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Russian Musicology after 1991: The Chief Scholarly Trends*

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Abstract. The article discusses musicology after 1991 — the year when the USSR dissolved and each of the former Soviet republics began to reveal their own particular musicological tendencies and form their own academic schools. The focus of our attention is on Russian musicology and its contemporary state. The article examines the geographical factor of the functioning of musicological schools, the role of conservatories in the formation of various fields of musicological research, as well as the peculiarities of the transformations music scholarship has undergone during the perceived period. Special characterization is provided to the subject matter and problem range of present-day Russian musicology, its priorities of research and presumed prospects.

Keywords: Russian musicology, centers for scholarly research, conservatories, academic journals, the subject matter of musicological research, post-Soviet deconstructions, academic schools in musicology

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Российское музыковедение после 1991 года: основные научные направления

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Аннотация. Статья посвящена музыковедению после 1991 года — даты, когда распался СССР и в каждой бывшей советской республике стали проявляться собственные музыковедческие тенденции и формироваться научные школы. В центре внимания — российское музыковедение и его современное состояние. В статье рассматривается географический фактор функционирования научных школ, роль консерваторий в формировании той или иной области музыковедческих исследований, а также особенности трансформации, которую претерпела наука о музыке в рассматриваемый период. Особую характеристику получает тематика и проблематика современного российского музыковедения, его исследовательские приоритеты и предполагаемые перспективы.

Ключевые слова: российское музыковедение, научно-исследовательские центры, консерватории, научные журналы, тематика музыковедческих исследований, постсоветские деконструкции, научные школы в музыковедении

Introduction

The three and a half decades that passed from the moment of the dissolution of the USSR have brought a fair share of losses and achievements. Many themes have departed from scholarly use, and musicology in the former Soviet republics has begun an independent development in each particular case.

New research works have been written on the mainstream issues of musical culture, and previously unknown facts and names have been brought into scholarly use. A freedom in the choice of the subject matter and methodology for research has emerged, which has yielded results virtually in all the spheres of musical scholarship. Change has affected the very form of transmission of scholarly ideas: musicological journals began to appear,

one after another, because of which the transmission of new knowledge has accelerated. When compared with the extremely few journals existent during the Soviet period (prior to the early 1990s, there were only two of them: *Sovetskaya muzyka* [Soviet Music] and *Muzykal'naya zhizn'* [Musical life]), the appearance of such a wide diversity of journals has provided a noticeable breakthrough and in many ways has influenced the quantitative data of musicology.

Without dealing with the advantages and the drawbacks connected with these changes, let us turn to the description of the most significant features discerning Russian musicology of the last few decades.

The Geography of Russian Musicology

Russia is an enormous country, divided into various regions, which to a significant degree

stipulated the development of the structure of musical education. During the Soviet period in each large region a conservatory was opened, and in recent times in Russia several dozens of higher educational institutions are working — they are conservatories, academies, institutes of arts, musical-pedagogical and scholarly research institutes and art departments in universities.

However, historically the formation of academic schools in musicology has been connected predominantly with conservatories, among which mention must be made, first of all, of the largest centers for scholarly research: it is the Tchaikovsky Moscow State Conservatory (established in 1866), the Gnesin Russian Academy of Music (established in 1895) (Moscow) and the St. Petersburg Rimsky-Korsakov State Conservatory (established in 1862). Besides these, there are conservatories functioning in Astrakhan (the Astrakhan State Conservatory, established in 1969), Ekaterinburg (the Ural State M.P. Mussorgsky Conservatoire, established in 1934), Kazan (the Zhiganov Kazan State Conservatoire, established in 1945), Nizhny Novgorod (the Glinka Nizhny Novgorod State Conservatoire, established in 1946), Novosibirsk (the M.I. Glinka Novosibirsk State Conservatory, established in 1956), Petrozavodsk (the Petrozavodsk State A.K. Glazunov Conservatoire, established in 1967), Rostov-on-Don (the Rostov State S.V. Rachmaninov Conservatoire, established in 1967) and Saratov (the Saratov State L.V. Sobinov Conservatoire, established in 1912). Mention must also be made of the two biggest scholarly research institutes: the State Institute for Art Studies (Moscow, established in 1944) and the Russian Institute for the History of the Arts (St. Petersburg, established in 1912).

The enumerated institutions, in particular, present the chief centers for preparation of academic personnel and represent virtually all the directions of musicology in the country,

among which are: the history of Russian music and of music outside Russia, theoretic musicology, folk music and medieval music, as well as several specialized fields of music scholarship — such as, for instance, musical theater, early music, mass musical genres, 20th and early 21st century music, the methodology of music scholarship and a number of others.

Along with this, in a number of Russian conservatories their own original academic schools are being developed, the character of which is in many ways stipulated by these educational institutions' localities. Thus, research of the traditional culture of the Siberian region, as well as the music of the countries of Southeast Asia is traditionally carried out by scholars from the Novosibirsk Conservatory; the musical culture of the Volga region is studied by researchers from the Kazan Conservatory; the musical culture of Karelia and the Finno-Ugric peoples is examined by musicologists from the Petrozavodsk Conservatory, etc. Mention may also be made of the academic schools established in line with the format of "teacher — student," which is traditional for Russian education. Hereby we mean the schools created by the most influential and well-known Russian musicologists. Examples of the latter include "Yuri Kholopov's school" at the Moscow Conservatory and "Natalia Gulyanitskaya's school" at the Gnesin Russian Academy of Music; both aforementioned schools are represented by specialists of a broad spectrum of scholarly interests, surrounded by plenty of students and adherents of their own. There also exist younger conservatory-based schools shaped by relatively local, albeit rather significant, scholarly interests; they are formed by multitudinous students of such professors as Svetlana I. Savenko, Tamara N. Levaya, Valery N. Syrov (from the Nizhny Novgorod Conservatory); Anatoly M. Tsuker, Alexandra V. Krylova (from the Rostov Conservatory);

Alla G. Korobova, Elena E. Polotskaya, and Liudmila K. Shabalina (from the Ural Conservatory). Within their frameworks, such important trends of research are realized as musical style and genre, contemporary ballet and opera theater, nonacademic musical culture, as well as numerous types of interdisciplinary research.

The Thematic Range of the Research

One of the chief distinguishing features after 1991 has been expressed by an extensive restoration of the thematic palette of research. The most characteristic features of post-Soviet musicology have revealed themselves particularly on the level of the thematic range. They emerged from the realization of the fact that during the Soviet period, a large number of phenomena of Russian musical culture and that of other countries had remained beyond the pale of research. In the conditions of ideological limitations, insufficient attention had been given to such trends of research as contemporary music, the avant-garde movements and techniques of composition, issues of rhythm, etc. Musicologists had virtually not turned to research of church music, the works of Russian émigré composers, or Soviet composers fallen out of favor of the government.

Against this backdrop, it was no wonder that the chief themes for post-Soviet musicologists have become all that had previously been repudiated or forgotten: there have appeared dozens of research works devoted to Orthodox Christian music and the musical tradition of the Old-Believers, the music of representatives of Russian émigré music, as well as contemporary Russian and Western music.

Research of national musical cultures has also unfolded itself in new ways: while during the Soviet period, the composition schools of the Soviet republics were at the center of attention, after 1991 this thematic stratum virtually disappeared from scholarly use.

During the course of the specified period, the “geography” of Russian musicological research gradually became bereft of countries the musical cultures of which had previously comprised a sturdy sphere of scholarly interests (which included Georgia, Ukraine, as well as the Baltic countries). The secession of the former republics has gradually brought a rift of connections with them, which has not been abated up to the present time. As German musicologist Christoph Flamm observes, the situation became even more intense with the transfer of musicology of the former Soviet republics into their own respective languages, which has led to an even greater insularity of music scholarship on the entire post-Soviet space. [1]

Russian scholarship has adapted to these changes better than the other post-Soviet countries. The freed niche was taken up by research devoted to studies of the musical cultures of the peoples of Russia, which formed one of the priority directions of present-day scholarly activities. Here it must be emphasized that the leading category, undoubtedly, was comprised by research devoted to the Tatar musical culture. In this sphere works of a fundamental character are presented (for example, *Natsional'naya muzykal'naya kul'tura kak tekst: tatarskaya muzyka XX veka* [National musical culture as a text: Tatar music of the 20th century] by Vadim R. Dulat-Aleev, [2] *Muzykal'nye kul'tury Srednego Povolzh'ya: stanovlenie professionalizma* [Musical cultures of the Middle Volga region: Formation of professionalism] by Alexander L. Maklygin, [3] and *Angemitonika v modal'nykh i tonal'nykh sistemakh: na primere muzyki tyurkskikh i finno-ugorskikh narodov Povolzh'ya i Priural'ya* [Anhemitonics in modal and tonal systems: on the example of music of the Turkic and Finno-Ugric peoples of the Volga and Near-Ural regions] by Larisa V. Brazhnik [4]; as well as works of more particular themes,

such as the studies of the national peculiarities of musical culture in the aspect of its genre-related, rhythmic, modal-harmonic, or other characteristic features. The emergence of research works connected with religious traditions must be especially highlighted. On the whole, the perspective depicting the studies of the music of the peoples of Russia is as such: about 2/3 of the works has been devoted to researching folk music, and 1/3 has been devoted to studying music written by academic composers.

That portion of the musical heritage that was also studied rather actively during the Soviet period, has also been subjected to reevaluation. The reasons for this were provided by the disclosure of archives and the bringing into scholarly use of a significant bulk of new materials connected with the activities of such composers as Mikhail Glinka, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, Pyotr Tchaikovsky, Modest Mussorgsky, Sergei Prokofiev, Igor Stravinsky, Dmitry Shostakovich, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Ludwig van Beethoven and other composers.¹ This has led to a cardinal reevaluation of previous perspectives of these composers, which may be testified by the appearance of a large number of new biographies. The actualization of this research genre has provided a testimony for reevaluation of basic, fundamental perceptions of the lives and musical legacies of the composers who had seemed to be studied thoroughly before.

As a consequence, musicologists of the Soviet formation have been replaced by a generation of researchers who have asserted themselves particularly with the emergence of their new perspectives of old phenomena. At times such a view is declared already on the level of the titles of the works: *Neizvestnyi Nikolai Myaskovskii: vzglyad iz XXI veka*

[Unknown Nikolai Myaskovsky: a view from the 21st century] (a compilation of articles commemorating the 140th anniversary of the Moscow Conservatory and the 125th anniversary of the birthday of Nikolai Myaskovsky; edited and compiled by Elena B. Dolinskaya) [5]; *Neizvestnyi Chaikovskii* [Unknown Tchaikovsky] (edited and compiled by Polina E. Vaydman) [6]; *Glinka, kotorogo my ne znali* [Glinka whom we did not know] by Svetlana K. Lashchenko, [7] etc. Yet another sphere of research turned out to be unfamiliar works by well-known composers. In 2010 a representative international conference “Musicological Forum — 2010” took place, which was a combined project of the State Institute for Art Studies and the Gnesin Russian Academy of Music. One of the general themes of this event was formulated as “Previously Unheard Music.” They included the “unheard” compositions by Franz Schmidt and Nikolai Myaskovsky, Hans Rott and Igor Stravinsky.

It is noteworthy that such a vector of interests is characteristic not only for music scholarship on the whole, but also distinguishes scholarly activities within any particular school of musicology. This is vividly represented, for example, in the research works of the Gnesin academic school, which has “mastered” during the course of the last 30 years virtually all the indicated directions of themes. Thus, Russian sacred music has acquired its researcher in the guise of Natalia S. Gulyanitskaya, as well as a large number of her students. Along with this, the first specialized works devoted to the works of “forgotten” masters, namely, Russian composers from the early 20th century — Fyodor Akimenko, Alexey Stanchinsky, Vladimir Rebikov, and Nikolai Tcherepnin appeared... (see, for example: [8; 9; 10]). The development of interest towards issues of music theory

¹ A list of the most well-known works is provided in the final section of the present article.

in 20th century music, traditional for the music theory departments of the Gnesin Russian Academy of Music, must also be highlighted. Along these lines, numerous scholarly works have been created, both those of a generalizing character — for example, Liudmila S. Dyachkova's textbooks on 20th century harmony, — as well as substantial monographic research works: among the latter, to take one example, Tatiana V. Tsaregradskaya's monograph *Vremya i ritm v tvorchestve O. Messiana* [Time and rhythm in the musical legacy of Olivier Messiaen] (2002) [11] must be highlighted.

Finally, there has also appeared what may be called a new type of text — when it has become possible to speak of a vivid presence of a personal element in research works. Among these, first of all, mention must be made of Pavel V. Lutsker's and Irina P. Susidko's joint monograph *Mozart i ego vremya* [Mozart and his time] (2008) [12] — one of the bright accomplishments of Russian musicology, — or Levon O. Hakobian's research work *Fenomen Dmitriya Shostakovicha* [The phenomenon of Dmitry Shostakovich] (2018), [13] in which the well-known researcher examines the musical legacy of the most significant 20th century Russian composer through the prism of an authorial comprehension of his creative path.

In 1994 the Russian Humanitarian Scholarly Fund (RHSF) was established, which initiated the process of endowing grants for engaging in scholarly research. The most enterprising musicologists have begun proposing research works the topics of which range through the entire spectrum of issues of contemporary music scholarship. Dozens of projects have been presented during all these years by musicologists of the Moscow and the St. Petersburg Conservatories, and the Gnesin Russian Academy of Music; among the most active conservatories that suggested similar projects, we must also list the Kazan, Nizhny

Novgorod, Novosibirsk, Petrozavodsk, Rostov, Saratov, and Ural Conservatories. The greater part of the most high-demand musicological works has been carried out particularly with the assistance of grants from the RHSF. This body of research works accentuated the most discernible research directions that unified together scholarly perspective and renewed methodology, as well as top-priority musicological themes. The latter include Soviet music and Soviet composers (Levon O. Hakobian, State Institute for Art Studies, and Ekaterina S. Vlasova, the Moscow Conservatory); 20th century Russian music and music from outside of Russia — Alban Berg (Yuliya S. Veksler, Nizhny Novgorod Conservatory); Igor Stravinsky (Svetlana I. Savenko, Moscow Conservatory); and Italian avant-garde choral music (Alexander S. Ryzhinsky, Gnesin Russian Academy of Music). A special trend has been formed by research of music from previous epochs. It is formed by studies of the Russian classics from the 19th century (among them Balakirev, researched by Tatiana A. Zaytseva from the St. Petersburg Conservatory); operas by Russian composers (such as Glinka's *A Life for the Tsar*, Borodin's *Prince Igor*, and Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov*), textological research and preparation for academic publication, studied by Evgeny M. Levashev and Nadezhda I. Teterina (from State Institute for Art Studies); Italian opera, researched by Pavel V. Lutsker and Irina P. Susidko (from the Gnesin Russian Academy of Music); 20th century musical theater, and postmodern dance, studied by Alexandra V. Krylova and Elena V. Kiseyeva (from the Rostov State Conservatory). The work supported by the grants has shaped in new ways the interests of the conservatory community, having brought out into the forefront the most notable research genre — the monograph.

The Deconstruction of the Soviet Musical Perspective of the World

One cannot avoid turning one's attention also to the radical changes having occurred in regard to the musicological evaluation of many events and facts. One of the most discernible tendencies turned out to be the deconstruction of the biographies of composers — not only the Soviet ones, but also those from Western Europe. The concept of the “Soviet myth,” referring to the issue of reception of the classical musical heritage during the Soviet period, was brought into scholarly use. There appeared large-scale scholarly works illuminating this problem range, — for example, Marina G. Raku's monograph *Muzykal'naya klassika v mifotvorchestve sovetskoi epokhi* [The musical classics in the myth-creation of the Soviet era] (2014), — as well as separate articles: among them, it suffices to name the works of Vera B. Val'kova (“*Solntse russkoi muzyki*”: *Glinka kak mif natsional'noi kul'tury* [“The sun of Russian music”: Glinka as a myth of national culture] [14]) and Lyubov A. Kupets (*Sovetskii mif o Bize: konteksty i podteksty* [Soviet myth about Bizet: contexts and subtexts], [15] etc. (see, for example: [16; 17]).

The deconstruction of the fundamental views of the historical significance of any particular epoch is seen on the example of two publications: the well-known six-volume *Muzykal'naya entsiklopediya* [Musical encyclopedia] (1973–1982), which has no alternative for itself, up to the present date, and the encyclopedic dictionary *Muzyka XX veka* [Music of the 20th century. Encyclopedic Dictionary] (2010), compiled by Levon O. Hakobian. Both value-based paradigms presented by these publications are simultaneously circulated within the scholarly space and quoted quite widely. At the same time, the *Musical Encyclopedia* has an advantage — in terms of both the significance of the genre and the numerousness of the published editions:

the run of the *Musical Encyclopedia* comprises over 100 thousand copies, while the run of the dictionary *Music of the 20th Century* comprises 2.5 thousand copies.

For comparison, let us cite the two approaches to defining the concept of “Soviet music.”

“The Soviet musical art,” as it is noted in the article from the encyclopedia, “presents a qualitatively new stage of development of the art of music. the October Revolution of 1917, which has liberated the peoples of the USSR from the centuries-old exploitation and established the equal status of nations, has created for the first time in history real conditions for the complete realization of the thesis formulated by Vladimir I. Lenin — ‘art belongs to the people.’ The right of the citizens of the USSR to the use of the achievements of culture has been fixed by Article 46 of the Constitution of the USSR.” [18, p. 124]

And this is the kind of interpretation that its offered in Hakobian's *Dictionary*. The article about Soviet music in this edition begins the following way: “The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 marked the end of the Russian Silver Age and led to the mass emigration of its activists. During the years 1917–1920 Rachmaninoff, Prokofiev, the elder and younger Tcherpnins, Oboukhov, Wyschnegradsky, and a little later — Medtner, Gretchaninov and Glazunov left Russia ... Many notable performers also emigrated, including Siloti, Chaliapin and Koussevitsky... The overwhelming majority of artists did not demonstrate any eagerness to collaborate with the adventurous and aggressive new government.” [19, p. 530]

Such categorical differences in the interpretation of one and the same phenomenon demonstrate that the deconstruction of the Soviet musicological perspective of the world has affected not only the subject matter, but also methods of research. This has also become a natural regular process, in contrast to

the longstanding domination of the methodological path known as the Marxist-Leninist path.

In contemporary musicological works, the methodological context has altered just as substantially as their thematic range. There appeared an entire musicological direction that asserted the right of musicology to the suppleness and mobility of music scholarship, its conformity to the changing principles of compositional practice.

Among the research works, mention may be made, for example, of such publications as *Nauchnaya metodika prokladyvaet puti* [The scholarly methodology makes headway] and *Metody nauki o muzyke* [Methodologies of music science] by Natalia Gulyanitskaya [20; 21]; *Blesk i nishcheta muzykal'noi nauki* [The splendor and the poverty of music scholarship] and *Bol'shie teoreticheskie kontseptsii v muzykoznanii: svet i teni* [Great theoretical conceptions in music scholarship: light and shadows] by Levon Hakobian²; *Mezhdru naukoj i iskusstvom: rossiiskoe muzykovedenie kak institutsional'nyi fenomen* [Between scholarship and art: Russian

musicology as an institutional phenomenon] by Tatiana V. Bukina, [22] and a number of others. [23; 24] In these works, the apparent increase of the role of the interpreter-musicologist is observed, which is especially illustrative, in contrast to the depreciation of the role of the composer. Some musicians, responding to Vladimir Martynov's well-known conception, [25, p. 3]³ have taken note of the unprecedented suddenness of the changes. For example, Vladimir Tarnopolsky⁴ remembers such a situation. "During the Soviet times, it was virtually impossible to find one's to a concert of Schnittke's music! Something frightful went on, even the mounted militia was called upon to keep the order. At the same time, when the same concert was presented with the same performers and the same program, repeated during the 1990s, — the hall was almost empty."⁵ Likewise, Sofia Gubaidulina in one of her first interviews given after her departure from Russia confessed: "I have lost my listeners." In contrast to this, the words of Valentina N. Kholopova spoken by her on Rodion Shchedrin's anniversary seem hardly to be accidental. When presenting the anniversary celebrant with the research work

² See: Hakobian L.O. The Splendor and the Poverty of Music Scholarship. *Muzykovedcheskii portal* [Musicological Portal (Website)]. (In Russ.) URL: <http://musikology.com.ua/upload-files/AkopyanBlesk.doc> (accessed: 25.01.2026); Hakobian L. O. Great theoretical conceptions in music scholarship: light and shadows. *Music scholarship in the post-Soviet space: proceedings of the International conference*. Moscow: Gnesin Russian Academy of Music, 2010. (In Russ.) URL: <https://musxxi.gnesin-academy.ru/wp-content/uploads/2009/12/Akopyan.pdf> (accessed: 25.01.2026)

³ In his book, the well-known composer discourses about the exhaustiveness of authorial creativity, which until recent times was presumed to be the main source for creating music. "...Neither the music of the great cultures of the past, nor the music of the traditional cultures of the present know the figure of the composer," Martynov writes. "There is also no place available for the composer either in folk music or in systems of liturgical singing — be it Gregorian chant, the Greek eight church modes or the Russian system of church chants. The role of the composer is also reduced to a minimum in such contemporary musical practices as rock or jazz music. thereby, it becomes absolutely apparent that music may be freely produced without the composer's furtherance and that along with the music created by composers surrounding us directly there also exists an enormous mass of music not pertaining to composers' creation."

⁴ Tarnopolsky Vladimir Grigoryevich (b. 1955) — Russian composer and pedagogue, professor at the Moscow Conservatory, visiting professor at the München Hochschule für Musik und Theater.

⁵ On a Sad Note. The Moscow Autumn Festival of Contemporary Music Starts. *Novoe vremya* [New times]. October 26, 2009. (In Russ.)

devoted to him, *Put' po tsentru. Kompozitor Rodion Shchedrin* [The path through the center. Composer Rodion Shchedrin] (2000), [26] as a gift, Valentina Nikolayevna accompanied it with the saying: “A book is the best present.”

Indeed, during the first decades after 1991, one could observe a discernible decline of interest towards research works about contemporary Russian music, which twenty years prior to that, in the 1980s, comprised virtually the chief sphere of interest for Soviet musicologists. Nonetheless, gradually the situation began to change.

Dissertational Activities

We must also note the extremely dynamic dissertational activities of the musicologists: during the examined period, a large number of dissertations was created, and these were able to form their own perspective of researchers' priorities.

In order to understand the directedness of the changes characterizing present-day dissertations in comparison with the works of the preceding period, first of all, we must turn our attention to their thematic range.

The main scholarly trends defined in the dissertations of the 1970s and 1980s may be presented in the following way:

Genres

Music from outside of Russia

Bells and bell peals

Concert life

Music and the other arts

Music of the peoples of Russia

Music of the peoples of the USSR

Musical perception

Musical performance and pedagogy

Non-European cultures

Russian music

Soviet music

Issues of music theory

The culture of church singing

Ethnomusicology

Notwithstanding the presence of these rubrics, the quantity of defended dissertations in each of them varied. Thus, prior to 1991, the leading thematic group “Music of the peoples of the USSR” was in the lead, while such rubrics as, for example, “Bells and bell peals” or “Concert life” were presented only by singular research works. Also quite formidable in terms of the quantity of dissertational works was the rubric “Musical performance and pedagogy.” This has been stipulated by the predominantly conservatory-type character of Russian musicology, frequently realized by performer-pedagogues.

During the 1990s, the themes of the dissertations changed noticeably. On the one hand, this was connected with the dissolution of the USSR and the departure of the national cultures of the former Soviet republics from the field of vision. On the other hand, there began objective processes linked with the mastery of new fields within the musical profession. Thus, the expansion of the technical possibilities of sound recording and transmission and, as a consequence to that, the interest in studies of them, stipulated the appearance of such a rubric as “Music in sound recordings and media”; the strengthening of the regional academic schools, which began after the departure of the national conservatories from the common academic space, actualized the rubrics “Musical regional studies” and “Musical culture of Russian cities.”

New sturdy thematic interests have asserted themselves: following the “grand-scale” musicology, the range of themes connected with church music began to be actively incorporated in dissertations. During the course of the last three decades, several dozens of dissertations have been defended in this field.

For the sake of visibility, I shall present a table reflecting the allotment of thematic interests in the dissertations defended during the 1970s and the 1980s. The extended rubrics, presenting

	THE THEMATIC SCOPE	The 1970s	The 1980s	The 1990s	The 2000s
1	Russian music before 1917	30	20	70	130
2	Soviet music and contemporary Russian music	15	50	80	150
3	Music from outside of Russia prior to the 20th century	40	50	90	150
4	20th century music from outside of Russia	10	15	50	120
5	Music of the peoples of the USSR	40	130	25	10
6	Music of the peoples of Russia	10	15	40	130
7	The musical culture of the cities of the USSR/Russia	3	2	25	50
8	Church music; traditions of the culture of church singing in composers' creativity	10	15	25	95
9	Issues of music theory	20	50	20	15
10	Musical genres	20	30	50	90
11	Orchestral styles, study of instruments	0	5	10	40
12	Musical performance and pedagogy	30	40	130	150
13	Musical criticism, methodology, terminology	0	10	20	40
14	Music of Asian, African and Latin American countries	10	10	20	60
15	Musical regional and areal studies	5	5	15	35
16	The musical culture of Russian cities	0	0	5	45
17	Ethnomusicology	15	20	40	70
18	Nonacademic musical genres: jazz, rock, blues	0	25	10	40
19	Music and the other arts	5	10	25	50
20	Monographic research	20	30	70	200

the possibility of comparing the preferences of the themes with the decades following are reflected in it (the numbers are rounded up in them).

If we make an attempt of summarizing briefly the tendencies in the sphere of dissertational activities during the examined period, the following must be highlighted.

The latest decades have been marked by the numbers of defended dissertations, which have increased each year; they are characterized by an absence of "prohibited" themes and, as a consequence, a diversity of problem ranges; they are marked by the appearance in scholarship

of a large quantity of performer-musicians and an extension of the field of scholarly interests in musicology in the direction of instrumental, choral and solo vocal performance.

The formation of the thematic range of dissertations is to a considerable extent influenced by the makeup of the graduate students of Russian conservatories and universities. Some of them have witnessed a substantial increase of admission of graduate students from other countries, in particular, the People's Republic of China. This has led to the situation, due to which it is necessary to mark out research works connected with Chinese

music in the group of academic specializations 5.10.3. “Types of Art” (the Art of Music).⁶

On the whole, present-day Russian musicology has preserved the features of transitivity, combining features of spontaneity and regularity, producing, at times, an insufficient amount of research works in certain areas, and, at other times, a surplus of them. To a certain extent, this has become the result of the departure from the policies of state procurement and, on the other hand, — the result of the numerous reforms that have taken place in the spheres of educational and academic polities.

**The Most Frequently Cited Works
by Russian Musicologists,
Created During the Examined Period
(with the Indication of the Venue
They Were Realized in)**

In conclusion, we shall provide a list of the most frequently cited research works created after 1991, for illustration of the quantitative marker, reflecting the thematic perspective of the research works and their domain in Russian musicology.

Music theory works:

Gulyanitskaya N.S. *Musical composition. Modernism, postmodernism. History, theory, practice.* Moscow: Yazyki slavyanskoi kul'tury Publ., 2014. (Gnesin Russian Academy of Music) (In Russ.)

Dyachkova L.S. *Harmony in 20th century music: Tutorial manual for musical higher educational institutions.* Moscow: Gnesin Russian Academy of Music, 2004. (Gnesin Russian Academy of Music) (In Russ.)

Sokolov A.S. *20th century musical composition: Dialectics of creativity.* Moscow: Tchaikovsky Moscow State Conservatory, 1992. (Tchaikovsky Moscow State Conservatory) (In Russ.)

Soviet music:

Hakobian L.O. *Dmitry Shostakovich: The experience of the phenomenology of creativity.* St. Petersburg: Dmitry Bulanin Publ., 2004. (State Institute for Art Studies, Moscow) (In Russ.)

Vlasova E.S. *The year 1948 in Soviet music. Documented research.* Moscow: Klassika-XXI Publ., 2010. (Tchaikovsky Moscow State Conservatory) (In Russ.)

Raku M.G. *The musical classics in the myth-creation of the Soviet era.* Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie Publ., 2014. (State Institute for Art Studies, Moscow) (In Russ.)

Contemporary Russian music:

Ivashkin A.V. *Conversations with Alfred Schnittke.* Moscow: Kul'tura Publ., 1994. (Gnesin Russian Academy of Music) (In Russ.)

Russian music and the 20th century: the Russian art of music in the history of 20th century artistic culture. Ed. and comp. by M.G. Aranovsky. Moscow: State Institute for Art Studies; Moscow Conservatory, 1997. (State Institute for Art Studies, Moscow) (In Russ.)

The history of contemporary Russian music. Issue 2. Ed. by M.E. Tarakanov. Moscow: Muzyka Publ., 1999. (State Institute for Art Studies, Moscow) (In Russ.)

Kholopov Yu.N., Tsenova V.S. *Edison Denisov.* Moscow: Kompozitor Publ., 1993.

⁶ The nomenclature of the academic specializations according to which academic degrees are bestowed was ratified by the order of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation in 2021. The passport of the academic specialization 5.10.3. “Types of Art” includes the art of theater, the art of music, the arts of cinema, television and other screen arts, the visual and decorative-applied art and architecture, as well as the art of choreography. The directions of research are regulated for each of the arts.

(Tchaikovsky Moscow State Conservatory) (In Russ.)

Kholopova V.N. *Sofia Gubaidulina. Interviews with Sofia Gubaidulina*. Ex. ed. E. Restagno. Moscow: Kompozitor Publ., 1996. (Tchaikovsky Moscow State Conservatory) (In Russ.)

Kholopova V.N. *The path through the center. Composer Rodion Shchedrin*. Moscow: Kompozitor Publ., 2000. (Tchaikovsky Moscow State Conservatory) (In Russ.)

20th century music from outside Russia:

Veksler Yu. *Alban Berg and his time. The experience of documented biography*. St. Petersburg: Kompozitor Publ., 2010. (Glinka Nizhny Novgorod State Conservatoire) (In Russ.)

Yerokhin V.A. *De musica instrumentalis. Germany. 1960–1990*. Moscow: Muzyka Publ., 1997. (State Institute for Art Studies, Moscow) (In Russ.)

Kokoreva L.M. *The Musical culture of Poland in the 20th century: Karol Szymanowski, Witold Lutoslawski, Krzysztof Penderecki: essays*. Moscow: Tchaikovsky Moscow State Conservatory, 1997. (Tchaikovsky Moscow State Conservatory) (In Russ.)

Kholopova V.N., Kholopov Yu.N. *The music of Webern*. Moscow: Kompozitor Publ., 1999. (Tchaikovsky Moscow State Conservatory) (In Russ.)

Tsaregradskaya T.V. *Time and rhythm in the musical legacy of Olivier Messiaen*. Moscow: Klassika-XXI Publ., 2002. (Gnesin Russian Academy of Music) (In Russ.)

The musical culture of the Russian émigrés:

Korabelnikova L.Z. *Alexander Tcherepnin: Lengthy wandering*. Moscow: Yazyki russkoi kul'tury Publ., 1999. (State Institute for Art Studies, Moscow) (In Russ.)

Nestyev I.V. *Diaghilev and the 20th century musical theater*. Moscow: Muzyka Publ.,

1994. (State Institute for Art Studies, Moscow) (In Russ.)

Savenko S.I. *The world of Stravinsky*. Moscow: Kompozitor Publ., 2001. (Tchaikovsky Moscow State Conservatory) (In Russ.)

Stravinsky I.F. *Correspondence with Russian communicants: materials for a biography. Vol. 1: 1882-1912*. Moscow: Kompozitor Publ., 1997. (In Russ.)

Orthodox Christian music:

Byzantium and Eastern Europe: liturgical and musical connections. Hymnology. Comp. by N. Gerasomova-Persidskaya, I. Lozovaya. Ex. ed. I. Lozovaya; ed. by E. Filippova. Moscow: Progress-Traditsiya Publ., 2003. Issue 4. (In Russ.)

Gulyanitskaya N.S. *Russian "Harmonic singing" (the 19th century)*. Moscow: Gnesin Russian Academy of Music, 1995. (Gnesin Russian Academy of Music) (In Russ.)

Gulyanitskaya N.S. *The poetics of musical composition: the theoretical aspects of 20th century Russian sacred music*. Moscow: Yazyki russkoi kul'tury Publ., 2002. (Gnesin Russian Academy of Music) (In Russ.)

Zakharyina N.B. *Russian liturgical church singing books of the 18th and 19th centuries: the synodal tradition*. St. Petersburg: Peterburgskoe vostokovedenie Publ., 2003. (In Russ.)

Lebedeba-Emelina A.V. *Russian sacred music of the Era of Classicism (1765–1825): Catalogue of compositions*. Moscow: Progress-Traditsiya Publ., 2004. (In Russ.)

Denisov N.G. *The Strelnikov choir of the Kostroma land: Traditions of old-believers' church singing*. Moscow: Progress-Traditsiya Publ., 2005. (In Russ.)

The music of bells: compilation of research works and materials. Comp. by A.B. Nikanorov. St. Petersburg: Russian Institute for the History of the Arts, 1999. Issue 2. (In Russ.)

Russian sacred music in documents and materials. Vol. 1: The Synod choir and

the College of church singing: Memoirs. Diaries. Letters. Comp. and with an introductory article and comment. by S.G. Zvereva et al. Moscow: Yazyki russkoi kul'tury Publ., 1998. (In Russ.)

Russian sacred music in documents and materials. Vol. 2. Book 2. The Synod choir and the College for church singing: Concerts. Periodicals. Programs. State Institute for Art Studies; M.I. Glinka State Central Museum of Musical Culture. Comp. and with an introductory article and comment. by S.G. Zvereva, A.A. Naumov, and M.P. Rakhmanova. Moscow: Yazyki slavyanskoi kul'tury Publ., 2004. (In Russ.)

Russian sacred music in documents and materials. Vol. 3: Church singing in post-reform Russia in the understanding of contemporaries: Local convocation of the Russian orthodox church of 1917–1918. Comp. by A.A. Naumov and M.P. Rakhmanova. Moscow: Yazyki slavyanskoi kul'tury Publ., 2002. (In Russ.)

Russian sacred music in documents and materials. Vol. 4: S.V. Smolensky. Memoirs. Prep., introductory article and comment. by M.P. Rakhmanova; acad. ed. M.P. Rakhmanova. Moscow: Yazyki slavyanskoi kul'tury Publ., 2002. (In Russ.)

Russian sacred music in documents and materials. Alexander Kastalsky: articles, materials, memoirs, correspondence. State Institute for Art Studies; M.I. Glinka State Central Museum of Musical Culture. Ed., comp. and with an introductory article by S.G. Zverev. Moscow: Znak Publ., 2006. (In Russ.)

Russian sacred music in documents and materials. Vol. 6: S.V. Smolensky and his correspondents: written correspondence with S.D. Sheremetev and K.P. Pobedonostsev. State Institute for Art Studies; M.I. Glinka State Central Museum of Musical Culture. Prep. of text, introductory article and comment. by M.P. Rakhmanova. Moscow: Yazyki slavyanskikh kul'tur Publ., 2008. Book 1. (In Russ.)

The traditions of sacred singing in the culture of the old-believers of the Altay

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Church singing in the historical-liturgical context: The East — Russia — The West. Hymnology. Comp. and ex. ed. by I. Lozovaya; ed. by O. Zhivaeva. Moscow: Progress-Traditsiya Publ., 2003. Issue 3. (In Russ.)

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Golovinsky G.L., Sabinina M.D. *Modest Petrovich Mussorgsky.* Moscow: Muzyka Publ., 1998. (In Russ.)

Rakhmanova M.P. *Nikolai Andreyevich Rimsky-Korsakov.* Moscow: Gnesin Russian Academy of Music, 1995. (Gnesin Russian Academy of Music) (In Russ.)

Classical Western art:

Kirillina L.V. *Beethoven. Life and creativity.* In 2 vols. Moscow: Nauchno-izdatel'skii tsentr "Moskovskaya konservatoriya," 2009. (In Russ.)

Lutsker P., Susidko I. *Mozart and his time.* Moscow: Klassika-XXI Publ., 2008. (Gnesin Russian Academy of Music) (In Russ.)

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Methodology of music scholarship:

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Hakobian L.O. Great theoretical conceptions in music scholarship: Light and shadows. In: *Music scholarship in the post-Soviet space: International conference.* Moscow: Gnesin Russian Academy of Music, 2010. (Gnesin Russian Academy of Music). (In Russ.)

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History of Music: From the Source to Interpretation (Based on Materials from Russian Scholarly Periodicals of the Last Three Years)

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Abstract. The present article reviews Russian scholarly periodicals using various types of historical primary sources, such as archival documents, autographs, musical manuscripts, letters, diaries and memoirs, as the material for research. Approximately two hundred articles from more than two dozen Russian scholarly journals were examined. The examined journals belong to higher education institutions (conservatories and academies), research institutes and independent publishing houses. The article identifies the main publication groups formed according to two interrelated parameters including the type of primary sources and the purpose set out in a particular publication. The focus is on (1) archival documents as a basis for changing the characteristics and assessments of significant historical phenomena; (2) filling of gaps in knowledge about the musical culture of the past; (3) clarification and elucidation of the biographies of composers, performing musicians, critics, and publishers; (4) history of the musical composition of works and creative process of their authors, including in connection with the preparation of scholarly academic publications. An analysis of numerous articles has led to the conclusion that attention to primary sources has become widespread in Russian musicology due to both freer access to archives and library collections today and development of new approaches to understanding the reliability of scholarly research and to criteria for the scholarly foundation of contemporary academic publications of musical works.

Keywords: scholarly periodicals, musicology, document, primary source in scholarly research, egodocument

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История музыки: от первоисточника к интерпретации (по материалам отечественной научной периодики последних трёх лет)

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Аннотация. Обзорная статья посвящена анализу статей в отечественной научной периодике, материалом исследования в которых стали исторические первоисточники разного рода: архивные документы, автографы, нотные рукописи, письма, дневники, воспоминания. В поле зрения авторов попало около двухсот статей из более чем двух десятков научных российских журналов, принадлежащих высшим учебным заведениям (консерваториям и академиям), научно-исследовательским институтам, независимым издательствам. В статье выявлены основные группы публикаций, сформированные по двум взаимосвязанным параметрам: типу первоисточника и цели, поставленной в той или иной публикации. Основное внимание уделено архивному документу как основе для изменения характеристик и оценок значимых исторических явлений; заполнению лагун в знаниях о музыкальной культуре прошлого; уточнению и прояснению биографий композиторов, музыкантов-исполнителей, критиков, издателей; истории сочинения музыкальных произведений и творческого процесса их создателей, в том числе в связи с подготовкой научных академических изданий. Анализ многочисленных статей позволил сделать вывод о широком распространении в российском музыковедении внимания к первоисточникам, обусловленного как более свободным доступом к архивам и библиотечным фондам, так и формированием новых подходов к пониманию достоверности научного исследования и критериям научного оснащения современного академического издания музыкальных сочинений.

Ключевые слова: научная периодика, музыковедение, документ, первоисточник в научном исследовании, эго-документ

Introduction

A glance at musicological periodicals of the last three years as a single information array reveals a kind of snapshot of the current state of scholarship for identifying priority areas of research. Review articles based on such an approach acquire additional meaning if they focus on examining a single problem or a single area of knowledge about musical art. Two years ago, at the end of 2023, the first experiment of this kind was undertaken in a work related to

opera. At that time, more than 200 publications were examined, which confirmed the high research status of this topic. [1] A year later, a review article was published on research into contemporary academic music — a field that has remained unconditionally relevant for several decades as well as having recently gained new approaches. [2]

The present article, which is the third in the original series of analytical reviews, pays close attention to primary sources of information, representing a key trend in contemporary

musicology. This interpretation implies a significant limitation of the material, since the term “primary source” in the title of the article can also mean the original musical work itself. In this case, any theoretical or historical study that uses the musical text of a specific work a priori turns into its interpretation; in other words, the field of research is maximally expanded, and its boundaries are blurred. Thus, we settled on materials of a special kind. These are archival or current documents, autographs, as well as a whole complex of biographical materials, which have recently been referred to as “egodocuments” [3] — letters, diaries, memoirs.

An analysis of approximately two hundred articles from 22 Russian scholarly journals publishing musicological research was performed:

1. *Actual Problems of High Music Education* (Nizhny Novgorod Glinka State Conservatory)
2. *Journal of Musical Science* (M.I. Glinka Novosibirsk State Conservatory)
3. *Bulletin of the Vaganova Ballet Academy*
4. *Vestnik of Saint Peterburg University. Arts*
5. *Journal of Saratov Conservatory. Issues of Arts*
6. *Vremennik Zubovskogo Instituta* (Russian Institute of Art History, St. Petersburg)
7. *Journal of the Music Theory Society*
8. *Art of Music. Theory and History* (State Institute for Art Studies, Moscow)
9. *Culture. Art. Education* (A.N. Kosygin Russian State University (Technology. Design. Art))
10. *Music. Art, Research, Practice* (N.G. Zhiganov Kazan State Conservatory)
11. *Music Academy* (Kompozitor Publishing House)
12. *Music in the System of Culture: Scientific Bulletin of the Ural Conservatory*
13. *Musical Journal of Northern Europe* (Petrozavodsk State Glazunov Conservatory)

14. *Journal of Moscow Conservatory*
15. *Opera musicologica* (St. Petersburg State Conservatory named after N.A. Rimsky-Korsakov)
16. *Russian Musicology* (Gnesin Russian Academy of Music)
17. *Contemporary Musicology* (Gnesin Russian Academy of Music)
18. *Sphere of Culture* (Samara State Institute of Culture)
19. *Scholarly Papers of Gnesin Russian Academy of Music*
20. *Art & Culture Studies* (State Institute of Art Studies, Moscow)
21. *South-Russian Musical Anthology* (Rostov State Rachmaninov Conservatory)
22. *Philharmonica. International Music Journal* (Nota Bene Publishing House).

Documents as an Impetus for Rethinking History

The most relevant results are produced when documents found in archives, museums and library repositories are brought into the orbit of research. Progress in the systematisation of such materials, greater accessibility of information, digitisation and description of collections, as well as online publication of documents represent a trend that is currently felt throughout the world. These processes, which are intended to facilitate scholars' access to primary sources, mainly achieve this goal. Nevertheless, the regular emergence of new archival finds and related discoveries, sometimes sensational, convinces us that this process is far from complete. A role is also played by how accurately and completely the discovered documentary sources are attributed and, no less importantly, how they are interpreted and how significant this interpretation is for the formation of new knowledge.

In recent years, Russian musicology has made many achievements in the field of archival research, source studies and generalisation

of these observations. The greatest number of discoveries are related to documents that introduce new details into the biographies of composers and performing musicians, about whom supposedly much if not everything was known.

Johann Sebastian Bach can be considered one of these figures. Despite the fact that his life and work were very thoroughly documented, Tatyana Shabalina, a prominent Bach scholar, manages time and again to discover sources introducing new details into the understanding of the composer's life and creative path and, most importantly, to consistently form new interpretations of the facts. Shabalina writes that the original printed text of the Bach's cantata *Wünschet Jerusalem Glück* BWV1139.1 found in the Russian National Library is the only surviving copy in the world for accurately establishing the date of the work creation as 1725, thereby ending the long-standing discussion on this issue, and its author's composition of seven, and not six — as previously believed — parts. [4, p. 11–19] A thorough analysis of all the circumstances, versions and facts makes a significant addition to the understanding of Bach's cantata work, while one curious detail rose a question about the intricate fate of archival documents in Russian collections: during the Soviet era, the pages with the text of Bach's cantata were located in a storage section of the Russian National Library designated as the "Anti-religious Department." [Ibid., p. 12] Equally impressive conclusions about the fate of the autograph of Johann Sebastian Bach's Mass in *B minor* (BWV 232 / II–IV) and its reception were made by Shabalina based on the analysis of the handwritten score kept

at the St. Petersburg Conservatory. [5] New documentary research became the basis for adjusting the idea of the Bach's youth in the article by Natalia Dahl. [6]

Anatoly Milka chose a different way of interpreting documentary materials in his articles of 2024. [7; 8] Two well-known stories — about Bach's journey on foot from Arnstadt to Lübeck in 1705–1706 and about his improvisation at the reception of the Prussian King Friedrich II (May 7, 1747) — are almost flawlessly supplied with historical evidence, as well as with more than 300 years of descriptions and interpretations, including the Obituary written by Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach.¹ However, this is only at first glance. An analysis of the available documents and identification of contradictions and oddities in them forced the scholar to doubt a number of details, even if they appeared to represent reliable and truthful evidence. Such doubts, in turn, led to the deconstruction of existing knowledge and conclusions that can safely be called paradoxical: the composer's journey to Lübeck in reality was most likely not the same as it is presented in the history of music, [7, p. 24] and Bach did use the king's theme in the improvised fugue, and not his own, as most historians insisted. [8, p. 645]

A critical assessment and revealed contradictions in the available documents related to the French debut of Christoph Willibald Gluck (1774) were used by Anastasia Khlyupina to put forward a bold assumption: the contract with the composer, which has been considered by historians for 250 years as a means of pressure from the theatre, is most likely a fiction and "an invention of Gluck's first German biographers." [9, p. 618] This time,

¹ Agricola J. F., Bach C. P. E., Mizler L. Chr., Venzky G. Der dritte und letzte ist der im Orgelspielen weltberühmte HochEdle Herr Johann Sebastian Bach, Königlich-Polnischer und Churfürstlich Sächsischer Hofcompositeur, und Musikdirector in Leipzig. In: *Musicalische Bibliothek...*, hrsg. von Lorenz Misler, S. 158–176. Leipzig: Mizlerischen Bücher-Verlag, [1754], Bd. 4, Theil 1.

as in Milka's work, interpretation became a means of "demythologising" a historical source by drawing on a wide range of arguments.

Larisa Kirillina used a combination of direct and indirect documentary evidence, as well as confirmed facts and hypotheses to paint a picture of the young Beethoven's journey to Vienna (1787). Using the publication of Dieter Haberl (2020), [10] who clarified the chronology of events, she significantly expanded the documentary base and drew on sources of a wide variety of types for a more accurate and complete answer to the question: "Did Beethoven meet Mozart, and if not, what did he do in Vienna?", which had not previously received any reliable answer. [11, p. 21]

On Deconstruction and Reconstruction

Reliance on the document, its unbiased, "unblinkered" analysis, along with meticulous comparison of facts and identification of diverse connections, have become one of the most important areas of today's research into Russian and Soviet music history. The thematic range of such works is quite wide. Very valuable publications of materials considering regional culture can be highlighted. As a paraphrase of a famous statement by Mikhail Lomonosov, we can say that the understanding of Russian history in its fullness and diversity will be enhanced precisely by such materials, which extend beyond the boundaries of the capital "locus" familiar to scholars. This concept became the basis for the research and bibliographic project "Scholarly Map of Russia," in which musicology was actively involved. [12] In addition, it stimulates the emergence of works of various genres: from those based on archival documents essays on the musical culture of individual regions, most often Siberian ones [13; 14; 15] to filling the gaps in the biographies of key figures in this history, such as the musicologist Boleslav Yavorsky [16] or theatre artist Pyotr Lambdin. [17] The discovery of

archival documents is perhaps the only way to bring the names of forgotten masters back from oblivion, thereby both restoring justice and making the understanding of historical processes complete and more adequate. The objectives and conclusions of the article by Natalia Gulyanitskaya can be assessed in this light. [18]

The histories of theatres, universities, and philharmonic societies, which are new in their essence, have also become relevant. Previous official releases and encyclopaedic articles, which generally lack historical specifics and have sometimes been subject to ideological "correction," have been replaced by works presenting history in a variety of diverse facts and opinions that did not yet have, and could not previously have had, the status of publication. The course of events and the struggle of opinions, recorded in the minutes and transcripts of meetings, the texts of treaties, curricula and programs, as interpreted by scholars, convey to us the living current of history. It is precisely this kind of documentary reconstruction that was undertaken by Tatiana Naumenko in an article considering the relationship between Dmitry Shostakovich and Mikhail Khrapchenko, [19] as well as in her work highlighting the scholarly activities of the Gnesin State Musical Pedagogical Institute in the first decade of its work. [20] Articles by Pyotr Gordeev, published in several domestic journals, formed a unique cycle of documented post-revolutionary history of theatre and music: the Moscow Bolshoi Theatre, [21] the Maly Drama Theatre, [22] and the Mariinsky Theatre. [23]

Forgotten pages of Soviet history were restored in an article by Liudmila Gavrilova, who published materials from a "Panorama of 20th Century Opera" series of programs issued by the Main Editorial Board of Music Broadcasting of the All-Union Radio, including 96 radio broadcasts literally saved from destruction by Valery Berezin, a professor

at the Moscow Conservatory. [24] However, these pages were forgotten rather as a historical fact, since the documentary materials were “sentenced” to be written off; nevertheless, the radio cycle itself still exists in the memories of those, albeit now small in number, listeners of these programs.

Although a voluminous study by Marina Raku, extremely rich in documentary material, which is read like a historical detective story, is focused on the film *The Fall of Berlin* by Mikhail Chiaureli with music by Dmitry Shostakovich, the interpretation extends to a wide range of phenomena of the Stalin era. [25] A similar historical perspective emerges in the article by Alexander Naumov about the play *Rip-grass* (1901) by Evgeny Goslavsky (text) and Alexander Shefer (music), studied on the basis of documentary materials. [26]

An analysis of responses in popular and professional periodicals “on the heels” of premieres and concerts serves as an effective means of deconstructing established and often unrealistic ideas. Presenting musical life in all its diversity in both the capital and regions, [27; 28] they recreate a picture of the musical perception of the work by famous musicians and clarify established assessments — as in the case of the materials concerning the reception of Sergei Rachmaninoff’s concerts in the USA and France, which were collected and interpreted by Vera Valkova. [29; 30] Newspaper publications, which have become sources for contemporary scholarly analysis, fill various episodes of music history with living, concrete material — both well-known and of little notice, e.g. an article about the Orthodox church singing tradition of Harbin in the 1920s–1940s. [31]

Studies dispelling misconceptions that having once arisen subsequently acquired the status of fact are particularly relevant. Referring to newspapers and journals of the past is unlikely to completely destroy established assessments,

but is often capable of significantly adjusting them. In this case, even a single detail can become the seed of a new interpretation. Thus, the widespread opinion about the failure of Bizet’s *Carmen* at the premiere secured its place among the list of masterpieces that suffered a fiasco, becoming one of the arguments for the short-sightedness of the critics who failed to appreciate this outstanding work. The work with articles from periodicals of that time shed light on the very complex circumstances of opera production, which can already be considered a success, and most importantly, managed to turn this judgment into a myth, proving its factual unreliability. [32]

Egodocuments:

Touches for Portraits and More

Egodocuments were the starting point for many discoveries and interpretations in a number of journal publications over the past three years. A common distinguishing feature of such sources is their “distinctly personal character.” [3, p. 185] Discussing this term, Yury Zaretsky calls it an “umbrella” under which “almost any autobiographical text can take refuge.” [Ibid., p. 186] In addition to autobiographies, memoirs, diaries, notebooks, letters and greeting cards, the egodocument concept includes any “testimonies” a person has about himself and his work, which sometimes manifest themselves in the most unexpected ways.

In musicological publications of recent years, such documents regularly become a source for clarifying various types of biographical data. In the overwhelming majority of cases, these letters are either newly discovered, little-known, or have not received due attention from researchers. Such publications include, for example, an article by Alexander Komarov about a previously unknown letter from Pyotr Tchaikovsky to Herman Laroche, “which was added to the collections of the Russian

National Museum of Music in 2024.” [33, p. 34] In addition to attributing this letter, which is valuable in itself, the author integrates it into the already known correspondence between friends, clarifying its details and filling in the gaps that existed until now. Among other articles of this kind, the publication of five letters from Alexander Serov to his mother, dating back to 1858–1859, the time of his travels through Europe, can be considered. It is interesting that during this same period, Serov “published correspondence in the form of ‘traveller’s notes’ in the magazine *Music and Theatre Herald*,” [34, p. 72] which also contained impressions from the trip. Compared to these correspondences, the letters to his mother act as a kind of quintessence of the egodocument concept, since in the first case, the composer striving to be more objective hardly described his feelings and impressions, while in the second, he generously shared his own assessments. [Ibid., p. 79]

Often, the study of letters as an additional source of information about the biographical facts, works and views of outstanding musicians becomes the impetus for an entire series of publications. Such are the articles by Natalia Savkina, based on the letters from *The Sergei Prokofiev Archive* at Columbia University. [35; 36; 37] The hero of the first of them was not only and not so much Sergei Prokofiev, but Boris Asafiev. According to the author, during the review of their correspondence from 1925 to 1935, “previously unknown life circumstances are investigated, and creative aspects are rendered in a new light,” [35, p. 112] and “tragic twists and turns of Soviet history ... can be read between the lines of these letters.” [Ibid.] In two other articles from this small cycle, Savkina focuses to a greater extent on the personality of Prokofiev, whose letters make a significant contribution “to the study of Prokofiev’s personality, which manifests itself differently in communication with different people.” [37, p. 171]

Finally, it is necessary to mention a whole series of articles devoted to translations into Russian of Ferruccio Busoni’s letters appeared in various musicological journals over the past three years. [38; 39; 40] No less interesting are the works using both unpublished and published egodocuments to reveal the details of the biography, as in the article by Maria Konstantinova, who outlined the Alexander Dargomyzhsky’s legal battle with the publisher Fyodor Stellovsky through the composer’s letters. [41]

Another type of egodocument — diaries — has recently been used less frequently to clarify biographical data. Nevertheless, Russian musicological journals include such publications. For example, the history of relationships between Anton Rubinstein and Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolaevich is examined in terms of the latter’s diaries. [42] On the other hand, such egodocuments can be used for other purposes — for “some generalisations on the problematic aspects of the study of manuscripts by Russian musicians” [43, p. 383] based on the diary entries of Nikolai Findeisen or even for identifying “the problem of teaching <...> harmony, to highly gifted students using the example of Sergei S. Prokofiev’s experience.” [44, p. 115]

In some cases, the role of egodocument may be played by rather untypical sources — for example, “the ‘joint text’ of composers’ titles has the ability to show author’s range of interests and explain the choice of topics” [45, p. 1] or personal library collections represent “a valuable source for research of composers’ artistic biographies, which bears the imprint of the personalities both of the owner of the book collection and of his or her entire generation.” [46, p. 29]

On the Path to Publication and After It

One of the most important areas of musicological work, requiring a thorough

study of primary sources of various kinds, is the preparation of works for publication. A contemporary scholarly publication includes a very wide range of tasks that confront scholars: the most complete, as far as possible, study of the autograph, drafts and variants, editorial versions, if they exist, the restoration and analysis of the context of this work, its critical reception, and many other necessary textual operations.

Such extensive and diverse work is being carried out by groups of musicologists as part of the preparation of new complete collections of works by Russian classics; its interim results and achievements are being recorded in scholarly periodicals. Thus, having examined the autographs of the score and piano arrangement of *The Nutcracker* ballet, prepared for publication by the composer himself, in the context of unpublished materials from the collections of the P.I. Tchaikovsky State Museum-Reserve, Alexander Komarov, concludes that such documents are of fundamental importance for reconstructing the history of the work. [47] Researchers have made public the complex and controversial history of Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's editing of the orchestral and vocal works of Modest Mussorgsky, which had not previously attracted attention. [48]

An academic edition of a significant work requires an equally thorough study of the original source. The absence of a comprehensive study of Sergei Taneyev's *John of Damascus*, which would include reliance on a body of documentary materials, prompted the commissioning of such a special work, which paved the way for a critical edition of Taneyev's masterpiece. [49] As a result of describing and analysing the history of publication of the opera *Woman with a Dagger* by Vladimir Rebikov in the P. Jurgenson Moscow publishing house, recreated from the materials

of correspondence and handwritten biography of the composer, Elena Shabshaevich makes a conclusion that goes beyond the problem associated with a specific work: "on the basis of the archival documents, it will undoubtedly enrich the chronicles of both compositional activities and music publishing in our country, having written in an extraordinary page into the history of Russian music during the first decades of the 20th century." [50, p. 66]

The importance of analysing a primary source increases when a musicologist encounters an unpublished manuscript that has not previously attracted attention. In this case, it requires a careful textual description, such as in the article by Alla Yankus. [51] Archival discoveries occupy a special place among these studies. In this case, an article published in a periodical has the opportunity to become the first publication introducing a discovery into scholarly and performing circulation, and to attract the attention of a wide circle of interested musicians. In 2023, such a striking discovery was a previously unknown autograph by Modest Mussorgsky — an arrangement of the folk song "Oh, my freedom" for a male choir without accompaniment [52]; in 2025, this was the figure of the previously unknown East Slavic Baroque composer Kaplinsky and his Easter concert. [53]

The problems of research related to pre-press preparation of essays and scholarly support of such publications are closely related to works devoted to the study of the creative process. Even outside of publishing tasks, updating and understanding a documentary source enriches the understanding of a musical work and ultimately contributes to its performance destiny, which is what an academic publication serves. A novel detailed analysis of Mikhail Matyushin's sketches for *Victory over the Sun, Composition in Quarter Tones for Violin with Piano Accompaniment* and *Don*

Quixote, [54] early works of Shostakovich, examined in terms of rough drafts, [55] process of Rimsky-Korsakov's work on the opera *May Night*, [56] and identification of the specifics of the Russian manuscript version of Giovanni Paisiello's opera *The Beautiful Miller's Daughter*, discovered in the archives [57] — all this confirms the value of a thorough and meticulous analysis of the manuscript as the main source of primary information.

A special line of musicological research, reflected in periodicals, was formed by articles devoted to the history of publications. The range of such topics is very wide. As in the case of updating manuscript sources, such material is typically used to draw conclusions concerning a specific work or its author, touch upon a wider range of issues and, importantly, to outline the paths to deepening knowledge about the more general development processes of musical art, culture and scholarship. In the case of the publication of selected chorales by J.S. Bach, undertaken by Charles Gounod, the analysis of the collection and commentary makes it possible to draw conclusions about Gounod's special attitude to the legacy of the German classic, whose chorales he proposed to learn by heart, [58, pp. 78–79] and about the reasons for the emergence and growth of interest in his legacy in French culture as a whole. The same can be said of the article presenting Georges Bizet not as a composer but as an editor and proofreader of other people's works, [59] i.e., in a role that is non-considered when determining his place in the history of musical art.

Conclusion

It is quite clear that journal publications cannot claim to fully cover the problem of the primary source in musicological research, much less exhaust it. Monographs, dissertations, collections of articles and conference materials

that touch on this issue in one way or another have been left behind. Generalisations and assessments with this approach are obviously limited by the very nature of a scholarly periodical. However, in its essence and results, the perspective proposed in the article may be legitimate for several reasons. It allows a particular research trend to be grasped almost at the moment of its inception and, in addition, provides the opportunity to cover the “geography” of Russian musicology in its various regional manifestations. In scholarly periodicals, currently available online in most cases, it is easier to present the results of research that led to the most desired result for a scholar — a discovery, a find, a detection of a previously unknown name or fact.

The analysis of scholarly periodicals over the past three years has revealed some of the most important trends associated with the use of primary sources as the main research material. Scholars are increasingly turning to authentic documents of various types, which can help clarify both ancient and relatively recent episodes in the history of musical culture. The result almost always turns out to be more significant than simply filling the gaps in knowledge. Perceptions of individual artistic phenomena and even the interpretation of general historical and musical processes can change. Professionalism and interpretation practice prove to be an even more effective aspect than the very fact of using the original source. The primary source itself, even if it falls into the hands of a scholar for the first time, fails to guarantee the depth and completeness of the conclusions and protect against its superficial and passive use. The most works of the last three years fortunately demonstrate a combination of two necessary qualities: respect for the document and necessary established scholarly practice of its interpretation.

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The Role of Mentality in Understanding Musical-Theoretical Definitions (On the Example of Timbre and Texture Analysis in the Works of Chinese Musicologists)

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Abstract. The article considers the problem of mutual enrichment of research practices of Russian and Chinese musicology as a result of mastering the methods of music analysis developed within the framework of different scientific paradigms. The starting point of the discussion was the thesis that representatives of different cultures, characterised by different mental consciousness, have significant differences in the perception of artistic phenomena. The article considers the expressive means of music from this point of view — in particular, in terms of texture and timbral colouring — suggesting that the understanding of the meaning of timbre-textural sound colours by the European ear and the ear of representatives of Eastern cultures (China, in particular) is not the same. This appears to be due to differences in mentality, a significant characteristic of which, in the latter case, consists in the visual-figurative type of thinking as conditioned by the Chinese language system, especially its written hieroglyphic form, which presupposes the brain working with images. The visual-figurative type of thinking, in turn, determines the priority of painting among the arts. The special techniques of painting described in ancient sources were aimed at creating either deep, dense, multi-layered colours, or transparent single-layer dots and thin drawn lines. The orchestral sonorities created by Chinese composers, possessing various phonisms, are perceived as a transfer of the techniques of Guohua (国画) monochrome painting onto the musical fabric; as such, Chinese musicologists take the latter into account in the analysis of orchestral works. The experience of studying the timbre-textural features of Guo Zurong's piano concertos using this method as featured in the present work reveals its viability, allowing for a deeper understanding of the national type of musical thinking of Chinese composers.

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Keywords: mentality, timbre, texture, piano concerto, Guo Zurong, Guohua painting technique, analysis methods

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Роль менталитета в понимании музыкально-теоретических дефиниций (на примере анализа тембра и фактуры в работах китайских музыковедов)

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Аннотация. Статья посвящена проблеме взаимообогащения научных практик российского и китайского музыкознания в результате овладения методиками анализа музыки, выработанными в рамках разных научных парадигм. Отправной точкой рассуждений стал тезис о том, что представители разных культур, характеризуемые разным ментальным сознанием, имеют существенные отличия в восприятии художественных явлений. Авторы статьи предлагают взглянуть с этой точки зрения на выразительные средства музыки, в частности на фактуру и темброкрасочность, высказывая предположение, что понимание значений тембо-фактурных красок европейским слухом и слухом представителей восточных культур (в частности, Китая) неодинаково. Обусловлено это ментальным своеобразием, значимой характеристикой которого является визуально-образный тип мышления, предопределённый системой языка, его письменной иероглифической формой, предполагающей работу мозга с образами. Визуально-образным типом мышления обусловлен, в свою очередь, приоритет живописи в ряду искусств. Описанные в древних источниках особые приёмы изобразительной техники были направлены на создание либо глубокого, «плотного», многослойного по текстуре цвета, либо прозрачных однослойных пятен и тонких линий рисунка. Создаваемые китайскими композиторами оркестровые звучности, обладающие разным фонизмом, воспринимаются как перенос на музыкальную ткань приёмов монохромной живописи Гохуа, а китайские музыковеды учитывают последнее в анализе оркестровых сочинений. Осуществлённый в статье опыт изучения тембро-фактурных особенностей фортепианных концертов Го Цзужуна посредством данной методики раскрывает её жизнеспособность, позволяющую глубже понять национальный тип музыкального мышления китайских композиторов.

Ключевые слова: менталитет, тембр, фактура, жанр фортепианного концерта, Го Цзужун, техника живописи Гохуа, методика анализа

Introduction

In contemporary discourses, there is active interaction between the Russian and Chinese schools of musicology. This is undoubtedly a two-way process. On the Chinese side, it is aimed at studying the music of Russian composers and mastering the analytic methodology that has developed in the Russian musicological school. The musical culture of the PRC, in turn, is today the focus of attention of scholars from all Russian conservatories, both in its traditional forms and research into the works of contemporary composers. Meanwhile, the successful approaches taken by Chinese musicologists in terms of studying their own musical culture, especially in terms of analysis of melody, timbre, texture, and other aspects of musical language, has the potential to enrich the tools used in Russian academic and pedagogical schools, even potentially transforming existing research approaches. The article will discuss the specifics of these unusual (for Russian musicologists) methods of analysis, as well as considering the underlying cognitive paradigms that form their basis.

The Role of Mentality in Different Understandings of the Meanings of Artistic Phenomena

Reflecting on the question of the assimilation of European genre models of instrumental music by Chinese composers, one involuntarily recalls the idea expressed almost two and a half centuries ago in the work *An Essay on the Origin of Languages, as well as on melody and musical imitation* by Jean-Jacques Rousseau that all forms of national music owe their main features to language. [1, p. 238] This thesis, which is based on the phonosemantic structure of a given language, appears to be

profound and true in the context of modern linguistic research, confirming that the national way of thinking is recorded in the national language of representatives of a particular culture. [2, p. 765]

In the process of long-term historical development of traditional societies, which include China, a stable mentality is formed, which is characterised by “a collective mental state, a way of thinking and behaviour common to a people or nation.” [3, p. 34] National mentality should be understood as “a mindset, a set of intellectual, emotional and cultural characteristics, as well as value orientations and attitudes characteristic of a particular social or ethno-national group, as well as an entire people.” [4, p. 39] This explains the fundamental differences in the perception of art by representatives of different national cultures, since art creates artistic models of the world and personality, forming a picture of the world in accordance with the experience stored in the cultural memory.

Due to this factor, understandings of the same artistic phenomena and artefacts among representatives of different peoples cannot be assumed to be the same. Let us take Indian dance as an example. While for a European, the perception of this spectacle may be limited to the plasticity of movements and general decor, for a representative of a corresponding ethnic group, it is an open book that can be read through bodily symbolism¹ (Il. 1, a–d).

If we look at the expressive means of music from this point of view, we may proceed from the assumption that the same musical phenomena associated with them can be perceived and interpreted differently by representatives of different cultures. To a large extent, this

¹ The symbolism of Indian dance is formed by universal graphic symbols: the circle — beauty and strength emanating from the feeling of unity, the triangle — creation, preservation, etc. See more details: [5].

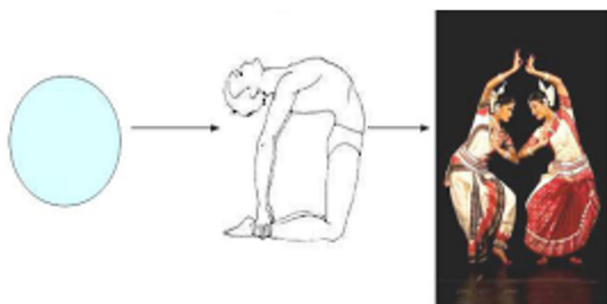
a) Triangle



b) Cross



c) Circle



d) Rectangle



Il. 1. Symbolism of Indian dance [5, p. 203–204]

relates to the timbral vibrance and semantics of instrumental timbres.

Discussing the communicative properties of timbre, Anna Limitovskaya notes the role of timbre stereotypes, citing as an example the signal quality of the trumpet, the pastoral quality of the oboe, the hunting “sphere” of the French horn, etc. [6, p. 80] However, timbral symbolic associations in different cultures may not coincide (similar to the mismatch of colour semantics) or have additional connotations. Evgeny Nazaykinsky offers an explanation for this. He points to the multi-layered nature of musical meanings conveyed by timbre, which, in his opinion, “cover both the individual, personal life experience of a person, ... and the social, historical, normalising experience.” [7, p. 160] Let us assume that, due to this multi-layered nature, the perception and understanding of the meanings of timbre-textured colours by the European ear and the ear of representatives of Eastern cultures (China, in particular) differs in a similar way to the differences in the perception of Indian dance.²

On the Role of Visual-Figurative Thinking in Chinese Culture

These differences, which are clearly manifested in the work with the texture and timbre of the symphony orchestra — a borrowed European “instrument” — in the works of Chinese academic composers, are determined by a mental uniqueness, a significant characteristic of which is the visual-figurative type of thinking inherent in Eastern cultures. The fundamental role of visual-figurative representations is determined, in turn, by the language system; however, not so much by the phonosemantic system, as by its written form. Maria Rubets

² Reflecting on the characteristics of Chinese painting, researchers note a similar difference in the interpretation of meanings by representatives of different cultures: “The artistic image in Chinese painting contains practically no random details and can be correctly read only in the context of a certain cultural tradition. In the same pictorial image, a Chinese person and a European will see different meanings.” [8, p. 132]

writes that “hieroglyphic writing as such, when perceived, presupposes the brain’s work with images: a hieroglyph is not an alphabetical word, it does not require letter-by-letter reading, and it does not even always contain a phonetic component. A hieroglyph is a reflection in writing of some perceptual image, concept or entire situation, in contrast to an alphabetic word, in which the phonetic expression most often quite accurately corresponds to the written one.” [9, p. 8]

The visual-figurative type of thinking that determined the specificity of hieroglyphic writing also preconditions the special role of painting in Chinese culture in terms of organically incorporating text fragments (Il. 2).³



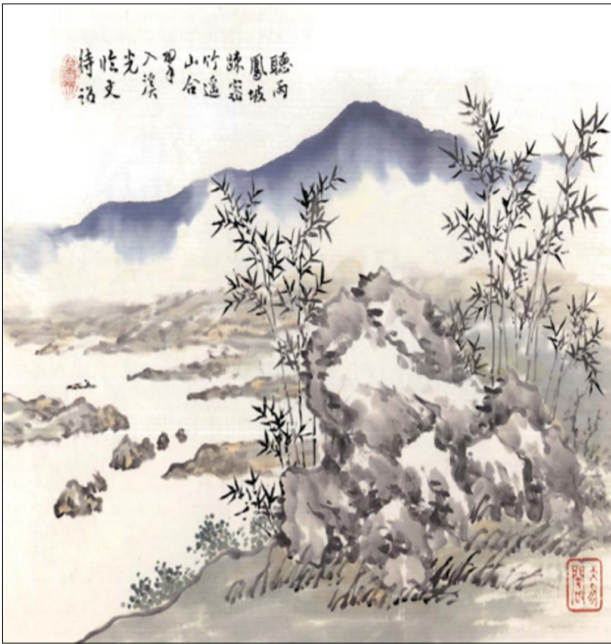
Il. 2. Wu Youhuo. *Streams and Mountains with Cascading Waterfalls*.
Qing Dynasty

Vera Belozerova notes: “The main graphic elements of Chinese painting have a calligraphic genesis and analogues described in treatises.” [11, p. 355] Ancient techniques of drawing with ink and Indian ink were based on the transmission of the finest nuances of colour, the variability of which, with the dominance of only two colour principles — white and black — was achieved through special methods of applying paint to the surface of the sheet (Ils. 3 and 4).



Il. 3. Wang Zhen.
Ink Drawing of a Lotus (1925)

³ Noting the inseparability of the connection between painting and calligraphy as the main directions in Chinese art, Oksana Ovsyannikova and Natalia Tagiltseva write: “Every artist in China is simultaneously both a calligrapher and a painter.” [8, p. 132] See also: [10].



Il. 4. From the book *A Word on Painting from the Garden with a Mustard Seed*, Vol. II: Plum, Orchid, Bamboo and Chrysanthemum (2002)

Analysis of Timbre and Texture of Musical Works by Chinese Composers in Comparison with the Guohua Painting Technique

The roots of traditional Chinese painting go back to the 2nd–3rd millennia BC. The importance of this practice is captured in the word itself, where *guó* (国) is the state, and *huà* (画) is a painting or picture. Obviously, the name captures the deep cultural significance of this practice. Wang Wei writes: “Chinese painting reflects the spirit of the people of the Celestial Empire; it expresses the people’s consciousness like nothing else. Its main objects are the manifestation and glorification of the soul and feelings, expressed through composition and that which is ‘not visible to the eye,’ which is located, as it were, between the lines.” [12, p. 154] Over the centuries of its existence, a detailed technique has developed. The Guohua painting techniques

described in ancient sources — ink splashing, ink layering, broken ink and others — were aimed at creating either a deep, “dense,” multi-layered colour in texture, or transparent single-layer dots and thin line drawing.⁴ This principle of working with the colour and texture of paintings is close to the phenomena of background and relief in terms of the density or sparseness of the musical fabric. Let us recall Evgeny Nazaykinsky’s words on the inextricable connection between texture and timbre in the creation of sound colour. “Texture as a configuration of musical sound is determined ... not only by the lines of voices and the outlines of sound masses,” the scholar noted, “but also by sound colour and phonic brightness.” [14, p. 74–75] Timbre, in his opinion, “serves as the basis for the colouristic texture.” [Ibid.] Let us pay attention to the presence in the musicologist’s definitions of concepts close to painting, such as lines and sound arrays.

Confirmation of this is the existence in Chinese musicology of works in which the textural and timbre techniques used by Chinese composers are considered in direct parallel with the aforementioned technique of traditional Chinese painting. Their authors offer a unique, ethnically distinctive method of analysing the musical texture of works in comparison with the techniques of applying paint to parchment described in ancient treatises on painting.

Thus, in the study of the symphonies of the outstanding Chinese composer Guo Zurong, carried out by Tu Zhijie, the analysis of texture is realised through analogies with the techniques of Guohua writing. The researcher explains the use of this method of texture-timbre analysis, which is unconventional for European musicology, by the fact that in China “there are many compositional rules of ‘ink painting,’ which can be relied upon

⁴ Techniques for working with brush and ink are discussed in detail in the work of Tu Nan: [13].

in the structural understanding of orchestration, arrangement and use of timbres.” [15, p. 106] The author argues for this approach according to the multiple analogies between the coloration of painting and sound. He emphasises that “...the arrangement and transformation of timbres, as well as the regulation of strength and other techniques, can be clearly represented in the score through various phenomena of density (‘thickness’) or sparseness (‘thinness’) of the interweaving of voice,” [Ibid.] arguing that the fullness or transparency of sounds is analogous to the texture of the application of paints in Guohua painting.

The analogies between painting and music in Chinese culture are also based on the fact that *drawing, like a piece of music, was understood procedurally*. One of the most important compositional rules of Guohua painting is *kai he* (开合, opening and closing). This is explained through the similarity of the drawing to a musical work: the painting “must have an introduction (*kai* — opening), development of the theme and conclusion (*he* — closing).”⁵

Let us take as an example the scroll *Grapes and Squirrel* by Qi Baishi (Il. 5). “The composition begins at the top, where the grape vine begins its movement, unfolding like a musical theme. This is ‘*kai*.’ Then comes the development — the bunches of grapes create a rhythm, leading the gaze. And finally, at the bottom of the painting there is a small squirrel, which seems to place a full stop on the composition and thus complete it. This is ‘*he*’.”⁶

Tu Zhijie’s analytical experience, which examines the techniques of forming musical fabric through the prism of painting techniques, corresponds to the cultural paradigm. Of course, one could consider such an approach to be



Il. 5. Qi Baishi.
Grapes and Squirrel(1952)

⁵ Chinese painting as discussed by Artem Savichev. 11 golden rules of composition in Chinese painting (Guohua). URL: <https://dzen.ru/a/Z6-3rYdwfBgc7QLI> (accessed: 16.11.2025).

⁶ Ibid.

purely experimental, but a closer examination reveals that this is not so.

In an article devoted to the analysis of Wen Deqing's string quartet, *Po Mo II*, researcher Ding Chun applies the same comparative analysis method. The musicologist shows how the composer, in an effort to maximally expand the space of timbral expressiveness, imitates "the dynamic process of drawing technique, the play of ink colour and the techniques of their application in painting with the help of such methods as transparency and density of texture, as well as changes in dynamics and timbre." [16, p. 92] It is no coincidence that the title of the work — *Po Mo II* — corresponds to a special technique of applying ink in thick layers to create the impression of volume in Guohua painting. Analysing the orchestration techniques in Yang Lishan's work *Desert at Dusk*, another researcher Gong Huahua also thinks of orchestral texture as sound painting and interprets its structure and development as a result of the use of Guohua techniques. [17]

Let us dwell on a specific example to explain the specifics of the textural and timbral thinking of composers and researchers who are bearers of the Chinese mentality. One of the methods of applying ink to the surface of the scroll in Guohua painting practices is ink splashing,⁷ which can be single-layer, double-layer, or multi-layer.

In considering the implementation of this technique in relation to the symphonies of Guo Zurong, Tu Zhijie writes: "...to imitate the two-layer paint on paper after splashing the ink, the orchestra is divided into two main sound groups of equal strength, which play alternately and stand out among other instruments by their absolute sound advantage."

[15, p. 164] Analysing the development of the first movement of Guo Zurong's Symphony No. 17, the author highlights the technique of "two-layer ink splashing" as dominant. He notes that the first layer is made up of high timbres, while the second combines mid and low (Example No. 1, see mm. 50–54), and "two sound groups echo, intertwine with each other, forming bold strokes, the sound of 'ink' is heavy, similar to strong colour contrasts." [Ibid.]

By applying this method to the analysis of Guo Zurong's piano concertos, we discovered a similar technique for creating a sound fabric. Thus, in the first movement of the Piano Concerto No. 2 (mm. 232–245) the sound groups of woodwinds and strings are formed into two separate layers, which dominate over other timbres. Their alternation forms a dialogue similar to the alternation of configurations achieved by the technique of double layers of ink in Guohua paintings (cf. Example No. 2 and II. 6).

The musical fabric is designed differently, appealing to "the method of accumulating ink" (ji mo fa 積墨法).⁸ In relation to musical texture, it was examined by Ding Chong in the article "Traditions of Chinese Calligraphy and Guohua Painting in Wen Deqing's string quartet *Po Mo II*." [16] As was discovered, this principle is also widely used by Guo Zurong in the culmination sections of his piano concertos with the effect of increasing sonority from *p* to *f* not only due to dynamics, but also due to the accumulation of energy of ever new layered timbres. There are many examples of this kind.

The extent to which the considered techniques of timbre-texture graphics of musical scores are close to the effects achieved through the Guohua painting technique can be judged by comparing

⁷ "Po mo fa 泼墨法 ("method of splashed ink") — the ink solution is applied liberally to the desired area of the image so that it spreads out, leaving no traces of the brush movement." [11, p. 366]

⁸ "Ji mo fa 積墨法 ("method of accumulating ink") — the ink is applied in completely dry layers (sometimes up to 10–25 layers) sequentially from a light tone to increasingly darker tones, which allows the artist to achieve a special depth of black colour." [11, p. 366]

Example No. 1

Guo Zurong. Symphony No. 17.
First Movement, mm. 48–54

The image displays a musical score for Example No. 1, consisting of two systems of staves. The first system includes a string quartet (Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass) and a woodwind section (Flute, Clarinet, Bassoon, and Contrabass). The second system includes a string quartet and a woodwind section (Flute, Clarinet, Bassoon, and Contrabass). The score is written in a complex, rhythmic style with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes. Dynamics such as *cresc.* and *cresc.* are used throughout. The notation includes various articulations, slurs, and dynamic markings.

Example No. 2

Guo Zurong. Piano Concerto No. 2.
First movement, mm. 232–241

The image displays a musical score for Example No. 2, consisting of two systems of staves. The left system contains five staves, and the right system contains six staves. The top two staves in each system represent the piano part, while the remaining staves represent the orchestra. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. A measure number '142' is printed between the two systems. The piano part features complex rhythmic patterns and melodic lines, while the orchestra provides harmonic support with various instrumental textures.



Il. 6. Hong Zichen. *Landscape in the Chinese Style of the 17th Century*



Il. 7. Mi Youren. *Wonderful Views of Xiaoxiang*. Southern Song Dynasty

them with the paintings of old Chinese masters. Let us take as an example the scroll Mi Youren (1074–1153) from the Southern Song Dynasty *Wonderful Views of Xiaoxiang* (Il. 7), which was created “primarily using splashing and ink-laying techniques, thanks to which images are formed by the spreading and blurring of water ink. Contour lines are almost never used. Dense and transparent, dark and light shades make the landscape appear and disappear, suddenly stand out brightly, then plunge into a haze, creating a mysterious and changeable atmosphere,”⁹ which resembles the exquisite alternations of transparent and dense textures with subtle dynamic nuances in the symphonic and concert works of Chinese composers.

Conclusion

It is impossible to examine within the framework of this article the full diversity of

textural and timbre techniques that may be interpreted through analogy with the visual techniques of Guohua painting. However, even this brief comparative analysis reveals the specificity of the national “vision” of textural-timbre development, whose essence is the perception of lines, layers, condensations or rarefactions, etc., from the position of Guohua techniques, the processual perception of canvases made within the framework of the root tradition for Chinese culture. This perspective seems to be essential for understanding the method by which Chinese musicologists analyse sound colouring. And this is important, since Chinese composers address their orchestral works primarily to their own people, relying on the peculiarities of the national mentality — the totality of mental, emotional, value orientations and attitudes embedded in the cultural memory of the ethnic group.

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⁹ Source: <https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E6%BD%87%E6%B9%98%E5%A5%87%E8%A7%82%E5%9B%BE/10736178> (accessed: 11.11.2025).

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EDN VKUKOF



Between *Cantus Firmus* and Pervasive Imitation: Features of Working with Liturgical Sources in Early Tudor Composers Motets

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Abstract. The article discusses the principles of working with a plainchant in the motets of the English composers of the second half of the 15th – early 16th century. The examination of these principles could clarify the interaction between various composition techniques, such as *cantus firmus* technique and pervasive imitation. The compositional methods could be divided into four groups. Three of them (demonstrated through Richard Davy’s *In honore summae matris*, John Browne’s *O Maria Salvatoris Mater* and Robert Fayrfax’s *Magnificat Regale*) demonstrate the same tendency, namely that the chant plays no main structural role in the composition. The principle of a fragmentary *cantus prius factus* device, when a plainchant is fractal and the cantus voice no longer serves as the base of a composition, should be particularly noted. This is an example of a transitional technique; it could have originated from John Dunstaple’s motets, while also containing some pervasive imitation characteristics. John Taverner’s four-voice *Magnificat* represents a later version of *cantus prius factus* interpretation: here pervasive imitation is combined with the cantus firmus technique, based on a clear and unflorid plainchant demonstration.

Keywords: Renaissance polyphony, *cantus firmus*, pervasive imitation, motet, Eton choirbook, compositional principles interaction

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Между *cantus firmus* и сквозным имитационным письмом: особенности работы с литургическим первоисточником в мотетах композиторов эпохи ранних Тюдоров

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Аннотация. В статье рассматриваются принципы работы с одноголосным первоисточником в мотетах английских композиторов второй половины XV – начала XVI века. Изучение этих принципов может прояснить взаимодействие различных композиционных приёмов, таких как техника *cantus firmus* и сквозная имитация. Классификация методов композиции состоит из четырёх групп. Три из них (на примере *In honore summae matris* Ричарда Дэйви, *O Maria Salvatoris Mater* Джона Брауна и *Magnificat Regale* Роберта Фэрфакса) объединяются общей тенденцией — утратой структурирующей роли григорианского первоисточника в композиции. Особенно показательным становится принцип фрагментарного проведения *cantus prius factus*, когда хорал дробится и уже не является стержнем композиции. В этом случае речь идёт о переходной технике, которая восходит к мотетам Джона Данстейбла и одновременно содержит черты сквозного имитационного письма. Четырёхголосный Магнификат Джона Тавернера представляет собой уже более поздний вариант многоголосной обработки литургического *cantus prius factus*: развитая сквозная имитация в песнопении соединяется с техникой *cantus firmus*, базирующейся на ясном и неколорированном проведении одноголосного первоисточника.

Ключевые слова: ренессансная полифония, *cantus firmus*, сквозное имитационное письмо, мотет, Итонская хоровая книга, взаимодействие техник композиции

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Introduction

It is well known that throughout the Middle Ages, the single-voice primary source often served as a starting point or a foundation for creating a polyphonic composition. During the Renaissance, the *cantus firmus* technique remained one of the “mainstream” ones, which was reflected in the works of a wide variety of composers. Numerous masses and motets were composed almost exclusively in this

technique, including such polyphonic device as *cantus prius factus* (further — *c. pr. f.*). At the same time, from the second half of the 15th century onward a *pervasive imitation* (another technique that was highly symptomatic of the Renaissance) began to spread. Many motets by Antoine Busnois, Josquin des Prez and their students provide solid examples thereof. As both techniques existed in the same compositional field, the pervasive imitation interacted with the *cantus firmus* technique.

Prof. Nikolai Tarasevich dutifully notes: “It [pervasive imitation. — *G.K.*] begins its development in the epoch of La Rue, Josquin, and their contemporaries: these composers, although increasingly working with its most important characteristics (such as imitation, thematic motifs and phrases extraction), still think in terms of *c. f.*” [1, p. 52] Sometimes composers used *cantus floridus*, derived from *cantus firmus*.

The English composers of the second half of the 15th century and the early 16th century were no exception: they also focused on working with liturgical sources. *Eton Choirbook* is considered the largest motet anthology in England of the early Tudor period, covering the years from approximately 1500 to 1504. Most surviving pieces¹ are assumed to be written in *cantus firmus* technique.²

The early Renaissance English motets have not yet been examined from the point of interaction between different techniques, and the compositional aspects of working with a liturgical source have not been analyzed in detail. These aspects have not been sufficiently studied in Russian musicology, compared to foreign works; however, even in foreign musical literature, despite a larger amount of work, not all compositions and parameters have been accurately considered. The novelty of the approach of the present article consists in an attempt to classify the methods of compositional approaches to a liturgical chant source and to analytically reinterpret certain motets. This classification and some renewed analytical data should allow us to draw conclusions about the specific progress of the English motet.

A dissertation by Catherine Hocking [2] was valuable for our research due to its coverage of many liturgical sources and previously unknown plainsongs. A dissertation by Anna Teplova [3] and articles by Peter Philips [4] and Julie Cumming [5] were also indispensable for our research. Cumming’s article has been especially significant as it proposes that the technique of pervasive imitation originated from *cantus firmus* and *cantus floridus* in Renaissance compositions, and Cumming’s observations are therefore relevant to our research.

The interaction between techniques or its absence may be determined by a number of factors: the completeness of a liturgical source/plainchant and a degree of “coloration” (*florid*); the rhythmic design of the source; the preservation of *c. pr. f.* mode and its reflection in a motet; the presence of imitations or imitative systems. These aspects allow us to clearly define the role of *c. pr. f.* role in the early Tudor motets.

Finally, we have attempted to classify the principal compositional approaches to a liturgical source applied by the English composers of the late 15th and early 16th centuries. This classification is based on the rhythmic design of the liturgical source/plainchant and the *c. pr. f.* completeness within a particular piece. The classification includes four categories:

1. *C. pr. f.* is used in full, but is not rhythmically distinguished (i.e., may be introduced by various note-values, including minims).

2. *C. pr. f.* is fully used by a composer and mostly introduced by large durations (semibreves at the very least).

¹ The *Eton Choirbook* inventory says the manuscript contains 93 pieces, of which 29 pieces are listed and 21 are preserved incompletely. GB-WRec MS 178 (*Eton Choirbook*). Manuscript of polyphony: c. 1500–1504. Eton College Library, Eton, England. URL: <https://www.diamm.ac.uk/sources/202/#/> (accessed: 22.12.2025).

² At the beginning of her PhD thesis, Catherine Hocking supplied a table that demonstrates correlations between motets and applied chants. [2, pp. 6–8]

3. *C. pr. f.* is used in fragments and in rhythmically indistinguishable.

4. *C. pr. f.* is introduced with significant modifications, melodic additions and is rhythmically distinguished (i.e., its rhythmic design includes large durations).

According to the proposed classification, we shall now successively examine examples for each category.

**A Full Chant Exposition:
Richard Davy's Motet
*In honore summae matris***

The first motet to consider is a piece by Richard Davy (1465–1538) *In honore summae matris*,³ in which *c. pr. f.* is preserved without substantial melodic modifications. The origin of the piece was a responsory chant *Iusti in perpetuum vivent*, of which Davy used the verse 15 and a half of the verse 16⁴ from Chapter 5 of the Book of Wisdom. Davy's polyphonic setting consists of only first part of the responsory (verse 15).⁵ It is interesting to note that in the Sarum antiphonary this responsory is sung in the seventh church tune with the final *g*, while its continental version features both sixth and seventh church tunes.⁶

In his motet, Davy fully copies a plainsong only once, splitting the chant into four fragments that are laid only in five-voice tutti sections (in Example No. 1 we mark sections by letters “a,” “b,” “c,” and “d,” with sections limits being marked by square brackets above the score).⁷ The chant is not florid, and an original tone order is preserved. Davy's arrangement does not follow the original's correspondence between music and words. In Example No. 1, we may see that Davy's fragments do not coincide with the original chant setting: the first semi-line of the responsory's ending (“eorum”) and the beginning of the second semi-line are joined together in section “b.” The main difference between the responsory and Davy's version is the repetition of the initial “a” segment after the final motet section “Amen.” This transformation results in that the entire motet ends on the final *c*, rather than *g*, and the chant mode itself is reinterpreted in this case.

This change in the final makes the motet mode unclear compared to that of the original responsory. In Davy's motet, cadential tones are *g*, *f* and *c*; and the conclusive cadences roots (cadences of three main sections) rest on the same three pitches. The emphasis on the fourth

³ The *Eton Choirbook* and other sources contain compositions with no voice designation, e.g. Davy's *In honore summae matris* and John Banester's *O Maria et Elizabeth*. Then the voice name was invented by the editor and began to vary depending on an edition. Moreover, the individual voice from a composition can be found under different names in various sources.

⁴ These are verses 16–17 in Clementine Vulgate.

⁵ It is fixed in *Antiphonale Salisburiense*, however some other manuscripts show both verses are sung together in the responsory part, while the Verse part includes another text. Cistercian antiphoner. F.A26v. CDN-Hsmu M2149. L4. 1554. Halifax (Canada), St. Mary's University Patrick Power Library. URL: [https://cantus.simssa.ca/manuscript/123723/?folio%5B0%5D=A26v&pageAlias=Folio%20A26v#:~:text=Halifax%20\(Canada\)%2C%20St.%20Mary%E2%80%99s%20University%20%2D%20Patrick%20Power%20Library%2C%20M2149.L4%201554](https://cantus.simssa.ca/manuscript/123723/?folio%5B0%5D=A26v&pageAlias=Folio%20A26v#:~:text=Halifax%20(Canada)%2C%20St.%20Mary%E2%80%99s%20University%20%2D%20Patrick%20Power%20Library%2C%20M2149.L4%201554) (accessed: 22.12.2025).

⁶ This information is available at “Cantus Database.” URL: https://cantusdatabase.org/chant-search/?search_bar=justi+in+perpetuum+vivent (accessed: 22.12.2025).

⁷ The exposition of *c. pr. f.* only in tutti sections was characteristic of many Eton motets. [6, p. 106] *Cantus firmus* technique still mattered for composing process even if there were free-chanted sections (without *cantus firmus*).

Example No. 1

Responsory *Justi in perpetuum*

a
Ju - - - - - sti in
per - - - - - pe - tu - um
vi - - vent
et a - pud Do - - - mi - num

b
est mer - ces e - o - - - rum;
et co - gi - ta - ti - o e -

c
o - - - - - rum; a - pud
al - tis - - - - -

d
- - - - - si - mum.

degree of mode is unusual for the seventh mode/church tune, for this *d* is the reciting tone of a mode (repercussion). At the same time, a cadential root is *f*, suggesting the fifth church tune that has pitch *c* as the repercussion.⁸ This ambiguity makes it problematic to identify the mode.

However, from the point of a compositional process, it is equally important that the chant is represented with different note-values, which include both large (breve, semibreve) and small (minim, semiminim) values. Hence, although the plainsong is not florid, it does not stand out prominently from the rest of the composition,

⁸ Is there a rationale for a “reprise” of this “a” segment? Perhaps, the explanation lies in theological field. The “a” segment finishes on the word “Dominum,” and the responsory text itself has an invocation to God. I assume that this little transformation of *c. pr. f.* was intended to maintain the meaning of the Biblical text.

as the latter is characterized by the same note-values. This indicates that the role of surrounding voices is gradually increasing, leading to establishing a functional equality of all voices in compositional process. The final section, the

“Amen,” is particularly representative.⁹ Here, Davy shapes *c. pr. f.* through very different note-values, yet most importantly, he uses *soggetto* based on the first four chant tones — the only case in the entire motet (Example No. 2).

Example No. 2

Richard Davy. *In honore summae matris.*
Exposition of *soggetto* in the conclusional “Amen”

The musical score is presented in three systems. The first system consists of four staves: Treble, Mezzo, Contratenor, and Tenor. The second system consists of six staves: two Contraltos (C.), two Tenors (T.), and a Bass (B.). The third system also consists of six staves: two Contraltos (C.), two Tenors (T.), and a Bass (B.). The music is written in a single system with a common time signature. It features various rhythmic patterns, including triplets and sixteenth notes. The word 'Amen' is indicated by 'A' under the notes in several places. The score is a vocal setting of the 'Amen' in a motet.

⁹ The score is cited after the edition by Jason Smart.

URL: [https://www.cpd.org/wiki/index.php/In_honore_summae_matris_\(Richard_Davy\)](https://www.cpd.org/wiki/index.php/In_honore_summae_matris_(Richard_Davy)) (accessed: 22.12.2025).

John Taverner’s Four Voices Magnificat as an Example of a Mixed Technique

The Magnificat for Four Voices by John Taverner (c. 1490–1545), preserved in the Gyffard partbooks manuscript, illustrates another case of a clear, unflorid, but rhythmically distinguished chant. The final piece is the one-voice Magnificat from the Sarum Rite in the sixth psalm tune (as Hocking writes, “the Sarum canticle tone”).¹⁰ It is important to note an active application of imitations,

compared to Davy’s motet. The Magnificat’s even-numbered verses are polyphonic, as becomes the tradition, and Taverner’s composition consists of three parts, primarily according to the mensuration changes (see Table 1). However, there is one more aspect of division, at the level of compositional technique, since *cantus firmus* sections and free-chanted sections alternate in the Magnificat. The consecutive exposition of two techniques, *cantus firmus* and pervasive imitation,

Table 1. John Taverner. Four-voice Magnificat. Structure

Measure	Text	Semibreves amount in a section	Chant is full exposed	Fragmentary exposition chant (initial tones)	Cadential root	Amount of voices
Tempus perfectum, prolatio minor	Et exultavit spiritus meus:	36	+		<i>a</i>	4
	In Deo salutary meo	33	+		<i>f</i>	4
	Quia fecit mihi magna qui potens	39		+	<i>a</i>	3
	Et sanctam nomen eius	33		+	<i>f</i>	4
Tempus imperfectum, prolatio minor	Fecit potentiam in brachio suo,	42	+		<i>a</i>	4
	Dispersit superbos mente cordis sui.	54	+		<i>f</i>	4
	Esurientes implevit bonis:	42		+	<i>a</i>	3
	Et divites dimisit inanes	42			<i>f</i>	3
Tempus perfectum, prolatio minor	Sicut locutus est ad patres nostros:	34	+		<i>a</i>	4
	Abraham et semini eius in saecula	36	+		<i>f</i>	4
	Sicut erat in principio	33		+	<i>a</i>	2
	Et nunc et semper: Et in saeculorum. Amen	60	+		<i>f</i>	2-4

¹⁰ All versions of single-voice Magnificat in voice tunes are represented by Hocking: [2, pp. 143–145]. I also recall that psalm tune and church tune (mode) are very similar, but aren’t the same.

was generally common for the second half of the 15th – first half of the 16th century pieces, and it was observed by a wide variety of composers in different genres, in particular, in Josquin's masses. [1, p. 83] The plainsong is sung in Medius in *cantus firmus* sections and easily identified, as Taverner distinguishes *c. pr. f.* through equal augmented note-values (mostly semibreves). The chant is not colored, and Taverner uses the original pitch row. At the same time, the liturgical monody is decorated by imitations, or *soggetti*: therefore, strictly speaking, these *cantus firmus* sections should be identified as written in a mixed technique (pervasive imitation and *cantus firmus*).

Only initial notes of *c. pr. f.* are used in free-chanted sections, most of them being rhythmically obscure in a polyphonic texture. Moreover, free melodic development is followed in Medius later, and the imitation

has a structural function there. An example thereof is the section "Esurientes implevit": the initial imitation between Contratenor and Medius includes the first three chant pitches (in Example No. 3 in Medius part they are marked by crosses), followed by a sequence of three-voice imitations, in which the chant literally melts.

In other compositions by John Taverner one may observe a somewhat similar pattern of work with *c. pr. f.* There is also a division into *cantus firmus* and free-chanted sections in the motet *Ave Dei Patris filia*, where composer introduces the hymn *Te Deum* as *cantus firmus*. The chant is clearly distinguished by large note-values in the polyphonic texture. The hymn is rather long and full of melodic repetitions, whereby Taverner apparently singles out individual musical verses of the hymn to provide a constructive basis of the motet (the 1st, 2nd, 5th, 14th and 29th). Nevertheless, there are some striking differences

Example No. 3

John Taverner. Four-voice Magnificat.
Imitation systems in "Esurientes implevit"¹¹

The image shows a musical score for a four-voice Magnificat by John Taverner. It features three vocal parts: Contratenor (soprano), Medius (Tenor), and Bass. The lyrics are "E - su - ri - en -". The score illustrates imitation systems in the "Esurientes implevit" section. The Medius part has 'x' marks above certain notes, indicating specific chant pitches. Dashed boxes highlight the imitation systems between the voices.

¹¹ Double designation of Medius-Tenor part is explained by the fact that the first one is authentic and is set in the Partbook title, while the second designation is editorial (Jason Smart).

URL: [https://www.cpd.org/wiki/index.php/Magnificat_a_4_\(John_Taverner\)](https://www.cpd.org/wiki/index.php/Magnificat_a_4_(John_Taverner)) (accessed: 22.12.2025).

between *Ave Dei Patris filia* and Magnificat. First of all, the chant is exposed through large, but not equal note-values,¹² therefore a logical formation is determined not only by *c. pr. f.*, but also by surrounding free-chanted parts. As Hugh Behnam noted in his examination of *Ave Dei Patris filia*: “The choice of note-values appears arbitrary, unless mathematical processes as yet identified.” [7, p. 102] Imitation is an essential technical element of Magnificat, whereas it serves no constructional function in *Ave Dei Patris filia*, hence this is one more distinction between two compositions.¹³

A Fragmentary Exposition of *c. pr. f.*: Robert Fayrfax’s Magnificat Regale

Now we come to focus on a technique when a liturgical source is exposed only fragmentary. One of the examples is the Magnificat Regale by Robert Fayrfax (1464–1521); the composition has been preserved in a few manuscripts, including *Caius Choirbook*¹⁴ and *Lambeth Choirbook*,¹⁵ the principal early Tudor polyphony sources, as well as *Eton*

Choirbook.¹⁶ As Catherine Hocking argues, Magnificat Regale’s liturgical source is the Magnificat counterpoint for eighth canticle (psalm) tone.¹⁷ Such counterpoints were born out of improvisation on the chant or canticle and were called *faburden*.¹⁸ A counterpoint to a liturgical source serving as the basis for a polyphonic composition is considered a peculiar feature of the English tradition.

At the beginning of every even-numbered verse of the Magnificat, the initial pitches of the aforementioned counterpoint are sung in Tenor part (or in Bass part in case of the last two verses¹⁹). Example No. 4 shows *c. pr. f.* and Tenor part melody, the latter seemingly containing the same row pitches as in the supposed liturgical source. *C. pr. f.* initial tones are obvious, but later on row pitches from Magnificat counterpoint are lost. A prolonged melismatic melody remains in Tenor part, while the *faburden* seems to disappear, having only shown up at the beginning; substantial fragments are omitted,²⁰ and last four tones are possibly transposed.²¹

¹² Indeed the *Te Deum* fragment is sung by the same note-values (semibreves) in conclusional “Amen.”

¹³ *Ave Dei Patris filia* is analyzed in detail in works of Hugh Behnam and Natalya Naumova. [7, pp. 5–104; 8, pp. 78–79]

¹⁴ GB-Llp MS 1 (Lambeth Choirbook; Arundel Choirbook). Complete MS choirbook: Late 1520’s. Lambeth Palace Library, London, England. Fol. 66v–69.

¹⁵ GB-Cgc MS 667/760 (Caius Choirbook). Manuscript of polyphony: 16th century: Late 1520’s Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, England. Fol. 118–121.

¹⁶ Fayrfax Magnificat Regale is only inventoried in the *Eton Choirbook*. Moreover, Magnificat parts have no designations either in *Caius Choirbook*, or in *Lambeth Choirbook*.

¹⁷ All Magnificat tunes and their counterpoints are presented in Hocking’s PhD dissertation. [2, pp. 149–151]

¹⁸ The term “faburden” usually means an improvisational counterpoint technique, but sometimes a lower part of the faburden is also called so. [2, p. 146] According to a treatise by a Scottish Anonymous *The Art of Music Collected [collected] out of all Ancient Doctouris of Music*, there are four kinds of faburden and all of them are built on a chant. These are described in Chapter *Heir Beginniss Faburdun*. [9, pp. 127–184]

¹⁹ Periodic exposition of initial tones in verses of Fayrfax’s Magnificat is similar on *motto* principle, which is characteristic of the early Tudor masses. [8, p. 97]

²⁰ Missed *c. pr. f.* tones and fragments are given in square brackets in this and following examples. The scores come from the Humphrey Thompson edition —

URL: [https://www.cpd.org/wiki/index.php/Magnificat_regale_\(Robert_Fayrfax\)](https://www.cpd.org/wiki/index.php/Magnificat_regale_(Robert_Fayrfax)) (accessed: 22.12.2025).

²¹ One wonders, should we qualify the four tones conclusion as a transposed *c. pr. f.* fragment, rather than an average melodic line in fourth range? Is this not an exaggeration?

Example No. 4

Robert Fayrfax. Magnificat Regale. Section "Et exultavit."
Correlation of Tenor part and *c. pr. f.*

The image displays five systems of musical notation. Each system consists of two staves: the upper staff is labeled 'c. pr. f.' (cantus firmus) and the lower staff is labeled 'Tenor'. Vertical dashed lines connect notes between the two staves to show their correlation. The lyrics are written below the Tenor staff. The first system shows the beginning of the phrase 'Et exultavit'. The second system continues the phrase. The third system shows 'Spi - ri - tus me - - - us'. The fourth system shows 'in De - - - o'. The fifth system shows 'sa - lu - ta - ri me - - - o' and includes a bracket labeled 'transposition (?)' above the Tenor staff.

Could it be so that the whole row of tones was somehow hidden in one of the next sections of the Magnificat? This does not seem plausible. One of the features of the *cantus firmus* technique is that the chant is exposed through longer note-values compared to the surrounding parts. Such is the beginning of the Tenor part of the Magnificat section "Fecit potentiam," so could one trace *c. pr. f.* there? The analysis demonstrates no such note sequence. The initial pitches row (see Example No. 5) are given in

breves and semibreves, but the further melody turns into a pervasive imitation with *soggetti* — exactly as it was previously seen in Taverner's Magnificat.

What kind of composition technique was used in such cases? The Magnificat counterpoint is not the logical composition center: *c. pr. f.* is almost dissolved in melismas and imitations. This is how Peter Philips describes the compositional technique of the *Eton Choirbook* motets: "The character

Example No. 5

Robert Fayrfax. Magnificat. Section "Fecit potentiam"

C. pr. t.

Tenor

Fe - cit po - ten - ti - am in bra - chi - o su -

Contra-tenor

dis - per

C. pr. t.

T.

- o - dis - per

B.

of the pieces in the *Eton Choirbook*, alongside those in Caius and Lambeth, fully justifies the term often applied to it: ‘florid.’ Although the degree of floridity varies, almost every piece in the repertoire is more florid than anything that went before it or came after it in the English repertoire.” [4, p. 5] Philips does not speak clearly about *cantus floridus*, but certainly hints at it. The *Eton Choirbook* illustrates a saying popular at the beginning of 16th century, “Anglici vulgariter jubulare,

Gallici vero cantare dicuntur,” so two manners — a more embellished melismatic English manner and a “syllabic ‘modern’” continental one — are opposed, as Harrison states. [9, p. 258] At the same time, one would make an unfounded claim that Fayrfax’s Magnificat, as well as some other compositions of that period, were created in the *cantus floridus* technique. To make such a claim one would need to expose necessary row of tones at least once to identify a “colored” chant.²²

²² It is a prerequisite condition for determination of *cantus firmus* technique and *cantus floridus* as derived from the first one. Julia Yevdokimova was one of the first musicologists who described a coloration (floridity) as an artistic method. The term was first applied to compositions of the English musicians of the first half 15th century, in particular John Dunstaple and Guillaume Du Fay. Yevdokimova explains a colored chant or *cantus floridus* as “a free melodic outline.” She states: “If we do not know the chant melody, on which the piece is built, it is impossible to discern it in relative voices texture or to recognize by some features. A chant is often fully used, neither split up, nor repeated, its structure remaining unaltered, except for a free rhythmization. <...> Free rhythmization of *c. pr. f.* naturally leads to a melodic colorization of the chant.” [10, pp. 21–22]

The Magnificat is also different from *c. pr. f.* in the mode aspect. The faburden mode could be attributed as eighth psalm tune according to its genesis from the Magnificat tune. In all sections, final cadences end on final *f* in the Magnificat (except one, which ends on *d*). The mode attribution is still uncertain and debatable (as Hocking writes, “conflicting canticle tone assignment” [2, p. 180]). Scholars express varying views, and the Magnificat Regale tune is determined both as sixth and eighth church tune. [Ibid., pp. 140–141] It could be possible to call the Magnificat Regale tune as the transposed eighth church tune with confinal *f*, but a weak final *c* and the lack of a clear *c. pr. f.* exposition do not help to solve the mode issue. Cadences are one of the main manifestations of the harmonic system in music (in particular, Renaissance music), and they are one of the key elements of the mode demonstration, even if tonality is not concerned. At the same time, Fayrfax’s Magnificat is not the only example of such problem: similar contradictions between the cadence system as the mode base points and the actual mode liturgical source, the Magnificat counterpoint, are found in other English composers’ motets. [Ibid., p. 180]

As a result, it is difficult to discuss the application of the *cantus firmus* technique in the case of Robert Fayrfax’s Magnificat, since *c. pr. f.* does not provide a logical core to the composition. The faburden is not

rhythmically distinguished, its intonations are also very fragmentary, and the mode characteristics are also different. The same may be observed in other motets from the *Eton Choirbook*, for example, in John Banester’s *O Maria et Elizabeth*.

A Transformed Chant:

John Browne’s *O Maria Salvatoris Mater*

John Browne’s (c. 1480–1505)²³ *O Maria Salvatoris Mater* is another controversial motet from the *Eton Choirbook*. The eight-voice composition is a “preface” motet in the Eton anthology. As many English votive antiphons, *O Maria Salvatoris Mater* consists of two sections that differ by measures (Tempus perfectus, prolatio minor; Tempus perfectus, prolatio major). Hocking points out at the Office antiphon *Venit dilectus meus* [2, pp. 66–67] as a liturgical source for the motet. Indeed, in the Tenor part some melodic lines correspond to the assumed *c. pr. f.*, but the final one is not exposed entirely. The first chant segment is sung in the opening section “O Maria.” It includes the following tones: 1st and 7–20th tones, while tones 2–6 are omitted, as well as some others. In Hocking’s opinion, various *c. pr. f.* pieces are transposed (by a fifth lower), including initial *c. pr. f.* pitches (7–17th tones, omitting tones 9–13th) in “Cunctaque peccamina Parit.” The entire Tenor part and assumed chant are juxtaposed in Example No. 6.²⁴

²³ John Browne is “perhaps the greatest English composer between Dunstaple and Taverner.” [4, p. 25] His heritage far outnumbers other musicians’ pieces in the *Eton Choirbook*: fifteen compositions are noted in the anthology, although only seven have been preserved completely.

²⁴ The cited example is based on the Charles H. Giffen edition —
URL: [https://www.cpd.org/wiki/index.php/O_Maria_salvatoris_Mater_\(John_Browne\)](https://www.cpd.org/wiki/index.php/O_Maria_salvatoris_Mater_(John_Browne)) (accessed: 22.12.2025).

Example No. 6

John Browne. *O Maria Salvatoris Mater.*
The Tenor part and its correlation with *c. pr. f.*

The musical score consists of ten systems, each showing the correlation between the Tenor part and the C. pr. f. part. The lyrics are: O Ma - ri - a cun - eta - que pec - ca - mi - na. pa - rit christum vir - go ma - nens; Il - lam re - co - la - mus, cae - le - sti - a. Ad - est sem - per Ma - ri - a. his iam sanc - tis iu - bi - le - mus vo - ce, cor - de de - can - te - mus hac. no - stra me - lo - di - a.

Conclusion

Here the same pitch row is repeated with little changes²⁵ in two sections: the first begins with “Cunctaque peccamina Parit,” and the second starts with “Ad est semper Maria.”²⁶ Such accurate repetitions indicate that Browne consciously constructed the tones row, especially since its melody differs significantly from *Venit dilectus meus*.²⁷ Browne therefore offers his own chant *version* and leaves only some *c. pr. f.* fragments unchanged. How should we call this kind of technique? There are considerable differences between Browne’s *version* and the chant, which contradict both *cantus floridus* and *cantus firmus* techniques. It is for this reason Fabrice Fitch disagrees with Hocking and does not accept an exact identification of *c. pr. f.* [11, p. 36, 40] He applies the term “‘pre-intoned’ incipit” [Ibid.] to the initial chant fragment in the opening “O Maria.” It is there that Browne’s repetition of tones row begins,²⁸ yet Fitch avoids commenting on the repetition in the Tenor part. In such case as this, an attribution of the motet to a particular technique should be relative. A double repetition of tones and pitches (since rhythm is not preserved) allows to point out at the similarity to the ostinato technique in the work of Josquin, Obrecht and other composers.

It is also interesting that Browne applies these imitations only in three-to-four voices sections in *O Maria Salvatoris Mater* (for example, in *Superans nascentia*), although imitations themselves are commonly used in his other motets. As Fitch states, a “far more purposeful” imitation is what distinguishes Browne from his contemporaries and predecessors. [Ibid., p. 25]

Methods of treating liturgical sources in the early Tudors motets vary greatly, and a different compositional process unfolds in each new work. Moreover, it is not always possible to define a technique. Many motets (apart from those by Taverner) share a decline of a structural chant role as a feature. This is true of compositions where *c. pr. f.* is applied entirely with little changes to a polyphonic texture, yet is not rhythmically distinguished and exposed by different note-values, as in Davy’s *In honore summae matris*. Some examples demonstrate that the basic compositional element is no longer the chant itself, but its transformed version, hence turning into a pseudocantus.

Another group of motets consists of compositions where *c. pr. f.* is applied but in fragments and is barely maintained rhythmically. A composer pays attention only to individual intonations and melodic segments, combining and revising them in a specific manner. The result is a functional equality of voices and a transition of the logical base from the liturgical source to the rest of the voices. These principles make this compositional technique close to the pervasive imitation. The latter derives the logic of composition from the *soggetti* exposition which is often based on the chant. Fayrfax’s and his contemporaries’ motets could be described as created in *transitional technique*, when *points/soggetti* did not yet become the focus of the authors’ attention, but the *c. pr. f.* is no longer the logical

²⁵ In this repetition Browne missed and added a few tones. These changings are insignificant, so there is no profound influence on the main tone sequence (row). All basic melodic leaps and lines are repeated.

²⁶ The pitch row and its repetition are marked by an asterisk.

²⁷ It is noteworthy to pay attention to the melodic line *g-f-b-g-a-c'-f*, which does not seem to link to *c. pr. f.*

²⁸ There is the incipit at the end of the Tenor part: Browne makes a melodic arch from the end to the motet’s beginning “O Maria,” adding to the pitch row two tones, *d* and *g*. Hocking explains that the composer intended to preserve the balance and symmetry. [2, p. 71]

starting point of the composition, which leads to its splitting into parts and (or) dissolving in melismas.

In some way, the above observations prove a thesis about the pervasive imitation genesis from *cantus firmus* and *cantus floridus*. Julie Cumming demonstrates an unknown author's motet *Ave beatissima* from *Trent 89* to justify her argument.²⁹ The discant part has a colored chant, while the remaining parts are built on imitations of *c. pr. f.* extracts. [5, pp. 38–41] Indeed, Cumming's example illustrates a solid pervasive imitation, rather than a transition from one technique to another. In fact, the establishing of pervasive imitation was never linear or straightforward: *soggetti* were based both on *c. pr. f.* (section "Amen" from Davy's *In honore summae matris*, non-*cantus firmus* sections in Taverner's Magnificat) and *a composer's own melody* ("Fecit potentiam" in Fayrfax's Magnificat).

Therefore, it is highly possible that John Dunstaple's motets were "predecessors" of transitional technique motets. The growing melismas lead to *c. pr. f.* losing its dominant structural position. The *Regina celi* is an example: Dunstaple changes chant melody to such extent that *c. pr. f.* turns into "free paraphrase." [3, p. 146] Frank Harrison suggests the term *cantus fractus* for such cases. [9, p. 231] However, *Descendi in ortum meum* is the closest to transitional motets. It includes a short citation of antiphon *Descendi*, found only in the motet's beginning. Further on, it is no longer possible

to find the chant, and this type of composition reminds one of Fayrfax's Magnificat. Anna Teplova suggests that Dunstaple could have conceived *Descendi in ortum meum* as "absolutely free from borrowings," [3, p. 174] If so, it means that early Tudor composers adopted and developed those compositional tendencies that were present in Dunstaple's motets. Browne's and Davy's motets are less exemplary, but can be still associated with those works.

Finally, Taverner was of younger generation compared the *Eton Choirbook* authors, and his four-voice Magnificat is distinctive by two unequal types of logical composition formation: there are *cantus firmus* sections based on a clear and complete *c. pr. f.* representation and the sections with a paraphrased chant. The texture is full of imitations of both types, so the *soggetti* systems are created. In *cantus firmus* sections Taverner actually mixes two techniques, *cantus firmus* and, as a sort of "framing," the pervasive imitation. The composer makes a liturgical source the compositional centre, largely exposing it by same large note-values (like *cantus planus*) yet leaving the chant pitch row³⁰ unchangeable. Such obvious technique "calculations" with imitation development will be found in *cantus firmus* motets of Taverner's successors, John Sheppard, Tomas Tallis, and William Byrd. Byrd's *Miserere mihi Domine* may be considered as a model that was further complicated by introduction of a double canon. [13, p. 41]

²⁹ This musicologist points out to two "paths" of the pervasive imitation genesis: through a chanson and two "low" kinds of motet (a song motet and a chant-paraphrase motet); the imitation is intended to highlight every beginning of a new section in both cases. The chant-paraphrase motet is a motet with florid (colored) chant application, while the song motet is a "three-voice work with Latin text," close to chanson and using some imitation fragments (actually, many of them are canonic). [5, pp. 32–33, 37–38]

³⁰ It's noteworthy that forth kind of faburden examples demonstrate such principle of full equal note-values *c. pr. f.* exposition in Scottish Anonymous's treatise *Art of Music Collected [Collected] out of all Ancient Doctouris of Music*. Actually, imitations and *soggetti* are lacking in most of the examples. [12, pp. 159–184]

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Modern Response of the People's Soul: Broadcasting and Exploring Sibelius' Music in Finland over the Last Decade

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Abstract. This article is devoted to the study of the perception and interpretation of the music of Jan Sibelius in Finland during the last decade. Sibelius is by far the greatest national composer in Finland, whose music is deeply rooted in the country's culture and identity. However, his work has undergone various interpretations over time, reflecting changes in the socio-political context and cultural values. This article analyzes current trends in the performance, critical understanding, and popularization of Sibelius' music in Finland. Special attention is paid to how the changing society and modern audience perceive the composer's legacy. The study covers a wide range of sources, including concert recordings, critical articles, academic research, as well as educational programs and cultural initiatives dedicated to Sibelius. The article deals with the question of how Sibelius' music is transmitted to the younger generation of Finns, and what methods are used to preserve the relevance of his music in the modern world. The article examines the influence of various factors, such as technological development, globalization, and changing cultural values, on the perception of the composer's music. In conclusion, the article offers an insight into the role of Sibelius' music in shaping Finland's modern national identity and cultural identity.

Keywords: Jan Sibelius, Finnish music, broadcasting practice, academic research, cultural identity

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Современный отклик души народной: трансляция и исследование музыки Сибелиуса в Финляндии за последнее десятилетие

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Аннотация. Предлагаемая статья посвящена исследованию восприятия и интерпретации музыки Яна Сибелиуса в Финляндии в течение последнего десятилетия. Сибелиус, безусловно, является крупнейшим национальным композитором Финляндии, чья музыка глубоко укоренилась в культуре и идентичности страны. Его творчество подвергалось различным интерпретациям на протяжении времени, отражая изменения в общественно-политическом контексте и культурных ценностях. В данной статье анализируются современные тенденции в исполнении, критическом осмыслении и популяризации музыки Сибелиуса в Финляндии. Особое внимание уделяется тому, как меняющееся общество и современная аудитория воспринимают наследие композитора. Исследование охватывает широкий спектр источников, включая концертные записи, критические статьи, научные исследования, а также образовательные программы и культурные инициативы, посвящённые Сибелиусу. В статье затрагивается вопрос о том, как транслируется музыка Сибелиуса молодому поколению финнов и каким образом актуализируется наследие композитора в современном мире. Рассматривается влияние различных факторов на восприятие музыки композитора, таких как развитие технологий, глобализация и меняющиеся культурные ценности. В заключении предлагается осмысление роли музыки Сибелиуса в формировании современной национальной идентичности Финляндии и её культурного самосознания.

Ключевые слова: Ян Сибелиус, финская музыка, практика трансляции, академическое исследование, культурная идентичность

Introduction

The life and work of Jan Sibelius (1865–1957) is inextricably linked to the national awakening and independence of Finland. His works, such as *Finlandia*, *Kullervo*, and others, not only laid the foundation for international recognition of Finnish music, but also became cultural

symbols that absorbed the folk spirit. In Finland, Sibelius has long ceased to be just a composer — he has become one of the key symbols of the national cultural identity. It is no coincidence that people say: “Sisu, sauna, Sibelius” — his music is deeply rooted in the Finnish way of life and national character.¹

¹ Folke Gräsbeck emphasized in his interview that “Sisu, sauna and Sibelius” are the three fundamental symbols of Finnish culture. This confirms the important role of Sibelius’ music in shaping the national character of the Finns. See: Stenger W. Sisu, sauna, Sibelius and heavy metal, too. In: *this is FINLAND*. January 2015. URL: <https://finland.fi/arts-culture/sisu-sauna-sibelius-and-heavy-metal-too/?ysclid=mjfnq9wv8q919989611> (accessed: 21.12.2025).

Over the past decade, in an era of globalization and cultural diversification, broadcasting, and exploring Sibelius' musical heritage in Finland has shown a striking contrast between "preserving tradition and innovation." On the one hand, the national component is carefully preserved through traditional concert venues and performances of classical works, keeping in touch with cultural roots. On the other hand, research perspectives are expanding, interdisciplinary, and detailed scientific approaches are emerging, and modern communication tools are contributing to a modern interpretation of musical heritage. Broadcasting practices and academic research in Finland form a harmonious symbiosis. The constant flourishing of concert life provides living examples for academic research, while in-depth academic research provides a theoretical basis for innovation in concerts and cultural communication.

This study covers the period from 2015 to 2025 — a key milestone marked by a series of celebrations marking the 150th anniversary of Sibelius' birth (2015) and Finland's systematic promotion of the preservation and exploration of his musical heritage. Research materials are obtained from three main sources: first, authoritative information published by Finnish organizations, including scientific publications of the Sibelius Academy, official archives of the Lahti Sibelius Festival and bibliographic collections of the National Library of Finland; second, results of international scientific platforms, such as thematic monographs published by *Cambridge Scholars Publishing* and scientific articles published by *Sibelius One* magazine; third, proven online resources, including thematic reports and statistics from the Finnish Tourism Office (this is FINLAND) and Finnish music promotion organizations (musicfinland.fi). By combining and analyzing these diverse

materials, we aim to comprehensively present the current state of broadcasting and new developments in Sibelius music research in Finland over the past decade.

Sibelius Music Broadcasting Practice in Finland over the Last Decade: Concert Venues and Innovations

Preservation and Modernization of Traditional Concert Venues

In Finland, concerts of Sibelius' music are inextricably linked to its cultural context and historical atmosphere. The continuous operation of traditional concert venues is the essence of the practice of heritage transfer. These venues include both memorial venues closely associated with Sibelius' life and regular concerts in professional concert halls, forming a dual broadcast system: "memorial performance in context" and "professional performance."

Hämeenlinna, the birthplace of Sibelius, is an important center for broadcasting his work. His childhood home, which was turned into a museum in the 1960s, after a major renovation in 2007, has become a cultural space combining an exhibition of exhibits and musical concerts. The museum holds chamber concerts all year round, where Sibelius' piano works, songs, and chamber music are performed. On important dates such as Finnish Independence Day, Christmas, and Sibelius' birthday (December 8), themed concerts are held. For example, on December 8, 2023, the museum invited young violinists to perform Sibelius' violin works, using a violin that belonged to the composer himself and passed to his granddaughter Satu Yalas. This instrument, presented to the composer by his uncle-captain, became a material link between the past and the present, allowing the audience to experience a "spiritual response

in music” in the atmosphere of the childhood home.² This “house-museum + concert” model deeply integrates the musical experience with the historical context, transforming Sibelius’ music from an artifact into a tangible cultural memory.

The Sibelius Concert Hall in Lahti, a professional symbol of the performance of Sibelius’ music in Finland, is recognized as one of the best places to interpret his works due to its “unsurpassed acoustics.” Over the past decade, the concert hall has created a holistic system for performing Sibelius’ works through an “annual series of concerts + an emphasis on the festival.” The Lahti Symphony Orchestra, the hall’s resident orchestra, has long been committed to fully presenting Sibelius’ works, collaborating with conductors Osmo Vanska, Hannu Lintu, and others to create authoritative interpretations and recordings of many works. The 2025 Lahti Sibelius Festival was held under the motto “Sibelius-Patriot and Mystic” and presented panoramic concerts, including symphonic poems, symphonies, and chamber music: on August 28, *Kullervo* was performed, on August 29 — *The Lemminkäinen Suite*, and on August 30, the festival ended with the First Symphony. The program also included orchestral songs by Sibelius and Grieg, forming a systematic overview of Sibelius’ creative career.³ The festival invited not only local Finnish artists, but also internationally renowned performers such as soprano Karita

Mattila and baritone Davone Taines, providing both a national component of the concert and an international impact.

Helsinki, the cultural center of Finland, is also an important venue for Sibelius’ music concerts. Professional ensembles such as the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra and the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra organize regular concerts of Sibelius’ works each year at the Helsinki Concert Hall, the Finnish National Opera, and other venues. During the celebration of the 150th anniversary of Sibelius’ birth in 2015, the Athenaeum Helsinki Art Museum hosted a special exhibition “Sibelius and the World of Art,” for which Finnish pianist Folke Gräsbeck prepared original music, including recordings of 90 rare and recently discovered works by Sibelius, implementing a cross-disciplinary fusion of music and visual art. This innovative form of “exhibition + audioaccompaniment” expanded the context of Sibelius’ music distribution and attracted the attention of a wider audience, including non-specialists.

“Reconstruction of Classics” and “Discovery of Little-Known Works”

Over the past decade, Sibelius music concerts in Finland have shown a trend of parallel development of “reconstruction of classics” and “discovery of little-known works,” preserving the classical heritage. On the one hand, key works such as *Finlandia*,

² The details of the concert at the Sibelius House Museum in 2023 are based on the official archival materials of the museum. The violin used in the concert was presented to the composer in 1881, when he turned 16 years old. Currently, the instrument is in the possession of Satu Yalas, who regularly uses it in memorable concerts. See: Visit Häme. *The musical heritage of Sibelius lives on in the landscape and in today’s concerts*. URL: <https://visithame.fi/en/see-and-do/culture-heritage/sibelius-musical-heritage/> (accessed: 21.12.2025).

³ The program of the Lahti Sibelius Festival in 2025 has been officially published by the organization for the promotion of Finnish music. Founded in 1975, the festival has become a key venue for the performance of Sibelius’ works in the world. See: *Music Finland. Lahti Sibelius Festival*. URL: <https://musicfinland.fi/events/lahti-sibelius-festival/> (accessed: 21.12.2025).

the Violin Concerto, and the Seven Symphonies continue to be performed at high frequency, but the way they are performed is constantly being updated. On the other hand, the ignored early works, chamber music, and piano compositions attract more attention, forming a more complete picture of Sibelius' work.

In classical works, Finnish artists strive to bring a modern interpretation, while remaining true to the original. Folke Gräsbeck, an authoritative interpreter of Sibelius' music, has performed two-thirds of the composer's approximately 600 works. He emphasizes that the key characteristic of Sibelius' music is the "strong melody" that is evident in his early works, although it has not yet formed the "Kalevala romantic language" characteristic of the *Kullervo* and *Lemminkäinen*.⁴ During the anniversary concerts in 2015, he recorded an album on the Steinway, presented to the composer for his 50th birthday (located in the Sibelius House Museum), restoring the "warm, delicate, and lyrical tone"⁵ of Sibelius' music due to the historical quality of the instrument. This double reconstruction "instrument + interpretation" has become an important direction in the modern interpretation of classical works. Conductor Thomas Dausgaard's interpretation of the "three-dimensional texture"⁶ in Sibelius' symphonies suggested a new approach to the reconstruction of classical music. He focused on the interconnection of independently developing melodic lines, fast

figures, revealing the "irrational mystery"⁷ in Sibelius' music through subtle conducting work and allowing listeners to feel the contemporary vitality of classical works.

The discovery and promotion of obscure works has been an important breakthrough in broadcasting practice over the past decade. Finnish artists and academic organizations have collaborated with each other to discover a number of Sibelius' unpublished works and manuscripts through documentary processing and archival research, and their first performances have become highlights in concert practice. Folke Gräsbeck has long promoted Sibelius' little-known works, believing that they "bring true listening pleasure, new perspectives, and depth,"⁸ complementing the limited presentation formed only by "popular works" such as *Finlandia* and *Sad Waltz*. At his festival on the island of Korpo in Finland, he performs both classical and early chamber compositions and piano miniatures by Sibelius. In 2015, Gräsbeck invited the Australian quartet *Flinders* to perform these little-known "pearls" together. The project of recording "the complete works of Sibelius," implemented by the Lahti Symphony Orchestra in collaboration with *BIS Records*, covered all the famous works of the period from 1883 to 1931 and was published in the form of 68 CDs, which allowed listeners to fully appreciate the creative path of Sibelius and provide the concert market with an extensive inventory of little-known works.

⁴ Stenger W. Op. cit.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ The concept of "three-dimensional texture" by conductor Thomas Dausgaard is described in detail in his article dedicated to the 150th anniversary of Sibelius. The conductor focuses on the importance of fine work with textured layers to reveal the mystical essence of the works. See: Serinus J.V. Sibelius at 150: Probing Depths of the 7 Symphonies. *Classical Voice North America: Journal of the Music Critics Associations of North America*. 2015. March 17. URL: <https://classicalvoiceamerica.org/2015/03/17/sibelius-at-150-probing-depths-of-the-7-symphonies/> (accessed: 21.12.2005).

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Stenger W. Op. cit.

Chamber music, an important part of Sibelius' oeuvre, has attracted more attention over the past decade. The 2025 Lahti Sibelius Festival specially organized a chamber music concert, where the *Iloa Quartet* and pianist Ossie Tanner performed the String Quartet in *A Minor* (1889), the Piano Sonata in *F sharp Minor* (1893), and the Piano Quintet in *G Minor*, demonstrating Sibelius' mastery of small genres. Sibelius' songs caught the attention of the audience: soprano Johanna Rusanen-Cartano and tenor Klaus Florian Vogt performed Sibelius' orchestral songs in combination with Grieg's compositions, revealing the common features and unique style of Scandinavian folk song. These concerts of little-known works not only enriched the ecosystem of concerts of Sibelius' music, but also allowed the audience to get a better idea of the diversity of his creative style.

Diversification and Youth of Business Entities

Over the past decade, the subjects of broadcasting Sibelius' music in Finland have diversified, forming a three-dimensional broadcast network: "professional groups + young artists + public participation." Professional artistic groups play a leading role, young artists bring innovative energy, and broad public participation provides a solid social foundation for broadcasting heritage.

The Sibelius Academy, Finland's leading music training organization, has become a key structure for broadcasting Sibelius' music. The Academy not only trains a large number of professional performers and researchers, but also through the Global Music Project⁹ encourages undergraduate and graduate students to participate in research and performance

of Sibelius' music. Doctoral programs focus on performance practice, teaching methodology, and the cultural significance of Sibelius' music. Established by the Academy, *Trio*, a peer-reviewed journal, specializes in publications on the practice of performing Western classical music and aesthetic research, including many articles on performing techniques and stylistic analysis of Sibelius' works, providing theoretical guidance to young artists. In addition, teachers of the Academy actively participate in concert practice: for example, Folke Gräsbeck, a well-known professor of the Academy and an internationally recognized authoritative interpreter of Sibelius' music, transmits his interpretation experience and research results to the younger generation through the "learning + concert" model.

The arrival of young artists brought new energy to the broadcast of Sibelius' music. Young Finnish musicians, inheriting a traditional style of interpretation, boldly experiment with cross-disciplinary fusion and innovative forms of self-expression. For example, the Young Sibelius Festival in Helsinki in 2023 invited Finnish young musicians under the age of 30 to perform Sibelius' works in the format of chamber music and solo performances. Some performers combined electronic musical elements with traditional Sibelius pieces, creating a unique modern style of performance. Sibelius' descendants are also actively involved in broadcasting the legacy: his granddaughter Satu Yalas inherited the composer's violin and collaborates with artists such as Gräsbeck to record albums and conduct concerts, becoming an important link between family memory and music broadcasting. Young artists attract more young audiences to Sibelius' music through

⁹ The global musical project of the Sibelius Academy is described on the official website of the Institute. The project supports more than 20 students annually through participation in international studies and concerts related to the music of Sibelius. See: Sibelius Academy. Sibelius Academy's publications.

URL: <https://www.uniarts.fi/en/sibelius-academy/research-and-impact/publications/> (accessed: 21.12.2025).

social networks, online broadcasts, and other modern communication tools, effectively expanding the circle of admirers of the composer.

Broad public participation is an important guarantee of continuous broadcasting of Sibelius' music in Finland. Community choirs and amateur orchestras often include Sibelius' works in their concert programs. *Finlandia*, as a symbol of the national spirit, is a must-have piece during important holidays such as Independence Day. During the celebration of the 150th anniversary of Sibelius' birth in 2015, "The Whole Country sings Sibelius" events were held all over Finland, where residents, students, and workers sang together in a choir, forming a large-scale cultural event. Educational activities related to Sibelius are widespread: music education programs in schools introduce the composer's works, and music schools organize special courses on their performance, educating teenagers to recognize and love national music. This broadcast model of "professional leadership + public participation" has deeply rooted Sibelius' music in Finnish society, making it a common cultural asset.

Academic Research on Sibelius' Music in Finland over the Past Decade: Expanding Dimensions and In-Depth Analysis

System Support for Research Organizations and Research Platforms

Significant advances in Sibelius music research in Finland over the past decade would not have been possible without the systematic support of professional research organizations and academic platforms. These organizations and platforms lay the foundation for Sibelius' research by pooling resources, creating communication networks, and publishing

scientific results, becoming the driving force behind scientific innovation.

Sibelius Academy, Finland's leading music research organization, plays a leading role in the field of composer's music research. At the Department of Music History and Musical Aesthetics, the *Doc Mus doctoral program* has long focused on Sibelius' creativity, performance, and cultural influence, producing a large number of professional researchers. Scientific series published by the Academy include *Doc Mus Research Publications*, *Finnish Journal of Music Education* and *Finnish Journal of Ethnomusicological Research*, which contain articles on text analysis, pedagogical practice, and cultural translation the music of Sibelius. In addition, the Academy works closely with international scientific organizations, participates in organizing International symposia dedicated to Sibelius, and publishing articles, promoting international dissemination of the results of local Finnish research.

The National Library of Finland, an important organization for the preservation of Sibelius' documents, provides extensive support in the form of primary sources for scientific research. The library is responsible for compiling the "Complete Works of Jan Sibelius,"¹⁰ which uses a critical approach to the systematic processing of manuscripts and variants of Sibelius' works, providing researchers with an authoritative text base. The Taju Library's institutional knowledge base Taju contains electronic resources such as doctoral theses and research reports from the Sibelius Academy, providing open access to scientific results and facilitating search and citation for researchers from different countries. In the year of the 150th anniversary of Sibelius'

¹⁰ The project "The Complete Works of Sibelius" was launched by the National Library of Finland in 1996. By 2025, 32 volumes have been published, covering various genres of the composer's work. For more information, see: [1].

birth in 2015, the National Library of Finland, in collaboration with the city of Hämeenlinna, organized an International Symposium dedicated to Sibelius, where scholars from all over the world gathered in the composer's homeland to discuss his work, historical context, and cultural influence. The results of the conference were published by *Cambridge Scholars Publishing* under the title *Jean Sibelius's Legacy: Research on his 150th Anniversary*, [2] becoming an important document in Sibelius' research over the past decade.

The interaction of international academic platforms and Finnish research has further expanded the international perspective of Sibelius' music research. Sibelius One, the authoritative international platform for Sibelius research, publishes a semi-annual journal and contains scientific articles, concert reviews, and bibliographic lists in which the contribution of Finnish scientists plays an important role. In the July 2025 issue of the magazine, Professor of the Sibelius Academy Veijo Murtomäki published an article *Patriotism and Political Nationalism in Sibelius the Late 1910s*, [3] analyzing Sibelius' work on the eve and after the independence of Finland and revealing the complex relationship between his work and that of the Soviet Union music and political context.¹¹ International symposia provide local scientists with a platform to communicate with international colleagues. Since 1990, symposia have been held in Helsinki, Oxford, Hämeenlinna, and other places. The sixth Hämeenlinna Symposium in 2015 included articles by Finnish scholars on Sibelius' chamber music and songs, promoting international recognition of research on lesser-known works. This research model "support for local organizations + interaction

with international platforms" ensures national uniqueness of research and diversification of the scientific perspective.

***Expanding Research Dimensions:
from Text Analysis
to Interdisciplinary Research***

Research on Sibelius' music in Finland over the past decade has gone beyond the traditional analysis of the text of music, showing a trend towards interdisciplinary and multidimensional research. Scholars no longer focus on the technical characteristics of works such as melody, harmony, and structure, but instead view Sibelius' music in a broad historical, cultural, and social context, conducting cross-disciplinary research with literature, history, geography, and pedagogy, enriching the depth and breadth of research.

The relationship between music and national cultural identity remains a key topic in Sibelius' research in Finland. Over the past decade, research has become more focused on the combination of historical context and contemporary meaning. Veijo Murtomäki, an authoritative Finnish researcher of Sibelius, has long studied the relationship between his music and the formation of Finnish national identity. His monograph *Jean Sibelius ja isänmaa* (Jan Sibelius and the Motherland) [4] deeply analyzes the connection between Sibelius' work and the Finnish independence movement, and the article 2025, dedicated to the critical period of the late 1910s, reveals the complex interweaving of patriotism and political nationalism in Sibelius' music. By studying the epic elements and folklore materials in such works as *Finlandia* and *Kullervo*, the researchers explore how Sibelius shaped the Finnish national image through music and

¹¹ The article by Veijo Murtomäki analyzes Sibelius' letters and drafts from the period 1917–1920, revealing the connection between the Fifth Symphony and the political context of Finland.

how this image functions in modern Finland. Research shows that Sibelius' music remains the core of Finnish national identity, as it not only carries historical memory, but also adapts to the cultural needs of different eras. In the era of globalization, this nationality is becoming an important symbol of Finnish culture's entry into the international arena.

The study of nature and geography has been an important innovation in Sibelius' research over the past decade. Finnish scientists, using theoretical perspectives of environmental humanitarianism, explore the image of the Finnish natural landscape in Sibelius' music and its connection with the Finnish view of nature. Later Sibelius' work *Tapiola* is considered as an example of "natural music." Scientists analyze the shape, texture, and orchestration of the piece and interpret how the music reproduces the mysterious atmosphere and vitality of Finnish forests. These studies draw attention not only to the artistic characteristics of the works, but also to the deep relationship between music, the environment, and national character — the vast forests, lakes, and other natural landscapes of Finland inspired Sibelius, and his music, in turn, increased the love and reverence of Finns for nature. The international research project *Scandinavian Music and Cultural Geography*, implemented by Professor Daniel Grimley of the University of Oxford in collaboration with Finnish scientists, includes a section on Sibelius, which has received support from Finnish scientific organizations and has become an example of interdisciplinary research.

Studies of Sibelius' creative techniques and aesthetic ideas over the past decade have shown a tendency to detail and systematize. Analyzing manuscripts and drafts of works, scientists reveal the creative process and evolution of Sibelius' style. Timo Virtanen, editor-in-chief of *The Complete Works of Jan Sibelius*, has long been engaged in musical and documentary

research, finding out the chronology of the creation of works and transmitting variants through comparing different handwritten and printed publications, providing a solid documentary base for analyzing the text. In addition, scientists pay attention to the mutual influences of Sibelius and contemporary composers: for example, Murtomäki's article *Sibelius and Busoni* in the *Sibelius One* journal [5] examines the influence of two composers in the field of aesthetic ideas and creative techniques, which expands the international perspective of research. In aesthetic studies, scholars focus on "mysticism," and "minimalism" in Sibelius' music, analyzing the thickening and elevation of musical language in the composer's later works, as well as the impact of this aesthetic orientation on contemporary music.

Sibelius' research in the field of music education is an important applied field that has emerged over the past decade. With the spread of Sibelius' music in general education and music schools in Finland, scientists began to study practical ways and methods of teaching his works. Researchers from the Sibelius Academy are studying empirically how to integrate the composer's works into music programs of different age groups, while simultaneously developing students' performance skills and strengthening their national cultural identity. The collection of articles *Expanding Professionalism in Music and Higher Music Education: A Changing Game* [6] includes research by Finnish scientists on teaching Sibelius' works, offering innovative methods such as "experimental learning" and "cultural-contextual learning," and providing a theoretical guide for the practice of music education. These applied studies build a bridge between academic research and pedagogical practice, advancing the transmission of Sibelius' music from generation to generation.

***Publication and Dissemination
of Research Results:
Books, Articles, and Digital Resources***

Over the past decade, the results of research on Sibelius' music in Finland have been presented in various forms, including books, scientific articles and digital resources, forming a diversified publication system of "monographs + journal articles + digital documents," which has contributed to the wide dissemination and scientific exchange of research results.

In the field of publications, Finnish scientists produce systematic comprehensive studies and thematic monographs. Veijo Murtomäki, a leading Finnish Sibelius scholar, has published several influential monographs, including *Symphonic Unity: The Development of Formal Thinking in the Symphonies of Sibelius* [7] is a classic document in research on Sibelius' symphonies, which is still widely cited. His 2007 monograph *Jean Sibelius ja isänmaa* was reprinted several times, becoming a key source for research on the relationship between Sibelius' music and nationalism. International collaborations are also important. The collection writings *Jean Sibelius Legacy: Research on his 150th Anniversary* [2] published by Cambridge Scholars Publishing in 2015, includes articles by scientists from Finland, the United Kingdom, the United States, and other countries where the contribution of Finnish scientists it is a third of the total volume. The content covers Sibelius' work in all genres, including orchestral music, chamber music and songs. Well-known works are analyzed in detail and new compositions are researched. The 2021 Chinese edition of *Sibelius*, [8] although written by a British scientist, was verified by Finnish Sibelius research specialists.

The analysis of Sibelius' late creative silence period in the book integrates the latest Finnish research, becoming a bridge between Sibelius' Chinese and Finnish studies.

The publication of scientific articles demonstrates a trend of "stable growth in quantity and quality improvement." According to statistics, from 1981 to 2022, 238 journal articles about Sibelius were published in the world, of which more than 40% were published from 2012 to 2022.¹² Articles of Finnish scientists are published in reputable publications. Like pearls, they naturally take pride of place in recognized music publications, such as *Trio*, *Finnish Magazine of Music Education* and *Sibelius One*. The themes of their works are as multifaceted as the facets of a diamond: from a close analysis of the musical text, such as the study of K. Kallioniemi *Melodic Features and Structural Innovations in Sibelius's Piano Sonata*, [9] before penetration into cultural and historical roots, as in the article by A.O. Väisänen *The Influence of the Epic Kalevala on Sibelius' Early Works*. [10] The questions of concert practice and the history of perception, revealed in works like J. Heikkinen *Traditions and Innovations in the Performance of Sibelius' Works by the Lahti Symphony Orchestra*, [11] are also not left out. It is noteworthy that the works of Finnish researchers organically combine theoretical depth with concrete examples drawn from concert life, which is a vivid reflection of the Finnish tradition of combining theory with practice.

A real breakthrough in the dissemination of knowledge about Sibelius over the past decade has been the creation and opening of digital archives. The Sibelius Digital Archive

¹² Statistics on publications related to Sibelius show that the works of Finnish scientists account for about 28% of the total number of publications in the world. A source: 掌桥科研. "西贝柳斯论文文献" (Zhǎng qiáo kēyán. "Xī bèi liǔ sī lùn wén wén xiàn = Zhangqiao Research. "Sibelius Papers and Literature") [EB/OL]. 2022-07-17.

of the National Library of Finland is a treasure trove of manuscripts, letters, photographs, and other invaluable evidence of the composer's life and work, including first-time published digital copies of manuscripts available for online study by researchers around the world. The institutional knowledge base of the Sibelius Academy Taju opens up the full text of numerous doctoral theses and research reports; between 2020 and 2025, 15 works on Sibelius' music were published, covering music analysis, pedagogical aspects, cultural broadcasting, and other important areas. In addition, the online platform of *Sibelius One* magazine publishes not only the latest scientific articles, but also provides information about concerts, recommendations for listening to recordings and other useful content, becoming a true digital center that combines scientific research and its practical application. The advent of these digital resources has erased geographical boundaries, expanding research opportunities, allowing scientists from all over the world to get acquainted with the results of Finnish research on Sibelius and increasing the international prestige of local developments.

**Transformation of Cultural Value
and Modern Significance
Sibelius Music in Finland**

***From the National Symbol
to the Cultural Industry:
Diversified Value Transformation Paths***

Finland in recent years has not only been actively engaged in preserving and studying Sibelius' musical heritage, but also boldly experimenting with its modern cultural transformation. Using diverse approaches such as "music + tourism," "music + education," and "music + creative industries," the country transforms intangible musical wealth into concrete cultural products and industrial assets,

finding a harmonious balance between cultural and economic values.

"Music + Tourism" has become one of the key areas of cultural value transformation. Places that are inextricably linked to Sibelius' name, such as Hämeenlinna (city of birth), the Ainola House Museum and the Sibelius Concert Hall in Lahti, have become iconic sites of Finnish cultural tourism. The Sibelius Children's Home-Museum in Hämeenlinn welcomes tens of thousands of visitors every year; the museum offers a unique "music tour" that includes a guided tour of the house, chamber concerts, and stories about the composer's life, allowing guests to get deeper into the atmosphere of Finnish music and culture. The Lahti Sibelius Festival has become a prestigious international music destination: in 2025, the festival attracted audiences from more than 20 countries, stimulating the development of the hotel business, restaurant business, transport infrastructure and other related industries in Lahti. The Finnish Tourism Office actively promotes music tourism dedicated to Sibelius, presenting on its official website the theme route "Sibelius Musical Journey" — from Helsinki to Hämeenlinna and Lahti, combining iconic places associated with the composer into an attractive tourist product. Such a model, where "musical heritage is combined with vivid impressions," allows tourists not only to get acquainted with the music and culture of Sibelius, but also makes a significant contribution to the economic development of the region.

The transformational path of "music + education" finds its expression in the deep integration of Sibelius' music into the Finnish music education system. The educational programs of Finnish schools include Sibelius' works in the main curriculum, forming students' musical literacy and national identity through listening, singing, and performing. Higher music education institutions, such as

the Sibelius Academy, offer specialized courses in the performance and research of the composer's works, attracting students from all over the world and creating a recognizable international brand of music education. In addition, music schools and centers in Finland organize "Sibelius master classes" and "Sibelius competitions for young performers," providing a platform for demonstrating and developing young talents. This educational model, which combines "education and professional training," not only ensures continuity in the transmission of Sibelius' musical heritage to the next generations, but also increases the overall level of music education in Finland, preparing qualified professionals for the music industry.

The interdisciplinary direction "music + creative industries" pushes the boundaries of transforming the value of Sibelius' music. Finnish creative companies create a whole series of original products inspired by motifs from the composer's music and biography: stationery with a portrait of Sibelius and sheet music, music boxes that reproduce the melodies of the *Finnish Anthem* and *Tapiola*, interior items stylized as the Sibelius House-Museum. These creative products combine artistic merit and practical utility, becoming important conduits for the culture associated with Sibelius' music. In addition, the composer's music is actively played in movies, video games, and other areas: the soundtrack to the Finnish film by Aku Louhimies' *Tuntematon sotilas* (Unknown Soldier) (2017) contains quotes from the *Finnish Anthem*, enhancing the national sound of the picture; in the Finnish mobile game *Norse Mythology*, Sibelius' orchestral music is used as a background, introducing the younger generation to national music in a playful way. This way of transformation through interdisciplinary synthesis allows Sibelius' music to go beyond traditional cultural spaces and seamlessly integrate into the everyday life of modern people.

Current Meaning: Maintaining Cultural Identity and Bridging International Dialogue

In modern Finland, the preservation and study of Sibelius' music is of great importance: this is not only the protection and promotion of national cultural heritage, but also an important element that forms cultural identity and promotes international cultural dialogue.

Sibelius' music is still the quintessence of Finnish national identity. In the era of globalization, when there are more and more contradictions between cultural diversity and unification, Sibelius' music, as a unique Finnish cultural symbol, is a powerful factor that unites public sentiment and strengthens cultural identity. The performance of the *Finnish Anthem* during festive events such as Independence Day can awaken the historical memory and national pride of Finns, strengthening collective self-awareness; the celebration of nature, life, and freedom in Sibelius' music resonates deeply with the way of life and values of Finns, being a musical reflection of the Finnish national character. Practical activities and research conducted in recent years have deepened Finns' understanding of the cultural essence of Sibelius' music, allowing it to continue to serve as a unifying principle and pass on cultural traditions to future generations.

Sibelius' music has become an important bridge connecting Finland with the global cultural community. As the most famous Finnish composer, Sibelius has long crossed national borders, becoming an integral part of the world musical heritage. Over the past decade, Finland has demonstrated to the world the contemporary appeal of Sibelius' music by hosting international Sibelius festivals, international academic conferences, producing authoritative recordings, and publishing scientific research, which has allowed Finnish culture to gain even wider international recognition. The Lahti Sibelius Festival invites

world-renowned musicians to participate in concerts, popularizing Sibelius' music and promoting the exchange of musical ideas between Finland and other countries; scientific works of Finnish researchers are published in international journals and presented at scientific conferences, allowing the world to better understand the cultural roots and artistic value of Sibelius' music. This international dialogue "through music" not only enhances Finland's cultural influence in the world, but also opens up opportunities for mutual understanding and respect between different countries and cultures.

Finland has developed a comprehensive approach to heritage conservation Sibelius' project, which combines the transmission of performing traditions, scientific editing of works and their cultural actualization, which makes its heritage alive and significant in the 21st century, was able to breathe new life into the musical heritage, proving that traditional art still has a huge potential in the modern world. This model emphasizes the need for respect for the authenticity of heritage, as well as attention to modern innovations and applications, avoiding both rigor and conservatism, as well as excessive commercialization that can distort the essence of heritage. Finland's experience is of great importance to other countries seeking to preserve their musical heritage — only through an organic combination of knowledge transfer, research, and modern reinterpretation can traditional art be allowed to shine in new times.

Conclusion

Over the last decade (2015–2025), the preservation and study of Sibelius' music in Finland has been characterized by comprehensive development and profound innovation. In the field of Finnish experience transfer, we have managed to create a holistic

system that includes both professionals and amateurs, combining tradition and modernity through the preservation and modernization of classical concert venues, the revival of classical works and the discovery of little-known works, as well as the diversification and expansion of the audience, thanks to which Sibelius' music has firmly established itself in Finnish culture. In the field of scientific research, with the help of reputable organizations such as the Sibelius Academy and the National Library of Finland, Finnish scientists have expanded their research areas, moving from traditional text analysis to interdisciplinary research, and published many high-quality monographs, articles, and digital resources, helping to deepen and expand the scope of Sibelius' research. In the area of cultural transformation, Finland has been able to breathe new life into the musical heritage by using approaches such as "music + tourism," "music + education," and "music + creative industries," making it an important tool for maintaining cultural identity and promoting international dialogue.

The success of preserving and studying Sibelius' music in Finland is based on the fundamental principle of "equal attention to the national and international, unity of traditions and innovation."¹³ On the one hand, Finland carefully preserves the national identity of Sibelius' music, closely linking it with its own history, culture, and nature, which makes it an irreplaceable cultural symbol. On the other hand, Finland openly embraces globalization and modernization, using international exchange, interdisciplinary approaches and digital technologies to adapt traditional musical heritage to the needs of modern society. This model of conservation and research not only allows Sibelius' music to be a model of inspiration in Finland, but also serves as

¹³ "This is Finland — Sibelius!" — national program to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the composer / Ministry of Education and Culture of Finland, 2015. URL: <https://sibelius150.fi/en> (accessed: 21.12.2025).

a valuable example for the protection and development of the world's musical heritage.

In the future, the preservation and study of Sibelius' music in Finland has even greater potential for development: in the field of experience transfer, digital technologies such as virtual reality and online concerts can be used more actively to expand the audience; in the field of scientific research, interdisciplinary research can be deepened, strengthening cooperation

with literature, history, ecology and other fields in the area of value transformation, more models of interdisciplinary collaboration can be explored, allowing Sibelius' music to play an even more significant cultural and social role. In any case, Sibelius, as the soul of the Finnish people, and his musical heritage will remain an important part of the cultural map of Finland, symbolizing the connection between the past and the future, national identity and the whole world.

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EDN XHYHKO



Pyotr Tchaikovsky: The Composer's Circle of Virtual and Real Communication

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Abstract. The article sets out to reveal the specifics of cultural dialogues between the composer Pyotr Tchaikovsky and the poet Lord George Gordon Byron, as well as with the writer Leo Tolstoy and the philosopher Vladimir Solovyov. Regardless of whether the creative communication between these figures was real or “virtual,” the author focuses on aspects that contribute to: (1) the accumulation of new knowledge regarding the composer’s worldview; (2) understanding the essence of the profound foundations of one of Tchaikovsky’s most beloved works — the opera *The Enchantress*; (3) generating interest among Chinese audiences in *The Enchantress*, given that at the core of this work lies the phenomenon of transformation, representing an integral concept in Chinese philosophy, along with the theme of patriotism (the latter revealed through the image of the opera’s heroine, Nastasya “Kuma,” embodying the archetype of the native land). At the same time, the study of the dialogical interaction of geniuses of world culture allows us to identify “strange convergences” between them, which occur at the crossroads of ways, eras and countries.

Keywords: Pyotr Tchaikovsky, George Gordon Byron, Vladimir Solovyov, Leo Tolstoy, opera *The Enchantress*, novel *Resurrection*, dialogue

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П.И. Чайковский: круг виртуального и реального общения композитора

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Аннотация. В статье осуществляется попытка раскрыть специфику культурных диалогов композитора Петра Чайковского с поэтом лордом Джорджем Гордоном Байроном, писателем Львом Толстым и философом Владимиром Соловьёвым. Независимо от того, было ли творческое общение обозначенных персоналий реальным или виртуальным, автор останавливается на таких его моментах, которые способствуют: 1) приращению нового знания относительно мировоззренческих установок композитора; 2) смыслопостижению глубинных основ одного из любимейших произведений Чайковского — оперы «Чародейка»; 3) интересу китайского зрителя к опере «Чародейка» ввиду того, что в центре этого произведения — феномен преобразования как неотъемлемый концепт китайской философии, а также тема патриотизма (последняя раскрывается в том, что образ главной героини оперы Кумы Настасьи воплощает собой архетип родной земли). Вместе с тем исследование диалогического взаимодействия гениев мировой культуры позволяет выявить «странные сближения» между ними, которые встречаются на перепутье дорог, эпох и стран.

Ключевые слова: Пётр Чайковский, Джордж Гордон Байрон, Владимир Соловьёв, Лев Толстой, опера «Чародейка», роман «Воскресение», диалог

Introduction

The past year, 2025, was marked by an anniversary date associated with the name of Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, whose 185th birthday was celebrated by the international community. While, in the context of this event, it might seem that everything that in one way or another bears the stamp of this genius of Russian musical culture has long been studied, the current state of musical art, including creative innovations on the part of foreign masters, convinces us of the opposite. The present work offers a new perspective in the study of the master's creative legacy, which clearly shows that today Tchaikovsky's place among the most researched composers remains secure.

Pyotr Tchaikovsky and George Gordon Byron

It is known that the closet drama *Manfred*, written by George Gordon Byron, formed the basis for Tchaikovsky's programmatic symphony of the same name, on which he was working in 1885. The fact that the composer was attracted to the philosophical and dramatic poem is not surprising. His interest in philosophical problems and philosophy in general manifested itself throughout his life, not only through reading relevant literature, but also through direct communication with philosophers. Among them was the composer Sergei Taneyev's brother, Vladimir Ivanovich Taneyev (1840–1921). It is known for certain that Vladimir Taneyev was part of Tchaikovsky's

circle of close friends from his time as a student at the School of Law. [1]

As Pavel Morozov [2] notes, Tchaikovsky, Doctor Alexander Buturlin, who knew the Gospel very well, actress Maria Ermolova, Sergei Taneyev, Ivan Turgenev, as well as various doctors, lawyers, and historians attended the so-called “academic dinners” at Vladimir Ivanovich’s house. The appeal of the philosopher Taneyev’s house for all these people lay not only in his hospitality, but also in the unique library that Vladimir Ivanovich began collecting in his youth. It contained over twenty thousand volumes, which were located in three rooms.¹ No less attractive for meetings was the Demyanovo estate, located near Moscow, where Vladimir Taneyev also hosted the philosopher Vladimir Solovyov. [Ibid., pp. 16–17]

Byron, as is known, not only showed respect for the works of the French philosophers Montaigne, Voltaire and Rousseau, but was also familiar with the philosophical maxims of the English philosophers Bacon, Hobbes and Locke, as well as the Scottish philosopher Hume. From this point of view, Tchaikovsky’s interest in Byron’s work presumably arose not so much due to the poet’s romantic nature and the characters born of his genius as to the philosophical nature of his artistic legacy.

It is no coincidence that the hero of Byron’s poem was included in the title of the four-hand piano piece by the philosopher Nietzsche, entitled *The Melancholy of Manfred*.²

Remarkably, the names of Tchaikovsky and Lord Byron again appeared side by side centuries later, but for a completely different reason. [3] Thus, in 2017, an announcement was posted on the website of the University of Michigan’s School of Music, Theatre, and Dance, which trains undergraduate and graduate students in the performing arts,³ about the premiere of an opera entitled *The Enchantress* scheduled for November 11. While information about a premiere opera production might seem commonplace for Michigan students,⁴ the author of the present article found this information quite intriguing. After making some enquiries, it was possible to ascertain that this Michigan *Enchantress* had nothing to do with Tchaikovsky’s opera. The teachers and students had created an entirely new work, borrowing only the title from their great predecessor.

The newly commissioned *Enchantress* from Michigan artists, led by composer Kamala Sankaram and librettist Rob Handel, is dedicated to Lord Byron’s daughter, Ada Lovelace (1815–1852), who is remembered for her contributions to science. The full title of the opera is:

¹ When, at the request of Anatoly Lunacharsky, Vladimir Taneyev was offered to sell the library for one hundred rubles, he refused and handed it over to the Soviet government free of charge, for which he received a “letter of protection” from Lenin. [2, p. 17]

² See: Walters E. The Musical Equivalent of a “Crime in the Moral World,” the Music of Friedrich Nietzsche. URL: <http://www.critical-theory.com/the-musical-equivalent-of-a-crime-in-the-moral-world-the-music-of-friedrich-nietzsche/> (accessed: 29.11.2025).

³ The school was founded in 1880 after Henry Simmons Freese, founder and president of the Union Choirs and the University Musical Society, urged the school’s leaders to include music in the curriculum. It is located on the University of Michigan’s North Campus, which also houses the College of Engineering, the Stamps School of Art and Design, and the Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning. Every year, more than a dozen productions and concerts are presented on the main stage.

⁴ In particular, the studio productions organised annually by the university include, as a rule, three musicals, two operas (opera scenes), four or five theatrical productions, and many choreographic performances.

“Ada Lovelace. Opera performance of *Enchantress*” Since the opera’s plot revolves around the life and fate of a female mathematician who paved the way for the computer revolution, the Enchantress here is not Nastasya “Kuma,” but a brilliant scientist far ahead of her time. At the same time, like Tchaikovsky’s heroine, who exists only in the space of artistic reality, Ada Lovelace was a stunningly beautiful woman (Il. 1), whose life turned out to be no less tragic than Nastasya’s.

The opera called for two sopranos, a mezzo-soprano, a tenor, a baritone, a bass-baritone, a piano and a string quartet. It is noteworthy



Il. 1. Margaret Sarah Carpenter. Portrait of Ada Lovelace

that this work that first emerged on the main stage of the University of Michigan later went beyond the boundaries of the higher educational institution to enjoy repeated productions on more prestigious stages, with the only caveat that these new productions received a different title from the original. First the work was renamed to *The Number Enchantress Ada Lovelace*, but subsequently lost its connection with the title of Tchaikovsky’s opera altogether, as indicated on the University of Michigan School website. In 2022, the production, now staged by New Camerata Opera — one of New York City’s most active and prominent opera companies — was titled *The Infinite Energy of Ada Lovelace*. The same title appeared in the 2023 production, when the opera was presented by the Marble City Opera company. Among the performers of the title role were Emily Hughes and Teresa Kesser.

Pyotr Tchaikovsky and Leo Tolstoy

When mentioning works dedicated to Tchaikovsky’s opera *The Enchantress*, it is necessary to acknowledge the extensive research of Boris Asafiev, who examined this — perhaps the composer’s most beloved — creation from various angles. Here it is relevant that the academician repeatedly places the name of Leo Tolstoy next to Tchaikovsky’s name, sometimes bringing them closer together, sometimes moving them apart. Asafiev reveals similarities between the composer’s work on his musical creations and the writer’s work on texts. In particular, he notes that Tchaikovsky’s search for “an absolutely non-formal form” and flexible intonations took place “in the same way as Leo Tolstoy searched for them, for a long time and passionately, for example, ... when he agonized over the appearance of Katyusha Maslova.” [4, p. 143]⁵

⁵ “In this work of Tchaikovsky there is a similarity with the corresponding work, secondary, tertiary, etc., on texts by Leo Tolstoy.” [4, p. 155]

The appeal to the words of one of the most prominent researchers of Tchaikovsky's work seems important due to the fact that in the opera *The Enchantress*, written in 1887, and Tolstoy's novel *Resurrection*, which was completed in 1899, there are direct and indirect echoes. Along with the phenomenon of transformation, which is key to both the opera and the novel, the main heroine of *Resurrection*, like Kuma, has a "demonic attraction... sees nature and enjoys it...; lives in love for people despite the fact that people... strive to kill this love in her."⁶ No less interesting is the fact that in the 1914 Japanese theatrical production of *Resurrection*, which took place on the stage of the Tokyo Theatre, the image of Katyusha Maslova was perceived exclusively in a musical sense, for which a song was specially written for the main character, which gained incredible popularity. Its authors were director Hogetsu Shimamura, who also wrote the lyrics, and composer Nakayama Shimpei. "When you sing this song," Hogetsu Shimamura testified, "you mentally imagine a river carrying its waters across the endless fields of Russia, now winding, now twisting, like life itself..." (quoted from: [5, p. 74]).

Considering that Tchaikovsky's opera *The Enchantress* has never been staged in Japan, the resemblances revealed between the production of Tolstoy's *Resurrection* by Japanese masters and the stage version of the said opera on the Russian stage cannot fail to impress. In the absence of precise information

regarding whether Tolstoy was familiar with Ippolit Shpazhinsky's drama or Tchaikovsky's opera based on it, we can only agree that, alongside Asafiev, modern researchers are quite justified in placing the names of the composer and the writer next to each other.

No less important in the question of the writer's cultural sensitivities is Tolstoy's virtual dialogue with representatives of Chinese philosophy. Among the concepts close to the writer's heart, one can name the teachings of Confucius and Laozi. Thus, at the end of February 1884, Tolstoy wrote to Vladimir Chertkov⁷ about his immersion in the world of Chinese philosophy: "I am sitting at home in the heat with a severe runny nose and have been reading Confucius for the second day. It is difficult to believe what kind of extraordinary moral height this represents. One enjoys seeing how this teaching sometimes reaches the heights of Christian thinking."⁸

A few days later (4–6 March), Tolstoy again shares his spiritual discoveries with Chertkov: "I am busy with Chinese religion. I learned a lot of good, useful and joyful things for myself. With God's help, I want to share with others."⁹ (In parentheses, we note that this intention of Tolstoy was realised, which can be judged on the basis of the exposition of the Chinese teaching of Confucius [6] that he wrote.) On 27th March 1884, in his Diary, Tolstoy makes the following entry: "I also attribute my moral state to reading Confucius and, most importantly, Laozi."¹⁰

⁶ For more details on this issue see: Vinogradova O. *Resurrection. Tolstoy. Maslova-Christ*. URL: <https://proza.ru/2020/10/19/1215> (accessed: 05.12.2025).

⁷ Vladimir Chertkov (1854–1936) — prominent "Tolstoyan" and publisher of Tolstoy's works.

⁸ [Tolstoy L.N.] *Chinese wisdom. Books of Confucius*. (In rubric "Chinese Wisdom"). URL: <https://tolstoy-lit.ru/tolstoy/chernoviki/kitajskaya-mudrost.htm> (accessed: 05.12.2025).

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

It seems that Tolstoy's attention to Confucius is explained mainly by the fact that the teachings of the Chinese thinker were opposed to everything obscure, transcendental and miraculous. Confucius was not inspired by abstract problems or questions of religious metaphysics, but preferred to concentrate exclusively on clarifying questions of practical morality and the foundations of human coexistence. The high level of humanity and the preaching of selflessness and love for people that distinguish the teachings of Confucius were very much in line with Tolstoy's own thoughts on this matter. As for Laozi, it is believed that the Russian writer responded particularly to his preaching about physical abstinence, which is necessary for the development of the spiritual principle within oneself, which alone constitutes the basis of human life.

From the point of view of this essay, it is noteworthy that Tchaikovsky also showed interest in Chinese culture. We learn about this from a publication dedicated to the dance entitled "Tea" from the ballet *Nutcracker*. To reveal the character of this dance number, the composer used, along with genuine folk melodies, instruments characteristic of Chinese musical culture (see more details: [7, pp. 146–151; 8]).

Based on the available data, we believe that, just as Tolstoy's *Resurrection*, according to literary scholar Viktor Shklovsky, "came to the Land of the Rising Sun as an opera, turned into a song and showed the people a new essence of love," [5, p. 74] in the Chinese context, Tchaikovsky's opera *The Enchantress* takes an exalted position among such works as the most beloved by Chinese audiences, such as the opera *Eugene Onegin* and the ballet *Nutcracker*. Firstly, we are talking about the fact that the philosophy of transformation realised by Tchaikovsky in the image of Nastasya

"Kuma" is close to the moral philosophy of the teacher Confucius. This is clearly demonstrated by the 1993 Sichuan opera version of Puccini's opera *Turandot* (libretto by Wei Minglun, score by Liao Zhongrong), entitled *Princess Turandot*.

Let us recall that according to the Sichuan version, "...the consequence of the transformation of Turandot's character... is the beauty of Liu's deed, which is beautiful because it corresponds to such qualities as her nobility, fidelity and the correspondence of words to deeds, etc. That is why, shocked by the moral greatness of the girl, Turandot renounces worldly passions and, thus *transformed*, takes on the sublime image of Liu, relentlessly following the Nameless Wanderer (mine italics. — *Sh. M.*)." [7, p. 112]

Secondly, Tchaikovsky's opera *The Enchantress* is permeated with a feeling of the Motherland, as stated by Asafiev: in the music of *The Enchantress*, "rays shine that warm the consciousness of the listeners, drawing them beyond the boundaries of passions: this is the feeling of the Motherland. How does Tchaikovsky evoke them in music? He probably did not think about this <...> *Russian* in the melody and harmony of the score of *The Enchantress* goes beyond the limits of only externally audible colouring or imitation: while national in essence, in content, it is communicated to a sensitive ear without the use of specific devices." [4, p. 157] Here we attach special importance to the fact that Tchaikovsky's image of Nastasya represents the archetype of the native land. [9] In our opinion, the feeling of patriotism evoked by Tchaikovsky's opera *The Enchantress* is what also brings Russians and Chinese closer together. Therefore, staging this opera in China can teach a lot not only to the musicians and performers living in this country, but also to the audience.

Pyotr Tchaikovsky and Vladimir Solovyov

Taking into account the influence of Benedict Spinoza's ideas on the concept of the philosophy of love in the opera *Iolanta*, in the case of the opera *The Enchantress*, we consider it possible to speak of Vladimir Solovyov's philosophy of love, which does not create any cognitive dissonance in relation to Tchaikovsky's ideological attitudes. The fact is that it was Spinoza that Solovyov called "his first love." [10, p. 3] Moreover, Solovyov's own philosophical system, which affirms "the immanent unity of all that exists and its connection with the original principle — God" [11, p. 39] was built on the basis of Spinoza's monistic ideas. As Teresa Obolevich writes, "Solovyov was delighted with the Spinozist concept of the unity of all that exists — the spiritual and material beginnings of the universe, God and nature." [Ibid.]

Both Archpriest Vasily Zenkovsky and Alexey Losev pointed out the intersections in the philosophical legacy of Spinoza and Solovyov.¹¹ At the same time, Nelly Motroshilova sees the kinship between the philosophies of both thinkers in the fact that they both "tried to develop teachings of a comprehensive, that is, metaphysical plan, encompassing universal philosophical issues and centering them around ethics, and most importantly, around the concept of God." [12, p. 183] This explains why, for Spinoza, his chief

d'oeuvre was his *Ethics*, while for Solovyov it was the book *Justification of the Good*.

However, more significant for us in the context of the dialogue between Tchaikovsky and Solovyov will be the assessment of the Russian philosopher made by Vladimir Ern: "Solovyov was the first after Plato to make a new, enormous discovery in metaphysics. In the sea of intelligible light, which was fleetingly revealed to Plato, Solovyov, with the greatest power of insight, reveals certain dazzling features of the eternal feminine." [13, p. 134] And further: "Under the dialectic of Solovyov ... there always trembles the great joy of love for the mysterious and gracious basis of the world, as known in intimate experience." [Ibid., p. 205]

Comparing these words with those cited by David Brown in his study of Tchaikovsky's life and work: "Since being tempted by *The Enchantress* I have remained completely faithful to my soul's fundamental need to illustrate in music what Goethe [in his *Faust*] said: '*Das Ewig-Weibliche zieht uns hinan*' (The Eternal in woman leads us on),"¹² one cannot help but feel the commonality of attitudes between Solovyov and Tchaikovsky.

Strikingly, both geniuses were distinguished by their ability to experience mystical experiences. This can be seen even in the composer's early poems written in childhood. The presence of mystical experiences

¹¹ According to the philosopher, "this teaching about the universal substance, which we might nowadays call the theory of actual infinity, is equally Solovyovian and Spinozist... Solovyov is well aware of the contradictory nature of Spinoza's teaching on the plurality of things and the presence of mechanistic elements in Spinoza, as well as the conventionality of his 'geometric method' and the absence of historicism in Spinoza. For Solovyov, Spinoza's thought is characterised by a certain one-sidedness. Nevertheless, he agreed with Spinoza that at the basis of being lies actual infinity and that every philosophy must be crowned with the teaching of *causa sui* — about this, there was never any doubt in Solovyov's mind. In terms of this theory, Spinoza was always the basis for him." For more details on this issue see: Losev A.F. *Vladimir Solovyov and his time*. URL: <https://litlife.club/books/159133/read?page=44> (accessed: 05.12.2025).

¹² Brown D. *Tchaikovsky: The Man and his Music*. London: Faber and Faber Ltd, 2010. URL: <https://ru.z-lib.fm/book/2950807/d2d9ae/tchaikovsky-the-man-and-his-music.htm> (accessed: 05.12.2025).

in Tchaikovsky's life is also evident in his Diary, to which Antonina Makarova refers in her dissertation research as "existential." [14] Similarly, we find information about the "revelation of communion with God" in the composer's experience in another work by the same author. [15, p. 59]

The revealed analogies give grounds to assert that, even before the time when the philosophy of love was embodied in the opera *Iolanta* based on the ideas of Spinoza, the sought-after philosophy clearly declared itself in the opera *The Enchantress*. It seems that its disclosure was based on Solovyov's religious philosophy. As an example, let us turn to the verbal text of Kuma's Arioso from Act IV of the opera *The Enchantress*.

Where are you, my darling? I'm here!
 Come quickly, light of my soul,
 Beauty is the joy of the eyes!
 I'm burning with impatience to see you
 And press it to your warm heart.
 Without you, my soul is exhausted by melancholy
 Come, come!!!
 Come quickly, and we'll rush off together.
 We are far away from here,
 away from evil and troubles!
 Come quickly, come, my light!
 We will fly away from evils
 and troubles together!
 Come, clear falcon,
 Beauty and joy, light of my soul!
 I'm burning with impatience to see you...

In full agreement with Semyon Frank, for whom the discovery of the national spirit in cultural texts was connected with the discovery of ideas and philosophemes objectively contained in the cultural text, [16, p. 163] let us turn to the verbal emotives present in the poetic text of Arioso, highlighting from among them the following:

– emotive meanings: darling, exhausted, melancholy, impatient, burning, etc.;

– emotive connotations: light of the soul, beauty/joy of the eyes, my light, clear falcon, etc.;

– emotive potentials: heart etc.

Further, trying to understand the originality of these emotives through "intuitive deepening and empathy" [Ibid.] as the second step towards the national spirit, for which Frank was searching, we emphasise that already one of the first *emotive meanings* — the emotive *darling* — turns out to be ambiguous. This emotive simultaneously incorporates such lexemes as: *expected, awaited, sweet, dear, beloved*. Let us note that the importance of the choice is determined both by the nature of the performance of this Arioso (if we are talking only about a loved one, then this is one emotion, if about someone who is not only loved, but also awaited, then the emotion is different) and by the understanding of its meaning.

Considering that the lexeme *come* is used in the text of Arioso exactly seven times, we make our choice in favour of the expected (awaited) Kuma Knyazhich. As for the other emotive meanings we have highlighted, it is obvious that they all relate to the negative emotions that determine the heroine's state. On the contrary, what we have designated as, in essence, *emotive connotations* have an exclusively positive emotional assessment. The salient point here is that each of them is related to light. This refers both to an inner light, when we are talking about the soul, about the beauty and joy of the eyes (the eyes are the mirror of the soul, and accordingly, the heroine speaks of spiritual joy), as well as to an external light, which is given by the image of the beloved.

It is significant that the very concept of *inner light* can also be considered in several aspects:

- strength, wisdom, truth;
- spiritual awakening, which results in "awareness of one's true nature and connection with the surrounding world" [Ibid.];
- connection with others. [Ibid.]

In this context, the etymology of the lexeme *clear* (clear falcon) also leads to exclusively “light” concepts: *spark*, *bright star*.

Finally, in carrying out the “sympathetic comprehension of the internal tendencies and uniqueness of the national spirit,” [Ibid.] which Frank defined as the final activity of thought, we will emphasise the fundamental importance for us of the fact that all these emotive connotations also carry religious symbolism. In particular, according to spiritual mentors, “joy is ... a touch of Divine grace upon us ... for spiritually enlightened people this is not just a quiet state, but an abundant heartfelt joy, which turns out to be the brightest, the most powerful, in the positive sense of the word, manifestation of the human soul.”¹³

In turn, “the light of the soul is not just an expression of an internal state, but also a universal language that is spoken by the heart.”¹⁴ Therefore, noting the synonymy of the concept *inner light* with the concepts of *heart* and *conscience*, Alexander Tuberovsky sees the reason for this in the fact that the source of such light is God. Accordingly, with the presence of

this light, “contemplation of objects and beauty of the spiritual world becomes accessible.”¹⁵ The essence of the lexeme *heart* as an emotive potential is also revealed in the reflections of Boris Vysheslavtsev.¹⁶ According to him, the heart simultaneously represents the unity of the conscious and the unconscious, as well as the unity of soul, spirit and body.¹⁷

It is through the heart that “mystical contact with God and with one’s neighbour” occurs in Christianity,¹⁸ since “the heart is the organ that establishes this special intimate connection,”¹⁹ which has received the name of Christian love. “Differing from all other non-Christian love in terms of its mystical depth, it is revealed by the fact that it is a connection of depth with depth, a bridge thrown from one abyss of the heart to another.”²⁰

It is no coincidence that the lexeme *heart*, according to Galina Sklyarevskaya’s calculations, is mentioned in the Holy Scriptures about 750 times, being placed alongside other biblical concepts. Among these are: *God*; *angel*; *prophet*; *repentance*; *sacrifice*; *saint*; *Church*; *apostle*.²¹ The human heart is also connected

¹³ *How to find joy? Words from spiritual mentors*. URL: <https://mbrsm.ru/2018/11/09/kak-obresti-duxovnyu-radost-slova-duxovnyx-nastavnikov/> (accessed: 29.11.2025).

¹⁴ Ionnikov S. N. *The light of the soul and its reflection*. URL: <https://proza.ru/2020/10/19/1215> (accessed: 29.11.2025).

¹⁵ Tuberovsky A. Hieromartyr Inner Light [Interpretation of the words “the light that is in you” (Matt. 6:23; Luke: 11, 35)]. *Theological Herald*. 1914. Vol. 2. No. 5. pp. 25–47. URL: https://azbyka.ru/otechnik/Aleksandr_Tuberovskij/vnutrennij-svet-tolkovanie-slov-svet-kotoryj-v-tebe-mf-6-23-lk-11-35/ (accessed: 29.11.2025).

¹⁶ Boris Petrovich Vysheslavtsev (1877–1954) — Russian religious thinker, who received a professional philosophical education in Marburg.

¹⁷ Vysheslavtsev B.P. The meaning of the heart in religion. *The Path*. 1925, no. 1, pp. 59–73. URL: https://azbyka.ru/otechnik/Boris_Vysheslavtsev/znachenie-serdtsa-v-religii/#source (accessed: 29.11.2025).

¹⁸ Vysheslavtsev B.P. *Ethics of the Transformed Eros*. Moscow: Respublika, 1994. URL: https://azbyka.ru/otechnik/Boris_Vysheslavtsev/etika-preobrazhennogo-erosa/ (accessed: 29.11.2025).

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Sklyarevskaya G.N. *Heart in the Holy Scripture*. URL: https://samlib.ru/p/-porjadin_m_e/serdcebiblia.shtml (accessed: 29.11.2025).

with love, which is presented in Christianity as “the main commandment — the main ethical principle.” [17, p. 104]

The fact that in the text of Kuma’s Arioso both physical and spiritual emotives are present allows us to turn to Vladimir Solovyov’s philosophical idea of the all-unity found through physical love. Let us emphasise that it was precisely physical love that Solovyov considered as “a force that not only overcomes human egoism, but also transforms reality,” contributing to “a feeling of mystical involvement in the unity of the world,” [18, p. 71] “the elevation of the divine in man to the divine in everything.” [19, p. 82] Moreover, “the goal of sexual love-Eros in Solovyov is not physical birth, but spiritual birth, bodily transformation...” [20, p. 60]

By endowing love with a metaphysical character, Solovyov considers it not only from the standpoint of culture, but also “in synonymy with such phenomena as the meaning of life, death, freedom, creativity...” [21, p. 5] In other words, the beauty and joy of Kuma’s eyes, or in other words, the rejoicing of her soul, her heart, are determined by only one thing: with the prince she impatiently awaits, she is able to survive the syzygy.

Victoria Kravchenko interprets this concept of Solovyov in the following way: experience organically connects “external existence and internal states of the individual, when a person does not distinguish between the personal and the universal, without being completely absorbed in the process, but remaining a self-acting and self-aware, self-creating and self-feeling individual.” [22, p. 32] The basis of the sought-after experience, according to the researcher, is “Love in its new quality — of a life-unifying force and infinitely uplifting power.” [Ibid.]

The fact that syzygy is simultaneously recognised at the level of “a special form of selfless cooperation of man with the Highest, in which human ideas and goals must be rejected in the name of incomprehensible ways of unique interaction,” [Ibid., p. 33] reveals the internal motivation of Kuma’s actions. Dreaming that she and Knyazhich would fly away “far from here, away from evil and troubles,” she abandons her home and her profitable business, leaving behind loved ones who were ready to come to her aid, unable to understand that there is no place on earth where one would not have to face grief and misfortune.

That is why Solovyov’s idea that, since the metaphysical level of love in a person is only rudimentary, “at the physical level this strong feeling, as a rule, remains unrequited and fruitless, and if reciprocated, can lead to a tragic end.” [18, p. 71] Moreover, Asafiev’s position, according to which all the characters in the opera *The Enchantress* are revealed exclusively depending on this central character, rhymes with the following position of Solovyov: “Hatred is only a modification of love and has no independent origin. Hatred comes from selfishness, which is exclusive love for oneself. Thus, there are two kinds of love: negative love, or hatred, and positive love, or love in the proper sense.”²²

It is obvious that the princess is the bearer of negative love. It thus seems that the reason why it was possible to carry out the crime she had planned against Nastasya has one simple explanation. The deifying love that united Kuma with the whole world made her defenseless against cunning and meanness. If she had been the same kind of brash and cunning woman, she would hardly have trusted a man she didn’t know without being wary. However,

²² Solovyov V. S. *Sophia. Second Dialogue*. RGALI. F. 446, list 1, portfolio 19.

in a situation where sensual eros transforms her being, raising Nastasya to a higher level of existence, marked by all-unity, she no longer fears anything, especially since divine love also presupposes love for one's enemies as the impossibility of responding to evil with evil.

Accordingly, in Act I of the opera, in the aria entitled "Look from Nizhny," Nastasya demonstrates her elemental closeness with nature and the people around her, of which she is a part, just as people themselves are an integral part of nature. Therefore, Asafiev is absolutely right to assert that "the music of Act I of *The Enchantress* is a kind of unique example where a mass feeling of solidarity before the power of human beauty, revealed in its full completeness, is revealed in its gradual growth." [4, p. 145] Conversely, in the Arioso, which appears in Act IV, we see a different situation. Previously not "enlightened by either faith or education," Kuma, "having set herself the sole task of living happily," [23, p. 236] through physical love for Knyazhich becomes the owner of a feeling that differs from her previously spontaneous experience of kinship with nature and the people around her.

In our opinion, the internal transformation of this Kuma, who had not previously known Divine love, is clearly presented in Solovyov's poem, written on May 17, 1876:

The essence of this poem was expressed with all its depth and understanding by Alexey Kozyrev: "The power of love, unspent and hidden in the heart, will eventually come to the surface and 'unite heaven and earth' — this is the meaning of Solovyov's hexameters." [20, p. 73] Therefore, having been married, as usual, without love, which partly justifies Nastasya's refusal to observe the obligatory mourning and grief after the death of her husband, she, having met Knyazhich, experiences love, which Asafiev calls "sincere, overcoming elemental passion in the name of an ethically beautiful unity in life and mutual understanding of life's goals." [4, p. 147]

Conclusion

In concluding our research aimed at identifying individuals within Tchaikovsky's inner circle, whether these contacts were real or "virtual," our focus on Tchaikovsky's interactions with Byron, Tolstoy, and Solovyov places the composer's personality in a slightly different light, prompting new searches and discoveries. In particular, the fact that in the new staged versions of the opera by composer Kamala Sankaram with a libretto by Rob Handel, which was dedicated to Lord Byron's daughter Ada Lovelace, the lexeme "enchantress" has lost its significance, is due,

Truly he one is the favorite of gods, who in life's early springtime
 Crowned not his head with the myrtle, whom only in reveries beckoned
 Tenderly waving the golden-hued queen of Cythera. With bounties
 Poorly endowed by the Muses and Graces, let ancient Cronus's offspring
 Deep in his heart keep it hidden and nourish with thought that is sombre.
 Sooner or later the flame that is secret will burst to the surface,
 Flash like Hephaestus to grip the wide earth in a blaze that engulfs it.
 All that lay buried within the deep breast, that in vain sought an image:
 Impulses bold of the spirit so proud and the tenderness boundless of loving, —
 All this shall fuse into one unrelenting great power, and magic
 Mighty in stream shall embrace every thought that is human,
 Closing the chain that is golden and wedding the heavens to earth.

in our opinion, to Tchaikovsky's prominent position in the world musical landscape. In other words, the opera by the Russian composer is too well-known to duplicate its title in the work of modern authors due to evoking associations that are inappropriate in this case.

In turn, the culturally boundary-breaking dialogue between Tchaikovsky and Tolstoy outlined points of intersection between the opera *The Enchantress* and the novel *Resurrection*, which were not obvious to most. The updating of Tolstoy's work by Japanese theatrical masters has determined a possible development vector for the opera *The Enchantress* in the space of contemporary Chinese musical theatre, which seems quite promising.

Finally, Tchaikovsky's dialogue with Solovyov provides grounds for asserting that

before critics discovered the ideologies of the Dutch philosopher Benedict Spinoza in the opera *Iolanta*, the opera *The Enchantress* became a creative laboratory for the composer, in which the maestro embodied the Russian religious philosopher's concept of love. The personality of Solovyov serves as a connecting link between Tchaikovsky and Asafiev with only one caveat. If in Tchaikovsky's worldview the name of Solovyov stands next to the name of Spinoza, then in Asafiev's worldview it stands next to the name of Losev. As argued in this essay, such echoes played a significant role in the development of the virtual dialogue between Tchaikovsky and Asafiev. A careful study of the latter has the potential to reveal new facets in the artistic legacy of both masters.

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British Choral Music in the Last Third of the 20th Century: Outcomes of the English Musical Renaissance

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Abstract. The present paper considers the main development paths of British choral composition during the last third of the 20th century. The analysis of choral scores by British composers, which were in demand in the global concert scene both at the turn of the century and today, identifies several evolutionary trends: (1) *post-Britten* influenced by the choral music of the outstanding British composer Benjamin Britten; (2) *post-Avant-Garde* combining the achievements of the post-war Avant-Garde with typical features of British choral music; (3) *New Simplicity*, understood as a manifestation of the “contemporary reaction to the complexity of the Avant-Garde” (Levon Hakobian); (4) *democratic* associated with successful attempts to unite the music of academic and popular genres; (5) *moderate academic* based on a limited selection of Avant-Garde innovations placed in the conditions of tonal or modal composition. Along with the presented classification, three common grounds that unite virtually all choral composers of Great Britain are identified: (1) a connection between the past and present of British music, revealed in most works; (2) an unflagging attention to church works representing mainly Christian denominations (Catholicism, Protestantism and Orthodoxy); (3) a desire to combine the compositional and technical achievements of continental composers with the genre and intonational specifics of British music. The key conclusion of the article is that contemporary British composers, even in the context of the multi-directional evolution of British choral composition, have remained faithful to the principles first formulated by the figures of the English musical Renaissance.

Keywords: choral music, contemporary composition, choral texture, vocal timbre, British composers

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Британская хоровая музыка последней трети XX века: итоги английского музыкального ренессанса

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Аннотация. Статья посвящена изучению основных путей развития британской хоровой композиции последней трети XX века. На основе анализа хоровых партитур композиторов Великобритании, востребованных в мировом концертном пространстве не только на рубеже веков, но и сегодня, автор выделяет несколько эволюционных направлений: 1) *постбриттеновское*, отмеченное влиянием хоровой музыки выдающегося британского мастера Бенжамина Бриттена; 2) *поставангардное*, соединяющее достижения музыки послевоенного авангарда с типичными чертами британской хоровой музыки; 3) *направление Новой простоты*, понимаемой как проявления «современной реакции на усложнённость авангарда» (Левон Акопян); 4) *демократическое*, связанное с успешными попытками объединения музыки академических и массовых жанров; 5) *умеренное академическое*, основанное на ограниченном отборе авангардных новаций, помещённых в условия тональной или модалной композиции. Вместе с представлением данной классификации автор выявляет три общих основания, объединяющих практически всех хоровых композиторов Великобритании: 1) выявляемая в большинстве сочинений связь прошлого и настоящего британской музыки; 2) неослабевающее внимание к церковным сочинениям, представляющим в основном христианские конфессии (католицизм, протестантизм, православие); 3) стремление к соединению композиционно-технических достижений континентальных мастеров с жанровой и интонационной спецификой британской музыки. Ключевой вывод статьи — современные британские композиторы даже в условиях разновекторности эволюции британской хоровой композиции сохранили верность принципам, впервые сформулированным деятелями английского музыкального ренессанса.

Ключевые слова: хоровая музыка, современная композиция, хоровая фактура, вокальная тембрика, композиторы Великобритании

The phenomenon of the English musical Renaissance currently associated with the names of Mackenzie, Parry, Stanford, Elgar, their students and followers — Vaughan Williams, Gustav Holst, George Dyson, Herbert Howells and others — was a powerful impetus for the development of British music. Drawing on national musical traditions rooted in folkloric examples and works of old masters from Dunstaple to Handel, British composers have distinguished themselves in the music

of various genres. However, it was perhaps in the field of choral music that the role of British composers in the pan-European context by the end of the 20th century could be described as key. This situation is due to both the emergence of a number of iconic names in the last third of the last century and the diversity of trends in the development of British vocal composition, which created a concert repertoire for choral groups of various lineups and performance capabilities that is constantly heard on world

stages. The present article aims to identify the main developments of British choral music in the last third of the 20th century and briefly describe each of them.

Successors of Benjamin Britten

The early 1970s in the history of Britain's choral music are associated with the strong influence of Benjamin Britten (1913–1976) and his followers, including Michael Hurd, Kenneth Leighton and William Mathias. Being the author of one of the first Britten's biographies, [1] Michael Hurd (1928–2006) continued Britten's tradition of creating works for both professional and amateur (mainly children's) groups. He is the author of 15 musical and dramatic works written specifically for children, including two operas, seven pop cantatas, three ballad cantatas, a morality play, and an oratorio. The very listing of the genres of these musical compositions testifies to the stylistic pluralism of Hurd, who is equally inclined to create works in traditional academic genres and compose popular music. The democratic approach of the composer, which sought to popularise choral music, was also expressed in the predominance of monophonic, chordal texture. In his most famous compositions — *The Shepherd's Calendar* choral symphony for baritone (1975) and *Night Songs of Edward Thomas* cycle (1994), Hurd, along with the above-mentioned textural types, uses the resources of imitative presentation (typically short free canonical episodes) and antiphons of male and female choirs.

Having come under the influence of twelve-tone music in his youth, Kenneth Leighton (1929–1988), adheres to the definition of a tonal centre even in his serial experiments.

A possible reason for this was the young composer's predominant interest in Berg's unorthodox serial experiments and examples of Dallapiccola's "dodecaphonic bel canto." [2, p. 287] The desire to create tonal as well as modal music was also determined by the priority of church works in Leighton's choral legacy. A deeply religious man, he moved beyond the creation of compositions for the Anglican Church to pay greater attention to Catholic choirs that admitted the use of more complex textural graphics. The fidelity to the traditions of old British polyphony in Leighton's polyphonic masterpiece *Laudate pueri* (1973) for three choirs *a cappella* is presented in dialogue with the musical tendencies of the second half of the 20th century: here, antiphonal and imitative-polyphonic texture is combined with the syllabic division of the word, as well as with stereophonic effects achieved through the disposition of the choral groups prescribed by the composer (these schemes are reminiscent of those that preceded the scores of Nono, Berio and Stockhausen in the 1960s and 1970s).

An example of Leighton's work for the Anglican Church is the 1972 cycle *Magnificat & Nunc dimittis*. In comparison with the composer's Catholic works, the choral texture is noticeably simplified and most often presented in chord form. In a number of cases, Leighton uses the resources of textural *crescendo*,¹ gradually including choral voices into the overall vertical.

The use of simple harmonic verticals also distinguishes many works by Leighton's younger contemporary, William Mathias (1934–1992): *Missa-brevis* op. 64 (1973), *Missa aedis Christi* op. 92 (1983) and numerous motets. Mathias

¹ The techniques of *crescendo/diminuendo* in relation to texture are considered in works by Valentina Kholopova. [3]

was a lifelong devotee of tonal and neo-modal music stemming from his deep love of early British music, which he carried throughout his life, beginning with his involvement in the 1950s with The Elisabethan Madrigal Singers choir founded at the Aberystwyth University. Mathias' immersion in the study of ancient polyphonic masterpieces went beyond the Renaissance era; *Missa-brevis* op. 64 for choir and organ (1973) finds the use of *Ars antiqua* rhythmic modes, while the archaic atmosphere in *Cantate Domino* for choir and organ (1987) is ensured by a partial reproduction of the textural appearance of parallel organum.

A deep interest in early British music and literature was also characteristic of Nicholas Maw (1935–2009), a composer who is more often associated with neo-romanticism in musicological literature. This perception of his work is primarily dictated by the study of his chamber-instrumental heritage, as well

as individual statements by the composer, which position his art as an attempt to restore the connection between contemporary music and romantic tradition.² However, in his choral music, Maw establishes connections not only with the Romantics, but also with composers of previous eras. One of Maw's most famous choral works is the cycle *Reverdie* (1975) for male choir based on texts by anonymous poets of the 14th–15th centuries. Along with the chordal and homophonic-harmonic textures actively used by the composer with the relief and background differentiation carried out through both dynamics and strokes, an example of neo-Renaissance counterpoint is traced with the representation reminiscent of the polyphonic scores of the 15th–16th centuries with their typical independence of vocal voices from a single bar line (Example No. 1).

The composer is generally characterised by a predominant interest in working with texts

Example No. 1

Nicholas Maw. *Reverdie*. No. 3 "Al Nist by the Rose", mm. 1–12

Andante sostenuto
p espr.

TENOR II

Al nist by the rose, — rose, — Al nist by the

rose, — I lay, by the rose, — rose, —

pp

BARITONE

p espr.

Al nist by the rose, — rose, —

rose, — by the rose — I lay, I

Al — nist by the rose — I lay —

² Let us cite one of them: "I am increasingly concerned with what music has lost — those moments the composer can no longer work with. I want to work with them again ... Around 1914, for obvious social and political reasons, there was a certain pause in the natural development of the tradition <...> It seems to me that I am trying to restore that tradition." [4, p. 98]

of ancient poets: 17th-century poets John Hall, Thomas Browne, Joseph Beaumont, as well as numerous works of English and Anglo-Saxon anonymous lyric poetry dating back to the 14th, 12th, and even the 8th centuries. The striking archaism of Maw's works is largely determined by ancient poetry. Thus, the cycle *Three Hymns* (1989) presents an untypical for the end of the 20th century interpretation of the organ part, which rather complements the vocal stanzas with improvisational interludes than provides harmonic support. In the third number, the solo voices of the soprano and alto sound alternately against the background of a sparse organ accompaniment, which literally immerses the listener in the atmosphere of *quasi*-medieval music.

Influence of the European Avant-Garde

Taking an opposite direction to the Britten and post-Britten branches of British choral composition in the second half of the 20th century are the works of a number of composers who paid special attention to contemporary writing techniques inherited from the masters of the first and second European Avant-Garde. This trend in British music of the last three decades of the 20th century is primarily associated with the work of composers from the New Music Manchester Group and Brian Ferneyhough.

The New Music Manchester Group was formed in 1953 by the students of the Manchester College of Music (composers Alexander Goehr, Harrison Birtwistle, Peter Maxwell Davies, pianist John Ogdon and conductor Elgar Howarth). The father of Alexander Goehr (b. 1932), the oldest member of the group, was the composer and conductor Walter Goehr, himself a student of Arnold Schoenberg and Ernst Krenek. The study of the basics of twelve-tone technique under the guidance of his father, acquaintance and friendship with Boulez influenced the compositional and technical

solutions of the composer's early works sustained mainly in the serial technique. Due to attention to contemporary choral music and a deep knowledge of the old masters' works, Goehr both created unique works in which seriality was combined with the principles of modal composition, motet strophes and inclusion of madrigalisms (a remarkable example is *The Death of Moses* oratorio (1991–1992)). Like Luciano Berio, Goehr worked on a reconstruction of some of the lost scores of Claudio Monteverdi: in 1994–1995, Goehr restored the opera *L'Arianna* by the great Italian master, which became a notable event in the musical life of the late 20th century. It is remarkable that such a coexistence of contemporary composition methods and early music seems completely organic for Goehr and consistent with the concept of contemporary music, to which he once gave the following definition: "Contemporary music is a balanced culture with its own performing style, its own range of ideas, and therefore its own sound. This is the culture I belong to, if I belong to any culture at all" (Cit. ex: [5, p. 434]).

The multifaceted musical world, in which the latest technical principles coexist with the experience of musical composition from past centuries, is also represented by the choral work of Alexander Goehr's close friend, his colleague at the New Music Manchester Group, Peter Maxwell Davies (1934–2016). Like Goehr, Davies studied Arnold Schoenberg's scores while still in Manchester, attending the Summer Courses for New Music in Darmstadt in 1956–1957, and subsequently studying with Milton Babbitt and Elliott Carter in the USA, as well as with Goffredo Petrassi in Italy. At the same time, in the 1950s, he was preparing fragments of *Vespro della Beata Vergine* by Monteverdi for a concert, while in relation to his works, he used terminology that referred to the experience of ancient composition (hocket, isorhythm, *cantus firmus*, etc.).

Davis wrote about the need for contemporary composition knowledge to take into account both the latest music and the musical traditions that preceded it: “Most young composers are familiar with at least the most superficial aspects of Schoenberg, Bartók, Stravinsky, etc. — perhaps even of Messiaen or Stockhausen — but they know surprisingly little about more ancient composers — their training has led them to take for granted that they know all there is to know about them.”³

Francis Routh noted that contemporaries said about Davies: “He is a neo-mediaeval composer to the same extent as Stravinsky was a neo-classical composer.” [6, p. 233] The analogy with Stravinsky in this case is non-accidental: similar to the works of the Russian composer, many of choral pieces by Maxwell Davies are characterised by polyrhythmic overlays and frequent changes of meter. One of the prototypes of such a temporal organisation for the composer becomes the scores of the old masters, who used a constant conjugation of the perfect (ternary) and imperfect (binary) temporal organisation. The whimsical changes between perfect and imperfect metrics, as well

as the superposition of the two principles, are found, for example, in *Apple-Basket* (1990) — a composition that approaches the complexity of its metric rhythm to the compositions of Brian Ferneyhough. The works of Maxwell Davies are also characteristic of the landscape style of the 20th-century British choral music classics, such as Frederick Delius and Vaughan Williams. The *Westerlings* cycle created in 1976–1977 has an original subtitle: “Four Songs and a Prayer, with Seascapes.” If the songs are traditionally based on a verbal series (the poems of the Scottish poet George Mackay Brown), then the landscapes are a wonderful example of free choral vocalises. The texture is based on complementary choir figurations literally illustrating the slowly changing sea waves. The figurations are performed either with a closed or open (phoneme *A*) mouth (Example No. 2).

One of the most famous British composers of the second half of the 20th and early 21st centuries, Harrison Birtwistle (1934–2022), is also distinguished by the interaction of old and new, resulting in the attainment of his own original style. Tatiana Tsaregradskaya reveals a certain pattern in the composer’s

Example No. 2

Peter Maxwell Davies. *Westerlings*. No. 1.
Seascape I, mm. 20–24

The musical score for Example No. 2, titled 'Seascape I, mm. 20–24' by Peter Maxwell Davies, is presented in four staves: Soprano (S.), Alto (A.), Tenor (T.), and Bass (B.). The score begins at measure 20. The Soprano part features a melodic line with lyrics 'Ah' and dynamic markings *p*, *mp*, *mf*, and *f*. The Alto part has lyrics 'Ah' and dynamic markings *mf* and *f*. The Tenor part has lyrics 'Ah' and dynamic markings *f*, *p*, *f*, *pp*, *f*, *pp*, *f*, and *f*. The Bass part has lyrics 'Ah' and dynamic markings *f*, *p*, *f*, *pp*, *f*, *pp*, *f*, and *f*. The tempo marking 'poco a poco più mosso' is placed above the Soprano staff. The score includes various rhythmic notations, including triplets and fermatas.

³ Cit. ex: Jones N. Sir Peter Maxwell Davies: The Man and the Music. *Online Research Cardiff*. 2019. URL: <https://orca.cardiff.ac.uk/id/eprint/132410> (accessed: 20.01.2026).

creative evolution, consisting of progressive attention to the works of the old masters: “If at the beginning of his creative path, Birtwistle was in the zone of historical dialogue with his older contemporaries Stravinsky and Messiaen, then as he moved towards creative maturity, he discovered an interest in other musical styles and eras, in particular the Middle Ages, the Renaissance and the Baroque.” [7, p. 97] At the same time, ancient Greek mythology, including the famous myth of Orpheus, also had a major influence on the work of the British composer, determining the concept of Birtwistle’s key works: instrumental *Tragoedia* (1965), *The Mask of Orpheus* opera (1986) and *Nenia: The Death of Orpheus* dramatic scene (1970) for soprano and five instruments. Among the choral works closely connected with the myth of Orpheus, which became, in the apt expression of Tsaregradskaya, “a ‘spinal cord’ for the composer’s work,” [8, p. 258] let us recall *Meridian* (1970–1971) for mezzo-soprano, two female choirs and instruments, *The Fields of Sorrow* (1972) for two sopranos, choir and 16 instruments and *On the Sheer Threshold of the Night* (1980) for 16 voices.

Birtwistle’s appeal both to the world of Antiquity and to the music of the European masters of the *Ars Nova* and the Renaissance is entirely understandable given the special significance that ancient art had for composers of the 15th and 16th centuries. It is no coincidence that the madrigal genre with its characteristic theme of love and death so often featured the story of Orpheus and Eurydice, which remained one of the genre’s most famous embodiments for centuries. However, the next turn to the theme of Orpheus in Birtwistle’s work is striking in its unprecedentedness. Twelve singers are arranged on the stage in a semicircle; the left and right parts of the semicircle are represented by male and female voices, respectively; two soloists standing on

opposite sights of the stage perform the parts of Hades (Bass 4) and Eurydice (Soprano 1). The part of Orpheus is assigned to two voices: countertenor (Alto 4) and tenor (Tenor 1). On the one hand, this literally corresponds to Orpheus’s borderline position between light and darkness, between love and death; on the other hand, as Tsaregradskaya writes, it also reflects “the two-sided nature of Orpheus”: “To the left of this pair [countertenor and tenor. — *A.R.*] the men are ranged, and the women are to the right. The men represent the ego (reason), while the women represent anima (intuition). These two forces play against each other during the entire piece.” [Ibid., p. 270] The struggle between two forces on the arena of Orpheus’s consciousness is literally reflected in the score, where Orpheus part (the duet of countertenor and tenor) is in the centre — between female and male voices. To create an audible contrast between the two beginnings, Birtwistle prefers to use the extreme registers with the stroke and rhythmic opposition. The soprano timbres performing their lines in a tense tessitura under conditions of the finest nuances acquire great importance. According to Tsaregradskaya, “this kind of singing makes the impression of a ‘choir of shadows’ with their immaterial and ‘un human’ singing.” [Ibid., p. 271] Perhaps, Birtwistle’s study of Avant-Garde scores from the 1950s to 1970s, particularly the works of Luigi Nono, also played a role in this timbre decision. In particular, Birtwistle’s approach is reminiscent of Nono’s similar decision in the score of *Al gran sole carico d’amore* to avoid likening his heroines to ordinary people and to approach the unreal sound of the female voice embodying the singing of higher beings through predominantly ensemble (non-solo!) intonation at the border of the second and third octaves.

Along with the works of Alexander Goehr, Peter Maxwell Davies, and Harrison Birtwistle, the direction closely connected with the

development of post-war Avant-Garde ideas is represented by the work of Brian Ferneyhough (b. 1943), who clearly asserts himself already in his first choral work, *Missa brevis* (1969). Taking as his starting point the timbral experiments of Schoenberg, i.e., a combination of *Sprechgesang* and traditional singing with the use of ensembles of voices with contrasting levels of tessitura tension, in conjunction with the temporal and textural ideas of the post-war Avant-Garde, Ferneyhough created his own distinctive choral style, combining sharply dissonant chromatics, complex metro-rhythmic basis and untypical timbral solutions of the vocal score.

Each new choral score by Ferneyhough presented performers with new challenges determined by the ideological specifics of the work, as well as reflecting the general trends in the development of choral composition. In this regard, Ferneyhough's second choral opus, *Time and Motion Study III* (1974) is very indicative. It is the third work in a series of pieces "whose title is a pun on the efficiency tests to which British workers were subjected in the 1960s," as Paul Griffiths writes. [9, p. 302]

Time and Motion Study III places extraordinary demands on the singers: in addition to the extremely complex intonational and temporal organisation of the lines of choral voices, each singer is required to master virtually the entire palette of articulation techniques that existed at the time the score was created. The latter circumstance indicates that Ferneyhough was deeply immersed in the study of the scores by his contemporaries: a multi-level application of *Sprechgesang*, phonation with excessive breathing, differentiated by the intensity of vibrato, as well as original textural

solutions. With regard to the latter feature, let us point out that the diagonal texture that became widespread in Ferneyhough's late choral works is the evidence of the impression the composer experienced from his acquaintance with Nono's *Prometeo*.⁴ This conclusion is also prompted by an understanding of the goal pursued by the Italian and British composers, which consisted in striving for maximum timbre mobility of melodic lines (more precisely, melodic diagonals) and harmonic consonances, which can be seen by comparing the scores of specific musical-theatrical projects *Prometeo* by Nono and *Shadowtime* by Ferneyhough, completely devoid of what can conditionally be called spectacle. Drawing on Nono's experience, Ferneyhough came to the formation of an opera performance that was "played out" only on an auditory level, representing a phenomenon that Sigrid Weigel aptly called "sound choreography" (*eine Art Klang-Choreographie*). [11, p. 29]

The connection between Ferneyhough's project *Shadowtime* and Italian music of the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries is noteworthy, which is confirmed by the composer's testimony about his musical interests. When asked by Paul Griffiths what the composer would like to listen to in his spare time, Ferneyhough replied: "Almost anything from the Italian renaissance, primarily Monteverdi, the Gabriellis and their contemporaries. The exuberant pleasure in the architectural play of masses in the latter and the mannerist intensity of every detail of the former — not to speak of his amazing timing — have always exercised a powerful pull." [10, p. 247] In relation to the latter — Ferneyhough's interest in the time manipulation by Gabriellis and his contemporaries —

⁴ Brian Ferneyhough pays considerable attention to late Nono, in particular to his quartet and the "tragedy of hearing" *Prometeo*, in his conversation with Jeffrey Stadelman in 1992. See: [10, p. 484].

the observation of Jean-Pascal Chaigne about the connection between the works of the British master and the masterpieces of the Renaissance in the recording of tempo changes is also indicative: "...many proportions used here (*Kurze Schatten II* by Ferneyhough. — *A.R.*) determine different speeds of sound and in this case have the same function as in Renaissance music, where proportion was the only way to introduce a change in the speed of performance into writing." [12, p. 285]

What Ferneyhough took from the composers of the first Avant-Garde wave (primarily Schoenberg) and his older contemporaries — representatives of the post-war Avant-Garde (especially Nono) — led him not only to create works that became real encyclopaedias of contemporary choral writing due to the richness and even apparent redundancy of performance techniques, but also formed the image of his performer as ready for a constant search for something new, overcoming himself and, thus, in the words of Richard Toop, capable of "preserving the idea of art as an endless search for the transcendent" (Cit. ex: [13, p. 145]).

Opposition to Avant-Garde Tendencies: John Tavener and Michael Finnissy

Taking an entirely different tack to the work of the New Music Manchester Group and Brian Ferneyhough, John Tavener (1944–2013) is the most prominent British representative of the school of New Simplicity. Since the 1980s, choral music has occupied a dominant position in the work of the composer, who converted to the Orthodox faith in 1977. During this period, Tavener's true world bestsellers appeared: *Funeral Ikos* (1981); *The Lamb* (1982) and *The Tiger* (1987) based on the texts by William Blake; *Love Bade Me Welcome* (1985) based on the texts by George Herbert; *Magnificat & Nunc Dimittis* (1986). The high popularity of these compositions is largely due to their characteristic static, peaceful atmosphere,

the predominance of a verse-chorus structure, and the clear diatonic basis of the melodies developing against the background of sustained organ points, similar to the isons of ancient chants. Isons are one of the most characteristic features of John Tavener's music, which is largely responsible for its leisurely, meditative and timeless character.

Tavener's close friend and spiritual mentor, the Orthodox nun Mother Thekla, provided great assistance in forming the textual basis of his works. A number of the composer's works feature her original texts, but in most cases, she was more of a compiler of a verbal series from fragments of liturgical texts, excerpts from the Bible, and in some cases, inclusions of secular literature. These include one of John Tavener's most famous works, *Song for Athene* (1993), which was created on the death of Tavener's close friend, the Greek actress Athene Hariades. The work became famous throughout the world due to its performance during the funeral ceremony of Diana, Princess of Wales, in 1997. The text of the choral piece rather organically combines fragments of an Orthodox funeral service, the Gospel of Luke, and William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. The inclusion of Shakespeare's texts is a tribute to the memory of the Greek actress, who was a renowned interpreter of the works of the great English playwright in Greece and abroad. Let us also focus on the reverberation effects of Tavener's scores. The coda that concludes the composition is an example of a jubilant, solemn chant, in which the division of the choral parts into melodic voices and organ points provides the sound with an incredible volume achievable even when the composition is performed by a chamber ensemble.

The study of British choral music in the last quarter of the 20th century leads to the establishment of unexpected parallels between the work of individual composers, which largely clarify the accepted notion

in contemporary musicology about the main development trends of British music. Thus, Michael Finnissey (b. 1946), most often considered a representative of the New Complexity, appears in his choral music to be closer to John Tavener than to Brian Ferneyhough. Finnissey's two main sources of his choral work inspiration are ancient Christian chants and the world of folklore.⁵ The composer's sacred works have harmonic, polyphonic or heterophonic texture, which is often combined with sustained tones of individual parts (Example No. 3). Finnissey's work is also characterised by the long development of melodic horizontals, free from metric determination. His scores often contain sections of monophony or diaphony, recreating the sound of ancient organums (a well-known example is *Seven sacred motets*, 1991). His works also discover the textural organisation

characteristic of Dunstaple's motets — a combination of the conventional *cantus firmus* tenor with its coloration (*In mense autem* motet from the above-mentioned cycle).

In *Magnificat & Nunc dimittis* (1986), the polytextuality typical of 13th-century motets is used: Finnissey superimposes two verbal series connected by a single textual source of Gospel prayers (*Magnificat*, *Nunc dimittis*) presented simultaneously in English and Greek. In this case, different textural solutions are chosen: *Magnificat* is characterised with the heterophony of female voices (English text) against the background of a rhythmic (similar to a harmonic ison) duet of the outer parts, complemented by the pulsation of the tenor. *Nunc dimittis* represents an example of homophonic-harmonic texture: the female choir and the tenor part create a chorale

Example No. 3

Michael Finnissey. *Magnificat & Nunc dimittis*, mm. 1–3

Animatedly (♩) – Excitedly – Raw-edged.

The musical score consists of five staves. The top two staves are vocal parts with lyrics in English: "My soul doth mag - ni -". The third staff is a vocal part with lyrics in Greek: "A - - - nas - - - ta -". The bottom two staves are piano accompaniment. The score is marked with a forte dynamic (ff) and includes performance instructions: "Solo" and "Animatedly (♩) – Excitedly – Raw-edged." The music features long melodic lines and complex rhythmic patterns.

⁵ Let us cite an excerpt from the work of the British pianist and musicologist Ian Pace, which lists the main musical areas of interest to Finnissey: "Those familiar with Michael Finnissey's music will know that he draws extensively upon a range of pre-existing musical sources, whether from the Western art music tradition, early twentieth-century popular song, music hall, or many folk and vernacular musics from different parts of the world." [14, pp. 57–58]

background (English text) for a peculiar psalmody of the bass (Greek text). Almost all of Finnissy's spiritual works are characterised by abundant melismatics with chromaticism, adding an expressive sophistication to the compositions.

Democratisation Trends of Choral Music

An important phenomenon in the history of British choral music in the last third of the 20th century was the work of composers who advocated the democratisation of choral art and its rapprochement with the sphere of mass music.⁶ A definite starting point for this trend, which later became characteristic of choral art in other countries, was the premiere of Andrew Lloyd Webber's rock opera *Jesus Christ — Superstar* in 1970. An important place in the composition, which combines rock style with elements of classical operatic dramaturgy, i.e., the presence of a leitmotif system, recognisable genre features of recitatives, arias and ensembles, was occupied by choirs, whose music gained extraordinary popularity remained in the future. It is enough to recall such musical numbers as *Jesus Christ — Superstar*, *Hosanna* and *Last Supper* to be convinced that even today they are performed in the programs of festivals and individual choral concerts. The secret of their success, along with a memorable melodic basis and vibrant rhythms, was the relative simplicity of the musical material, concerning both the ranges of the choral parts and the tessitura conditions used, as well as the simplicity of their textural design. The choral numbers of Webber's rock opera are typically presented in unison (in an octave) or in simple harmonic

two-part singing (less often, three-part singing). The choral score has no classic division into four parts (SATB): the composer either indicates specific characters (apostles, priests) or differentiates the parts by gender (girls and boys). The choral score is similarly structured in most of Webber's musical opuses staged in the 1970s and first half of the 1980s: *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (1968–1972), *Evita* (1976–1978) and *Cats* (1981).

In the following decade, Lloyd Webber's choral writing became more complex,⁷ which is especially noticeable when getting acquainted with the score of his famous *Requiem* (1984). This work immersing the line of secularisation of the liturgical genre in the bosom of pop stylistics stands apart not only in the composer's legacy, but also in the choral music of the late 20th century, since it largely influenced the appearance of works by Karl Jenkins, Bob Chilcott, John Leavitt, Dan Forrest and other authors advocating today for the fundamental democratisation of academic choral genres. Despite a certain stylistic affinity with the composer's musicals, this work is distinguished by the diversity of its textural structure: the resources of imitative polyphony also acquire a significant role along with the chordal, homophonic-harmonic texture. The stylistic "marginality" of the *Requiem* is expressed by both tonal-harmonic and intonational means and the phenomenon of combining symphonic and pop musical instruments, as well as by the choice of performers for the solo parts of the premiere — classical opera tenor Plácido Domingo and the famous pop singer Sarah Brightman.

⁶ The presence of two complementary lines in the development of British choral music, which can be conditionally called elitism and democracy, is also characteristic of the initial stage in the British musical Renaissance. For details, see: [15, p. 66].

⁷ For example, *The Phantom of the Opera* (1986) already presents the classical four-part mixed choir; the resources of antiphonal presentation are actively used along with monophony and chordal texture.

If for Lloyd Webber, the composition of the cantata-oratorio genre is, in a certain sense, a striking exception in his choral legacy, which was mainly oriented towards the sphere of musical theatre, then for John Rutter, on the contrary, classical choral genres associated with both the sphere of sacred and secular music are fundamental. As an outstanding contemporary choirmaster, Rutter creates works for choral groups of various levels, while sensitively understanding the capabilities of non-professional choirs. Despite the eclecticism of Rutter's choral music,⁸ which has been emphasised by some researchers, the composer clearly understands the line that separates academic choral music from mass one. Rutter's first major vocal-symphonic work, the cantata *Gloria* (1974), was already a huge success and defined the direction that Rutter has taken since the 1980s to the present day: the creation of clear tonal-harmonic music in understandable classical forms intonationally connected with examples of popular music, including jazz (recall the cycle of choral miniatures *Birthday Madrigals* (1995), which presuppose both the variability of the instrumental composition of the performers and the ability of the pianist accompanying the choir to improvise). At the same time, Rutter's works are examples of academic music in the solution of choral scores: here, a variety of classical choral texture types are encountered: chordal, antiphonal, imitative-polyphonic (up to the creation of an allusion to a fugal presentation

in the finale of *Gloria* or in "Fecit potentiam" from *Magnificat* (1990)). Rutter's bright melodic talent often leads to the introduction of a homophonic-harmonic organisation with the melodic relief of the solo part (less often, the voice) developing against the background of a chordal support for the rest of the choir.

The Middle Way of the Evolution of British Choral Music

A portrait of British choral music in the last decade of the 20th century would be incomplete if, given a presentation of the extreme tendencies in its evolution — the development of timbre and textural innovations of the Avant-Garde of the first and second waves and the fundamentally opposite trend of choral democratisation oriented, among other things, towards the field of popular culture — we neglected the music as representing what could conditionally be called the middle path in the development of contemporary choral composition in Great Britain. This path is associated with the work of those composers who, despite their stylistic differences, are united by the search for new possibilities within the framework of existing academic genres and moderation in the application of various innovations in the field of contemporary composition. Among the latter, let us recall the work of composers representing different generations, but who became famous mainly in the 1980s and 1990s: James MacMillan, Roxana Panufnik and Thomas Adès.

⁸ Let us cite an excerpt from Zhu Xuanyang's article: "Analysing the compositional style of J. Rutter, one might come to the conclusion that his music is eclectic. With its 'roots' and genre preferences, it undoubtedly goes back to the origins of ancient Christian music <...> However, the influence of the centuries-old choral traditions of England and the French culture of the early 20th century can be traced in his compositions. The genre features of American classical jazz and its associated vocal art can also be considered as an addition to the stylistic 'eclecticism' in his compositions." [16, p. 36]

For the Scottish composer James MacMillan (b. 1959), the field of choral music has always been a beloved and enduringly revered one. The composer's first major premiere in the United Kingdom was the work for choir and organ *Cantos Sagrados* (1989), which continues the line of combining secular and sacred texts in one work, dating back to Vaughan Williams and Britten. However, in this case, the composition theme was not a protest against the war, but a denunciation of political tyranny and the repression of a totalitarian state against its citizens. Along with texts from Catholic liturgy, the libretto is based on fragments of works by Ariel Dorfman and Anna Maria Mendoza, which have been translated into English. The construction of the composition based on several verbal sources is also characteristic of the cantata for choir and strings *Seven Last Words from the Cross* (1993). As in *Cantos sagrados*, the two groups of literary sources (in this case, the Gospel and liturgical texts) are differentiated phonetically through the use of English and Latin. Already here, the functional division of texture into melodic voices (within the framework of a harmonic or imitative-polyphonic texture) and harmonic support voices, typical of MacMillan's choral music, is evident. Melismatic (appropriative notes, trills) plays a significant role in the melodic development, adding an expressive tone to the predominantly diatonic intonation of MacMillan's compositions.

MacMillan's works for choir *a cappella* are among the undisputed world leaders in the number of performances among contemporary choral compositions. His famous play *A Child's Prayer* (1996) written in response to the atrocious terrorist attack on a primary school in the Scottish town of Dunblane received wide distribution around the world at the turn of the century. The textual basis of the composition was the prayer that children read in preparation for their first Communion.

In the outer sections of the three-part structure, the composer distinguishes two main layers in the texture: (a) the choir performing chords similar to the ringing of bells; (b) the voices of two solo sopranos singing a duet of a pure, soulful melody in the upper register. The culmination is the middle part of the work, based on the ever-increasing rhythm of the choral antiphons with the single word "Joy." A striking example of textural differentiation can be found in *The Gallant Weaver* play (1997) created based on the text of a poem by MacMillan's favourite poet, Robert Burns. The basis of the composition is a three-part canon of the soprano part against the background of barely audible chords of the choir, which create an incredible volume of sound. Using exclusively the resources of modal diatonicism in conjunction with the means of textural and dynamic *crescendo*, the composer creates a composition that throws a sonic "bridge" into the Renaissance era and demonstrates the possibilities of creating vibrant works based exclusively on the classical resources of vocal composition even at the end of the 20th century. This skill is largely based on the ideological platform of the Catholic composer, for whom, as Joel Clarkson writes, "theology and music go hand in hand." [17, p. 11]

Moderate use of innovations in contemporary composition and a deep knowledge of the choir's capabilities distinguish the works of MacMillan's younger contemporaries — Roxana Panufnik and Thomas Adès. Roxana Panufnik (b. 1968), daughter of the renowned Polish conductor and composer Andrzej Panufnik, who emigrated to the UK in 1954, was trained as a composer at the Royal Academy of Music and became widely known in the 1990s due to a number of outstanding premieres. One of them, *Westminster Mass*, written in 1997 for the 75th birthday of Cardinal Basil Hume demonstrates a deep knowledge of the traditions of British choral music

(attention to the two-choral organisation with an abundance of colourful antiphons) and, at the same time, an interest in the innovations of temporal and textural organisation that became widespread in the 20th century. Like many of Panufnik's subsequent works, *Westminster Mass* is distinguished by the active use of asymmetrical meters, the resources of polyrhythmic superposition of duplets and triplets, as well as polymetry associated with the combination of contrasting metric organisation within one measure (a classic case is the superposition of 6/8 and 3/4 meters in *Gloria*). The texture of *Westminster Mass* demonstrates the effects of artificial reverberation, which came from the choral music of the post-war Avant-Garde, created by prolonging ("suspending") the tones of the melody within a polyphonic harmonic texture. Along with the syllabic division of the word, polylingualism is widespread: two main phonetic series are compared — Latin and English — both sequentially (for example, in *Kyrie*) and jointly (see *Deus, Deus meus*).

The interaction between the past and present of British music is also revealed in the analysis of the works by Thomas Adès (b. 1971). Adès' first choral compositions demonstrate his passion for early British choral music. In 1992, he wrote the *Fool's Rhymes* play based on the texts of John Donne and folklore sources from the 14th and 16th centuries; in 1997, he created *The Fayrfax Carol*.⁹ Referring to ancient texts does not lead to citing intonation material. Nevertheless, one can speak of stylisation (use of imitative texture, introduction of sequences and *solī — tutti* contrasts) combined with the resources of chromatic tonality or with unusual instrumentation (use of a prepared piano in *Fool's Rhymes*).

Conclusion

The works of MacMillan, Panufnik and Adès are an example of how the foundation of the English musical Renaissance — British early music and folklore — remained a source of inspiration and compositional basis for masters of the late 20th century. In trying to find an explanation for this phenomenon, several defining constants can be seen in the development of British choral music:

1. Deeply rooted in national traditions, the work of most British composers constantly corresponds to the music of previous generations — from Dunstaple to Elgar and Britten — as well as to the diverse world of Britain folklore.

2. An important area of choral creativity popular in Great Britain throughout the 20th century was sacred music represented by both works for the Anglican and Catholic churches and Orthodox compositions (Tavener), as well as works synthesising the traditions of sacred music of various religious denominations (Delius, Fanshawe, Tavener, Jenkins).

3. The work of British composers demonstrates a flexible interaction between national vocal and choral characteristics and general European trends in the field of musical composition techniques.

The leading position of British choral music in Europe can largely be explained by the high performance level of the country's choral groups. A distinctive feature of UK choral professionals is the narrow specialisation of each outstanding choral group, sufficient to achieve high-quality performance of works of a particular period. The British choirs and ensembles of the late 20th century include groups that either perform medieval and Renaissance music, as well as examples

⁹ Robert Fayrfax (1464–1521) is an outstanding composer of the English Renaissance, one of the most famous predecessors of the Elizabethan composers Tallis and Byrd.

of contemporary choral music oriented towards early polyphony (Paul Hillier's Hilliard Ensemble, Jeremy Summerlee's Oxford Camerata) or specialise in the interpretation of baroque and classical works (John Eliot Gardiner's Monteverdi Choir, Robert King's King's Consort Choir), as well as groups known for performing primarily contemporary choral music (James Wood's New London

Chamber Choir, Harry Christophers's The Sixteen ensemble).

To sum up all of the above, it is difficult to disagree with the thought expressed by Edward J. Dent on the pages of the *Music & Letters* magazine back in 1925: "We English are by natural temperament singers rather than instrumentalists. <...> Our instinct, like that of the Italians, is to sing." [18, p. 225]

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Time, Tradition, Author: Artistic Concepts of the Piano Concerto by Alexey Krasheninnikov

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Abstract. The article analyses the Piano Concerto by the St. Petersburg composer Alexey Krasheninnikov, performed as part of the 2nd Rachmaninoff International Competition for Pianists, Composers and Conductors in June 2025. The subject of the study is the artistic concept of the composition and the mechanisms of its implementation in the musical text. The study is focused on the three key concepts of Time, Tradition and Author, which are placed in the cultural and historical context of the “end of composers’ time” (Vladimir Martynov). The synthesis of these conceptual lines identifies the author’s central reflection: an understanding of the place and role of the composer in the contemporary world. Fundamental oppositions (personality — world; creator — clamour of everyday life, etc.) become instruments for researching two modes of human existence: external (interaction with reality) and internal (path to oneself). In the present article, the form of the concerto is interpreted as an image schema based on Krasheninnikov’s commentary and current research into “individual musical projects” from the perspective of cognitive science. The cognitive model is the visualisation of data on digital devices, coupled with the action of scrolling. Determining the tempo-rhythmic organisation of the work, the montage technique of “gaps” becomes a tool for realising this image schema. The analysis also focuses on the main themes of the concerto and the logic of dramatic development through the lens of the stated conceptual lines.

Keywords: music of the 21st century, Alexey Krasheninnikov, Sergei Rachmaninoff, piano concerto, conceptuality Time, tradition, image schema, scrolling

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Время, традиция, автор: художественные концепты Концерта для фортепиано с оркестром Алексея Крашенинникова

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Аннотация. В статье анализируется Концерт для фортепиано с оркестром петербургского композитора Алексея Крашенинникова, прозвучавший в рамках II Международного конкурса пианистов, композиторов и дирижёров им. С.В. Рахманинова в июне 2025 года. Предметом изучения выступает художественная концепция сочинения и механизмы её реализации в музыкальном тексте. Исследование фокусируется на трёх ключевых концептах — Время, Традиция, Автор, — помещённых в культурно-исторический контекст «конца времени композиторов» (Владимир Мартынов). Синтез этих концептуальных линий позволяет выявить центральную авторскую рефлексию — осмысление места и роли композитора в современном мире. Фундаментальные оппозиции (личность — мир, творец — шумы бытия и др.) становятся инструментами исследования двух модусов человеческого существования: внешнего (взаимодействие с реальностью) и внутреннего (путь к себе). Отталкиваясь от комментария Крашенинникова и опираясь на актуальные исследования «индивидуальных проектов» в музыке с позиций когнитивистики, автор статьи интерпретирует форму концерта как образ-схему. Когнитивной моделью служит визуализация данных на цифровых устройствах, сопряжённая с действием скроллинга. Монтажная техника «разрывов» становится инструментом реализации этой образ-схемы, определяя темпо-ритмическую организацию произведения. В фокусе анализа оказываются также основной тематизм концерта и логика драматургического развития сквозь призму заявленных концептуальных линий.

Ключевые слова: музыка XXI века, Алексей Крашенинников, Сергей Рахманинов, фортепианный концерт, концепт Время, традиция, образ-схема, скроллинг

Introduction

Homo universalis (universal man) refers to the so-called Renaissance Man, whose activities and cognitive interests fell beyond a single sphere and included a wide range of areas: intellectual, artistic, social, material and spiritual. In the contemporary socio-cultural paradigm, a priority is focusing strategies that involve narrow professionalisation, including in the field of artistic creativity. In this context, individuals with multi-creative potential are of

particular research interest, since their creative activity provides an opportunity to study the mechanisms of integration and mutual influence of different types of artistic practice within the framework of an individual, authorial method. Music history knows many examples of composers who demonstrated talent in various fields: for example, Mendelssohn, Čiurlionis, Gershwin and Schoenberg were talented artists; Weber, Schumann and Prokofiev possessed exceptional literary abilities; Hoffmann, the creator of the first Romantic opera, went

down in history primarily as a writer and artist, although he spent most of his life practicing law.

Like the creators listed above, St. Petersburg composer Alexey Krasheninnikov has successfully pursued various artistic endeavours over the years. For over 20 years he has been working as a violinist in one of Russian leading orchestras, the Mariinsky Theatre Symphony Orchestra. However, the scope of his creative interests is not limited to music. Krasheninnikov is a talented writer whose individual literary style is characterised by a clearly expressed musicality. He is the author of the short story collections *Waltz for Saint-Germain* (2023) and *Half-Erased Character* (2025). The illustrations for the first book were done by the composer himself. These drawings demonstrate the skill of a graphic artist and portrait painter, who sensitively reveals the image of the model. Thus, Krasheninnikov's artistic world represents an organic and complex system of interaction between expressive means inherent in music, literature and fine arts.

Alexey Krasheninnikov was born in Almaty in 1976. He studied at the St. Petersburg Conservatory, graduated in 2004 from the violin class under Alexander Stang and in 2011 from the composition class of Professor Alexander Mnatsakanyan. Since 2011, Krasheninnikov has been a member of the Union of Composers of Russia and the Union of Composers of St. Petersburg, where he also holds the post of board member and chairman of the chamber section. He has received numerous awards, including the first prizes at the All-Russian Composer Competition named after A. Petrov (2012) and "AVANTI" All-Russian composer competition (2020). A highlight was his participation in the 2nd Rachmaninoff International Competition for Pianists, Composers and Conductors, which took place in June 2025 in Moscow. Krasheninnikov's competition works include Variations on the Theme *Dies Irae* for piano,

a romance for soprano and piano *Rodnoye* on a poem by Dmitry Merezhkovsky, and a Piano Concerto. The composer received second prize and a silver medal at the competition.

In recent years, Krasheninnikov's work has attracted particular interest from researchers. Let us first note the works of Ekaterina Okuneva and Darya Semko. [1; 2] The attention of these authors is attracted by both the works (the opera *Cursed Days* (based on a work by I. Bunin), the Saxophone Concerto) and the principles of the composer's artistic thinking in the syncretic unity of musical and literary elements.

The present article continues the line of scholarly understanding of Krasheninnikov's work to focus on the figurative-semantic and compositional-dramatic features of the Piano Concerto. This is not the composer's first turn to the instrumental concerto genre. His creative arsenal includes three more works with a direct reference to the genre model: Concerto for Clarinet and Strings (2006), Concerto for Violin and Percussion (2007), Saxophone Concerto (2022).

As is well known, the genre of the instrumental concerto has undergone a significant evolution over its more than three-century history, from the formation of a genre canon in the 18th century through its renewal in the 19th century to the experimental searches of the 20th century, as a result of which "the genre has lost its integrity and became essentially variant-multiple." [3, p. 112] In the 21st century, despite changing cultural paradigms, interest in the concerto remains relevant. An analysis of the works created by our contemporaries furnish insights into the metamorphoses that are currently taking place in this genre.

From Intention to Text: Mechanisms of Musical Embodiment

Alexey Krasheninnikov's Piano Concerto was written specifically for the Rachmaninoff

International Competition. As the composer himself noted, the work was created in an extremely short time frame.

A brief commentary by the composer on his personal page in the social network VKontakte provides insight into the concept and idea behind the composition: “The main component of this concerto’s form is the constant and unexpected change of episodes, like the change of frames in a film. We live in a time of mosaic thinking, when people do not linger on the perception of something for long, but, on the contrary, tend to turn the page mid-sentence, hence the concept of ‘many letters’; no one wants to read long texts or watch long videos. Our era is the scrolling era.”¹

The composer’s expressed thoughts should not be thought of as constituting a programme for the concerto, but are better seen as a figurative analogue to its structural features. The phenomenon of mosaic thinking is realised in musical composition through a system of constant contrasting switches. While the one-part composition of the concerto fails to fit into typical patterns, it does contain formal features of classical form-building: the periodic appearance of the introductory theme is functionally similar to a refrain; moreover, the very peculiar return of the original material at the end resonates with a recognisable reprise, although more at the level of sensation. However, these principles do not become defining, since the semantic “idea” is built on top of the structure to determine both the architectonics and development process. The “individual project” (the Yuri Kholopov’s term) of this concerto seems to fit organically

into the theory of musical form considered within the paradigm of cognitive science — that is, a concept based not on the material aspect of the text, but on the factor of mental structuring. Summarising the works of contemporary composers, Anna Amrakhova notes that “cognitive models structure both the visual imagery of a composition and its compositional structure. Understanding of the *form* turns into *understanding* in the literal sense.” [4, p. 48] In the classification proposed by Amrakhova, the structure of Krasheninnikov’s Piano Concerto corresponds to an image schema. The cognitive model here is the image of presenting information on digital devices and, at the same time, the action (scrolling through the content), as if performed by the “user.” The montage principle² becomes the means of realising this image schema, determining the rhythm and dynamics of the listener’s perception. For Krasheninnikov, this method of structuring makes it possible to convey a specifically experienced sensation of time, its discontinuity, tension, curvature, ability to compress, and everything that, in the words of the composer, distances us “from a full perception and empathy with anything.”³

The composer uses the principle of “gap” as a way of organising contrasting fragments. The deliberate emphasis on the “gap” is achieved through its timbral isolation. The “switching” function is entrusted to a whip, which effectively becomes the second main “hero” of the concerto. It is interesting that the function of “gaps” in the score was initially distributed between the woodblock and the whip. However, just before the premiere,

¹ URL: <https://vk.com/alexkrash15> (accessed: 04.02.2026).

² In the second half of the 20th century and in the 21st century, montage acts as a universal principle of thinking, which is reflected in any form of artistic creativity. For more information on the montage principle in music, see Olga Sinelnikova’s article. [5]

³ The quote is taken from the composer’s commentary on his personal VKontakte page. URL: <https://vk.com/alexkrash15> (accessed: 04.02.2026).

at the suggestion of pianist Sergei Oskolkov Jr., Krasheninnikov dedicated the percussion part entirely to the whip. The composer noted that the sharp sound of the whip is reminiscent of film frame clicking, which perfectly matches the concept of an abrupt change in musical episodes.⁴

Despite the absence of formal programmatic features (title, subtitles, epigraphs, etc.) and the composer's generally ambiguous attitude toward the verbal concretisation of musical meanings, which simplifies the underlying ideas, Krasheninnikov's works, including the analysed concerto, use various ways of clarifying the substantive aspects of music, namely: they possess a vivid, in a certain sense "visible" imagery, increased associativity of the musical text and use elements of instrumental theatre. The subtle interaction of musical and extra-musical principles gives birth to an unspoken word. While remaining within the framework of "pure" instrumentalism, this music entertains a possibility of various exploratory interpretations.

The concerto is written for a large symphony orchestra with an expanded percussion section. The piano acts as an absolute soloist, revealing its cantilena potential and rich timbre palette. This instrument becomes the embodiment of the creative principle, and its leading role is determined not so much by the presence of a cadenza or an abundance of solo fragments, but by its function as a carrier of the "author's word." The whip claims the role of the second, "side"⁵ soloist. Its nature is fundamentally opposite to the piano: the whip (*frusta*) is a noisy percussion instrument that produces a sharp

clap without a specific pitch. However, despite the obvious timbre limitations in comparison with the colourful piano, it is precisely whip that subjugates both the piano and the entire orchestra, unceremoniously and indifferently cutting off lyrical outpourings, dramatic build-ups and accumulation of chaotic processes. The piano and whip parts create a semantic opposition: on the one hand, the creative sphere, on the other — the overwhelming vanity of life, the incessant "clamour of everyday existence."

The main idea of the concerto can be described as follows: an existential search for creative self-identity and spiritual guidelines in an era that proclaimed "the death of the author" (Roland Barthes) and the "end of composer's time" (Vladimir Martynov). The stated idea is revealed in conditionally programmatic lines that represent the understanding of both the nature of time perception (1) and the continuity aspect of artistic tradition (2). These vectors form a complex layer of self-reflection (3), which becomes a kind of mirror for the creative personality.

Let us consider the main themes of the concerto and relate them to the disclosure of the indicated lines.

Existential Experience of Time Perception

The dramatic sphere of the work is connected with the presentation of the image of Time. This dramatic layer includes several themes united by common means of expression, among which the leading role is played by various forms of ostinato. The first theme of Time (reh. 1) has the following type of embodiment: a sound repeated in a rehearsal manner at a fast

⁴ Now the author plans to make changes to the score and give the complete part of the blows to the whip.

⁵ It should be noted that the presence of an opponent "character," a timbre antagonist, is a specific dramatic element of Krasheninnikov's concerto thinking. Thus, the Saxophone Concerto, despite the title, is also essentially double, since the button accordion plays the most important dramatic role in it (see more about the concept of this work: [2]). The situation is similar in the Concerto for Violin and Percussion, which contains a cadenza for a duet of violin and timpani.

tempo to serve as a kind of space axis and a background where sound points randomly “flash” (Example No. 1). Supported in the first and second performance by a string and wooden section, respectively, they create the illusion of sonic chaos. A sense of chaos also arises at the vertical level, as the points form clusters of atonal consonances.

The toccata movement, the nature of the performance (the author’s remark: “mechanically and very rhythmically”), the neutrality of the material and the logic of its development (the accumulation of entropy) — all this connects the image of Time with a negative context. This is not just the inexorable passage of time in the outside world, but the uncomfortable feeling experienced by the lyrical hero of his own existence in the flow of the surrounding reality. It is no secret that contemporary man perceives the conditions of his existence in time as too fast and tense. Psychologists attribute this to the density of the information environment in which we live

and to the increased speed of communication due to the invention and improvement of virtual communication platforms. A person is unable to comprehend and emotionally perceive incoming information and unfolding events. The toccata theme is a representative of such an “existential gap.”

However, the impression of chaos in the developing material turns out to be imaginary. The scattered sound points eventually come together to form a two-voice theme (reh. 2) with pitch anarchy opposed by a strict rhythmic organisation that establishes rigid time parameters for the relationship between the voices: the lower line is always one sixteenth note behind the upper one. It feels like the lyrical hero of the concerto is trying to tame the sound chaos, collecting disparate fragments of musical matter and language into a new, alternative order. In reh. 4, this theme is heard in the retrograde (Example No. 2), which symbolises an unsuccessful attempt to turn back time.

Example No. 1

Alexey Krasheninnikov. *Piano Concerto*.
Piano part, mm. 13–17

The musical score for Example No. 1 is a piano part in 4/4 time. It consists of three staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a melodic line. The middle staff is a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) with a dense, rhythmic accompaniment of sixteenth notes. The bottom staff is a bass clef with a melodic line. The tempo/mood is indicated as 'механистично и очень ритмично' (mechanical and very rhythmic). The dynamic is marked 'p' (piano).

Example No. 2

Alexey Krasheninnikov. *Piano Concerto*.
Piano part, reh. 4, mm. 55–62

The musical score for Example No. 2 is a piano part in 4/4 time, consisting of two systems of two staves each. The top system shows a two-voice theme with a treble clef upper voice and a bass clef lower voice. The bottom system shows the same theme in retrograde. The dynamic is marked 'ff' (fortissimo). The tempo/mood is indicated as 'mea'.

The image of Time is complemented by two more themes performed by the soloist (rehs. 7 and 9). Their sound realisation is also connected with ostinato textural formulas (Examples Nos. 3a and 3b).

They are also brought together by their modal organisation as limited by the scale in the volume of a diminished fifth: *a, h, c, d, es*. This intonational isolation creates a special artistic impression: in contrast to the sound anarchy of the orchestral environment, reaching a culminating point (from m. 111, the composer instructs the woodwinds to “play any notes”); the music in the soloist’s part seems to lose its vector of movement, gets stuck in a narrow space, creating an image of aimless marking time, a painful search for a way out. The cumulative effect finds its resolution in a chain of arpeggiated passages

built according to the strict structural model of minor third — minor sixth. However, the technical methods at this stage rather symbolise the futility of efforts to “verify harmony with algebra.”

The Phenomenon of the Author’s “I” and Strategies of Creative Reflection

All the above material sounds in the soloist’s cadenza (rehs. 17–18) and, up to a certain point, is also limited by the framework of the scale *a, h, c, d, es*. The choice of these particular sounds seems to hold the key to the hidden program of the concerto, namely to that line which is connected with the process of the author’s reflection. The point is that these sounds form the composer’s monogram introducing the author’s “I” into the narrative: KRASCH⁶ (Example No. 4).

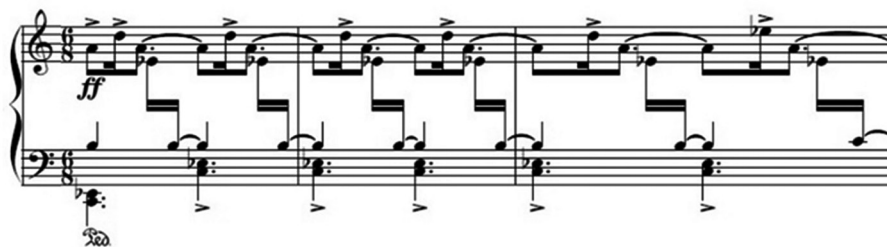
Example No. 3a

Alexey Krasheninnikov. *Piano Concerto*.
Piano part, reh. 7, mm. 82–87



Example No. 3b

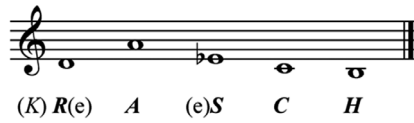
Alexey Krasheninnikov. *Piano Concerto*.
Piano part, reh. 9, mm. 104–106



⁶ Krasheninnikov is the organiser of the Krash Club — a union of creative people of St. Petersburg. The aim of the Krash Club is indicated on its “VKontakte” page (https://vk.com/krash_club): “The aim of the Club is to unite the creative intelligentsia of St. Petersburg, to create a ‘point of attraction’ for musicians, artists, writers, and all people who in one way or another belong to various fields of art.”

Example No. 4

Alexey Krasheninnikov. *Monogram*



In personal correspondence, Alexey Krasheninnikov admitted that he had no specific intention of introducing any monogram, but that it rather came about intuitively.

The artistic form of realisation of the author's "I" and the problem of creative reflection in the concerto becomes the lyrical figurative sphere including a number of important themes.

The key role is played by the *introductory theme* performed by the soloist (Example No. 5). The composer designated the music of the introduction as elegy and noted that, unlike all the other material, it was written as a separate work.

The theme sounds in the key of *B-flat major* and has the character of calm reflection. The monorhythmic nature of the melodic line and its small range give the sound a meditative quality that establishes a special, introspective narrative plane. The theme is deliberately simple in both textural and harmonic terms. Its melodic

and rhythmic pattern is reminiscent of romantic themes, sometimes evoking unexpected associations, for example, with the theme of the terzetto of Eleanor, Manrico and the Count from the opera *Il Trovatore* by Giuseppe Verdi (Example No. 6).

Example No. 6

Giuseppe Verdi. *Il Trovatore*.
Terzetto of Eleanor, Manrico and the Count, mm. 1-4



In the dramaturgy of the work, the elegy plays a significant role: it runs through the entire concerto in the form of a series of lyrical piano solos, which allows it to be interpreted as the voice of the concerto lyrical hero or rather as the "author's word." Without entering into a direct dialogue with the themes of Time, it nevertheless sensitively reflects their influence by losing its tonal stability and distorting its intonation pattern with echoing clamor of everyday life invading it. The latter becomes possible due to the monorhythmic basis of the melody (Example No. 7). The technique used by Krasheninnikov is similar to the concept

Example No. 5

Alexey Krasheninnikov. *Piano Concerto*.
Piano part, mm. 1-8



Example No. 7

Alexey Krasheninnikov. *Piano Concerto*.
Piano part, reh. 5, mm. 67-70



of “windows” by Salvatore Sciarrino (for more details see: [6]). Similar to the Italian composer, the point of space-time disruption generates a crack with alternative time-space bleeding through. This technique serves a dual function: it demonstrates the multidimensionality of the narrative and enhances the dramatic tension.

The elegy has the last word — the work ends with a large piano solo, in which the theme sounds as if “beyond the framework” of the concerto, in full, without traumatic breaks, enthusiastically jubilant, radiant and expanding the space and absorbing all the orchestral colours, as if it had finally broken out of the intermittent, crazy flow of reality into a new spatial-temporal dimension.

An important dramatic stage of (rehs. 15–17) the concerto is connected with another lyrical theme. This is the theme of the Russian folk song *A Path in the Damp Forest* (Example No. 8). Known from its arrangements by Anatoly Lyadov and Alexander Gretchaninov, this song is often performed by choirs at a brisk tempo and with a humorous character. Krasheninnikov used the version presented in the collection of melodies for singing, compiled by the famous teacher, Honoured Worker of Culture of Russia Margarita Reinish.

According to the composer, he was attracted by the lyrical potential of the melody, the concentration in it of that *toska* (Russ.,

melancholy) that carries within itself a certain specific “code” of the Russian mentality. The researcher of the Russian linguistic picture of the world, Alexey Shmelev, wrote: “Many foreigners who studied the Russian language drew attention to the untranslatability of the Russian word *toska* and the national specificity of the mental state it denoted. It is difficult even to explain to a person unfamiliar with *toska* what it is. <...> *toska* is what experienced by a person who wants something, but does not know exactly what it is, and only knows that it is unattainable <...> In a sense, any *toska* could be metaphorically presented as a longing for the heavenly homeland, for the lost paradise.” [7, p. 55]

In this context, the choice of key for the song is non-accidental: *F minor* has long been associated with “unaccountable *toska*” (Rimsky-Korsakov), “the highest expression of pain” (Justin Knecht), “deep sadness” (Christian Schubart). The theme has a simple melodic and rhythmic basis; its range is limited to a fifth; repetition and descending sequential movement make it easily remembered and recognisable. The harbingers of this *toska* theme in the form of an ascending fifth intonation appeared repeatedly in the sound chaos of the first section.⁸

At the insistence of the author, the theme of the song should be performed on a recorder

Example No. 8

Alexey Krasheninnikov. *Piano Concerto*.
Recorder part,⁷ reh. 15, mm. 168–175



⁷ Composer’s remark in the score: “If it is impossible to use a recorder, it is permissible to play the piccolo flute.”

⁸ See the part of the bell and piano in reh. 3 and 3 bars before reh. 4, as well as the part of the 2nd flute reh. 7 + 7 measures.

during the first performance. This timbre solution emphasises the fragility and naivety of the image, giving it childish features⁹ on the one hand and imparting a national flavour on the other. The motif of childhood brings in an introspective perspective, giving the image of Time a personal touch as a past and memory in the artist's life.

The lyrical culmination of the concerto (rehs. 24–30) is connected with the development of the theme *A Path in the Damp Forest*. This section can be called a masterpiece of lyrical and psychological landscape painting. The background for the theme is made up of the first and second violins, which perform clustered harmonics, with the woodwinds, which imitate birdsong. The composer uses a simple technique that creates an incredibly naturalistic effect: the oboes and bassoons play a descending intonation only on the reed, without forming a specific pitch, while entering in a random order. The theme is started again by the recorder, which is joined by the piccolo to form a canon. The further development is based on the picking up of the theme by new instruments so that a five-voice canon is formed in reh. 29.

Interaction with Artistic Tradition: Dialogue with Rachmaninoff

In composing his piece specifically for the Rachmaninoff International Competition, Krasheninnikov could not ignore the legacy of the great composer, whose name is associated with the culmination in the development of the Russian piano concerto genre. The dialogue with Rachmaninoff is constructed in three aspects: through direct contact with Rachmaninoff's themes and the principles of their development, by rethinking of the structural-genre model of Rachmaninoff's concerto and as a way of "seeing the world" and talking about it.

Regarding the first aspect, Krasheninnikov twice introduces a very recognisable quote into his concerto. In reh. 13 of the piano part, against the background of continuous orchestral clamor, a transformed introduction theme from the first movement of Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2 (Examples Nos. 9a and 9b) sounds. The discrepancy of the harmonic vertical does not prevent its recognition due to its textural and metro-rhythmic presentation.

The introduction of this quasi-quotation is non-accidental, since it allows the image of Time to be presented in a different context, namely as a dialogue with the past and artistic tradition. In the literature about Rachmaninoff, the characterisation of this theme as a "calling and solemn alarm" has become established. [8, p. 210] The polyphony of the chord vertical, echoing and measuredly repeating in the bass *F* contra octave, truly creates a pre-storm image, as if predicting the difficult trials that await Russia in the first half of the 20th century. Krasheninnikov's choice of this theme likely has a symbolic meaning: it emphasises the connection between historical periods in the fate of our country. This guess is confirmed by the new appearance of Rachmaninoff's theme (reh. 22), which this time quite accurately follows the chord chart, but sounds in the context of a fantastically grotesque waltz, which makes one recall the scene of Bulgakov's ball at Woland's.

It is also impossible to ignore the allusiveness of the musical material, which produces a vague effect of *déjà vu* (or rather, *déjà entendu*). Thus, the mentioned waltz evokes associations with the ghostly scherzo episode from the second part of Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 3, and the rehearsal-toccata motif found there in the piano part seems to have served as a prototype for Krasheninnikov's Time theme (Example No. 10).

⁹ As is known, the recorder is an instrument that preschoolers use when learning to play wind instruments.

Example No. 9a

Alexey Krasheninnikov. *Piano Concerto*.
Piano part, reh. 4, mm. 151–156

The image displays two systems of musical notation for the piano part of Alexey Krasheninnikov's Piano Concerto. Each system consists of three staves: a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a separate bass clef staff. The first system begins with a dynamic marking of *ff* (fortissimo) in both the grand staff and the bass staff. The second system features a dynamic marking of *fff* (fortississimo) in the grand staff, with a *p* (piano) marking in the bass staff. The notation includes complex rhythmic patterns, including sixteenth-note runs and chords, with various articulation marks such as accents and slurs.

Example No. 9b

Sergei Rachmaninoff. *Piano Concerto No. 2*.
First movement, piano part, mm. 1–8

The image shows the first eight measures of the piano part for the first movement of Sergei Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2. The tempo is marked *Moderato* with a quarter note equal to 66 (♩ = 66). The dynamics start at *pp* (pianissimo) and gradually increase, indicated by the instruction *poco a poco cresc.* (poco a poco crescendo). The score concludes with a *rit.* (ritardando) marking. The notation features a steady accompaniment in the bass with chords and moving lines in the treble.

Example No. 10

Sergei Rachmaninoff. *Piano Concerto No. 3*.
Second movement. Piano part, mm. 135–140

The image presents the piano part for the second movement of Sergei Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 3, measures 135–140. The tempo is marked *leggiero* (light). The dynamics begin with *dim.* (diminuendo) and then move to *p* (piano). The score ends with a *poco cresc.* (poco crescendo) instruction. The notation is characterized by flowing, melodic lines in both hands, often with slurs and grace notes.

Some analogies with a specific work by Rachmaninoff can be found in *Symphonic Dances*, as the closest one to Krasheninnikov's concerto in terms of figurative and semantic content, with their logic of hidden programmatic signs interpreting the Rachmaninoff's work in autobiographical, historical and mythological keys. The genre-style (demonic danceability, toccata rhythms, waltz-like, "ball at Satan's") and figurative-programmatic (the theme of Time, the folklore theme as a generalised and at the same time very personal expression of Russian *toska*, the revelation of the author's "I") components of both works reveal a certain similarity.

Alexey Krasheninnikov's composition offers an original interpretation of the genre compositional model. On the one hand, the composer generalises the new historical experience; on the other hand, with a hint of nostalgia, he appeals to the artistic tradition, which is associated in the concerto primarily with the name of Rachmaninoff. Thus, in Krasheninnikov's concerto, the principle of developing thematic material characteristic of Rachmaninoff is reflected. The essence of this principle lies in the gradual "flourishing" of the lyrical theme with each subsequent performance, as a result of which it achieves a powerful, hymn-like sound. A striking example of this technique in Krasheninnikov can be observed both in the development of the theme of the Russian folk song *A Path in the Damp Forest* and in the final version of the elegy sound.¹⁰ In general, the interpretation of the concerto as a lyrical genre, based on the "return-to-soil" principle linking musical expression with national and cultural roots, is undoubtedly akin to Rachmaninoff's model.

Both composers are brought together by the similarity of their lyrical worldview and open emotionality. As for Rachmaninoff, the Krasheninnikov's music is, first of all, an expression of beauty and spirituality, a sphere of self-expression. The main thing that unites Krasheninnikov with the great Russian composer is their belonging to the generation that is essentially the turning point. The creative path of both composers crossed the border — the change of centuries, accompanied by a fundamental transformation of worldview paradigms under the influence of large-scale social-cultural processes. For Rachmaninoff, this was the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, the collapse of imperial Russia and emigration; for Krasheninnikov, this was the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, the collapse of the Soviet Union and complex transitional processes of the post-Soviet period. Therefore, the music of both becomes a kind of testimony of the era: a longing for what was lost, a fear of impending changes and an attempt to maintain value orientations in a crumbling world can be heard. Rachmaninoff's music imbued with nostalgia captures the boundary between the beautiful "past" and the lonely "present" in emigration; Krasheninnikov's music captures the boundary between a bygone era and an uncertain future. For both composers, the lyrical is a saving island, a healing space: where history destroys, music preserves humanity.

**In Place of a Conclusion.
In Search of Harmony:
Between the World and Oneself**

Let us return to the concept of Krasheninnikov's concerto and sum up the above. The synthesis of program lines

¹⁰ However, the difference is also noticeable. While in Rachmaninoff, the competition/confrontation between the soloist and the orchestra implies the achievement of *agreement* in the finale, the radiant light of the elegy, as well as the rapture and delight remain the prerogative of the soloist in Krasheninnikov: the orchestra is silent, and its silence emphasises the isolation of the lyrical statement.

identifies the author's central reflection — an understanding of the place and role of the composer in the contemporary world. This understanding is realised through a series of fundamental oppositions: personality — world, creator — clamor of everyday existence, spiritual — worldly, own — alien. The composer reveals the content of the theme in two aspects: the interaction of the individual with the environment and the identity crisis.

The first aspect is associated with the representation of an existential “gap,” reflecting the loss of the ability to fully experience the current moment in time in the rush of everyday life. The scientific and technological revolution of the second half of the 20th century, the rapid development of information systems and the discovery of virtual reality turned against humanity, enslaving it and launching a process of dehumanisation. An infinite scrolling syndrome has become one of the symptoms of these metamorphoses. Along with a persistent behavioural addiction, it provoked more fundamental changes: the transformation of true values and their gradual disappearance from what is truly significant to a person. The musical embodiment of the conflict in the concerto goes beyond a simple juxtaposition of lyrical themes and the image of Time, which sets the rhythm of the frantic race. The very structure of “gaps” (the image schema as a cognitive model) turns into an active-dramatic factor. In turn, each of the two lyrical themes in the concerto has a specific function in the artistic whole. The development of the elegy theme

forms a chain of monologues reflecting the author's thoughts about the goals and meanings of existence in the world and the possibility of preserving one's true self under conditions of chaos. The theme *A Path in the Damp Forest* embodies the ideal of eternal, timeless beauty, an affirmation of the ethical standard of simplicity and naturalness. As a symbol of the once possessed heritage, it stands in opposition to the mad pursuit of false values and the all-consuming “clamour of the world.” It seems to contain the memory of what was lost and, at the same time, the hope of returning to the origins.

The second semantic perspective of the composition is determined by the fact that the lyrical hero of the concerto appears not simply as a person, but as a creator for translating the problem of the interaction between the individual and the world into the plane of existential and artistic search. Through the image of a creative Personality, the author manages to reveal a painful paradox of contemporaneity: on the one hand — the need to find a unique voice, on the other — the pressure of cultural tradition in a world where “everything has already been written.” In this reality, the creator risks to become a shadow: his figure loses social and cultural significance, and his right to originality is called into question.

The metaphor of a “half-erased character” — an image borrowed from Krasheninnikov's story of the same title¹¹ — becomes the key to understanding the hero of the piano concerto. In this stylistic, almost an oxymoron figure, the subject of experience and the form of its

¹¹ *Half-Erased Character* by Krasheninnikov was inspired by *Erased de Kooning Drawing*, which belonged to the American artist, representative of pop art and conceptual art Robert Rauschenberg. Reflections on the boundaries of art led Rauschenberg to carry out a provocative art experiment through destruction: having received a fresh sketch from Willem de Kooning, the artist erased it, leaving only ghostly hints of the former image. This object provokes reflection in the viewer: is this a full-fledged work of art or merely a symbolic frame enclosing emptiness and embodying the idea of creative impotence?

(non)existence or, within the framework of the concerto concept, the need to be heard and blurring of personality contours are paradoxically combined. The hero of the story accidentally meets a similar half-erased stranger, with whom they search for a transparent or ghostly world erased by the artist. “I almost don’t exist,” “A pale reflection of a great plan,” “I almost don’t have a face either, but that’s a good thing. Now there is no need to have your own face.” [9, p. 83] It seems that these phrases characterise not only the character, but also every artist, who at times acutely experiences his own powerlessness, as well as the era in which the individual painfully realises the loss of his identity. Isn’t this ghostly (or transparent) world, where the half-erased character goes, the very same authenticity that we once had and irrevocably lost in pursuit of the deceptive mirages of the vain world? Isn’t this the very “lost paradise” to which the soul of an artist, tired of the fragmentation of contemporary existence, aspires?

However, other questions remain. If, at the end of the concerto, the hero still manages

to escape from the intermittent, chaotic flow of time into another dimension (as indicated by the ecstatic, jubilant sound of the elegy on the solo piano, devoid of the previous traumatic breaks), then is this world a true reality or just an illusion generated by a tired consciousness? The silence of the orchestra enhances the semantic ambiguity of the finale. Does it emphasise the absolute loneliness of the hero, which became the price of his acquired freedom? Does it symbolise the artist’s true liberation, or does this silence signify the soloist’s imaginary victory, merely an illusion of overcoming, behind which a new form of alienation is hidden? It seems that the finale of the concerto leaves room for different interpretations. And in this ambiguity and multiplicity of answers, the great power of his influence on listeners lies. Ultimately, the “half-erased character” is not only the hero of a story or a concerto, but also each of us who in search of ourselves, balances on the edge of true existence and its imaginary semblance, reality and illusion, between the desire to be understood and the fear of exposing our “I.”

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On the Significance of the Composer's Comments in the Scores of Guo Zurong's Piano Concertos (On the Example of the Sixth Piano Concerto *Ode to the Plum Blossom*)

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Abstract. The article sets out to study the meaning of the composer's textual comments in the scores of piano concertos by the prominent Chinese composer Guo Zurong. Such remarks are interpreted as constituting a significant element of the composer's programmatic thinking. Their multi-layered function is considered on the example of the Sixth Piano Concerto *Ode to the Plum Blossom* (1968). The main focus is on analysing the composer's comments that frame the concert score. It is demonstrated that verbal explanations are not an external addition, but directly correlate with the musical dramaturgy and the system of expressive means (the use of the timbre of the pipa to personify the image of the plum, the leitmotif role of ascending passages, as well as textural and dynamic contrasts depicting the opposition of the flower and the cold). The research methodology is based on a comprehensive historical, cultural and musical-theoretical analysis. The author places Guo Zurong's practice of authorial commentary in a broad context: from the traditions of Chinese poetic imagery with the symbolism of the plum blossom (梅花) as the embodiment of fortitude and hope to the European romantic tradition of programmatic writing. Comparative analysis with Wang Jianzhong's piano piece *Plum Blossom Melody in Three Variations* (梅花三弄) reveals the commonality of the semantic complex of expressive means (arpeggiated flights, high register, dense texture) for the embodiment of this cultural archetype in music. The main conclusion of the analysis is that the author's comments in the scores of Guo Zurong perform a multi-tasking function that manifests itself as an integral part of the composer's artistic concept and a synthesising component of his unique style.

Keywords: Guo Zurong, piano concerto, programme music, author's commentary, score, plum blossom (meihua), Chinese music, musical symbolism, pipa

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О смыслах авторских комментариев в партитурах фортепианных концертов Го Цзужуна (на примере Шестого фортепианного концерта «Ода цветению сливы»)

Цуй Сивэнь

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Аннотация. Статья посвящена исследованию авторских текстовых комментариев в партитурах фортепианных концертов известного китайского композитора Го Цзужуна. Данные ремарки рассматриваются автором статьи как значимый элемент программного мышления композитора. На примере Шестого фортепианного концерта «Ода цветению сливы» (1968) раскрывается их многослойная функция. Основное внимание уделяется анализу авторских комментариев, обрамляющих партитуру концерта. Автор доказывает, что вербальные пояснения не являются внешним дополнением, а напрямую коррелируют с музыкальной драматургией и системой выразительных средств (использование тембра пипы для персонификации образа сливы, лейтмотивная роль восходящих пассажей, а также фактурные и динамические контрасты, рисующие противостояние цветка и стужи). Методология исследования строится на комплексном историко-культурном и музыкально-теоретическом анализе. Автор помещает практику авторских комментариев Го Цзужуна в широкий контекст: от традиций китайской поэтической образности и символики цветка сливы (мэйхуа) как воплощения стойкости и надежды до европейской романтической традиции программности. Сравнительный анализ с фортепианной пьесой Ван Цзяньчжуна «Цветущая слива мэй» (梅花三弄) выявляет общность семантического комплекса средств выразительности (арпеджированные взлёты, высокий регистр, плотная фактура) для воплощения данного культурного архетипа в музыке. Основным выводом статьи заключается в том, что авторские комментарии в партитурах Го Цзужуна выполняют многозадачную функцию и предстают неотъемлемой частью композиторского замысла, синтезирующей составляющей его уникального стиля.

Ключевые слова: Го Цзужун, фортепианный концерт, программная музыка, авторский комментарий, партитура, цветок сливы (мэйхуа), китайская музыка, музыкальный символизм, пипа

On the Programmatic Nature of Guo Zurong's Piano Concertos

One of the important features of the piano concertos of the well-known Chinese composer Guo Zurong (郭祖荣) is their programmatic character. This demonstrates, on the one hand, the importance for the composer of the coexistence of words and music as a tribute to

national tradition, [1] and on the other hand, the desire to establish direct contact with the public within the framework of a genre that is not indigenous to Chinese culture: as Liudmila Kazantseva rightly points out, “the main task of the programme is to establish contact between the composer and the listener, facilitating the listener’s understanding

of the composer's artistic intent."¹ Guo Zurong's deep understanding of the close connection between music and literature stems from his long-term interest in literary creation. As a musician, he clearly felt their closeness and interpenetration, revealing not only the unique splendour of each work, but also making them more vivid and voluminous. As Ren Xuanjiong rightly notes, "literary qualities in music are manifested through programmatic, narrative, dramatic and typical qualities." [2, p. 2] In an interview with the author of the present study, Guo Zurong named Beethoven and Schubert among the composers he particularly reveres.² The latter's work emblematically represents musical romanticism as a whole, whose key feature is its reliance on the principles of programmatic writing. In this connection, we should mention another great German romantic, Robert Schumann, who paid great attention to the literary basis of his works and the reflection through these parallels of pictures of the surrounding environment and internal human feelings. Schumann believed that "art that is capable of producing only empty sounds, lacking the means to express inner emotions, is an insignificant art." [3, p. 144] An example is his 1848 piano suite *Waldszenen* (Forest Scenes) op. 82³ depicting beautiful forest landscapes, each of which captured the composer's emotional experiences. Let us remember that the suite consists of nine pieces, each of which has a programmatic title, under which, in addition, in order to instantiate the figurative content, a poem is given that corresponds to the musical concept of the miniature. For example, the fourth number,

entitled *Verrufene Stelle* (Unfavourable Place), is introduced with a poem by the German playwright Friedrich Hebbel (1813–1863):

Die Blumen, so hoch sie wachsen,
Sind blass hier, wie der Tod;
Nur eine in der Mitte
Steht da im dunlekn Roth.

Die hat es nicht von der Sonne:
Nie traf sie deren Gluth;
Sie hat es von der Erde,
Und die trank Menschenblut.

On the Role of Literary Commentary in the Scores of Piano Concertos

The given example, like many others that were in the focus of Guo Zurong's interests, demonstrates that, in working with the European genre model of the piano concerto, the Chinese composer not only relied on the programmatic traditions inherent in Chinese music, [1, pp. 91–92] but also focused on the Western European experience of Romantic art. This supports the hypothesis of Guo Zurong's commitment to a programmatic type of thinking, which is realised through literary commentary. Let us emphasise the expressed idea with the words of the Chinese musicologist Wang Yaqi: "Programme music uses a literary approach, conveying the creative vision and musical concept through textual description, while simultaneously expressing the composer's emotions." [4, p. 20]

However, when examining the entire content of Guo Zurong's piano concertos, it is easy to be convinced that the direct imprinting

¹ Kazantseva L.P. Programme music: Functions of the program. In: Kazantseva L.P. *Musical content in the context of culture*. Astrakhan: Volga, 2009, pp. 274–280.

² From the author's interview with Guo Zurong on August 9, 2024.

³ The choice of this work as an example is due to the practice of the author of this study as a concert pianist.

of the program, when it is, in the words of Kazantseva, “parallelly correlated with the music,”⁴ should be treated in the composer’s work on a case-by-case basis. These are Piano Concertos No. 2 *The Joy of Mountains and Seas* (山海欢腾), No. 3 *Spring* (春日), No. 6 *Ode to Plum Blossoms* (咏梅) and No. 9 *Progress* (进取).⁵ To a greater extent, the composer gravitates towards a hidden programme, which Kazantseva characterises as “the most complex type of correlation of the extra-musical component with the musical content,”⁶ requiring intensive intellectual work from the listener. However, no matter what type of programming the composer uses in order to communicate the meaning of the key images of the music of his piano concertos, he includes explanatory texts directly in the scores of the works, verbally recording the thoughts, emotions and even views on life contained in them in a continuation of the romantic tradition of literary commentary. It is equally significant that, when composing piano concertos, the composer carefully documents the sources of his creative inspiration. Thus, in the text of the scores, he specifies the impulse of his genuine emotions. Here, one of the important sources are images of nature, such as the seasons, landscapes, birdsong, plum blossom. In drawing inspiration from poetic lines, the composer often draws seeks musical equivalents for them in an effort to form in performers and listeners an idea of the natural landscape motifs that excite him. Thus, in the second part of Piano Concerto No. 1,

Andante molto cantabile — forming the lyrical centre of the work — Guo Zurong turns to poetic sketches. One of these is the poem *Country Life* by Gao Ding of the Qing Dynasty: “The grass grows tall, and orioles fly in the sky of the second month, the willows by the embankment sway, intoxicated by the spring mist” (“草长莺飞二月天，拂堤杨柳醉春烟”). Here the composer considers it of importance to convey the beauty and majestic tranquillity of early spring in the countryside of the Jiangnan region. Desiring to enhance the effect of the static night landscape at the beginning of the second part of the concert, the composer leaves the following remark: “On a moonlit night near the city shore, the spring wind sways the silence.”⁷

Among the images of nature that inspired Guo Zurong was the singing of birds. In classical Chinese poetry, birdsong is a literary symbol embodying vitality. Sound effects of this kind are often enhanced by text commentary. For example, characterising the main theme of the first movement of the Piano Concerto with orchestra in the key of *D-flat*⁸ (降D调钢琴与乐队), the composer inserts the following comment into the score: “At the end of the spring of 1988, I heard the singing of a cuckoo.”⁹

In the second movement of Piano Concerto No. 2, in emphasising the motif of homesickness, the composer leaves a remark in the score: “The night is cool as water. The waves are making a noise outside the window. It makes me feel nostalgic for my

⁴ Kazantseva L.P. Op. cit.

⁵ For more information on Guo Zujun’s program concerts, see: [1].

⁶ Kazantseva L.P. Op. cit.

⁷ Guo Zurong. Collection of concert scores (manuscript edition). Hong Kong: New Hong Kong Yearbook Ltd., 2009, vol. 1, p. 49 (郭祖荣. 协奏曲曲集总谱(手稿版)(0). 香港: 新香港年鉴有限公司出版, 2009, 卷一第49页).

⁸ Not all of Guo Zurong’s piano concertos are numbered.

⁹ Guo Zurong. Collection of concert scores (manuscript edition). Hong Kong: New Hong Kong Yearbook Ltd., 2009, vol. 2, p. 632 (“协奏曲曲集总谱(手稿版)(卷二)” — 香港: 新香港年鉴有限公司出版, 郭祖荣, 2009).

homeland.”¹⁰ Piano Concerto No. 9 *Progress* is prefaced by a detailed commentary, which begins like this: “A person’s life must be filled with the spirit of constant striving for progress (by ‘striving for progress’ is meant the striving for the prosperity of the country and the people).”¹¹ The autobiographical nature of many verbal remarks reveals itself in the presence of dates, geographical specifics, as well as in the direct testimony of the author. In the same introductory commentary to Piano Concerto No. 9 *Progress* appears the following comment: “All my life I have been unhappy, but, guided by the spirit of progress and the desire to compose a national symphony for China, I constantly overcame difficulties and reached this day. Guo Zurong, November 23, 2023, early morning.”

Without continuing the series of possible examples, we will emphasise that, as is well known, “programmatically can manifest itself at any level: tone, means of musical expression, intonation, musical image, dramaturgy, theme and idea, authorial presence.”¹² This verbal concretisation is important, since it is always supported by a set of means of musical expression: texture, dynamics, and intonation. Thus, using literary language, Guo Zurong skilfully reveals the essence of music, linking its emotional resonance with content that typically focuses on traditional Chinese imagery. Let us consider the specifics of implementing this type of programmatic approach using the example of Piano Concerto No. 6, which is entitled *Ode to the Plum Blossom*.

Symbolism of the Image of Wild Plum in Chinese Culture

The concerto was written in 1968. This is a one-part work, whose poetic title establishes a certain mood in the listener. The textual comments made by the author in the score of the work serve a similar purpose. However, before characterising them, we should consider the symbolic meaning of the image of plum blossoms in Chinese culture in general. In classical Chinese literature, plum blossoms are imbued with deep meaning. In ancient Chinese poetry, the plum tree transcended its natural attributes as a plant, becoming a means through which poets express their aspirations and ideals. The semantic side of the image is ambiguous. Most typically, it symbolises an indomitable character and the ability to resist. The rationale for this is that, in the cold, snowy winter, when all other trees are dormant, only the plum tree, with its blossoms, defies the harsh cold. Ancient poets used this image to express “noble virtue” — the upholding of moral ideals in the face of adversity, the refusal to obey even the laws of nature: the plum blossoms despite the snow. Thus, Zhao Jiahong writes: “...snow symbolises rational perception, pure spirituality. It is contrasted with the wild plum as a symbol of early spring and sensory perception of the surrounding world.”¹³ Thus, the wild plum blossoms, in contrast to the freezing cold, serve as a metaphor for resilience and vitality. The Song Dynasty poet Wang Anshi refers to this in his deeply touching poem *Plum Blossoms*:

¹⁰ Guo Zurong. Collection of concert scores (manuscript edition). Hong Kong: New Hong Kong Yearbook Ltd., 2009, vol. 1, p. 165. (“协奏曲曲集总谱(手稿版)(卷一)” — 香港: 新香港年鉴有限公司出版, 郭祖荣, 2009).

¹¹ Although completed by Guo Zurong in 2024, Piano Concerto No. 9 *Progress* is currently unpublished. The score was provided to the author of the article in manuscript.

¹² Kazantseva L.P. Op. cit.

¹³ Lu Meipo *Snow and Plum Blossom: Know Russian*. 06.11.2016.
URL: <https://znajrusskij.blogspot.com/2016/11/xuemei.html> (accessed: 26.01.2026).

Thus, it is in an effort to emphasise and strengthen the main semantic “dominant” that the composer leaves comments in the score related to this flower. It is significant that these remarks literally frame the composition. The first is located at the very beginning of the score (p. 2): “In turbulent times, Zheng’an village finds peace. The scent of plums hangs in the garden, and feelings are expressed in music.”¹⁶ It is difficult to convey more precisely in words the character of the introductory section’s music, which visualises through sounds the semantic opposition between winter’s stasis and the resolutely blossoming harbinger of spring against this backdrop. All this fits into the first eight-bar, which begins with *pianissimo* tremolo strings, complemented by tremolo timpani and the alternate appearance

of two pipas, also with a tremolo pattern. Against this “ghostly” background, in the fourth measure the solo flute appears to carry the main motif, which also concludes with a trill. However, from the sixth measure on the ascending “take-off” of the canonically entering imitations in the strings and woodwinds, which rapidly thicken the texture with increasing sonority from *p* to *ff*, the sound reaches the concluding chord *tutti*, completing the initial syntactic construction. The further development preserves the described logic in a variable form, where the tremulous background is associated with a “lifeless” snow cover, on which wild plum flowers “bloom” in rapid contrast (Example No. 1). Such a direct association would not have been possible without the comment left by the composer.

Example No. 1

Guo Zurong. Piano Concerto No. 6
Ode to the Plum Blossom, mm. 1–20

The image shows a page of a musical score for Guo Zurong's Piano Concerto No. 6, 'Ode to the Plum Blossom', measures 1-20. The score is written in Chinese and includes parts for various instruments: Piccolo, 2 Flauti (Flutes), 2 Clarineti (Clarinets), 2 Fagotti (Fagots), 4 Cori (Cori), 2 Trombe (Trombe), 1 Tromboni e Tuba (Tromboni e Tuba), Timpani, Piano, Arpa (Arpa), Pipa (Pipa), Violini (Violini), Violoncelli (Violoncelli), and Contrabbassi (Contrabbassi). The tempo is marked 'Andante tranquillo'. A green circle highlights a specific passage in the Piano part, which is the main focus of the example.

¹⁶ Guo Zurong. Concerto No. 6 *Ode to the Plum Blossom* for piano and orchestra: score (manuscript edition). Hong Kong: New Hong Kong Yearbook Ltd, 2009, vol. 2, p. 427 (“协奏曲曲集总谱(手稿版)(卷二)” — 香港: 新香港年鉴有限公司出版, 郭祖荣, 2009).

Throughout the concert, both in the orchestra and in the piano part, the image of blossoming wild plum flowers is depicted in ascending passage flights, which can be seen as a leitmotif characterising the blossom to which the composer dedicates his musical “ode.” Interestingly, this musical solution coincides with the vision of this image presented by another composer, who also dedicated his work to plum blossom. This is a piano piece by Wang Jianzhong, *Plum Blossom Melody in Three Variations* (梅花三弄, 1973).¹⁷ Researchers of this work note the reliance of the melody’s accompaniment on small durations, which “take on an arpeggiated appearance. This method of sound construction is widely used in accompaniments on the guqin

(古琴). Symbolising the details of a flower, this melodic fragment depicts the swaying of plum branches in the cold wind; a micro-perspective of the painting is created, in which everything is drawn, right down to the thin stamens and petals.” [7, p. 62]

In Examples Nos. 2 and 3, the musical “solution” of a given image in the named piece and in the piano part of the concerto under study is compared.

Continuing the comparison of the musical embodiment of the plum image, we will cite another statement from the above-mentioned article about the work of Wang Jianzhong. [Ibid.] In the next fragment, “the plum blossom seems to appear in close-up — this is a plum

Example No. 2

Wang Jianzhong. *Plum Blossom Melody in Three Variations*,
mm. 117–124

Example No. 3

Guo Zurong. *Concerto No. 6 Ode to the Plum Blossom*,
mm. 176–181, piano part

¹⁷ The title of this work by Wang Jianzhong is translated differently in Russian-language publications: in one case — *Plum Blossom Mei* [7]; in another — *Plum Blossom Melody in Three Variations* [8].

grove, where the trees stand straight and proud, despite the frost, wind and snow. Inspiring music in a high register is accompanied by a varied accompaniment in terms of texture, bringing the development of the musical material to a climax and revealing the image of the splendour of the plum blossom, symbolising perseverance and steadfastness of spirit.” [Ibid., p. 63] The obvious commonality of the texture-timbre and register embodiment of the plum blossom image is clearly demonstrated when comparing Examples Nos. 4 and 5.

And here is how the Chinese researcher Lü Ming interprets the figurative content of the same piano composition: “The piano gradually reveals its rich possibilities through octave echoes of sixteenth notes in the upper register.

Its bright timbre clearly highlights the vibrant and smooth melody of the piece, inspiring a dynamic rhythm that creates a sense of moving forward. This creates an image of austere beauty rising above the cold wind, imbued with a fresh, energetic dynamism amidst the icy cold.” [9, p. 29] Let us continue the comparative associations by comparing musical fragments (Examples Nos. 6 and 7).

Other works by Chinese composers are similarly dedicated to the image of the plum tree. Among them are the orchestra suite *Plum Blossom* (梅花) by Yang Shuangzhi, the song *Plum Blossom Invocation* (梅花引) by Xu Peidong, a piece for chamber instrumentation of folk instruments by an anonymous author, performed in the nan yin style entitled¹⁸

Example No. 4

Wang Jianzhong. *Plum Blossom Melody in Three Variations*, mm. 141–149

141 *Animando* (♩ = 126)
ff

145

Example No. 5

Guo Zurong. *Concerto No. 6 Ode to the Plum Blossom*, mm. 228–235, piano part

8

cresc.

f

¹⁸ Nan Yin is a style of Chinese chamber music from the southern Chinese province of Fujian.

Example No. 6.

Wang Jianzhong. *Plum Blossom Melody in Three Variations*,
mm. 207–214

Example No. 7.

Guo Zurong. *Concerto No. 6 Ode to the Plum Blossom*,
mm. 277–284, piano part

Plum Blossom Melody (梅花操),¹⁹ and many others. An analysis of their content and style revealed the presence of common features with the examples considered earlier. Thus, regarding the last instrumental piece (*Plum Blossom Melody*) Yu Dingyang writes: “The plum blossom, despite the harsh winter, defiantly blooms in the cold, serving as a tribute to the honest, incorruptible, pure and noble character of people.” [10, p. 2] Zhong

Yangxizi describes the imagery of the piano suite *Plum Blossom* as “a vibrant spectacle of spring, with a multitude of flowers competing in splendor, filling the overall musical image with greater clarity and vitality.” [11, p. 21] The texture of the suite, based on continuous arpeggiated accompaniment, according to the same author, “strengthens the driving force of the piece and the feeling of continuous movement” [Ibid.] (Example No. 8).

¹⁹ *Plum Blossom Melody* is one of the four famous works of Quanzhou Nanyin of Fujian Province, which is a representative work of the world intangible cultural heritage of Quanzhou Nanyin transmitted through instrumental notation. It is performed using traditional instruments such as pipa, sanxian, erxian and dixiao.

However, let us return to Guo Zurong's Piano Concerto No. 6. Another comment about plum blossoms appears at the very end of the essay. The composer writes: "Completed in the new house in Zheng'an village, while the plum trees in the garden were blooming under the incessant winter rain."²⁰

Example No. 9 reproduces the last bars of Guo Zurong's composition. Corresponding to the beginning of the concerto, the ascending passage movement with dynamics *f* establishes the image of the triumph of plum blossom, symbolising spring and the ineradicable energy of life itself.

Example No. 8

Yang Shuangzhi. Piano suite *Plum Blossom*,
Fourth Movement "Blooming Multitude", mm. 1-25

Moderato $\text{♩} = 92$

The musical score consists of five systems of piano music. Each system contains a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The tempo is marked 'Moderato' with a quarter note equal to 92 beats per minute. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The score begins at measure 48. The music features a mix of chords and moving lines in both hands. The final system includes a 'rit.' (ritardando) marking.

²⁰ Guo Zurong. Concerto No. 6 *Ode to the Plum Blossom* for piano and orchestra: score (manuscript edition). Hong Kong: New Hong Kong Yearbook Co., Ltd, 2009, vol. 1, p. 507 ("协奏曲曲集总谱(手稿版)(卷一)" — 香港: 新香港年鉴有限公司出版, 郭祖荣, 2009, 第507页).

Example No. 9.

Guo Zurong. Concerto No. 6 *Ode to the Plum Blossom*,
mm. 545–549

The image displays a page of musical notation for Example No. 9, which is a section from Guo Zurong's Concerto No. 6, 'Ode to the Plum Blossom', measures 545-549. The score is written on ten staves. The top two staves appear to be for a melodic instrument, possibly a flute or violin, with various notes and rests. The middle four staves are for the piano accompaniment, showing chords and rhythmic patterns. The bottom two staves are for a vocal line, with lyrics written in Chinese characters below the notes. The notation includes various musical symbols such as clefs, time signatures, and dynamic markings. The overall style is characteristic of 20th-century Chinese concert music.

Conclusion

Thus, the presented analysis allows us to draw some conclusions. The first concerns the significance of images that are fundamental to art in general, which are saturated with symbolic meaning in the work of Chinese authors, among which is the image of a blossoming plum tree.

The second is connected with the Romantic tradition of verbal commentary, which turned out to be akin to the programmatic guidelines of Guo Zurong, whose apparent dissatisfaction with the presence of a general title for the concerto — *Ode to the Plum Blossom* — prompts him to make clarifying semantic

remarks in the score. And finally, the third and very important aspect from our point of view is the common musical understanding of how the image of a blossoming plum tree resisting the frost should “sound,” presented through a

comparison of the works of Chinese composers who dedicated their works to it, which allows us to speak of a single semantic complex of means of musical expression in its musical embodiment.

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Russian Music in Marc-André Hamelin's Performing Practice (Part 2): Nikolai Medtner's Sonatas

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Abstract. This article, which considers the performance art of Canadian pianist Marc-André Hamelin, continues the study of his interpretive approach to 20th-century Russian music that began in the previous issue of this journal. In this section, the author turns to the interpretation of sonatas by Nikolai Medtner, a composer whose work occupies a central place in Hamelin's performing repertoire. The pianist played and recorded all of Medtner's sonatas and two volumes of *Forgotten Motifs*, op. 38 and op. 39. Highlighting both similarities and differences in the musical preferences of both masters, the article notes in particular their commitment to polyphony and large-scale form. Special attention is paid to the polymelodism of Medtner's texture and its reflection in Hamelin's interpretation. The pianist builds his sound canvas according to the equality of voices, although often the accompaniment becomes a more striking element of the texture. Hamelin's timbre palette absorbs all the richness of the piano sound — from light *perlé* to deep *legatissimo*. The article also examines approaches to constructing performance form in sonatas. The logic of the construction of the cycle in Hamelin's interpretation is subject to the natural course of development, in which the dynamics depend on the transformation of the texture and the frequency of the change of harmonic events; at the end of the sonatas, an increase in the tempo is frequently encountered. The primary means of unifying form during performance becomes the revelation of recurring thematic intonations, as confirmed by a number of examples. In conclusion, it is noted that a lyrical element predominates in Hamelin's interpretation of the cycle of Medtner sonatas.

Keywords: Marc-André Hamelin, Nikolai Medtner, piano performance, piano style, interpretation of Nikolai Medtner's piano sonatas, performing individuality

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Русская музыка в исполнительском творчестве Марка-Андре Амлена (Часть II): Сонаты Николая Метнера

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Аннотация. Статья посвящена исполнительскому искусству канадского пианиста Марка-Андре Амлена и продолжает исследование его интерпретационного подхода к русской музыке XX века, начатое в предыдущем выпуске журнала. В данной части автор обращается к трактовке сонат Николая Метнера, композитора, чьё творчество занимает одно из центральных мест в исполнительском репертуаре Амлена. Пианист сыграл и записал все сонаты Метнера и две тетради «Забытых мотивов» ор. 38 и ор. 39. В статье обозначаются точки сходства и различия в музыкальных пристрастиях обоих мастеров, в частности отмечается их приверженность к полифонии и крупной форме. Особое внимание уделяется полимелодизму метнеровской фактуры и его отражению в интерпретации Амлена. Пианист выстраивает звуковое полотно на равноправии голосов, хотя нередко сопровождение становится у него более ярким элементом фактуры. Тембровая палитра Амлена вбирает всё богатство фортепианного звучания — от лёгкого *perle* до глубокого *legatissimo*. В статье рассматриваются также подходы к созданию исполнительской формы сонат. Логика построения цикла в интерпретации Амлена подчиняется естественному ходу развития, в котором динамика зависит от преобразования фактуры и частоты смены гармонических событий, в завершении сонат нередко происходит увеличение скорости темпа. Главным средством объединения формы в процессе исполнения сочинений становится выявление сквозных тематических интонаций, что подтверждено рядом примеров. В заключение отмечается, что в трактовке цикла метнеровских сонат у Амлена преобладает лирическое начало.

Ключевые слова: Марк-Андре Амлен, Николай Метнер, фортепианное исполнительство, фортепианная стилистика, интерпретация фортепианных сонат Николая Метнера, исполнительская индивидуальность

I don't see many real and sincere musicians around me.
It seems as if you are the only one left...

*From a letter from S.V. Rachmaninoff to N.K. Medtner,
December 28, 1921, New York¹*

Introduction

The popularity of Nikolai Medtner's piano music has grown significantly in the last two decades: dissertation research by Ekaterina

Predvechnova [1] and Vladimir Budnikov [2] have appeared, as well as a collection of articles entitled *Unforgotten Motives* edited by Elena Dolinskaya [3]; major festivals and competitions

¹ Letters from Sergei Rachmaninoff to Nikolai Medtner. 28.12.1921, New York.
URL: <https://senar.ru/letters/577?ysclid=mli3vrnphm318577381> (accessed: 20.02.2026).

have been held, such as the Medtner Marathon festival at the Gnesin Russian Academy of Music and the International Competition in Memory of N.K. Medtner in St. Petersburg. It thus seems as if the long-term lack of interest in the composer's work has started to be properly addressed by musicologists. Vladimir Tropp, an ardent admirer of Medtner, in his article "Towards Medtner" reveals the troubled performance legacy of his works. [Ibid., pp. 269–287] Researchers have identified certain objective facts that explain the longstanding undervaluation of Medtner's stature in Russia, including his lengthy emigration and the far greater popularity of his contemporaries, primarily Rachmaninoff and Scriabin. While it is well known that Rachmaninoff actively patronised Medtner, using his authority to promote both the latter's performing career and his compositions, he was unable to help his friend achieve the status of a famous musician. Moreover, Nikolai Karlovich himself did not contribute to this. A brilliant pianist, he gave preference in concert programmes in most cases only to his own compositions.² His position on new music, as set out in his book, *The Muse and the Fashion*, was in a sense a challenge to reality. His quixotic and reverent service to the ideals of beauty, the pursuit of artistic and professional perfection — these unpopular and unfashionable (at all times) qualities of the composer became the main reason for his work being alienated from a wider audience, but paradoxically have also turned out to be a point of attraction for many. "Medtner's music doesn't captivate you with its immediate emotionality,

but rather is perceived as if 'from within'," notes Tatyana Malikova. "It can be compared to an intelligent, deep, but not entirely easy to understand book, to which one must sometimes return to reread in order to fully comprehend the thoughts hidden in it." [5, p. 280] Indeed, its inner beauty and sincerity, organisation and naturalness, its intelligence and simplicity are not attainable by every performer, as confirmed by the rather modest (even today) discography of Medtner's works.

The Canadian pianist and composer Marc-André Hamelin is one of the few performers to have recorded all of the composer's sonatas and two opuses of *Forgotten Motifs* (op. 38 and op. 39), as well as his Second Piano Concerto. His perception of Medtner's music appears to be devoid of any external influences; rather, it is completely direct and subject to artistic intuition.³ At the same time, his performance contains everything that is characteristic of Medtner's music: melodiousness, breadth and simplicity of the "horizon" of the phrase, restrained intonation culture, as well as its distinct national Russian flavour, which is expressed in improvisation, in simple dance movements, in the heartfelt, direct conversation of melodic lines, and in the emotional power of harmonic conjugations. However, what is most important is that the lightness, spontaneity and liveliness of the performance give his interpretations a natural flow of music and accessibility to perception. Hamelin's statements about Medtner are similar to the views of many Russian musicologists: "...But the problem is that with most performances he

² The following lines from Medtner's letter to Alfred Swann (August 1929, Montmorency) are indicative: "But to prepare a whole programme of other people's compositions plus some skazkas ["fairytale"] of the undersigned, without intending to use this programme for other concerts, would probably be too much... and in this case I would have to refuse the concert." [4, p. 42]

³ Medtner himself refers to the expression "artistic intuition" when he discusses performance: "And isn't the historical era (with which, by the way, most great artists are not on good terms) comprehended by us, artists, primarily through artistic intuition and precisely through a work of art." [3, p. 204]

will not generally reveal himself to the listener at the first hearing. He really demands and repays repeated hearings.” [6, p. 139] It is obvious that Hamelin is close to the composer’s musical world, as well as understanding his language and compositional solutions, while at the same time he is fascinated by new images and a new sense of the instrumentality of the piano.

Medtner and Hamelin: the Unity of Opposites

As well as the two musicians having many things in common, there are also many aspects that separate Hamelin and Medtner’s artistry. For example, the pianist notes that Medtner’s religiosity is completely alien to him, thus hinting that their spiritual and vital interests are hardly related. [Ibid., p. 170] However, the artists’ musical preferences largely coincide. For example, a love for “counterpoint,” for polyphony in the broadest sense, which manifests itself both in the choice of repertoire and in one’s own compositional technique. Hamelin’s concert programmes include some of the most complex works created in polyphonic genres: Leopold Godowsky’s *Passacaglia*, Ferruccio Busoni’s *Canonical Variations and Fugue*, and Max Reger’s *Preludes and Fugues*. Here, it should be noted that this approach to polyphony was nurtured in the artistic soil of Romanticism. The same applies to Hamelin’s own *Prelude and Fugue*, which was written, by his own admission, under the influence of Sergei Taneyev’s *Prelude and Fugue*, Samuel Barber’s *Sonata for Piano*, and Ferruccio Busoni’s *Fourth Piano Concerto*. The pianist himself admits that his pieces are extremely difficult to perform. The interest in textural density, of course, reveals Hamelin’s virtuosity gene, a craving for unusual complexities, but here they

are by no means technical in nature, but rather auditory. In one interview, the musician said that he has a record on which all 15 symphonies of Dmitry Shostakovich are combined in parallel.⁴ This seems an absurd undertaking, at least to the average ear. While for a professional, finding familiar meanings in such a “terrifying” cacophony seems like an interesting challenge, it seems unlikely that such a record could ever have ended up in Medtner’s possession.

Elements of Hamelin’s repertoire would also not have received the approbation of the Russian composer. For example, as is well known, Medtner was not a big fan of French music. Conversely, the works of Claude Debussy, Maurice Ravel, and Gabriel Fauré have been a constant feature of Hamelin’s concert career. Their echoes are easy to “hear” in his interpretations of Medtner’s works — in the flying passages and fluttering arpeggiations. This light, airy manner raises no doubts, but neither does it provoke rejection. In general, Hamelin’s performing style is characterised by not overloading the texture, but, on the contrary, making it as clear and understandable as possible. This is consistent with Medtner’s recommendations for the *Idyllic Sonata*: “Play everything more *easily*, without pressure, *without excessive expression*, emphasis, temperament, and so on <...> Let the music *sound itself!* Do not interfere! (author’s emphasis. — *I.S.*)” [7, p. 27]

American and Austrian music, which is similarly alien to Medtner, is represented in Hamelin’s repertoire by its most striking examples: a sonata by Charles Ives, a sonata by Pierre Boulez, a sonata by Alban Berg, works by Kaikhosru Sorabji,⁵ various pieces by Stefan Wolpe, and etudes by William Bolcom.

⁴ Ethan Iverson. Interview with Marc-André Hamelin. URL: <https://ethaniverson.com/interviews/interview-with-marc-andre-hamelin/> (accessed: 20.02.2026).

⁵ It is clear from his own compositional oeuvre that Hamelin was a great admirer of Nikolai Medtner.

This factor might suggest that his contact with the complex rhythms of the 20th century allows the pianist to feel more at ease with traditional material, as well as applying to Medtner's very specific approach to metrical organisation. The naturalness with which Hamelin constructs Medtner's large periods, which are variable in metre and internal pulse, is, in the view of the present author, a result of his engagement not with Romantic music, but with the most recent compositions requiring special rhythmic discipline combined with inner freedom. Irina Skvortsova defines Medtner's rhythm as "an interwoven, refined modern material <...>, which is characterised by the use of 'sharp' rhythmic combinations, polyrhythm, complex metres, and free handling of the bar line." [3, p. 161] Indeed, in most of the performances of the main parts in Hamelin's interpretation, it is impossible to "hear" the bar line. What is of key importance to the pianist is "expression of the motive." This is especially clearly manifested in the chord presentation, for example, in all the main parts of the sonata triad, and in the third part of the Sonata-Tale. This approach is consistent with Metner's ideas. In his methodological recommendations, the composer often advised playing more as a whole, in a single line of movement, developing the absence of accents and increased levelling. [7, p. 13, 21, 29] Playing the whole piece over and over again, measuring the details and tempo shifts — for Hamelin, this is a typical way of working, often without an instrument.

But perhaps most of all, the musicians are united by their passion for sonata form. Although Hamelin the composer did not write a single work in the sonata genre,⁶ the sonata

"giants" occupy a prominent place in his performing repertoire: Symphony for Solo Piano by Charles Alkan, Sonata in *B major* by Franz Schubert, as well as piano concertos by Dmitry Shostakovich, Rodion Shchedrin, Johannes Brahms, Ferruccio Busoni, and many others. The pianist can confidently be counted among the masters of this major form, but with his own understanding and approach. For Hamelin, the form of writing is, first and foremost, a path, a way, a fascinating journey. He does not strive to base his interpretation on a particular dramatic plan; rather, he is a pianist-storyteller, a narrator, and how the story will end should be a mystery to the listener. This position is close to Metner's views. "For fruitful artistic work, a sense of pleasure and savour is essential!" wrote the Russian composer. "<...> It is necessary to *constantly change the sound*, touch, technique, and methods!! Never *become stagnant* in anything! (author's emphasis. — *I.S.*)." [Ibid., p. 19] "If we approach a tree to select a suitable plank or go out into a field only to find medicinal herbs, then we will not see the beauty of either the tree itself or the fields themselves." [8, p. 148]

In 1998, Hamelin released all of Nikolai Medtner's sonatas on the Hyperion label; in 2006, opp. 38 and 39 appeared on the same label. He also participated in proofreading the text for the American publisher Dover's reissue of the sonatas and tales, and wrote a brief preface for them.

It should be noted that such a serious passion for Medtner became part of a larger interest in Russian music;⁷ it was perhaps in this wider sense that Hamelin more clearly discovered the facets of Medtner's pianism.

⁶ The large form in his compositional work is represented by two cycles of variations and two suite cycles.

⁷ In this sense, he is distinguished for example, from pianists Hamish Milne and Geoffrey Tozer, who specialise exclusively in the works of Nikolai Medtner.

Colouristics and Textural Discoveries of Marc-André Hamelin

In his essay on Medtner's compositional technique, Nikolai Myaskovsky characterises the composer's music as "colourless, unpicturesque," identifying this very "colourlessness" as a "bright feature" of all his work. [3, p. 40, 44] Boris Asafiev expresses a similar point of view. More than a century later, Anna Shtrom entered into polemics with Myaskovsky and Asafiev. In her study of Medtner's vocal works, she drew attention to the richness of his sound-painting elements and the role of the performer in revealing them. [9, p. 14] However, perhaps the authoritative musicians were not so wrong in their characterisations of colourlessness. Medtner, a brilliant pianist himself, placed very high demands on future performers of his compositions, understanding that they would become co-authors of his music. "Colouring" the musical fabric of his works is not an easy task. To use Medtner's expressions, one will need "the rail of imagination" and its corresponding "technical device," "more subtle artistic work," [and] one will have to "work more with shadings. Exercise in aural immersion. Search for the finest nuances." [7, p. 20]

Anyone who writes about Medtner's piano writing draws attention to the exceptional density of its texture, its characteristic "contrapuntalism," as Nikolai Myaskovsky and Alexander Goldenweiser put it. Zhitomirsky notes that Medtner tends to thicken the musical,

often dissonant, fabric with all sorts of non-chord notes, intertwining voices. [10, p. 325–326] The composer places the voices close together, weaving meaningful melodic elements into the middle of the textural layer. In this regard, one might say that he perceives the instrument as a Baroque composer would, ensuring fluidity in the development of material through all manner of imitations and strettos within a single register, whilst dynamics naturally depend upon the density of the texture itself and the number of voices.

In most such episodes, Hamelin is in no hurry to bring out one of the voices or make the entry of a motif in another voice more prominent; what matters to him is preserving the overall movement and transparency as such — that is, the decisive factor for him is creating conditions under which the listener will have time to perceive this musical fabric as polymelodic, to sense the beauty of the interweaving rather than the density of the sonic space. Of course, depending on the material, the technical solution may vary, but all such episodes share one thing in common — Hamelin does not give preference to any single voice; on the contrary, he may even allow one of them to be slightly "lost," merely hinting at it in the sonic space, whereby such episodes acquire a shimmering, mobile character. An illustration is provided in the main part of the Piano Sonata in *C major* op. 11 No. 3 (Example No. 1). The fact that none of the lines prevails over the others is justified by the logic of the first presentation

Example No. 1

Nikolai Medtner. Piano Sonata in *C Major* op. 11 No. 3.
First movement, mm. 7–11

of the theme. Hamelin makes the listener “work”: to catch the internal movement of the fabric or, perhaps, to hear his or her own version. From the point of view of interaction with the listener, this is a striking technique.

Polymelodism is natural for Hamelin; the pianist cannot choose his voice, but is rather “enchanted” by their interweaving. The theme of the introduction to the Sonata-Memories immediately comes to mind: the sounds float freely, immersing the listener in a meditative state.

Another approach is observed in the development of the Piano Sonata in *G minor* op. 22. Here, Hamelin, throughout a large construction of a fluid polymelodic canvas (Example No. 2a), first emphasises the linearity in the two-part voice, which is reinforced by polyrhythm (Example No. 2b); however, at the culmination, he moves away from the melodic mode to emphasise the colourful harmonic space. By drawing attention to each chord, the melody fulfils the function of a link between the chords, a kind of “pedal” (Example No. 2c).

The very same “graphicity” of texture noted by many researchers, including Myaskovsky, is not always interpreted by Hamelin as an attempt to isolate each voice. In places where one might choose between melody and harmony, Hamelin accords preference to the latter; his responsive attention to timbral colour changes even enlarges the movement and pace of certain episodes, as exemplified by the main theme of Piano Sonata in *E minor* op. 25 No. 2.

The question presents itself: what becomes of the “unifying thread of melody-as-theme”? [7, p. 25] Here we can turn to the words of Medtner himself: “The theme is not always and

Example No. 2 Nikolai Medtner. Piano Sonata in *G minor* op. 22

a) mm. 101–102



b) mm. 110–112



c) mm. 119–120



only a melody. It is more than a melody, for, as Bach proved in his fugues and Beethoven in his symphonies, it has the ability to transform, as it were, the most complex construction of form into a continuous melody.” [8, p. 48]

Indicative in this regard is the Piano Sonata in *D minor* op. 11 No. 2, which is titled *Elegy*. Here Hamelin strives for a complete fusion of melody and accompanying voices, for the primacy of harmony — and this becomes the basis according to which he builds the line. This is facilitated by its special pianistic characteristic — the complete symmetry of the apparatus, when the pianist feels both hands as one.⁸ It is precisely the precision of the simultaneous playing and legato of chords that gives the music depth, fullness, and penetration.⁹

⁸ It is known that Hamelin paid a lot of attention to the left-handed repertoire, which contributed to this symmetrical feeling.

⁹ A completely different feeling of this space is presented in the recording by Maria Yudina. The pianist interprets this sonata in a multi-voice manner, clearly revealing each element.

In this case, we are talking about a two-by-three arrangement, where only the first chord coincides and the pedal plays a major role. At the climax, where all the consonances do not coincide due to the tied notes, the effect of the “break” of the hands makes a strong impression (Example No. 3).

In Marc-André Hamelin’s playing, Medtner’s piano texture often appears in a form where the melody and accompaniment

form a single line, where the theme resembles a hidden voice — sometimes more clearly revealing itself, sometimes disappearing in a stream of small durations.¹⁰ In the notes this is not obvious, instead often appearing as melody and accompaniment. One of the many examples is the first movement of the Sonata-Tale in *C minor* op. 25 No. 1 (Examples Nos. 4, a, b and c). Hamelin strives to position the two voices as closely as possible in terms of dynamics

Example No. 3

Nikolai Medtner. Sonata-Elegy op. 11 No. 2, mm. 70–71



Example No. 4

Nikolai Medtner. Sonata-Tale in *C minor* op. 25 No. 1

a) Exposition, primary theme group, mm. 8–9



b) Exposition, transition, mm. 22–24



c) Recapitulation, subsidiary theme, mm. 79–80



¹⁰ We may call it antiphonal by analogy with antiphony in choral music, which implies singing that is performed by two choirs not for the purpose of creating polyphony, but rather to carry long notes from one voice to another.

and articulation, which adds fluidity to the flow of durations. The melody is passed from hand to hand, from register to register, giving the music an elemental, shimmering, magical quality.

But perhaps one of Hamelin's most striking discoveries in the field of colouristics is his special approach to the accompanying material. Often it is this element that provides the theme with the necessary character and tone. The accompanying voices do not create a background, a second plan, a perspective; rather, they become fully-fledged participants in the main action. Strictly speaking, it is difficult to find exclusively accompanying voices in Medtner. The musical texture of his compositions is filled with characteristic lines of equal duration and movement along chord tones or scale tones. In addition, there are episodes where the accompaniment is clearly separated from the main theme due to a register gap (in the later sonatas, the "specific weight" of the accompaniment increases).

Hamelin never "hides" the accompaniment, instead making its sound as expressive as possible, especially in terms of articulation (rather than dynamics). This is facilitated by the diversity in the presentation of the accompanying voices, which creates many difficulties for the performers. For example, in the *Introduzione* from the first movement of the *Piano Sonata in E minor* op. 25 No. 2, the accompanying part initially develops independently.¹¹ Gradually, its descending intonation (Example No. 5a) is and expansively transformed into longer constructions. Hamelin plays the accompanying voices with great difficulty, with an overpowering effort, as if afraid of losing every harmonic vertical, so that at some point the accompaniment comes to the fore without melody (Example No. 5b).

Example No. 5

Nikolai Medtner. *Piano Sonata in E minor*
op. 25 No. 2. First movementa) *Introduzione*, m. 10b) *Introduzione*, m. 16

In the main theme, the accompaniment — whilst preserving the note values and, in part, the melodic contour — transforms the character of the music into something light and scherzo-like through the change of articulation to staccato (Example No. 6a). Hamelin plays the accompanying voices at first *portamento*, then more sharply, thus drawing attention to the change taking place. The transition is built on sixteenth notes, the melody and accompaniment in it begin to converge, forming at a certain moment a single line (Example No. 6b). After this, the accompanying voices are plunged into chaotic movement due to the uneven metrics; this "vortex" comes to the fore here as the most striking element (Example No. 6c). The subsidiary theme is presented with the chords played *legato*, which seems a logical conclusion.

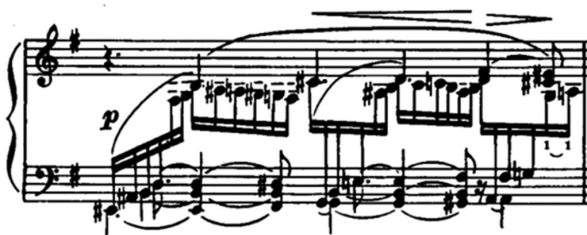
¹¹ This sonata has become rather popular lately; while all its performers try to play the accompaniment in relation to the melody as an equal textural layer, none of its interpreters has achieved the parity achieved by Hamelin.

Example No. 6 Nikolai Medtner. Piano Sonata in *E minor*
op. 25 No. 2. First movement

a) Exposition, Primary theme group, mm. 28–29



b) Transition, m. 58



c) Transition, m. 64



Let us stipulate that the melodic material, as a whole, does not lose its primacy, but at the same time the surrounding voices are by no means secondary. While in the no less interesting interpretations by Evgeny Svetlanov (the “pedagogical grandson” of Nikolai Medtner), Evgeny Kissin and Emil Gilels, the melody occupies a much larger place, Hamelin seems to encourage the listener to return to this music in the future in order to better “examine” all the “projections.”

Hamelin’s timbral playing highlights the variety of textural patterns within each sonata. Of course, such finishing is a characteristic of the pianist’s virtuoso thinking. Vladimir Budnikov, in his dissertation research dedicated to the timbrality of the piano texture of Medtner’s works, characterises the composer’s musical fabric as a projection of four elements — aqua-texture, terra-texture, aero-texture and ignis-texture — and linking them with the figurative content of the works. [2] In the context of Hamelin’s performance art, a connection could be made with each of the types mentioned above; however, the pianist follows a different trajectory: he is interested in the dynamics of change and transformation of the material, not only as a performer, but also as a composer. In an interview with *Steinway* magazine, he notes: “Take the *Night Wind* Sonata: It’s thirty-three minutes long, and there are tons of little things in there that the listener may not catch — but they add up to something truly great. It’s not usually the thematic material in Medtner that is arresting; it’s what he does with it. The transformational resource is endlessly fascinating to me.”¹²

In Hamelin’s interpretation, the phonic effects become particularly distinct, while the pianist is not “held back” within the framework outlined by the composer himself. Thus, he strives for a vivid juxtaposition of registers, which for the most part is not between the lower and upper registers, but rather between the middle and the edges. An example of this appears in the primary theme group of the Piano Sonata in *F minor* op. 5. In the Sonata *Minacciosa* op. 53 No. 2, the register juxtaposition takes on a sound-pictorial effect, associating it with the booming rumbles of thunder and lightning (Example No. 7a). When moving passages

¹² Bambarger B. Marc-André Hamelin reveals the unexpected.
URL: <https://www.steinway.com/news/features/marc-andre-hamelin> (accessed: 17.02.2026).

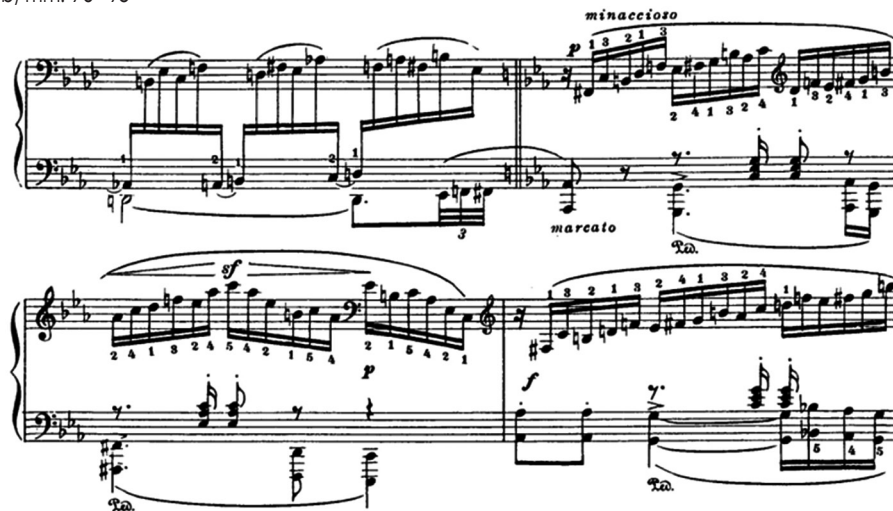
Example No. 7

Nikolai Medtner. *Sonata Minacciosa* op. 53 No. 2

a) mm. 18–20



b) mm. 90–93



quickly from one end of the keyboard to the other (Example No. 7b), Hamelin does not strive to articulate every note.

In one of the fragments of the Sonata-Idyll (mm. 71–74) an association with birdsong is created, which corresponds to the title of the movement — *Pastoral*. In the Sonata in *E minor Night Wind* op. 25 No. 2 (Medtner) invokes the sound of bells in a reference to Rachmaninoff, to whom this work is dedicated.

And yet, for the most part, Medtner — and after him Hamelin — gravitate towards the so-called “pianoforte” expression. This is expressed in the predominant *legato* stroke in all its gradations from *perlé* to deep — “like in swamp boots” [7, p. 18] — immersion into the instrument. Medtner’s most intimate themes sound monophonic in the left hand *legato* against the background of an accompaniment

of sixteenth notes in the right (the coda of the first part of the Sonata-Tale; the episode “Stentando” in the Piano Sonata in *E minor* op. 25 No. 2) and are perceived as exceptions in a diverse series of contrapuntal episodes. Often these are quiet, meaningful culminations, beauty in all its naturalness and simplicity (such as, for example, the second subsidiary theme in the Sonata *Reminiscenza* op. 38 No. 1, Example No. 8).

Example No. 8

Nikolai Medtner. *Sonata Reminiscenza* op. 38 No. 1. Second subsidiary theme, mm. 61–64



The Sonata-Elegy, the Sonata Reminiscenza, and the Sonata-Idyll are played by the pianist with a predominance of the *legato* stroke, with small digressions in the dance episodes of the second subsidiary themes. The German researcher of Medtner's work, Christoph Flamm, draws attention to the fact that cantabile in Medtner's sonatas has a specific, non-song-like, but rather philosophical-dialectical or narrative character. According to him, in Medtner's music "true simplicity is not afraid of being banal." [11, p. 136] Hamelin is also not afraid to be simple or banal, using a small arsenal of performing tools in these works, but revealing them to the fullest.

Hamelin's Virtuosity as the Key to Medtner's Form

In the context of "performance form-building,"¹³ Medtner's thematicism can scarcely be overestimated. "Medtner considered thematic development to be a 'unifying thread' that subordinates the composer's work," noted Isaac Zetel. "In his works one will not find any 'commonplaces' — the main attention here is concentrated on the substantive and organic development of musical ideas." [4, p. 68] It is impossible not to notice that his musical expressions are distinguished by emotional restraint, a musical "chasteness," which is expressed in a careful, refined attitude to the range of intonation symbols. Elena Dolinskaya believes that "the specific quality of Medtner's thematics is the laconism and completeness of each thought. The composer frequently employs compressed theme-calls, theme-chants, and theme-epigraphs, which become the initial melodic impulse of a composition.

<...> A typical feature of lyrical thematism is a certain pitch-lockedness of the theme-grain: the composer often limits the melody to either a fifth or an octave range." [13, p. 169, 171]

Hamelin is both sensitive to the transformations of thematic development and at the same time selective. In each composition he strives to discover a "skeletal" intonation that will stand out throughout large sections. In the interpretation of each sonata one can hear such an intonation, for example, the chant from the transition of the Sonata-Ballade op. 27 (Examples Nos. 9, a, b and c).

Example No. 9

Nikolai Medtner. Sonata-Ballade op. 27.
Transition

a) mm. 32–33



b) mm. 101



c) mm. 125



¹³ The term, which was introduced and developed in Olga Kiseleva's dissertation research "Principles of Piano Performance Formation," [12] implies the role of the performer in creating the form. The complex of tempo-rhythmic, dynamic, articulatory, and timbre means concretises the form of the composition, recreating the composer's intention.

Hamelin, in a Baroque style, slightly emphasises the first metrically weak note in this motif; it is this note that catches the listener's ear. By placing such intonational accents, the pianist achieves a cohesive development of the material. This formative technique was discussed in the previous article in the present series when analysing Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 3. It seems that the choice of active intonation and the performance arrangement of its most noticeable manifestations is far from a spontaneous decision of the pianist. This intonation sounds especially convincing before fugue episodes, in which it takes on the thematic function; accordingly, the fugue becomes the logical culmination of the development. This happens, for example, in the Sonata-Ballade and the Sonata tragica in *C minor* op. 39 No. 5.

The enormous importance of thematic connections in the performance of Medtner's sonatas is primarily noted by piano teachers. Evgeniya Tarasova writes: "Observing the growth of a future theme from the seed of the previous one, their close interconnection..., determining the 'specific weight' of each theme and its role in the construction of the melodic 'tree' of the work — and therefore *in the construction of form* — is a process that can enrich creative searches. <...> Let us repeat: it is desirable that all these thematic twists and turns be noticed by the interpreter at the very beginning of the work... (mine italics. — *I.S.*)" [14, p. 13, 19] She is echoed by Evgeniya Vasyutinskaya: "The main task of the pianist ... is to 'pull' the main material to the surface of the oversaturated texture." [15, p. 104]

Often, the finales of the composer's sonatas contain the entire thematic content (Sonata tragica, Sonata in *G minor* op. 22). Hamelin strives in his performance to prepare the listener for the final section, drawing attention to the characteristic intonation turns of each theme throughout the sonata. In the Sonata

tragica, the dotted-rhythm intonation literally "permeates" the entire form, binding the themes together with its vivid exclamation (Examples No. 10, a and b). The pianist, as a rule, tries to maintain even the tempo.

Example No. 10

Nikolai Medtner. Sonata Minacciosa
op. 53 No. 2

a) Primary theme group, mm. 1-2

b) Coda, mm. 422-423

The forms in the composer's sonatas encourage researchers to turn to extra-musical sources, seeking parallels from the fields of philosophy, poetry and drama. Based on her analysis of the compositional semantics of the sonatas, their philosophical and poetic program and existential symbolic images, Ekaterina Predvechnova comes to a conclusion about the "synthetic and symphonic nature of the composer's thinking." [16, p. 176] In her analytical studies, Evgeniya Vasyutinskaya draws attention to the deep penetration of the poetic into his musical text, as well as to the close connection of the sonatas with the works in this same genre by Franz Liszt, Alexander Scriabin and the ballads of Frédéric Chopin. [15, p. 106] None of the authors

ignores the two most important features of the works: their narrative character, which is generated precisely by the poetic, ballad-like, programmatic nature, and, at the same time, the completeness of the concept and form. As Tamara Levaya notes, Medtner's way of thinking was fundamentally antinomic: "...the composer implies unity and multiplicity, homogeneity and diversity, simplicity and complexity, rest and movement, contemplation and action — commenting on them in a special scheme,¹⁴ and later developing these antitheses in relation to the musical material itself." [17, p. 3] Christoph Flamm interprets this idea somewhat differently but in relation to performance — in his opinion, with regard to the piano sound of Medtner's works, "beauty is created in his art, first of all, not by extremes, but by balance." [11, p. 137] In the opinion of the present author, Hamelin's interpretations represent precisely the balance of means, the precision of all details, which is impossible without the highest degree of mastery — that is to say, virtuosity. In fact, this balance also is virtuosity — the precision of the proportions of each element in time and sound space, that very beauty.

The tempo balance is most obvious. Following the logic of the poetic through-composed development, Hamelin most often noticeably increases the tempo towards the end of the work. For this reason, Medtner's music sounds faster in Hamelin's interpretation than in that of other performers. The only exception is the *Night Wind* Sonata, which he plays the slowest of all (which confirms that speed is not an end in itself for him). The codas of the *tragica*, *romantica*, and *minacciosa* ("stormy") Sonatas are the moments of release of emotions and feelings. Although the pianist does not hold back, the way he voices the

entire texture is simply amazing. The denser the musical fabric, the less tone pedal he uses in favour of the precision of the lines. Medtner edited his works in great detail, so Hamelin is precise here. However, if, for example, the accompanying voices are presented in even and fast durations, he can allow himself a certain degree of rhythmic freedom in those places where the harmonic vertical changes more often (without drawing attention to the melody — that is, the melody does not force him to slow down). In those places where the accompaniment becomes sophisticated (hemiolias, polyrhythm, frequent changes in metric content), the pianist strictly adheres to the tempo and meter.

Hamelin is clearly captivated by Medtner's constant rhythmic "play." The composer seems to do everything to make the bar line imperceptible to the ear. This is facilitated by the sophisticated motivic organisation of the themes, the discrepant metrics in the hand parts, increased attention to weak beats, the absence of bass (especially in the early sonatas), and the constantly changing texture. As an experienced performer, Hamelin looks for the longest line in this flow (often accompanying) and does not overload the semantic lines with accents, despite the fact that in Medtner's text there is an abundance of dashes, wedges, check marks, *sf*, playing the lines of sixteenth notes as evenly as possible; the more chromatic the part of the passage is, the more evenly the pianist performs it.

The most crucial balance is maintained in dynamics and *touché*. Hamelin's huge dynamic "breath" is clearly noticeable in his interpretation of Medtner's works. It follows the dynamic transformation of the text itself, since any thickening or lightening of the texture naturally increases or decreases the strength of the sound. In this case, we are talking not

¹⁴ Here, Levaya is referring to Medtner's book *The Muse and the Fashion*.

only about the number of voices, but also about the compaction of space through chords or different types of double notes or repetitions. Hamelin strives not to overload the space before the highest point of dynamic development is reached. Very indicative in this regard is the culmination in the Sonata-Elegy, where, despite *ff* in the powerful chord texture, only one dissonant delay to the second low degree (in the upper register without bass) pierces the entire phrase at *sf*.

It is very typical in Medtner for expansion of texture to be used as a dynamic means. If in the early sonatas this is not so noticeable, then, starting with the *tragica*, such “dynamics” can be seen in every sonata.

Let us turn to the subsidiary theme of the second movement of the Sonata-Idyll op. 56 (Example No. 11).

Hamelin plays this episode very carefully, using only microdynamics, adding sound carefully, and drawing the listener’s attention

Example No. 11

Nikolai Medtner. Sonata-Idyll op. 56.
Second movement, subsidiary theme, mm. 77–92

The musical score for Example No. 11 consists of four systems of piano music. The first system is marked *doletissimo* and *pp*, with the instruction *cantando* and *una corda*. The second system is marked *poco a poco cresc.* and *tre corde*. The third system is marked *cresc.* and *♩ (longa)*. The fourth system is marked *poco largamente, risonante* and *legatissimo*, ending with *pp*. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

Conclusion

to harmonic changes. At first, the opposite movement of the extreme voices naturally leads to an increase in sonority. Then a second-inversion supertonic chord sounds, spread over two octaves. On the one hand, the intense harmonic movement is suspended for two measures, while on the other, a large number of sounds, including non-chord ones, fall into the only pedal here, which creates a dissonant long accent. The hand parts diverge even more: the arpeggiated movement in the left hand in sixteenth notes (and not eighth notes, as was the case earlier) dynamically prevails over the third passage in the right, which creates the very *crescendo* that is indicated in the notes. At the end of the phrase, the voices break down widely across registers. By exposing each of them, Hamelin achieves the effect *f* not by adding sound, but by revealing the number of voices.

In this case, the pianist does not use linear dynamics, but a kind of “deep,” differentiating fabric that creates a perspective that allows the sound field to expand and be filled with detail. And Hamelin uses this dynamic as the main approach in his interpretations. It should be noted that such an approach is connected with the depth of auditory perception inherent in composers and conductors. Using this approach, the pianist more often does not increase the sonority, but even reduces it, in order to better voice the entire score, especially in moments when the registers are filled with voices very densely. But one also always feels that there is a kind of “air” in its texture that allows the ear to separate one element from another. In the words of Christoph Flamm, “the composer seems to go beyond the limits of the instrument: not like Rachmaninoff, by taking it to its utmost limits, and not like Scriabin, by extreme refinement, but by rejecting the generally accepted vocabulary, by spiritualisation.” [11, p. 143]

To summarise, let us emphasise once again that Medtner “did not pave an easy path” to the performance of his music — in his compositions there is no overt emotionality, vivid contrast of themes, clear generic affiliation of dance-like interpolations, exact repetitions, familiar accompanying patterns, and so forth. His piano universe is imbued with multi-voice melodicism, rhythmic fantasy and inventiveness of pianistic texture. This world, like a “frost pattern on glass,” is at once complex, natural and incomprehensible, born as if of its own accord.

In Marc-André Hamelin’s interpretation, Medtner’s music reveals its enormous sound-expressive potential: register, dynamic, timbre-harmonic, textural, articulatory. For the pianist, the thematic content of each sonata is a fascinating compositional journey, with many discoveries in the area of transformation of the material and its arrangement in space. Hamelin’s technical mastery literally “uncovers” hidden “corners” in the composer’s sonatas: codas, fugue culminations, and intricate developmental episodes. But what is most important is that, the closer Hamelin gets to the desired sonic embodiment, the brighter and more natural in movement the technical manifestation turns out to be. The musician notes Medtner’s “exceptional pianism,” supporting his assertion with the words of Sergei Prokofiev that “Medtner has everything at his fingertips.” [18, p. 19] It seems to us that Marc-André Hamelin’s interpretations not only reveal new facets of Nikolai Medtner’s music, but also force us to reflect once again on the particular ways in which pianists and composers work on a piece of music, as well as on their respective ways of musical thinking.

Within the framework of this study, it is difficult to refrain from referring to

the composer's entire macrocycle of sonatas. Researcher Raisa Shitikova, examining the sonata genre in the 20th century, draws attention to the features of Medtner's cycles, which represent a unique fusion of lyricism, epic and drama. At the same time, she identifies two main directions in them, which are comprised of lyrical-epic and lyrical-dramatic types. [19] In Hamelin's interpretations, the lyrical element becomes the dominant that unites all fourteen works. Dramatic and tragic episodes highlight and emphasise the main lyrical line. The epic element is rather expressed in a narrative manner, where the parts are transformed into episodes with a gradual unfolding of the material that is used to fill the sonic space. The culmination of the macrocycle is the Sonata-Reminiscence, which stands out for its diversity of figurative content, the completeness of the parts, their contrast, and, in Hamelin's performance, improvisational nature. The first four sonatas are full of light, joy, naivety, playfulness, hope and impulsiveness. Further, it is easy to see that the lyrical and dramatic figurative structures alternately change (Sonata in *G minor* op. 22 — Sonata-Tale in *C minor* op. 22 No. 1;

Sonata in *E minor* *Night Wind* op. 22 No. 2 — Sonata-Ballade in *F major* op. 27; Sonata *A minor* (*During the war 1914–1917*) op. 30 — Sonata-Reminiscenza op. 38 No. 1; Sonata tragica op. 39 — Sonata Romantica op. 53 No. 1; Sonata Minacciosa op. 53 No. 2 — Sonata-Idyll in *G major* op. 56). The *Night Wind* sonata becomes the place of concentration of internal personal expression. This is expressed in Hamelin in a deeper and more expressive intonation and contrast of elements (in the slow movement, as mentioned above). In the following sonatas, the lyrical images become more and more enlightened, reaching their “flowering” in the subsidiary theme group of the Sonata tragica and the primary theme group of the Sonata Romantica. The last two-part Sonata-Idyll is full of fragility and tenderness, light and contemplation (it is no coincidence that “birds singing” — perhaps birds of paradise — appear in it). Hamelin interprets the entire cycle as a kind of lyrical diary of the composer, which captures the desire for light, joy, and the desire to understand life in all its manifestations. Indeed, such an interpretation is close to the pianist's own worldview — and probably for this reason sounds rather convincing.

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Supported Singing as a Phenomenon of Vocal Technique: Research and Methodological Perspective

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Abstract. This article examines the vocal phenomenon of supported sound production. In vocal teaching methodology, breath support is traditionally associated with the organization of respiratory processes in singing. While this approach is fundamentally valid, it is insufficient for identifying all components involved in the development of support in singing, which often leads to misconceptions and ineffective pedagogical practices in vocal training. The traditional approach to teaching vocal breathing is characterized by an emphasis on inhalation technique, while the role of phonatory exhalation is underestimated. Consequently, students develop only the initial component of a complex skill, which does not exert a decisive influence on the quality of sound production. Drawing on extensive practical and pedagogical experience, the article provides a more detailed analysis than is customary in methodological literature, outlining the full set of conditions required for the organization of supported phonation. Four components of the complete respiratory cycle in singing are identified: a brief inhalation; a momentary breath suspension lasting a fraction of a second; a prolonged phonatory exhalation; and, finally, a short diaphragmatic release of breath. The article also examines the principal acoustic characteristics of supported sound production.

Keywords: vocal methodology, schools of vocal technique, singing respiration, breath support, supported phonation, electropneumography, radiographic methods in the study of the physiology of singing respiration

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Певческая опора как феномен вокальной техники (научно-методические аспекты проблематики)

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Аннотация. В статье рассматривается такой певческий феномен, как опёртое звукоизвлечение. В вокальной методике опору звука принято связывать с процессом организации певческого дыхания. Данный взгляд на проблему является верным, но недостаточным, чтобы определиться со всеми компонентами в работе над опорой в пении, что нередко приводит к ошибочным установкам в классе вокала. Традиционный подход в обучении певческому дыханию характеризуется смещением акцента на технику вдоха при недооценке роли фонационного выдоха. Вследствие этого учащиеся совершенствуют лишь первичный компонент сложного навыка, не оказывающий решающего влияния на качество звукообразования. Обобщая практический и педагогический опыт более подробно, чем это принято в методических работах, в статье описываются все условия для организации опёртой фонации. Выделяются четыре составляющих формирования всего дыхательного цикла в пении: короткий вдох; задержка дыхания, которая длится доли секунды; продолжительный фонационный выдох и, в конце, короткий, так называемый сброс дыхания, производимый диафрагмой. Также рассматриваются основные акустические признаки «звукоизвлечения на опоре».

Ключевые слова: вокальная методика, вокальные школы, певческое дыхание, певческая опора звука, опёртое пение, метод электропневмографии и рентгенографии в исследованиях физиологии певческого дыхания

One could not become a capable singer without possessing the art of the control of the breath.

Manuel Garcia Jr. [1, p. 46]

Supported Singing within the System of Vocal Breathing Training

Throughout the history of vocal pedagogy, singing breathing organisation has been among the primary objectives in solo singing classes. Virtually all major methodological studies devote a special section in their research to describing the features of forming singer's breathing or analysing its typology in detail.

Every singer hears expression “the school of singing is a school of breathing” from their very first solo singing lesson. However, most vocal teachers predominantly understand this statement to mean only a certain type of a singing inhale.

Modern views on the types of signing breathing rely considerably on the data of pneumographic studies.¹ Overall,

¹ A pneumograph is a special device for imaging and recording respiratory movements.

the knowledge of the signing inhale types allows for categorising them into several groups, which have been well established in vocal pedagogy, though with some variations. The classification may be presented as follows:

1. Clavicular breathing (supercostal, upper thoracic or shallow).
2. Thoracic (lateral, costal, lower chest).
3. Abdominal (diaphragmatic).
4. Mixed (thoracoabdominal, lower rib-diaphragmatic, costal-abdominal).

The only type of breathing that is considered unacceptable for academic singing in all methodological studies is clavicular. All others have been accepted: they were even dominant and fundamental in different periods. However, experts in the field of vocal pedagogy know that no matter what tricks a singer uses while organising their inhalation, what ultimately matters is how the air comes into contact with the larynx during phonatory exhalation. In practice, it can be often observed that a singer attempts to deal with the problem of sound by playing with the breathing type, ignoring the fact that it is merely one element of a cohesive and complex sound production mechanism. The type of breathing may not be the goal. Naturally, it can activate and direct sensations during the phonation, but it cannot solve all sound production problems. Perhaps, this is the reason why many singers and teachers do not use silent breathing development exercises in their work.

Dmitry Lyush² described one of the problems related to the excessive focus on the breathing mechanism in the following way: “It is common to see that even professional singers complain about poor voice quality, explaining it as a ‘loss’

of breathing. Yet, they can never clearly explain what exactly happened and how breathing could be ‘lost.’ After visiting a phoniatriest, it usually turns out that the cause of poor sound is in the sluggish closure of the vocal cords or the formation of growths on them. The singer then begins to adjust the sound by changing the intensity of the phonatory exhalation. As a rule, these experiments entail further deterioration in sound quality. All this is the result of the failure to understand physiological inseparability of the functions of the larynx and breathing.” [2, p. 74]

It is much more difficult to form a singing exhale than inhale, because it is essential for singer’s breathing to keep pressure under the vocal folds (*Plicae vocales*) throughout the entire phonation process. In academic vocal art, phonatory exhalation is the breathing mechanism associated with the inherent aesthetics of sound production: smooth, “supported” uniform timbre singing.

Currently, supported singing is most often referred to by its Italian name, *appoggio della voce* (vocal support). In German methodological literature, this concept is referred to as *Stütze* (support).³ Singers understand this term primarily as the so-called “support of sound production,” which does not accurately reflect the actual functioning of the larynx, because any phonatory exhalation is reduced to the formation of support. Hence the concept of “breathing support,” frequently used in vocal pedagogy, is purely figurative, since the sound of any quality emerges exclusively due to the vibration of air passing through the vocal folds. Taking into account modern scientific ideas about phonation, it is more appropriate

² Dmitry Vasilievich Lyush — an alumnus of Kyiv conservatory, an Ukrainian educator and researcher in vocal pedagogy.

³ See more on the way this concept is used in German-language pedagogy in book: Bruns P. *Minimalluft und Stütze*. [3]

to use the concept of “support” not in relation to sound, but rather as a special sensation of an “air column” formed with respiratory muscles as the vocal folds functioning is naturally and primarily influenced by the force of pressure from underneath.

Accordingly, a renowned educator Francesco Lamperti believed that when working with students, it is necessary to ensure that when singing a note, breathing must provide support. The famous maestro suggested explaining this as follows: “...as if the process of inhalation continues ... so that the voice rests on the breath, or rather it is supported by the air column, and the sound appears to be clear and free from external noise.” [4, p. 40]

It is easy to see that in the prominent European vocal schools, the concept of supported sound is primarily associated with the singer’s breathing. Breathing support emerges when the air is tightly compressed in the chest as if in a sort of air bag, but certain groups of muscles press it in specific areas: the upper, middle and lower parts of the lungs, where the tension arises. The feeling of support can be achieved with any of the abovementioned types of breathing. The only remaining problem is to select respective groups of respiratory muscles to organise phonation.

Singer and teacher Sergei Yudin⁴ provided the following description of the vocal support phenomenon: “...if, upon inhaling, a singer not only keeps their inhaling muscles tense, but at the moment of sound attack and throughout the entire sound duration, keeps them in tension, the breath during the flow of sound is supported.” [5, p. 34]

From the physiological perspective, supported singing is a conditioned reflex, a component of singing skill. Singing voice researchers believe that support is ensured by the antagonist muscles that shape the singing exhalation: the diaphragm, external and internal chest muscles. That might be the reason why the French version of the concept of support in singing sounds like “lutte vocale,” which literally means *vocal struggle*.

The German phoniatriest and voice researcher Rudolf Schilling⁵ roughly described the reflexive nature of vocalists’ “supported singing” as follows: “...the elastic tension is consciously held back during the sound-producing exhalation, and it is gradually released, part by part. The muscles used to inhale remain active or ready for action for a long time after the exhalation has begun and continues. Depending on whether these elastic forces retention occurs mainly in the upper or lower parts of the chest, it is possible to speak of upper or lower support (Stütze).” [6, p. 54]

A similar description of supported singing physiology was given by the well-known Soviet voice researcher Ivan Nazarenko: “The requirement for ‘sound support on the diaphragm’ or ‘lower support’ is a basic condition for controlling air pressure in the subglottic space and controlling the strength and duration of the voice tone. A new relationship between the action of the diaphragm muscles and the external chest muscles, corresponding to the singing exhalation, is established over the course of life, and it is the main conditioned reflex, which the vocal teacher has to deal with.” [7, p. 441]

⁴ Sergei Petrovich Yudin (1889–1963) — an opera singer (tenor), a soloist of the Bolshoi Theatre (1911–1914 and 1919–1941), director and educator who taught at Tchaikovsky Moscow Conservatory.

⁵ Rudolf Schilling (1876–1964) — a German doctor specialised in phoniatics, a co-founder of modern phoniatics.

An important element in the supported singing organisation is the so-called “breath hold.” This is a period of less than a second following the termination of inhalation before the singer switches over to the muscles forming the phonatory exhalation. The breath hold was described in detail in the early 20th-century German methodological literature, where it was called *Stauprinzip* (literally a delay, compressed breathing). It is not only a physiological transition point from the activation of the inhaling muscles (that draw air in) to the expiratory muscles (that draw air out), but also the vocalist’s psychological readiness for phonation.

The Interrelation of the Sensation of Vocal Support with the Functioning of the Larynx and the Oropharyngeal Tract

“Breath-supported” singing is required for achieving certain acoustic qualities of sound. The purpose of supported breathing is to develop “supported sound,” which is understood in academic singing as a solid, light, moving-forward voice. The “unsupported” sound, on the contrary, is characterised as sluggish, uneven, flaccid, and powerless.

It is evident that in order to achieve the supported sound, one must be able to create support in breathing, but the latter does not ensure the former. The feeling of the air column support is absolutely vital, but not the only condition to achieve the “supported sound.” For the latter, other vocal technique components related to the larynx functioning, articulation, and resonators in singing ought to come into play.

“The feeling of ‘support’ comes from a certain resistance to the force of subglottic

pressure, the resistance to this pressure of the working vocal cords in relation to the constantly changing volume of the oropharyngeal cavity,” wrote singer and professor at the Novosibirsk Conservatory Alexander Zdanovich. [8, p. 104]

Probably owing to this fact, a number of schools considers “supported singing” as a set of acoustic properties of the cantatory sound. Indeed, it is possible to have the feeling of support in breathing, but not that of the sound. Examples here may include musicians who play wind instruments. Having the skill of supported breathing, they cannot sing supported sounds.

In the second half of the 19th century, Italian teachers developed another interpretation of the supported singing phenomenon, which was related to the acoustic qualities of sound, expressed in certain characteristics of the voice resonance.

Russian tenor Fyodor Vitt,⁶ who sang in the Neapolitan opera, laid out his vision of supported singing in Italy: “The true *appoggio* (support) is viewed by Italian teachers as a ‘mask’ only; and the teachers who claim that *appoggio* is the chest support confuse their students and often force the sound into their chest, making their voices sound dull, heavy and muffled. *Appoggiare la voce* means to support the sound. It is only possible to hold a sound by propping it against a single and specific place. Accordingly, the Italian school gives us this place, which is exclusively ‘masked’ *appoggio*.” [9, p. 43]

This point of view is confirmed by Vsevolod Bagadurov, who wrote that the understanding of *appoggio* not only as breathing support (*sul fiato*), but also in the resonator. It was finally established in the Neapolitan school led by Beniamino Carelli.⁷ In addition to oral-

⁶ Fyodor Fyodorovich Vitt (1879–1970) — a Russian baritone, who performed in the Neapolitan theatre of San Carlo, an educator.

⁷ Beniamino Carelli (1833–1921) — one of the most prominent Italian solo singing teachers at the end of the 19th – early 20th centuries, a composer, for many years he worked in the Neapolitan Conservatory of San Pietro a Majella.

pharyngeal support (*appoggio bucco-farinjio*), there are descriptions of special sensations of support at the level of registers: the larynx in the chest register (*appoggio laringeo*) and the supraglottic in the head register (*sopra-laryngeo*). [10, p. 215]

Thus, we can conclude that supported sound is a component of the vocal skill characterised by the involvement of the muscles that organise vocal breathing and their connection with the larynx and the resonator system in singing. This definition brings the concept of supported singing to another, broader level of understanding its formation, related to the sound flow acoustics and aesthetics.⁸ This is also pointed out by vocal teachers and researchers of the singing voice, who note that supported sound production leads to phonation that can be defined as professional academic singing, as it has specific acoustic characteristics. Consequently, the supported sound thus has a recognisable timbre, which is an indicator of professional singing. Any singing style requires support: acting, pop-jazz, or folk. However, each of them sounds noticeably different from the others. The reason lies in the nature of the contact between the air column and the larynx, which occurs as a result of support, and then in the specificity of the resistance to the subglottal pressure in the vocal tract.

In the case of academic phonation, support participates in shaping its inherent overtone spectrum of singing harmonics, owing to which all vowels are levelled in vocalisation. Voice

researchers have found that each vowel sound has its own subglottal pressure. Laryngologist Leonid Rabotnov,⁹ having measured the pressure under the vocal folds, provides the following figures for the main vowels, for example, in the Russian language speech: on average for A — during speech about 10 mm of mercury,¹⁰ E — 12, O — 11, I — 13.5, U — 12.5. [12, p. 52]

That said, we may conclude that the subglottal pressure decreases in the following sequence of vowels: I–U–E–O–A. A similar situation of “unevenness” is regulated by the singer’s flexibility of support sensations in the subglottic region, as well as in the supraglottic system, where impedance is formed.¹¹

It is also common knowledge that the acoustic spectra of vowel sounds differ in their ratios of high and low formants. It is this acoustic feature that allows the ear to distinguish between vowels. However, this condition is unacceptable for singing, as it leads to a mottled sound. This problem is solved in solo singing classes by organising the support of the sound flow. The supported singing enables one to level vowels in singing, largely owing to establishing high-frequency singing formants.

Acoustic Characteristics of Supported Sound Production

Back in 1956, while analysing the voice spectra of various singers, Soviet acoustician Sergei Rzhevkin¹² noticed that professional singers’ high singing formant zone is stable

⁸ The close interrelationship between laryngeal function and breathing is also emphasized by specialists in the field of actor’s speech training. [11, p. 15]

⁹ Leonid Dmitrievich Rabotnov (1879–1934) — a Russian, Soviet laryngologist, Doctor of Medicine (1916).

¹⁰ Millimeters of mercury column (mm m. c.) — 1 mm of mercury \approx 133,322 Pascal.

¹¹ In acoustics, impedance is understood as measure, reflecting the level of the environment resistance to the sound-wave propagation.

¹² Sergei Nikolayevich Rzhevkin (1891–1981) — a physicist, Professor at the Faculty of Physics, Lomonosov Moscow State University, a founder of the Russian school of acoustics.

even when vowel sounds change. The scientist also tried to “verify harmony with algebra” and gave the voice spectrum of a non-professional

baritone (Figs. 1 and 2). Then it was mentioned that the test subject’s voice timbre seemed to be sharp.

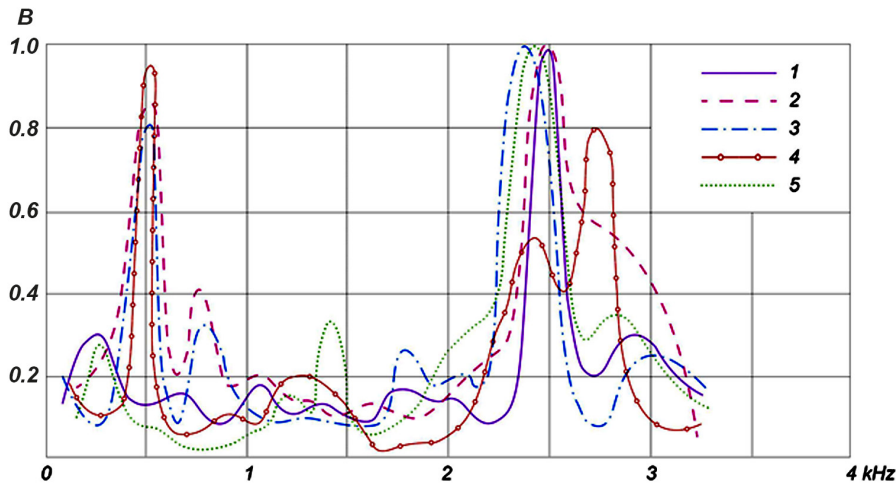


Fig. 1. Schematic representation of the frequency spectrum envelope of a professional bass singer performing the *Do* sound in the tenor octave (*c*) (129 Hz) with the following vowels: 1 – U, 2 – O, 3 – A, 4 – E, 5 – I (according to Sergei Rzhevkin) [13, p. 207]¹³

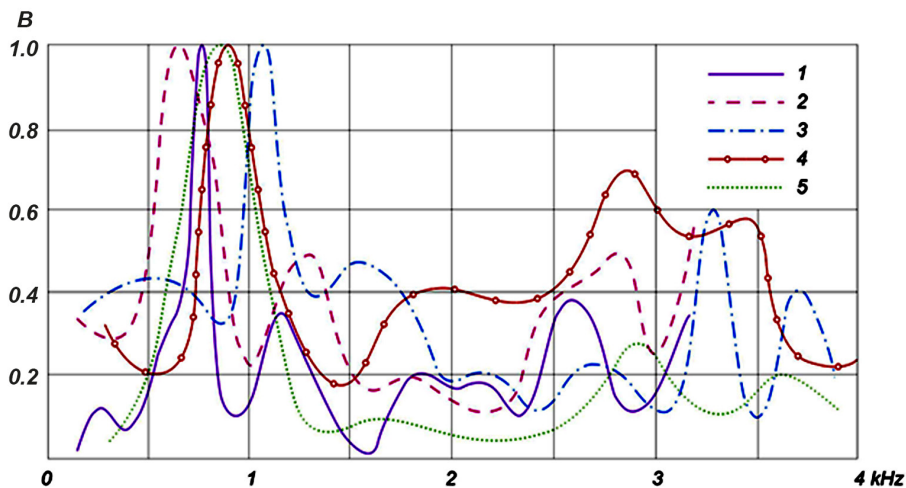


Fig. 2. Schematic representation of the frequency spectrum envelope of the vowel *A Zsung* by an inexperienced singer (baritone) producing the following sounds: 1 – 129 Hz, 2 – 167 Hz, 3 – 217 Hz, 4 – 288 Hz, 5 – 325 Hz (according to Sergei Rzhevkin) [13, p. 209]¹⁴

¹³ The envelope curve shows that the low and high singing formants repeat in the same place regardless of the vowel.

¹⁴ The lower formant was unstable when changing vowels. The fluctuations ranged from 600 to 900 Hz. There was no clearly manifested upper formant. It was only possible to notice a slight increase in the range from 2500 to 3000 Hz can be observed.

As a result of his research, Rzhavkin came to the following conclusion: “In the voice of a highly skilled singer, there are sharply pronounced ‘singing formants’ in the range of about 500 and about 2500 Hz, which are the same for all vowels and throughout the entire range from the lowest to the highest notes. A comparison with the voice of an inexperienced singer shows that in the latter case, the singing formants are not clearly pronounced and stable...” [13, p. 205]

Later, another Soviet scientist Vladimir Morozov, discovered that levelling the vowel spectra in academic singers occurs due to the presence of amplification in the area of the so-called high singing formant (HSF), which slightly increases depending on the type of voice. For example, for bass and baritone it is 2100–2500 Hz, for tenor 2500–2800 Hz, for soprano 3000–3500 Hz, and for children it reaches 4000 Hz (Fig. 3).

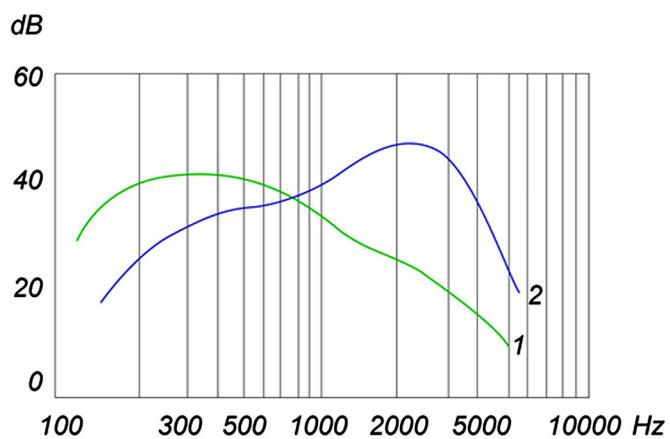


Fig. 3. The comparison between speech (1) and vocal (2) vowel spectra (according to Vladimir Morozov) [14, p. 99]¹⁵

Researchers engaged in the studies of the singing voice usually fail to pay attention to the connection between the voice timbre and the nature of supported singing, except for specific cases. It might be explained by the fact that the term “voice support” itself is figurative and is exclusively related to singing. Its use is determined more by the need to somehow describe the phenomenon, which is considered a fundamental principle of singing in vocal pedagogy. This may be the reason why supported voice sound came to be described from the physiological rather than the acoustic perspective.

For example, singer and teacher Pavel Tikhonov¹⁶ compared the human voice with a reed pipe to provide to clarify the interaction between breathing and the larynx. He wrote that only two conditions allow for proper support in the voice: the correctly attached reed and well-inflated bellows. “However, suppose, there is a hole in the bellows,” continued Tikhonov, “and they are poorly inflated, the sound will no longer be supported because there will not be enough air pressure under the reed. Similarly, the sound will not be supported if, for some reason, the reed is poorly attached; the air in the pipe will not be sufficiently compressed and channelled due to leakage through the gap, formed by the deviation of the reed, thus resulting in a hissing and, naturally, weak sound.” [15, p. 53]

Professor Tikhonov’s vivid comparison speaks to the need for the comprehensive approach to the understanding of support, which is primarily involved in establishing the contact, a sort of “coupling” between

¹⁵ The diagram shows the way a vocal vowel expands the high formant area and brings it into the area of the increased auditory sensitivity.

¹⁶ Pavel Ilyich Tikhonov (1877–1944) — a singer (bass), who performed in the opera houses in Kyiv and Odessa. He was the soloist of the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow. He taught in the conservatories of Moscow, Minsk and Saratov.

the larynx and breathing. Deficiencies in the organisation of the latter, underestimation of the excessive tension in the vocal folds caused by the incorrectly organised support beneath them might entail very serious consequences. It is also worth mentioning that vocalists who are fascinated by the feeling of support but do not pay attention to its connection with the larynx often slip into “over-supported singing,” which leads to the feeling of constriction, suffocation, and a heavy, sluggish voice. In such cases, the sound appears “crackling.”

In this regard, we could cite an example of a defective voice caused by the “over-supported” singing. A student of the renowned teacher Camille Everard,¹⁷ the famous opera singer Nadezhda Salina,¹⁸ stated that her professor’s school was hard and therefore it was not suitable for everyone. She noted the following: “After his lessons, I was hoarse and would lose my voice for several days, while others’ voices began to sound exhausted over time” (Cit. ex: [10, p. 331]).¹⁹ In this case, the exhaustion most likely arose from the incorrectly distributed pressure under the vocal folds. As Leo Weinstein notes in the book about his teacher Everard, “support, support” was often heard in the classroom, especially when the voice began to tremble. “I must say that the students often did not understand this simple requirement, did not understand what the sound should actually be supported by, and this annoyed the maestro greatly.” [16, p. 3]

The Role of the Diaphragm in the Organization of Vocal Phonation

The problem of the interaction between exhalation and the work of the larynx is rarely discussed in the methodological literature. However, the most common mistake made by teachers when forming sound support is a lack of understanding of the flexible change in the feeling of support in the context of the voice register (see below more on the influence of subglottal pressure on the formation of the register mechanism). Each register mechanism, used by a singer for phonation, has its own kinesthesia. Consequently, a single technique to build up support will be insufficient. Subjectively, the feeling of support changes depending on the register of the note.

Viktor Yushmanov²⁰ wrote that the feeling of support is largely related to the choice of the so-called singing manner. The scientist noted that, a covered (closed) sound, for instance, is perceived by the singer as more supported than an open one. “High supraglottal resistance of the covered singing manner requires active holding of the sufficient subglottal pressure. It creates a muscular sensation of resistance to the singing exhalation, which singers and vocal teachers have defined as ‘breathing support.’” [17, p. 56]

Thus, it can be said that the subjectivity of the support feeling arises from the perception of register mechanisms. This is also confirmed by singers in practice. For example, the sounds

¹⁷ Camille François Everard (Everardi) (1825–1899) — a Belgian baritone, alumnus of the Paris Conservatoire, who sang in Russia for many years. In 1870–1889, he worked as a professor at the conservatory in St. Petersburg, in 1890–1897, he worked in Kyiv Music College, and in 1897–1899, he was a professor of Moscow Conservatory.

¹⁸ Nadezhda Vasilievna Salina (1864–1956) — a Russian singer (soprano), an honoured artist of the Imperial Theatres (1908).

¹⁹ Information is based on the report delivered at the plenum of the Vocal-methodological department of the State Institute of Music.

²⁰ Viktor Ivanovich Yushmanov (1941–2009) — a singer (bass), a voice researcher and vocal educator.

of the female chest register are internally less perceived as supported compared to the middle mixed register.

Therefore, in their early career female singers might not easily switch to the mixed mechanism on middle notes, and some teachers mistake it for a disruption of the connection with breathing and support, although in reality the problem lies in a disruption of the ratio between the closing and opening functions of the vocal folds, which leads to a harsh sound in the middle register. A similar issue arises in men who, when covering the upper register notes, internally perceive them as more supported in relation to the lower register.

Vocal methodology studies still differ in their opinion the diaphragm movements during the formation of supported phonation. On the one hand, the role of the diaphragm flattening when using abdominal or lower rib-diaphragmatic (costal-abdominal) breathing is emphasised, while on the other hand, there are differing views as to whether the diaphragm should gradually return to its original dome-shaped position during phonation or whether the singer should try and resist this, thereby organising the sound support.

Antonio Juarra²¹ noted that different views on the role of the diaphragm movement have resulted in “some vocal schools performing high notes by supporting them with a raised diaphragm, while others lower it.” [18, p. 77] The Italian teacher himself believes that the result is the same in both cases.

As noted above, the role of the diaphragm in the organisation of phonatory exhalation is to

build subglottal pressure so that the voice can perform not only tasks related to the dynamics of sound, but also to the formation of the voice “register constitution,” which will be discussed below. From this point of view, raising the diaphragm during phonation will not allow it to perform its balancing function. It has already been noted above that professionally sounding voices are distinguished by the complex movements of the diaphragm during phonation.

For example, Professor Liudmila Yaroslavtseva,²² studying the regulation of professional singers’ singing breathing using electro-pneumography and X-ray imaging,²³ found that skilful singers regulate their phonation during exhalation. The pneumogram of these vocalists showed complex and small breathing zigzags associated with sound production (Fig. 4).

In her lectures, Professor Yaroslavtseva²⁴ said that the pneumographic data were confirmed by X-ray studies of the diaphragm. In particular, in experienced singers skilled in sound refinement and other dynamic nuances, X-rays of the diaphragm showed specific minor movements that they performed depending on the set task. The diaphragm was not just a muscle for phonatory exhalation, but a thin, sensitive membrane that organised the dynamics of the voice, flexibly influencing the subglottic pressure.

From the perspective of professionally regulated singing breathing, the diaphragm is not a merely inhalation muscle, but an organ that performs small inhalation and exhalation

²¹ Antonio Juarra — an Italian singer (baritone) and educator.

²² Liudmila Kostantinovna Yaroslavtseva (1922–2017) — a singer (soprano), a scientist and researcher of the singing voice, professor of Solo Singing Department at the Gnesin Russian Academy of Music in Moscow.

²³ Roentgenography, or X-ray is an imaging method that uses roentgen rays to create images of human internal organs and tissues.

²⁴ A co-author of this paper Dmitry Grinikh was Yaroslavtseva’s student during his studies at the Gnesin Russian Academy of Music in Moscow.

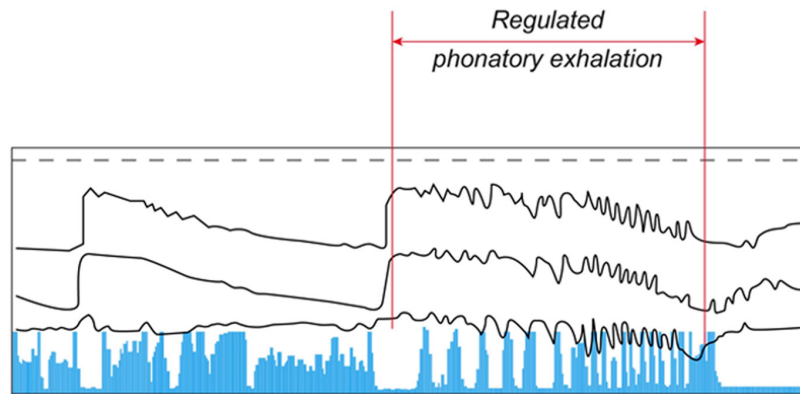


Fig. 4. Pneumogram of regulated phonatory exhalation (from the work of Liudmila Yaroslavtseva) [19, p. 182]²⁵

movements during the phonatory exhalation phase, thereby influencing the change in the subglottic pressure.

Accordingly, we can conclude that the feeling of support has a significant effect on the organisation of the singing voice register structure. The respiratory muscles, and above all the diaphragm, distribute the subglottic pressure in such a way that a balance is created between the pitch level, the density of the vocal folds on it and the counterpressure (impedance) system in the oropharynx.

In view of the aforesaid, it is difficult to agree with those teachers who, during phonation, for example, try to push their fist against their student's stomach in order to more actively "support" the note²⁶ as well as with those who forcefully hold the diaphragm in a flattened state.

The diaphragm and its antagonists, the abdominal muscles, are also involved

in organising the final stage of vocal support, the so-called breath release. This is an important technical component that is often overlooked by vocal teachers. It involves the release of the residual air and the termination of the feeling of an air column inside the body. Perhaps this is why the release often allows the singer to "reset their senses" at the moment when fatigue builds up or the singer feels discomfort during the phonation.

Mastering the release mechanism is not rather hard for many students, as it requires certain coordination of the diaphragm and vocal folds. The key point in organising this movement is to ensure that there is no additional "pressure" on the vocal folds, which leads to the folds tightening and fatigue. At the moment of a technically correct release, the voice produces a minor, light "moan" at the end of the sound, which indicates the presence of the required support.

²⁵ It is a part of a pneumogram reflecting the regulation of subglottic pressure: inhalation movements while singing — pressure decrease, exhalation movements — pressure increase. All three oscillographic curves show that coordination occurs at the chest level, lower ribs and abdomen.

²⁶ That was the technique used by Montserrat Caballé at one of the classes: How to breath while singing was shown by Montserrat Caballé. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8xtBb9h7VIY&t=20s> (accessed: 11.05.2025).

Components in the Formation of Vocal Support Sensations

Thus, when working on breathing in singing, particularly, in a solo singing class, it is important to remember that there are not two phases, as many teachers believe (i.e., vocal inhalation and phonatory exhalation), but four. The sequence of these phases is as follows: a short inhale; a hold lasting a fraction of a second; a long phonatory exhale and, in the end, a short *release* of breath (produced by the diaphragm). In this sequence, the entire breathing cycle may be characterised as singing.

Being the only energy source for a singer to ensure the subglottic pressure, the “sound support” participates in shaping certain acoustic qualities that are constantly present throughout the entire voice range. These qualities enable to identify the academic sound of the voice by ear. The supported phonation is an exclusively singing phenomenon. It allows uniting the essential components of the vocal technique, such as singing breathing, larynx position, register mechanisms, impedance in the vocal tract, and the function of the articulatory apparatus into a single professional skill.

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Artistic Aspects of Russian Music Publishing in the Second Half of the 19th – Early 20th Century: M.P. Belaieff, Leipzig

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Abstract. The article continues the research devoted to the domestic music publishing in the second half of the 19th – early 20th centuries. The M.P. Belaieff, Leipzig company, which is widely known in Russia and abroad, was founded 140 years ago in 1885. The main areas of its activity were the support and popularisation of the music by Russian composers, which was reflected in the company’s repertoire policy and artistic approach to the design of printed materials. The distinguishing feature of all Belaieff published copies is the highest for that time quality of its manufactured products and talented work of its artists, which became a clear example of deep penetration into the figurative structure of the work, its content and symbolism. The repertoire of expressive means used by the publisher includes a large number of diverse ornaments, vignettes and patterns, landscape and genre compositions, as well as floral designs and abstractions, which were of direct interest to a wide consumer audience. Although many Russian publishers of that era actively collaborated with established and successful artists, M.P. Belaieff did not adhere to such a strategy. The covers of his sheet music were mainly produced by little-known and even amateur artists, including Alexander Antipov, Pyotr Buck and, as an exception, Fyodor Rerberg, whose popularity at the turn of the century acquired a significant professional and creative scale. A characteristic feature of many frontispieces is a lack of information about the artistic personnel who participated in the preparation for the publication of a number of compositions. The topic covered in this paper is intended to expand and supplement information about the domestic music publishing industry and its individual semantic aspects.

Keywords: domestic music publishing, “M.P. Belaieff, Leipzig”, national idea, design artists, Alexander Antipov, Pyotr Buck, Fyodor Rerberg

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Художественные грани отечественного нотоиздательского дела второй половины XIX – начала XX века: «М.П. Беляев в Лейпциге»

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Аннотация. Статья продолжает исследования, посвящённые отечественному нотоиздательскому делу второй половины XIX – начала XX века. В 1885 году, 140 лет назад, возникла широко известная в России и за рубежом фирма «М.П. Беляев в Лейпциге». Основными направлениями её деятельности явились поддержка и популяризация музыки русских композиторов, что нашло отражение в репертуарной политике предприятия и художественном подходе в оформлении печатной продукции. Отличительная черта всех беляевских экземпляров — в высочайшем для своего времени качестве изготавливаемой продукции, в талантливой работе художников, ставшей наглядным примером глубокого проникновения в образный строй произведения, его содержание и символику. В арсенале выразительных средств обнаруживается большое количество разнообразных орнаментов, виньеток и узоров, пейзажных и жанровых композиций, цветочных рисунков и абстракций, представлявших непосредственный интерес для широкой потребительской аудитории. Несмотря на то, что многие российские коммерсанты в тот период активно сотрудничали с даровитыми и успешными живописцами, М.П. Беляев не придерживался такой стратегии. На обложках его нот стоят автографы мало известных на сегодняшний день мастеров и даже любителей: А.Н. Антипова, П. Бука и, как исключение, Ф.И. Рерберга, популярность которого на рубеже веков приобрела значительный профессиональный и творческий масштаб. Характерный штрих: многие авантитулы вообще не содержат никакой информации о художественном персонале, принимавшем участие в подготовке к выпуску ряда сочинений. Затронутая в данном материале тема призвана расширить и дополнить сведения об отечественном нотоиздательском деле и его отдельных смысловых гранях.

Ключевые слова: отечественное нотоиздательское дело, «М.П. Беляев в Лейпциге», национальная идея, художники-оформители, А.К. Антипов, П. Бук, Ф.И. Рерберг

Introduction

During the second half of the 19th century, due to the active development of production technologies, the Russian music publishing industry achieved an exceptionally high level of printed materials design. These materials can be divided into several groups, each demonstrating its own characteristics and approaches related to

the role and purpose of the published literature, and to the trade category. Each group is the bearer of ideological, commercial and artistic vectors for the development of enterprises and part of a cultural image designed to increase financial profits and contribute to the strengthening of business positions within the bourgeois-capitalist system.

The role of artistic design for sheet music, books on the theory and history of music, etc., was becoming, firstly, extremely relevant, contributing to the intensive sale of printed editions as a subject of marketing operations of diverse areas and, secondly, quite broad — from the newspaper catalogues and price lists to extremely expensive printed samples accessible only to a wealthy clientele.

The choice was large and catered to different consumer needs. Galina Aksenova writes: “The involvement of the best artists of the era, often called ‘romantic historicism,’ such as V.M. Vasnetsov, A.P. Ryabushkin, K.V. Lebedev, L.S. Bakst, E.E. Lanceray, B.V. Zvorykin, I.Ya. Bilibin, F.I. Rerberg, S.S. Solomko, E.P. Samokish-Sudkovskaya and others, in the design of musical printed materials formed a new image of sheet music and established new principles of its illumination subtly combining antiquity and novelty.” [1, p. 12]

This tendency was most clearly manifested in the printed music products published by the M.P. Belaieff, Leipzig company,¹ which integrated the use of frontispieces, illustrations, headpieces, initials, endings, field decorations and ornamental designs characteristic of “early and late medieval book-writing and early printed culture, genuine interest in which arose in the middle of the 19th century

during the period of the establishment of a national style in Russian culture.” [Ibid., p. 10] The special emphasis on this style was determined by the policy of Mitrofan Belaieff in publishing the works of Russian composers, which required compliance with the stated specifics in material and artistic resources: from the idea to its implementation. In addition to established creative professionals, *artists just starting their creative path and even amateurs* were involved in the design of music publications. Support for talented Russian youth was provided on a continuous basis, as evidenced by the large number of works published in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Therefore, the concept of Belaieff’s plan was also revealed here in a broad and multifaceted manner.

In terms of technical characteristics, samples of printed products by M.P. Belaieff, Leipzig demonstrated excellent quality, surpassing numerous Russian analogues in many ways. The reason for this is the high-level proof,² professionally executed printing and editorial support, which fully corresponded to the goals and objectives of the company for reducing costs and improving its print runs.³ Industrial ambitions of Mitrofan Belaieff did not extend to the creation of a full-cycle production enterprise; all print runs were issued by the Carl G. Röder printing house, famous for its advanced equipment.⁴

¹ The company was entered into the city register of trading enterprises on July 4, 1885.

² Unlike Mikhail Kunin, who noted the excellent appearance of M.P. Belaieff’s products, Boris Volman held a directly opposite point of view, arguing that “...in terms of artistic design, Belaieff’s publications are rather trivial. Externally, they look very respectable: a standard cover made of thick grey paper with a lush frame, a title page with text surrounded by ornate fine engraving, excellent engraving of the musical text, a wider format of notes compared to other publishers.” [2, p. 145]

³ In detail: *Charter of the Board of Trustees for the Encouragement of Russian Composers and Musicians*: Approved February 5, 1905, St. Petersburg, Yablonsky steam-powered printing house, (1905).

⁴ Vladimir Trainin writes: “By establishing a publishing company not in Russia, but in Germany, Belaieff demonstrated his characteristic providence and foresight. The fact is that, firstly, Leipzig was the world centre of the book and music trade, and the Röder music printing house selected by Belaieff as a printing base had no equal in the clarity, accuracy and elegance of the musical notations, the low cost of publications and the integrity of business relationships with clients; secondly, <...> the brand of the German publishing house ensured copyrighting throughout the world.” [3, p. 20–21]

In the homeland, storage and sales⁵ were carried out through the I. Jurgenson warehouses⁶; in Western Europe, via the Kister company.⁷

M.P. Belaieff, Leipzig: National and Artistic. From Idea to Implementation

Many published specimens deserve the closest attention as examples of exclusive design and layout. They convey a direct connection between the artistic aspects of the era: music and painting, professional, creative, etc. In addition to the business characteristics as objective signs of producing musical literature, these specimens follow various ideological and spiritual principles ultimately forming the ideological platform of the publishing house and personal position of Mitrofan Belaieff himself. In the words of Theodor Adorno, “by bringing national characteristics to the forefront, music became a political ideology since the middle of the 19th

century, acted as a representative of one nation or another and affirmed the national principle everywhere.”⁸ [4, p. 136]

The M.P. Belaieff, Leipzig company began to pursue this line steadily and consistently from the very first printed samples. The works of Alexander Glazunov enjoyed special attention and love.⁹ Mitrofan Belaieff had become acquainted with the work of the budding and then still unknown composer earlier due to a visit to the St. Petersburg amateur music group, where he played the viola,¹⁰ as well as through his friendship with Anatoly Lyadov, who later became the Glazunov’s teacher.

Symphony No. 1,¹¹ which was performed in 1882¹² at a concert of the Free Music School under the direction of Mily Balakirev, aroused great interest. Its next performance was conducted by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, who left the following recollections: “At that time, there was an All-Russian exhibition

⁵ The managers of the company in Leipzig and St. Petersburg were Franz Schaeffer and Fyodor I. Grus, respectively.

⁶ At the beginning of the 20th century, some copies contained the owner’s stamps of S.A. Kusevitsky Russian Music Publishing House, as well as A.F. Zeivang’s shop on Kuznetsky Most in the house of the Dzhamgarov brothers (Kuznetsky Most, 12), etc.

⁷ In addition, many works sold in Western Europe bear the owner’s stamps of a number of other companies that participated in this process, in particular, the oldest German firm Breitkopf & Härtel in Great Britain, etc.

⁸ However, the activities of the Belaieff Groupe in the post-October period also had other assessments. In particular, in 1917, Boris Asafiev stated that “nationalism” in art could be considered one of the “fundamental temptations” that required “overcoming.” See: I. Glebov (B.V. Asafiev). *Temptations and overcoming. Melos*. Ed. I. Glebov (B.V. Asafiev) and P.P. Suvchinsky. Book 1. St. Petersburg, Synodal Printing House, 8 (1917). In his opinion, prominent representatives of the group, such as composers Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, Alexander Glazunov and Anatoly Lyadov, failed to escape such deviations. See: I. Glebov (B.V. Asafiev). *Impressions and thoughts. Melos*. Ed. I. Glebov (B.V. Asafiev) and P.P. Suvchinsky. Book 2. St. Petersburg, Synodal Printing House, pp. 143–144 (1918).

⁹ The composer recalled: “He had plans for his own publishing business and offered me his services for further publications. I had the honour of being the first to receive such an offer <...> Soon, a turning point occurred in the planned framework of Belaieff’s activities, and he transferred what he did for me alone at the beginning of his comprehensive activity to a whole galaxy of Russian music creators.” [5, p. 487–488]

¹⁰ The earlier stage life of Glazunov’s works began within the walls of St. Petersburg University, where he took part in regular concerts called “Musical Exercises of Imperial University Students in St. Petersburg.” [6, p. 20–21]

¹¹ Dedicated to N.A. Rimsky-Korsakov.

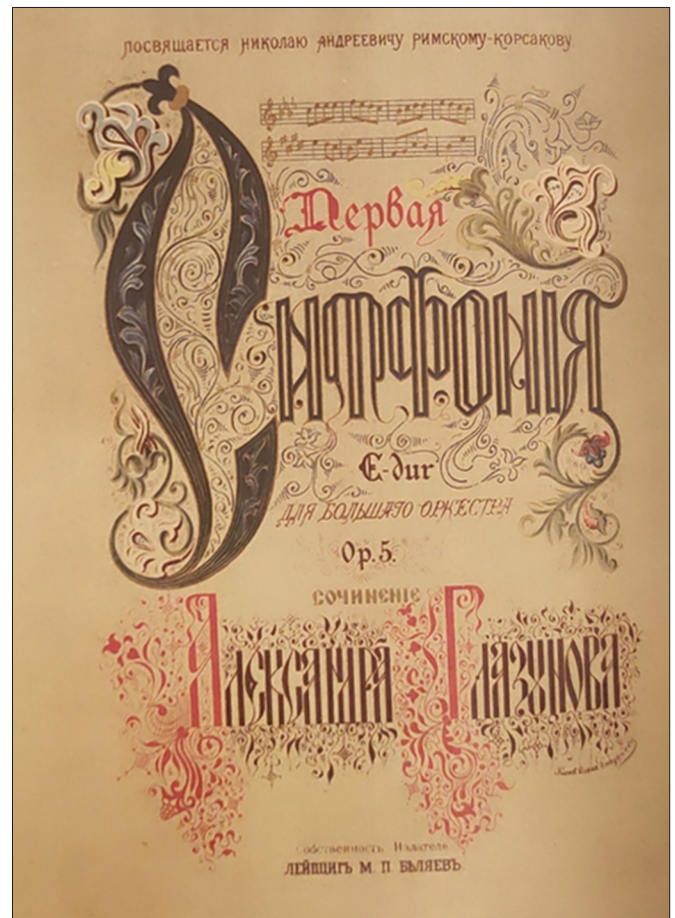
¹² Composed in 1881.

in Moscow, at which, among other things, symphony concerts were planned <...> Before the start of the Symphony rehearsal, a tall and handsome unfamiliar gentleman, whom I had seen many times in St. Petersburg, approached me. He introduced himself as Mitrofan P. Belaieff and asked permission to be present at all rehearsals.”¹³ [7, p. 178]

According to the recollections of Belaieff’s friends and associates, it was his fascination with Glazunov’s talent that allowed the idea of opening a music publishing company to be realised to publish the works of Russian composers. These thoughts were shared in an essay by an engineer Mikhail Kurbanov, as well as by Vladimir Stasov, who wrote that “a new, hitherto unknown world of artistic pleasure and joy was opening up for him [Belaieff], and he decided to devote all his strength, his whole life and, finally, a significant part of his wealth to this new world. The main reason for all this was Glazunov.” [8, p. 126–127]

When examining some of Glazunov’s works published by Belaieff, a number of features that reflect their consistent relationship with ancient Russian written traditions can be noted. Thus, Galina Aksenova points out that in Symphony No. 1 published in 1886 (Il. 1), “...the name of the author Alexander Glazunov was written by cinnabar calligraphic initials decorated with stylised fine-grass vegetation characteristic of 15th-century codices. The capital letter ‘S’ filled with acanthus and decorated with fine-grain ornament and stylised flowers is also borrowed from the liturgical codices of the 15th century.” [1, p. 19]

Old Russian ornaments became a characteristic style in the design of Glazunov’s



Il. 1. Alexander Glazunov. Symphony No. 1 (title page).
M.P. Belaieff, Leipzig Publisher, 1886

other works: *Slavonic Festival* “Une fête slave” (1890),¹⁴ Symphony No. 4 (1894), Symphony No. 5 (1896) and *Fantasy* (1896). It is noteworthy that the specificity of the created covers, in terms of their publishing objectives, maximally corresponded to the theme and musical content of the publications, affirming their great national idea. In addition to their exceptional artistic quality, they embodied one of the main goals of the Belaieff project: the promotion of new Russian art. All members of the group — Alexander Ossovsky, Vyacheslav

¹³ The symphony was performed for the third time on the initiative of Franz Liszt in Weimar on May 14, 1884 at the congress of the General German Musicians’ Union.

¹⁴ All dates in brackets are publication dates.

Karatygin, Yazeps Vitol, as well as Belaieff himself — wrote about this.¹⁵

Among these, the opera *Sadko* by Rimsky-Korsakov should be mentioned with the first avant-title created in the style of “romantic historicism” by the composer and amateur artist Alexander Antipov¹⁶ (Il. 2).

Galina Aksenova characterises the 14th century ornaments present on it as Novgorod teratological, zoomorphic and anthropomorphic. [1, p. 20] In addition, the “plot-anthropomorphic initial ‘D’ from the 14th century Psalter (Tolstoy collection) represents David the psalmist playing the gusli.¹⁷ The letters ‘S’ and ‘O’ on the cover of the *Sadko* score are of zoomorphic ornament from the Psalter of the 13th–14th centuries, the Rumyantsev Gospel of the turn of the 12th–13th centuries, presented in the tables of Butovsky’s album (tables 26–27, 35, 42–44, 46).” [Ibid.]

The lifetime sample from 1897 is a luxurious piano-vocal score “with a hard composite binding and cardboard wings covered with dark burgundy material, black corners and a wide strip at the spine (5 cm). Composite endpapers are white.”¹⁸ Some of the survived



Il. 2. Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov. The opera *Sadko*.
Designer Alexander Antipov.
M.P. Belaieff, Leipzig

¹⁵ Dmitry Lukonin quotes an article by Belaieff, written for the 17th anniversary of the Russian Symphony Concerts, where he notes that “the majority of the public still treats these concerts with indifference, but this is typical of the Russian people, who are more inclined to be distrustful or even blaspheme their native land than to rejoice at even the slightest success of their compatriot in the field of musical art.” [9, p. 84] Stasov was more optimistic in his “Biography of M.P. Belaieff.” The discussion was about the World Exhibition in Paris, where his publications were presented and received awards. Two concerts were held on July 10 (22) and 17 (29), 1889. The following review arose about this event: “...the Parisian public of that time attended his concerts in large and sympathetic crowds and gave the greatest justice to all the best Russian musical creations performed for them. People enthusiastically applauded the authors, the concert conductor N.A. Rimsky-Korsakov, the second conductor A.K. Glazunov and the solo pianist N.S. Lavrov. The press expressed its unexpected surprise, sympathy and admiration in a multitude of diverse articles.” See: Stasov V.V. *Mitrofan P. Belaieff. Biographical Essay*. St. Petersburg, Published by the editorial board of the Russian Musical Newspaper, No. 2, Column 21–22 (1895).

¹⁶ Cousin of the composer Lyadov.

¹⁷ The same figure is depicted on the title page of the *Collection of Russian folk songs for voice and piano*, compiled by Lyadov (1898). This work was dedicated to Belaieff.

¹⁸ Score. Opera *Sadko*. 1896. N.A. Rimsky-Korsakov. Museums of the Leningrad oblast.
URL: <https://union.lenoblmus.ru/entity/OBJECT/218737> (accessed: 28.11.2025).

Sadko copies have the original cloth binding and glued chromolithographed title page of the cover designed by Antipov. On the inside paper there is a watermark “C.G.R. 5” with a stamp in the form of a six-pointed Star of David, which indicates the music printing and engraving house of C.G. Röder.

The style of this design emerged in the very first years since the founding of the publishing house, becoming the basis for other printed compositions. In particular, Alexander Antipov was the author of the covers for such works as the *String Quartet on the Theme “B-la-f”* created by Rimsky-Korsakov (first movement), Lyadov (second movement), Borodin (third movement) and Glazunov (fourth movement). It was published in 1886 with a dedication to Mitrofan Belaieff, which was reflected in the musical notation of his surname (Il. 3).

The similar in meaning opus of 1889, three quartet sketches *Name Day*,¹⁹ is as a musical congratulation from Glazunov (*Blessers*), Lyadov (*Velichanye*) and Rimsky-Korsakov (*Round Dance*). In particular, the title page for the Borodin’s opera *Prince Igor*, published after the composer’s death in 1888,²⁰ makes a very vivid and epic impression (Il. 4).

The artist’s other works include César Cui’s *Five Little Duets* for flute, violin and piano (1897), as well as Rimsky-Korsakov’s opera *The Tsar’s Bride* (1899), and others.



Il. 3. Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, Anatoly Lyadov, Alexander Borodin, Alexander Glazunov. *String Quartet on the Theme “B-la-f”*. M.P. Belaieff, Leipzig, 1886

¹⁹ The original Russian spelling is preserved.

²⁰ The piano score traditionally is in a half-leather binding with embossing on the spine. The title page framed in an Old Russian style contains the title of the work and accompanying information in Russian and French. Next comes a portrait of the composer Borodin and excerpts from the manuscript of the chorus *Glory* (“Glory to all good princes! Glory!”). Musical quotations are also present on the avant-title of Glazunov’s *Symphony No. 1*. Galina Aksenova writes about the cover design for *Prince Igor*: “In general, the composition proposed by the artist refers us to the era of the Igor’s battle, to the famous Vshchizh Arch of the 12th century, which was part of the altar space.” [1, p. 15]



Ил. 4. Alexander Borodin. Opera *Prince Igor*.
Designer Alexander Antipov. M.P. Belaieff, Leipzig, 1888

One of the artists Belaieff collaborated with is Pyotr Buck,²¹ who designed the covers of the following works²²: *Arabian Melody* for singing and piano (1888) and romance *For the Shores of the Distant Fatherland* by Borodin (1888), symphonic suite *Scheherazade* (1889) and opera *May Night* by Rimsky-Korsakov (Pl. 5), Glazunov's Symphony No. 2 (1889), Three Excerpts (Overture, Dances and Marches) from the opera *Prince Igor* by Borodin (1889), *In People's Houses* for singing with orchestra or piano accompaniment by Borodin (1890), *Mazurka* by Felix Blumenfeld (1890), *Melody* and *Spanish Serenade* for cello and orchestra (1890), *Oriental Rhapsody* by Glazunov (1891), Variations for piano on the theme of the romance *Venice Night* by Mikhail Glinka (1895)²³ and others.

Another artistic direction of Belaieff's publications is allegorical, landscape or genre illustrations, floral compositions, etc., including *Overture No. 1 on Three Greek Themes*²⁴ (188-) by Glazunov and *Spanish Capriccio* by Rimsky-Korsakov (1888).²⁵ All of them were made by Alexander Antipov. Rimsky-Korsakov's

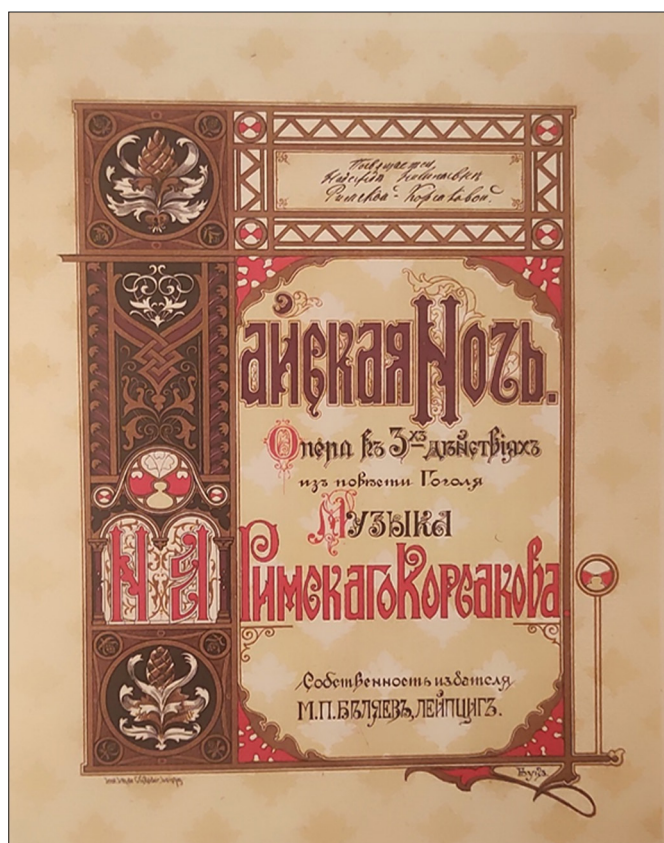
²¹ On the titles of Belaieff's notes, Buck is indicated in two languages: П. Букъ, Букъ and P. Buck. Most likely, we are talking about Pyotr P. Buck (1865–1941), an architect who began to study at the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts in 1887 and completed his full course in 1892 with the title of "free artist." He was awarded medals: 2nd silver and 1st silver in 1892 and 1893, respectively. In 1897, he received the title of artist-architect. He came from a merchant family. One of his brothers, Fyodor P. Buck (1864–1945), was an artist, amateur guitarist, musicologist, and guitar historian. One version of Pyotr Buck's work at Mitrofan Belaieff's publishing house is linked to Ilya Repin, who taught at the Academy of Arts from 1894; another version assumes the creative contacts between his closest relatives.

²² It should be noted that a fairly large part of Belaieff's music covers have no artistic authorship at all. So far it has not been determined and requires additional information sources possibly located in the archives of the publishing house itself, which left Russia and continued its activities abroad after Belaieff's death.

²³ As before, the avant-title contains a quote from the aforementioned romance by Glinka.

²⁴ A Greek theme without attribution is used in the design of the cover for *Oresteia* opera by Sergei Taneyev (1900).

²⁵ Boris Volman gives the following example: "When Glazunov's *Elegy in Memory of a Hero* was published, even he, who was rather indifferent to the artistic design of the published notes, expressed his protest to Belaieff, declaring that 'the vignette was made in the Gothic style, while the music was rather Slavic than German in character'." [2, p. 145]



Il. 5. Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov. Opera *May Night*.
Designer Pyotr Buck. M.P. Belaieff, Leipzig



Il. 6. Alexander Gretchaninov. *Two Romances*, Op. 15.
Designer Fyodor Rerberg. M.P. Belaieff, Leipzig, 1898

Fairy Tale for large orchestra was designed by Pyotr Buck as an enigmatic monochrome landscape enclosed in a round frame and surrounded by stylised antique letter text.

Other examples are two romances by Alexander Gretchaninov: *Evening Bells* and *Death* (1898) illustrated by the artist Fyodor Rerberg (Il. 6). This is perhaps a rare case for Belaieff of entrusting such a work to an

artist who had gained wide recognition in professional circles.²⁶ Fyodor Rerberg, who began his education in 1881 with private lessons from V.S. Rozanov, continued his studies at the Imperial Academy of Arts (1885–1892): initially in the architecture department and then in the painting department with Karl Wenig, Vasily Vereshchagin, Bogdan Villevalde, Pavel Chistyakov, Pyotr Shamshin and Valery Yakobi.

²⁶ In the history of Russian culture, Fyodor I. Rerberg (1865–1938) remained as a major artist-painter, watercolourist and teacher. Enjoying well-deserved authority among his colleagues, he was the organizer of the Moscow Association of Artists (MAA, 1893–1924) and a member of its board. He participated in the work of the Tver social and pedagogical group (1909–1914) and collaborated with the artistic association in St. Petersburg (1912–1914). In 1906, he opened his own studio (in some sources, a school), which existed until 1931. Kazimir Malevich, Ivan Klyun, Valentina Khodasevich, Ivan Blokhin, Fyodor Zakharov, Konstantin Yasinsky (junior), Alexey Rybnikov, Vladimir and Liudmila Burlyuk were his students. See: [10].

Rerberg was acquainted with Ilya Repin and sought advice from him. The latter was close to Belaieff. From him he received orders to create composer portraits and was often present at Belaieff's "Fridays" as a close friend and like-minded person. At the end of the 19th century, his acquaintance Rerberg was still a young and promising artist in need of funds and a circle of useful contacts. These circumstances probably influenced Belaieff's decision to invite him as an illustrator.

Rerberg's creative legacy includes many watercolour works. Gretchaninov's romances were apparently written using this technique. However, it seems unlikely that this cover is the artist's first experience in designing sheet music. During the research of the present work, it was possible to find only an example dated 1898 (Il. 6). Compositionally, the model consists of two spatial-thematic elements: a landscape depicting a bell tower in the scattered silhouettes of the trees surrounding it in a twilight colour scheme reminiscent of the transience of earthly existence (*Evening Bells*) and a black raven as a harbinger of death (*Death*).

Galina Aksenova writes: "The ornament of the half-frame is made up of a Byzantine lily, the design of which is based on material from the 'second didactic part' of Butovsky's album (in this part, 'the ornamental motif that can be extracted from the ancient drawing is presented in essays and in an enlarged form'). At the bottom of the page, on an open book of life with a tassel, a black raven as a symbol of death sits, turning the pages." [1, p. 20]

Works by other composers were published no less colourfully: for example, *Mosaic* by Nikolai Shcherbachev: a collection of individual pieces (1883), *Scherzo-Caprice* (1886) (Il. 7), etc.



Il. 7. Nikolai Shcherbachev. *Scherzo-Caprice*.
M.P. Belaieff, Leipzig, 1886

Conclusion

It becomes clear the work of graphic designers at the Belaieff Publishing House is a topic that requires additional search. This is especially true for the works of Alexander Antipov and Pyotr Buck,²⁷ whose names are found only on individual copies, not to mention the considerable number of unnamed covers of numerous Belaieff publications, which "gives a feeling of the business and creative life of large and small enterprises." [12, p. 138] The company's artistic guidelines aimed to promote and popularise national ideas

²⁷ All illustrative material used in this article was taken from open sources, collections of the Russian State Library, and Richard Davis's book *The Beauty of Belaieff*. [11]

and works of Russian composers, as well as demonstrating the highest quality of all published works, including those of lesser-known composers. Due to the difficulty of finding any equivalents to this level of graphic

design excellence in either domestic or Western European printing of this period, the music manuscripts published by M.P. Belaieff, Leipzig represent exceptional phenomena in the global cultural space.

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