

LIUDMILA K. SHABALINA*Urals State M. P. Mussorgsky Conservatory, Yekaterinburg, Russia
ORCID: 0000-0001-8547-0738, lyudmila@convex.ru*

The Yekaterinburg Section of the Imperial Russian Musical Society / Russian Musical Society (1912–1919)

The article sets the goal of ascertainment of the results of the activities in Yekaterinburg of the local section of the Imperial Russian Musical Society (IRMS), which existed in the city for seven years, part of which passed during the years of the revolution and the Civil War. The favorable conditions accompanying the emergence of the local section of the IRMS, stipulated by the longstanding activities of amateur musical-enlightening societies. The establishment of the first professional musical educational institution in the Urals region – the Musical College affiliated with the local section of the IRMS – is highlighted as the greatest achievement of the Society. The hardships of its functioning during the crossover period of Russian history (1917–1919) and the moments of critical situations brought in the danger of the shutting down of the Musical College. The merits of the members of the local section of the IRMS, who were able to establish and preserve this Musical College in Yekaterinburg, as well as the professional musicians, graduates of conservatories, who performed in concerts and were engaged in pedagogical work are disclosed. An evaluation is made of the College, created under the auspices of the IRMS, as the foundation for the establishment in Yekaterinburg (during the Soviet period – Sverdlovsk) of a higher musical educational institution – the Urals State M. P. Mussorgsky Conservatory.

Keywords: the musical culture of the Urals, musical education, the Yekaterinburg Section of the Imperial Russian Musical Society (IRMS), the activists of the IRMS.

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Л. К. ШАБАЛИНА*Уральская государственная консерватория им. М. П. Мусоргского
г. Екатеринбург, Россия
ORCID: 0000-0001-8547-0738, lyudmila@convex.ru*

Екатеринбургское отделение Императорского Русского музыкального общества / Русского музыкального общества (1912–1919)

В статье поставлена задача выяснения результатов деятельности в Екатеринбурге отделения Императорского Русского музыкального общества (ИРМО), существовавшего в городе семь лет, часть которых пришлось на годы революций и Гражданской войны. Рассмотрены сопутствующие появлению отделения ИРМО благоприятные обстоятельства, обусловленные многолетней деятельностью в Екатеринбурге любительских музыкально-просветительских обществ. Открытие первого на Урале профессионального музыкального учебного заведения – училища при отделении ИРМО – выделено как главное достижение Общества. Трудности его работы в переломный период русской истории (1917–1919) и моменты критических ситуаций могли привести Музыкальное училище к закрытию. Выявлены заслуги членов местного отделения ИРМО, сумевших создать и сохранить это учебное заведение в Екатеринбурге, и музыкантов-профессионалов, выпускников консерваторий, выступавших на концертах и занимавшихся педагогической работой. Оценивается значение училища, созданного при отделении ИРМО, в качестве фундамента для организации в Екатеринбурге (в советское время – Свердловске) высшего музыкального учебного заведения – Уральской государственной консерватории имени М. П. Мусоргского.

Ключевые слова: музыкальная культура Урала, музыкальное образование, Екатеринбургское отделение Императорского Русского музыкального общества (ИРМО), деятели ИРМО.

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The Yekaterinburg Section of the Imperial Russian Musical Society (from 1917 – the Russian Musical Society) existed for only seven years – from 1912 to 1919, moreover, from 1917 to 1919 it functioned in the complex conditions of the civil War. As a natural result the following questions arise: was the Society able to make its contribution to the musical culture and education of the upland capital of the Ural region, and if it did, what kind of contribution was it, and due to whose social and/or personal initiatives was it made? The present article is devoted to answering these questions.

In the second half of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century Yekaterinburg was distinctive for its active social life, and the Section of the IRMS turned out to be one of the last musical societies in the area existing in the pre-revolutionary era. The first was the Yekaterinburg Musical Circle, which grew out of the family evenings of the 1870s in the house of the Makletsky family and by 1880 acquired the status of a municipal society (after consolidation of its statute at the Ministry of Inner Affairs). Towards the end of the 19th century there were close to 200 members of this circle. In 1900 upon commission of Ilya Zakharovich Makletsky (1840–1902) a concert hall was built for the circle (by architect Yuliy Dutel). Starting from 1912 the Yekaterinburg Section of the IRMS was housed in this building (Illustration 1). The circle lasted for over 30 years, for the most part being engaged in producing operas. The birth of the Opera Theater in Yekaterinburg in 1912 was in many ways a result of the activities of this society.

Yekaterinburg is indebted to the rise of operatic activity to the “Trusteeship of People’s Sobriety” – a governmental and communal structure, which appeared upon the proposal of Minister of Finances Sergei Witte. From 1895 in the Perm Gubernia the preparation of directors of folk choruses centered in Perm and Yekaterinburg began. The project was headed by opera singer Alexander Gorodtsov. By 1917 around 400 functioning choruses were created in the gubernia.

From 1895 the “Society of Lovers of Fine Arts” functioned in Yekaterinburg; it brought together artists, architects, writers and musicians. It was engaged in organizing beneficiary concerts and exhibitions, and promoted the appearance in the city of the Vissarion Belinsky Central Library (1899) and the Artistic-Industrial School (1902). The first chairman of the society



Illustration 1. The Building of the Section of the IRMS/RMS in Yekaterinburg (1912–1919). Presently the Concert Hall of the P. I. Tchaikovsky College

was architect Yuliy Dutel, the author of the project of the Makletsky Concert Hall, which subsequently became the building of the Section of the IRMS.

The lengthy work of the intelligentsia of Yekaterinburg on aesthetical education of the residents of the city paved the way for the establishment of the Section of the Imperial Russian Musical Society. Unlike the amateur, leisure-enlightening unions, the IRMS relied on a professional basis in setting up the of the concert activities and in the organization of musical education (classes, colleges and conservatories) [14].

The creation of a new musical structure required special efforts on the part of the city’s patriots. A crucial role in the opening of the Yekaterinburg Section of the IRMS was played by Dmitri Pavlovich Solomirsky, a lawyer and amateur musician, the irreplaceable chairman of the Section (Illustration 2). By his merit the concert hall built for the previous musical circle by Ilya Makletsky was built and transferred as a gift to the Section [6]. The trust for Solomirsky on the part of the Imperial court presented a no less weighty argument for the positive decision made concerning this question by the Main Directorate of the IRMS¹.

Evgeny Ivanovich Ivanov, the son of the chief of the Ural Mountains factories Ivan Ivanov, became the assistant chairman of the Section. An amateur cellist, a leader of the Yekaterinburg Musical Circle, in 1893 he opened one of the first musical stores in the city and founded a musical publishing house, in which the music of the local composers, Tsvetikov, Goyer and Mulikovskiy, were published (the music was printed in the St. Petersburg Printing Office of Vassily Bessel).

Pianist and composer Vassily Stepanovich Tsvetikov, a graduate of the St. Petersburg Conservatory (where he was a student of Karl Van-Ark), who worked in the city from 1886, became the director of the Musical Classes [2]. The work of the Yekaterinburg Section of the IRMS and the Musical Classes affiliated during the first year of its existence found reflection in the printed Report (Illustration 3).

In 1915 the question arose of transferring the musical classes to the status of a college, and Solomirsky confirmed his readiness to provide material assistance for this idea. In St. Petersburg, the head of the Directorate of the IRMS at that time was the grand-daughter of the Grand Duchess Elena Pavlovna, Princess Elena Georgievna, by her husband's surname, Saxe-Altenburg [8, pp. 118–121]. In 1916, when the IRMS classes in Yekaterinburg – after their work was positively evaluated by the member of the Main Directorate, pianist Leonid Nikolayev – were transformed into a college, she wished the educational institution “successful development and flourishing”².

Pianist Boris Matveyevich Lazarev, a graduate of the Petrograd Conservatory, was invited to direct the college. The Yekaterinburg newspapers presented his professional biography³. The festivities in honor of the transformation of the classes into a college took place on October 16, 1916.

The following year, 1917, became a crossover year in Russian history. The last composition to be performed at a concert of the Section of the IRMS prior to the beginning of the revolutionary unrest was the Fourth Piano Concerto by the founder of the Society, Anton Rubinstein (the soloist was Boris Lazarev). The changes in the fate of the IRMS began immediately after the February Revolution of 1917, which was met in the city with enthusiasm. After the abdication of Emperor Nicholas II (March 2/15, 1917) the Russian Musical Society returned to its original title, and in Yekaterinburg its abbreviation changed at once. Under the sign of the “RMS” on March 19, 1917 a concert of the musical society was announced with the participation of a chorus directed by a faculty member of the college Mikhail Efimovich Kuskov⁴.

In May 1917 Boris Lazarev and Mikhail Kuskov were delegated to Petrograd to the “Congress of Representatives of the RMS,” which engaged in a new Statute of the RMS, the conservatories and the colleges. “At the last session c. [comrades. – *L. Sh.*] Mikhail Treskin (Wilno), Mikhail Gnassin (Rostov-on-Don), Mikhail Kuskov (Yekaterinburg) and Victor Belyayev (Petrograd) made presentations about the democratization of music and establishing the Academy of Music”⁵.

In the Autumn of 1917 the October Revolution erupted, leading to global changes of the social-political structure of the state. In Yekaterinburg, where the Bolsheviks came to power immediately, nationalization of all property began. Making an effort to preserve the educational institution, “the students and faculty of the Yekaterinburg Musical College informed the Department for People’s Education affiliated with the Soviet of Workers and Soldiers’ Deputies that the by the Resolution of the General Assembly of the Students and Faculty the College is to be restructured. The College was declared to be an autonomous institution, and all personal property and real estate of the RMS shall pass into the ownership of the College”⁶.

The subsequent step was taken towards the democratization of the inner life of the educational institution. A Council was created among the faculty members and students for directing it. Besides Boris Lazarev the Council included violin pedagogue Boris Vitkin and student Boris Kushelevsky. Another student, E. K. Kisselev, was appointed as the treasurer, and this was a rash decision.

Civil War erupted in the region of the Ural Mountains in November 1917 in the treasury milieu; in May 1918 it flared up again. In July 1918, when on orders of Lenin the Moscow and Petrograd Conservatories were transferred to the Narkompros [People’s Committee for Enlightenment], the White Army secured a victory in the Ural Mountains region. Several days before its retreat from Yekaterinburg, the Red Army, after holding telegraph conversations with Lenin and Sverdlov about the necessity of a trial of the tsar, shot the imperial family on the night of July 16th and 17th. Whether this was a



Illustration 2. Dmitri Pavlovich Solomirsky (1838–1923), Chairman of the Yekaterinburg Section of the IRMS



Illustration 3. The Title Page of the Report of the Yekaterinburg Section of the IRMS during the First Year of its Existence

decision of the central government or the initiative of the local chieftains, has remained unclear up to now.

The White Army occupied the city on July 25, 1918, and Yekaterinburg became subservient to the Interim Government of the Urals with the center in Ufa. The Yekaterinburg Section and the Musical College were once again declared to belong to the Russian Musical Society. On the eve of the start of the school year it became clear that the College's material situation was at a critical state due to a "total attenuation of finances"⁷. The directory decided to make redundant ten faculty members at once, who taught over two hundred students. In the press there was an invocation to the students to come to the "special meeting"⁸. The Ministries of Enlightenment, Internal Affairs and Labor of the Interim Government of the Urals created a committee for Regulating the Situation and held sessions with the members of the Yekaterinburg Section of the RMS. It was possible to find the financial means needed for preserving the educational institution and preserve the College.

The 1918–1919 concert season in Yekaterinburg turned out to be exceptionally abundant. A multitude of refugee musicians became concentrate within the city. A large number of musicians from other countries arrived with the armies of the "interventionists" in the ensembles of the military orchestras: the wind and the symphony (as part of the Czechoslovak Corps)⁹. Concerts were held continuously and had an ideological directedness: "Patriotic concerts" and "Concerts of Slavic Music" [10, pp. 533–534].

In December 1918 the Section of the RMS opened a cycle of "historical concerts" which featured performances of the music of Handel, Rameau, Lully, Couperin, Gluck, Leclair, Mozart and Haydn. Scenes from Serov's "Judith" and the entire "I Pagliacci" by Leoncavallo were produced by the students with the participation of soloists from the opera. Maximilian Karlovich Maksakov, who in the future was to become a professor at the State Institute of Theatrical Arts (GITIS), became the director of the production and the performer of the role of Tonio. A gala concert of the orchestra and the opera company was presented at the theater on February 17, 1919 in honor of the head of the "Omsk Directory" Alexander Kolchak, who came to visit the city¹⁰.

The 1918–1919 season of the Yekaterinburg Section of the Russian Musical Society was the most saturating of all, but it turned out to be the last one. From the first months of 1919, understanding the durability of the securing of Soviet rule in Moscow and Petrograd, the leadership of the local section of the RMS turns to forming the autonomous organization "Yekaterinburg Musical Society." The college becomes a part of its structure, and then in newspapers the

title of its rubric renewed once again: "The Musical College of the Yekaterinburg Musical Society"¹¹.

In the spring the situation on the fronts of the Civil War changed in favor of the Red Army. Boris Lazarev, Maximilian Maksakov and several other teachers moved to Siberia, where the previous forces were still holding on. The musical pedagogues who remained in the city conducted a meeting and elect young pianist Nina Andreyevna Ivanova to the position of the chairwoman. A niece of Evgeny Ivanov, she was a graduate of the Petrograd Conservatory, where she studied with Nikolai Lavrov. She later remembered the critical situation in the college during those years: "We had only one aim in mind then – to keep the educational process from ceasing"¹².

The Red Army occupied Yekaterinburg on July 14, 1919. The reaction of the greater part of the Yekaterinburg intelligentsia (and, hence, the members of the musical community) found expression in a mass exodus from the city. An article appeared in the newspaper "Uralskiy rabochiy" ["The Urals' Worker"] titled "The Flight of the Musicians: 'Stories of imaginary barbarities of the Red Army did not evade the attention of the musicians and opera artists... <...> Almost all the music teachers, who had no cause for 'saving themselves,' fled not only Yekaterinburg but beyond the border of Russia"¹³. Thereupon the short life of the Yekaterinburg Section of the IRMS/RMS was interrupted. "From the middle of 1919, after the establishment in the Ural Region of Soviet rule, all mention in the press of the Section of the IRMS and of the other 19th and early 20th century musical societies in the city cease" [12, p. 300].

The Yekaterinburg Section had enough time to fulfill its most important goal: here the first professional musical educational institution appeared – the Musical College¹⁴. Great merit in its creation and preservation, as it became clear from the archival sources, belonged to the cultural enthusiasts who were devoted to the art of music and to their native city. And whereas the Imperial Russian Musical Society disappeared along with the collapse of the empire, the Musical College continued to live and develop, having become a necessary step towards the founding in the city in 1934 of the higher musical educational institution – the Conservatory [13].

The turn of the 19th and 20th centuries appeared in the musical history of Russia as a period of a qualitative leap in the process of professionalization of music and education. "A decisive role in this movement was played by the activities of the Imperial Russian Musical Society. By 1917 there were sections

of the IRMS working in almost 60 Russian cities, and many of them had Musical Classes and Colleges opened within their auspices, and five conservatories were established” [11, p. 278]. Having joined the milieu of cities with conservatories, Yekaterinburg/

Sverdlovsk also fit into this musical community, having acquired in 1936 a philharmonic society and a symphony orchestra as well¹⁵. In the Urals region the city became a center for musical culture and continues to preserve and develop its positions.

NOTES

¹ Dmitri Pavlovich Solomirsky (1838–1923) was an Active State Councilor, a Cavalier of the Orders of St. Stanislav of the 2nd Degree (1879), St. Anna of the 2nd Degree (1892), Vladimir of the 4th Degree (1895) and the 3rd Degree (1913). He was the son of general-major Pavel Solomirsky (Pavel was born from the civil marriage of her mother with Dmitri Tatishchev and was listed under the surname of one of Tatishchev’s forebears; there exists hearsay that his father was Emperor Pavel I) [7]. Dmitri Pavlovich Solomirsky completed studies at the Law Department of the Moscow University and starting from 1861 served as an arbitrator in Perm. After the death of his father he moved to St. Petersburg. With the outbreak of the Russo-Turkish War, he provided aid to wounded Russian soldiers. The Service of the Red Cross originated on the basis of the Krestovozdvizhensky [Exaltation of the Holy Cross] Community of Sisters of Charity created upon the initiative of Grand Duchess Elena Pavlovna, the name of which is connected with the founding of the RMS. Subsequently it was placed under the patronage of Empress Maria Feodorovna (the widow of Emperor Alexander III and the mother of Nicholas II), who on numerous occasions expressed her gratitude to Dmitri Pavlovich for his participation in the affairs of this organization. In 1878 Solomirsky returned to the Urals region, where he inherited the Syset Factories (near Yekaterinburg). He joined the work of the district court. He provided material assistance to the educational institutions of Yekaterinburg, most significantly – to the Section of the IRMS [6]. Annual Reports of the Section confirm his generous contributions (Otchyot Ekaterinburgskogo otdeleniya Imperatorskogo Russkogo muzykal'nogo obshchestva i sostoyashchikh pri nyom muzykal'nykh klassov za 1912–1913 gg. [Report of the Yekaterinburg Section of the Imperial Russian Musical Society and the Musical Classes Organized under its Auspices for 1912–1913]. Yekaterinburg: L. V. Sharavyeva Printing Office, 1913, pp. 4–5; Otchyot Ekaterinburgskogo otdeleniya Imperatorskogo Russkogo muzykal'nogo obshchestva i sostoyashchikh pri nyom muzykal'nykh klassov za 1914–1915 gg. [Report of the Yekaterinburg Section of the Imperial Russian Musical Society and the Musical Classes Organized under its Auspices for 1914–1915]. Yekaterinburg: Khudozhestvennaya pechat' [Artistic Printing], 1916, pp. 3–4).

² Zaural'skiy kray [The Region Beyond the Urals]. 1916. October 16 [4].

³ Boris Matveyevich Lazarev (1888–1982) graduated from the Petrograd Conservatory in 1916. “For 8 years Mr. Lazarev’s teacher was Alexander Siloti, who in his turn was the favorite pupil of Franz Liszt... At the Petrograd Conservatory he studied as a special subject theory composition with Maximilian Steinberg (the best student and one of the most worthy successors of the traditions of Rimsky-Korsakov, with Professor Vitol and with Sokolov” (Zaural'skiy kray [The Region Beyond the Urals]. 1916. September 6). Lazarev was both a student and the husband of the daughter of Alexander Siloti (who himself was a cousin of Sergei Rachmaninoff) – Kiriena, the grand-daughter of Pavel Tretyakov. A graduate of the Petrograd Conservatory, she moved to the Ural region with her husband, but did not work in the college [3, p. 17]. In 1919 the couple found themselves in Irkutsk, and then in Chita. From 1922 they lived in Harbin, where Lazarev taught at a music school and the “Lotos” Studio. In 1926–1927 they moved to New York, where Lazarev assisted Siloti in his class at the Juilliard School. In 1933 he returned to China where he became a successful piano teacher. Among his students was the winner of the First International Tchaikovsky Competition, Lui Shikun. Prior to the establishment of the communist regime in China, Lazarev returned to the USA [1].

⁴ Uralskaya zhizn' [The Urals Life]. 1917. March 22.

⁵ Russkaya muzykal'naya gazeta [Russian Musical Newspaper]. 1917. No. 25–26. July 1, p. 444.

⁶ Uralskaya zhizn' [The Urals Life]. 1918. April 22.

⁷ Zaural'skiy kray [The Region Beyond the Urals]. 1918. September 6.

⁸ For the sake of replenishment of monetary means the concert hall of the Section of the RMS was leased for various events. One of them took place on December 9, 1918 on the Day of St. George the Conqueror in honor of the St. George Cavaliers of the White Army. The festivities in the hall of the RMS were attended by the founders of independent Czechoslovakia: Milan Stefanik, who became the Minister of Defense, and Jan Syrový, in the future who was to become the prime minister and the president of the country.

⁹ Uralskaya zhizn' [The Urals Life]. 1918. September 8.

¹⁰ Uralskaya zhizn' [The Urals Life]. 1919. February 19.

¹¹ Nash Ural [Our Urals]. 1919. February 1.

¹² Having been elected on the assembly (Uralskaya zhizn' [Urals Life]. 1919. March 25), Ivanova (Ivanova-Kulibina) Nina Andreyevna (1893–1980) graduated from

the Petrograd Conservatory in 1916. Prior to her return to Yekaterinburg, she received as a present a photo-portrait of Alexander Glazunov with the parting words: “To the future disseminator of the traditions of the Petrograd Conservatory in the Near East, to the talented and exclusively musical Nina Andreyevna Ivanova from her previous instructor sincerely devoted to her, anchoring great hopes on her upcoming artistic and also pedagogical activities. May 7, 1916. Alexander Glazunov.” (Personal Archive of Nina Ivanova). In 1916–1922 she taught at a musical college, starting from 1925 with her husband V. A. Kulibin (the descendent of the inventor) she lived in the southern Ural Mountain region. Upon her return in 1939 she worked at the conservatory: she was the dean of the piano department and the chairwoman of the union of accompanists [3, p. 18].

¹³ Ural'skiy rabochiy [The Urals Worker]. 1919. August 7.

¹⁴ The destiny of the other Sections of the IRMS in the Urals region (established in the early 20th century in Perm and Ufa) turned out to be less fortunate and not as effective in its results [9; 10; 12]. The events of the lynchpin years influenced some of the other regional sections in an unfavorable manner as well. For example, in Rostov-on-Don the Section of the IRMS was established in 1896, while “in 1918 entrance auditions in Rostov were announced by three institutions simultaneously, all of which positioned themselves as higher educational institutions, but their lives were soon discontinued in connection with the Civil War in the area of the Don Cossack Army” [5, p. 85]. A musical higher educational institution appeared in the city only during the second half of the 20th century (having been reorganized into a conservatory in 1992).

¹⁵ During the Soviet period (from 1924 to 1991) Yekaterinburg was renamed into Sverdlovsk, in honor of Yakov Sverdlov, a cohort of Vladimir Lenin.

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About the author:

Liudmila K. Shabalina, Ph.D. (Arts), Professor of the Music Theory Department, Urals State M. P. Mussorgsky Conservatory (620014, Yekaterinburg, Russia), **ORCID: 0000-0001-8547-0738**, lyudmila@convex.ru

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Об авторе:

Шабалина Людмила Константиновна, кандидат искусствоведения, профессор кафедры теории музыки, Уральская государственная консерватория им. М. П. Мусоргского (620014, г. Екатеринбург, Россия), **ORCID: 0000-0001-8547-0738**, lyudmila@convex.ru