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### Musicology: "Knowledge about the Lack of Knowledge" – Setting and Solving Problems\*

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**Abstract.** The article is devoted to the relevant issue of *chronotypology* in 20th and 21st century art and its interpretation in philosophical-aesthetical and musical-artistic scholarship. Considering the rapidly changing landscape of the contemporary humanitarian field, the author poses questions of reevaluation of both the basic scholarly concepts and newly introduced notions directed at the explanation of new and unusual phenomena of art. The work addresses the concepts and utterances of well-known scholars (including Victor Bychkov, Nadezhda Mankovskaya, Yuri Kholopov, etc.), as well as contemporary composers (Victor Ekimovsky, Vladimir Martynov, Anton Batagov, etc.). Special attention is paid to the discrepancies found in the interpretations of certain fundamental categories of art, which provide a general characterization of the present state of musicological knowledge. Questions of classification of the stages of artistic-aesthetical knowledge; questions regarding the lexicon of cultural and musical phenomena; questions of the methodology of studying new phenomena — this is the range of issues that require definition and application of terms, appearing during the process of the development of contemporary art.

**Keywords:** musicology, chronotypology, avant-garde, modernism, postmodernism, postpostmodernism, metamodernism, aesthetics, lexicon of the nonclassics

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## Музыковедение: «знание о незнании» — постановка и решение проблем

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**Аннотация.** Статья посвящена актуальной проблеме хронотипологии искусства XX–XXI веков и её толкованию в философско-эстетической и музыкально-искусствоведческой науках. Учитывая стремительно меняющийся ландшафт современного гуманитарного поля, автор ставит вопросы переосмысления как базовых научных концептов, так и вновь привнесённых понятий, направленных на объяснение новых и непривычных феноменов искусства. В работе предпринимается обращение к концепциям и высказываниям известных учёных (в их числе — Виктор Бычков, Надежда Маньковская, Юрий Холопов и др.), а также современных композиторов (Виктор Екимовский, Владимир Мартынов, Антон Батагов и др.). Особое внимание уделяется противоречиям в толкованиях некоторых фундаментальных категорий искусства, в целом характеризующим современное состояние музыковедческого знания. Вопросы классификации этапов художественно-эстетического сознания, вопросы лексикона культурных и музыкальных феноменов, вопросы методологии изучения новых явлений — вот тот корпус проблем, которые требуют определения и терминирования, возникая в процессе развития современного искусства.

**Ключевые слова:** музыковедение, хронотипология, авангард, модернизм, постмодернизм, постпостмодернизм, метамодернизм, эстетика, лексикон неклассики

### Introduction

Contemporary musicology presents a field of issues that are generated and multiplied as the result of the development of art as an aesthetic phenomenon. Thus, Viktor Bychkov writes: “Practically all the foundations of art essential from the point of view of classical aesthetics and, first of all, its aesthetic value, are subjected to cardinal transformation.” [1, p. 274] Determining these “essential foundations” of music scholarship presents a problem that must be solved by the entire community of art scholars.

The panoramic survey of the problem field of musicology discovers, on the one hand, “eternal” themes, and on the other hand, — themes that appear here and now. Some of them, connected with the classical aesthetics,

have never been retracted by anybody, and constant attention towards them is necessary; while others — generated by the non-classical approach and its lexicon, — require study and evaluation. It is not difficult to surmise, after having examined such classical principles of art as “the structure and the artistic image,” “style and stylistics,” as well as “form and content.” And a completely different picture arises, when the global metamorphoses of culture are noted and new products of aesthetic consciousness appear, such as, for instance: “artefact,” “deconstruction,” “play,” “simulacra,” “intertext,” “hypertext,” “ambient,” “performance,” “gesture,” etc.

The attempt to accentuate certain ontological objects of contemporary musicological space/time, chosen on the basis of juxtaposition

of facts pertaining to the musical and the verbal languages presents one of our tasks.

Let us begin with the definition of the concept, “problem,” included in the title of the article and requiring specification of interpretation. Problems (from the Greek: *problema* — aim, assignment) are characterized in different ways: both as “I know *what*, but I do not know *how*” and as “*knowledge about a lack of knowledge* — a problem-based situation.” Niels Bohr, the great physicist, believed that “Problems are more important than solutions: solutions may become outdated, while problems always remain.” [2, p. 27] This thought also finds resonance in the assessments of many contemporary artistic people (for example, Umberto Eco).<sup>1</sup>

A considerable amount of questions requiring “denotation” (attribution, definition) is also present in music scholarship, which at times is not able to “catch up” with musical practice. This may be also observed in musical pedagogy, which at times becomes out of date and waits for new solutions.

### About the Chronotypology of 20th and 21st Century Art

We shall settle on a concept that is not without reason called essential, — the “chronotypological stages of the transformation of art” — which finds its use in contemporary philosophy, aesthetics and art studies. The concept of chronotypology, which is connected with time and the types of artistic creativity, possesses an ambiguousness of characteristic features with which it is not yet possible to reach a consensus, — neither in the milieu of philosophers, nor in the sphere of art studies.

Thus, Viktor Bychkov in his work *Problemy i “bolevye tochki” sovremennoi estetiki* [The Problems and “Sore Spots” of Contemporary Aesthetics] (2005) asserts: “All the terms applied here (avant-garde, modernism, etc.) have been utilized during the course of a century by everybody, and in the most varied meanings, sometimes overlapping each other, and at other times never coinciding... Each person says about the same subject whatever comes uppermost, endowing the utilized terms with (his own) arbitrary meanings and demonstrating an utter lack of interest in what his colleagues say about it, or whether he would be understood by them at all.” [4, p. 21]

Without setting out to listen attentively to this many-voiced “chorus” of discrepant utterances, we shall concentrate on the philosophical-aesthetical conceptions of certain outstanding Russian scholars.

In his theory connected with the phenomenology of art, Bychkov highlights three stages by the specificity of the 20th century aesthetic consciousness: “The *avant-garde* presents the entire assemblage of insurrectional, scandalous, provocative, manifesto-type, innovative directions of the first half of the century. <...> *Modernism* presents a sort of academization and legitimization of the avant-garde discoveries in the artistic sphere of the middle of the century wherein the insurrectional-scandalous-provocative ardor intrinsic to the avant-garde is absent. *Postmodernism* presents a peculiar type of *playing* with all the values and phenomena of culture, including the avant-garde and modernism, in a mode of nostalgic fatigue

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<sup>1</sup> Umberto Eco, when discoursing on the title and its meaning in his work *Notes in the margins of “The name of the rose,”* formulates the following: “An author should not interpret his own work”; “A title, unfortunately, is already a key to interpretation.” [3, p. 597]

of a waning aestheticism, which also began somewhere in the beginning of the century [the author's italics. — *N.G.*].” [1, pp. 350–351]

We perceive it to be important that the scholar speaks of the “intermixed quality” of the phenomena of art, leaving aside the so-called conservative direction, which possesses its own path of development and criteria of evaluation: “Despite the conditional aspect of these terms and the intermixed quality within culture of these phenomena denoted by them, nonetheless, they reflect in a rather definite way both the essential typology and the relative chronology of the unfolding of the global restructuring of aesthetic consciousness in the 20th century.” [Ibid., p. 378]

Having singled out these three stages of chronotypology of art, and having characterized each one of them in a convincing manner, Bychkov initiated a professional discussion and a manifestation of other points of view of this subject. [5]

Let us turn our attention to the position assumed by the well-known philosopher, Nadezhda Mankovskaya, who in her work *Khronotipologicheskie etapy razvitiya neklassicheskogo esteticheskogo soznaniya* [Chronotypological Stages of Development of Non-Classical Aesthetical Consciousness] (2005) offers her own classification of the terms “avant-garde, modernism, neo-avant-garde, postmodernism and postpostmodernism.” The scholar singles out the avant-garde and modernist trends as “powerful, transnational tendencies of the first half of the 20th century, which have involved all the arts in their orbit.” [6, pp. 69–70]

Mankovskaya, similar to Bychkov, indicates at the “polysynthetism” of this phenomenon of culture, but, unlike her colleague, she does not connect modernism with the “cooling down” and “academization” of the avant-garde. Moreover, she evaluates the temporal

factor in a different way, considering that “the avant-garde and modernism appeared almost synchronously at the beginning of the 20th century” and “during the course of a rather lengthy period of time, they have evolved parallel to each other.” [Ibid.]

We must make a note: Mankovskaya (in the encyclopedic edition *Leksikon nonklassiki. Khudozhestvenno-esteticheskaya kul'tura XX veka* [Lexicon of the Non-Classics: 20th Century Artistic and Aesthetic Culture], 2003) also observes the presence of the term “trans-avant-garde” (from the French: *trans-avant-garde*) as a movement in postmodernist art, “the aesthetic creed of which consists of the juxtaposition of itself to the neo-avant-garde, in particular, to conceptualism, new picturesqueness, figurativeness, expression, a brightly expressed personal element; the fixation on aesthetical pleasure, a free combination of the artistic styles of the past.” [7, p. 440]

Next, while discussing the scholars' attitudes towards the problem of chronotypology, let us turn our attention to the following fact of no small importance. Mankovskaya applies, along with the term “neo-avant-garde,” the term “avant-garde II,” as well; at the same time, she holds her attention on Yuri Kholopov's conception. [Ibid., pp. 139–142] What results is a curious scholarly intersection, a peculiar cultural transfer (we are not comparing the temporal indicators). Kholopov, in his late work *Novye paradigmy muzykal'noi estetiki XX veka* [New Paradigms of 20th Century Musical Aesthetics] (2003) asserts: “How did all of this occur in the century of the great breakthrough? Evolution is a gradual change of paradigms. When applied to the Newest Music, this evolution possessed a rapid, explosive character. Its development went dynamically, in two great waves, the so-called “avant-garde trends”: Avant-garde I (≈1908–1925) and Avant-garde II (≈1946–1968). The elemental powerful splashes of creative

energy caused radical breakthroughs in musical composition manifesting deep changes of musical-aesthetical paradigms.”<sup>2</sup>

Here an additional commentary is required. Kholopov, when quoting Bychkov’s definition (from the year 2000) in his aforementioned work, pays attention to the interdisciplinary “discrepancy” in the artistic lexicon. Let us cite a fragment from his text:

“In music, here, we can observe discrepancies with the terminology and the chronology of the other arts. Thus, one of the profound researchers of non-classical aesthetics, Viktor Bychkov points at the following *general* states of the process of ‘reappraisal of values’ in the artistic culture of the 20th century:

- *The avant-garde* — the entire assemblage of rebellious, scandalous <...> innovative directions from the first half of the century.

- *Modernism* — the academization and legitimization of the avant-garde discoveries in the artistic milieu of the middle of the century without the rebellious-scandalous-provocative ardor intrinsic to the avant-garde.

- *Postmodernism* — a peculiar <...> type of playing with all the values of Culture, including the avant-garde and modernism <...>.”<sup>3</sup>

It must be said that Bychkov envisaged the possibility of the two waves of the avant-garde about which Kholopov spoke; and, as it seems, there are no “noticeable discrepancies” present here. After all, Bychkov points at “powerful avant-garde figures”: “It is highly likely that only in music did modernism reveal something equal to the greatest pre-war

avant-gardists in the power of artistic search represented by such composers as Pierre Boulez, Karlheinz Stockhausen, John Cage, Iannis Xenakis, Sofia Gubaidulina, and Alfred Schnittke.” [1, p. 431]

The list of outstanding composers indicated above may be also supplemented by such names as Edison Denisov, Andrei Volkonsky, Arvo Pärt, Valentin Silvestrov and others, whose artistic quests, on the one hand, present a continuation of the avant-garde intentions of the early 20th century, and on the other hand, — the ascertainment of the poetics of new artistic-expressive means. Thereby, the musicological and philosophic-aesthetical approaches, essentially, do not present an adversarial position of chronology and terminology during “the age of the great breakthrough.”<sup>4</sup>

While researching the chronotypology in keeping with the “reappraisal of values,” it also becomes necessary to discuss the phenomena of the so-called *conservatism* — as a sphere of artistic culture that preserves the traditions. “However, their time as creators has virtually passed, and for this reason conservatism has not provided any noticeable and, especially, outstanding phenomena or names in the history of art.” [4, p. 351] Has their time really passed? Have there really been no noticeable figures? No outstanding phenomena? — these questions are waiting for their answers. It is not improbable that the concept of “conservatism” itself also requires specification, and that so far the appropriate

<sup>2</sup> Kholopov Yu.N. New paradigms of 20th century musical aesthetics. (Холопов Ю.Н. *Новые парадигмы музыкальной эстетики XX века*). 2003. URL: <http://www.kholopov.ru/prdgm.html> (accessed: 10.08.2025).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> However, in general (in comparison with the terminology in other languages), in this interpretational field it is possible to discover terms that are still insufficiently defined, for example, “experimental music” and “the musical avant-garde.” See: [8].

term for the observed phenomena has not yet been “coined.”<sup>5</sup>

Thus, in connection with the problem-connected situation concerning particular objects themselves, as well as the words signifying them, let us turn our attention to the following. The chief musical occurrence of the 20th century, as it is known, was the rejection of *tonality* (Tonalität, Tonalité, Tonal'nost') and the proclamation of *atonality* (Atonalität, Atonalité, Atonal'nost'). There has still not been any consensus about these terms up to the present day, and each proclaimer of the conception has insisted on his own particular opinion, although time, as it would seem, has long since gone far ahead and has made its demands.

Let us remind ourselves of Alban Berg's utterance regarding the problem of “Was ist Atonal?” In his interview on the radio (1930)<sup>6</sup> the composer, when answering the interviewer's questions, defines the essence of the concept of new music the following way: “I tell you, this whole hue and cry for tonality comes not so much from a yearning for a keynote relationship as from a yearning for familiar concords — let us say it frankly, for the common triads. And I believe it is fair to state that no music, provided only it contains enough of these triads, will ever arouse opposition even if it breaks all the holy commandments of tonality.” [10, p. 11] (It must also be noticed that Kholopov, when analyzing in his time *Wozzeck* by the selfsame Berg, brought together the terms “tonality” and “atonality” and applied a specific word

combination: “an atonal, that is a new-tonal composition.”)

Disagreements in the term lexicon also exist regarding the following phase of avant-garde music. In the early 1920s, as it is known, (instead of *free atonality*), the “method of composing with twelve notes which are related only with one another” (in German: *Komposition mit zwölf nur aufeinander bezogenen Tönen*) was proclaimed. This method (and not “system,” — according to Schoenberg!) is the symbol of the avant-garde accumulating its manifesto-like energy. However, here, disagreements are present, as well: in Russia the terms “dodecaphony” and “seriality” are used, while in the West the expressions *twelve-tone technique* and *serialism* are widespread. At the same time, it is important that this seemingly imperceptible terminological misconvergence leads — no less, no more! — to a *disjunction of the chronotypological phases*. Whereas, *serialism* (in Russian musical literature) refers to “total serialization” (i.e., the method of composition of the late 1940s and early 1950s, which began its path from Messiaen and Babbitt), — in the English-speaking terminological lexis, there is a perceptible tendency of unifying together by means of this word all the existent types of serial techniques, without any temporal differentiation. And this is by no means unimportant”: after all, according to Father Pavel Florensky's assertion, “terminus is a boundary.” [11, p. 218]

(If we are to continue this theme, we can also turn our attention to the inoculation into

<sup>5</sup> This problem was discussed by us in the book “Musical composition: modernism, postmodernism...” (*Музыкальная композиция: модернизм, постмодернизм...*) in the chapters “The non-classical classics in music” (Неклассическая классика в музыке) and “The classical classics in music” (Классическая классика в музыке). [9, pp. 111–154]

<sup>6</sup> The interview with Alban Berg was posthumously published in the *Wiener Musikzeitschrift* under the title *Was ist Atonal?* [What is Atonality?]. [10]

the contemporary musicological lexicon such terms as *sound masses*, *posttone*, *post-tonality*, etc.<sup>7)</sup>

Thus, even a brief familiarization with the issue of *chronotopology* makes it possible for us to arrive at preliminary conclusions about its topicality not only for philosophy and aesthetics, but also about music scholarship.

### The Problems of the Metamodern Trend and the Composers' Attitudes Towards the Shift of the Cultural Paradigm

In the sphere of “knowledge about the lack of knowledge,” there might also arise the problem of *metamodernism* — yet another “sore point,” the contiguity with which is of concern for many people. Thus, Mankovskaya in her work *Ot modernizma k postpostmodernizmu via postmodernism* [From Modernism to Postpostmodernism via Postmodernism] concludes: “The laminated, equilibristic qualities of postpostmodernism, its ambivalent, controversial impact on the world of the aesthetical stimulates the ‘navigation’ of aesthetical and artistic thought at the threshold of the 21st century.” [13, p. 25]

When discussing the problem of “postpost,” it is customary to refer to Luke Turner, particularly, his *Manifesto* (2011)<sup>8</sup> and *Brief Introduction* (2015).<sup>9</sup> The author writes: “...the discourse

surrounding metamodernism engages with the resurgence of sincerity, hope, romanticism, affect, and the potential for grand narratives and universal truths, whilst not forfeiting all that we’ve learnt from postmodernism. Thus, <...> metamodernism considers that our era is characterised by an oscillation between aspects of both modernism and postmodernism.”<sup>10</sup>

In recent times, texts about the “metamodern” style have begun to grow in number; architecture of the metamodern trend, literature in the metamodern style, the aesthetics and philosophy of the metamodern direction, etc. Of cognitive interest, in particular, is Alexander Pavlov’s work *Obrazy sovremennosti v XXI veke: metamodernizm* [Images of Modernity in the Twenty-First Century: Metamodernism], in which the conclusion is arrived at that “from the informative point of view, the conception of the metamodern style virtually does not stand up to scrutiny, while the manifesto itself remains at best a declaration.” [14, p. 1] Nonetheless, the author, while criticizing the movement, concludes: “Metamodernism acquires a new life and vindicates its right to existence.” [Ibid.]

(As for the music of the “metamodern” trend, it seems that, so far it has remained in the sphere of an unidentified object, although the attempt to have its say, and even to “construct its own system of concepts” has clearly been indicated.<sup>11)</sup>

<sup>7</sup> “A significant turning-point in post-tonal thinking occurred when some composers replaced notes with masses of notes, or sound masses, as musical units.” [12, p. 231]

<sup>8</sup> Turner L. *Metamodernist. Manifesto*. URL: <http://www.metamodernism.org> (accessed: 10.08.2025).

<sup>9</sup> Turner L. *Metamodernism: A Brief Introduction*. URL: <https://luketurner.com/metamodernism-a-brief-introduction> (accessed: 10.08.2025).

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> See, for example: Khrushcheva N. *Metamodernity in music and around it*. (Хрущёва Н. *Метамодерн в музыке и вокруг неё*). (2020). Let us cite the annotation to the book: “The author examines academic music in light of the metamodern trend, showing how the return of affects turns into the arrival of new tonality and melody, post-irony transforms itself into a radical simplification of the language and playing with the banal, and oscillation — into the sparkling crystal of new melancholy and new euphoria. Basing herself on Akker’s and Vermeulen’s manifesto, the author constructs her own system of concepts, fitting into it Valentin Silvestrov’s music and the meme ‘D. Dobro,’ Russian philosophy and the public from VKontakte, Vladimir Martynov’s conception of ‘The end of the time of composers’ and utterances of ‘Glory to the CPSU’.” [15]

We cannot avoid showing an interest towards the attitudes of composers regarding the shift in the paradigm — i.e., their music and words about music. Many of the things that contemporary composers — for example, Rodion Shchedrin, Sofia Gubaidulina, Vladimir Martynov, Valentin Silvestrov, Viktor Ekimovsky, Anton Batagov — say in this connection, are well-known.<sup>12</sup> Let us turn to only some of the composers' utterances regarding the issue of the metamorphoses of aesthetical consciousness. Nonetheless, generally speaking, in all likelihood, Dmitri Kourliandski, who slipped the comment: "For me music is the practice of liberation from ready-made answers, or the art of posing questions,"<sup>13</sup> was right. (The composer of the famous work, *The Unanswered Question*, had also contemplated about this...)

"Now the attitude towards what is 'new' or 'old' has changed fundamentally," Batagov muses in one of his interviews. "After postmodernism has had its say in the history of culture and, most likely, has expired, the stage of absolute freedom has emerged. This freedom consists in that fact that a person who sits down to compose, improvise,

or play, may use any methods whatsoever — whichever methods that are not limited to either any style or any technology. Most likely, this is an unprecedented period. We do not have to control our consciousness in any way. When we possess boundless possibilities, including virtual ones, the understanding arrives that the goal is not to search for the new, but to discover anew what has existed for a long time, which becomes new by means of this process."<sup>14</sup>

Not to search for new means — this is what the composer has proclaimed in connection with the declared end of postmodernism, which "had its say in the history of culture and, most likely, has expired."<sup>15</sup> So how does this achieved freedom become realized? This question may be answered by music itself, such compositions by Batagov as, for instance, *Agitation* and *16+* (2019). We shall briefly answer this special type of question, only the following way. The song cycle *16+* is an original "form of genre," wherein the hereditary succession is organically connected with techniques of hypertext forming as the result of combination of centuries-old texts of poetry by women. Here

<sup>12</sup> The composers' aesthetic positions find various forms of genre for their utterances — interviews, articles and monographs. Special relevance has been acquired by their texts about their own music and that of other composers, for example: Prokofiev's *Autobiography* and Ekimovsky's *Automonograph*. In his conversation with Irina Severina, — in connection with his jubilee year (2017) — the composer emphasizes: "Pay attention to the difference in the title: I had in mind, first of all, the self-analysis of my music, and only afterwards all these autobiographical details." See: Severina I.M. Viktor Ekimovsky — Nikolai Korndorf: intersecting parallels. (Северина И.М. Виктор Екимовский — Николай Корндорф: пересекающиеся параллели). URL: <http://www.gazetaigraem.ru/article/12474> (accessed: 10.08.2025).

<sup>13</sup> Dmitri Kourliandski: "In the direction towards objective music..." (Дмитрий Курляндский: «В сторону объективной музыки...») URL: <https://www.classicalmusicnews.ru/interview/dmitrii-kurljanskii-v-storonu-obektivnoi-muzyki/?ysclid=me5ukxz2sp289840693> (accessed: 10.08.2025).

<sup>14</sup> Uvarov S.A. In music now there is a stage of absolute freedom: conversation with Anton Batagov. (Уваров С.А. В музыке сейчас этап абсолютной свободы: беседа с А. Батаговым). URL: <http://www.iz.ru/862511/sergei-uvarov/v-muzyke-seichas-etap-absoliutnoi-svobody> (accessed: 10.08.2025).

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

the style of expressive means is the assemblage of individual solutions for each of the 16 constituent songs. The most important thing is that the composer steps over the categories of post-modernism and creates something new, which he does not give a title, indicating it merely as an “unprecedented period” (maybe, this is what metamodernism is?).

Viktor Ekimovsky paid his “tribute to the memory” of the departed historical epoch in his significant composition No. 100 — *The Ninth Symphony. Epitaph to the Avant-garde* (2017). The premiere of this work (in December 2018), essentially, presented the beginning of a new stage in the composer’s music (and not only that!), wherein there would be no place left for the style generalized in the six movements of this composition.

In a web-conversation with the author of these lines, the composer “speaks out” many things regarding the form-and-content of this composition, its conceptual idea and constructive principles. Ekimovsky provided an original title to his text: “Nine questions-answers posed to myself...”<sup>16</sup> In this important musicological document, the composer raises and solves essential problems of a philosophical-aesthetical type. We shall cite fragments of the text with the aim of showing how musical and verbal means, when united and combined together, may provide answers to the questions posed by time:

*“The Ninth... — is this a compilation of 20th century musical technologies?”*

— The 20th century is rich in technological innovations. But fast-fleeting time assigned a certain time period for each of these innovations — and by the end of the century, all of the newest techniques (as they had been called during their times) have remained in the annals of history. The present composition is a museum exposition.

*The Ninth... — is it an epitaph, or an homage to the avant-garde?*

— Everything began with the avant-garde music of the 1950s, where Boulez’s and Stockhausen’s serialism reigned supreme (and in this niche in our country, that of Denisov and Schnittke), then the aleatory technique in the music of Penderecki and Lutosławski, then the minimalism of Philip Glass and Steve Reich. The classical type of the avant-garde style has exhausted itself with these chief directions. And it died with the passing away of its last adepts.

*The Ninth... — is this not a postmodernist composition?*

— 21st century music may be labeled in any way you wish, including as ‘postmodernism,’ but this nonacademic, unphilosophical unintellectual, at times ugly trend has nothing in common with avant-garde music. with the epoch of the Great Avant-garde.” [16, p. 17] (As they say, comment is needless!)

A postscript. While perceiving the music of Ekimovsky’s *Ninth Symphony*, while reading and listening to the composer’s own words about it,<sup>17</sup> one comes to the following

<sup>16</sup> Viktor Ekimovsky’s text is published in its entirety in the journal *Uchenye zapiski RAM imeni Gnesinykh* [Scholarly Papers of the Gnesin Russian Academy of Music] (2020, no. 2) in Natalia Gulyanitskaya’s article “‘Scholarly Speech’ and Musicology.” [16]

<sup>17</sup> On March 3, 2020, Viktor Ekimovsky participated in the project of the Russian Composers’ Union “Composers’ Readings” together with the Moscow Ensemble of Contemporary Music at the Novosibirsk State Conservatory with a lecture, in which he introduced the listeners with his *Ninth Symphony. An epitaph to the avant-garde* (the recording from the premiere in December, 2018) and provided oral explanations to his composition.

conclusion: the *Epitaph to the Avant-garde* is a significant composition presenting a musical chronotypology of the 20th and 21st centuries. The authorial conception sets the time period (demonstrated in the succession of the six movements, where the first presents serialism, the second — the aleatory technique, the third — pointillism, the fourth — micropolyphony, the fifth — minimalism, and the sixth — macro-minimalism) and the type of composition, each of which is technically indicated in the respective titles of the movements.

Without entering into a polylogue with philosophers, artists and non-artists, Ekimovsky outlines the epochal path of the art of music. The composer brings in the word combination “the Great Avant-garde,” in essence, “embracing” by its means, the art of the music starting with 1945, to which he sends a parting farewell, being convinced that everything has already been invented and said. Culture and post-culture (Bychkov), the post-avant-garde and the Great Avant-garde (Ekimovsky) — do these verbal symbols not have something in common with each other?

### Conclusion

Thereby, while observing various approaches and points of view — those of philosophers, aesthetes, literati and art scholars, — let us formulate a set of problems that require, in our view, subsequent setting and study in the musicological sense. Among them, first of all, there is the terminology. A considerable number of words pertaining to chronotypology — “postpostmodernism,” “after-postmodernism,” “alter-modernism,”

“digital modernism,” “virtualistics” and, finally, “metamodernism” and the “metamodern” style, — all of this confuses and deludes the recipient. The number of terms expands, while the horizon is extended.

Second, it is the phenomenology. The motion towards “the objects themselves” — towards the musical facts as phenomena conveyed by our senses (or, to put it simpler — to the sounding material, the composition itself) is an essential part of the cognition of a musical composition. Perception of “the objects themselves” at the present time demonstrates itself not only as being diverse, but also not at all convincing in regard to the thought that is declared or asserted. For example, while observing the ethical distance, I shall state the following: dodecaphony and the aleatoric technique, presented in one row, — as a phenomenon of the avant-garde of the early 20th century (?); the invention of sound — as the paramount factor of post-war avant-garde music (?); the absolutization of one composition — as a symbol (?) or a mouthpiece of a musical direction, etc.

And third, it is the methodology. While working with musical objects and applying various alternate approaches toward research, it becomes important to discern not only their genera (the work/composition/simulacra), but to include it into the surrounding milieu (the environment/ambient/context).<sup>18</sup> In addition, it is also proper to consider the genre mixture, which is frequently encountered in contemporary music and leads to new types of genre classification. (We have

<sup>18</sup> The contextual approach to research of 20th and 21st century musicology in Russia (of the Soviet and the post-Soviet periods) is presented, among other works, in Tatiana Naumenko's book. [17]

indicated only certain points of this problem range which the recipient of the musical compositions is perplexed by).

In the conclusion of the article, we may remember the words of Hans-Georg

Gadamer about the relevance of the beautiful, about the significance of truth and method: “The question is more difficult than the answer”; “Only the person who has questions possesses knowledge.” [18, pp. 426, 428]

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