

The Orchestral Musical Style of Alexander Scriabin as Demonstrated by his Unfinished ‘Prefatory Action’

In the classical music repertoire there exists a singular phenomenon of musical works that have not been completed by composers, either due to their decease or because they had simply put them aside and never gone back to complete them. Some of these incomplete works have subsequently been completed by other composers or musicologists. Many of these compositions have become well-known additions to the standard repertoire, and include such works as Mozart’s Requiem, completed by Franz Xaver Süssmayer, Mahler’s Tenth Symphony, of which several completed performing versions exist, the most notable ones being by Ernst Krenek and British musicologist Derryck Cooke, Charles Ives’ Universe Symphony, likewise existing in two performing versions by two American composers, Larry Austin and Johnny Reinhard, Alban Berg’s opera ‘Lulu’, completed by Friedrich Cerha, and Arnold Schoenberg’s oratorio “Der Jakobsleiter,” completed by the composer’s pupil Winfried Zillig. What presents this phenomenon as especially interesting is not only the occurrence of another musical work by a well-known composer appearing in the repertoire, and not only the fact that a lesser-known composer or musicologist takes up the bold quest of completing a work by a well-known elder master – albeit these aspects certainly present intriguing elements as well. However, the most striking aspect is that in most cases these incomplete torsos happen to be the final works of the composers, and it is as if a veil is torn asunder in the final musical work of a master who is already facing the world to be. One could present the case of these compositions possessing a certain amount of wisdom and other-worldly sense of the life beyond the grave, which becomes revealed to us when this music becomes available to us.

One of the most enigmatic compositions in the 20th century and, probably, in the repertoire of the entire Western music is Alexander Nikolayevich Scriabin’s “Prefatory Action”. Scriabin, who during the later part of his life became immensely interested in mysticism and esotericism, from around the time he wrote his Third Symphony, becoming interested in the ideas of Friedrich Nietzsche, of the Superman, and of Helene Blavatsky, of Theosophy and alternate paths of spirituality. One of her ideas was about the seven races of humanity, of which our race is the fifth, being the most tragic and destitute, but still possessed with the possibility of evolving to a higher level of spirituality. Scriabin’s music passed through a definite evolution, starting of being adherent to Chopin, later on acquiring more ecstatic features, endowed with certain attributes of Wagner, and at the end, acquiring an original innovative musical language, which harmonically passed beyond the confines of diatonicism into a ‘new tonality’, which was equipped to express his mystical insights.

As is well-known, Scriabin was mostly prominent in the field of piano music, hence, most of his compositions are written for piano and include ten piano sonatas, many preludes, etudes and works in other genres. He wrote a relatively small amount of orchestral works. Those include his early work “Reverie” for orchestra and a Piano Concerto, three symphonies, and his final works – the Poem of Ecstasy and ‘Prometheus: a Poem of Fire’. It could be said about Scriabin’s orchestral music that the orchestration is always one degree more traditional in comparison with all his other features: his harmonic and rhythmic language, the piano textures – the latter in regards to the piano music. His first two symphonies, the ‘Reverie’ and the Piano Concerto possess a rather generic type of orchestration, being generally of high quality of very much in the vein of the average musical style of that time period. It is in his Third Symphony that Scriabin achieves some original results in the field of orchestration too; those are enhanced in the “Poem of Ecstasy” and in “Prometheus”.

Since Scriabin lived in Moscow, hence he was a proponent of the Moscow school of composition, if one is to take into account the typical division of artistic styles, inherent in Russian culture, into the Moscow style and the St. Petersburg style. This division is true not only in music, but in poetry, in literature, in art and in philosophy. In the Soviet times, the composers were likewise very much stylistically divided into the ‘Moscow school’ and the ‘Leningrad school’. Ironically, though Moscow is generally considered to be the more Russian city, more deeply enrooted in Russian native history, whereas St. Petersburg is considered to be the more Western city, looking out to Europe, there are certain features in the artistic styles of these cities, which place them precisely in reverse to this mode of thinking. In the sphere of music, the Moscow school, as represented by Tchaikovsky, Taneyev, Rachmaninoff and Scriabin, is endowed with a greater degree of Western, European attributes, than their counterparts in St. Petersburg – Mousorgsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, who developed what could be defined as a Russian national musical style. They played upon Russian exoticism as a key element

of language and used Russian folk melodies more freely, developing them greatly in their music, whereas the Moscow-based composers turned to the European abstract forms and genres and wrote symphonies and sonatas, using them to express emotional moods, philosophical concepts and perceptions. The St. Petersburg school, on the other hand, has always been highly theatrical, featuring numerous operas, short character pieces, symphonic poems and other orchestral pieces describing literary subject matter, written by such composers as Rimsky-Korsakov and Liadov. This is a generalization, to which there are always exceptions.

Scriabin's three symphonies were written in different numbers of movements. The First Symphony has six movements, being, in a sense, the most innovative in form, with a Finale which incorporates chorus along with orchestra – a tradition following Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. Scriabin wrote the text itself to the choral music in the Finale, which is the "Hymn to Art". Albeit, not the most high quality poetry, it achieves, nonetheless, a semantic representation of spiritual apotheosis. The symphony the music alternating moods, from tragic and tempestuous to serene and calm, reaching a feeling of ecstasy and transfiguration at the end. The Second Symphony has five movements and, likewise, presents alternations of tragic moods with refined, serene and ecstatic ones, likewise passing from tragedy to apotheosis and spiritual triumph at the end. However, it is in the Third Symphony, a work in three movements, where Scriabin's mature style is established. It is the only work by the composer which contains a program, and has an additional title, "The Divine Poem", as well as additional titles to each of its three movements – "Struggles", "Pleasures" and "Divine Games". Its programmatic conception follows to a great extent the ideas of Nietzsche. The first movement depicts the struggle within the human being between the part in him which aims at worshiping a God above and that which aspires to evolve to a lofty spiritual level, closer to God. Scriabin, similarly with many intellectuals of his time interpreted Nietzsche's idea of the Superman as that of spiritual development of humanity, their personal efforts undertaken to become more enlightened beings, possessing divine attributes. The second movement is titled "Pleasures," in which the human being is exposed to an abundance of pleasure of life, causing him temporarily to forget his spiritual aspiration, while the third movement is titled "Divine Games," and depicts the state in which humans acquire a high level of spiritual development. Here, Scriabin's orchestration becomes endowed with more developed features, achieving a grandiose, enlightened style, albeit, very much following the traditions of Tchaikovsky and Taneyev, the most important Moscow composers. At the same time a personal refined orchestral style is developed by the composer, manifested in the most abundantly diverse stylistic traits, ranging from the broad *tutti* sections to the sparsely orchestrated, refined soft sounds. Scriabin's last two compositions for orchestra, "The Poem of Ecstasy" and "Prometheus," though sometimes erroneously called the Fourth and fifth Symphonies, are in reality not symphonies but one-movement symphonic poems, albeit endowed with modified sonata forms, each being twenty minutes long. Here Scriabin's orchestration really reaches a point of refinement, at the point of which it could not be stated that his orchestration lags behind his other stylistic features in terms of modernity. It has numerous intricate features, such as the tremolo strings, the intricate contrapuntal lines between the different instruments, the interplay between the string instruments and woodwind instruments, the blocks of sounds formed within the *tutti* sections, the interplay of strings and winds in the loud sections. In the case of the "Poem of Ecstasy" an important trait in the orchestration is presented by the solo trumpet, which plays the role of the main character or hero, who undergoes the spiritual transformation, which the work, essentially describes in its semantic content. Scriabin even wrote a literary poem to the "Poem of Ecstasy," albeit after composing the piece. In his final orchestral work, "Prometheus, a Poem of Fire" Scriabin passes beyond the diatonic harmonic language and develops an innovative harmonic style of his own, based on central vertical harmonies of six-note chords, which are stacked up in fourths – perfect, augmented or diminished. This results in the famous "Prometheus chord," which sounds like a modification of the dominant, but really carries the function of a tonic. In "Prometheus" the piano takes up the role that the solo trumpet took in the "Poem of Ecstasy", essentially giving the "Prometheus" the attributes of both a symphony and a piano concerto. It is not presented merely for the pianist to show off pianistic technique, but primarily for semantic reasons: the pianist represents the main "hero" of the composition, the human soul, undergoing spiritual transformation, passing through the path from the misty beginning of history in the very beginning of the work and self assertion in the opening of the fast section, through struggle and tragedy in the middle of the work and leading at the end to triumph and an ecstatic self-affirmation. The ecstatic coda, in essence, describes the evolution towards a higher mode of existence as the result of personal spiritual effort in developing one's own emotional, intellectual and other centers. Here the orchestration clearly approaches a style, close to the most innovative tendencies of Scriabin's time. It could be said that in its orchestration, Scriabin's "Prometheus" and, to a lesser degree, the "Poem of Ecstasy" could be compared to Stravinsky's early works, most notably, the "Nightingale" and the "Firebird". There is a singular similarity in terms of orchestration

between these early works by Stravinsky and the late works of Scriabin in terms of the intricacy of sound, the refinement of orchestration, the tasteful usage of timbre and of different colors, or blending different instruments together, of sometimes using entire string sections, entire woodwind sections and sometimes blending them together. Other composers, to whom Scriabin's orchestration could be compared, are, of course, Richard Strauss, Debussy and Ravel, who had also reached a refinement of orchestration.

In the later part of Scriabin's life, starting from the time he wrote his Third Symphony, Scriabin became more and more interested in mystical ideas, most notably, of Helene Blavatsky. He never became a blind adherent of her Theosophical movement, but tended to interpret them in his own personal way. For many years he was conceiving of a grandiose work of art, the "Mysterium", which would be a theurgical musical composition that would transform the world spiritually. It would present a synthesis of the arts, incorporating music, poetry, dance, and even incense. A special temple would be built for it in India, and all of humanity would arrive to it to join a voluntary spiritual transformation which would be essentially a willful self-immolation in ecstasy and fire. Scriabin deemed himself the Messiah, sent to earth to fulfill this mystical event. After a course of a number of years Scriabin conceived the idea that before the "Mysterium" should happen, he should compose the "Prefatory Action," another theurgical musical composition, involving a synthesis of the arts, which would precede the "Mysterium" to prepare humanity of this final spiritual fulfillment. Hence, he was conceiving the idea of the "Prefatory Action", which gradually pushed aside his plans for the "Mysterium". Towards the end of his life he saw that humanity was not prepared for undergoing this grandiose spiritual transformation, so he, essentially, left the idea of the "Mysterium" aside. He actually claimed that the final work would be written by him, in the future, after he undergoes a few reincarnations, a few generations later.

Scriabin wrote a literary text or libretto to the "Prefatory Action," describing the birth of the universe, the conversation and interaction of lofty divine spirits, the passing of humanity through a dark, materialized historical phase, its subsequent overcoming of this and, at the end, the final spiritual dissolution. After this he, essentially, composed the entire music without writing it down. His composing habits were, essentially, that he created entire pieces in his head, jotting down sketches only in cases when he was not sure of certain passages, when he was thinking of means of revising them. Only after completing the music he would notate it down. Scriabin's friend, composer and music critic, Leonid Sabaneyev, the author of the famous book, "Remembrances of Scriabin," published in 1925, gave an eye-witness account in his book that when he visited Scriabin's house, the composer played large fragments of the music to the "Prefatory Action" to him on the piano from memory. Sabaneyev claimed that this was the most beautiful music by Scriabin he had ever heard. Other eyewitnesses claimed Scriabin claiming, after finishing the music: "I have only one remaining unpleasant task to do: to write the music down". Unfortunately, soon after that Scriabin unexpectedly fell ill with blood poisoning, as a result of which he died in April 1915 at an early age of 43. His last words were: "But this is a catastrophe!" The "catastrophe," in Scriabin's mind, was not such an "insignificant" event as his own death, but the fact that humanity would not be endowed with this "Mysterium" and, hence, would not be transformed spiritually. As it turned out, he could not even write down on music paper the music, which he had composed, so, as Sabaneyev wrote in his book "Remembrances of Scriabin", "the music was lost irretrievably". For the music critic, who had had a chance to hear fragments of this musical work and to marvel at its immense beauty, this was one of the biggest tragedies resulting from Scriabin's death.

Curiously enough, Sabaneyev in his book mentions that there was evidence that the famous priest and philosopher, Father Pavel Florensky, who was a mystic in his own right, predicted at the time after Scriabin's death that "in thirty three years the "Mysterium" would be completed and Scriabin's name would somehow be involved in it". In fact, that is what happened, since in 1948, thirty three years after Scriabin's death, composer Sergei Protopopoff made a performing version of the "Prefatory Action". Protopopoff is a composer of the generation of avant-garde composers, who were prominent in the 1910s and 1920s, but whose activities were suppressed in the 1930s. They include such names as Nikolai Roslavetz, Alexander Mossolov, Arthur Lourié – the latter had emigrated to France and then to the USA – Vsevolod Zaderatsky, Joseph Schillinger and others. Some of these composers were preoccupied with discovering new musical techniques and new systems of harmony and pitch organization, and many of them were, in a sense, followers and continuers of Scriabin's late style, having continued in the direction where Scriabin left off. Of these composers who built new harmonic systems of organizing pitches, Roslavetz and Protopopoff were the most prominent. They established new harmonies based on vertical and even horizontal sets of pitches, which were not "atonal," being based on certain types of organization of sound, but neither were they tonal, since they were not subservient to diatonic harmonies.

Sergei Vladimirovich Protopopoff was born in Moscow in 1893. He started his musical studies at an early age, however, he also went to pursue studies in medicine, graduating from the Medical Department of Moscow University. In 1913 he made the acquaintance with the theorist, Boleslav Yavorsky and, subsequently, went to Kiev to study privately with Yavorsky, after which he enrolled into the Kiev Conservatory. Yavorsky was a proponent of numerous innovative ideas, discoursing about history, genre, musical styles and a general semantic interpretation of music. Incidentally, he was also a brilliant analyzer of Scriabin's music according to his theoretical systems and historical concepts. One of his most important discoveries was the theory of the "harmonic modes." At the core of his theoretical system was the interval of the tritone, which resolves into the major third. From a few basic extensions of this intervallic progression several 'modes' are created. When these modes are in turn dissected and spread out horizontally, this produces a few new, non-standard scales, the majority of which are very similar to Messiaen's 'modes of limited transposition'. Protopopoff, during "avant-garde period", which lasted from 1917 to 1932, wrote modernist music, somewhat related to Scriabin in its harmonic language, and he used these "modes" as a basis for his harmonic language, making full use of the resulting horizontal scales. Protopopoff music also had some affinity to the music of Roslavetz and Mosolov. It featured an organic combination of the symbolist aesthetics, – manifesting in a new form of romanticism, combined with a new harmonic language – with futurism – demonstrated by new, urbanistic textures and a novel, grotesque sound-world. In his modernist period, Protopopoff composed three piano sonatas, a few song cycles and longer vocal works set on texts of Russian folk tales, organically combining them with modernist aesthetics. His music generally alternates textures which are very Romantic, with those that are rather harsh and modernistic, somewhat similar to Stravinsky and Mosolov. This combination of these two opposing stylistic traits forms an interesting artistic synthesis in Protopopoff's music.

Since Protopopoff was a Moscow-based composer, he wrote sonatas and songs, turning to the modernist aesthetics to express his personal subjective emotional life and philosophical musings. However, his vocal works set to texts of Russian folktales are endowed to a greater degree with "St. Petersburg/Leningrad" aesthetics, since they have a greater quantity of theatrical qualities.

In the early 1930s, as a result of pressure of Communist Party activists among the musicians, which led to a number of decisive governmental edicts, all the composers who wrote modernist music were harshly suppressed in their activities. As a result, they essentially ceased composing modernist music, having been virtually threatened with reprisals. Hence, from the early 1930s all the music of Roslavetz, Mosolov, Protopopoff and Vsevolod Zaderatsky became traditional, diatonic and somewhat generic and bland, with all the innovative, modernist features totally absent. Nonetheless, the composer did not cease his compositional activities, switching to a more conventional, academically tonal musical language; nor did he stop being a disciple of Yavorsky and an ardent promoter of the latter's theoretical systems and historical concepts. From 1938 to 1943 Protopopoff taught at Moscow Conservatory, after which in the mid-1940s he cooperated with Maria Alexandrovna Scriabina, the daughter of the famous composer, who was a theatrical producer. She commissioned him to write music for theatrical productions of many famous plays, of which his music to Alexander Ostrovsky's play "The Thunderstorm" became especially distinguished in its style. In 1946 Maria Scriabina, who also tended to the Scriabin Museum in Moscow, suggested to Protopopoff to turn to Scriabin's literary text and musical sketches to his "Prefatory Action" to reconstruct Scriabin's unrealized project. The composer set to work and two years later, in 1948, finished the work, thus fulfilling Pavel Florensky's prophecy. He made a performing version of the "Prefatory Action", for reciter (or a number of actors), chorus and two pianos, composing the music, derived completely from Scriabin's unfinished musical sketches. The score of Protopopoff's finished version as well as the materials related to it, stored in the archives of the Glinka Museum, demonstrate that Protopopoff studied the subject matter of the literary text as well as the musical sketches very thoroughly. All the themes are written out, and analyzed in terms of their possible semantic meaning, showing that Protopopoff was trying to infer very attentively the semantic meaning of each of the musical themes before assembling them together to build the musical structure of his version. At its inception, it was meant to be a rather local affair, most likely, being written chiefly to attract visitors to the Scriabin Museum, to show them specimens of Scriabin's late style, as well as to demonstrate to them the conception of Scriabin's unfinished masterpiece and the music, based on the composer's sketches. One of the most remarkable circumstances, related to the completion of this work was that it was completed in that particular era, most notably in 1948, one of the worse years in the entire history of music during the Soviet era, the year of the famous Edict of the Communist Party, which branded almost all the leading composers and tendencies of that time as "formalist" and, hence, hostile to the prescribed Soviet aesthetics. There is undocumented evidence that it was given a public performance in 1949. However, no written evidence of this has yet been found by the author of these lines, though mention

has been made by musicians, who heard it from eye-witnesses of that time. In all likelihood, it could have been tolerated by the Soviet authorities due to the fact that because Scriabin's daughter had some authority in the society of that time, due to her relation to the famous composer. Supposition could be made that it was given a closed performance at the Scriabin Museum. In the later years, when the legacy of this generation of Russian modernist composers has finally become available to the public, Protopopoff's version of Scriabin's "Prefatory Action" was finally given a number of public performances in Moscow – in 1992 at the Scriabin Museum by Moscow's Helicon Opera, who repeated it in 1993 and 1994 at the Glinka Museum and the Grand Hall of Moscow Conservatory, in April 2009 at the Scriabin Museum and in June 2009 at Moscow Conservatory's Rachmaninoff Hall. The time of public exposure of this remarkable composition has finally arrived, though it still awaits for a broader recognition by the general public.

At first it appears not to be clear whether Protopopoff conceived of this version as ultimately being for two pianos, chorus and reciter, or whether he wanted to orchestrate it later on. However, the copy of the score, stored at the archive of the Glinka Museum clearly indicates Protopopoff's plans to orchestrate this music later on. However, Protopopoff's own premature death in 1954 dissolved all of these intentions. It seems that, unfortunately, the "Prefatory Action" has a fatal influence on those who set out to work on it – Scriabin was prevented from finishing it, and Protopopoff was prevented from orchestrating it. However as the case may be, upon close examination of the sketches, certain aspects become clearly discernible, indicating that it was conceived of as being for orchestra.

First of all, the piano texture includes tremolos (Example 1). Not a single piano composition by Scriabin contains pure tremolos, notwithstanding the fact that his music has a variety of intricate pianistic effects. Tremolos are clearly indicative of piano reductions of symphonies and other orchestral works or piano-vocal scores of operas, and clearly imply orchestral effects, reduced for pianists' needs. Secondly, there are also wavering accompaniment figurations in triplets and in sixteenth notes, which clearly resemble similar figurations in string instruments (Example 2). Those could be found in piano music as well as in orchestral scores. Most importantly, the textural spacing of the music is interesting: very often the melodic line is not in the top voice of a chord but in a middle voice, sometimes being in the second piano, while the first piano plays accompaniment figures (Example 3), and sometimes being in the first piano while the second piano has notes which are of higher pitch than the melodic line, and also there are other figurations going on at the same time in the other piano (Example 4). This clearly demonstrates that this music was meant as an orchestral work, where these contrapuntal lines, though happening in the same register, are presented in different colors. There are a number of dramatic chords which, though sounding perfectly in place when played on the pianos, undoubtedly have a sense of being more effective if drawn by instruments which could hold the notes for their entire durations, rather than struck, leaving the sound to die down like on a piano (Example 5). Some of the chords clearly invoke associations with brass instrumental sounds, most notably brass fanfares – similar to those in the Third Symphony, the "Poem of Ecstasy" or "Prometheus" (Example 6). Many of the textures present dramatic melodic lines in the low registers, clearly presenting associations with trombone lines (Example 7). There are high melodic figurations, bearing resemblance to lines, performed by flutes (Example 8). The tutti sections also combine in an interesting manner, presenting curious combinations in the context of both piano music and orchestral music (Example 9). Nonetheless, many portions of this work are undoubtedly endowed with piano effects, allowing for the assumption that Protopopoff had been conceiving of the work as one for orchestra joined by solo piano, in the manner of Scriabin's "Prometheus". Of course, the genre of music of music for two pianos and their textural results are, in essence, different from the genre of music for one piano, since there are more possibilities and more contrapuntal intricacies available. However, upon careful examination of the score of Protopopoff's performing version of "Prefatory Action," the conclusion clearly arises that the textural thinking is not as much pianistic as it is orchestral in its conception. There is not a predominant line with a subsidiary line, but rather there is a wealth of contrapuntal activity, which presumes orchestral thinking, featuring different orchestral instruments playing simultaneously with different colors. Some lines are brought out more, others are brought out less. At that, in the long run, it sounds perfectly fine as a piano work as well. So this combination of pianistic and orchestral thinking is what makes Protopopoff's version of Scriabin's "Prefatory Action" especially distinctive.

Example 1

Andante rit.

Soprano
Лик со-кро-вен-ный ми-ро - зда - нья

Alto
Лик со-кро-вен-ный ми-ро - зда - нья... rit.

Piano

Piano

Example 2

Andante cantabile

Piano

Piano

Pno.

Pno.

Example 3

Example 3 consists of two piano parts in 4/4 time, marked *Andante da lontano*. The upper part is marked *ppp* and features a long, sustained melodic line with a slur. The lower part is marked *pp* and features a rhythmic accompaniment with triplets in the bass line.

Example 4

Example 4 consists of four piano parts in 3/4 time, marked *Allegro moderato*. The parts are arranged in two systems. The first system includes two piano parts: the upper part is marked *mf* and features a rhythmic accompaniment with triplets and slurs, while the lower part is marked *mp* and features a similar rhythmic accompaniment. The second system includes two piano parts: the upper part is marked *mf* and features a rhythmic accompaniment with triplets and slurs, while the lower part is marked *mf* and features a similar rhythmic accompaniment. The parts are marked with various dynamics and articulations, including slurs and triplets.

Example 5

Andante quieto

Soprano

Alto

Piano

mp marcato

Piano

Andante quieto

pp una corda
p

F#m F#m F#m F#m F#m

4

S.

p Уст не кос - нув - ших - ся мы тѣп - ло - е ды - ха - нье,

A.

p Уст не кос - нув - ших - ся мы тѣп - ло - е ды - ха - нье,

Pno.

Pno.

simile

Example 6

Moderato

Piano

sf

Moderato

f quasi trombe

Example 7

Moderato

Piano

Piano

Pno.

Pno.

Example 8

Andante quieto

Piano

Piano

Pno.

Pno.

Example 9

The image displays two systems of musical notation for a piano piece. The first system is labeled 'Piano' and consists of two staves. The upper staff has a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). It features a melodic line with trills and triplets, marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The lower staff has a bass clef and a key signature of two sharps, with a melodic line marked *pp sempre*. The second system is labeled 'Pno' and also consists of two staves. The upper staff has a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps, with a melodic line marked *mf*. The lower staff has a bass clef and a key signature of two sharps, with a melodic line marked *pp sempre*. The notation includes various rhythmic values, including triplets and trills, and dynamic markings such as *p*, *pp sempre*, and *mf*.

Mention must be made of another existing completed version of Scriabin's "Prefatory Action," which was completed much more recently. In 1970, a Moscow composer, originally born in Perm, Alexander Nemtin, an avid attendee of the Moscow Electronic Studio, which at that time was hosted at the Scriabin Museum, opened in 1966, was also given the suggestion to complete Scriabin's "Prefatory Action". He turned to the same sources as Protopopoff, for creating his version of this mystical work – Scriabin's literary text, which he used as a libretto, and the musical sketches. However, he realized the project in a totally different manner, composing a work initially for orchestra and chorus, without setting Scriabin's text to music, keeping the chorus vocalizing. One especially curious feature in this phenomenon was that in 1948, the most sinister year in the history of Russian music, Protopopoff was not afraid of setting these words to music, whereas in 1970, when the situation was to a certain degree less stifling, Nemtin was wary about the authorities responding negatively and creating obstacles for the performance of his version of the "Prefatory Action," due to its mystical subject matter – as Nemtin put it, the subject of the work "had no dealings with the theme of the class struggle." Nemtin started out by composing a forty-minute work for chorus and orchestra, which was premiered in 1973. However, during the course of composing the music, he saw that he was not able to depict the subject matter of the entire text in this span of time. So from 1976 to 1980 he wrote the second part of the "Prefatory Action", which lasted for another fifty minutes. Not being able to complete his musical rendition of the subject matter, in 1980 he started working on the third part of this grandiose composition, finishing it in 1996. The third part of the work lasted for an hour, so the result was a gigantic work for chorus and orchestra, altogether lasting for two and a half hours. The words are not set to music, but the semantic qualities of the music are meant to express the poem. Upon reading Scriabin's literary text, written in the form of a long poem, (which, unfortunately, has still not been republished since its initial publication in 1919 in an edition called the "Russian Propylaeum") and then listening to the music of Nemtin's version, it becomes clearly apparent how the music portrays all the events described in the text. Nemtin's completed performing version of Scriabin's "Prefatory Action" was released on compact disc in 1999 in the Decca label, in performance of the German Orchestra of Berlin under the direction of Vladimir Ashkenazy. It was performed a few times during Nemtin's lifetime, before he died in February 1999. One could point out that Nemtin was somewhat luckier than Scriabin and Protopopoff, in that he was able to finish his version of the music, to orchestrate it, as well as to hear it several times in live performance.

At the end, the question arises of which of these two versions is better, and which fits Scriabin's initial conception more adequately. This essentially presents an arguable question, due to the fact that all people have

different tastes – hence, some listeners may like Protopopoff's version better, while others may prefer Nemtin's. The personal attitude of the author of these lines is that both of these versions are worthy of attention and even admiration in their own right, and the existence of two extremely contrasting renditions of this composition presents an intriguing phenomenon. The fact that this curious and enigmatic project of Scriabin was given two realizations, which are so different from each other, and that this unfinished work could be completed in two such contrasting ways reveals its true universal spiritual potential.

Santrauka

A. Skriabino orkestrinis muzikinis stilius (remiantis jo nebaigtuoju „Įvadinio veiksmu“)

Aleksandras Skriabinas – vienas mįslingiausių rusų kompozitorių, kurio vien jau pats gyvenimas yra tapęs tikra legenda, labiausiai yra žinomas kaip fortepijoninės muzikos kūrėjas. Jo fortepijoniniame palikime – dešimtyje sonatų, daugybėje preliudų, etiudų, fantazijų ir kt. – išryškėja kompozitoriaus stiliaus raida nuo ankstyvojoje kūryboje ryškios F. Chopino įtakos, kurią keitė ekstaziškas proto-vagneriškasis laikotarpis, iki vėlyvojo mistiškojo laikotarpio su modernistinėmis harmonijomis ir ezoterinio pobūdžio nuotaikomis.

Tačiau ne mažiau svarbi jo kūryboje buvo ir kita sritis – orkestrinė muzika. Skriabino orkestrinis palikimas negausus, tačiau ypač savitas, o kūriniai visų pirma perteikia didingas filosofines koncepcijas ir dramaturgiškai galias kosmines pasaulio perspektyvas. Iš pastarųjų labiausiai išsiskiria trys simfonijos ir du kūriniai orkestrui – „Ekstazės poema“ ir „Prometėjas. Ugnies poema“. Pirmosios dvi simfonijos, nors ir prisodrintos emocijų bei dramaturgijos, novatoriškos formų, dalių skaičiaus bei jų išdėstymo (Pirmoji simfonija – šešių dalių, jos finale įvestas choras pagal paties Skriabino „Odę menui“, o Antroji simfonija – penkių dalių), dar pasižymi gana tradicine orkestruote, būdinga rusų simfonistams Čaikovskui ir Tanejevui. Trečiojoje simfonijoje – „Dieviškojoje poemoje“ – harmoninė kalba ir orkestruotė jau žymiai originalesnės, o „Ekstazės poemoje“ ir „Prometėjuje“ orkestrinės spalvos išstobulinamos taip, kad jų naujoviškumą galima prilyginti tokiems skirtingiems kūriniams kaip Stravinskio „Ugnies paukštė“ ir „Fejerverkas“ bei Prokofjevo „Skitų siuita“.

Skriabino gyvenimas ir kūryba tapo legenda daugiausia dėl paskutinio neužbaigto jo kūrinio – „Įvadinio veiksmo“. Tai turėjo būti didžiulis veikalas, jungiantis įvairius menus, su vokaline partija pagal paties kompozitoriaus literatūrinį tekstą, aprašantį viso to, kas gyva, gimimą, dvasinę evoliuciją ir galutinę transfigūraciją. Tai turėjo būti įžanga į dar mįslingesnį grandiozinį teurginį veikalą „Misterija“, skirtą atlikti specialiai Indijoje pastatytoje šventykloje, kurią, siekdama ekstaziško susideginimo dvasios ugnyje, būtų lankiusi visa žmonija. Tačiau Skriabinas spėjo parašyti tik „Įvadinio veiksmo“ literatūrinį libretą ir 53 puslapius muzikinių eskizų.

Vėliau dviem kompozitoriams pasisekė užbaigti šį kūrinių kiekvienam jų būdingu stiliumi. Kompozitorius modernistas Sergejus Protopopovas (1893–1954), muzikos teoretiko Boleslavo Javorskio (1877–1942) auklėtinis, aktyviai kūręs Maskvoje XX a. trečiąjį dešimtmetį, paskatintas Skriabino dukters Marijos ir Skriabino muziejaus Maskvoje direktorės T. Šaborkinos, 1948 m. parašė versiją skaitovui, chorui ir dviem fortepijonams. Jis planavo šią versiją orkestruoti, tačiau netikėtai mirė. Ši „Įvadinio veiksmo“ versija įdomi tuo, kad jos pagrindu galima paanalizuoti, kokios galėjo būti kompozitoriaus intencijos dviem fortepijonams parašyto kūrinio orkestruotės atžvilgiu, kadangi vietomis fortepijoninė faktūra čia grynai pianistinė ir, sprendžiant pagal tai, skirta atlikti būtent dviem fortepijonams, nors daugelio kitų epizodų faktūra leidžia manyti ją esant aiškiai orkestrinę, ir tai rodo, kad kompozitorius turėjo mintyje orkestrą ir tikrai planavo vėliau šį kūrinių orkestruoti. Protopopovo „Įvadinio veiksmo“ versiją Maskvos Skriabino muziejuje ir Konservatorijos Didžiojoje salėje 1992, 1993 ir 1994 m. atliko „Helikono“ operos teatro solistai, o partitūrą 2008 m. išleido Maskvos leidykla „Kompozitor“.

Kita Skriabino „Įvadinio veiksmo“ versija, kurios autorius – maskvietis kompozitorius Aleksandras Nemtin (1936–1999), yra skirta dideliame orkestrui, chorui, fortepijonui, vargonams ir šviesos partijai (panašiai kaip Skriabino „Prometėjuje“). Tai trijų dalių pustrečios valandos trukmės kūrinys. Rašyti pirmąją „Įvadinio veiksmo“ dalį Nemtin pradėjo 1970 m., o trečiąją baigė 1996 m. Šis jo kūrinys – ir visas, ir atskiros dalys – keletą kartų buvo atliktas Rusijoje, Europos šalyse ir JAV. Kitaip nei Protopopovas, Nemtin sumanė savo versiją būtent orkestrui ir numatė visas orkestrines spalvas. Veikalo orkestruotė, kurioje paties Skriabino orkestrinis stilius susipina su XX a. pabaigos orkestruotei būdingais bruožais, taip pat ir paties Nemtin orkestriniu braižu, tapo vienu iš puikiausių elementų kūrinio muzikoje. Tačiau literatūrinis tekstas čia nenaudojamas, o choras ir solistai dainuoja be žodžių. Nemtin čia naudoja sudėtingas 12–16 garsų akordines struktūras, paties Skriabino užfiksuotas jo muzikiniuose eskizuose ir aiškiai skirtas būtent „Įvadiniam veiksmui“. Nemtin „Įvadinio veiksmo“ versija yra išleista kompaktine plokštele.

Šios dvi versijos atskleidžia labai įdomų fenomeną: kaip galima užbaigti legendiniu tapusio kompozitoriaus kūrinį tokiais visiškai skirtingais būdais ir remiantis skirtingais aspektais, būdingais paties Skriabino pirminėms koncepcijoms. Jau pats faktas, kad du visiškai skirtingi kompozitoriai gali pateikti tokias viena į kitą nepanašias, tačiau kartu ir visiškai priimtinas šio unikalios veikalo versijas, rodo begalinį šio kūrinio meninį ir dvasinį potencialą, kaip pats Skriabinas ir numatė „Įvadinio veiksmo“ planuose ir eskizuose, ir patvirtina šią kompoziciją esant išties mistiniu meno kūriniumi ir viena iš didingiausių ir įtaigiausių XX a. pradžios meninių koncepcijų.