The Symphonic Anti-utopia as a Conscious Necessity

(Certain Features of Soviet Symphonic Composition of the 1920s and Early 1930s on the Example of Gavriil Popov's First Symphony)

"...onwards and higher..." Vassily Kandinsky "Concerning the Spiritual in Art"

"Everything must be changed. Things should be arranged in such a way that everything would become new; so that our false, dirty, boring, ugly life would become a just, clean, happy and beautiful life...With your entire bodies, all your hearts, with all your consciousness – listen to the Revolution" Alexander Blok "The Intellectuals and the Revolution"

The symphonic legacy of the Soviet composers of the 1920s and the early 1930s could be in al fairness examined as a transitional period between such lofty surges of symphonic thought as the music of Scriabin and Stravinsky of the time of "The Rite of Spring" and the works of Shostakovich and Prokofiev of the late 1930s and early 1950s. The first fifteen years of the post-revolutionary era discloses a contradictory picture of reevaluation of the artistic experience of the past and simultaneously of mastering new methods and new compositional techniques. As a result at the poles of the era one could find artists with not merely different styles but also differing aesthetical positions and world-views. Thus, Romantic-Modernist traditions are upheld by Nikolai Myaskovsky and Vladimir Shcherbatchov in their symphonies. Attempts at revolutionary restructuring of symphonic genres from the perspective of language and form were carried out by Alexander Mosolov, Dmitri Shostakovich and Nikolai Roslavetz. A search for means of adaptation of classical methods within the framework of anti-traditionalism was carried out by Popov, and in the early 1930s - by Shostakovich. However, notwithstanding the diversity of stylistic tendencies and the differences of the aesthetical positions, virtually all the significant composers of the era were united by a common theme, previously indicated by Alexander Blok at the dawn of the revolutionary changes in his article "The Intellectuals and the Revolution," in which the problem of moral and civil self-determination in the conditions of the collapse of the old world, as well as the attitude towards the past and the future are determined in the context of actual artistic challenges.

Of course, the theme "intellectuals and revolution" had been disclosed in Soviet symphonic writing in various ways. For example, Myaskovsky in his Sixth and Seventh Symphonies and Shcherbatchov in his Second Symphony, based on Blok's poetry solve this problem on the basis of traditional perceptions, juxtaposing the inner world of the artist with the dramatic turns of history, this way, asserting the impenetrability of eternal truths and poetic freedom. Roslavetz perceives the phenomenon of time from a utopian position, attempting to place an equals sign between the innovation of artistic language with revolutionary changes in society. However, the collision, created from this identification creates a quasi-romantic image of a restless spirit, rising, just like according to Scriabin, to self-assertion of the ideal, in this case, the ideal of the revolution (as in his symphonic poem "Komsomolia"). Shostakovich in his Second and Third Symphonies, Mosolov in his "Iron Foundry" and Schillinger in his symphonic poem "October" attempt to reflect one of the most popular aesthetic symbols of time, namely, the festive utopia (of the urbanistic, revolutionary type), created by the avant-garde, disclosed by means of the tri-temporal dramaturgy (for discussion of tri-temporal dramaturgy, see 6, 34–35), within the framework of which the spheres of imagery in the domain of genre and subject matter are delimited to the greatest degree and personify by themselves the struggle of the past (the oppressive and grotesque) with the present (the heroic and brave), projecting this struggle onto the bright future. The problem of the attitude of the intellectuals towards the revolution is disclosed here as an attempt of forming a positive symbol of the era, which already has a direct connection with Soviet mythology (the October, the Revolution, the Proletariat, Labor, the First of May, etc.).

Gavriil Popov at the turn of the 1920s and 1930s, and then later Dmitri Shostakovich during the transitory period of his creative path, attempt to combine the traditional dramaturgical collisions with the avant-garde

tri-temporal space, this way attempting to create large-scale synthetic conceptions. This exceptionally difficult challenge was overcome during the examined time-period, first by Gavriil Popov in his First Symphony, whereas Dmitri Shostakovich solved it somewhat later – in his Fourth Symphony. The hidden program of the three-movement cycle of Popov's First Symphony is also genetically connected with the theme of "the intellectuals and the revolution". However, its interpretation in the political conditions, when the expectations of the future world of happiness were not fulfilled, turned out to be quite ambiguous. The historical optimism, inherited from the avant-garde, no longer helped to form up a life-asserting conception. In the process of creation, in the musical work an anti-utopian, alternative line of thinking was drawn out, disclosed as the tragic position of the human being, placed in the whirlpool of the revolution, having followed it but, in the long run, having lost faith in both the revolution and in human beings.

So how is it, that this alternative had been formed, and from the revolutionary utopia, extolled by Blok a large-scale dramatic conception grew, which was able by the sheer force of the musical texture to refute the mythology of both the revolution and the totalitarian system, built in the early 1930s?

In order to answer this question, let us attempt to solve two basic problems, namely: a) how the utopian world-view reflects within Russian symphonic music of the first three decades of the 20th century; b) how on the level of musical thematicism the dramaturgy is built, allowing for discussion of an anti-utopian perception of the composer's perception.

It is obvious that the idea of utopia has been an unalienable companion of humanity from its earliest times. The aspiration to live in a better, more just world, presents a natural inclination of all human beings. Hence, the temptation to build models of the future in the present was always very considerable. In addition, regardless of the possibilities of realization of utopian projects, their capability of influencing social consciousness possessed a veritably hypnotic power. One example of this could by provided by the utopias of Chernyshevsky, which compelled an entire generation of Russian intellectuals to imitate his heroes, this way, transforming a fictional reality into a historical fact? As for the revolutionary, communist utopia, the desire to carry it out into life in the 20th century has veritably turned the world over.

Obviously, in the beginning of the 20th century, hardly any of the artists could withstand the dreams of the bright future. The regeneration of the outdated old world began to acquire factual delineations. The "previously unheard changes" and the "previously unfathomed uprisings" had gradually turned into reality. They had also turned into realities of art, including the art of music. This way, already at the beginning of the 20th century the finished artistic embodiment of the presentiment of the "bright future" appears in the music of Alexander Scriabin. The "Divine Poem," the "Poem of Ecstasy," "Prometheus," the sketches for the "Prefatory Action" and other works by the composer in their mystical-philosophical program contain the most important and indispensible characteristics of utopia - modeling the captivating, inspired, free world, distanced from the ugly reality. However, the vision of the future, according to Scriabin, discloses as a mystical action of transformation of the human spirit and of all reality. "In 'Prometheus' the action of creation of a new world is unfolded, that world which is disclosed before the spiritual gaze of the human being in an ecstatic rapture. /.../ Is it not that holy city, the "New Jerusalem" that is extolled at the end of Scriabin's 'Prometheus,' of which the prophets, the author of the Book of the Revelation and all the visionaries had dreamed?" Igor Glebov (Boris Asafiev) had marveled (5, 46). "The proud conception of Scriabin about the human being-turned-god," – the same author emphasized – "placed the human spirit in the center of the universe as the sun of the universe. /.../ Scriabin dreamed of a powerful entity, which would know e v e r y t h i n g, having experienced everything, and would direct the currents of the worlds according to its own discretion. The Universe would merge with this entity. /.../ The Mysterium – the conception of which was Scriabin's guiding star throughout his life /.../, was meant particularly to become this type of action of fulfillment of all destinies.

Scriabin was filled with the same dreams and with the same visions which had gripped the unknown author of the Apocalypse, but Scriabin did not think of the divine spirit, building a new earth separately from the human being, whereas "the mighty human spirit merged in his imagination with the Godhead" (5, 18). «The interest in esoteric ideas," Anton Rovner notices, "started to prevail in Scriabin's music since the time of his Third Symphony, "The Divine Poem" and strengthened during the course of the years. At first Scriabin carried out a grandiose, extravagant conception, the "Mysterium," the goal of which was to be the transformation of the entire universe and all of humanity by means of a willful ecstatic annihilation and transformation to a higher spiritual level. In this project, for which Scriabin planned to build a temple in India, all humanity should be involved" (7, 205). What is this if not a utopia? What is it if not an example not only of a philosophical foundation for the future of humanity, but also the approach to a <u>materialization</u>, albeit, an unachievable one, of this conception? This is why, notwithstanding the fact that Scriabin's utopia was, first of all, connected with spiritual rebirth, its essential aesthetical and ethical accents turn out to be quite concrete, visible, and turned towards real life. As a result, these accents become topical, not only for admirers of demiurgic poetics and esotericism but also for the artists of the avant-garde, who recognized in Scriabin's music a revolutionary underlying message.

So what did it consist of, and what features of the avant-garde utopia proper are demonstrated in Scriabin's music as evident for the young generation of the "futurist" rebels?

The first is a stately and steadfast optimism, based on the overcoming of reflection, inertia and contemplation, which corresponded to the futurist representation of art as a source of energy and movement. It is not difficult to suppose that the heroic histrionics, bringing out the sturdy willful themes onto the forefront, the intonational contours of which were determined by an active movement upwards and were stressed by signal and anthem lines, was perceived by the young generation as a glorification of the reformatory creative element, the aim of which was the future (Examples N. 1, 4, 5, 7). Here a remarkable alternative was formed, which found its further development in the 1920s, – namely, the alternative to the past, which was associated with weak-willed Apocalyptic and exalted emotional states.

The second is that Scriabin's musical utopia, in addition to its characteristic musical intensity, had also realized itself in terms of a very unusual concentric form (layered upon the stencil of sonata form) and recreating in the consciousness of the listener a grandiose ascending spiral, the coils of which coincided with culmination surges, and the top of which presented a coda-apotheosis, which absorbed all the semantics of the compositions in it (in the cases of the "Prefatory Action" and "Prometheus").

The third is that Scriabin's utopia turned out to be inherently festive and devoid of conflict, which likewise corresponded in the views of the revolutionary generation to the image of the utopia. Scriabin's "sun city" is initially free of contradiction, as all the elements of musical construction (the horizontal, the vertical and the diagonal) have been predetermined and interconnected with a common thematic core, their contrast having a purely external quality, not presuming qualitative changes of the semantics affixed to them.

The fourth is that Scriabin's symphonic utopia was founded upon massive symphonic resources (not an insignificant aspect, the significance of which was to strike the listener with the grandiosity of the instrumental caliber). Here it is necessary to mention the semantics of timbre. The timbre of the trumpet and the brass section in general was utilized within the framework of dynamic growth, leading to the final triumph, the apotheosis of the willful impulse (Notes 1, 2, 5–7, 9). In this part of the utopian conception it is interesting to note that the representatives of the generation of the avant-garde (Roslavetz, Schillinger, Mosolov, Shostakovich and Popov) also tried to use massive orchestral forces. For instance, Roslavetz's "Komsomolia" features an orchestra with quadruple woodwinds with two cornets, four trumpets, six horns, two harps and pianos. Schillinger's "October" features an orchestra with triple woodwinds with four horns, an expanded group of percussion instruments and piano; finally, Popov's First Symphony features an orchestra with quadruple woodwinds with thorns and a large set of percussion instruments and two harps (notice that the composer demands a total of 12 contrabasses in his orchestral ensemble!)

As for the brass and especially the timbre of the trumpet, this particular instrumental color has definitively established itself in their musical output as a symbol of revolutionary will and a festive triumphant element (Examples N. 10, 12, 13, 17, 19–22, 26, 30).

Of course, the symphonic conceptions of Scriabin as well as his philosophical views were greatly distant from the utopia which began to unfold in the 1920s. anti-traditionalism, anti-romanticism and, most importantly, the ideological pathos – that was the line of demarcation which divided Scriabin's aesthetics from the avant-garde. The avant-garde utopia formed at the springboard of the social-political mythology. In its aesthetical schemes the avant-garde endowed the future with veritably material attributes. Hence, within the framework of art, broad dissemination is bestowed upon the revolutionary, festive utopia, in which the social revolution is perceived as a genuine meaning of the future, indentified with a concrete social system (socialism, communism), as in the case of Mayakovsky. On the other hand, in the early 1920s the avant-garde formed yet another variety of utopia, – namely, the industrial, machine-related (for instance, in the artistic legacy of the constructivists, the production workers and others). According to it, the bright future is inseparable from urbanistic growth as well as scientific, technical and industrial progress. However, notwithstanding the nuances of interpretation, the avant-garde utopia generally conceived of the future through the prism of social well-being, order and collective happiness.

Of course, the embodiment of this utopia in art, for instance, in music, demanded a new symbology, which utilized the recognizable traits of the time, bold contrasts of style and a modern musical language. It is particularly on this new wave of innovation in symphonic art that principally new pitch systems become

disseminated (such as, for instance, Nikolai Roslavetz's technique of "synthetic chords"), and anti-traditional dramaturgical schemes become current (including the aforementioned tri-temporal space in the works of Mosolov, Shostakovich and Schillinger).

However Scriabin's conception of the future had not yet exhausted all of its resources in the music of the 1920s, in the aspects of its musical form and thematicism. Upon close examination it is not difficult to discover a relatedness of intonations (albeit in new modal and scalar conditions), as well as a stereotyped solution for a Finale or coda in the symphonic compositions by Scriabin and the composers of the Soviet avant-garde.

In the first case, the themes of the will, directed "onwards and upwards," as well as resolute imperative lines retain their desirability. Only their semantics change. Now the themes of the will, self-assertion, created spirits, flight, dreams, etc. are interpreted as themes, which reflect the spirit of the revolutionary struggle, machine labor and an urbanistic future. As a result, paradoxically, theaticism, which had previously personified an aspiration towards the other-worldly hights, turns into a thematicism, which brings out the earthly features, determined by genres: an anthem-like tread of revolutionary songs and marches, as well as the depictive sonorical force of machine rhythms. Here it suffices to point at the similarity of the "machinery" themes of Mosolov (the Fifth Sonata, "The Iron Foundry" and others) and the themes, symbolizing the mythology of revolutionary struggle and labor in Shostakovich's music (the Second and Third Symphonies) with the themes of Scriabin. In all of these cases there is the same dotted-line step, the same majestic signal impulse, the same accents of the will, the same upsurges of open fourths and fifths (Examples N. 1–12, 14–16, 19, 27–31). Also noteworthy in thus urban context are the intonational coincidences with Nikolai Roslavetz's "Komsomolia" and Joseph Schillinger's "October" (Examples N. 20–23, 25, 26).

As for the second aspect – namely, the structural similarity and the solution of the problem of the Finale – here it is likewise not difficult to find points of contiguity between the musical legacy of Scriabin and his successors.

The image of the avant-garde utopia in the symphonic music, as well as in that of Scriabin, is unfolded in a circle-like manner. The concentric variant formation was characteristic for the aforementioned symphonies by Shostakovich, Nikolai Roslavetz's "Komsomolia" and Joseph Schillinger's "October" (the same idea would be picked up by the first and third movements of Gavriil Popov's First Symphony). In Mosolov's "Iron-Foundry" the concentric unfolding seemed to be absent. However, this was only so upon a first glance. After all, the variation, total-ostinato layering of textural strata in that famous composition presents the same method of movement in circles. Only the movement is not on a horizontal but on a vertical plane, which, naturally adds a dynamic element to the form and brings closer the culmination of the recapitulation.

As for the Finale, the coda-apotheosis: here the Soviet composers of the 1920s and the early 1930s almost unanimously attempted to model the festive picture of "Prometheus" and, especially, the "Poem of Ecstasy". The coda-apotheosis in all the aforementioned cases was called upon to crown the concentric ascent with the might of the orchestral sound, the domination of the major color, and in the case of Shostakovich and Roslavetz, this coda was also intensified by choral timbres (once again, just like in "Prometheus"). More over, in the case of Shostakovich, the choral Finales within the frameworks of the grandiose diptychs of the Second and Third Symphonies carried a crucial semantic strain. They presented themselves as a verbalized version of the utopia, since here by means of the spoken word the mythology of the spoken out was verbalized – the mythology of the October, the Commune, Lenin, the First of May, etc.

Of course, not only in terms of aesthetics, but also in terms of form it is impossible to set an absolute equals sign between the aesthetical and artistic results of Scriabin and those of the avant-garde. This is true even in the sense that the very principle of concentric ascent in Scriabin's music was connected with the substantiation of the ethical imperative, with the disclosing of the humanistic idea of the ascent of the human spirit and thought towards perfection. The symphonic utopias of the 1920s turned out to be pragmatic and functional, turning into musical moulds of the type of the "Monument of the Third International" of V. Tatlin, the top of which could only indicate the direction of "onwards and upwards," but not the final meaning of ascent, namely, its moral outcome.

However, the theme of "calquing" by the composers of the avant-garde of Scriabin's models remains exclusively interesting up to the present day. For instance, why did composers, up to Gavriil Popov demanded allusive material, addressed towards Scriabin's symbolism, for the formation of an anti-romantic symphonic conception? To what extent was the turning to Scriabin's dramaturgy justified upon forming a totally differing philosophical-aesthetical program? Not laying claims upon exhaustion of these questions, let us suppose that the creation of a convincing, artistically full-fledged avant-garde utopia would be impossible without a foundation upon tradition, on examples which had already passed the selection of time. Moreover, the revolutionary character of the music of Scriabin was officially recognized during the years of the revolution, and had no need of additional argumentation. On the other hand, the artificial, constructive qualities of the avantgarde method, the schematic qualities of the dramaturgy and, to a certain extent, the ideological engagement, narrowed down the artistic and expressive specter of the music. Hence, its saturation with the live breath of thematic allusions and redirections allowed the content of the utopia of the Soviet avant-garde to be made more profound and multidimensional.

Thus, the utopia, as an inseparable part of the futurology of the avant-garde and as an inseparable feature of the world-view of the revolutionary generation had found its distinctive and complete expression in the symphonic music of the greatest composers of the era: Nikolai Roslavetz, Dmitri Shostakovich, Joseph Schillinger and Alexander Mosolov.

However this utopia began to exhaust itself by the end of the 1920s. Abstract rationality and groundless optimism hindered the creation of complex artistic collisions. The dream of an urbanistic future was quickly losing its past attractiveness. In its turn the avant-garde was not able to compete with the totalitarian ideology, which by the late 1920s and the early 1930s formed the myth of the exhaustion of the evolutionary development of society, the factual identification in the socialist world with the perfect future with the perfect present. The myth of the permanence, non-contradictoriness and lack of conflict of the structure of the government was immediately carried into the sphere of artistic work, having become the pivot of the method of socialist realism, founded on the canonical reflection within art of the ontological foundations of totalitarianism: the cult of personality, the communist ideology and internationalism.

This way, the avant-garde, notwithstanding its revolutionary and, generally, rather politicized aesthetical trend, did not coincide with the totalitarian aesthetics in the most important aspect: the avant-garde's picture of the world was dynamic, since it projected the strivings of the artists towards the future, whereas the picture of the world in the Grand Style was static: the future was perceived of virtually having arrived (at least in the works of art).

The avant-garde was condemned, and the acquisition of the new theme in art, of new heroes and of new moral and aesthetical guidelines became an urgent necessity. Nonetheless, particularly here the roads of the artists have parted. The most important vector of search in the early 1930s turned out to be the official line of art, connected with the propaganda of totalitarian mythology and the mastering of the socialist realist method. The other vector was the attempt at a profound, honest view of what was occurring and, simultaneously, drawing conclusions of one of the most dramatic pages in Russian history: the Revolution and the Civil War. This way, the foundations were built of that tragic reflection, which endowed the world with the prose of Bulgakov and Platonov, the poetry of Akhmatova, Mandelstam and Tsvetayeva, the absurdist writings of Kharms and Oleinikov, the art of Filonov and the symphonic music of Shostakovich. This established tragic trend of artistic works in the USSR included Mosolov's opera "The Raft", Gavriil Popov's First Symphony and Shcherbatchov's Third Symphony. Of course, as is well-known, for a long time this present trend fell out of the historicall context, and was for many years consigned to oblivion. However, "manuscripts do not burn". The meaning of this is that it not only existed, but also exerted its influence on social consciousness, albeit latently, leaving its mark on the paths of development of contemporary art.

It was particularly this tragic trend, which became the second reality of Soviet art, which was able to realize in full measure the aforementioned theme of Bok, which now was interpreted in the following way: the moral position of a rational human being in the conditions of a historical catastrophe. Moreover, this question, posed by Blok, which is, essentially, an eternal question in the conditions of formation of a totalitarian system, arrayed itself with a large quantity of nuances. Here, the main accent was frequently placed on the infinitely ailing experience of the fact of the downfall of the revolutionary utopia, to which a considerable part of Russian intellectuals had devoted their lives. The issue was particularly about the acknowledgement of defeat of their own ideals: the political, moral, aesthetic, religious and all other ideals – against the background of the loss of spirituality and depreciation of the meaning of culture. The present anti-utopian perspective becomes exclusively characteristic for the aforementioned artists. However, in symphonic music, Popov's First Symphony should be placed particularly at the forefront of the list of orchestral works which clearly demonstrate the features of anti-utopia, narrating about the end of the world of the future, that ideal future, with the presentiment of which Scriabin's generation had lived, as did the generation of the avant-garde of the 1920s.

The fate of the symphony is well-known. Having been begun in 1927 and having received positive comments from Popov's contemporaries already during the process of its creation (including receiving a prize at the All-Union Competition in 1932), it was completed in 1934 and premiered in the Grand Hall of the Leningrad Philharmonic Society in 1935. The reaction to the performance of the work was just as shattering as was the reaction to Shostakovich's "Lady Macbeth" a year later. The symphony was withdrawn from cultural circulation and was never performed publicly in Russia again up to 2008.

The considerable span of time during which the symphony was being created testifies of the immense difficulty of its composition, of the tortuous searches for artistic solutions which would correspond to the planned program, which the composer indicated the following way in his diary: "... about 1.) struggles and failures 2.) humanity and 3.) the energy, will and joy of the labor of the victor" (4, 236). However, the epoch brought in its own amendments into the process of straightening out the planned subject matter. The idea of the festive Finale-apotheosis, which would crown the thorny but fruitful path of building new life, resulted in a paradoxical manifestation, as has been noted before. The contours of festive Finales of the 1910s and 1920s were to a considerable degree altered from the perspective of tragic reflection. Hence, the sought for "Promethean" Finale did not occur.

Although, this happened not in the least because the composer "did not find the "bright melodic material" that corresponded adequately to his conception, as Barsova writes (1, 117). The symphony's Finale turned out to be untenable not in a musical, but in a philosophical sense, having discovered the glaring discrepancy between the ideal and real worlds. However, it is difficult to suppose that this result was absolutely an unconscious one for the composer. After all, the time during which the symphony was being composed was essentially an antiutopian one. The absurd disparities swept over the social, political and cultural life of the country. Thus, the political context in which the work was being written was the unfolding of political repressions (the rout of the Trotsky opposition, the "Shakhtin" affair, the process of the Promparty, the battle against the "kulaks"), the folding up of the New Economic Polity and the establishment of a command administrative system of managing the economy, it was the struggle for power and the destruction of Lenin's revolutionary "guard" (including the murder of Kirov). The historical cultural context of the composition was the tragic death of Mayakovsky, about which the composer was immensely upset, and was planning to write a symphony about the poet's death, the liquidation of all of the artistic organizations not controlled by the government, the establishment of political censorship and the formation of the principles of socialist realism in art (to which the symphony did not correspond, from the very beginning). Finally, the historical-stylistic context of the symphony was, in fact, the establishment of the anti=utopia in literature, the visual arts and music.

In other words, the anti-utopian features of Popov's symphony are impossible to observe outside of the historical and cultural context. Moreover, the anti-utopian perspective refers to the previously existing musical legacy. In this sense, a certain amount of influence on the composer might have been exerted by some opuses by Shostakovich and Mosolov. However, one must speak about the anti-utopian perspective of the music of these composers in light of the musical tradition of the 1920s only with certain stipulations. First of all, the anti-utopia in Shostakovich and Mosolov's case in mostly discernible through satirical plots, called on to ridicule the evil of the era, – namely, the insignificance of the small person, the petty bourgeois, – in other words, to ridicule the past (Mosolov's "Four Newspaper Advertisements" for voice and piano, and the opera "The Hero", as well as Shostakovich's operas "The Nose" and "The Bolt"). Second, the features of anti-utopia involuntarily permeate into the fabric of musical compositions, which are formally dedicated to the unfolding of Soviet mythology (Mosolov's "The Raft" and Shostakovich's "The Golden Age"). At that, this involuntariness is primarily determined by the ambiguity of the dramaturgical accents: in Mosolov's case – in connection with the use of the so-called alternative material, and in Shostakovich's case, in connection with the particularities of the genre-related transformations of thematicism, presenting the aesthetical results of the musical compositions with rather controversial attributes.

Thus, the satirical perspective or the involuntary shift of accents in a well-known utopian scheme, which changed the emphasis of the ridicule of the past beyond the limits of the object of ridicule – these were the aspects which allowed to determine the presence of anti-utopian features in the music of Shostakovich and Mosolov, which could not have been left unnoticed by Popov.

Nonetheless, Popov chose his own path. Undoubtedly, Popov with his new composition reacts in a conscious way with a feeling of pain to the contemporary realities. The insolvency of the revolution, the destruction of the cultural stratum, and at the same time a dialogue with the artists, who for the first time had started speaking in an Aesopian language – this is the emotional and semantic atmosphere of the First Symphony. At the same time, the composer chose the most optimal means of expressing the tragic sense of the time, since he was already aware of the sad experience of Mosolov, whose music (chiefly, the brightly theatrical and programmatic type) was virtually banned in the USSR in the early 1930s. In other words, a symphonic manifestation of the

anti-utopian idea could no longer be endowed with programmatic or theatrical attributes. A verbal disclosure of its semantic meaning would be equivalent of suicide.

As a result, the composer chose the most difficult and optimal decision. The anti-utopia was to be carried out within the framework of a purely instrumental conception. Moreover, this was not a demarche towards the concrete flaws of society, but as a multi-layered interaction with an immense cultural tradition of both the past and the present, which would permit the disclosure of the absurdity, inherent in the events of his time. The dialogue with the past turns out to be of first importance here (incidentally, likewise to the tri-temporal dramaturgical scheme of the avant-garde). The biggest difference is that the past in the case of Popov does not express itself in the grotesque arabesques of Romantic clichés, as in the case of Shostakovich or Mosolov, but, on the other hand, the shattered fragments of a romantic view of the world through the prism of stylistic allusions with the music of Wagner and Mahler, Scriabin and Tchaikovsky (such is the domain of the subsidiary theme group of the first movement, Example 33). To this category likewise pertain the stylistic features, which - as in the case of the second movement – discover a kinship with the music of Shcherbachov and Myaskovsky (for instance, in terms of the breadth of unfolding of the elegiac cantilena theme, Example 35). The dialogue with the present in Popov's composition to a greater degree presents multi-aspect associations with the urbanistic poetics of the 1920s, presented by the music of Shostakovich, Schillinger, Mosolov, Deshevov, Prokofiev and others. However, the ostinato figures of short breath, the echoes of revolutionary marches and songs, and the rhythm of machinery production in the primary theme group of the first movement and the Scherzo-Finale are permeated not with a grandiose festive pathos, but with an aggressiveness and banal self-assertion, as in the case of Mosolov's "The Raft", depicting the soulless work of a production "Moloch" (Examples 29, 32, 36). This way, the machine-like utopia in Popov's Symphony appears rather as an image of the present and not the future, as opposed to the way that this domain of imagery and subject matter was depicted in the works of the composers of the avant-garde of the 1920s. Consequently, it loses the sacred-utopian semantics, while returning to its anti-humanistic roots. On the other hand, the future in the coda of the Finale is associated with a powerful current of sound, identifying itself with the climactic peak, thus, reminding the listeners of the apotheosis in the codas of Scriabin and Roslavetz, Shostakovich and Schillinger (Example 37). However, particularly in this seemingly grandiose coda the main element of anti-utopia is present. This is because an obvious semantic manipulation is taking place in relation to the utopian construction of Popov's predecessors. First of all, the past, in Popov's case, is the nostalgic memory of the lofty past (through the prism of the style of Wagner and Mahler). In other words, this presents itself as the longed for past (which is absurd from the perspective of the revolutionary mythology). Second, the heroism of the present is presented as dubious, due to the aggressive impersonality of the thematicism, which becomes alternate in the full meaning (as in Mosolov's music) and, hence, carries nihilistic and not positive energy. The projection of these semantic manipulations in the thematic sphere of the future destroys the utopian construction. This same outcome is also stressed by Barsova "At first, this (the Scherzo - I.V.) is perceived as anearly example of the festive Finales, which were so admired in the Soviet music of the 1930s, and corresponded so perfectly with the official optimistic conceptions.

This kind of impression dispels the harshness and agressivity of the image; it is a conscious effect, which puzzles the listener in what seems to be an unclouded atmosphere of festive exaltation; it appears as a result of a total usage of the technique of poly-ostinato. The short, primitive motives of ostinato figures, set in the vein of "music of machines," deliberately contradict the purpose of expressing emotions of overall happiness" (1, 117). The symbols of the future in the form of a quasi-Scriabin apotheosis, clearly, do not bear the strain of the aggression of machines. The alternative wave of ostinato, which intrudes into the Finale, in its outcome dispels the image of festive rejoicing. The dream of the ideal reality and the perfect future turns out to be insolvent. In this tragically absurd manner ends the composer's dialogue with the past and the present, which for the first time <u>calls on the past to bear witness against the present</u>.

These outward semantic, expressive, dramaturgical aspects, of course, rely upon a concrete artistic method. From our point of view, this given method presents nothing else but the aforementioned principle of alternative material. In order to substantiate this thesis, let us turn to our own conclusions, made some time ago in connection with the dramaturgical particularities of Mosolov's musical compositions from the 1920s and 1930s. in Mosolov's music "the alternative principle became apparent in a special approach towards the formation of elements of expression and content in his compositions, first of all, in the aspect of discrepancies of genre, juxtapositions and the technique of mounting, which determined the dramaturgical outline. The combination of various models of genre conditioned the ambiguity of the content, simultaneously reflecting the pathos of revolutionary reorganization, industrial revival, social optimism and a festive perception, joined with a negative attitude towards the past, and a particular consideration of the future... However, this general aesthetical

aspect conditioned both the concrete method of selection of musical material and the specifics of dramaturgy. From this point of view the alternative principle expressed itself in Mosolov's music primarily in the creation of thematic complexes, presenting themselves in the form of opposition to the main material, and termed by us as alternative material...". And further on: by the term alternative material "in the compositions of Mosolov, one should presume a thematic opposition with vividly expressed aggressive ostinato motor movement, frequently endowed with specific grotesque characteristics, and fulfilling the function of "absorption" of the main material in the process of development" (2, 155–156).

In other words, the function of the alternative material was aimed at displaying the anti-romantic aim of the compositions, since the main thematic material proper, for instance, in the piano sonatas, String Quartet and First Piano Concerto, was indirectly connected with the Romantic-Modernist traditions, the Scriabin-Medtner sources, and with the stylistic features of Mosolov's teacher, Myaskovsky. In its turn, the aggressive ostinato features of the alternative material discovered a direct connection with the machine utopia of the time. After all, the poly-ostinato movement of short intonational modes (such as, for instance, in the Fifth Sonata, First Piano Concerto and String Quartet) created a landform sense of mechanical work. In the consciousness of the composers of the mid-1920s, these mechanical, rotary intonations were associated with the machine utopia, the image of the future. Thus was the dramaturgical scheme constructed, which personified the battle of the past (the main material) with the present (alternative material). We should notice that in this scheme the alternative qualities were evaluated from a positive point of view, since the image of the past in the spirit of revolutionary nihilism was subject to ridicule and destruction in an a priori manner. This is why the role of the alternative material, notwithstanding its aggressive qualities and spiritual impoverishment, turned out to be doublesided, after all: it carried not only a negative element, which absorbed the genre-determined emotionally expressive thematicism, but also signified in itself the appearance of a new, positive semantics, reflecting the machine utopia of the time (this is how the given material is particularly interpreted in the symphonic poem "The Iron-Foundry" and in the opera "The Raft".

In Popov's First Symphony, the conception, connected with the spiritual search of the personality and the self-determination of the artist in the revolutionary whirlpool, returns the role of machine rhythms once again to its sources, in other words, presenting it as alternative and negative in the full sense of the words. However, it becomes negative not in relation to the main thematic material, as in Mosolov's music. The aggressive motor movement in Popov's symphony is the main <u>feature</u> of the main material (of the primary theme group of the first movement, of the theme in the Scherzo third movement; Examples 33, 37). At the same time, the aggressive energy of the alternative material is such that the subsidiary theme group also is saturated by the breath of ostinato. Here special significance is acquired by the contrapuntal movement in relation to the main theme of the subsidiary theme group, in its quartal submotivic formulas (in the pat of the timpani, Example 34). This presents a sort of quintessence of the alternative material, clarifying its functions of noise and sonority (thus the alternative material seems to modulate from the passionate gust of ostinato figures, the mono-rhythmical "drumbeat" of the eighths in the primary theme group to the resonant funereal beats in the timpani part of the subsidiary theme group).

Further on, the continuous collision of the two beginnings of the exposition at the 8th phase of the development section leads to a grandiose culmination, in which the appearance of the color of the major mode is comparable to the third of the spheres existing in the utopian tri-temporal continuum – namely, the future. However, despite all the grandiose scale of the climax, the composer does not being the development up to the festive apotheosis, gradually lessening the dynamic tension, leveling the established tonality by means of polyphonic movement of lines and polychordal effects. The first collision of the past with the present does not end in the creation of a positive and conflict-free picture of the future. The image of the future turns out to be unrealized up to the very end. The climax is followed by a shortened recapitulation with a domination of ostinato pulsation. The elements of the subsidiary theme group appear only as echoes, and disappear once again. The idea of the alternative is realized once again: the subsidiary material is pushed out.

The second movement of the symphony presents itself as a lyrical intermezzo and simultaneously as a philosophical monologue-musing. The composer excludes the usage of alternative material here (the narration about "humanity has disclosed itself by Popov without any reference to utopian rhetorical expression or machine-like ostinato movement). The second movement is entirely dedicated to subjective emotional experience of the chief protagonist, as if restoring the destroyed lyrical-dramatic image of the subsidiary theme group of the first movement. However, in this section of the symphony the lyrical-dramatic condition turns out to be more individualized. In both the stylistic and the modal aspects, it discloses by means of Popov's individual stylistic intonation, whereas in the first movement, to a greater degree, the stylistic allusions to Wagner and

Mahler indicated towards a maximally generalized supra-individual means of transmitting lyrical-dramatic images. As a result, the monologue quality, the personal attitude towards the problems of spirituality turns into another step of anti-utopia, since in the traditional utopian scheme of the 1920s, the subjective, emotional perspective was perceived as an anachronism, a relic of the past.

Finally, the third movement, following the slow and plaintive chant of the solo violin in the final measures of the second movement, once again plunges the listener into the world of elemental conflict of the first movement. The third movement is likewise opened by means of an aggressive ostinato in the low strings (which presents the alternative material proper), whose "drumbeats" are supported by the pulsation in the percussion (Example 38). The first section of the movement is wholly connected with the emancipation of ostinato formulas in all the strata of orchestral texture, which leads to a deconcentration of the orchestral texture into separate timbre-phonemes between rehearsal numbers 21 and 31. This kind of "entropy" of thematicism, connected with the aggressive ostinato qualities of the alternative material, prepares the second section (the Coda at rehearsal number 33), the aim of which is to unite the scattered sonar strata into one overall current of sound. As a result, the Coda presents by itself an extremely interesting fusion of alternative material (as counterpoint of main themes) and the material, the semantics of which is comparable to the symbolism of Scriabin (in its allusions to the themes of self-assertion, will, etc.). However, the thematicism, which could be associated with Scriabin's spiritual transformation, simultaneously carries the imprint of the march-like, festive, triumphant symbolism of the 1920s. Here, once again, behind the curtain, parallels could be discerned between the apotheoses-Finales of the symphonic works of Shostakovich and Schillinger, and the Finale of Mosolov's opera "The Raft". Nonetheless, the grandiose intensity, created as a result of the interaction of the intonations, aspiring upwards, the color of the major mode and the aggressive, rough tread of the ostinato figures joined with the incessant dynamic and textural expansion once again, just like in the first movement, does not lead to the expected result. The musical movement is almost physically lacking "air". At the peak of the culmination as if a breakdown occurs: the final chord disjoins the entire construction, since it cannot be sensed as being stable. It is, in essence, a polychord, which combines the features of a tonic, dominant and subdominant in C major.

The ostinato features of the alternative material here likewise limited the specter of breath of form, not permitting the realization of the primary programmatic conception, connected with the manifestation of a positive image of the future. In other words, the alternative material seemed to indicate the victory of the supra-individual, anti-human, ant-historical beginnings. It also created the impression of a false optimism, the personification of which turned out to be the "artificiality" of the major and the pompous quality of the dynamics. It is understandable that the level of confrontation of the extroversive and the introversive, the symbols of the past and the present in the contexts of the Finale, could have been perceived by Popov's contemporaries as an anti-utopian refutation, in which the sought for world of the future buries under itself the past and the present, as well as everything individual and spiritual. Within the framework of this anti-utopian outcome, possibly, the solution is hidden to the riddle of such embittered attacks on the symphony by apologists of the new method in art, attacks which no other symphonic composition has ever suffered, neither before, nor after. The Finale of the symphony was not given its due credulence, not because it was lacking a convincingly optimistic accent. It was because for Popov's contemporaries the language of the composer's utterance was a rather accessible language, one that combined the recognizable codas and symbols of the era, - namely: the semantics of Scriabin's utopia, features of urbanistic utopia of the 1920s, features of the tri-temporal, dramaturgical space of the avant-garde and revolutionary art and, finally, the alternative principle, allowing not only to collide but to refute various models of style and genre.

In other words, the symphony projected in itself an immense historical and spiritual experience, simultaneously reflecting virtually all the artistic and stylistic explorations of the symphonic music of the 1920s and early 1930s. However, the conscious attempt within a symphonic composition of Scriabin-type proportions to model the utopia of its times led to the awareness of the tragic impossibility of artistic realizations of this conception. The shift of semantic accents gave birth to the anti-utopia. And this circumstance paved the way for the accusations against Popov not only of formalism, but of the discrepancy of his music with the classrelated and ideological canons of his time.

However, the tragic personal intonation, designated by the composer as the solely possible one against the background of optimistic lies, was soon to be picked up by Shostakovich, who was able to pronounce the chief tragic and essentially anti-utopian monologue in symphonic music of the 20th century.

EXAMPLES







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Santrauka

Simfoninė antiutopija kaip suvokta būtinybė (keletas XX A. 3-iojo dešimtmečio ir 4-ojo dešimtmečio pradžios sovietinio simfoninio stiliaus bruožų remiantis Gavriilo Popovo Pirmosios simfonijos pavyzdžiu)

XX a. 3-iojo dešimtmečio ir 4-ojo dešimtmečio pradžios sovietinių kompozitorių simfoninis palikimas laikomas pereinamuoju laikotarpiu tarp dviejų iškilių simfoninės minties viršūnių – Skriabino ir Stravinskio "Šventojo pavasario" laikotarpio muzikos ir vėlesnės Šostakovičiaus ir Prokofjevo kūrybos. Per pirmuosius penkiolika metų po revoliucijos atsiskleidė prieštaringa praeities meninių patirčių persvarstymo, kartu ir naujų metodų, naujų komponavimo technikų įsisavinimo panorama. Todėl šio laikotarpio pradžios ir pabaigos menininkų ne tik stiliai, bet ir pasaulėžiūra bei estetinės nuostatos yra visiškai skirtingi. Taigi Nikolajus Miaskovskis ir Vladimiras Ščerbačiovas, perteikdami modernumą, laikėsi akademinės, romantinės tradicijos; radikalūs avangardistai, tokie kaip Aleksandras Mosolovas, Nikolajus Roslavecas ir Jozefas Šilingeris, bandė restruktūrizuoti simfoninius žanrus muzikos kalbos ir formos požiūriu; Dmitrijus Šostakovičius ir Gavriilas Popovas ieškojo būdų, kaip antitradicionalizme taikyti klasikinius metodus. Nepaisant tokios stilistinių tendencijų ir meninių užmojų įvairovės bene visų šio laikotarpio kompozitorių kūryboje, visus juos vienija bendra tema, jau revoliucinių pokyčių apyaušryje įvardyta Aleksandro Bloko straipsnyje "Inteligentija ir revoliucija".

Ši tema sovietinėje simfoninėje kūryboje atsispindi įvairiais būdais. Pavyzdžiui, Miaskovskis Šeštojoje ir Septintojoje simfonijose ir Ščerbačiovas Antrojoje simfonijoje, skirtoje Blokui, šią problemą sprendė pasitelkdami romantinę tradiciją, priešpriešindami vidinį menininko pasaulį dramatiškam istorijos posūkiui ir taip teigdami amžinųjų tiesų ir poetinės laisvės nepaveikiamumą. Roslavecas į laiką žvelgė iš utopinių pozicijų, mėgindamas kalbos naujoviškumą prilyginti revoliucinėms permainoms (Kamerinės simfonijos Nr. 1, Nr. 2 ir "Komjaunuoliškoji"). Iš šios utopijos kylanti dramatiška kolizija taip pat kūrė besiblaškančios poetinės sielos paveikslą, primenantį Skriabino ar Schönbergo poetinius vaizdinius. Mosolovas ir Šilingeris savo negausiuose simfoniniuose opusuose ("Fabrikas", "Spalis") mėgino atspindėti vieną iš populiariausių to meto estetinių schemų – avangardo pagimdytą trilaikę dramaturginę erdvę, kurioje vaizdinės (arba teminės) sferos simbolizavo kovą tarp praeities (prislėgtos ir groteskiškos) ir dabarties (šventiškos ir herojiškos), o šios kovos rezultatas yra šviesus rytojus. Šostakovičius ir Popovas psichologines kolizijas bandė sujungti su trilaike dramaturgija ir taip siekė sukurti didingas simfonines koncepcijas, kuriose asmenybė atsiskleidžia kaip istorijos atspindys.

Tuo laikotarpiu šią sudėtingą problemą pirmasis pradėjo spręsti Popovas, o Šostakovičius jos ėmėsi kiek vėliau – Ketvirtojoje ir Penktojoje simfonijose. Popovo tridalės Pirmosios simfonijos, rašytos 1927–1934 m., užslėpta programa yra genetiškai susijusi su "intelektualų ir revoliucijos" tema. Tačiau jos interpretavimas to meto politinėmis sąlygomis, kai jau buvo visiškai aišku, kad šviesios ateities lūkesčiai nepasiteisino, buvo toli gražu nevienareikšmis. Istorinis optimizmas, paveldėtas iš avangardo, jau nebepadėjo formuoti gyvenimą teigiančios koncepcijos. Kūrinyje išryškėja alternatyvi antiutopinė pozicija, atskleidžiama kaip tragiška situacija individo, atsidūrusio revoliucinėje suirutėje, praėjusio visą jos kelią, tačiau galų gale praradusio tikėjimą ir pačia revoliucija, ir žmonėmis. Ši alternatyvi pozicija ir bendras estetinis kūrinio rezultatas yra susijęs su būdingos teminės opozicijos pagrindinės muzikinės medžiagos atžvilgiu panaudojimu.

Teminė opozicija (arba alternatyvioji medžiaga) Gavriilo Popovo simfonijoje – tai trumpos ostinatinės formulės. Pirmą kartą jos pateikiamos kaip pirmosios dalies šalutinės partijos kontrapunktas, atliekamas

timpanų, o jau simfonijos finale nesudėtingas jų ostinatiškumas ir tariamas fanfariškumas išplinta po visą faktūrinę erdvę, išstumia pagrindinę tematiką. Alternatyvioji medžiaga čia tartum simbolizuoja pergalę prieš asmenybiškumo, žmogiškumo, istoriškumo pradą. Kartu ši medžiaga kuria ir apsimestinio optimizmo nuotaiką, kurią įkūnija įkyrus mažoro dominavimas ir dinamikos pompastiškumas. Pastarąją išdavą lemia pagrindinės tematikos ypatybės: nerimastingas pirmosios dalies pagrindinės partijos viesulas (motorinio judėjimo veržlumas čia derinamas su groteskiškais sąskambiais, taip perteikiant stichinį praeities ir dabarties jėgų susidūrimą), pirmosios dalies šalutinei partijai (turinčiai sąsajų su Wagnerio ir Mahlerio melodiškumu) ir antrosios dalies pagrindinei temai būdingas gilus susimąstymas. Tačiau, kaip buvo minėta, išorinio ir vidinio pradų – praeities ir dabarties simbolių – susidūrimas apoteozę pasiekia finale, kuriame šventiškas ateities pasaulis sunaikina visa, kas yra savita ir dvasinga. Šis antiutopinis akcentas – tai kompozitoriaus asmeninio požiūrio į šiuolaikinį pasaulį rezultatas. Antiutopinis simfonijos rakursas atspindi būdingas trečiojo dešimtmečio ir ketvirtojo dešimtmečio pradžios sovietinio meno tendencijas, susijusias su meninės individualybės saviidentifikacija totalitarizmo formavimosi kontekste.