

## Contemporary Musical Art

Research article

UDC 787.3+78.071.1

<https://doi.org/10.56620/RM.2025.1.005-015>

EDN: NYOCWA



### Nikolai Korndorf's Compositions in Alexander Ivashkin's Repertoire\*

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**Abstract.** The article is devoted to the musical works by composer Nikolai Korndorf that are part of the repertoire of Alexander Ivashkin, a cellist of world renown. The destiny of the performances of a whole set of Korndorf's solo, chamber and orchestral compositions, such as *Concerto capriccioso*, the string trio, the piano trio, the *Triptych (Lament, Response and Glorification)*, and the *Passacaglia* is connected with the name of this outstanding musician. Special attention in this article is given to the last of the mentioned compositions, which bears the authorial dedication to Ivashkin. In the context of the overall questions dealing with the poetics of the titles and the genre form of Korndorf's compositions, clarification is given of the peculiarities of the composer's interpretation of the historical genre of the passacaglia. Closely adjoining the musical and verbal elements, Korndorf brings into the musical text of the *Passacaglia* fragments from Dante's *The Divine Comedy*, which are read out loud by the performer in the language of the original text. One of the important aspects in comprehending the artistic meaning of Korndorf's cello compositions is connected with musical symbolism. In the textural, intonation and harmonic tendencies manifested in the *Passacaglia* it is possible to observe both the semantic connections with the abundant world of Dante's images and the associative parallels within the extensive musical intertextual domain.

**Keywords:** Alexander Ivashkin, Nikolai Korndorf, 20th century Russian music, Korndorf's *Passacaglia*, Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, musical symbolism

**For citation:** Panteleeva Yu. N. Nikolai Korndorf's Compositions in Alexander Ivashkin's Repertoire. *Russian Musicology*. 2025. No. 1, pp. 5–15. <https://doi.org/10.56620/RM.2025.1.005-015>

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\* The article was first published in Russian in the collection of materials of the international Scholarly Conference "Musical Scholarship in the Context of Culture: Toward the 75th Anniversary of the Gnesin Russian Academy of Music", which took place between October 30 and November 2, 2018. Ed. by E. S. Derunets, T. I. Naumenko, Yu. N. Panteleeva, I. A. Presnyakova. Moscow: Probel-2000, 2018, pp. 378–390. The article is published in the present issue of the journal with minor supplementations.

Translated by Dr. Anton Rovner.

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### Alexander Ivashkin – Artist, Scholar and Organizer

The scholarly and artistic legacy of Alexander Vasilyevich Ivashkin, a musician who combined in a virtuosic manner several roles at once in his activities — those of an art scholar, cellist, conductor, organizer and pedagogue, — impresses by the scale and breadth of the artistic material spanned by a single intellectual and performance gesture. In his monograph about Charles Ives, the musicologist described by the term “stretto” one of the most saturating periods of the American composer’s musical creativity. This definition is also applicable to Ivashkin himself. His versatile activities have been imprinted in a voluminous body of scholarly works and a broad collection of sound recordings, institutions established by him (such as the Center for Russian Music at the London University) and musical ensembles (the Ensemble of Soloists of the Bolshoi Theater Orchestra). It can be essentially compared to a dense type of polyphonic texture in music.

The main field of the scholar’s academic interests, as is generally known, was comprised by the music of 20th and 21st century composers, both Russian and from other countries. Moreover, whereas in Russia the researcher turned primarily to American and European music, which during those Soviet years presented a true *terra incognita* (Charles Ives, Krzysztof Penderecki, Mauricio Kagel, John Cage), while living abroad, he concentrated his attention, for the most part, on Russian music and its complex path traversed

during the previous century. And, it must be noted, this analytical work was absolutely uncompromising, which may be perceived in all the scholar’s works. At the same time, whatever Ivashkin’s exploratory glance is fixed on, its value is also contained in itself.

The object of understanding was formed not only by isolated artistic figures, the knowledge of which found reflection in the scholar’s monographs, but also the artistic process in itself, when attention was focused on many creators united among themselves not by their belonging to a single historical space and time. The scholar’s new book *Posle Shostakovicha* [After Shostakovich], on which he worked during the final years of his life, was supposed to have become such a generalizing research work. In it he planned to elucidate the musical works created by the generations of composers that followed the generation of Alfred Schnittke, Edison Denisov and Sofia Gubaidulina.

Ivashkin’s performance activities, which were as intensive as his scholarly work, were noted by the same spirit of continuous search that led to genuine discoveries. The musician’s repertoire, which was constantly replenished by new works by Russian composers and those from other countries (including Australia and New Zealand) was also notable for its archival rarities. One of them was the previously unknown version<sup>1</sup> of Sergei Rachmaninoff’s *Vocalise* discovered by Ivashkin in the archives of the M. I. Glinka State Central Museum of Musical Culture and subsequently rendered by the cellist in his inimitable interpretation. Among the more than fifty world premieres presented by the musician is Brahms’ *Cello Concerto*.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The musical text wherein the corrections made by Antonina Nezhdanova, the first performer of the *Vocalise*, were not added into the score differs from the subsequent section in its tonality (*E-flat minor*), as well as by other parameters.

<sup>2</sup> The premiere of the work was performed by Ivashkin in October 2004 in Hamburg together with the Hamburg Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Andrei Boreiko. The Concerto was performed in February 2005 in Moscow at the Grand Hall of the Conservatory by Alexander Ivashkin and the Orchestra of the State Academic Symphonic Cappella of Russia under the direction of Valery Polyansky.

What is meant here is the initial version of the *Concerto for Violin, Cello and Orchestra*, which, as the archival documents show, was initially conceived by the composer as being particularly a concerto for solo cello.

### Ivashkin as an Interpreter of Korndorf's Music for Cello

Of special prominence in Alexander Ivashkin's repertoire is the music of Nikolai Korndorf<sup>3</sup> (1947–2001). The musician not only performed all of the composer's cello compositions, — the solo, chamber and orchestral ones, — but in most cases became their very first performer. We are referring to the *Concerto Capriccioso* for cello, string orchestra, keyboards, harp and percussion (1986), the *Trio In Honour of Alfred Schnittke (AGSCH)* for violin, viola and cello (1986), the *Trio "Are You Ready, Brother?"* for violin, viola and piano (1996), the *Passacaglia* for solo cello (1997), and the *Triptych (Lament, Response and Glorification)* for cello and piano (1999).

The aspiration to span all the music for cello created by any particular composer presents a distinctive feature of Ivashkin, in whose discography the works of Alexander Tcherepnin, Nikolai Roslavets, Sergei Rachmaninoff, Sergei Prokofiev, Dmitri Shostakovich, Benjamin Britten, Sofia Gubaidulina, Alfred Schnittke and Giya Kancheli are presented exhaustively.

When touching upon the question of the history of Korndorf's and Ivashkin's artistic interaction, it is necessary to refer to the music written by the composer for the

Ensemble of Soloists of the Bolshoi Theater (under the direction of Alexander Lazarev): *Confessiones* (1979), the ritual *Da!!* [Yes!!] (1982), *Amoroso* (1986), and the opera *MR (Marina und Rainer)* (1989). The Ensemble of Soloists of the Bolshoi Theater, a group created by Ivashkin<sup>4</sup> in 1978, performed 20th century music,<sup>5</sup> as a result of which the works of composers did not lose their connection with "the concrete historical hour," if we are to apply here Alexander Mikhailov expression.

### "The Name of the Thing"

When providing characterization for the composer's cello works, let us focus our attention on certain aspects of the unity of their form and content. It would be logical to stem from the titles disclosing with a greater or smaller amount of concreteness the main idea of the composition. In some cases, the composer limited himself to a simple indication of the genre, whereas in others, he would resort to quite individualized verbal formulations. On the whole, conceptual, enigmatic verbal constructions are characteristic for Nikolai Korndorf's poetics ("*...si muove!*", *Da!!*, *MR (Marina und Rainer)*, *Underground Music*).

Alexander Mikhailov explained the semantic ambiguity of one of the titles cited above the following way: "Nikolai Korndorf <...> in one case gave an absolutely ingenious title to his composition: 'Da' ['Yes']. And as for what 'Yes,' as I remember, with an exclamation point, means, — there cannot be a simple rational explanation for this. But such kinds of titles

<sup>3</sup> *Nikolai Korndorf. Complete Music for Cello*. With the Russian Philharmonic Orchestra, under the direction of Konstantin Krimets, with Anya Alexeyev, piano. Toccata Classic, 2012. Nikolai Korndorf. *Passacaglia for cello solo (dedicated to Alexander Ivashkin)*, *String Trio*, *Piano Trio* (with Patricia Kopatchinskaya, Daniel Raiskin, Ivan Sokolov). Megadisc 7817, Belgium. World Premiere Recording.

<sup>4</sup> Ivashkin was simultaneously the artistic director of this ensemble and one of its participants.

<sup>5</sup> During the years of its existence, the Ensemble of Soloists from the Bolshoi Theater Orchestra released over twenty LP records with the music of 20th century composers.

are perfectly explainable. There is a perception in the composer's head: what he is creating could be labelled simply by this general word." [1, p. 865]

According to Umberto Eco, a title presents "a generalizing macro-utterance," a "topic of narration" or a narrative. This also reveals itself in the title *Concerto Capriccioso*, which is noteworthy in its "genre combination" (Yuri Tynyanov). Here, just as in the case of any other genre, something in the vein of an intertextual frame or framework is created, to which the artist's conception correlates. A musical composition's adherence to a certain genre tradition, i.e., to a "mobile, evolving historical set," [2] discloses the possibility for various comparisons and juxtapositions carried out both synchronically and diachronically. These may be capriccios for cello written by 20th century composers (Krzysztof Penderecki, Hans Werner Henze, or Lucas Foss) or the examples of this genre created in the Romantic era.<sup>6</sup> Among the latter, Pyotr Tchaikovsky's *Pezzo Capriccioso* for cello and orchestra op. 62 must be highlighted, forming a parallel with Nikolai Korndorf's concerto by its genre profile and, of course, the choice of the solo instrument.

Genre also provides the means of differentiation of the respective sections within a cyclic composition, such as, for instance, the String Trio *In Honour of Alfred Schnittke (AGSCH)*, which is based on a triad of historical forms (Chorale, Toccata and Aria). An analogous approach is also incorporated in the *Tryptich*, wherein by means of titles based on different genres (*Lament*, *Response* and *Glorification*) the conception of the composition is disclosed in the logical interconnection between the part and the whole.

So, what is it that stands behind "the name of the thing," and what role in the semantics generation does the genre-related entity of the musical composition play? After all, "each genre becomes important when it is perceived" (Yuri Tynyanov). [3, p. 150]

### *Passacaglia*: in Dialogue with Dante

Let us turn to the *Passacaglia* — one of the works dedicated to Alexander Ivashkin.<sup>7</sup> Here the traditional genre indication particularly carries out the function of the type of "generalizing macro-utterance" about which Eco spoke, and becomes a hermeneutic key towards the interpretation of a composition's artistic meaning.

While preserving the "predominating traits" (Boris Tomashevsky) of the genre, Korndorf enhances them by connecting them with the extra-musical — namely, the literary — element. Indeed, where else, if not in Dante's *The Divine Comedy*, with the philosophical-poetic imagery of which the artistic fabric of the *Passacaglia* correlates, is the idea of the procession and the step presented so symbolically?

The composer perceived the early form of the variations on an ostinato bass in a certain new angle, having connected its archetypal indication together with the leading narrative technique permeating the entire text of *The Divine Comedy*. It was Osip Mandelstam who wrote that Dante's versification itself is inseparable from the process of motion filled with reflection and symbolism: "In Dante, philosophy and poetry are always in step, always on its feet <...> The measure of the poems is inhaling and exhaling — a step." [4, p. 10]

<sup>6</sup> Niccolò Paganini, Camille Saint-Saëns, Felix Mendelssohn, Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov, etc.

<sup>7</sup> Other musical works dedicated to Ivashkin are Schnittke's *Hymn No. 3* and *Klingende Buchstaben*, Alexander Raskatov's *Kyrie eleison*, Dmitri Smirnov's *Monogram*, etc.

The relief formula in the bass voice opening the *Passacaglia*, which is also the “bearing construction” of the entire composition, manifests, on the one hand, the *perceptible* (to use Tomashevsky’s term) indication of the historical musical genre, and on the other hand — let us make such a presumption — indicates at the main narrative instance of the text. What is meant here is the figure of the narrator — Dante, who is simultaneously the narrator and the main protagonist of the story. This is how one of the researchers of Dante’s style writes about this poetic particularity: “It is well-known that Dante presents himself in the ‘Comedy’ in a double hypostasis — as the author and as a character. Dante the author creates the poem in strict correspondence with the ‘system of coordinates’ chosen by him and simultaneously contemplates about the process of creativity. And then there is Dante the protagonist, the person who travels with Vergil, and then with Beatrice through the heavenly realms, encounters various people there, learns of their histories, is horrified, commiserates, feels fear, bewilderment, joy, delight and gratitude. And whereas the image of Dante the author possesses concise biographical traits, Dante the character, according to the well-known American researcher, Singleton, is ‘each person,’ or ‘everyman.’” [5, p. 65]

In the middle section of the form (*Recitazione sotto voce*), wherein the cellist pronounces rhythmically in a low voice the fragments from Dante’s *Purgatorio*, are presented already explicitly, clearly. This is aided by the mode of narration from the first person: “we went one after the other along the mountain gorge,” “we had to move along the edge,” “I looked at the fire, clenching my hands and bending ahead...,” etc. This is how our attention is focalized on the actor — the protagonist of the narrative. At the same time, within the poetical text the images accompanying

Dante’s and Vergil’s ascent towards the mountain of Purgatory are visualized in all brightness: “Here is a mountain slope in a raging fire, / And from the cliff the wind is beating, while soaring,” “A new group of people approached this group along the path embraced by flames.” What is important is that the change of the visual perspective — the focalization — occurs also due to the musical, first of all, the textural means. If one is to stem from the fact that the bass line presents the personification of the main hero of the narration, the poet himself, then the means of the disposition of this voice in the overall texture, generating diverse spatial effects, may arouse direct association with the event plan of the *The Divine Comedy*: the “abysses” and “gorges,” the “bright light” and the “beauty of the heavens.” After all, this visual row is implicitly contained in Korndorf’s musical narration, because, incidentally, may also be perceived in a broader context, than that which appears in a direct connection with Dante’s text.

#### About the Genre Code of the *Passacaglia*

The most important symbol in the composition’s artistic system is the instep of the human being, personifying in itself the inner motion of the soul along the path of purification. At the same time, the narrative structure of musical composition, altogether, manifests the idea of ascent from the “abyss of Hell” to the light of Heaven, if we turn to the narrative loci of Dante’s cosmogony.

While preserving the genre code of the *passacaglia*, the composer, at the same time, interprets in a peculiar way its essential principle — the immutable bass twice subjected to essential transformations. The pitch content of the quasi-ostinato figure is limited to four pitches. They correspond to the cello strings (*C, G, D, A*), and for this reason are strictly fixed in a certain register. Only at the very end of the composition, the present sound collection is

rapidly expanded due to a systematic addition, with which new sounds appear strictly along the principle of the circle of fifths. What is meant here is the conclusive passage (Example No. 1), soaring on a rhythmic *accelerando* through all the registers — from the *C* of the large octave to the *G#* of the third octave. Its structure (a few intervals of ninths, situated at the distance of fifths from each other) is predetermined by the main intervallic vector of the bass line. Does this line not symbolize that very separation from the ground (in this case, the meaning of the word “ground” and one of the varieties of the genre of the basso ostinato coincide remarkably)? This is described in the following verses of *The Divine Comedy* [6, p. 338]:

*Such longing upon longing came upon me  
To be above, that at each step thereafter  
For flight I felt in me the pinions growing.  
When underneath us was the stairway all  
Run o'er, and we were on the highest step...*

In this connection, let us draw our attention to one of the observations made by a number of present-day scholars in regard to the frequency of the use of certain words in the *The Divine Comedy*, such as, for instance, God, Heaven,

love, life, the sun, grace, words, reason, etc. Applying the statistical methods of the study of the poetic text, researchers arrive at the conclusion that “the lexeme ‘earth’ decreases in its frequency as the text proceeds from ‘Hell’ to ‘Purgatory,’ and then to ‘Paradise’: [respectively,] 55, 45, 38 mentions, <...> in the three parts of the ‘Divine Comedy,’ and in Dante’s perception, the lexeme ‘terra’ is negative.” [7, p. 26] On the musical level, as we see in Korndorf’s music, at the very end of the *Passacaglia*, the idea of the overcoming of earth’s gravity is realized by means of a rapid ascent into the highest register — to the almost intangible, most intricate sounds. The line of the bass voice, seemingly inseparable from the strict line embodying a measured pace, breaks off with the leading genre indication, and therein, undoubtedly, is comprised of one of the peculiarities of the contemporary compositional interpretation of the historical genre.

Another significant case of reinterpretation of the bass voice is presented in the middle — predominantly verbal — section of the *Passacaglia*. It is important to emphasize that the sounds of the quasi-ostinato bass here are created on the same strings, but beyond the bridge of the cello (“to play behind

Example No. 1

Nikolai Korndorf. *Passacaglia*, conclusion

the bridge on the identified strings,” as it is written in the composer’s performance instructions). Thereby, when moving down, these notes turn out to be higher in terms of range. What causes this change, which occurs in an element of the texture that seems to be a constant, by its definition — the bass formula, albeit, one that is interpreted in a peculiar manner?

One of the key moments in the *The Divine Comedy* is expressed in Dante’s words from the conclusive song of *Inferno*: “What the point is beyond which I had passed.” [6, p. 176] When discoursing about the trajectory of the path traversed by the main hero, Pavel Florensky in his work from 1922, *Mnimosti v geometrii* [Specious Aspects in Geometry] provides an unexpected explanation of “...Dante’s space, as built in the vein of Euclidean geometry.” [8, p. 47] The philosopher and mathematician presumes that, when “descending along the steep slopes of the funnel-shaped Hell,” Dante and Vergil at a certain moment “...unexpectedly capsize, turning with their legs to the surface of the Earth, from whence they entered the underground domain, and with their heads — to the opposite side (*Inferno*, Canto XXIII).” [Ibid., p. 46] The paradoxical quality of Dante’s space, wherein movement forward presumes a change of direction, was also written about by Yuri Lotman: “...the meaning of Dante’s path is manifested in the impulse upwards, each step of his is marked according to this scale, presenting a descent or an ascent upwards.” [9, p. 260]

It is noteworthy that in the third section of the *Passacaglia*, the “turned over” sounds of the bass voice restore their previous appearance, as if symbolizing the beginning of a new stage of his path — the ascent towards the mountain of Purgatory. The endless melody gradually traverses through the stages of microtonality, chromaticism and diatonicism; moreover, all the tonal changes here are organized in precise correspondence with

the logic of the circle of fifths, which enhances the effect of gradualness in the continuous ascent.

### About the Musical Symbolism in the *Passacaglia*

Other musical symbols are also present in the composition. One of the episodes of the *Passacaglia* is presented by a type of contrapuntal texture carried out in the vein of early polyphony (the upper voice in the four-voice texture is sung by the cellist himself). The reason for the appearance of such an image in the narrative fabric of the work, most likely, must also be sought for in the storyline structure of the *The Divine Comedy*, where from time to time the protagonists hear various church chants. Whereas in Dante these psalms and hymns are marked out by means of Latin, in Korndorf, the image of the sacred chants is manifested by means of a scholarly contrapuntal style. Also remarkable here is the key of *D-flat major* — the tonality of Hymn III *In Honour of Gustav Mahler*, wherein the images of the New Heaven and New Earth, which are written about in the words from the 21st chapter of the *Book of Revelation* of St. John, concluding this Biblical text, have found their interpretation.

One contemporary researcher of the Romantic style in music seems to describe a special expressive feature appearing on the basis of the differentiated approach toward the use of Latin and Italian in one musical composition inspired by the poetry of the great Florentine (what is meant here is Franz Liszt’s *Dante Symphony*): “...Dante’s poems are not sung in the choral finale — the text of a Catholic prayer is incorporated there. But among the number of themes of the first movement, verses from Dante’s poems, which are of prime importance, are inscribed under the musical lines...” [10, p. 77] Without turning to Latin, or to any verbal text in this fragment, Korndorf, nonetheless, recreates in his *Passacaglia*

a certain generalized spirit of Catholic singing with the aid of certain compositional means capable of arousing associations with the polyphonic style of Renaissance ecclesiastical music.

A certain symbolism may also be discerned in the final *E major* triad (Example No. 1), colored in the timbres of harmonics and soft whistling (*fischio*). In Korndorf's individualized poetics, the present tonality acquires the special semantics of Light, stemming back to even before his famous piano composition *Yarilo*, and in the context of the present composition, it is even possible to state — the semantics of Paradise.

And here yet another correspondence arises, which not only demonstrates the intertextual depth of Korndorf's composition (incidentally, according to Barth, it is in the unconscious

textual connections, even at a greater degree than in conscious ones, that the essence of intertextuality reveals itself), but also providing the grounds for pondering over certain supra-individual symbols, which may be perceived similarly by various artists. In this case, what is meant here is the unusual correspondence appearing between the conclusion of Korndorf's *Passacaglia* and the Finale of Prokofiev's *Symphony-Concerto* op. 125 (Example 2).<sup>8</sup>

In his article *Cooling the Volcano*, written about two concertos by Prokofiev, Alexander Ivashkin shares with his readers his truly intimate perception of the final measures of this composition: "I know Prokofiev was not a religious man. But when I play the Finale of the *Symphony-Concerto* (particularly the last bars in the third octave), I always experience the clear

Example No. 2

Sergei Prokofiev. *Symphony-Concerto*  
for Cello and Orchestra op. 125. Finale, conclusion

The musical score for Example No. 2 shows the final measures of the Finale of Prokofiev's *Symphony-Concerto* op. 125. The score is in 2/4 time and features a cello line and orchestral accompaniment. The cello line consists of a series of eighth notes in the third octave, starting on G4 and ending on E5. The orchestral accompaniment includes Timpani and Otoni, Archi. The Timpani part has a strong dynamic marking 'f' and a single note on G4. The Otoni, Archi part has a strong dynamic marking 'f' and a single note on G4. The score is marked with a '3' in the top right corner, indicating the third octave.

<sup>8</sup> On November 1, 2018, this composition was performed in the concert organized in memory of Alexander Ivashkin at the Grand Hall of the Moscow Conservatory.

sensation that this amazing (and still unique) passage is the image of a very small gateway to Paradise (according to the Russian Orthodox Christian image, it should be smaller than the eye of a needle). In these last four bars Prokofiev escapes from all official pressure, all Soviet hindrances, all personal problems, and is granted complete freedom. Like a soul liberating itself from the physical yoke of a dying body.”<sup>9</sup>

Also noteworthy is Dmitri Shostakovich’s utterance, which Ivashkin cites in the same article: “...just under the cupola.”<sup>10</sup>

Of these “strange convergences,” if one is to quote the words of Pushkin, most likely, it is not proper to arrive at conclusions about any type of quotation from Prokofiev’s concerto on the part of Korndorf, since the appearance of the *E major* in the third octave in the concerto is stipulated exclusively by the inner logic of the development of the *Passacaglia* — a consistent augmentation of the perfect fifth “steps” comprising the bass formula. However, the receptivity of such a refined performer as Ivashkin, who interpreted the finale of the *Symphony-Concerto* not only musically, but also verbally, fits organically into the semantic field of Korndorf’s *Passacaglia*, creating within it yet another actional chain of events.

Moreover, in the main protagonist’s “narrative voice,” it is possible also to view the figure of the composer himself. In his introductory article to his book of conversations with Alfred Schnittke, Ivashkin writes: “...the composer undergoes an almost Dante-like path, in order to ‘see the luminaries once again.’” [11, p. 7] And although

the musicologist speaks here of his vis-à-vis, the idea itself to compare the path, or the creative method (Ancient Greek μέθοδος — path) of the artist with Dante’s journey is quite noteworthy. It is possible that this comparison also did not escape the attention of Nikolai Korndorf, who knew this book very well,<sup>11</sup> and may have served as one of the impulses for the composer to create his work for solo cello with the titular dedication — to Alexander Ivashkin.

Dmitri Merezhkovsky in his research of Dante made the following generalization of his great poetic work: “The aim of the ‘Comedy’ is ‘*elevating, anagogical, sensus anagogicus*,’ in the words of Dante: this means particularly that all of it presents a ladder leading from the earth to heaven, each symbol of which presents a symbol.” [12, p. 38] One may suppose that it would not be an exaggeration to assert that the idea of elevation as a spiritual journey is also imprinted in the set of events in Korndorf’s *Passacaglia*.

#### About the Emblematic Figures in the Trio “*Are You Ready, Brother?*”

The anagogical (from the Ancient Greek ανάγειν — elevation, construction) directedness of artistic utterance is also intrinsic to the composer’s other works in which the cello is involved, for example, the Trio “*Are You Ready, Brother?*”, the title of which is derived from the text of the spiritual song *Ride the Chariot*. The overall idea of ascension to celestial heights is imprinted in the very relief of this work, which, notwithstanding the chamber quality of the instrumental ensemble, turns out to be concordant to the compositional logic

<sup>9</sup> Ivashkin A. *Cooling the volcano: Prokofiev’s cello Concerto op. 58 and Symphony-Concerto op. 125*. URL: [http://alexanderivashkin.com/08publications\\_three\\_oranges2009\\_prokofiev.html](http://alexanderivashkin.com/08publications_three_oranges2009_prokofiev.html) (accessed: 12.11.2024).

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> The composer mentioned this when conversing with the author of the present article in 1997.

of the three symphonic *Hymns*, which is also confirmed on an intertextual level.

The symbolism of the major triad plays an important role in this composition, as well: the sparse domain of the static, soft sections of the *Trio* traverse the lines of the sounded out major chords. At the same time, in the *Concerto Capriccioso*,<sup>12</sup> we already anticipate that cosmic quality of the images that would be implemented in the *Hymns* and the *Third Symphony*, in which the overtone series turns out to be an almost emblematic figure. It appears at the inner boundaries of the form and asserts itself as a peculiar antipode to the combined undifferentiated color of the twelve-tone sonority.

Alexander Ivashkin, a refined interpreter of Nikolai Korndorf's music, wrote in an article devoted to the composer's memory: "Very frequently, his composition stands on the verge of what can be performed on the instruments. <...> But we must be grateful to him: in Korndorf's music, a new world is opened (almost always — with a tremendous effort!), promising new possibilities for the performers." [13, p. 72] The performing skill of the cellist was capable of mastering the technical complexity of Korndorf's compositions, but, most importantly, Ivashkin managed to convey in his interpretations the depth and inimitable beauty of the music written by this unique contemporary composer.

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<sup>12</sup> The Russian premiere of the *Concerto Capriccioso* was presented by Ivashkin on November 16, 2004 at the Grand Hall of the Moscow Conservatory. On the same day, the defense of the dissertation *Poetika stilya Nikolaya Korndorfa* [The Poetics of Nikolai Korndorf's Style] written by the author of this article. A review of it was given by Doctor of the Arts, Professor of the London University Alexander Ivashkin.

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Received: 07.11.2024

Revised: 10.12.2024

Accepted: 10.01.2025