

Formation of Russian Musicology from Sacchetti to Asafyev, 1885-1931

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Abstract

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This study explores Russian thought about music in thirty-five years leading up to the establishment in 1921 of the music research department at the Institute for Art History in St Petersburg, generally considered the key event in the institutionalization of musicology as a scholarly discipline, and for a decade after that. Drawing on sources that include newspapers and articles across half a century and hitherto little-known archival materials, such as transcripts of meetings, official resolutions, and personal correspondence, I show how Russian musicology grew up in dialogue with the broader intellectual developments of the period. The temporal framework of this study bridges the “revolutionary divide,” dismantling the persistent notion of 1917 as the zero hour in the history of Russian and Soviet culture. Where existing studies have tended to conceptualize writing about music in the early Soviet era either as the voluntary acceptance of ideological directives from the State or as the total ideological crackdown on free scholarly thought, my findings reveal a volatile two-way relationship between the State and individual scholars, in which musicologists themselves exhibited a nuanced range of attitudes toward the centralized ideology and could be active agents of the sweeping ideological change.

Chapters 1 and 5 deal with institutions and the thorny quest to legitimize musicology as an academic profession; Chapters 2, 3, and 4 focus on the vibrant discourse on the study of music that appeared in the press. In its earliest stage, the institutionalization of musicology was slowed by the relentless focus of the music conservatories on the social legitimization of the profession of a musician, which left no space for the advocacy of the professional scholar. During this same early period, musicological thought was being forged in the debates in the popular press over the competing claims of positivism and idealism. Where positivism upheld the idea that music scholarship should concern itself with the scientific search for universal laws governing both the historical development of music and its inner workings, the idealist camp favored the understanding of music as an ineffable art, out of reach of the rational mind.

In Chapter 1 I analyze Nikolai Findeisen’s criticism of the conservatory professor Liveriy Sacchetti, an expert in European music historiography and aesthetics, and Findeisen’s nationalist vision for musicology, which was gaining momentum in the two pre-revolutionary decades. Chapter 2 presents a longitudinal study of the Russian reception of Eduard Hanslick’s influential treatise *On the Musically Beautiful*, which reveals two ideological shifts, first to positivism, then away from it. Chapter 3 concerns itself with an example of this positivist influx and the strong idealist opposition it elicited in certain avant-garde artistic circles of the 1910s: Emily Medtner’s

criticism of Nadezhda Bryusova's work, rife with anti-modernism, racial anxiety, and fear of the prescriptive ambitions of science. Chapter 4 looks at the same ideological clash from a different perspective. Members of the Scriabin Society, offended by the critical stance the music critic Leonid Sabaneyev took in his monograph on the recently deceased composer, attempted to besmirch his reputation by casting him as a clueless rationalist who could not approach the true meaning of Scriabin's music. Chapter 5 examines the increasing ideological pressure that The People's Commissariat for Education (Narkompros) put on the musicologists at the Russian Institute of Art History in the late 1920s, steeped in the infamous rhetoric of "formalism" that later informed the public denunciations of Prokofiev and Shostakovich. My focus on the personal communications between Boris Asafyev and Alexey Finagin reveals that adapting one's convictions to the changing ideological climate often came at the cost of personal relationships.

To my teachers

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Introduction

[H]e who approaches the great enigma should know to take his sandals off his feet, for the place where he is standing is holy ground; he should feel the greatness of the spirit, with which he communes, and honor the highest, the inscrutable and the unfathomable in it – with silence. But what to say about those presumptuous accounts that attempt to empty the ocean with a spoon; that by mundane means as the so-called psychological analysis of the manifestation of genius ... try to show to the public that the Fair Lady (do you remember Blok's *The Fairground Booth*?) has a "cardboard head"? Scriabin's interpreter produces a stick figure, then pulls, bends, and stretches it this way and that, demonstrating one after another a pianist of genius and a failed symphonist, – a dandy, possessed by diabolic snobbery, – a bad poet of the amateur kind, a deranged false prophet – an Übermensch from Bedlam, – and the gaping crowd applauds the simplicity and unity of the critical-biographic conception, when the conveniently folded puppet disappears in his world-encompassing pocket until the next demonstration. It was Goethe's Mephistopheles who taught the effect of such simplified demonstrations to an admiring apprentice:

The first was so, the second so,
And hence the third and fourth was so.¹

This impassioned rant was penned on May 12, 1916 by the Symbolist poet Vyacheslav Ivanov, a year after the death of the composer Alexander Scriabin. It was aimed, broadly, against all "exhaustive judgment and final assessments, claiming to provide complete understanding and decisive verdicts [that] already resounded over [Scriabin's] fresh grave,"² and in particular against the music critic Leonid Sabaneyev's recently published monograph *Scriabin*.³ Perceived as rationalistic, Sabaneyev's approach was unacceptable to the Symbolists, whose ambition was to depart "from reality toward a higher reality," and was taken by Scriabin's admirers as an

¹ [П]риближающийся к великой загадке [должен уметь] снимать обувь с ног своих на месте святе, чувствовать величие духа, с которым он как бы вступает в беседу, и чтить высшее, непостижимое и непроницаемое в нем – безмолвием. Но что сказать о самонадеянных характеристиках, пытающихся вычерпать ковшем море и обиходными средствами так называемого психологического анализа гениальных манифестаций (которые в этой плоскости неизбежно обличатся, как проявления болезненности) воочию показать публике, что у Прекрасной Дамы (Вы помните «Балаганчик» Блока?) – «картонное темечко»? Истолкователь Скрябина вынимает схематическую фигурку на шалнирах, дергает, растягивает и вытягивает ее так и сяк, последовательно демонстрируя гениального пианиста и неудачного симфониста, - dandy, одержимого дьяволическим снобизмом, - плохого поэта из любителей, бесноватого лжепророка, - сверхчеловека из Бэдлама, - а глазееющая толпа рукоплещет простоте и единству критико-биографической концепции, когда удобно сложенная фигурка прячется до следующей демонстрации в мирообъемлющий карман. Эффекту таких упрощенных демонстраций поучает восхищенного ученика гетевский Мефистофель:

Вот это – так, и это – так.

А потому и это – так.

Izvestiya Petrogradskogo Skryabinskogo Obshchestva, [Proceedings of Petrograd Scriabin Society], vol. 2 (Petrograd: T-vo R. Golike i Vilborg, 1917), 16-17. Quotation from Faust is given in Walter Kaufmann's translation: Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Walter Arnold Kaufmann, *Goethe's Faust: the original German and a new translation and introduction* (New York: Anchor Books, 1989).

² [У]же раздаются над свежеею могилой притязающие на полноту постижения и окончательность выводов общие суждения, решающие приговоры. *Izvestiya*, 2, 16.

³ Leonid Sabaneyev, *Scriabin* (Moscow: Skorpion, 1916).

affront to the Christ-like image of the recently deceased composer-theosoph.

In Ivanov's opinion, efforts to comprehend music in a rational way and describe it verbally amounted to nothing more than an exercise in futility, as it was impossible to a non-artistic mind to penetrate the thought process of an artist of genius. Trying to spell out in words the ineffable essence of music amounted to its profanation. To champion his cause against such efforts, Ivanov summoned the enduring Romantic tropes of primacy of feeling over reason and of misunderstood genius, and packed his diatribe with references to Aleksandr Blok, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Mikhail Lermontov.

The two glaringly contrasting images: the initial rapturous description of art as a means for mystical communion on the one hand, the invocation of the lowly fairground puppet theater with its typical freak show, which epitomized the profane, on the other, conveyed just how inadequate Ivanov deemed Sabaneyev's book to be. This juxtaposition is also suggestive of the contemporary conflict between those who promoted Symbolist aesthetics, among them Ivanov, and the nascent avant-garde. Blok's *The Fairground Booth* satirized Symbolism, marking his own departure from the movement:

Mocking the quasi-religious ideals of Ivanov's Symbolist theater ... Blok mobilized the masquerade topos, a master trope of Symbolism, to satirize the movement's obsessive interest in ambiguity and enigma, as well as its feigned gravitas and mystical pretensions. ... Blok's play capitalizes on the *balagan's* affinity for estranging acts and performance surrogates (puppets, marionettes), specifically in the cardboard Colombina, in order to create a foil for the Mystic-Symbolists' obsessive focus on the spiritual and ineffable.⁴

In Blok's play the beautiful woman, an embodiment of the eternal feminine, who arrives at a gathering of mystics and whom they mistake for Death herself, is sardonically revealed to be a fake cardboard figure. Ivanov used Blok's caricature as a metaphor for the travesty performed by critics, whose analyses inevitably end up describing the surrogate instead of the essence. That such simplifications were not only pointless, but also morally reprehensible, became clear to the reader of Ivanov's article, when he introduced a quotation from the scene in *Faust's* study, where Mephistopheles offers a "sarcastic explanation of the methods and fields of study at a university"⁵ to an incoming student. Appealing to Goethe's authority showed that Ivanov indeed considered Sabaneyev a potent adversary, someone against whom he needed to launch his heaviest missile, the creator of *Faust* holding pride of place in Ivanov's artistic pantheon.⁶ Next Ivanov mocked German critics, who explained Nietzsche's philosophy through the lens of his mental illness; and finally he quoted from Lermontov's *The Prophet* – a quintessential portrayal of a castaway artist, and a milestone in Russian poetry. Thus perched on the shoulders of giants, Ivanov summed up:

The stubborn ambition to research all the mysteries of the human soul and measure all its

⁴ Colleen McQuillen, "From The Fairground Booth to Futurism: The Sartorial and Material Estrangement of Masquerade," *The Russian Review* 71, no. 3 (2012): 418.

⁵ Goethe and Kaufmann, *Faust*, 57-58.

⁶ Vyacheslav Ivanov, "Gyote na rubezhe dvukh stoletiy," in *Sobraniye sochineniy*, vol. IV (Brussels: Foyer Oriental Chrétien, 1987).

depths is ridiculous enough; but it is even more ridiculous when we speak of the most complex soul, a soul of a genius who undoubtedly ventured ahead of his time. When the measurements are given in exact numbers and explanations are simplified to the extreme, [Sabaneyev's] book loses all credit in the eyes of a thoughtful reader.⁷

All in all, that Ivanov drew on such a heavy artillery of allusions and symbolism to critique Sabaneyev's book is a testimony to how high the stakes were in the conflict around *Scriabin*. For this reason this conflict presents a fascinating case study for an investigation into debates concerning knowledge on music in Russia in the early twentieth century. A close reading of the virulent criticism incurred by Sabaneyev's monograph is offered in Chapter 4 of this dissertation. This and other conflicts illustrative of the intellectual climate of the immediate pre-revolutionary decades provide the bulk of the project's material.

Positioned at the intersection of musicology and the history of scholarship, this study explores Russian thought on music from the 1880s to the end of 1920s. It thus spans the four decades which led to the institutionalization of musicology as a scholarly discipline in 1921 and the decade that followed. The turn of the twentieth century in Russia saw the expansion of writing on music; it was a time of rapid assimilation of European historiography, aesthetics and philosophy, rethought and reacted against in a nationalistic vein. Caught in the midst of many disparate influences, the four pre-revolutionary decades were crucial in shaping what music scholarship would become in Russia. No study has yet untangled the conflicting viewpoints of the fin-de-siècle Russian debates on music and traced them back to their many sources. However, without understanding this body of knowledge one cannot hope to fully comprehend what the brave new Soviet musicology built upon, and against what it reacted.

Frameworks and claims

This dissertation is structured around two intersecting sets of issues. The first deals with the thorny quest to legitimize musicology as an academic profession. The early signs of its nascent disciplinary acceptance date back to Liveryi Sacchetti's courses (including a specialized music history course introduced in 1885) which transformed the curriculum at the St. Petersburg Conservatory and made possible his unprecedented promotion to a professorial position in music aesthetics and history in 1886. The quest for the establishment of musicology as a discipline reached its goal only with the advent of the new social order, and at a different type of institution: specifically, when the Institute of Art History in St. Petersburg was reorganized into a research hub in 1921. What ideological beliefs needed to be in place in order for these institutional initiatives to take place in the 1880s and in the 1920s; why approaches to music studies in different institutional contexts (conservatories and research institutes) were opposed to each other; how these institutions dealt with the nationalist imperative to transform the borrowed European bodies of knowledge and research approaches into a distinctly Russian discipline; and what kind of dynamics developed between the musicologists' professional agendas and the Soviet hands-on approach to controlling scholarly community – these are the issues explored in the first and fifth chapters, which provide this study with its frame. These chapters are primarily

⁷ Смешно, вообще, упрямое желание изследить все тайники человеческой души и измерить все ее глубины; сугубо смешно, когда речь идет о душе сложнейшей, о душе гения, явно опередившего современность. Когда же измерения глубин представлены в точных цифрах и объяснения доведены до чрезвычайного упрощения, то книга в глазах мыслящего читателя теряет всякий кредит. *Izvestiya*, 2, 18.

based on archival records of the institutions in question as well as publications emanating from them.

The chapters between them examine the viewpoints articulated in periodicals and monographs that were published outside of music institutions and were only tangentially connected to them. Whether music should be a legitimate subject of humanistic inquiry; whether it could and should be comprehended rationally; who had the aptitude and competence to study it; and what methods, skills, and expertise they should possess – these questions constituted a prominent thread in Russian music criticism in the four decades before the revolution, and set the stage for the institutionalization of musicological practice in the early Soviet period.

I organize my dissertation around the following claims:

- 1) The institutionalization of the budding discipline of musicology in Russia was stalled for four decades because the urgent objective of Russian conservatories – the social legitimization of the profession of a musician — left no space for the advocacy of the professional scholar as well. Music theory and history were understood as strictly practical subjects, designed to educate a well-rounded composer or performer. Furthermore, the clearly Western European orientation of the Russian conservatories was unpopular in the intellectual climate of growing nationalism. For these reasons, the first Soviet musicological research institute – the Music Department at the Institute of Art History in St. Petersburg (1921-1931)—positioned itself in opposition to the conservatories. Unlike the conservatories, the Institute conceived of musicology as a rigorous scholarly undertaking and musicologists as rightful members of the scientific community.
- 2) Therefore, before the revolution the standards, methodology and philosophical foundations of the discipline were being developed outside of major institutions, mainly in publications about music in the public press. This press discourse was caught in the crossfire between positivism and idealism, and their respective proponents sometimes waged a veritable war against each other.
- 3) Late nineteenth-century Russian positivism was of highly prescriptive and ideological nature. By placing science at the top of the hierarchy of human pursuits and investing it with the highest possible authority, proponents of positivist ideology thus endowed their belief system with scientific prestige and in turn engendered its pervasive emulation, appropriation and inevitable distortion all across Western Europe and far beyond. However distorted, such emulation was of particular importance to emergent fields like music and literary scholarship, which were striving for institutional recognition.
- 4) While it is possible to trace the ubiquitous repercussions of positivism and idealism back to some of their sources, allegiances to these two camps were rarely based on a thorough knowledge of the philosophical sources. Rather, these precepts were disseminated by word of mouth that traveled through familial and professional genealogies as much as through print media.
- 5) These genealogies were largely responsible for continuity between pre- and post-revolutionary periods. Many of the ideas and scholarly methods that were in circulation within the early Soviet political and institutional contexts were already established before the revolution.

Terminology

This intellectual history is defined by the relationship between the rational and intuitive modes of knowledge about music that music critics and scholars promoted at the turn of the twentieth century. The philosophical framework of Chapters 2, 3, and 4 is, therefore, the opposition between (and in many cases confluence of) positivism and idealism. Rather than denoting

specific philosophical schools, I use these terms in the broad sense, as umbrella concepts for many different outlooks, which describe the two core ideas that underlay much of the thinking on music in the period in question.

By positivism I mean the idea that music scholarship should concern itself with the search for universal laws that govern both the historical development of music (and of art and society in general) and music's inner workings. This general idea often gave rise to the following subideas: first, that theoretically determined laws should have predictive and prescriptive power over the practice of music and, second, that such a search should be carried out with the help of the methods and rigor of the natural sciences, to whose status the humanistic disciplines should aspire. For those who advocated such a scientific study of music, it went without saying that rationality should be the primary mode of cognition.

Proponents of the idealist understanding of music, by contrast, subscribed to the evergreen Romantic notion of the ineffable. According to the nineteenth-century Romantic hierarchy of the arts, music was the highest of all the arts because of its unrivaled ability to channel divine revelation. The idea that music – the art least bound by representation of earthly reality — was able to move beyond mundane and tap into truer and higher planes of existence remained as relevant for Symbolism as it had been for Romanticism. Even more relevant was the Symbolist imperative to reach this higher reality through one's creative work, as Vyacheslav Ivanov's maxim *a realibus ad realiora* demonstrates. Such a higher plane of being was well out of reach of the rational mind, and could be glimpsed only intuitively. Consequently, writers who upheld such convictions frequently inveighed against the use of rational faculties for understanding music, and declared the essence of music to be impenetrable to the human mind. Furthermore, they deemed people who were not creative artists (and therefore unable to catch a glimpse of the ineffable) to be incapable of comprehending a composer's design. The idea that a critic could dictate terms to a composer was an abomination to them, and was often condemned as arrogant and sacrilegious.

These two broad categories drew from many wells of nineteenth-century thought, and it is nearly impossible to identify all of them. In these pages I attempt to establish some correlations between specific manifestations of these beliefs in Russian music criticism at the turn of the twentieth century and in the works of (mostly) European writers, whose thought shaped the Russian intellectual discourse of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The belief that societies develop according to teleological laws, which are qualitatively no different from the laws of nature and can be uncovered by methods similar to those used in natural sciences, and that every society inevitably progresses through three intellectual stages (theological, metaphysical, and positivist) was most famously formulated in Auguste Comte's writings in the mid-nineteenth century. This belief has constituted a powerful agenda for the development of the humanities ever since. In Russia, Comte's ideas were broadcast by writers such as Vladimir Lesevich, who published his take on Comte's philosophy as early as 1869 in the influential periodical *Otechestvenniye zapiski*;⁸ these ideas were crucial for the formation of Russian sociology. More importantly, modifications of these precepts reached the Russian reader via the works of such writers as Hippolyte Taine and Herbert Spencer, who were not associated with positivist traditions as such and were known for criticizing Comte's philosophy, but who

⁸⁸ Vladimir Lesevich, "Filosofiya istorii na nauchnoy pochve," [Philosophy of History on the Scientific Grounds.] *Otechestvenniye zapiski*, no. 1 (1869); Vladimir Lesevich, "Pozitivizm posle Konta," [Positivism after Comte.] *Otechestvenniye zapiski*, no. 4 (1869).

nevertheless held firmly to a similar deterministic outlook.

Likewise, many brands of idealism (particularly German ones) fed into Russian nineteenth-century discourse on music via various channels. Of the German Idealist philosophers, Friedrich Schelling had a particularly robust network of Russian contacts. According to Pyotr Rezvikh, Schelling's interactions with Russian intellectuals (more than 70 people in total) spanned almost his entire career – from 1800 until the end of the 1840s. Schelling's Russian contacts reflected the versatility of his intellectual interests: he communicated not only with philosophers, but also with doctors, scientists, scholars, and other prominent figures such as the Minister of Education Sergey Uvarov, the poet Fyodor Tyutchev, and the composer Mikhail Viyegorsky. His Russian correspondents hailed not only from Moscow and St. Petersburg but also from smaller university cities like Kharkiv.⁹

Prominent Slavophile thinkers such as the Kireyevsky brothers attended Schelling's lectures in Munich and were deeply influenced by his ideas. The most attractive aspect of Schelling's thinking for Slavophilism were the Schelling's efforts to find a common ground between reason and revelation. Laura Engelstein explains that Slavophiles aspired to the ideal of personal wholeness, the key element of Russian Orthodoxy. Such wholeness could only be achieved if a balance was struck between the spiritual and rational faculties of the mind, in which the logical mind could not overshadow intuitive sensibilities. One of the main theorists of Slavophilism, Ivan Kireyevsky, criticized Western philosophy for giving pride of place to rationality, which led to a disjointed consciousness. Thus, he believed that "Schelling's great contribution ... was to have recognized the inadequacy of rational cognition as the path to truth and to have adopted the goal of reconciling reason and revelation."¹⁰ One of the central concepts of Schelling's *Naturphilosophie*, the idea that a pervasive energy binds together the universe – *Weltseele*, or world soul – became a model for the foundational Russian religious notion of *sobornost'* (collectivity).

This sketch of the dichotomy between positivism and idealism should not be taken to indicate that there was a clear boundary between these sets of convictions. In actuality, these ideas coexisted, and were indeed to a great extent two sides of the same coin: both were concerned with the search for universals, be they rationally comprehensible scientific laws or intuitively communicated divine revelations. However, the terminological opposition adopted here reflects the conflicts between people of positivist and idealist leanings. The material on which this study is based suggests that this binary was present in the minds of the writers themselves, since they issued militant statements against each other in the name of scientific progress or in passionate defense of music's ineffability.

Most of the authors discussed here did not identify themselves as positivists, idealists, or followers of particular philosophers. Moreover, the overwhelming majority did not cite their sources at all, which makes the task of establishing the provenance of their ideas all the more challenging. When possible, I also point out personal and professional genealogies along which ideas might have reached these writers.

Furthermore, by using these labels I do not mean to suggest that they appeared in the

⁹ For more information, as well as analysis of methodological problems of studying Schelling's reception in Russia see: Pyotr Rezvikh, "F.W.J. Schelling v dialoge s rossiyskimi intellektualami " [F.W.J. Schelling in dialogue with Russian intellectuals.] *Novoye literaturnoye obozreniye*, no. 91 (2008).

¹⁰ Laura Engelstein, *Slavophile Empire: Imperial Russia's Illiberal Path* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), 133.

original texts. For instance, despite the fact that positivist precepts were bread and butter for the early Soviet musicologists such as Boris Asafyev, Alexey Finagin and Semyon Ginzburg, these authors never appealed to Comte's authority and never called their work "positivist." However, they did aspire to ideals of scientific rigor in the study of music, which by that time had become firmly entrenched in Russian discourse on music. The term "positivism" fell out of favor with the Soviet authorities following Vladimir Lenin's work *Materialism and Empiriocriticism*, which became foundational for the creation of Soviet ideology.¹¹ Likewise, Asafyev formulated his seminal theory of intonation, which included ample elements of idealist philosophies, in a moment when the word "idealism" had become anathema in the Soviet state. In an intellectual climate increasingly dominated by official rhetoric it was possible (up to a point) to rely on both positivist and idealist precepts, as long as they were packaged in ideologically acceptable terms. Therefore, in this dissertation the terms "positivist" and "idealist" denote conceptual frameworks that were used, but not necessarily acknowledged.

Another terminological issue that demands clarification is the distinction between the terms "science" and "scholarship." When referring to present day research, I use the terms "science" and "scholarship" in their common meaning. However, from the late seventeenth century onwards the Russian word "nauka" has had a broader meaning which is comparable to that of the German word "Wissenschaft," in so far as both words encompass notions of science and scholarship.¹² When relating ideas from the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century Russian sources, I often found the word "science" to be a more exact equivalent of the word "nauka," even when these sources dealt with music studies. After all, this was what most of the authors meant by studying music, in accordance with the positivist spirit: they considered themselves to be studying it scientifically, by discovering its immutable laws and applying methods from the natural sciences. This was also what people meant when they protested against scientific inquiry into the realm of art. Yet not all cases are clear-cut. When the sources did not contain explicit or implicit advocacy for scientific methods, but the authors identified as scholars, as evidenced by their institutional affiliations and/or their emerging sense of professional membership (as was the case for Liveriy Sacchetti and Nikolai Findeisen, for instance), I used the word "scholarship," as distinct from "music criticism." Since the emphasis in the title of this dissertation is on "formation" rather than on "musicology" per se, and since the majority of sources for this project cannot be called musicological or scholarly in the current sense of these words, such terminological gray areas are inevitable.

When considering music scholarship of the 1920s, when musicology emerged in Russia as an institutionalized discipline more or less as we know it today, I use the word "musicology" in its present-day meaning. Still, it is worth noting that this is a conflation of two interchangeable Russian terms *muzikoznaniye* (widespread in the 1920s) and *muzikovedeniye* (commonly used now). Both were used by Asafyev and his colleagues to mean "musicology," understood as a

¹¹ Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, *Materializm i empiriocrititsizm. Kriticheskiye zametki ob odnoi reaktsionnoy filosofii* [Materialism and Empiriocriticism. Critical Comments on a Reactionary Philosophy] (Moscow: Zveno, 1909). However, official early Soviet documents on education and science often insisted on the necessity of "positive knowledge" ("позитивное знание" или "позитивная наука")

¹² Alexander Vucinich attributes such a meaning to Leibniz's influence, who corresponded with Peter the Great: "Leibniz's influence was to a considerable extent responsible for the fact that the Russian word *nauka* (science) acquired the broad meaning of the German *Wissenschaft*, which includes history and philosophy as well as the natural and social sciences." Alexander Vucinich, *Science in Russian Culture: 1861-1917* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1970), 47.

rigorous scholarly, and in many instances a veritably scientific, undertaking: the Music Department at the Institute of Art History was, for instance, the rightful heir of the positivist quests of the preceding decades (there was an acoustics lab at the Institute, while forays into the realms of mathematics, physics, and Pavlovian psychophysiology were common).

Note on translation

All translations are my own unless otherwise stated. In the Russian originals (given in the footnotes), I have modernized pre-revolutionary orthography and standardized spelling and punctuation according to contemporary rules for the sake of readability. In some cases, when the Russian originals are abridged or paraphrased in the main text, the Russian text is nevertheless given in full in the footnotes. The system of transliteration adopted here is the one used in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, except for the transliteration of names. Surnames of first- and second-generation Russian immigrants, such as Findeisen and Sacchetti, are left in their original form, according to the spelling the authors used when corresponding with their Western European colleagues.

Chapter overview

The narrative of this study is one of continuity. It belongs to the recent historiographic trend in the study of the revolutionary period in Russian music culture, which undermines the widespread understanding (both in Russian and Anglophone historiography) of the revolution as a zero hour.¹³ My research offers a view of the revolutionary epoch, its political turmoil and intellectual ferment, as experienced by individuals who did not shed their educational background and identities overnight. To this end it presents an investigation into the prerevolutionary modes of thought in which early Soviet scholars were nurtured.

The seeds of Soviet musicological discourse were planted long before the revolution. In Chapter 2 I analyze the ample resonance that Hanslick's *On the Musically Beautiful* enjoyed in Russia over the course of five decades. Tracing gradually changing opinions about a single text in the Russian musical press, I identify a late nineteenth-century shift to positivism, and in turn an idealist backlash to positivism in the early twentieth century. The mid-1880s witnessed the advent of a new generation of writers who advocated applying the methods of natural sciences to the study of music in order to discover its immutable laws, and who were well-versed in European positivist literature. Despite the political and intellectual stagnation of the 1880s, these writers' formative years coincided with the two decades in which science and civil liberties triumphed in Russia (1860s-1870s). This "golden age" fostered the belief that scientific progress spurred progress in politics, thus conflating revolutionary and positivist discourses. Therefore, the Nihilist and Populist philosophers went to great lengths to promote an appreciation of science among the general public. The generational identification with scientific philosophy brought about the later positivist turn in the humanities. However, that unqualified belief in the power and morality of science faltered in the 1890s, and a surge of mystique-oriented artistic movements precipitated an idealist shift in music criticism in the early twentieth century. Relishing the idealist understanding of music as the only art capable of expressing the ineffable, and thus as an approximation of the Kantian noumenal world, many critics revolted against the idea that music could be comprehended rationally. The standoff between positivist scholars and the writers who defended irrational aesthetic sensibilities led to violent clashes, the ideological

¹³ See examples of studies that bridge this divide below in the literature review.

implications of which I examine in detail. Two examples of this anti-scientific backlash provide the material for individual case studies in Chapter 3 and 4.

The theory of symmetrical modes conceptualized as universal musical laws was forged in the 1900s by Boleslav Yavorsky and Nadezhda Bryusova (the poet Valery Bryusov's sister), who enthusiastically embraced the scientific spirit.¹⁴ Chapter 3 concerns itself with this prime example of the positivist influx and the strong idealist opposition it elicited in certain avant-garde artistic circles of the 1910s. The conflict was exemplified in the denunciation of Nadezhda Bryusova's talk "Science of music, its historical development and contemporary state"¹⁵ by the music critic Emiliy Medtner. His reply to Bryusova's speech was rife with anti-modernism, racial anxiety, and Benjaminian fear of the prescriptive ambitions of science, which Medtner thought would rob the creative process of its authenticity. The unsympathetic portrayal of Bryusova in the diaries of Medtner's friend, Symbolist poet Andrey Bely, illustrates the contempt for music scholars that was flourishing in Russian artistic circles in the years before 1917.

Chapter 4 looks at the same ideological clash, but from a different perspective. While Bryusova's talk emphatically advocated revamping the study of music into a hard science, Leonid Sabaneyev's book on Scriabin did nothing of the sort. Rather, embracing many esoteric and idealist precepts (including the concept of *sobornost'*), it espoused a critical attitude to some aspects of Scriabin's creative career (such as his orchestration and poetic skills). Such an attitude was unacceptable to Scriabin's friends and admirers, who founded a veritable cult around the composer. Relying on the widespread negative perception of music scholarship, they attempted to besmirch Sabaneyev's reputation by casting him as a clueless rationalist who could not approach the true meaning of Scriabin's music.

As mentioned above, the outer chapters explore institutional contexts of music studies in the 1880s and 1920s respectively. The widespread perception that Russian scholars should be primarily concerned with the study of Russian music was one of the reasons why the European-oriented St. Petersburg Conservatory proved an infertile ground for nurturing the nascent discipline. In Chapter 1 I analyze Nikolai Findeisen's criticism of the conservatory professor Liveriy Sacchetti, an expert in European music historiography and aesthetics. Findeisen's nationalist vision for musicology gained momentum in the two pre-revolutionary decades (through the work of Bryusova and Yavorsky, among others) until Asafyev's Music Department claimed outright that the Department's research priority was to study Russian music before everything else. Thus, nationalism factored both into the failure of the conservatory model of musicology and the (temporary) success of the humanistic model, developed at the Institute of Art History some forty years later.

Chapter 5 examines communications between The People's Commissariat for Education (Narkompros) and the Russian Institute of Art History in the 1920s. Inspired by a traditional association between scientific and political progress, as fostered in Russia since the 1860s, the first generation of musicologists at the Institute sincerely believed in the Soviet ideals of equality and socially responsible scholarship. Tacitly relying on both the positivist and idealist precepts they had inherited from pre-revolutionary music studies, these scholars willingly developed

¹⁴ This theory was later appropriated by the "founding father" of Soviet musicology Boris Asafyev, who in the 1920s was in the vanguard of the Soviet quest to establish a rigorous discipline of music scholarship.

¹⁵ Nadezhda Yakovlevna Bryusova, "Nauka o muzike, eya istoricheskiye puti i sovremennoye sostoyaniye. Doklad, pročitannyy v Obshchestve Svobodnoy Estetiki 11 noyabrya 1909 g.," [Science of music, its historical development and present state. A talk given in the Society of Free Aesthetics on 11 November 1909.] *Vesī*, no. 11-12 (1909).

Marxist methodologies, which resulted in thoughtful and versatile research. Up to mid-1920s their endeavors were sanctioned by the State, which did not yet have the wherewithal to meddle in the affairs of the scientific community. However, these musicologists' interpretation of Marxism differed from that of the State, which relied on simplified, cliché-ridden dogma, as did their sociological methods. Consequently, the Music Department experienced increasing ideological pressure from Narkompros in the late 1920s, whose criticism of the Institute's work was steeped in the infamous rhetoric of "formalism" that later informed the public denunciations of Prokofiev and Shostakovich. Evidence from hitherto little-known archival material, such as transcripts of meetings, official resolutions, and personal correspondence, suggests that the two-way relationship between the State and individual scholars was volatile. These documents reveal that musicologists themselves were active agents of the sweeping ideological change and exhibited a nuanced range of attitudes toward the centralized ideology, from eager implementation and promotion of the ideology to rethinking, circumventing and downright resisting it.

Time and place

The specific dates in the title of the dissertation carry a symbolic significance. In fact, the dissertation discusses material from before 1885 and somewhat beyond 1931. The choice of the starting date was nonetheless suggested by the establishment of a specialized course in music history at the St. Petersburg Conservatory, as well as the advocacy for the scholarly study of music that was gaining momentum in press around the that time. The end date is the year when the Soviet authorities disbanded the three research institutions which had carried out musicological research. Establishing Creative Unions in place of comparatively independent research hubs ushered in a new period of tight institutional control over the humanities.

The five chapters roughly correspond to the five decades constituting the time frame of this study. Chapter 1 examines the changes in the St. Petersburg Conservatory curriculum during the 1880s, although Findeisen's reaction to Sacchetti spans the three decades that followed (1890s-1910s). Although Chapter 2 is a longitudinal study, designed to cover the entire dissertation period, many of its significant texts were published in the early 1890s, following the upsurge of positivist ideas in press in the second half of the 1880s. Events analyzed in Chapter 3 happened in the end of the 1900s, the case study of Chapter 4 – in the middle of 1910s. Chapter 5 considers the progress of the Music Department at the Institute of Art History over the course of an entire decade – the 1920s.

Although the title of this dissertation advertises a study of the formation of "Russian musicology," its discussion of institutional contexts is limited to St. Petersburg institutions. This was largely dictated by personal background, which afforded me insider knowledge of the musicological scene in St. Petersburg as well as larger professional networks and the greater accessibility of the St. Petersburg archives.

There is evidence to suggest that there was a great deal of similarity in the workings of the St. Petersburg and Moscow conservatories at the end of the nineteenth century. The St. Petersburg Conservatory was the older one, and when the Moscow Conservatory was founded, it adopted the same statute. Both institutions reported to the same patron – the Imperial Russian Musical Society – and had similar objectives regarding the legitimization of the musical profession.¹⁶ It is likely that practical attitudes to music theory and history at the St. Petersburg

¹⁶ For details see: Lynn Sargeant, "A new class of people: The Conservatoire and musical professionalization in

Conservatory did not differ much from those at its Moscow counterpart. Furthermore, some of the Moscow Conservatory graduates, whose professional activities lay outside of their alma mater, receive consideration in Chapters 3 and 4.

From a historiographical point of view, the focus on St. Petersburg might be fortunate, given that in Soviet music historiography the culture of the former Imperial capital has been traditionally given less consideration than that of the current Soviet capital. However, to counterbalance my emphasis on St. Petersburg, in the chapters dealing with non-institutional discourse on music St. Petersburg yields pride of place to voices from Moscow, although in many cases the boundaries the two cities' cultural scenes were blurred. It was (and still is) not uncommon to travel back and forth between these cities frequently, to work in both Moscow and St. Petersburg at some point in one's life, and to cultivate numerous professional relationships in both cities. For instance, The Proceedings of the Petrograd Scriabin Society, considered in Chapter 4, consisted almost entirely of statements from Moscow, as they were sent in the form of letters from Moscow to the St. Petersburg branch of the Society.

Archival materials and literature review

The body of primary sources that informed my research fall into three categories: archival records, press articles, and musicological studies, some published by institutions, others independently. Archival material for Chapter 1 comes from official conservatory records kept at the Central State Historical Archive of St. Petersburg (hereafter referred to by its Russian abbreviation TsGIA – *Tsentral'niy Gosudarstvenniy Istoricheskiy Arkhiv*). The two relevant collections are Collection 361, which contains the Conservatory archive before 1917, and Collection 408 – the archive of the Imperial Russian Musical Society.¹⁷ Chapter 5 is chiefly based on Collection 82, entitled “The State Research Institute of Theater, Music and Cinematography,”¹⁸ and kept at the Central State Archive of Literature and Art of St. Petersburg (hereafter abbreviated TsGALI – *Tsentral'niy Gosudarstvenniy Arkhiv Literaturi i Iskusstva*), as well as several collections of personal correspondence kept at the Manuscript Section of the Russian Institute of Art History (hereafter abbreviated RIIH – *Rossiyskiy Institut Istorii Iskusstv*). The comprehensive Collection 82 contains official resolutions from The People's Commissariat for Education (Narkompros) and its branches, the Central Administration for Scientific, Scholarly-Artistic, and Museum Institutions (Glavnauka), and the State Academic Council (GUS). These resolutions were addressed to all institutions under the jurisdiction of these administrative bodies and in particular to the Russian Institute of Art History. In addition, Collection 82 includes transcripts of administrative and scholarly meetings at the Institute, official correspondence, yearly reports on past and projected activities of the research departments, statutes of the Institute, scholars' curricula vitae, statistics of the staff and expenditures, etc.

As to the secondary literature, almost nothing has been written on the topic of this project per se. However, there are several studies of a more general scope that informed the historical narrative of the dissertation, as well as studies on the history of Western and Soviet musicology, whose approaches inspired the angle I took in my research. The first group of sources are

Russia, 1861-1917," *Music & Letters* 85, no. 1 (2004).

¹⁷ Archival records are referred to by their collection *fond*, inventory *opis'* or *razdel* (op. / r.), file *yedinitza khraneniya* (ye. kh.) or *delo* (d.), and folio *list* (l.).

¹⁸ One of the many names under which the Russian Institute of Art History was known throughout the 20th century.

monographs on the history of Russian thought, in particular of scientific thought. Of these, Alexander Vucinich's monumental *Science in Russian Culture: 1861-1917* (1970) has not yet been surpassed in scope and synthesis, and remains foundational.¹⁹ However, the time of its publication left its mark on Vucinich's argument. Vucinich's focus on anti-monarchist sentiment pervades his interpretations of the driving forces behind the development of Russian science and should elicit certain reservations. While he does provide enough evidence that the growing movement against the autocratic system of government was inspired by scientific progress, the insistence with which he drives the point home bears suspicious resemblance to the narrative that was actively promoted in the Soviet studies of the same material, on which Vucinich must have relied extensively when researching his monograph in the 1960s.

Musicology is a fairly recent focus for those working on the history of scholarship. However, the tendency to conceptualize musicology as an integral part of the intellectual developments of the time has been underway for decades. Nicholas Cook reminisces in his *The Schenker Project: Culture, Race, and Music Theory in Fin-de-siecle Vienna* (2007):

Then we learned to think of the analytical project as itself the result of a particular set of historical contingencies, a means through which a particular set of social and ideological values were maintained under the guise of being just the way things are: it was Joseph Kerman's book *Contemplating Music* (1985; British title *Musicology*) that made me realise for the first time how far my discipline was itself a historical construction. And in the field of Schenkerian theory, William Rothstein's seminal article 'The Americanization of Schenker' (first published in the following year) played the same kind of role. It was as if Schenkerian analysis had acquired an instant history.²⁰

Three years after the publication of Rothstein's article, Nicholas Cook published his own account of Schenker's reliance on the legacy of German idealism.²¹ Further growth of disciplinary self-consciousness was manifest in Pamela Potter's PhD thesis "Trends in German musicology, 1918-1945: The effects of methodological, ideological, and institutional change on the writing of music history" (1991), which became the foundation for her widely cited monograph *Most German of the Arts: Musicology and Society from the Weimar Republic to the End of Hitler's Reich* (1998).²² In the next two decades such landmark studies emerged as the collection *Music Theory and Natural Order from the Renaissance to the Early Twentieth Century*, edited by Suzannah Clark and Alexander Rehding, and many others.²³ In the late 2000s three full-scale

¹⁹ Alexander Vucinich, *Science in Russian Culture: 1861-1917*. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1970).

²⁰ Nicholas Cook, *The Schenker Project: Culture, Race, and Music Theory in Fin-de-Siècle Vienna* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007). p. 4. William Rothstein, "The Americanization of Heinrich Schenker," *In Theory Only*, no. 9/1 (1986): 5-17.

²¹ Nicholas Cook, "Schenker's Theory of Music as Ethics," *The Journal of Musicology* 7, no. 4 (1989): 415-439.

²² Pamela Maxine Potter, "Trends in German musicology, 1918-1945: The effects of methodological, ideological, and institutional change on the writing of music history" (Ph.D., Yale University, 1991); Pamela Maxine Potter, *Most German of the Arts: Musicology and Society from the Weimar Republic to the End of Hitler's Reich* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

²³ Suzannah Clark and Alexander Rehding, *Music Theory and Natural Order from the Renaissance to the Early Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, United Kingdom ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001). For inquiries on the history of music theory see, for instance, Scott Burnham, "Musical and intellectual values: interpreting the history of tonal theory," *Current Musicology*, no. 53 (1993): 76-88; Ian Bent, *Music Analysis in the Nineteenth Century*, 2 vols., Cambridge readings in the literature of music (Cambridge ; New York, NY, USA: Cambridge

monographs on the ways in which social environments influence music historiography solidified a new kind of framework for conceptualizing the early musicological thought: Nicholas Cook's study on Schenker, Kevin Karnes's *Music, Criticism, and the Challenge of History: Shaping Modern Musical Thought in Late Nineteenth-Century Vienna* (2008),²⁴ and Alexander Rehding's *Hugo Riemann and the Birth of Modern Musical Thought* (2009).²⁵ All three tackle academic politics, ideological concerns, and the social anxieties that shaped the musicological methods and music-theoretical terminology of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, and which bequeathed an enduring legacy to the discipline.

To give only a couple of examples, Kevin Karnes reevaluates the established view of Hanslick as a formalist, arguing that he turned his back on the empiricist approach after his appointment at the University of Vienna. In order to be hired in the first place, however, his aesthetics had to fit with the pervasive "Herbartization" of the Austrian humanities: and his *On the Musically Beautiful* brilliantly fulfilled this objective.²⁶ Alexander Rehding examines, among other issues, the implications that "the increasing aggression and militarism of the Wilhelmine culture" had on Hugo Riemann's nationalist linkage of language and music.²⁷

It is this group of publications that my dissertation relies on most conspicuously. It draws on their methods and applies them to the particular set of issues presented by the Russian case, issues that were both similar and different from those that the German case presents: the tension between Russian nationalism and scholarly methodology borrowed from Europe; the frequent conflicts between proponents of positivist and idealist brands of cognition; and the events that complicated the institutionalization of musicology and the formulation of scholarly identity in Russia – namely, the collapse of the social order in the aftermath of the October Revolution, and the birth of Soviet ideology.

As mentioned before, another trend, which this dissertation aims to promote, is that of bridging the "revolutionary divide" that defines much of the scholarship – both Russian and Western – on the Russian twentieth century. The idea of 1917 as the zero hour in the history of Soviet culture is being actively rethought in studies about the Russian revolution. The still-scarce published examples of this tendency in music-historical research include Lynn Sargeant's *Harmony and Discord: Music and the Transformation of Russian Cultural Life* (2011) and Rebecca Mitchell's PhD thesis "Nietzsche's Orphans: Music and the Search for Unity in Revolutionary Russia, 1905-1921," which is currently being reworked into a monograph. Both studies focus on the ideologies of the pre-revolutionary period, but also analyze their continuation into the early Soviet period, thus transcending the year 1917.

I am indebted to Tatyana Bukina's momentous monograph *Music Scholarship in Russia in 1920s-2000* (2010) – an impressive sociological study of Russian humanistic music scholarship, which marked the beginnings of a disciplinary self-awareness of which Russian

University Press, 1994); Anthony Pople, *Theory, Analysis, and Meaning in Music* (Cambridge ; New York, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Dieter Christensen, "Hugo Riemann and the Shaping of Musicology: An Ethnomusicological Perspective," in *Festschrift Walter Wiora zum 90. Geburtstag*, ed. eds Christoph-Hellmuth Mahling and Ruth Seibers (Tutzing: H.Schneider, 1997), 34-43.

²⁴ Kevin Karnes, *Music, Criticism, and the Challenge of History: Shaping Modern Musical Thought in Late Nineteenth-Century Vienna*, AMS studies in music (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

²⁵ Alexander Rehding, *Hugo Riemann and the Birth of Modern Musical Thought*, New perspectives in music history and criticism (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

²⁶ See Chapter 2 of the monograph "Music Criticism as Living History"

²⁷ Rehding, *Hugo Riemann and the Birth of Modern Musical Thought*, 159.

musicology is still in dire need. In particular, the first two chapters of the monograph – “Institutionalization of musicology in the early Soviet culture: Asafyev’s scholarly strategy” and “At the beginnings of Marxist musicology: sociology of music of the 1920s as a methodological project” - have informed the present dissertation. That said, I do take issue with the premise of these chapters in two important ways. First, Bukina subscribes to the same rigid periodization that Sargeant and Mitchell seek to dismantle. It is correct that the flourishing of the discipline of musicology in Russia started only after the revolution. The scholars of the revolutionary epoch perceived themselves as building an entirely new discipline from scratch, which, they hoped, would live up to the radically new social environment, and they sought to portray their ideas and work as radically new. However, Bukina’s monograph does not account for the many ideological continuities between pre-and post-revolution thought; ones which underpinned the research that scholars at the Music Department conducted.

Second, using her impressive knowledge of studies about early Soviet policies, Bukina examines the high status of science, which was elevated by the Soviet state as one of the cornerstones of its ideology, and the policies that gave scientists special treatment. She then extends this broadly accurate assessment to the Institute, which results in a picture of rather uncomplicated collaboration between musicologists and the state. Bukina’s monograph is primarily based on secondary sources as well as Soviet publications of primary sources (where the choice of documents, needless to say, was biased). Likely, lack of primary sources was the reason why so much was lost in translation from the broad assessment to the particular circumstances. Archival documents tell a different story of a highly ambiguous back-and-forth between the Institute and the authorities, in which sincere scholarly dedication, ideological enthusiasm, gradual mastery of failsafe lingo, and blatant power play were closely intertwined.

As I was working with the archive of the Russian Institute of Art History at TsGALI, I signed the archival logs and saw the names of the researchers who had looked at the documents before me. I was surprised by how few scholars had viewed these extremely informative files in the post-Soviet decades: only some of them were musicologists and none were from outside of Russia. Understandably, secondary literature on this topic is very scarce. An exception is Ksenia Kumpan’s informative article “The Institute of Art History at the turn of the 1920s-1930s,” which makes extensive use of Collection 82 and relevant documents from other archives.²⁸ This article investigates the work of the Institute (not only of the Music Department) in the late 1920s, and tells the story of the Institute’s “liquidation.” However, its perspective is skewed by a pervasive anti-Soviet bias, which rapidly started to color the outlook of post-Soviet scholars in the humanities in the 1990s after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and has been flourishing ever since. This perspective sees Soviet history as a story of unalloyed oppression and prompts scholars to view formulae of the early Soviet rhetoric as mere symbols of the oppressive power and ideological dogmas, even though these formulae originally were invested with strong and sincere convictions.

Another study that taps into the wealth of primary materials on this period is *Music and Soviet Power: 1917-1932* by Marina Frolova-Walker and Jonathan Walker, a deft English translation of little-known articles by Soviet musicians and critics supported by extensive

²⁸ Ksenia Kumpan, "Institut istorii iskusstv na rubezhe 1920-1930 godov," [The Institute of Art History at the turn of the 1920s-1930s], ed. M. E. Malikova, *Instituti kul'turi Leningrada na perelome ot 1920-kh k 1930-m godam* (Pushkinskiy Dom, 2011), <http://www.pushkinskiydom.ru/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=ISfRoURS2-k%3D&tabid=10460>

commentary, which dismantles numerous misconceptions about early Soviet cultural policies.²⁹ The book's sections on musicology, namely on Boris Asafyev's ideas about the role of musicologists as ideological "nannies" for composers, has been of particular help.

Some studies on early Soviet musicology published in the Soviet period have been helpful as well, in particular collections such as *From the History of the Leningrad Conservatory*,³⁰ *From the History of Soviet Music Education*,³¹ and *Materials for B. Asafyev's Biography*.³² However, whenever possible, I opted to see originals of these documents. When compared to the originals, their Soviet publications reveal editorial corrections and inconsistencies, some of them not even necessarily the result of ideological censorship. For instance, for reasons that remain unclear, a preliminary version of the syllabus of Sacchetti's specialized music history course was published in the collection rather than the much more legible final one.³³ Andrey Kryukov's article on the history of the Music Department of the Institute (1982) falls short of explaining the power dynamics at the Institute, as it covers only the period up to 1925, stopping right before the unflattering conflict between Asafyev and the Department took place.³⁴ In general, Soviet musicologists assumed a figure-centered approach towards the history of their discipline, publishing ideologically correct biographies of individual scholars.³⁵ These and other Soviet publications on the early Russian music criticism and scholarship remain informative only as a primary sources for studying the ideological framework of Soviet musicology of a later period.³⁶

Finally, while virtually nothing is written on the epistemology of music and anti-scientific sentiments in Russian musical circles of the early twentieth century, there are plenty of studies to extrapolate from in cases of well-known figures such as Scriabin. For instance, while the conflict between the Scriabin Society and Leonid Sabaneyev has not been considered in scholarly literature, much of the extensive literature on Scriabin does consider the composer's esoteric philosophy and its cultural contexts.³⁷

²⁹ Marina Frolova-Walker and Jonathan Walker, *Music and Soviet Power: 1917-1932* (Woodbridge, Suffolk Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2012), text.

³⁰ Anna Lvovna Birkengof et al., *Iz istorii Leningradskoy konservatorii: materialy i dokumenty 1862-1917* [From the History of the Leningrad Conservatory: Materials and Documents 1862-1917] (Leningrad: Muzika, Leningradskoye otdeleniye, 1964).

³¹ L.A. Barenboim, S.M. Vilsker, and P.A. Vulfius, *Iz istorii sovetskogo muzikal'nogo obrazovaniya. Sbornik materialov is dokumentov. 1917-1927* [From the history of the Soviet musical education. A collection of materials and documents. 1917-1927] (Leningrad: Muzika, Leningradskoye otdeleniye, 1969).

³² Andrey Nikolayevich Kryukov, *Materialy k biografii B. Asafyeva* [Materials for a biography of B. Asafyev] (Moscow: Muzika, 1981).

³³ It is hard to imagine the perfectionist Sacchetti offering such a messy manuscript, rather than the version of the same document in a much neater handwriting, for assessment to Rimsky-Korsakov and Johannsen, who left their signatures and expressed their agreement with the contents of the course on the title sheet.

³⁴ Andrey Nikolayevich Kryukov, "Razryad istorii muziki Rossiyskogo instituta istorii iskusstv" [Department of Music History of the Russian Institute of Art History] in *Iz proshlogo sovetskoy muzikal'noy kul'tury* (Moscow: Sovetskiy kompozitor, 1982).

³⁵ Such as: Yelena Mikhailovna Orlova, *B.V. Asafyev. Put' issledovatelya i publitsista* [B.V.Asafyev: the path of a scholar and a critic] (Leningrad: Muzika, Leningradskoye otdeleniye, 1964).

³⁶ See, for instance: Yuriy Anatolyevich Kremlyov, *Russkaya misl' o muzike. Ocherk istorii russkoy muzikal'noy kritiki i estetiki v XIX veke* [Russian thought on music. An essay on the history of Russian music criticism and aesthetics of the 19th century], 3 vols. (Leningrad: Muzgiz, 1954-1960).

³⁷ See, for instance, Malcolm Brown, "Scriabin and Russian 'Mystic' Symbolism," *19th-Century Music* 3, no. 1 (1979): 283-330; Richard Taruskin, "Scriabin and the Superhuman: A Millennial Essay," in *Defining Russia*

Methodology

In conclusion, I will briefly review the methods on which I relied:

- 1) In order to trace the reiterations of tropes, beliefs and common assumptions about the nature of music and the epistemological approaches deemed adequate for the study of music, I consider numerous publications in the Russian press from the 1880s to the end of the 1910s. Based on these reviews, columns, prefaces to textbooks, obituaries, historical and analytical essays, and other related documents, I single out the beliefs and assumptions which were most often championed and across many texts, such as the conviction that theory and interpretation always follows the practice of composition, and is therefore secondary to it.
- 2) From this pool of publications I chose several representative essays that engage with essential ideological and methodological questions in order to trace their ideas back to (more often than not) European sources, such as Comte's law of three stages, or the organicist tradition. In the absence of bibliographies and references (the absence of which was routine and acceptable in Russian music criticism and scholarship of the time), such close reading proves the only way to chart the dissemination of these ideas.
- 3) In Chapter 2 I venture a longitudinal study of the Russian reception of Eduard Hanslick's immensely influential treatise *On the Musically Beautiful*. Tracing reactions to it across five decades enables me to identify shifts, exemplary of the intellectual climate of the time, in attitudes to Hanslick's notoriously ambiguous mix of idealist and formalist precepts.
- 4) Inquiry into the authors' biographies helps me illuminate the mechanisms by which ideas were disseminated along familial and professional genealogies, and in many cases clarify why a particular author espoused a particular set of ideas. These were people, some of them influential, some obscure, who lived in the same art world, who largely knew about each other and who inherited their aesthetic and intellectual preferences from their parents, professors, friends, or fellow students, and passed them on in similar ways. For instance, the scientifically-oriented scholar Nadezhda Bryusova studied with Sergey Taneyev, whose brother Vladimir was a committed and well-read positivist; the idealist writer Alexey Linitsky was the son of a famous Ukrainian theologian Petro Linitsky; the critic Emiliy Medtner and the poet Andrey Bely, bound by a decades-long friendship, both put up a forceful resistance to rational inquiry into artistic matters.

Such a micro-historical focus holds pride of place in my dissertation, and because of it the amount of biographical detail in these pages might at times seem excessive. In an attempt to track down these intellectual lineages, I traced the life circumstances of some of these authors with a forensic zeal. Hopefully, these efforts will contribute to correcting the gap created when Soviet historians lionized individual figures—such as the two heavyweights of Russian music criticism of the nineteenth century, Aleksandr Serov and Vladimir Stasov—and made them accessories in the creation of the official Soviet version of intellectual history, while all but dismissing the rest of what was a vibrant discourse. Today, people writing on music are still

Musically: Historical and Hermeneutical Essays (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 308-359; James Baker, "Scriabin's Music: Structure as a Prism for Mystical Philosophy," in *Music Theory in Concept and Practice*, ed. James M. Baker, David W. Beach, and Jonathan W. Bernard (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1997), 53-96; Simon Morrison, "Skryabin and the Impossible," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 51, no. 2 (1998): 283-330; Anna Gawboy, "Alexander Scriabin's Theurgy in Blue: Esotericism and the Analysis of "Prometheus: Poem of Fire" op. 60" (Ph.D., Yale University, 2010). For a broader discussion of Theosophy in Russia see: Maria Carlson, *No religion higher than truth! A History of the Theosophical Movement in Russia, 1875-1922* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993).

considered far less worthy of investigation than people writing music. Therefore, little information in Russian (let alone in other languages) is available about most authors featured here. Because of this I felt compelled, before discussing their ideas on music, to get the best possible sense of who these people were. If they were so emotionally invested in matters of music aesthetics, what else lay close to their hearts? In a word, I attempted to make a history of ideas as close an approximation to a history of people listening to music as possible.

5) Uncovering such personal connections, in turn, allows me to outline artistic and personal associations that formed the fin-de-siècle Russian art world (in Howard Becker's sense) and that were bound by shared aesthetic preferences and convictions. Bourdieu's notion of taste as a means of social belonging is an important instrument for conceptualizing these networks as well.

6) Most of the interactions that I choose for case studies are based on disagreements and overt conflicts between representatives of these groups. The emotional intensity and eloquence with which the opposing sides articulated their rejection of one another's beliefs are revealing of their assumptions. These authors put their own identity on display with utmost clarity, and never more than when defining themselves against each other and endorsing their cause.

Chapter 1. Liberio's Labour Lost, or Why a German Disliked an Italian for Being Not Russian Enough

The year 1885 – when Guido Adler published his seminal manifesto “The Scope, Method, and Goal of Musicology,” widely considered to have marked the birth of Western European musicology as a scholarly discipline – was an important year for the study of music in Russia as well. The St. Petersburg Conservatory, the first higher music education institution in Russia, introduced its first specialized two-year course in music history. The historian who developed the course was Liveryi (or Liberio) Sacchetti (1852-1916). The next year Sacchetti was promoted from a senior lecturer to a rank of professor and thus became the first professor of music history and aesthetics at a Russian institution.

Sacchetti's position, however, cannot be compared to that received by Adler in 1898 at the University of Vienna. Immediately upon commencing his duties there, Adler founded the Musikwissenschaftliches Institute – an achievement that crowned the decades-long quest for institutionalization of musicology in Austria. Sacchetti's post, on the other hand, was roughly synonymous to the professorship that Adler's predecessor Eduard Hanslick had secured back in 1861 upon the publication of his treatise *On the Musically Beautiful* (1854), when musicology as a discipline did not yet exist.

Thirty-seven years had to pass between the establishment of the first university professorship in music history (1861) and the foundation of a musicological institute in Vienna (1898). In St. Petersburg, similarly, thirty-five years separated Sacchetti's appointment as professor (1886) and the foundation of the first research institution for musicology – the Music Department of the Russian Institute for Art History, headed by Boris Asafyev (1921). These three and a half decades, plus a decade after the establishment of the Music Department, constitute the period considered in this dissertation.

This chapter will examine the institutional context of Sacchetti's work inside the conservatory and the perception of his professorial status outside of it. The following two items will be on the agenda: first, why the development of the criteria and methods of music scholarship, as well as the search for its institutionalization was largely happening outside of the conservatories (at least until the mid-1920s), and second, why the first Russian musicological institution was in fact modeled in opposition to the conservatory. To this end, we will delve into the official conservatory records kept at the Central State Historical Archive of St. Petersburg, as well as into private diaries of Nikolai Findeisen, an independent scholar whose idea of scholarly standards very much differed from Sacchetti's. This ironic story of a German who disliked an Italian for being not Russian enough was illustrative of the nationalist appropriation of the German-forged discipline of musicology in Russia at the turn of the twentieth century.

According to Lynn Sargeant, over the course of the nineteenth century, “all across Europe, musicians and cultural critics worried about the dominance of foreign musicians, who robbed native musicians of scarce jobs and opportunities and subverted the national character of musical life.”³⁸ Russia was not an exception.

However, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century the national composition of the profession started gradually mutating. It was a time when the predominantly European professors, initially invited to teach at the newly established Russian conservatories, started accepting in their ranks their first students, the home-trained Russian musicians of the next

³⁸ Sargeant, "A new class of people," 41-42.

generation. Similar developments were taking place in the Russian scientific community, where advocacy was growing for admitting more Russian scientists into the country's scientific institutions. Exemplary was the scientists' massive outrage when such a luminary as the famous chemist Dmitriy Mendeleev lost elections for a chair in chemistry and technology at the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences, Russia's oldest and most prestigious scientific institution, historically dominated by foreign specialists.³⁹ The careers of both Sacchetti and Findeisen were poised on this borderline period, when not only the barely existing field of music scholarship, but also the occupations of a musician and a scientist were growing indigenous roots. It is therefore hard to find a more fitting case study than a disagreement between two second-generation Russian immigrants about what it meant to be a Russian scholar. The transitional dynamic of their field was embodied not only in their professional, but in their personal lives as well.

“From the height of the pulpit”

Instead of a strictly scientific, substantiated view of the subject, which we, mere mortals, had a right to expect of a “professor” of music history ... Mr. Sacchetti presented us with some historical hodgepodge of vocal pieces. ... For a specialist-professor, who preaches to both the musicians and the public from the height of the pulpit, such a pure dilettantish approach is quite unexpected and deplorable.⁴⁰

This was the scathing assessment given by the music critic Vladimir Frolov to a talk by Sacchetti “Relationship of music and text,”⁴¹ which Sacchetti read at the St. Petersburg Conservatory on February 18, 1893. The music critic complained about the avalanche of “uncritical”⁴² references to ancient and contemporary European authors, which, to his mind, did not contribute much to a real explanation of the relationship between music and text.⁴³ He had hoped for something more:

We expected that the professor would clarify in his special lecture the most important issue: the basic laws of the “relationship between text and music,” namely: 1) of preserving the prosody and rhythm of the poem, 2) of declamation, 3) of preserving the poetical form of the text and, finally, 4) of corresponding mood. Unfortunately, the

³⁹ Vucinich, *Science in Russian Culture: 1861-1917*, 96-97.

⁴⁰ Вместо строго-научного, обоснованного взгляда на предмет, который мы, простые смертные, вправе были ожидать от “профессора” истории музыки ... г. Саккетти преподнес своим слушателям какой-то исторический вокальный винегрет. ... для профессора-специалиста, поучающего и музыкантов, и публику с высоты кафедры, такое чисто диллетантское отношение к делу является для нас совершенно неожиданным и прискорбным. Vladimir Konstantinovich Frolov, “Ob otnoshenii muziki k tekstu. Lektsiya prof. L.A.Sacchetti,” [On the relationship of music and text. A lecture by Prof. L.A.Sacchetti] *Nashe vremya*, no. 9 (1893): 155.

⁴¹ Published in: Liveryi Antonovich Sacchetti, *Iz oblasti estetiki i muziki* [From the Realm of Aesthetics and Music] (St. Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo L. Turiginoy, 1896), 96-111.

⁴² Frolov, “Ob otnoshenii muziki k tekstu,” 155.

⁴³ Все эти примеры сопровождалась бесконечными ссылками на разных авторов: греческих, латинских, немецких, французских, английских, итальянских; цитатами из Шуна, Платона и других древних писателей, доказывавших, мы в том не сомневаемся, большую эрудицию почтенного лектора, но ни мало не содействовавших выяснению поставленного им основного тезиса “об отношении музыки к тексту”. ... Отсутствие критического отношения к цитатам представляло также одну из слабых сторон лекции г. Саккетти. Ibid.

lecturer left us in bewilderment regarding the objective of his lecture.⁴⁴

Failing to explicate “the basic laws” was inexcusable for a professor, Frolov implied. Apparently, showcasing one’s erudition in the Western intellectual tradition was not relevant for substantiating one’s reputation as a professional scholar.

Vladimir Konstantinovich Frolov (1850–1915) was a music critic of the newspaper *The Petrograd Leaflet* (*Petrogradskiy listok*), and at the same time an official at the State Bank, and received his education at the St. Petersburg College of Commerce.⁴⁵ Being thus a complete outsider to the conservatory and its curriculum, he nevertheless had in mind a definite standard, to which a conservatory professor had to live up. The halo of prestige surrounding the title of a professor in public perception made Frolov impose his ideal of scholarly rigor on Sacchetti’s lecture. For Frolov, this ideal was the positivist notion that the goal of humanistic research was to uncover the universal laws that govern the development of art. By 1893 this idea had become widely accepted in Russian cultural journalism (see Chapter 2 on the mid-1880s positivist turn in Russian writing on music).

Sacchetti’s talk indeed had the form of a historical overview of vocal music, in the course of which he referred to no fewer than thirty-two music historical studies in German, French, Italian, English and Russian, by such scholars as Ambros, Kiesewetter, Spitta, and Coussemaker. Nevertheless, he provided some generalizations as well. He maintained that monophonic music enhanced the meaning of the words, polyphonic music obscured them and sometimes contradicted their dramatic objective, and homophonic music illustrated the text and enhanced its dramatic effect, but, succumbing to the demands of music-formal symmetry, did not prioritize the meaning of the words and slowed down the theatrical action.⁴⁶ The laws Frolov suggested Sacchetti should have studied were no more universal than the ones inferred by Sacchetti. But apparently, his inferences, peppered with citations from European luminaries, were not perceived as independent and original enough.

Even a most sympathetic review of Sacchetti’s book *From the Realm of Aesthetics and Music* voiced similar concerns. The reputable music critic Mikhail Mikhailovich Ivanov – who was no stranger to music aesthetics, as he did the first Russian translation of Hanslick’s *On the*

⁴⁴ Мы ожидали, что профессор выяснит в своей специальной лекции самое главное: основные законы "отношения текста к музыке", а именно: 1) о соблюдении ударения и ритма стиха, 2) о фразировке (декламация), 3) о сохранении поэтической формы текста и, наконец, 4) о соответствии настроения. К величайшему сожалению, лектор оставил нас в совершенно недоумении относительно цели своей лекции. Ibid.

⁴⁵ "Obituary. Frolov, Vladimir Konstantinovich," *Russkaya muzikal'naya gazeta*, no. 9-10 (1915): col. 180.

⁴⁶ Из этого беглого очерка можно сделать следующий вывод об отношении музыки к тексту в периоды ее мелодического, полифонического и гомофонического фазиса развития: 1) Одноголосная музыка ограничивается тем, что следует смыслу слов и усиливает выражение чувства, на которое они лишь намекают; 2) Полифония, соединяя несколько самостоятельных мелодий в одно целое, в котором голоса, вступая неодновременно, поют разные слова, более или менее заглушает последние и иногда идет вразрез со сценическими требованиями; 3) Гомофония, в своем речитативном стиле иллюстрирует текст, усиливает драматизм, но, стремясь к мелодическим красотам и изящной симметрии музыкальной архитектуры, наносит ущерб смыслу слов и тормозит сценическое действие. Особенности поэзии и музыки настолько значительны, что соединение их в вокальном искусстве иногда мешает им, и только в счастливых и довольно редких случаях (преимущественно в небольших лирических произведениях) они, дополняя друг друга, оказывают взаимную помощь для достижения высшей художественности. Livery Antonovich Sacchetti, "Ob otnoshenii muziki k tekstu," in *Iz oblasti estetiki i muziki* (St. Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo L. Turiginoy, 1896), 111.

Musically Beautiful, - while praising Sacchetti's study to the skies, expressed reservation about the author's manner of including "too many references to the others' opinions"⁴⁷ and to summon various authorities to support his thoughts. This lent Sacchetti's analyses a certain ponderousness characteristic of the German aesthetic thought to which Sacchetti had a particular predilection, Ivanov opined.⁴⁸ Such was the reputation of the first professor of music history and aesthetics in Russia. Understandably, this kind of renown was not the best vehicle for the development of the discipline of musicology in Russia in the climate of growing positivism and nationalism.

The poster child of German scholarship

Liveriy Antonovich Sacchetti was born on August 18, 1852 in the village Ust-Kenzar in Tambov province to a Russian noblewoman and an Italian flute player and music teacher who had settled in Russia and taken Russian citizenship.⁴⁹ By the time Liveriy was born, Antonio Sacchetti's stint as the solo flautist at the Italian opera in Odessa had already ended, and he was currently employed as a music teacher at the Tambov Institute.⁵⁰ He became the first music teacher to his son, who demonstrated an aptitude for music very early, and sent him, aged fourteen, to the conservatory.

Liveriy Sacchetti graduated from the conservatory twice – in 1874 and in 1878. First, he studied cello under the famous Karl Yulyevich Davıdov, who subsequently became the conservatory director. After that, he enrolled in the conservatory again as a composer under Yuliy Ivanovich Johannsen and Nikolai Andreyevich Rimsky-Korsakov (studying music history under Hermann Laroche) and graduated with a small silver medal. He was appointed at the conservatory as a teacher of harmony in 1878, immediately upon graduation, and, after several promotions, reached the highest rank of an Ordinary Professor of the First Degree in 1901.⁵¹ Sacchetti also lectured on aesthetics at the Academy of Arts from 1885-1894, and since 1895 had been a librarian at the Imperial Public Library (now the National Library of Russia), where he worked under Vladimir Stasov.

Despite his Italian heritage, Liveriy Sacchetti's mother tongue was Russian, and he belonged to Russian Orthodox faith, as did his wife Aleksandra Kanevskaya, also a graduate of the St. Petersburg Conservatory, and his daughter Yekaterina and his son Aleksandr, who later studied under Maksim Kovalevsky and became a well-known sociologist.⁵² Sacchetti's

⁴⁷ Mikhail Mikhailovich Ivanov, "Iz oblasti estetiki i muziki' L. Sacchetti, professora S.-Peterburgskoy konservatorii," [From the Realm of Aesthetics and Music" by L. Sacchetti, a professor of the St. Petersburg Conservatory.] *Novoye vremya*, no. 7534 (1897).

⁴⁸ Г. Саккетти только, по-моему, напрасно дает слишком много ссылок на чужие мнения, прибегая к помощи самых разнообразных авторитетов для поддержки своих мыслей. Его мысли справедливы и без чужой поддержки; бесчисленные же подстрочные примечания и выноски дают только известную тяжесть его статье. ... Специально эстетические статьи... заслуживают в этом смысле особенного внимания, хотя они имеют тот тяжеловатый характер, которым отличаются все вообще эстетические немецкие умозаключения, - к ним же автор имеет особое пристрастие. Ibid.

⁴⁹ Biographical dictionary "Employees of the National Library of Russia – Scientists and Cultural Figures," ed. G.V. Mikheyeva and G.A. Khotuntsova (St. Petersburg: Rossiyskaya natsional'naya biblioteka, 2013). http://www.nlr.ru/nlr_history/persons/info.php?id=156 (accessed February 23, 2015)

⁵⁰ Richard Taruskin, *Defining Russia Musically: Historical and Hermeneutical Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 190.

⁵¹ On Sacchetti's promotions see: TsGIA: F. 361, op.11, d. 101, l. 67; F. 361, op. 11, d. 155, l. 8; F. 361, op. 11, d. 155, l. 80.

⁵² This biographical note is primarily based on Sacchetti's personal file in the conservatory archive, kept in the

knowledge of current developments in European musicology was truly encyclopedic. He read German, French, Italian and English fluently, judging by the long lists of books he checked out from the conservatory library, when he did research for his widely used *Short Historical Anthology of Music from Ancient Times up to and Including the Seventeenth Century*.⁵³

As the only person holding a professorship in music history, for a certain period Sacchetti personified the discipline. He was repeatedly sent to represent Russia at European events by the RMO, which compensated his travel expenses. In 1888 he represented the Conservatory at the International Music Exhibition in Bologna, and was elected an honorary member of the Accademia Filarmonica di Bologna.⁵⁴ In 1900 the Imperial Russian Musical Society delegated him to give a talk on the history of Russian Orthodox church music at the International Congress of Music History in Paris, and sponsored his trip with a sizeable sum of 750 rubles.⁵⁵ In May 1909 he received 500 rubles⁵⁶ (his former yearly salary at the Academy of Arts)⁵⁷ to participate in the Third Congress of the International Music Society, organized by Guido Adler and held in Vienna at the same time as Haydn Centennial Festival.⁵⁸ His trip to Vienna was followed by correspondence with Guido Adler in 1909-1911, concerning Sacchetti's collaboration on Adler's edition *Corpus scriptorum de musica*.⁵⁹

Sacchetti's Western European colleagues essentialized him as a Russian, despite his Italian name and linguistic prowess. On occasions when he presented talks at international meetings, he spoke on Russian music, although he was anything but a specialist on this subject (as his nemesis Nikolai Findeisen was quick to point out). Sacchetti's correspondence with Adler also reveals that the latter expected Sacchetti to work on Russian materials for the *Corpus*. In Russia, however, he was seen as the poster child for imported European-style (primarily German) humanistic scholarship, and rightly so.⁶⁰

Sacchetti was well versed in the major aesthetic debate on the boundaries of arts and the definition of the beautiful that raged since the eighteenth century, of which Hanslick's *On the Musically Beautiful* and Ambros's *The Boundaries of Music and Poetry* were two major manifestations. In Russia this centuries-old debate was alive and well as late as the 1890s.⁶¹ In

Central State Historical Archive of St.Petersburg. TsGIA: F. 361, op.9, d. 48.

⁵³ Liveriy Antonovich Sacchetti, *Kratkaya istoricheskaya muzikal'naya khrestomatiya s drevneishikh vremyon do XVII veka vklyuchitel'no* [Short Historical Anthology of Music from Ancient Times up to and Including the 17th Century] (St. Petersburg: M.M. Lederle, 1896).

⁵⁴ Nikolai Davidovich Bernstein, *Kratkiy ocherk zhizni i deyatel'nosti prof. Liveriya Antonovicha Sacchetti* [A Short Sketch of Prof. Liveriy Antonovich Sacchetti's Life and Work] (St. Petersburg: S.R. Baum, 1903), 7.

⁵⁵ TsGIA: F. 408, op. 1, d. 296, l.1.

⁵⁶ Nikolai Fyodorovich Findeisen and Marina Lvovna Kosmovskaya, *Diaries, 1902-1909* (St. Petersburg: Dmitriy Bulanin, 2010), 236.

⁵⁷ TsGIA: F. 361, op. 9, d. 48, l. 42

⁵⁸ *III. Kongress der Internationalen Musikgesellschaft Wien, 25. bis 29. Mai, 1909: Bericht vorgelegt vom Wiener Kongressausschuss*, (Vienna: Artaria 1909), 11.

⁵⁹ National Library of Russia, Manuscript department, F. 667, ye. kh. 79. Sacchetti, Liveriy Antonovich, Letters (6) to Prof. Guido Adler, Vienna, 13 ff., 1909-1910; F. 667, ye. kh. 85. Adler, Guido, Professor of the Institute of Music History in Vienna. Letters (14) to Liveriy Antonovich Sacchetti, 29 ff., 1909-1911.

⁶⁰ Even in appearance, his publications differed from other Russian music-historical writing of the time: unlike most writers on music, Sacchetti meticulously cited his sources.

⁶¹ For instance, a music journalist to be discussed in Chapter 2, Sergey Kazansky, published an article "Place of music among the arts" in 1892. Sergey Pavlovich Kazansky, "Mesto muziki sredi iskusstva," [Place of music among the arts.] *Artist* 25, 26 (1892).

his article “Poetry and the visual arts,”⁶² which opened his widely used collection *From the Realm of Aesthetics and Music*, Sacchetti gave his own take on this debate, although heavily relying on Winckelmann and Lessing. Second, he did not remain indifferent to the positivist trend sweeping the Russian humanities in the late nineteenth century. His article “Foundations of music criticism,” concerned with the positivist search for historical laws and objective criteria of aesthetic judgment, will be analyzed in Chapter 2. Third, as evident from the syllabi for his history courses at the conservatory suggest, he internalized the master narrative of music history from such studies as the comprehensive music history started by August Wilhelm Ambros and continued by Wilhelm Langhans.⁶³ Sacchetti’s deep knowledge of European scholarship made him a logical candidate for teaching at the St. Petersburg Conservatory, since it was from the start an undoubtedly European-oriented institution, with many of its professors initially invited from abroad.

Music history on the margins

The call to deepen the study of music history at the conservatory sounded as early as July 27, 1878 in a memo, addressed to the Conservatory Council by Osip Karlovich Hunke, a composer, an author of a harmony textbook, and the Conservatory librarian. Hunke was dissatisfied with the method of teaching music history, which, in his opinion, consisted only of memorizing names and dates without an overarching concept of historical evolution of music. While he admitted that such a perfunctory course might be sufficient for performers, students of composition theory should have had a solid idea of “what kind of music different peoples had, at different stages of its development, and how each composer influenced the subsequent development of the art of music.”⁶⁴ Toward this end he suggested establishing a professorship in music history, as well as introducing mandatory graduation essays in music history on topics such as “explanation of the origins of various musical forms (oratorio, opera, symphony, overture, etc.), of harmony, melody and rhythm of different eras (the state of vocal or instrumental music in different centuries), etc.”⁶⁵ This new undertaking, he claimed, would have resulted not only in “higher significance of the conservatory as an institution of higher music education, but also would have, as its direct consequence, the development of the science of music history itself, which is still not at all advanced in Russia.”⁶⁶

On September 30, 1878 the Council deemed such an innovation “desirable,” and in fact

⁶² Sacchetti, *Iz oblasti estetiki i muziki*, 1-43.

⁶³ August Wilhelm Ambros et al., *Geschichte der Musik*, 5 vols. (Breslau,: F. E. C. Leuckart, 1862); Wilhelm Langhans, *Die geschichte der musik des 17., 18. und 19. jahrhunderts*, 2 vols. (Leipzig,: F. E. C. Leuckart, 1884).

⁶⁴ Поэтому я полагал бы для этих учеников учредить особый, специальный, возможно полный курс истории музыки, в котором внешняя, номенклатурная сторона шла бы наряду с внутренней и пройдя который учащийся получил бы основательное понятие о том, какова была музыка у разных народов, в разных стадиях ее развития и в чем выразилось влияние каждого из композиторов на последующее развитие музыкального искусства. Birkengof et al., *Iz istorii Leningradskoy konservatorii*, 275.

⁶⁵ Как примеры подобных задач могут служить: объяснение происхождения разных музыкальных форм (оратория, опера, симфония, увертюра и проч.), гармонии, мелодии и ритма в разных эпохах (состояние вокальной или инструментальной музыки в разных столетиях) и проч. Ibid.

⁶⁶ Мне кажется, что установление предположенного мною порядка, независимо от того, что подняло бы значение консерватории как высшего музыкального образовательного заведения, имело бы своим прямым последствием и развитие самой науки истории музыки, столь мало в России еще выработанной, несмотря на тот богатый материал, который это государство представляет по племенному разнообразию и богатству народной музыкальной фантазии. Ibid, 276.

soon invited the renowned music critic Hermann Laroche to rejoin the conservatory (after a leave of absence) in order to teach music history to the students specializing in theory of composition.⁶⁷ The comprehensive two-year course, however, was not developed until 1885. Only on September 20, 1885, did the Council approve Liveriy Sacchetti's proposition (evidently a reminder of Hunke's old request) to open a two-year specialized music history course for composers.

Three syllabi of Sacchetti's conservatory courses survived: a general music history course, a specialized music history course, and a course in aesthetics.⁶⁸ The specialized course was a comprehensive survey of music history from prehistoric music up to the Romantics of the late nineteenth century and included several sections on Russian music at the end. Its structure and conceptual framework betrays that it heavily relied on German music histories. The opening historical sections of the course traditionally offered examination of prehistoric music, based on the knowledge of music of "currently living savages."⁶⁹ These "savage people" included the Inuit, peoples of America, Australia, and Africa.⁷⁰ Next in line were the "oriental people" – music of the Chinese, Hindus, Arabs, Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Phoenicians, and Jews. This list suggests that the opening sections of Sacchetti's course might have been (and probably were) lifted in their entirety from the opening of the second book of Ambros's *Die Musik des griechischen Altertums und des Orients*.⁷¹ In Ambros's history, however, the section of The Orient followed the discussion of Greek music, while in Naumann's history⁷² (as in Sacchetti's course) it preceded it, suggesting a different degree of reliance on Eurocentric evolutionary assumptions and on the progressivist belief that peoples of the Orient belonged to the lower stage of development. Thus, Sacchetti's syllabus demonstrated not only his adoption of the content, but also synthesis of his sources and discrimination between premises that underlay studies of different German authors, in favor of the current evolutionary view that all peoples progressed along the same developmental course and represented its different stages.⁷³

It is remarkable, however, that unlike Ambros's or Naumann's volumes, Sacchetti's course did not start with the earliest music example, as was the custom, but with an overview of the discipline, which introduced students to music history as a scholarly endeavor – to its goals,

⁶⁷ TsGIA: F. 361, op.11, d. 101, l. 69.

⁶⁸ Published in: Birkengof et al., *Iz istorii Leningradskoy konservatorii*, 109-117.

⁶⁹ Предположение о первобытном состоянии музыки по музыке ныне живущих дикарей. TsGIA: F. 361, op. 11, d. 155, l. 128.

⁷⁰ The line "Music of the savage people of the Polar countries, America, Australia, and Africa" (Музыка диких народов полярных стран, Америки, Австралии и Африки) might have prompted the editors of the Soviet publication *From the History of the Leningrad Conservatory* (1964) to include the preliminary version of Sacchetti's syllabus, where this line is missing, rather than the final one. America as the "country of Indians" was one of the dominant images of the USA in Russia in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Characteristically, Count Fyodor Tolstoy received his nickname "The American" on the account of his "savage" tattoos, which he got while living among the Aleut people. (See: Ivan Ivanovich Kurilla, "Tisyachelikaya Amerika," [Thousand-Faced America.] *Otechestvenniye zapiski*, no. 4 (61) (2014): 56-70.) Thus Sacchetti's classification of American peoples as savages was completely in line with the ideas of his time. America soon became a sensitive topic in Soviet discourse, however, and the Khrushchev Thaw was not an exception. One can only guess whether the editors did not want to mention it at all, or, on the contrary, were concerned about its classification as "the country of savages."

⁷¹ See: Ambros et al., *Geschichte der Musik*, xxviii – xxxii., table of contents

⁷² The only other author on his list of major music historians appended by Sacchetti in the beginning of the syllabus, who treated the antiquity extensively. Emil Naumann, Ferdinand Christian Wilhelm Praeger, and F. A. Gore Ouseley, *The History of Music*, Special ed., 5 vols. (London, New York: Cassell, 1886).

⁷³ Although we might wish he did not discriminate in such a way.

problems and important landmarks:

1. The significance of music history as a discipline, complementing the general history of civilization (for a scholar in general).
2. The specifically musical significance of music history: a) as a foundation for music criticism, b) as a guide for musician's work, c) as an indication of the social significance and status of music and musicians in different nations and in different historical eras.
3. The contemporary state of music history. Difficulties, accompanying its study. Sources.
4. A list and appraisal of the main works on music history (Virdung, Praetorius, Martini, Forkel, Fétis, Kiesewetter, Coussemaker, Ambros, [Dommer, Brendel, and Naumann were added in another version of this syllabus],⁷⁴ etc.)

...
Physiological explanations of the origins of music (Taine and Spencer).⁷⁵

The fact that from the very beginning Sacchetti tried to frame music history as a scholarly discipline, and relied on Hippolyte Taine and Herbert Spencer – the foremost authorities for Russian scholars of the humanities in the second half of the nineteenth century – placed this course firmly in line with the broader, university-based humanistic scholarship.

On February 12, 1883, the Artistic Council decided it was necessary to introduce a class in aesthetics, but postponed the appointment of specific lecturer for this class until a later meeting.⁷⁶ Eventually, they appointed Sacchetti, who produced a syllabus in short order.⁷⁷ Sacchetti's syllabus did not focus on music per se, but situated it against a specific set of issues that had been occupying European writers on aesthetics at least for two centuries before, such as the distinctions between the beautiful and the useful, the beautiful and sublime, classification of arts as representational and non-representational, spatial and temporal, and the application of the method of natural sciences in aesthetics. Evidently influenced by Hyppolite Taine, by the scientific method Sacchetti meant four things:

- a) comparing works of a single author and [determining] their relationship to the author's personality;
- b) comparing works of artists of the same historical era and [determining] their relationship to their time and its character;
- c) comparing artistic works of a specific people and elucidating the national element in art;

⁷⁴ TsGIA: F. 361, op. 11, d. 155, l. 128.

⁷⁵ 1. Значение истории музыки как науки, дополняющей всеобщую историю цивилизации (для ученого вообще); 2. Значение истории музыки специально музыкальное: а) как основы музыкальной критики, б) как руководства для деятельности музыканта, в) как указания на общественное значение и положение музыки и музыканта у разных народов и в разные эпохи истории; 3. Современное состояние истории музыки. Трудности при ее изучении. Источники; 4. Перечень и оценка главных трудов по истории музыки (Вирдунг, Преториус, Мартини, Форкель, Фетис, Кизеветтер, Куссемакер, Амброс и пр.); Первобытное состояние музыки: 1. Физиологическое объяснение происхождения музыки (Тэн и Спенсер) Birkengof et al., *Iz istorii Leningradskoy konservatorii*, 111.

⁷⁶ At the same meeting Sacchetti was promoted to a senior lecturer.

⁷⁷ TsGIA: F. 361, op. 11, d. 155, l. 8.

d) the universal element in art.⁷⁸

Sacchetti's broad scope and rigid systematization further positioned music in the purview of humanistic inquiry and in the context of other arts, thus transcending the narrow practical focus of music history as previously taught at the Conservatory. The innovation, introduced by these specialized courses to the conservatory curriculum, was not only in degree but also in kind. Sacchetti's comprehensive expertise, his style of teaching, and his prestigious institutional affiliation equipped him to be the founder of Russian musicology as a coherent discipline. Sacchetti's unprecedented promotion to the rank of professor of music history and aesthetics in 1886, therefore, had the potential to transform the institutional status of music scholarship in Russia. However, for reasons discussed below these changes did not have far-reaching consequences and remained a routine promotion that the conservatory lecturers received after several years of satisfactory work.

Theory as a means for legitimization

One of the main concerns of the conservatory officials in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was the struggle to legitimize the musical profession. As Lynn Sargeant has demonstrated, for holders of a conservatory diploma the path to acquiring a legal right to move to a higher social estate was long and thorny.⁷⁹ She describes the struggle of the conservatory legally to secure the rights of the graduates that were already included in the very first statute of the St. Petersburg Conservatory in 1861. Upon completing the conservatory course, the worthy graduates were awarded the title of Free Artist. Before the Conservatory, this title was being granted by the Academy of Art and was associated with certain social privileges. Most importantly, it entailed the right to receive a title of "honored citizen," if the graduate did not already belong to this or higher estate. The estate of "honored citizens" functioned as buffer between the nobility and the lower estates. While not formally entering the nobility, honored citizens were similarly exempt from the poll tax, military draft, and corporal punishment⁸⁰ and received an opportunity to apply for inclusion into hereditary nobility as a reward for excellent service.⁸¹ For Jews the title of honorary citizen provided the right to reside outside of the Pale of Settlement. Whether or not they would be granted these opportunities was a burning question for most of the conservatory students. Lynn Sargeant cites the enrollment data for another conservatory that was under the jurisdiction of the Russian Musical Society – the one in Kiev. In the years 1915-1916 the students from noble estates comprised slightly more than a quarter of the total student body,⁸² while almost exactly half of the students were Jewish.⁸³ In Moscow and

⁷⁸ а) сравнение произведений одного и того же художника и отношение этих произведений к личности автора; б) сравнение произведений художников одной и той же исторической эпохи и отношение этих произведений к их времени и его характеру; в) сравнение художественных произведений одного и того же народа и выяснение национального элемента в искусстве; г) общечеловеческий элемент в искусстве. Birkengof et al., *Iz istorii Leningradskoy konservatorii*, 117.

⁷⁹ See: Sargeant, "A new class of people."

⁸⁰ Aleksandr Nikolayevich Lushin, "Imenitiye i pochetniye grazhdane v Rossii v XVII – nachale XX veka: stanovleniye i razvitiye pravovogo statusa," [Eminent and honored citizens in Russia in the 17th - early 18th centuries: establishment and development of the legal status.] *Vyestnik Nizhegorodskoy akademii MVD Rossii*, no. 18 (2012): 25.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁸² Sargeant, "A new class of people," 50.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 56.

St. Petersburg Conservatory, similarly, enrollment was open to women, non-nobles and Jews, who comprised a significant portion of the student population. Thus, whether or not the title of free artist, awarded to the conservatory graduates, also conveyed the opportunity for upward mobility, was a matter of paramount importance in the estate system in the Imperial Russia. In case of the conservatory, however, the efforts to secure legal rights for free artists to become honored citizens met with opposition from the government, which sought to limit access to the aristocracy from the lower estates. Sargeant cites an official provision, which was crucial for the status theoretical subjects had at the conservatory: in the process of approval of the official conservatory statute the Committee of Ministers demanded that students excelled in music theory in order to be worthy of the title of Free Artist. Sargeant also pointed out that this agreed very well with Anton Rubinstein's own ideal of a well-schooled musician:

According to this ideal, greater aesthetic and theoretical knowledge distinguished true professionals from amateurs or artisans. ... At the same time, the theoretical and aesthetic education of conservatoire musicians provided a rationale to insist on their inclusion in respectable, educated society alongside their less musically skilled but better educated amateur counterparts.⁸⁴

Theoretical knowledge, perceived as proof of one's intellectual prowess and well-rounded education, was thus a defining trait of a professional musician worthy of the title of free artist and therefore was indispensable for the prestige of the profession. Furthermore, it was an indispensable skill for a professional composer, and composers were the most prestigious estate inside the music profession. In 1901 Rimsky-Korsakov asserted bluntly, in his project to revise the composition curriculum, that "musical creativity is the highest sphere of manifestation of musical talent and the highest branch of activity in the art of music. I believe that all musician-performers will agree with this as well, since such a statement in no way diminishes their significance."⁸⁵ "Theory," therefore, was taught at the Conservatory as theory of composition in an essentially practical sense – the professional skills necessary to produce qualified composers, not as a branch of music-scholarly endeavor.⁸⁶ For students of other faculties theoretical instruction was different in level, but not in kind.

All in all, instruction in music theory received a hands-on approach. Records of the meetings of the Conservatory Council and the Artistic Council reveal that the changes in music theory curriculum were given much thought and were implemented each year. After very detailed debates new classes were introduced, the duration of courses was adjusted, entrance and graduation requirements were specified for general and specialized theory courses, professors' responsibilities were formalized, and even a competition for a textbook on musical forms was

⁸⁴ Ibid., 44.

⁸⁵ Музыкальное творчество есть высшая область проявления музыкального таланта и высшая отрасль деятельности в музыкальном искусстве. Полагаю, что с этим согласятся и все музыканты-исполнители, ибо такое положение отнюдь не умаляет их значения. Birkengof et al., *Iz istorii Leningradskoy konservatorii*, 278.

⁸⁶ This consideration factored into my choice of this study's protagonists. For instance, such a celebrated figure as Sergey Taneyev, traditionally considered one the pillars of early Russian musicology, and primarily a composer himself, designed his magnum opus, the monumental theoretical study *Convertible Counterpoint in the Strict Style*, first and foremost to provide theoretical and practical knowledge to composers. As such, this study and its author fall largely outside of the objective of this dissertation is concerned with – to trace the emerging identity of the discipline as an independent humanistic enterprise.

announced.⁸⁷

For instance, on April 4, 1883 the theoretical branch of the Artistic Council (Rimsky-Korsakov, Johannsen, Sieke, Rubets, Lyadov and Sacchetti, among others) discussed four items on their agenda:

- 1) dividing the general harmony course into two years;
- 2) starting instruction in practical composition at the same time as classes in counterpoint;
- 3) establishing requirements in piano skills for composers;
- 4) opening a chair in History of Russian Music (which was not implemented, unlike the previous three items).⁸⁸

On February 18, 1885, the same quorum decided to 1) divide all the composition students among three professors (Rimsky, Johannsen, and Solovyov), 2) assign each professor a class in instrumentation, 3) require successful graduation from classes in solfège and elementary theory before entering a specialized class in theory, 4) divide the general course of theory into short and comprehensive courses.⁸⁹ In 1886 the curriculum was somewhat revamped again.⁹⁰ Evidently, the Council's priority was to create, by method of trial and error, the most effective theoretical curriculum possible.

By contrast, their attitude to music history was very *laissez-faire*. Examination of the records of the Council meetings revealed that besides the establishment of the above-mentioned specialized two-year course in music history in 1885, and the class in aesthetics in 1883, no changes were made to the curriculum in the 1880s that did not concern composition theory or performance. Nor did anything of the sort come under discussion in the 1890s. The “science” of music was mentioned extremely rarely (in fact, I came across only two such instances – in 1878 and 1916), and to no avail. In fact, even the word “nauchnīy” was used almost exclusively to denote the so called “scientific classes” – that is, general subjects such as geography, physics and languages, which were mandatory for the Conservatory students, - and was rarely applied to the study of music.

From this it is not hard to infer that music history and aesthetics were not understood as independent or scholarly disciplines, or even essential ones for the curriculum. Arguably, these disciplines played a similar role in the conservatory's quest for legitimization: by opening wider intellectual horizons to the conservatory graduates these subjects supplied the students' performance or composition skills with highbrow varnish, applicable in elite social contexts, and thus added to the prestige of the profession. Subserving to performance and composition, they were necessary only as long as they helped produce a well-rounded musician. Moreover, as long as they were not practically applicable, unlike the theoretical subjects, their role was much less important. In contrast to music theory, during the 1870s-1890s music history and aesthetics were a low priority for the Artistic Council.

One of Sacchetti's letters to the St. Petersburg Directorate of the Imperial Russian Musical Society, which oversaw the conservatory, provides further evidence that the objective of music history courses was seen as purely practical. Asking to reverse his pay cut, Liveriy

⁸⁷ See TsGIA: F. 361, op. 11, dd. 9, 49, 64, 72, 101, 139, 155, 251, 293A, and other journals of meetings of the Conservatory Council and Artistic Council.

⁸⁸ TsGIA: F. 361, op. 11, d. 155, l. 53-53v.

⁸⁹ TsGIA: F. 361, op. 11, d. 155, l. 65-65v.

⁹⁰ TsGIA: F. 361, op. 11, d. 155, l. 110.

Sacchetti justified the necessity of the courses he taught at the conservatory as follows:

Anton Grigoryevich [Rubinstein] gave me an opportunity to concentrate on my work on history and aesthetics. These subjects Anton Grigoryevich regarded as the foundation of a sensible musical education, and voiced this opinion to the audience of my lectures, which he sometimes attended. According to Anton Grigoryevich's views, I try to teach music history as a science that can insure the younger generation from fashionable, haphazard trends, which do not always agree with the true progress of art, - and to aid the conservatory students not only in acquainting themselves with the exemplary works of the past eras, but also in understanding them. By reading lectures on aesthetics I mean to open the students' eyes to the meaning and significance of art in general and music in particular, in order to guard future artists against mere virtuosity, which lowers art to the level of musical craft.⁹¹

The directorate's resolution on Sacchetti's letter - "Ask the director to find the means to grant Professor Sacchetti's request" - further confirms that his petition resonated well with the official conservatory position on music history and aesthetics. The objective of these subjects was to cultivate educated artists, who would understand the meaning of art, and who also would be able to know true progress from fashion. On the contrary, efforts to legitimize the professional identity of a scholar would have been alien to the agenda that preoccupied the conservatories at the time: to legitimize the profession of a musician. In 1892, after fourteen years of teaching at the conservatory and six years of being a professor, Sacchetti wrote (in the same request to keep his salary):

I am writing my composition on aesthetics in order to help my successor to continue my work; if such a person does not appear, then I hope that this book can replace lectures on this subject for the future pupils of the Conservatory and the Academy of Arts.⁹²

Not only was he not aware of any other Russian scholar whom he deemed to be able to carry out the similar job; he also doubted he would ever have a successor at any of these two institutions.

Stasov's protégé

The major reason for Sacchetti's failure to nurture a successor and to elicit enthusiasm for his ideas from the Russian musical community outside of institutions, was precisely the European-

⁹¹ Уменьшив мой педагогический труд в Консерватории, не нанося мне материального ущерба, Антон Григорьевич оказал мне истинное благодеяние, доставив возможность сильнее сосредоточиться на занятиях по истории и эстетике. На эти предметы Антон Григорьевич смотрел, как на основу разумного музыкального образования, и высказывал этот взгляд аудитории, иногда посещая мои лекции. Согласно с мнением Антона Григорьевича, я стараюсь преподавать историю музыки как науку, могущую уберечь молодое поколение от модных, случайных направлений, не всегда согласных с истинным прогрессом искусства, - и содействовать учащимся в Консерватории не только знакомиться с образцовыми произведениями прежних времен, но и понимать их. Читением лекций по эстетике я имею в виду открыть глаза учащимся на смысл и значение искусства вообще и музыки в частности, для предохранения будущих художников от одной лишь виртуозности, понижающей искусство до музыкальных дел мастерства. TsGIA: F. 361, op. 9, d. 48, l. 41-41v.

⁹² Я пишу свое сочинение по эстетике для того, чтобы помочь моему будущему преемнику продолжать мое дело; если же таковой не окажется, то я надеюсь моей книгой заменить лекции по этому предмету для будущих учеников Консерватории и Академии Художеств. TsGIA: F. 361, op. 9, d. 48, l. 42.

oriented style of his scholarship. The diaries of Nikolai Fyodorovich Findeisen (1868-1928),⁹³ best known as the founder and editor of the seminal pre-revolutionary music periodical *Russian Musical Gazette* (1894-1917), provide a glimpse into the reasons why Sacchetti's scholarly work might have been seen as irrelevant to the development of music studies at the turn of the twentieth century. Born sixteen years after Sacchetti, Findeisen belonged to the next generation of Russian music writers, such as Yuliy Engel (1868-1927), Aleksandr Ossovsky (1871-1957), and the slightly younger Boleslav Yavorsky (1877-1942), who in the last two decades before the revolution started to formulate professional identity and standards, despite the absence of institutional career opportunities.

Findeisen's family background was not unlike that of Sacchetti. He was a son of a German merchant Fyodor (Friedrich) Davidovich Findeisen – who hailed from Altenberg, Saxony, but grew up in what is now Estonia, – and his second wife Nadezhda Osipovna Kubli, whose father was Swiss.⁹⁴ Although Fyodor Findeisen considered himself to be Russian,⁹⁵ he was a Lutheran, as were his seven children from the first marriage, and spoke German as his first language. Nikolai Findeisen, on the other hand, was Orthodox, like his mother, and grew up speaking Russian. He even complained that in German he wrote “worse than a shoemaker,”⁹⁶ when he submitted an article on Glinka to a German periodical *Der Klavier Lehrer*.

Unlike Sacchetti, however, Findeisen never attended the conservatory and was never affiliated with a major music institution (except the journal he founded) for most of his career. His scholarly prowess Findeisen gained by self-education, from perusing standard German textbooks like Adolf Bernhard Marx's *Allgemeine Musiklehre*⁹⁷ to translating Emil Naumann's *Illustrierte Musikgeschichte* into Russian.⁹⁸ He studied music theory privately with the future professor of the St. Petersburg Conservatory, the composer Nikolai Aleksandrovich Sokolov,⁹⁹ who in turn studied under Sacchetti's teachers Rimsky-Korsakov and Johannsen.

Findeisen's real mentor was none other than Vladimir Vasilyevich Stasov – the pillar of Russian music nationalism, who became an appropriate role model for the 19-year-old student ardently interested in the history of Russian music. Over the course of his career Findeisen authored monographs on Glinka, Serov, Dargomizhsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, and Rubinstein, as well as on subjects like art song, early operas, and music criticism in Russia. His magnum opus was the seminal *Studies of the History of Music in Russia from Ancient Times to the End of the*

⁹³ Nikolai Fyodorovich Findeisen and Marina Lvovna Kosmovskaya, *Diaries, 1892-1901* (St. Petersburg: Dmitriy Bulanin, 2004); Findeisen and Kosmovskaya, *Diaries, 1902-1909*; Nikolai Fyodorovich Findeisen and Marina Lvovna Kosmovskaya, *Diaries, 1909-1914* (St. Petersburg: Dmitriy Bulanin, 2013).

⁹⁴ Nikolai Fyodorovich Findeisen and Marina Lvovna Kosmovskaya, *Iz moikh vospominaniy* [From My Memoirs], *Rukopisnye pamyatniki* (St. Petersburg: Rossiyskaya natsional'naya biblioteka, 2004), 55-56.

⁹⁵ Круг приятелей и знакомых отца состоял преимущественно из немцев, хотя сам он считал себя русским и любил говорить по-русски, смягчая некоторые слова и не всегда выговаривая правильно и чисто. *Ibid.*, 57.

⁹⁶ Кончил немецкую статью о Глинке, отправил. Вышла изрядно длинной. Попал в немецкие литераторы, хотя пишу по-немецки хуже сапожника! Findeisen and Kosmovskaya, *Diaries, 1902-1909*, 119.

⁹⁷ Adolf Bernhard Marx and Aleksandr Sergeyevich Famintsin, *Vseobshchiy uchebnik muziki: rukovodstvo dlya uchiteley i uchashchikhsya po vsem otraslyam muzikal'nogo obrazovaniya* [The Universal School of Music: A Manual for Teachers and Students in Every Branch of Musical Art], 2 ed. (Moscow: P. Yurgenson, 1881).

⁹⁸ Emil Naumann and Nikolai Fyodorovich Findeisen, *Illyustrirovannaya vseobshchaya istoriya muziki: razvitiye muzikal'nogo iskusstva s drevneishikh vremyon do nashikh dnei* [Illustrated Music History] (St. Petersburg: F.V. Shchepansky, 1897-1899).

⁹⁹ Marina Lvovna Kosmovskaya, "Nikolai Fyodorovich Findeisen (1868-1928) i yego vospominaniya," in *Iz moikh vospominaniy* (St. Petersburg: Rossiyskaya natsional'naya biblioteka, 2004), 33.

*Eighteenth Century (Ocherki po istorii muziki v Rossii s drevneyshikh vremyon do kontsa XVIII veka)*¹⁰⁰ (1928–1929). Findeisen’s studies on Russian music were based on a hitherto unprecedented number of documentary sources and set a new standard of scholarly rigor in music-historical work. Pioneering music source studies in Russia, he published in RMG countless letters of Russian composers, and founded an almanac specifically for publication of primary materials on Russian music history – *Muzikal’naya starina (The Musical Past)*.

As a specialist on Russian music Findeisen was known in Europe. Oskar Fleischer invited him to become a corresponding member of the International Music Society;¹⁰¹ he published in the journal of the society,¹⁰² as well as in periodicals such as *Die Musik*,¹⁰³ *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*¹⁰⁴ and others. When Hugo Riemann needed advice on Russian musical culture, he turned to none other than Findeisen.¹⁰⁵ He also developed a project to found a St. Petersburg branch of the IMS.¹⁰⁶ Such a solid international standing of a scholar who formally could have been considered a dilettante, i.e. who was unaffiliated and did not earn a diploma from a university or a conservatory, exemplified the openness of the Russian music-scholarly community at the turn of the century. Neither conservatories nor universities functioned as gatekeepers of the emerging status of a music scholar at the time. Instead, people built their reputations independently, through publications. Furthermore, from a disciplinary point of view an affiliation with the conservatory provided a neither an intellectual community nor financial support necessary to carry out research. Still, by the last decade of the nineteenth century, when Findeisen came of age as a scholar, the status of a conservatory professor carried certain prestige, as well as certain expectations, at least in the eyes of outsiders such as Findeisen.

Although Findeisen was sought after in Germany as an expert on Russian music, he possessed a thorough knowledge of Western European music history as well, writing on Wagner, among other topics. Unlike his mentor Stasov, Findeisen’s appreciation extended to most of the musical canon, of which his tribute to the Wagnermania of the time was but a small part. This precipitated Findeisen’s disagreements with Stasov. By the end of Stasov’s life his nationalist convictions had become increasingly hardline. Even for his protégé Findeisen he became too much. As early as 1898 Findeisen protested against his teacher’s narrow-mindedness in a diary

¹⁰⁰ Nikolai Fyodorovich Findeisen, *Ocherki po istorii muziki v Rossii s drevneyshikh vremyon do kontsa XVIII veka* [Studies of the History of Music in Russia from Ancient Times to the End of the 18th Century], 2 vols. (Moscow, Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoye izdatel'stvo, 1928-1930).

¹⁰¹ Лейпциг. Вечером 12-го [июня 1899]. С Флейшером в Берлине долго беседовали об учреждении петербургской секции международного Музыкального общества, в котором, кроме того, он предложил мне быть членом-корреспондентом и сотрудником обоих изданий общества – статьи, библиография и обзор музыкальной жизни России; 5 августа: Пришли циркуляры Internationale Musik Gesellschaft – выбран членом-корреспондирующим. Был из Праги Ян Pастејрик, расспрашивал о русской музыкальной литературе. Findeisen and Kosmovskaya, *Diaries, 1892-1901*, 244, 251.

¹⁰² 2 сентября 1903: В «Zeitschrift» Международного музыкального общества сегодня напечатана моя корреспонденция – достаточно обкорнанная! Ibid., 123.

¹⁰³ 1 августа 1901: Послал ответ редакции нового журнала “Die Musik”, которая предложила мне сотрудничать. В журнале Международного общества – напечатана моя статья. Ibid., 282.

¹⁰⁴ 7 сентября 1903. Сегодня от нового редактора Шеринга бицмановской «Neue Zeitschrift für Musik» (Лейпциг) – корректировать. 8 сентября 1903. Новое приглашение немцев сотрудничать: от редакции «Signale für die Musikalische Welt» (Genf). Findeisen and Kosmovskaya, *Diaries, 1902-1909*, 123-124.

¹⁰⁵ National Library of Russia, Manuscript Department. F. 816, op. 2, d. 2155. A letter and a card (H. Riemann’s photo) to N.F. Findeisen (1901, 1909).

¹⁰⁶ 2 сентября 1908: Вчера – проект Устава СПб Секции Международного музыкального общества. Findeisen and Kosmovskaya, *Diaries, 1902-1909*, 220.

entry:

[Stasov] sent the stupidest note – he definitely values only his own, and in the work of others (which also goes completely over his head) he sees and gloats only over ... typos! What a crackpot!¹⁰⁷

The correspondence between Findeisen and Stasov lasted from 1891 until a showdown in the press in 1903 that ended their close relationship. In 1903 their disagreements spilled into a public quarrel over a matter as petty as Findeisen not being reverent enough about Glinka's unrealized plan to write an opera after a play by the famous lexicographer Vladimir Dahl. Still, Findeisen inherited much from this relationship, including his contempt for Liveriy Sacchetti. Ever the ardent proponent of the New Russian School, and the main ideologue of its war with the Westernized conservatory, Stasov abhorred the idea that Russian talent could benefit from European schooling. That Vladimir Stasov should detest Sacchetti's work was inevitable. In 1896, a year after Sacchetti started working with Stasov at the Imperial Public Library, Findeisen made an entry in his diary:

Stasov berated Sacchetti – called him stupid and a fool and complained about his assistance (although he is a sweet and kind person, but a fool) ... Sacchetti is without talent, etc. Rimsky-Korsakov, when Sacchetti was still a conservatory student, called him a mediocrity. What a professor, historian, scholar, librarian?!¹⁰⁸

Despite the fact that Findeisen eventually fell out with his mentor, he continued to dislike Sacchetti.

Findeisen vs. Sacchetti

Findeisen's opposition to Sacchetti, however, was private: his negative attitude to the conservatory historian's methods found an outlet exclusively in his diaries. There, it persisted for decades.¹⁰⁹ It might have even been the case that Findeisen kept his grudge unbeknownst to Sacchetti, whose correspondence with Findeisen was unfailingly courteous. The editor of RMG never acknowledged his animosity publicly, and ran favorable reviews of Sacchetti's books and even an overview of his career.¹¹⁰

A specialist on Russian music who set a new standard of fidelity to primary sources, in his diaries he derided Sacchetti for not knowing Russian music well enough and not making an effort to unearth the necessary documents. The following diary entry dating from 1909 sums up Findeisen's grievances:

¹⁰⁷ 5 октября 1898: Последний прислал преглупую записку – ему положительно дорого только свое, а в чужих работах (да еще явившихся совершенно помимо его мысли и некоторого участия) он усматривает и расписывает только ... опечатки! Какой чудак! Findeisen and Kosmovskaya, *Diaries, 1892-1901*, 232.

¹⁰⁸ 20 ноября 1896: Стасов очень ругал Саккетти – и глупым, и дураком, и жаловался на его помощничество (хотя человек милый и добрый, но дурак); его протезировал Веселовский и какая-то дама (Усова – что ли). Саккетти – и без таланта и т.д. Римский-Корсаков, когда Саккетти был еще учеником консерватории, отзывался о нем как о бездарности. Каков профессор, историк, ученый, библиотекарь?! *Ibid.*, 180.

¹⁰⁹ From the first entry concerning Sacchetti (1896) until the last one in the published portion of the diaries (1914).

¹¹⁰ Nikolai Fyodorovich Findeisen, "Liveriy Antonovich Sacchetti: biograficheskiy ocherk," [Liveriy Antonovich Sacchetti: Biographical essay.] *Russkaya muzikal'naya gazeta*, no. 8 (1898): col. 722-726.

Yesterday I was taken aback by the well-meaning stupidity of the silver-haired “scholar” Sacchetti, who came to ask for a recommendation letter to Adler before his trip to Vienna as a delegate. He is going to give a talk on early secular music before Glinka, focusing on Haydn and the Philharmonic Society; but when I asked him if he was aware of the existence of symphonic concerts and symphonies here in the eighteenth century, and performances of Haydn’s works and oratorios before the foundation of the Philharmonic Society, his agreeable countenance started assuming an increasingly surprised expression. “Is it possible? Where did you find all this? I suppose in the Romyantsev Library, etc., because we sure don’t have anything in the Public Library!” Well done, old professor, who in all of his 50-year-long career did not think to take a peek at the catalogues (of the Manuscript department) and accounts of the same Public Library, in which he served for many years, let alone to look through old editions. ... Enraptured, he asked me to give him appropriate materials for his upcoming talk in Vienna, and for a subsequent reworking of his History. His own materials do not go further than the old Albrecht’s essays on the Philharmonic Society, and the like. But of course he’d never think of working with authentic sources – despite all his certified sapience and his professor’s title.¹¹¹

Findeisen repeatedly used scare quotes around “scholar” or “historian” in relation to Sacchetti: “Correspondence with Ziloti, Pyotr, Sacchetti (asked for materials ... a “historian”!).”¹¹² This betrays the fact that Findeisen’s annoyance with Sacchetti was to a great extent fueled by the latter’s official status as a scholar, his firm institutional affiliation, and his title of a professor (to which Sacchetti admittedly did not live up). Findeisen’s repeated diatribes demonstrate that he had a clear idea of what kind of skills a person in such a position should possess, in order to be worthy of their status. These skills, which included mandatory expertise on Russian music (by virtue of being a music scholar in Russia) and prowess in working with primary sources, did not quite overlap with the one Sacchetti had.

Findeisen’s used the same yardstick for other music writers as well. When Alexey Fyodorovich Kal, who taught music history at the St. Petersburg University in the rank of Privatdozent, met with Findeisen to pick up materials and scores on his lectures on Musorgsky, Findeisen ranted:

¹¹¹ 21 апреля 1909: Поудивился вчера благоглупости седовласого «ученого» Саккетти, приехавшего просить рекомендации к Адлеру перед поездкой делегатом в Вену. Он собирается прочесть о старинной светской музыке до Глинки и указать на Гайдна и Филармоническое общество; когда же я его спросил, известно ли ему о существовании симфонических концертов и симфониях у нас в XVIII в., об исполнении произведений и ораторий Гайдна до основания Филармонического общества, его благообразный лик стал принимать все более и более удивленное выражение. «Да неужели? Где вы все это нашли? Наверно в Румянцевской библиотеке и др., так как в нас в Публичной библиотеке ведь ничего нет!». Молодец старый профессор, за свою 50-летнюю деятельность не догадавшийся не то что старые издания перелистать, а хотя бы заглянуть в каталоги (Рукописного отдела) и отчеты той самой Публичной библиотеки, в которой он служит много лет ... Умиленно просил дать ему соответственный материал для предстоящего венского доклада, а затем и для полной переработки его Истории. Его материалы не идут дальше старых альбрехтских очерков о Филармоническом обществе и т.п. И ведь ни один черт не вздумает поработать над подлинными источниками – несмотря на свою апробированную ученость и профессорское звание. Findeisen and Kosmovskaya, *Diaries, 1902-1909*, 234.

¹¹² 5 июля 1909: Переписка с Зилоти, Петром, Саккетти (материалов запросил... «историк»!) Ibid., 241.

He admitted that he knew about Musorgky only ... from Kompaneysky's article! It is even more amusing that only now, lecturing at the university, he studies (?) and learns about history of music in Russia! A fine historian, a fine Privatdozent!¹¹³

Neither Findeisen nor Stasov were affiliated with the conservatory or the university. Thus, Findeisen never had the opportunity to experience firsthand that a conservatory professorship was in fact quite unhelpful when it came to scholarly research. Instead, Findeisen idealized the professorial title and the institutional affiliation and held it to an exceedingly high standard – not only when it came to historians, but professional musicians in general.

According to Findeisen, neither Nikolai Sokolov, his former music theory teacher, nor Aleksandr Glazunov, the then director of the Conservatory, were professional enough. At a Russian Musical Society meeting he observed the lack of initiative, plenty of bureaucratism, and helpless mumbling, “as if it were not the main musical institution in Russia, but a circle of incompetent and apathetic provincial dilettantes.”¹¹⁴ The sense of being an outsider permeated Findeisen's diaries, in spite of his less than reverent attitude towards the conservatory officials. After attending another meeting at the RMO he commented bitterly: “The esteemed professors (Sacchetti, Lavrov, Sokolov) must have been surprised at my attendance. Sacchetti is unbearably silver-tongued and such a windbag.”¹¹⁵

Summing up, Findeisen's rejection of Sacchetti's work clarifies what it meant for Findeisen to be a scholar. First, Findeisen often emphasized Sacchetti's scholarly incompetence. He was annoyed that the professor was not keeping up with the latest developments in the discipline, especially Russian ones. In 1898 he wrote down: “It is strange that Sacchetti with ‘pleasant courtesy’ expressed his surprise at the fact that in 1895 I expressed my opinion on the very essence of Fleischer's studies on neumes!”¹¹⁶ He ridiculed Sacchetti's reliance on secondary sources, which at the time were predominantly foreign. Sacchetti's remarkable bibliographic control of Austro-German scholarship did not earn him any credit in Findeisen's eyes, for whom Russian primary sources obviously carried much more weight and authenticity.

Second, Findeisen repeatedly referred to the irrelevance of Sacchetti's public speaking and deemed such empty talk to be out of place in the institutional context: “Sacchetti's babble – unnecessary, making everyone cringe.”¹¹⁷ Such complaints resonated with the ones Vladimir Frolov made regarding Sacchetti's talk on music and text, in which his heavy reliance on

¹¹³ 23 января 1908: Потом – пришел Каль за материалами и нотами Мусоргского для университетских лекций. Признался, что о Мусоргском знает только ... по статье Компанейского! Еще курьезнее, что только теперь, читая лекции в университете, он изучает (?) и узнает историю музыки России! Хорош историк, хорош приват-доцент! Ibid., 201.

¹¹⁴ 17 октября 1909: Вчерашнее заседание юбилейной комиссии произвело снова удручающее впечатление. Отсутствие инициативы (почти у всех), канцелярщина Соколова, болтовня – ненужная, заставляющая всех морщиться, Саккетти, - глупость Арцыбушева, мямление Глазунова – точно это не главное музыкально учреждение в России, а кружок неумелых и апатичных провинциальных дилетантов. Findeisen and Kosmovskaya, *Diaries, 1909-1914*, 80.

¹¹⁵ 24 сентября 1909: Вечером – заседание юбилейной комиссии ИРМО. Поудивились, видимо, господа профессора (Саккетти, Лавров, Соколов) моему присутствию. Саккетти нестерпимо сладкоречист и пустозвонист. Ibid., 77.

¹¹⁶ 9 сентября 1898: Был в Публичной библиотеке (странно, что Саккетти с «приятной любезностью» удивляется, что в 1895 г. я выразил свое мнение о самой сути этюдов о невмах Флейшера!) Findeisen and Kosmovskaya, *Diaries, 1892-1901*, 228.

¹¹⁷ Findeisen and Kosmovskaya, *Diaries, 1909-1914*, 80.

European musicology did not make his conclusions any more “strictly scientific.” For Findeisen, too, to be a scholar meant to produce original thought, and originality he conceptualized in a nationalist vein – for him it meant to best the imported European knowledge, not merely perpetuate it.

Third, in the early twentieth century an institutional affiliation of a scholar already carried high prestige and entailed correspondingly high expectations. Despite the lack of efforts on Sacchetti’s part to entrench his disciplines (music history and aesthetics) within the conservatory curriculum, and the lack of motivation to do so on the conservatory’s part, the need for institutionalization of the music-scholarly enterprise obviously grew fast among the Russian music writers.

Conclusion: bypassing the conservatory

Nevertheless, for the first two decades of the twentieth century, the quest for institutionalization and debates about what music scholarship should be in Russia, were happening almost entirely outside of the framework of higher education. The inner chapters of this dissertation will explore these public discussions in detail. All the while, at the conservatories music theory and history remained entirely subservient to music making.

It was not until 1916 (the year Sacchetti died) that the venerable music critic Nikolai Dmitriyevich Kashkin (1839-1920) filed an official memorandum on the necessity to develop scholarly research at the St.Petersburg conservatory. He motivated his suggestion by the responsibility of the conservatory, which wielded much authority in musical matters, to reinvigorate contemporary musical life and purge it from the elements of decadence, which, according to him, stemmed from ignorance in what constituted the nature of music and laws of its development.¹¹⁸ Kashkin suggested founding chairs in contemporary harmony, rhythm (which would also be responsible for formal analysis), Russian music, and applied aesthetics. However, it was not until a decade later that such a change was really implemented at the St. Petersburg Conservatory, when Boris Asafyev was tasked by the Soviet educational administration to found a department of musicology in 1926. By that time, musicology had already been flourishing for five years at the first Russian research musicological department at the Institute for Art History in St.Petersburg. Quite tellingly, its chair Boris Asafyev and his followers defined this new kind of institution in opposition to the conservatories.

In May 1921, when the Institute was on the verge of its reorganization into a research hub in September 1921, Asafyev used his criticism of the conservatories as an important part of his rationale for the establishment of a new research institution that would be different in kind. In a memo that was read at a meeting of the Council of the Faculty of Music on May 19, 1921,¹¹⁹ Asafyev wrote:

The question of founding a higher music education institution has been repeatedly raised by the interested cultural figures, but could never be solved in a satisfactory way, because such an institution has been always conceptualized only as a music school of the conservatory type, i.e. a professional educational institution, which is alien in its nature to the activities of purely scientific character. ... Until very recently, chairs of music history and aesthetics [at the conservatories] have been occupied by persons without any

¹¹⁸ Birkengof et al., *Iz istorii Leningradskoy konservatorii*, 305.

¹¹⁹ TsGALI: F. 82, op .1, ye. kh. 60, l. 56v.

specialized training, whereas in the field of teaching theory the conservatories confined themselves to the once and for all established type, remaining alien to all new movements in this question and to the historical consideration of the problems of musical composition.¹²⁰

In 1925, in his report on the five-year activity of the Music Department, Asafyev's pupil Alexey Finagin echoed this sentiment. According to him, before the foundation of the Music Department, music scholarship had been largely equated at the conservatories with practical training needed to impart technical skills to composers. He also pointed out that the idea that scholarship was an intellectual activity different in kind from creative work such as performing or composing, was in fact quite recent.¹²¹

From the point of view of this brave new Soviet musicology, not only Sacchetti, but also Findeisen was hopelessly outdated. It was Findeisen's turn to be taken to task by a scholar born sixteen years after him. Boris Asafyev (1884-1949) wrote to Alexey Finagin in 1923:

Findeisen is out of the question. Chelyustkin compiled his work on Sarti from Findeisen ... [and] borrowed source references from Findeisen, who made them up ... I'm writing all this to say that we mustn't invite Findeisen [to the Institute].¹²²

However, Asafyev did realize Findeisen's aspirations that Russian musicology be founded on

¹²⁰ Вопрос об организации высшего музыкального учебного заведения неоднократно поднимался заинтересованными художественными деятелями, но никогда не мог получить удовлетворительного разрешения, так как такое учреждение мыслилось всегда лишь в виде музыкальной школы консерваторского типа, т.е. профессионального учебного заведения, чуждого по существу своему занятиям [?] чисто научного характера. ... В высших музыкальных учебных заведениях кафедры истории музыки и эстетики до самого недавнего времени замещались лицами, не имевшими ни какой специальной подготовки, а в области преподавания теории консерватории ограничивались раз навсегда установленным типом, оставаясь совершенно чуждыми всяким новым движениям в данном вопросе и историческому рассмотрению проблем музыкального письма. TsGALI: F. 82, op. 3, ye. kh. 1, l.1-1v.

¹²¹ Наука о музыке в России, до времени открытия нашего учреждения ... отождествлялась с дисциплинами, предназначенными для муз.-технической подготовки композиторов и исполнителей и, в таком случае, находилась полностью в плане деятельности существовавших в России консерваторий. Тот очевидный факт, что быть творцом музыкантом и быть музыковедом или историком искусства суть две, различные по своему призванию, формы человеческой деятельности и что они, тем самым, требуют каждая особых, отличных друг от друга, методов подхода к муз.-художественным произведениям – этот несомненный факт коренного различия художественной и научной работы (при всем их необходимом взаимодействии), стал отчетливо сознаваться в области музыкознания только в самое последнее время. Alexey Vasilyevich Finagin, "Obzor deyatel'nosti R.I.T.M. za pyat' let ego sushchestvovaniya" [Survey of the work of the Music Department during the five years of its existence] in *De musica: Vremennik Razryada istorii i teorii muziki Gosudarstvennogo instituta istorii iskusstv* (Leningrad: Academia, 1925), 100.

¹²² 28 июня 1923 г. Асафьев-Финагину: О Финдейзене не может быть и речи. Челюсткин списывал с Ф. свою работу о Сарти и вслед за Ф. влез в дебри, а с ним вместе и я третьи сутки не могу вылезти из сартиевского болота. чтобы сплести концы с концами. Сокращаю, клею и исправляю, собрав все материалы, какие только можно, чтобы работа походила на научную и добросовестную. Челюсткин делает ссылки по Ф. а тот врет или Ч. сам не указывает откуда, а когда указывает или я сам догадываюсь - вранье или просто ничего нет. ... Пишу заново многие разборы, составляю указатель и т.п. ... Пока я читал эту работу не входя в детали и не сравнивая с Ф. я поддался хорошему мнению А.Н.Р-К-ва, а теперь прихожу в бешенство. Нет – больше нельзя таких выпускать из Института – или Института не надо!... Все это на то пишу, что приглашать Ф-на нельзя. RIII: F. 68. op.1, ye. kh. 78, l. 40-40v.

source studies and concern itself primarily with studying Russian music. The idea that the riches of the Russian musical traditions are overdue for scholarly examination was an opinion championed not only by Findeisen, but also by countless other critics in the first decades of the twentieth century. In the early 1920s, Asafyev used this ubiquitous idea to provide justification for the creation of the musicological department in his above-mentioned memo. He deplored the fact that there had been no attempts to study the “richest examples of Russian musical creativity” and the “treasury of folk songs.”¹²³ The research plan of the Music Department for the year 1924 read:

The objectives of the [Historical] Section lie primarily in the sphere of studying Russian music; naturally, [the Section does not] reject scholarly inquiry into the history of Western European music, since there are appropriate materials and primary sources for such an inquiry in Russia.¹²⁴

Ironically, criticism leveled by an independent scholar (Findeisen) at an affiliated scholar (Sacchetti) provided one of the very first glimpses into the emerging identity of a musicologist in Russia. Moreover, Findeisen’s professional identity exerted strong influence on the institutionalized musicology of the 1920s, which defined itself in opposition to the conservatories and was much more influenced by the battle between positivism and idealism in the public press (to be examined in Chapters 2, 3, and 4) than by anything emanating from the conservatories. As Sacchetti’s inconsequential career illustrates, the conservatory environment largely did not foster the development of the kind of interdisciplinary, humanistically-oriented musicology that flourished in Russia from early 1920s until the 1930s, and in the West until now.

After the research activities of the Institute were curtailed for ideological reasons, musicology had no institutional bases other than the conservatories, where it has continued to reside until the present time. However, the Soviet ideological crackdown of the 1930s meant that the new conservatory-based musicology never had the chance to develop historical methodology untarred by ideological control, or build scholarly relations with Western musicological traditions. The conservatory-style theory, so much deplored by Asafyev and Finagin, became the safest space for music-scholarly thought. Repercussions of such an institutional arrangement continue to be felt until today, especially in the deep conceptual misunderstanding between Russian conservatory-based musicology, and the university-based musicology of Europe, Britain, and the United States.

¹²³ Но не есть ли разительный пример нашей научной отсталости, что Россия с ее сокровищницей народных песен до сих пор не располагает рядом научных работ по исследованию песнетворчества и сравнительному изучению песенных типов народов ее населяющих. ... Россия до сих пор не располагает научными исследованиями, освещающими историю русского музыкального искусства; такие мастера как Глинка, Римский-Корсаков, Мусоргский даже не нашли своих биографов, и не было сделано даже попытки подвергнуть музыкально научному исследованию богатейшие образцы русского музыкального творчества. TsGALI: F. 82, op. 3, ye. kh. 1, l.1v.

¹²⁴ План работ Разряда Истории Музыки на 1924 г. Историческая секция. ... Задачи Секции ... лежат главным образом в области изучения русской музыки, конечно без какого либо принципиального отказа от научных исследований по истории зап. европейской музыки, поскольку для таковых имеются в России соответствующие материалы и первоисточники. TsGALI: F. 82, op. 1, ye. kh. 152, l.2.

Chapter 2. The reception of Hanslick's *On the Musically Beautiful* and the Shift to Positivism

Positivism is not high on the list of things that come to mind in connection with Russian and Soviet humanities. Andrzej Walicki, a historian of Russian thought, does not even think it is true that positivist influence in Russia ever had much weight: “Positivist ideas of course had a considerable impact on the general intellectual climate of the day, and some Russian positivists were not without talent, but none of them can be said to have played a really prominent role in the history of Russian ideas.”¹²⁵ However, the trend to conceptualize music scholarship as a rigorous (and thus prestigious) scientific enterprise, which had been gaining momentum since the mid-1880s, and became an instrumental influence on Soviet music scholarship, can be at least partly traced back to Auguste Comte's doctrine and its modifications in the writings of John Stuart Mill, Émile Littré, Herbert Spencer, and Hippolyte Taine.

The first time positivism made a prominent appearance in Russian culture was at the end of the 1860s – the time when “the great flowering of Russian science”¹²⁶ began. A rather straightforward appropriation of Comte and Littré's ideas marked Grigoriy Virubov's¹²⁷ studies, who since 1867 collaborated with Émile Littré on the journal *La Philosophie Positive*. More critical, but still faithful to Comte's scheme of three stages were Vladimir Lesevich's articles “Philosophy of History on Scientific Grounds”¹²⁸ and “Positivism after Comte,”¹²⁹ published in the influential monthly *Otechestvenniye zapiski* in 1869. Sociological positivism in particular found fertile grounds in the Russian intellectual climate. Even Walicki concedes that in this field, “Russian positivism made its most valuable – and indeed international – contribution.”¹³⁰ Sociologists Eugene de Roberty and Maksim Kovalevsky, who entered their active creative careers during the 1880s, were the ones who made this contribution. While both of them modified positivist doctrine considerably and incorporated it in their own (very different) systems of thought, they nevertheless remained committed to finding the immutable and universally applicable laws of societal development.

The theory of symmetrical modes, developed by Nadezhda Bryusova and Boleslav Yavorsky in the 1910s, which I analyze in chapter three, was the first far-reaching attempt to do the same for music. In the present chapter I pinpoint the beginning of the positivist shift in the study of music in Russia in the mid-1880s, and inquire into the ways in which the positivist mindset seeped into the Russian literature on music and indeed, helped forge the very notion of music scholarship. In this essay I record the oscillations of aesthetic, scholarly, and political opinions from the early 1880s to the late 1920s by tracing the Russian reception of Hanslick's immensely influential aesthetic treatise *On the Musically Beautiful (Vom Musikalisch-Schönen, 1854)*.¹³¹

¹²⁵ Andrzej Walicki, *A History of Russian Thought from the Enlightenment to Marxism* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1979), 361-398.

¹²⁶ Vucinich, *Science in Russian Culture: 1861-1917*, xv.

¹²⁷ Or Wyruboff, as he signed his work, originally published in French.

¹²⁸ Lesevich, “Filosofiya istorii na nauchnoy pochve,” 163-196.

¹²⁹ Lesevich, “Pozitivizm posle Konta,” 361-398.

¹³⁰ Walicki, *A History of Russian Thought*, 362.

¹³¹ Eduard Hanslick, *On the Musically Beautiful: A Contribution Towards the Revision of the Aesthetics of Music*, trans. Geoffrey Payzant (Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett Pub. Co., 1986).

Eduard Hanslick was a Viennese music critic and the first scholar to receive a full university professorship in music history and aesthetics. His treatise, which by the beginning of the twentieth century went through ten editions, was as much an exercise in the aesthetics of music as a polemical pamphlet against the New German School and program music in general; it was especially well-known for its anti-Wagnerian invectives. In short, Hanslick's contention was that musical beauty resides in purely musical form, in the harmonious interplay of musical sounds and not in evocation of images, ideas, or feelings. His most famous (and most hated) metaphor was the comparison of music to a moving arabesque as the most precise expression of a musical form that was beautiful in and of itself. This metaphor offended many a critic, who felt that it denied music any intellectual significance. During his life Hanslick was usually classified as a formalist and a follower of Herbart's school of aesthetics. However, several recent studies argued that much of Hanslick's argument relied on idealist precepts, camouflaged with statements in line with Herbartianism, which had more currency in the Viennese academic climate of the day.¹³² No wonder that reactions to a book so contradictory and contentious occupied the pages of Western European music periodicals for half a century. In Russia the polemic around Hanslick's treatise had a late start, but was no less intense.

This chapter surveys the changing attitudes to Hanslick and music scholarship over the course of five decades, starting in 1880 and concluding in 1929. To use a scientific metaphor as does many a critic in this chapter, such a longitudinal approach allowed me to use Hanslick reception as a "black light," revealing the changing patterns of reactions that Hanslick's book elicited in different periods. I identified two such clusters of responses: one in 1886-1894; the other in 1900-1914. To use the broadest categories possible, the first one may be dubbed positivist, the second one idealist. I analyze the first, positivist group of reactions in greater detail because, first, it was more numerous and was published in weightier periodicals, and second, it had more bearing on early Soviet scholarship. This group consisted of the eminent Ukrainian folklorist Petro Petrovich Sokalsky, the music critic and exiled revolutionary Sergey Pavlovich Kazansky, the music and art historian Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Neustroyev, the zoologist Vladimir Aleksandrovich Wagner, and Liveriy Antonovich Sacchetti, the first professor of music history and aesthetics in Russia. Four of them belonged to the generation that was brought up during the 1860s and 1870s – the "golden age" of Russian science. However different their fields of expertise, the consistency with which they advocated a scientific worldview and the necessity of applying scientific methods to the study of music allows us to speak about the generational "positivist turn" in Russian music criticism of the late nineteenth century. The objective of each analysis is to outline the specific combinations of ideas – such as associating the positivist outlook with revolutionary ideology by its proponents, and with the discourse on degeneration by its critics – and to point out which of these combinations lived on. Except for Boris Asafyev, none of the writers I consider here was subsequently lionized by Soviet scholars. They have therefore largely remained unknown to present-day musicologists. However, the outlets they

¹³² Carl Dahlhaus, *The Idea of Absolute Music* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989); Carl Dahlhaus, *Aesthetics of Music* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Mark Evan Bonds, *Music as Thought: Listening to the Symphony in the Age of Beethoven* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2006); Mark Evan Bonds, "Idealism and the aesthetics of instrumental music at the turn of the nineteenth century," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 50, no. 2/3 (1997); Mark Burford, "Hanslick's idealist materialism," *19th-Century Music* 30, no. 2 (2006). For more examples, see: Karnes, *Music, Criticism, and the Challenge of History*, 33.

published in were among the most influential among the Russian reading public, and therefore lent these people a voice to be reckoned with.

Fathers: before positivism

By 1880s, negative reception of Hanslick's doctrine among Russian composers already had a long history. As early as 1859, five years after the publication of *On the Musically Beautiful*, Aleksandr Serov polemicized with Hanslick: "Music, besides being a play of sounds, is the language of the soul ... partly coinciding with verbal speech, partly incommensurable with it."¹³³ He would return to this polemic in subsequent years, using stronger language.¹³⁴ It goes without saying that Hanslick and his Russian advocate Herman Laroche were anathema to the nationalist New Russian School as well. In 1873 Borodin wrote to his wife: "Then [Laroche] goes on to say that those who think that music can express any feelings at all are mistaken, that that's nonsense, that it is only 'an art of combining tones in a manner pleasing to the ear.' What the devil is this all about?"¹³⁵ Of the same mind was Rimsky-Korsakov.¹³⁶

In the second half of the nineteenth century the music critic Herman Laroche (1845-1904) seemed to be the only unwavering supporter of Hanslick's doctrine in Russia. As late as 1880 Laroche kept up his popularizing effort. Reviewing Hanslick's collection of criticism *Musikalische Stationen*¹³⁷ immediately after its publication in Germany he deemed it necessary to spend most of his article rehearsing the philosophical points of *On the Musically Beautiful*, which remained untranslated to Russian. Ten months after that, however, an abridged version of Hanslick's treatise was published in Russian translation for the first time, in the influential journal *Russkaya misl'* (*Russian Thought*)¹³⁸. There, it was preceded with a favorable editorial preface.¹³⁹

¹³³ Музыка, кроме игры звуками, есть – язык души сердца, отчасти совпадающий со словесною речью, отчасти с нею несоизмеримый." Aleksandr Nikolaevich Serov, "Opera i eyo noveysheye napravleniye v Germanii," [Opera and its newest direction in Germany] in *Kriticheskiye stat'i*, vol. 2 (St. Petersburg: Tip. Departamenta udelov, 1892), 1195. The article was first printed in the journal *Russkoye slovo* in 1859, no. 7.

¹³⁴ Cf. Aleksandr Nikolaevich Serov, "Tematizm uvertyuri k opere 'Leonora'. Etyud o Betkhovene," [Thematism of the overture for the opera "Leonora". An etude on Beethoven] in *Kriticheskiye stat'i*, vol. 3 (St. Petersburg: Tip. Departamenta udelov, 1895), 1406. The article was first printed in the journal *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* in 1861, vol. 54, no. 10, 11, 12 and 13; and Aleksandr Nikolaevich Serov, "Hector Berlioz," in *Kriticheskiye stat'i*, vol. 4 (St. Petersburg: Tip. Departamenta udelov, 1895). Written in 1869.

¹³⁵ Далее высказывается мысль, что крайне ошибаются те, которые думаю, что музыка способна выражать какие-нибудь чувства — это вздор, она представляет только «искусство сочетать звуки приятным для слуха образом». Это черт знает что такое! Borodin's letter from 25 October 1873, quoted in: Richard Taruskin, *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions: A Biography of the Works through Mavra*, vol. 1 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 93. Laroche's article that Borodin ridicules is a review of Gustave Chouquet, *Histoire de la musique dramatique en France depuis ses origines jusqu'à nos jours* (Paris: Firmin Didot frères, fils et cie, 1873), published in the newspaper *Golos*, no. 259 (September 19, 1873). The dislike was mutual: a year later Laroche published a devastating review of a collection of Borodin's romances (*Golos* no. 18, 1874).

¹³⁶ "[Laroche's] activity was mere grimace and gesticulation, lies and paradoxes, exactly like the activity of his Viennese prototype" (My Musical Life, 410)," quoted in: Taruskin, *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions*, 1, 93.

¹³⁷ Herman Avgustovich Laroche, "Muzikal'nīye ocherki," *Russkiy vestnik* 145 (January 1880).

¹³⁸ Eduard Hanslick, "O prekrasnom v muzike," *Russkaya misl'*, no. 10 (1880): 1-46. It was published in the section of the journal entitled "Criticism."

¹³⁹ The translator remained anonymous, and the preface was signed "Editorial."

The “scientific, literary, and political journal” *Russkaya misl’*, based in Moscow, was a brainchild of Sergey Andreyevich Yuryev (1821-1888), its founder and editor. A former mathematician and astronomer,¹⁴⁰ literary and theater critic, editor and translator, Yuryev was a person of many talents. His literary output was small, his impact on the intellectual climate of the time crucial and multifarious. The idealist philosopher Lev Lopatin¹⁴¹ applied to Yuryev the established trope “a man of the 1840s,”¹⁴² which by the end of the nineteenth century came to nostalgically denote the generation that was caught in the struggle between the Slavophiles and Westernizers, and intense debates about the future of Russia.¹⁴³ Yuryev was a man of well-defined idealist convictions, a Slavophile, and a follower of Schelling.¹⁴⁴ It is thus fair to assume that Yuryev’s preface to the first Russian translation of Hanslick’s book documents the convictions typical for the writers of the pre-positivist generation. To put the subsequent analyses into perspective, I will adumbrate these convictions here.

Yuryev professed the same desire for marriage of reason and revelation that preoccupied Schelling and other German idealist philosophers. He believed that the truth could be attained neither by speculative nor by empirical reasoning alone, but only through the “integral and harmonic convergence of all spiritual forces of man.”¹⁴⁵ Moreover, he maintained that the truth could not be revealed to a single mind, since one consciousness is always subjectively limited. It could only be comprehended by a collective, all-human consciousness – that is, *sobornost’*¹⁴⁶ – which could be attained in the mystical sacraments of the Church. Yuryev gave pride of place to the mystical side of life. For him, the irrational element did not defy logic, but rather enabled it: it was the force that put abstract rational principles into practice.¹⁴⁷

Paradoxically, such a position made it possible for Yuryev to justify Hanslick’s crusade against feeling, although he was coming at the issue from a different angle than Hanslick did, and using terminology quite alien to Hanslick’s position. Yuryev’s views on art were grounded in the notion of the all-pervading force that bound the world together. He called it “creative, so to say artistic” divine thought.¹⁴⁸ This force animated the work of art and was thus the very essence of beauty: it imparted to a work of art those properties we perceive as beautiful. Yuryev said it was indeed feasible to study these properties independently of human perception, because the animating force itself existed objectively.¹⁴⁹ However, Yuryev emphasized the importance of

¹⁴⁰ He had to abandon his scientific career because of an eye condition. Vladimir Gilyarovskiy, *Vsyo o Moskve* [Everything about Moscow] (Moscow: AST: Astrel’, 2010), 177.

¹⁴¹ He was the editor of the important journal *Voprosi filosofii i psikhologii* (*Questions of Philosophy and Psychology*), and the head of the Moscow Psychological Society.

¹⁴² Lev Mikhaylovich Lopatin, “Sergey Andreyevich Yuryev, kak mislitel’,” [Sergey Andreyevich Yuryev, as a thinker] in *V pamyat’ S.A. Yuryeva: sbornik, izdanniy ego druž’yami* (Moscow: Tipo-Litografiya I.N. Kushnereva, 1891), 195. This article was a eulogy delivered on 24 January 1889 at the Moscow Psychological Society.

¹⁴³ Vsevolod Vladimirovich Lazutin, “Ideyno-povedencheskiy kompleks “lyudi sorokovikh godov” v literature kontsa XIX - nachala XX veka” (Dissertation, Institute of World Literature named after A.M. Gorky, 2011).

¹⁴⁴ His obituary in *Istoricheskiy vestnik* was titled “One of the Russian idealists.” S. T-v, “Odin iz russkikh idealistov,” [One of the Russian idealists.] *Istoricheskiy vestnik* 43, no. 3 (1891): 793-803.

¹⁴⁵ Lopatin, “Sergey Andreyevich Yuryev,” 208.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 209. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the old religious idea of *sobornost’* (spiritual unity) so pervaded Russian philosophy and literature that some referred to it as the “Russian Idea.”

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 200.

¹⁴⁸ Необходимость, порождающая мир, не абстрактная и рассудочная, а творческая, так сказать художественная. *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ Hanslick, “O prekrasnom v muzike,” 2. “They exist in reality,” Yuryev wrote in his preface.

psychology in aesthetic studies, as it was a discipline more applicable for studying “the movement and activity of the deepest and most important spiritual forces” than the natural sciences.¹⁵⁰ Apparently, he did not conceive of psychology from strictly physiological point of view, as did some of this chapter’s other protagonists, who belonged to the next generation.

Although Yuryev hailed scientific inquiry as an indispensable part of the integral cognitive enterprise, he still could not admit that scientific methodology was applicable to music. Indeed, this was one of the caveats that he made in his editorial preface.¹⁵¹ Using anti-positivist innuendo Yuryev reproached contemporary aesthetics, which “following the method of natural sciences, commit the sin of ... crude realism, of which the aesthetics of the highly gifted novelist Zola can serve as an example.”¹⁵² Such a reference to Zola was more eloquent in 1880 than it is now.

The works of Émile Zola, whose naturalist style was famously based on Comte's philosophy, acquired especially wide and often scandalous popularity in Russia, due to his early Russian translations and close collaboration with Russian periodicals.¹⁵³ While his motto “science, applied to literature” was quickly gaining currency among Russian literary artists, the French writer became a favorite scapegoat for anti-positivists when it came to applying positivist thinking to aesthetic matters. In 1894 Dmitry Merezhkovsky wrote about Zola:

In all [his] works [he] expresses unbounded devotion to exact contemporary knowledge, dispassionate, independent of life, self-sufficient as the highest, all-absorbing principles of philosophy, art, and life – devotion to that “scientific science,” in the words of Leo Tolstoy, which is worshiped by Auguste Comte and Spencer, Littré and John Stuart Mill.¹⁵⁴

When Yuryev was writing his preface to Hanslick’s book, Zola's manifesto “Le Roman expérimental” had just appeared in *Vestnik Evropi* (*Herald of Europe*) in September 1879.¹⁵⁵ Therefore, to drop a negative reference to Zola meant at the time to dissociate oneself clearly from the positivist strand of the Russian aesthetic debates.

The fact that a person so deeply embedded in the idealist discourse should praise Hanslick's work as excellent and important, despite its author's call (on the very first page) to apply methods of natural sciences to the study of music,¹⁵⁶ supports the current scholarly

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ That is, against Hanslick’s idea of applying methods of natural sciences to the study of music aesthetics.

¹⁵² Hanslick, "O prekrasnom v muzike," 3.

¹⁵³ Natalia Yakovleva, *Chelovecheskiy dokument: istoriya odnogo ponyatiya* [The Human Document: The History of a Notion] (Helsinki: Slavica Helsingiensia 42. Helsinki University Print, 2012), 13-14. For a thorough analysis of the ideologies clashing in the Russian reception of Zola, see John McNair, "'Zolaizm' in Russia," *The Modern Language Review* 95, no. 2 (April 2000): 450-462.

¹⁵⁴ Прежде всего и тот, и другой всеми произведениями выражают безграничную преданность современному точному знанию, бесстрастному, не зависящему от жизни, самодовлеющему как верховному, всепоглощающему принципу философии, искусства и жизни, - преданность той "научной науке", по выражению Льва Толстого, которую исповедуют Огюст Конт и Спенсер, Литтре и Джон Стюарт Миль. Dmitriy Sergeyevech Merezhkovsky, "Noveyshaya lirika," [The newest lyric.] *Vestnik inostrannoy literatury*, no. 12 (1894): 143.

¹⁵⁵ Even before its French publication

¹⁵⁶ Fortunately for Hanslick, Yuryev wrote, he abandoned the ground of natural sciences in the end. Hanslick, "O prekrasnom v muzike," 3.

consensus that Hanslick's study was idealist at its heart.¹⁵⁷ In the end of his preface, Yuryev evoked Schelling and Hegel, who also purportedly understood beauty as existing in and of itself, as did Leonardo, Winckelmann, and Lessing. This, he concluded, constituted the proper aesthetic inquiry, which “could not be shattered by any results, obtained by the methods of natural sciences.”¹⁵⁸ Constructing such a genealogy for *On the Musically Beautiful*, Yuryev demonstrated his own idealist pedigree, as well as Hanslick's. Although the word “positivism” was never uttered on these three pages, it is evident from Yuryev's denunciation of Zola and scientific methodology that the Russian reception of Hanslick was from the very beginning caught in the crossfire between positivism and idealism.

That Yuryev decided to publish a translation of Hanslick's book in the first year of his journal speaks to the already established reputation the treatise enjoyed in Russia in 1880. By 1885, when it had been translated in full by Mikhail Ivanov,¹⁵⁹ Hanslick's name was being dropped in all kinds of contexts: not even in specialized discussions of music aesthetics, but as a passing reference to a well-known authority. For instance, writing on Schumann, the music critic Osip Yakovlevich Levenson proclaimed that the controversial questions of program music were already brilliantly solved in studies by Hanslick and Hostinsky, which were written in a “clear manner devoid of cloudy philosophy.”¹⁶⁰ Extensive summaries of Hanslick's ideas appeared in places as unlikely as the *Journal of Civil and Criminal Law*, where Pavel Ivanovich Miller, a specialist on copyright and a privy counselor, published a lengthy article on music copyright, a sizeable portion of which he devoted to paraphrasing Hanslick's book.¹⁶¹ He called it “very wide-spread, though unpopular in Germany,”¹⁶² echoing a similar characteristic given by Laroche in 1868, and likely repeated elsewhere later.¹⁶³ Hanslick's alleged unpopularity was construed by Laroche as an advantage: characterizing his book as “going against the tide”¹⁶⁴ was a hint at the authenticity and prestige of its ideas.¹⁶⁵ An anonymous reviewer in *Russkaya misl'*, however, thought that Miller's reference to Hanslick was neither here nor there, and exposed Miller's ignorance in musical matters.¹⁶⁶ In a word, if one needed a quick fix to one's illiteracy in music, Hanslick's treatise was the book to read in the 1880s.

¹⁵⁷ Karnes, *Music, Criticism, and the Challenge of History*, 33.

¹⁵⁸ Hanslick, “O prekrasnom v muzike,” 3.

¹⁵⁹ Eduard Hanslick, *O prekrasnom v muzike: dopolneniye k issledovaniyu estetiki muzikal'nogo iskusstva*, trans. M.M. Ivanov (Moscow: Jurgenson, 1885).

¹⁶⁰ Многие спорные некогда вопросы музыкальной эстетики за последнее время получили блестящее разрешение в замечательном исследовании Гостинского (Hostinsky, *Das Musikalisch-Schöne und das Gesamtkunstwerk*), написанном тем же ясным, чуждым туманной философией языком, как относящаяся к тому же предмету знаменитая книжка Ганслика *Vom Mushkalisch-Schönen*. Osip Yakovlevich Levenson, *Iz oblasti muziki* (Moscow: Tipografiya A.I. Mamontova, 1885), 110.

¹⁶¹ Pavel Ivanovich Miller, “Muzikal'naya sobstvennost',” [Musical ownership.] *Journal of Civil and Criminal Law* 16, no. 1-2 (1886): 37-76. On Hanslick: pages 41-45.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 44.

¹⁶³ Herman Avgustovich Laroche, “Glinka i ego znachenie v istorii muziki. Stat'ya tret'ya i poslednyaya,” [Glinka and his significance in the history of music. The third and last essay.] *Russkiy vestnik* 77 (1868): 50-51.

¹⁶⁴ Книжка Ганслика у нас почти неизвестна, в Германии она очень известна, но не популярна, ибо плывет против течения. Laroche, “Glinka i ego znachenie v istorii muziki. Stat'ya tret'ya i poslednyaya,” 51.

¹⁶⁵ That both Levenson and Miller refer to the German title of the book (and Miller to the German spelling of Hanslick's name as well) suggests that they read *On the Musically Beautiful* in the original German (which means that even before Ivanov's 1885 translation the German version was popular in Russia), and were either unaware of the existence of Russian translations, or wanted to exploit the prestige of its Germanness.

¹⁶⁶ Anonymous, “Bibliography,” *Russkaya misl'* 12 (1886): 396-397.

Sons: the positivist turn

In the first three decades of Hanslick's reception in Russia, those who vehemently disagreed with his views belonged to the composers' guild. Since Hanslick argued so strongly for and against certain kinds of music, the composers' rage was ignited mainly by this side of his crusade. It was thus a quarrel about how to write music rather than how to write on music. Not until the mid-1880s did the dissenting voices acquire a distinct flavor of scientific refutation, and the debate on Hanslick became a debate on scholarly (or scientific, as many would have it) methodology. To a large extent this turn indicated that the next generation of music writers perceived the study of music more and more as a part of the broader humanistic (or scientific, as many would insist) enterprise, for which a proper methodology was being actively sought. For the first time, accusations were fired from the positivist camp, and Hanslick's formalism was perceived as an assault on the right way of doing music scholarship, not music composition.¹⁶⁷ The five writers who extensively engaged with Hanslick's argument in the press between 1886 and 1894 were Sokalsky, Kazansky, Neustroyev, Wagner, and Sacchetti. In the main section of this chapter I will analyze the multiple variations on the core positivist belief that all of them shared – that the study of music should search for universal laws, aided by scientific progress. But how exactly did these writers understand progress in science?

The idea of scientific progress

In his clear-cut analysis of positivist legacy in modern thought,¹⁶⁸ Michael Singer examines the ideas of progress held by the early positivists who exerted the strongest influence on the development of scientific philosophy: Comte and Mill. Their ideas of progress were different, since the two disagreed on an important epistemological issue – whether observation should be preceded by a certain theoretical framework in the mind of the observer. John Stuart Mill was convinced that a preexisting theory was a distorting lens that skewed the perception of the observer, and therefore rendered the observed facts subjective and useless. Conversely, Auguste Comte believed that without a preexisting framework one could not be able to make sense of the facts.¹⁶⁹ Only the latter viewpoint admits the existence of different scientific paradigms, while the former views progress as a continuous movement forward. Singer shows that

a strong belief in progress pervades Mill's theory of induction. In his view, Aristotle and Plato were really rather bad at classifying, and Bacon made fair progress but still fell into error. ... We are able to avoid the “Fallacies of Generalization” of our predecessors because we have more and better experience, including more and better experience in the proper use of experience, than they had. ... Any notion of a paradigm shift appears alien to his thought”¹⁷⁰

Comte, by contrast, argued that “putting isolated observations together in a productive way ... depended on a prior sense of theory, Comte thus recognized that, in Kuhn's terminology ... whether a classification was good or bad might have depended on the paradigm within which it

¹⁶⁷ This is partly the reason why the time frame of this dissertation begins in the year 1886.

¹⁶⁸ Michael Singer, *The Legacy of Positivism* (Basingstoke, Hampshire ; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 59-65.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 63-64.

was viewed. In this he differed sharply from Mill.”¹⁷¹ To this I might add that Comte, dismantling methods of theology and metaphysics – the preceding stages of human thought, in his classification – perceived them as qualitatively different from positivism.

In what follows I argue that from the beginning of the positivist shift in Russian-language humanities, its representatives espoused a distinctively Millian linear vision of scientific progress inimical to the idea of paradigm shifts. It lived on well into the twentieth century and underpinned the first positivist theory of music, that of Bryusova and Yavorsky.

This vision was first applied to the Hanslick problem in 1887, in an article by the eminent Ukrainian ethnographer and composer Petro Petrovich Sokalsky (1832-1887). Like many other writers on music of the time, as well as other men in his family, Sokalsky was formally trained not in music, but in a scientific discipline. His father was a professor of economics at Kharkiv University – a career and discipline also chosen by his older brother Ivan. A wunderkind, at sixteen years of age Sokalsky became the youngest student at the department of natural sciences of Kharkiv University, defended a dissertation for a master’s degree in chemistry, and after graduation continued to publish articles on the subject, in addition to his activity as a music critic.¹⁷² After graduation he worked as a personal secretary to the consul general of Russia in New York.

The article in question was a fragment of a larger study *Foundations of Music Psychology*, on which Sokalsky worked in the last decade of his life concurrently with his seminal monograph on folk music.¹⁷³ Advocating an empirical approach to the study of music perception, Sokalsky contended that the largest mistake of Hanslick's “gifted, but one-sided” theory was considering only one part of a “complex mechanism that is musical impression.”¹⁷⁴ “In essence,” Sokalsky wrote,

music “in and of itself” does not exist at all: we do not see and do not hear those sound waves, which move on the way from the playing or singing musician towards the listener.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 66.

¹⁷² Larisa Filatova, “The music journalism and educational activity of Petro Petrovich Sokalsky: personality and time,” *Youth & Market: Monthly scientific-pedagogical journal*, no. 5 (100) (2013): 30-34; Grigoriy Borisovich Bernandt and Izrail Markovich Yampolsky, *Kto pisal o muzike: bio-bibliograficheskiy slovar' muzikal'nikh kritikov i lits, pisavshikh o muzike v dorevolutsionnoy Rossii i SSSR* [Who Wrote on Music: Bio-bibliographical dictionary of music critics and personalities who wrote on music in pre-Revolutionary Russia and USSR], 4 vols. (Moscow: Sovetskiy kompozitor, 1971-1989), vol 3, 81.

¹⁷³ Petro Petrovich Sokalsky, “O mekhanizme muzikal'nikh vpechatleniy. (Material dlya muzikal'noy psikhologii),” [On the mechanism of musical impressions. (Material for musical psychology)] in *Iz mira iskusstva i nauki* (Odessa: Tipo-khromo-litografiya Ye. I. Fesenko, 1997), 1-25. Petro Petrovich Sokalsky, *Russkaya narodnaya muzika velikorussskaya i malorussskaya v eyo stroyenii melodicheskoy i ritmicheskoy i otlichiya eyo ot osnov sovremennoy garmonicheskoy muziki* [Russian Music of Great- and Malo-Russia, its melodic and rhythmic structures and its difference from the foundations of contemporary harmonic music] (Kharkiv: Tipografiya A. Darre, 1888). The first drafts of the work were made as early as 1877. See: Alyona Zharik, ““Osnovī muzichnoy psikhologii” P. Sokalskogo. Dzhereloznavchiy diskurs.,” [‘Foundations of Music Psychology’ by P. Sokalsky. Discourse on source study] in *Kiev Musicology: collection of scholarly studies* (Kiev: Kievskiy institut muziki imeni R.M.Gliera, 2013), 51-59.

¹⁷⁴ Пущенная в ход даровитым, но односторонним пером известного венского критика Ганслика, эта теория приобрела многих адептов, но и возбуждала против себя много возражений. Недоразумение же тут в том, что под одним и тем же словом «музыка» подразумевали самые разнородные явления, и каждый смотрел только на «часть» того весьма сложного механизма, который составляет музыкальное впечатление. Sokalsky, “O mekhanizme muzikal'nikh vpechatleniy,” 7.

What kind of music “in and of itself” is this, when it does not exist for our organs of the senses, when there is essentially *no* music outside of us? A painting, a statue, a building really do exist outside of us, in and of themselves. But music is reproduced only in the moment, when it penetrates the listener’s ear, and there makes certain nervous threads, about three thousand, a kind of keyboard of our hearing organ, tremble materially.¹⁷⁵

In order to understand the nature of Sokalsky’s disagreement with the notion of “music in of itself,” and by extension his idea of scientific progress, we must look at his theory of music perception. This complex mechanism, according to Sokalsky, comprised three kinds of phenomena. The first was the acoustic element: vibrations of elastic bodies and combinations of tones. This element had been studied since Pythagoras. The second was the physiological processes of human hearing: transformation of invisible waves into sounds, and all sorts of pleasant and unpleasant sensations caused by these sounds. This was investigated in Johannes Müller’s research and Helmholtz’s “epochal work.”¹⁷⁶ The third element was the next stage in the transformation of sounds: irritation of nerve centers, which then caused different moods, which, in turn, would be transformed into phenomena of an even higher order due to the associative process: conceptualization, ideas, judgment, and assessment. This was music psychology.¹⁷⁷ According to Sokalsky, this element had not yet been studied at all. Sokalsky used the psychological stage to glorify a certain kind of music, just as his opponent Hanslick did. Folk music and church music (by which Sokalsky meant Gregorian chant) were for him the common denominator for all people: these two kinds of music spoke to the majority of people, because they evoked most common associations and reproduced basic moods, recognizable by everyone.¹⁷⁸

The problem with Hanslick’s approach, Sokalsky said, was that the Viennese critic considered only the middle, physiological stage of listening to music – that is, the transformation of sound waves into sounds – and did not venture in the third stage of psychological activity. That’s why the author of *On the Musically Beautiful* ended up with nothing more than the patterns of arabesques: a musical kaleidoscope, utterly devoid of meaning. Meaning emerged only in the third stage, in the higher activity of the nerve centers. However, Hanslick excluded this from his account (as if suffering from a sensory processing disorder, we might add) and was therefore unable to comprehend the purpose of music, regarding it as a mere plaything. Such a bizarre explanation resulted from the characteristic belief that only one kind of methodology can yield truthful conclusions. Unwilling to perceive Hanslick’s approach as different in kind, not in extent, Sokalsky was convinced that Hanslick’s theory was faulty only because the field of

¹⁷⁵ В сущности, музыка «сама по себе» не существует вовсе: мы не видим и не слышим тех звучных волн, которые движутся на пути от играющего или поющего музыканта к слушателю. Какая же это музыка «сама по себе», когда она не существует для наших органов чувств, когда ее в сущности *нет* вне нас? Картина, статуя, архитектурное здание, действительно существуют вне нас, сами по себе. Но музыка воспроизводится только в тот момент, когда она внедряется в ухо слушателя, и заставляет там материально дрожать известные нервные нити, около 3-х тысяч, составляющие своего рода клавиатуру нашего органа слуха. Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Hermann von Helmholtz and Alexander John Ellis, *On the Sensations of Tone as a Physiological Basis for the Theory of Music*, 2d English ed. (New York: Dover Publications, 1954).

¹⁷⁷ Sokalsky, "О механизме музикал'них впечатлений," 8-10.

¹⁷⁸ According to Sokalsky, associations played a crucial role in the perception of music, the third (psychological) stage was thus responsible for the national and individual differences. Since every person possessed a different bank of associations, then Beethoven's depiction of storm would cause a Swiss to imagine a storm in Switzerland, and a Russian – a storm in Russia.

psychology was undeveloped in his time, and he did not have the perfected scientific apparatus at his fingertips. Such a progressivist idea of the past scholarship as undeveloped – or, rather, not willing to go all the way towards the positive knowledge – resurfaced time and again in the ubiquitous trope of the “scholastic science of the past.” Two decades later this trope assumed pride of place in Nadezhda Bryusova's positivist “musical science.”

To conclude, Sokalsky's argument came down to four widespread ideas, which lived on during the subsequent decades as music scholarship was gestating. First, for Sokalsky, as for any scientifically-minded writer of the time, it went without saying that psychology was based primarily on physiological processes. This causal relationship would gain even wider currency in the following decades, for instance, in Vladimir Bekhterev's article “Issues, concerning medical and hygienic significance of music,” (1916), or in the work of Sergey Kleshchov, a pupil of the renowned physiologist Ivan Pavlov and a musicologist at the Institute for Art History, whose study on the physiology of music was lauded as truly scientific and objective by an internal reviewer.¹⁷⁹

Second, Sokalsky maintained that induction must proceed from the simple to the complex. This is why, according to him, all previous studies of music aesthetics, such as those by Fischer and Hanslick, were unscientific – they started with the complex. The third idea was that folk music was an untouched repository of basic and pure musical elements – a gold mine for a scientifically-minded researcher. Studying the “natural” music material reinforced the methodology of the natural sciences. It would resurface later in theories of Bryusova and Yavorsky. The last idea was the conviction that many phenomena of the natural world should be implicated in the study of music. Consequently, adopting the immutable laws of acoustics and physiology to the study of music was only natural. This would later become a common thread in all positivist responses to Hanslick.

The marriage of science and revolution

A much more scathing criticism of Hanslick's doctrine than that ventured by Sokalsky, as well as a similar call for a holistic study of art, resonated throughout the series of articles by Sergey Pavlovich Kazansky (1857-1901) that ran in the early 1890s in the “theater, music and art journal” *Artist*, a short-lived (1889-1895) but seminal periodical on the arts. Like *Russkaya misl'*, this journal was also in a sense Sergey Yuryev's brainchild: he and Fyodor Kumanin founded it shortly before Yuryev's death. Yuryev's work on the journal, however, did not go further than the

¹⁷⁹ Vladimir Mikhailovich Bekhterev, "Voprosi, svyazannye s lechebnim i gigiyenicheskim znacheniyem muziki," [Issues, concerning medical and hygienic significance of music.] *Review of Psychiatry, Neurology and Experimental Psychology*, no. 1-3 (1916): 105-124. Vladimir Mikhailovich Bekhterev (1857-1927) was a prominent Russian physiologist, psychiatrist, and neurologist. The review of Sergey Kleshchov's "Physiology of music" was authored by Roman Gruber, who was the chair of the Psycho-Physiological Commission at the Institute. He wrote: "Only by replacing all familiar terms of music aesthetics, phenomenology, psychology of creativity and perception by clear-cut and unambiguous terms – terms of psycho-physiology – will we achieve a solid basis for truly scientific classification in this area." (Ибо только заменив все привычные термины музыкальной эстетики, феноменологии, психологии творчества и восприятия четкими, однозначными терминами - понятиями психофизиологии, мы получим твердую основу для подлинно научной систематики в этой области). TsGALI: F. 82, op.3, ye. kh. 12, ll. 44-45. Also, see Kleshchov's later articles, for example: Sergey Vasilyevich Kleshchov, "O metode vospitaniya pianisticheskikh dvizheniy," [On the method of training a piano player's movements.], no. 9 (1936): 63-67.

introductory article outlining the objectives of the journal, and one posthumous publication, so that his favorable attitude to Hanslick did not have a chance to influence the journal's policy.¹⁸⁰ Kazansky's articles deserve detailed consideration because they were published in such an influential outlet, and also due to their author's exemplary expertise in the scientific discourse of the day.

Like many music critics, Kazansky graduated from university (with a degree in law) and pursued extracurricular music studies, notably with Yuriy Arnold. What was far from common among Russian writers on music was that Kazansky also belonged to the Moscow branch of the terrorist organization *Narodnaya volya* (*The People's Will*, or *The People's Freedom*)¹⁸¹ – the one responsible for the assassination of the emperor Alexander II in 1881. For this association he was exiled to Western Siberia.¹⁸² *Narodnaya volya* was an offshoot from *Zemlya i volya* (*Land and Liberty*), the first Russian political party that openly advocated revolution. Kazansky's close involvement¹⁸³ with such a radical group suggests that his revolutionary convictions ran deep. He started as a music critic in Moscow, covering the city's musical life for *Teatr i zhizn'* (*Theater and Life*) and *Russkaya misl'*. His reviews stopped in 1888, and resumed in 1896, but in Tiflis, instead of Moscow. Apparently, he was allowed to settle there after his Siberian exile. Between these years he only produced the four large theoretical essays¹⁸⁴ for *Artist* (all of which engage with Hanslick to some extent), which Kazansky must have written in Siberia. It is no wonder, then, that all four essays were signed with a pseudonym Z.

The first essay in the series, "One of the reactionary doctrines in the field of aesthetics" (1890), dealt with *On the Musically Beautiful* in a systematic and ruthless manner.¹⁸⁵ Its opening paragraph contained in embryo many of Kazansky's positivist principles: the idea of scientific progress, the search for laws (or the conviction that all phenomena were related to each other), discrimination between scientific and unscientific methods, a definite preference for the former in the study of music, faith in the prescriptive power of historical and sociological explanation, and last but not least the belief that science should serve humanity:

One of the main achievements of nineteenth-century science was the undeniable recognition of the mutual connection of absolutely all phenomena observable by man, as well as various aspects of human activity in particular. The roaring success, achieved by scientific analysis ... [proved insufficient for the purpose of] increasing human

¹⁸⁰ In any case, in his opening article Yuryev declared that no good would come from endorsing a certain doctrine, and that the new journal would aim to synthesize idealistic and realistic philosophies. Sergey Andreyevich Yuryev, "Introduction," *Artist*, no. 1 (1889): 1-5.

¹⁸¹ Bernandt and Yampolsky, *Kto pisal o muzike*, vol. 2, 9.

¹⁸² The time of his exile immediately preceded Lenin's Siberian exile in 1897-1900.

¹⁸³ He helped with the publication of the group's newspaper and was associated with illegal printshops. Bernandt and Yampolsky, *Kto pisal o muzike*, vol. 2, 9.

¹⁸⁴ Sergey Pavlovich Kazansky, "Odna iz reaktsionnikh doktrin v oblasti estetiki (O Ganslike)," [One of the reactionary doctrines in the field of aesthetics (On Hanslick).] *Artist* 6, 7(1890); Kazansky, "Mesto muziki sredi iskusstva; Sergey Pavlovich Kazansky, "Slozhniye formi v iskusstve (K voprosu o zadachakh operi)," [Complex forms in art (To the issue of the aims of opera).] *Artist* 27, 28, 29(1893); Sergey Pavlovich Kazansky, "O roli ideala v iskusstve," [On the role of the ideal in art.] *Artist* 42(1894).

¹⁸⁵ For Kazansky, Hanslick was a bugbear, the prime example of formalist ideology; in his last essay to be published in *Artist*, "On the role of the ideal in art," he brought up Hanslick for no particular reason, other than to give him and formalism a hard time. The title of this article, as well as its principle that the aesthetic and philosophical ideals of every epoch follow from historical circumstance of this epoch, is evocative of Taine's *On the Ideal in Art* (1867).

happiness. ... The new movement deems it necessary that ... the relationship [between the phenomena] is studied. Only in this case, it is assumed, science can indeed serve humanity. Nowadays it is considered outdated to study a certain kind of human activity and to search for its laws paying no heed to its relationship to the other aspects of life. ... Today a literary historian ... is aware that art is a product of social life, and that the latter should provide both explanation for existing art, and a guide for the future work of an artist.¹⁸⁶

It did not take Kazansky long to point out that Hanslick still dwelt in the metaphysical age, which science had condemned a long time ago. One of the main criticisms Kazansky leveled at Hanslick was the latter's ignorance of the latest developments in science, of which Kazansky adduced abundant examples. That he regarded Hanslick to be profoundly idealist is evident from the following outburst: "Thus, the author apparently considers it possible to *know the absolute, to comprehend the true essence of things*. And this he calls an approximation of the method of natural sciences, moving away from metaphysics!... Is greater mockery of science possible?"¹⁸⁷ In such a distinction between metaphysics and science, Kazansky's position was distinctly Comtian. It hearkened back to the first of Comte's five definitions of *positif*: "The word 'positive' denotes that which is real rather than chimerical. In this regard, it [is devoted] to scientific investigations with which our minds can actually cope, and pays no heed to the impenetrable mysteries that obsessed humanity in earlier times."¹⁸⁸ Comte's second definition of positive science was usefulness, as opposed to futility: metaphysics was futile, and therefore could not lead to the improvement of the human condition, which, according to Comte (and Kazansky), was the main objective of positive science. Comte did not try to disprove metaphysics, but simply regarded the whole enterprise a waste of time, because it concerned itself with issues that were beyond the power of the human mind.¹⁸⁹

The issue that was well within the reach of the human mind, for the positivist Kazansky, was not the essence of phenomena, but the relationship between them. He spelled out the belief, widespread at the turn of the century, that the universe was bound together by invisible forces and immutable laws, waiting to be discovered: "So, in our scientist's opinion, there are things

¹⁸⁶ Одним из наиболее крупных приобретений науки девятнадцатого века является несомненно признание взаимной связи как всех вообще явлений, доступных человеческому наблюдению, так и различных сторон человеческой деятельности в частности. Громкий успех, достигнутый научным анализом, сумевшим расчлнить явления на их составные факторы и исследовать природу каждого из них в отдельности, не мешает в последнее время признавать его недостаточным для той цели, которая имеет в виду увеличение человеческого счастья. В наше время подняло голову новое направление, считающее необходимым, чтобы ... были исследованы их зависимость друг от друга, и их взаимное отношение, чтобы были изучены, словом, условия их *сотрудничества*. ... [В] наши дни признается отсталым изучение того или другого специального вида человеческой деятельности, законы которого отыскиваются исключительно в нем самом без принятия в расчет его отношения к другим сторонам жизни. ... В настоящее время историк литературы ... сознает, что искусство продукт человеческого общежития и что в этом последнем надо искать как объяснения наличных фактов искусства, так и руководства для дальнейшей деятельности художника. Kazansky, "Oдна iz reaktsionnikh doktrin," part 1, 39.

¹⁸⁷ Итак, автор видимо считает возможным *познать безусловное, постигнуть истинную сущность вещей*. И это он называет приближением к естественно-научному методу, удалением от метафизики!.. Возможно ли большее глумление над наукой? Ibid., 43.

¹⁸⁸ Quoted in: Singer, *The Legacy of Positivism*, 10.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 13.

that can be comprehended in and of themselves... If Dr. Hanslick does not recognize the contemporary doctrines of unity of matter,¹⁹⁰ conservation of energy, and so on, then he should at least acknowledge the unity that is brought to the external world by the spirit studying it.”¹⁹¹ This last kind of unity, brought to the world by human perception, could have only been invoked by a convinced empiricist. Kazansky explained that empiricism (a doctrine according to which only that can be known, which can be experienced through the human senses) was the cornerstone of the contemporary scientific method, and therefore the idea of autonomous beauty divorced from the subjective aesthetic experience was complete nonsense.¹⁹²

A close reading of Kazansky’s essays shows that he internalized almost every theory that had currency among the educated class. He had an informed opinion about many scientific ideas of the time and about almost all prominent nineteenth-century positivists. I will give just a few examples to illustrate his carefully maintained awareness of the positivist tradition. He insisted that empirical methods had already become commonplace, and in order to back up his opinion he had to refer “neither to Comte nor to Kant, neither to Mill nor to Bain, neither to Spencer nor to Lewis.”¹⁹³ He even flaunted his expertise, adding that he named “representatives of different schools on purpose, because they all agree on this matter and can only disagree in details.”¹⁹⁴ By the “literary historian” in the opening passage he probably meant Taine,¹⁹⁵ famous for his *History of English Literature*. According to Kazansky, Comte’s division of sociological methods into static and dynamic¹⁹⁶ enjoyed “such a success in science that now it is almost impossible to reason scientifically, not taking these terms into account.”¹⁹⁷ Kazansky did take them into account, proposing a classification of fine arts into static (architecture, sculpture, and painting) and dynamic (music, ballet, and poetry).¹⁹⁸

Furthermore, Kazansky referred in detail to Spencer’s ideas: for instance, the theory underlying *The Origin and Function of Music*¹⁹⁹ (that music evolved from agitated speech) and his pain-pleasure theory (according to which pleasure and suffering were caused by either balance or imbalance of bodily energy). The latter Kazansky evoked to explain feelings aroused

¹⁹⁰ He likely meant the law of conservation of matter.

¹⁹¹ Kazansky, "Odna iz reaktsionnikh doktrin," part 1, 44.

¹⁹² Interestingly, Kazansky started his critique of Hanslick’s understanding of the musically beautiful in a manner similar to Sokalsky but in more appropriate terms: “Such [specifically-musical] beauty correlates only with the physical side of the human nature; it speaks only to the nervous organization of the hearing sensations, to the physiological processes of blood circulation and breathing. ... It is evident that if spiritual beauty – which draws its meaning from the realm of thought, – could not be associated with this kind of beauty, then music should have occupied one of the lowest steps in human activity.” Ibid., 40. Hanslickian arabesques were thereby relegated by both Sokalsky and Kazansky to the domain of the purely physical, elemental or pathological, which Hanslick so readily scoffed.

¹⁹³ Все это -- азбучные истины, и мне нечего ссылаться, для подтверждения их, ни на Конта или Канта, ни на Милля или Бэна, ни на Спенсера или Льюиса. Ibid., 44.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ He referred to Taine in his other essays.

¹⁹⁶ Comte proposed this in *Philosophie Positive*: “Social dynamics studies the laws of succession, while social statics seeks those of coexistence; so that the general application of the first is properly to furnish to practical politics the true theory of progress, at the same time that the second naturally forms that of order.” Quoted in: Lester Frank Ward, "Static and Dynamic Sociology," *Political Science Quarterly* 10, no. 2 (June 1895): 203.

¹⁹⁷ Kazansky, "O roli ideala v iskusstve," 99.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 92-103.

¹⁹⁹ Kazansky, "Odna iz reaktsionnikh doktrin," part 1, 39.

by music.²⁰⁰ Physiological explanation of feelings, based also on less well-known medical literature, played a prominent role in Kazansky's musical science. As an alternative to Hanslick, he even proposed a methodology for studying aesthetic experiences based on scientific advances in physiology and psychology. It included finding associations between certain combinations of tones and certain properties of the human body (such as the structure of nerves responsible for hearing), or comparing the laws of blood circulation and breathing with rhythmic flow of sounds.²⁰¹

The most important reason for such associations, however, Kazansky finds in the history of human society,²⁰² since they were reinforced genetically, by way of natural selection, over the course of the development of the societies. However naïve it sounds today, the Lamarckian belief in inheritance of acquired characteristics was still widespread in 1890s, since August Weismann's rejection of this principle, known as the Weismann barrier and first presented publicly in 1883,²⁰³ might not yet have been well known outside professional circles.

First, such a comprehensive, if amateur, command of the current scientific knowledge and methodologies in a non-specialist – and a political exile, writing in Siberia,²⁰⁴ – suggests that Kazansky was not exaggerating when he said that positivist ideas and works transmitting them were indeed widespread in Russia in the late 1880s. Second, such a profound commitment to knowledge in the fields of social and natural sciences must be considered in light of his other commitment – namely, the aspiration to change the social order. In the highly politicized scientific discourse of the second half of the nineteenth century, the ability to effect the latter was perceived to depend on the former.

Kazansky maintained that entire spheres of scholarship were still at odds with positive science, and music was one of them. Kazansky considered Hanslick's doctrine to be the dominant view in the musical world, and spelled out the reasons for such a state of affairs. The first one was historical: the idea of progress understood as increasing specialization, such as division of labor, scientific analysis, and technological advancement. Hanslick's quest to divorce music from reality was a symptom of the same process. The second reason was political: Hanslick was expressing the predominant views of the bourgeoisie, which in the nineteenth century became the most powerful class in Europe. Theories such as Hanslick's led to the understanding of music as an innocuous and meaningless plaything for the privileged, thus perpetuating inequality, while music was capable of effecting a positive social change.

It is hardly surprising that a committed revolutionary should call for a close connection between life and art. But the vehemence with which Kazansky advocated studying music according to scientific methods, and with which he protested Hanslick's neglect (or ignorance) of them, and the fact that the topic became an *idée fixe* in his writings, clearly underscore the connection between the revolutionary spirit and the scientific mindset. Indeed, according to Alexander Vucinich's landmark study of Russian science in the period from 1861-1917,²⁰⁵ this connection became one of the most salient features of the changing mentality of the Russian society of the time. “The struggle of materialism and idealism” would later become a cornerstone

²⁰⁰ Kazansky, "Odna iz reaktsionnikh doktrin," part 2, 21.

²⁰¹ Regarding physiology, Kazansky quoted at length Helmholtz's *On the Sensations of Tone*, which in his eyes represented a true scientific inquiry, and which contradicted Hanslick in every respect. *Ibid.*, 26.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 27.

²⁰³ In a lecture titled "On inheritance" ("Über die Vererbung")

²⁰⁴ He probably had at least some of the quoted studies at hand, which means that they were relatively available

²⁰⁵ Vucinich, *Science in Russian Culture: 1861-1917*.

of communist ideology. Even Kazansky's vocabulary, such as “reactionary doctrine,” is redolent of the Soviet clichés of a later time. It is important to remember, however, that the seeds of this later discourse were abundant long before the revolution. Even in the examples featured in this dissertation they surface time and again, not as clichés, but as sincere convictions. And if they were ideology-ridden, that ideology was certainly not a centralized and enforced one. The importance of the connection between revolutionary ideology and positivism for our inquiry thus cannot be overestimated. Three decades later the same connection would remain central for the development of musicology, which was being conceptualized as a new and Soviet discipline.

Psychology recapitulates sociology

In his next article (1892), Kazansky was preoccupied with three major works on the aesthetics of art that were published in Russia between 1885 and 1890.²⁰⁶ Of the three, Kazansky engaged mostly with Aleksandr Neustroyev's *Music and Feeling (Muzika i chuvstvo, 1890)*,²⁰⁷ which he considered to be the most pertinent and valuable for the study of music, and which took issue with Hanslick extensively. Kazansky's reaction to Neustroyev's book is remarkable because it lays bare the direct connection between his advocacy of sociological methods and social responsibility. To support this point I will analyze these two authors' disagreement on the matter of social conventions. The sociology of music, conceptualized as a rigorous scientific discipline, would later become a fail-safe approach in the “country of triumphant socialism.” It featured prominently in Boris Asafyev's scholarship and syllabi, as well as in the studies of other scholars who worked at the Music Department of the Institute of Art History, headed by Asafyev. But before we turn to music sociology, developed by Asafyev's predecessors, a few words on Neustroyev's career are in order.

In 1890, Neustroyev's social status and social circle could not have been more different from Kazansky's. Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Neustroyev (1860-1908) graduated from the Department of Law at the St. Petersburg University, and in 1882-1888 studied piano and theory of composition (under Yu. I. Iogansen) at the St. Petersburg Conservatory. A year after the publication of *Music and Feeling* Neustroyev was appointed custodian at The Hermitage museum in St. Petersburg. Later he published historical studies of art,²⁰⁸ judging by which he was well-versed in the European history of art and fluent in English, German, and Italian. Neustroyev was an assistant to Andrey Ivanovich Somov, the chief custodian of The Hermitage, a well-known art historian, and father of the painter Konstantin Somov, one of the founders of *Mir iskusstva*. Konstantin was friends with the Neustroyev family and often stayed at their dacha in Martyshkino.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁶ The first two were: Sergey Andreyevich Yuryev, "Neskol'ko misley of stsenicheskom iskusstve," [Several thoughts on the art of stage] *Russkaya misl'*, no. 2, 3, 5, 10 (1888); August Wilhelm Ambros, *Granitsi muziki i poezii. Etyud iz oblasti muzikal'noy estetiki* [The Boundaries of Music and Poetry: A Study in Musical Aesthetics] (Moscow, St. Petersburg: V. Bessel', 1889).

²⁰⁷ Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Neustroyev, *Muzika i chuvstvo: materialy dlya psikhologicheskogo osnovaniya estetiki muziki* [Music and Feeling: materials for the psychological basis of music aesthetics] (St. Petersburg: Tipografiya V.F.Kirshbauma, 1890).

²⁰⁸ Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Neustroyev, *Kartinnaya galereya Imperatorskogo Ermitazha* [The Art Gallery of the Imperial Hermitage] (St. Petersburg: Tipografiya Efrona, 1898).

²⁰⁹ Alexandre Benois, *Memoirs* (London,: Chatto & Windus, 1960).

Neustroyev inherited a predilection for scholarly work from his father,²¹⁰ Aleksandr Nikolayevich Neustroyev (1825-1902), a bibliographer and book collector, who made a name for himself by compiling a monumental study *Historical Inquiry into Russian Periodicals and Collections from 1703-1802*²¹¹ – an almost 1000-page compendium on the eighteenth-century Russian press – and an index of articles to accompany it. By the time of its author's death it was a rare and sought-after book.²¹² Neustroyev Senior hailed from a merchant family and was well-off enough to buy private book collections after the deaths of their owners, mostly famous scholars, and donate them to official libraries (over 73000 volumes in total!).²¹³ His career can also serve as an example of the changing idea of what counted as scholarship in the early twentieth century. Three decades after the bibliographer's death, the Soviet *Literary Encyclopedia* wrote that his studies lacked scholarly rigor, and that he failed to consider some of the preceding bibliographic scholarship.²¹⁴ However, during his life he was undoubtedly perceived as a scholar. The designation was applied to him in obituaries in 1902. Furthermore, following a favorable review by the academician Afanasiy Bichkov his *Historical Inquiry* received the Uvarov Award²¹⁵ – a prestigious prize that honored scholars in the field of Russian history and literature – such as the famous linguist Aleksandr Potebnya, another recipient of the prize. An encomium to Neustroyev senior's work that called it a study of “tremendous scholarly interest”²¹⁶ was published by Anatoliy Viktorovich Polovtsov (1849-1905) – an archaeologist and art historian, who was in charge of the archive of the Ministry of the Imperial Court, and was well-connected in the art world (he wrote a memoir about Turgenev²¹⁷ and was Roerich's friend and colleague).²¹⁸ A copy of Neustroyev junior's book *Music and Feeling*, kept at the National Library of Russia, bears the inscription “To A.V. Polovtsov 4.V.1891 from the author.”

²¹⁰ I have been unable to find a direct confirmation of these two scholars' family relationship so far. However, their dates of birth (1825 and 1860), Neustroyev junior's patronymic, and the entry in Neustroyev senior's *Index to Russian Periodicals* (1898), p. 433, listing a certain Aleksandr Aleksadrovich Neustroyev as a person who helped compile the index, alongside with Ekaterina Aleksandrovna Neustroyeva, who, according to an obituary, certainly was the author's daughter provide a fairly solid ground for such a conclusion. Anatoliy Ivanovich Faresov, "Pamyati A. N. Neustroyeva " [In memory of A.N.Neustroyev.] *Istoricheskiy vestnik* 88(April-June 1902); Aleksandr Nikolayevich Neustroyev, *Ukazatel' k russkim povremennim izdaniyam i sbornikam za 1703 - 1802 godi i k Istoricheskomu roziskaniyu o nikh* [Index to Russian Periodicals in 1703 - 1802 and to the Historical Inquiry on them] (St. Petersburg: Parovaya skoropechatnya P. O. Yablonskogo, 1898).

²¹¹ Aleksandr Nikolayevich Neustroyev, *Istoricheskoye roziskaniye o russkikh povremennikh izdaniyakh i sbornikakh za 1703-1802 godi, bibliograficheski i v khronologicheskoy poryadke opisannikh* [Historical Inquiry into Russian Periodicals and Collections from 1703-1802, Described Bibliographically and Chronologically] (St. Petersburg: Tipografiya tovarishchestva "Obshchestvennaya pol'za", 1874).

²¹² Faresov, "Pamyati A. N. Neustroyeva " 988.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 981.

²¹⁴ Исследовательский момент в работах Н. отсутствует. Он даже не всегда учитывал работы прежних исследователей в области библиографии. "A. N. Neustroyev," in *Literaturnaya entsiklopediya*, ed. V.M. Friche; A.V. Lunacharsky (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoye slovarno-entsiklopedicheskoye izdatel'stvo "Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya", 1934), 28.

²¹⁵ A prize that he declined in favor of somebody who would compile a similar index on the first half of the nineteenth century. Faresov, "Pamyati A. N. Neustroyeva " 988.

²¹⁶ Anatoliy Viktorovich Polovtsov, "Dragotsennoye nauchnoye posobiye," *Moskovskiy Vedomosti*, 6 February 1898.

²¹⁷ Anatoliy Viktorovich Polovtsov, "Vospominaniya ob I.S.Turgeneve.," [Memoirs about I.S.Turgenev] in *Tsar'-kolokol. Illyustrirovanniy vseobshchiy kalendar' na 1887 god* (Moscow: 1886).

²¹⁸ His daughter, and architect Kseniya Anatolyevna Polovtsova, was one of the founders of a religious-philosophic circle “Voskreseniye,” and was arrested in the late 1920s.

An economically privileged son of a well-known scholar soon to occupy an important research position, who was also friends with such members of the scholarly establishment as Somov and Polovtsov on the one hand, and a political prisoner, rotting in Siberia, on the other: it stands to reason that Neustroyev's and Kazansky's approaches to scholarship could have been rather different. In fact, they were not as different as one might suppose, which attests to the methodological coherence of the music-critical writing of the period.

Neustroyev's study was chiefly concerned with two theories of music aesthetics – those of Hanslick and of Moritz Lazarus, the founder of *Völkerpsychologie* (or national psychology), who also engaged with Hanslick's aesthetics in his *Das Leben der Seele*²¹⁹ (1856-1857). Hanslick, according to the author, was on the losing formalist side of the war between the idealists and formalists. Neustroyev considered Lazarus's theory to be more scientific than Hanslick's. He clearly intended the term as complimentary, but his book lacked the ardent advocacy for the scientific study of music characteristic of Kazansky's style.²²⁰ From the outset, however, Neustroyev stated the purpose of his study in terms of positivism:

Is it possible to narrow down the seeming diversity of music's influence to some general law; is it possible to get to the root of the question of how music can affect us if it is purified of all incidental admixtures imparted by associations; in other words, what is its physiological and psychological effect on man?²²¹

If these questions were solved, then “we would be able to come closer to solving another question that follows from the first one, namely the question of what music can express and what its place among the fine arts is.”²²² Neustroyev thus drew upon one of the central trends of Russian scholarship at the time: asserting a causal relationship between physiology and psychology and thus promoting a materialistic understanding of the human psyche. Following the positivist preoccupation with classifying progressive stages of development, Neustroyev distinguished two stages in the history of music perception. According to him, in antiquity, music was not differentiated from other arts. It exerted such a strong moral influence on the Greeks

²¹⁹ Moritz Lazarus, *Das Leben der Seele in Monographien über seine Erscheinungen und Gesetze*, 2 vols. (Berlin: Heinrich Schindler, 1856–57). Neustroyev took these two writers as examples of the battle of “the two camps: idealists and formalists, opposing each other belligerently.” Neustroyev, *Muzika i chuvstvo*, 36. As Mark Evan Bonds recently observed, Lazarus disagreed with Hanslick, because the former was concerned primarily with psychology and perception of music, while the latter with the aesthetics. In Lazarus's own words, Hanslick “[attended] primarily to the content of music, [Lazarus] to the effect of it.” Quoted in: Mark Evan Bonds, *Absolute Music : The History of an Idea* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2014), 245.

²²⁰ Having destroyed Hanslick's philosophy in his previous publication, it is no wonder that Kazansky agreed with Neustroyev that Lazarus's theory was more scientific than Hanslick's. But “more” did not for him mean “completely.” His chief objection to Lazarus was that his theory was “based exclusively on the analysis of mental phenomena, and did not go beyond the scope of the purely psychological sphere. . . . This . . . would have been legitimate, if the mental phenomena were primary, and not derivative.” (Kazansky, “Mesto muziki sredi iskusstva,” part 1, 113.). What was primary, then? Naturally, social experience, Kazansky asserted.

²²¹ Нельзя ли все это кажущееся разнообразие влияния музыки подвести под какой-нибудь общий закон, нельзя ли доискаться до разрешения вопроса о том, какое действие может производить на нас музыка, очищенная от всей примеси случайностей, приданных ей ассоциаций, иными словами, каково ее физиологическое и психологическое действие на человека. Neustroyev, *Muzika i chuvstvo*, 2.

²²² [Тогда] мы будем в состоянии подойти ближе к разрешению и другого, который вытекает из этого первого основного, именно к вопросу о том, что может выражать музыка и какое ее место в ряду изящных искусств. Ibid.

because it was still inseparable from mime and word. The advent of Christianity, in Neustroyev's opinion, brought the idea of music that amplified the word. But as early as the era of Gregorian chant there appeared the notion of music independent of the word, which would eventually lead to music in the true sense of the word – that is, to instrumental music.²²³

Neustroyev's knack for classification (which he might well have acquired while working on his father's massive *Index*) suggests that he, too, thought that an inquiry into the aesthetics of music should adhere to the widely accepted scientific notions of the time. Heavily relying on the classifications of feelings given in *Psychological Analyses on a Physiological Basis: An Attempt at a New Foundation of Psychology*²²⁴ by the German psychologist Adolf Horwicz (1831-1894), Neustroyev laid out his own ranking of feelings that could be aroused by music. These could be of two kinds: "formal feelings"²²⁵ and "sympathetic feelings." By the latter Neustroyev meant empathy. "Formal feelings," however, were vague and unformed, and thus did not lend themselves to specific descriptions. These feelings, such as tension and relief, could be aroused musically, by employing such musical devices as dissonances, suspensions and syncopations on the one hand, and resolution and faster tempo on the other. If nudged in the right direction by the properties of the musical material, these primary vague feelings, such as longing, were able to develop into specialized feeling, such as grieving for a lost friend. Summing up, Neustroyev wrote:

In a few words, the musical content can be reduced to the following: Affecting the life of our soul, [music] evokes vague formal and sympathetic feelings, which develop with the help of symbolism, convention, incidental and deliberate cues into specific feelings and images; in compositions that predominantly formal it acts in a less definitive manner, evoking fragments of formal feelings that stay undefined, and moods.²²⁶

Possessing an impressive command of German psychological literature, Neustroyev referred to numerous medical studies on human hearing and on the effects of music on human physiology. Nevertheless, for Kazansky, a committed advocate for elevating social sciences to the legitimate status of natural sciences, his approach was not rigorous enough. The "science" component had to be at least as prominent as the "social" one.

The argument revealing Kazansky's understanding of the scope and methods of music sociology appeared when he attacked Neustroyev's notion of "conventional symbolism" - that is, a social convention that had acquired specific meaning in a given culture over time. For Neustroyev, who focused on acquired knowledge, it was convention – an important part of our social intelligence – that helped transform formal feelings into specific images. For Kazansky, the answer to these questions lay elsewhere: symbolism and convention were too incidental and vague to be considered a legitimate material for science; he required hard and fast explanations.

²²³ Ibid., 4.

²²⁴ Adolf Horwicz, *Psychologische Analysen auf physiologischer Grundlage. Ein Versuch zur Neubegründung der Seelenlehre*, 2 vols. (Halle,: C.E.M. Pfeffer, 1872).

²²⁵ *Elementargefühle, formale Gefühle* or *vage Gefühle* in German terminology

²²⁶ В нескольких словах содержание музыки сведется к следующему: Действуя на нашу душевную жизнь, она вызывает неясные формальные и симпатетические чувства, которые развиваются при помощи символизма, условности, случайных и неслучайных намеков, в конкретные чувства и образы; в произведениях с преобладанием формальной стороны она действует менее определенно, вызывая отрывки формальных чувств, остающихся в своей неопределенности, и настроения. Neustroyev, *Muzika i chuvstvo*, 67-68.

Social science was only a science when it relied on the findings of physics and physiology. To give an example, Neustroyev asked: “What else, other than arbitrary convention, explains that our major mode expresses joyful mood? ... Why should the sounds of the cello express love, and at the sounds of bassoons and oboes should we imagine a rural setting?”²²⁷ Kazansky, instead, quoted Helmholtz's theory of combination tones, which, being simpler in major than in minor, were thought to be the reason for the pleasant nature of the major mode, and for the unpleasantness of the minor mode. As to the second question, Kazansky felt it necessary to give the social convention an evolutionary backing, thus claiming its legitimate place in the realm of natural sciences. Relying on the idea from Spencer's “On the Origin and Function of Music” that music stemmed from “idealization of those intonations that appear in people's [speech] exclusively in the moments of passionate excitement,”²²⁸ Kazansky claimed that the timbre of cello was the closest to the timbre of an adult male's voice and therefore was the most suitable for embodying romantic sentiment.

Kazansky summed up his objections to Neustroyev as follows: “Indeed, the facts of social life are manifestations of natural life, as much as one usually accepts facts of chemistry, physics, etc. to be. In the meantime, the author imparts to all the facts of social life a character of conventional symbolism, thereby destroying all of their vitality.”²²⁹ By suggesting that that which did not adhere to scientific discourse was devoid of all vitality, Kazansky upped the ante quite a bit. This should not surprise us if we remember that scientific discourse was perfectly aligned with political in Kazansky's thinking. Such a literal understanding of “life sciences,” in which all that was redolent of idealism also smacked of the stifling autocracy, and in which the natural sciences were equated with all that is modern and alive, was part of the popular scientific mentality that started with the scientific revolution of the 1860s and the writings of the Nihilists. By the 1890s, as Kazansky's publications showed, it had already trickled down to all spheres of Russian cultural life.

The fall of scientism

Kazansky's invective, although broadcast through an influential journal, did not harm Hanslick's Russian reputation. In fact, the same journal published a short review of the eighth German edition of *On the Musically Beautiful* in 1892, which claimed that despite Kazansky's just criticism, some aspects of Hanslick's book remained relevant and that its “tendency was scientific enough, and even progressive.”²³⁰ The debate around the treatise was rekindled in 1895 by the publication of its third Russian translation, by Herman Laroche.²³¹ The translation received high praise²³² in comparison to the previous one by Ivanov, but also caused more outpourings of severe criticism. By then Hanslick's four-decade-old book was starting to be perceived as anachronistic, but so was optimistic scientism and blind faith in positivist precepts.

²²⁷ Ibid., 64.

²²⁸ Kazansky, “Mesto muziki sredi iskusstva,” part 1, 117.

²²⁹ В самом деле, факты общественной жизни являются настолько же проявлениями жизни природы, насколько таковыми признаются обыкновенно факты химические, физические и т.д. Между тем автор отмечает все факты общественной жизни характером условного символизма, чем явно отрицает в них всякую жизненность. Ibid., 118.

²³⁰ Anonymous, “Review of ‘On the Musically Beautiful’,” *ibid.* 19: 123.

²³¹ Eduard Hanslick, *O muzikal'no-prekrasnom: opit poverki muzikal'noy estetiki*, trans. Herman Avgustovich Laroche (Moscow: Jurgenson, 1895).

²³² Anonymous, “Review of Laroche's translation of ‘On the Musically Beautiful’,” *Severniiy vestnik* 9(1895): 69-71.

It is true that by the late 1880s positivism began to hold sway over the humanities – a development clearly reflected in Russian responses to Hanslick's theory. But unlike the reform period of the 1860s, in the reactionary post-1881 era attitudes toward positivism were far from unanimous. The author of the next significant reaction to Hanslick might serve as an example.

Vladimir Aleksandrovich Wagner (1849-1934),²³³ like his Bayreuth namesake, did not think highly of Hanslick's theory. A zoologist and the founder of comparative psychology in Russia, Wagner's work focused on instincts and their evolution within the framework of Haeckel's biogenetic law. A staunch Darwinist, he was the first researcher in Russia to apply evolutionary theory to psychology. In 1895 he became a Privatdozent at Moscow University.²³⁴ In the same year, the year Laroche published his translation of Hanslick's treatise, Wagner authored two articles on music, both relevant to a discussion of positivism in music scholarship.

Wagner married the pianist Maria Apollonovna Krzysztofowicz, a pupil of Nikolai Rubinstein,²³⁵ and their Moscow house on Malaya Tsaritsynskaya Street, typically for its time, became a juncture of the musical and scientific worlds – a convergence also represented by the music scholar and third-generation scientist Leonid Sabaneyev, whose work will be discussed in chapter four. Since the fusion of scientific and art worlds is pertinent to our inquiry, and since Wagner's views and work are better documented than those of Sabaneyev, it would be germane to a discussion of positivism in Russia to adumbrate Wagner's pursuits and convictions.

As Sabaneyev's father, the famous zoologist Leonid Pavlovich Sabaneyev had done in 1873, in 1912 Wagner founded a journal, titled *Priroda (Nature)*, which in many ways was a successor to Sabaneyev's publication. This one, though, was blessed with a longer life than its predecessor, surviving to the present day.²³⁶ A “godfather” to the new journal was none other than Anton Chekhov, with whom Vladimir Wagner became closely acquainted in the summer of 1891, which the two spent at the Bogimovo estate in the Tarussky District. Wagner had already entertained the idea of a journal two decades before its actual founding, and discussed it in his correspondence with Chekhov, who proposed a name for the journal, *The Naturalist*. Wagner's connection to Chekhov is worth investigating, since it appears to exemplify what the art world thought of the scientific enterprise at the end of the century. The conversations Chekhov and Wagner had during their summer stay in Bogimovo allegedly made their way into Chekhov's novella *The Duel* (1891). In his memoir *Around Chekhov* (1933) the writer's brother Mikhail reported that the philosophy of one of the characters was based on Wagner's views.²³⁷

What kind of philosophy did Chekhov purportedly lift from Wagner? The central characters of *The Duel* were the impassive and orderly zoologist Von Koren, and the well-read but dissolute and unemployed Laevsky, both portrayed unsympathetically. Von Koren's contempt

²³³ Literature on Wagner: Yuriy Aleksandrovich Filipchenko, "V. A. Wagner," *Priroda*, no. 4 (1929): 283; Valentin Aleksandrovich Dogel, "Vladimir Aleksandrovich Wagner (K 75-letiyu so dnya rozhdeniya)," [Vladimir Aleksandrovich Wagner (On the occasion of his 75th birthday).] *Estestvoznaniye v shkole*, no. 1 (1925): 1-2; Valentin Aleksandrovich Dogel, "V. A. Wagner," *Priroda*, no. 4 (1934): 90; Nina Vladimirovna Uspenskaya, "A.P.Chekhov i V.A.Wagner," *ibid.* 95(1982): 92-97; B.V. Lukin, "Perviy redaktor 'Prirodi' V.A. Wagner," [The first editor of "Nature" V.A.Wagner.] *ibid.* 48 (1987): 48-58.

²³⁴ In 1906 he moved to St. Petersburg and assumed a professorship at the university. Bernandt and Yampolsky, *Kto pisal o muzike*, vol 1, 138.

²³⁵ Lukin, "Perviy redaktor 'Prirodi' V.A. Wagner," 50.

²³⁶ Aleksandr Fyodorovich Andreyev, "Zhurnal 'Priroda' - 100 let," [The journal 'Priroda' is 100 years old.] *Uspekhi fizicheskikh nauk* 182, no. 1 (January 2012).

²³⁷ Mikhail Pavlovich Chekhov, *Vokrug Chekhova* [Around Chekhov] (Moscow: Moskovskiy rabochiy, 1964), 236.

for Laevsky ultimately led the former to challenge the latter to a duel. Portraying Von Koren's increasing aversion to Laevsky, Chekhov put into his mouth expressions of extreme social Darwinism. Von Koren considered it a duty of every responsible member of a society to kill such people as Laevsky, and went as far as to say he would gladly serve as executioner, if the state were to entrust such a mission to him. According to the zoologist,

primitive man was preserved from such as Laevsky by the struggle for existence and by natural selection; now our civilization has considerably weakened the struggle and the selection, and we ought to look after the destruction of the rotten and worthless for ourselves; otherwise, when the Laevskys multiply, civilization will perish and mankind will degenerate utterly. It will be our fault.²³⁸

The other characters in the story react with disbelief and disgust to Von Koren's extremism, worthy of a faithful follower of Max Nordau. In his call for extermination of degenerates Von Koren out-nordaued Nordau, who never went that far, but only stipulated that “those degenerates, whose mental derangement [was] too deep-seated, [had to] be abandoned to their inexorable fate.”²³⁹

Nordau's *Entartung* appeared in German only in 1892, a year after the publication of Chekhov's novella. Russian translations of Nordau's other works were published in 1893, and *Entartung* was translated only in 1894. It was not until 1894 that Chekhov wrote to Alexey Suvorin that he “read such birdbrains as Max Nordau with great disgust.”²⁴⁰ So, Chekhov must have read Nordau's book well after he completed the novella, which was first published in October and November 1891 in Suvorin's newspaper *Novoye vremya* (*The New Times*). However, the fact that Von Koren espoused views reminiscent of Nordau's, although more extreme, and even employed a metaphor found in *Entartung*, which compared degeneration to cholera microbe,²⁴¹ suggests that even before reading Nordau's infamous book Chekhov was aware of the widespread discourse on degeneration. It was first popularized by Bénédict Morel's work in the mid-nineteenth century. From this discourse the metaphor might have come both to *The Duel* and to *Entartung*. As is evident in both texts, the degeneration discourse was closely associated with the scientific worldview: Nordau repeatedly asserted scientific credibility of his method, and Chekhov portrayed Von Koren as a scientist.

²³⁸ Первобытное человечество было охраняемо от таких, как Лаевский, борьбой за существование и подбором; теперь же наша культура значительно ослабила борьбу и подбор, и мы должны сами позаботиться об уничтожении хилых и негодных, иначе, когда Лаевские размножатся, цивилизация погибнет, и человечество выродится совершенно. Anton Pavlovich Chekhov, *The Duel and Other Stories*, trans. Constance Garnett (New York: The Macmillan company, 1916), 40.

²³⁹ Max Simon Nordau, *Degeneration*, trans. Reinette McCrea, 4th ed. (New York: D. Appleton and company, 1895), 551.

²⁴⁰ [A] таких свистунов, как Макс Нордау, я читаю просто с отвращением. Anton Pavlovich Chekhov, *Polnoye sobraniye sochineniy i pisem* [Complete Works and Correspondence], ed. S. D. Balukhatiy, 30 vols. (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoye izdatel'stvo kudozhestvennoy literatury, 1944), vol. 23, 283, 533-534.

²⁴¹ Chekhov's Von Koren: “Laevsky is absolutely pernicious and is as dangerous to society as the cholera microbe,” Von Koren went on. “To drown him would be a service.” Chekhov, *The Duel and Other Stories*, 28. Nordau: “Certain micro-organisms engendering mortal diseases have always been present also – for example, the bacillus of cholera; but they only cause epidemics when circumstances arise intensely favourable for their rapid increase. Nordau, *Degeneration*, 537.

What exactly Chekhov and Wagner discussed in the summer of 1891 we will never know. Written four decades later, Mikhaíl Chekhov's memoirs do touch upon the themes of these conversations. However, judging by Wagner's own published sociological works, degeneration was never an issue for him. From 1899 to 1901 Wagner published in *Russkaya misl'* a series of sociological essays titled "Biological Views and the Issues of Life,"²⁴² and even worked on a book called *Psychobiological Foundations of Sociology*, which remained unpublished. For these studies he gained recognition as a sociologist, and became a vice-president of the Russian Sociological Society named after Maksim Kovalevsky.²⁴³ Two of the *Russkaya misl'* essays dealt with the issues of heredity and education, as did his 1904 essay "From the history of Darwinism in sociology."²⁴⁴ Wagner's method in these essays was scholarly enough: first he comprehensively surveyed the existing literature on the subject, juxtaposed and analyzed conflicting viewpoints, and only then ventured an informed opinion. Application of evolutionary theory to sociology indeed had pride of place in these writings. However, Wagner's ultimate contention was that while natural selection had played a crucial role in the development of human societies in the past, there was no reason why a developed society had to depend on such a cruel and inhuman process as late as the nineteenth century. He was convinced that societies must abandon the Darwinian struggle for existence and shed the yoke of natural selection by developing methods of artificial selection. This, in his understanding, had nothing to do with eugenics and such. The primary place where artificial selection was to be implemented was school, where, Wagner wrote, natural selection was still rampant and had to be stopped. The criteria of artificial selection in school would be, according to Wagner, knowledge and skills useful in life, correct development of intellectual faculties and firm foundations of ethics.²⁴⁵ He never hinted at the desirability of sorting human beings into categories, or mandating violence and injustice in the name of "natural" sociological processes. In this, he profoundly disagreed with the father of the social Darwinism, Herbert Spencer, an advocate of *laissez-faire* economic policy.²⁴⁶ In a dissertation on Wagner's contribution to psychology, Olga Kolodkina maintained that "evidence, collected by Wagner to back up the idea that biological laws are unacceptable in studying human society, allowed for a well-grounded criticism of racism and social Darwinism."²⁴⁷

All in all, we can assume that in his daily conversations with Chekhov Vladimir Wagner never said anything as extreme as what Von Koren said in *The Duel*. He might not even have perceived the character to be in any essential detail modeled after himself, since the relationship

²⁴² Vladimir Aleksandrovich Wagner, "Biologicheskiye vozzreniya i voprosi zhizni," [Biological views and the issues of life.] *Russkaya misl'* (1899-1901).

²⁴³ Lukin, "Perviy redaktor 'Prirodi' V.A. Wagner," 54.

²⁴⁴ Vladimir Aleksandrovich Wagner, "Biologicheskiye vozzreniya i voprosi zhizni (Vospitaniye i nasledstvennost')," [Biological views and the issues of life

(Upbringing and heredity).] *Russkaya misl'* 5(1899): 1-25; Vladimir Aleksandrovich Wagner, "Biologicheskiye vozzreniya i voprosi zhizni (Shkola XIX veka)," [Biological views and the issues of life

(School of the 19th century).] *Russkaya misl'* 5(1901): 51-71; Vladimir Aleksandrovich Wagner, "Iz istorii darvinizma v sotsiologii," [From the history of Darwinism in sociology.] *Russkaya misl'* 8(1904): 1-29.

²⁴⁵ Wagner, "Shkola XIX veka," 69.

²⁴⁶ Wagner, "Iz istorii darvinizma v sotsiologii," 3.

²⁴⁷ [Д]оказательства, собранные Вагнером в защиту положения о - том, что биологические законы неприемлемы при рассмотрении человеческого общества, позволили обосновать критику расизма и социального дарвинизма. Olga Olegovna Kolodkina, "Vklad V.A. Wagnera v razvitiye raznykh otrasley psikhologii" (Dissertation abstract, Moskovskiy gumanitarniy universitet, 2011), 19.

between the writer and the scientist did not deteriorate after the publication of the novella. For what reasons, then, might their conversations have triggered such a turn in Chekhov's creative process? Portraying the standoff between the opposing “scientific” and “artistic” worldviews, the writer presented generalized images of both. It turned out that the “scientific” one was in his eyes inextricably associated with social Darwinism and moral devaluation. The standoff was important for resolving Chekhov’s own doubt, as well as those doubts he thought to be persisting among the Russian intelligentsia. A professional doctor, and once a convinced Darwinist himself, after his trip to Sakhalin Chekhov started to doubt whether evolutionary theory was universally applicable, especially to human societies.²⁴⁸ Among the Russian public, he was convinced, the enthusiasm for natural sciences had abated by the end of the century.²⁴⁹

Things had changed since the 1860s, when the flourishing of the scientific mindset was reflected in the literary tradition. Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons* (1862) and Chernishevsky's *What Is to Be Done?* (1863) provide a useful point of comparison: “It was not an accident that Bazarov ... was a medical student who studied physiology and was skilled in dissecting frogs. Gossip in St.Petersburg and Moscow had it that Kirsanov, the forward-looking hero of ... *What Is to Be Done?*, was modeled on Sechenov.”²⁵⁰ By 1891, as Chekhov's novella suggests, for some artists the scientific enterprise became increasingly associated with misguided morality. So did positivism, which at the time was virtually synonymous with science.

Naturally, the evolutionist and professor of zoology Vladimir Wagner was well aware of the legacy of Comte and other positivist writers.²⁵¹ His magnum opus *Biological Foundations of Comparative Psychology*, first published in 1910, opened with three chapters on, respectively, theological, metaphysical and scientific worldviews in comparative psychology. Later in the volume he relied on Comte's views on comparative anatomy and psychology,²⁵² but rejected Comtian and Spencerian organicist conceptions of the state.²⁵³ Although Wagner refuted Spencer's ideas in the area of his professional competency, in his article “Genesis and development of music”²⁵⁴ he completely relied on Spencer's “On the origin and function of music”²⁵⁵ and its central idea that music developed from agitated speech, meanwhile rejecting hypotheses by Darwin and Weismann. Like Comte, he regarded knowledge of natural sciences indispensable to the education of a well-socialized citizen, and a necessary component in shaping

²⁴⁸ Margarita Moiseyevna Odesskaya, "Ibsen, Strindberg, Chekhov v svete kontseptsii vırozhdeniya Maksa Nordau," [Ibsen, Strindberg, Chekhov in the light of Max Nordau's conception of degeneration] in *Ibsen, Strindberg, Chekhov: a collection of articles*, ed. Margarita Moiseyevna Odesskaya (Moscow: Rossiyskiy gosudarstvenniy gumanitarniy universitet, 2007), 222. See also: Heinz Setzer, "Chekhov, dekadans i Maks Nordau," in *Chekhov i Germaniya* (Moscow: Filologicheskiy fakul'tet MGU, 1996), 181-182; Aleksandr Borisovich Krinitsin, "Problema "vırozhdeniya" u Chekhova i Maksa Nordau," [The problem of "degeneration" in Chekhov and Max Nordau] *ibid.*, 165-180.

²⁴⁹ Chekhov, *Polnoye sobraniye sochineniy i pisem*, vol. 23, 284. A letter to Suvorin.

²⁵⁰ Vucinich, *Science in Russian Culture: 1861-1917*, 126. Ivan Mikhailovich Sechenov (1829-1905), a physiologist and polymath, one of the most prominent Russian scientists of the nineteenth century.

²⁵¹ Uspenskaya, "A.P.Chekhov i V.A.Wagner," 94.

²⁵² Vladimir Aleksandrovich Wagner, *Biologicheskiye osnovaniya sravnitel'noy psikhologii* [Biological Foundations of Comparative Psychology] (Moscow: Nauka, 2005), 127.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, 188.

²⁵⁴ Vladimir Aleksandrovich Wagner, "Genezis i razvitiye muziki," [Genesis and development of music] *Voprosi filosofii i psikhologii* 28 (May 1895): 275-312.

²⁵⁵ Russian translation: Herbert Spencer, "Proiskhozhdeniye i deyatel'nost' muziki," [On the origin and function of music.] *Russkoye bogatstvo* (January 1891): 47-70.

of the collective psychology.²⁵⁶ He envisioned his journal's main objective as “studying those issues and data of natural sciences that lay the foundation of human sciences: history, sociology, law ... philosophy, psychology, ethics, aesthetics, [and] political economy”²⁵⁷ thus endorsing one of the central tenets of positivism: natural sciences as a model for the humanities.²⁵⁸

It is in this light that Wagner's response to Hanslick is significant. That a reputable journal like *Questions of Philosophy and Psychology*, operating on the crossroads of philosophy and natural sciences, should deem a response to the third Russian publication of Hanslick's book necessary, and that it merited a review by a scientist (who, therefore, considered musical aesthetics to be entirely within his professional purview), says much about the high status and renown Hanslick's doctrine acquired in Russia by 1895, and about the high standing of the idea that study of music should be based on scientific principles.

Having no professional knowledge of music or art history, Wagner did not venture a specific alternative to Hanslick's theory in his article “On the beautiful in music.”²⁵⁹ Instead, he insisted that Hanslick's ideas were not scientifically proven. His central contention, voiced on the first page, was again a call for a holistic study of music, in this case backed up by Wagner's actual scientific expertise in genetics:

Hanslick, not being a natural scientist and being preoccupied with a philosophical question ... insists on the necessity of the methods of natural history in studying aesthetic issues. As a natural scientist I can only support such a demand, but I definitely cannot understand how, having chosen such a viewpoint, he could forget the fundamental principles of natural sciences – forget about the genetic connection of all phenomena, and thus about the necessity to study them by proceeding from the simplest to the more complex.²⁶⁰

Wagner went on to take down Hanslick's arguments, which he found to be ridiculous from the scientific point of view, relying on outdated sources, or simply illogical.

It is revealing whose opinion Wagner regarded as authoritative. He quoted at length from Hippolyte Taine, whose theory, foundational for positivism in art history, stipulated that every work of art was conditioned by and could be studied only in the context of its “race, milieu, and moment.” Although Taine was critical of Comte, his determination to find out the laws of the development of art placed him firmly into the pleiad of nineteenth-century scholars applying

²⁵⁶ Lukin, "Perviy redaktor 'Prirodi' V.A. Wagner," 55.

²⁵⁷ Главная задача журнала предполагается в разработке таких вопросов и данных естествознания, которые начинают залегать в основы гуманитарных наук: истории, социологии, юриспруденции вообще и криминалистики в частности, философии, психологии, этики, эстетики, политической экономии. Nina Vladimirovna Uspenskaya, "A.P.Chekhov i V.A. Wagner," *ibid.* 95(1982): 97.

²⁵⁸ Cf. Chekhov's Von Koren: “The 'humane studies' of which you speak will only satisfy human thought when, as they advance, they meet the exact sciences and progress side by side with them.” Chekhov, *The Duel and Other Stories*, 129.

²⁵⁹ Vladimir Aleksandrovich Wagner, "O prekrasnom v muzike," [On the beautiful in music.] *Voprosi filosofii i psikhologii* 29(1895): 478-502.

²⁶⁰ Ганслик, не будучи натуралистом и разрешая философский вопрос ... настаивает на необходимости естественно-исторического метода в решении вопросов эстетики. В качестве натуралиста, я могу только присоединиться к этому требованию, но решительно не могу понять, каким образом, став на эту точку зрения, можно забывать основные принципы естествознания: о генетической связи всех явлений между собою, - а исходя отсюда, - о необходимости изучать их, исходя от простого к сложному. *Ibid.*, 478-479.

positivist principles to the humanities. In the Introduction to his famed *History of English Literature*, Taine explained his determinist theory: “The great historical currents are formed after this law. . . . Here as elsewhere we have but a mechanical problem; the total effect is a result, depending entirely on the magnitude and direction of the producing causes”²⁶¹ (that is, his famous triad of race, environment, and epoch).

Wagner, however, chose to quote not from the heavily racialized²⁶² *History of English Literature*, but rather from Taine's *Philosophy of Art*, the Russian translation of which enjoyed wide popularity and multiple reprints. Meticulous descriptions of landscape and climate, social and political conditions were copiously provided in this study in order to explain national spirit, since Taine was convinced that they could lead a historian not only to understanding the laws that shape artistic creation, but also to an aesthetic criterion: the best art was that which captured the national character most comprehensively. According to Wagner, such a method was widespread and accepted long ago.²⁶³ He also cited Moritz Carrière in support of his notion that art could not be divorced from life, and had to be studied only in a close connection to “religious ideas and political life of nations.”²⁶⁴ According to Wagner (as to Kazansky five years earlier) it was precisely the lack of such catholicity that made Hanslick's approach unscientific.

Just how influential Wagner's opinion was we can gather from bibliographic reviews and, most importantly, from the entry on “Music” in the most comprehensive and authoritative Russian encyclopedia, widely used at the turn of the century, the Brockhaus and Efron Encyclopedic Dictionary. The bibliographic section of the influential *Russkaya mīsl'*, surveying noteworthy books and articles in other journals, devoted a paragraph to Wagner's article, which, in the opinion of the anonymous reviewer, “contained a thorough and witty refutation of [Hanslick's] absurd 'scientific' assertions.”²⁶⁵ The Brockhaus and Efron entry, published two years after Wagner's article, was written by Sergey Bulich – a Kazan University-educated linguist, ethnographer, and music historian, a professor of the St.Petersburg University and later one of the co-founders and the first dean of the first music department at the Institute of Art History. Bulich credited Wagner with “well-aimed objections” that dismantled Hanslick's theory, which had “now lost its significance to a considerable degree”²⁶⁶ and cited other writers that supported Wagner's position: Neustroyev and Sacchetti. It is worth noting though, that, however critical Bulich was of Hanslick's views, his eighteen-page entry opened with a summary of Hanslick's theory on the very first page – a tribute to its vast influence on the Russian thought on music.

The next generation: idealism again

Hanslick's influence in Russia, however, did not end with the victorious dismantling of his doctrine by the advent of positivism in the humanities, exemplified in the cluster of the late nineteenth-century critical responses that have occupied the bulk of this chapter. As we have seen

²⁶¹ Hazard Adams, *Critical Theory since Plato* (New York, : Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971), 647.

²⁶² “What we call the race are the innate and hereditary dispositions which man brings with him to the light, and which, as a rule, are united with the marked differences in the temperament and structure of the body.” *Ibid.*, 645.

²⁶³ Wagner, “O prekrasnom v muzike,” 495.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁵ Статья г. Вагнера заключает в себе обстоятельное и остроумное опровержение этих вздорных „ученых” утверждений. Anonymous, “Bibliography,” *Russkaya mīsl'* 10 (1895): 491.

²⁶⁶ Sergey Bulich, “Muzika,” in *Entsiklopedicheskii slovar' Brokgauza i Efrona*, ed. I. Ye. Andreyevskiy (St. Petersburg: Izdaniye F.A.Brokgauza, 1897), 127-145.

in the case of Vladimir Wagner, the unqualified belief in the power and morality of science came under philosophical scrutiny in the last decade of the nineteenth century. In the early twentieth century Hanslick suddenly became relevant once again. Another cluster of responses was published, this time of idealist pedigree (although different from Yuryev's brand of idealism), whose authors elevated Hanslick once again into a position of authority. First was the book of essays on aesthetics titled *Symbolism* by the poet Andrey Bely, born Boris Nikolayevich Bugayev, who would also have a role in later debates that had bearing on Russian music scholarship. Details of Bely's biography are readily available and need not be related here. One aspect, however, deserves to be dwelt upon – namely, his relationship with his father. Bely's father, Nikolai Vasilyevich Bugayev, was a well-known mathematician and philosopher. He was Chair of the Moscow Mathematical Society and one of the most noteworthy representatives of the Moscow school of mathematics. The Society believed that the mechanistic view, which dominated mathematical research at the time, was misguided, since the idea of universal causality negated those aspects of reality that resisted causal explanation and were “free.” Alexander Vucinich writes: “By supporting this mechanistic orientation, according to Bugayev and his followers, classical mathematics gave unwarranted support to materialistic philosophy, the archenemy of the sacred culture surrounding the institutional complexes of autocracy. ... Bugayev's ideas were espoused and defended mostly by idealistic philosophers and theologians, who interpreted them as a mortal blow to the intellectual supremacy of science, and as a powerful, though indirect, defense of metaphysical and religious experience as a source of true wisdom.”²⁶⁷

It can be argued that Bely's relationship with his father was complicated, which was most famously reflected in the relationship between the father and son Ableukhov in Bely's novel *Petersburg*. In the opinion of Magnus Ljunggren, Bely's parental surrogate was his close friend Emilii Medtner.²⁶⁸ However, there is also evidence that his father the scientist was a role model to Bely. Fyodor Stepun, editor-in-chief of the journal *Logos* (a part of Medtner's publishing house *Musaget*), who closely collaborated with Bely and Medtner, wrote:

[B]y the time of our rapprochement with *Musaget* Bely was fascinated with neo-Kantianism; he entrenched himself in it as if it were a stronghold inaccessible to philosophical dilettantism, paraded it as a token of his serious attitude to science, sensing in this seriousness a connection to his father, a real scientist, a philosopher-mathematician.²⁶⁹

Be that as it may, the militantly idealistic position of Bely's father was certainly reflected in the poet's collection of essays *Symbolism*. It was printed in 1910 by *Musaget*, exactly at the time of the collision between Bryusova and Medtner, which will be analyzed in the next chapter. First

²⁶⁷ Vucinich, *Science in Russian Culture: 1861-1917*, 352-354.

²⁶⁸ Magnus Ljunggren, *The Russian Mephisto: A Study of the Life and Work of Emilii Medtner* [The Russian Mephisto], Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis Stockholm studies in Russian literature (Stockholm, Sweden: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1994), 19.

²⁶⁹ К тому же Белый и сам ко времени нашего сближения с “Мусагетом” увлекался неокантианством, окапывался в нем как в недоступной философскому дилетантизму траншее, кичился им как признаком своего серьезного отношения к науке, чувствуя в этой серьезности связь с отцом, настоящим ученым, философом-математиком. Fyodor Stepun, *Byvsheye i nesbyvsheyesya* [What Was and What Never Came to Pass] (St. Petersburg: Aleteya, 2000), 218-219.

appearing in 1902 in the journal *Mir iskusstva* (*The Art World*) and reprinted in *Symbolism*, Bely's essay "Forms of art"²⁷⁰ adopted Hanslick's ideas as the main authority on music. Relishing the idealist understanding of music as the only art capable of expressing the ineffable, an approximation of the Kantian noumenal world, Bely found in Hanslick's phrase "Its realm is truly not of this world"²⁷¹ exactly what he needed. Unlike the visual arts, concerned only with images of external reality, music for Bely was concerned with the inner life of reality.²⁷² Therefore, all forms of art had reality as their starting point, and music – that is, pure movement, - as their final destination. Music was the art farthest removed from reality,²⁷³ and the closest to approaching the mystery of existence.²⁷⁴ The next logical step was rejecting the possibility of comprehending art in a rational way, and Bely gladly took it: "On many occasions our life unfolds in such a way that its rational side steps to the fore. This is why we are ready to view all manifestations of life through the prism of the law of . . . knowledge. We forget that the realm of art is outside of the purview of this law."²⁷⁵ He urged drawing a boundary between art and science, and spoke against charging art with scientific goals. Bely did not preach against rational knowledge in general, considering it one of the diverse ways of knowing the universe; he just considered it unsuitable for studying art.²⁷⁶ Moreover, in a piece called "Emblems of meaning" (1909),²⁷⁷ immediately preceding "Forms of art" in the collection, Bely renounced all causal relationship between science and a worldview: "Fantastical palaces of "scientific worldviews" shot up in front of us and crumbled; from the shards of materialism soared up the icy peak of Spencer's "synthetic philosophy" - and shattered. The truth is that science and Weltanschauung are incommensurate."²⁷⁸ Hanslick's insistence on "specifically musical beauty" and denial of music's relationship with reality were once again indispensable to the Symbolist quest *a realibus ad realiora*.

Bely's friend Emiliy Medtner embraced Hanslick's philosophy as well. In 1896 he traveled to Vienna, where he met the critic and reported about the encounter in *Moskovskie Vedomosti* in 1897.²⁷⁹ A lawyer by training, Medtner reminisced: "While working on the candidate dissertation *Rudolf von Jering's Theory of Possession*, at leisure I diligently read another sharp-witted Viennese, that greatest of music critics Hanslick, and, I remember, couldn't help but compare these two writers in my preface."²⁸⁰ It is important to keep in mind the attitude

²⁷⁰ Andrey Bely, "Formi iskusstva," [Forms of art] in *Simvolizm* (Moscow: Musaget, 1910), 149-174.

²⁷¹ Hanslick, *On the Musically Beautiful*, 30.

²⁷² Bely, "Formi iskusstva," 165.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, 166.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 169.

²⁷⁵ Наша жизнь во многих случаях складывается таким образом, что рассудочная сторона ее выступает на первый план. Отсюда наша готовность рассматривать все жизненные проявления сквозь призму закона основания познания. Мы забываем, что область искусства вне компетенции этого закона. *Ibid.*, 164.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 170.

²⁷⁷ Andrey Bely, *Simvolizm* (Moscow: Musaget, 1910), 49-143.

²⁷⁸ Перед нами взлетали фантастические чертоги «научных мировоззрений» и рушились; из обломков материализма взлетел льдистый кряж «синтетической философии» Спенсера — и рассыпался. Дело в том, что наука и мировоззрение несоизмеримы. Bely, "Emblematika smisla," 53.

²⁷⁹ E. K. Wolfing, "U Ganslika," *Moskovskie Vedomosti*, Vol. 4 1897.

²⁸⁰ Работая над кандидатским сочинением "Учение о владении по Рудольфу Иерингу", я в часы досуга усердно читал другого остроумного венца, величайшего музыкального критика Ганслика, и, помнится, не мог удержаться от того, чтобы в предисловии не сопоставить этих двух писателей. Vadim Veniaminovich Sapov, "V.I.Ivanov i E.K. Medtner. Perepiska iz dvukh mirov.," [V.I.Ivanov and E.K. Medtner. Correspondence from two worlds] *Voprosi literatury*, no. 2 (1994): 312-313.

of these two friends to Hanslick's doctrine when we examine their standpoint regarding the studies by Sabaneyev and Bryusova in the subsequent chapters.

In 1914 the *Russian Musical Gazette* (RMG), one of the leading music periodicals in Russia and Nikolai Findeisen's brainchild, ran a piece called "Eduard Hanslick's aesthetic theory. (A critical etude)"²⁸¹ by Alexey Petrovich Linitzky²⁸² (1874 - ?), the journal's Kiev correspondent. Findeisen's choice indicated that in the 1910s, Hanslick's ideas remained relevant enough that they merited another substantial exegesis, despite everything that had been written on them in the previous decades. Alexey Linitzky was the eldest son of Petro Ivanovich Linitzky,²⁸³ a well-known philosopher and theologian, a Plato scholar, an adversary of empiricism and professor of philosophy at Kiev Theological Academy. There is a direct correlation between the father's and son's opinions on Hanslick. An art lover, Petro Linitzky was particularly fond of music. His distaste for program music and predilection for "pure music" was so well-known that his colleague Petro Pavlovich Kudryavtsev mentioned it in the theologian's obituary:²⁸⁴ "Pyotr Ivanovich held to the idea that a true philosopher should like music, because pure thought and pure art . . . resemble each other in their formal and at the same time disinterested character."²⁸⁵ In his article "On art" (1905), published in the influential *Proceedings of Kiev Theological Academy*, Petro Linitzky quoted Hanslick, and, as befitted a theologian, did not fail to mention the "realm not of this world" either. According to him, "Form was always considered the most important element in art. In creation of form lies that special creative artistic spirit that is called genius, ingenuity, talent."²⁸⁶

The striking similarity of Alexey Linitzky's stance on music aesthetics to that of his father, the eminent theologian, shows the strong idealistic heritage of the RMG correspondent's views. Like Bely, Linitzky gave Hanslick an upper hand. His RMG essay was basically a synopsis of *On the Musically Beautiful*, laced with rather timid objections in defense of musical content – a far cry from the positivist battlefield of the 1890s. When he argued in favor of the thoughts and feelings evoked by music, he emphasized their spiritual quality. Like his father, he also compared music to philosophy in that it better described an abstract, not a specific, subject, and concluded his rather muddled and unprofessional argument by stating that the musically beautiful, ideas, and feelings constituted the hidden (that is, ideal) content of music.²⁸⁷ While it

²⁸¹ Aleksey Petrovich Linitzky, "Esteticheskaya teoriya Eduarda Ganslika (Kriticheskiy etyud)" [Eduard Hanslick's aesthetic theory. (A critical etude).] *Russkaya muzikal'naya gazeta* 20-21; 22-23(1914): 494-497; 524-528.

²⁸² Linitzky's first name and patronymic are not specified in the publication, but can be found on his calling card, kept in Findeisen's archive in the National Library of Russia, F. 816 (Findeisen N.F.), op. 2, ye.kh. 1543: Linitzky A.P. A note to N.F. Findeisen on a calling card.

²⁸³ I am very grateful for the generous help in establishing this familial relationship to the leading Ukrainian scholar of Petro Linitzky and the author of the only monograph on his life and works, Natalia Mozgova, who sent me a copy of Petro Linitzky's curriculum vitae, kept at the Central State Historical Archive in Kiev, F. 711, op. 1, ye.kh. 10931, which lists names and dates of birth of all his children. (Personal correspondence, September 20, 2014).

²⁸⁴ Petro Pavlovich Kudryavtsev, "Professor Pyotr Ivanovich Linitzky," *Proceedings of the Kiev Theological Academy* 8-9(1906): 763.

²⁸⁵ Вместе с тем П. Ив. Любил повторять ту мысль, что истинный философ должен быть любителем музыки, потому что чистое мышление и чистое искусство, - думал он, - близки друг другу, по своему формальному и — вместе с тем — бескорыстному характеру. Ibid., 764.

²⁸⁶ Всегда признавалась и признается важнейшим элементом в искусстве форма. В создании формы и состоит тот особый творческий дар художника, который называется гением, гениальностью, талантом. Petro Ivanovich Linitzky, "Ob iskusstve," [On art.] *ibid.* 9(1905): 17-18.

²⁸⁷ Linitzky, "Esteticheskaya teoriya Eduarda Ganslika (Kriticheskiy etyud)" 528.

could be symptomatic of RMG's financial struggle and the general scarcity of Russian writing on music that Findeisen accepted such a weak piece in a desperate effort to scrape the materials for the next issue – a perennial predicament he amply described in his diaries, – it also did signify a Hanslick renaissance in the intellectual climate swaying towards idealism.

In the same year (1914) another piece on Hanslick was published. Its author, whose rhapsodic style anticipated the ecstatic outbursts of eulogies to Scriabin two years later, was the pianist Grigoriy Abramovich Angert. The essay, “On the perception of the musically beautiful”²⁸⁸ was a part of the collection, which he edited together with the pianist David Shor. This curious collection, entitled *The Musical Almanac*, was published by the private school “Institute of Musical Education named after Beethoven” (or simply Beethoven Studio), founded by Shor in Moscow in 1911. Besides Angert's, it contained contributions by Leonid Sabaneyev, Boris de Schloezer and a translation of Arnold Schoenberg's “Problems in Teaching Art.”

In his contribution, Angert issued a passionate call to abandon all attempts to study music with the help of rational faculties and give in to the only true way of music perception – the immediate and irrational one. Not all the authors in the collection went to such extremes. Reviewing the *Almanac* in the journal *Bulletins of Literature and Life*,²⁸⁹ the influential critic Yuliy Engel praised the collection, but sneered at Angert's “simplicity and naivety” and his willingness to reject all objective criteria in favor of “immediate enthrallment.”²⁹⁰ However, the almost exact similarity of Angert's views to those of two other writers who will be the subject of this dissertation –Emiliy Medtner and Leonid Sabaneyev – warrants a detailed analysis of his ten-page encomium to the Beautiful (which he rendered with the capital letter). This essay opened with a colorful description of relativism that plagued music criticism. For Angert, the usual cacophony of subjective critical voices, unable to reach a consensus and all equally convincing, offerend the poor listener only with confusion rather than a reliable yardstick to measure the absolute merit of a piece or a performance.²⁹¹ Serious studies of music aesthetics, like those by the mutual opponents Hanslick and Ambros, he considered to be equally confusing. Which of their opposing conclusions should a lost listener believe? After reading both of them, Angert opined, the listener would still be unsure whether Scriabin's *Prometheus* expressed feelings or not.

To be sure, Angert did not side with Hanslick. He claimed that the musically beautiful lay neither in expression of lofty feelings, nor in the purely musical beauty of form.²⁹² Both ideas were equally misleading, because their authors arrived at them in a wrong way. The reason why the listener should not buy into any of the contradictory critical explanations was, according to Angert, because a music critic did not have the authority to lay down the law. Only the composer did: “Criticism plays a secondary, subservient role in relation to art. ... It can never acquire independent significance and dictate laws to art.”²⁹³ Angert rehearsed the old argument about the primacy of practice over theory: speech came before grammar, as musical creations came before

²⁸⁸ Grigoriy Abramovich Angert, "O vospriyatii muzikal'no-prekrasnogo," [On the perception of the musically beautiful] in *The Musical Almanac*, ed. D. Shor G.A. Angert (Moscow: Beethoven Studio, 1914), 63-72.

²⁸⁹ Yuliy Dmitriyevich Engel, "Review of the Musical Almanac " *Byulleteni literaturi i zhizni*, no. 15-16 (1914): 475-477.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 476.

²⁹¹ Angert, "O vospriyatii muzikal'no-prekrasnogo," 65.

²⁹² *Ibid.*, 68.

²⁹³ Критика играет служебную, подчиненную роль по отношению к искусству. Она никогда не может приобрести самостоятельного значения, диктовать законы искусству. *Ibid.*, 66.

harmony and counterpoint, and a man of genius had the right to come and destroy the academic edifice that had been erected over centuries.²⁹⁴ Exactly same reasoning was used by Emiliy Medtner when in 1910 he vehemently rejected Nadezhda Bryusova's positivist efforts to establish laws of music in a response to her lecture “Musical science, its historical development and contemporary state.”²⁹⁵ For Medtner, the genius of great composers could never be second to critical judgment.

How can we know the absolutely beautiful in music, then? Angert's exemplary recipe offered many parallels in content, style, and wording to other idealist utterances of the decade. First he blamed attempts to comprehend art rationally for causing the relativist confusion:

Doomed to failure is anyone who attempts to define the Beautiful. For one cannot write a prescription for comprehending the musically Beautiful. One cannot describe and formulate it. It lies beyond the language of words and formula. It can shine, blind, enthrall, but it cannot and should not be understood. Where comprehension and definition of the beautiful begins, unity and rapture end, and discord, dissent, and reflection arise.²⁹⁶

However, he did lay down a criterion for perceiving the beautiful:

The force of immediate enthrallment – this is the only criterion with which one should approach works of art. Approach it without preconception. Cast away all musical habits, convictions. Come before the work of art musically naked, without the rags of musical grammar. Forget who's the ideal and who the false god is in music, who's cast down and who's exalte. For all conviction is prejudice. For it is hard for the truly Beautiful to emerge through the thickets of prejudice. It is perceived at the moment of the flash of rapture, when the composer's soul bursts from his composition and becomes one with the naked, chaotic, disorganized soul of the listener. Ecstasy. There are no chairs, no light, no performer, no nice clothes, no hands descending on the instrument. There is no Beethoven, no Wagner, Strauss. No one knows who performs what and by whom. The audience is a single, inner and outer ear to receive the composer's voice. If this voice is strong and powerful, if the listener does not harbor convictions, i.e. the forces of resistance to one or another composer, then the Beautiful will make itself felt. One will not be able to encompass it in words. One will not be able to reduce it to the known laws. But it will be apparent without words, without reasoning. ... Perception of the Beautiful happens without and despite analyses, syntheses. The listener should be receptive to the

²⁹⁴ Ibid., 69.

²⁹⁵ Bryusova, "Наука о музыке, ея исторические пути и современное состояние. Доклад, прочитанный в Обществе Свободной Эстетики 11 ноября 1909 г."

²⁹⁶ На неудачу обречена попытка каждого, кто стал бы определять, в чем Прекрасное. Ибо нельзя предписывать рецептов для познания музыкально-Прекрасного. Нельзя описать и формулировать его. Оно лежит вне языка слов и формул. Оно может засиять, ослепить, захватить, но не может и не должно быть понятным. Где начинается понимание и искание прекрасного, там кончается единство и восторг, там возникает рознь, разномнения, рефлекс. Angert, "О восприятии музыкально-прекрасного," 70.

creator. And as the creator creates the Beautiful in the moment of divine inspiration, the listener perceives the beautiful in the moment of divine revelation.²⁹⁷

Angert's enraptured style, rife with religious and erotic allusions, resonated all too well with the later literature on Scriabin. This included, first, Leonid Sabaneyev's book on the late composer, published in 1916, in which he expressed in terms similar to Angert's the ideal of *sobornost'* as the only true way of perceiving the essence of music, and second, responses of his opponents from the Scriabin Society, who denounced rational knowledge and defended irrational perception as the only true path to penetrating music's mysteries.

Another, even more significant correlation with Sabaneyev's views, was Angert's elitism. On the surface, Angert's position was happily all-embracing, since it demanded the shedding of all musical knowledge and convictions and coming before the work of art naked and equal. However, Angert considered it necessary to clarify this point. All were welcome to approach the beautiful, but only those who possessed a sensitive and responsive soul were able to perceive it. If a peasant showed up at a performance of a Beethoven's symphony, he would not feel the Beautiful, because utilitarian concerns filled his soul to the brim, leaving no space for anything else. This constituted the peasant's preconception, which resisted self-sufficient and disinterested art. It was a preconception to which he was tied organically and which he was not able to shed. The most he could hope for was to react to music on the physiological level and perform involuntary movements when listening to a naturalistic piece.²⁹⁸ Although Sabaneyev never sank to such blatancy, the premise behind his conviction that only a select few were able to fully understand a composer's intention was precisely the same. This was a far cry from Kazansky's belief in social significance of music, or Bryusova's defense of folk music as the form of music closest to natural laws. Politically, as well as aesthetically, people who chose to engage with Hanslick on idealistic grounds in the 1910 were the opposite of the positivist-minded scholars of the 1890s.

Hanslick reception from Sacchetti to Asafyev

To conclude the overview of Hanslick's reception in Russia, we need only cast a glance at the beginning and the end of our time period. The two scholars whose careers define the boundaries

²⁹⁷ Сила непосредственного захвата — вот единственный критерий, с которым надо отходить от произведений искусства. Подходить к нему без предвзятости. Отбросить от себя все музыкальные привычки, убеждения. Предстать пред произведением искусства музыкально-нагим, без рубища музыкальной грамматики. Забыть про то, кто идеал и кто идол в музыке, кого свергал и кого возносил. Ибо все убеждения — предубеждения. Ибо сквозь их толщу трудно пробиться истинно-Прекрасному. Оно познается в момент вспышки восторга, когда душа композитора рвется из его произведения и сливается с обнаженной, хаотической, дезорганизованной душой слушателя. Экстаз. Нет стульев, нет света, нет исполнителя, нет красивых одежд, рук, опускающихся на инструмент. Нет Бетховена, нет Вагнера, Штрауса. Неизвестно, кого исполняют, что исполняется, кто исполняет. Аудитория — один внутренний и внешний слух, которому доносится голос композитора. Если этот голос силен, могуч, если в слушателе нет убеждений, т. к. сил сопротивления тому или другому композитору, то Прекрасное почувствуется. Его нельзя будет охватить словами. Его нельзя будет подвести под известные законы. Но оно будет ясно без слов, без рассуждений. ... Но постижение Прекрасного совершается без и вопреки анализам, синтезам. Слушатель должен быть конгениален создателю. И как создатель творит прекрасное в момент божественного вдохновения, так слушатель постигает прекрасное в момент божественного откровения. Ibid., 70-72.

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 71-72.

of this dissertation – Liveriy Sacchetti and Boris Asafyev – provide a bird's-eye view of the change that happened in Russian opinions on Hanslick throughout the period. Sacchetti expressed his opinion on Hanslick's book in his “Foundations of music criticism,” first published in *Severnij vestnik* (*The Northern Herald*) in 1886, the year he assumed his professorial post at the St.Petersburg Conservatory.²⁹⁹ The article was reprinted in Sacchetti's collection *From the Sphere of Aesthetics and Music* a decade later.

The conservatory professor took a moderate stance on scientism. He definitely regarded the scientific mindset as a value, and his works contained no trace of doubt that it was a prerequisite for music research as well. However, unlike the aggressive positivist Kazansky, he did not issue passionate calls for applying the methods of natural sciences to music. Judging by his many publications, to his mind, scholarly rigor lay in being well-informed about the research on a topic and in considering all the contradictory viewpoints in order to present a picture as objective as possible. His reserved tone had much in common with Neustroyev's mildly pro-science attitude.

However, in many respects “Foundations of music criticism” exemplified the turn to positivism that took place in the late 1880s. Sacchetti's main goal in this piece was to establish objective foundations for music criticism, that is criteria of aesthetic value that would be based on “scientific veracity” rather than on subjective preference. To achieve this, Sacchetti ventured a quite thorough overview of music history conceptualized as a war of euphony and expression. The *stile antico*, for instance, was the epitome of euphony, while composers like Monteverdi and Gluck risked breaking rules and overusing dissonances in search of a new level of expression. Each of these two conflicting but indispensable sides of music composition, according to Sacchetti, had its own scientific basis: euphony was grounded in physiology, and expression in psychology.³⁰⁰ Since, according to Helmholtz, perception of consonance had a physiological basis, the desire for euphony was an expression of human physiological desire for pleasure, while the need for expression reflected human psychology. The duality of human nature demanded both sides to be present in art. That is why Sacchetti thought Hanslick's approach insufficient: it was based solely on the external and formal (that is, physiological) side of music and neglected the other one – psychology. As an example of aesthetic research in psychology he referred to Moritz Lazarus's theory, which, apparently, had some currency among the Russian writers on music in the late 1880s – early 1890s.³⁰¹

While both physiological and psychological sides were essential, historically the latter always triumphed over the former. Halfway into the essay Sacchetti formulated a historical principle of music criticism: if expression always won, then modern critics should take this under advisement. Condemning innovative dissonances amounted to standing on the wrong side of history.³⁰² However, even this was not a completely objective criterion, because history knew examples of cacophonous abuse of dissonance, unwarranted by expressive goals, which was passed off as innovation (for Sacchetti, Gesualdo was one of the composers who fit into this category). If history was not a suitable criterion, then what was? “History of music,” Sacchetti wrote

²⁹⁹ Liveriy Antonovich Sacchetti, "Osnovī muzikal'noy kritiki," [Foundations of music criticism.] *Severnij vestnik* (March, April 1886): 1-19, 1-24.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 124.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 143-144.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, 135.

raises the following questions, on whose solution depends the scientific competence of music criticism. First, we ask: is it possible to determine the acoustic value of music based on exact data? Are there absolute ugly sonorities and are there absolutely beautiful ones; finally, are there sonorities that the ear would at first find disagreeable, but would later get used to? ... These questions pertain to physiology. Second, it is necessary to decide what constitutes this musical expression? ... What does music express, what is its content? What psychological phenomena transpire in the composer's soul ... what kind of resonance does this mood evoke in the listener's heart and according to what laws? The answer is expected of psychology. If the aforementioned sciences resolve these questions, this would provide aesthetics with the possibility of establishing the prevalence of either physiological or psychological factor in music, and allow music criticism to determine the degree of preserved euphony and achieved expression in any given composition.³⁰³

Evidently, Sacchetti's methodology did not lack in scientific optimism. However, he was pessimistic about the level of development the sciences had reached in reality. He believed that the solution had not yet been found, not because there were no laws to be discovered, but only because of the formidable complexity of the subject.³⁰⁴ Positive science of the beautiful, in place of the metaphysics of the past,³⁰⁵ had a bright future in Sacchetti's system.

The four writers discussed above who were influenced by positivism to various degrees – Sokalsky, Kazansky, Neustroyev, and Wagner – could each have endorsed something in Sacchetti's article. Interpreting Hanslick's focus on form as his confinement to the physiological side of music (and how irate Hanslick would be if he knew what a chorus of music critics claimed that his own approach was nothing more than “pathological” in his own terms); searching for immutable laws, quantifiable data and objective criteria; historical determinism; conviction that the natural sciences should come to the humanities' aid; juxtaposing Hanslick's and Lazarus's doctrines – all these threads in Sacchetti's skein have already been under discussion in this chapter. Although not militantly positivist, Sacchetti's standpoint of 1886 had strong ties to other publications on the music aesthetics of the late 1880s and early 1890s. That writers of such different professional milieux (a scientist at the University, an art historian at The Hermitage, a conservatory professor, and a political exile) were more or less of the same mind regarding Hanslick is a sign of the relative coherence marking the positivist breakthrough in writing on music in the mid-1880s.

³⁰³ История музыки ... возбуждает следующие вопросы, от разрешения которых зависит научная компетентность музыкальной критики. Во-первых, спрашивается: есть ли возможность определить звуковое достоинство музыки на основании точных данных? Есть ли созвучия, абсолютно безобразные, есть ли абсолютно красивые: наконец, нет ли таковых, с которыми слух, находя их сначала неприятными, может впоследствии примириться? ... Эти вопросы относятся к области физиологии. Во-вторых, необходимо решить, в чем заключается эта музыкальная экспрессия? ... Что выражает музыка, каково ее содержание? Какие психологические явления совершаются в душе композитора, ... какого рода отголосок этого настроения возникает в сердце слушателя и в силу каких законов? Ответ ожидается от психологии. Решение этих вопросов упомянутыми науками дает возможность эстетике установить преобладание или физиологического, или психологического фактора в музыке, а критике — определить в каждом отдельном произведении степень сохраненного благозвучия и достигнутой экспрессии. Ibid., 138-139.

³⁰⁴ Ibid., 148-149.

³⁰⁵ Ibid., 151.

More than four decades later Boris Asafyev authored an entry on Hanslick in the Great Soviet Encyclopedia, the most authoritative reference source of the Soviet period.³⁰⁶ Given Asafyev's strong idealist heritage,³⁰⁷ which he managed to disguise by his masterful employment of Soviet rhetoric, it is not surprising that Asafyev's take on Hanslick was positive. He maintained that Hanslick was misunderstood and cast as a "narrow formalist." However, it was exactly Hanslick's purported polemics against idealism, or "musical-speculative aesthetics,"³⁰⁸ that Asafyev praised the most in his encyclopedia entry. He claimed that Hanslick only wanted to purge musical content of the "external admixture of idealist philosophy and the aesthetics of feeling."³⁰⁹ By doing this, Hanslick paved the way to

the contemporary dynamistic doctrine of musical form and the functional method of analysis of music compositions, and also made necessary a revision of views on musical content, but already from the point of view of the social significance and justification of this content.³¹⁰

Asafyev failed to mention that his own "dynamistic doctrine" was to a great extent influenced by the idealism and energism of Ernst Kurth's theory. Thus, Asafyev's entry on Hanslick was exemplary of the intellectual climate of Soviet musicology in late 1920s, when practice was already divorced from preaching (as I show in chapter five). The intuitive and highly speculative approaches to the study of music that were proliferating in the 1910s left a formidable legacy, which, although unmentioned by Asafyev, mixed with positivist approaches and continued to shape musicological methods for years after the Revolution.

Conclusion

However diverse in its ideology and motivation, Russian reception of *On the Musically Beautiful* showed a broad correlation between the critics' ideological platform and their attitude to Hanslick. Idealists of all stripes – from the Slavophile Yuryev to the symbolist Bely – tended either to enthuse about Hanslick or to criticize him, while accepting most of his tenets as foundational. The scientific-minded crowd rejected his system more or less completely.

In his *Music, Criticism, and the Challenge of History*, Kevin Karnes appended a long list of studies concerned with Hanslick's treatise and "the idealist underpinnings of many of its central arguments."³¹¹ Russian reception of Hanslick's philosophy provides clear support for the idea that, despite all appearances, Hanslick was an idealist. However, in the intellectual climate of mid-nineteenth century Austrian academia, when the humanistic disciplines struggled to be accepted in academic curricula and in the process were recalibrated from the speculative mode of

³⁰⁶ Igor Glebov, "Hanslick," in *Bol'shaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya*, ed. O. Yu. Shmidt (Moscow: Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya, 1929), 539-540.

³⁰⁷ For instance, his thought was much indebted to such anti-scientific sources as Scriabin's diaries, examined in chapter four.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 539.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

³¹⁰ Своей критикой он расчистил путь современному динамическому учению о музыкальной форме и функциональному методу анализа музыкальных произведений, а также сделал необходимым пересмотр воззрений на содержание музыки, но уже с точки зрения социальной значимости и оправданности этого содержания. *Ibid.*, 540.

³¹¹ Karnes, *Music, Criticism, and the Challenge of History*, 33.

inquiry towards empirical examination of “the objectively verifiable characteristics inherent and unique to individual works of art,”³¹² Hanslick had to masquerade as a proponent of the application of methods of natural sciences to music – the only standpoint that could assure him of a university position at the time.³¹³ The ambiguity built into Hanslick's viewpoint resurfaced with a vengeance in the Russian reception of his book. Too idealist for the positivists, and at times too formalist for the idealists – the protean nature of Hanslick's doctrine can account for the relevance it had in the eyes of Russian music writers over the course of the four decades, and probably for its phenomenal popularity and influence in general.

This examination of Hanslick's Russian reception also brings to light these writers' ambivalent relation to positivism, first embraced, then rejected. Why did Hanslick's doctrine attract the interest of authors of emphatically positivist convictions in the mid-1880s, and of idealists in the first two decades of the twentieth century?

The 1880s was the first decade of the political reaction that deeply affected Russian science and intellectual life. In 1881 the ascension of Alexander III, who quickly and ruthlessly hunted down the members of *Narodnaya volya*, the assassins of his father, the tsar-reformer Alexander II, put an end to the liberal reforms of the 1860-1870s. In 1884 a new university statute was enacted that severely limited the autonomy of the universities from the state, established governmental control and effectively stalled scientific development. However, four of our five writers who criticized Hanslick from the scientific standpoint were born just in time for their formative years to coincide with the two progressive decades, 1860s and 1870s (Wagner in 1849, Sacchetti in 1852, Kazansky in 1857, Neustroyev in 1860; only Sokalsky, born in 1832, belonged to an older generation). In the golden age of Russian science, the Nihilists and Populist philosophies played the most important role in promoting appreciation of science among the broader reading public and beyond the academic community. Political reforms and scientific revolution went hand in hand, and the conviction that political progress was spurred by its scientific counterpart, which had become common currency by the time Kazansky wrote from his Siberian exile, originated back in the 1860s. Dobrolyubov, Chernishevsky and Pisarev were the main proponents of Nihilism – a movement that rejected all philosophical authority except that based on science. The Nihilists were convinced that science was the best remedy for the social ills that plagued the country.³¹⁴ Especially the writings of Pisarev, an ardent advocate of the wide dissemination of scientific knowledge, were epoch-making.³¹⁵ In an autobiographical sketch, the famous physiologist Ivan Pavlov wrote: “Under the influence of the great minds of the 1860s, particularly that of Pisarev, our intellectual interests were directed toward natural science, and many of us decided to study the natural sciences at universities.”³¹⁶ Populism, the main ideological current of the 1870s, represented notably by Lavrov and Mikhailovsky, reacted against nihilism in some aspects, but in others developed its legacy, and these latter aspects were precisely the rejection of metaphysics and the utmost respect for scientific thought.³¹⁷ Pyotr Lavrov was one of the first philosophers to introduce positivism into the Russian intellectual discourse.

³¹² Ibid., 32.

³¹³ Ibid., 31-33.

³¹⁴ Vucinich, *Science in Russian Culture: 1861-1917*, 14.

³¹⁵ Ibid., 16.

³¹⁶ Ibid., 19.

³¹⁷ Ibid., 22-23.

In the 1880s a generation stepped to the fore that was brought up in the climate dominated by such adepts of science as Pisarev and Lavrov. As a result of the Nihilists' and Populists' impressive *tour de force*, the scientific mindset had diffused into much broader circles of the educated class, and people who were not natural scientists by vocation carried these convictions to their areas of intellectual activity. Generational identification with scientific philosophy was what brought about the positivist turn in the humanities. In the study of music this turn was marked by the establishment of the first chair in music history and aesthetics at the St. Petersburg Conservatory, held by Sacchetti.

The reasons for the subsequent “idealist turn” in the reception of Hanslick included disillusionment with positivist ideals starting in the 1890s and following a decade of political stagnation, and the surge of symbolism and other artistic movements that emphasized the irrational. However, as Nadezhda Bryusova's work demonstrated, the positivist orientation held its ground during the 1900-1910s. A new generation of scientifically-minded music scholars came of age who practiced what the previous generation only preached; they were concerned with actually realizing scientific methods in the study of music and finding the laws of music. Yavorsky and Bryusova's work consisted mostly of their original theories, rather than polemics with individual predecessors, and starting with Yavorsky's first major publication in 1908 Russian music research for the first time had a direct bearing on the further development of musicology in the Soviet Union. The advent of new “musical science,” heralded by Bryusova in 1909, made the standoff between positivism and the irrationalist aesthetic sensibilities even stronger: a clash that resulted, for instance, in the Scriabin Society's violent reaction to Sabaneyev's book in 1917. As Paul du Quenoy wrote in his *Revolutionary Russia 1890-1930*, many ideologies and philosophies fashionable in Western Europe and the US converged in Russia in the revolutionary period: from idealism to mysticism to scientific modes of thought.³¹⁸ In such a rich and contradictory environment Hanslick's treatise, caught between positivism and idealism, was something in which everybody had a stake.

³¹⁸ Paul du Quenoy, *Revolutionary Russia 1890-1930*, History in Dispute (Detroit: St James Press, 2005), xv.

Chapter 3. Positivism and the Danger of Science: Nadezhda Bryusova vs. Emilii Medtner

In November 1909, at the famous Symbolist hangout “Society for Free Aesthetics,” Nadezhda Bryusova, who was to become an important music educationalist in the Soviet state, gave a talk on the “Science of music, its historical development, and present state.” A fine example of the positivist precepts that underpinned the early Russian experiments in the “science of music,” the lecture was subsequently published in the influential Symbolist art journal, *Vesī (The Scales)*,³¹⁹ and later as a separate book. This early work is remarkable in several respects. First, it was in the vanguard of the triumphant march of positivism, which prompted Russian music scholars to produce highly original theories in the early twentieth century; second, it was closely related to Boleslav Yavorsky’s “theory of modal rhythm,” which laid the foundation for Soviet and post-Soviet music theory; and finally, it provoked a revealing controversy. This chapter will contextualize the main tenets of Bryusova’s study and untangle the circumstance that surrounded its publication by focusing on a venomous reply from the music critic Emilii Medtner, who firmly held on to an idealist philosophy of music.

Nadezhda Yakovlevna Bryusova (1881-1951) was the younger sister of the Symbolist poet Valeriy Yakovlevich Bryusov (1873-1924). As early as 1904, a fresh Conservatory graduate, she published several reviews in the journal *Vesī*, edited by her brother. These short publications show that her early artistic predilections, such as admiration for Richard Wagner’s operas and distaste for Anton Bruckner’s symphonies,³²⁰ were part and parcel of Symbolist aesthetics. Her interest in Hindu mythology, which was all the rage at the time in Russian artistic circles, was evident from her pseudonym “Sunanda” and her scathing criticism of Anton Arensky’s operatic setting of the legend of *Nala and Damayanti*, based mainly on Russian translation³²¹ of *The Mahabharata* and not on the Sanskrit original.³²²

Bryusova’s ideas bore striking resemblance in both spirit and content to an important theoretical study *The Structure of Musical Speech* (1908)³²³ by Boleslav Leopoldovich Yavorsky (1877-1942), indicating that Yavorsky and Bryusova collaborated not only as co-founders of the Moscow People’s Conservatory, but as scholars, and shared a conceptual framework. The Symbolist poet Andrey Bely, recalling names of people who frequented “Free Aesthetics,” portrayed Bryusova and Yavorsky as colleagues (although not in the most flattering terms). Yavorsky’s theory of symmetric modes would later exert vast influence on the development of Soviet music theory, primarily due to his student Sergey Protopopov and Yavorsky’s influence on Boris Asafyev, both future masters of Russian musicology. However, Bryusova’s methodological contribution to this important theory, despite causing such intense debate at the time, was written off in the Soviet period.

Bryusova’s “Science of Music” was published a year after Yavorsky’s study. However, her early reviews in *Vesī* suggested that her future inquiry into folk music and the theory of

³¹⁹ Bryusova, "Nauka o muzike, eya istoricheskiye puti i sovremennoye sostoyaniye. Doklad, pročitanniy v Obshchestve Svobodnoy Estetiki 11 noyabrya 1909 g.," 185-211.

³²⁰ Nadezhda Yakovlevna Bryusova, "Muzika v Moskve," [Music in Moscow.] *Vesī*, no. 3 (1904): 51-52.

³²¹ A translation by one of the foremost nineteenth century Russian poets Vasilii Zhukovskiy.

³²² Nadezhda Yakovlevna Bryusova, "'Nal' i Damayanti' (Opera Arenskogo)," [Nala and Damayanti (Arensky's opera).] *Vesī*, no. 2 (1904): 49-52.

³²³ Boleslav Leopoldovich Yavorsky, *Stroyeniye muzikal'noy rechi. Materiali i zametki* [The Structure of Musical Speech. Materials and Notes] (Moscow: Tipografiya G. Aralova, 1908).

modes was already underway in 1904. The December issue contained a rather critical review³²⁴ of the seminal collection of folk songs, recorded on a phonograph and transcribed by Yevgeniya Linyova, the first volume of which appeared in 1904.³²⁵ Bryusova rejected Linyova's interpretation of "live folk intonations" as a product of "artificial, theoretical modes," and also disagreed with Vyacheslav Pyotr's research on modes, on which Linyova relied.³²⁶ By 1904, Bryusova must have already known Yavorsky for several years. He studied at the Moscow Conservatory at the same time and with the same teachers³²⁷ as she did and graduated a year earlier.

Home-schooled by her brother, Nadezhda Bryusova never attended a university but studied with the best teachers at the Moscow Conservatory: piano under Konstantin Igumnov, history of church music under Stepan Smolensky, and music theory under Mikhail Ippolitov-Ivanov and Sergey Taneyev.³²⁸ In Sergey Taneyev's class, Bryusova and Yavorsky underwent extensive theoretical training that included counterpoint, canon and fugue and musical forms – Yavorsky in 1899-1903, Bryusova in 1900-1907.³²⁹ Bryusova considered Taneyev to be one of the crucial influences of her musicological career.³³⁰ A famous composer and pianist, a life-long professor at the Moscow Conservatory and a co-founder of the Moscow People's Conservatory, and thus one of the pillars of the Russian musical community, Sergey Taneyev was a mentor to several generations of Moscow musicians.³³¹ Although Taneyev himself was also schooled almost exclusively at the Moscow Conservatory, apart from a couple of years in a *gymnasium*, his older brother Vladimir Taneyev was a well-known lawyer, philosopher, and sociologist, and he accumulated a remarkable library in these areas. Vladimir was deeply influenced by positivism and highly valued Comte's work, regarding him as a founder of scientific philosophy. Faithfully adopting Comte's law of three stages, he wrote that positivism was "a movement that superseded the fictitious ideas of theology and metaphysics in science, practice, and art."³³² Fifteen years older than Sergey, he was likely an influence during his younger brother's formative years. When Sergey lived in Paris in 1876-1877, he wrote to his family, "It was somewhat strange to meet people, whose names I knew only from Volodya's books. ... When Paris³³³ said: let me introduce you to Mr. Taine, I was very surprised: when people said 'Taine' I

³²⁴ Nadezhda Yakovlevna Bryusova, "Review of Yevgeniya Linyova, 'Velikorusskiye pesni v narodnoy garmonizatsii,'" *Vesī*, no. 12 (1904): 69-70.

³²⁵ Yevgeniya Linyova, *Velikorusskiye pesni v narodnoy garmonizatsii* [The Peasant Songs of Great Russia as they are in the Folk's Harmonization: Collected and Transcribed from Phonograms] (St. Petersburg: Izdaniye Imperatorskoy Akademii Nauk, 1904–1909).

³²⁶ Bryusova, "Review of Linyova," 70.

³²⁷ Roman Eduardovich Berchenko, *V poiskakh utrachennogo smisla: Boleslav Yavorsky o Khorosho temperirovannom klavire* [In Search of Lost Meaning: Boleslav Yavorsky on 'The Well-Tempered Clavier'] (Moscow: Klassika-XXI, 2005), 12.

³²⁸ Bernandt and Yampolsky, *Kto pisal o muzike*, vol. 1, 123.

³²⁹ Grigoriy Borisovich Bernandt, *S. I. Taneyev* (Moscow: Muzika, 1983), 270-272.

³³⁰ Nataliya Nikolayevna Minor, "Problemy massovogo muzikal'nogo vospitaniya v pedagogicheskom nasledii N.Ya.Bryusovoy" (Dissertation, Moscow State Pedagogical University, 1998), 19.

³³¹ The music critic Leonid Sabaneyev, the protagonist of chapter five of this dissertation, also studied harmony and counterpoint with Taneyev in 1892–1898. Bernandt, *S. I. Taneyev*, 271.

³³² Позитивизм - направление, которое заменяет в науке, в практике, в искусстве вымышленные идеи богословия и метафизики. Quoted in: Pyotr Vasilyevich Alekseyev, *Filosofi Rossii XIX-XX stoletiy (Biografii, Ideyi, Trudi)* [Philosophers of Russia of the 19th-20th Centuries (Biographies, Ideas, Works)], 4 ed. (Moscow: Akademicheskii Proyekt, 2002), 786.

³³³ Bruno Paulin Gaston Paris (1839 – 1903), French writer.

used to think of a book; it never occurred to me that someone could say, “Here is Taine” and show me not a book, but a person.”³³⁴ Having grown up in a household where Hippolyte Taine's works were known simply as “Taine,” Sergey Taneyev was no doubt acquainted with scientific philosophy and its application in the humanities. Bryusova's positivist diatribes, therefore, were at least partly conditioned by her conservatory education.

The science of music

The opening paragraph of Bryusova's book spelled out its positivist agenda with the utmost clarity:

Sound, which provides temporal forms with an auditory impact – such is the world of musical embodiment. The science of music studies this world, its nature and its life. Scientific inquiry should yield exact knowledge of the laws that govern the sounding temporal life of this world. The method of the science of music is the same as the method of all natural sciences that study the physical structure of any world. It involves experimenting on individual living creatures, which provides the opportunity to comprehend the general laws of life of the world that we study – since any living part of the world, in abiding by its laws, is tantamount to the whole world. Reason, the mind's sight, comprehends the universal unchanging laws of life in the multitude of changing forms. The path of the mind, the path of all sciences is the path of this pure sight.³³⁵

As much as positivism has changed since Comte, its different versions have always had one belief in common: that science is capable of uncovering immutable laws that underlie the universe. For instance, from Comte's “law of three stages” to Maksim Kovalevsky's evolutionism, positivism had viewed progress as the most important law that applied to both the natural world and human societies. As Michael Singer points out in his description of the legacy of positivism in modern thought, this expectation was the primary reason for the prestige of natural sciences and survives well into the present day.³³⁶ The fact that Bryusova professed this belief as early as the third sentence of her definition of “the science of music” and presented it as her own, indicates that by the late 1900s, the positivist agenda had already been internalized by Russian students of the arts.

³³⁴ Мне как-то странно встречать людей, имена которых я прочитывал на Володиных книгах ... Когда мне Парис сказал: позвольте вас представить г-ну Тэну, я очень удивился: я привык при слове ‘Тэн’ представлять себе книгу; мне никогда не приходило в голову, что, сказав ‘вот Тэн’, мне покажут не книгу, а человека. Quoted in: Bernandt, *S. I. Taneyev*, 36.

³³⁵ Звучание, давшее слуховое осязание временным формам, – таков мир музыкального воплощения. Наука о музыке исследует этот мир, его природу и его жизнь. Результаты научных исследований должны дать точные познания о законах, управляющих звучащей временной жизнью этого мира. Метод науки о музыке тот же, что метод всех естественных наук, изучающих физическое строение какого бы то ни было мира. Это опытные исследования над отдельными живыми существами, дающие возможность познать общие жизненные законы изучаемого мира, - ибо всякая живая часть мира по выполнению его законов равнозначна всему миру. Разум, зрение сознания, в многообразии и движении форм, постигает всеобщие неизменные законы жизни. Силой чистого зрения совершается весь путь сознания, путь всех наук. Nadezhda Yakovlevna Bryusova, *Nauka o muzike, eya istoricheskiye puti i sovremennoye sostoyaniye* [Science of Music, Its Historical Development and Present State] (Moscow: Lad, 1910), 1.

³³⁶ Singer, *The Legacy of Positivism*, 90.

Seeing music within the natural world was a leap necessary to carry out such an agenda. Bryusova understood music as something that had a life of its own, was uniform at its core, and, most importantly, was external to the human mind. Although Bryusova was probably the first Russian who likened musical pieces to living organisms and claimed their essential similarity, the claim fit into the venerable tradition of organicism started by Rousseau and most famously exemplified in Spencer's essay, "The Social Organism" (1860).³³⁷ It logically followed from such an assumption that music should be studied through methods of the natural sciences and that the science of music should be invested with the same sort of prestige that the natural sciences enjoyed. Just how high that prestige was became clear when Bryusova identified methods of natural sciences as primarily "experiments on living creatures." Quite deaf to the morally ambiguous ring of the phrase, and oblivious to the age-old criticism that for centuries had been leveled at music theorists for "dissecting" and "killing" the live artistic spirit with their dry analyses, Bryusova championed the gratuitous metaphor in the opening paragraph of an essay that was nothing short of a manifesto, confident that this metaphor invested the manifesto with authority.

Bryusova argued that the most important element of music was its temporal aspect – musical motion and the developing form. Music's temporal aspect was articulated by tension and resolution, made possible by the hierarchy of more and less stable tones of the mode: "Motionless matter is just a cerebral construct that does not exist in life. The laws of motion, instability, and tension are the only laws, governing life of the sonic-temporal matter."³³⁸ Motion was thus always directional, aiming to resolve into stability.

"The mode," Bryusova wrote, "is a scheme of the sounding life, a form of scientific comprehension of [this] life. But to the extent that this scheme is close, equivalent, identical to the life itself, it is alien to mechanistic constructs, assembled from inanimate ... abstract units that have nothing but a superficial resemblance to the living significance of sounds in real life."³³⁹ Bryusova also condemned equal temperament, in which the "natural relationships" of the tones were distorted, mechanized and petrified.³⁴⁰ The oppositions between the living and dead and between the natural and mechanistic were crucial for Bryusova's theory. For her, the new and true science was defined by its interest in life. Adopting a ubiquitous trope of the time, Bryusova denounced the old "scholastic science" of music, which, "in place of live physical images of the world, created ... artificial resemblances, constructed by the intellect and fully subordinated to the intellect."³⁴¹ According to Bryusova, the scholastic period in sciences ended with the

³³⁷ Russian translation: Herbert Spencer, *Opīī nauchniye, politicheskiye i filosofskiyе* [Essays: Scientific, Political, and Speculative], ed. N. A. Rubakin, 3 vols. (St. Petersburg: Aktsionernoye Obshchestvo pechatnogo dela Izdate', 1899-1900).

³³⁸ Неподвижная материя — это лишь рассудочное, не существующее в жизни измышление. Законы движения, неустойчивости, тяготения суть единственные законы, управляющие жизнью звуковой-временной материи. Bryusova, *Nauka o muzike*, 36.

³³⁹ Лад есть схема звуковой жизни, форма научного познания идущей звуковой жизни. Но насколько близка, равнозначаща, тождественна эта схема самой жизни, настолько чужда она механическим построениям, склеиваниям из неживых, отвлеченных единиц, отвлеченных звуков, ничем, кроме внешнего подобия, не связанных с живым значением звуков в звуковой жизни. *Ibid.*, 9.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 22. Leonid Sabaneyev would also have a go at equal temperament in his monograph on Scriabin, which is the subject of the next chapter.

³⁴¹ И наука создала для своих исследований, взамен живых физических образов мира, искусственные, построенные рассудком и до конца подвластные рассудку подобия. *Ibid.*, 3.

beginning of the Renaissance, but in music, it lasted well into the beginning of the twentieth century.

Scholastic science could never keep pace with the actual development of composition and was only able to codify styles once they became obsolete and mechanistic. Theorists devised a system of rules when the composers had already moved on to a different style. The model that Bryusova extrapolated to all music theory must have come from the *stile antico*, which was essentially a seventeenth-century codification of Palestrina's style into a concise set of rules for students of composition. Thus, scholastic science fostered the prejudice that live artistic inspiration was beyond the purview of rational inquiry. The new science, however, purported to study music not *ex post facto* but in real life and was concerned not with its mechanistic residue in the form of dead styles but with discovering its actual laws. Such a progressivist scheme was strongly redolent of Comte's law of three stages of science, according to which science became capable to yield real knowledge only in its last, positive stage.

Understandably, Bryusova viewed Hermann von Helmholtz's influential study of the effect of overtones on consonance and dissonance as entirely the wrong way of studying music since it ignored music's temporal aspect and precluded a true scientific inquiry into laws of living nature (that is, tension and resolution as embodied in mode).

For some time," she wrote, "everybody thought that they found something perfectly, irrefutably scientific in the discoveries of physics, which began studying separate musical sounds and relationships of separate musical sounds. The science of music eagerly embarked on this new path; [which seemed] so desirable to the scholastic science, since [it was] quite a consistent continuation of the usual scholastic method of de-animation, abstraction from life and motion for the sake of scientific inquiry.³⁴²

Bryusova never mentioned Helmholtz by name, but made unmistakable references to his theory of interference of waves as responsible for the dissonant quality of musical sounds.³⁴³ However, she did not shy away from pseudo-scientific jargon, speaking liberally of cells and atoms:

The science of music defined this vital force as a force of motion, of ceaseless drive forward, in time and in the sound-space of pitch, of every atom of the sonic-temporal matter. The fullness of material life is in the incessancy of its motion, without culmination, without a set point of rest. Only striving for stability – such is the vital law of musical matter, common to all physical worlds.³⁴⁴

³⁴² Одно время всем казалось, что нашли что-то совершенное, неопровержимо научное в открытиях физики, начавшей изучать отдельные музыкальные звуки и соотношения отдельных музыкальных звуков. Наука о музыке ревностно вступила на этот новый путь; и тем легче был переход, тем желаннее казались эти пути схоластической науке, что они были вполне последовательным продолжением обычного схоластического метода умерщвления, отвлечения от жизни и движения ради научного исследования. *Ibid.*, 9.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*, 10.

³⁴⁴ Наука о музыке определила эту жизненную силу, как силу движения, непрерывного устремления вперед, во времени и в пространстве звуковой высоты, каждого атома звуковой-временной материи. Полнота жизни материи в непрерывности ее движения, без завершения, без намеченной точки покоя. Только стремление к устойчивости, - таков жизненный закон музыкальной материи, общий всем физическим мирам. *Ibid.*, 35-36.

Bryusova's metaphors, chaotic as they were, nevertheless bore a striking resemblance to the actual scientific concepts of homeostasis and Brownian motion. Although it is unclear to what extent Bryusova might have had the opportunity to follow scientific discoveries of the day, it is worth noting that Einstein proved Brownian motion mathematically just a few years before the publication of Bryusova's book, in 1905.

The only positivist tenet that Bryusova did not spell out in her opening paragraph was the predictive power of science. She wrote on it extensively at the end of the essay, much to the distaste of her future opponent, Emiliy Medtner. The idea of predictive power was crucial to Comte's positivist program. It was the *raison d'être* of the whole program, since positive science was, in Comte's view, a means toward a political reorganization of society. It was possible, he thought, once we discover the laws of social life, to predict the future and thus shape it as desired. The shape of the future Comte envisioned was, however, repugnant to many. It was a society based on a "religion of humanity" and controlled by a caste of positivist scientists where the sovereignty of common people was severely limited and most of the population did not have any say in the decisions made by the empowered educated class. The idea did much to discredit Comte's philosophy in the eyes of his contemporaries. Unfortunately for his successors, the "father of positivism" publicly proclaimed this much deplored program to be inseparable from his philosophy. In an attempt to "rescue Comte's philosophy from Comte's politics," John Stuart Mill even had to discard Comte's later writings as a product of a mental illness; Émile Littré preferred to dispense with the notion of predictive power of science altogether.³⁴⁵ The idea, however, lived on.

Bryusova was convinced that the new science of music would possess such predictive power:

Contemporary science, knowing all the possible combinations of cells in the whole of an organism, is able to comprehend all the great, infinite variety in the structure of live musical organisms, all the great diversity of possible modes. Knowing the conditions of organic development allows us not only to comprehend all historically existing modes, but also to predict new, as yet unembodied forms of mode in all their limitless diversity.³⁴⁶

Adopting the Comtian eagerness to reform the *status quo*, she maintained that these predictions would help replace the "approximate system" of contemporary composition, which did not yet rely on modes with the scientific modal system.³⁴⁷

There was, however, a prominent concept in Bryusova's thinking that undermined her textbook version of positivism and revealed her Symbolist credentials. She defined this concept alternatively as "the pure sight" (*zreniye*) and "the mind's sight." Even terminologically, in their

³⁴⁵ Singer, *The Legacy of Positivism*, 73.

³⁴⁶ Современная же наука, зная все возможности слияния клеток в целом организма, может постичь все великое, бесконечное разнообразие в строении живых организмов музыки, все великое многообразие возможных ладов. Знание условий органического развития дает возможность не только постигать все существовавшие в истории воплощения лады, но и предугадывать возможные, еще не явленные формы ладов, предугадывать возможность беспредельного движения в области развития лада. Bryusova, *Nauka o muzike*, 44-45.

³⁴⁷ Приближенный вне-ладовый строй несомненно уже должен будет замениться ладовым, построенным на основании науки о живом музыкальном воплощении. *Ibid.*, 50.

suggestion of a clairvoyance, these expressions were strongly reminiscent of esotericism. From the outset, Bryusova made a distinction between rationality (or rational will), which she cast in negative terms and considered to be an instrument of scholastic science, and reason (or more specifically, living reason),³⁴⁸ which she vested with the power to penetrate the surface and discover the order of things. “Consciousness” was used neutrally as a default state of the human mind that could either succumb to the follies of rationalism or be enlightened by reason. It was reason that possessed “the sight.” For Bryusova, this sight was capable of producing knowledge of “unconditional precision” and represented the only true way of cognition.³⁴⁹ During the scholastic period, Bryusova wrote, the rational will attempted to substitute itself for reason, which was not yet strong enough.³⁵⁰ This paradoxically tied her argument back to the Comtian view of the earlier stages of human thought – the theological and the metaphysical ones, – in which people's intellectual faculties were not yet sufficiently developed.³⁵¹ Bryusova acknowledged the ambiguous nature of the mind's sight in the following passage: “The path of scholastic dogmatism continues until the moment when the previously unseen free path of cognition opens, not only inseparable from the subconscious drives, but also stemming from them, expressing them.”³⁵² Bryusova did not spell out the reasons for the beginning of this new era. However, once the new way of cognition revealed itself, “the first thing that became clear to the freed mind's sight is the vital force of sonic-temporal matter. ... This vital foundation was the law that needed to seek defense neither in arbitrary judgment nor in dogmas of tradition; ... the consciousness did not have to seek a proof of what it saw with its own sight, or of the fact that it saw life in the living world.”³⁵³ Here, Bryusova's positivist agenda reached its furthest point. Forgoing the method of extrapolating from experience and proceeding to generalize the inference into laws, she based her argument on the quicksand of an individual consciousness – exactly what positivists would have labeled “metaphysical.”

Yavorsky's symmetries

Although Bryusova never formally studied under Boleslav Yavorsky, she considered him to be her mentor.³⁵⁴ In 1906, after studying at the Moscow Conservatory, Yavorsky and Bryusova (along with none other than Sergey Taneyev) were among the founders of the Moscow People's

³⁴⁸ [Н]адо было найти что-нибудь, что заменило бы собою жизнь, подобно тому, как рассудочная воля заменила собою живое сознание. Ibid., 3.

³⁴⁹ Странно видеть в прошлом попытки движения вне этого единственного пути. Странно, что когда-то сознание не верило своей единственной силе, что было когда-то новым, - открытием неведомой раньше возможности, - признание безусловной точности чистого зрения. Ibid., 1-2.

³⁵⁰ Рассудочная же воля, пытаясь заменить собою недостаточно сильное чтобы воспринять сознание, насильно связывала мысль с их неподвижностью. Ibid., 2.

³⁵¹ Auguste Comte and Gertrud Lenzer, *Auguste Comte and Positivism: The Essential Writings*, Harper torchbooks (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), 280.

³⁵² Пути схоластического догматизма длятся до того мгновения, пока не откроется раньше невидимый, свободный путь познания, не только не отделимого от бессознательных стремлений, но исходящего из них, выражающего их собою. Bryusova, *Nauka o muzike*, 36.

³⁵³ Первое, что стало ясным для освобожденного зрения сознания, - это жизненная сила того, что воплощает, жизненная сила звуковой-временной материи. Мгновенно исчезла всякая возможность произвола, беззакония, механичности; мгновенно сознали свое бессилие все рассудочные замыслы. Жизненная основа была законом, которому не надо было искать защиты ни в произволе, ни в догматах предания, ибо такой закон был простым видением сознания; сознанию не надо было для самого себя искать доказательств тому, что оно видело собственным зрением, тому, что оно видело жизнь в живом мире. Ibid., 36.

³⁵⁴ Minor, "Problemī massovogo muzikal'nogo vospitaniya," 32.

Conservatory.³⁵⁵ Together, they developed a course on music listening for non-professionals, hailed as the first course of this type in the history of Russian musical education.³⁵⁶

Bryusova and Yavorsky shared vocabulary and ideas, and although Yavorsky's highly systematic work was in no way a manifesto, it relied on the same precepts as Bryusova's methodological declaration. In Part III of *The Structure of Musical Speech*, published in 1911, Yavorsky referred to the discussion of scales in Bryusova's book of 1910, acknowledging, if only indirectly, the collaborative nature of their work.

While blaming theorists of the past for studying sounds “produced by a dead [meaning inanimate – *OP*] body (a string, a tuning fork, etc.) and constructing a row of sounds based on mathematical abstract calculations” instead of studying “live sounds, made by live creatures,”³⁵⁷ Yavorsky built a theory which conspicuously relied on math and minute classification. A large part of Yavorsky's lasting legacy in Soviet and post-Soviet musicology was his theory of modes, which was more general than the European understanding of mode at the time. Mode, for Yavorsky, was any system of stable and unstable tones, characterized by tension and resolution, which shaped musical time – a concept that had little to do with the notion of scale. His theory of modal tension and resolution, which he called modal rhythm (*ladoviy ritm*), hinged on the symmetry of the tritone within the octave, which he considered to be the most unstable interval, governing all other intervals (or “relations” in his terminology). According to this theory, the whole 12-tone pitch space was comprised of “tritone systems” – nodes that included a tritone and both its inward and outward resolutions. Different combinations of these nodes would result in stable modes (such as major and minor) and unstable ones, in which even stable tones possessed unresolved tension. Yavorsky pictured his theory as a spiral system of musical space, organized into tritone systems positioned in the circle of fifths. This illustrated his idea that “there was no absolute stability, but only a certain drive of unstable relations.”³⁵⁸ Bryusova defined such lack of stability as “symmetrical, retroactive tension of the two opposing points in a spiral turn, the opposing tones in the octave circle.”³⁵⁹

³⁵⁵ Natalia Andreyevna Mironova, *Moskovskaya konservatoriya. Istoki (Vospominaniya i dokumenty, fakti i kommentarii)* [Moscow Conservatory. Beginnings (Memoirs and documents, facts and commentaries)] (Moscow: Moscow State Conservatory named after P.I. Chaikovsky, 1995), 82.

³⁵⁶ Minor, "Problemī massovogo muzikal'nogo vospitaniya," 101.

³⁵⁷ Изучение ограничивается составом одного звука, производимого мертвым телом (струной, камертоном и т.п.), и построением ряда звуков на основании математических отвлеченных вычислений, а не на основании соотношений и взаимодействий звуков живых, производимых живыми существами. Yavorsky, *Stroyeniye muzikal'noy rechi*, part I, 2.

³⁵⁸ [В] звуковой области нет абсолютной устойчивости, а существует определенное стремление неустойчивых отношений. *Ibid.*, 6.

³⁵⁹ Тяготение, неустойчивость звуковой материи, в доступной восприятию замкнутой симметричной форме, выражается в виде симметричного, обратного тяготения двух противоположных точек спирального поворота, противоположных звуков в круге октавы. Bryusova, *Nauka o muzike*, 39.

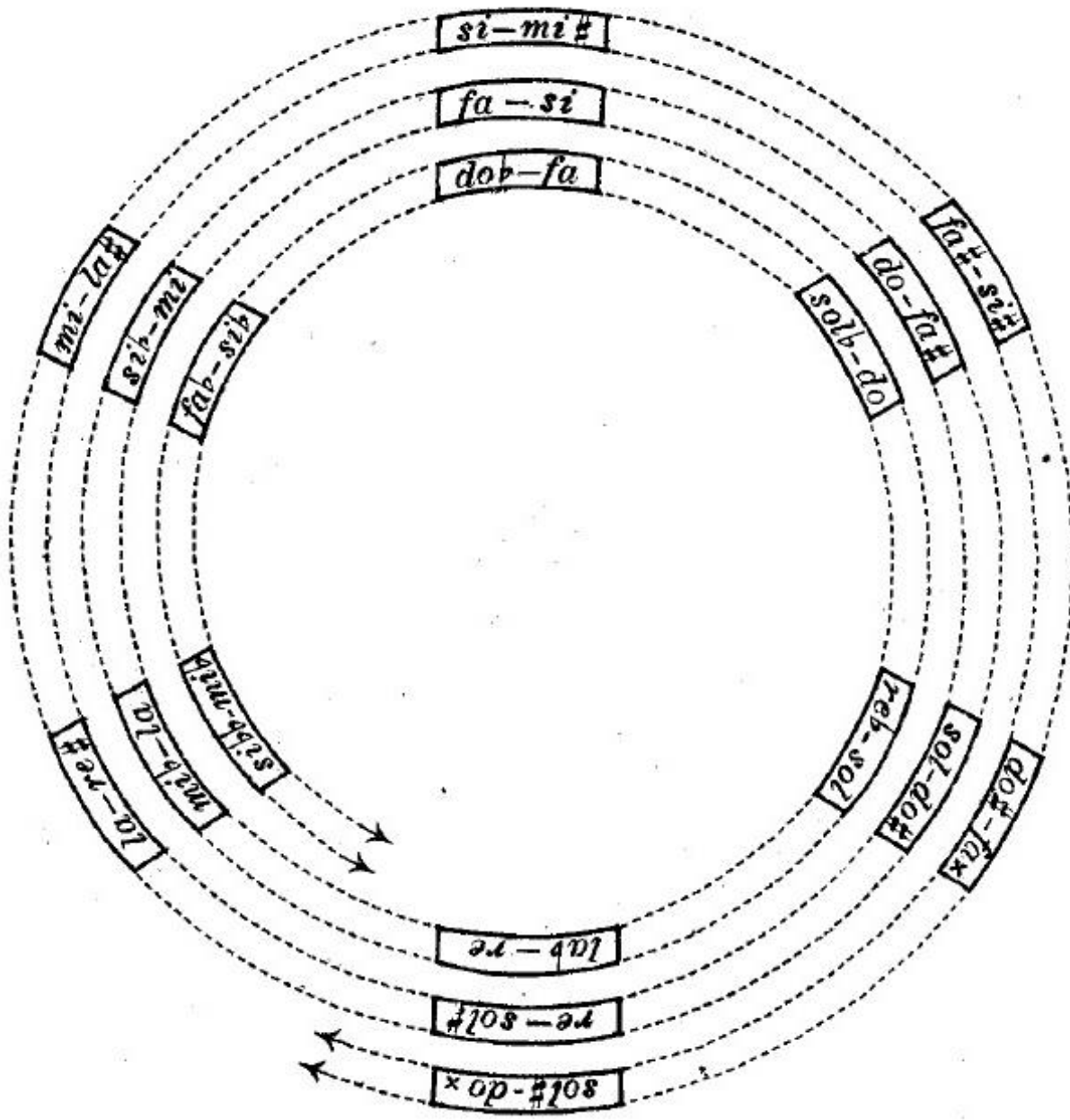


Figure 1. Boleslav Yavorsky. The 12-tone pitch space organized in “six-semitone relations,” or tritones.

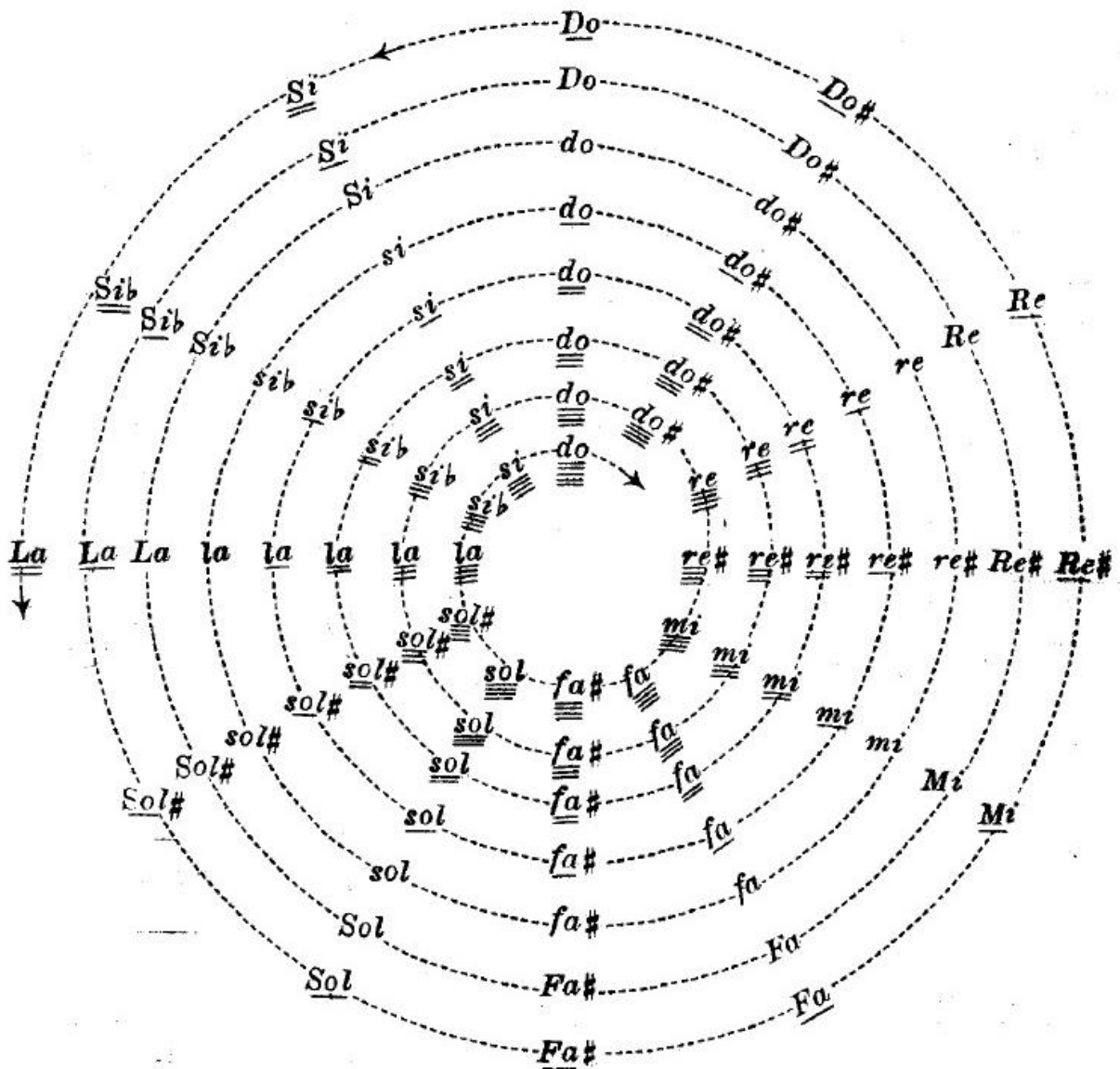


Figure 2. Boleslav Yavorsky. The circle of fifth, organized in a spiral form. The outer points of the spiral always form a tritone, the most unstable interval.

Both schemes were reprinted in Protopopov, Sergey Vladimirovich. *Elementi stroyeniya muzikal'noy rechi* [Elements of the Structure of Musical Speech]. 2 vols Moscow: Gosudarstvennoye Izdatel'stvo Muzikal'niy Sektor, 1930. They are reproduced here from this publication, which was edited by Yavorsky and was essentially an expanded explanation of his theory.

Such was the general law, discovered scientifically and applicable to all kinds of music. Yavorsky repeatedly wrote that folk music, blissfully ignorant of European music theory, conformed to this law, but he did not provide his reader with examples of such conformity. Yavorsky's subversive goal was best served by providing negative examples from Western European classical music, which he viewed as based on a misguided and flawed theory, ignorant of this general law.

Many terms and ideas from *The Structure of Musical Speech* resurfaced in Bryusova's book. Yavorsky's opening sentences, too, emphasized equivalency of music and life, and the crucial role of the temporal aspect of music:

Musical speech, one of the constituent parts of sound speech, derives its material and laws from the same life, of which it is a manifestation. The material ... of musical speech is sound in time. Musical speech is not a monument to life that has passed, but a manifestation of life itself, life that is happening at the moment, and therefore unfolding in time.³⁶⁰

Similar vocabulary – dead, live, scholastic, mechanistic³⁶¹ – appeared in Bryusova's study almost immediately, as did the idea of musical inspiration, which according to both Yavorsky and Bryusova was previously considered to be beyond the reach of science.

Studies of human perception and attention were blooming at the end of the nineteenth century in the works such as William James's monumental *The Principles of Psychology* (1890). Like Bryusova and her pseudo-scientific metaphors, Yavorsky, too, attempted to find a causal relationship between musical form and aspects of human physiology and perception, such as breath and attention span. He claimed: “The largest span of continuous and coherent musical speech corresponds to the longest duration of breath in a living creature, and to the longest basic unit of its continuous attention.”³⁶² Like Bryusova, Yavorsky took issue with the European theory of music, criticizing particular concepts such as the idea of a final (“there were as many ‘scales’ as different tones at the end of chants and songs”³⁶³), and iconoclastically pointing out “mistakes” in the music of canonical composers (even Beethoven!) caused by their reliance on a theory that was ignorant of the modal laws, such as the “incorrect” barring in the first movement of Beethoven's Piano Sonata no. 8 (“Pathétique”), in which the bar line should have been moved half a bar forward.³⁶⁴

³⁶⁰ Музыкальная речь, одна из составных частей звуковой речи, черпает свой материал и законы из той же жизни, проявлением которой она является. Материалом, из которого создается музыкальная речь, является звук во времени. Музыкальная речь является не памятником протекшей жизни, а проявлением самой жизни, жизни совершающейся, следовательно длящейся во времени. Yavorsky, *Stroyeniye muzikal'noy rechi*, part I, 2.

³⁶¹ Ibid., 4.

³⁶² Наибольшее протяжение непрерывной связной музыкальной речи соответствует наибольшей продолжительности дыхания живого существа и наибольшей продолжительности основной единицы его непрерывного сознания. Ibid., 8. And later: В этом существует аналогия с слишком быстрым чередованием цветов для зрения, запахов для обоняния, ощущения для осязания и вкуса. Yavorsky, *Stroyeniye muzikal'noy rechi*, part II, 7.

³⁶³ This he might have gotten right, since the concept of a final gained its utmost importance in the somewhat artificial process of imposing the Frankish theoretical system onto the preexisting body of Gregorian chant.

³⁶⁴ Yavorsky, *Stroyeniye muzikal'noy rechi*, part III, 9.

The idea that a theory could be harmful to the practice of composition³⁶⁵ stemmed from the conviction that they were causally related. Predictive power and the prescriptive role of science took on a crucial significance in both Yavorsky's and Bryusova's work. Possibly reacting to the stigma born by the notion of “music theory,”³⁶⁶ Yavorsky distinguished between “theory” and true science, in which the former operated *ex post facto* and presented a mechanistic obstacle in the composer's way while the latter revealed the true natural laws of music in folk music and thus assisted composition.³⁶⁷ At the end of his study, Yavorsky formulated the ultimate goal of music scholars:

To study the form of musical works of the previous period ... and to infer from the past experience a possibly perfect and complete theory on the structure of musical speech. Only then would it be possible for the first history of ‘music’ to appear, the subject of which would be the history of emergence and development of the structure of musical speech, through which one can comprehend its meaning, independent of [its] application to particular vocal or instrumental compositions, operas or songs, symphonies or sonatas and independent of biographical and chronological information, conveyed in anecdotes or quasi-philosophical lucubrations.³⁶⁸

Here, Yavorsky echoed a positivist concept of history aiming at the discovery a single law of historical development; but his position differed from Taine's, popular in Russia at the time, that such a discovery was only possible by way of a “thick description” of particular national cultures. For Yavorsky, particular manifestations of the law were inferior and extraneous to the law itself.

The danger of science

An aggressive rebuttal to Bryusova's – and Yavorsky's – apologia for the omnipotence of science came from the article, “On the New Science of Music” (1910),³⁶⁹ published in the collection,

³⁶⁵ Перечисленные ошибочные приемы создали измышленный, искусственный стиль, накладывающий по слуховой и школьной традиции свой вредный отпечаток на вдохновение композиторов последующего времени. Yavorsky, *Stroyeniye muzikal'noy rechi*, part III, 12.

³⁶⁶ Subsequent discussion of Andrey Bel'iy's diaries will illustrate this stigma.

³⁶⁷ Современный период композиторской техники, начавшийся со вступлением на композиторское поприще лиц, слух которых был развит на народных песнях, к которым они относились не как к «этнографической» подробности, а как к истинному источнику музыкальной премудрости, ведет к недалекому быть может времени, когда свободное творчество, сознав законы музыкальной речи, сольется с путями народного творчества и в своем новом свободном движении создаст новую грандиозную эпоху выявления человеческого духа и выдвинет ряд новых гениев, творчеству которых теория будет помогать, а не мешать, превратившись из «теории» музыки в науку о музыке. Yavorsky, *Stroyeniye muzikal'noy rechi*, part III, 12

³⁶⁸ Теперь же задачей музыкальных деятелей является выяснение формы музыкальных сочинений бывшего периода, издание их в естественном виде соответствующем их форме (что является и задачей современных композиторов при печатании собственных сочинений) и выведение на основании прошлого опыта возможно совершенного и полного учения о построении музыкальной речи. Только тогда станет возможным появление первой истории «музыки», содержанием которой будет история возникновения и развития строения музыкальной речи, через которое познается ее содержание, независимо от применения этой музыки к вокальным или инструментальным сочинениям, к операм или романсам, симфониям или сонатам, независимо от биографически-хронологических сведений разбавленных анекдотами и общими quasi философскими рассуждениями. *Ibid.*, 12.

³⁶⁹ The article was written in 1910, a year after the journal *The Golden Fleece*, for which Medtner wrote, ceased

Modernism and Music (1912), by the conservative music critic Emiliy Medtner. He was the older brother and mentor of the composer, Nikolai Medtner. Committed to promoting Nikolai's performing and composing career, and resentful of anybody he saw as his brother's competitor or deterrent, Emiliy championed Nikolai's conservative German-influenced aesthetics as the only true path Russian music should follow. A staunch Wagnerian, Medtner wrote under the pseudonym Wölfing – one of Siegmund's names in *Die Walküre*.

Modernism and Music was published by “Musaget,” a publishing house financed by Medtner's German friend Hedwig Friedrich and run by Medtner and his long-time friend and mentee, the poet Andrey Bely.³⁷⁰ Among other things, *Musaget* published a translation of Houston Stewart Chamberlain's *Arische Weltanschauung*.³⁷¹ In Medtner's own words, Chamberlain's views “on race, the Semites, on the Aryans and especially on the Teutons are literally identical to my own, which are based on intuition and insignificant observation. Certain passages could have been written by me.”³⁷² Medtner developed racist thinking a decade before the publication of *Modernism and Music*. His anti-Semitism and racism, inextricably intertwined with his philosophy of culture, persisted until his last years, when he became a supporter of Hitler. By the time of the publication of *Modernism and Music*, he had come to see his German descent as the defining trait of his personality, which made him a European superior to his Russian environment, and to view his mission to be the Germanization of the Russian art. In Medtner's worldview, the future of Russian culture was symbolized by Brünnhilde, who needed to be awakened by the Siegfried of German culture.³⁷³

An important figure among Russian Symbolists, Medtner heard Bryusova's lecture at the “Society for Free Aesthetics,” which he also frequented. While avoiding *ad hominem* attacks on Valeriy Bryusov's sister, since both of them belonged to more or less the same Symbolist circle, and paying lip service to “the serious and gifted theorist,”³⁷⁴ he did not tone down one iota of his crushing assault on everything for which she stood. In the opening sentences, he drew a connection between the unwelcome rational mode of inquiry into musical matters, flourishing around the turn of the century, and modernist aesthetics. He was pleased to note that the proponents of the science of music did not necessarily welcome modernist composition.³⁷⁵ Thus, his displeasure at Bryusova's endeavors was caused not by her personal affiliation with a wrong aesthetic camp, but by the menacing alliance of modernism and science per se. Medtner experienced deep anxiety about the scientific way of studying music that loomed large in the age of modernism. “Of all the arts, music is the one that is most closely linked to race,” he wrote.

If race is manifested in music, then the unheard novelty of modernist music, resembling nothing at all in any aspect, as well as the passionate search for the new foundations of

publication, so it was published only two years later in his collection *Modernism and Music* (1912). E. K. Wölfing, “Po povodu novoy nauki o muzike,” [On the new science of music] in *Modernizm i muzika* (Moscow: Musaget, 1912), 215-243.

³⁷⁰ Rosamund Bartlett, *Wagner and Russia*, Cambridge studies in Russian literature (Cambridge ; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 170.

³⁷¹ Houston Stewart Chamberlain, *Ariyskoye mirosozertsaniye* [Aryan Worldview] (Moscow: Musaget, 1913).

³⁷² Ljunggren, *The Russian Mephisto*, 26.

³⁷³ For a detailed discussion of Medtner's life and views see Ljunggren's monograph “The Russian Mephisto: A Study of the Life and Work of Emilii Medtner.”

³⁷⁴ Wölfing, “Po povodu novoy nauki o muzike,” 217.

³⁷⁵ Ibid.

music, force the question: where is the race that corresponds to [this search]? ... If the music of Strauss and Reger is indeed art, only inaccessible to us ... what kind of race will emerge among us, following such music? What if some prehistorical race is rising among us, which was not entirely exterminated by the Aryans but instead mixed with them and is now surfacing in its remote descendants? And what kind of 'whole tone' and quartertone 'nightmares' are promised to us by the future music of the future race? Certain representatives of the Turanian race are able to hear quartertones. So dissimilar to the majority of outstanding Germans, is it not to this race that Richard Strauss belongs?³⁷⁶

Unable to fabricate Jewish origins for Reger and Strauss, Medtner resorted to such convoluted reasoning in order to dissociate these modernist composers from German culture. In the first place, modernist art (and by extension, scientific inquiry) were undesirable because they signaled an impending racial threat to the European worldview. They were the signposts of imminent change, symptoms of an alien element gestating in the body of European culture, invisible for the time being but harboring a destructive force. In light of such a textbook case of racist anxiety, it is not surprising that Medtner exerted his most vehement efforts to counter Bryusova's claim of predictive power and prescriptive role of the new science of music. The idea that rationality could dictate its will to art (or to life, which was all the same to Bryusova) was deeply disturbing to Medtner.

For him, science's purpose was to follow life, to "mechanize" it, thus rendering it abstract and accessible to reason. He endorsed the view that the power of rational inquiry was limited, while Bryusova deplored this view as a shortcoming of the past epochs, which science had successfully overcome. For Medtner, this was all science really could and should do, and the rest stayed "for now or forever, beyond scientific reach, and [was] possible to learn only by way of long-term artistic contemplation and multiple attempts at independent creative work."³⁷⁷ Medtner perceived Bryusova's imperative new science as an endeavor no less scholastic than the one it purported to supplant, exactly because it foolishly attempted to explain life itself, instead of making do with abstractions.³⁷⁸

Medtner, too, succumbed to a fear of "mechanization." However, his was a Benjaminian fear of the "exact knowledge of the laws," promised by Bryusova, which would ossify in a set of prescriptive rules that "give a dangerous illusion of the complete mechanization of creative

³⁷⁶ Из всех искусств музыка всего теснее связана с расою; если раса высказывается в музыке, то неслыханная по новизне музыка модернистов, ни на что прежнее ни в чем не похожая, и страстное искание новых основ музыки вынуждают к вопросу: где та раса, которая соответствует этим честным, горячим, но странным преобразовательным попыткам, в которых столько любви к какой-то неведомой будущей музыке и такое окончательное равнодушие к музыке великой эпохи. Если музыка Штрауса или Регера действительно искусство, которое нам лишь недоступно ... то что за раса возникнет среди нас за такой музыкой? Уж не подымается ли на нас какая-нибудь доисторическая икс-раса, не до конца истребленная арийцами, с ними смешавшаяся и теперь вновь заявляющая о себе в отдаленнейших потомках? И какие лады, какие «целотонные» и четвертетонные «кошмары» несет нам будущая музыка будущей расы? ... Четверть тона различают некоторые представители туранской расы. Не к ней ли принадлежит столь непохожий на большинство выдающихся германцев Рихард Штраус? Ibid., 227-228.

³⁷⁷ [О]стальное остается (пока или навсегда) за пределами науки, и учиться этому остальному (которое большею частью является сутью искусства, его тайной) можно только при помощи длительного художественного созерцания и многих попыток самостоятельного творчества. Ibid., 217-218.

³⁷⁸ Ibid., 220.

work,³⁷⁹ and bereave creativity of its authentic aura. Medtner maintained that “turning musical art into knowledge and craft” equaled “negating art.”³⁸⁰ For Bryusova, on the other hand, the mechanization of cognitive procedures was dangerous because it yielded incomplete and distorted knowledge of the world.

The two critics' opposing ideals clashed most obviously when Medtner exposed the implicit nationalist sentiment that underlay Bryusova's positivist agenda. Their disagreement was rooted in their different understanding of authenticity. Bryusova and Yavorsky placed their trust in folk music (by which, as became evident from later publications on modal theory,³⁸¹ they meant Russian folk music), perceived as more universal and natural than the misguided European composition. For Medtner, the ultimate site of authenticity was the “*ens realissimum* [the most real being] of the art of sound: German music from Bach to Brahms.”³⁸² Speaking for “us Europeans, who do not care about all countries,” Medtner resisted Bryusova's universalizing impulse and stated that “there can be no music (or scale) common to all mankind.”³⁸³ Bryusova's reliance on folk music threatened to undermine the superiority of the European tradition that was so dear to him.

Medtner was committed to the view of music history as a succession of geniuses. Far from equating music with life, he extolled the larger-than-life status of art as a triumph of human spirit over nature:

Human creativity is not a part of nature; ... in its aspirations it is higher than nature. ... Beethoven's symphonies or Roman law are not at all natural; they did not go where nature wanted to go; quite the contrary, they strove to overcome the latter, to create a kingdom independent of it.³⁸⁴

However, in his view only a particular part of humanity deserved the credit for this triumph. Defending the traditional major and minor modes that Bryusova had denounced, Medtner wrote: “Major and minor are musical symbols of the eternal Aryan dualism.... [They] are far from being a Volapük, an international concoction, but are the product of a certain European-Aryan group of peoples. The composers of genius could not have written in Volapük for a century and a half.”³⁸⁵

³⁷⁹ [Д]ающие опасную иллюзию безостаточной механизации творчества. Ibid., 219.

³⁸⁰ Это означает не больше и не меньше, как отрицание музыкального искусства и превращение его в знание и в умение. Ibid.

³⁸¹ Notably, in the book by Yavorsky's student Sergey Protopopov, which was essentially a much expanded version of Yavorsky's theory: Sergey Vladimirovich Protopopov, *Elementi stroeniya muzikal'noy rechi* [Elements of the Structure of Musical Speech], 2 vols. (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoye Izdatel'stvo Muzikal'niy Sektor, 1930).

³⁸² Что мысль Н. Брюсовой, даже приближаясь вплотную к *ens realissimum* искусства звука, то есть к немецкой музыке от Баха до Брамса, скользит мимо ... лишний раз доказывается ... утверждением ... 'Эпоха полного (?) окаменения звуковой системы совпадает с эпохой развития клавишных инструментов'. Wölfling, "Po povodu novoy nauki o muzike," 236-237.

³⁸³ Все страны до нас, европейцев, не касаются; общечеловеческой музыки (а следовательно и гаммы) быть не может. Ibid., 231.

³⁸⁴ Человеческое творчество не есть часть природы; ... оно по устремлению своему выше природы, хотя и слабее ее; ... симфонии Бетховена или римское законодательство вовсе не естественны, вовсе не шли туда, куда хотелось идти природе; наоборот, стремились во многом преодолеть последнюю, создать свое независимое от нее царство. Ibid., 219-220.

³⁸⁵ [З]десь европейская музыка доработалась до магнитных знаков, которыми нащупываются какие-то космические противоположности; тут знаменуется нечто подобное тому, что Ницше выразил в своем противополжении Диониса Аполлону, почему к целому ряду антитез, характеризующих устремления

Medtner wanted so desperately to avoid associating authenticity with the non-European and to rescue the notion of genius that he reversed the common idea of “primitive” cultures as being closer to nature than the “developed” nations – the usual justification for investing the noble savage with authenticity. Medtner claimed that many tribes that were considered primitive were in fact degraded descendants of the cultures that once had been great, thus suggesting that folk modes might have been not an immediate gift of nature, but still, a creation of the human genius.³⁸⁶

Medtner's intractable racism made him well attuned to the clash between powerfully surging nationalism and the European legacy in Russian culture of the Silver Age. He sensed an undeclared but potent presence in Bryusova's brochure: “I sense here a shadowy subconscious desire to lead music astray from the way that was paved (but far from completed) by the Germans.”³⁸⁷ Whether the desire was subconscious or not, about that he was quite right.

Scientific poetry

Medtner's close friend Andrey Bely was also vocal in his rejection of the possibility of comprehending art in a rational way.³⁸⁸ In his presumptuous, misogynistic memoirs, he jeered at “music theorists”: “Bryusova's eyes sparkled like agates, but her little brain machine worked without a hitch – “tick-tock.”³⁸⁹ Her colleague Leonid Sabaneyev amounted to nothing more than “teensy-weensy namby-pamby, always fidgeting around the ‘Aesthetics,’ who later would scribble about Scriabin.”³⁹⁰ However, not all Symbolists treated rationalist inquiry into art with such utter contempt.

Valeriy Bryusov, eight years older than his sister, exerted a pervasive influence on both her professional development and the formation of her worldview: “I was his student in all the general school subjects and ... in life,” Bryusova wrote. “Stages of his creative work were to a large extent stages of my development. The epoch of Symbolism and the following epoch of mysticism in Russian poetry of the time – they were all reflected in my consciousness.”³⁹¹ In a

мажора и минора, можно прибавить еще одну, сопоставить дионисизм с минорным, аполлинизм с мажорным ладом. Мажор и минор суть музыкальные символы извечного арийского дуализма. ... При этом *dur-mol* отнюдь не волапюк, не международная стряпня, а порождение определенной европейско-арийской группы народов. На воляпюке не могли бы писать гениальнейшие композиторы в течение полутора столетий. *Ibid.*, 230-231.

³⁸⁶ Но знает эта наука, откуда лады? Почему они «естественны»? Кто присутствовал при историческом их рождении? Или они врождены, то есть даны природой непосредственно, не через гения? ... Что так называемые первобытные народы имеют свои лады — ничего не опровергает из сказанного. Какое число вполне развитых культур погибло, забыто и живет среди полудиких племен в виде обломков (например: ладов, моральных обычаев, наконец иногда до странности тонко развитой речи и т. п.). *Ibid.*, 241.

³⁸⁷ [Ч]уется мне здесь смутное неосознанное желание сдвинуть музыку в сторону от того пути, который проложен (и далеко не пройден до конца) германцами. *Ibid.*, 226.

³⁸⁸ Bely, “Formi iskusstva,” 170.

³⁸⁹ [А] у Брюсовой глаза – агаты блистающие; но зато – головной аппаратик работал без промахов: “тики-так, тики-так” – громко, отчетливо. Andrey Bely, *Mezhdru dvukh revolyutsiy* [Between Two Revolutions] (Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo pisateley v Leningrade, 1934), 239.

³⁹⁰ Постоянно вертелся в “Эстетике” Л. Сабанеев, – рыжавенький, маленький-сладенький, кисленький-висленький; позже “доскрябил” он Скрябина – в книге о Скрябине. *Ibid.*, 240. More on Bely's memoirs in chapter five.

³⁹¹ Я была его ученицей по всем общеобразовательным предметам, и кроме того, так сказать, его ученицей в жизни. Этапы его творчества были в большей мере и этапами моего развития. Эпоха символизма, следующая

memoir written in 1912-1913 Bryusov described the intellectual climate of the household in which the six Bryusov children grew up:

[T]he 1860s were coming; 'rays of light' started penetrating the 'realm of darkness' of the Moscow merchantry. ... My father hit the books ... reading Marx and Buckle, Darwin and Moleschott, all those works whose titles were on everyone's lips. ... From fairy tales, from all sorts of 'devilry,' I was diligently protected. On the other hand, I learned about Darwin's ideas and principles of materialism before I learned multiplication. It goes without saying that religion had no place in our home.³⁹²

The Bryusovs' rationalist upbringing most certainly played a role in their later search for clarity. Despite being a core member of the Symbolist movement, Valeriy Bryusov had a longstanding connection to positivism, albeit a tangled one. In March 1910, Bryusov reported to his friend, the writer Pyotr Pertsov:

There is a great schism in our circle of ex-decadents: a struggle between the 'clarists'³⁹³ and the 'mystics.' The clarists are *Apollon*, Kuzmin, Makovsky, etc. The mystics are the Moscow *Musaget*, Bely, Vyacheslav Ivanov, Sergey Solovyov, etc. ... The 'clarists' defend lucidity ... of thought, style, images, but this is only form; essentially, they defend 'poetry for the sake of poetry.' ... The mystics preach 'renewed Symbolism,' 'mythopoesis,' etc, but essentially, they want poetry to serve Christianity, to be ancilla theologiae. Not long ago we had a great battle about this in "Free Aesthetics." As you might imagine, I am wholeheartedly with the 'clarists.'³⁹⁴

The opposition is a familiar one. Valeriy Bryusov, Nadezhda Bryusova's mentor and role model, and the head of *Musaget* Emiliy Medtner found themselves on the opposite sides of the battle, which was taking place in March 1910, exactly between the presentation and publication of Bryusova's talk in November 1909 and Medtner's caustic reply to it, crafted in August 1910. At the very end of his life, Valery Bryusov still applied the epithet "positivist" to himself without a

за ней эпоха мистицизма в русской поэзии того времени, все ни были отражены в моем сознании. Quoted in: Minor, "Problemī massovogo muzikal'nogo vospitaniya," 21.

³⁹² Но близилась 60-е годы; «лучи света» стали проникать и в «темное царство» московского купечества. ... Отец засел за книги ... читал Маркса и Бокля, Дарвина и Молешотта, все те сочинения, названия которых в то время были у всех на языке. ... От сказок, от всякой «чертовщины» меня усердно оберегали. Зато об идеях Дарвина и о принципах материализма я узнал раньше, чем научился умножению. Нечего и говорить, что о религии в нашем доме и помину не было." Valery Yakovlevich Bryusov, *Dnevnik. Avtobiograficheskaya proza. Pis'ma* [Diaries. Autobiographical Prose. Correspondence] (Moscow: OLMA-PRESS, 2002), 164.

³⁹³ See Mikhail Kuzmin's manifesto "On beautiful clarity" (1910) Mikhail Alekseyevich Kuzmin, "O prekrasnoy yasnosti," [On beautiful clarity.] *Apollon*, no. 4 (1910): 5-10.

³⁹⁴ В нашем кругу, у ех-декадентов, великий раскол: борьба «кларистов» с «мистиками». Кларисты — это «Аполлон», Кузмин, Маковский и др. Мистики — это московский «Мусaget», Белый, Вяч. Иванов, Серг. Соловьев и др... «Кларисты» защищают ясность, ясность мысли, слога, образов, но это только форма; а в сущности они защищают «поэзию, коей цель поэзия», так сказал старик Иван Сергеевич. Мистики проповедуют «обновленный символизм», «мифотворчество» и т. п., а в сущности хотят, чтобы поэзия служила их христианству, стала бы ancilla theologiae. Недавно у нас в «Свободной эстетике» была великая баталия по этому поводу... Я, как догадываетесь, всей душой с «кларистами». "Pis'ma V. Ya. Bryusova k P. P. Pertsovu," [Correspondence of V. Ya. Bryusov and P. P. Pertsov.] *Pechat' i revolyutsiya*, no. 7 (1926): 46.

second thought. In his response speech at a celebration in honor of his fiftieth birthday, held on December 16, 1923 at the State Academy for Artistic Sciences, he recalled his fierce polemics with Vyacheslav Ivanov, "who brutally reproached me for this realism in symbolism, this positivism in idealism."³⁹⁵

In June 1909, only a few months before his sister's lecture on the new science of music, Bryusov published an article that later acquired the status of a manifesto in the eyes of many. He wrote it not for his own journal *Vesī*, although it was quite a reputable artistic journal, but for *Russkaya mīsl'* (*Russian Thought*), a major Russian periodical. The article was titled, "The Literary life of France. Scientific Poetry,"³⁹⁶ and was essentially a review and summary of René Ghil's *De la poésie scientifique*,³⁹⁷ published in Paris earlier that year. René Ghil began as a member of Stéphane Mallarmé's circle but later drifted apart and created his own following, which he called "instrumentalist school," or "scientific poetry." Like Émile Zola, who exerted a powerful positivist influence on the Russian literary tradition, Ghil had an extensive Russian career: he collaborated with *Vesī* from the beginning until the end of its illustrious but short life (1904-1909), contributing about forty articles over the course of those six years. His duties were to write reviews of all the remarkable literary events then taking place in France, which he duly supplied to the journal, even if his definition of "remarkable" was skewed by his unyielding ideological position.³⁹⁸ He conducted extensive correspondence with Bryusov for an even longer period of time, from 1904-1915, from which we learn that Bryusov was arguably his most loyal follower in Russia. Unlike Zola, however, Ghil's writings were mostly ridiculed by his French colleagues and later considered a failure by literary scholars. His Russian contemporaries, annoyed by Bryusov's admiration for his ideology and the disproportionate latitude the editor of *Vesī* allowed him, made the most of the Russian word *gil'*, homonymous with Ghil's last name, which means "nonsense."³⁹⁹

The poet explicated his doctrine in the *Traité du verbe (Treatise on the word)*, which was first published in 1885 and was "a serious misreading"⁴⁰⁰ of the works of Helmholtz, Darwin, and Comte that even his ardent supporter Bryusov considered obscure to the point of being unreadable.⁴⁰¹

For Ghil and Bryusov, the intellectual activity behind scientific and artistic pursuits was essentially the same, but the method was different. As opposed to the analytical method of science, the objective of poetry was to synthesize while engaging with the same questions that science failed to solve. In Ghil's theory, poetry was not reduced to a servant of science, *ancilla scientiae*, but was destined to bring together all the scientific advances that the separated and

³⁹⁵ Я помню, отлично помню, наши очень бурные споры с Вячеславом Ивановым, который жестоко упрекал меня за этот реализм в символизме, за этот позитивизм в идеализме» Valery Yakovlevich Bryusov, "Response speech," in *Valeriyu Bryusovu: sbornik posvyashchenniy 50-letiyu so dnya rozhdeniya poeta*, ed. P.S. Kogan (Moscow: KUBS Vysshego literaturno-khudozhestvennogo instituta imeni Valeriya Bryusova, 1924), 55.

³⁹⁶ Valery Yakovlevich Bryusov, "Literaturnaya zhizn' Frantsii, II. Nauchnaya poeziya," [The literary life of France. Scientific poetry.] *Russkaya mīsl'*, no. 6 (1909): 155-167.

³⁹⁷ *On Scientific Poetry*. René Ghil, *De la poésie scientifique* (Paris: Gastein-Serge, 1909).

³⁹⁸ Ghil's work for *Vesī* is discussed in: Roman Mikhailovich Dubrovkin, "Rene Gil' i Valeriy Bryusov: khronika odnoy perepiski," [René Ghil and Valeriy Bryusov: a chronicle of a correspondence] in *Rene Gil' - Valeriy Bryusov. Perepiska 1904-1915*, ed. R. M. Dubrovkin (St. Petersburg: Akademicheskii Proyekt, 2005).

³⁹⁹ See, for instance, Pasternak's poem "To Bryusov," written on the occasion of Bryusov's 50th birthday. *Ibid.*, 39.

⁴⁰⁰ Joseph Acquisto, "Between Stéphane Mallarmé and René Ghil: the impossible desire for poetry," *French Forum* 29, no. 3 (Fall 2004): 27-28.

⁴⁰¹ Bryusov, "Nauchnaya poeziya," 158.

specialized branches of science were not able to synthesize. The poet's creative intuition was thus the best tool for divining the connections "between the elements of world and life," which were not yet discovered scientifically.⁴⁰² The search for relations and the idea of interconnectedness of phenomena in the physical world was one of the major ideas of the late nineteenth-century scientifically oriented worldview (as well as the mystical worldview). Along this line of reasoning, Ghil constructed a rigid scheme of correlations between colors and timbres of musical instruments. Much of it he lifted from Arthur Rimbaud's "Voyelles," saying that Rimbaud had got it all wrong. The scheme was shortly discredited by the new research of the French psychologist Alfred Binet, whose *Problème de l'audition colorée* (*The Problem of Colored Audition*) (1892) was translated into Russian in 1894.⁴⁰³ Characterizing art as a method of cognition on par with science, Bryusov also hoped that Ghil's "scientific poetry" would clear the way for the developing theories of the literary scholar Alexander Potebnya⁴⁰⁴ (1835-1891), who understood cognition in terms of Herbart's theory of apperception and Humboldt's theory of language, and who considered poetry and science to be primary tools for comprehending the world.⁴⁰⁵

To put the theory of "scientific poetry" in practice, Ghil undertook the creation of a massive poem, *Œuvre* (1889-1926), which traced the "fate of our planet, beginning with the first cosmic processes to all the complexity of the contemporary social life."⁴⁰⁶ The action took place in an "ideal environment," two children spoke for humanity, and the stylistic devices of each chapter corresponded to the epoch they represented. Despite the self-proclaimed positivism of Ghil's method, it is hard to overlook the parallels between his utopian megalomania and that of Scriabin's *Mysterium*.⁴⁰⁷

Bryusov admitted that most of his readers, perhaps, would regard the term "scientific poetry" as oxymoronic, not unlike "a square circle."⁴⁰⁸ He also noted, however, that society had made great progress in thinking about the world due to scientific advances. Therefore, poetry had to change as well in order to remain relevant to such a society. "The understanding of poetry as a fortuitous expression of one's experiences and personal feelings," he wrote, "as a purely scholastic elaboration of the once and for all established themes, is opposed by those who follow 'scientific poetry' and their ideal of art – conscious, thoughtful ... and inextricably bound to modernity."⁴⁰⁹ Note the word "scholastic," which Bryusov, like his sister, used to describe the outdated approach to writing poetry for which he proposed an alternative.

⁴⁰² Силой творческой интуиции поэт должен улавливать между элементами мира и жизни – связи, еще не установленные точным знанием, и предугадывать новые пути, по которым наука может идти к новым завоеваниям. *Ibid.*, 162.

⁴⁰³ Russian translation: Alfred Binet, *Vopros o tsvetnom slukhe* [The Problem of Colored Audition] (Moscow: Tipolitografiya tovarishchestva I. N. Kushnerev, 1894).

⁴⁰⁴ Bryusov, "Nauchnaya poeziya," 166.

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁶ Ему хотелось бы в ней обозреть все судьбы нашей планеты, начиная с первых космических процессов до всей сложности современной социальной жизни. *Ibid.*, 165.

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁸ [С]лова, поставленные во главе этой статьи, 'научная поэзия', должны многим показаться противоречием в терминах, чем-то вроде 'квадратного круга'. *Ibid.*, 156.

⁴⁰⁹ Такому пониманию поэзии, как случайного выражения своих впечатлений и личных переживаний, как чисто схоластической разработки однажды навсегда установленных тем, - искатели "научной поэзии" противопоставляют свой идеал искусства, сознательного, мыслящего, определенно знающего, чего оно хочет, и неразрывно связанного с современностью. *Ibid.*, 160.

According to the scholar of Symbolism Roman Dubrovkin, Bryusov's decades-long infatuation with the idea of “scientific poetry” found little scholarly recognition. Indeed, it is a rare scholar who resists the squeamish irony that all too often accompanies research into modes of inquiry that blur the boundaries between the rational and irrational. While recognizing Bryusov’s and Ghil’s aesthetic precepts as a significant strand of Symbolism and while attempting to rectify this lapse in scholarship on Russian *fin de siècle*, Dubrovkin himself is quick to accuse Ghil of childish, uninformed, and, by the end of the nineteenth century, outdated faith in Auguste Comte's theories. Like early twentieth century writers, Dubrovkin even adopts Leo Tolstoy's pejorative term “scientific science” to characterize Ghil's unbounded devotion to positivism.⁴¹⁰

What is lost in such a dismissive approach is the prescriptive, ideological, and ambiguous nature of late nineteenth century Russian positivism. Placing science atop the hierarchy of human pursuits and investing it with the highest possible authority, positivist ideology thus endowed itself with scientific prestige and engendered its pervasive emulation, appropriation and inevitable distortion all across Western Europe and far beyond. However distorted, such emulation was of particular importance to emergent fields like music and literary scholarship, which were striving for institutional recognition. While it is possible to trace positivism's ubiquitous and thus hardly outdated repercussions in the artistic and scholarly thought of the day,⁴¹¹ these repercussions were, with some exceptions,⁴¹² rarely based on a thorough knowledge of writings of Comte and his followers. Rather, they interbred with such unlikely bedfellows as Symbolism and mysticism, further obscuring their uncertain pedigree.

By the turn of the century, positivism had disintegrated and pervaded the intellectual environment of the *fin de siècle*, just as Ridley Scott's disintegrating Engineer pervaded and impregnated Earth's biosphere in the beginning of *Prometheus*. As much they were through printed media, positivist precepts were disseminated by word of mouth that traveled through familial and professional genealogies. The journal *Vesì* was an appropriate venue for publishing Bryusova's article not only because it was her brother's journal, but also because its ideology was steeped in the concept of "scientific poetry" – one of the quirky Russian repercussions of positivism, like Bryusova's own project. The case of the Bryusov siblings was thus exemplary of the tightly bound cluster of familial, friendly, and collegial relationships in the art world, in which most people knew each other and in which the ideological was closely interwoven with the personal.

⁴¹⁰Dubrovkin, "Rene Gil' i Valeriy Bryusov," 41.

⁴¹¹ Speaking of outdated allegiances, such repercussions produced many curiosities, such as Vladimir Taneyev's conviction that the brain was a gland, which “secreted thoughts just like liver secreted bile, and kidneys secreted urine” - a borrowing of Descartes's theory of the pineal gland as the seat of the soul, hardly accepted even by Descartes's contemporaries, and by the late nineteenth century widely considered ridiculous. At the same time, this idea resembled the various physiological conceptions of consciousness, which were part and parcel of positivist mindset. Alekseyev, *Filosofi Rossii XIX-XX stoletiy*, 786.

⁴¹²For instance, the poet and religious thinker Dmitriy Merezhkovsky, one of the founders of Russian Symbolism, studied the works of Comte, Spencer, and Mill quite thoroughly, when he was still a student at the St. Petersburg University, before disavowing his allegiance to positivism once and for all.

Chapter 4. Sabaneyev's *Scriabin* and Conflicting Epistemologies of the Russian Silver Age

In the last two years before the revolution – 1916 and 1917 – a confrontation shook Russian artistic circles. Three parties were engaged in the conflict: the music critic and mathematician Leonid Sabaneyev, who published a book on the composer Alexander Scriabin; members of the Petrograd Scriabin Society, who met this publication with vehement opposition; and finally, Alexander Scriabin himself, quite dead by that time, who nevertheless provided an essential (although ventriloquistic) contribution to the debate by way of his diaries, published in 1919. This chapter will provide a close reading of all three sources, pointing out their connections and disagreements, and glean the ideas that have bearing on the discussion of musical epistemology in Russia during the 1910s.

On April 14, 1915 Scriabin died of a cause so trivial (blood poisoning caused by a pimple on his upper lip) that it prompted an avalanche of speculations about the “real” (i.e. mystical) reasons for his demise. In the spring of 1916 Sabaneyev published his book on the composer, the most substantial of dozens of publications that flooded Russian musical press shortly after Scriabin’s death. In May (and again in November) 1916 the Petrograd Scriabin Society, “concerned about the incorrect interpretation of Scriabin's philosophy, which might take root among the reading audience if Mr. Sabaneyev's book were left without an immediate and proper treatment from informed persons,”⁴¹³ convened for an inquisition into the matter, where many a member of the society let off steam. In 1917 letters from the Moscow Scriabin Society and responses to them were published in the Proceedings of Petrograd Scriabin Society (volume 2) – a source that has so far received little scholarly attention. Something in Sabaneyev's book must have touched a sore spot: the Proceedings consist of 29 pages of abuse addressed to the book’s author. All contributors were Scriabin's admirers and were acquainted with his irrationalist, heavily theosophical thought – as was Sabaneyev, whom they nevertheless regarded as a defector to the rational camp. Their reactions are revealing of the Russian intellectual climate of the time, when the idea of music scholarship itself was new and largely modeled after the discipline of musicology that by 1916 had already been institutionalized in Germany for three decades.

In Russia, this rationalist influx met considerable opposition from the artistic avant-garde. The grudges that Sabaneyev’s critics held against his perceived scholarly approach reveal a common ideology. They unanimously targeted the twin cornerstones of rationalist inquiry: reliance on empirical evidence as opposed to intuitive knowledge, and detachment of oneself from the object of study. Resistance to the empiricist invasion may well be one of the reasons why Theosophy became so prominent in the 1910s in Russian artistic circles. This case study illustrates the larger conflict of idealist and positivist thought that provides the framework for the Russian musical criticism of the first two decades of the twentieth century. The body of literature produced during these two decades served as the immediate foundation for the new discipline of musicology, which makes the Sabaneyev-Scriabin confrontation all the more significant.

The Scriabin Society and their criticism of Sabaneyev's book

Nine people contributed to the Proceedings of the Scriabin Society – Scriabin's doctor V.V. Bogorodsky; Princesses Varvara Nikolayevna Lermontova and Marina Nikolayevna Gagarina

⁴¹³ Петроградское Скрязбинского Общества ... обеспокоено неправильным толкованием философом Скрязбина, могущим установиться у читающей публики, если книга г. Сабанеева останется без немедленного должного освещения со стороны осведомленных лиц. *Izvestiya*, 2, 3.

(sisters of the idealist philosopher Sergey Trubetskoy, the author of “Foundations of Idealism”⁴¹⁴ and daughters of Nikolai Trubetskoy, the president of the Moscow branch of Russian Musical Society); publishers V.L. Nosenkov and A.N. Bryanchaninov; Scriabin’s second wife, pianist Tatyana Schloezer-Scriabina; her brother, the music critic Boris de Schloezer (Scriabin’s long-time ally); the symbolist poet Vyacheslav Ivanov, and an anonymous author. Their emotionally charged reactions to Sabaneyev’s book were largely free of institutional or geographical rivalries: Sabaneyev never taught at a conservatory, nor was the traditional rivalry between Moscow and St.Petersburg relevant, because most of the contributors were Sabaneyev’s fellow Muscovites. Whatever caused their outrage and prompted them to repair the damage that Sabaneyev’s book admittedly did to Scriabin’s image in laymen’s eyes was hiding deeper, in the realm of the personal and the aesthetic. An overview of the charges they leveled at Sabaneyev reveals their common idealist view of art.

The most vivid (and livid) picture was painted by the poet Vyacheslav Ivanov: a diabolical image of Sabaneyev as the evil puppeteer Mephistopheles, manipulating the unfortunate puppet of Scriabin, much to the delight of an ignorant crowd.⁴¹⁵ The rest of the contributors kept up with Ivanov’s grandiloquence. The most frequent complaint was the inadequacy of Sabaneyev’s rational methods to his subject. Sabaneyev’s work was praised as a well-written, pithy, and solid contribution to Russian literature on music history, an intellectually and ethically scrupulous, well-informed, industrious⁴¹⁶ and thorough study.⁴¹⁷ However, it amounted to nothing but an exercise in futility, an attempt to “empty the sea with a bucket”⁴¹⁸ due to Sabaneyev’s lack of “the intuition that is necessary before everything else to understand the intuitive goals of a genius.”⁴¹⁹

The anonymous writer elaborated on the topic: “Such fiery souls as Scriabin’s, longing for heaven, are better comprehended by love, and Sabaneyev wanted to comprehend it by reason alone.”⁴²⁰ Understandably, rational cognition (Mephistopheles’s domain) was an inadequate means for understanding such a soul. Besides, one can approach the great mystery of Scriabin’s music only on the condition that one “honor the highest, the inscrutable and the unfathomable with silence,” Ivanov ranted in a passionate defense of ineffability of Scriabin’s music.⁴²¹

Scriabin’s image as a Christ-like figure (born on Christmas day and dead come Easter)

⁴¹⁴ Sergey Trubetskoy, "Osnovaniya idealizma," [Foundations of idealism.] *Voprosi filosofii i psikhologii*, no. 1-5 (1896).

⁴¹⁵ *Izvestiya*, 2, 16-17.

⁴¹⁶ Эти грустные размышления ... навеяны... книгою во многих отношениях превосходною: хорошо написанною, содержательною, одним из солидных вкладов в нашу литературу по истории музыки, мало того, книгою, составленною (я в этом не сомневаюсь) со всем субъективным правдолюбием, со всею интеллектуальною и этическою добросовестностью. *Ibid.*, 17.

⁴¹⁷ [М]не теперь становится жаль ... Сабанеева с его капитальным, но к сожалению столь неудачным трудом. *Ibid.*, 21.

⁴¹⁸ Но что сказать о самонадеянных характеристиках, пытающихся вычерпать ковшом море. *Ibid.*, 16.

⁴¹⁹ Л.Л. Сабанеев, лишенный повидимому той внутренней интуиции, которая прежде всего нужна для понимания основных интуитивных заданий гения, заплутался в областях, о которых он был из бесед в кругу Скрябина наслышан. *Ibid.*, 21.

⁴²⁰ Любовью легче всего познаются такие пламенные, рвущиеся к небу души, какова была его душа. Сабанеев хотел одним только рассудком понять Скрябина. *Ibid.*, 15.

⁴²¹ Без сомнения, всякое предварительное осведомление и даже изображение своевременно и полезно в меру своей фактической достоверности, при условии, что приближающийся к великой загадке умеет снимать обувь с ног своих на месте святе, чувствовать величие духа, с которым он как бы вступает в беседу, и чтить высшее, непостижимое и непроницаемое в нем – безмолвием. *Ibid.*, 16.

was another notable thread in several responses. Vladimir Nosenkov shared the news that conversations with Scriabin had turned him away from stubborn rationalism and religious skepticism. The reviews were rife with descriptions of Scriabin's crystal-clear, delicate child's soul, his eyes full of trust and love for humanity: a man of genius who dreamt of giving his life in order to return humanity to God. One reviewer made a transparent reference to Christ's twelve apostles, to whom Sabaneyev apparently did not belong.

Another important charge (albeit one contradicting the facts) concerned Sabaneyev's position as an outsider. Two of the contributors mentioned that Sabaneyev had used Scriabin's terms in their generally accepted meaning, whereas for Scriabin they had "an absolutely specific, peculiar meaning,"⁴²² although no specific examples of such terms were adduced. The implication was that it was impossible to study a composer's philosophy in any other terms than his own and necessary to follow the letter, not just the spirit of that philosophy. Sabaneyev mentioned Scriabin's peculiar terminology as well, but attributed it to a lack of erudition on Scriabin's part, rather than originality.⁴²³

What outraged Sabaneyev's readers the most was his idea that some of Scriabin's creative impulses were nothing short of Satanist. This charge backfired on Sabaneyev as his readers accused him of working out his own subconscious issues in his writing. The anonymous reviewer asked whether "Sabaneyev himself was not under the spell of the same 'idée fixe' as he claimed Scriabin was, and did not need the same 'desatanization' that he claimed Scriabin started undergoing in the last years of his life."⁴²⁴ According to Ivanov, Sabaneyev "was lost in the labyrinth of his own cellar"⁴²⁵ (i.e. his subconscious). Like Ivanov, the other contributors were convinced that rational, simplified knowledge is inherently evil, and interpreted Sabaneyev's attention to Scriabin's "Satanic Poem" and Ninth Piano Sonata, subtitled "The Black Mass," as well as his extensive discussion of Satanism, as a projection of his own devilish ways of cognition onto Scriabin.

A few aspects of Sabaneyev's methodology could indeed have provoked a rebuttal from those opposed to a rationalist mode of inquiry. They included distancing himself from the object of study, attempting to generalize historical data, and referencing actual scientific theories of the day, notably those by Helmholtz and Haeckel. However, the following analysis of Sabaneyev's monograph will show just how incompatible his approach was with positivist thinking. Sabaneyev's mystical notions of "the astral plane," intuition and ineffability, which proved central to his arguments were completely overlooked by his opponents, who instead chose to condemn him as a clueless rationalist, deprived of intuition. This (willful) misunderstanding was emblematic of the deeply idealist convictions that were widespread in Russian avant-garde art world at the time.

⁴²² Скрябин постоянно вкладывал в общепринятые термины и выражения совершенно особое, свое содержание. *Ibid.*, 7.

⁴²³ [С]лишком часто, даже читая чужие мысли в книгах, придавал им свое толкование, отличное от авторского. Между строк разных авторов он всегда любил находить свои взгляды, он видел их часто там, где их не мог бы обнаружить строгий критический ум. Всюду и везде он видел свою собственную мысль. Sabaneyev, *Scriabin*, 37-38.

⁴²⁴ Невольно приходит в голову мысль: уж не находится ли сам Сабанеев во власти «навязчивой идеи», которой по его мнению страдал Скрябин и не нуждается ли сам в той «десатанизации», по его словам начавшейся у Скрябина в последний период его жизни? *Izvestiya*, 2, 15.

⁴²⁵ [З]аблудился в лабиринте собственного подполья. *Ibid.*, 21.

Leonid Sabaneyev and his Scriabin

Sabaneyev's family came from the university milieu. His father, Leonid Pavlovich Sabaneyev, was a professor at St. Petersburg University, a renowned zoologist who corresponded with Darwin. Sabaneyev himself had a doctoral degree in pure mathematics, lectured and wrote on math and zoology.

In his large monograph, Sabaneyev offered a detailed account of both Scriabin's philosophy and his music. He recounted Scriabin's ideas on the synthesis of the arts and on the *Mysterium* – an eschatological act that by way of uniting all arts and all people on Earth in an artistic-religious ritual was supposed to bring about the end of the human history. He analyzed Scriabin's piano and symphonic music, drawing on the fashionable theories of Hermann von Helmholtz to explain Scriabin's harmony; he discussed Scriabin's experiments in the synthesis of arts and expounded the composer's philosophical doctrine in painstaking detail. Nothing else in the 1916 avalanche of memorial publications on Scriabin surpassed this account of the departed composer's life and work in thoroughness, and nothing else elicited such a violent opposition from Scriabin's friends and fans.

In addition to his university education, Sabaneyev studied piano at the Moscow Conservatory with Nikolai Zverev, and harmony and counterpoint with Sergey Taneyev. He was very active as a music critic, contributing to many Russian periodicals, but the analytical nature of his publications gained him a reputation as a music scholar. Characteristically, the symbolist poet Andrey Bely, recalling names of people who frequented the "Society for Free Aesthetics," positioned Sabaneyev among the theorists, and not among the critics: "Of theorists I remember Yavorsky, Eiges, Sabaneyev, Wolfing (E.K. Medtner), P.I. D'Alheim; Scriabin appeared as well; of music critics there were Kruglikov, Engel, Sakhnovsky."⁴²⁶ Of the five writers, whom Bely described as theorists, only Yavorsky would merit the name in its modern sense. The label, however, was not applied in a benevolent fashion, and was followed by an acerbic description of Sabaneyev as a scribbler.⁴²⁷ This image of utter insignificance appeared immediately after a larger discussion of music theory, cast in a similar vein, so there is little doubt that it was Sabaneyev's theoretical angle that elicited Bely's contempt. Sabaneyev would later return the favor in his *Reminiscences of Russia*, calling Bely crazy and "a typical hysteric."⁴²⁸

A close examination of Sabaneyev's book on Scriabin, however, reveals the "theorist" to be anything but the staunch positivist. In the concluding section, I conjecture the reasons why Sabaneyev's critics saw it as opportune to accuse him of a positivist transgression that he did not quite commit.

Intuition and ineffability

The idea of intuition loomed large in Sabaneyev's discussion of creativity and knowledge. Since intuition held such pride of place in his hierarchy of various modes of cognition, it is worth recounting Sabaneyev's understanding of the concept in his own words, however turgid his style

⁴²⁶ [И]з теоретиков помню Яворского, Эйгеса, Сабанеева, Вольфинга (Э. К. Метнера), П. И. д'Альгейма; бывал и Скрябин; бывали музыкальные критики: Кругликов, Энгель, Сахновский. Bely, *Mezhdru dvukh revolyutsiy*, 219.

⁴²⁷ Постоянно вертелся в «Эстетике» Л. Сабанеев, — рыжавенький, маленький-сладенький, кисленький-висленький; позже «доскрябил» он Скрябина — в книге о Скрябине. Ibid., 240.

⁴²⁸ Белый был, по-видимому, действительно «не в себе» и был типичным истериком. Leonid Leonidovich Sabaneyev and Tatyana Yuryevna Maslovskaya, *Vospominaniya o Rossii* [Reminiscences of Russia] (Moscow: Klassika-XXI, 2004), 66.

might sound to us today.

He deemed intuition much more important for a creative genius than reason : so much more important, in fact, that he felt the need to legitimize what looked suspiciously like a product of rational planning in Scriabin's music – his symmetrical harmony and form. Flaunting his status as a person privy to Scriabin's creative process, he claimed:

'Principles,' generally inherent in [Scriabin's] composition, reflecting some kind of inner laws, manifest themselves most evidently in harmony, where these principles reach such clear expression that sometimes one might think that Scriabin works theoretically, that his plan of action is conscious – so well-shaped are the resulting schemes, so well they match the data – as strange as it might seem – even of exact science. All that, again, might have occurred to me, if I personally did not know Scriabin's creative process, if in that knowledge I did not glean confidence that what sometimes seemed to be the fruit of reasoning, was really the product of intuition of rare power.⁴²⁹

As befits the subject under discussion, Sabaneyev appended no evidence of any kind (sketches, conversations etc.) to support this claim. Instead, he legitimized Scriabin's "principles" by casting them as intuitive revelations, which the composer rationalized *ex post facto*, thereby turning them into compositional tools. Thus, intuition was closely linked to mastery or skill. However mundane and derivative mastery might be, compared to intuition, it was still indispensable for an artist of genius, even if only as safety gear:

Adherence to 'principles' in [Scriabin's] work was elevated into a sort of dogma. This does not mean that there was any preconception, that he, having laid down these 'principles' in advance, used them to approach the mystery of creative process. No – creative process engendered these principles in him, but he, unlike other artists, translated them into conscious plane more frequently, more frequently treated them as the material that had already gone from the intuitive to the technical plane. Born meta-consciously, a principle reached his consciousness afterward, and then became knowledge to him. ... This process may have harbored a certain danger of schematization, into which he undoubtedly lapsed from time to time, precisely when intuition left him alone with his principles. This happens to every artist, but with Scriabin, it is harder to notice the seams that would reflect his technical work, and the failures of inspiration that would prompt a collapse of intuition. The conscious principles of his creative work helped him. Their originality made him be always authentic and always 'himself.' Their being conscious made him a great master, who in this respect can be compared only to the greatest

⁴²⁹ Присущее вообще его творчеству яркое выражение «принципиальности», отображающей какие-то внутренние закономерности, ярче всего выразилось в гармонии, где принципиальность достигает такого выражения, что иной раз можно было бы подумать о том, что Скрябин действует теоретически, что его план действий сознателен – настолько стройны получаемые схемы, настолько они находятся в соответствии с данными – как это ни странно – даже точной науки. Все это – повторяю – можно было бы подумать, если бы я лично не знал творческого процесса Скрябина, если бы в этом знании не почерпнул уверенности, что то, что казалось иногда плодом рассуждения, на самом деле было продуктом редкой силы интуиции. Sabaneyev, *Scriabin*, 124.

representatives of the art of music.⁴³⁰

Furthermore, Sabaneyev maintained, not all intuition was true. In the chapter that analyzed Scriabin's "symphony of light" (*Prometheus*), he postulated the two ingredients of artistic success – innate creativity and mastery – and also distinguished the lower (scientific) and the higher (artistic) kinds of intuition. Discussing Scriabin's experiments with light, Sabaneyev argued that the composer did not possess innate creativity in this new area, and thus did not master the technique, but only guessed at "the new artistic mainland, hiding in the ocean of the unknown" by way of a "mental, scientific kind of intuition. Intuitively, Scriabin guessed the idea of the symphony of light, but not the art of light itself."⁴³¹

Intuition was the one and only path to originality, and therefore, in Sabaneyev's opinion, original creativity could not be fully comprehended: "There were artists, who for a certain period of time lost the connection to the higher world of intuition, which sustains a true, original language, and began to talk in a weak and reduced language."⁴³² Condescendingly, Sabaneyev went on: "There are artists [who find their language by way of speculation, with the help of logical rationale], but a true artist of genius would never do so; he finds his realization by way of *metaconscious intuition*, by way of a process as resistant to interpretation as it is to research."⁴³³

The ineffable made its appearance often in Sabaneyev's book. His repeated efforts to dissociate creative work from "exact science" implied that scientific methods could be only so useful in explicating creativity. But, paradoxically, even scientific explanations of Scriabin's music proved necessary in asserting the primacy of intuition, since intuition was Scriabin's key to entering both the mystical heights and the scientific depths:

Such intuition allowed him to penetrate mysteries of timbre structure, having guessed the path that the development of harmony had taken before his time. In scientific parallels, in

⁴³⁰ «Принципиальность» его творчества была возведена им в своего рода догму. Это не означало предвзятости, не означало того, что он, заранее составив себе эти «принципы», с ними подходил к тайне творческого процесса. Нет – этот процесс рождал в нем эти принципы, но он, в противоположность другим художникам, чаще доводил их до плана сознания, чаще обращался с ними как уже с материалом, перешедшим из интуитивного в технический. Рожденный сверхсознательно принцип после доходил до его сознания и уже делался для него знанием. ... Возможно, что в этом крылась известная опасность схематизации, в которую он несомненно иногда впадал, именно в тех случаях, когда интуиция оставляла его одного, со своими принципами. Это случается со всяким художником, но у Скрябина труднее заметить те швы, которые бы отражали его техническую работу, и те провалы вдохновения, которые стимулировали бы падение интуиции. Сознанные им принципы его творчества помогали ему. Их оригинальность делала его постоянно самобытным и постоянно «самим собою». Их осознанность делала его великим **мастером**, которого в этом отношении можно сравнить только с самыми великими представителями музыкального искусства. Ibid., 140.

⁴³¹ Но эта интуиция, помогшая ему напасть на новый художественный материк, скрывавшийся в океане неизвестного, не была художественной интуицией, а скорее ментальной, научной. Скрябин интуитивно угадал идею световой симфонии, но не самое световое ... искусство. Ibid., 230-231. Like many writers of his time, Sabaneyev, a member of a scientific dynasty, used the word "nauka" to mean science, rather than scholarship.

⁴³² Бывали и такие, у которых в определенный период исчезали связи с высшим миром интуиции, который поддерживает чувство подлинного, своего языка и они начинали говорить языком редуцированным и слабым. Ibid., 114.

⁴³³ Спору нет – есть и такие художники, но таковым никогда не будет истинный *гений*, который находит свой путь воплощения путем *сверхсознательной интуиции*, путем процесса столь же необъяснимого, сколь и неподдающегося изучению. Ibid., 112.

the scientific propriety of his harmonies, of which he was not even aware, lies one of the powerful proofs that the world, created by Scriabin, is deeply organic; in historical progress lies its justification.⁴³⁴

Lastly, a son of a renowned professor and a university-trained scientist himself, Sabaneyev often assumed a patronizing attitude, lamenting Scriabin's lack of formal education. However, he was quick to absolve Scriabin's ignorance on the account of the composer's formidable intuition:

Having received no rigorous schooling in philosophy, being essentially an amateur in this field, possessing neither specialized education nor real erudition, in the realm of abstract thinking Scriabin astounds with his enormous, uncannily developed intuition, which not infrequently allowed him to penetrate the depths of abstract notions.⁴³⁵

Sabaneyev's critical attitude, however, persisted when Scriabin wandered off into areas, where Sabaneyev considered him a dilettante. Orchestral music, poetry, the art of light and esoteric practices: all these were essential ingredients for creating Scriabin's unrealized *opus magnum* – the *Mysterium*. According to Sabaneyev, in all these areas the composer was not blessed with inborn intuition, and consequently, did not master the appropriate level of skill, therefore working at a superficial level, which, in turn, yielded poor and schematic results. “Infinitely demanding toward himself in the area of which he was fully conscious with the consciousness of a higher order,” Sabaneyev preached, “he became very self-indulgent in others.”⁴³⁶

Scriabin's dilettantism had the gravest repercussions by far in the realm of the mystical. Sabaneyev blamed the would-be prophet for not practicing meditation and not conducting experiments on his own psyche.⁴³⁷ He called Scriabin “a magician – powerful, but not seasoned with knowledge, who perished in the element that he himself had ignited,”⁴³⁸ thus holding Scriabin's lack of “consciousness of a higher order” partly responsible for the failure of *Mysterium* and even for the magician's sudden death.

Writing about Scriabin's poetic exercises in the chapter “Synthesis of Arts,” the critic distinguished between original style (that could only be born from both intuition and technique) and manner – a substitute for such a style.⁴³⁹ A man of science, he criticized Scriabin's

⁴³⁴ Эта интуиция позволила ему проникнуть в тайны структуры тембров, угадав тот путь, которым шло развитие гармонии до него. В научных параллелях - в научной обоснованности его гармоний, обоснованности, которую он и не подозревал - хранится одно из могучих доказательств органичности созданного им мира; в историческом ходе - его оправдание. Ibid., 174.

⁴³⁵ Не имевший строгой философской школы, в сущности любитель в этой области, не получивший ни специального образования, ни обладавший настоящей эрудицией, Скрябин поражает в области исканий своей отвлеченной мысли громадным, сверхъестественным развитием интуиции, которая нередко позволяла ему проникать в глубину отвлеченных понятий. Ibid., 37-38.

⁴³⁶ Бесконечно требовательный к себе в той области, где он был полностью сознателен сознанием высшего порядка – он становился крайне снисходителен в остальных. Ibid., 82.

⁴³⁷ Пробовал ли он предаваться созерцанию, делал ли опыты над своей психикой? Строго говоря – ничего подобного он не делал. Ibid., 78.

⁴³⁸ Великий по мощи, но не искушенный знанием волшебник разбудил ту стихию, которая для нас явилась магическим искусством, но в пламени которой он сам сгорел, как духовная личность – до следующей жизни. Ibid., 84.

⁴³⁹ [Отсутствие] своего стиля, рожденного техникой и интуицией зараз: отсутствие, которое заменяется у

unscientific forays in optics and theory of light, of which the composer knew nothing. When he told Scriabin that the necessary white light was not notated in the “luce” part at the climax of *Prometheus*, the composer insisted that all colors, when projected brightly enough, approach white – a statement, Sabaneyev was quick to point out, that did not have any scientific basis.⁴⁴⁰ The implication was that, had Scriabin possessed true creative spirit in “the art of light,” he would have not made such a mistake.

The idea that conscious or rational knowledge can derive from intuition has an interesting ramification. Unlike Russian music critics of the nineteenth century, Sabaneyev did not dichotomize intuition and professionalism, artistry and craft. Consider the decades-long feud between the conservatory and the New Russian School that thrived on this ideological opposition, which was essential to the formulation of Russian musicians' nationalist ideals, or the image of Musorgsky as the uncouth, elemental Russian prodigy, for whom professional training (imported from Germany) would have proven disastrous, should he have ever undergone it. Instead, Sabaneyev cast rational knowledge as a mere byproduct of intuition, thereby emphasizing ineffability and reducing the explanatory power of rational knowledge to something somewhat useful, but quite insignificant. While Stasov had to justify Musorgsky's parallel fifths, Sabaneyev had to explain away something much more resistant – Scriabin's polished calculations in form and harmony.⁴⁴¹

Sabaneyev's far-fetched effort to present Scriabin's glaring symmetries as glimpses of *au-delà* is illustrative of the anxiety of rational influence experienced by the Russian music critics in the Silver Age.

Scientific methods

Despite the fact that they do not look anything like an academic approach to us today, three aspects in Sabaneyev's methodology might have been considered scholarly at the time and thus might have fueled the ire of the Scriabin Society members. To begin with, the author dissociated himself from his subject right away. On the fourth page of the foreword, he claimed that his book not only presented Scriabin's doctrines, but also reflected Sabaneyev's own attitude to the composer's legacy.⁴⁴² This was an exception in the literature on Scriabin at the time, which rarely engaged Scriabin's thought in a critical way.

Second, Sabaneyev had a predilection for drawing broad parallels between Scriabin's ideas and the historical and aesthetic context of his time. These parallels, however, were cursory and lacked specifics, evidence and consistency. They suggest that Sabaneyev knew that considering historical context was one of the core methods of humanistic scholarship, but had neither the interest nor skill to pursue it systematically.

For instance, he mentioned personally knowing “too many people” to whom Scriabin's

него манерою, довольно ярко выявленной и в его поэтических опытах Ibid., 100-101.

⁴⁴⁰ Это объясняется, как я полагаю, незнанием с теорией светов, с оптикой, что сказалось и после при проведении указанных принципов в жизнь. Sabaneyev, *Scriabin*, 240. Совершенно иногда неожиданно повидимому и для него самого местами появляется белый свет, как результат сложения дополнительных, напротив, там, где он описывал белый свет (в кульминационном пункте), у него белого не показано. Когда я указывал ему на это, то он обычно говорил, что здесь надо очень сильный свет, а при усилении света все цвета приближаются к белому – утверждение, не опирающееся на научный фундамент. Ibid., 245.

⁴⁴¹ For instance, the fact that Scriabin's piano pieces more often than not open with symmetrical periods.

⁴⁴² Это не есть только изложение мыслей и доктрин самого Скрябина, хотя в ней можно найти подробное изложение всех этих доктрин. Она выражает мое личное отношение к его мыслям и творчеству. Ibid., viii.

idea of the *Mysterium* was intuitively comprehensible, since all of them shared the “contemporary mystical consciousness.”⁴⁴³ In his discussion of Scriabin's alleged Satanism – which likely was perceived as his most egregious transgression by the Scriabin Society – Sabaneyev suggested that such a disposition of mind was partly caused by the mystical *Zeitgeist* around the world, referring to “contemporary literature, filled with sorcery and black magic.”⁴⁴⁴ At the same time, however, he did not miss the chance to assert Scriabin's uniqueness in musical matters: the composer was isolated and “mostly alien to the masses of musicians, who either could not catch up with his evolution, or fundamentally differed with him in their basic creative principles.”⁴⁴⁵

Finally, Sabaneyev produced his grandest historical generalization in order to explain Scriabin's harmony. In the chapter “Creation of Harmony” he set out, first, to detail the principles of harmonic structure, studying them analytically; second, to demonstrate the organic nature and strict logic of these principles; and third, to ground their development historically.⁴⁴⁶ Sabaneyev claimed that the development of Scriabin's harmony recapitulated centuries of development of Western harmony⁴⁴⁷: a transparent allusion to Ernst Haeckel's maxim “ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny” (the theory that an embryo's development parallels the entire evolution of its species), which, although defunct today as a valid scientific theory, was considered advanced at the time.

In the nineteenth century, Haeckel's articles appeared in Russian translations twice, and both times in the scientific periodical *Nature*,⁴⁴⁸ published from 1873 to 1877 by Sabaneyev's father, the famous zoologist Leonid Pavlovich Sabaneyev, as a spin-off from another project of his, the *Journal of Hunting*. Sabaneyev senior's article also appeared in this journal.

To explicate this idea, Sabaneyev junior resorted to another major positivist name of the time – Hermann von Helmholtz. Characteristic of contemporary music scholarship, the critic did not explicitly refer to Helmholtz and his *On the Sensations of Tone*, despite drawing heavily on his ideas. Building on Helmholtz's assertion that the higher an interval is positioned in the overtone series, the less consonant it sounds, Sabaneyev constructed his own teleological version of the development of consonances:

⁴⁴³ Идея Мистерии, как мистическая доктрина, как чаяние Последнего великого чуда и Единения с Творцом – органически вытекает из современного мистического сознания. ... И я лично знаю слишком многих, которым идея Мистерии даже в точно скрябинском изложении – была родна и интуитивно прозреваема. *Ibid.*, 63.

⁴⁴⁴ Несомненно, что его сатанизм был взращен на первых порах настроениями той эпохи, в которую он жил. В это время волна мистических настроений прокатилась по всему миру, найдя свое первое отражение в литературе, наводненной магией и чернокнижием. *Ibid.*, 72.

⁴⁴⁵ Скрябин ... был поставлен как бы вне эпохи, вне современной жизни и оттого в большей части случаев чужд массе музыкантов, которые или не успели угнаться за его эволюцией или принципиально расходились с ним в основных творческих принципах. *Ibid.*, 256.

⁴⁴⁶ Я выделяю в особую главу план скрябинского гармониетворчества, желая более детально выяснить принципы его строения, исследуя это строение аналитически; -- с другой стороны доказать, – что в этом случае возможно, – строгую органичность этих принципов, их стройную закономерность, которая в них проявляется, несмотря на их сложность и необычайность по сравнению со всем предыдущим в музыкальном искусстве; ... обосновать, наконец, исторически это развитие. *Ibid.*, 142.

⁴⁴⁷ [Р]азвитие, по которому шел Скрябин в своем гармониетворчестве, в сущности являет собою тот же процесс, как и вся предыдущая картина эволютивного хода гармонии в музыкальной истории. *Ibid.*

⁴⁴⁸ *Priroda. Populyarniy estestvenno-nauchnyy sbornik*, [Nature. Popular natural-scientific collection], ed. Leonid Pavlovich Sabaneyev, 5 vols. (Moscow: Tipografiya Gotye, 1873-1877).

Their development was going according to ... the gradual addition of the more and more remote partials of the overtone series. In the beginning, only the intervals of fifth and octave seemed 'stable' to people, and formed consonances. The ear has not yet learned to listen to the fifth partial – a third in the overtone series – and interval seemed to give an impression so sharp and bright that it was considered dissonant by the ancients.”⁴⁴⁹ Then, gradually fourths and thirds became perceived as consonances. However, “equal temperament closed the evolutionary development of “timbral” harmony, since the next pitch that must have been recognized [as a consonance] in the row of partials – the seventh pitch (B) or a natural seventh did not fit the equally tempered scale anymore.”⁴⁵⁰

According to Sabaneyev, it was Scriabin's harmony that unlocked the natural evolution of consonance once again: his “ultrachromatic” harmonies (that is, treating more intervals of the overtone series as consonant) were capable of bringing about the collapse of equal temperament and propelling music to cast off the centuries-old yoke of equal temperament.⁴⁵¹

In addition, Sabaneyev argued that Scriabin's music was in line with the musical *Zeitgeist* since Wagner, since Scriabin's innovations lay primarily in the sphere of harmony.⁴⁵² At this point Sabaneyev's “scientific” argument grew progressively less rational, since he focused on “psychological motives” of composers' interest in harmony. In his view, contemporary composers were drawn to harmonic innovation because harmony was the most magically potent musical device and thus was most appropriate to embody the prevalent contemporary (i.e. mystical) view of art.⁴⁵³

Another long pseudo-scientific argument ensued in which Sabaneyev stipulated that complex physical vibrations, constituting harmony and timbre, were the musical component with the strongest effect on human psyche and physique. Therefore, the more complex a harmony or a timbre was, the stronger the psycho-physiological response they were bound to elicit, to the extent of causing trance, i.e. the emission of an astral body.⁴⁵⁴ Sabaneyev thus attempted to

⁴⁴⁹ Их развитие шло в порядке ... постепенного привнесения все более и более удаленных призвуков натурального ряда. На первых порах*) только интервал квинты и октавы, т.к. два первых призвука натурального звукоряда казались человеку "устойчивыми", образовали консонансы. 5-го звука — терции в натуральном ряде ухо еще не научилось слушать и этот интервал казался уже настолько резким и ярким по впечатлению, что его причисляли к диссонансам (у древних). Sabaneyev, *Scriabin*, 150-152.

⁴⁵⁰ Но ... температура закрыла эволютивный ход «тембровой» гармонии, ибо следующий звук, который долженствовал быть осознанным в ряду натуральных призвуков — седьмой звук (B) или натуральная септима, уже не помещался в темперированном звукоряде. Ibid.

⁴⁵¹ Основная черта гармонического материала, с которым оперирует Скрябин — это их «ультрахроматическая природа». Гармонии эти, как я покажу в следующей главе, принципиально ультрахроматичны, и вызывая к разрушению рамок нашей температуры, влекут музыку к новой эре — к эре раскрепощения от вековых рамок темперированного строя. Ibid., 152.

⁴⁵² Следуя предпочтительно гармонической стезе — Скрябин отчасти следовал, (возможно, что бессознательно) общему стихийному устремлению всей музыкальной сферы, определившемуся начиная с эпохи Вагнера. Ibid., 144

⁴⁵³ Возможно, что действительно гармония обнаруживает наиболее могущественную психологическую или вернее психофизическую реакцию. Ibid.

⁴⁵⁴ Наиболее непосредственно, прямее и скорее всего именно она «магически» действует. В комплексе одновременных звучаний, в сложном психологическом впечатлении, которое обусловлено физическим причудливым колебанием — кроется самая мощная магия. Гармонии, как комплексы звуков, дифференцируемые нашим ухом на отдельные составляющие, и тембры, как комплексы, которые настолько слитны, что ухо наше не может их дифференцировать на звуковые отдельные и воспринимает как целый

explain what he saw as a magical effect by scientific means, but again, only up to a point. Later he conceded that further analysis of Scriabin's harmony became “more and more burdensome and meaningless, since one could not encompass Scriabin's free creativity, and that “it was hard to fit [it] into a theoretical framework.”⁴⁵⁵ Ineffability prevailed.

Esoteric ideas

Sabaneyev spent an equal, if not larger, portion of his book on ideas that could not have been considered scholarly even in the 1910s. The most prominent of these was the astral plane (or “the astral,” used as a noun), which proved indispensable for Sabaneyev's discussion of ineffability. If the greatness and power of a work of art was measured by the force of its repercussions in the astral plane, then the most valuable aspect of art was its ineffable essence, which had to be intuitively read between the lines, and of which any embodiment would be only an approximation.⁴⁵⁶ He gave one of the more detailed definitions of the astral body of art in the chapter “Synthesis of Arts,” since in his view all art was synthetic on the astral plane. “In addition to what was embodied by the artist,” Sabaneyev wrote, “every vital work of art has another, astral image, disembodied, but nevertheless vividly palpable for those who are able to feel art at all.”⁴⁵⁷ The astral body of art, for him,

is more significant, and its offshoots, extending from it to all possible areas of art are the deeper and longer, the deeper the work of art itself is, the more it was born from intuitive meta-conscious plane. ... The receiving, passive creator [i.e. listener] of art recreates this unrevealed image of the work's astral aspect the more vividly, the more creative energy he possesses, and the more sensitive he is. ... This astral resonance of a work of art is a truly synthetic image.⁴⁵⁸

физический образ – это преимущественно «активная часть» музыки, активная в воздействии на психику. Огромное впечатление гармоний и тембров всем известно. Чем сложнее комплекс звуков, чем сложнее тембр или гармония, при условии конечно их органичности – тем мощнее впечатление. Тембр большой трубы органа может потрясти, вызвать слезы, тембр там-тама или большого гонга иногда сразу вызывает транс, т.е. выделение астрального тела. Даже вне искусства взятые, эти явления служат магическим целям как огромные психофизиологические реактивы. В этой непосредственности магического воздействия, к которому сознательно или бессознательно стремится все современное искусства – заключается то преимущественное внимание, которое оказывается современной музыкой – гармонии. Ibid., 144-145.

⁴⁵⁵ Его гармонии удивительно мягки, легки, ясны и стройны при всей их изысканности, тем не менее звуковой анализ их, подобный сделанному мною анализу его основной гармонии, делается все более и более затруднительным да и бесполезным, ибо этого мира свободного создания звуковых комплексов нельзя обнять и трудно ввести его в теоретическое русло. Ibid., 162.

⁴⁵⁶ Нужно ли наконец, реальное воплощение всех тех художественных призраков, которые составляют то, что я наименовал астралом творения? ... не самое ли ценное в искусстве всяком именно его «невоплощенная» сущность; та, что интуитивно читается между строк, слышится между звуков? Величие и сила произведения измеряются размерами его астрала, совокупностью того невоплощенного синтетического призрака, который мы ощущаем, воспринимая явление искусства. Всякая реализация этой мечты парализует ее, огрубляет, делает слишком вещественной. Ibid., 108-109.

⁴⁵⁷ Кроме своего чисто физического образа, кроме того, что художником воплощено ... всякое жизненное произведение искусства имеет еще какой-то иной *астральный* образ, невоплощенный, но тем не менее ярко чувственный для тех, кому вообще дано чувствовать искусство. Ibid., 93.

⁴⁵⁸ Это астральное тело произведения искусства тем значительнее и простирающиеся из него отроги ко всевозможным областям искусства прочих тем глубже и длиннее, чем самое произведение глубже, чем более

If the greatness and power of a work of art are measured by the force of the work's repercussions in the astral plane, then the most valuable aspect of art is its ineffable essence, of which any embodiment would be only an approximation.⁴⁵⁹ Sabaneyev's description of astral offshoots matched the well-known paintings of musical auras, or "thought-forms" from one of the cornerstones of theosophic literature – *Thought-Forms* by Annie Besant and C.W. Leadbeater, published in 1901.⁴⁶⁰ The last chapter, "Forms Built by Music," contained depictions of colorful shapes spiking up from buildings in which music by Gounod, Mendelssohn and Wagner was being performed. The notion of the astral plane was popularized in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century by Theosophy and neo-Rosicrucianism, which also had some presence in Russia at the time.⁴⁶¹ Sabaneyev's understanding of the astral plane as an intermediary, and therefore somewhat lowly, space in the hierarchy of planes of existence between Earth and Heaven was very close to the traditional theosophic interpretation. Sabaneyev went to great lengths to distinguish between the astral plane and actual holiness. His infamous discussion of Scriabin's diabolical inclinations was grounded in his conviction that Scriabin's mistake was "to confuse the shimmering light of the astral with the sun of Revelation."⁴⁶² In a variation on what by 1916 had already become an archetype in music criticism – the ubiquitous heroic theme of Beethoven — Sabaneyev claimed that the art of Beethoven, who sacrificed the artistic component of his music in the name of holiness (albeit still limited, primitive holiness), was able to become sacred and rise above the astral plane,⁴⁶³ while Scriabin's sensual art fell short of holiness.⁴⁶⁴

Unabashedly mystical sentiment was a hallmark of Sabaneyev's style. Sometimes he expressed it directly, as when he ventured an explanation of Scriabin's sudden demise as the Heavens' answer to his challenge: "'Death or *Mysterium*' said he ... One can joke about these things neither here, nor There. A challenge was thrown to the forces that rule the world. ... The challenge was accepted and the Heavens answered: 'Death.'"⁴⁶⁵ In other cases, Sabaneyev allowed for a mystical point of view, but made it clear that he did not endorse it. He

оно рождено интуитивными сверхсознательными планами, чтением в тайнах вдохновенных сфер ... Воспринимающий, пассивный творец искусства воссоздает этот неявленный образ астрала творения тем ярче, чем более у него творческой энергии, чем более он чуток. ... Этот астральный резонанс художественного творения есть подлинный синтетический образ. Ibid., 93-94.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid., 108-109.

⁴⁶⁰ Annie Besant and C. W. Leadbeater, *Thought-Forms* (London, Chicago, New York: Theosophical Publishing Society; Theosophical Book Concern; John Lane, 1905), 75-84.

⁴⁶¹ See Konstantin Burmistrov, "Kabbalah and secret societies in Russia," in *Kabbalah and Modernity: Interpretations, Transformations, Adaptations*

ed. Marco Pasi, Boaz Huss, and Kocku von Stuckrad, *Aries book series* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2010), 79-105.

⁴⁶² Он ... просыпался ... пока только в астральный план призраков и галлюцинаторных образов, среди которых были священные, но огромное большинство которых было диаволического содержания. И мерцающий свет астрала подсознания он принимал за солнце Озарения. Sabaneyev, *Scriabin*, 75.

⁴⁶³ Чтобы быть – не путем, а одним из могучих средств пути, искусство должно очиститься от «скверны», от всего связующего его с низинами, оно должно стать святым, каким оно бывало в примитивной, правда, стадии, у Бетховена, оно должно стать молитвою, оно должно быть принесено в жертву. Ibid., 76-77.

⁴⁶⁴ И в том чрезмерном внимании, которое он оказывал чувственному, крылась мистическая ошибка. Великое чудо для своего свершения вовсе не требует такого арсенала чувственных средств. Ibid., 107.

⁴⁶⁵ «Смерть или Мистерия» говорил он – бросая вызов той интуиции, которая открывала ему его мессианство. С такими вещами не шутят ни тут, ни Там. Здесь был сделан вызов тем силам, которые управляют миром, сделан был жест Прометея, похищающего священный огонь для человечества. Вызов был принят и Небо ответило «Смерть». Ibid., 65.

distinguished between various “mystiques” as only a person well-versed in the subject could do. For instance, musing whether Scriabin indeed failed to bring to life his plan for the *Mysterium*, Sabaneyev surmised that realization of the *Mysterium* might have happened for Scriabin in the afterlife, immediately adding the caveat that this idea did not reflect his own conviction, nor was this kind of mystique identical to the one that Scriabin professed.⁴⁶⁶

Such oscillation between standpoints showed that Sabaneyev was of two minds about mystical matters (as befitted a member of a scientific dynasty). From this we can infer that when he reminisced about the hypnotic effect that Scriabin's irrational faith had on people of reason, he was making a confession about himself:

In some people being entranced by Scriabin's will caused counter-forces that passionately resisted, mustering all their powers of logic and coherent scientific thinking, in an attempt to match them against the subduing power of his illogical persuasion. I know many of these confirmed “infidels,” who told me that when Scriabin passed away, they caught themselves having a strange sensation of losing some kind of hope. Not musical hope but exactly the hope of the Act to which he aspired. Somewhere deep down they still harbored seeds of faith in the realization of the *Mysterium*.⁴⁶⁷

The doublespeak might have been caused by the fact that Sabaneyev was quite close to Scriabin until his death, and may have had reservations about admitting his “infidelity” to the cause of the *Mysterium* so soon afterward. Be that as it may, I argue that Sabaneyev's uneasy mix of a mystic's desire to surrender wholeheartedly to the allure of the intuitive, and a scientist's habit of keeping distance and a cool head, was exemplary of the battle of mystique and reason in the Russian 1910s.

The last thing that remains to be investigated in the configuration of Sabaneyev's ideas is the connection between the contemporary mystical (and not particularly Russian) notion of the astral plane, and the old religious idea of *sobornost'* – spiritual unity – the significance of which for Russian intellectual history and popular beliefs cannot be overestimated. Notably through the writings of the religious philosopher Nikolai Berdyaev, by 1916 the idea of *sobornost'* pervaded Russian literature and philosophy. This notion featured so prominently in the work of such writers as Dostoevsky, Solovyov, Ivanov, and Berdyaev that it became foundational for what came to be called the “Russian Idea.”⁴⁶⁸ Sabaneyev mentioned *sobornost'* when discussing

⁴⁶⁶ Есть ли этот факт доказательство и того, что вообще Мистерия – есть мечта, что она неосуществима. С мистической точки зрения конечно нет, тем более, что для мистика и самые границы существования земного не имеют такого значения, и я не без умысла сказал, что Скрябин переоценил свою «земную личность». С мистической точки зрения только незначительная часть нашей личности присутствует с нами в плане нашего воплощения. ... Мистерия могла наступить для него за гробом, и он мог быть в ней великим действующим лицом, не присутствуя на физическом плане. Я говорю это не как убеждение свое, а как мистическую возможность, хотя и оговариваюсь, что точка зрения этой мистики совсем не совпадает со Скрябинской точкой зрения и до известной степени ей противопоставляется. Ibid., 65-66.

⁴⁶⁷ В иных это гипнотическое воздействие, это заворожение их Скрябинской волей вызывало контр силы, которые страстно боролись, призывая к помощи все силы логики и научного, последовательного мышления, желая противопоставить их покоряющей силе его внелогического убеждения. Я знаю многих из этих вполне «неверных», которые мне говорили, что когда скончался Скрябин, то они поймали себя на странном чувстве разрушения каких-то надежд. Не музыкальных, а именно надежд того Акта, к которому стремился он. Где-то в глубине души их гнездились зародыши веры в великую Мистерию. Ibid., 50-51.

⁴⁶⁸ Don Louis Wetzel, "Alexander Scriabin in Russian musicology and its background in Russian intellectual

performances of Scriabin's music. As he put it,

Unwittingly charged by the creative currents emanating from the performer, the passive mass of listeners themselves start creating and... recreating the astral body of the composition. In this reciprocity of two categories of participants – active (performers) and passive (listeners) ... lies the kernel of a true, *soborniy* creative act.⁴⁶⁹

Sabaneyev's visceral and deeply moving accounts of Scriabin's performances spoke about psychic resonance, elation of understanding, powerful psychic currents and witnessing the birth of magic.⁴⁷⁰ If resistance to Scriabin's irrational persuasion was the reaction of a man of reason, the idea of *sobornost'* was definitely evoked by man of feeling, utterly smitten by the sound of Scriabin's piano.

It is not unexpected that Sabaneyev would evoke a spiritual ideal (*sobornost'*) while trying to comprehend a deeply spiritual experience that was of the utmost importance to him. Nor is it unusual that these emotionally charged passages make use of Sabaneyev's favorite irrationalist term (the astral). Nor should we be surprised to find an old Russian nationalistic idea in the context of modern theosophic terminology, despite the fact that our European-oriented critic did not often mention things Russian. The idea of *sobornost'* in new guises was still commonly used in Sabaneyev's time (for instance, by his adversary Vyacheslav Ivanov). Nor is it alien to the discussion of Scriabin's work: his *Mysterium* is primarily based on the ideal of *sobornost'*, albeit a hierarchical variant, in which the composer planned to arrange participants into groups of different rank.

Remarkable, however, is the modification that Sabaneyev made to the “Russian Idea.” The path to achieving true *sobornost'* (and by extension, Russianness) now lay through education and refinement. True *sobornost'* could only be achieved among the cultivated few. Sabaneyev claimed that only those who heard Scriabin play in private for the intimate, “small, esoteric group of ... kindred spirits” could truly appreciate the real heights of his performance.⁴⁷¹ The crowd in large concert halls, on the contrary, destroyed *sobornost'* by its alien psychic currents that did not resonate with the performance and caused interference.⁴⁷² It is true that such aggressive appropriation of Russianness by the cultivated few reflected Sabaneyev's elitism in general. Striking, however, is what was being appropriated – the nation-building ideal of wholeness and collective soul.

Like the connection of intuition and skill, discussed above, Sabaneyev's causal relationship between refinement and *sobornost'*, when compared to the debates of the previous century, betrayed his modern outlook. According to Stasov, who espoused the prevalent

history" (Ph.D., University of Southern California, 2009), 111.

⁴⁶⁹ Незаметно для себя пронизанная исходящими из исполнителя творческими потоками, пассивная масса слушателей начинает сама творить и воссоздавать астральное тело произведения. В этом взаимодействии двух категорий участников активной (исполнителей) и (пассивной) слушателей и кроется зерно подлинного, соборного художественного акта.. Sabaneyev, *Scriabin*, 190.

⁴⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 192.

⁴⁷¹ Это – изысканная музыка для небольшой, эзотерической группы посвященных, родственных композитору по духу и устремлению. ... Не количеством, а качеством аудитории должны побеждать такие изысканные и огромные художники. *Ibid.*, 191.

⁴⁷² Толпа имеет свои собственные токи, которые не резонируют на исполнение, которые интерферируя, уничтожаются или вызывают случайные явления. *Ibid.*

nationalist ideas of the last third of the nineteenth century, excessive education created an obstacle between an individual and their inborn intuition, which stemmed from one's national roots. According to Sabaneyev, to participate in the birth of the Russian “collective soul,” one had to be educated and acquire refined sensibilities.

Scriabin's philosophical diaries

Contemporary opinions differed as to exactly how much in Scriabin’s philosophical schemes could be traced back to theosophical doctrine. Sources published both before and after the revolution of 1917 claimed that it was only Scriabin’s friends who wanted to attach a theosophic label to him, and that in reality Scriabin was a mystic or idealist philosopher. The philosopher Ivan Lapshin wrote in his analysis of Scriabin’s notebooks that Scriabin was “very far from all the theosophical nonsense to which some of his friends wanted to connect his work”; he called Scriabin a “mystic idealist” and traced his philosophy back to German Idealism – Schlegel, Schelling, Schopenhauer, Fichte, Hartmann and Nietzsche, all at once.⁴⁷³ However, according to Leonid Sabaneyev, Scriabin did study Blavatsky’s writings extensively and her *La Doctrine secrète* “was something like his bed-side book.”⁴⁷⁴ Again, in Sabaneyev’s view, Scriabin took from theosophy only what reinforced the ideas he already had.

Scriabin’s thoughts on the matter of cognition can be found in his notes, published in 1919 in the sixth volume of *Russian Propylaea*,⁴⁷⁵ the collections of materials for literary history edited in 1915-1919 by the literary historian and philosopher Mikhail Gershenzon (1869-1925). Gershenzon was connected to musical circles through his wife, the pianist Maria Goldenweiser, who was Alexander Goldenweiser's sister. The published portion of Scriabin's diaries spans a period of seven years, between 1900 and 1906 (if we exclude an individual sheet dating back to around 1888). According to Sabaneyev, 1899-1900 was the time when Scriabin underwent a profound intellectual change and started developing ideas that later would form the core of his doctrine; it was the time of realization that the composer should embark on his own “Orphic path.” The style of Scriabin's prose, exuberant and repetitive, provided numerous expressions for the same set of ideas, or, rather, a central idea spawning several offshoots.

Scriabin formulated his central idea quite succinctly in the following maxim: “Reality is given to us only in the sphere of our own perceptions and psychic states, and we cannot claim any reality other than this.”⁴⁷⁶ Therefore, since “I perceive the world as a succession of states of my own mind, beyond which I can never go,”⁴⁷⁷ “the issue of studying the universe becomes the issue of studying the nature of one’s mental activity.”⁴⁷⁸ The notion of experience thus became paramount to Scriabin: “To comprehend means to become one with the object of knowledge, it ...

⁴⁷³ See: Dmitry Shilkin, *Iskusstvo i mistika: druzyam Skryabina* [Art and Mysticism: To Scriabin's Friends] (Petrograd: Tipografiya zheleznodorozhnikh izdaniy, 1916); Ivan Lapshin, *Zavetnye dumy Skryabina* [Scriabin's Cherished Thoughts] (Petrograd: Misl', 1922).

⁴⁷⁴ “Doctrinе secrete” была у него вроде настольной книги. Sabaneyev, *Scriabin*, 38.

⁴⁷⁵ *Russkiye Propilei: Materiali po istorii russkoy misli i literatury* [Russian Propylaea: materials on the history of Russian thought and literature], ed. Mikhail Gershenzon, vol. 6 (Moscow Izdaniye M. and S. Sabashnikovikh, 1919), 120-247.

⁴⁷⁶ Действительность нам дана непосредственно только в сфере наших ощущений, психических состояний, и никакой другой действительности мы утверждать не можем. Выражение «мы познаем все» через призму нашего сознания» -- не верно, ибо ничего кроме моего сознания нет и не может быть. Ibid., 159.

⁴⁷⁷ Я познаю мир, как ряд состояний моего сознания, из сферы которого не могу выйти. Ibid., 176.

⁴⁷⁸ Вопрос изучения вселенной сводится к вопросу об изучении природы деятельности сознания. Ibid., 177.

means to experience.”⁴⁷⁹ The idea that our consciousness is the limit of our knowledge, rendering rational modes of cognition inadequate, harked back to *The System of Transcendental Idealism* (1800) by German idealist philosopher Friedrich Schelling (1775-1854), whose output was a crucial influence on Russian intellectual history since the time of the Slavophiles. This idea persisted in Schelling’s later writings as well.

Another resemblance of Scriabin’s thought to Schelling’s was the high value placed on the cognitive function of art and creativity above anything else. For Scriabin, creativity could not be “explained by anything. It is the highest idea (notion), because it begets all notions.”⁴⁸⁰ He maintained that, “If the world is my creative work, then the question of *comprehending* the world comes down to the question of comprehending the nature of free creativity,”⁴⁸¹ and “the study of the nature of free creativity [is] the study of ourselves, self-observation.”⁴⁸²

Like any idealist, Scriabin held nature and especially history in low esteem, compared to the free play of creativity:

My world, my life, my dream, my blossom! I create your every moment, only to negate it in the next one. I create you, negating everything and thus affirming everything, and you exist only in my making, in my dream. ... O world that lived in the minds of my ancestors, I negate you, the whole past of the universe, science, religion and art, and thus let you live.⁴⁸³

Schelling, although far from equating the universe with creative work, had given art a similar pride of place in *The System of Transcendental Idealism*.⁴⁸⁴ For him, art was the only way to grasp the Absolute, because it was not solely dependent on the conscious functioning of the human mind. As Andrew Bowie puts it,

The production of [a work of art] at the level of technique is under the conscious control of the artist; the result, though, is not, because the motivation for that production, the ‘drive’, is unconscious. ... Schelling sees this relationship of nature and mind, unconscious and conscious, as the one place in which the ‘Absolute’ ... manifests

⁴⁷⁹ Познать значит отождествиться с познаваемым, значит пережить. *Ibid.*, 159.

⁴⁸⁰ Творчество не может быть объяснено ничем. Оно есть высшее представление (понятие), ибо оно производит все понятия. *Ibid.*, 136.

⁴⁸¹ Если мир мое творчество, то вопрос о познании мира сводится к вопросу о познании природы свободного творчества. *Ibid.*, 133-134.

⁴⁸² Итак приступим к изучению природы свободного творчества, т.е. другими словами к изучению самого себя, к самонаблюдению, к исследованию материала нами производимого. *Ibid.*, 137.

⁴⁸³ Мой мир, моя жизнь, моя мечта, мой расцвет! Я создаю каждое твое мгновение, чтобы отрицать его в следующее. Я создаю тебя, все отрицая, и тем все утверждая, и существуешь ты только в моем созидании, в моей мечте. ... Мир, живший в представлении моих предков, я тебя отрицаю. Я отрицаю тебя, все прошлое вселенной, науку, религию и искусство, и тем даю вам жить. *Russkiye Propilei*, 6, 152.

⁴⁸⁴ “If aesthetic intuition is merely transcendental intuition become objective, it is self-evident that art is at once the only true and eternal organ and document of philosophy, which ever and again continues to speak to us of what philosophy cannot depict in external form. ... Art is paramount to the philosopher, precisely because it opens to him, as it were, the holy of holies, where burns in eternal and original unity, as if in a single flame, that which in nature and history is rent asunder.” Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, *System of Transcendental Idealism* trans. Peter Lauchlan Heath (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1978), 231.

itself.⁴⁸⁵

Scriabin's concept of universal consciousness, in turn, rehearsed another core idea of Schelling's philosophy – that of the “world soul,” or *Weltseele*.⁴⁸⁶ At the same time it rang true to the core theosophical notion of the intuitive and direct knowledge of the world. Multiple individual consciousnesses, Scriabin wrote,

differ only in their content, but as the carriers of this content they are absolutely identical, they are beyond space and time. It is clear that [there are] no multiple consciousnesses, but [there is] a single consciousness, i.e. consciousness in general, which experiences a multitude of states not only vertically (in time) but also horizontally (in space). We would not be surprised in the least by a state of affairs in which a single consciousness would experience *first* one state and *then* another. It is much more mysterious to us that the same consciousness should experience Ivan *here* and Pyotr *there*. On the one hand, time seems deeper and harder to comprehend; on the other hand space, as an obvious form of plurality, is more perplexing. Thus, the expression ‘individual consciousness’ is factitious. There exists one consciousness, while individual consciousness is its nickname, by virtue of the content it experiences at a given time in a given place.⁴⁸⁷

What logically followed from the idea that there is only one true consciousness was that individual personalities were only illusions. They were merely clothes that people wore, and only came into existence when they identified with their lower, bodily existence. “Some philosophers confuse individuality with spirit,” Scriabin maintained.

Studying *individuality*, i.e. for instance, the ability to act in this or that way in certain circumstances, they think that they are studying the abilities of souls that are *essentially* different. They forget that individuality is a *relationship* to other individualities; it is the color, the manifestation of a single spirit in the form of time and space. The essence of spirit, will, life is one and the same for everybody and everything.⁴⁸⁸

⁴⁸⁵ Andrew Bowie, *Schelling and Modern European Philosophy: An Introduction* (London ; New York: Routledge, 1993), 52.

⁴⁸⁶ Miklós Vassányi, *Anima mundi: The Rise of the World Soul Theory in Modern German Philosophy* (Dordrecht ; New York Springer, 2011), 396.

⁴⁸⁷ [Множество индивидуальных сознаний] отличаются только своим содержанием, как носители же этого содержания они совершенно тождественны, они вне пространства и времени. Ясно, что дело идет не о множественности сознаний, а об одном и том же сознании, т.е. вообще о сознании, переживающем множество состояний вертикально (во времени) и горизонтально (в пространстве). Нас несколько бы не удивило такое положение вещей, при котором одно и то же сознание переживало сначала одно, потом другое. Гораздо более для нас таинственно, что одно и то же сознание переживает здесь Ивана, а подальше Петра. С одной стороны время как будто глубже и труднее доступно пониманию, а с другой пространство, как очевидная форма множественности, более сбивает с толку. Итак выражение «индивидуальное сознание» условно. Существует одно сознание, индивидуальное же сознание есть его кличка по тому содержанию, которое оно в данный момент и в данном месте переживает. *Russkiye Propilei*, 6, 167.

⁴⁸⁸ Не нужно забывать, что человек носит свою индивидуальность, как и тело (одежда). Некоторые философы смешивают индивидуальность с духом. Изучая индивидуальность, т.е. напр. способность поступать так или иначе при известных обстоятельствах, они думают, что изучают способности душ,

Scriabin complemented his apparent inheritance from a Schellingian conceptual apparatus by the use of Fichte's terminology. In passages not directly pertaining to his theory of cognition and therefore not considered here, Scriabin also drew on Fichte's notions of I and Not-I. Arguably, Sabaneyev might have been a more studied theosophist than Scriabin (relying so heavily on the theosophic concept of the astral plane), while in Scriabin's writings a fair amount of German Idealism persisted in the mix.

In his book, Sabaneyev endorsed two of the idealistic conceptions of cognition found in Scriabin's diaries, about which he must have learned either from reading the manuscript of the diaries or, more likely, from personal conversations with the composer. Like the composer himself, he believed that Scriabin's art represented not only a magical element, but also “the path of true, active cognition.”⁴⁸⁹ This agreed perfectly with Sabaneyev's own idea of intuition, because it was through art that Scriabin intuitively fathomed everything on which he later built his philosophical doctrine, and which only *ex post facto* “miraculously matched the occult doctrines of Eastern mystics.”⁴⁹⁰ Furthermore, Sabaneyev spelled out what Scriabin implied in his passages on creativity: “art follows the same laws as the creation of the universe.”⁴⁹¹ Second, Sabaneyev's idea of “living through” a performance seemed to be suggested by the important role that Scriabin assigned to experience. When a composer performed his own works, Sabaneyev maintained, he was “always ultimately subjective, and thus the performance became one with the performer's experience ... he invested all his essence in the performance ... and always produced either an authentic experience of artistic ecstasy, or just poor performance, if intuition failed him. *Tertium non datur.*”⁴⁹²

It is unclear to what extent Scriabin's actual views might have been familiar to the nine authors of the Proceedings. In the preface to his publication of Scriabin's diaries, Gershenzon confided that “only the few people closest to Scriabin were privy to the workings of his philosophic thought when he was alive.”⁴⁹³ However, upon close examination, many of the objections to Sabaneyev's methods do appear to match Scriabin's ideas on cognition. Sabaneyev's opponents did not argue at all with his analytical evidence, as if mundane methods were beneath them. In noble indignation, many of them voiced the conviction that those who had ears would hear everything in Scriabin's music by themselves. Instead, they called into question

которые различны по своей сущности. Они забывают, что индивидуальность есть отношение к другим индивидуальностям; она есть краска, явление одного и того же духа в форме времени и пространства. Сущность духа, воли, жизни у всех и у всего безусловно одна и та же, ибо различное всегда есть явление, тогда как дух есть безусловно нечто вне времени и пространства. *Ibid.*, 173.

⁴⁸⁹ И так – для него искусство – не только магическая заклинательная стихия, применимая к теургическим заветам, но подлинный, действенный путь познания. Sabaneyev, *Scriabin*, 41.

⁴⁹⁰ Он любил говорить, что чрез искусство он научился почти всему, что чрез искусство он познал интуитивно большую часть того, что он воплотил после в стройную систему своей философской доктрины, и что чудесным образом совпало с оккультными учениями восточных мистиков. *Ibid.*, 41-42.

⁴⁹¹ [О]н осознал, что искусство есть творчество следующее тем же законам, как и творчество вселенной и этим путем научился от искусства тайне откровения. *Ibid.*, 68-69.

⁴⁹² В интерпретации [исполнитель-автор] всегда субъективен до крайности, его исполнение отождествляется с его переживанием; никогда он не может играть одной техникой, а играет или всем существом - и тогда для него исполнение – акт священнодейственный; или же, при отсутствии настроения, он играет просто неудачно. Никогда не может и не хочет он создавать иллюзию переживания, а всегда дает или подлинный акт художественного экстаза - или же - дурное исполнение, без подъема. *Tertium non datur.* *Ibid.*, 178.

⁴⁹³ Но при его жизни только немногим ближайшим людям была до некоторой степени известна работа его философской мысли. *Russkiye Propilei*, 6, 97.

Sabaneyev's intuitive relationship with the object of his study and his personal integrity. The charge that Sabaneyev was a latent Satanist and thus in his writings worked out the problems of his own psyche was especially revealing. Scriabin's coterie readily implicated Sabaneyev in Scriabin's cognitive methodology, that is, to know the world by way of knowing one's own mind. In their eyes, Sabaneyev's mind was inept, uninitiated and unworthy of his God-like subject. This would suggest either that Scriabin indeed communicated his ideas on universal consciousness directly to at least some of his friends, or that the common sources of these ideas were known to all of them. The latter is as plausible as the former: we know that Sergey Trubetskoy (Varvara and Marina's brother) was well versed in German Idealism,⁴⁹⁴ and Sabaneyev was as familiar with theosophical doctrine as was Scriabin himself. At least two of the members of the Scriabin Society, Vyacheslav Ivanov and Boris de Schloezer, were well-known writers and had plenty of opportunities to broadcast these ideas to a large audience of professional musicians and music lovers.

Furthermore, the bitter irony of recapitulating Sabaneyev's main points, intuition and ineffability, seemed to be lost on his opponents. Presumably, the rebuttal had less to do with Sabaneyev's methodology (empiricist or not) than with the hurt feelings of those who formed the Scriabin circle. All of them idolized Scriabin as a new messiah, but none of them, except Tatyana and Boris de Schloezer, was as close to the composer as was Scriabin's "confidant"⁴⁹⁵ Sabaneyev, of whom they were probably jealous. When only a year after the composer's death his trusted friend came up with scathing criticisms of Scriabin as a dilettante, a failed symphonist, and worst of all a Satanist, they could not help but be deeply insulted. Personal outrage, however, was not much of a basis from which to discredit Sabaneyev's opinions publicly. None in the circle had the expertise that would allow them to engage with his actual arguments critically. Therefore, his actual argument did not matter. Instead, they went after Sabaneyev's credibility, portraying him as a dry, rational empiricist whose well-written, pithy, solid, thorough, well-informed and industrious study was devoid of any real knowledge, which could only be obtained by way of intuition.

Above all, they expected this attack to succeed, assuming that their accusations of rationality and lack of intuition would be received as valid and serious criticisms. In this, they followed the conventional wisdom of Russian avant-garde circles at the time. Andrey Bely's memoir spelled out this conventional wisdom as it concerned music theory, and by extension, any rationalist inquiry:

A couple of acerbic, dry theorists of music, thoroughly: N.Y. Bryusova and the ironically reserved and taciturn Yavorsky. Agile as a lizard, the talkative sister of the poet, with a small nose, a huge forehead, resembling a bulwark ... suggested – scientifically: why don't we retune our tunings into out-of-tunings? Why don't we have our rows within tone rows? Maybe – we should listen to chords through Chinese ears? (Why not elephant ears then? Large ears!) Brilliant brain-storming! The silent Yavorsky ... outgrew even Bryusova in his intellect, but uninspired was this skull ... For years Bryusova carried a "whole-tone" scale in her pocket, so she could take it out, like a tape measure, to measure in centimeters – Bach, Beethoven, following her brother's principles – 'To measure and to quantify!' ... Bryusova's eyes sparkled like agates, but then her little brain machine

⁴⁹⁴ See: Trubetskoy, "Osnovaniya idealizma."

⁴⁹⁵ Morrison, "Skryabin and the Impossible," 288.

worked without a hitch – ‘tick-tock, tick-tock.’ So, where is the melos? Melos – is just a row of numbers, the common denominator.⁴⁹⁶

The same clunky nonsensical alliterations that Bely used to describe Sabaneyev, he used again to describe the other two theorists at work: small, fast, absurd and insignificant. Bely observed music theorists as he might observe insects – chaotic, pointless, inhuman and anxiety-inducing. The contributors to the Scriabin Society proceedings certainly had such attitudes in mind when they countered Sabaneyev's perceived rationalism.

The perfectly articulated and well-organized opposition of the Scriabin Society to Sabaneyev's book indicated that in 1916 Scriabin's admirers endorsed a distinctively irrational epistemology of music. Although in the 1910s such views on cognition were at odds with the positivist scholarly mainstream, they reached their heyday in the decade immediately preceding musicology's institutionalization. Irrational theories of cognition and their value for conceptualizing music were favored by many and proved a formidable opponent for the new materialist-minded, institution-based Soviet scholarship.

⁴⁹⁶ [П]ара едких, сухих теоретиков музыки, дерзких насквозь: Н. Я. Брюсова и с иронической задержью молча сидевший Яворский. Как ящерка верткая, словоохотливая сестрица поэта, с малюсеньким носиком, с лбиною, напоминающей мне крепостной бастион, ... предлагала — научно: не переладить ли все лады — в нелады? Не построить ли нам неуряд — в звукоряде? А может, — ушами китайцев нам слушать созвучия? (А — почему не слоновьими? Большие уши!)... Блестящая головология! ... Молчаливый Яворский .. умом перерос даже Брюсову он, ... безвдохновительна была все ж молчаливая эта «адамова голова»; и живей была Брюсова; годы носила в кармане она «целотонную» гамму, чтоб, вынув ее, как завернутый клубиком метр, измерять сантиметрами — Баха, Бетховена, следуя принципам братца: — «Измерить и взвесить!»..... Брюсовой глаза — агаты блистающие; но зато — головной аппаратик работал без промахов: «тики-так, тики-так» — громко, отчетливо; ну, а: где мелос? Он — выкладка цифр, наименьшее кратное. Bely, *Mezhdv dvukh revolyutsiy*, 238-239.

Chapter 5. Of Friendship and Formalism: Musicologists and Soviet Power in the 1920s

Asafyev & Sons

On July 18, 1922, “over a cup of tea among friends, celebrating the end of the academic year” a letter was penned and addressed to Boris Asafyev. Although it was signed by twelve students⁴⁹⁷ and used the plural first person pronoun, the authorship of Alexey Finagin, one of Asafyev’s pupils, is beyond doubt (although some collaboration cannot be ruled out).⁴⁹⁸ In this letter, Finagin and the rest of the students expressed gratitude to Asafyev, who brought true music scholarship to life, and who put an end to the epoch of dilettantes in the study of music, writers such as Prince Odоеvsky, Stasov, Serov, Laroche, Sokalsky, Razumovsky and Taneyev. Even though each of these people made writing on music their life-long occupation and more than deserved to be considered professionals, Finagin relegated them to the status of amateurs because they used their own methods. For Finagin, scholarship could not develop without a general direction, common research methods and an infrastructure for passing on these methods to the next generation – in short, a research “school.”⁴⁹⁹ For Finagin, Asafyev was the unifying figure, who consolidated these scattered individual methods and thus created a truly scholarly method:

In you, Boris Vladimirovich, we, the young scholars, hail the man who categorically broke with dilettantism in the study of music; a scholar who gave us his own, new, revitalizing method and approaches; finally, a person who managed to attract the younger generation, and thus laid the foundation for his own “school.” ... [We ask] your permission for those among us who have already begun independent work, following the trail you blazed, to be considered the first propagandists of the new historical-philosophical school in music scholarship, founded by you.⁵⁰⁰

⁴⁹⁷ Including Roman Gruber, Semyon Ginzburg and Mikhail Druskin

⁴⁹⁸ It was written in Finagin’s distinct handwriting, was characteristic of his style, and its points were rehearsed in 1925 in his survey of the Department’s work, published as: Finagin, "Obzor deyatelnosti R.I.T.M.," 100-116.

⁴⁹⁹ Наука о музыке зарождается на наших глазах. В периоде диллетантизма, начатого просвещенным любителем кн. Одоевским, в ряде критических попыток Стасова, Серова, Лароша, отдельных подходов Сокальского, Разумовского, Танеева, наука о музыке только мыслилась, но не претворилась еще в действительность. Ибо, всякая наука живет методов и развивается "школой"; и если в указанных предварительных этапах попытки научного метода были, то все они не шли дальше личных приемов изучения музыкального материала и такая индивидуализация работы не могла конечно вылиться в определенное научное направление-школу. Пришло, однако, время собрать, наконец, воедино эти личные приемы, объективно проверить их и выявить ту простую истину, что история и теория музыки есть наука и что философия музыки есть отдел общей философии духа, подкрепив эти истины созданием научного метода изучения и образованием "школы" определенного направления. TsGALI: F. 82, op. 1, ye. kh. 122, l. 59-59v.

⁵⁰⁰ В Вашем лице, Борис Владимирович, мы, молодые научные сотрудники и приветствуем человека, категорически порвавшего с диллетантизмом в изучении музыки, ученого, давшего свой, новый, животворный метод подхода и способы работы, наконец, личность, сумевшую привлечь к себе молодых, т.е. положившую основы собственной "школы". ... Но большее откровение, большую радость мы все получили в истекшем году в непосредственном общении с Вами, в постоянных совместных беседах, в бесчисленных советах и Ваших указаниях нам, наконец, в личных Ваших иллюстрациях, как нового жизненного подхода к муз. произведениям, так и проводимого Вами научного метода обработки исторических данных о музыке. За все это меня и просили мои товарищи по работе Вас благодарить, с просьбой разрешить тем из нас, кто уже ровно приступил к самостоятельной разработке намеченного Вами пути считаться первыми пропагандистами новой историко-философской школы в науке о музыке, основоположником которой являлись Вы. TsGALI: F. 82, op. 1, ye. kh. 122, l. 59v-60.

The letter's author(s) hailed the fulfillment of the long-awaited ideal and celebrated the birth of true music scholarship with youthful ardor and sincerity. Although the young scholars perceived it as a new beginning, this ideal was entirely pre-revolutionary: it was continuous with the positivist conviction that scientific rigor in humanistic disciplines was of the utmost importance. The nineteenth-century marriage of science and social progress also stands out conspicuously in this letter.

The “scientific basis” of social reforms was a rhetorical staple for the young Soviet government as well. However, archival records provide no indication whatsoever that a positivistic orientation was specifically rewarded or fostered by the government at the institution where Asafyev and Finagin worked – the Russian Institute of Art History in St. Petersburg. Furthermore, there is no indication of official interventions of any kind in the early 1920s. The newly formed Music Department, led by Asafyev, was free to pursue the decades-old positivist ideal made eternally young by its association with the idea of progress, and spurred by the real changes occurring in society. Under these conditions, the Institute flourished.

This chapter investigates interactions between individual agency and official directives in early Soviet musicology. As a case study, I examine the inner workings of the first musicological research institution in Russia – the Music Department of the Russian Institute of Art History, whose work would have immense significance for the development of Soviet musicology. I will concentrate on the three focal points in the Institute's history, which corresponded to stages of its structural reorganization and the stages of increasing control:⁵⁰¹

- its reorganization into a research institute (according to the statute of September 7, 1921) from an institution of higher education.
 - the establishment of the Sociological Section, and later Sociological Committee (1925) prompted by the decrees to celebrate Lenin's life and work after his death in 1924, and
 - the conflict between Boris Asafyev and the Department in 1927-1928, which resulted in the complete restructuring of the Department in January 1928, the same month that a new statute was passed, as well as in the severing of all communications between Asafyev and Finagin.
- The story of the early brilliance and the untimely demise of the Music Department at the Russian Institute of Art History is mirrored (and well documented) by the story of friendship between Boris Asafyev, who was the Chair of the Department during its heyday in the 1920s, and his protégé, musicologist Alexey Finagin.

While only a few years older than most of his students (Asafyev was born in 1884, Finagin – in 1890), Asafyev was revered as a trailblazer in his role as founder of music scholarship in Russia. Finagin finished his formal studies at the Institute under Asafyev in 1922 and in the same year became a Secretary to the Music Department. His important administrative position, as well as friendship between him and the Chair, led to copious correspondence between the two men. The 72 letters from Asafyev to Finagin, preserved at the Manuscript Section of the Russian Institute of Art History, date from March 29, 1921 to June 6, 1928.⁵⁰² Asafyev's early letters to Finagin are filled with everyday concerns — requests to run errands or

⁵⁰¹ After each reform the Music Department was rechristened. It is hard to find English analogues for all four versions of the Department's name – Faculty of Music History (1919), Razryad of Music History (1921), Otdel of History and Theory of Music (1925) and MUZO (same as in MUZO of Narkompros), or Muzikal'niy Otdel (1928) – since all of them meant roughly the same thing, “Department”. To avoid confusion, I refer to this institution as the “Music Department” throughout the 1920s, despite the fact that the different names are useful in keeping track of the stages of ideological changes at the Institute.

⁵⁰² RIII: F. 68, op.1, ye. kh. 78, 89 ll.

to chair sessions in his place — showing that they communicated on a daily basis. Gradually, the conversations got more profound, as Asafyev trusted Finagin enough to confide his creative insights, as well as to complain about his perennial ailments, mental exhaustion and depression, as a letter from December 17, 1922 vividly illustrates.⁵⁰³

Their close friendship and professional relationship over the course of the next few years, essential for the development of music research at the Institute, remained strong through all but the last of the Institute's reorganizations. Its rupture bore witness to the fact that larger-than-life historical shifts wreak havoc not only in societal, but also in private life, as ideological disagreements grow into personal ones.

A blessing in disguise: how a higher education reform helped found Soviet musicology

The Russian Institute of Art History was founded in 1912 by Count Valentin Platonovich Zubov, a European-educated art historian who remained its director until 1924 and emigrated to Western Europe in 1925. Zubov's Institute, housed in his family mansion at St. Isaac's Square, was modeled after the German Institute of Art History in Florence, and initially consisted of just a research library and courses in art history open to the general public. Music history was taught at the Institute as early as 1916 and the Faculty of Music History was founded in 1919; the musicologist and literary scholar Sergey Bulich was its first Dean. In 1920, following Bulich's death, Boris Asafyev, one of the founding fathers of Russian musicology and a man of flexible convictions, was unanimously elected Dean.

The biggest transformation of the early 1920s was a change in the Institute's status from a school of higher education to a research institution. Practically, this meant drastically reducing the ever-growing body of students and auditors at the Institute, leaving only the most talented and dedicated, as well as raising the standards for passing the entrance examinations. Both changes were eventually implemented. In 1921 the former students received a new designation – research fellows.

No official decrees survive that would indicate that this directive came from above. In official reports the change was always referred to in a neutral tone, and no ulterior motives (political or otherwise) were mentioned. The Institute's director Count Zubov wrote in his memoirs (the reliability of which is however questionable, since they were written years after the events they describe, when Zubov was an émigré) that it was not until the early 1920s that he managed to revamp the Institute into a research institution, even though he had “envisioned” such an institution “from the very beginning.”⁵⁰⁴ Minutes of a departmental meeting from

⁵⁰³ Although Asafyev's biographers hinted that he might have been a hypochondriac, and thus his symptoms might have been of psychosomatic origins – a hypothesis that seems likely in light of his correspondence – his depression was undoubtedly real. He wrote: “But please understand for God's sake that my physical ailment is closely intertwined with the psychological and that if I cannot make any abrupt movement, nor play the piano a lot, nor utter a sentence loudly without feeling shortness of breath, palpitation and headache – then this is a fact, and not pretense or theatrics. (Но поймите же, господа, что мое физическое недомогание тесно связано с душевным и что если я не могу сделать ни одного резкого движения, ни сильно и много играть, ни произнести громкой фразы без того, чтобы не задохнуться, не почувствовать, как затрепеталось сердце и как возникла боль в голове, – то ведь это же факт, а не ломанье и не кривлянье.) Крюков, *Materiali k biografii B. Asafyeva*, 101.

⁵⁰⁴ Теперь удалось придать Институту тот характер, который мне представлялся при его создании и который на первых порах в силу вещей осуществить было нельзя. Было установлено, что он в первую очередь учреждение научно-исследовательское ... а не высшее учебное заведение, «вуз». Главной его целью стали индивидуальные и коллективные труды его членов, читаемые и обсуждаемые в заседаниях отделений и печатаемые в присоединенном к Институту издательстве «Академия». Valentin Platonovich Zubov and Tamara

February 20, 1922, claimed that the reform was carried out because its time was ripe, that it only “realized the scholarly needs of the Department,” and that even before the reform the Council decided to establish several research committees.⁵⁰⁵

Yet the timing of the reform and its somewhat hurried implementation suggest that there was an ulterior motive for the reorganization. As Ksenia Kumpan points out, the first academic institutions to experience momentous changes in staff and curricula were universities, since the government was concerned about the potential for the “wrong sort” of ideological conditioning among the younger generation. Class background and party affiliation became definitive criteria for hiring and firing (accepting and expelling) professors and students. The mechanisms for exerting centralized control over fundamental sciences, however, had not yet been developed.⁵⁰⁶ It was impossible to replace highly trained researchers immediately. Therefore, for several years the government opted for political reeducation of the old guard, rather than its purge. For the time being, the priority objective was preserving science, even if many of the qualified scientists were “bourgeois.” Besides, science had a head start, due to the old coupling of scientific and revolutionary discourse – it was already revolutionary by definition.

Institutions of higher education, however, were transformed in one blow on March 4, 1921, when Narkompros passed a “Provision on administration of higher education institutions.” It laid down a completely new system of administration, in which all higher education came under the jurisdiction of the Main Committee for Professional Education (Glavprofobr), a branch of Narkompros. The new system eliminated academic autonomy, as the key positions ceased to be elective, and members of directorial board would be appointed by Glavprofobr, which also had authority to assign a political commissar to the board. New curricula had to be developed according to the tasks set by Narkompros, and were subject to approval; Narkompros had the authority to implement state-wide plans and curricula. The provision officially reached the Institute on March 28, 1921.

The cherry on top was a document, signed personally by Lenin and sent as a circular to all universities on Lenin’s birthday – April 22, 1921. It was a decree that introduced the infamous “general scientific minimum”: a mandatory basic course in the social and natural sciences intended for all institutions of higher education.⁵⁰⁷ The social sciences included:

Dzhakesheva Ismagulova, *Stradnie godi Rossii: Vospominaniya o revolyutsii (1917-1925)* [Russia's Harvest Time: Reminiscences of the Revolution (1917-1925)] (Moscow: Indrik, 2004), 103.

⁵⁰⁵ The minutes was probably also taken by Finagin, as he noted the date and number in the upper left corner of the typescript and added that the original was with V.N.Rakint, the Institute’s academic secretary. Журн[ал] №2 от 20 февр[аля] 1922. ... Но к этому времени созрела и реформа Ин[ститу]та из Высш[его] Учеб[ного] Заведения в чисто научное со специальными исследовательскими задачами. Следует сказать, что Музыкальный Ф[акультет] не был этой реформой застигнут врасплох: Плодотворность учебных занятий по Русскому Отделу, довольно высокая академическая подготовленность большинства слушателей его, удачно подобранный по специальностям состав профессуры привели Совет Факультета к мысли, еще до реформы И-та, о необходимости открыть при Ф[акультете] ряд Ученых Комитетов. Реальным результатом этой тенденции явилось примечание в утвержденном ныне Уставе И[нститу]та, коим с момента утверждения Устава учреждался и Комитет по изучению Русской музыки. Таким образом, реформа И[нститу]та для Ф[акультета] Истории Музыки явилась только осуществлением научных потребностей Разряда. TsGALI: F. 82, op. 1, ye. kh. 122, l. 25.

⁵⁰⁶ Since the positivist enterprise of studying art strove to position itself among sciences, music and art history as practiced in the Institute fell under the category of fundamental science as well.

⁵⁰⁷ See: Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Cultural Front: Power and Culture in Revolutionary Russia*, Studies in Soviet history and society (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1992), 47-48.

Development of forms of society
 Historical materialism
 Proletarian revolution (its historical prerequisites, including imperialism, its forms and history in the context of the nineteenth-twentieth century history in general and the workers' movement in particular)
 Political order of RSFSR
 Organization of production and distribution in RSFSR
 Plan of electrification of RSFSR (its economic foundations, economic geography of Russia, significance and conditions of the plan's realization)⁵⁰⁸

This meant that the Institute, which was an institution of higher education, had to introduce all these subjects into its curriculum, along with classes on physics, chemistry and biology. The prospects were not rosy at all.

The timing of the Institute's reorganization in September 1921, therefore, was more than convenient. Glavprofobr's decree was the first directive from the authorities to be mentioned in the journals of meetings of the Music Department. The journal of the Department Council meeting dated April 21, 1921 mentioned two issues on the agenda, right next to each other:

- b) The new provision on Higher Education Institutions circulated by Glavprofobr.
- c) the fact that in view of the possible reorganization of the Institute into a research institution, it was advisable to form necessary research committees at the Department.⁵⁰⁹

Although Lenin's decree on the "general scientific minimum" was circulated only on April 22, while the Faculty Council meeting took place the day before, it is not unlikely the Institute's officials already knew about it, since communications from Narkompros reached the Institute's administration through more than official channels alone. In a 1921 letter to Finagin that possibly had to do with Glavprofobr's decree, Asafyev wrote that:

At the Board meeting V.P. Zubov officially announced that ... it was confirmed from Moscow that we should strictly adhere to the decree forbidding new elections and balloting for professorial positions until further notice.⁵¹⁰

⁵⁰⁸ а) По общественным наукам: 1) Развитие общественных форм (1 триместр по 4 часа); 2) Исторический материализм (1 триместр по 3 часа); 3) Пролетарская революция (исторические предпосылки переворота, включая империализм, его формы и история в связи с историей 19-20 века вообще и рабочего движения в частности. 2 триместра по 3 часа); 4) Политический строй РСФСР (1 триместр по 2 часа); 5) Организация производства и распределения в РСФСР (1 триместр по 3 часа); 6) План электрификации РСФСР (его экономические основы, экономическая география России, значение и условия осуществления плана, 2 триместра по 2 часа). Примечание: Настоящий минимум по общественным наукам читается во всех отделениях всех высших школ, кроме факультетов Общественных Наук, на которых входящие в минимум предметы читаются в расширенном объеме.

б) По естественным наукам: 1) Физика и космическая физика (включая геофизику, 2 триместра по 2 часа); 2) Химия (1 триместр по 2 часа); 3) Биология (2 триместра по 2 часа) TsGALI: F. 82, op. 1, ye. kh. 89, l. 11.

⁵⁰⁹ Журнал заседания Совета Факультета Истории Музыки 21-го Апреля 1921 г. №19

б) Принято к сведению разосланное Главпрофобром новое положение о Высших Учебных Заведениях
 в) В виду возможного преобразования Института в Ученое учреждение признано желательным образовать при факультете необходимые ученые комитеты. TsGALI: F. 82, op.1, ye. kh. 60, l. 54

⁵¹⁰ По делу Браудо. В понедельник 7-го на засед. правления В.П.Зубов официально сообщил о том, что за

Be that as it may, the Glavprofobr decree alone would have been enough to set the wheels in motion. The decree on higher education was not mentioned again in the journals of the Music Faculty's meetings. Instead, the Council meeting on May 19, 1921 approved and forwarded to the Board a lengthy memo written by Asafyev, in which he explained why establishing a music research institution in Russia was long overdue. The typescript of the memo adds another piece of evidence confirming that the higher education decree precipitated the reform that was long in the making: it shows that Asafyev used a preexisting text. Originally, Asafyev had in mind a project of an entire independent "Institute of History and Theory of Music."⁵¹¹ These words were crossed out and "Faculty of Music History of the Russian Institute of Art History" was written above. Furthermore, the word "Faculty" was substituted for the word "Institute" elsewhere. Otherwise, the text remained unchanged, except that two more sections on the new research committees and curriculum were added.

Asafyev's "Explanatory Memorandum" was not unlike Guido Adler's "The Scope, Method, and Aim of Musicology" in that it legitimized the need for music scholarship and spelled out the principles on which the new discipline of musicology was to be founded.

1) First, the proposed musicological institution should not follow the conservatory model. The conservatory was the only institutional context in which the study of music existed in Russia at the time, and Asafyev found it deeply unsatisfactory: theory of music was taught as an ossified set of rules and there were no qualified specialists in music history and aesthetics. The new institution would follow a university model, and, like European musicological departments, pursue "exclusively the goal of scholarly study of the art of music" and training new generations of scholars.⁵¹²

2) Compared to European musicology, Russia was backward, and this had to be rectified. As role models Asafyev cited old English and Italian universities, where "the tradition of teaching the science of music goes back to the Middle Ages."⁵¹³

3) The 1920s vogue for Baroque music and the nascent early music revival movement, which gave pride of place to historical study of music, was another important argument proving the relevance of scholarship to performance. Asafyev pointed out that the interest in early music was on the rise in St. Petersburg in 1921: "performances of music by Bach and old Italian masters

минувший срок со дня бывшей конференции ему было подтверждено из Москвы требование строго придерживаться декрета запрещающего новые выборы и баллотировку на звание и должность профессоров впредь до новых распоряжений по сему вопросу. [1921 г] РИИ: F. 68, оп.1, ye. kh. 78, l. 2, letter no. 2.

⁵¹¹ Kryukov, "Razryad istorii muziki Rossiyskogo instituta istorii iskusstv " 195.

⁵¹² Предлагаемый проект Института Истории и Теории Музыки [сверху карандашом: Фак. Ист. Муз. Р.И.И.И.] стремится к осуществлению типа учебного заведения, преследующего цели исключительно научного исследования музыкального искусства и подготовку деятелей музыкальной науки. ... В высших музыкальных учебных заведениях кафедры истории музыки и эстетики до самого недавнего времени замещались лицами, не имевшими никакой специальной подготовки, а в области преподавания теории консерватории ограничивались раз навсегда установленным типом, оставаясь совершенно чуждыми всяким новым движениям в данном вопросе и историческому рассмотрению проблем музыкального письма. TsGALI: F. 82, op. 3, ye. kh. 1, l. 1-1v.

⁵¹³ Россия является едва ли не самой отсталой из европейских культурных стран. На западе почти во всех больших университетах Германии, Англии, Франции, Бельгии, Италии имеются постоянные кафедры ко музыкальной науке (нередко несколько кафедр в одном университете по различным отраслям музыковедения), и традиция преподавания музыкальной науки восходит в Англии и Италии к эпохе средневековья. TsGALI: F. 82, op. 3, ye. kh. 1, l. 1

were an exceptional artistic success.”⁵¹⁴ However, if Renaissance painting and sculpture could be perceived immediately by the modern viewer, Asafyev maintained, Renaissance music had to undergo minute reconstruction by highly trained specialists before it could be performed and heard.⁵¹⁵

4) Finally, Asafyev went for a surefire strategy – appealing to the greatness of the Russian national heritage. He pointed out that treasures of Russian culture such as folk songs, music by Glinka, Rimsky-Korsakov and Musorgsky, as well as nationalized private music collections, remain unstudied.⁵¹⁶

These arguments were probably intended for those at Narkompros as much as for members of the Institute, since the reform had to be sanctioned from above, and Count Zubov hardly needed convincing of the necessity of humanistic scholarship. On September 7, 1921, the new statute was passed, officially making the Music Department, now Razryad, the first musicological research institution in Russia, as its counterpart in Moscow – the State Institute of Music Scholarship (GIMN), – was officially opened only later, on November 1, 1921.⁵¹⁷ With this reorganization, Zubov bought for the Institute six years of relative freedom. The Music Department did much during these six years.

The fat years

The stunning five-year progress from a practically nonexistent discipline of Russian musicology to the establishment of a robust scholarly paradigm, resulting in a flood of versatile publications, is highlighted in Finagin’s “Survey of the work of the Music Department during the five years of its existence,”⁵¹⁸ which he presented on February 23, 1925 at a jubilee meeting of the Department.

Before the Department was created, Finagin wrote, Russian musicology existed within

⁵¹⁴ Интерес же к музыке прежних эпох растет с каждым днем. Достаточно вспомнить какой исключительный художественный успех имеют концерты из произведений Баха, старо-итальянских мастеров. TsGALI: F. 82, op. 3, ye. kh. 1, l. 1v.

⁵¹⁵ Ибо ни в одной из областей искусства теоретическое исследование не связано столько тесно с художественным воспроизведением, как в музыке. Если, например, живопись или скульптура великих мастеров эпохи Возрождения воспринимаются современным зрителем непосредственно во всей полноте их художественного обаяния, то произведения гениальных музыкантов того времени требуют самой тщательной обработки для того, чтобы обрести свою звуковую жизнь. Интерес же к музыке прежних эпох растет с каждым днем. Достаточно вспомнить какой исключительный художественный успех имеют концерты из произведений Баха, старо-итальянских мастеров. TsGALI: F. 82, op. 3, ye. kh. 1, l. 1v

⁵¹⁶ Но не есть ли разительный пример нашей научной отсталости, что Россия с ее сокровищницей народных песен до сих пор не располагает рядом научных работ по исследованию песнетворчества и сравнительному изучению песенных типов народов ее населяющих. Не менее ответственную задачу с точки зрения научного исследования представляет собой и разбор нотных библиотек и музыкальных инструментов из обширных дворцовых и частных коллекций, а так же придворного ведомства, сделавшегося ныне достоянием народным. Музыкальная наука находится у нас в зачаточном состоянии. Россия до сих пор не располагает научными исследованиями, освещающими историю русского музыкального искусства; такие мастера как Глинка, Римский-Корсаков, Мусоргский даже не нашли своих биографов, и не было сделано даже попытки подвергнуть музыкально научному исследованию богатейшие образцы русского музыкального творчества. TsGALI: F. 82, op. 3, ye. kh. 1, l. 1v

⁵¹⁷ Mikhail Vladimirovich Ivanov-Boretsky, *Pyat' let nauchnoy raboti Gosudarstvennogo Instituta muzikal'noy nauki [GIMN'a]* [Five Years of Scholarly Work of the State Institute of Music Scholarship [GIMN]] (Moscow: Muzikal'niy sector Gosudarstvennogo izdatel'stva, 1926), 4.

⁵¹⁸ TsGALI: F. 82, op. 3, ye. kh. 9, ll. 38-57. The “Survey” was also immediately published in the yearly publication of the Department *De musica*: Finagin, “Obzor deyatel'nosti R.I.T.M.,” 100-116.

the narrow confines of music criticism and technical composition training, since the idea that the study of music could be qualitatively different and independent from creative work was still a novelty. Finagin also rehearsed his points from the 1922 letter to Asafyev, where he mentioned the lack of common methodology and absence of “school.” He added that prior to the 1920s there was only one truly scholarly theory, the one developed by Yavorsky. Understandably, in a report awash with revolutionary enthusiasm, which celebrated the achievements of his Department, Finagin did not give proper credit to the pre-revolutionary positivist voices which had been calling for the scientific discipline of musicology for several decades, and to which the Department’s activities were indebted. However, he was not wrong about the scattered nature of these attempts.

By 1925 the Department had become an “ideologically soldered group of musicologists” with a “crystallized” paradigm.⁵¹⁹ First, they adhered to a dynamistic worldview, built on Asafyev’s theory of intonation, which held that music should be studied only in its development, not as a static phenomenon. Second, they followed Asafyev’s understanding of music-historical process. What mattered to them was not the personality of a composer, but his surroundings, dubbed “musical *bit*” – the music-social environment, which developed according to its own laws.

The topics, on which members of the Department were working by 1925, included (but were not limited to) chant studies, paleography, historical approach to the study of Russian folk songs, Russian music of the eighteenth century, the history of piano music in Russia, methodology of music scholarship, psychology of musical creativity, music phenomenology, theories of music criticism, “psychophysics of sounding matter,” the application of dialectical materialism to musicology, the natural-scientific foundations of music (including studies in physics, acoustics, and mathematics of music), substantiation of 24-tone (or quarter-tone) temperament, etc. The projects of the Department included (but were not limited to) compiling a comprehensive catalogue of Russian folk songs, establishing an acoustical laboratory, a project on corrections and additions to Riemann’s dictionary, publication of a series of translations of contemporary Western European musicology (including works by Schering, Becker, Kretschmar, and Combarieu), and establishing personal and scholarly contacts with Western scholars.

The impressive level of scholarly rigor was documented in a lengthy program of entrance examinations dated 1926. In order to be accepted as a researcher at the institute, a person who did not graduate from a university or from the Institute’s courses was required to read 80 prescribed books and articles (almost 30 of them by Western authors, most of them cutting-edge) on 17 topics including the theory and sociology of art, methodology of music history, the history of music theory, music acoustics, psychophysiology of music perception, and comprehensive music analysis.⁵²⁰ Upon working one’s way through this bibliography, one would possess a comprehensive and up-to-date knowledge of the field.

Furthermore, the long-sought application of methods of natural sciences to music finally came to fruition in the Institute’s studies. Scholars like Sergey Kleshchov, Arseniy Avraamov and Yevgeniy Sholpo were proficient in and brought to the study of music prestigious scientific

⁵¹⁹ Finagin, "Obzor deyatel'nosti R.I.T.M.," 106.

⁵²⁰ 3 декабря 1926. Программа испытаний для экстернов и кандидатов в научные сотрудники 2 разряда, утвержденная в соединенном заседании Совета ОТИМ и предметной комиссии МУЗО Госкурсов. TsGALI: F. 82, op.3, ye. kh. 12, l. 54.

theories of the day (such as Pavlovian physiology) and technological expertise. Positivist convictions among scholars less educated in real science also did not fade away. If anything, they gained momentum.

In his talk "From mystical idealism to scientific realism," read at a meeting on April 26, 1926, Finagin traced the three stages of Prince Odоеvsky's convictions – idealist, skeptic, and scientific – mapping them metaphorically onto the development of the ideology of the Music Department. He also suggested that Odоеvsky's maxim "True science is always materialistic" should become the slogan of the Music Department.⁵²¹ In the words of P. Grachyov, who served as the secretary for the discussion that day, "The speaker does not differentiate between value sciences [i.e. humanistic scholarship – O.P.] and physical sciences; for him, art is in no way different from chemistry."⁵²² A lively conversation ensued, in which everybody voiced an opinion on whether or to what extent musicology was a science. Roman Gruber disagreed with Finagin only about the extent of musicology's status as a science, but not about its identity as such. He claimed that humanities and hard sciences were distinct, but equal, insofar as the historical method of study would turn the material of humanities into the material of exact science, and thus its role would not be subservient to such exact disciplines as acoustics, physiology of hearing, or paleography.⁵²³ Georgiy Rimsky-Korsakov (the composer's grandson) referred to Pavlov, who studied feelings and impressions, and disagreed with the speaker, deeming it impossible to study art without studying its perception.⁵²⁴ Sergey Dianin, who would later be remembered primarily as a Borodin scholar, doubted the claim that artistic evolution inevitably went through three stages, and also called into question the slogan about materialism of science, suggesting instead that agnosticism was the correct standpoint.⁵²⁵ Replying to all these objections, Finagin specified what he meant by science:

⁵²¹ Протокол соединенного заседания Исторической и Теоретической Секции ОТИМ ГИИИ 26 апреля 1926 г. Присутствовали: А.В.Финагин, С.А.Дианин, В.А.Прокофьев, Р.И.Грубер, Г.М.Римский-Корсаков, Е.А.Шолпо, И.В.Грачев. Предмет занятий: доклад д.чл.А.В.Финагина: "От мистического идеализма к научному реализму". Докладчик прослеживает эволюцию идеологических воззрений кн. В.Ф.Одоевского. Первый этап этой эволюции находит себе выражение в "Опыте построения единой теории изящных искусств с особенным применением к музыке" (1825); это - период "любомудрия", когда Одоевский находится под влиянием немецкой идеалистической философии. Второй период, озаглавленный "Русскими ночами" 1844 (С.Бах, Последний квартет Бетховена, Импровизатор), окрашен скептицизмом. Третий, последний период - научный, приведший Одоевского к работам по истории и теории музыки. По мнению А.В.Финагина его доклад является материалом для дискуссии. В эволюции Одоевского докладчик видит параллель к работе Отдела Истории и Теории Музыки ИИИ, лозунгом которой должен отныне служить афоризм Одоевского: "Истинная наука всегда материалистична". TsGALI: F. 82, op. 3, ye. kh. 9, l. 93.

⁵²² Докладчик не отделяет науки физических от наук ценностных, искусство для него ничем не отличается от химии и т.д. Ibid.

⁵²³ Затем Р.И.Грубер говорит о докладе, как о материале для дискуссии. "Бродильный фон" и точные науки равноправны. Фон будет переходить путем исторического изучения материала в точную науку, роль его не будет подчиненной акустике, физиологии (слуха), палеографии: разница между докладчиком и оппонентом в акцентуации. Ibid.

⁵²⁴ Г.М.Римский-Корсаков возражает докладчику, ссылаясь на проф. Павлова, который исключает чувства и впечатления, но все же ими занимается. Нельзя отмежевываться от психофизиологии. В искусстве нельзя отрешиться от изучения впечатлений. Ibid.

⁵²⁵ С.А.Дианин спрашивает, что значит: истинная наука материалистична. Правильная позиция - агностицизм. Ведь могут получиться самые неприятные результаты от "материалистического" изучения. ... Далее С.А.Дианин не согласен с положением докладчика о неизбежных трех фазах эволюции. TsGALI: F. 82, op. 3, ye. kh. 9, l. 93v.

Demands, which the speaker places on sciences, are the following: specific material – precise concepts. In this sense, science is documentary history, while interpretative history – philosophy of history – belongs to the science of values – philosophy.⁵²⁶

While agreeing on principal tenets (such as that music scholarship should aspire to be a science), musicologists at the Institute in 1926 were far from promoting a single slogan like “True science is always materialistic” or “True science is always Marxist,” but were eager to discuss the nuances of individual methodological standpoints.

Asafyev’s idealism

Equally important is the fact that the early and mid-1920s were the time when Asafyev developed central tenets of his intonation theory,⁵²⁷ which were most thoroughly explicated in his seminal work *Musical Form as a Process*.⁵²⁸ This theory (which was heavily indebted to Yavorsky’s work – certainly more heavily than Asafyev himself cared to acknowledge) proved to have immense significance for Russian musicology. I would go as far as to say that this theory, which originated in the idiosyncratic intellectual climate of the 1920s and was later promoted by Soviet musicologists as one of the cornerstones of “materialist musicology,” although it was anything but that, was one of the main reasons for the profound misunderstanding between Russian and Western scholars in the twentieth century. Too much in Russian musicology was built on this site-specific theory.

Clarity of thought was not one of Asafyev’s strengths, even in his mature period. His concepts were multifaceted and combined many contradictory ideas, which, arguably, allowed for the extraordinary pliability of his professional standpoints. Positivist jargon (such as his term “sounding matter”) coexisted in his thought with outright rejection of positivism. In 1918, in an article “Paths into the future,” for instance, he wrote:

[R]ational positivism [viewed] the entire cosmos, all its immensity, from the point of view of human intellect and its logic; ... it built an entire universe according to the same principles, according to which [its] machines ... were fabricated. ... Nobody believed that... energy, produced by creativity, is nourished by the very impulse of life and thus comes in touch with the source, which moves the entire universe...⁵²⁹

⁵²⁶ Требования, предъявляемые докладчиком к науке, следующие: конкретный материал - точные понятия. Наукой в этом смысле будет документальная история; обобщающая же история - философия истории - относится к науке о ценностях - философии. Ibid.

⁵²⁷ In the beginning of 1925 Asafyev wrote two studies “Substantiation of Russian musical intonation” and “Speech intonation” that would only be published much later – in 1930 and 1965. See: Boris Vladimirovich Asafyev, “Osnovi muzikal’noy intonatsii” [Foundations of musical intonation] in *Muzikal'naya forma kak protsess* (Leningrad: Muzika, 1971), 195-210; Boris Vladimirovich Asafyev, *Rechevaya intonatsiya* [Speech Intonation] (Moscow, Leningrad: Muzika, 1965).

See also: Yelena Mikhailovna Orlova, “Issledovaniye Asafyeva 'Muzikal'naya forma kak protsess',” in *Muzikal'naya forma kak protsess* (Leningrad: Muzika, 1971), 3-20.

⁵²⁸ Boris Vladimirovich Asafyev, *Muzikal'naya forma kak protsess* [Musical Form as a Process], 2 ed. (Leningrad: Muzika, 1971).

⁵²⁹ Так, в музыкальном искусстве встретились два характернейших течений прошлого века: индивидуализация (полное раскрепощение) личности и рассудочный позитивизм, стремившийся весь космос, всю его необъятность рассматривать с точки зрения человеческого рассудка и его логики; проверивший жизнь законами своего мышления и строивший все бытие по тем же принципам, по каким

On the next page Asafyev espoused views utterly incompatible with materialism, which were nevertheless crucial to his understanding of musical form, and which he continued to hold throughout his career, so that they became a significant part of his legacy:

Form is that which arises when the artist overcomes lifeless matter (in a more profound sense: inert matter) by the high intensity of his creative thought. ... Emitting the energy of our soul in [the form of] words and musical sounds we materialize [this energy], rather than animate the matter.⁵³⁰

Thus he was convinced that the barrier separating spirit and matter was permeable. His worldview owed so much to energism and dynamism from the turn of the century that it was only logical that he would find a kindred spirit in Ernst Kurth, who maintained that melody was “‘kinetic energy,’ a quintessential embodiment of psychic energy.”⁵³¹ Asafyev discovered Kurth’s work in the summer of 1924 and was deeply influenced by it. This did not, however, prevent him from criticizing Kurth for idealism and formalism as early as 1931, when his own fortune turned for the worse, following attacks by the RAPM (Russian Association of Proletarian Musicians).

Asafyev held the idea of intuitive knowledge (which for him was also objective) in high esteem:

The organic worldview, which, on the one hand, rejects the theory of mechanical construction of the whole out of the multitude of independent elements, and derives all phenomena from the unity of the Universe, in which nothing, not a single atom is conceived as a separate and independent element, and which on the other hand infinitely broadens our qualitative, intuitive perception of the world (i.e. holistic, rather than accumulated by way of cerebral addition of scattered data of sensory experience) – has led to the affirmation of the feasibility of objective knowledge of what had been formerly considered the mere illusion of a thinking subject. ... Therefore, much of what has been

фабриковались подчиненные ему машины. Интеллект и присущий ему метод построений в пространстве (геометризм) проникли в искусства. Создалось своеобразное понимание формы, как начала самодовлеющего, подчинять коему творческую мысль требовалось беспрекословно. С другой стороны, интеллект влек искусство в сторону тяготения к извне данным импульсам: быт, религиозный фетишизм (не религиозное творчество), политическое угодничество. Не возникало мысли, что искусство есть организм, инстинктивно находящий себе пищу и не нуждающийся в искусственном питании; что энергия, развиваемая творчеством, питается самым жизненным порывом и потому соприкасается с тем началом, что движет всей вселенной... Igor Glebov, "Puti v budushcheye," [Paths into the future] in *Melos*, ed. Igor Glebov and Pyotr Suvchinsky (St. Petersburg: Gosudarstvennaya tipografiya, 1918), 57.

⁵³⁰ Форму я мыслю, как непрерывное становление, т.е. как непрерывно поставляемый и разрешаемый в процессе творчества искус. В итоге, форма есть то, что получается в исскомом художником преодолении неживого материала (в более углубленном смысле: косной материи) напряжением творческой мысли, единой в своей триадности, т.е. соединении разума, чувства и воли. В каждом подлинном произведении искусства эта проблема одухотворения материи или материализации духа разрешается по-новому, по-своему, ибо неисчислимы те пути, какими выявляет себя жизненное начало. Изсякая из себя душевную энергию в слове и музыкальном звуке мы скорее материализуем ее, чем одухотворяем материал, ибо свойство звука вообще – быстро реагировать на стремление душевной силы и окристаллизовываться в звучащей форме, между тем как искусства пластические требуют затраты значительной доли физического труда, и творческий процесс в них знаменует скорее одухотворение материи, нежели материализацию жизненного напряжения. Ibid., 58.

⁵³¹ Ernst Kurth, *Selected Writings*, Cambridge Studies in Music Theory and Analysis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 24.

thought to exist only in imagination is now categorized as *realia*.⁵³²

At the same time he did not shy away from time-honored biological metaphors:

The synthesis of subject and countersubject is akin to the combination of two cells – the recipient cell and the sperm cell that through mutual attraction coalesced into a single organic whole, while in themselves being complex unities, ripe to create a higher organism in the process of further differentiation.⁵³³

Such an idiosyncratic mixture persisted in Asafyev's thought throughout the early 1920s, and was essential to his concept of "sounding matter," which later became one of the most widely used concepts among the scholars of the Music Department. In his article "The process of shaping sounding matter" (1923) Asafyev quoted Scriabin's diaries (discussed in Chapter 4), specifically his idea that the world exists only in human perception, while the external reality is ultimately nothing more than a succession of states of mind. As Asafyev himself put it, there was no difference between the state of our mind, which we call "a stone," and the one we call "a dream" - a textbook example of subjective idealism.⁵³⁴ Scriabin's ideas were another important contribution to Asafyev's theory of form:

Encountering in experience the undeniable existence of the phenomenon of *crystallization* of sound in music [i.e. musical form - *OP*], it is very easy and unavoidable to equate music, understood as the state of my mind, which rules over material that I have created, with physical matter (sonic), which is conditioned by the laws of physics, which govern acoustical phenomena.⁵³⁵

Despite relying on such ideologically questionable ideas, in the mid-1920s Asafyev was supported by Narkompros and Lunarcharsky, and enjoyed an illustrious reputation during that time. Even after his reputation came under attack in the late 1920s, his *Form as a Process*,

⁵³² Органическое воззрение на мир, с одной стороны отрицающее теорию механического строения целого из множества самостоятельных элементов и выводящее все явления из единства Вселенной, где ничто, ни единый атом не мыслится, как отдельное и независимое начало, - а с другой стороны бесконечно расширяющее наше качественное (т.е. целостное, а не накапливаемое путем рассудочного сложения разрозненных данных чувственного опыта), интуитивное познание мира – привело к утверждению возможности объективного знания того, что считалось лишь иллюзией рассуждающего субъекта. Таким образом, область непосредственно познаваемого (трансубъективное бытие) расширилась, расширилась и сфера опыта, и к *realia* отнесено многое, что казалось существующим лишь в воображении. ... Знание о целом оказалось недостижимым без принятия гипотезы о том, что целое постигается в движении и что оно не может быть осознано путем механического прикладывания частиц. Glebov, "Puti v budushcheye," 65.

⁵³³ Синтез вождя и спутника является словно бы сочетанием двух клеток, клетки – принимающей и клетки – спермы соединившимся путем взаимного влечения в единое органическое целое, будучи каждая сама по себе сложным целым, и готовых в процессе дальнейшей дифференциации образовать высший организм. *Ibid.*, 70-71.

⁵³⁴ Igor Glebov, "Protsess ofornleniya zvuchashchego veshchestva," [The process of shaping of sounding matter] in *De musica* (Petrograd: Petrogradskaya Gosudarstvennaya akademicheskaya filarmoniya, 1923), 146.

⁵³⁵ [Н]аталкиваясь в опыте с несомненным наличием явления кристаллизации звучаний в музыке, очень легко и неизбежно поставить знак равенства между музыкой, как моим состоянием сознания, господствующим над сотворенным мною материалом, и физическим веществом (звучащим), обусловленным физическими законами, управляющими акустическими явлениями. *Ibid.*, 149.

conceived in the early 1920s, retained much of his early idealist convictions.

Asafyev and his students like Alexey Finagin and Roman Gruber saw nothing wrong with working on state commission. It did not mean lowering academic standards. As late as his 1928 article “On the possibility and limits of applying economic categories in musicology,” Roman Gruber offered a thorough criticism of the current application of the method of dialectical materialism in the humanities. First, he protested the simplified and “vulgar” (in his own words) application of economic concepts to music, which had had much currency in the first years after the revolution, particularly in the work of such writers as Leonid Sabaneyev and Sergey Chemodanov. Second, he grounded his argument in such foundational Marxist texts as Karl Marx’s *Capital* and *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Friedrich Engels’s *Anti-Dühring*, *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*, and *Dialectics of Nature*, as well as their letters and early works. Armed with this knowledge, he deplored the usual practice of dialectical materialism, which concentrated on results rather than on the unfolding of dialectics in history, ignoring the concomitant contradictions and operating with abstractions. Most importantly, such a simplified application of economic terms ignored the dual nature of artistic creativity and its social function: it satisfied both the social demand (reception) and the individual needs of the composer herself (creative work as play). He thus proposed some ways in which the traditional notions of supply, demand, and labor had to be adapted for the study of artistic practices.⁵³⁶

In the six years of relative freedom, institutionalized music scholarship was built; in possession of its own publishing and educational infrastructure, it was characterized by rigorous standards of instruction, methodological self-awareness, and a variegated and flexible conceptual apparatus. The motivation behind the early Soviet musicologists’ fight for equality and development of new anti-elitist sociological methods aimed at eliminating class discrimination from academia, (as evidenced by their persistent appeals to pay attention to musical genres other than “art music”) was not unlike the motivation behind the New Musicology, inspired in part by the civil rights movements of the 1960s.

In 1925, Finagin looked into the future with hope and confidence:

The historical worldview teaches us that new ideological aspirations can by no means be imposed, or forced into, society’s consciousness from above, since they are but regular consequences of the existing forms of social life. It is not hard to infer from this that only that generation of people which wholeheartedly took in, lived through, and acknowledged the social revolution that happened here in Russia can and will create the kind of music that is necessary now, and will uphold currently acceptable scholarly positions.⁵³⁷

Finagin’s report is overflowing with confidence and pride, testifying to the enthusiasm of young

⁵³⁶ Roman Ilyich Gruber, "O vozmozhnosti i predelakh ispol'zovaniya v muzikovedenii ekonomicheskikh kategoriy," [On the possibility and limits of applying economic categories in musicology] in *Muzikoznaniye: Vremennik Otdela muziki* (Leningrad: Academia, 1928), 40-62.

⁵³⁷ Историческое мировоззрение учит, что новые идеологические устремления никаким образом невозможно навязать, внедрить в общественное сознание свыше, ибо они суть лишь закономерное следствие существующих за ними форм общественной жизни. Отсюда не трудно сделать вывод, что только то поколение людей, которое всей душой восприняло, пережило и осознало совершившийся у нас в России социальный переворот, может и будет творить нужную нам сейчас музыку и встанет на приемлемые для текущего момента научные позиции. TsGALI: F. 82, op. 3, ye. kh. 9, l. 40

scholars tasked with creating a new discipline from scratch. The first quoted sentence, however, offers a most jarring cognitive dissonance to a scholar of Soviet history. Whether this rejection of ideological controls was naiveté beyond belief, a refutation of accusations that undoubtedly were voiced in abundance, or an attempt to assuage Finagin's own fears (although in light of his usually straightforward style the last option is the least likely), this was how the young musicologists at the Russian Institute for Art History perceived their position in society. They believed themselves to be free to create the future. In the rest of the chapter I will assess the degree to which they actually had such freedom.

Freedom of method

According to its new status as a research hub, the Institute was accountable to Glavnauka, the Central Administration for Scientific, Scholarly-Artistic, and Museum Institutions, which was the branch of Narkompros (The People's Commissariat for Education) in charge of science and scholarship. Before May 1924, neither Glavnauka nor GUS (The State Academic Council) were mentioned at all in the records of the regular meetings of the Department, where scholars presented and discussed their research and logistical matters. It is symbolic that the conspicuous change coincided with Lenin's death in January 1924. On March 6, the Institute received a circular from Glavnauka that could not be ignored:

Glavnauka asks research ... institutions to send materials ... establishing the ideological connection between their scientific-practical work and Lenin's scientific and governmental work, and to specify the ways in which your institution might reflect Lenin's personality and ideas in the process of its work.⁵³⁸

The circular was discussed at a Department meeting on May 3, which resolved to establish a special Sociological Section to "study the sociological bases of the art of music and the role of music in social life," which would reflect Lenin's ideas in the form of purely scholarly work.⁵³⁹ While not contradicting the decree from Moscow, the wording in the transcript shows concern that the directives should fit the Department's current work. The new Sociological Section was conceived as a continuation of the already existing research topic "Music and social life"; the definition of sociological work was as broad as possible, and emphasis was given to embodying Lenin's ideas in "pure" scholarship.

Asafyev's own plan, expressed in a personal letter to Finagin, ventured much further into

⁵³⁸ В связи с постановлением Народного комиссариата по Просвещению о мероприятиях по изучению жизни и деятельности В.И.ЛЕНИНА, Главнаука просит научные, художественные и музейные учреждения и библиотеки представить материалы и воспоминания характеризующие связь этих учреждений с Владимиром Ильичем, имевшую место путем встреч и личных с ним сношений, а также устанавливающие идейную связь научно-практической работы учреждения с научным и государственным творчеством ЛЕНИНА и указать, в какой форме могло бы ваше учреждение отразить в процессе своей работы личность и идеи В.И.Ленина. TsGALI: F. 82, op. 1, ye. kh. 152, l. 30.

⁵³⁹ Протокол №3 Заседания Разряда Истории Музыки от 3 мая 1924 г. 4. Циркуляр Главнауки о возможном отражении в плане работ Разряда личности и идей В.И.Ленина: Полагая, что утвержденная в научном плане секции Музыкознания групповая тема "Музыка и социальная жизнь" может явиться той формой чисто научной деятельности Разряда, которая отразит в себе идеи В.И.Ленина, Разряд считает необходимым выделить данную работу в деятельность самостоятельной "Социологической" секции Разряда ближайшими своими задачами имеющий "изучение социологических основ муз. искусства и роль музыки в социальной жизни". TsGALI: F. 82, op. 1, ye. kh. 152, l. 27-27v.

the matter of what, according to him, qualified as following Lenin's ideas:

On Lenin. What could our Department do? a) collect everything that Lenin said on music b) persistently study the interaction of music and the social environment (*bit*), thus paving the way to an accessible art of music, and study the real role music plays in the life of different classes, c) continue to defend the position taken by the Razryad in understanding musical forms not as formally-indiscriminate schemes, but as aggregates, naturally crystallized in the process of organic development of musical language as one of the means of human communication.⁵⁴⁰

Asafyev's second point shows that he had already changed his mind since he penned his earlier article "Paths into the future"⁵⁴¹ (1918). Then, he maintained that "the art of the Russian intelligentsia is the true mirror of the people's creativity, reflecting the true spirit of the people," and defined the Russian intelligentsia as "a group of Russian Europeans, few in number."⁵⁴²

The last point was deeply personal, as it spelled out Asafyev's theory of form in a nutshell. Its wording, however, had a prescient ring of "battle with formalism" about it. Only a year later the Institute (primarily its Department of Literature, which housed the famous Russian "formal school")⁵⁴³ came under fire from Narkompros.⁵⁴⁴ As early as 1924, Asafyev conveniently conceptualized his theory as one opposed to formalism and thus sanctioned by Lenin's ideas. However, as of 1924 he had not yet embraced dialectical materialism, as is documented in one of the meeting transcripts.

On October 13, 1924 Roman Gruber gave a talk on "Contemporary musicology and dialectical materialism."⁵⁴⁵ Turnout was rather large (17 people) and included Zubov (the director), Asafyev, Finagin and Semyon Ginzburg. Gruber set out to justify current musicological

⁵⁴⁰ О Ленине. Что может сделать наш Разряд? а) собрать все, что когда л. и кому л и где л. говорил Л. о музыке, б) упорно исследовать взаимодействие музыки и быта, подготавливая этим путь к общепонятному муз. искусству, и изучать реальное положение занимаемое музыкой в жизни разных классов, в) продолжать [63 verso] отстаивать позицию занятую Разрядом в отношении понимания муз. форм не как формально-безразличных схем, а как закономерно выкристаллизовывающихся образований в процессе органического развития музыкального языка как одного из средств взаимообщения людей. RIII: F. 68. op.1, ye. kh. 78, l. 63-63v, letter no. 57. Undated, but clearly referring to the Glavnauka's circular

⁵⁴¹ Glebov, "Puti v budushcheye," 50-96.

⁵⁴² До последнего момента русская интеллигенция духовно олицетворяла Россию. Мы к этому все привыкли и в расчете на будущее творчество интеллигенции, к которой-де придет народ, мы строили все наши чаяния, даже философско-мессианские. Но народ может прийти и сказать то, чего мы вовсе не поймем, и все, что казалось русским, окажется лишь мечтой, грезой, навеянной при взгляде на Россию из прекрасного далека. Значит, и моя греза мыслится созданной при двух условиях: в убежденном трезвом сознании, что русская музыка есть провинция в отношении западных метрополий и, быть может, в обманчивом представлении, что интеллигентское русское искусство и есть истинное зеркало народного творчества, в котором отражается подлинный дух народа, а не стилизованное народническое веяние. Как русскому интеллигенту мне хочется обольщать тебя такой светлой надеждой. К тому же народ пока безмолвствует... Ibid., 76. Strikingly, in the last sentence of this passage he described "the people" themselves using Pushkin's famous phrase "the people are silent" from his *Boris Godunov*, implying that it was still unclear what "the people" wanted regarding the matters of art. [P]усская музыка есть музыка интеллигенции, т.е. незначительной группы русских европейцев. Ibid., 75.

⁵⁴³ Such scholars as Yuri Tinyanov, Boris Eichenbaum, and Viktor Shklovsky.

⁵⁴⁴ Kumpan, "Institut istorii iskusstv na rubezhe 1920-1930 godov," 548.

⁵⁴⁵ Transcript of the 1st (5th) session of the Section of Musicology of Razryad of Music History, Monday, October 13, 1924. TsGALI: F. 82, op. 3, ye. kh. 10, l. 6.

methods and themes and prove their “scientific legitimacy” from the viewpoint of dialectical materialism.⁵⁴⁶ This was an honest attempt to apply what Gruber thought to be a rigorous scholarly method to musicological work. This and Gruber’s other articles on similar subjects had the makings of thoughtful humanistic scholarship, based on a Marxist theoretical framework. The summary of this unpublished talk reveals that Gruber’s understanding of Marxist doctrine was broad and nuanced, not reducible to a single official maxim such as “Being determines consciousness.” He urged his colleagues to draw on primary sources (that is, writings by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Plekhanov), instead of recycling Marxism second-hand. Gruber believed that Marxism, as a method, was based on four principles:

- 1) The principle of constant change of all that is;
- 2) the principle of the universal interconnectedness of phenomena;
- 3) the principle of discrete, step-wise development in which quantity is transformed into quality;
- 4) the principle of dialectical (contradictory) development.⁵⁴⁷

The continuity of such a description with a pre-revolutionary scientific worldview is obvious: particularly the first and second postulates had been in circulation in humanistic thought for several decades. Based on a thorough reading of works by Engels and Lenin, Gruber concluded that the classical doctrine of dialectical materialism recognized the reality of “psyche” (as opposed to matter) and even the fact that the process of ideation followed its own independent laws. He even found certain parallels between Marxism and idealist philosophy, which was already a slippery slope in 1924.⁵⁴⁸ As to the basic concept that would later become a bugbear of Soviet ideology – the crude causal understanding of base and superstructure - Gruber claimed that the classic Marxist writers admitted that the relationship between base and superstructure was indirect, and that mediating factors existed between them (including that of “society’s psyche”), and that it was possible for the superstructure to influence the base. Thus, in “the complex system of interrelations between the two” Gruber saw a flexible scholarly instrument, capable of producing objective analysis of reality without squeezing it into a procrustean bed of inflexible formulas.

The takeaway was that dialectical materialism was quite similar to methods that were already independently developed by some musicologists, and that their work fit Marxist criteria quite well. Therefore, their work was justified and legitimate.⁵⁴⁹ Needless to say, such a complex interpretation of dialectical materialism, as well as the admission that it was possible to come to valid conclusions independently of it, would soon become anathema in the eyes of the officials in charge of ideological control.

Even more interesting is the transcript of the ensuing debate. Semyon Ginzburg, agreeing with the speaker on the validity of contemporary musicological methods, pointed out what he thought to be the main problem of the Marxist method in music – the difficulty of defining

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁷ 1) Принцип непрерывной изменчивости всего сущего; 2) принцип всеобщей связи явлений; 3) принцип скачкообразного развития с переходом от количественных определений к качественным; 4) Принцип диалектич. (противореч.) развития. TsGALI: F. 82, op. 3, ye. kh. 10, l. 6.

⁵⁴⁸ The idealist connections are not surprising in this case, because Gruber’s four principles of Marxisms were equally true for Hegelian dialectics.

⁵⁴⁹ TsGALI: F. 82, op. 3, ye. kh. 10, l. 6v.

music's "ideological content." Most significantly, this transcript also documented Asafyev's attitude to dialectical materialism as of October 1924:

In his concluding speech B.V. Asafyev claimed that for the time being he does not think it possible to define his attitude ... to the issue under discussion: his method and the principles of his approach grew as the result of many years' work on purely musical material, which, naturally, determined the self-sufficiency of his musical worldview and its independence from dialectical materialism; whether one can speak of common results is hard to say.⁵⁵⁰

It is unclear how often the transcripts of meetings were sent to Glavnauka in 1924. On October 24, 1924 the Institute's academic secretariat sent a memo to Finagin, nudging him to submit the yearly plan of the Department's work, and highlighting "the exceptional responsibility and importance of timely provision of the required reports to Glavnauka."⁵⁵¹ In December 1926 Glavnauka was still asking that transcripts and other materials be sent more regularly.⁵⁵² Still, Asafyev's willingness to disavow any connection with dialectical materialism, and to say such a thing in a forum of which a transcript might be forwarded to the authorities, meant that in October 1924 the Marxist method (a.k.a. dialectical materialism) had not yet become a sacred cow, and the intellectual environment at the Institute was still relatively free from censorship. In November 1924 it was still possible for Finagin to quote Henri Bergson, who was later vilified for idealism and intuitivism, and to proclaim that, "for the time being, the formal method might be the only scholarly method that does not need to be justified"⁵⁵³. On February 9, 1925, a discussion even took place in which Ginzburg, Gruber and Finagin could come to an agreement that music had no ideological content – a statement that would be unthinkable several years later.

At the October meeting Semyon Ginzburg gave a talk on "Jules Combarieu and the problem of musical thought," based on his preface to the Russian translation of the book *La musique, ses lois, son evolution (Music, Its Laws and Evolution)* by the French musicologist Jules Combarieu, whose sociological method was well-known in Russia in the 1920s. Building on Combarieu's formula "Music is the art of thinking with sounds," Ginzburg highlighted that musical thinking operated not with concepts, but with purely sonic complexes. Nevertheless, he stated, music was a means of human interaction, and thus a biological and social phenomenon, and should be studied as such.⁵⁵⁴ Roman Gruber went even further in pointing out that the term

⁵⁵⁰ В заключ. слове Б.В.Асафьев заявил, что пока не считает еще возможным определить в той или иной форме свое отношение к обсуждаемому вопросу: что метод и принцип его подхода выросли в результате многолетней работы над чисто музык. материалом, что и определяет, естественно, самостоятельность его муз.мировоззрения и независимость от диал. мат.; можно ли говорить об общности результатов, сказать затруднительно. TsGALI: F. 82, op. 3, ye. kh. 10, l. 6v

⁵⁵¹ 24 окт 1924г. Подчеркивая исключительную ответственность и важность своевременного доставления в Главнауку требуемых отчетов, Институт просит принять все меры к присылке просимого к означенному сроку. TsGALI: F. 82, op. 1, ye. kh. 152, l. 54.

⁵⁵² TsGALI: F. 82, op. 3, ye. kh. 12, l. 92.

⁵⁵³ Метод формальный является, б. может, временно единственно научным методом, не требующим своего основания, но требующим своего углубления, как только с ним подходят к изучению временных явлений. ...В дальнейшем докладчик останавливается на соч. Бергсона "Длительность и одновременность", положения которого дают возможность сделать ряд существенных выводов и для муз. теоретика. TsGALI: F. 82, op. 3, ye. kh. 10, l. 9.

⁵⁵⁴ 9-е) очередное заседание Секции Музыкального Разряда истории муз. в понедельник 9 февраля 1925 г.

“thinking” might not be entirely applicable to music, because of its strong association of operating with verbal concepts. He seconded Ginzburg’s defense of music’s non-conceptual nature and his call to “free music from cheap literary and psychological explanation.”⁵⁵⁵ It is worth noting that this was the same Semyon Ginzburg who, in late 1927, became Asafyev’s ally in his rhetorically manipulative campaign against the Music Department.

As late as January 17, 1927 Roman Gruber could give a talk “On ‘formal method’ in musicology” – a defense of the proverbial “formal method” that flourished in the Literary Department of the Institute in particular – and publish it in the third installment of “De Musica” in 1927.⁵⁵⁶

The lean years

The gradual change in the level of control imposed on the Department by Glavnauka, which started in May 1924, is rather well documented. In May 1924 interactions between GUS and the Department were still very innocuous. The transcript of a meeting that took place on May 6, 1924, is of particular interest, because it was attended by none other than Nadezhda Bryusova, who was by that time a professor, a GUS member, and thus quite a high-ranking official. The meeting was devoted to Alexey Finagin’s talk “Form as a value concept.”⁵⁵⁷ The idea that research terms were akin to “instruments of scientific production” had some currency at the Music Department, and scholars spent much effort on working out a shared network of precisely defined concepts. Finagin conceptualized both form and content as embodied in a system of intonations, according to Asafyev’s theory, which was soon to become foundational for Russian music theory, and which was already something of a paradigm at the Music Department in 1924. He concluded that developing a psycho-physical method in order to study human perception of intonation (i.e. perception of form and content) was a prerequisite for the scientific study of music.⁵⁵⁸

Гинзбург делает доклад на тему: "Жюль Комбарье и проблема музыкального мышления" ... Полагая музыкальное мышление по природе своей мышлением эмоциональным (в смысле классификации Генриха Майера), С.Л.Гинзбург указывает на его внепонятийный характер, оперирующий с одними лишь чисто звуковыми комплексами, в процессе творчества объединяемыми в единое и замкнутое целое - музыкальную форму. Здесь, по мнению докладчика, и заложен единственный путь к уяснению сущности музыки. как биологического явления, поскольку пребывание в сфере чистого звучания отрицает необходимость перевода на привычную, но от этого не более непосредственную, речь образов и понятий. Остановившаяся на психологической природе музыкального мышления, С.Л.Гинзбург отмечает, что переводя музыкальную мысль в живую ткань звучания, мы еще приносим элемент языка, т.е. социального средства взаимного духовного общения людей, и тем самым переходим к социологическому изучению музыки.

В заключение докладчик останавливается на вопросе о "музыкальной идеологии" и приходит к выводу, что т.к. "музыкальное мышление есть мышление в сфере внепонятийной, то след. в музыке никакого идеологического содержания нет в обычном понимании этого слова." TsGALI: F. 82, op. 3, ye. kh. 10, l. 12.

⁵⁵⁵ Р.Грубер ... указал во 1-х на опасность применения термина "мышление" к внепонятийным процессам в виду укоренившегося за ним именно "понятийного" значения; во 2-х всецело поддерживая стремление докладчика освободить музыку от литературнического и психологического истолкования. TsGALI: F. 82, op. 3, ye. kh. 10, l. 12-12v.

⁵⁵⁶ Roman Ilyich Gruber, "O 'formal'nom metode' v muzikovedenii," [On 'formal method' in musicology] in *De musica: Vremennik Otdela istorii i teorii muziki Gosudarstvennogo instituta istorii iskusstv* (Leningrad: Academia, 1927), 39-53.

⁵⁵⁷ TsGALI: F. 82, op. 3, ye. kh. 10, ll. 4-4v.

⁵⁵⁸ Протокол 3-го заседания Секции Музыкального Разряда истории музыки РИИИ от 6 мая 1924 г. Присутствовали: член ГУС'а проф. Н.Я.Брюсова ... А.В.Финагин, читает доклад на тему: "Форма, как

Opening the debates, Bryusova pointed out that Finagin's talk did not explain the law of musical tension (the cornerstone of Yavorsky's and her modal theory, which was discussed in detail in Chapter 3). It is worth noting that in offering criticism, Bryusova chose to advance her personal research agenda, not an official party stance, although her characterization of Finagin's talk as "detached from the element of music" foreshadowed the rhetoric Asafyev would use to silence dissenting voices in 1928. Roman Gruber contradicted Bryusova, praising Finagin's methodological and philosophical contributions.⁵⁵⁹

On September 19, 1924, a new hierarchy was established at the Department: the objectives of the Sociological Section (the one founded after Glavnauka's request to celebrate Lenin's life) were considered "mandatory for all workers of the Department, historians as well as theorists."⁵⁶⁰ Moreover, historical research was deemed nothing more than preliminary work for the Sociological Section.⁵⁶¹

On December 29, 1924, the director of the Institute Count Zubov was relieved of his duties. Arguably, he had it long coming: he spent four months in prison in 1922 on charges of unofficial correspondence with émigrés. His replacement, the art historian and professor of Kharkiv University Fyodor Schmidt, was apparently a sincere proponent of studying art according to the doctrine of dialectical materialism, and devoted considerable energy to swaying the Institute's research in this direction.⁵⁶²

One of the first official documents signed under Schmidt's management (January 3, 1925) was a yearly report on the Institute's activities. All institutions under the jurisdiction of Glavnauka received a form with questions, which had to be answered in their reports. Among other things, Glavnauka officials wanted to know the following:

- 39) What the objectives of the institution were in the area of scientific methodology
- 40) How closely the institution's scientific research and cultural-educational activity was related to dialectical-materialist views on nature and the history of societal development.
- 41) To what extent the collective method of solving research objectives was developed at the institution and how it was implemented. ...
- 50) What the relationship was between the institutions and organizations representing the

ценностное понятие", тезисы к кот. таковы: 1.Необходимость уточнения и утончения муз.эстет.понятий, как специфических "орудий научного производства"; 2.Сказать нечто бесформенное - значит вынести оценочное суждение; 3.За понятием "форма" мыслится какое-то ценностное основание; 4.Форма является для нашего сознания поводом к эстетической оценке. ... 13.До тех пор, пока психофизический метод исследования не будет признан и научно формулирован, науки об искусстве, в частности о музыке, строить невозможно. TsGALI: F. 82, op. 3, ye. kh. 10, l. 4.

⁵⁵⁹ В прениях по докладу приняли участие: Н. Брюсова, указавшая на оторванность исследования, по ее мнению, от муз. стихии, как таковой, вследствие чего не объяснен закон муз. тяготения и формы его применения, и Р.Грубер, отметивший весьма значительную методологическую и эстетико-философскую ценность доклада. TsGALI: F. 82, op. 3, ye. kh. 10, ll. 4-4v.

⁵⁶⁰ 19 сент[ября] 1924. 2.задачи Социологической Секции считать общеобязательными для всех работников Разряда, как теоретиков, так и историков. TsGALI: F. 82, op. 1, ye. kh. 152, l. 33v-34

⁵⁶¹ 3.Работы Секции Музыкознания и Исторической рассматривать как предварительную разработку вопросов необходимых для выполнения задач социологической секции. Ibid.

⁵⁶² Выписка из распоряжения по Главнауке №221 от 29 декабря 1924 г: Согласно заявления председателя Института Истории Искусств тов. Зубова об освобождении его от обязанностей председателя - просьба его удовлетворяется. В связи с этим изменяется состав правления: Председателем назначается профессор Шмидт Ф.И., членами правления - Лехт Ф.К., Шадурская З.Л., Назаренко Я.А. и Жирмунский В.М. TsGALI: F. 82, op. 3, ye. kh. 7, l. 9.

Party, local government, [and] professional unions.⁵⁶³

To this, the Institute responded with a rather short description of its activities, including the following paragraph on the history of music:

Development of a series of musical disciplines hitherto absent in general musical education, such as: theory of intonation, psychology of music-artistic creativity, history of Russian folk song, etc. ... Orientation of all scholarly work in the area of music history towards being more closely connected with matters of current interest and with the fundamentals of dialectical materialism.⁵⁶⁴

In early April 1925 Narkompros held a long conference (April 6-10) on artistic education, which marked the next level in the process of imposing stifling directives on research and educational institutions. The conference resulted in an entire heap of resolutions, signed by the Commissar's Deputy Iosif Khodorovsky on May 6, 1925. The first of these resolutions⁵⁶⁵ stated point-blank that "All scientific research should be carried out in the context of scientific-positive knowledge and be based on Marxism."⁵⁶⁶ Another resolution criticized the lack of integration of the "general scientific minimum" into university curricula and urged that these should be connected "organically" with other disciplines.⁵⁶⁷ It also defined the objective of the minimum – "familiarization with general foundations of Marxism, as theory and method," as well as application of the Marxist method to the history and sociology of culture and art.⁵⁶⁸ The importance of studying the art of the masses by developing a "sociological method" was

⁵⁶³ Форма годового отчета за 1923-1924 год по учреждениями и обществам подведомственным Главнауке: 39. Обрисовать задачи учреждения в области научной методологии; 40. На сколько тесно была связана научно-исследовательская и культурно-просветительская деятельность учреждения с диалектически-материалистическими взглядами на природу и историю развития общества. 41. На сколько развит в учреждении коллективный способ разрешения научно-исследовательских задач, и как он осуществляется. ... 50. Взаимоотношения учреждения и партийных, местно-государственных, профсоюзных, кооперативных организаций. TsGALI: F. 82, op. 1, ye. kh. 158, l. 232-235.

⁵⁶⁴ В области Истории Музыки: Выработка ряда музыкальных дисциплин до сего времени отсутствующих в общемузыкальном образовании, как то: теория интонации, психология музыкально-художественного творчества, история русской народной песни и др. Осуществление после многолетнего перерыва концертов и произведений новой музыки. Ориентировка все научной работы в области истории музыки на более тесную связь с современностью и с основами диалектического материализма. 3 января 1925 г. TsGALI: F. 82, op. 1, ye. kh. 158, ll. 257-259

⁵⁶⁵ At least according to their order at the Institute's archive.

⁵⁶⁶ Резолюции совещания по художественному образованию (6-10 апреля 1925 г) - 6 мая 1925 г. на подлинном надпись "Утверждается". ЗамНарком и Зав. ГПФ: И.Ходоровский... 2) Вся научно-исследовательская работа должна вестись в окружении научно-позитивных знаний и на основе марксизма. TsGALI: F. 82, op. 3, ye. kh. 7, l. 29.

⁵⁶⁷ 1) Общественно-политические дисциплины в ВУЗах и художественных школах по своим программам и методам преподавания должны быть органически связаны с общими учебными планами, а не являться механическим привеском к учебному плану, как это обычно имело место до сих пор. TsGALI: F. 82, op. 3, ye. kh. 7, l. 39

⁵⁶⁸ 3) Общая для всех ВУЗов часть политико-общественных программ должна заключаться в ознакомлении с общими основами марксизма, как теории и метода. Специальная - в приложении марксистского метода к истории культуры, к социологии искусства и др., применительно к специальному материалу данного ВУЗа (литературного, музыкального, живописного и т.д.) Ibid.

highlighted.⁵⁶⁹ This expression – “the sociological method” – was always used in the singular, as if there was no doubt which of the possible sociological methods was implied.

It was downhill from here. The first mildly critical evaluation of the Music Department from Glavnauka, which noted the absence of ethnographic studies of Russian folk music, came on May 14, 1925.⁵⁷⁰ It was not long before such reprimands trickled down to the core of the Institute’s research activities – the scholarly debates within the departments. The first documented unceremonious put-down on ideological grounds happened at a talk given by Mikhail Druskin on November 23, 1925. At the time, Druskin was a faithful follower of Asafyev, and even withdrew from the Institute in 1926-1927, when disagreement between the Department and Asafyev started brewing.

This was a joint meeting of the Theoretical Section of the Music Department and the Sociological Committee⁵⁷¹ – an Institute-wide department that was established in 1925 for the purpose of developing Marxist methodology and connecting the work of the four departments. In line with the abovementioned directives, the talk was entitled “Method of sociological study of the phenomenon of artistic style.” The debates after the talk can serve as an example of the power dynamics between researchers, who sought to construct a new scholarly paradigm based on the new ideology, and party functionaries, who were invested with the authority to disseminate the official dogma. Druskin’s argument incurred harsher than usual criticism from Yakov Nazarenko, who was both the head of the Sociological Committee and a Party member, who was on the Institute’s Board, and who had an upper hand even over the director Fyodor Schmidt.⁵⁷²

Druskin’s contention was that artistic activity was an instance of production process (that is, a form of manufacture). Therefore, art forms were influenced by the “technological character of the process of production.” He cited prehistoric and applied art as examples of his theory that “the character of production processes is reflected in the nature of aesthetic activity, while forms [these works assume] are historically identical to the forms of style.”⁵⁷³ It is unclear from the short summary of the meeting what exactly Druskin meant by this, but he clearly insisted that “understanding the laws of the emergence of artistic forms [was] only possible by including art in the category of productive activity of humanity,”⁵⁷⁴ evidently understanding the latter as

⁵⁶⁹ 6) В программу истории искусств должно включаться не только искусство верхов, но и искусство народных масс обращая особое внимание на возникновение и развитие социологического метода. Ibid.

⁵⁷⁰ Доклад Учен.Секр. Разр. А.В.Финагина о состоявшемся постановлении Уч.Совета Ин-та от 30 сего Мая. а) С полной готовностью принимая предложение Главнауки от 14 сего мая об изучении с этнографической и бытовой стороны муз. жизнь Севера. TsGALI: F. 82, op. 3, ye. kh. 9, l. 29v

⁵⁷¹ ПРОТОКОЛ соединенного заседания Теоретического Секции ОТИМ и Секции Общей Теории и Методологии Социологического Комитета ГИИИ.понедельник 23 ноября 1925 г. TsGALI: F. 82, op. 3, ye. kh. 10, l. 36.

⁵⁷² Kumpan, "Institut istorii iskusstv na rubezhe 1920-1930 godov," 573.

⁵⁷³ 5) На примере первобытного искусства мы видим, как формы производственных процессов являются непосредственно определяющим фактором в развитии художественных форм; 6) Формы художественного стиля так наз. "прикладного" искусства также обуславливаются "технологическим характером производительного процесса". ... 7) Следовательно - характер производительных процессов отражается на сущности эстетической деятельности, тогда как формы проявления этих работ исторически тождественны формам стиля. TsGALI: F. 82, op. 3, ye. kh. 10, l. 36.

⁵⁷⁴ 8) Таким образом, понять закономерность появления худож. форм. [Л.36об] искусства можно, лишь включив искусство в разряд производительной деятельности человечества. TsGALI: F. 82, op. 3, ye. kh. 10, l. 36-36v.

production of goods of any kind – from coal to symphonies.

Druskin's argument incurred Nazarenko's disapproval by leaving ideology out of the loop. Nazarenko claimed that the talk lacked proper method and went as far as accusing Druskin of an attempt to contradict Marxism:

Marxism cannot be disproved by claiming that the product of art depends more on material [than on the ideology]; independence of style from ideologies remains unproven.⁵⁷⁵

What he suggested that Druskin do was limit his inquiry to specific material, and test a particular sociological method on it.⁵⁷⁶ Despite the fact that the premise of Druskin's argument stemmed entirely from the central tenet of dialectical materialism and treated music as a social phenomenon, inextricably linked with other spheres of social life, it evidently did not conform to Nazarenko's idea of "the sociological method" in some important aspects. Asserting primacy of ideology over art was one of them.⁵⁷⁷ Although they did not mention Marxism, Finagin and Gruber were also uneasy with Druskin's claim that material form preceded ideology. Finagin objected to Druskin's separation of form and content (which, according to Asafyev's intonation theory, were one and the same), and disagreed with his claim that ideology lagged behind formal innovation.

In November 1925 Druskin was only 20 years old and still held the most junior position available at the institute, which might partly explain the harsh criticism he received and the fact that he was forced to concede that his hypothesis needed further verification.⁵⁷⁸ Even if this could have been a teaching moment, this strange confrontation between people who seemingly aspired to the same ideals was a perfect example of a scholarly community performing a balancing act on the treacherous line between articulating sincere and productive beliefs and seeing these mutate into a weapon for eradicating dissent. This line was still blurry during the mid-1920s, as becomes evident if we compare the dates of the official resolutions, disseminating less and less ambiguous ideological directives, and scholarly discussion, during which (unwittingly) non-conformist opinions continued to be voiced up to 1927.

⁵⁷⁵Оппонент отмечает, что доклад, несмотря на блестящую внешнюю форму, лишен метода ... Марксизм не опровергнуть тем, что продукт искусства зависит, якобы, больше от материала; независимость стиля от идеологий не доказана; также недоказана независимость первобытного искусства от общественных отношений. TsGALI: F. 82, op. 3, ye. kh. 10, l. 36v

⁵⁷⁶ Оппонент полагает, что значительно целесообразней было бы ограничиться строго конкретным материалом и на примере испытать тот или иной методологический подход в сфере социологии. Ценность же доклада в таком виде едва ли не исключительно ограничивается "осведомительной функцией" - как результат проработки ряда пособий по социологии искусства. Ibid.

⁵⁷⁷ When the party line changed, which happened numerous times during the Soviet period, those functionaries who promoted the old version were themselves denounced. Nazarenko was not an exception. A decade later the article on Nazarenko in *The Literary Encyclopedia* (1934) read that "In 1931 this un-Marxist and unscholarly book [Nazarenko's *History of Russian Literature of the nineteenth Century*] was exposed." N. L., "Nazarenko," in *Literaturnaya Entsiklopediya*, ed. V.M. Lunacharsky and Friche; A.V. (Moscow: OGIZ RSFSR, 1924), Vol. 7.

⁵⁷⁸ Докладчик, разъяснив свою мысль на примере, не отрицает некоторого заострения в постановке проблемы и приходит к выводу о необходимости тщательно проверить свою гипотезу на более конкретном материале. TsGALI: F. 82, op. 3, ye. kh. 10, l. 37. Such a retreat was untypical for the discussions at the Institute.

The conflict

During the winter of 1927-1928 a scandal broke out at the Music Department. After some disagreements in spring 1926, Boris Asafyev fell out with the Institute and withdrew from his work there, nominally retaining his position as the chair. In his place, Alexey Finagin served as the acting chair. A moving letter from Finagin to Asafyev, dated August 12, 1926, highlighted the growing tensions between the teacher and the student, clearly indicating that it was Asafyev who distanced himself:

Dear Boris Vladimirovich,

I remember my promise to create all the desired conditions for your work at our Department, but you must agree with me, dear Boris Vladimirovich, that I could succeed in this only on the condition that my actions are backed up with your consent and approval, i.e. on the condition of restoring the old relationship between you and me. In the first place, [this would require] resuming our face-to-face conversations, even if they are rare. Only through them can I ascertain that my actions conform to your wishes. I allow myself to hope that we have not lost a common language, because I continue to respect and love you as my teacher.⁵⁷⁹

In 1926 and 1927 Asafyev spent most of his time away from the Institute, laying the foundations for the musicology department at the Conservatory at the request of Glavprofobr.⁵⁸⁰ In late 1927 he decided to resume his work at the Institute, and his homecoming caused an “explosion” (*vzriv*)⁵⁸¹ at the Music Department. Asafyev came back with a reform project up his sleeve: he proposed a complete reshaping of the Institute’s structure that would purge all disciplines that, in his view, did not contribute to the study of social realities past and present. However, it was the way he chose to enact it that caused the deep rift between him and the group of scholars led by his former comrade-in-arms Alexey Finagin.

Asafyev’s formidable reputation, the fact that he was in Lunacharsky’s good books,⁵⁸² and a fair deal of surefire rhetoric gained him the support of the Institute’s Board of Directors and allowed him to implement this reform singlehandedly. On December 29, 1927, Asafyev wrote to his Conservatory colleague Alexander Ossovsky, inviting him to take charge of one of the new research sections at the Institute. This letter contained a project developed by Asafyev, which two weeks later was announced as the official structure of the Music Department. Asafyev made it a condition of his return that he could choose a new Secretary to the Music Department.⁵⁸³ Roman Gruber and Alexey Finagin were relieved of their duties in violation of

⁵⁷⁹ Дорогой Борис Владимирович, я помню свое обещание создать все желаемые для Вас условия работы у нас в ОТИМ’е, но Вы должны согласиться дорогой Борис Владимирович с тем, что это мне удастся только при том условии, когда за мною будет стоять Ваше согласие и полное одобрение моих действий, т.е. при условии восстановления прежних отношений между мною и Вами. И в первую же очередь хотя бы редких, но личных бесед меня с Вами. Только через них я буду уверен, что делаемое мною соответствует Вашему желанию. Позволю себе надеяться, что я не утерю общего языка с Вами, ибо продолжаю Вас уважать и любить как своего учителя. 12 VIII 26. РИИ: F. 68, op. 1, ye. kh. 77, l. 1.

⁵⁸⁰ [Т]огда мне пришлось по желанию Главпрофобра отдать много времени Консерватории. TsGALI: F. 82, op. 3, ye. kh. 31, l. 112.

⁵⁸¹ This was the word Fyodor Schmidt applied to the situation. TsGALI: F. 82, op. 3, ye. kh. 31, l. 17

⁵⁸² Ф.И.Шмит полагает, ссылаясь на письмо к ОТИМ и Б.В.Асафьеву от весны 1926 г, что и А.Н. Луначарский вполне разделяет взгляд Правления. Ibid.

⁵⁸³ His choice for this position, Semyon Ginzburg, enraged his colleagues the most, because Ginzburg was

the statute, which stipulated that the Department officials had to be elected, not appointed. Asafyev would not talk to his colleagues, circumventing their objections by writing directly to the Board.⁵⁸⁴ On November 27, 1927, when the Department called a meeting to discuss the conflict, he did not attend.

Everyone admitted that the conflict was caused not so much by scholarly as by ideological disagreements.⁵⁸⁵ This was how Schmidt put it at the meeting with the Department:

One should interpret this issue from the conceptual point of view. There are two main lines to the Institute's work: a) the artistic-political one, which aims to ensure that art scholars are engaged in all current battles (Glavnauka persistently pushes the Institute towards this line) and b) the line of academic research. The Board believes that it was this division that gave rise to the conflict between Asafyev and most of the scholars at the Department; the Board asks the Department to view this issue from such a conceptual point of view.⁵⁸⁶

Asafyev's actions left little doubt that this was indeed the case.

Even after Asafyev won, he must have felt the need to get rid of the deep-seated opposition to his reform. After the new statute and the new structure of the Music Department was finalized (on January 17 and 13, 1928, respectively), he wrote a long letter, on February 2, to the Institute's directorial board, in which he explained his view of the conflict between him and the Department. Remarkable is Asafyev's use of formalistic rhetoric in this letter, of which the following passage is illustrative:

It is possible that the group of the Department's members who oppose me is formally right. But the struggle necessary to eradicate the commandeering formalism and stifling bureaucracy that are flourishing at the Department, is beyond me.⁵⁸⁷

Asafyev strategically peppered his letter with the word "formal," which by the end of 1927 already carried dangerous associations. He directly accused his opposition of formalism, and also used the insidious word throughout the letter for no particular reason, speaking, for instance, of "the formal rightness of my enemies"⁵⁸⁸ and their "semblance of formally proper attitude."⁵⁸⁹

previously expelled from the Department for the lack of participation.

⁵⁸⁴ Letter to the Board from February 1, 1928, TsGALI: F. 82, op. 3, ye. kh. 31, l. 112-115.

⁵⁸⁵ Конфликт мой с группой ОТИМ вовсе не лежит в плоскости лишь научно-исследовательских расхождений. TsGALI: F. 82, op. 3, ye. kh. 31, l. 114.

⁵⁸⁶ Вообще же, следует рассматривать весь этот вопрос с принципиальной точки зрения. В направлении работы ИИИ существует две основные линии: а) художественно--политическая линия, стремящаяся вовлечь искусствоведов в участие во всех боях современности (на эту линию упорно толкает ИИИ - Главнаука) и б) линия академической научной работы. Правление полагает, что это разделение породило и конфликт между Б.В.Асафьевым и большинством ОТИМ; Правление просит ОТИМ рассматривать весь этот вопрос с такой принципиальной точки зрения. TsGALI: F. 82, op. 3, ye. kh. 31, l. 17.

⁵⁸⁷ Возможно, что группа сотрудников ОТИМ, выступающая против меня, формально права. Но мне не под силу борьба с расцветшим там приказным [зачеркнуто: нрзбр, вместо этого сверху:] формализмом и мертвящим бюрократизмом. TsGALI: F. 82, op. 3, ye. kh. 31, l. 113v.

⁵⁸⁸ Кроме этого обещания мне нечего было бы противопоставить формальной правоте моих врагов, если бы таковая была бы признана. TsGALI: F. 82, op. 3, ye. kh. 31, l. 114v.

⁵⁸⁹ 115: при полном видимом формально-корректном отношении. TsGALI: F. 82, op. 3, ye. kh. 31, l. 115.

Moreover, the document shows that this strategy was carefully constructed: on folio 113v the word “formalism” was edited in– it was written above a word that was crossed off (and is now illegible).

Evidently, this was not the first time Asafyev used such strategies. It was Finagin who called Asafyev out on it, a fact hinted at by the defensive tone of a subsequent passage in Asafyev’s letter:

I guarantee that my plan does not contain phraseology as comrade Finagin took the liberty of claiming in the previous meeting, having forgotten that he, also, to a certain extent, is indebted to what he calls my phraseology for his academic career and that until a certain point he was not alien to my ideas and methods of work.⁵⁹⁰

In this letter Asafyev accused Finagin of waging a turf war – exactly as he himself was doing.⁵⁹¹ But what was Asafyev’s motivation to step into his old shoes? In the letter to the Board he said that he invested so much energy in founding the Music Department that it pained him to see the “hopelessness of the situation at the Department, and its growing disconnect with all music-scholarly interests.”⁵⁹² Perhaps a less altruistic reason was that, if back in charge, Asafyev would be wielding ideological control over both musicological departments in Leningrad – those of the Conservatory and the Institute — and, therefore, over the city’s entire scholarly infrastructure. Asafyev’s vision of the reformed Department is amply documented in his correspondence and the official work plan of the Department that was circulated amongst the Institute’s researchers on January 13, 1928. He accused the Department’s scholars of fleeing from the pressing issues of life and hiding in the ivory tower of historicism and the natural-scientific focus. In practice, Asafyev effected a decisive turn from historical and natural-scientific approaches towards music to the sociological one. In the official document titled “Preliminary work plan of the Music Department” Asafyev spelled out the “principles of reorganization” as follows:

- 1) The Department’s work should come as close as possible to tackling musical modernity and the problems it poses.
- 2) The basis of all music-scholarly work should be music in its sound and motion, and the gauge of such work – the ear and its demands. Therefore the Department has no right whatsoever to flee contemporary music and music culture for the sake of the past.
- 3) No single area of musicology, researched by the Department’s sections, should eschew organic connection with the work of the rest of the Department.
- 4) Every section of the Department understands music as a social phenomenon. Thus, as

⁵⁹⁰ Я ручаюсь, что в моем плане нет фразеологии, как об этом взял на себя смелость заявить в прошлом заседании т. Финагин, забыв, что он в некоторой степени тоже был обязан тому, что он называет моей фразеологией, своей ученой карьерой и что до поры до времени он не чужд был моим идеями и методам работы. TsGALI: F. 82, op. 3, ye. kh. 31, l. 112v.

⁵⁹¹ Конфликт мой с группой ОТИМ вовсе не лежит в плоскости лишь научно-исследовательских расхождений. Где их не бывает. Тут дело в желании завоевать ОТИМ, успокаивая меня обещаниями - если будешь паинькой и будешь молча соглашаться с нашим курсом - то и мы помиримся с твоим председательством. Не нравится - подавай в отставку. TsGALI: F. 82, op. 3, ye. kh. 31, l. 114.

⁵⁹² С осени 1927, видя безнадежность положения в ОТИМ и все большую оторванность его от всех ученых интересов музыки, а также не желая обмануть высказанного мне Ученым Советом ГИИИ доверия, я решил начать работать в ОТИМ не формально, а по существу. TsGALI: F. 82, op. 3, ye. kh. 31, l. 112-112v.

intriguing or interesting might be independent self-sufficient development of disciplines, which analyze music as a physical, biological, or some other world of phenomena, it cannot take place at the Department, due to its stated general purpose and orientation. 5) The Department's work should be based on the principle of research practicality, since there is no other way to concentrate its work on tackling the tasks of contemporary musicology and music community and to stop the Department's apparent sprawling into the adjacent peripheral disciplines and its ambition to cover areas that belong to specialized research institutions.⁵⁹³

As early as 1924, Asafyev had expressed a similar sentiment in a series of three essays he published in the journals *Music Culture* and *Contemporary Music*. In the essay "Composers, keep up!" (the last of the three) he urged his colleagues in the composers' guild to "try living in the present and attempt to refract it," and to "hurry to create music for the sake of the life that has developed around you."⁵⁹⁴ The important difference, though, lay in the degree of power Asafyev wielded over composers on the one hand and musicologists on the other. While the published articles contained impassionate appeals, which composers were (still) free to ignore, the reform at the Institute was an order which the unwilling scholars of the Music Department had to accept. As the outcome of the conflict with the Music Department showed, Asafyev had the power to effect real structural change at the Institute.

When rehearsing these points in the aforementioned letter to Ossovsky (intended to persuade him to work by his side at the reorganized Department), Asafyev sounded even more aggressive. He called for fighting the "battles" for that kind of music that was an integral part of life. He compared the Institute's research versatility to a cancer tumor that spread in its pursuit of "acoustics for the sake of acoustics" and "historicism for the sake of historicism" (which he crossed out and changed to the more gripping "past for the sake of past.")⁵⁹⁵ Predilection for colorful, if crude, metaphors; preference for a broad-brush style ("past" instead of "historicism"),

⁵⁹³ 1. Работа МУЗО должна быть вплотную сближена с музыкальной современностью и выдвинутыми ею проблемами; 2. Базой всей музыкально-исследовательской работы становится музыка в ее звучании и движении, а мерилем - слух и его требования. Поэтому МУЗО ни в каком случае не имеет права уходить от современной музыки и музыкальной культуры во имя прошлого, ради прошлого; 3. Никакая отдельная область музыкознания, исследуемая в секциях МУЗО, не должна рассматриваться вне органической связи с остальной работой отдела; 4. Каждая из секций МУЗО рассматривает музыку, как социальное явление. Поэтому, как бы ни было увлекательным или интересным отдельное самостоятельное развитие дисциплин, анализирующих музыку как физический, биологический или иной какой мир явлений, оно не может иметь место в МУЗО, в связи с его указанной общей целевой установкой; 5. В основу работы МУЗО должен быть положен лозунг исследовательского практицизма, потому что нет иного средства концентрировать эту работу на ударных заданиях современного музыкознания и музыкальной общественности и остановить наблюдаемое расползание МУЗО по соседним периферическим дисциплинам и стремление охватить области, принадлежащие специальным исследовательским учреждениям. TsGALI: F. 82, op. 3, ye. kh. 31, l. 58.

⁵⁹⁴ The essay is translated and provided with a commentary in: Frolova-Walker and Walker, *Music and Soviet Power: 1917-1932*, 124-127.

⁵⁹⁵ 29 / XII 1927. Я прошу вас во имя общего нашего дела борьбы за новые течения и лозунги в музыке не отказаться войти актуально в работу в реформированном Музо Института. ... Принципы: тесная связь с "боями" за музыку в жизни ... полный отказ от прошлого ради прошлого [зачеркнуто: историзма ради историзма], акустики ради акустики, etc. Отказ и от распухания Музо подобно опухоли рака в смысле захвата всех прилегающих соседних научных дисциплин при бегстве от самой музыки. RIII: F. 22, op. 1, ye. kh. 27, l. 25, letter no. 15.

as well as capitalizing on the much-hated formula “art for the sake of art,” show that by late 1927 the making of the Soviet-style musicological rhetoric was already well underway, and Asafyev had mastered it perfectly. The accusations of fleeing from reality and studying the “past for the sake of past” also made a prominent appearance in Asafyev’s letter to the Board.⁵⁹⁶

The research topics that occupied the Institute’s musicologists in the early 1920s provide ample evidence that Asafyev’s accusations of their research being irrelevant to modern life, although rhetorically effective, were baseless. Finagin’s inquiry into the application of dialectical materialism to musicological research, or projects such as the “Commission for the study of musical *bit*”, or the natural-scientific focus of the Department all grew out of the pre-revolutionary positivist conviction that all phenomena were interdependent and music had to be studied as an integral part of social life and the material world. In the meeting of the Department with Director Schmidt, Finagin and Gruber rightly objected to these accusations and demanded evidence of the Department’s alleged flight from reality (which the director failed to provide). The two scholars cited positive evaluations of the Department’s work from GUS and the fact that it never received official criticism for being out of touch with life.⁵⁹⁷ That was about to change.

The end of the Music Department

On February 15, 1928, upon hearing Schmidt’s report on the Institute’s activities in the preceding year, the Scholarly-Artistic Section of GUS issued an official resolution. It was much less sympathetic than the previous one from December 1926.⁵⁹⁸ The first reprimand, which concerned the entire Institute, was its lack of a clear-cut ideological orientation:

The Sociological Committee still functions as a superstructure, and its methods have not yet penetrated all organs of the Institute’s organism. Acknowledging the difficulties that switching to the track of sociological method entails (for instance, the absence of a sufficient quantity of Marxist art scholars), one must note that the Institute’s work lacks a dominant ideological idea.⁵⁹⁹

⁵⁹⁶ В ОТИМ хотят завоевать себе большинство люди, которые не любят бороться за новые идеи и произведения в музыке и в музыкознании. Они предпочитают спокойно изучать великое в прошлом, в величии чего никто не сомневается. Это они называют историей музыки и такую историю защищают. Для такого ОТИМ характерно убежание от живой музыкальной действительности в дисциплины и отрасли, которые вполне могут изучаться в иных специальных Институтах. Изучая прошлое ради прошлого ОТИМ в лице своего историка оперы Ренессанса со злобой нападает на все яркое в области новой музыки и особенно в области оперы. TsGALI: F. 82, op. 3, ye. kh. 31, l. 114v-115.

⁵⁹⁷ А.В.Финагин предложил следующие вопросы: ...2) Почему именно Правление полагает, что вопрос о двух направлениях в научной работе особенно остро стоит именно в ОТИМ. Почему подвергается разгрому ОТИМ, всегда получавший от ГУСа одобрительные резолюции о своей деятельности, а не ИЗО, неоднократно слышавший из ГУСа критик и неодобрение. ... Затем Р.Л.Грубер предлагает Ф.И.Шмиту следующие вопросы: ... 3) На чем основано мнение Правления о малом контакте с жизнью у ОТИМ. Были ли соответственные официальные постановления ГУСа. Дало ли себе Правление отчет в том, что доля ответственности в этом вопросе лежит может быть и на самом Председателе. И на чем основывается мнение Правления о будто бы археологическом характере работы ОТИМ, TsGALI: F. 82, op. 3, ye. kh. 31, l. 18-18v.

⁵⁹⁸ TsGALI: F. 82, op. 3, ye. kh. 12, l. 92.

⁵⁹⁹ Социологический Комитет является как бы надстройкой и его методы еще не проникли во все части организма Института. Вполне учитывая трудности, с которыми связана постановка работы на основе социологического метода (напр., отсутствие достаточного количества искусствоведов-марксистов), приходится констатировать, что в работе Института нет, в силу указанного, идеологической доминанты. TsGALI: F. 82, op. 3, ye. kh. 31, l. 173.

The Department of Literature took the heat for “the dominance of the formal method, [which] contradicts the Marxist study of literature.”⁶⁰⁰ The Music Department was criticized for working outside the purview of music scholarship; for “chronological understanding” of modernity (i.e. not emphasizing the most ideologically significant recent events), and for its insufficiently sociological methods.⁶⁰¹ Clearly, GUS’s criticism echoed that of Asafyev all too well, although it is not easy to establish a precise nexus between the two.

The reorganization of the Department resulted in the curtailment of almost all projects related to physics, physiology, mathematics and the acoustics of music, leaving only the study of acoustics in relation to Asafyev’s own intonation theory. Shortly after the reform several scholars, who felt that their work did not fit into the reorganized department, petitioned the Board to retain some of the former projects by creating three special commissions: one on monody, another on the history of Russian music, and a third on the history of music-theoretical thought, which would include a physics-mathematical seminar. The request was denied as “inexpedient” and “contradicting the principles on which the reorganization of the Department was based.”⁶⁰²

Asafyev’s dubious rule did not last long: after undergoing ideological purges, on April 10, 1931, the Institute was merged with four other Moscow institutions into the State Academy of Art History,⁶⁰³ and from that moment on Asafyev’s musicological career was based at the Leningrad Conservatory. One of the last letters from Asafyev to Finagin, dated October 25, 1927, reveals that until the very end Asafyev thought of his former student as a confidant; someone who intimately understood his creative and scholarly quest. Moreover, he definitely did not think that Finagin was uninterested in his sociological endeavors:

It seems that I discovered and definitely substantiated something very significant – something that gives rise to a system. In any case, I will work on the soc[iology] of mus[ic]. . . . [M]y thought works powerfully this fall. Look, I connected: 1) the substantiation of the Russian intonation system 2) Symphonism 3) Mus[ical] thought and its logical norms 4) Dialectics of the evolution of forms 5) Dialectics of the evolution of the history of R[ussian] music 6) Issues of musical sociology. Everything cleared up and connected into a single harmonious whole.⁶⁰⁴

⁶⁰⁰ Доминирование формального метода, что замечается и в издательской части (так книга Б.Энгельгардта в корне противоречит марксистскому литературоведению). Ibid.

⁶⁰¹ Compare this to Bryusova’s criticism in 1924 (which was also an evaluation from GUS, since Bryusova was its member), which remained entirely at the level of scholarly differences and had no immediate consequences.

⁶⁰² Протокол Экстренного заседания совета Музо ГИИИ от 24 мая 1928 года.

"Заслушав, на основании постановления Правления ГИИИ от 27 апреля с.г., заключение Секции Музыкальной Культуры от 19 мая с.г. по вопросу об образовании при Секции комиссий по изучению прошлого русской музыки, по изучению одноголосия и по истории музыкально-теоретических воззрений с физико-математическим семинарием при ней, Совет МУЗО, всецело соглашаясь с приведенной в заключении Секции мотивировкой, постановляет, в отмену т. "в" параграфа 1 резолюции Совета МУЗО от 6 апреля с.г. считать организацию названных комиссий нецелесообразной и от проведения ее в жизнь воздержаться. . . . работа же [физико-математического семинария] не стоит ни в какой связи с задачами, стоящими перед МУЗО ГИИИ, и возобновление таковой шло бы в разрез с принципами, положенными в основу реорганизации Отдела. TsGALI: F. 82, op. 3, ye. kh. 31, l. 207, 208v.

⁶⁰³ Kumpán, "Institut istorii iskusstv na rubezhe 1920-1930 godov," 635.

⁶⁰⁴ 25 / X 27. Кажется, я открыл и конкретно обосновал что-то очень существенное - такое, из чего вытекает система. Во всяком случае работать по соц. муз. буду. Вообще за осень мысль у меня работает сильно.

About two weeks later, on November 12, 1927, Finagin would pen his enraged “Letter of the 13” (signed by 13 members of the department) to the Directorial Board, protesting the “insult” that had been dealt to the Department – the complete opposite of the admiring “Letter of the 12,” signed by Asafyev’s students in July 1922. Asafyev probably did not foresee the devastation his actions would bring to his relationship with Finagin. But when he did see the results, he must have considered this relationship collateral damage in his power play, since no attempt to resolve the disagreement is documented in their correspondence, which stopped shortly after the conflict. Three months after confiding to Finagin the inner workings of his scholarly thought, Asafyev wrote in this letter to the Board that he was right to sever, finally, his collaboration with his former protégé, albeit admitting that it was a hard thing to do.⁶⁰⁵

Finagin, like many others, could not tolerate the new intellectual environment. In letters to Andrey Rimsky-Korsakov (the famous composer’s son), who was also a prominent figure at the Department, he laid out a plan for continuing their work outside of the Institute, where they could advance scholarship without “interventions from B.V. [Asafyev], Simeon [Ginzburg] and Glavnauka” and to be free from “demagogical phraseology.”⁶⁰⁶ He found a place to meet and developed a plan of research publications. Rimsky-Korsakov, despite having nothing but “hate and disgust for the spiritual plebeians who threw us out of the Institute,”⁶⁰⁷ rightly pointed out to Finagin that such plans were utopian at best. These letters spelled the end of a relationship, which started only a decade earlier as one of trust, respect and shared vision.

Personal responsibility

The 1920s marked the end of the opposition of science and mysticism and of positivism and idealism. The two defining threads of Russian music criticism came to their illogical conclusion. In the scholarship that came out of the Music Department, and in Asafyev’s scholarly thought in particular, both threads interfused to produce a distinctive and productive conceptual mixture, and both were curtailed when ideological rhetoric, which functioned as a universal signifier of loyalty, finally solidified.

Druskin’s attempt to contextualize musical composition in terms of general “production process” failed because it was not packaged correctly. The idealism of Asafyev’s theory and its adherence to the contemporary movement of energism did not bother Narkompros as soon as it was dressed up in recognizable failsafe tropes. Control was being imposed gradually, but by the end of the 1920s the advancement of both idealist and positivist ideals was stalled by ideological

Смотрите я связал: 1) Обоснования русской системы интонации 2) Симфонизм 3) Муз. мышление и его логические нормы 4) Диалектика эволюции форм 5) Диалектика эволюции истории р. музыки 6) Вопросы муз. социологии. Все прояснилось и связывается в одно стройное целое. RIII: F. 68, op.1, ye. kh. 78, l. 79v, letter no. 69.

⁶⁰⁵ Мнение т. Финагина о моем плане ясно мне показало, как далеко мы разошлись даже в сравнении с эпохой первых расхождений, когда у меня возникло желание уйти из ОТИМ и когда только глубоко тронувшее меня доверие Ученого Совета побудило меня вернуться. Я вижу теперь, что был прав, отказавшись, наконец, от сотрудничества т. Финагина, хотя мне нелегко было это сделать. TsGALI: F. 82, op. 3, ye. kh. 31, l. 112v-113.

⁶⁰⁶ 8 М[а]р[та] 28. Я сделал все мог: нам негде было собираться, мы хотели продолжить свои работы без вмешательства Б.В., Симеона и Главнауки? Извольте! ... При Вашем желании, Вы могли бы встать во главе 10-15 лиц, желающих работать в музыковедении без демагогической фразеологии. RIII: F. 8, г. VII, l. 4-4v.

⁶⁰⁷ 1928, 1 марта. Я, конечно, отнюдь не думаю подрывать дорогих мне [л.7] связей с группой - и преисполнен ??? ненависти и чувства омерзения к духовным плебеям, выгнавшим нас из Института. RIII: F. 68. op. 1, ye. kh. 82, l. 6, letter no. 6-7.

dogma.

The process of the consolidation of this dogma is one of the most fascinating sides of Soviet intellectual life in the 1920s. In conclusion, I propose to take one final look at the Department's yearly report from 1925. There is no reason to suppose that while writing this document, its authors (which most probably included Alexey Finagin) clenched their fists and scribbled the hollow clichés required by the party. They believed they were on the right track in developing the new rigorous methods of doing scholarship.

In its first paragraph, the report spelled out the trope that was gaining formidable significance at the time – the idea of that scholarship needed to “connect to reality” and should not “escape life”:

The history of scientific institutions suggests that a scientific organization is solid and strong only as long as it does not lose organic connection to the relevant demands of reality with which it is contemporaneous – therefore, the Department Council [renounces] both abstract theorizing, unconnected as it is to life, but which some researchers may not have yet outgrown, and the narrow professionalization of practicing musicians.⁶⁰⁸ ... When it comes to the necessity of the Marxist approach ... the Department Council believes that the Marxist method is a method of accounting for past experience and the direction of human activity on the basis of the laws of dialectical development. To apply it to the study of art, if it aspires to become a science, is only possible on the condition of adhering to that “scientific materialism,” which lies in studying specific material according to the laws of scientific thought.⁶⁰⁹

In effect, such a statement was hardly new in 1925. For decades music critics had been calling for the scientific study of music, and for at least as long they assumed that such a study would involve studying the laws of social development (cf. Kazansky's articles). Moreover, it echoed beliefs espoused multiple times at scholarly discussions.⁶¹⁰

And yet, the hindsight that a modern historian possesses does not allow her to filter out the foreboding hue cast on this inconsequential document by the consequences it had. We know that Asafyev capitalized successfully on the trope of an “escape from life,” which ultimately led to the disintegration of the Music Department and of the scholarly paradigm that it had managed to construct in a mere decade. More significantly, we know that the stimulating sociological

⁶⁰⁸ История научных учреждений свидетельствует что любая научная организация крепка и сильна лишь до тех пор, пока она не потеряла органической связи с актуальными запросами современной ей действительности - и, Совет Отдела, поэтому, категорически отрицая как вне-жизненное, отвлеченное теоретизирование, не изжитое еще быть может некоторыми научными работниками, так и узкий профессионализм практиков музыкантов, сочетает в своей практике с одной стороны научную работу с общественно-педагогической и просветительской деятельностью, а с другой стремится ставить профессионально-технические интересы на более широкую базу объективно-научных основ музыкального искусства. TsGALI: F. 82, op. 3, ye. kh. 1, l. 54.

⁶⁰⁹ 4. По вопросу о необходимости марксистского подхода Совет Отдела подтверждая соответствующие тезисы, сформулированные его членами еще в 1924 году, в период организации работ Социологической Секции Отдел полагает, что марксистский метод есть метод учета прошлого опыта и направления человеческой деятельности на основе законов диалектического развития. И то, и другое в применении к искусствоведению, если таковое претендует стать наукой, возможно лишь при условии проведения в своих исследованиях того "научного материализма", который заключается в обработке конкретного материала по законам научного мышления. TsGALI: F. 82, op. 3, ye. kh. 1, l. 54

⁶¹⁰ Cf. Finagin's talk on Odoyevsky and his statement that science should deal with “specific material”

theory, which is all Marxism really was in the beginning, would soon mutate into the bugbear of Soviet science which stalled the development of Soviet humanistic scholarship and hopelessly compromised its reputation in the West.

Knowing this does not allow us to extrapolate lessons from the past and apply them to the present, and thereby shape the future in the Comtian sense. It is the essential unpredictability of the future that moments like this highlight. There was no way for these people to know that their good work made them accessories to Armageddon. They were doing the right thing, until they weren't. There were myriad factors at play in the ideological crackdown of the 1930s, and zooming in on some scholars' sincere enthusiasm for Marxist methods and others' mastery of Soviet rhetoric underscores just a few of them. However, this does not negate the very specific significance that the individual agency of these people had in the chaotic process of shaping the future. Imagine how much harder it would be to achieve ideological pressure of this magnitude in 1932 (when the infamous Creative Unions were instituted), if in 1925 not a single secretary writing up a yearly report phrased it Marxist terms.

Although Finagin's conviction in the impossibility of imposing ideological beliefs from above amazes us with its naivety, there is some truth to it. It would have been impossible to sway an entire country in a particular ideological direction without a great deal of compliance from people who sincerely believed in Soviet ideals, were ignorant of the atrocities that had been already committed in the name of those ideals by 1925, or rode the ideological wave. Maybe the inevitable bias that hindsight affords a historian, so eloquently denounced by writers such as Nassim Nicholas Taleb⁶¹¹ and Duncan J. Watts,⁶¹² is not an altogether bad thing after all. It is impossible to account for the myriad ways in which the future is constantly being shaped, to uncover historical laws and impose them on people in the name of a better future. However, hindsight makes it possible to investigate "personal responsibility": the ways in which certain actions of individual people – whether supporting or dissenting, informed or ignorant, driven or indifferent, high-ranking or subordinate – facilitated certain events of the future. Taken together, their impact was momentous.

⁶¹¹ Nassim Nicholas Taleb, *The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable*, 1st ed. (New York: Random House, 2007); Nassim Nicholas Taleb, *Fooled by Randomness: The Hidden Role of Chance in the Markets and in Life* (New York: Texere, 2001).

⁶¹² Duncan J. Watts, *Everything Is Obvious: Once You Know the Answer*, 1st ed. (New York: Crown Business, 2011).

Conclusion

This dissertation ends at the point when the institutional arrangement of the musicological enterprise in Russia assumed the shape it has had up to the present. In 1931, the Institute of Art History in St. Petersburg, the State Institute of Musical Science, and the State Academy of Artistic Sciences in Moscow ceased to exist in their original form as a part of the massive Soviet campaign of “purges of the Soviet apparatus” that took place in the late 1920s-early 1930s.⁶¹³ The Institute of Art History merged with other institutions and, during the most of the Soviet period, existed as Leningrad State Institute of Theatre, Music and Cinema until its pre-revolutionary name was restored in 1992.⁶¹⁴ Its reorganization, however, equaled its dismantling, since after 1931 it became a different institution in terms of ideology. The same kind of reorganization befell the State Academy of Artistic Sciences, which became the State Academy of Art Studies (Gosudarstvennaya Akademiya Iskusstvoznaniya),⁶¹⁵ while the State Institute of Musical Science merged with the Moscow Conservatory.

The disbanding of the Institute of Art History was the result of a progressive crackdown on the scholarly methods that flourished there (the “formal method” in particular). The activities of the Institute’s music department had already been curtailed by the ideological conflict of 1928. A fundamental restructuring of Soviet cultural life followed. As a result, the St. Petersburg and Moscow conservatories and their recently founded research departments assumed the role of the main (and a case can be made for using the word “only”) institutional basis for musicology in the Soviet Union.

In 1932, following the resolution issued by the Politburo on April 23, 1932 (“On restructuring of literary-artistic organizations”), the Creative Unions were established, radically reorganizing the activities of the Soviet artists and, by extension, musicologists, since they occupied the same institutional space.⁶¹⁶ In 1933, the official organ of the Composers’ Union was founded – the long-lived periodical *Soviet Music* (*Sovetskaya muzika*), devoted to all aspects of Soviet musical life, which exists today under the name *Muzikal’naya akademiya*. Opening with hardline editorials penned by the editor in chief Nikolai Ivanovich Chelyapov and testimonials from public figures praising the Politburo’s “historic resolution,” the journal readily assumed the style that we now recognize as Soviet propaganda, overflowing with repetitive variations on the party line.

Boris Asafyev founded the Musicology Department at the St. Petersburg Conservatory, which ensured at least some continuity between the research methodology developed by him and his colleagues in the 1920s and the subsequent development of Soviet musicology. A life-long professor, Asafyev remained influential, passing down to his pupils the principles he

⁶¹³ Yuliya Nikolayevna Yakimenko, "Iz istorii "chistok apparata": Akademiya Khudozhestvennikh Nauk v 1929 – 1932 " [From the history of "staff purges": The Academy of Artistic Sciences in 1929 – 1932.] *Journal of the Russian State University for the Humanities*, no. 1 (12) (2005). http://www.nivestnik.ru/2005_1/11.shtml (Accessed March 13, 2015)

⁶¹⁴ Galina Viktorovna Kopitova, "Khronika reorganizatsiy i pereimenovaniy Rossiyskogo instituta istorii iskusstv (1912-2012)," [A chronicle of reorganizations and renamings of the Russian Institute of Art History (1912-2012).] *Vremennik Zubovskogo Instituta*, no. 8 (2012): 144-148.

⁶¹⁵ See: Aleksandr Dobrokhoto, "GAKhN: an aesthetics of ruins, or Aleksey Losev's failed project," *Studies in East European Thought* 63, no. 1 (2011): 32-33.

⁶¹⁶ See the text of the resolution on the website of the Moscow State University: <http://www.hist.msu.ru/ER/Etext/USSR/1932.htm> (Accessed March 13, 2015)

formulated in his early years at the Institute, when his magnum opus *Musical Form as a Process* was taking shape.

However, conservatories presented a new institutional context for musicology – a context in which music theory, history, and aesthetics were traditionally conceptualized as subservient to the creative branches of musical labor (as the discussion of the conservatory curriculum in Chapter 1 demonstrated). Just how profound this change was can be gleaned from the programmatic article “On Soviet theoretical musicology,” similar in motivation to Adler’s “The Scope, Method, and Aim of Musicology,” that was published in 1940 in *Soviet Music* by the future patriarch of Soviet musicology Leo Abramovich Mazel.⁶¹⁷ His paradigmatic studies in music analysis, published in the 1960s and 1970s, are still widely used at the St. Petersburg Conservatory.

Having received his training at the newly formed Musicology Department of the Moscow Conservatory under Mikhail Ivanov-Boretsky, Mazel belonged to the first generation of conservatory-trained musicologists. Compared to the programmatic declarations that came out of the Institute during the 1920s, his understanding of the goals of his discipline was very different.⁶¹⁸ Whereas for Asafyev and Finagin, both history and theory represented an undertaking that was essentially distinct from the practice of music, Mazel spelled out his attitude unequivocally: “In essence, musicology should be understood as a specific aspect, a particular type of music-making.”⁶¹⁹ Moreover, not only was musicology a branch of music-making in Mazel’s opinion, it held the same lowly and dependent place in the hierarchy of musical pursuits that the intelligentsia held in relation to “the people,” according to the Soviet understanding of Marxism:

Musicology is a kind of “superstructure” in relation to composition and performance, albeit a necessary superstructure, which must be an organic part of music culture, like the ideological “superstructures” are parts of the social organism. This “superstructure” should originate from a “base” and, in turn, influence it. But without the “base,” isolated from it, unrelated to the main forms of music-making – creative work and performance – it cannot exist.⁶²⁰

This had never been the case at the Institute. There, musicologists had to justify their methods to the Narkompros ideologues, but they never had to defend their profession’s right to exist in terms of another profession. By 1940, conservatory musicologists had been doubly marginalized – as members of superstructure in the social sense (i.e. people not belonging to the “working class”)

⁶¹⁷ Leo Abramovich Mazel, “O sovetskom teoreticheskom muzikoznanii,” [On Soviet theoretical musicology.] *Sovetskaya muzika*, no. 12 (1940): 15-29.

⁶¹⁸ Symbolically, in the text of his article Mazel relied more frequently on the newer term *muzikovedeniye* in place of Asafyev’s *muzikoznaniye*, as if signaling that a change had happened in the discipline, significant enough to warrant a different name.

⁶¹⁹ В сущности, музыковедение следует рассматривать как особую сторону, особый вид *музицирования*. Mazel, “O sovetskom teoreticheskom muzikoznanii,” 19.

⁶²⁰ Ведь музыковедение – это своеобразная «надстройка» над композицией и исполнительством, пусть надстройка необходимая и долженствующая органически входить в музыкальную культуру, подобно тому как идеологические «надстройки» входят в общественный организм. Эта «надстройка» должна вытекать из «базиса» и, в свою очередь, влиять на него. Но существовать без «базиса», в отрыве от него, без связи с основными формами музицирования – творчеством и исполнительством – она не может. *Ibid.*, 29.

and in the professional sense, as theorists among practitioners. The subservient position of musicology to musical practice – a far cry from Bryusova’s belief in the science of music as a future guide for composers – had solidified.

The strategy Mazel used to boost musicology’s prestige was diametrically opposed to the positivist advocacies of scientific methods that we repeatedly encountered in earlier music criticism. Since Mazel’s article aimed to articulate his discipline’s place at an institution that was primarily concerned with the art of music, not its science, he emphasized the subjective and creative side of music theory, maintaining that the working process of a theorist was not devoid of aesthetic pleasure, and was enhanced by intellectual pleasure.⁶²¹ Musicological analysis was a creative act as much as a research process.⁶²²

As Mazel’s primary motivation was to define musicology’s relationship to creative pursuits, he pointed out the similarity between musicologists and performers: both the former and the latter uncovered hidden meanings in the composer’s work and supplied their own creative interpretations, thus adding to the historical accumulation of the layers of meanings around the work.⁶²³ Equating goals of performance and scholarship, he allowed for a certain degree of reciprocity between composition and these two inferior branches of music-making, as both of them elevated great works of arts by contributing to their reception history.

The idea that a work of art “grows” over time was a perfect justification for the consolidation of the performance canon. According to Mazel, the sum of interpretations (analytical or otherwise) remained encoded in the work itself, thus making it richer and more important as the time passed. A musicologist’s task was to provide a “scientific” exegesis of works of art (primarily canonic works of art, as he spoke of Chaikovsky’s symphonies and Bach’s fugues). Mazel’s emphasis on reception history, therefore, was strictly subjective and aesthetic rather than social and cultural, as had been the case at the Institute: the recent example of Narkompros’s crackdown on “vulgar sociology” was still very vivid in the minds of Soviet scholars. Consequently, Mazel’s article focused primarily on studying musical works rather than their social environment (or *bit*), thus switching the *raison d’être* of the discipline from sociology to aesthetics.

Establishing criteria for who could become a musicologist, Mazel stated that such a person should not only be a strong researcher, but a good musician as well.⁶²⁴ An age-old idea – the idea that the person writing on music should necessarily possess fine musical sensibilities – lay behind the scholarly identity Mazel described. However, in Russia such rhetoric had not been

⁶²¹ Можно, продолжая отдаваться музыке и наслаждаться ею, прийти к какому-то выводу, который дает новое удовлетворение (как художественное, так и научное) и повышает наслаждение, внося в него добавочный интеллектуальный элемент. Ibid., 20.

⁶²² Ясно также, что подлинный музыковедческий анализ, будучи научной работой, является в то же время творчески-музыкальным актом как по своему результату (воздействие на содержание и ценность произведения), так и по исходному моменту. Ibid.

⁶²³ Здесь мы подходим к аналогии между исполнителем и музыковедением. ... Когда музыковед раскрывает новые существенные внутренние соотношения в произведении, обнаруживает его связи с другими произведениями, дает своеобразное и глубокое истолкование его содержания, выясняет его историческое место и значение, проводит ряд интересных аналогий с произведениями других искусств и т.д., - он, подобно исполнителю, дающему глубокую и оригинальную интерпретацию, объективно обогащает произведение, увеличивает его ценность, значительность, содержательность. Ibid., 19.

⁶²⁴ Музыковед должен быть и *хорошим музыкантом*, и *сильным научным работником*. Я говорил выше о неизбежной дифференциации композиторов и теоретиков. Но каждый теоретик должен обладать некоторыми композиторскими навыками. Ibid., 29

used for explicit justification of musicology as a research discipline until after the 1920s. Rather, it had been frequently evoked by the detractors of the nascent music studies, apostles of the ineffable. Music scholars themselves were busy positioning their vocation as a positivist, university enterprise in search of general laws.

Mazel also relocated the search for laws from the social to the aesthetic sphere. Condemning analytical relativists, he urged his readers not to neglect “fundamental laws (not of a general socio-historical character, but immediately related to the specific nature of a given branch of art).”⁶²⁵ These laws thus “concentrated in themselves the beauty of many artistic phenomena,” while scientific truths possessed their specific kind of beauty.⁶²⁶ To a great extent, Mazel cast the value of scholarship as aesthetic.

To be sure, Mazel did rely on the Soviet materialist maxim that the world (and music as a part of it) is essentially comprehensible and can be studied scientifically, but only when he assumed a defensive stance, frustrated with those who did not accept the possibility of rational study of music: “Unequivocal acceptance of this maxim should distinguish Soviet musicians from musicians and scholars who hold idealist views.”⁶²⁷ In the next sentence, however, he conceded that such a study should be carried out only by a musically talented person.

Having defined his field in terms acceptable in its new institutional context, Mazel also rebelled against these terms, betraying the double bind of internalized discrimination. He mentioned expectations and attitudes musicologists encountered at the conservatory. “Will I play this piece any better if I read its detailed theoretical analysis?” – many ask.”⁶²⁸ The ubiquity of such expectations, signaled by Mazel’s need to answer them, demonstrated that the old conservatory understanding of theoretical disciplines as a means for producing a better artist was still alive and well. Along the way, Mazel refuted allegations that musicologists and performers wanted to be “smarter than the composer,”⁶²⁹ and such rhetorical questions as “What can ten books on a composer add to his creative output?”⁶³⁰ In conclusion, Mazel complained:

⁶²⁵ В борьбе со схематизмом и метафизическими абстракциями оно нередко отдает некоторую дань релятивизму. ... Подчеркивается, что в истории музыкальных стилей «все течет, все изменяется», и в то же время упускаются из виду те необходимые предпосылки, те коренные, фундаментальные закономерности (не общего социально-исторического характера, а непосредственно связанные со специфической природой данного вида искусства), на основе использования которых это «течение» и «изменение» только и может происходить. Ibid., 27.

⁶²⁶ Концентрируя в себе красоту многих художественных явлений (и представляя в то же время одно из средств раскрытия их индивидуального своеобразия), эти общие принципы обладают, кроме того, специфической красотой, присущей научным истинам. Ibid., 28.

⁶²⁷ Необходимо помнить общее положение, что музыкальное искусство, как и всякое другое явление реального мира, принципиально познаваемо и может (и должно) быть объектом научного исследования. Безоговорочное признание этого положения должно отличать советских музыкантов от музыкантов и ученых, стоящих на позициях идеализма. Другой вопрос, что научный анализ музыкального произведения ... не может не опираться на музыкальное восприятие и доступен только музыкально-одаренному человеку. Ibid., 16

⁶²⁸ Нередко от книги по теории музыки ждут *непосредственной* практической «пользы» для композитора или исполнителя. «Стану ли я играть лучше это произведение, если прочту его подробный теоретический анализ?» - спрашивают многие. Ibid.

⁶²⁹ Упреки по адресу исполнителей (а также музыковедов) в том, что они хотят быть «умнее композитора», справедливы лишь постольку, поскольку эти упреки направлены против попыток интерпретаторов произвольно навязать произведению нечто ему органически чуждое, противоречащее его замыслу. Ibid., 18-19.

⁶³⁰ Таким образом, неправы вопрошающие: «Что могут прибавить к творчеству композитора десять книг о

Unfortunately, among some musicologists it is considered good form to exhibit a kind of unhealthy skepticism in relation to their specialty, and disbelief in what musicology is capable of.⁶³¹

One wonders why.

Similar power dynamics have survived to the present day at the conservatories, and not only in Russia. The idea that musicology helps enhance one's listening experience by uncovering hidden structures or meanings in the work (whether these meanings were intended by the composer or have accumulated in the course of its reception history) persists as one of the primary justifications of musicological endeavors, maybe even the most important one. This argument, however, is not sufficient as a justification of the musicological enterprise, and I remember that it never convinced my interlocutors when they questioned the value of musicology (which happened frequently when I was a student at the St. Petersburg Conservatory).

This notion is founded on the centuries-old hierarchical distinction between amateur and connoisseur listening practices which gained traction in the late eighteenth century with Johann Nikolaus Forkel's "plan of a musical theory through which... the *Liebhaber* can be cultivated into a true, authentic *Kenner*," which he aimed to implement by imparting theoretical knowledge to concert-goers.⁶³² However, such a hierarchical rationale, albeit powerful in the elitist climate of philharmonic culture, starts to fall apart at the encounter with an even more powerful argument: that the simple, emotional listening of an amateur, unadulterated by rationalizations and excessive knowledge, provides a straighter path to the ineffable essence of music.

In the absence of a conceptual means for legitimizing disciplinary identity at its institutional home and establishing its relevance in the eyes of the public, the internalized subservient role of musicology at the conservatories led to a lack of professional infrastructure, still very much the case today. There is no national musicological society, no system of research funding, a shortage of peer-reviewed publishing outlets, and few career opportunities in scholarship, as the scarce musicological departments of the country's conservatories can accommodate only a tiny fraction of their graduates. Besides, the extreme centralization of Russian cultural life makes provincial conservatories an unpopular destination. The lack of developed infrastructure, in turn, is one of the reasons for the formation of what Tatyana Bukina has labeled the musicological "ghetto" - a discipline characterized by a low degree of professional mobility and impermeable disciplinary borders; closed to methodological exchange with other disciplines and with Western branches of musicology; relying on self-perpetuating musicological departments and fostering personal "schools" of thought (students grouped around a professor); lacking self-reflection and motivation for methodological revisionism, as schools by definition depend on cohesion and continuity.⁶³³ Russian musicology's current institutional

нем?» Ibid., 20.

⁶³¹ Музыковедом, как и композитором и исполнителем, должен быть лишь тот, кто чувствует соответствующее призвание, кто любит свое дело и верит в него. К сожалению, среди некоторой части музыковедов считается хорошим тоном какой-то нездоровый скептицизм в отношении своей специальности, неверие в возможности музыкознания. Ibid., 29.

⁶³² Matthew Riley, *Musical Listening in the German Enlightenment: Attention, Wonder and Astonishment* (Aldershot, Hants, England ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate Pub. Co., 2004), 90.

⁶³³ See a comprehensive analysis of the current situation in the last section of Bukina's monograph: Tatyana Vadimovna Bukina, *Muzikal'naya nauka v Rossii 1920-2000 godov (ocherki kul'turnoy istorii)* [Music Scholarship

position – an accidental consequence of the early Soviet politics that thwarted Russian music students' ambitions, ambitions which had been brewing for several the pre-revolutionary decades – remains the main cause of its woes. As this dissertation demonstrates, such an arrangement was not always the case. Neither was it historically inevitable or desired.

Today, people are starting to advocate resurrecting the humanistic musicological orientation that flourished at the Institute of Art History, pointing to the need for methodological renewal and dialogue with musicological traditions outside of Russia.⁶³⁴ As reminiscent these voices are of the post-Soviet nostalgia for the pre-1930s “freedom,”⁶³⁵ and as oblivious as they are to the sketchy power dynamics that proliferated at the Institute's Music Department during the second five-year period of its existence, such propositions define the heart of the problem. Whether or not such they will come to fruition in the near future, a thorough revision is in order: of the Soviet-constructed unproblematic lineage of Russian musicological thought that originated with Stasov, and of the Western perception of it as hopelessly corrupted by Big Brother's unrelenting stare, a perception which emerged during the Cold War.

The revisionist work that this study pursues is similar to research already done over the last few decades in relation to Soviet composers like Prokofiev and Shostakovich – research that complicates the one-dimensional narratives of their relationships to the state. Musicologists and music critics, inasmuch as they were people, were carriers of ideological precepts no less than composers were, whether or not these precepts were enforced by the powers that be: they were themselves indispensable agents of ideological, social, institutional, and aesthetic change. Configurations of their ideas are well preserved in the rich and hitherto neglected archival records, and amply articulated in their publications. This dissertation offers one of the first (but hopefully far from the last) interpretations of these abundant sources, opening another window into the workings of the late Imperial and early Soviet culture.

in Russia in 1920s-2000] (St. Petersburg: Russkaya khristianskaya gumanitarnaya akademiya, 2010), 134-143.

⁶³⁴ Olga Borisovna Manulkina, "From University to Conservatory and Back: Musicological Routes in Russia," in *Musicology Today: Academic Tradition Facing New Intellectual and Social Changes* (Faculty of Liberal Arts & Sciences, Saint-Petersburg State University, 2014); Bukina, *Muzikal'naya nauka v Rossii 1920-2000 godov (ocherki kul'turnoy istorii)*.

⁶³⁵ This kind of nostalgia is now exacerbated by the widespread perception of similarity between today's political regime and the Soviet terror.

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