creators are to return the leader's great political trust and care with loyalty, they should have a high level of skill in addition to the determination to be loyal to him. The present era requires loyalty plus skill, and this amounts to returning the leader's concern.

I hope that you creators will conduct a close study of what I have stressed today and achieve great success in the creation of the music for the film Among the Villagers.

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