



OXFORD JOURNALS
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

H\Y'DUFUXcl`cZ`F i gg]Ub`Bcb!@]VYf hm
 5 i h\cf fyt`5`Yi UbXYf`j Uj_]b
 Gci fW. H\Y`A i gjWJ`Ei UfhYf`mž`J c`"+*ž`Bc" (`fk]bhYf ž`%- &ž`dd") (' !)) *
 Di V`]g\YX`Vm`Cl ZcfX`I b]j Yf gjhm`Df Ygg
 GhU`Y`I F @` <http://www.jstor.org/stable/742476>
 5 W\ggYX. `%/#%\$#&\$\$, `&\$.` \$

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>. JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the JSTOR archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Please contact the publisher regarding any further use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at <http://www.jstor.org/action/showPublisher?publisherCode=oup>.

Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

JSTOR is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1995 to build trusted digital archives for scholarship. We work with the scholarly community to preserve their work and the materials they rely upon, and to build a common research platform that promotes the discovery and use of these resources. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



Oxford University Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to The Musical Quarterly.

<http://www.jstor.org>

The Paradox of Russian Non-Liberty

Alexander Ivashkin

The last years of Perestroika and Glasnost brought many changes to the cultural life of the Soviet Union. The changes began in an atmosphere of cautious optimism and included new freedoms to travel, to demonstrate publicly, and to write without the threat of censorship. So far, the changes of the past seven years have yet to produce any significant cultural results, only a reevaluation and a new understanding of old ideas in life, politics, and art. Foremost among these is the idea of traditional Russian non-liberty, which remains as prominent today as it was before the August coup of 1991 and the Second Russian Revolution.

Perhaps the most successful and productive year of Perestroika was 1989. Many new publications and newly published archival materials appeared, and there was also a great increase in the sale of Russian paintings. Soviet composers made many trips abroad, and musicians from all over the world were invited to perform in the Soviet Union. But then disappointment came, and at the moment many things simply do not work anymore. Many musicians and painters have since left the Soviet Union for different Western countries, and their former workshops in basements are now empty. The same is true of performers and composers. You will not meet Alfred Schnittke and Sofia Gubaidulina in Moscow, Valentin Silvestrov in Kiev, or Gia Kancheli in Tbilisi anymore. To reach them, you have to go to Germany or even to the Canary Islands. In fact, one can say that Russian culture exists more now in the West than in Russia itself.

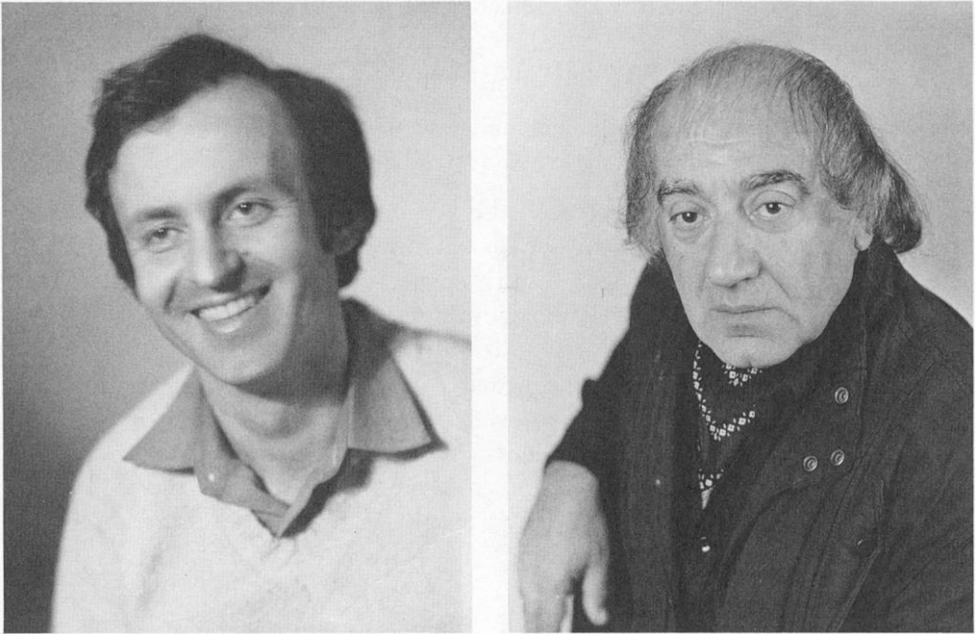
Of course, the cultural context changed completely after the Second Russian Revolution of August 1991: there is no longer any pressure, control, or censorship. Russia has become a new country, but in spite of its new freedom, something is definitely missing. The strong inner tension inherent in most Russian music is disappearing. Art and literature, like today's music, are tending to be less and less social, becoming more and more cold or academic.

These changes are all rather unusual for Russia, where culture has always been presented as a kind of substitute for real life. Of

course this tendency toward an “academical” profile does not signal any lack of “social” activities: you can still read long political essays by Leonid Batkin, famous historian of the Middle Ages in Western Europe; Sergei Averintsev, the leading Russian philosopher and a specialist on ancient Greek literature; and Grigori Pomeranz, philosopher and Zen specialist. After the August Revolution, history is now literally dominated by journalism, but artistic and social history, which have been for such a long time considered together, are becoming more and more distant, separate from each other. While they are more active in everyday life, artists, composers, writers, philosophers are becoming more deeply isolated in their own professional activities. “Literature and philology are being squeezed down, and are losing a central position in our society—toward a less prestigious, but, in my opinion, more appropriate place,” wrote Marietta Chudakova, Russian philologist and biographer of Mikhail Bulgakov, in the Moscow newspaper *Literaturnaia Gazeta*.¹ Moscow composers Vladimir Tarnopolsky, Alexander Raskatov, and Faradg Karaev expressed the same feeling in our conversations in Moscow; in their new compositions, one feels them searching for a rather abstract, pure musical language that is no longer connected with extramusical ideas. “Maybe I’ve lost programmatic, extramusical ideas, but I’ve got a new quality, and new understanding of a pure sound instead,” said Vladimir Tarnopolsky, talking with me about his latest symphonic work, *Cassandra*, recently premiered in Germany. Music does not need to hide anything “dissident.” It has no hidden symbolic meaning; it is just music. I feel this tendency in the latest pieces by Alexander Raskatov (*Dolce far niente* for cello and piano, 1991), Victor Ekimovsky (*Trippelkammervariationen*, 1991), and even in Sofia Gubaidulina (*Alleluiah*). In some respects, the shift represents an attempt to make a step toward Western attitudes.

This cultural process has an interesting parallel in the privatization of the new Russian economy: from the common but hidden symbols to the individual, but open, ideas. In other words, Russian culture is trying to be more objective.

I am not so optimistic about this tendency: it will not last long. All these surface changes do not necessarily represent a basic and fundamental change in Russian culture. Ernst Neizvestnyi, one of the leaders of new Soviet art, wrote, “It is not necessary for creative art and real life to be parallel. When I was most happy, my painting was most dramatic. When I fell in love, my sculptures became ascetic.”² Russian art seldom goes in the same direction as real life. Primarily, that has been because of the very individual, personal, and sometimes



Alexander Raskatov, Avet Terterian

even selfish character of Russian music, poetry, prose, and painting: each work of art always carries both a new message, a new concept, and a very personal one. That is why we do not properly understand modern French or British music; it seems to Russians too dietetic, too vegetarian. Their conception of art is different—to them art is a game, an entertainment, a competition of rational forces. Russian music is much more irrational, controversial, further removed from this “game conception.” A work of Russian art is a confession. There is nothing commonplace in it, nothing decorative, well balanced, or moderate. Everything is extreme, sometimes shocking, strange. We treat music as something more than just music; it is a means to express something spiritual. This does not mean that our musical language is not significant. The Russian school has always been very advanced in the technical sense, but in Russia we have never had an art for the sake of art. Even the Russian avant-garde at the beginning of the twentieth century only used their extreme means to express a new metaphysical image, for the Russian style is, first of all, a metaphysical one. It tries to ensure that all the events, all the written notes, all the words or colors do not conceal the content of the work.

The real content, the real tensions are *between* the words, the colors, or the sounds.

In *The Stone*, Ossip Mandelstam's first book of poems, he writes,

“There is the careful and remote sound of the falling fruit
Amidst the endless melody of the deep wood silence.”

Here, the poet tried to catch the very beginning of the meaning, the image, of poetry—in the sounds of stones, falling fruit, the shimmering of the forest silence. And this crucial problem worried many Russian artists. Where are the beginnings of the word, of meaning? How could it happen that the sounds of inanimate objects become a metaphor, carrying something spiritual?

Russian art tries to discover the origins of art that are embedded in our genetic memory. Valentin Silvestrov, the most sharp-eared composer in the Soviet Union, told me, “I don't create music, I am just writing down what I draw from the genetic well.” Alfred Schnittke said exactly the same thing: “I am just fixing what I hear. . . . It is not me who writes my music, I am just a tool, a bearer.”

Russian music is always in touch with its roots—roots of significance, and meaning. And in that sense Russian art is destructive, for it is concerned more with accident and morphology than with syntax. This is also true in social life; Russians are more prone to self-examination and introspection than to formal social contacts.

That is why all the changes of the last year have not affected Russian music too much. It is, paradoxically, that music was more profound and interesting in an atmosphere of harsh political pressure and social discomfort than today, when Russians have the freedom to travel, to bargain, and to sell. In other words, less freedom, more creativity; more freedom, less creativity. Russian art does not flourish under conditions of total freedom; it is (and was) usually more productive in an atmosphere of social and political contradictions. The long periods of social suppression in Russian history produced music of symbolic character, symbolic with “hidden” levels of meanings, which require investigation and interpretation. Many things in Russian life and art are like an iceberg, and one needs to be experienced to catch the important hints, situated below the surface. The language of Russian art and music is, in many respects, Aesopian language.

The point is that in Russia, culture was always a subject and never an object. In a recent interview in Moscow, composer Vladimir Martynov expressed a very similar feeling: “Every nation has its own mission: Greece developed an idea of beauty, of perfection; Rome created the concept of law. Israel and Russia are dealing with the

understanding of God; the concept of beauty doesn't exist as such: it means just divine incarnation."³ Of course, to be a subject is not an exceptional feature only of Russian culture. In an article on Haydn's "Nonsense of an Ending," based on the ideas of the Russian philologist Mikhail Bakhtin, George Edwards wrote, "Organic unity, balance and closure are not the objects of Haydn's art, but some of its subjects."⁴ But only in Russia have the subjects been the main substance of the art.

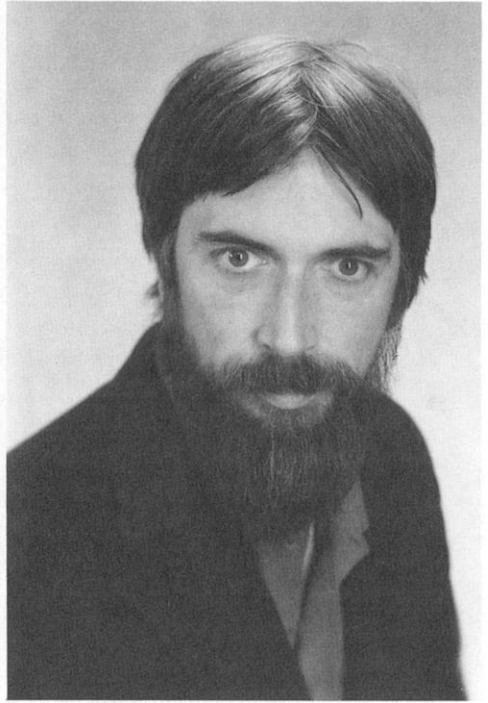
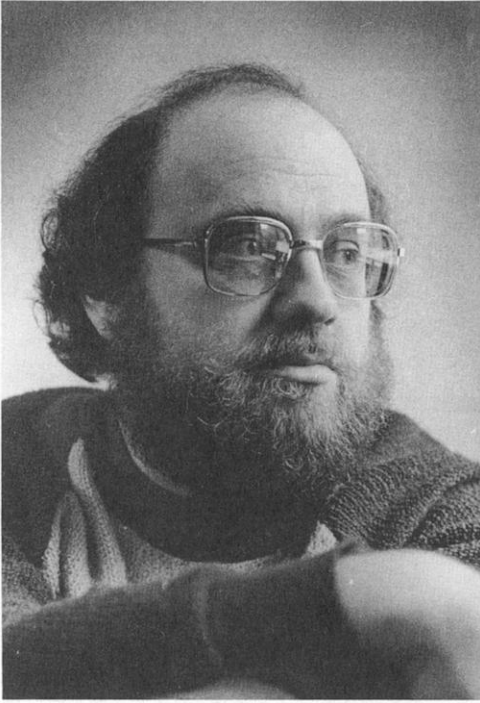
That is why the clash between the avant-garde *objective* surface and the symbolic *subjective* content sometimes produces very strange results. I remember the project for the first performance of Avet Terterian's Sixth Symphony, written for the Zagreb Music Biennial. Terterian is in many respects very Armenian, although one cannot call his music "folkloristic." Almost all of his eight symphonies are, in fact, long sonic meditations based on only a few elements, often just one sustaining note. Terterian believes that Armenia was the cradle of human civilization and that the Armenian language was the basic one for all Indo-European languages, so he put some of the old Armenian alphabet letters into the lines of the score in the Symphony, along with prerecorded services in Armenian churches and sounds of nature—water, stones. Then, Terterian urged the instrumentalists, a relatively small chamber group, to sing the old Armenian letters.

After I received the score for the first performance, I had a meeting with the composer, who also invited the painter Vladimir Yankilevsky and the philosopher Eugen Shiffers. Both men are leading persons in Russian art today; Shiffers is also a theater producer. They quickly grasped the idea of this strange mixture of avant-garde form and quite traditional content. They suggested that the Sixth Symphony should be performed as a short theatrical presentation under the title "The Funeral of European Culture." A large naked mannequin hidden by a blanket would be on the stage, sitting in a wheelchair. At the climax of the piece, the conductor would remove the blanket from the mannequin and push the chair along a sloping ramp into the audience.

One can call "iceberg" the Russian art of any period, starting with Gogol and Dostoevsky, on up to Mandelstam and Akhmatova. This "iceberg" tendency is most clearly revealed in the music of Dmitry Shostakovich, who lived for many years under the terrible pressure of the harsh Stalinist regime, and is especially evident in his last works, such as the Fifteenth Symphony and his Fifteenth String Quartet. Fifteen years ago, Alexander Knaifel, a well-known composer from St. Petersburg, wrote an article about the "Aesopian language"

and symbols in Shostakovich's music. He compared Shostakovich to Dante. Today, Knaifel's music is perhaps the most enigmatic among other "icebergs" in Russian music. He isolates himself from any social activities and lives in a quiet Composers' House near St. Petersburg. Knaifel is not interested in the outer changes of Russian life; he has his own time and space dimensions. Usually his compositions are very long. One of the latest works, *Agnus Dei*, lasts two hours and thirty minutes and consists almost entirely of single sounds of different length, color, and dynamics produced by four instrumentalists playing different instruments, including an electronic generator. After one of the first performances of this work, Valentin Silvestrov told me, "This is a dead end. There is nowhere to go after this work. It is very deep and is pure concept, but there is no exit from it." Nevertheless, Knaifel went even further in a more recent work, *Hommage à Akhmatova*, performed at the Almeida Festival in 1989. Written for a cellist and singer, it uses some verses of Akhmatova, but they are not audible. The lines of Akhmatova's poems are just written, like subtitles in a movie, under the instrumental lines. What is interesting in Knaifel's scores is his notation. Reading the score, you often cannot imagine how it would sound. You have to be drawn into the work to find the key to it. The composer told me that this difference between "written" and "sounding" is actually built into his works. Knaifel considers music not as a text which everybody can read, but as something different which we need to discover by research or interpretation.

Another major feature of Russian art is that it draws you in as a participant. A work of Russian art is an event, an action, which involves you, which does not leave you outside. Why? Perhaps because Russian art was always very oral, in the broad sense of this word. Dostoevsky wrote in the *Writer's Diary* in 1877, "There are very popular stories about saints' lives—*Chetji-Miney*—all over Russia. That's because many people, many generations know these stories by heart, not from books, just from other people. There is something penitential in these stories for the Russian soul. Many people, even before they learn reading, know these stories."⁵ The written text of a work of art is not as important for Russian art as it is for Western culture. For Russian people, what is much more important is what lies behind the text. The text of a piece of music, as in Knaifel's works, becomes an activator of our associations, of our activities. Ferdinand de Saussure was the first to establish the difference between speech, "parole," and language, "langue." In the case of Russian culture, speech prevails. You have to endure all the events in Russian music, not just "read" them from a remote, impersonal distance.



Alexander Knaifel, Vladimir Martynov

That is probably why the most popular literature in the 1970s was not fiction, but scientific research essays about fiction or art. An urge to interpret, to “endure” is inherent in Russian culture. You will never find just a ready-made product in art or in music. This is true also of Russian icons; your position in relation to an icon when you view it is very mobile, multi-angled. To understand its symbolic meaning, you have to enter the space of the icon and move in different directions.

Of course, this feature of Russian culture is connected quite closely with the Russian lifestyle. The social surface of Russian life was almost always false and empty, arranged and constructed only for political reasons, so the real intellectual currents emerged in art. Gradually, Russian art became a substitute for reality, while real, everyday life was transformed into nightmare and illusion. Many Russian people lived only in art, music, or poetry instead of in real life because they had no other life. Of course, it is not the same now; since August 1991 the most popular kind of literature is the newspaper.

A good example of the “orality” in Russian music is Vladimir Martynov, who teaches music at the Orthodox Church College in Zagorsk and writes music for the church services. Of course, in this case he writes only vocal parts without any score, but he does the same even if writing a piece for normal concert performance, as in a new piece, *The Triumph of Aerobics* for percussion ensemble, or in the piece *Leaf from an Album* for chamber group. By composing this way, Martynov wishes to underline that music is not a product of the composer’s work. Music exists only when it sounds in oral practice. A piece of music does not exist in a fixed, written text. Music itself is not a text; it emerges only in sounds in performance practice. That is why the conductor of the *Leaf from an Album* tears a blank sheet of paper, which he has instead of the score at the music stand, to stop the performers. The composition collapses; it does not finish.

The fateful role of Russia is to join West and East, in both a social and cultural sense. In the past, there was no real contact between the culture of the West and Russia. While the West experienced democracy, Russia remained under the Tartar yoke. We had no real bourgeoisie; the best of our intelligentsia was lost during the Stalin repressions. Finally, the communists destroyed many cultural institutions and traditions. Russia never had freedom. And life in Russia was never so scheduled, so well organized, as in the West, so the perception of Western traditions and cultural patterns could not be direct; there was always some Russian amendment, some modification.

Russian art and music became known to Europe in the nineteenth century. At first it seemed, from a European point of view, a little wild, not quite professional, exaggerated. In such artists as Gogol, Dostoevsky, Mussorgsky, Tolstoy, the range and intensity of their images, problems, passions were much greater than in any European art. But, paradoxically, the stimuli and patterns of their very original and powerful art were actually taken from Western Europe, mostly France and Germany. In the twentieth century, however, many Western artists were influenced by Russian culture. Russian “amendments,” Russian attitudes taken up by Western art added a great deal to the development of world culture, but the social background for such productive interchange was very different. In spite of the social and political backwardness of Russia, the heterogeneity of its society, and its lack of freedom and education, the results were remarkable.

Another interchange of ideas happened after Khrushchev’s thaw. At first, Soviet art was able to absorb new Western achievements during a brief period in the late 1960s. Then the Iron Curtain fell

again. The spiritual tendencies in Russian art and music moved underground; Western technical achievements were not developed, but rather reevaluated.

I can understand why Western countries and their governments are afraid of the increasing migration of Russians to the West. It is not merely a demographic or economic problem; it is also an important and dangerous psychological and cultural question. Russians as the result of their different (from the Western point of view) lifestyle, tend to destroy Western order, to rearrange this order in their own style, and then to use it for their own goals. This is not just a Russian “chaotic” or “Slavic” irrationalism, but rather the development of a new type of culture, a meta-culture. Meta-culture takes different traditions, different idioms, and puts them into a new context, or at a different level. These idioms, traditions, ready-made products, of particular cultures are amalgamated in a meta- (“after”-) culture, where they begin to function as primary elements of a new parasitic culture, and they are productive at the same time. For example, the heroes of works by James Joyce, Charles Ives, Luciano Berio are styles and historical traditions, mixed and melted together.

Russian art of the twentieth century is very meta-cultural. So too is American art, or the art of any young country. These countries borrow and transform art forms of old civilizations, “quote” them, so to speak. “Everybody quotes,” wrote Ralph Waldo Emerson, “quotation is the bearer of the truth.” Emerson did not mean direct quotation, but the concentrated result of certain cultural developments. We draw material from the genetic well of culture. That is why we do not need intermediary steps; they have already been taken by previous generations and cultures. Instead, we use this concentrated product of culture, and then we may transform it, reevaluate it, or perhaps merely follow it. In any case, our creative activity rises to a different level; we operate with many different traditions and materials from a bird’s-eye point of view. Therefore it is not just music, but something different: meta-music, or post-music. Developing, returning to the same important elements, repetitions, introspection, lack of development—all these features are typical of the new Russian music of the 1980s.

Think of the titles of the works by Valentin Silvestrov, written in the 1980s: *Postludium*, *Postscriptum*, and even *Post-Symphony* (the Fifth). What happens in his *Post-Symphony*? Nothing from the point of view of traditional symphonic developments. There is the articulation of a few very simple, symbolically treated elements; the use of allusions instead of active, “thematic” materials; the lengthening of

static time; the emphasis of the importance of each particular moment rather than the development of structural unity. The work seems to be a large separate coda, not a complete symphony. This is a very typical approach toward form in modern Russian music of recent years, not merely in the music of Valentin Silvestrov.

Moscow composer Vladimir Tarnopolsky constructs his musical forms like preludes: something starts, repeats, but then does not develop. There is searching, previewing, an attempt to begin something, and then a refusal, a failure. One of his latest pieces is named *Prelude (Choralvorspiel "Jesu, diene tiefen Wunden")*; it collapses after quite dynamic events occur in the composition. His other works have a similar character. For example, the Piano Trio *Troisty muzyky (Musique triste)* is nothing but the "tuning" of instruments; the piano is prepared in the manner of the Ukrainian bandora. The entire piece is just a preparation to play; only at the very end does the music finally "start." The players sing primitive choral tunes to words from "Christmas Song about Misery," a philosophical text by the eighteenth-century Ukrainian philosopher Grigori Skovoroda. Of course, it sounds very nonprofessional, but that is what the composer wishes to convey: music dies if it is fixed in patterns.

Tarnopolsky went even further in his Second Trio for clarinet, titled *Echoes of the Last Day*, which was performed at last year's Huddersfield Festival. It begins with a search for sound (not necessarily tuning), and sounds like chaos. After attempts to find its way, to start an action, we hear the German words "rechts-links," pronounced by the instrumentalists. Then, this symbol of rational mechanicism changes as it is replaced by the typical Russian "eternal" question, "Chto delatj?" ("What to do," "What next?"). This half-tragic, half-comic point marks the climax of the work, and it eventually dies away in noises and whispers. This idea signifies the crucial problem of Soviet music of recent years: the rejection of the traditional concept of development as a mechanical one; the nonacceptance of Western syntax in musical forms; in short, the acceptance of Western idioms and patterns only as material for reevaluation, for use in a meta-musical manner, with the emphasis on the morphology and accident of every separate sound element. However, the latest work by Tarnopolsky, *Cassandra*, represents an opposite direction—the "post-August" tendencies of an abstract sound context.

Usually there is a close connection between the social climate and musical forms at any period of history. For instance, sonata form emerged during the age of rationalism and enlightenment. The Russian philosopher Georgy Gachev considers sonata form to be a child of the era of the great geographical discoveries, when the ideas of space,



Vladimir Tarnopolsky

contrasts, and development became dominant. You travel—this is the exposition; you are away from native Europe—the development section; you return—the recapitulation.

The fugue was more suitable for small cities, expressing the idea of fixed rules and a guaranteed course of events. Of course, there were the possibilities of irrational, mystical occurrences, but in general, the fixed rules in the arts—as the stable events in life—were a warranty and condition for access to the opposite.

But in the sonata and in the fugue, the idea of development—the idea of time—was connected with the idea of a circle, or a spiral. If you do not come back from your journey, your journey is a disaster. If you write a work without a recapitulation, that is a disaster too.

The gap between the rational and irrational spheres, depending on the requirements of a particular period of history, sometimes became quite wide. Sonatas by Liszt or Scriabine demonstrate a very free treatment of the idea of development and return. But still, the basic idea of logical perfection in a work of art was closed, not open; pattern was very powerful. Then, one can find the most tragic contradiction between an irrational landscape in music and an extremely rational serial technique in Schoenberg's last works, such as his String Trio, op. 45. This contradiction demonstrates an already changed

perception of the world's order and disorder. The twentieth-century conception of the world is far from being just rationalistic; to many theorists the world consists of quite well-known, investigated components, but connections between these components are indiscernible—irrational—especially on micro levels.

Let me briefly comment on Russian “amendments” to this concept of musical forms as a reflection of global order and disorder. Of course, irrational and personal elements of disorder were always part of classical music forms. What do Mozart's codas mean? They are an attempt to cross all the previous development, to use a pedal point, to let us enjoy, by irrational repetition, something that has already been accomplished. From the structural point of view, such a coda means nothing, but often, these codas are the most important and expressive sections of Mozart's music. Later in the nineteenth century even the finales of symphonies are merely contemplative codas; their traditional functions of “explanation of everything” and successful conclusion are transformed into something different. Alfred Schnittke explained to me his idea of the modification of the classical, rationalistic finale into an irrational, personal coda: “The finale,” said Schnittke, “which must explain everything, doesn't exist any more since Tchaikovsky's Sixth and Mahler's Symphonies. I realized that such finales were born when atheism appeared. There is no longer a 100 percent good finale.”

In the symphonies and quartets of Dmitry Shostakovich, the entire finale appears to be a big, nonstructural coda. Sometimes the whole work is only coda (like the Fifteenth String Quartet). The Russian attitude tends toward this development. The large form becomes more and more irrational, less and less structural. And that is because nowhere, except in Russia, have art and music been so firmly bound to the political and social situation. Nowhere, except in Russia, has art been such a substitute for real life. Nowhere, except in Russia, has the real life of a great country with enormous intellectual potential also been so empty and hopeless. Nowhere else has art taken the place of real life on such a large scale.

In the 1970s, at the time of Brezhnev, under terrible political pressure, Soviet composers began to write large musical compositions; they started to organize a large musical space. It was an attempt to create an ideal sound model for the emptiness and darkness of real life. Very often, searching for the ideal image, composers descended to the utmost depth of linguistic simplicity, then invested it with greater strength, and turned it back into a sign, or symbol, imbued with the light of current history. Russian music, since Shostakovich, has rejected the importance of logical development and replaced it with

an irrational shimmering (exactly what Mozart did in his classical codas) of the most important symbolic elements. To a Russian music is not a text, not a construction; it is a special kind of reality. Music emerges in organic juxtapositions of important elements, rather than in a mechanical, strictly logical development of the main theme or idea. Simple elements play a very important role in the symphonies of Schnittke, Gubaidulina, Terterian, Kancheli, Silvestrov, Tishenko, Korndorf. Those elements—in different contexts—practically organize musical form, becoming points of orientation in the flow of different and contrasting events. The spaces (and the time) in Soviet music of the 1970s and 1980s are living, real spaces, not just abstractions.

I have discussed the morphological, rather than syntactic, character of Russian musical mentality. We borrow Western syntax and destroy it, moving deeper to the roots, paying more attention to the expression of the particular moment than to its structure. And here is another Russian “amendment”: the interpretation of a work of art is ephemeral. Music exists while it sounds, then continues to exist in memory and thoughts, not in archives or on paper or in analytical dissertation. This attitude, produced by Russian life itself, is very close to the performers’ attitudes. That is why I call it the “performance ephemera” of Russian music. The performer tries to catch the most important “points” of music and highlight them to show the unity of the work. A musicologist tends to compare a new work with older works, with patterns known to him. The psychology of Russian composers is now much closer to the performers’ points of view.

The “performance ephemera” of Russian music is closely connected to the Russian idea of beauty. According to Russian mentality, beauty itself is ephemeral. This is probably an Oriental feature, like the Japanese art of flower arrangement, which is also ephemeral. All ephemeral things, and only ephemeral things, are beautiful for Russians: music, performance art, and ultimately life itself.

The present period of Russian history is very unclear. We do not know what will happen to Russian music. But the big “coda,” I hope, is certainly over now, and we are standing at the door of new beginnings. Now we can export our music and art; Russian music and Russian composers are known everywhere. Sometimes it seems to be not far away from our own century’s very common stream of *fin de siècle*, the end of both the century and of the millennium. “Everything must be sold” is the typical attitude for such transitional periods. And, as has happened before in history during similar “ends” and “transitions,” we just think about the modifications of what we have already accomplished. We just do not notice something new; perhaps it has already been born.

But I do not think this “new” is just an attempt to establish a pure, abstract, Western-like art, which seems at the moment to be acceptable for post-August Russia. I believe Russia will never be a typical Western country. Moreover, musicians, composers, artists who leave Russia now will produce a huge Russian irrational invasion in the West. Borders of Russian culture, as never before, will be extremely wide.

Russian culture is very strong. But for Western civilized cultures it might be dangerous. It combines art and life and presents a completely different attitude to creative work. For Western art, unfamiliar with Russian “amendments,” Russian influence might be very painful. Russian art always contains elements of “illness” which can be very productive, but could also destroy a very well organized tradition of Western art.

Of course, there are positive examples of the influence of Russian mentality on Western artists. I see this influence in the works of George Crumb, Olivier Messiaen, Gyorgy Kurtag. But a new wave of Russian immigration might produce a huge invasion of Russian irrationalism in all the arts. Be sure, it is not so easy to deal with. Be careful.

Notes

1. M. Chudakova, “Uglubit’sa v chestny akademizm,” *Literaturnaia Gazeta* 48 (1991): 11.
2. E. Neizvestnyi, *Govorit Neizvestnyi* (Frankfurt: Possev-Verlag, 1984), 140.
3. Vladimir Martynov, “Bog povelevaet, chtoby zhizn’ byla psalmom” [“God wants our life to be a Psalm”], *Sovetskaia Muzyka* 6 (1991): 42.
4. George Edwards, “The Nonsense of an Ending: Closure in Haydn’s String Quartets,” *Musical Quarterly* 75, no. 3 (1991): 229.
5. F. M. Dostoevsky, *O russkoi literature* (Moscow: Sovremennik, 1987), 270.