

Schumann's Impressions in the 20th - Century Music

To approach the problem defined in the title it is necessary first to take at least a cursory glance at it in retrospect comparing the 19th and 20th century Russian music relative to Schumann's influences.

Borodin, Mussorgsky, Tchaikovsky, Rubinstein... Many pages of lyrical utterances are linked with Schumann— those particular lines of romantic music where the language of expressing something deeply intimate needs special, analytical (or probably even psychoanalytical) tools allowing an exploring composer to get an insight into the depths of spiritual life. What is meant here is the search for new harmonic methods on the way to which Schumann was destined to make so many discoveries! Russian composers took his experience highly creatively and very differently. In the 19th century, the golden age of authors' styles, his experience served as the point of departure for forming individual authors' idioms which we find in Mussorgsky (*Sunless*), Borodin (*For the Shores of Thy Far Land*), Tchaikovsky and Rimsky-Korsakov. It is not so much Schumann's style that got embedded in those idioms as the freedom and daring in creating new means of harmonic language. Thus the turn-of-the-century (until Stravinsky) modernist harmonic techniques had been prepared.

Let us take, for example, the piano miniature "In the Evening" from the *Fantasy Pieces* cycle. Schumann's colour findings in this masterpiece caused a long-lasting response in the 19th- century music, Russian music in particular. Its echoes, quite constructive ones, can be heard in Lyadov's *The Enchanted Lake*. These are landscape lyrics, the D flat major key, the active role of the texture (figurations), and colour effects. Next, the D flat – E harmonic plane (the middle of the form in Schumann and the initial modulation movement in Lyadov), the technique of chord development using the tritone double of the dominant, a hint at the diminished mode in Schumann, and the realized one in Lyadov.

Another example: "The Round Dance of the Princesses" from Stravinsky's ballet *The Firebird*. No doubt, this work belongs to another age. The romantic flair gives way to savoury colours and the aesthetically refined modernist style of expression. The psychological gives way to the mythological, to the expression of high structural tension. It is easy to notice *how* phrases from Schumann's "In the Evening" had been reconsidered. Schumann presents landscape in lyrical perception: it is not a fantastic landscape but a lyrical fantasy, a vision of landscape. Lyadov's landscape, even though it has a lyrical tinge, is a metaphysical landscape. This is mythology: an enchanting fairy-tale land, but unpopulated and mysterious and therefore somewhat frighteningly alienated. Stravinsky's links with Schumann are even more indirect. The author of the *Firebird* places maidens' ceremonial roundelay outside any subjectively psychological context. This is pure mythology. Psychologism is dissolved in expression, but the latter too belongs more to the colour rather than to the lyrical domain; the tension of high and refined aestheticism intrinsic in modernism is felt here.

So, the vector of Schumann's influence is directed toward the individual author's language:

- from a particular lyrical utterance to mythology, to expressing the extrapersonal and the extrapsychological;
- from a musical moment to extratemporal categories;
- from particular intuitive insights to generalized language forms and rational individualized construction.

The 20th century brought changes. Schumann's influence passed from the area of creativity to the real life space. This is more than just influence. This is inner language. A language to create not a piece of music but rather a diary to confide one's thoughts, or letters addressed to like-minded people.

Valentin Silvestrov's metaphoric language is based on romantic allusions. It is the *style of Schumann's postludiums*. And, in essence, Silvestrov views contemporary music as existence in the "*postludium state of culture*". Schumann is represented in his music as a life, cultural context relative to which his works appear as a postscript. "A postludium," says Silvestrov, "is like gathering of repercussions; it is a form that presumes the existence of a certain text which does not really make part of the given text, but is linked with it." More widely, this is "the state of culture where the forms reflecting life-music <...> are replaced by the forms commenting it".¹

¹ S. Savenko. "Rukotvorniy kosmos Valentina Silvestrova". In: *Muzyka iz byvshego SSSR*. Moscow, 1994, p. 80.

A piece for two pianos, *Correspondence*, by Georgs Pelecis and Vladimir Martynov was played at the “Alternative – 1998” festival. The title did not feature programmism, and the composers did not declare themselves as authors and the *Correspondence* as a composition. The paradox lay in that they presented to the public a text which was not an opus in its accepted meaning but a life reality – personal letters. Sending regular letters to each other from Riga to Moscow and back the composers at some moment went over to the musical language. Their letters turned into sheet music. The performance of *Correspondence* challenged such concepts as “author” and “opus” and greatly shook the very situation of a concert. Where lies the line of distinction between a composer and a non-composer, an opus and a non-opus, a concert and other situations?

But the main thing is that the correspondence began in the language of Schumann’s music (at least the first two letters). More than that, even the characters of the two correspondents somehow got reflected in the images of Schumann’s protagonists: Florestan and Eusebius. Alexei Lyubimov, who together with Ivan Sokolov was the first performer of *Correspondence*, said: “Both remain their own selves: Gosha² with his calm heartfelt lyrics, and Martynov with his dynamic, high-powered idiom telling of intense inner work.”³

Pelecis and Martynov use Schumann’s language to pose acute creative problems. What is more important today: composition or musical flow? What is authorship, *self-expression*? What is meant by language: a material or *what* this material expresses – *that* which stands behind it?

Now, why Schumann? Trying to answer this question let us look into what preceded musical messages. There was a letter from Riga. Here is an excerpt from it.

“That of which I wanted to write specially happened in a bus on the way to Salacgrīva. I’d call it revelation <...>. Even if it was purely musical.” Then Pelecis describes the music he heard in his dream. “Suddenly I saw in my dream that I was in a formidable and solemn cathedral <...>. The only reality <...> was music. It was a marvellous and endless flow of most diverse inner quality, nothing was repeated, but externally it was equally wonderful and without sharp changes in the state level <...> in a most varied genre and stylistic order. There was rock, and old music, <...> and one piece followed another so beautifully, each having so much artistic and spiritual force and lightness as if the problem <...> of the ‘earthiness’ of music (our prosy everyday) did not exist at all. But I well remember that there were no sounds in the spirit and aesthetics of modernism or avant-garde. And now I think that tertian music is something more than just a historical period in the evolution of art. <...> I now know that the inner freedom accessible to the ancients is possible, only on the level of our hearing experience. And it can be poured out into an endless flow, without any repetitions and ‘thematic working’. But its principal modus (the technical modus) slipped from my understanding. I remember only the spiritual-artistic modus – the gushing joy, love and tenderness.”

The letter concluded as follows: “The other day, in the evening, taking occasion of being alone, I sat at the piano and wrote a small piece in 10–20 minutes. At first I didn’t fall for it, but now I’m playing it over and over again. There is a certain Schumannian string in it, which is pleasant to pluck at. Surely I haven’t found compelling intonations here, but all the same I’d like to convey it to you. There is probably no sense in playing the piece at any official recital. Who needs it! Maybe you don’t need it either, but I’ll still send it to you. Simply as ‘a word from Riga’. <...> 3.12.1984. *Gosha*.”

Martynov replied with his piece in Schumann’s style and added: “Your move”, turning all this into kind of exchange of thoughts. So the course of their musical correspondence had been set by the dream image of an endless uninterrupted flow... *Correspondence* is actually not a composition meant for an audience. And Schumann is the inner language to convey thoughts to a like-minded friend.

[Excerpts 1. (Georgs Pelecis) and 2. (Vladimir Martynov)]

² Russian diminutive from Georgs.

³ From a conversation with A. Lyubimov after the concert (1998).

Excerpt 1. (Georgs Peletsis)

Пример 1. Г. Пелецис – В. Мартынов. Переписка (автограф Г. Пелециса). Письмо Г. Пелециса

Excerpt 2. (Vladimir Martynov)

Пример 2. Г. Пелецис – В. Мартынов. Переписка (автограф Г. Пелециса). Письмо В. Мартынова (с третьего такта)

What is there in Schumann which attracts Silvestrov, Pelecis and Martynov?

Schumann's immersion in a state is the widening of time limits when time is counted in moments. Thus happens the transition to another dimension. Already in Schumann we see that which is called today *verticalization of time*, that is, the state where "time turns into space" (Wagner). [Excerpt 3. (a) *Arabesques* and (b) *Poet's Love. Postludiums*]

Excerpt 3. (a) Arabesques

Пример 3а. Р. Шуман. Арабески

Zum Schluss.
Langsam. $\text{♩} = 55$

Excerpt 3. (b) *Poet's Love. Postludiums*

Пример 3б. Р. Шуман. Любовь поэта. № 12. Я утром в саду встречаю...

ritard. [a tempo]

бод - ный, ве - чаль - ный друг!
там - ri. ger, plus - ser Mann!

Not only this makes Schumann kindred with the contemporary world. The significance of his discoveries is far weighty. He showed one of the paths to be taken by the 20th-century music, especially in the last third of the century. Vertical *immersion in a moment* takes place in Silvestrov's postludium improvisations – certainly improvisations, as they are Schumann-like spontaneous and nonteleological. In Schumann too they do not have a vector leading to an objective or at least pointing to it. Schumann's moments fall out of the chain of linear narration; they replace the determinacy of links between the moments with the self-significance of the moments themselves.

In Schumann's composition, the structure of his works – the sequence of moments, the endless flow of moments – accords with the principle of immersion in a moment. This is probably the major distinction of Schumann from other romantics. He was the first to come to the *series principle* that is realized in open suite-ness, in the flow of moments open into infinity and limited possibly only by programmism – conditioned by it, that is, motivated extramusically. This method works in Schumann so systematically that its effect tells not only on the suite but extends to other forms as well. Schumann actually *deconstructs* classical forms, the sonata and the sonata-symphony cycle turning them into a flow, into an endless succession of moments, into something *suite-like* or, more precisely, *novelette-like*, that is, into something *individually cyclic*, mosaically spontaneous, slipping away, even in the sonata form, from the sonata logic – to such an extent that sometimes it is hard to perceive it from the position of this logic. The music rushes into a flow where all components have equal significance like a portrait gallery, a string of recollections, or entries into a diary. Here is just one citation from Schumann's diary: "Was writing a verse, 'Ivan the Great [Bell Tower]', in the morning. Fischer von Waldheim and baron Mayendorf came to see me. Fair weather has been holding for a fortnight now. Then we visited Prince Golitsyn. A grand gentleman. Lives luxuriously. Then we took a ride along the Smolensk road from where the French had been advancing. There are glades on the Moskva River <...>"⁴.

Schumann's "flow" became highly relevant in the last third of the 20th century. It is not by accident that his style, particularly the style of his postludiums (*Arabesques*, *Poet's Love*), became the guideline for Silvestrov's metaphoric language in his *quiet music*, *Kitsch Music* in particular. But it is not just Schumann's style as *another's* language which is relevant today, and not actually his style. *Quiet music* is concordant with the very method of the "flow of moments"; the stopped moment becomes a space, a territory where one can stay and where one can travel infinitely. This territory is Silvestrov's *postludium* style. It is just here that the final deconstruction of linearity takes place in Silvestrov. The way over this land is discrete and nonteleological; it is divided by holds, attenuations, rests and fermatas. Every new step is like a rebirth, and it does not lead to the horizon – there is no horizon; it leads to nowhere, or rather comes round to itself. Every new moment suspends and dissolves the sound in silence. Sound and silence are one. The differences between these two states are indistinct. Both states are a metaphor of the *postludium* style. Even the term "postludium" used by Silvestrov both in his utterances and in the name of his work is borrowed from Schumann. If postludium means "reminiscence of a certain text", this certain text is a generalized image of the 19th century music, primarily Schumann's music, for Silvestrov. [Excerpt 4. (a) V. Silvestrov. *Kitsch Music*, Pt. III; (b) V. Silvestrov. "Song Heals the Aching Spirit..."]

⁴ "R. Shuman. Puteshestvie v Rossiyu v 1844 godu" (Diary). In: M. Saponov. *Russkiye dnevniki i memuary R.. Vagnera, L. Shpora, R. Shumana*. Moscow, 2004, p. 182.

Martynov's *Bricolage* features direct use of Schumann's piano style. Schumann for Martynov is a text, primarily in terms of language, and probably of method. Martynov seems to be listening to him attentively, looking at him fixedly as at a precious relic or an artefact of a bygone culture, like an ancient papyrus, trying to comprehend it. And he is trying to grasp Schumann's pianism, his characteristic idioms that are not cited but are recognisable as being Schumann's ones. Everything from the first to the last note is Martynov's text. [Excerpt 6. V. Martynov. *Bricolage*.]

Excerpt 6. V. Martynov. *Bricolage*.

Пример 5. В. Мартынов. Брикколаж (автограф)

Martynov's *Bricolage* is Schumann-facsimile and Schumann-deconstruction at the same time. Martynov models Schumann's idioms, but he makes them into that which is not Schumann's style. This is not stylisation; this is something opposite to it. Martynov converses in Schumann's language, but he translates it using "system operations"; that is, rigorously calculated manipulations by the method of repetition and addition (repeated but gradually widening circles), into something that is his own, ritual, nearly magical. And he constructs not a composition, that is, the author's own personal utterance, but a certain action and, simultaneously, a conceptual object. A post-opus, rather than an opus. A flow.

According to Martynov, the practice of composition is "creation of things. Any traditional culture is, in the first place, a flow; the figure of composer is unfamiliar to it. Composer's music focuses attention on an individual moment thereby obstructing any possibility of a flow. Bricolage is a counterbalance of composition. Lévi-Strauss designated the method of formulaic thinking by this term. With bricolage, the result is achieved by operating a ready formulaic repertoire, i.e., by traditional elements, by way of moving them, and there is nothing else except this set of formulas. This method embraces all folklore, iconographic systems, Eastern martial arts, and all traditional epos, including Homer. The composers of the 15th-century Dutch school still combined composition and bricolage while arranging a borrowed cantus, but in the 17th century hundred percent composition prevailed.

In the 20th century, the figure of composer was dying out. It was reduced to the minimum in jazz and rock. Our generation is a transitional one. From the mid-1970s Pärt, Silvestrov, Pelecis, Rabinovich and me have practically ceased to be composers in the full meaning of the word.”⁶

To my question, why it was Schumann’s style from which he took his bearing, Vladimir Martynov replied: “Schumann impressed me very strongly, strikingly, back in my early childhood. <...> He possesses some magic force, some emotional charge which anybody else hardly has.”⁷

This is true, but Martynov turns into a flow the material that is not intended for it. Schumann had grown from a different philosophy, had not he? Martynov is convinced however that “a flow can be derived from any real music because any live composed music belongs to the flow somehow or other. It is another matter that one can either make constructions out of the flow or yield to its environment. And *if the flow is opened out, freed from construction, it will be seen that internally it is characteristic precisely of romantic music, perhaps especially of Schumann’s music.*”⁸

The method of bricolage means withdrawing from self-expression, from author’s speech as material, and turning into commenting composition. The method’s novelty consists in positioning one’s “own” relative to “another’s”. The symbiosis of the contexts used does not reveal the obvious presence of the author’s material at all. The question of distancing one’s “own” from another’s” does not arise. One’s “own” reveals itself not in the musical material but in the concept that appeals more often than not to the extra-language domain or, in case of music, to the extramusical domain. And here all historical languages and dialects, traditions and contexts become equally relevant. The author arranges the contexts and juxtaposes them, and they interact with each other inducing this or that accent and creating a whole ensemble of self-reflections and semantic resonances.

In this way, the turn to Schumann in the 20th and the present 21st century bears quite a different meaning than in the 19th century. A comparison of methods clearly demonstrates the new import (see *Table*).

Table:

19th century	20th and 21st centuries
Striving to obtain individuality	Withdrawing from individuality
Direct personal utterance	Indirect utterance through allusions. Commentary
Author’s consciousness	Veiling authorship. Commentator thinking
Individual style	Borrowed style – cantus, metaphor of culture (Silvestrov, Martynov)
Searching for novelty in the language	Searching for novelty in the concept, in the situation, in the context
Searching for links with literature: programmism	Searching for links with real life: conceptualism, context situation. With other texts: intertextuality
Opus Composition for concert performance	Post-opus Transfer to life reality. Happening

⁶ From a conversation with V. Martynov (1998).

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

The composer's statement of contextuality and intertextuality comes initial. Cultural memory becomes a leading category of the content. This bears directly on the manner of performance, which is evidenced, for instance, by Silvestrov's direction to Kitsch Music: "Play in a very tender, intimate tone as if touching slightly on the listeners' memory so that the music sounded in their minds."

Santrauka

R. Schumanno stiliaus atšvaitai XX a. muzikoje: naujas komentaras kaip savojo kultūrinio tapatumo nustatymo forma

Pranešime parodyta, kad Schumanno stilius atitinka tam tikras XX a. muzikos stilistines tendencijas ir kad jis įsiliejo į šiuolaikinį kultūrinį kontekstą metakalbos, metaforinio stiliaus (V. Silvestrovas), aliuizijos, kvazicitatos (G. Pelecis), brikolažo (V. Martynovas) forma.

1. Autorystės atsisakymas – pats paradoksaliausias kelias į savo vidinį pasaulį.

Savęs atpažinimas remiantis kito komentaris – aktuali nūdienės kultūros strategija. Pranešime pateikta Schumanno muzikos kalba paremtos kultūrinės identifikacijos patirtis.

2. Schumanno panirimas į lyrinę būseną praskleidžia laiko ribas, pereina į kitą erdvę.

Jau Schumanno muzikoje galime rasti tai, kas šiandien vadinama *laiko vertikalizacija*, perėjimas į tokį būvį, kai „laikas tampa erdve“.

Visa tai ne tik suartina Schumanną su dabartimi. Tai apibūdina vieną iš kelių, kuriuo pasuko muzika paskutinį XX a. trečdalį. Neatsitiktinai jo stilius tapo orientyru „naujojo paprastumo“, minimalizmo, konceptualizmo krypties kompozitoriams.

Schumanno panirimas į lyriką, padaugintas iš aktualaus meno („sava“–„svetima“ kaip savęs atpažinimas pasitelkiant kultūrinio mito aiškinimą), kultūrologijos strategijos kryptį, iš repeticinio stiliaus metodikos derinio su brikolažo (C. Lévi-Strauss) technika, tampa eksperimentiniu performansu, hepeningu, interaktyvių vaidybinių struktūrų pagrindu.

3. Posovietinės erdvės kompozitoriai Valentinas Silvestrovas (Ukraina), Georgas Pelecis (Latvija), Vladimiras Martynovas (Rusija) Schumanno refleksijas jaučia labai skirtingai, tuo parodydami savo individualumą.

V. Silvestrovo *tyliosios muzikos* metaforinės kalbos orientyras – Schumanno „Postliudijų“ („Arabesku“, „Poeto meilės“) stilius. Ir jis priimamas ne kaip *svetima kalba*, o kaip „akimirčių srauto“ metodas: sustabdytas laikas tampa erdve, teritorija, po kurią galima be galo ilgai keliauti. Keliai tenai diskretiški ir neteleologiški. Kiekvienas naujas žingsnis – tai gimimas iš naujo, jis nepriartina prie horizonto – horizonto nėra, tas žingsnis veda į niekur arba į patį save. Kiekvienas kitas laiko momentas pakimba, nyksta, ištirpdo garsą tyloje. Garsas ir tyla – vienis. Šių būsenų skirtumai neryškūs. Abi šios būsenos – *postliudiškumo* metafora. Jeigu postliudija – „tam tikro teksto atgarsis“, tai Silvestrovui tas tam tikras tekstas yra apibendrinantis XIX amžiaus muzikos vaizdas ir pirmiausia – Schumannas.

Brikolažas V. Martynovui – tai Schumannas faksimilė ir kartu Schumannas dekonstrukcija. Martynovas, subtiliai modeliuodamas Schumanno idiomą, paverčia jas tuo, ko Schumanno stiliumi nepavadinsi. Tai ne stilizacija, o visai priešingas jai dalykas. Martynovas lyg ir kalba Schumanno kalba, bet, pasitelkęs „sistemines operacijas“, paverčia ją tam tikru vaidinimu ir kartu konceptuali objektu. Ne opusas, o postopusas.

G. Pelecio ir V. Martynovo „susirašinėjimas“ pagrįstas šamaniškais frazėmis. Abu kompozitoriai jas vartoja kaip kai ką archetipišką, kai medžiaga neturi tiesiogines reikšmes. Jiems Schumannas – tai vidinė kalba, kuria savo mintis tikrina du bendraminčiai.

Pabaigoje analizuojamas kultūrinių paradigų – XIX a. ir šiuolaikinės muzikos – skirtumas. Analizė grindžiama bazinių kategorijų lyginimu: požiūris į autorystę, nuomonių objektas, naujoviškumo paieškos teritorija (kalba arba konceptas), medžiagos supratimas (stiliaus arba antstilio), ekstramuzikinės sąveikos srities pasirinkimas (menas arba realybė – literatūrinė programa arba konkreti gyvenimo situacija).