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THE MUSICAL WELTANSCHAUUNG THROUGH THE PRISM OF RUSSIAN TEXTBOOKS ON MUSIC HISTORY*¹

Up to the present day the notion of the *musical Weltanschauung* has not been sufficiently explored in scholarly discourse, although it has often been used as a metaphor or a synonym for the “artistic picture of the world,” a “musical thesaurus,” the totality of all creative endeavors of some artist, art and musical thinking, music history and musical culture. At a first glance, the musical *Weltanschauung* is a projection for the more general notion, the artistic picture of the world. The specifics of this projection are related to the subject matter and features of its functioning in culture. Undoubtedly, even though each art projects its own picture of the world, which depends on the leading modality of this type of art and the system of technical approaches to modeling this secondary reality. Additionally, any type of art exists in a complex relationship with the historical, cultural, productive and technical practices, which render direct and indirect influences on forming and shaping all these pictures of the world.

As a result, three levels of comprehension the musical *Weltanschauung* can be delineated:

1. *Philosophic-historical* – the picture of the world in music culture;

2. *Artistic-technological* – the musical *Weltanschauung* as part of the artistic picture of the world.

3. *Practical-educational* – the musical *Weltanschauung* as the history of musical culture and as a school subject.

It is the last of these levels, as artificial as it might seem and as optional to perceive as it might be, which serves for Russian culture

as a nucleus for understanding all the other options of the musical *Weltanschauung*. This meaningfulness is formed by a number of objective factors:

– In Russia at the present time all musical education is highly professionalized (with a unique three-level system of preparing professional musicians);

– There exists a number of typical standards for musical education (general school, complementary education, and specialized education), including books and brochure-sized texts on these subjects;

– Ever since the Soviet times, the historical practice in Russian professional musical education has stipulated that this subject should be viewed – along with philosophy – as the main tool for forming “the right worldview” for students, future music lovers and professional musicians;

– The centralized position of Russian literature in Russian culture has made literature the most outstanding (in every sense) compared with all the other types of cultural endeavors, determining the trajectory of their development. Moreover, many musical genres are synthetic (for in particular, all vocal and theater music, as well as instrumental programs).

Since 2000 there has been a rapid increase observed of the quantity of publications on music history. This may be associated with the drastically changing society, which encourages (and often dictates) freedom of expression on any topics, and offers many different models of education, with significant economic and social stimuli to encourage professional success².

* Translation by Dr. Vladimir Orlov, edited by Dr. Anton Rovner.

The Musical Weltanschauung as a Subject of Music History

In modern Russian educational practice the discipline of music history, depending on the level of education, is subdivided into music literature (in elementary and secondary professional education) and music history (on the higher school level), although a large number of names and works are discussed on both levels. Nevertheless, *de jure* they are directed towards different specializations in humanities, and, consequently, carry different educational objectives. For example, music literature is more related to philology, and therefore music is used as a linguistic system, the elements of which must be studied to develop analytical, detailed thinking. Music history is a part of the history curriculum, which deals with historical, geographic and contextual processes, grouping the material along the space-time axis, and forming a general, abstract type of thinking with use of elements of modeling and reconstruction.

In modern practice there exists the tendency of changing the name of the subject of “Music Literature” at the elementary level simply to “Music” with added adjectives – Russian, from outside of Russia, national, European, modern. This change of the name of the course, primarily, helps the learner to concentrate more intensively on the subject, taking away all the additional associations for the students. On the other hand, there is a hidden attempt being constantly made to relate the subject of “music literature” with the subject of “music” in general education, in the context of the general target audience (school children in grades 1–7), and the status of complementary education (in children’s music schools (CMS)).

As a result, the contemporary model of this subject presents itself as follows: at the center there lies the general curricular field of “music” introduced to children in children’s music schools, followed by music literature in secondary professional education with a certain amount of music analysis and verbal skills, and then concluded by presenting general processes of musical culture at the college

level. In other words, the pupils progress from an emotionally integral overview, via detailed structural analysis to generalized classifications and theoretical models of processes.

However, this is a purely theoretical model; in the reality of education, the content of all educational literature (and, consequently, the subject itself) depends to a large degree on the individualities of the authors of the curricular textbooks. In addition, the subject of music history itself is quite specific, being endowed with

- Subjectivity, along with a large variety of sources which are mostly indirect (or rather had been such such, before the advent of sound recording, or, more precisely – video recording);

- Listening aberration, which depends on the historical context and the listener belonging to a certain subculture, including peculiar individual characteristic features;

- Lack of a common opinion on what music is (Is it something that sounds? Is it the listener’s receptivity? Is it some notated musical text?) and the criteria, which differentiate it from *non-music*;

- An equal status for the three participants in the musical process – the listener, the performer and the composer – each of whom may have a very different, often opposing, type of musical Weltanschauung;

- A co-existence in each musical composition of imminent music laws with certain projections of the respective historical and cultural epoch, and sometimes elements of the composer’s psychogram.

Moreover, the principal verbal character of the subject of music history creates for it a solid reputation of a translator from one language – music and the emotions caused by it, – into a different one – intellectual, verbal and non poetic. Usually, when discussing this process of “translation”, attention is drawn to the negative aspects: the inadequacy of style, the directness of content, the inability to understand the essence, and its excessiveness for receiving emotional pleasure.

Nevertheless, music history is the only fundamental subject in any curriculum that

is directed toward cultural reflection on musical phenomena and processes. This subject elucidates and helps build the virtual framework of the paradigm-related musical *Weltanschauung*, which comes to life and reveals its detailed components in the disciplines of musical performance.

Modern Russian musical education is currently in the process of transfer-search-transformation, when the paradigm-related musical *Weltanschauung* has not yet been established; it is replaced with a panorama of the individual paradigm-related musical *Weltanschauungs* of various authors of musical textbooks. But there is a general trend of moving from the traditional “old” paradigm-related musical *Weltanschauung* of the Soviet era – through the transformation of an “alien” Western paradigm-related musical *Weltanschauung* – to the emerging paradigm-related musical *Weltanschauung* of the 21st century.

The Soviet Musical *Weltanschauung* and its Current Transformations

The traditional musical *Weltanschauung* was formed in the 1920s under the ideological patronage of Anatoly Lunacharsky and the leadership of Boris Asafyev. As a paradigmatic event it was documented in college and school textbooks since the 1940s, and in children’s music schools – since the late 1960s. Its major characteristic features are as follows:

- A uniform approach to all individuals mentioned in music history books via uniform requirements and textbooks (there was only one textbook on this subject for each level of education);
- Unchanged views on music and historical processes during the course of several decades, which was demonstrated by the fact that the same texts were published over and over until the first changes were introduced in the 1980s;
- Moral and ethical appraisal of various events in music history throughout the textbooks as a justification for praising or criticizing a certain individual;

- Ignorance of lifespan psychology and disregard of the potential target audience: a high school textbook used the same vocabulary and syntax as a college-level textbook with its obvious slant toward scholarly discourse.

- Use of a large number of cliches and banalities with incorporation of elements of political rhetoric;

- A clearly ideological message in the interpretation of musical and historical events and processes, biographical facts and even musical compositions; as a result of which there arises the obvious slant towards mythology in music history;

- A Strict selection and ranking of names and events in the history of musical culture;

- Positioning of the text as a monographic work (the authors are presented impartial scholars, no examining questions or didactic elements may be present), the focus is entirely on the information;

- This paradigm-related musical *Weltanschauung* is based on a certain ideal derived from natural science, which is manifested in the sameness of cause-effect relationships with the one and only correct interpretation, with a simplified approach to complex and contradictory issues in the musical culture of the past;

- A lack of an interdisciplinary approach, a fear of comparisons, Eurocentrism, strong passeism (directedness solely towards examples from 19th century music).

This musical *Weltanschauung*, paradoxical as this may sound, turned out to be quite stable in contemporary educational practice. These textbooks are still being printed and used widely among teachers, pupils and students, thus still promoting the old Soviet-time musical *Weltanschauung* for those who were born after the collapse of the Soviet Union. There are two reasons for this:

1. *Objective (economic)*: The number of copies of these textbooks was so great that these books have been available in any library (even in villages and schools), and accessible to a large number of students;³

2. *Subjective (psychological)*: Almost all the teachers (especially those teaching in the secondary and higher education programs) were taught with these books; for them the “Soviet” musical Weltanschauung had become “a scale into the subconscious” (to use a metaphor by Alfred Schnittke).

Over the past six years the traditional musical Weltanschauung has been transformed along two main trajectories: extensive and intensive. The former is based on *space-time-related* approaches (historical and geographical issues), “new in old” (the deformation of the previously very static pantheon of composers), and “old in new” (an increased interest in church music). The latter is based on a system of viewpoints: *psychological and didactic* (issue-oriented description of content)⁴, an appeal to the perception of a certain age group and educational status, or *socio-cultural* issues (mass musical culture is perceived as a worthy topic for discussion in a music history course).

The most impressive element here is an expanded historical scale of all studied epochs, especially of Russian musical culture. For instance, pupils at children’s music schools now cover an eight-hundred-year period of music before the Glinka and Pushkin era – starting with the times of Kievan Rus. College-level music students, on the contrary, study Russian music from the mid-20th century up to the end of the 1990s.

No less impressive is the *expansion of geography* of the subject – across the European continent and worldwide. One textbook, written for music theorists at the Conservatory level, stands out from the rest. For the first time in Russian educational practice it covers a range of countries of the Americas: the US, Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, Mexico, and discusses the present-day trends in the music of Asia and North Africa.

Overall, the current musical Weltanschauung in Russian education today is acquiring its basic contours, focusing on *comprehensiveness* (theory and practice), *tolerance* (a broad representation of musical cultures outside of Europe, as well as the art of various ethnic and socio-cultural groups), *decentralization and homogeneity*

(when the history of musical culture is perceived as a broad range of artistic practices worthy of attention, and not merely a small number of isolated geniuses of the period); *orientation on culture* (music history is examined within the context of a holistic humanitarian culture); *new auditory strategies* (use of a bright new audio strategy by means of listening to CDs and individual creative practices).

Therefore, the current educational musical Weltanschauung is an *audio-oriented perspective*, i.e. the picture of the world of a contemporary young person with a dominant audio-oriented channel of perception, who represents the subculture of modern professional musicians. His or her musical Weltanschauung contains specimens of the intellectual avant-garde (individual compositions), and alternative music phenomena (music from outside of Europe, jazz, pop culture fragments), as well as popular pieces of classical music so greatly appreciated by all types of music fans, such as Mozart’s *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*, Vivaldi’s *Le quattro stagioni*, Chopin’s *Funeral March*, and Johann Strauss’s *An der schönen blauen Donau*.

Nevertheless, the influence of the Soviet musical Weltanschauung has been quite solid up to the present day. If children’s music schools and colleges are not limited to Soviet-era books, but are supplied with new varieties of musical texts literature texts⁵, in the case of universities the situation is very different. Most major university textbooks on music history are dated within the range between the 1960s and the early 1990s, and their new editions are usually direct reprints.

For example, *the figure of Alexander Glazunov in college-level textbooks today is represented by texts written in 1954 and the 1960s*: these are the chapters from the textbooks for conservatories written by *Y. V. Keldysh* and *N. V. Tumanina*. The composer’s description fits clearly in the ideology and spirit of that era. Glazunov is represented within the strict frameworks of the standard formulas of Stalinist rhetoric, which migrate from one field of inquiry into another: Glazunov is seen as one of the most renowned composers of the

turn of the century, who continued the Russian classical tradition in new historical settings [5, p. 48]. Glazunov is considered to be “a composer for the people, a patriot with a deep devotion to the Russian national character” [Ibid], which places the composer into the Soviet ideological standards of a builder of communism. Then the book turns to the notion of his “ideological limitations,” characteristic for the entire generation of the 1880s, unlike the representatives of the *Mighty Handful*. The textbook then proceeds to discuss Glazunov’s struggle against the decadent moods prevalent in Belyaev’s Circle [Ibid, p. 62], which is once again associated with the norms of the Soviet political rhetoric. In the context of the emerged Cold War, it is especially tricky to handle the problem of Glazunov’s departure abroad, and his refusal to return to Russia, making him, in a way, a *nevozvrashchenets* (an *émigré* for political reasons), a *refusenik*⁷. Keldysh follows the general rule of not even mentioning the fact of emigration. He ignores this period of the composer’s life and work. The book states that in 1928 Glazunov left the country “for health reasons.” Then, following the same template, the author mentions briefly that his life abroad was unhappy, and whatever he had composed back then was done out of necessity to make his ends meet [Ibid, p. 63].

Repeating Keldysh, Tumanina, who wrote her text in very different political conditions, nevertheless said: “Glazunov’s work is first and foremost characteristically national. His work has been inspired by Russian nature, <...> the glorious future of Russian people, <...> and that is where Glazunov is very similar to the composers of the *Mighty Handful*” [4, p. 17]. It is in this version of his biography that the composer’s musical creativity is presented as a source of socialist realism in music – the only recognized method of artistic expression in the works of Soviet composers⁸.

Today, instead of using a new textbook, still unwritten as of now, students are offered the option of “independent study,” based on the 10 volume series “History of Russian Music,” edited by Keldysh. The chapter on Glazunov is presented in Volume 9, in the section titled “Late

19th – Early 20th Century.” The volume was published in 1994, and the entry on Glazunov was once again written by Keldysh. The annotation to the entire series says that the work on music history reflects “the new trends in the discipline of history.” As a scholarly monographic work, the chapter revises the image of Glazunov in new historical and cultural conditions, the beginning of the post-Soviet era.

Glazunov has been declared a recognized successor of Rimsky-Korsakov’s traditions, an undisputed authoritative figure in the music of the complex times of the early 20th century. In this chapter for the first time the author mentions the tremendous influence of Wagner on Glazunov’s music [3, p. 219], and introduces the notion of the “academically conservative” trends in his work in the first third of the 20th century. Without mentioning any names or events, Keldysh makes the presupposition that these trends were in disagreement with the reforms in the Conservatory after the Bolshevik revolution of 1917, which presented the real reasons behind Glazunov’s departure abroad [Ibid, p. 223–226]. Then again, there is no reference to Glazunov’s life and work during his life abroad.

Surprisingly, the author’s arguments and his choice of words to describe the work of the composer demonstrate rudiments of the Soviet musical *Weltanschauung*. The general impression produced by the chapter is that the author has a very strong personal opinion of the object of his essay. It is especially evident in the style of the narrative about the composer, which is both subjective and psychological. For instance, when he stresses Glazunov’s intolerance of the music of young Stravinsky and Prokofiev, and especially of the music of the 1920s, Keldysh provides the following interpretation: “Such an attitude towards all new tendencies inevitably made Glazunov a creative loner, which would have a detrimental influence on his own composition” [Ibid, p. 224]. The emotional directness of tone is likewise characteristic for the analytical segments of the chapter. For instance, when discussing the symphonic fantasy “The Forest,” Keldysh states, without elucidating his claims,

that it is “disjoint in shape, ragged and tedious in content.” The influence of Wagner is given a very negative assessment, which becomes clear from the epithets being used in the text in reference to *The Sea* and the *Eastern Overture*: “with a pompous and cumbersome sound, yet lifeless” [Ibid, p. 233]. Further, in full compliance with the directives of socialist realism, the author contraposes the parameters of form and content in these works, saying that the former prevails over the latter” [Ibid]. Providing his description of the Seventh Symphony, Keldysh summarizes: “notwithstanding his great skill and inventiveness <...> his music, nevertheless, has a somewhat cerebral character; the excess of materials produces a motley impression, which contradicts the breadth and monumentality of his ideas” [Ibid, p. 242]. The reader is left wondering what the criteria for “non-cerebral” music are.

The introductory and closing paragraphs of this chapter define the already canonized image of Glazunov: “A student and disciple of Rimsky-Korsakov, an outstanding composer of the new Russian school of music, a progressive figure in musical and public affairs” [Ibid, p. 215], a staunch supporter of Russian art, a composer of the “transitional period,” “not an innovator” [Ibid, p. 274].

Undoubtedly, this collective work cannot be considered a textbook because of the great difference between a monographic work written by a group of authors and a textbook.

In the early 21st century, what should the greatly indispensable college-level textbook on music history be like, so that the student could use it to study the current scholarly approach to the examined issues. The publication of books, especially of college-level textbooks, has always been an important constituent part of educational and cultural policy for many reasons.

Firstly, unlike monographic works and articles, textbooks are obligatory for students to read, and therefore shape their musical picture of the world. What content it would be filled with and in what manner, what connections, epithets and names will be present there, – this is what will determine the professional profile of the

future professionals in music and choreography.

Secondly, if a monographic work or article presents the author’s perspective of concepts related to the art of music, and different articles and monographic works may very well enter into disputes with one another, textbooks present a very different case. They establish in themselves an officially recognized system, a point of reference which is perceived often a priori, without any proof or objection (especially in Russia, with our reverent attitude towards the printed word).

Thirdly, students of conservatories, unlike those in other areas of humanities, are for the most part not inclined to written or textual perception of information. For the most part, music students tend to perceive their world in an auditory manner. In these circumstances, a music history textbook transforms the nonverbal language of music into a verbal printed text, becoming almost the only mediator with the world of absolute interpretations and the author’s notions. It happens in the world where the only criterion is, at certain times, the subjective dichotomy between “I like” and “I don’t like.”

A contemporary textbook should be, first and foremost, the kind of source book that has no lacunae of content. For instance, the chapter on Glazunov in a future music textbook must contain a number of music history topics that are covered in academic discourse yet are not presented in higher education: Glazunov and the government (the monarchy and the Soviet regime), as well as Glazunov and the Russian émigré community; Glazunov’s musical style in the context of Western music of the second half of the 19th – early 20th century.

In its methodological approach, this text should not be a monographic work; instead it should be universal, combining familiar and practical types of overviews with issue-related topics and algorithmic approaches. Of course, in the present age of internet technologies it is highly desirable to make the utmost use of all these opportunities by means of electronic textbooks: to present more information (for example, in the didactic block), more visual materials (methodologically), and to be

perceived better psychologically.

It is a well known fact that our students possess a special cognitive and psychological personality structure, and it is difficult for them to study logical, algorithmic, abstract ideas and high volumes of written verbal information. Consequently, in order for the textbook to help the student master the course successfully, it should be ideally written by a team of motivated authors, including:

- a scholar, who is a recognized subject matter expert in this field;
- an experienced methodologist, university- or conservatory-level instructor who knows

how to present the material in the process of education;

- an instructional designer who loves academic music, preferably with a degree in music;
- a graduate student or graduate assistant, who has just recently been a student and who can provide feedback from the point of view of the future “consumer” of this intellectual product – the university or conservatory textbook.

And so, if it is as Karel Čapek had asserted, “the book must create the reader,” then the new textbook “must create the new type of student,” who, in his or her turn, will create the new musical and artistic notions of the 21st century.

NOTES

¹ Small fragments of the article in Russian were published in: [6]; Kupets L.A. Glazunov’s heritage in Russian textbooks for high schools (second half of XX – beginning of XXI century) // Bulletin of the Vaganova Ballet Academy. SPB., 2014. № 4 (33), pp. 77–80. The report on this subject was read in December 2015 at an International Conference in St. Petersburg University.

² See two large publication projects: 12 books of the “Styles, Composers, Epochs” by ROSMEN PRESS for the elementary school level and 5 series of ACADEMIA XXI books, published by the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation and the Federal Agency for the conservatory level.

³ Textbooks for children’s music schools edited by T. V. Popova (9th ed., published in 1989) were printed in runs of 100,000 copies each, and while other textbooks

published in the 2000s – is no more than 5-10 thousand copies.

⁴ The Problem of Musical Post-Modernism [2] – for universities, Issues of Romanticism and Creative Psychology [7] – for children’s music schools and Colleges.

⁵ generally Russian.

⁶ especially from other countries.

⁷ ‘Defector law’, introduced in Soviet legislation in 1929, had a retroactive force (which means it also affected those who departed before that date) and practically accused these people of treason.

⁸ For a definition of socialist realism, see: издание «Muzykal’nyi slovar’ Grova / pod redaktsiyey L.O. Akopyana. M. Praktika 2001 s. 812 [Grove’s Musical Dictionary / edited by L.O. Akopyan. Moscow. Praktika. 2001. p. 812].

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Музыкальная картина мира

сквозь призму отечественных учебников по истории музыки

В статье анализируется отражение музыковедческой научной парадигмы в российском музыкальном образовании. Вводится понятие «музыкальной картины мира» (МКМ) как проекции художественной картины мира. Имея несколько уровней, МКМ рассматривается здесь как история музыкальной культуры, создаваемая в российских учебных изданиях.

Основной раздел посвящён исследованию «советской» МКМ и её современных трансформаций. Указываются основные признаки данной МКМ, которая конструируется ещё в 1920-х и закрепляется в учебниках уже с 1940-х гг. Фиксируется историческая «живучесть» модели вплоть до начала XXI века по ряду объективно-экономических и субъективно-психологических причин.

Современная МКМ в России видится как явление становящееся и неупорядоченное, в котором одновременно присутствуют как устойчивые элементы «советской» МКМ, так и тренды западной науки. Ситуация демонстрируется на примере интерпретации личности и творчества одной из влиятельнейших музыкальных фигур в России конца XIX – первой трети XX века – А. К. Глазунова.

Ключевые слова: российское музыкальное образование, учебники истории музыки, консерватория, А. К. Глазунов, музыкальная картина мира

The Musical Weltanschauung

through the Prism of Russian Textbooks on Music History

The article analyzes the reflection of the musicological scholarly paradigm on Russian musical education. It brings in the concept of “musical picture of the world” (MPW) as a projection of the artistic picture of the world. Being endowed with several levels, the MPW is examined here as the history of musical culture created in Russian tutorial editions.

The main section of the article is devoted to research of the “Soviet” MPW and its present-day transformations. Indications are given of the chief characteristics of this present MPW, which was constructed already in the 1920s and consolidated itself in textbooks already in the 1940s. Record is made of the historical “durability” of the model all the way up to the beginning of the 21st century as the result of objective economical and subjective psychological reasons.

The present-day MPW in Russia is perceived as a phenomenon existing at a formative and disordered stage, which contains the simultaneous presence of both the stable elements of the “Soviet” MPW and the trends of Western scholarship. The situation is demonstrated on the example of interpretation of the personality and the musical oeuvres of one of the most influential musical figures in Russia of the late 19th century and the first third of the 20th century – Alexander Glazunov.

Keywords: Russian musical education, textbooks on music history, conservatory, Alexander Glazunov, musical picture of the world

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