

Neoromanticism as a Dominating Tendency in the Symphonic Music of Latvian Composers in the Last Third of the 20th Century and the Beginning of the 21st Century. The Local Causes for its Topicality in the Context of European Music History

The designation *Neoromanticism* (also *Neoromantic*) in musicology in the last two decades of the 20th century and at the beginning of the 21st century, was initially a characteristic word in music criticism, and then gradually changed to a term which is regularly used in research of aesthetic and stylistic problems in contemporary music. In writings of two respectable international music encyclopaedia publications – *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (Jann Pasler 2001) and *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Martin Wehnert 1998), as well as in separate publications and special research papers Neoromanticism is basically defined and analysed as a tendency which represents the stylistic development processes in the classical music genre in the last third of the 20th century (Arnolds Klotiņš 1987, Kyle Rothweiler 1987, David Fromm 1994, Franck Trentmann 1994, Mary Rameaka Campbell 1994, Lolita Fürmane 2000, *Postmodern music/Postmodern thought* 2002, Hermann Danuser 2005, Richard Taruskin 2008). However, the exploration and research of Neo-romanticism in musicology like any other significant aesthetic idea and tendency in the history of the 20th century music is closely related to specific music material and the analysis of the cultural traditions and context, influencing it. The goal of this publication is to introduce the reasons for the topicality of the tendency of Neoromanticism in works of varied classical music genres, particularly symphonic music, of the mid- and late-generation contemporary composers of Latvia. When characterising the local features of musical creative tendencies and cultural historical experiences in the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century in the classical music culture in Latvia, there are particular aspects which substantially differ from the corresponding experiences in other countries. To express his position towards the problem in question the author of this paper structures the problems analysed in the following way:

- 1) Neoromanticism as the dominating tendency in the history of classical music in Latvia in the last third of the 20th century, the uniqueness of this fact in the history of European music;
- 2) clarification and characterisation of the reasons of the particular influences of the 19th century Romantic style in the music history of the music in Latvia in the 20th century.

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A great number of less internationally-known mid- and later-generation composers, currently living in Latvia (aged 40 and older), among them Leons Amoliņš (1937), Alvilis Altmanis (1950), Ilona Breģe (1959), Pēteris Butāns (1942), Rihards Dubra (1964), Maija Einfelde (1939), Agris Engelmanis (1936–2011), Romualds Jermaks (1931), Aivars Kalējs (1951), Imants Kalniņš (1941), Romualds Kalsons (1936), Juris Karlsons (1948), Arturs Maskats (1957), Selga Mence (1953), Pēteris Plakidis (1947), Andris Riekstiņš (1951), Indra Riše (1961), Vilnis Šmīdbergs (1944), Andris Vecumnieks (1946), Imants Zemzaris (1951) and others, basically present in their music (symphonic in particular) classically traditional music language expression, organically synthesising it, not too radically, with features of the Modernism of the first half of the 20th century in diverse individual variations. Neoromanticism is the most broadly represented tendency in the music of the above-mentioned Latvian composers in various classical genres¹.

Due to this fact, music of these composers substantially differs from the music of Latvian composers of the youngest generation (40 years and younger), among which the most outstanding personalities are, for example, Anitra Tumševica (1971), Rolands Kronlaks (1973), Mārtiņš Viļums (1974), Gundega Šmite (1977), Santa Ratniece (1977), Andris Dzenītis (1977), Ēriks Ešvalds (1977) and Jānis Petraškevičs (1978). The creative searches of these composers are notable for their more radical approach to the adaptation and

¹ For further information and more detailed characterisations in English of the Latvian composers noted in this section, please visit <http://www.lmic.lv/core.php?pageId=747>.

creation of concepts of new music languages and expressions². Gradually Latvian composers of the youngest generation have, in their own and specific way, taken over the music culture process of the classical genre. However, in the sense of aesthetic and stylistic position, the more traditionally oriented older generation of composers in Latvia still holds a notable balance in the field of their music creations.

The most significant discrepancy as to the origin and representation of the tendency of Neoromanticism between Latvia and other countries in the last third of the 20th century is based upon the diversecultural-historical experience. Neo-romanticism in the classical music genre in the 1970s and 1980s developed, in its own way, as a post-war (1950s and 1960s) avantgarde post-modernistic *reaction* tendency. In that way, in the history of the classical music genre in Western Europe, Neoromanticism, along with such locally or more broadly defined music style tendencies as Minimalist music (minimalism), *New inwardness*, *New simplicity*, *New Expressivity*, and others, developed after the gained experience of Modernism and its more radical tendencies – avantgarde, suggesting standards for background evaluation and analysis. Latvia in its turn alongside with other East European countries and former USSR territories various stylistic tendencies of Postmodernism in the classical music in the last third of the 20th century developed without a notable period of Modernism. In this case, this development in Latvia can be considered unique.

In Latvia, for various historical reasons (which will further be explained more in detail), adaptation to the aesthetic ideas and stylistic resolutions of Modernism in the classical music genre was fragmentary, without a long-lasting effect on the experience of composers, musicians, the public and critical reviewers both in the first third of the 20th century, and in the 1950s and 1960s. By the 1960s the dominating 19th century Romanticism paradigm in the culture of Latvian classical music (with some individual exceptions) almost immediately changed to distinct tendencies characteristic of stylistic retrospective and synthesis of the Postmodernism period. At the beginning of the 1970s in the music of many Latvian composers of the younger generation at that time (for example, Romualds Kalsons, Pēteris Plakidis, Pēteris Vasks, Juris Karlsons and others), a unique quality of *Neo-romanticism* appeared. Considering different attempts to define Neoromanticism in the theoretical literature and comparing them with specific results of analytical evaluation of the creative work of Latvian composers in symphonic music in the last third of the 20th century, the author of the given paper suggests the following definition of the style tendencies of Neoromanticism open for further evaluation and discussion.

The realization and manifestation of the cultivated universal artistic expression paradigm of Romanticism of many European countries, including also the corresponding style tendency in the creative work of Latvian composers in the last third of the 20th century, leads one to analytically perceive the musical language of Neoromanticism in the sense of its unique semantics. The **tendency of Neoromanticism**, clearly, and at the same time, very discretely reflects the characteristic stylistic retrospectivity and intertextuality of the Postmodern period of art. It is the creation of compositions with such an expression, which evokes defined associations and stylistic allusions with its historical prototype, the music of Romanticism created by varied composers in the 19th century, at the same time reflecting in an, on principle, contrasting stylistic model the acknowledgement of the romantic artistic paradigm.

The term *i n t e r t e x t u a l i t y* used in this research paper is principally used with the meaning that was entered into circulation since the 1960s, thanks to the regular publications by French linguist Julia Kristeva (1941) on Postmodern culture, art and aesthetic questions. Altogether, in the analysis of the intertextual aesthetic and artistic processes, it is regularly used as a defined synonym of such designations as *context*, *tradition* and *allusion*.

At the same time, intertextuality is considered also as the expansion of an already familiar idea, and, at the foundation of intertextuality, is the idea that one text can be explained by another text, expressed with yet another text, and endlessly continuing on in that way. In the circulation of codes, any text can be potentially remade into other intertextual qualities (Julia Kristeva 1986). Still, while not radicalising the meaning and significance of the concept of intertextuality, it can be concluded, that, in the works of art of the Postmodernism period of culture, a notable acuteness has developed in the expression of the meanings of textual relations, which, additionally, often is directed towards the creation of poetic and stylistic allusions with characteristics

² Further characterisations of the creative searches of contemporary Latvian composers of the younger generation are provided in two articles in a recently published collection of Latvian scientific writings in English (Rolands Kronlaks 2009, Ilze Šarkovska-Liepiņa 2009).

of the styles of previous eras. In turn, in instrumental music, acknowledging its absolute abstract and verbally untranslatable nature, one of the most vivid expressions of intertextuality is the activation of the elements of diverse styles. Additionally, if the abstract music text itself is directed mainly to the creation of a retrospective stylistic allusion, then the stylistic prototype can be considered as the main object, which is indicated, and which is played upon and developed further in the text of a specific work of music. This reference also enriches the notions both on one, as well as on many, stylistically substantive qualities of compositions, and offers fruitful encouragements in the decoding of a particular text and in the evaluation of the aesthetic (see, for example, Michael L. Klein 2004, Audra Versekenaitė 2009).

The previous statement means that the methods of expression characteristic of the style of Romanticism, developed in 19th century music, with such typical creation and compositional principals have been proven current and significant in the creative work of many of the composers of the last third of the 20th century. Still, under the influence of the aesthetic ideas of, mainly, the first half of the 20th century, diverse novelties in the language of music (for example the principle of dodecaphony and its varied modifications, deeper searches in the artistic modelling of the sound timbral acoustic phenomenon, free notation techniques of musical materials in the layout of space and time, the use of diverse scales in the creation of new modal systems) have been created in the framework of the Postmodern situation in the creative work of every composer, originally and diversely synthesized with separate elements of classical romantic music language (tonal harmony, textural, compositional, genre), that have been developed in previous centuries.

With the implementation of this kind of musical language, the contradiction characteristic to the romantic artistic world view of diverse, often radically contrasting spheres of images, a desire to postulate some ideal existence of categories of eternal beauty in the consciousness of people, many of the composers of the last third of the 20th century have assigned a different expression of the themes of Romanticism, a meaning contrasting with the music of the 19th century. Not just only directly expressing the experiences of one's soul in romantic expression, but, in the trends characteristic of Romanticism, to update the interest of the values and the beauty of music of by-gone eras, in the resolution of these themes and to not refrain from subjective artistic interpretations and the reflection of feelings rooted in personal experiences, at the same time actively synthesizing varied methods and approaches of expression – that is the hidden *motto* of the reflected Neoromantic tendency of works of music.

The above concept of the tendency of Neoromanticism has not necessarily always manifested itself in music works of high stylistic or artistic individual quality. There are quite a number of music pieces where the element of 19th century Romanticism has been expressed in a rather primitive way. However, in the most successful cases music can address and fascinate its audience with its artistic brilliance and originality.

Today, as already mentioned above, there is a whole galaxy of Latvian composers of the mid- and later-generation, who continue in a certain way to develop the tendency of Neoromanticism in their own individual interpretations. The reasons for this local uniqueness in the searches in some specific aspects of the history of the Latvian classical music will be considered in the subsequent sections of this writing.

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Many of those outside Latvia who are interested in music may be surprised by the fact that, even until the 19th century, the main ethnic group living in Latvia – Latvians – for historical reasons were not rulers of their own land, and did not participate in the formation of the government or in the workings of public institutions. Beginning with the 13th century, when Latvia was gradually occupied by the German Crusaders, Latvians for many centuries lost their ability to be real rulers of their land, and were in various forms of subjugation to those who conquered this territory.

In the period between the 13th and 16th centuries, the territory of Latvia was included in the nation formed by the occupying German regime – Livonia (formed by the territories of Latvia and Estonia). The most important political centre of Livonia was the city of Riga, and the nation was ruled by representatives of the German occupying powers. In the 16th century, the nation of Livonia ceased to exist – after the Russian-Polish war two Latvian ethnographic regions were formed in the contemporary territory of Latvia – the duchies of Kurzeme and Zemgale (independent nations which were ruled mainly by Baltic Germans) and the *Pārdaugava* duchy (the territories of Eastern Latvia and Southern Estonia) as a province of Poland.

In 1629 after the Polish-Swedish war the historically Latvian ethnographic region of Vidzeme came under the rule of Sweden while the ethnographic region of Latgale came under the rule of Poland. In 1721, after the *Northern War* between Russia and Sweden, Vidzeme came under the rule of Russia. In 1772, after the division of Poland among many European nations (Austria-Hungary, Russia and Prussia), Latgale also came under the rule of Russia. In 1795, the Kurzeme duchy ceased to exist as an independent nation and it was included in the Russian empire. In the period of Czarist Russian occupation of Latvia, lasting from the 18th century till the beginning of the 20th century (World War I), the territory of Latvia was artificially divided – there was the Kurzeme province (formed by the territories of Kurzeme and Zemgale) and the province of Vidzeme (including also the territory of Estonia), while Latgale was included in the province of Vitebsk (Belarus). Only in the 20th century, after the end of *World War I*, taking advantage of the historical situation in Europe, in 1918 Latvians established an independent state of their own on their territory – the Republic of Latvia, which comprised four historically Latvian regions of Kurzeme, Latgale, Vidzeme and Zemgale. The first period of Latvia as an independent state lasted until 1940 (in 1940 Latvia was occupied by the Soviet Union), and, after the collapse of the Soviet Union (1991), Latvia was renewed as an independent state.

The main ethnic group in Latvia – Latvians – were the majority of the population of the modern territory of Latvia in the period from the 13th to the 20th centuries, though this majority was subjugated to the rule of the occupants. In the above-mentioned period Latvians gradually became serfs in many regions – they were in a particularly subordinate and subjugated situation to the absolute owners of the land – foreign (mainly Baltic Germans) landowners. Latvian farmers in Kurzeme and Zemgale, with regard to German land owners, were the most subjugated part of the population in the period from the 17th to the 19th centuries. The status and rights of Latvians in Vidzeme were slightly better (the rulers were Swedish and German landowners) whereas in Latgale Latvians were under full subjugation of the Polish landowners.

The lengthy occupation of Latvia by other nations historically delayed the development and realisation of a united Latvian people and nation, which only began to develop in the 19th century. Besides, viewed from the standpoint of cultural experience, there was principally no relationship between Latvians and the rulers of the foreign occupiers for many centuries. Latvians lived in a rural environment for many centuries according to their ancient traditions and beliefs, and were not introduced to the culture and most important development processes and results of professional art in the New Era in Europe (as of the Renaissance.) The rare opportunities for Latvians to be introduced to the ancient European professional culture and art achievements were only possible through church services of the various denominations of the Christian church (Catholic, Lutheran, and Orthodox), as well as educational institutions (schools), formed by the church. Representatives of the foreign occupiers of the territory of Latvia only made attempts to implement the current leading cultural traditions of Europe in the scope of their society without any intention to introduce them to Latvians.

A notable historical investment by the many centuries of foreign occupation, mainly Germans, is the written Latvian language. The Latvian language, alongside with the Lithuanian one, are the only Baltic languages of Indo-European descent, still living today. Since the end of the 16th century many Lutheran ministers of German origin in the Latvian regions of Vidzeme, Zemgale, and Kurzeme laid the foundations for the written Latvian language, which was based upon the characteristic formal grammar rules of the German language of that time. The written Latvian language developed along this path even up to the 20th century, when there was a fully developed theoretical concept, differing from the formal grammatical constructions of the German language at that time. In the period until the middle of the 19th century the creation of the written Latvian language alongside with learning Latvian on the part of Baltic Germans was necessary to facilitate communication with their subordinate persons – the Latvian farmers.

It is interesting to note that in the cultural environment, formed by the foreigners (occupants of Latvia), there were individuals well-known within the context of European musical history who at different times worked in Latvia. For example, the German composer of the Baroque period – Johann Valentin Meder (1649–1719) – spent a great part of his life in Riga, Latvia. He lived and worked in Riga from 1685 to 1686 and from 1701 to 1719. In the second half of the 18th century the well known keyboard (harpsichord, piano, organ) virtuoso Johann Gottfried Mützel (1728–1788) worked in Riga. His period of working in Riga was from 1753 to 1788. An interesting fact in the biography of J. G. Mützel is that in 1750 (the last year of J. S. Bach's life) Mützel spent some months perfecting his knowledge of composition with several distinguished German Classical composers.

Richard Wagner (1813–1883) also spent two years of his life (1837–1839) in Riga as the musical director of the Riga German Theatre. However, neither these well-known composers, nor composers, musicians, artists, and philosophers of many other nations developed any links with the Latvians, living in Latvia at that time. Some exceptions were a few German ministers who in the 17th century worked in the field of Latvian folklore material collection and summarisation, thus introducing the material to the foreign society which occupied the territory of Latvia (though there was little interest on the part of the foreign society).

It should be noted that in the second half of the 18th century in Latvia one of the most well-known European philosophers, Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744–1803), worked in Riga, too (1764–1769). While in Riga, J. G. von Herder actively expressed the philosophical ideas characteristic of the period of the Enlightenment as well as displayed interest in Latvian traditional culture. The publication *Volkslieder nebst untermischten anderen Stücken* (its second revision was published in 1807 with the title *Stimmen der Völker in Liedern*) by J. G. von Herder in 1788 and 1789 also included Latvian folk songs. However, even in this period (the second half of the 18th century in Latvia) J. G. von Herder was a rare exception, since the great majority of foreigners in Latvia displayed neither interest in Latvians as a people, nor in their ancient and ethnographically long-established traditions.

Owing to various historical conditions Latvians as the basic nation, living in Latvia, could cultivate their own national culture only in the middle and the second half of the 19th century. This period in the research of Latvian history is labelled as The First National Awakening.

Choir singing and choir music gained the earliest and most widespread popularity in Latvian society in the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. This related to the previously implemented education system by the Baltic Germans with the Protestant (Evangelical Lutheran) church congregations. In the 19th century these schools dominated the ethnographically Latvian regions in Vidzeme and Kurzeme. In these schools, based on the German model, the education of the peasants included a significant amount of singing in groups. With the beginning of the First National Awakening the first professionally educated Latvian musicians (among whom the majority were teachers) took over the singing celebration (*sāngerfest*) idea of the Baltic Germans and established a new, unique local tradition – the All Latvian Song Festivals. Starting from 1873 until nowadays they are a regular occurrence (today they occur every five years), being organised in Latvia as a national (regional) celebration of the uniqueness of its cultural traditions. Today they are a celebration with more than 10,000 singers in a combined festival choir who sing a cappella choir songs in a classical Latvian tradition³.

The fact that Song Festivals became one of the most important forms of the manifestation of Latvian national identity in Latvia even until World War I in 1914 also explains the broad representation of choir music (*a cappella* choir songs) in the musical creations of professional Latvian composers in the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. Even though a precise calculation has not yet been made, there are compelling reasons to believe that choir music works constituted at least 90% of all the works, composed in the classical music genre by the first generation of Latvian composers (as of the middle of the 19th century). These were followed by vocal and instrumental chamber music compositions and approximately only one percent (if not less) were symphonic and vocal symphonic music. In the opera genre until the beginning of the 1920s Latvian composers had not yet represented themselves.

At that time (until the end of World War I in Europe) the choir music compositions of Latvian composers (mainly choir song miniatures) were based on individual versions of classical-romantic music language and style elements, typical for the 19th century, which were taken over from German and Russian composers. A similar trend dominated also in the vocal and instrumental chamber music works as well as symphonic music. Historically, the first symphonic work by a Latvian composer in Latvia was the 1880 opus *Simfonisks allegro* (*Symphonic Allegro*), composed by Andrejs Jurjāns (1856–1922), which, actually, was the first movement of his unfinished Symphony No. 1. The fact that since the last third of the 19th century the genre of Latvian symphonic music has always been something like a mirror which vividly reflects the current stylistic trends in Latvian music culture is also confirmed by an example of Jāzeps Vītols (1863–1948), who laid the foundations

³ On November 7, 2003, UNESCO proclaimed that the Latvian Song and Dance Celebration tradition was a masterwork of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

for the Latvian classical music, pathetically voicing his views in the Latvian press in 1912: *The level of musical significance for each nation can be measured in their scores. As long as we do not speak outwardly with the voices of flutes and trombones, we shall remain little noticed in the rich symphonic concert of the world.*

The fact that there were few symphonic music works by Latvian composers can be explained by extra-musical problems. Prior to establishing of the Latvian state in 1918, Latvian society had very limited economic and financial resources (which were mainly ruled by the long-lasting occupants of the Latvian territory, namely, Baltic Germans and Russians), so there was no possibility to form an independent symphony orchestra or such an institution as the Opera. The lack of a symphony orchestra institution did not encourage composers to write music for it. Besides, considering the situation that in the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century the Latvian part of the population of Latvia was without a similar cultural-historical experience, compared to such European countries as Germany, France, Italy and others with a much longer history of music culture traditions, the ability of the public to understand symphonic music could objectively be based on the somewhat easier to understand the 19th century style of Romanticism. This stylistic current could potentially be defined as **National Romanticism** in modern musicology. To characterise it a brief digression is necessary which will clarify the position of the author of this writing, based upon the evaluation and summary of the expressed conclusions of multiple research works (*Classic and romantic German aesthetics* 2003, Alfred Einstein 1947, Georg Knepler 1961, Rey M. Longyear 1973, Jim Samson /1/ 1991, Jim Samson /2/ 1991, Jim Samson /3/ 2001, Martin Wehnert 1998).

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As is already known, one of the first groups to express the concept of Romanticism at the end of the 18th century and the first third of the 19th century in musical creations as well as theoretical essays were the German artists and writers of the Jena and Heidelberg school, for example Karl Wilhelm Friedrich von Schlegel (1772–1829), August Wilhelm von Schlegel (1767–1845), Johann Ludwig Tieck (1773–1853), Georg Philipp Friedrich Freiherr von Hardenberg (pseudonym *Novalis*; 1772–1801), Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder (1773–1798), Ernst Theodor Wilhelm Hoffmann (1776–1822) and the brothers Grimm – Jacob (1785–1863) and Wilhelm (1786–1859). The designation of *Romanticism* was used by these German authors to draw attention to a quite new form of artistic expression, differing from the principles of the 18th century Classicism.

Stressing the encoded unknown, the essence of the ideal sphere in the work of art, the artists and art theoreticians developed an understanding of Romanticism as an ideology of eternal searching, often highlighting the sad or even tragic realisation of the unreachable ideal. Besides, in the aesthetic concept of Romanticism most cultivated by, for example, the brothers Grimm and E. T. A. Hoffman, a deepened interest in the values of folklore developed, finding in this field an inexhaustible source of inspiration for the creation of works of art.

The previously characterised understanding of Romanticism at the beginning of the 19th century in Germany and other countries of Europe (France, Great Britain) was noted not just in the art of the classical genre alone. Related processes could be seen in the developments of other cultural spaces as well. This is confirmed, for example, by the ideas of the 19th century philosophy. In the middle and second half of this century, Europe was dominated by the teachings of many notable German philosophers. Ignoring the often differing trends (in the amplitude from the searches for truth in the abstract ethical and moral criteria system until even clear metaphysical explanations of reality), there is a well-known basis for the understanding of them all as a specific reflection of the philosophy of idealism. In this case the concept of idealism means that the external world, actually, is intangible and spiritual. It is one of the mediated perceptible dimensions of psyche, which leads one to be conscious of the essence of *absolute reality*, in which a person's soul exists (the philosophical idea of transcendence)⁴.

The initial philosophy of idealism in its diverse individual versions was developed by Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762–1814), Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831), Friedrich

⁴ The author of this writing offers his own personal opinion of the beliefs of the 19th century German philosophers – there can be differing interpretations, which are determined by developed resources of research

Wilhelm Joseph Schelling (1775–1854) etc. who accentuated the significance of the desire of man to understand the world and the criticism of many moral questions of a religious dogma. A final individualised (radical) treatment of this direction was gained by the pessimistic atheism of Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860) and reached its climax in the philosophy of Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844–1900), where one of the most well-known premises is: *God is dead*. The striving of many idealism-tended philosophers to develop new ideas and possibilities in the search for the meaning of life reflected specific processes in the social life in various countries of Europe. For example, the Great French Revolution at the end of the 18th century was immediately followed by the discrediting of the ideals of the philosophy of Enlightenment, which, in turn, constantly inspired new revolutionary reorganisation processes. Atheism strengthened further and the belief that with the help of reason it is possible to achieve the desired results easily, with specific formulas and noble slogans.

It is also necessary to truly understand the imperatives of ethics and morals without which an all-round existence is not possible. However, a human both as an individual and a member of society, for objective as well as subjective reasons is unable to realise the vision of an all-round personal development. That is why a frequently encountered confusion and a bitter sense of resignation arises, which constantly interacts with the belief in one's abilities and attempts to form *a better present and future*. These conclusions more or less thread all of the works of the previously noted philosophers, and it is not difficult to perceive their relation to the foundations of the romantic aesthetics – ideas which were realised in two mutually supplementary tendencies in the diverse genres of classical art.

The first tendency is characterised by the sharply contrasting artistic model of such a viewpoint which postulates the tragedy of the unreachable ideal. Along the same lines, the expression of the creative works accentuates more the relation of the imagery of the individual inner world with significant social, political and philosophical ideas. Viewed from this angle, the romantic pathos is often interwoven with the realisation of the inability to overcome difficulties and resolve contradictions, in which an individual himself as well as his dreams and confidence sink and disappear. At the same time, however, there is a continuous calling to be conscious of one's mistakes in searches for his/her ideals, thus gaining valuable experience in the formation of moral aesthetic realisations.

For example, in literature and fine arts such a sharply critically-minded person, often placed in the background of actual historical events, appears in the creative works of George Gordon Byron (1788–1824), Victor Hugo (1802–1885), George Sand (1804–1876), Walter Scott (1771–1832), Eugène Delacroix (1798–1863), Caspar David Friedrich (1774–1840), Philipp Otto Runge (1777–1810) and Théodore Géricault (1791–1824). Another branch of this tendency of Romanticism is more directed towards confirmation of the sphere of the unreal, metaphysical ideal, searching for the imaginary, transcendental spirit in the world, which a human is not always able to achieve, but understanding of its essence offers a vital, calming and spiritually encouraging path of life. The most distinguished representatives of this trend of early romanticism in literature are, for example, E. T. A. Hoffmann, W. H. Wackenroder, Heinrich Heine (1797–1856), Mikhail Lermontov (1814–1841), François-René de Chateaubriand (1768–1848) and many other writers and poets.

The second tendency which affects the content and poetics of different works of art strives to stress the national uniqueness – the symbol of the ideal past in a specific social consciousness. Additionally, it should be noted that in the sense of folklore heritage the facilitation of a national self-confidence was consequently realised in the European history of culture of the 19th century. After the collapse of the ideals of the Enlightenment towards the conclusion of the Great French Revolution, a civic society model began to form quickly since the end of the 18th century (the decline of monarchist absolutism and a very gradual, contradictory transformation to a bourgeois democratic regime); individuals developed a particular necessity to identify themselves with their national affiliation. The concept of a nation clearly began to synthesise with the understanding of the nation which lived in its territory, about the people who formed it, whose world view was based on a specific overall and local system of values. For this very reason, in the cultural space of many nations, there was a notable increase in interest in one's own cultural-historical experience, which, in a concentrated manner, was reflected in folklore. The creative process, in its turn, clearly sensing this direct and indirect developed *societal demand*, attempted to clarify and reflect new world view aspects in the existent as well as completely new genres.

Based upon the beliefs of the author of this paper, the first tendency reflected most clearly the aesthetics of Romanticism and style in the literature and visual art of 19th century Europe. Including other specific

elements of a national context, it is still basically directed towards a maximally universal, super-national model of the image of Man. In contrast, the second tendency was notably local and current in the realisation of the national self-consciousness of every nation's aspirations.

One must remember Ludwig van Beethoven, Franz Schubert and Fryderyk Chopin, when discussing the relationship with the aesthetics of Romanticism and the development of a stylistic viewpoint, for example, in the field of symphonic music. It is their symphonic and instrumental solo concertos, in the opinion of the author, which largely marked the border between the characteristic harmonic balance of Classicism and the sharp internal and external collisions which are characteristic of the manner of expression of Romanticism. Slightly later chronologically the full confirmation of Romanticism was to be found in the works of Hector Berlioz (for example, *Symphonie fantastique* 1830, and *Harold in Italy* 1834). The radical examples of this style in symphonies and instrumental solo concertos, in their turn, were created, for example, by Pyotr Tchaikovsky and Alexander Scriabin in Russia, Antonín Dvořák in the Czech Republic, César Franck in France, Franz Liszt in Hungary, Gustav Mahler and Richard Strauss in Austria and Germany.

In the second half of the 19th century, particularly in the last third, a characteristic fundamental principle of the artistic expression of Romanticism was convincingly effected in the creative work of the composers of that time – a sharply contrasting sphere of imagery, confrontation, collisions.. The above related to the symphony and instrumental solo concert as well as to the programmatic symphonic poem. The hymn-like ideal of the concept of the genre in question was first realised by F. Liszt. This becomes apparent in some of his symphonic poems, for example, *Tasso, Lamento e Trionfo* (1854), *Les préludes* (1854) and *Prometheus* (1855). Here the dilemma of the dramatically conflicting incompatibility of reality and the ideal, characteristic of Romanticism, influenced by specific literary works, is replaced with the confirmation of the *sense of surmounting*. A related concept was offered slightly later by R. Strauss in his programmatic poems *Tod und Verklärung* (1889), *Also sprach Zarathustra* (1896), *Ein Heldenleben* (1898) and A. Scriabin in his symphonic work *Reverie* (1898), *Symphony No. 3 or Le Divin Poeme* (1904), *Le Poeme de l'extase* (1907) and the poem *Prometheus* (1910).

Altogether, in the creative work of all the previously noted romanticists the approbated tools of expression and usage of methods had reached such fullness, that in terms of development it essentially found itself nearly fully exhausted.. Though it was largely extended, it was still the classical tonal music language system and almost everything typical, possible, and characteristic was achieved. The searches for new methods of expression actively inspired thinking about the creation of a new music language system. This logical growth was reflected in the later works of such composers as G. Mahler, F. Liszt, R. Strauss and A. Scriabin.

Actually, regarding the leading trends of the most radical expression in 19th century Romanticism, we must remember also the great variety of the existing artistic ideas and stylistic resolutions of that time. In the context of Romanticism there was also the development of the trend which placed great significance in the preservation of the traditions of the developed classical era, particularly the time of the second half of the 18th century. Those who realised this stylistic synthesis were German composers Felix Mendelssohn and Robert Schumann as well as a Norwegian composer Edvard Grieg. The synthesis of two initial tendencies – the classical clarity and romantic pathos – were consequently realised in the creative work of Austrian symphonist Anton Bruckner and the German composer Johannes Brahms.

In the symphonies of A. Bruckner there is a balanced co-existence between a lyrically-epic and a dramatically sharp expression. Bruckner was particularly interested in harmony, the creation of form, textures and searches for unique timbral resolutions, offering many new artistic revelations. Similar trends can also be seen in the symphonic music of J. Brahms. Contrary to Bruckner, his contemporary J. Brahms developed further the previously expressed tendency of dramatic quality and heroism in the works of L. Van Beethoven. In that way, Brahms in his works (four symphonies, Violin Concerto, Double Concerto for violin, cello and orchestra, two piano concertos) in an original way combined the principles of late Classicism with an artistic world view characteristic of Romanticism.

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In addition to the two previously characterised fundamental tendencies of romantic symphonic music, there was also an intense development of music which directly or indirectly represented folklore elements in the works of the classical music genre. The usage of this material or attempts to create a unique musical

expression which was oriented towards a similarity with the characteristic forms of sound of folk music also allows the definition of this current in 19th century music history as a variation of 19th century Romanticism – **National Romanticism**. This term is used to mark many attempts in the genres of classical music to manifest also traditional music elements of specific nations, romanticising or aesthetically idealising the sound forms of these elements, and, additionally, give them a romantic treatment. At the same time it is an attempt to manifest the belonging of music works of the classical genre to specific national cultural traditions.

This current was broadly implemented in the creative works of those European national composers who identified themselves with a nation, which postulates the ideas of the autonomy of national culture and free development. Almost all Latvian professional composers of the first generation in Latvia in the 19th century attempted to realise the idea of National Romanticism or romanticising national cultural elements in their creative works.

In new symphonic works this current developed along two paths. The first was expressed as a tendency to make use of specific folklore material, including folk song and dance melodies in symphonic scores. Classical examples of this current in the history of European symphonic music are, for example, an overture by Russian composer Mikhail Glinka *Capriccio Brillante on the Jota Aragonesa* (1845) and Scherzo-Fantasia on Two Russian Themes *Kamarinskaya* (1848) as well as *Slavonic Dances* (1878–1887) by Czech composer A. Dvořák. The second path confirmed the birth of the genre of a lyrically-epic poem and its topicality in the symphonic music of many composers. One of the notable points in the history of this genre is *My Country* (1874–1879), the cycle of six symphonic poems by Czech composer Bedřich Smetana. In that cycle the poem genre was offered as an artistic message, additionally the clear goal of the programmatic titles provided by the author was to facilitate a specific association of imagery (the poetic beauty and myths of the homeland and the usage of musical elements similar to folklore in both specific and broad forms) formed while perceiving this music.

Of course, notable associations in the consciousness of the listener developed regardless of whether or not the work was clearly named. However, in the formation of image association, particularly significant is not only a melodic foundation to the music material and the various tools of expression, but also specific form principles, which allow the listener to clearly understand the realisation of the composition's content intention. In this respect the lyrically-epic symphonic genre has its own typical characteristics: it reflects, in terms of development, a sufficiently complex form of expression, which is characterised by a slow development of detailed varied spheres of imagery, and additionally, one of those spheres is gradually crystallised as the most important in the work.

Characteristic and artistically vivid examples of the lyrically-epic poem genre in the romantic symphonic music of the last third of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century are, for example, the symphonic poems *Tamara* (1882) and *Russia* (1884) by Russian composer Mily Balakirev, the symphonic poems *In the Forest* (1900) and *The Sea* (1907) by Lithuanian composer Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis, the symphonic poems *The Water Goblin* (1896) and *The Hero's Song* (1897) by Czech composer A. Dvořák, the symphonic poems *En Saga* (1902), *Finlandia* (1899) and *Pohjola's Daughter* (1906) by Finnish composer Jean Sibelius. It is also interesting to note that the characteristic features of the poem genre in this period were often encountered in works which were not called poems. Along with that an extended and multiform world of genres related to poems developed in the creative practice, namely, landscape, ballad, fantasy, imagery and similar ones (for example, the tone poem *Night on Bald Mountain* (1867) for symphony orchestra by Russian composer Modest Musorgsky), and they are all united by the related fundamental tendency of expression of musical imagery.

Thus, it can be concluded that at the time when first symphonic scores were being written by Latvian composers in the last third of the 19th century (some of them having graduated as composers from the conservatories of Moscow and St. Petersburg), in the symphonic, as well as other genres of classical music in the European nations of a more ancient cultural tradition, the most important fundamental viewpoints of the aesthetics of Romanticism had already been fully developed, and a number of typical tools of expression had been developed, which confirmed the vitality of such aesthetics with sufficient clarity. Due to the previously characterised historical reasons, the current that is conditionally called National Romanticism dominated the music written by the first generation of Latvia's Latvians in varied classical genres (mainly the symphonic poems and symphonic imagery as well as two symphonies and one instrumental solo concerto). Unfortunately, for various reasons (in certain cases also lack of stylistic originality), this music is generally unknown outside of Latvia.

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It is interesting that, in terms of stylistic development, the situation in Latvian literature, poetry and forms of visual art since the middle of the 19th century until World War I, was different. It was focused more on the study and creative transformation of various current new tendencies in that period (including Modernism). In the first period of Latvian independence (1918–1940), this situation survived – the aesthetics and stylistics of Romanticism, inherited from the 19th century, continued to dominate the classical genre music, written by Latvian composers, while in other forms of classical art, one could see a larger variety of aesthetic ideas and stylistic resolutions. In this period it mostly involved personalities, to a great extent, one specific personality, who dictated the tone in the field of musical between the two World Wars in the 20th century in Latvia.

An important, and, in certain aspects, conclusive role in the Romantic aesthetics and the beginning development in the stylistics in the field of music creation was also the close involvement of the Latvian classical music genre composer Jāzeps Vītols (1863–1948) with the definite, and, considering the background of their era, the overall conservative Romantic traditions of the second half of the 19th century, which were broadly spread throughout many nations in Europe. It was, for a long time, dominated also by, for example, the St. Petersburg Conservatory, founded and, for many years, directed by Russian composer and music theoretician Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844–1908), in whose atmosphere J. Vītols gradually became a noteworthy composer and music teacher (1886.–1918.; professor from 1901). Upon J. Vītols' return to the land of his birth (1918), founding and, for many years, directing the Latvian Conservatory (1919; nowadays J. Vītols Latvian Academy of Music), as well as its composition class, it was only natural to realise those concepts, which, until that point, had been assuredly tested in theory as well as in practice⁵.

Of course, separate echoes of the aesthetics of Modernism and its varied stylistic characteristics fragmentarily expressed themselves in separate works of diverse genres of Latvian composers of this period – for example the choir music of Jānis Zālītis (1884–1943), the piano music of Lūcija Garūta (1902–1977) and Volfgangs Dārziņš (1906–1962), the symphonic music of Jānis Ivanovs (1906–1983) and the opera's of Jānis Kalniņš (1904–2000). Still, these echoes contain only separate methods of musical expression (for example, harmonies, textures, form creation), as opposed to the confirmation of a conceptual turn towards those tendencies of Modernism, which, in the period up until even World War II, quickly developed in the nations of Europe with an ancient cultural tradition, such as France, Italy, Russia and Germany.

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A new period in the development of professional music culture in Latvia started in 1940 and lasted till the end of the 1980s. In this period Latvia was again occupied – twice by the Soviet Union (1940–1941, 1944–1991) and during World War II – by Germany (1941–1944). The Soviet occupation force that ruled Latvia during this period, to a great extent, implemented a practice in the existence and work of the most significant institutions of culture that dramatically differed from the experience, gained in the first period of Latvian independence. In this environment of Soviet totalitarianism free thinking and diversity that had developed freely was no longer possible. Stressing that the field of culture is one of the most important tools in the upbringing of an obedient *Soviet person*, relentless attempts to include the political ideology and control were realised in all spheres of culture, including professional music, widely using methods of political censorship to hide information that was undesirable.

Furthering the political goal of stimulating artistic development that would be understandable to *the nation, simple working people*, in the time that Joseph Stalin (1879–1953) ruled the Soviet Union (1924–1953), to ideologically and administratively control the creative process in all art, the special terminology of Formalism and Socialistic Realism was developed. Even though both concepts theoretically (in the official ideological positions of the Soviet Communist Party and the justification of its theories of art) were justified very vaguely and contradictorily, in practice, *Formalism* was understood as a denial and condemnation of the leading aesthetics of Modernism in the art of Western Europe and the United States (in Soviet thinking, an ideological enemy), while *Socialistic Realism* was an attempt to justify the existence of such a form of expression that would be *understandable to a simple people*.

⁵ An insight into the overall direction of the musical work of Jāzeps Vītols and a list of his major works in varied genres can be found at <http://www.lmic.lv/core.php?pageId=747&id=280&> (The web page of the Latvian Music Information Centre).

Reviewing Soviet press articles and official remarks, expressed in publications which were dedicated specifically to art from the 1940s and 1950s, artists in all forms of art had to face a number of obligatory though vaguely formulated requirements: the imagery of the art must reflect reality, art is a media of upbringing and education, art gives people something to do in their free time, art is an expression of Humanism, which is characteristic only to Socialism, art reflects the nobility and greatness of the Socialistic system. Apart from these fundamental positions there were also specific requirements for *Soviet composers*, regarding what *good music* should be like: visually specified to stage performances, film; inter-musical with quoting, stylisation of works, iconic sounds with the imitation of a person's speech in vocal music, the imitation of sounds of nature and mechanical sounds.

Actually these requirements, stating what a *good, Socialistic art* should be like, often expressed a desire to see and hear placard-like social-political slogans. That is why in the whole multiformity of art, all art, the creative works of many Latvian composers included, particularly in the 1940s and 1950s, plenty of placard-like, at times even primitively illustrative music was written, which was composed according to the specific socio-political demands of the Soviet occupation power. Composers (the same as artists in other fields) who still attempted to preserve their own uniqueness were often criticised publicly as *Formalists* and *traitors of the ideas of the Soviet regime*. Within the period of Stalinism this kind of criticism could lead not only to a maximum isolation of the composer or any other creative person, thus robbing and choking their creativity, but also to real punishment of a person like imprisonment or deportation to the territories of the north of the Soviet Union (in most cases Siberia), usually accused of *political crimes*.

The totalitarian power of the Soviet Union as an unquestionably significant factor of influence on the cultural process vividly illustrates the decisions of the ruling Communist party of the Soviet Union in the 1940s and 1950s. On February 10, 1948 in the official press of the Soviet Union an official decision was published *On Vano Muradeli's opera „Great Friendship”*. In it a number of Russian composers of that time were strongly criticised for being formalistic and incompatible with the aesthetic principles of Socialistic Realism, and among the first to be named were the distinguished personalities of that time Sergei Prokofiev (1891–1953) and Dmitri Shostakovich (1906–1985). They were composers who dared to retain an original individual style in their music, which included adaptations of certain fundamental ideas of the aesthetics of Modernism.

These political regulations meant that in Soviet republics, including Latvia, the local Communist party organisations were obliged to *reveal such artists* who had retreated from the *positions of Socialistic Realism and force them to express their regret*. In Latvia there was a similar regulation by the Communist Party, according to which many Latvian artists and composers were punished. One of them was one of the best Latvian composers – Jānis Ivanovs (1906–1983). Ivanovs earned harsh criticism from the Soviet occupying power for his attempts to use characteristic stylistics of Modernism in his music (Symphony No. 5 and String Quartet No. 2).

These aggressive actions by the Soviet totalitarian power resulted in the situation that in the 1940s and 1950s almost all composers, living in Latvia, had to engage in self-censorship of aesthetics and stylistics, artificially limiting their creative attempts, so as not to receive new punishment or harsher sanctions. That was also the main reason why so many artistically colourless or contradictorily perceptible works were produced. In the 1940s and 1950s, in terms of stylistic tendencies, the creative work of Latvian composers is, in fact, difficult to generalise. The main orientation proved to be the classical romantic music language, which, in terms of expression, is very distant from the emotionally elevated and sharpened expression characteristic of the Romanticism style of the 19th century. This situation endured in the musical creative process till the end of the 1950s when the socio-political background in the Soviet Union changed slightly.

The changes were triggered by the regulation of 1958, issued by the Soviet Communist Party *Regarding the Correction of Mistakes in the Operas „Great Friendship”, „Bogdan Hmelnicky”, „From All My Heart” and Other Works*. Generally speaking, this indicated that the ruling totalitarian regime of the Soviet Union slightly modified its previously politically too aggressive views, though the fundamental requirement, regarding the art of Socialistic Realism, *which must be supported by all artists, living in the Soviet Union*, remained the same. This slight weakening of ideological control took place in the time when Nikita Khrushchev (1894–1971) led the Soviet Union (1956–1964).

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In this period the Soviet authorities allowed artists to become familiar with the experience of Modernism, which had already spread all over Europe. However, this small aesthetic and stylistic pluralism in the Soviet Union was only officially allowed in the two cultural centres of the superpower – Moscow and St. Petersburg (Leningrad at that time). Attempts to let the ideas of Modernism into other nations of the Soviet Union, including Latvia, were strictly controlled. However, much depended also on the composers, musicians and the subjective opinions of the local authorities. In Latvia only a few composers were successful. Among these composers is Jānis Ivanovs (1906–1983) – a musician who in the field of symphonic music (Ivanovs is the author of twenty-one symphonies) has represented a synthesis of classical traditions and modernism and whose own artistic brightness is comparable to the music of such composers as D. Shostakovich and A. Honegger⁶.

Being a distinguished personality in music, J. Ivanovs was brought closer to the Soviet occupation regime as, in his own way, an *official composer* of Latvia (in certain aspects similar to D. Shostakovich, even though the fates of J. Ivanovs and D. Shostakovich were different). This also required certain ideological concession gestures in the creative work of J. Ivanovs (special compositions, dedicated to the Communist party). However, in general, J. Ivanovs successfully developed his own individual style, which is familiar to music connoisseurs even outside of Latvia. Many of J. Ivanovs' symphonic works have been released on CD by the British firm *Campion Records* at the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century⁷.

After the contradictory period of N. Khrushchev's rule Leonid Brezhnev (1906–1982) became the new ruler of the Soviet Union, whose totalitarian superpower lasted from 1964 to 1982. This period in the history of the Soviet Union is often referred to a period of stagnation – there was no return to the methods of Stalin, which were based on the open intimidation, terror and mass repressions. While Brezhnev held his power, the intimidation and damping of activities of those who were insubordinate to the Soviet regime or political dissidents used other, mainly psychologically and morally destructive methods, and there were no significant political or economic reforms.

After the death of Brezhnev in the early 1980s the Soviet Union was briefly ruled by two leaders of the elder generation of the Communist party. Their power lasted till Mikhail Gorbachev (1931) was elected the new leader of the Soviet Union. Gorbachev took over rule of the Soviet Union at the time of deep national economic and political crisis (1985–1991). This led to gradual liberalisation of political development, later called *Perestroika* (*Reconstruction*). However, the course of liberalisation that had actually begun, led to the collapse of the Soviet Union. The gradual renewal of liberalisation and democratic norms was actively welcomed by a great majority of the population of the Baltic nations (Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia), occupied in 1940 and 1944 by the Soviet Union. These events initiated a new national awakening period in Latvia (from 1987), which at the beginning of the 1990s (1990-1991) ended with the renewal of national independence.

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It is interesting to note, that in the last 20 years of the existence of the Soviet Union (1970s and 1980s) artists belonging to various fields, classical genre composers included, actually began to embrace changes in the aesthetic and stylistic orientation in the world. Similarly, information exchange with the rest of the world in the field of culture was not as limited as it was under Stalin and Khrushchev. Nowadays these reference points are described as Postmodernism or the period of Postmodernism in European culture (mainly with regards to the last third of the 20th century). This period also witnessed the inflow of other stylistic trends, marked by a unique technique of composition and musical method of expression, like the *Neoromanticism*, *New folklore wave*, *Minimal music*, *New inwardness*, polystylistic as specific principle of composition and its various modifications etc. This process confirmed that even without any previous experience of study of Modernism the composers of Latvia consciously and unconsciously understood the trend towards the characteristic retrospectivity and style synthesis of the Postmodernistic culture and art which was partly accepted by the Soviet regime.

⁶ More detailed information in English of the music of J. Ivanovs can be found online at the address <http://www.lmic.lv/core.php?pageId=747&id=289&>.

⁷ For further information, please see, for example, the page <http://www.dimusic.co.uk/ivanovs.html>.

In this aspect, for example, in Latvia one can perceive the somewhat neutral interaction of two confronting interests. The Soviet authorities considered the tendencies of stylistic retrospective in music (like in other forms of art) acceptable, as it represented, to a certain degree, the renewal of well-known classical traditions. Particularly in those cases, when works of art expressed forms, based on stylistic retrospectivity and relatively easier to recognise traditional messages, which also had notable elements of the language of Modernism (this approach represents, for example, the tendency of Neoromanticism). However, for many Latvian composers this was an opportunity to herald varied themes in the abstract language of music, including problems of national culture and identity (as a reaction to massive and aggressive policy of Russification in the former Soviet Union), which constantly became more acute in the period of Soviet occupation. Unfortunately, after national independence in Latvia, this problem is still an issue.

While in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s taking over the forms of expression characteristic of the music of 19th century Romanticism (including the National Romanticism currents of experience), certain Latvian composers masterfully supplemented their works with earlier or later varied other stylistic layers of the 19th century Romanticism as well as their synthesis in individual models. Thus, composers were able to create a concept of encoded poetic invitations to preserve the singularity and uniqueness of the national culture in their works within the framework of the world in the last third of the 20th century with the reality which is distant from the characteristic Romantic ideals of 19th century art. Some of those Latvian composers who began their creative work in the 1970s (as Pēteris Vasks, also Romualds Kalsons, Pēteris Plakidis, Juris Karlsons, Arturs Maskats etc), were able to create a unique illusion in the stylistics and expression of the works, composed in this period, that the trend towards Postmodernism actually did occur, based upon the gained experience of the Modernism period of the previous generation of composers, even though that did not actually happen. Possible, it is the largest paradox of Latvian history of music⁸.

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Santrauka

Neoromantizmo tendencijos XXI a. pradžios latvių kompozitorių simfoninėje kūryboje.

Keletas latviškos stiliškos tradicijų aspektų

P. Vasko, J. Karlsono ir A. Maskato simfoniniuose kūrinuose

Dviejų paskutinių XX a. dešimtmečių ir XXI a. pradžios muzikologijoje sąvoka „neoromantizmas“ pirmiausia buvo populiarus muzikos kritikos terminas, o vėliau palengva buvo pradėta jį nuolat naudoti nagrinėjant šiuolaikinės muzikos estetinius ir stiliaus klausimus. Išraiškos priemonės, būdingos romantizmo stiliui, galutinai susiformavo XIX a. simfoninėje muzikoje – tipiški komponavimo principai buvo naudojami simfoniniuose žanruose, instrumentiniuose koncertuose, poemose ir, kaip bus toliau įrodyta analizuojant įvairius faktus ir muzikinius pavyzdžius šiame pranešime, pasirodė esantys reikšmingi ir plačiai naudojami daugelio XX a. paskutinių trijų dešimtmečių kompozitorių kūryboje. Vis dėlto daugiausia paveiktos estetinių XX a. pirmos pusės idėjų įvairios muzikos kalbos naujovės (pvz., dodekafonijos principai ir jų įvairios modifikacijos, gilinimasis į meninių tembrinių akustinių reiškinių modeliavimą, laisvos muzikinės medžiagos išdėstymo erdvėje ir laike notacinės technikos, įvairių garsaelių naudojimas naujose derminėse sistemose) kompozitorių buvo atrandamos postmodernizmo eroje, savitai ir įvairiais būdais sintezuojamos su atskirais klasikinės romantinės muzikos kalbos elementais, kurie buvo suformuoti ankstesniais amžiais (tonalinė harmonija, faktūra, forma, žanras).

Įtvirtindami šią muzikinės kalbos rūšį, prieštarą, būdingą romantiniam meniniam požiūriui į įvairius, dažnai radikaliai kontrastuojančius vaizdinius, postulodami idealų amžino grožio kategorijų žmogaus sąmonėje egzistavimą, daugelis XX a. trijų paskutinių dešimtmečių kompozitorių romantizmo temoms priskyrė išraišką, kontrastuojančią XIX a. muzikai, ne tik tiesiogiai išreiškdami vidinius romantinius išgyvenimus, bet ir būdingą romantizmui dvasia atgaivindami susidomėjimą praėjusių amžių muzikinėmis vertybėmis ir muzikos grožiu, išryškindami šias temas ir neišvengdami subjektyvių meninių interpretacijų ir jausmų išraiškų, kylančių iš asmeninių potyrių, tuo pat metu aktyviai sintezuodami įvairius metodus ir išraiškos būdus. Toks yra netiesioginis neoromantinės tendencijos muzikos kūrinių moto.

Latvių klasikinės muzikos žanrų istorijoje nuo XX a. aštunto dešimtmečio iki pat XXI a. pradžios neoromantizmo tendencijos pasirodė esančios vienos iš fundamentaliausių ir yra glaudžiai susijusios su nacionalinio romantizmo tradicijomis. Pranešime daugiausia dėmesio skiriama neoromantizmo tendencijoms atstovaujantiems simfoninei trijų šiuolaikinių kompozitorių – Pėterio Vasko (1946), Jurio Karlsono (1948) ir Arturo Maskato (1957) – kūrybai.