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Music Scholarship in the Context of Culture

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Music Theory and Musical Psychology: Quests and Discoveries*

Elena M. Alkon

Gnesin Russian Academy of Music,
Moscow, Russia,
elenalkon@mail.ru, https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4701-2378

Abstract. In the sphere of integration of various disciplines and the development of interdisciplinary research music has held a special position as a phenomenon of culture and a sign system distinct for the special role of the emotional, continual-energetic and unconscious elements. The article examines the tendency of interaction between music theory and musical psychology connected with the conceptualization of the unconscious which has been existent for over a century. The author highlights the most important moments of this process, directed at forming the perception of musical thinking as a central category connecting music theory and music psychology. Observations are expressed about the character and the dynamics of the examined tendency in Russian and American musicology, about terminological conceptualization of the unconscious in musical thinking, and information is recounted about significant musicological projects connected in one way or another with this issue.

Keywords: methodology of musicology, interdisciplinary approach in musicology, music theory and musical psychology, musical thinking, terminological conceptualization, mode-acoustic field, mode archetype

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Научная статья

Теория музыки и музыкальная психология: поиски и находки

Елена Мееровна Алкон

Российская академия музыки имени Гнесиных, г. Москва, Россия, elenalkon@mail.ru, https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4701-2378

Аннотация. В интеграции наук и развитии междисциплинарных исследований музыка как феномен культуры и знаковая система, отличающаяся особой ролью эмоционального, процессуально-энергетического, бессознательного, занимает особое место. В статье рассматривается тенденция взаимодействия между теорией музыки и музыкальной психологией, связанная с концептуализацией бессознательного и продолжающаяся более века. Автор выделяет наиболее важные моменты этого процесса, направленного на формирование представления о музыкальном мышлении как центральной категории, соединяющей теорию музыки и музыкальную психологию. Высказываются наблюдения о характере и динамике рассматриваемой тенденции в отечественном и американском музыкознании, о терминологической концептуализации бессознательного в музыкальном мышлении, вводятся данные о крупных междисциплинарных проектах, так или иначе связанных с этой проблемой.

Ключевые слова: методология музыкознания, междисциплинарный подход в музыкознании, теория музыки и музыкальная психология, музыкальное мышление, терминологическая концептуализация, ладоакустическое поле, ладовый архетип

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...In most cases problems occur with the cessation of thinking based on the concept of "the common state of things."

Ultimately "terminal things" are in reality are implicated in "primary things."

Ernst Kurth ¹

he intensiveness of informational exchange between the different fields of scholarship is continuing to expand (see, for example: $[1; 2; 3; 4]^2$), which makes it possible to prognosticate new discoveries upon their intersections and the appearance of new spheres of knowledge. The interaction of art studies with other scholarly disciplines is presently being appraised as the answer to "the challenges of modernity." Attention toward the interdisciplinary accents in music theory,³ the strengthening of its connections with musical psychology upon the extension of cross-cultural processes, has become especially important for musical education and pedagogical innovations. Among the recent publications, the direction of special interest to us is that of "integrative musical psychology." [5]

The aim of the article is to disclose the tendency of productive interaction between

music theory and musical psychology, which has continued for over a century and is connected with the turn of music theory towards the sphere of the unconscious. A special role in the emergence of this branch of the discipline has been played by the ideas of outstanding Swiss musicologist Ernst Kurth (1886–1946), which have continued to be developed up to the present. "Music theory" is examined in the present article in the line of contemporary perceptions, expounded in two fundamental works.⁴ It is noteworthy that both editions touch upon questions connected with musical psychology, moreover, in the Cambridge History of Western Music Theory the Fourth Part Descriptive Traditions includes a special section titled Musical Psychology, which contains two chapters: Energetics and The Psychology of Music.5 The editor of the publication Thomas Christensen

¹ Kurth E. Muzykal'naya psikhologiya. Oblasti i granitsy muzykal'noi psikhologii [Musical Psychology. Areas and Boundaries of Musical Psychology]. Translated by L. Tovaleva, O. Galkin, comments by O. Galkin. *HOMO MUSICUS: al'manakh muzykal'noi psikhologii [HOMO MUSICUS: Almanac of Musical Psychology*]. Ed. and comp. by M. Starcheus. Moscow, 1994. P. 12.

² Konson G. R. (ed.) *Iskusstvovedenie v kontekste drugikh nauk v sovremennom mire: paralleli i vzaimodeistviya: sb. tr. Mezhdunarodnoi nauchnoi konferentsii 21–26 aprelya 2019 g.* [Proceedings of the International Scholarly Conference "Art History in the Context of Other Disciplines in the Modern World: Parallels and Interactions" April 21–26, 2019)]. Moscow: Filin, 2020. 994 p.

³ Kholopova V. N. Mezhdistsiplinarnye aspekty obshchei teorii muzyki [Interdisciplinary Emphasis of General Theory of Music]. *The Journal of Russian Society for Theory of Music*. 2013. No. 1 (1), pp. 31–38.

⁴ The Cambridge History of Western Music Theory. Ed. by Thomas Christensen. Cambridge, U. K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002. 998 p.; Kholopov Yu. N., Kirillina L. V., Kyuregyan T. S., and others. Muzykal'no-teoreticheskie sistemy: uchebnik dlya istoriko-teoreticheskikh i kompozitorskikh fakul'tetov muzykal'nykh vuzov [Musical-Theoretical Systems: A Textbook for Historical-Theoretical and Composition Departments of Music Universities]. Moscow: Kompozitor, 2006. 631 p.

⁵ Rothfarb L. A. Energetics. *The Cambridge History...*, pp. 927–955; Gjerdingen R. The Psychology of Music. *The Cambridge History...*, pp. 956–981.

explains this by the fact that the analytics of music and the musical psychologist unifies the connection between empirical musical composition and its perception.⁶ Analysis of energetics in 20th century musicology is the subject of Tatiana Tsaregradskaya's article.⁷ We shall turn to separate questions posed in the chapter *The Psychology of Music* later in the article.

In its study of the elements of theory from the point of view of music psychology, musicology receives absolutely new perceptions. Addressing the questions related to the psychology of unconsciousness has turned out to be especially productive for music theory scholarship in the 20th and 21st centuries. The phenomenon of music is more appropriate than any other discipline for the study of the sphere of the unconscious, due to its temporal nature and intangibility, its essential dissolution after each performance, its existence in the form of inner auditory perceptions and its power of impact over the human being. It is not by accident that for Kurth a special quality of continuance in the counterpoint and melodicism of J. S. Bach's music provided that particular problem range in which his psycho-energetic conception was generated. In Grundlagen des linearen Kontrapunkts [The Foundations of Linear Counterpoint] (1917)⁸ the Swiss musicologist proposes

a new understanding of melody (melos) and linearity, bringing in a number of special musical terms. In Musikpsychologie [Musical Psychology] (1931)⁹ he analyzes the interaction of musical psychology with the aesthetics and psychology of music and formulates the basic question of the philosophy of music as an issue of perception of the inner world of the human being. Kurth singles out two crucially diverse approaches to the understanding of music — as a metaphysical world accessible only to intuition, and as a world generated by the psyche, a purely anthropomorphic phenomenon, and in correspondence to this determines two worldview positions. One is based on the dependence of the laws of music on psychological processes, while the other presumes that the laws of music itself predetermine the conditions of our psyche. Particularly in music theory, in its hidden form, are the most important elements of the empirical psychology of music revealed, as Kurth emphasizes.¹⁰ The encounter of musical psychology with music theory is manifested in the fact that musical psychology, for the most part, researches elementary concepts. However, the new, previously unfamiliar approach also presents an absolutely new type of understanding. "The phenomena which are simply taken for granted within the

⁶ The Cambridge History... P. 20.

⁷ Tsaregradskaya T. V. Napravlenie energetizma v kontekste muzykoznaniya XX veka ["Energeticism" as a Trend of the Twentieth-Century Music Analysis]. *The Journal of Russian Society for Theory of Music*. 2017. No. 4 (20), pp. 36–48.

⁸ Kurth E. *Grundlagen des linearen Kontrapunkts. Einführung in Stil und Technik von Bach's melodischer Polyphonie*. Bern: Akademische Buchhandlung von Max Drechsel, 1917. 525 S.; Kurth E. *Osnovy linearnogo kontrapunkta. Melodicheskaya polifoniya Bakha [Fundamentals of Linear Counterpoint. Bach's Melodic Polyphony*]. Trans. from the German by Z. Evald. Ed. by B. Asafiev. Moscow: Muzgiz, 1931. 304 p.

⁹ See: Kurth E. *Musikpsychologie*. Berlin: Max Hesse, 1931. 323 p.; Kurth E. Muzykal'naya psikhologiya..., pp. 7–27.

¹⁰ Kurth E. Muzykal'naya psikhologiya... P. 11.

sphere musicology, become merely points of departure in musical psychology," stemming from which "musical psychology must trace out its own sphere." According to Kurth, the commonly accepted notions of music theory contain a discrepancy which is connected with the penetration of music into the sphere of the unconscious, and while music theory continues to fail to realize that its main conceptions are always surrounded by mysteries in which the "perceptible flesh of its knowledge" is dissolved, it will continue to falter on its own limitedness. 12

The interest in generic psychology and its laws at the turn of the 19th and the 20th centuries is linked by researchers with the quests for the general laws of music characteristic for that time. In musical psychology, the beginning of which is considered to be the end of the 19th century, from Hermann Helmholtz's "physiology of hearing" and Carl Stumpf's "psychology of hearing," Kurth passes onto a qualitatively different level — to the "psychology of listening" and the main subject of his research is comprised of the laws of formation of musical integrality.¹³

The concept of intonation developed by Boris Asafiev (1884–1949), who highly appraised his contemporary Kurth, has determined many aspects of Russian musicology, however the famous music scholar, as Mark Aranovsky evaluates his conception, did not propose a theoretical method of discovery and classification of typified intonations.14 Apparently, the understanding of the essence of the psychoenergetic component (the idealistically unconscious) came into contradiction with the accepted materialistic doctrine, but in the second book Intonation the scholar finally discarded the notion of understanding intonation as the relationship of sounds (i.e., the real elements of pitch) and "structural definiteness," albeit, remained faithful to understanding intonation as an "ontological definiteness." The conception of intonation became less concrete, but more generalized and, most importantly, generated the working the processes of musical thinking out, and therein its main historical role may be perceived.

The issues of integrality found their reflection in the research of Leonard Meyer (1918–2007), a significant American music scholar, whose ideas also continue to be developed. Meyer studied the "laws of good continuation" (melodic continuity, rhythmic, and metric continuation), basing himself on Gestalt psychology and the theory of expectation, the conscious and the unconscious. In particular, according to his observations, a group of tones may be considered to be well formalized, if it is comprised of approximately equal tempered intervals following each other in succession in one direction.¹⁶

¹¹ Ibid. P. 12.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid. Pp. 22, 24.

¹⁴ Aranovsky M. G. Kontseptsiya B. V. Asaf'eva [The Concept of B. V. Asafiev]. *Muzykal'no-teoreticheskie sistemy 20 veka [Musical-Theoretical Systems of the 20th Century*]. Ed.-comp. M. Aranovsky. Moscow, 2011, pp. 85–122.

¹⁵ Ibid. P. 121.

¹⁶ Meyer L. B. *Emotion and Meaning in Music*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957. 328 p.

In Soviet music scholarship in the time period from the 1940s through the 1960s, due to various objective reasons, which one can only surmise, musical psychology turned out to be contiguous to musical acoustics, along with other "borderline" disciplines. Despite the circle of questions embraced by musical psychology (the study of the mechanism of creative processes, the performer's general state on the concert stage, the process of music perception, the classification of musical abilities) and subsequently enumerated in the encyclopedic dictionary devoted to musicology, its author, well-known musicologist-historian Keldysh was compelled to acknowledge that notwithstanding the direct connection of all the aforementioned questions to music scholarship, to pedagogy and practice, "musical psychology must [my italics. — E. A.] be examined as a part of general psychology, whereas musical acoustics is assigned to the sphere of physical disciplines, rather than to musicology."17 With the word "must", the author of the article seems to exonerate himself before future generations of scholars and suggests to read "between the lines", treating this with understanding: during the time of the Great Patriotic War, and later the Cold War studies in the sphere of acoustics as a field related to physics with which musical psychology was still tightly connected, concentrated in the spheres of military defense and outer space programs.

However, already in the early 1970s, after the "thaw", the publication of a book by Evgeny Nazaykinsky (1926–2006) about the psychology of musical perception marks a new period in music scholarship. The music scholar considers the turn of attention towards psychology to provide one of the conditions for deep penetration into the laws of music, into its nature and specific features. He cites the works of Hugo Riemann and Ernst Kurth as examples.¹⁸ He distinguises the special role played by of two significant music theorists — Yuri Tyulin (1893–1978), who brought the concept of apperception as well as a set of other terms into music theory and valued the significance of study of the subconscious, and Leo Mazel (1907-2000), who exerted great attention towards the psychology of perception.¹⁹ Nazaykinsky's turn to the subconscious components of perception, to the definition of the role of life experience and integrality, towards a psychological understanding of various conceptions, such as pre-hearing, towards the attribute of metaphor, has paved the way towards the elaboration of new perceptions of music and towards terminological conceptualization. The first book demonstrated Nazaykinsky's first conception – the coordinate of depth in music, while the second²⁰ presented a set of systemic triads, such as drama — lyricism — epos, space — motion — time, texture syntax — composition, and context — text — *subtext*. On the basis of Dmitri Uznadze's

¹⁷ Keldysh Yu. V. Muzykovedenie [Musicology]. *Muzykal'naya entsiklopediya* [*Musical Encyclopedia*]. Yu. V. Keldysh, Editor-in-Chief. Moscow, 1976. Vol. 3. Col. 809.

¹⁸ Nazaykinsky E. V. *O psikhologii muzykal'nogo vospriyatiya* [*On the Psychology of Musical Perception*]. Moscow: Muzyka, 1972. P. 11.

¹⁹ Ibid. Pp. 4, 69.

²⁰ Nazaykinsky E. V. *Logika muzykal'noi kompozitsii [The Logic of Musical Composition*]. Moscow: Muzyka, 1982. 319 p.

theory of attitude, his conception of *modus* is formed. To the aforementioned concepts of macro-level, two less perceptible, albeit, in my opinion, extremely important notions must be added — "interval-motion" and "interval-switching." Following Kurth's teaching, Nazaykinsky discerns in this *common* (let us remember Kurth's words brought as the epigraph to the article) conception of "continuous" from "discrete" and thereby opens up the path towards terminological conceptualization of the unconscious.²¹

The search for new methods in art studies in the early 1970s was marked by a very successful "brainstorm," the target of which was musical thinking. A group of scholars pertaining to various professions — psychologists, musicologists, linguists, cyberneticists and philosophers - was brought together by another outstanding theorist — Mark Aranovsky (1928-2009), who was especially interested in this phenomenon.²² About thirty or forty years later, the engaging of scholars from various disciplines who are interested in various important and crucial issues has already become a rather customary affair,²³ but this is, indeed, a confirmation of the

progressive nature of Aranovsky's project.

Since the 1980s English-language publications have applied more and more frequently the concept of music cognition, instead of the term "musical psychology," or, to be precise, "the psychology of music." By unifying the spheres of psychology, linguistics, neurophysiology, philosophy and informatics, all of which study thinking, intuition, the cognitive abilities of human beings and other living organisms, as well as the processes of formation of perception, "cognitive science" has risen to a new level. The study of cognitive abilities is generally discerned by its amalgamation with new technologies.²⁴ The "cognitive approach" proper became a basis for the research work A Generative Theory of Tonal Music written by musicologist Fred Lerdahl and linguist Ray Jackendoff, in which the authors cover a broad spectrum of "musical intuitions" — from elementary processes of grouping to the most complex types connected with prolongation.²⁵ The formalization of unconscious processes intrinsic to tonal music onto the level of harmony and rhythm proposed by them is evaluated as the analogy to "generative grammar" in structural linguistics. The

²¹ Nazaykinsky E. V. Vzaimosvyazi interval'nykh i stupenevykh predstavlenii v razvitii slukha [Interrelationships between Interval and Step Representations in the Development of the Musical Ear]. *Vospitanie muzykal'nogo slukha [Instruction of the Musical Ear]*. Moscow: Muzyka, 1977, pp. 25–77.

²² *Problemy muzykal'nogo myshleniya* [*Problems of Musical Thinking*]. Comp. and ed. by M. Aranovsky. Moscow: Muzyka, 1974. 333 p.

²³ See, for example: *Language and Music as Cognitive Systems*. Ed. by P. Rebuschat, M. Rohrmeier, J. A. Hawkins, I. Cross. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012. 356 p.; *Language, Music, and the Brain: A Mysterious Relationship*. Ed. by M. A. Arbib. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013. 662 p.

²⁴ Gjerdingen R. Op. cit. P. 976.

²⁵ Lerdahl F., Jackendoff R. *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music*. Cambridge, Massachusets: The MIT Press, 1983. P. 332. For a summary of the theory of generative grammar, see: Lerdahl A. W. (F.) Generativnaya teoriya muzyki v svete traditsii Shenkera i Rimana [Generative Music Theory in Relation to the Schenkerian and Riemannian Traditions]. *The Journal of Russian Society for Theory of Music*. 2018. No. 4 (24), pp. 20–40.

"generative music theory treats music theory as a branch of cognitive science and, through a rule system, models the structures that listeners implicitly infer from a musical surface."²⁶

The neuropsychological approach, based on the acceptance of Functional Interhemispheric Asymmetry (FIA) by world science, has been used by Vyacheslav Medushevsky upon his creation of the conception of intonational form. Let us stress the special role of the unconscious and "corporeality" in intonation generalization at the level of "the proto-intonational form".27 Giving a fair characterization of his Doctoral dissertation Intonatsionnofabul'naya priroda muzykal'noi formy [The Intonational-Narrative Nature of Musical Form] (defended in 1984) as a "leap forward," Valentina Kholopova at the same time reproaches Russian musicology for its inert quality, asserting that during the course of the subsequent 30 years it "did not advance a single step"28 in that direction. However, this is nothing more than a faulty assessment. Reaction towards Medushevsky's work followed

immediately, but this took place in the Far-Eastern Academy of Arts. Already in 1994 (i.e., a year after the publication of Medushevsky's book written on the basis of his dissertation) in Vladivostok theses of my presentation were published, where the conception of my future Doctoral dissertation was presented in general terms. Three years later, in 1998, now already in Moscow, an article was published based on the manuscript from 1995.29 This was followed by a set of publications, including a book,³⁰ and then in the successful defense of my Doctoral dissertation Muzykal'noe myshlenie Vostoka i Zapada: kontinual'noe i diskretnoe [Music Thinking of East and West — Continual and Discrete] (St. Petersburg: Russian Institute of Art History, 2002. 421 p.). In the context of development of the interdisciplinary approach in Russian musicology, it is important to note that the neuropsychological approach in these research works has been complemented by the semiotic and the anthropological.

In the basis of the model "East — West" as the analogy to the FIA and the materials pertaining to oral and oral-

²⁶ Lerdahl A. W. (F.). Op. cit. P. 20.

²⁷ Medushevsky V. V. *Intonatsionnaya forma muzyki [Intonation Form of Music*]. Moscow: Kompozitor, 1993. 268 p.

²⁸ Kholopova V. N. Op. cit. P. 31.

²⁹ See: Alkon E. M. K probleme kontinual'nogo i diskretnogo v muzykal'nom myshlenii [On the Problem of Continual and Discrete in Musical Thinking]. *Kul'tura Dal'nego Vostoka Rossii i stran ATR: Vostok — Zapad: nauchnaya konferentsiya* [Culture of the Russian Far East and Asia-Pacific Countries: East — West: Scientific Conference]. Issue 1. Far Eastern State Institute of Arts; Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography of the Peoples of the Far East Far Eastern Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Vladivostok, 1994, pp. 125–127; Idem. Kontinual'noe i diskretnoe v muzykal'nom myshlenii Vostoka i Zapada [Continual and Discrete in the Musical Thinking of East and West]. Vzaimodeistvie khudozhestvennykh kul'tur Vostoka i Zapada. Pamyati Izabelly Rubenovny Eolyan [Interaction of Artistic Cultures of East and West. In Memory of Isabella Rubenovna Eolyan]. Moscow: State Institute of Art History, 1998, pp. 112–133.

³⁰ Alkon E. M. *Muzykal'noe myshlenie Vostoka i Zapada* — *kontinual'noe i diskretnoe* [*Music Thinking of East and West* — *Continual and Discrete*]. Vladivostok: Far Eastern State University Publ., 1999. 126 p.

written traditions (conditionally defined as the "East"), the conception was presented and the foundations were laid of the theory of musical thinking of the mythological type, and a set of concepts was brought in. Proceeding from the continual approach to the concept of *lad* (mode), the necessity arose of bringing in the concept of "the mode-acoustic field," denoting the special modal function of space (continuous, energetic and unconscious) appearing upon the change from one tone to the next. Later, this was supplemented by the conception of "the mode-metrical field," denoting a continual unit of quantitative meter. In other words, the conception of fields, modal-acoustic and modal-metrical, highlighted and denoted the spatial (or, to be precise, spatial-temporal) understanding of the interval as a continual unit typical for the right hemisphere of the brain. Almost twenty years later, on the basis of the principle of symmetry / asymmetry, the classification of binary modal archetypes³¹ was created, the diversity of the different varieties of which was narrowed down into a system on the basis of the "modal

capacity" (to use Evgeny Gertsman's term), the succession of the fields and the directedness of the motion³².

The work on elaboration of the neurosemiotic approach was joined by my student Svetlana Klyuchko, who successfully met this rather difficult challenge, since the material chosen for her research was quite complicated: the object of her study was traditional Chinese and Korean musical notation. Significant and the most interesting results of her work found reflection in her dissertation written for the degree of Candidate of Arts³³ and other scholarly works.³⁴

Special and detailed scholarly attention is merited by the research works by Anirudh Patel, devoted to the issue of distribution of resources between the two hemispheres of the brain in the processes of linguistic and musical syntax,³⁵ and Arnie Cox, who studied the types and forms of conceptualization of music in which, consciously or unconsciously, its corporeal-motional mental nature, based on the connection of imitation, imagination and expression, is manifested in the form

³¹ A term coined by Kira Yuzhak. For more on the subject see: Yuzhak K. I. Lad, tip poryadka, dinamicheskaya i evolyutsionnaya sistema [The Lad: Type of Order, Dynamic and Evolving System]. *Traditsii muzykal'noi nauki* [*Traditions of Musical Science*]. Leningrad, 1989. P. 57.

³² For more details see: Alkon E. Klassifikatsiya ladovykh arkhetipov i sovremennye problemy muzykal'nogo obrazovaniya [Classification of Mode Archetypes and Modern Problems of Music Education]. *Vestnik kafedry YuNESKO "Muzykal'noe iskusstvo i obrazovanie"* [Bulletin of the UNESCO Chair "Musical Arts and Education"]. 2019. Vol. 7, No. 2, pp. 77–95.

³³ Klyuchko S. I. Spetsifika traditsionnoi muzykal'noi pis'mennosti Vostochnoi Azii: na primere Kitaya i Korei: avtoref. dis. ... kand. iskusstvovedeniya: 17.00.02 [The Specifics of Traditional Musical Writing in East Asia: on the Example of China and Korea: Thesis for Dissertation for the Degree of Cand. Sci. (Arts): 17.00.02)]. Vladivostok, 2009. 27 p.

³⁴ See, for example: Klyuchko S. I. Traditsionnaya muzykal'naya pis'mennost' Kitaya (psikhologicheskii aspekt) [Traditional Musical Writing of China (Psychological Aspect)]. *Muzykovedenie* [*Musicology*]. 2008. No. 5, pp. 62–67.

³⁵ Patel A. D. *Music, Language, and the Brain.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008. 513 p.

of action or perception. In the latter's book music is perceived as *embodied cognition*, as a process involving *hearing*, *motion*, *perception* and *thinking*.³⁶

Thereby, we see how useful and productive for music theory Kurth's psycho-energetic conception has turned out and remains to be. In conclusion, emphasis must be made what seems to be customary and generally known: the sphere of the unconscious is organic for music, but presents special kinds of difficulties upon the attempt of terminological conceptualization. However, it follows from here the

development of music theory, understood as the study of music and the systematization of knowledge for the purpose of education, is impossible without recourse to psychology. The conjunction of music theory with musical psychology has been successfully developing for over a century and is capable of revealing new horizons in the cognition of this phenomenon. What is needed here is merely the proper approach an interest towards the world and other disciplines, and a perspective — an interest towards the human being and his expression of himself in music.

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Information about the author:

Elena M. Alkon — Dr.Sci. (Arts), Professor at Music Theory Department.

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Информация об авторе:

Е. М. Алкон — доктор искусствоведения, профессор кафедры теории музыки.

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