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"Art in the Dialogue of Cultures" is an international peer-reviewed open-access periodical dedicated to the study of traditions and innovation in contemporary art, as well as their scholarly interpretation within the context of intercultural dialogue. The journal publishes original research, analytical reviews, and informative articles addressing current issues in the history and theory of musical culture, fine arts, and arts education. Its thematic scope encompasses a wide range of topics, including: the role of art in the modern world, East-West relations in cultural dialogue, the philosophical essence of art, the enigmas of creative process, historical and theoretical aspects of artistic and creative practice, and notable anniversaries in Russian and world culture. The journal seeks to bridge the gap between cutting-edge academic research and teaching practice in higher, secondary, and supplementary music education. It features contributions from established scholars as well as early-career researchers embarking on their professional paths.

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THE PHILOSOPHICAL NATURE OF ART

Original article

@Bodina E. A.

The Realization of the Semantic Potential of Music in Human Consciousness

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Abstract. Issues related to the impact of music on humans have been in the research focus of art historians, psychologists, educators, cultural scholars, neurophysiologists, and psychiatrists for the recent decades. This interest can be attributed to the modern trends in the analysis of the music and personality interaction to develop some conceptual provisions to clarify this process. The article focuses on the hierarchical structure of music's impact on human consciousness and activity in the critical perspective. Four levels of this process are highlighted: emotional synchronization, meaningful immersion, spiritual objectification, and activity objectification. The characteristics of each level and their interconnections are outlined as the most comprehensive structure of music's impact, ensuring an effective result. This hierarchical structure is examined in the context of the process of assimilation that occurs within a person under the influence of music. The multifaceted influence of musical art on a person's inner world and activities is highlighted: immersive, suggestive, spiritual-moral, and other impacts that contribute to the formation and development of personality. Music develops a person as a biological being by shaping neural connections, thereby providing new opportunities for the brain, promoting its plasticity, and endowing a person with the ability to perceive and respond differentially to various intonations, forms, and styles. Music not only contributes to the evolution of human personality but also enriches a person's inner world, expands their horizons, develops creative potential, and strengthens psychological resilience and health. However, the positive formative and developmental effect is possible only based on the full realization of the substantive potential of music; otherwise, it will either remain misunderstood, as often happens with complex classical and modern academic music, or evoke only primitive emotions and hypertrophied activity. As a result, the influence of music on personality will be simplified and substantively inadequate. Relevant findings conclude the article.

Keywords: music, perception, assimilation, emotional synchronization, meaningful immersion, spiritual objectification, activity objectification

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Реализация содержательного потенциала музыки в сознании человека

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Резюме. Проблематика, связанная с воздействием музыки на человека, в последние десятилетия привлекает внимание искусствоведов, психологов, педагогов, культурологов, нейрофизиологов, психиатров. Учет современных тенденций в подходе к анализу взаимодействия музыки и личности позволяет разработать некоторые концептуальные положения, конкретизирующие этот процесс. Статья посвящена описанию иерархической структуры воздействия музыки на сознание и деятельность человека. Описаны четыре уровня этого процесса: эмоциональная синхронизация, смысловое погружение, духовная объективация и деятельностная объективация. Охарактеризованы особенности каждого и их взаимосвязь как наиболее полная структура воздействия музыки, обеспечивающая эффективный результат. Описанная иерархическая структура рассматривается в контексте процесса уподобления, которое происходит с человеком под воздействием музыки. Указывается на многоаспектное влияние музыкального искусства на внутренний мир человека и его деятельность: иммерсивное, суггестивное, духовно-нравственное и др. воздействия, способствующие формированию и развитию личности. Музыка развивает человека и как биологическое существо, поскольку формирует его нейронные связи, а значит, обеспечивает новые возможности мозга, способствует его пластичности и наделяет человека способностями восприятия и дифференцированного реагирования на различные интонации, формы и стили. Музыка не только способствует эволюции человеческой личности, но и обогащает внутренний мир человека, расширяет его масштабы, развивает творческие возможности, укрепляет психологическую устойчивость и здоровье. Однако положительный формирующий и развивающий эффект возможен лишь на основе полной реализации содержательного потенциала музыки, в противном случае она либо останется непонятой, что нередко бывает со сложной классической и современной музыкой академического направления, либо вызовет лишь примитивные эмоции и гипертрофированную деятельностную активность. В силу этого влияние музыки на личность будет упрощенным и содержательно неполноценным. В конце статьи приведены соответствующие выводы.

Ключевые слова: музыка, восприятие, уподобление, эмоциональная синхронизация, смысловое погружение, духовная объективация, деятельностная объективация

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Introduction

In recent decades, there has been a sharp increase of interest in music as an effective means of influencing individuals and society as a whole. The number of studies dedicated to biological rhythms activated by music, its therapeutic properties, the process of interaction with the human brain, and the features of its psychological influence on consciousness has grown. Conditions for emotional uplift and pleasure from music, as well as some negative consequences of its impact, have been clarified. While not denying the unconditional scientific relevance and practical importance of the conducted research, we intend to address the substantive and procedural side of music's impact on consciousness and, subsequently, on human activity. To confirm the relevance of this approach, we will refer to the idea of one of the leading national art historians, B. V. Asafiev, regarding the primacy of content in music (Asafiev, 1971).

The research objective here is to reveal the hierarchical structure and main stages of music's impact on human consciousness, its sequential interiorization, resulting in art-historical and psychological-pedagogical perspectives.

Assimilation as an Important Mechanism for the Perception and Understanding of Music

In pursuing the stated objective the author will try to focus on the issue of stating that the most characteristic phenomenon accompanying the process of interaction between music and a person is the latter's assimilation to the emotional tone, content, and even dramatic features of the music. Let us clarify the terms used.

The term *assimilation* is of paramount importance, universal in nature and significance, attracting the attention of researchers due to the nuances of substantive specificity hidden within this polysemous term. Let us examine it in more detail.

The term *assimilation* is mainly found in the works of philosophers and psychologists: Plato (Plato, 1999), V. S. Solovyov (Solovyov, 2022), A. R. Luria (Luria, 2019), A. N. Leontiev (Leontiev, 2005), and others. Familiarity with the definitions of the term indicates its polysemy. For instance, in V. I. Dal's dictionary, the term is interpreted as deriving from *to assimilate*, meaning "to compare, apply, find similarity, likeness, difference"¹. Evidently the definition of the term *assimilation* refers to the accompanying verb: "to become similar to someone or something"². A similar definition is provided by S. I. Ozhegov: "to become similar to someone or something"³.

¹ Dal, V. I. (1996). *Explanatory Dictionary of the Living Great Russian Language* (Vol. 4). St. Petersburg: Diamant, 503. (In Russian)

² *Comprehensive Explanatory Dictionary of the Russian Language* (1998). St. Petersburg: Norint, 1392. (In Russian)

³ Ozhegov, S. I. (1952). *Dictionary of the Russian Language*. Moscow: State Publishing House of Foreign and National Dictionaries, 772. (In Russian)

Philologists view assimilation from formal positions as a rhetorical figure of comparison, a stylistic turn based on an expanded comparison, interpretation of semantic identity, etc. Such an approach to defining the term, from the perspective of our stated goal, seems unproductive.

It is noteworthy that even in Christian encyclopedias, the term *assimilation* is absent, although the term *venerable* is present, referring to a saint from among the monastics who has attained the highest moral dignity through their deeds and holiness of life⁴.

Let us point out an important aspect of the manifestation of assimilation as a procedural-substantive resource for understanding the object of perception. Essentially, assimilation can serve as a form of understanding an external object, as well as adaptation, imitation, or copying of its characteristic properties, up to accepting it as a model for one's own cognitive activity. Since the logical structuring of this internal process is complicated, researchers emphasize the significance of intuitive *grasping* and emotional acceptance. In this interpretation, understanding can be closely related to empathy, which stimulates the convergence of cognitive or activity positions of communication participants, their resonant interaction, which is especially characteristic of a person perceiving music.

Therefore, the essence of assimilation lies not so much in creative perception and emotional resonance with music, but in

the transformation of a person under the influence of music (Bodina, 2022, 21–22). It changes a person, activating and renewing their memory, creating new neural connections in the brain, essentially creating a *new* person in the image and likeness of the music. This is why assimilation represents the comprehension of the profound essence of the object of perception (based on acceptance or rejection), its higher meaning. Hence, assimilation is characterized by a direction not merely towards cognitive or activity perspectives but towards a value-significant perspective (Bodina, 2025, 46–56). Assimilation becomes an important factor not only in enculturation but also in the moral mastery of culture—the problematic field of forming the spiritual and moral culture of personality.

So, how can we define the term *assimilation* in the context of the emotional interaction between music and a person? It seems that, based on what has been said, it is a way of elevating a person's spiritual and physical powers under the condition of a difference in potentials (in strength and character) between the object and subject of perception. It is worth noting that the strength and character of music are by no means related to loudness, speed of playback, or rhythmic precision. Sometimes quiet and not very fast music has a stunning depth and vivid impact. As an example and objective evidence, we can refer to the effect created by the talented Vietnamese pianist Dang Thai Son in his performance of Chopin's Mazurka

⁴ *Christianity: Encyclopedic Dictionary* (Vol. 2) (1995). Moscow: Great Russian Encyclopedia, 387. (In Russian)

in A minor (Op. 17). The quiet, melancholic music he creates not only captivates the hushed hall but also literally hypnotizes the large group of professionals (the symphony orchestra) surrounding the pianist on stage – this can easily be verified by watching the corresponding video online.

If we interpret the psychological-pedagogical significance of assimilation, we must recognize it as the most important method of *infecting* a person with the holistic artistic content conveyed by music, with immediate emotions that have a formative influence on consciousness and personality as a whole (Dudnyk, 2023). If we consider education as the transmission of spiritual experience from person to person, from generation to generation, then the artistic content of music, which emotionally *captures* and to a certain extent *subjugates* a person, plays a crucial educational role. It is devoid of verbal didacticism and caused by emotional influence and persuasion, which is based on the free will of the perceiving individual, their enjoyment of music, as well as their understanding and acceptance of the *message* it carries. As Korsakova I. A., Sadritdinova M. M. rightly points out, the "facilitator-teacher should monitor the purity (authenticity, reliability, coherence) of incoming information and help students in selecting and ranking information, as well as in the adequate interpretation of the collected data" (Korsakova, Sadritdinova, 2025, 18).

Assimilation becomes a way of interaction between a person and music, conditioned by their free will and natural desire for joy, pleasure, emotional

liberation, replenishment, and sometimes even ordering (as well as chaos, when it comes to loud, rhythmically monotonous, and intrusive music) of their own inner world. It should be noted that assimilation to art, due to the richness of its types, styles, content, forms, and artistic-expressive means, is practically infinite, unlike assimilation to a specific person (for example, a teacher or a beloved artist) as a role model for imitation. Therefore, assimilation is a free and thus effective path to self-discovery and self-education of personality under the influence of music (in this case, we specifically refer to it and its possibilities).

The analogy between humans and music deserves special attention for several reasons. A person, as a holistic organism and a highly organized receptive system, reacts to music psychologically and then actively reproducing its essential characteristics. Music embodies invaluable psychological qualities that manifest involuntarily due to the listener's emotional empathy, the dialogical interaction with the musical work, and the comprehension of its artistic, spiritual, and universal significance. It is no coincidence that Quintilian asserted that "music is the most ancient of spiritual pursuits" (Ideas..., 1973, 182). The analogy that defines the relationship between music and personality stimulates a feeling of "kinship" in humans, based on a sense of connection with another person (the composer, performer, or artistic hero), another era, or culture. This crucial effect of music was defined by the Russian religious thinker, philosopher, and scholar P. A. Florensky as *brother-making*, since

the analogy with music ensures the similarity of a person to it, orientation towards its substantive values, and, ultimately, a corresponding active effect. *Brother-making* is, in essence, a micro-model of the formation of humanity—a humanistically oriented community of free, spiritually enriched, and positively oriented individuals (Florensky, 2003).

Moreover, as a result of this analogy, both the upbringing and socialization of the individual occur simultaneously, since in the process of analogy, a person absorbs the artistic-aesthetic experience of humanity, in which art occupies a special place (Alcon, 2023). Among all known forms of art, music stands out for its direct emotional impact – holistic, non-verbal (if we consider so-called *pure* music, without poetic text), sensually captivating, and offering sound models of thinking, activities, relationships, conflicts, behavioral patterns, and emotional reactions (Guseva, 2020). According to several researchers, Bach's music contains sound images of all types of conflicts characteristic of everyday domestic life and professional activities. This is why the perception of Bach's music is an invaluable experience of symbolic understanding—through sound images—of the patterns of human life.

Hierarchical Structure of Music's Impact on Human Consciousness and Behavior

The analysis of the interaction between humans and music provides grounds for scientific generalizations at the levels of philosophical, art-historical, and psychological-pedagogical understanding (Ignatiev, Kuznetsova, 2024). We are

discussing the most general model of music's influence on a person – on their brain, consciousness, and behavior.

Let us examine in more detail the process of interaction between music and humans in a procedural-temporal logic that corresponds to the nature of music. This nature is so complex and multifaceted that various theoretical postulates can be applied to it, including the modern interpretation of the corpuscular-wave concept in physics (Hawking, 2003), the theory of the zonal nature of musical perception developed in acoustics (Garbuzov, 1948), the concept of variant multiplicity in performance (Rappoport, 1972), and, of course, the art-historical analysis of the intonational means of musical expressiveness, which has a robust scientific foundation in domestic musicology (Asafiev, 1971; Levitin, 2007; Medushevsky, 1993; Nazaykinsky, 1988).

As noted, the impact of music on humans has a hierarchical structure, and its first level is *emotional synchronization*. There is sufficient information in the literature indicating that from the very beginning of its sound, music actively engages a person in emotional interaction due to its rhythmic nature, which is also inherent to the human organism (Nazaykinsky, 1972). This involves the differentiated characteristics of each of the internal organs of a person, the most important of which is the heart. This is why the correspondence of musical rhythm to the heartbeat, which is physiologically the most comfortable, evokes emotional resonance and a sense of pleasure (Bicknell, 2005). Evidently popular music exploits this feature of

perception, achieving a positive response from the recipient even in cases of blatantly low quality.

This is the primary reaction to music, based on the rhythmization of the organism and sensations that are transmitted to the brain, provoking natural responses (head movements, swaying of the body, foot-tapping, etc.). The nature of these *responsive* movements is involuntary but aims for *resonance*, which brings pleasure from movements that are in harmony with the music (Grühn et al., 2016).

At the stage of emotional synchronization, the wave nature of music is vividly manifested, which, due to its rhythmic and other properties of musical intonation – including pitch (melody), tempo, timbre, and metric features related to accents on strong beats – leads to the dynamization of the listener's behavior, with their barely noticeable or explicit movements effectively *reproducing* the sounding music.

Let us emphasize the spontaneity and naturalness of the human organism's reaction. It is important to note: it is the organism, not the personality of the person, since we are discussing the primary reaction to a sound-based emotional stimulus. The stage of emotional synchronization can have various temporal limits. For example, music perceived as background may provide prolonged, effortless accompaniment to a particular life event, activity, or behavior of a person who does not take such music to heart but is content with its unobtrusive *accompanying* function.

The picture changes when music *captures* a person; they begin to listen closely, reacting to individual intonational structures and fragments, expressive means, style, and nuances of performance. This is the second hierarchical level of music's impact – *meaningful immersion*.

This stage is characterized by an immersive detachment from the *non-musical* world, a sequential empathizing with the sounding material, comprehension of intonational interconnections, their temporal unfolding, the dynamics of expressive means, and the overall dramaturgy (Medushevsky, 2010). Meaningful immersion is characterized by fluidity and timelessness of perception, concentration on the sound fabric embodying the composer's intent, nuances of interpretative execution, and the overall line of dramatic development.

At this stage, associations are activated, allowing the listener to correlate what they hear with previously experienced or current experiences while following the unfolding of the music's content, the change and dynamics of its images, their *struggles*, and dialogical interactions. Consequently, meaningful immersion activates and concretizes individual emotions, transforming them into complex, often vague but evident and strong feelings, touching the subconscious, drawing out similar experiences, and activating memory that recreates already familiar or similar intonations and constructions (Luria, 2019).

If at the stage of emotional synchronization, the right hemisphere of the brain, responsible for emotions and intuition, predominated, then in the stage

of meaningful immersion, the left, verbal hemisphere, responsible for intellectual activity, actively engages. However, thanks to the interaction of both hemispheres, the brain begins to work systematically and cohesively, allowing the listener not only to feel but also to comprehend what they hear, to compare and generalize their listening experience, or to structure it as they perceive the sounding music (Rakhmatovich, 2024). As a result, *dramaturgical parallels* become accessible to the listener, based on recurring intonations or impressions from past experiences.

It is important to note that we defined immersion in music as meaningful. Meaning and significance are foundational concepts in semiotics, and we believe that it is the meaning – i.e., the individualized interpretation, understanding of essence, insight, associative comparison, and interpretation – that defines the perception of music as a unique experience of an individual with their specific life experiences, substantive characteristics, forms of communication with art, as well as their understanding of its humanistic and value-laden nature (Reva, 2021).

Meaningful immersion allows one to form their attitude and *concept* of the work, which corresponds to or contradicts the listener's expectations, auditory experience, and needs, enabling differentiation of the perception result, the pleasure or dissatisfaction derived from it. The structure of meaningful immersion can be characterized by

a sequence: *tracking* → *interest* → *analysis* → *generalization*, encompassing the accumulated auditory experience of music perception preceding the actual moment.

Let us also note the nuances of meaningful immersion, which manifest in the fact that the overall impression of music is characterized not only by pleasure but also by tragic experiences, *crushing* the heart (in the terminology of medieval thinkers) – that is, a whole range of feelings engaged by music (Nazaykinsky, 1972). At the same time, a person may experience pleasure from the very fact of connection with music, regardless of the emotional and meaningful effect it produces.

Let us emphasize the temporal limits of meaningful immersion, conditioned by the duration of the music and a certain inertia after the sound has ended. Recently listened-to music continues to *sound* in consciousness for some time, reproducing the most vivid moments: often a person hums – aloud or to themselves – the melodies they liked, keeping the rhythm, repeating what made an impression and what they remembered most. The music that has just sounded leaves a person over time as the impression weakens or when it is displaced by another, stronger and more vivid impression. Psychologists assert that nothing passes by the brain⁵ without leaving an imprint–new neural connections that may manifest immediately or may not appear for a long time until a trigger arises that stirs memory

⁵ Svarnik, O. (2020). Interview. *Scientific Russia*, 2020. Available at: [https://scientificrussia.ru/articles/mozg-pomnit-vsyo-beseda-s-](https://scientificrussia.ru/articles/mozg-pomnit-vsyo-beseda-s-nejrofiziologom-olgoj-svarnik)

[nejrofiziologom-olgoj-svarnik](https://scientificrussia.ru/articles/mozg-pomnit-vsyo-beseda-s-nejrofiziologom-olgoj-svarnik) (accessed on: 20 October 2020).

and awakens faded impressions, actualizing and renewing them.

Following meaningful immersion is the stage of *spiritual objectification* – processing the received impressions in consciousness, solidifying them in memory, and relating them to past experiences. The stage of spiritual objectification occurs within the personality, often independently of it, as the objective *work* of the brain is beyond the individual's control, representing a kind of deep *secondary processing* of impressions, as they are rated, ranked and included in the spiritual baggage as a valuable addition. It seems that this process is not mechanical but rather integrative, where old and new impressions *interweave*, enriched with new feelings and new substantive nuances.

One of the most authoritative contemporary musicologists, V. V. Medushevsky, believes that music, upon entering a person's inner world, transforms them, and the person perceives this process as *the living realization of their own life*. As a result, new existential content is formed that was absent before the contact with music (Medushevsky, 1988).

Spiritual objectification allows the listener's experience to acquire integrity, transforming it into a valuable new formation which, regardless of the degree of the individual's awareness, determines their new capabilities and a new semantic field for thought-activity. Spiritual objectification is a qualitative phenomenon based on the dialectical accumulation of musical impressions, knowledge about music, forms of practical

engagement with it, and, ultimately, the quantity of auditory information of the most varied nature, including the individual's auditory life background (Lareau, 2015).

This is proven by the pedagogical concept of the contemporary French music educator Angélique Fulin (Fulin, 1992), who considers *sound events of the surrounding world* in close connection with the experience of mastering the language of music. Through her practical work, she has demonstrated a direct connection between diverse auditory experiences and their mutually stimulating roles. In particular, she believes that sound images of the surrounding world determine the adequacy of musical perception, influencing its differentiation and vividness.

Thus, spiritual objectification is an invisible process of internal processing of musical impressions within the context of the individual's diverse auditory, including musical-auditory, experience. The process of spiritual objectification can be extended or compressed in time. This depends on the volume and quality of the auditory experience accumulated by the individual, their involvement in mastering the figurative language of music, their knowledge about it, the depth and interest in its comprehension, as well as the natural characteristics of the recipient's psyche, particularly the lability of their nervous system (Swebodziński et al., 2023).

Therefore, the stage of spiritual objectification is the stage of processing auditory experience, its differentiation and generalization, hierarchical organization of auditory impressions according to the level

of affinity, value ranking, and the identification and construction of a chain of preferences that determine not only experience but also the individual's aesthetic taste, forming their *portrait* based on musical attachments or rejection of certain music. For instance, a lover of classical music with an established system of preferences, upon hearing heavy rock, is quick to retreat from the monotonous, pounding music that does not correspond to their ideas of harmony, beauty, and the aesthetic potential of music. Similarly, a rock enthusiast, listening to the nearly perfect Mozart, is quick to reject its beauties and immerse themselves in the familiar element of rock. Such behavior is predetermined by the spiritual objectification that has occurred in their consciousness, ordering their habitual auditory experience and structuring rock impressions as systematic, preferred, and consistently in demand.

Let us note another important aspect of spiritual objectification as the result of the first two levels-emotional synchronization and meaningful immersion. A direct influence of music on human intelligence (Gardner, 2007), attention, memory, and the ability to differentiate and generalize *musical information*, highlighting the commonality of rhythms, memorable melodic turns, and timbral characteristics of sound, has been proven. It is believed that the brain perceives music with both hemispheres: the left (speech) hemisphere is responsible for rhythm, while the right (imagery) hemisphere is responsible for timbre and melody.

We believe that such differentiation is, at the very least, conditional. In music, means of expression (rhythm, meter, melody, tempo, timbre, etc.) are inseparable and exist as a single whole – the artistic image (Umidakhan, 2023). The brain hemispheres, despite their functional asymmetry, are connected by the corpus callosum, allowing them not only to interact but also to compensate (as scientifically proven) for some capabilities of the neighboring hemisphere in case of its damage. Consequently, the holistic impact of music forms a holistic image in the listener's consciousness. The listener may perceive individual artistic-expressive means of music in a differentiated manner but ultimately reacts to the holistic image, which causes the creation of new neural connections and, thanks to them, remains in memory.

Any *reminder* of what has already been recorded by the brain (be it a characteristic rhythm or an expressive melody) activates memory, correlates with what was heard before, is analyzed, and, thanks to the formation of new neural connections, becomes a possession of consciousness. Moreover, scientists are convinced that sounds influence the neuroplasticity of the brain and the formation of new neural connections. In this context, it is impossible to overlook the enormous role of the subconscious as a repository of impressions and images accumulated in the process of music perception. Thanks to this accumulation, art becomes an effective means of avoiding neuroses (Kohlberg, 1984) and harmonizing the unconscious.

The next and final hierarchical level of music's impact on a person is *activity*

objectification. Its meaning lies in the mediated manifestation of music's influence on human consciousness and the subsequent reflection of this influence in a person's actions, their relationships with others, and the content and forms of their activities. Note that activity objectification represents the visually least noticeable effect, as it is characterized by what L. S. Vygotsky defined as a *delayed reaction* (Vygotsky, 2017). Activity objectification manifests only after spiritual objectification has taken place, practically reinforcing its effect.

Activity objectification manifests as something that has conditioned a single action or deed, a formed psychological attitude, or a disposition toward a certain kind of content and character of activity. The profound mediation of music's influence on human consciousness in this case does not allow to describe this influence with convincing precision, since *the sound world of music* (a term by E. V. Nazaykinsky) closely interacts and *intertwines* with the individual's internal psychological world, leaving a trace in it that manifests only under conditions of demand.

In particular, all situations involving a spiritual-moral effect are, to some extent, conditioned by, among other things, the individual's *musicality*. Musicality as a personal quality manifest in the humane orientation of the individual, their altruism, attentive and caring attitude toward the *other*, which proves the spiritual virtues of a person. These are formed not only in the process of purposeful upbringing but also in the process of the involuntary influence of musical art

(Bibler, 1975), which carries a powerful spiritual, aesthetic-educational charge.

This has been assumed and differentiated since antiquity, right up to the present day (Frolova, 2024). However, today the spiritual-educational potential of music has been significantly devalued by pop culture, especially pop music, which has become primarily song-based, recitative (rap), and to a much lesser extent, dance-oriented. Danceability has become an accompanying factor in pop music, embodying the stereotypical nature of its rhythm, the primitiveness of its melodies and poetics of predominantly lyrical content. At the same time, pop music successfully *speculates* on the characteristic closeness to the rhythm of the heartbeat, which is perceived by humans as the most comfortable and therefore desirable.

The provocative ease of perceiving pop music largely ensures its dubious success, as well as its influence on the recipient's consciousness. The perception of music in a philharmonic concert hall and a nightclub differs sharply, primarily due to the artistic quality of the music. Music of high, professionally determined quality (especially contemporary) is far from always easy to perceive (Fadeeva, 2025). For an inexperienced or *traumatized-by-pop* listener, it may seem boring, meaningless, and completely incomprehensible. At the same time, an experienced listener extracts from it a multitude of emotions, captivating ideas, and observations (Lareau, 2015), which shape their consciousness, substantively fill it, and *prepare* it for exteriorization in critical situations, everyday life, and professional activity, regardless of its specifics.

Note that activity objectification can manifest in a weakened form, conditioned by elapsed time, a certain *forgetfulness* of the person (but not the forgetfulness of their brain, which *remembers* everything!), the indeterminacy or contradictoriness of the individual's strategic life and professional aspirations, etc. However, the internal potential of the personality, formed, among other things, under the influence of music, is a kind of integrity in which music occupies its place or *dissolves*, remaining for the time being unnoticed.

Much less frequently, activity objectification manifests as a vivid emotional outburst, causing an involuntary action or conscious deed. In this case, the impression left by the music retains its vividness and meaning, and may even become an internal *tuning fork* for the personality, determining its practical steps in the near and distant future.

Let us reflect: does the interaction between the listener and music always have a clear structure and is sequentially realized at the four hierarchical levels: emotional synchronization, meaningful immersion, spiritual, and then activity objectification?

Obviously, not always. For example, young people in a nightclub or at a rock concert, having experienced emotional synchronization, do not strive at all for meaningful immersion, as their goal is entertainment and pleasure from the loud rhythm and movement to the music. Therefore, the described structure may not be fully realized. This concerns, in particular, the *skipping* of the meaningful

immersion stage, but the possibility of the next stage, spiritual objectification, is quite real and objective. In this case, the habitual and preferred music—in this instance, rock—becomes fixed in the listeners' consciousness and becomes a pattern, a desirable model from the standpoint of which any other music, differing in content and character, is perceived or rejected.

Other variations of incomplete music perception structure are also possible. For example, if the music is not very likable or unintelligible to the listener, then after emotional synchronization and an unrewarding meaningful immersion, spiritual objectification will occur in a weakened form, since the heard music is perceived as useless and undesirable. And the brain, to a certain extent independently of the listener, records its impact! Therefore, if the listener hears such music again and, of course, remembers their negative emotional reaction, then activity objectification may only materialize in turning off the music-playing device... Although it is unlikely that turning off a device transmitting music once disliked can be seriously attributed to activity objectification. However, if after this the listener expresses dissatisfaction with a girlfriend's absurd hairstyle, the cold coffee brought by their wife, or indignation at a child's school grade, then such an emotional reaction can quite be correlated with activity objectification, conditioned by a bad mood spoiled by the music.

At rock concerts, one can often observe a scenario where after emotional synchronization comes activity

objectification, consisting of tumultuous behavior accompanied by antisocial manifestations and hypertrophied activity, when a person loses emotional balance and completely submits to the music provoking them (Tame, 1984). This is caused, on the one hand, by the overly tumultuous nature of the music and its destructive, intoxicating rhythm, and on the other hand—by the low quality and monotony of the listener's experience, when an adherent of a single musical style only perceives that one, and does so with stable enthusiasm.

Therefore, the structure described above characterizes the full cycle of interaction between a person and music from the perspective of the listener's engagement, their striving to understand and experience the music, or simply to derive pleasure from a favorite piece, recall it, and enjoy its sound. This is why the experience of perceiving music of different styles and characters is so important. It allows for comparing one's own impressions and priorities, forming attachments and taste. It is clear that the criterion for a full-fledged auditory experience is still the classicists (Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninoff, and perhaps E. Morricone, M. Legrand, L. Armstrong, etc.), whose beneficial influence on the human psyche has been convincingly proven by scientific experiments.

We deliberately bypass the question of the wave nature of sound influence (although it is significant), as this issue is sufficiently characterized in specialized literature. Wave impulses are processed by the brain and stimulate the organism's response. However, our attention is

concentrated on the logic and sequence of music's impact, considering its temporal nature and the embodiment of this impact not only during music perception but also afterwards—in the process of a person's life activities, in their emotional, intellectual, and activity manifestations.

Their analysis provides a procedural structural-hierarchical picture of assimilation, which can be realized with varying degrees of completeness. And the more limited the described stages are, the more superficial the perception of music remains and the more primitive its influence on the personality is. In this case, we consider it legitimate to speak of personality, and not only of a person's biological status, since music concentrates within itself centuries of socio-cultural experience of comprehending and emotionally-sensitively embodying the world and human relations in sound artistic images.

It is no coincidence that art historians and psychologists hold the opinion that all types of interactions and conflicts between people are embodied in Bach's polyphonic music and Shakespeare's plays. And if this is so, then music has colossal formative, developmental, and educational significance, which depends on listening experience, the depth of comprehending the music's content, and the accumulation by a person of the spiritual potential contained within it.

Conclusion

The realization of the substantive potential of music in human consciousness is a complex psychophysiological and spiritually formative process. Its basis is the mechanism of a person's assimilation to

the sounding music—the sequential acceptance and reproduction (mental or mediated-practical) of its emotional-sensual and intellectual impact, immersion into its intonational nature, which includes all artistic-expressive means available to musical art (rhythm, melody, tempo, timbre, dynamics, agogics, etc.). In the most complete and sequential algorithm, the substantive potential of music is realized at four hierarchical levels in the process of emotional synchronization, meaningful immersion, spiritual objectification, and activity objectification. Their sequence ensures the interaction between a person and music, as the latter possesses diverse possibilities for influencing the personality: from primitive

rhythmization of movements to deep internal, spiritual transformation. Furthermore, music is characterized by immersive, suggestive, morally-developing, and other impacts that contribute to the formation and development of personality. Music develops a person as a biological being by shaping their neural connections, thus providing new possibilities for the brain, promoting its plasticity, and endowing a person with abilities for differentiated perception and reaction to various musical intonations, forms, and styles. Music enriches the spiritual world of a person and contributes to their evolution, expanding their inner universe, infinite in the artistic space of art and eternal in time.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Bodina E. A.: conceptualization; methodology; writing – review & editing, data curation; methodology; investigation; validation; writing – original draft preparation.

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Axiological Priorities of Contemporary University Music Educators

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Abstract. The paper examines the transformation of the fundamental values that serve as a foundation for professional activities of teacher-musicians (i.e. professional performers involved in teaching music) in higher education under the current social and cultural changes in Russia. The paper identifies key axiological shifts: the transition from the canon of normative teaching paradigm to the model based of meaningful values; from frontal monologue of interpersonal interaction to the synthetical dialogue. The paper also specifies the most significant axiological attitudes of contemporary teacher musicians that define their professional identity and professional effectiveness. This approach fosters the development of not only professional competencies but also developed axiological thinking in students, enabling them to analyse musical phenomena within a broad cultural and historical context. The article logically describes the structure of the contemporary pedagogical worldview that integrates universal humanistic principles, a competency-based approach, facilitation strategies in education, and student-centred learning technologies. The authors pay special attention to the missionary role of the teacher musician as a mediator of appropriated cultural values and a mentor to students who acquire a unique/subjective/authorial position and develop professional self-awareness. The paper emphasizes that the success of a contemporary teacher is inextricably linked to developed psychological and pedagogical competence, the ability to provide facilitation support, and constant reflection on one's own professional *self-concept*. The study substantiates the importance of purposeful modelling of the pedagogical process, oriented toward students' holistic comprehension of the musical space as a continuous, evolutionary, synergistic flow that constitutes the very essence of the existential axiosphere.

Keywords: humanistic ethics, value orientations, synthetic-dialogical paradigm, axiology of music education, higher education, competency-based approach, pedagogical facilitation, teacher musician, personalized learning

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Аксиологические приоритеты современных педагогов-музыкантов высшей школы

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Резюме. В статье рассматривается трансформация фундаментальных ценностных оснований профессиональной деятельности педагогов-музыкантов высшей школы в условиях актуальных социокультурных изменений современной России, выявляются ключевые аксиологические сдвиги: переход от нормативно-канонической парадигмы преподавания к ценностно-смысловой, от фронтально-монологической модели межличностного взаимодействия к синтетически-диалогической, а также конкретизируются наиболее значимые аксиологические установки современных педагогов-музыкантов, определяющие их профессиональную идентичность и эффективность осуществляемой деятельности. Такой подход способствует формированию у студентов не только профессиональных компетенций, но и развитого аксиологического мышления, позволяющего анализировать музыкальные явления в широком культурно-историческом контексте. В статье последовательно раскрывается структура современного педагогического мировоззрения, интегрирующего общечеловеческие гуманистические принципы, компетентностный подход, фасилитационные образовательные стратегии и личностно-ориентированные технологии, направленные на индивидуализацию обучения. Особое внимание уделяется миссионерской роли педагога-музыканта как медиатора присваиваемых культурных ценностей и наставника на пути обретения обучающимися уникальной/субъектной/авторской позиции и развитого профессионального самосознания. При этом подчеркивается, что успешность современного педагога неразрывно связана с развитой психолого-педагогической компетентностью, способностью к фасилитационной поддержке и постоянной рефлексией собственной профессиональной "Я-концепции". В ходе исследования обосновывается важность целенаправленного моделирования педагогического процесса, ориентированного на целостное постижение обучающимися музыкального пространства как непрерывного эволюционно-синергетического потока, составляющего саму суть аксиосферы бытия.

Ключевые слова: гуманистическая этика, ценностные ориентации, синтетически-диалогическая парадигма, аксиология музыкального образования, высшая школа, компетентностный подход, педагогическая фасилитация, педагог-музыкант, персонализация обучения

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Introduction

The current situation in higher professional music education is characterized by conceptual rethinking of its value-based foundation. This rethinking is driven by powerful landslide shifts in the social, cultural and economic landscape of the country and the world. Globalization, the accelerating pace of technological change, information overload, the transformation of social communication forms, and many other trends are both rapidly altering the conventional way of life and shaping a new environment in which music is taught. Under these conditions, the system of higher professional music education, traditionally based on canonical didactic norms and stable theoretical and methodological principles, now needs profound axiological transformations. The central figure in this transformational process is, first and foremost, the active personality of the teacher musician.

Shifting Value Dominants: from Normative Determination to Value Pluralism

The musical culture of the turbulent 20th century entered an open confrontation with the classical genre, stylistic and aesthetic canons formed over the past several centuries. This, in turn, led to a crisis in the philosophical, normative, and value foundations of music education. While the 19th century had already seen the emergence of a relatively stable, unified system of musical and aesthetic principles and corresponding *constant* compositional techniques, the subsequent era proclaimed

the value of the unpredictably evolving creative process, i.e., searching for artistic truths, diverse experimental solutions, innovative approaches, and significant, distinctive worlds of individual composers. The rejection of tonality, the emergence of dodecaphony, polystylistics, aleatoric (chance) music, sonorism, and electroacoustic music—all these represented not just a shift in compositional architecture, the *matrix* of created works, but also evidence of profound restructuring of existential meanings of music as a spatial and temporal continuum.

Music educators have found themselves facing the need to restructure the learning process, previously oriented toward the assimilation and reproduction of canonized models, into an educational format that makes it possible to identify the value foundations of diverse, sometimes conflicting artistic worlds. In this approach, the backbone internal logic and semantic consistency of musical expressions has become the dominant value. A new perception of musical reality requires educators to develop axiological thinking that will enable them to analyse and interpret various musical phenomena in a broad cultural, historical and philosophical panorama, and identify their place in a single evolutionary-synergetic flow of musical ideas. This approach is consonant with contemporary research on key competencies that emphasizes "creativity and critical thinking are inextricably linked and are often two sides of the same coin" (Thornhill-Miller et al., 2023, 8). S. S. Shlyakhova and

N. V. Yarmukhametov, the authors of the quoted paper, study the characteristics of music perception by the current generation. They argue that "the musical consciousness of Gen Z is built on the combination of the conscious (familiarity with pop and rock music, reliance on the lyrics of the music piece, etc.) and the unconscious (ignorance of classical music, folklore and archetypal meanings of music, etc.)" (Shlyakhova, Yarmukhametov, 2023, 62).

The Synthetic Dialogical Paradigm as the Basis of Contemporary Pedagogical Thinking

Conceptualizing the world of musical culture as a complex, self-evolving system opens up new perspectives for music pedagogy. A synergetic approach that examines the dynamics of *order* and *chaos* within a single, synchronous context, enables us to avoid linear progress in art and education. The synthetic dialogical paradigm, established in the second third of the 20th century, regards musical space not as a sequential series of various cultural and historical types/styles/eras, but as single, indivisible cosmic chaos.

The synthetic dialogical paradigm means that educators who accept it consciously abandon the role of the sole, sovereign organizer of the educational environment and adopt the role of the active observer and participant in the complex processes awakening the creative self-awareness of music students. B. Winarko and N. Budiwati, the authors of the study on humanistic pedagogy, assert that "observations have shown a clear shift in the role of teachers from authoritative figures to facilitators

who guide students through inquiry-based learning and personal development" (Winarko, Budiwati, 2023, 266). The teacher's task shifts toward creating special conditions, *attractors*, that stimulate independent cognitive and creative activity in students. Suggestive methods and caring support for students' creative and exploratory activities (heuristic conversations, interactive questioning, empathic listening, etc.) begin to predominate in the educational process, thus leading to significant qualitative changes in the perception and thinking of future professionals. Their teachers, therefore, have to demonstrate sensitivity, *pedagogical vigilance*, intuition, developed perception, and a readiness for improvisation (functional-role combination, readiness to engage in dialogue, etc.) as elements of pedagogical communication. As shown in the study by M. Zhao, S. M. Maat, N. Azman, and E. Zheng on the relationship between pedagogical facilitation and students' academic performance, it is "by offering various types of support and fostering a supportive climate via constructive teacher-student interaction that they can ultimately improve students' online learning performance" (Zhao et al., 2022, 10).

The Principle of Dialogue in Teaching Music

The idea of dialogue as a valuable exchange is becoming central to the development of the contemporary education system. In higher education, the principle of dialogism in teaching music is implemented on several levels: as a dialogue between a *collective cognitive*

subject (syncretic interaction between teacher and student) and pieces of music (*artefacts* from different eras and stylistic trends); as an interpersonal dialogue between teacher and student, based on the parity of mutually respectful, equal participants; and as an internal, introspective dialogue between the students and their selves in the process of reflection and creative self-identification.

The teacher rejects a monologue and the authoritarian position by organizing the educational space as a venue for diverse viewpoints, a multitude of meanings and artistic interpretations. As one of the coaches remarks in a study of music pedagogical and artistic strategies, "We also learn a lot from each other, and to me that's what makes it exciting. What's great about this concept is that every approach is always being challenged by the coaches in some way, and that's just great. So, nothing is certain, everything can always change" (Verneert et al., 2024, 170). The major task for the teacher is not simply to demonstrate the idea of the only possible, *correct* interpretations of musical pieces, but to teach students to enter a complex, polyphonic dialogue with the world cultural heritage, to extract and construct unique, personal meanings inspired by this heritage. As P. N. Juslin and P. Laukka note, "this suggests that the performer plays a fairly large role in communicating an emotional *message* above and beyond what is communicated through the score alone" (cited by (Lerch et al., 2020, 227)). V. P. Reva argues that "the selective-communicative component of musical perception acquires a special

artistic content when the content of the music piece awakes feelings consonant with the life experience of the listeners, resonating with their spiritual world" (Reva, 2019, 28). T. A. Kolysheva and T. I. Blaginina also note that professional reflection "reveals the ability for critical thinking, teaches to reason and not to rely on the only correct solution, as well as activates creativity, pedagogical imagination, observation and, naturally, the students' own life experience" (Kolyševa, Blaginina, 2020, 86). This didactic approach is particularly relevant when introducing music of the 20th and 21st centuries, in which the idea of meaning, generated through dialogue between *us* and *them* (polystylistics, quotation, collage techniques, etc.), emerges most clearly. Thus, the implementation of the dialogical principle in teaching music contributes to the development of musician-interpreters (*Homo Faber*), capable of critical thinking, independent value judgment and creating their own otherness within the shared space of the cultural semiosphere.

Personalization of the Educational Process

The challenges of the time, associated with the colossal growth of information volumes and the rapid renewal of knowledge, make it pointless for teachers to equip students with a uniform, *final* amount of knowledge. Given the dynamic renewal of knowledge, skills, and abilities, another axiological priority for contemporary educators is the development of personalized educational paths for each student, taking into account their initial level of

professional training, previous experience in academic and concert performance activities, a range of general and specific abilities, life interests, cognitive stimuli, ambitions, etc. Education is shifting from finite/fixed/static to *lifelong learning*. Y. Zou, F. Kuek, W. Feng, and X. Cheng point out that "the flexibility afforded by digital learning platforms is another key factor in promoting student success. By allowing students to access course materials, lectures, and assessments at their convenience, e-learning platforms accommodate those with work, family, or other commitments" (Zou et al., 2025, 6). O. V. Nikiforova, in her regular reviews, points out that machine learning algorithms enable "to generate personalized recommendations on music educational platforms" (Nikiforova, 2024, 30). K. V. Kazunina, R. K. Khurmatullina, and I. M. Salpykova are convinced that "the ability to independently select a repertoire and create your own notes and musical arrangements in real time contributes to the development of motivation" (Kazunina et al., 2023, 66). Personalization of educational paths also involves self-organization, self-control, and self-assessment skills in students, that is, various metacognitive skills thus enabling students to manage their professional growth independently in the future. V. V. Malandin and M. S. Osenneva, developing this idea, argue that "the principle of personalization is the methodological foundation for professional music and pedagogical training in general" (Malandin, Osenneva, 2021, 50), which determines its extrapolation to all aspects of training the

will-be professional. A group of authors from the K. D. Ushinsky National Pedagogical University of Ukraine, developing this idea further, argue that "the principle of searching for the personal meaning of higher musical education emphasizes the need for personal development of a music student, diagnosing and merging the system of his subjective (moral-aesthetic, professional) values" (cited by (Smyrnova et al., 2019, 2079). Thus, there is a noticeable rise in the value of following an individual path of development over the value of achieving abstract, unified results.

The Missionary Role of the Teacher Musician: Developing Students' Value Frame of Mind

In a context of growing pragmatism and the loss of traditional spiritual and moral guidelines, the job of the teacher musician is becoming an important, almost sacred, mission. Maria Heimonen, developing the theme of new pedagogical ethics in music education, argues that "sensitivity and respectful listening to others is said to form an ethical basis for creating peace in the world" (Heimonen, 2012, 69). As is well known, intellectual growth without the refinement of spirituality can lead to threatening consequences for all humanity worldwide. A group of researchers studying contemporary global trends in education (K. E. Ortiz-Ordonez, D. K. Burbano-Gonzalez, D. A. Suarez-Munoz) point out that "the analysis highlights a growing emphasis on integrating affective, ethical, and relational dimensions into virtual pedagogical practices alongside technological innovation" (Ortiz-Ordóñez et al., 2022, 1).

Therefore, one of the top axiological priorities of a contemporary teacher is the *soul ennoblement* of a student. Education is aimed at raising not only a competent, competitive music performer, but also a decent, morally responsible person. L. A. Rapatskaya states that "the vector of necessary changes in the professional training of will-be teacher musicians is set not by reform, but by transforming the content of music and pedagogical education, established over the centuries, based on the Russian cultural tradition in its original integrity. This process involves not only passing the principles of musical *craft*, over to the next generations, but also focusing on the high spirituality of Russian culture" (Rapatskaya, 2024, 17). Holly Ho Yin Chung points out that "there was an overwhelming consensus among the four participants in the study about helping their students to identify and overcome their weaknesses in ESL. This was one of these teachers' main motivations to improve their teaching" (Chung, 2022, 52). V. E. Bagdasaryan, N. Yu. Sklyarova, and S. M. Stroganova, discussing the specifics of Russian pedagogical anthropology, state that "...regarding the Russian civilizational tradition, there are at least three dimensions seen in the understanding of human nature: an appeal to God, to the soul, and to the collegiality inherent in the Russian people... Thus, Russian pedagogical anthropology defines the specifics of Russian pedagogy as *pedagogy of the ideal*, spirituality-centred psychological pedagogy, socializing pedagogy" (Bagdasaryan et al., 2025, 16).

This *pastoral* mission of the teacher musician is implemented through the very process of deep immersion in the world of high art, through joint creativity and discussion of the ethical problems and conflicts inherent in musical works. R. Angel-Alvarado, M. R. Wilhelmi and O. Belletich, developing the idea of an integrated approach to music education, point out that "teachers consider the learning content, anthropological elements and learning community for planning, instructing and assessing didactic situations offered to a student" (Angel-Alvarado et al., 2019, 16–17). The teacher helps students build their own systems of moral and ethical guidelines, through which they learn the categories of good and evil, respect and empathy, help and mercy, etc. I. D. Levina, S. M. Nizamutdinova, I. A. Korsakova, developing this idea, point out that "musical emotions are an integral part of understanding and value", and also emphasize that "emotions turn out to be the *key* to understanding the *message* of the great master imprinted in them to future generations" (Levina et al., 2023, 36). Teachers demonstrate with their own example a value-based attitude toward the profession as a noble service, and toward art as a path to self-knowledge and understanding of the world. Annabella Fung, analyzing the spiritual quest of music students, points out that "music engagement in the worship team affirmed her love for music. She searched inwardly in this encounter of the *I/Thou* relationship as the music spoke to her soul; her self-identity emerged in this spiritual quest" (Fung, 2022, 16). In this sense, the teacher

musician acts not only as a keeper of professional knowledge and competencies but also an adherent of the existential, spiritual values of culture. A. V. Toropova explains that "the anthropological turn to the subject of musical and educational anthropological practices – the teacher as a subject transmitting dominant values, and the student as a subject accepting or rejecting these dominant values – gives us the opportunity to escape the logical trap of *misunderstanding* the meaning of one's own activity" (Toropova, 2023, 55). T. I. Koptelova argues that such "organic philosophy enables combining scientific, artistic and religious approaches in the study of spiritual phenomena of a particular culture" (Kopteleva, 2019, 20).

Meaning-Making Transition from Knowledge to Competencies

Contemporary educational standards are clearly shifting their emphasis from the acquisition of a fixed volume of knowledge (the knowledge paradigm) to the development of professional and meta-professional competencies in will-be professionals. In higher musical education, this means that the value is placed not only with the virtuoso mastery of the performing skill or the deep understanding of theoretical subjects. It is also with the readiness for an independent, rich creative life, for planning one's own path of further self-education, for effective interaction with colleagues and students, for adaptation to the changing conditions of the educational service market, etc. Accordingly, the value-oriented mode of pedagogical activity should also be shifted towards the purposeful modelling of situations that require students to

demonstrate precisely these competencies. The functional and role tasks of the teacher should be considered "as equal to the developing competencies of future music specialists, determined by the readiness to carry out independent cognitive activity, the desire for professional recognition and career success, the development level of communication skills, social activity, readiness for cooperation, the ability to produce extraordinary creative ideas and the implementation of innovative projects" (Shcherbakova et al., 2025, 30).

Facilitative Pedagogical Strategies

The term *facilitation* has become key to describing the new functional role of contemporary teachers. K. West and R. Cremata, explaining the essence of facilitation training, state that "informal educational practices require a retracted teacher role, a decentring of expert authority and the potential empowerment of students to take active roles in their learning" (Cremata, 2017, 73). The teacher-facilitator directs all efforts towards creating a special reference development environment in which the process of professional development of students and their creative self-expression proceeds most effectively and naturally. Their activities are aimed at activating the internal resources of students and actualizing their personal potential. As Yu. Korostenskene argues, "We are counselors, guides, mentors showing how to do everything, but children have to take responsibility: what will I learn, what strategies will I use, what is my goal? As teachers, we are just assistants in this endeavor" (Korostenskiene, 2022, 226).

Facilitative pedagogical strategies include the ability to carry developmental, heuristic dialogues; mastery of the tactics of asking *correct*, eliciting questions (interactive questioning); organizing co-creative interaction; intensifying students' creative and independent search activities, etc. N. A. Frolova asserts that "autodidactic processes, acting as the foundation for independent educational and cognitive activity, help students organize their self-education and self-improvement, contribute to a qualitative change in the psychological properties and status of the individual, enable them to overcome the difficulties of self-development and become the subject of their own development" (Frolova, 2019, 64). The facilitation approach requires that teachers should have highly developed skills in psychological observation, carry out permanent and comprehensive diagnostics of the students' general and special abilities, be able to *hear* students and to react flexibly to the slightest changes in their intellectual and emotional state, etc.

The Need to Improve the Psychological and Pedagogical Competence of Contemporary Teacher Musicians

In today's educational environment, teaching based solely on a teacher's high level of professional (musical performance) skill may not be as effective as it once used to be. Today, the well-developed psychological and pedagogical competence of teachers is no less important. This requires knowledge of the patterns of age-related typological development, the fundamentals of

educational psychology, and the psychology of creativity and musical activity. E. S. Peteneva, citing the results of a study by O. A. Luchinina and E. S. Vinokurova, asserts that "96% of the musicians surveyed expressed a need for specialized psychological knowledge that would enable them to independently cope with problems arising in the course of their work" (Petenieva, 2022, 35). N. M. Garipova, developing this idea further, points out that "knowledge of psychology enables a deeper understanding of music itself, an appreciation of its elevated mission in human history, and also enables teachers, as mentors of the younger generation, to engage in self-improvement throughout their lives" (Garipova, 2022, 28).

In this case, axiological principles are expressed in the understanding that working with gifted, emotionally sensitive music student requires special tact, special methods of motivational stimulation, and special ways to overcome various crisis phenomena. Teachers should be able to recognize the signs of creative burnout, mitigate the symptoms of stage fright, remove internal barriers that hinder students' creative expression, and, overall, provide comfortable conditions for the professional and personal development of music students in the intense and competitive environment of a university that specializes in creative courses. Thus, such value orientations have become an unshakable moral imperative for the teacher.

Value Redefinition: The Self-Concept of a Teacher Musician

Developing a strong system of value orientations in students is impossible without deep internal work on their professional and personal identity. An effective tool for such introspective self-development is axiological reflection—a constant process of understanding and rethinking one's pedagogical attitudes, motives, methods of interpersonal communication, and much more. The structure of a pedagogical worldview can be characterized by three interconnected *concepts*: the *I-concept* (the teacher's self-perception as an individual), the *A-concept* (the Attitude toward one's professional activity, its meaning, and social significance), and the *P-concept* (the nature of one's Perception and attitude toward students). The kaleidoscope of problems faced by contemporary educators requires the actualization of each of these components. Educators must maintain a balance between professional exactingness and a non-judgmental perception, between a monologue, directive position and equal collaboration, between fidelity to tradition and openness to innovation. In a study on dance anthropological practices, A. M. Ailamazyan and E. I. Tashkeyeva point out that "the need to constantly overcome oneself and the limitations of one's body, to develop endurance, to rehearse despite fatigue and pain, leads to the formation of strong-willed character traits" (Ailamazyan, Tashkeeva, 2024, 66). A constant internal readiness for change and the acceptance of new experiences can

ultimately become the key to a successful and long-term teaching career.

Conclusion

Our analysis of the axiological priorities of contemporary music educators in higher education suggests that, influenced by the general trends in the evolutionary development of culture and education in recent decades, value orientations have undergone significant changes. The conceptual core of the new system of pedagogical worldview comprises a number of fundamentally significant ethical principles for music educators.

First, the focus on the value-based, semantic revelation of the internal logic and semantics of musical works within the overall context of the synergetic development of global artistic culture.

Second, the focus on subject-to-subject, dialogic relationships within interactions with students.

Third, the focus on the unconditional value of the student's personality.

Fourth, the educator's awareness of their missionary, spiritual, moral, and *pastoral* role. Finally, the cornerstone of the entire value system is the commitment to continuous professional and personal self-improvement of teachers, their willingness to continually enrich their own *I*, *A*, and *P* concepts.

Thus, the job description of a contemporary teacher musician in higher education represents a complex synthesis of a high level of mastery of a musical instrument, a deep understanding of their humanitarian mission and social responsibility, and a willingness to provide psychological support and facilitation to students in the active phase of their

professional and personal development. The success of contemporary teachers is determined by their ability to cultivate a unique, value-based educational environment around themselves, enabling a holistic understanding of music as an ever-changing and inexhaustible stream of the powerful human spirit.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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THE MYSTERIES OF CREATIVITY

Original article

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Perforemer as a Thinker: on the Problem of Interpretation and Reinterpretation

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Abstract. This article raises the question of the criteria of the performer's mastery, which firstly implies actualization of dialogical interaction with the composer, secondly binding collaboration on the side of both the musician and the listener, the latter being a partner in a creative act of the kind. Finally, the artist engaged in musical performance is to be a thinker since music is not only expressed at the speech level but also at the level of mentality. It is proved that provision of the above three conditions only can enable the performer to carry hardcore music lovers with singularity and distinct identity of his own rendition of the score. It is also stated that one of the effective methods of work with the author's text is its reinterpretation. Viewed in the light of Mikhail Bakhtin's dialogical concept, the said method should be treated as co-existence of the given and the created, the cognitive and the ethic. The criterion of consistency of the dialogue as an experience in the agreement of contradictions, is then the performer's pure taste and clear insight into the aim pursued by the new concept: whether it is enrichment of the world music culture or, alternatively, demonstration of one's own willfulness and arbitrary rule. Establishing her system of reasons, the author of this paper turns to such authorities as Ferruccio Busoni, Glenn Gould, Maria Yudina, brothers Mikhail and Nikolay Bakhtin, thus making comparisons between reinterpretation and literary translation.

Keywords: performer-thinker, criteria of the quality of performance, interpretation, reinterpretation, performance as a dialogue

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Исполнитель как мыслитель: к вопросу об интерпретации и реинтерпретации

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Резюме. В статье поднимается вопрос о критериях исполнительского мастерства, которое предполагает, во-первых, актуализацию диалогического взаимодействия с автором звучащего произведения, во-вторых, непременно со-творчество как со стороны музыканта, так и слушателя, выступающего соучастником такого творческого действия. Наконец, в-третьих, работающий в области музыкального исполнительства художник должен быть мыслителем, поскольку музыка предстает не только на уровне речи, но и мышления. Доказывается, что лишь при выполнении этих трех условий музыкант-исполнитель может увлечь за собой подлинных ценителей музыки оригинальностью и самобытностью собственного прочтения нотного текста. Утверждается, что одним из действенных методов работы с авторским текстом становится метод реинтерпретации. Рассматриваемый в свете диалогической концепции М. М. Бахтина, обозначенный метод предстает как событие данного и созданного, познавательного и этического. Критерием состоятельности диалога как опыта согласования противоречий становится безупречный вкус исполнителя и четкое осознание того, какой цели служит его новая концепция: обогащению мировой музыкальной культуры или демонстрации своеволия и произвола. Выстраивая систему аргументации, автор обращается к авторитету Ф. Бузони, Г. Гульда, М. Юдиной, братьев М. М. и Н. М. Бахтиных, проводя аналогии между реинтерпретацией и художественным переводом.

Ключевые слова: исполнитель-мыслитель, критерии качества исполнительского мастерства, интерпретация, реинтерпретация, исполнение как диалог

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Introduction

These days, when in the performing art, alongside great, longstanding contests, there appear numerous brand-new events at which young pianists compete in skills, one might raise one, yet pivotal question. How holistic are the criteria of the performing qualities of different artists, and what is decisive when the audience (viewers), i.e., this or that performer's fans, choose the leader and

name the loser? The question is far from idle since many merited musicians often view such events with skepticism noting that contests sometimes fail to reveal a true talent.

Realizing that each member of the panel typically has sought-for criteria guaranteeing some objectivity in this definitely subjective process of assessment, we must name the criterion which we believe to be the principal one. If music is viewed as thinking whose essence was

most adequately disclosed in Maurice Bonfeld's monograph (Bonfeld, 1991), then the performer appears to be a thinker able to deeply impress both an expert and a simple amateur by singularity and distinct identity of his own ideas. Relevance of such a statement is conditioned by the following. If contemporary key figures of musical aesthetics are composers-philosophers and philosophers-composers whose very personalities "permit to approach understanding of music as a transcending experience constituting the ultimate value" (Go, Shao, 2023, 35), then the performer has every right to be involved in this 'circle of confidants' solely as a thinker. One good historical example showing how the ideas of the performer-thinker are actualized, are the legendary lectures given by Arthur G. Rubinstein. As A.V. Malinkovskaya, expert in the piano art history, points out, "in fact those were concerts-lectures. Anton Grigorievich's performance was accompanied by his more or less detailed commentaries on the personalities of the composers and their styles, historical and cultural circumstances imprinted in their various compositions" (Malinkovskaya, 2025, 152). As indicated by Shi Ya Van, "the statement made in his [Chopin's] 'Method of Methods' on the necessity to strain after harmonic combination of an intuitive comprehension of the metaphoric structure of the studied pieces and a substantial analytical and technical precision of each of its elements, later became one of the basics in the professional training practice of

piano players within the Russian music education system" (Shi, 2023, 86).

In other words, much as creative work excludes any whatsoever replication, performance, according to the position of Canadian pianist Glenn Gould, is not at all replication. From this perspective, ranged as musicians carrying with singularity of their approach to the interpretation of both classics and contemporaries, apart from Glenn Gould (1932–1982), might be rather a limited number of performers. These are first and foremost Ferruccio Busoni (1866–1924); Kaikhosru Sorabji (1892–1988); Maria Yudina (1899–1970), Alexei Sultanov (1969–2005) and others.

Meanwhile the stories of their lives and fortunes apparently prove that their method of working with the score often raised protests of both the composers (thus, well known are the aesthetic disagreements between Ferruccio Busoni who offered, during one of the concerts, his own transcription of the piano piece two of *op. 11* by A. Schoenberg, and the author who was dissatisfied by the concept of the piano virtuoso⁶) and the critics who were their contemporaries. Typically, the latter are those expressing most reproaches addressed to innovators and concerning their rather free treatment of a piece of art whose authorship belongs to someone else, irrespective of the fact whether mentioned is the classical or contemporary repertoire.

Trying to answer the question "which way ... one can investigate ... the elusive ... phenomenon of musical performing art ... so that the said investigations would

⁶ For a closer look on the item see (Bulatova, 2009).

obtain necessary conceptivity, and what could help justifiably build them into the scholarly space" (Ruchkina, 2010, 280), N. P. Ruchkina offers the following. "Here we need a completely different integral methodology of scholarly knowledge, characterized, above all, by a specific aspect angle focused on the probatory analysis of a hard-to-conceive, in terms of discursive knowledge, phenomenon which is probably the interpretative conceptuality of the creative work of this or that musician" (Ruchkina, 2010, 280–281).

This author defines the starting point for the creation of the sought methodology as "phylogenetic inversion" (Ruchkina, 2010, 281) specifying that the latter was initially "applied in the work with scientific texts" (Ruchkina, 2010, 285). "Broadening the sphere of its output factor" (Ruchkina, 2010, 285), N. P. Ruchkina expresses certainty that the above method permits "to clarify the genetic way of these or those ideas, discoveries, find the ideas which are probably linked with continuous threads" (Ruchkina, 2010, 281).

Since phylogenetic inversion is in fact not a method but "a term that in evolutionary biology denotes a hypothesis *that in the course of evolution structures along dorsoventral axis accepted orientation opposite to that of the ancestral form*"⁷, it becomes clear why the researcher bringing forward this 'method' "does not propose any practical ways to solve it <the phylogenetic inversion>" (Monastyrshina, 2019, 12). Nevertheless, the very idea that inversion

is "a chromosomal rearrangement meaning a 180° turn of a chromosomal segment"⁸, affords ground to resort to another, generally more organic for musical aesthetics and, more specifically, for a performing art term that constitutes an opposition to interpretation. "The awareness of the external limits of the topic and the purposeful imparting to it of a monographic character can provide a further powerful impetus for the design of the material" (Korsakova, Sadritdinova, 2025, 10).

Artistic performance in the context of reinterpretation

So far, the term *reinterpretation* appears to be most relevant in philology, which fact is witnessed by quite a number of investigations of the said phenomenon through the lens of various cultural artifacts. Introduction in scholarly discourse of the notion we are interested in, is strongly stipulated by a significant and actively elaborated in modern literature studies theory of translation. We here mean the problem of correspondence of the source text to the foreign-language text.

A matter of principle for us in the history of correlation between two entities is a necessity to distinguish translation as *imitation directed towards resemblance* and as *imitation directed towards difference*. Thus, for Walter Benjamin translation as imitation is impossible precisely because the translator, trying to reach similarity with the original text, preserves only those items that are

⁷ Inversion (evolutionary biology) – Wikipedia. Available at: https://translated-turbopages.org/proxy_u/en-ru.ru.d45c2cee-696fc303-2f31f63e-74722d776562

[/https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inversion_\(evolutionary_biology\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inversion_(evolutionary_biology)) (accessed on: 14.09.2025).

⁸ Inversion (biology) – Wikipedia. Available at: https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Инверсия_%28биология%29 (accessed on: 14.09.2025).

translatable in principle. By contrast, focusing on those items untranslatable, the scholar this way emphasizes the situation of dissimilarity, which challenges the very idea of translation. Insisting on untranslatability as something that has to be translated, Benjamin characterizes translation as a fact forming the notion of truth anew.

The fact that in one of the recent publications we see an attempt "to reveal similarity in views of two prominent representatives of their time on the problem of translation or, otherwise, performing interpretation, which is solved by Busoni in the domain of performing art and by Benjamin in the domain of oral art (poetry and prose)" (Dent, 1974, 164), enables to project the ideas of the German philosopher on musicology. The outcome of the mentioned direction can be viewed in the fact that translation as similarity-oriented imitation most of all corresponds to the phenomenon of interpretation. This refers to secondary artistic activity, when the performer follows the score concept whose authorship belongs to the composer.

What concerns translation as a dissimilarity-oriented imitation, it corresponds to a reinterpretation experience as a primary artistic activity. Here the Latin prefix *re-* synchronically means return, refusal, repetition, and rethinking. In other words, a performing activity carried out under the banner of reinterpretation, leads to a situation at which, working with a piece written by a definite composer, the performer reconstructs this piece as if he, the performer, is its creator. It might be

thought that an experience of the kind conditions automatic placement, in the problematic field of performing art as reinterpretation, of the listener too.

Indeed, being involved in the act of creation evolving between the composer-philosopher/philosopher-composer and the performer-thinker, the latter, in accordance with the well-known triad, should also possess a definite culture of thinking. One argument here can be the words said by E. Dent regarding F. Busoni: "He believed that his audience knew classical music as he himself did"; hence "it would be needless to tell the listeners what they had already known. Those who came to his concerts with a strong concept how Bach, Beethoven or Chopin were to be performed, often left bewildered or even enraged" (Dent, 1974, 258). Symbolic, in full tandem with Busoni, yet somewhat more drastic, was the statement made by Glenn Gould: "Nowadays recordings of the great performers of the past and present coexist and are available at any moment to those who wish to listen to them. So, the performer has either to compose music anew or find another job" (Monsenzhon, 2008, 154–155).

It would seem that an ideal concert pianist espoused by these two brilliant musicians is expressed with absolute precision, yet reality apparently proves that the unity existing between these performers separated in time and space is not so implicit. Let us explain it by a concrete example.

It is common knowledge that any creative work implies artist's freedom, that is why any violence restricts its most vivid

manifestations. However, it is the score mottled with the composer's notes on the tempo, character, hues, etc. that examples willfulness and limitations the performer is to defer to. From this perspective rather indicative are Busoni's creative efforts aimed at editing J. S. Bach's compositions. This activity brought him such recognition that there appeared a joke popular among the people who knew Busoni. The essence of the joke was that Busoni's wife Gerda (**nee** Sjöstrand) was repeatedly introduced as Mrs. Bach-Busoni. Commenting on this funny fact, Erinn Knight writes: "Truth or fantasy, yet this social misdeed shows how closely the name of Busoni was linked with Bach's name" (Knyt, 2010, 22).

No doubt, Busoni's titanic work at Bach's legacy became a guideline followed by so many performers of the great German's music. However, by a twist of fate, while creating his bold 'interpretations of Bach's music, in many ways agreeing with Busoni in what concerns performing principles, Glenn Gould strived to bring the score as close as possible to the variant cultivated during the Baroque era "that left Bach to us" (Khramov, 2022). Meant here is the music discourse just fixing the pitch and metric peculiarities.

It is then clear that total reinterpretation of the score in full accordance with the value-based dominant ideas of its epoch is impossible without a deep dive in the context accompanying the history of the creation of the work of authorship. "In case there is no realization of the immensity and multidimensionality of the composer's legacy and variety of its

inner intertextual links, impossible is full-fledged formation of the learners' professional world, stimulation of research activities, improvement of mastery" (Prid'ma, 2024, 106). Above all, as noted by G. A. Torgoni, "performance from memory not only raises the level of freedom in the interpretation of an artistic image, it also becomes an invaluable repository of spiritual experience as it permits to obtain greater professional literacy, increase the associative area of the performing thinking" (Torgoni, Morozova, 2024, 89). One can hardly admit that Svyatoslav Richter who was reproached for a very slow tempo of his performance of Part Two of Sonata Nine by Beethoven, deluded himself about the author's message, the more so as this genius of music, great erudite person could speak, alongside Russian, Beethoven's language as his mother-tongue. In the same way one can hardly suspect that changing the character of the B-moll Prelude by J. S. Bach performed during the Great Patriotic War, Maria Yudina failed to realize the essence of this piece of music as she placed a premium on up-tempo and boosted sound. "To undertake the interpreter's mission, the performer has to learn to operate in his work with many contexts revealing the social and aesthetic nature of the music image, singularity of its intonational sphere, stylistic and genre reference, history of creation and perspectives of development, interconnections with all kinds of outer factors and phenomena, etc. It is this thorough, comprehensive study of the artistic image that contains prospects for original, plausible and convincing

interpretation of the music content in compositions belonging to various genres and trends" (Krasovskaya, 2023, 99).

It is of importance to note that performer's direct involvement in the work aimed at the creation of a piece of music was originally rather widespread. Suffice it to recall that in the 17th – 18th centuries "music could simply not exist without a collaboration between the composer and the performer. It was either improvised, or composed immediately, ... hence it mostly belonged to the performer, as compared to the later or perhaps earlier times. Most of the music created at various epochs was only outlined without being completely recorded ... The performer could be in a way compared with a young child with a coloring book in his hands, and the sketches further turned to pieces of art" (Fuller, 1989, 117).

One must admit that the above quote affords ground for viewing the experience of reinterpretation as perhaps even more acceptable in the work of a contemporary musician-performer in his treatment of scores, than interpretation itself. This idea may be supported by Dmitri Shostakovich's words addressed to Maria Yudina: "This is not at all what I wrote, yet play it this way! This way only!"⁹.

To completely realize the responsibility of the performer opting for reinterpretation, let us resort to V. B. Khramov's observations. In his monograph dealing with Glenn Gould's creative work, this Russian music scholar

and practical performer undertakes a comparison study of a Baroque-adapted fragment of Sonata 1 (f-moll) by Ludwig van Beethoven and the same fragment, yet with the composer's notes. These are the eight starting bars where V. B. Khramov finds 27 (!) notations. Further on, comparing Beethoven's *urtext* with the established version belonging to Artur Schnabel, the scholar already mentions 50 editorial notations, "which means that he <Artur Schnabel> added his own 23 signs to Beethoven's" (Khramov, 2022).

Hence the circumstances become rather awkward: in case of abject and thorough follow-through of the composer addressing his speech to his contemporaries, the performer unintentionally excludes him from the circle of those living in the 21st century, and not without reason. Emotions initiating maestro's creative experiences, are in subjection to the epoch that has shaped them. It would be sufficient to compare, say, the 18th century of sentimentalism and sensationalism with the 19th century, a time of pragmatism and cruelty. That is to say, one should not forget that emotions "differ from culture to culture" (Lobanova, 2025, 52).

On the other hand, obeying Schnabel's orders, the pianist rather does his will than embodies the composer's concept. Meanwhile one has to admit that the essence of the musician's performing activity is in the achievement of "an equal

⁹ Kirillova, L. 'Stalin's favourite pianist with a Gospel in hand: in memory of Maria Yudina'. *Pravmir*. Available at: [https://www.pravmir.ru/lyubimaya-pianistka-](https://www.pravmir.ru/lyubimaya-pianistka-stalina-s-evangeliiem-v-rukah-pamyati-marii-yudinoj/)

[stalina-s-evangeliiem-v-rukah-pamyati-marii-yudinoj/](https://www.pravmir.ru/lyubimaya-pianistka-stalina-s-evangeliiem-v-rukah-pamyati-marii-yudinoj/) (accessed on: 27.12.2025). (In Russian)

synthesis of two ... tendencies, mimetic (*the past*, responsible for the written record of scores) and creative (*the future*, anticipating reproduction of the text). Both these tendencies are extremes often actualized as a unity that embodies a total of creative intentions of two producing minds, the composer and the performer, within an act of creating a piece of music" (Okisheva, 2025, 86).

In our opinion, one right track leading out if the situation could be a view of reinterpretation from the standpoint of the dialogical concept of Mikhail Bakhtin, a philosopher who was on friendly terms with Maria Yudina for quite a number of years.

Reinterpretation in the light of Mikhail Bakhtin's dialogical concept

A need to view reinterpretation with regard to a harmonizing dialogue seems significant for one simple reason. Any piece of art can only be born due to "*the intemporal tandem 'composer – performer' joined by the piece of art as a language fact...*" (Prihodovskaya, Okisheva, 2024, 207). Here we have "two modifications of one piece of art, modifications of its written record and a sounding fact", which forms its *dual nature* [ibid.]. If however the performer prefers to work with the score without looking back at previous interpretations, then those well-wishers who refuse to support his creative urge, readily advise him to write his own composition and "do whatever you want with it", rather than give him a *carte blanche* in regard to the author's music. "Signposts on this path are conditioned by various culture factors, yet first and foremost by the attitude of

the composer, the performer, the listener to the music texts as dialogical phenomena of the 'spiritual' (heavenly) and 'material' (earthly) worlds" (Rapatskaya, 2023, 42).

At first sight, non-admission of the said experience is conditional upon the prohibition of any arbitrariness to a piece of art that has already been blended in a definite performing tradition. At the same time those artistic stereotypes that have been formed in the perception of that piece presently create a psychological barrier hindering, in the indignant lover of music, any recognition of validity of new artistic interpretations. Yet, if we take into account the fact that performance itself, perception too, are processes deeply creative, then we should agree on the indisputability of the following thesis. The less habitual is the next performance of a well-known piece, the more internal work it will require on the part of the listeners to enable their understanding of the performer's idea.

Is the audience, while coming to the concert, ready for such a serious, co-creative, activity (mental activity), especially these days, when any contact with art bears an element of show, attracting viewers and listeners with specific, at times purposefully demonstrated by the musician's individual style, onstage dress, shoes? This question is of special relevance in view of comprehending music as an emotionally *contagious* event. As noted by the researchers of musical-aesthetic emotions, "much as man catches emotions of other people by way of perceiving emotional mimics, voice position, music can 'infect' interpreted as expression of feelings"

(Levina et al., 2023, 32). If rather serious in this respect classical concerts of the past century were named by Glenn Gould a circus because the performer in his *hic et nunc* creative activity is to not just to think of the logic in which the music material develops but also as the saying goes, "make a spectacle of himself", then what can be said of today's priority grades of the consumer society basically living by market laws, according to which art is often bought and sold as a commodity? A. Lerch, C. Arthur, A. Pati & S. Gururani note that "every performance will ultimately be heard and processed by a listener. The listener's meaningful interpretation of the incoming musical information depends on a sophisticated network of parameters. These parameters include both objective (or, at least, measurable) features that can be estimated from a score or derived from a performance, as well as subjective and 'internal' ones such as factors shaped by the culture, training, and history of the listener" (Lerch et al., 2020, 224).

As for the infamous advice to another 'bright spark' to abstain from touching 'someone else's thing' counting on 'his own' only, this would elude, in a public debate, the wanted dialogue between the composer and the performer, marked, as Mikhail Bakhtin explained, by infinity and inexhaustibility. Developing the Socratic dialogical experience with a view to written speech, Bakhtin disclosed the essence of the latter as a co-existence of the given (the textual cognitive in the text) and the created (the textual ethical). And if the notion of reinterpretation reflects the fact of

simultaneous presence in the performing practice of the basic text (the score) and its new interpretation (the performance itself), then correlation between the new interpretation and the ethic line actualized in the performer's activity becomes evident solely within the context of Mikhail Bakhtin's dialogical concept. Besides, providing an opportunity to hear something familiar with a different, new subject matter, Bakhtin's dialogue initiates a precedent for a comparison of both variants. As researcher I. S. Kuznetsova states, "Immanuel Kant presumed that by the power of its emotional impact, by the excitement generated, music takes the second place after poetry... It brings up aesthetic emotions, thus developing creative talent in man. What is still more important, music promotes communicational culture" (Kuznetsova, 2024, 14).

From out of the rules of dialogue notional since antiquity, we will denote three basic ones:

1) participants of the dialogical situation have to be linked by a common topic, in our case a definite piece of art talked about by way of musical discourse;

2) for some time the speaker (composer) turns into a listener, and, the other way round, the listener (performer) acts as a speaker because he builds his speech supported by the same laws as his interlocutor (composer);

3) each participant of the dialogical situation is to undertake *search for truth* instead of trying to turn his interlocutor into his supporter and thus win a victory over him. As stated by researcher Marja Heimonen, "these relationships require

sensitivity, respectful and critical listening, and dialogue among and between students and teachers" (Heimonen, 2012, 71).

Taking into account that a true dialogue is impossible 'beyond' contradictions which finally have to be accommodated or otherwise harmonized, it becomes clear that the performing activity is generally an utterance initially contradicting the utterance of the composer. Within this context, the impression produced by Maria Yudina's performance on Maria Grinberg can hardly be surprising: "I come to her concert. I listen. I am amazed and stunned by her rendition! I come back home, take the scores and realize that Yudina has turned everything upside down. One day later I again go to the same concert with the same program, and now she persuades that this is the only way it should be performed"¹⁰.

Coming back to parallels between the art of performance and the translation theory, we must note that the experience that 'turns everything upside down', rhymes with the line of a professional translator Nikolay Bakhtin, Mikhail Bakhtin's brother. In expert's opinion, resort to the logical structure of the material expressed by verbal signs (sheet music in our case) is nothing but the opening phase in the perception of the sense of a literary text. Therefore, a poetic translator deems it possible "to destroy it down to the basis that contains the semantics of the author's inner experiences and then to get involved in this stream with

the aim of recreating an utterly new form" (Bakhtin, 2008, 84).

Does not F. Busoni mean the same stating that "notation, musical composition is above all a joker aimed to catch inspiration ... A translator's task is to turn rigidity of signs ... into emotion. Yet legislators demand that the translator should reproduce this rigidity of signs; they believe that the stronger the adhesion between his reproduction and the signs, the closer it is to perfection" (Busoni, 1911, 15). As a result, since notation deprives the author of inspiration, the performer's primary target is a necessity to spiritualize these dead signs in the process of experiencing his own artistic inspiration. Do not the following words said by Glenn Gould stay in accord with the authors cited: "A musician playing the piano is also to be a composer managing this instrument because 'professionalism has not been canceled'" (cited by (Khramov, 2024, 106))? A matter of principle for us is the fact that the maestro himself dwelled, while working at a piece of art, solely upon its structure whose thorough analysis gave him right for his own interpretation! As a researcher writes, "the creative result of the musician's work is not score sonorization at concerts, not artistic presentation of the same, but creation of a new concept of a piece already known, already recorded" (Khramov, 2022).

Clearly realizing that "freedom is a predicament of morality" (Khramov, 2024, 105), we must remind: Bakhtin's

¹⁰ Kirillova, L. 'Stalin's favourite pianist with a Gospel in hand: in memory of Maria Yudina'. *Pravmir*. Available at: [https://www.pravmir.ru/lyubimaya-pianistka-](https://www.pravmir.ru/lyubimaya-pianistka-stalina-s-evangeliiem-v-rukah-pamyati-marii-yudinoj/)

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opposition between the cognitive and the ethic originated from moral philosophy of Socrates' dialogues. His rhetorical competence was defined by a perfect mastery of the oratorical canon – a triunity of Ethos, Logos and Pathos. Inferiority of written speech, unlike oral expression, is in the fact that the composer's speech subjectified in scores preserves the importance of Logos only, whereas Ethos and Pathos are only potentially represented in it. This must probably be the reason why Glenn Gould who bravely undertakes actualization, in the process of musical performance, of his own Ethos and Pathos, is named a philosopher, "moreover, in a Socratic sense" (Khramov, 2024, 104).

It is significant that "resorting to masterpieces of piano music, taking a liberty to modify the author's will clearly denoted by signs, he must be sure that his concept will improve the piece, that at least its variant will not be worse. In this case only it can claim to be a creative product as creative work, in a simplest definition, is an activity aimed on the creation of a new, better being, in this definite case of a new, culture enriching concept of a piece of music. In other cases ... the new concept ... is a manifestation of willfulness" (Khramov, 2022).

The question whether and to which extent a listener of today is able to tell the difference between one and another, is to a great extent rhetorical. "Deep, homogenous, abstract insight characterizes

perception of those who study at the faculty of music, people for who man and his activities are placed in the center of the system" (Vershina, 2024, 65). Although we avoid speculations on the position of musical philosophy and musical aesthetics in training modern composers, musicologists, performers, music tutors, i.e., professional listeners, we shall only share our long observations of students mastering such disciplines as Russian Language and Speech Culture, Sociology, Culture Studies, Philosophy. Quickly and easily passing tests, which activity is zealously trained at comprehensive schools, these young people enter universities without abilities of thinking.

In a somewhat different way, the same idea was expressed by a professional *neurolinguist, Professor of Saint Petersburg State University Tatiana Chernigovskaya*: "Most people do not think at all. Thinking is a frightful labor ..., a strain of personality as a whole"¹¹. Expressing confidence that the thinking ability can be developed like any other, we must note that the role of music in the development of this ability is unprecedented because nothing can compare to nonverbal arts in the influence produced on the development of "the second part of the intellect" which Tatiana Chernigovskaya associates with *sensibility*¹². L. A. Rapatskaya emphasizes the requirement "to introduce in the curriculum at least one theological discipline which might become a basis for

¹¹ Tatiana Chernigovskaya: "I can see apocalyptic features everywhere, I cannot see any progress". Sobaka.ru. Available at: <https://www.sobaka.ru/krd/city/>

science/126840?ysclid=ml81fftvw657092938 (accessed: 02 February.2026)

¹² Ibid.

a future dialogue between the spiritual and secular knowledge, which dialogue is so necessary for education" (Rapatskaya, 2024, 20). From this viewpoint a performer-thinker acts as a listener's guide to the world of high culture, the culture of thinking as well. That said, the mutual search for truth might and must be carried out supported by the artistic freedom of each participant of dialogical communication, the freedom that "permits man to move along two paths, moral and immoral" (Khramov, 2024, 105).

Conclusion

Summarizing all the above we must emphasize the importance of the following. The only criterion for a performer aiming to reinterpret composer's legacy, has always been and still is (apart from the pure taste unimaginable without vast erudition) clear realization of the target contained in the new concept: whether it is interest on the part of the audience, or unconditional recognition of authorities in the given area, or material wealth, or satisfaction of ambitions, or formidable worship to good at the chosen field of endeavor.

In this last case, "motivated by an experience of a necessity to restore the unity of being, a creativity of the kind is implicitly oriented on an axiologically valid result whose dominants are moral bases and selfless service to the ideal" (Volkova, Zhukova, 2024a, 219). The high status of the sought service and special

value of all the participants making a dialogical triad may be mentioned on the grounds that "evangelic 'In the beginning was the Word' appears to be coordinate to the lines 'In the beginning was the Number', 'In the beginning was the Sound', 'In the beginning was the Music', 'In the beginning was the Gesture', 'In the beginning was the Emotion'" (Volkova, 2024b, 186).

The noted parallels manifestly show that "sound, much as emotion, are integral properties of musical speech exactly as intonation actualized in non-verbal discourse holds in storage this or that gesture" (Volkova, 2024b, 186), and the number holds this or that rhythm. Finally, the fact that "the Slavic Word shows its relation to both the Sound and ability to hear" (Volkova, 2024b, 186) permits to agree that the performer, the same way as the rhetor, is a personality "pretending to an answerable right to participate in persuasive speech" (Khabankova, 2016, 8) in accordance with the idea contained in this speech. "This approach emphasizes the need for systemic, interconnected thinking that fosters a comprehensive understanding and application of knowledge" (Piper et al., 2015, 99). This means "the rhetor's intentions to change actuality of the world around us or introduce something new in this world" (Khabankova, 2016, 10). Beyond a reasonable doubt, anyone wielding such power is not to be just a man of reason, but a man of thought!

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Volkova P. S.: conceptualization; methodology; writing – review & editing, data curation; methodology; investigation; validation; writing – original draft preparation

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CONTEMPORARY CONCEPTS OF ART EDUCATION

Original article

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An Interpretive Approach in the Multicultural Space of Music Education Pedagogy

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Abstract. The article analyzes some scientific positions related to the definition of the interpretation phenomenon and its essential anthropological characteristics. The individual's ability to take a personal view and interpret the accumulated wealth of world culture addressing private goals and values, acquires key significance in the modern multi-space of musical art and education. This involves the "acceptance" of a foreign culture and other artistic meanings, as well as the need and ability to transform them, creating new ones. Furthermore, the actualization of the creative interpretive-personal qualities of future musicians-educators, and the necessity of forming these qualities in the educational process of the higher education system, are increasing. Interpretation brings music pedagogy closer to philosophy and art history, serving as a universal method of human cognition, comprehension of socio-historical phenomena and works of art—a vast area of human spiritual and artistic activity. The subject of music education is likely to appear as a person who invariably interprets, deciphering the deep artistic meanings of art—not only of an individual author but also of national and historical segments of culture. There is a broad agreement among researchers that human communication with musical works can be attributed to as a "system of interacting, expanding semantic circles", therefore the interpretive approach acts as an important institutional mechanism in the intentness "from hypertextuality to intertextuality" as an attribute of the multicultural world and the educational principle of the *polyphony of cultures*.

Keywords: musical art and education, multicultural space, interpretive approach

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Интерпретационный подход в мультикультурном пространстве педагогики музыкального образования

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Резюме. В статье анализируются различные научные позиции определения феномена интерпретации, его сущностные антропологические характеристики. Способность личности рассматривать и интерпретировать сложившееся богатство мировой культуры через себя, свои цели и ценности приобретает ключевое значение в современном мульти-пространстве музыкального искусства и образования. И это не только "приятие" чужой культуры, иных художественных смыслов, но и потребность и умение их преобразовывать, созидая новые. В этом контексте возрастает актуализация творческих интерпретационно-личностных качеств будущих музыкантов-педагогов, необходимость формирования этих качеств в учебном процессе системы высшего образования. Интерпретация сближает музыкальную педагогику с философией и искусствознанием, являясь универсальным методом человеческого познания, осмысления общественно-исторических явлений и произведений искусства – обширную область духовной и художественной деятельности человека. Субъект музыкального образования предстает как человек, непременно интерпретирующий, расшифровывающий глубинные художественные значения искусства – не только отдельного автора, но и национального и исторического сегментов культуры. Есть все основания говорить о коммуникации человека с музыкальными произведениями как "системе взаимодействующих расширяющихся смысловых кругов", где интерпретационный подход выступает важным институциональным механизмом в интенции "от гипертекстуальности к интертекстуальности" как атрибуту мультикультурного мира и образовательного принципа "полифонии культур".

Ключевые слова: музыкальное искусство и образование, мультикультурное пространство, интерпретационный подход

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Introduction

The rapidly changing modern world imposes new requirements on the understanding of the very foundations of pedagogical activity, challenging established positions, concepts, approaches, and methods. The very process of obtaining knowledge and, in general, any information, is being radically transformed. Moreover, this applies not only to students but to all subjects of education, including teachers. Numerous dialectical dichotomies of professional training arise at different levels of the educational hierarchy. For example, on the one hand, there is the demand for highly specialized, top-class experts, and on the other, the importance of universal competencies is a current trend. The discreteness of the educational process contrasts with the need to establish broad interdisciplinary connections. The actualization of national attributes of pedagogical systems conflicts with the globalization of the world educational space... Such opposing initial methodological references could be continued indefinitely.

Undoubtedly, a certain *mixity*, and in some segments even chaos, or at least unsystematic nature, could not but cause the scientific community to search for effective educational tools for *orientation* in this space, peculiar *points of support*. In reality, this means understanding the strategic direction, revealing didactic *beacons* of humanitarian knowledge for a conventional teacher and their pupils to grasp onto. The paradigm of the *search for*

meaning is likely to have emerged as the central idea of many pedagogical works recently. In particular, it is expressed by A. D. Korol, noting that the most important problems of education are the loss of the integrity of knowledge, the loss of its meanings, and a decrease in motivation for cognition. The academic, reflecting on the monological nature of the educational process and the relay-like character of knowledge acquisition, characterizes it by a loss of subjectivity, alienation from the real world, and ignorance of the student's social experience.

On the other hand, a number of current publications reveal the strengthening tendency of a *dialogue of cultures* under the influence of globalization. A completely new concept for pedagogical resources appears—the *factor of uncertainty* – a methodological basis for implementing a transdisciplinary approach in music education. Furthermore focusing on the new educational reality is also occurring in European pedagogical science, where the research into effective models of interaction in conditions of uncertainty is also leading. As researchers S. Mlongo, K. Mbatha, B. Ramatsece, and R. Dlamini point out, considering the challenges of the digital transformation of education, "Despite the potential of digital learning to improve educational outcomes, there remains a significant gap between the theoretical benefits of digital integration and the practical realities faced by students, teachers, and institutions. Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted

approach that includes the development of inclusive policies, investment in infrastructure, and a commitment to continuous professional development for educators" (Zou et al., 2025, 5). As J. Korostenskiene notes in her study of the Lithuanian educational system, "We propose that, within the framework of educational philosophy, humanism may be perceived from the broad and the narrow perspectives... humanism is perceived here as the anthropocentric perspective on education, within which several schools of thought are subsumed: the humanistic paradigm in the narrow sense (hereinafter humanism), instrumental pragmatism, constructivism... postmodernism and care ethics" (Korostenskiene, 2022, 217).

As for more specific methodological tools that could be effective in this complex and contradictory world of humanitarian knowledge, the comparative method is most often mentioned, as well as the appeal to the phenomenon of the educational text in a broad sense, as a kind of coherent semantic structure, emphasizing the growing role of extra-textual information in the interaction of the main subjects of artistic or educational communication.

Many findings of research-active authors revealed that interpretive activity is a necessary condition for the assimilation of knowledge. However, we tend to believe that apparently considering the initially philosophical or art-historical *nature* of this concept, the significance of interpretation precisely as a pedagogical phenomenon is completely leveled, and the interpretive approach as a universal educational *key*

capable of opening the door to the modern world of culture, thoroughly coded with signs and encrypted with meanings, is overlooked.

Interpretation as an Anthropological Phenomenon

In pedagogical science, interpretation is defined as "the ability to view the accumulated wealth of culture through oneself, one's own goals, values..." (V. A. Slastenin, L. S. Podymova). The humanistic orientation and personality-centered technologies of modern professional education require the ability "not only to appropriate the world of objects and ideas, but also to produce them, transform them, and create new ones" from the teacher. This proposition is of paramount importance in understanding interpretation precisely as a pedagogical phenomenon. The demand for creative-constructive, interpretive qualities of future teachers is increasing, as well as the necessity of forming these qualities, both professional and spiritual-personal, in the educational process of the higher education system.

At the foundation of the interpretive approach lies the emphasis on the value-based, artistic content of education, the formation of humanistic moral orientations based on mastering the universal specificities of world culture as a result of the student's scientific-cognitive, spiritual-aesthetic, and educational-creative activity. In modern pedagogical science, as the authors intend to clarify, "the phenomenon of education is not exhausted by its cognitive and pedagogical components, but has deep hermeneutic

meanings, forming, educating the 'understander' and interpreter" (Mikeshina, 2002, 227). Undoubtedly, the center of research in modern education is the *Developing Person* (V. P. Zinchenko). "The affirmation of the anthropocentric paradigm in modern science determines the advancement of complex human research as the main direction of the development of humanitarian knowledge... Cultural and anthropological approaches, dominating and interacting in humanitarian research, orient pedagogical science and education towards the knowledge of universal and unchanging human essences, subjectivity, and the creative principle in the individual" (Gladkikh, 2009, 13) – writes Z. I. Gladkikh. In this context, researcher Annabella Fung, studying the phenomenon of holistic development of musicians, emphasizes that "Music draws on body, space, time and relationships to offer an experience of the sacred and through such peak musical experience it is possible to encounter the power of the I/Thou relationship" (Fung, 2022, 1). Developing this idea of the educational process integrity, researchers K. E. Ortiz-Ordoñez, D. C. Burbano-Gonzalez, and J. A. Suarez-Muñoz emphasize that "technology should serve human-centered educational goals, nurturing not only knowledge acquisition but also students' social and emotional development" (Ortiz-Ordoñez et al., 2022, 2).

Meanwhile, in recent years, a contradiction has intensified in pedagogical education between the strategic goals oriented towards

personal and spiritual values as a priority for student development, and the methods and means of implementing these goals that exist in the actual practice of the educational process, as reflected in the works of A. A. Verbitsky, L. Ts. Kagermazova, E. V. Karpova, N. V. Kozlova, N. V. Martishina, V. G. Razhnikov, and other scholars. If we talk about modern Russian music-pedagogical education, then, we tend to believe, it is still built largely on a knowledge-based foundation, and its personal-meaning and creative aspects are insufficiently taken into account, as noted by many pedagogical researchers (M. M. Berlyanchik, E. Ya. Liberman, L. A. Mikeshina, I. E. Molostvova, et al.).

The current research verifies the earlier indications of the weak, and not always practice-oriented, study of the mechanisms of cognition and transmission of the meanings and spiritual content of works of musical art. Innovative theories and concrete tools are needed, as a set of methods, means, and forms of organizing instruction, optimizing the music-pedagogical process in accordance with humanistically-oriented educational goals, within the framework of the personal-meaning paradigm. Thus, it is required to *reset* the correlation of all the components of the educational content. "What is considered merely accompanying elements in education–entry into culture, socialization, and humanization–is no less significant for society than the actual mastery of general and specialized knowledge", L. A. Mikeshina rightly notes (Mikeshina, 2002, 228). Let us add that this should be significant not only for society,

but first and foremost for the subject themselves. The priority processes identified by the scholar cannot be successfully implemented without actualizing interpretation as an anthropological, as well as a pedagogical phenomenon.

Interpretation as a Subject of Scientific-Pedagogical Research

Any research is usually launched by designating the subject and/or object that becomes the center of scientific or creative research, by clarifying the meanings of the terminology used, analyzing various approaches, concepts, etc. The meanings of many expressions and terms often have a contextual character and require additional adjustment, clarification, and often interpretation (i.e., elucidation, explanation), to which considerable importance should be attached, as we tend to believe. All this, of course, is also characteristic of research in the field of music education pedagogy as the pedagogy of art. This area is very specific both for the researcher themselves and for the consumer, user, addressee of such research—people engaged in various spheres of musical art pedagogy. Let us note several, in our opinion, the most characteristic features.

Firstly, this involves the unusually broad, to a certain extent, encyclopedic knowledge necessary for the professional activity of a musician-educator. Philosophy in all its diversity (ontology, ethics, aesthetics...), hermeneutics, cultural studies, sociology, semiotics, psychology, didactics, various types of art, performance, art history, musicology,

methodology, teaching methods—these are just the areas directly involved in the music-pedagogical profession. Each of these sciences, in turn, correlates with an even broader spectrum of not just knowledge, but personal meanings that determine the level and quality of the specialist's competencies. All this elevates this type of activity to a completely special place, which is noted by many scientists (E. B. Abdullin, A. A. Verbitsky, V. G. Razhnikov, G. M. Tsypin, A. I. Shcherbakova, et al.).

The *encyclopedism*, multifaceted nature, and multi-vector orientation of music education pedagogy as a completely special area of pedagogy determines a multitude of approaches in research. Let us note some of them that are relevant to our topic. For example, various aspects of the professional development of a music teacher are considered: the organization of pedagogical activity (A. A. Verbitsky, V. A. Slastenin, et al.), the value-meaning orientations of the student, the axiological approach to art (N. B. Berkhin, N. I. Kiyashchenko, B.M. Tselkovnikov, et al.), the development of musical thinking, the intellectual component of the music-pedagogical process (V. G. Razhnikov, K. Seashore, T. A. Kolysheva, et al.), music perception, mastering its expressive means (B. V. Asafiev, N. M. Garipova, L. A. Mazel, V. V. Medushevsky, M. K. Mikhailov, et al.), the psychological aspect of instrumental training (G. M. Kogan, G. M. Tsypin, et al.), the development of musical abilities of the individual (E. I. Ignatiev, V. I. Petrushin, B. M. Teplov,

D. N. Uskova), and musical-psychological anthropology (A. V. Toropova).

As a rule, the created teaching models are in line with general pedagogical theories developed at the end of the 20th century—developmental pedagogy (L. S. Vygotsky, L. V. Zankov, V. V. Davydov, D. B. Elkonin), cognitive learning (Ya. A. Ponomarev), and humane-personal education (V. Razhnikov, Sh. Amonashvili). It is on this basis that professiograms of a music teacher are created, components of their pedagogical mastery (M. M. Berlyanchik, A. V. Malinkovskaya, A. I. Nikolaeva, G. M. Tsy-pin, et al.) and spiritual-value orientations (L. S. Maykovskaya, B. M. Tselkovnikov, et al.) are identified, and professional requirements for graduates of music-pedagogical universities are determined (E. B. Abdullin, Yu. B. Aliev, L. G. Archazhnikova, et al.).

Despite the diversity of research in music education pedagogy as a special field of scientific-pedagogical knowledge, insufficient attention, in our opinion, is paid to the development of conceptual foundations for the professional training of specialists, research into issues that go beyond the educational process and lead the educational sphere into the modern socio-cultural space. In this regard, research proposing holistic, interdisciplinary research strategies acquires particular significance. As R. Angel-Alvarado, M. R. Wilhelmi, and O. Belletich point out, developing the ideas of design-based research, "Design-Based Research (DBR) is an interdisciplinary and holistic research approach that serves both

for theoretical construction and practical application, involving iterative relationships among theoretical bases and complex real-world situations" (Angel-Alvarado et al., 2019, 337). The well-known pedagogical researcher V. G. Razhnikov even speaks of the anthropological nature of obstacles in the pedagogy and psychology of art. The study of interpretation as a pedagogical phenomenon can largely fill this lacuna. The practical necessity for this is felt ever more strongly. Specialists in the field of musical performance analysis also attribute to the difficulty of transferring objective parameters of performance into the plane of subjective perception. Thus, A. Lerch and colleagues explain: "When examining phenomena that are complex and at times ambiguous - such as 'expressiveness' - it is imperative to fully define the scope of the associated terminology. Inconsistently used or poorly defined terms can obfuscate results making it more challenging to build on prior work or to propagate knowledge across disciplines" (Lerch et al., 2020, 35).

Interpretive activity in the music-pedagogical space is considered as "a method of cognizing musical art and reality in the context of the musician-educator profession, realizing the theoretical and practical mastery of spiritual and material objects of music-pedagogical activity based on a system of creative principles regulating this process" (Rumyantseva, 2008, 31).

It is indicative for us that pedagogical researchers from Russian provincial universities, where the professional level of graduates is noticeably declining, are

addressing this issue. These include, in particular, D. N. Uskova (Perm), Z. V. Rumyantseva (Kostroma), F. Kh. Valeeva (Chelyabinsk), I. E. Molostvova (Saransk), L. V. Vakhtel (Voronezh). We comprehend the phenomenon of interpretation in pedagogy as a vital and necessary connecting link in the effective integration of various positions and technologies designed to optimize the professional training of a future specialist. as much as possible.

The second feature of researching the music-pedagogical process lies in the extremely heterogeneous degree of development of problems, even those *lying on the surface*, and the inaccuracy of various kinds of formulations, terminology, etc. Let us explain this using the example of the current research. Such a fundamental problem as the interpretation of music is intensively developed, first and foremost, from the standpoint of performing activity. Recent findings reveal the psychological level of this phenomenon (*interpreting ability of the individual* by D. N. Uskova, *musical-psychological anthropology* by A. V. Toropova, *the person as a subject of interpretation* by A. N. Slavskaya). Finally, the thesis of the interpretive approach as a strategy for music-pedagogical education has been declared. This relevant and very valuable proposition for us still does not fill the pedagogical lacuna of training and educating future specialists with the necessary complex of personal qualities, professional knowledge, and skills. Qualities essential for effective interpretive activity, both in the professional vector, and as

an indispensable attribute of the successful socialization of a musician-educator.

The problem of interpreting works of musical art in general and in the educational process in particular, in our opinion, has additional difficulties. This is connected, firstly, with the existence of a wide variety of opinions about what music is, what musical language is. That is, the categorical concepts themselves are quite blurred, and consequently, the methodological foundations of students' interpretive activity. The contradictoriness, and often the opposition, of views and judgments of the most authoritative figures presents certain difficulties for aspiring musicians.

In this regard, we present here two different positions related to the debate about the measure and correlation of MUSIC and WORD in the music-pedagogical process. "The word can never fully explain the entire depth of music, but without it, it is impossible to even approach this most subtle sphere of cognition of feelings", believes V. A. Sukhomlinsky (Sukhomlinsky, 1973, 175). A somewhat different opinion is held by M. I. Roiterstein: "It is necessary to restore trust in music itself. We have ceased to trust it. We invariably duplicate every detail of it with words... But someone once said that music begins where words end" (Roiterstein, 1988, 63). These statements indicate that this problem, permeating almost the entire, first educational, and then professional activity of a musician-educator, is largely solved individually. That is, by the teacher themselves in the context of a specific pedagogical task.

Another aspect of the specificity of interpretive activity in the music-pedagogical process lies in the complex possibility of interpreting music in various sign systems—graphic, verbal, phonic. There are also very significant nuances here. And many musician-educators use these possibilities individually. It seems that this thesis does not require proof. It is known that there are teachers who orient the educational process towards performance demonstration or the demonstration of recordings of musical works, using the verbal component to a lesser extent. Other, very diverse combinations of these components are also possible, which, by the way, is one of the manifestations of the professional-personal style of a musician-educator.

The phenomenon of interpretation brings pedagogy closer to philosophy, being a universal method of human cognition, comprehension of historical phenomena and works of art—a vast area of human spiritual-creative activity. Artistic creativity, which, in our opinion, is the professional activity of a musician-educator, is always an object of attention for philosophical science in various aspects—worldview, cultural, ethical, aesthetic, sociological, hermeneutic, axiological. The philosophy of culture (M. Kagan), art (V. Solovyov), music (A. F. Losev), education (B. Gershunsky) express in the music-pedagogical process the subject of philosophical knowledge, absolutely necessary for the formation of the interpretive culture of the future specialist.

This interrelation is also outlined in pedagogical science. Indicative, for

example, in this regard is the direction of the movement towards truth in Plato (as interpreted by Heidegger): Shadows on the wall – Objects in the light of the fire – Real things in the sunlight outside the cave – Return to those who take shadows for reality, striving to lead them out of the cave. In this intention, especially in its fourth position, we see a clearly expressed educational component, the ethical essence of the purpose of pedagogy.

In our opinion, it is interpretation that is the tool for the *mutual pollination* (M. S. Kagan) of philosophy and pedagogy. A full-fledged interpretive activity of a music teacher is impossible without a philosophical understanding of a wide range of problems and concepts, without mastering the techniques of artistic cognition and thinking. The works of M. M. Bakhtin, A. F. Losev, V. S. Solovyov, and in recent decades—V. P. Zinchenko, M. S. Kagan, N. I. Kiyashchenko, M. K. Mamardashvili and others—acquire not only theoretical but also practical value for music education pedagogy as the pedagogy of art. At the same time, any knowledge included in the content of the professional and spiritual-moral formation of a musician-educator must, first of all, be conditioned by music itself and reflect its essential characteristics. "The person-to-person relationship, the direct communication of people, determines the character of the content of music" (Kagan, 1996, 14) – asserts M. S. Kagan. In modern life, in modern education, a specialist who knows and understands is in demand. According to T. B. Smyrnova and her colleagues, "The axiological core of music as its

semantic content provides translation and creation of values of musical art as values of the Universe to values of the internal world of the person" (Kagan, 1996, 14).

The Hermeneutic Essence of Interpretive Activity in the Pedagogical Process

What is the governing principle of interpretive activity from the standpoint of hermeneutics? The recoding of information from one sign system to another, is associated with the generation (increment) of meaning. In instrumental or vocal performance, this is, for example, a change in the sign form of embodying artistic content—a transition from graphics to acoustics. For the music-pedagogical process, a more substantial inclusion of additional components—communicative, verbal, artistic, and others—into the graphic-acoustic system is characteristic.

Defining the hermeneutic nature of creative knowledge, L. A. Mikeskina writes: "The subject of education appears as a person who invariably interprets, deciphers the deep meanings that stand behind the obvious meanings, reveals the level of meanings hidden behind the literal meanings. This activity of thinking in the process of education turns out to be no less significant than the usual accumulation of knowledge, which it significantly complements" (Mikeskina, 2002, 238). In this case, knowledge itself appears before the student not in the form of a fact, a point with a once-and-for-all established meaning, but in the form of a certain concept, theory, and often even in the form of a hypothesis, which is even

more characteristic of the world of art. Then the acquired knowledge becomes merely a methodological basis for building one's own positions, ideas, research methods, performance interpretations, etc.

Thus, it can be confidently asserted that the process of forming the interpretive qualities of a future teacher is directly related to the development of his personality, his relationship with the surrounding world in the hermeneutic paradigm, where the subject *not only perceives and transmits, but rather interprets various texts and phenomena*.

In this regard, methodological approaches that form the basis of scientific research play a significant role. For us, such a *point of support is the anthropological approach to art and the person of art* by V. G. Razhnikov, the meaning of which lies in the perception, study, and education of the whole person as an organic whole *in his inseparable relations with the world*. It is in this context that the thesis should be understood that "art relates to science as a creation and a mechanism of creation. Creation is initially organically holistic, while its mechanisms are partial and can only create an additive, inorganic wholeness" (Razhnikov, 2007, 12). We agree with the position of V. G. Razhnikov, who noted that pedagogical research in the field of art can be "objective and scientific only in terms of external social status. In terms of content, however, they must be cognate with art, conformable to it. They must reflect the anthropological needs of a person, i.e., the need for self-identification of the individual, for

changing oneself as a species under the influence of art" (Razhnikov, 2007, 12).

Investigating the nature of interpretive activity in the music-pedagogical process, one should note its similarity to any other secondary artistic creativity. Interpretation is born in the process of empathic *immersion* of the personality into the intonational-energetic flow of music, representing the spiritual world of the composer. "A truly talented musician performing Beethoven's music seems to transform into Beethoven at that moment. If he does not become so attuned to this music as if he had created it himself, it will be difficult for him to captivate his listeners with it", noted D. B. Kabalevsky (Kabalevsky, 1987, 9).

The intensive processes of humanization of modern education have demanded the inclusion of new methodological guidelines in the circle of philosophical and pedagogical research on artistic creativity, and first of all, the development of theories for orienting the individual in the world of music-pedagogical values: "Modern philosophical, scientific, and artistic thought persistently overcomes 'self-confident anthropocentrism,' resolutely rejects the absolutization of rational-logical ways of understanding the world in favor of a subjective-personal way of comprehending it", writes B. M. Tselkovnikov (Tselkovnikov, 1998, 15). In the same vein, M. S. Kagan states: "In the artistic exploration of reality and in the content of art, the subjective, evaluative, ideological-expressive principle plays an essential role. Merging into one indivisible spiritual whole with

the cognitive principle, it forms the specific, only-by-art-obtained artistic" (Kagan, 1996, 121).

Defining the essence and direction of the Russian philosophy of music education, E. B. Abdullin and E. V. Nikolaeva assert: "Each epoch is a dialogue of worldviews, and, naturally, is characterized by the coexistence of various philosophical positions regarding the purpose of music education, its meaning, content, and specifics" (Abdullin, Nikolaeva, 2004, 44). At the same time, we note a clearly expressed tendency in the modern philosophy of pedagogical education towards the study of the internal state of the personality, the art of *fashioning oneself* (M. K. Mamardashvili), towards the idea that *upbringing is nothing other than the process of forming a system of values* (M. S. Kagan). Therefore, similar, closely related concepts often act as the semantic dominant of various positions.

For example, "the result of spiritual-personal interaction with art, first of all, should be 'emotional-sensory acceptance,' 'creative re-creation,'" believes B. M. Tselkovnikov (Tselkovnikov, 1998, 23). V. V. Zenkovsky holds a close position: "The ontological meaning of cognition consists in drawing closer to the object of cognition, in order to transition into love for it..., which connects the world into a living whole" (Zenzovsky, 1997, 71). Speaking about the prospects for the professional training of music teachers, N. I. Kiyashchenko declares: "A modern musician-educator cannot have standard approaches in presenting musical material, common to all students. He must be ready for comprehensive

dialogical communication—with all the sounds of the world, with each student as a unique personality, in whom such an abundance of strings must be hidden and be able to resonate with the spiritual makeup of each student, such as humanity has not yet invented even with the help of computer technologies" (Kiyashchenko, 2002, 105).

The authors believe the artistic-interpretive approach in music education, developed by I. E. Molostvova, uniting all musical disciplines, where interpretation appears not as a separate type of instruction, is of considerable interest. The student's personality and the work of musical art, which are at the center of I. E. Molostvova's concept, actualize the communicative context of musical cognition. The researcher defines the organization and structure of the artistic-interpretive environment as conditions for implementing the artistic-interpretive approach in the music-educational process. Nevertheless, this approach practically does not take into account the performance component of interpretation (and it mainly refers to its verbal component), does not consider the qualities necessary for a future teacher to realize full-fledged interpretive activity, and insufficiently reflects the creative side of the interpretation process as an increment of artistic meanings.

There is a broad agreement among researchers related to various aspects of actualizing the creative component of the educational process, the holding of conferences where this problem is given close attention, testify to the objective trends in the development of modern

pedagogical science in this direction. Speaking about the existing intensive processes of modernization of education, the well-known Russian pedagogical scientist A. A. Verbitsky speaks out about the problems on the path to a new type of teaching and upbringing based on *the competence approach*. He states that most professional competencies cannot be formed by means of traditional instruction.

Interpretation as a Didactic Tool

The qualities that characterize the professional success of a specialist are "the ability and capacity to learn, independently obtain information, adapt to new situations, pose problems and make decisions, work in a team, be responsible for the quality of one's work, have the will to succeed, be competent in the sphere of civic-social activity, in everyday and cultural-leisure activities, and be tolerant of intercultural differences" (Verbitsky, 2007, 7). Developing this idea about the importance of *feedback* in the educational process, researchers Mao Zhao, Siti Mistima Maat, Norzaini Azman, and En Zheng emphasize the importance of considering emotional factors: "The results of this study inspire educators to pay more attention to the unique role of affective factors while advocating the importance of teacher support in enhancing the learning performance of university students. More emotional and affective positive feedback should be given to students' learning activities, and more affective teaching strategies should be applied to specific teaching activities" (Zhao et al., 2022, 13). In this context, the position of T. Das Gupta is indicative,

pointing to the need to transform the educational learning environment towards the development of greater subjectivity and personal authenticity of students: "Key qualities of an empowered music student include: Having a voice and feeling they have choices; Creating and not just consuming or recreating music; The opportunity to connect and collaborate with peers; Being able to ask questions" (Das Gupta, 2025, 5).

These qualities, according to A. A. Verbitsky, are effectively implemented in the theory and technology of contextual learning, where, unlike traditional learning that draws its content from scientific knowledge, two sources for selecting content exist. "Alongside the didactically transformed content of the relevant scientific disciplines, another source is added—future professional activity. It is presented in the form of a model of the specialist's activity, a description of the system of his main functions, problems, and tasks. Orientation towards them allows to design complexes of subject-specific, social, and personal competencies to be developed in the process of education" (Verbitsky, 2007, 7).

In our opinion, this approach has undoubted practical value, as shown by its recent implementation in the pedagogical process of music education. There is every reason to consider contextual learning as a kind of *an open book*, suggesting constant updating and supplementation in accordance with the realities of the modern educational process.

A. A. Verbitsky notes that the conventional unit of work for the

teacher and student in contextual learning is the *situation* in all its subject-related and social multi-significance and contradictoriness; it is a kind of *semantic field* in which *semantic interaction* occurs. The scientist defines a *situation* as a system of external and internal conditions that determine the activity of participants in the pedagogical process. Context and situation, in his opinion, are connected in such a way that the situation includes both external conditions, the acting subject themselves and other people with whom they are in relationships of communication and interpersonal interaction. In our opinion, there is every reason to speak also about the inclusion of entire cultural phenomena in these relationships. In that case, in the interpretive approach, the situation, from the point of view of the pedagogical process, is not just a *semantic interacting field*, but a *system of interacting, expanding semantic circles*.

The current research verifies the actualization of students' interpretive qualities as an effective method of forming their professional competence. It is precisely the inclusion of interpretation as the dominant condition of both educational and professional activity that allows overcoming the main contradiction of higher education, that is the mastery of professional activity by a specialist is ensured within the framework and by means of a qualitatively different activity—educational activity.

Furthermore, the demand for interpretation in the educational process precisely as a pedagogical phenomenon does not negate traditional approaches in teaching, but allows solving the same

educational tasks, only at a higher level. In particular, any interpretive activity has a clearly expressed dialogical, communicative orientation, and the problem of interpersonal interaction and dialogical communication of the subjects of the educational process will be solved at the level of artistic creativity.

Note that the question of the need to develop interpretive qualities in students, even the corresponding change in curricula in educational institutions, was raised repeatedly in Soviet times. As an example, let us give an excerpt from G. Taraeva's article "Interpretation as an Academic Discipline in Higher Education": "And if we look into an even more distant future, outline a curriculum... for the year 2001? It does not have such disciplines as harmony, polyphony, analysis, solfeggio. It has musical improvisation, history of musical styles, theory and methodology of analysis, history of the instrument and performance, interpretation of musical works. The main goal—the education of an independently thinking and consciously acting artist—runs like a thread through the entire cycle and culminates in the course 'interpretation of musical works'" (Taraeva, 1982, 64). The article was written in 1982 in the genre of a musical-educational forecast. The beginning of the 21st century was felt at that time as a distant future. But has much changed since then? Definitely, yes. Education, including music education, is increasingly viewed not as a process, result, or system associated with the assimilation or transmission of knowledge, but as a phenomenon of culture (V. L. Benin, I. E. Vidt, N. B. Krylova), which is an "essential

quality of any form of activity based on a system of generally accepted values, creative models, and norms of life activity" (Anthropological..., 2005, 63).

Many pedagogical scientists draw attention to the relevance of including various levels of the cultural-hermeneutic component in the didactic content of the educational process. "Interpretation requires from the student maximum concentration of deep personal structures", points out L. V. Vakhtel (Vakhtel, 2002, 36).

In the concept of M. M. Berlyanchik's *professiogram of a musician-educator thinking, technology, creativity*, it is emphasized that only the presence of these qualities in the teacher themselves generates motivation for their formation in students.

A. N. Slavskaya's subject approach directly determines the art of interpretation by the level of mastery achieved by the individual: "The ability to interpret... should be an important professional quality of teachers" (Slavskaya, 2002, 104).

In his textological approach to the professional training of music teachers, B. D. Kritsky calls for "ensuring a higher stage of generalization and integration of educational processes, oriented towards the modern level of cultural development" (Kritsky, 2000, 4).

In this aspect, the importance attached to pedagogical (educational-artistic) interpretation in the professional activity of a music teacher is of particular value to us (B. D. Kritsky, A. V. Malinkovskaya, et al.). In such a concept, pedagogical and performance interpretation (verbal and acoustic) are so strongly synthesized that they form a fairly integral unified form.

The search for meaning, the semantic constant, becomes that initial construct from which all subsequent interpretive activity of the student-musician grows. And the pedagogical (educational-creative) process rises to a scientific-artistic level.

Nevertheless, in modern music-pedagogical education, a rather negative picture in this regard is emerging, noted by many researchers. For example, F. Kh. Valeeva states that there is insufficient attention "to the formation of the semantic component in students' performance interpretations. The complex of taught musical disciplines in musical educational institutions does not fully solve the problem of forming a musician capable of creating convincing performance interpretations. The narrowly grammatical, narrowly technical orientation of musicians' training does not allow penetrating the depths of the musical text, the structures of a meaningful order" (Valeeva, 2008, 24).

The well-known musician-educator M. M. Berlyanchik also states: "Modern performing art is distinguished by interpretive tendencies, which, however, are still little reflected in music pedagogy" (Berlyanchik, 2000, 28). Even in scientific-theoretical works directly related to the music-pedagogical process, the problems of interpretive creativity are also studied, to a greater extent, from the standpoint of performance training-intonation-tactile techniques (A. V. Malinkovskaya), sound quality (M. M. Berlyanchik), stylistic adequacy of performance (A. I. Nikolaeva).

Despite the significant demand in the practical educational process for innovative interpretive technologies, the authors believe that simply teaching a future teacher to interpret music is as impossible as, for example, it is impossible to teach someone to love and feel. The task of the musician-educator here is fundamentally different-to create conditions and motivation for their pupil to realize the personally valuable meaning of a special relationship with a musical work, requiring intellectual and moral effort, involvement, listening intently, peering into the spiritual-energetic sphere of the composer, the need for constant enrichment and self-improvement as a creator.

This could be, for example, the use of a metaphor as a local didactic tool in organizing an effective dialogue between the subjects of musical-educational discourse, formed under conditions of intercultural interaction. Or an appeal to the theory of affects and musical rhetoric in interpretations of the intonational-figurative characteristics of a performed musical work. This toolkit is diverse and diversified.

In music education, the words of S. I. Hessen are particularly relevant: "any problem cannot be presented in the form of ready-made truths, but must be 'discovered' anew each time, unfolding as 'research conducted before one's eyes'" (Ermolenkina, Ito, 2025, 5). The phenomenon of interpretation is capable of transforming any cognitive activity, such as reading a book, into a truly creative process, where the birth of a new meaning, new productivity, besides

the reproductive, information-relay beginning, is necessarily present.

Interpretation of a Musical Work as a Text of Culture

A person expresses their attitude to the world in activity, objectified in various sign systems, which can be defined as a multitude of texts, in the broad sense of the word. The study of various aspects of textual culture acquired extraordinary intensity at the end of the 20th century in various fields of science—semiotics, linguistics, hermeneutics, cultural studies, and information theory. "The world of culture has the structure of a text... Text is the symbolization of culture. An individual text possesses integrity and self-sufficiency for the world of culture" (V. V. Malikov). Text is considered as a set of significant elements representing reality in a communicatively directed form (A. A. Brudny, Yu. M. Lotman, B. M. Uspensky). The functions of text in culture are also analyzed—communicative, cumulative, adaptive, directive, regulatory, productive. Common features of text and culture are defined, such as orientation towards extra-linguistic reality, dialogicality, discreteness, polysemy, creativity, sign character, historicity, normativity, etc.

Thus, for example, in the educational process of an instrumental class, the graphic notation of a musical work is a projection of the individual authorial style and further—of the historical-stylistic Text of Culture, which elevates the relationship with the musical score to the level of methodological analysis and artistic creativity. Such an attitude is in

demand today in all spheres of music education, not only in the performance training of a future specialist. Apart from theoretical scientific research in this context, this sphere of artistic creativity is constantly of interest to performing musicians and practicing teachers, which we will discuss further in the relevant sections of our study. Let us note once again the universality of the phenomenon of interpreting the Text, capable of being the basis for both large-scale philosophical research and the creation of didactic and methodological support for corresponding educational programs.

From these positions, V. V. Bartel's philological concept can be designated as the path from hypertextuality, where each text refers to other texts, to the "single intertext of human culture" (Bartel, 2007, 22). Presenting the world of culture from an information-semiotic point of view, V. V. Bartel speaks of its three main aspects: the world of artifacts, the world of meanings, and the world of signs, which are interconnected. "Phenomena of culture include any artifacts that carry meanings, in other words, act as signs possessing meanings" (Bartel, 2007, 23). According to the scholar, intertextuality is not only a special way of organizing artistic texts (dialogicality), but also the designation of a specific method of artistic thinking, characterizing the modern cultural situation as an open pluralistic, multilingual world (dialogue of cultures). In our opinion, V. V. Bartel's concept, although oriented towards teaching literature in school, can also be in demand in the pedagogical process of music education. After all, interpretation is

always individual; it is based on personal meaning, albeit mediated by another and addressed to another. In this, we see the manifestation of its intertextuality.

The idea of the intentness of interpretation from hypertextuality to intertextuality needs, in our opinion, additional methodological tools, namely, the full use of the contextual approach in education. Only then will interdisciplinary cross-semantic connections *work*, only then can we speak about the embodiment of the idea of the Polyphony of Cultures (A. Schnittke), the automatic inclusion of unconscious and anonymous quotes (R. Barthes, J. Kristeva, M. Yampolsky), only then will the educational process become genuine interpretive creativity.

The concepts considered are extraordinarily in demand and relevant for substantiating innovative pedagogical technologies designed to significantly improve the quality of specialist training in the higher education system. In this regard, the theory of B. D. Kritsky is very close to us, as he identifies a special area of texts, the integrity of which he defines as an *educational metatext*. The content of the educational metatext is determined by the goals and objectives of training a specialist in music-pedagogical education. The structure of the metatext includes specific educational texts, which include pedagogical concepts, academic subjects, and their methodological and program support.

Professor B. D. Kritsky puts forward a textonomic concept, based on the relationship *text and subject-interpretation of the educational text by the subject*. The culture of interpretation is

treated in this concept within the category of *educational metatext* as the student's interpretation of the educational material in its integrity and the dynamics of historical development, conditioned by the artistic context of the era. By essentially defining the educational material of various disciplines by the concept of *educational metatext*, B. D. Kritsky investigates the very process of interpreting educational texts in the theory and practice of training music teachers. For the scholar, the culture of interpretation is the activity of the subject (student) mastering the educational metatext—the foundation of the professional training of a musician-educator. In contrast to B. D. Kritsky's theory, we speak of interpretive culture as an integrative professional-personal quality, and the interpretive approach as necessary elements of the professional level and successful socialization of a future specialist.

According to B. D. Kritsky's textonomic concept, the educational metatext of university training for a music teacher is a content-integrity structure conditioned by the interaction of scientific-pedagogical and artistic-pedagogical texts. The former texts are addressed to non-artistic areas of knowledge. The subject of the latter is art and the ways of its mastery. These also include musical compositions (artistic-musical texts). The scholar also defines profile subtexts that correspond to preparation for one or another type of professional-pedagogical activity—vocal, instrumental, conducting-choral, etc. Thus, the musical score of a work is a profile subtext of the educational metatext.

It makes sense to examine it in the semantic, hermeneutic, didactic, and cultural-historical facets of analysis. The semantic facet of studying the musical score is conditioned by its sign nature, the multiplicity, and polysemy of meanings of most symbols included in its structure. The hermeneutic facet allows analyzing the nature and functionality of working with the musical score. The didactic facet identifies optimal technologies for solving the tasks set by the educational process, and for students mastering certain abilities and skills in the researched context. The cultural-historical facet of studying the musical score characterizes the specific socio-historical conditions of the origin and existence of the recording of a musical work as an attempt to permanently fix its being.

Without exaggeration, it can be said that interpretation permeates literally the entire sphere of music education, exerting a decisive influence on the development of the personality, both professionally and spiritually-personally. At the same time, the processuality of interpretation cannot be viewed solely in the horizontal plane of the stage-by-stage alternation of various structural components. A more complex determination is present here, involving both internal subjective processes and external objective factors. The correlation in the student's interpretive creativity of analysis, reflection, and imagination; feeling, emotions, stylistic features of the era, the author, and the student's own individuality; the objective and the subjective—all this remains a debatable topic for many studies in pedagogical

science. For example, N.N. Telysheva asserts: "Analysis acts as a specific link... in art history research, while interpretation involves moments of selectivity, self-expression, and evaluation... Analysis is a necessary condition for the scientific nature of the interpretation of any artistic work (phenomenon). The comprehension of meaning must necessarily be demonstrative" (Telysheva, 2009, 172).

Interpretive activity intensively develops students' thinking abilities, as noted, in particular, by E.V. Chebotkevich: "The interpretation of music, the comprehension and performative revelation of its figurative-poetic content is one of the effective ways of forming and crystallizing the professional intellect of a musician" (Chebotkevich, 2007, 80).

On the other hand, the importance of imagination as a unique generator of interpretive processes is emphasized. Albert Einstein believed that imagination is more valuable than knowledge, for knowledge is limited, while imagination can embrace the entire world. The role of the teacher as a senior mentor here lies in skillfully directing and combining the *logical* and *associative*, *scientific* and *poetic*, *discursive* and *intuitive*, *rational* and *emotional*. Such a combination requires a special method of comprehension—the interpretive approach. This position finds confirmation in modern research on humanistic pedagogy. Thus, F. Verneert and colleagues, studying pedagogical strategies in "The Ostend Street Orchestra" project, conclude that abandoning unified procedures and the only *correct* musical parameters has a liberating effect: "Giving up the idea that you have to conform to

certain musical rules creates an explosion of energy. It puts humanity back into the music. Music makes encounters possible, without prejudice" (Verneert et al., 2024, 168). As B. Winarko and N. Budiwati point out, studying practices oriented towards personal development, the transformation of the teacher's professional role is a key condition for success: "Observations showed a clear shift in the role of teachers from authoritative figures to facilitators who guide students through inquiry-based learning and personal development. Rather than dictating the flow of lessons, teachers acted as mentors, encouraging students to explore ideas independently, ask critical questions, and reflect on their experiences" (Winarko, Budiwati, 2023, 264-265). H. Chung comes to similar conclusions in her study of teacher motivation, emphasizing that understanding students' personal and academic needs is fundamental for pedagogical development: "'Students as the Major Driving Force... Turning Students' ESL Needs into Teachers' Motivation... Students' Satisfaction' are the fundamental superordinate themes that determine a teacher's desire for development" (Chung, 2022, 36). In the same context, Maria Heimonen develops the idea of pedagogical leadership, emphasizing that "Music educators would act as mentors, mentoring parents and helping the children to learn from all of their experiences... The wisdom required of a teacher can be compared to the 'iudicium' of judges based on a holistic knowledge of law and wisdom about people, life and the world" (Heimonen,

2012, 76). R. Cremata holds the same opinion, developing the idea of pedagogical leadership in modern music education, and points to the key competence of the modern teacher-facilitator: "regulate their level of control and intervention depending on contexts, but all encouraged their students to be agents of their learning" (Cremata, 2017, 77).

The second important point is the creation in the educational process of an atmosphere that stimulates such an essential quality of the future professional's cognitive activity as dialogicality—the "spiritual-moral instrument" of the individual's interaction with the world (M. M. Bakhtin). Dialogue in Bakhtin's concept is not so much an exchange of information as a turning towards each other at a higher-spiritual, energetic-level. A musical work, like any work of another art, is capable of modeling the complex inner spiritual world of a person, thereby determining the dialogical structure of the student's relationship with the composition they are performing or perceiving. This *orientation towards the other*, this communicative focus, is key for the pedagogy of art.

The internal reserves and high potential of dialogue in the system of spiritual-value orientations of music-pedagogical education are revealed in the works of V. S. Bibler, N. I. Kiyashchenko, B. M. Tselkovnikov, V. I. Stachinsky, and others. The dialogical nature of art, the communicative aspects of artistic creativity, and musical perception were touched upon in their works by B. V. Asafiev, M. Sh. Bonfeld, M. S. Kagan,

V. V. Medushevsky, V. N. Kholopova, B. L. Yavorsky, and other musicologists. The pedagogical principles and functions of communication related to the activity of a music teacher (E. B. Abdullin, Yu. B. Aliev, L. G. Archazhnikova, O. A. Apraksina, L. A. Rapatskaya), and the instrumental and performance training of future specialists (A. V. Malinkovskaya, A. I. Nikolaeva, G. M. Tsypin) have been substantiated.

The problem of *understanding the other*, underlying M. Bakhtin's theory, allowed Man to "look at himself through the eyes of another, to catch reflections of his own life in the consciousness of other people" (Bakhtin, 1986, 88), and later found reflection in V. S. Bibler's concept of the *multifacetedness of cultures*. These models are extremely in demand in modern pedagogical science. At the same time, dialogical technologies are connected not only with the communicative side of organizing the educational process, but also in the vector of person-centered learning.

The numerous dialogical theories of M. Bakhtin's followers appear in our understanding as paradigmatic circles of the birth of new meanings, a kind of *interpreters of interpretation*. This gives us grounds to assert, as a methodological basis for the content of music-pedagogical education, *the phenomenon of meta-dialogicality*. We understand this phenomenon as a multi-level intersubjective interaction that generates a continuous interpretation of musical texts in various sign systems, conditioned by the reflection in individual intonation of the experience of an empathic personality

as a special property of musical consciousness.

The above-mentioned features are of great importance for understanding the role of interpretive culture in the system of music-pedagogical communication. In this regard, we note the recent appearance of terms defining various aspects of interpretation as a musical-pedagogical phenomenon, in particular, *Culture-Creating Person* (I. E. Molostvova) and *moral cultural assimilation* (E. A. Bodina).

In scientific works of general pedagogy and music education pedagogy, the problems of musical upbringing, music perception, and *cultural assimilation* (according to E. A. Bodina's terminology) are most often actualized. All this is undoubtedly very important. Nevertheless, the *culture-creating* component of the practical music-pedagogical process remains insufficiently actualized. The study of interpretive activity as a pedagogical phenomenon, in our opinion, will continue the intention-*cultural perception – cultural assimilation – towards its logical and important completion – culture-creation (kulturosozidanie)*, a methodological principle extremely necessary not only in performance, but to no lesser extent in the pedagogy of music education as the pedagogy of art. Let us recall the wonderful words of K. S. Stanislavsky: "Art, creativity-is not a 'game,' not 'artificiality,' and not 'virtuosity of technique,' but a creative process of spiritual and physical nature" (Stanislavsky, 1938, 140).

We will designate interpretive culture as a quality that determines various aspects of secondary artistic creativity as *interpretive culture-creation* (*interpretatsionnoe kulturosozidanie*), in contrast to the term proposed by E. A. Bodina, which has a predominantly ethical intent and presupposes "assimilation to those creative achievements of humanity that elevate the personality, give it new strength for development and improvement" (Bodina, 2004, 44). The obligatory bottom-up orientation of moral cultural assimilation has more complex determining vectors in interpretive culture-creation.

Conclusion

While giving due credit to the developed theory of assimilation, intended primarily for the upbringing and socialization of the individual, the current research emphasizes the main difference—*the outcome of interpretive culture-creation is the birth of new meaning, manifested in all structural components of the professional activity of a musician-educator*. The formation of interpretive culture in the educational process is connected, first of all, not with the development of performance skills, as it might seem at first sight, although this is also very important, but with the formation of the student's spiritual world, their need for interaction with the surrounding world through works of musical art. In this context, the author rightly asserts that "it is precisely as a result of critical reflection and categorical evaluation of appropriated musical values that the student's value-based worldview is formed, characterized by spiritual and moral transformation of

the personality and manifested through the ability to make judgments, the strengthening of professional self-awareness, and the affirmation of one's unique "Self" in the world of musical art" (Shherbakova, 2025, 15).

Thus we tend to believe that the interpretive approach in modern Russian music education fixes the sociocultural dominant as a key pedagogical paradigm, allowing to level out the negative manifestations of globalization and digitalization while stimulating the personal principle and social demand. We are impressed by Professor L. A. Rapatskaya's expression *transfiguration* (*preobrazhenie*) regarding Russian music-pedagogical education. It is more than appropriate in this context, for it reflects the very essence of the methodological transformation. The concepts of *innovation*, *modernization*, etc., are, to a certain extent, merely external markers of the educational process. Indeed, the traditions of Russian pedagogy have always been precisely the spiritual-moral, creative principle and the personal approach.

The anthropological challenges of a contradictory global world put forward the creative potential of the individual in all spheres of life as the main educational resource. The universal character of creativity as a *form of being* allows us to outline its correlation in the educational paradigm in a more expanded form—as a problem of developing the very subject of creativity in the categories of multiculturalism: as a human ability and personality quality; as a theoretical-methodological basis for constructing

a music-educational process for developing a multicultural personality; as a scientifically grounded foundation for the comparative study of the music of the peoples of the world in the space of academic lessons; as an approach to the methodological support of multicultural music education. As B. Thornhill-Miller and his colleagues point out, developing a dynamic model of four basic 21st-century skills ("4Cs": creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration), "One very important issue for understanding the 4Cs and their educational implementation that can be simultaneously a help and a hindrance for teaching them—and also a challenge when assessing them – is their multidimensionality and

interrelatedness... the 4Cs are not entirely separate entities but instead... should be seen as four interlinked basic 'elements' for future-oriented education... As a result, it ranges from impossible to suboptimal to teach (or teach towards) one of the 4Cs without involving one or more of the others" (Thornhill-Miller et al., 2023, 22).

Thus, the anthropocentric paradigm of modern humanitarian knowledge defines the interpretive approach in the pedagogy of music education as an integration of various dialogical-communicative subject relations, based on the dialectical interaction of the established algorithm of professional training and the creative personality of the student in the process of their socialization in the cultural-educational space of higher education.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Original article

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The Art of Piano Performance and Distance Technologies in the Training of Students of the People's Republic of China as a Problem of Contemporary Art Studies

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Abstract. Distance learning technologies that enable the management of music university students' learning processes by using the internet, videoconferencing, and LMS platforms are being actively introduced worldwide. This issue is particularly significant in the context of teaching students in the People's Republic of China, who have unique culturally conditioned ways of perceiving and mastering musical material. The authors present the results of a study on the methodology to embed distance learning technologies into training piano students in China, based on the active use of contemporary music and computer technologies in teaching stage piano performance. The authors examine specialized software introduced and used in Chinese piano classrooms. The paper discusses methodological approaches to organizing musical and creative events by using mobile applications, video conferencing systems, instant messengers, etc. The authors describe in detail their own methodology including: 1) synchronous lessons via video conferencing platforms using multichannel sound and a viewing angle of the keyboard and the performer's hands; 2) asynchronous work with recorded video fragments for a detailed analysis of the performance; 3) the use of specialized software (e.g., PiaScore, Simply Piano) to develop sight-reading skills; 4) elements of music information systems that ensure an effective educational process in a distance learning format; 5) the description of contemporary music and computer technologies that ensure a high-quality and effective professionally oriented educational process. The authors analyse problems that teachers may encounter when introducing innovative technologies and give recommendations for solving them. The authors conclude that it is vital to develop a reliable IT support system for music universities to overcome the significant digital divide between students and teachers. The paper may be useful to musicologists and art historians working on the development of a transdisciplinary approach to the study of musical phenomena, as well as to educators working in distance and blended learning contexts.

Keywords: art history, piano performance, piano pedagogy, distance learning technologies, People's Republic of China, Chinese piano students, music computer technologies (MCT), digitalization of education

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Искусство исполнительского мастерства на фортепиано и дистанционные технологии в процессе подготовки студентов китайской народной республики как проблема современного искусствознания

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Резюме. Дистанционные образовательные технологии, которые позволяют осуществлять управление процессом обучения студентов музыкальных вузов, используя Интернет, видеосвязь, LMS-платформ, активно внедряются во всём мире. Особую значимость эта проблема приобретает в контексте обучения студентов Китайской Народной Республики, для которых характерны свои культурно-обусловленные особенности восприятия и освоения музыкального материала. Авторы статьи излагают результаты исследования по разработке методологии включения дистанционных технологий в процесс подготовки студентов-пианистов КНР, основанной на применении современных музыкально-компьютерных технологий, активно используемых в обучении искусству исполнительского мастерства на фортепиано. Рассмотрен ряд специализированных программ, представленных и применяемых в китайской аудитории; рассмотрены методические подходы к организации музыкально-творческих мероприятий с использованием мобильных приложений, систем видео-конференц-связи, мессенджеров и др. Подробно раскрывается авторская методика, включающая: 1) синхронные занятия через платформы видеосвязи с использованием многоканального звука и углом обзора клавиатуры и рук исполнителя; 2) асинхронную работу с записанными видеофрагментами для детального анализа исполнения; 3) использование специализированного программного обеспечения (например, *PiaScore*, *Simply Piano*) для развития навыков чтения с листа; 4) элементы музыкально-информационных систем, обеспечивающие эффективный образовательный процесс обучения в дистанционном формате; 5) описание современных музыкально-компьютерных технологий, обеспечивающих качественный и эффективный профессионально-направленный образовательный процесс. Проанализированы проблемы, с которыми могут столкнуться преподаватели при внедрении инновационных технологий, и рекомендации, способствующие их решению. Был сделан вывод о необходимости создания надежной системы IT-поддержки музыкальных вузов для преодоления значимого по уровню цифрового разрыва между студентами и преподавателями. Материалы статьи могут быть полезны музыковедам и искусствоведам, занимающимся разработкой проблематики становления и развития трансдисциплинарного подхода к изучению музыкальных явлений, а также преподавателям, работающим в системе дистанционного и смешанного образования.

Ключевые слова: искусствознание, искусство исполнительского мастерства на фортепиано, фортепианная педагогика, дистанционные технологии, Китайская Народная Республика, китайские студенты-пианисты, музыкально-компьютерные технологии (МКТ), цифровизация образования

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Introduction

The current stage of societal development is characterized by the penetration of digital technologies into all fields of human activity. This is reflected in various areas of musical art and contemporary music education. The traditional model, which emphasizes individualized learning, is facing global challenges. These include the growing demand for access to high quality education, as well as the need to meet the cognitive patterns and expectations of Generation Z, who have developed a culture of clip-based thinking. In such circumstances, a redesign of the educational process is long overdue. The teaching process should be divided into synchronous (online classes) and asynchronous (independent work with recorded materials and applications), which requires the creation of new workflows. The global transition to distance learning formats, necessitated by contemporary challenges and, consequently, the specific nature of performance art training, allows, for example, for various types of testing, automating routine processes and tasks, promptly collecting analytical data, and much more. It is especially noteworthy that

for many Chinese students, raised in the tradition of hieroglyphic writing, visual information is often primary. This circumstance, in some cases, makes technologies such as detailed multi-camera filming or visualization of keystroke force in VR not just convenient but crucial for understanding new information.

Research Summary

Many researchers are studying the functionality of using contemporary information technologies in music education: instant messengers (O. N. Manapova, M. S. Podin (Manapova, Podin, 2021), E. A. Nazarbayev, Zh. K. Kulmagambetova (Nazarbayev, Kulmagambetova, 2025), I. G. Aktamov, O. V. Sambueva (Aktamov, Sambueva, 2021)), mobile applications (S. S. Arbuzov, A. A. Konovalov (Arbuzov, Konovalov, 2022), M. V. Pereverzeva (Pereverzeva, 2023)), virtual reality (M. M. Volynov, A. A. Kitov, B. S. Goryachkin (Volynov et al., 2020)), web tools (O. M. Abramova (Abramova, 2017), I. B. Gorbunova, O. L. Yasinskaya (Gorbunova et al., 2020), etc). Various difficulties associated with their use cause concerns in such musicologists and researchers as D. S. Khurmatullina (Khurmatullina, 2021), B. R. Mandel (Mandel, 2013),

V. A. Chistousov (Chistousov, 2015), N. V. Kolesnik and S. I. Boyarkin (Kolesnik, Boyarkina, 2024). Works of a number of Russian and foreign researchers ((Gorbunova, 2020; Gorbunova et al., 2020; Zhongsheng, 2025; Zhang, 2025), etc reveal problems of using contemporary distance technologies in the system of music education, as well as issues related to innovative music-related technological solutions that can be achieved using transdisciplinary and meta-subject approaches that illustrate the possibilities of contemporary music-computer technologies (MCT) used in various fields of musicology and music pedagogy. These include the development of digital musical instruments in the compositional practice and concert performance of a contemporary performing musician. The use of artificial intelligence technologies in music and music education (Baidoo, Bondzi, 2025; Ding, 2025; Abramova, 2017; Li, 2025; Mygdanis, 2025; Tatlılioğlu, 2024; Tong, 2025; Zhu, 2025) has been paid attention to by many researchers: teaching vocal art (Li, Liang, 2025); a study of innovative strategies for higher music education in the perspective of new media (Liu Lilin (Liu, 2025)); a study of the readiness for online learning of students enrolled in distance learning programs at universities in Guangzhou (Jin Yiqiang, Su Hong (Jin, Su, 2025)); a study of strategies for creating and promoting online courses using

the example of organizing distance learning at one university (in the city of Harbin; see the work of Zhao Jigang, Li Zhenyu (Zhao, Li, 2025)); a study of an innovative model of group piano lessons in an online environment using the example of piano lessons (Zhang Lijuan (Zhang, 2025)); a study of the methods of teaching online courses in piano improvised accompaniment in colleges and universities in China and Russia (Song Shuai (Song, 2021)); the use of various distance learning systems (LMS platforms) in music education (Bhuiyan M. O. (Bhuiyan, 2025); Craig B., Xu J. L. (Craig, Xu, 2024); Dominguez-Figaredo D., Gil-Jaurena I. (Domínguez-Figaredo, Gil-Jaurena, 2024), including Moodle (Si-Mohammed B., Bahlul A. (Si-Mohammed, Bahloul, 2025)); as well as the use of virtual reality systems (VR) in music and music education (Li, Liang, 2025; Mygdanis, 2025; Que, Hu, 2025; Tong, 2025; Volynov et al., 2020), including the development of specialized plugins and virtual musical instruments¹³.

The successful and fruitful collaboration of musicologists, educational researchers and specialists IT technologies of the scientific and methodological laboratory "Music and Computer Technologies" of the A. I. Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia, significantly contributed to effective solutions to the aforementioned problems. They devised methods to develop specific

¹³ See, e.g.: Available at: <https://www.zgmzyq.cn/en/information/the-origin-of-sheng-is-legendary-the-music-it-plays-is-called-feng-ming.html> (accessed on: 19 December 2025); Available at: <https://www.zgmzyq.cn/en/operating-guide/the-reform-of-shengyin-let-this-ancient-musical->

[instrument-have-a-new-sound-in-modern-bands.html](https://www.kvraudio.com/product/individual-chinese-xun-by-kong-audio) (accessed on: 19 December 2025); Available at: <https://www.kvraudio.com/product/individual-chinese-xun-by-kong-audio> (accessed on: 18 May 25).

educational models to enable Chinese music students to study the art of performance using distance learning technologies, which is clearly reflected in the works written on innovative methodological developments, covering in detail the substantive components, main directions, and key aspects of the use of relevant music education systems¹⁴.

Methods

The following methods were used in the study:

- analysis of musicological, psychological, pedagogical, and methodological literature on the research problem,
- comparative analysis of traditional and distance learning forms in music pedagogy, study and synthesis of domestic and international experience in the application of distance technologies in music education,
- systematization of approaches to studying the characteristics of piano performance perception by Chinese music students in the context of digital transformation and the active functioning of a high-tech creative music educational environment,
- systematization of methodological approaches to teaching Chinese students in the context of the digital transformation of education,
- musical and scientific research methods conditioned by development of Music Computer Technologies (MCT) as a contemporary interdisciplinary field of

knowledge studied by musicologists and art historians, as well as specialists involved in the development of a transdisciplinary approach to the study of musical phenomena.

The following methods were used to write this paper: the analysis of psychological, pedagogical, and musicological literature on the research subject, the comparative analysis of traditional and distance learning formats, the study and synthesis of national and international experience in applying distance learning technologies to teaching piano performance, and the systematization of approaches to studying the characteristics of piano performance perception by Chinese music students in the context of the digital transformation of education.

Results and Discussion

The Use of Messengers in Learning

The advent of distance learning technologies resulted in a colossal shift in performance training and music education in general. These technologies include, for example, messengers with expanded functionality, specifically designed for organizing group outreach Interaction in communities with large numbers of participants. Primarily, they facilitate the organization of online lectures and seminars due to the option of screen sharing for presentations. According to O. N. Manapova and M. S. Podin, instructors can organize separate chats for each academic subject, where lecture

¹⁴ Available at: <https://reverb.com/en-fi/item/83244925-three-body-technology-tear-of-land-chinese-xun-virtual-instrument-download> (accessed on: 18 May 2025);

Available at: https://cdn.roland.com/assets/media/pdf/D-50_OM.pdf (accessed on: 19 December 2025).

material is discussed (Manapova, Podin, 2021, 56). Within these chats, it is easy to assign individuals responsible for specific tasks and conduct interactive surveys to gather opinions on the format of a lesson quickly or select the topic for the next project. The practice of setting up closed groups deserves special attention; this is ideal for publishing official announcements.

Another fundamental function of any messenger used in an educational context is to ensure the unimpeded flow of information. This is not limited to sending private messages; This involves creating a space (an educational information environment) where teachers can promptly publish announcements, share current schedule changes, remind students about upcoming project deadlines and exam requirements, and distribute additional educational materials such as links to research papers, lecture recordings, or useful online resources. Students, in turn, can ask clarifying questions on complex topics, request clarification on assignments, and receive prompt responses not only from the teacher but also from their more knowledgeable classmates.

The most prominent example of such a messenger is Telegram. The platform allows for the creation of group chats for up to 200,000 people, making it ideal for large educational institutions. The file transfer limit is 2 GB, which significantly exceeds competitors' capabilities. This eliminates the need for third-party file-sharing services. It also allows for the use of both programs for various educational tasks, such as sending notifications about

homework deadlines or conducting topic-specific surveys on the material covered. As noted by E. A. Nazarbayev and Zh. K. Kulmagambetova, the necessary information can be found using the instant search system through message history (Nazarbayev, Kulmagambetova, 2025, 30). Furthermore, a built-in translator eliminates language barriers.

Similar functions are available on the Russian social network *Vkontakte* (VK), which has an extensive library of video and audio materials, and *TamTam* (support for bots and the ability to organize group communications among up to 100 participants simultaneously).

However, according to I. G. Aktamov and O. V. Sambuev, *WeChat* and *QQ* are most suitable for Chinese audiences, as they offer specific functions lacking in their Western analogies: the option to create mini-forums within chats, built-in file storage with large memory capacity supporting long-term storage of materials, and integration with payment systems for organizing group book purchases (Aktamov, Sambueva, 2021, 170).

Digitalization of Music Education through Mobile Apps

Mobile apps are also actively used in musicological research. The also transform the music education process by digitizing it. According to S. S. Arbuzov and A. A. Konovalov, mobile apps used in teaching performance skills on various musical instruments can be roughly classified into several categories, each addressing specific pedagogical challenges (Arbuzov, Konovalov, 2022, 63).

The first and most popular category is software for teaching specific musical

instruments, such as *Yousician*, *Simply Piano*, *Flowkey*, and *Fret Trainer*. These programs utilize sound recognition technologies via the device's built-in microphone or MIDI connection to analyze the student's performance in real time, providing instant feedback on note accuracy, sound quality, and other key parameters. They often take the form of interactive courses with step-by-step lessons, progressing from basic exercises to the creation of complex musical compositions or musical creative projects, including video segments. They may also incorporate elements of gamification to support students' motivation to acquire knowledge.

The second fundamental trend involves the use of training apps for developing specific skills, in particular, pitch (Pereverzeva, 2023, 92). This includes multifunctional mobile apps such as *Perfect Ear*, *Complete Rhythm*, and *Tenuto*, as well as simpler platforms such as *Note Trainer* and *Rhythm Cat*, which offer a variety of exercises for identifying intervals, scales, rhythmic patterns, sight-reading, etc. The main advantage of these apps is their ability to transform routine learning into what is often seen as a boring task by many students into an engaging process, thus significantly improving the effectiveness of memorization.

A third significant area is applications that act as virtual musical instruments: GarageBand, FL Studio Mobile, Korg Gadget, BandLab, and others. As D. S. Khurmatullina notes, these can be used to learn the basics of arrangement, as well as experiment with different sounds and styles, without investing in expensive

physical equipment (Khurmatullina, 2021, 55).

The fourth area includes reference and library programs. These include digital tab collections (Ultimate Guitar, Songsterr), encyclopedias, and chord identifiers based on photographs or other graphic images, as well as sheet music archives and online libraries.

Applying Virtual Reality in Educational Practice

Virtual reality (VR) offers solutions that would be difficult or *impossible to implement in the real world*, as noted in the scientific works of M. M. Volynov, A. A. Kitov, and B. S. Goryachkin (Volynov et al., 2020, 802). For example, a VR demonstration of a teacher demonstrating correct hand positioning on the piano from any angle, including from the inside, in slow motion, while simultaneously visualizing the force exerted on the keys. The system can also project musical notation directly into the performer's field of view, eliminating the need to look at the music stand and lose contact with the instrument. The ability to record one's performance and then analyze it not only aurally but also visually, observing the movements of one's avatar from the outside, provides unprecedented opportunities for self-reflection and independent work. This approach allows for the simulation of even less-than-ideal performance conditions, such as a noisy audience or technical glitches, preparing the musician for the unpredictability of real concert situations. At the same time, the physiological manifestations of stress (tremors, increased heart rate) remain authentic, ensuring a highly reliable training experience. All this occurs in

a safe, controlled environment where errors can be analysed (Flew et al., 2025; Schilling et al., 2024; Schweighart et al., 2024; Si-Mohammed, Bahloul, 2025; Singh et al., 2025; Sun et al., 2024). For instruments such as large harps, the issue of portability is solved: an expensive and bulky instrument is always available in the virtual space in any number of copies, which is critical for educational institutions with limited budgets.

Distance learning also frequently utilizes various videoconferencing systems, such as Zoom, Skype, and Microsoft Teams, which are designed to facilitate continuous, real-time interactive communication between participants in the educational process (Abramova, 2017, 35). Each of these systems offers a unique set of features. In particular, the Zoom platform has become widespread in the academic environment due to its intuitive interface, stable operation even with low internet connection speeds, and an extensive set of tools for interactive learning. Its key features include virtual group collaboration rooms, screen annotation tools, and advanced moderation options for managing participant access rights to screen sharing, microphones, and video cameras. The system supports automatic session recording with the option to save them both to cloud storage and local devices, and provides detailed analytics on attendance and participant activity, allowing for objective assessment of student engagement.

Microsoft Teams, an integral part of the Microsoft 365 ecosystem, offers deep integration with office applications (Word,

Excel, PowerPoint, OneNote, OneDrive), creating a comprehensive collaborative learning environment. Instructors can create specialized teams for each course, organize themed channels within them, share files, co-edit documents in real time, and use a built-in scheduler to organize and plan collaborative creative activities. This program differs from similar programs in its advanced accessibility features, including automatic subtitles and real-time speech transcription, which contributes to a more inclusive educational process for students with various hearing and visual impairments (see for more details (Gorbunova et al., 2020)).

Corporate educational platforms—specialized software for organizing distance learning systems (LMS)—represent a different approach to organizing learning. For example, the *Moodle LMS* adapts to the individual requirements of educational organizations. This is achieved through the system's modular architecture and support for numerous extensions. In the context of consulting activities, there are tools for organizing thematic discussions on forums (in synchronous and asynchronous modes). *Blackboard*, in turn, offers ways to monitor student academic performance. Both platforms support mobile learning through official apps, providing access to educational materials from smartphones.

However, as B. R. Mandel notes, one of the key mistakes that occurs at the initial stage of digital transformation of the educational process is the attempt to simultaneously implement a wide range of technological solutions (Mandel, 2013, 4). This approach often leads to cognitive

overload for teachers, who are forced to master dozens of unfamiliar platforms in a short period of time. As a result, classes turn into demonstrations of the software's technical capabilities. Students (and teachers) are forced to deal with a variety of digital tools, each requiring separate registration, authorization, and memorization of a unique algorithm of actions, which distracts from the essence of the material being studied and causes digital fatigue.

A Strategy for the Phased Implementation of Innovative Technologies in the Training of Chinese Piano Students

In these circumstances, it is recommended to pursue a strategy for the phased implementation of innovative technologies in the classroom. Teachers should begin by identifying one pedagogical task that is most relevant to their subject. These include, for example, tasks related to the need to improve clarity when explaining complex material, developing teamwork skills, or automating routine knowledge assessment. Then, it is advisable to select a specific application that will achieve the desired result. These could include interactive surveys created using applications such as Socrative and Mentimeter, which test the knowledge acquired by music students throughout the semester. It is crucial to collect empirical data on the effectiveness of the chosen tool through reflective discussions and questionnaires that show the degree of student engagement in the learning process. To address the challenges posed by the use of distance learning technologies in teaching, it is necessary to

develop an educational activity plan that includes regular participation in specialized webinars on overviews of specific services as well as on methods of their pedagogical application. Selecting events organized by recognized educational platforms (e.g., Lectorium, Stepik, Coursera) is crucial, and this should be reflected in the student's technology map, as noted in the scientific works of V. A. Chistousov (Chistousov, 2015, 51).

It is also recommended to develop online communities located in specialized blogs on VKontakte and Telegram; there teachers share ready-made methodological developments, discuss emerging difficulties, and receive advisory support from colleagues.

Another problem lies in the excessive workload of teachers in the distance learning process. According to N. V. Kolesnik and S. I. Boyarkina, "they spend 43 hours a week on work tasks, which is 5 hours more than usual, and only 24 hours of work time are spent directly on teaching (the remaining time is spent on other tasks, such as planning and preparing for classes, grading assignments, working with colleagues, and professional development)" (Kolesnik, Boyarkina, 2024, 38).

To solve this problem, some tasks should be delegated. The first step is to identify students who are proficient in digital technologies used to solve a range of research problems in music science, study various musical phenomena, and use in contemporary music education. This should be done tactfully, encouraging students' active participation. A proposal was also made to establish a team

responsible for specific areas: for example, for working in Ableton Live (setup, basic technological solutions), for making presentations in Canva or Figma, and for various levels of interaction in the general Telegram/Discord chat (responsibility for the content of messages, adherence to online etiquette, etc.). This redistribution of tasks frees up the teacher's time to focus on individual work with students' creative needs. Meanwhile, technical issues are addressed by the students themselves.

A Methodology for Teaching Performance to Chinese Pianist Students Using Distance Learning

Based on the results of the analysis, a teaching method for Chinese pianist students can be proposed that consists of several components. Initially, we propose organizing synchronous lessons via videoconferencing platforms such as Zoom, with the mandatory use of a high-quality multi-channel audio transmission system (e.g., via external USB audio interfaces, condenser microphones, and closed-back headphones). We also suggest a specially developed multi-camera video surveillance system with at least three camera angles: a general view of the performer, a close-up of the keyboard with finger and hand positioning, and an additional side angle to monitor body positioning and pedal work. Detailed visualization of demonstration elements is particularly important for Chinese students, as many of them perceive information visually.

The second component of the methodology involves systematically organizing asynchronous work with pre-recorded video fragments of performances,

which are created both by the teacher (demonstration materials, study etudes, analysis of typical errors) and by the students themselves (recordings of homework assignments, rehearsals, and intermediate results of work on a musical piece). The analysis is based on the multi-level system: first, the student independently conducts a self-analysis of his/her recording using a special checklist, then the teacher provides his/her own opinion in a special video annotation program (e.g., Moises, Audacity), where comments are linked to specific bars.

The third component of the methodology involves the active use of specialized software aimed at developing specific professional skills. For example, the PiaScore app serves not only as an electronic music library but also as an interactive assistant with automatic page turning, the ability to annotate music text, synchronization with audio recordings and a metronome, and a built-in music notation recognition system via the device camera. While Simply Piano offers a gamified approach to mastering solfeggio and sight-reading through a system of gradually more complex exercises, interactive tasks, and instant feedback, it is especially important for Chinese students that the interface of these apps should be adapted to their native language and take into account the specific musical terminology adopted in the Chinese pedagogical tradition. The technological infrastructure of this method requires from students to have a minimum set of equipment: a digital piano or an acoustic piano with the ability to connect to a computer, a high-speed

internet connection of at least 50 Mbps for stable sound transmission, a multifunctional recording device (smartphone or camera with a resolution of at least 1080p), an external microphone and headphones, as well as specialized software for processing sound and video. Of great importance in the contemporary music education process in all its manifestations is the literacy and erudition of the teacher, his/her openness to the perception of new, breakthrough educational trends. On the one hand, they are determined by the development of digital educational technologies themselves, on the other hand, by new areas of research in the field of music science (such as cognitive musicology, transdisciplinary musicological research, mathematical research methods in musicology), as well as the identification of new approaches to the study of musical phenomena and their influence on the music education process (see, for example, in the work (Gorbunova, 2020)), which necessitates the development of new educational concepts, including distance music education systems and e-learning at all levels and in various educational institutions that carry out professional training of musicians.

Possibilities of Organizing Student Piano Performance Training Using Distance Learning Technologies

Our pedagogical research revealed significant variations in the piano proficiency level in music students at Chinese universities. Due to the massive expansion of university admissions, the piano was removed from the mandatory entrance exams for applicants

to creative arts courses. This has resulted in insufficient basic training for a significant portion of music students, who often focus on vocal training. This creates difficulties in teaching courses that lay the foundation for piano performance, forcing instructors to divide students into groups based on their level. Most music and pedagogical universities offer improvised accompaniment courses only in the second or third years, forming groups based on their major and minor. These courses are built on the basic levels of harmony, solfeggio, music theory, and piano instruction covered in the first two years of study. However, this study period is insufficient to master either piano technique or the practical aspects of harmony. As a result, students demonstrate weak skills in applying their knowledge in practice. Inadequate curricula and poor time management negatively affect the completion of practical assignments and, as a whole, the overall musical education of piano students in China.

The limited equipment at educational institutions presents another problem. Mass admission to creative universities has led to a shortage of teaching staff due to space and financial constraints. A lack of classroom space also reduces the effectiveness of instruction. As a result, many teachers are forced to resort to group lessons. In such circumstances, universities can optimally utilize distance learning technologies as a means of providing educational and methodological support to supplement and, where necessary, adjust the content of their curricula. Another problem is the quality of teaching materials

used in distance piano courses. These courses first appeared in Chinese conservatories in the 2010s. With the growing popularity of this program, various publications have been released. There are numerous textbooks, but their content is often duplicated, repeating previously published teaching methods and techniques for professional music disciplines, including arranging and composing music. For example, they overemphasize the theoretical aspects of harmony and texture without sufficient attention to practical exercises, or lack a consistent teaching system from simple to complex. This leads to confusion in mastering the course material. At the same time, distance learning technologies and e-learning methods continue to be actively used in music education; there is a dynamic development of their content, as well as an active search for scientifically based solutions (in musicological, pedagogical, and information technology aspects).

Associate Professor of the Piano Department He Yi released the album "Beethoven's Piano Sonatas" in 2020 and subsequently transferred exclusive distribution rights for its inclusion in distance music education systems using contemporary digital portals worldwide. During the 2020 pandemic, she actively participated in the development of online courses and recorded demonstration lessons on platforms such as Baijia Jiangdan and Future Orange Education. She organized charity broadcasts on Douyin and Bilibili, which received widespread acclaim from domestic and international educators. On June 17,

a remote piano teaching project was launched in collaboration with the Hamburg Conservatory of Music (Germany). Professors Christiane Behn and Matthias Weber conducted live lessons using Yamaha remote equipment, achieving a high level of engagement with the target audience. Vice Dean Yang Jihua and representatives from relevant departments also participated in the course. The progress and results of a pilot study managed to identify the specific features of the educational process for teaching piano performance to Chinese piano students using distance learning technologies. We developed a methodology for teaching piano performance using distance learning technologies for students in the People's Republic of China. We prepared the relevant teaching materials and, over a period of 2.5 years (from October 2023 to February 2026), conducted a pilot study—a multi-stage, multi-component, and multi-factorial pedagogical experiment (its ascertaining, predicting, and forming parts)—to identify the specific features of the educational process for teaching piano performance to Chinese piano students using distance learning technologies and e-learning. The formative part of the pedagogical experiment was conducted at Shanxi University (Jinzhong City, Shanxi Province, People's Republic of China) over the course of a year (two semesters in the 2024–2025 and 2025–2026 academic years). The choice of a specific higher education institution in China was dictated by the availability of a distance education department.

The total sample included 60 piano students aged 17–25, divided into two groups with identical academic performance indicators and proficiency in contemporary digital educational technologies and MCT.

During the ascertainment phase, an online survey was organized and administered among the formed groups. The multifunctional messenger WeChat was chosen as the primary technological platform for organizing and distributing the survey among the target audience. This choice was based on its widespread use throughout the People's Republic of China. I. G. Aktamov and O. V. Sambueva note that the key advantages of this social network include a high response rate, due to a familiar environment for respondents, the ability to answer questions promptly and remind them of deadlines directly, and the convenient collection of responses in a single system (Aktamov, Sambueva, 2021). A link to the questionnaire was distributed through chats connecting study participants and by sending it via private messages to potential respondents. Participants were given a specific time period to complete the survey, after which the form was closed. Beforehand, they received detailed written instructions explaining the survey's purpose, the rules for completing the questionnaire, and guarantees of confidentiality of their data.

This survey served several purposes. First, it allowed for the collection of additional qualitative and quantitative data on the participants in the pedagogical experiment. While the entrance exam objectively demonstrated their level of knowledge, the questionnaire provided

a deep understanding of their motivational sphere, which is necessary for the subsequent identification of hidden correlations. Secondly, the survey served as a pre-test.

The first question addressed the digital competencies of Chinese piano students. The results are shown in Figure 1.

The majority of respondents (45%; see Figure 1) indicated that they possess high digital skills, meaning they confidently master new specialized software, including MCT, and can solve most technical problems. Other students surveyed (30%) noted that they can use basic computer functions, but require external assistance for complex tasks.

The next question focused on the students' participation in online events (survey results are illustrated in Figure 2).

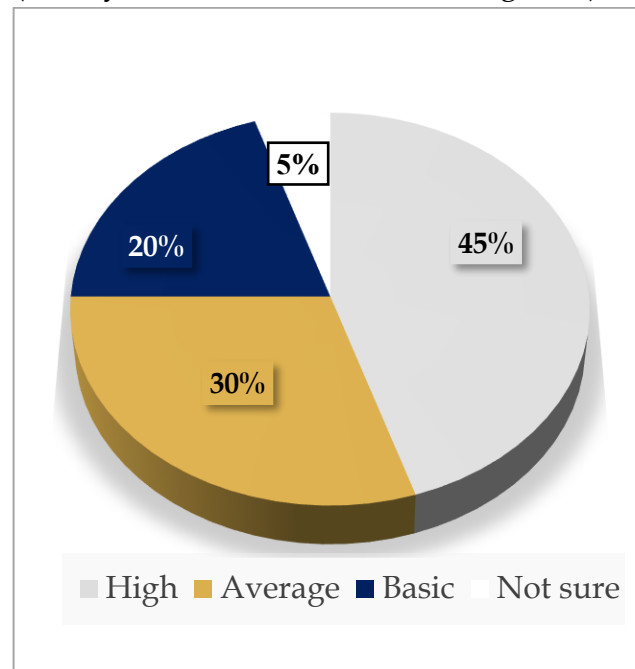


Figure 1. Respondents' responses to the question: "How do you rate your level of digital literacy in the context of using professional programs and applications?"

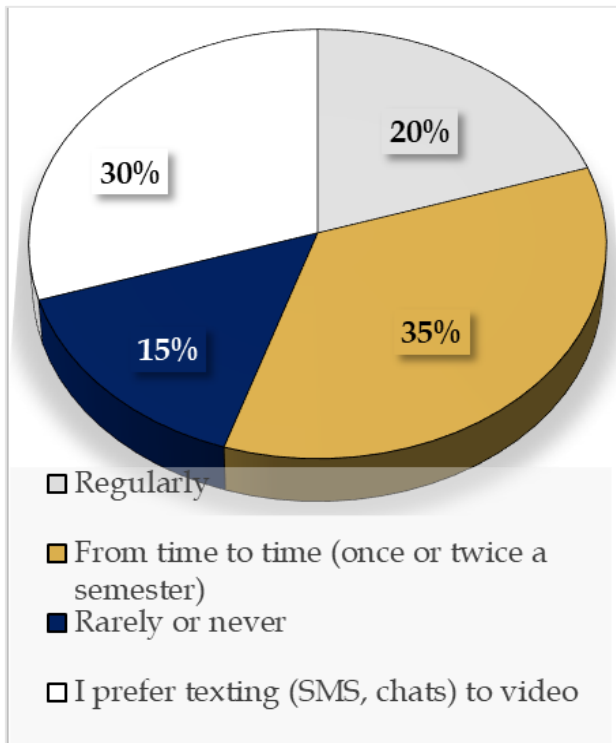


Figure 2. Respondents' responses to the question: "How often have you participated in online meetings or video conferences lasting more than 30 minutes in the past year?"

The data presented in Figure 2 shows that only 40% of respondents had had consistent experience using video conferencing before the experiment. Most students either rarely used this communication format or did not use it at all. This indicates that the integration of video technology into the educational process, particularly online consultations with the teacher, was a completely new practice that required additional learning for many individuals. It is also worth noting that a certain group of students consciously choose text-based communication over video, which must be taken into account when developing individualized learning approaches. Consequently, the low initial level of readiness for using video technology underscores the importance of subsequent advances in this area, demonstrating

the effectiveness of the pedagogical methods applied. Furthermore, based on the information provided, it is clear that most students use standard laptops or computers with built-in cameras and microphones, which provide basic readiness for remote interaction. However, this is insufficient to achieve high-quality sound recordings, which is especially important in a contemporary music education system, which must rely on the assessments of musicologists and outstanding performing musicians.

At the same time, the identified diversity of technical capabilities highlights the need to create a flexible methodological system. Such a system should ensure equal educational opportunities through differentiated instructions for working with sound (musical sound) for different levels of technical equipment.

The formative stage of our experimental study involved auditions, which were conducted remotely in accordance with assigned assignments and lessons taught by piano teachers (in some cases, alongside outstanding performers or included in the educational process). As part of this stage, students were tasked with independently recording and submitting a video recording of their performance of strictly prescribed software, which included technical exercises (e.g., Czerny Etude, Op. 139, No. 1).

A thorough analysis of the resulting video materials revealed a number of additional issues, related, for example, to the students' digital literacy that significantly affected the educational process as a whole. Weak sound quality

control manifested by hissing, distortion, and extraneous noise was observed throughout. This indicated a fundamental misunderstanding of the basic principles of audio recording, e.g. the importance of choosing the acoustic environment to minimize reverberation, the inability to manage input signal levels, leading to clipping and distortion when overloaded, and the failure to use an external microphone instead of the built-in one in a camera or laptop (Zhang Lijuan (Zhang, 2025, 103)). Another significant technical issue was the students' complete inability to set a static and methodically correct camera angle. Capturing key elements of the performing apparatus, such as the hands, forearms, and overall posture at the instrument, is known to be critical for analysis. However, this basic requirement was often not achieved, as noted in the scholarly works of Song Shuai (Song, 2021, 72). This oversight eloquently demonstrates a lack of understanding of the didactic goals of the recording itself. Students are unable to intuitively determine the optimal distance to the camera or choose the correct shooting angle, which leads to systematic errors. As a result, the camera is often positioned either too close, leading to cropping and cutting out important details such as the elbow joint or wrist position, or, conversely, too far away, making technical nuances critical for the teacher simply indistinguishable. An equally common error is placing the camera at an odd, often extreme, angle, which inevitably distorts perspective and prevents an adequate assessment of either the musician's hand position or body posture. Taken together,

all these technical shortcomings reduce the value of high-quality educational video material, both in content and artistic quality, to virtually zero, as Chen Bei and Chen Chunyan (Chen Bei, 2023; Chen Chunyan, 2022) also point out in a number of their studies.

Finally, the analysis revealed a noticeable psychological tension in the students, directly caused by the very fact of video recording and the oppressive presence of the camera. This tension was expressed in a number of external manifestations: unnatural and constrained movements, tense facial expressions, and a general increase in muscle tone throughout the body.

This physical condition directly and negatively affects the quality of sound production and the freedom of the entire performing apparatus, as any muscular stiffness makes the sound less flexible and expressive. The resulting frustration and nervousness prevent the performer from fully concentrating on artistic and purely technical tasks, forcing them to focus on secondary details and their own anxiety. Meanwhile, the ability to function in front of a camera is becoming an integral part of the professional competence of a contemporary musician.

In response to the identified challenges, a technical briefing was organized and conducted in the form of an interactive webinar on the popular Tencent Meeting platform. The webinar was divided into several sections. Specific recommendations were provided in the section on technical equipment. To ensure high-quality sound, it was recommended to use external USB microphones, such as the Blue Yeti or Rode

NT-USB, paired with HD webcams that should be positioned directly to the side of the piano, ensuring the performer's hands, forearms, and posture are captured in the frame. The software section identified the primary platform for synchronous online lessons, such as Zoom, chosen for its stability and the *original sound* feature. For asynchronous self-study, it was recommended to create shared chats in WeChat. The webinar focused on a detailed analysis of the settings, specifically demonstrating the systematic activation of the *Original Sound* mode in Zoom, which allows the participants to disable the built-in noise reduction algorithms, ensuring a pure, unprocessed piano sound. Of particular value to our pedagogical research is the detailed study of the experience gained by the staff of the Music and Computer Technologies Research Laboratory at the A. I. Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia on the organization and details of the music education process using distance learning technologies and e-learning. For a long time the laboratory has been conducting research to identify the specifics of using distance learning technologies in the study of musical phenomena and issues related to modelling the musical creativity process. The data we obtained and the results of our original research, as well as our own teaching experience (that of one of the authors of this paper, Liu Ganfeng, and postgraduate students from the Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia, Hou Wang, Sun Jiayue, He Yunchuan, and others) at the Music and Computer Technologies Scientific and Methodological Laboratory of Herzen

University, were used in the advanced training programs "Distance Technologies in Music Education", "Methodology for Teaching Music Subjects With Music and Computer Technologies", "Electronic Music Synthesizer", "The Art of Performance and Arrangement on a Keyboard Synthesizer", and the professional retraining program "Teaching an Electronic Keyboard Synthesizer." We used these results to develop curricula for the subjects and approaches to train students in performance-related subjects using the methods we developed. We found that the competent and targeted use of contemporary computer-based technologies plays a key role in the effectiveness of the distance learning process in the content of these programs.

It should be noted that while organizing classes with students during the formative stage of the pedagogical experiment, alongside addressing a number of art historical and technological issues, we also developed curricula for the two upcoming semesters. These curricula served as detailed learning roadmaps. These outlined technical requirements, scheduled week by week, for systematic mastery of the material. At the same time, a mandatory repertoire list was developed, including works by Russian and Western classics, as well as pieces by Chinese composers. Additionally, the plan included a strict schedule for the submission of assignments.

This was followed by relevant classes. The first semester was devoted to adapting students to the remote format. These weeks proved the most challenging due to significant technical issues, particularly

audio lags (technical problems manifested as delays, interruptions, or distortions of sound) of up to 500 milliseconds, which completely precluded the possibility of synchronized performance between teacher and student in real time, forcing a transition to an adapted *show-explain-repeat* method. As part of this process, students received specific assignments, such as practicing finger position in a technically difficult manner, and sent short video clips lasting 15–30 seconds, after which the teacher either provided detailed feedback in the form of written comments directly in the chat, or recorded a video response with a visual demonstration of the correct movement. Special attention was paid to hand positioning, that was rectified by demonstrating the correct position close-up on camera, followed by a strict requirement for the student to set the same camera angle. Therefore, instructions such as *show your hand exactly as I'm doing now* became regular teaching practice.

In parallel, group master classes were held every two weeks. For example, as part of such an activity, one student performed a pre-memorized piece (the sonata "Landscapes of Jiangnan" by Jiang Wianye), while the other students learned to express reasoned and constructive criticism. The final midterm exam in December was conducted asynchronously, requiring each student to submit a pre-recorded and rehearsed video containing a mini concert programme. The objective results of this assessment demonstrated that 80% of students successfully completed the assigned learning tasks and demonstrated consistent progress.

However, the remaining 20% showed a noticeable deterioration in technical skills, the main reason for this negative trend being the teacher's inability to correct immediately the student's actions physically.

In the second semester, the work became more advanced with the introduction of more complex concert repertoire. Simultaneously, experiments began with remote ensemble music making, where students, for example, mastered four-hand playing by recording their parts separately and then synchronizing the audio tracks in specialized programs. Individual online lessons for fine-tuning details, group master classes for developing critical thinking and artistry, as well as lectures on music literature and solfeggio, conducted via videoconference remained the main forms of work. The final stage was devoted to the final assessment, which took place in the format of an open online concert for a general audience or, at the student's discretion, as a closed recording of the exam program. Following the exam, a final student survey was conducted to assess their satisfaction with the process. Based on this analysis, final conclusions were drawn on the effectiveness of the distance learning methods used and specific methodological recommendations were developed for integrating online learning elements into the traditional music education system, taking into account both technical and pedagogical aspects.

A special focus was placed on finding correlations and opportunities for transferring experience with existing developments by scholars and educators in

this field. As a result, a number of practice-oriented solutions were identified based on the experience of training musicians, art historians, composers, and teachers of professional music disciplines in advanced training and professional retraining programs offered by the Music and Computer Technologies Scientific and Methodological Laboratory of the A. I. Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia. Of particular value for our consideration is the use of comprehensive music education for individuals with disabilities using the capabilities of distance learning systems and contemporary MCT (see, for example, (Gorbunova et al., 2020)).

To summarize, we note that initially, students demonstrated a low level of readiness for using various IT technologies. This necessitated the introduction of specific measures: students were taught the basics of sound recording and working with specialized software and hardware. These procedures became a prerequisite for their successful adaptation to the distance learning format. Short video clips were also used to correct performance techniques.

The results of the pedagogical experiment confirm the need for the systematic use of MCT and distance technologies in contemporary music education. This integration must be carried out while maintaining the fundamental principles of piano performance and music education pedagogy. This conclusion is fully consistent with the broader view that, "experimenting with innovative methodologies and introducing advanced technological solutions into

the educational process are key factors contributing to the modernization of the education system and the enhancement of its quality" (Antonova et al., 2025, 166).

Conclusion

The development of the transdisciplinary approach to the study of musical phenomena, is actively explored in the works of musicologists, art historians, educational researchers, and specialists involved in the development of contemporary music-oriented IT applications and MCTs. These methods include those aimed at their active use in the system of contemporary professional music education as a key component.

The study found that with the active use and integration of contemporary technological tools into the educational process, focused on solving a wide range of problems and methods of remote interaction, it is possible to achieve a variety of pedagogical objectives. Thus, it was found that:

- Messengers are effective for organizing group work,
- Video conferencing systems enable synchronous interaction between teachers and students,
- Virtual reality systems offer the development of innovative, previously unexplored (and previously impossible to introduce and use) teaching methods and technologies.

The use of digital, innovative educational technologies is associated with significant challenges, such as cognitive overload for teachers and students when

attempting to simultaneously master multiple platforms, leading to *digital fatigue* and a distraction from the core of the educational material by the need to solve the technical challenges that arise and accompany this process.

Successful integration requires a strategically sound teaching methodology, beginning with a specific pedagogical task and selecting a specific tool (or set) for it. For high-quality lessons, especially in specialized subjects (e.g., piano), a minimal set of equipment is required: high-quality microphones, headphones, a multi-camera system, high-speed internet, and specialized, professionally oriented music and computer software and hardware. In this regard, the competent and targeted use of

specialized, professionally oriented hardware and software plays a key role in implementing a successful educational process using distance learning technologies. Today, this involves leveraging the capabilities of contemporary, specialized music-oriented digital tools—music computer technologies.

The teaching methodology we developed for Chinese music students specializing in performance, and especially piano students, serves as a clear example of a comprehensive approach integrating synchronous and asynchronous modes of work, essential and highly sought after in today's high-tech, creative educational environment.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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EAST AND WEST IN THE DIALOGUE OF CULTURES

Original article

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Portraits of Circassians in 19th-Century Russian Graphic Art: On the Issue of Representing the Ethnomenality of the Circassian People in Art

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Abstract. Portraits of Circassians in Russian graphic art remain insufficiently studied, with only a few authors addressing them in their articles and no fundamental monographs on the subject currently available. Until the early 19th century, visual representations of Circassians could be found in engravings by European artists. It was only after the first Russian ‘academic expeditions’ and ‘military-strategic surveys’ during the Russo-Caucasian War that graphic images of the inhabitants of Circassia by Russian artists began to appear. The article examines images of Circassians in portrait graphics by Russian artists of the 19th century. It raises issues of authenticity based on ethnographic, historical and cultural materials by European and Russian authors. The attitude of the Circassian people towards sitting for foreign and Russian artists is found in a variety of memoirs. Possible reasons for this behaviour include pagan superstitions, the absence of a ‘guest-host’ relationship, and the increasing Islamisation of the region. The work applies a comprehensive method based on formal-stylistic and cultural-historical analysis. The authors have established that both well-known artists and those who remain in the background turn to depicting the Circassians; the works under study play an important role, but at the same time, they are insufficiently accentuated in art history. For the first time, a historical interpretation of Circassian images in the portraits ‘Fatma, a Kabardian woman from Babukovsky Aul’ by A. V. and A. S. Vysheslavitsev and ‘Prince Nauruzov Tyu-Sultan’ by I. E. Repin is presented. The researchers prove that Russian artists have been interested not only in the general appearance of the Circassian people, but also in individual representatives of this ethnic group since the 1840s; it requires more detailed and lengthy research.

Keywords: ethnography, graphic art, portrait graphics, Circassians, Russo-Caucasian War, Vysheslavitsevs, I. E. Repin

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Портреты черкесов в отечественной графике XIX века: к вопросу отражения этноментальности черкесского народа в искусстве

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Резюме. Портреты черкесов в отечественной графике и ныне остаются недостаточно изученными, лишь немногие авторы обращаются в статьях к их исследованию, фундаментальные монографии подобной тематики на настоящий момент отсутствуют. До начала XIX века визуальное представление о них можно было получить через гравюры европейских авторов. Лишь после первых российских "академических экспедиций" и "военно-стратегических осмотров" в период Русско-Кавказской войны появляются графические изображения жителей Черкесии, выполненные отечественными авторами. В статье исследуются образы черкесов в портретной графике отечественных художников XIX века. Поднимаются проблемы натурной достоверности с опорой на этнографические, исторические и культурологические материалы европейских и отечественных авторов. Исследуется отношение черкесского народа к позированию зарубежным и российским художникам на основе мемуарной литературы. В качестве причин подобного поведения выделяются военное противостояние между Российской империей и Черкесией, возможные языческие суеверия, отсутствие связи "гость-хозяин" и усиливающаяся исламизация региона. В работе применен комплексный метод, основанный на формально-стилистическом и культурно-историческом анализе. Автором установлено, что к изображению черкесов обращаются как известные художники, так и оставшиеся на дальнем плане; в их творчестве обозначенные произведения играют немаловажную роль, но вместе с тем недостаточно акцентированы в искусствоведении. Впервые обозначается искусствоведческая интерпретация черкесских образов в портретах "Фатьма, кабардинка Бабуковского аула" А. В. и А. С. Вышеславцевых и "Князь Наурузовъ Тыу-Султанъ" И. Е. Репина. Резюмируется факт заинтересованности отечественных художников не только в общем облике черкесского народа, но и отдельных его представителей, начиная с 1840-х годов, что требует более детального и длительного изучения.

Ключевые слова: этнография, искусство графики, портретная графика, черкесы, Русско-Кавказская война, Вышеславцевы, И. Е. Репин

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Introduction

The Adyghe, or Circassians, one of the largest indigenous peoples of the northwestern and central Caucasus, inhabit the contemporary republics of Adygea, Kabardino-Balkaria, and Karachay-Cherkessia, as well as the Krasnodar and Stavropol Krai. Circassia and the Russian Empire were linked by centuries of diplomatic relations, which changed dramatically with the onset of the Russo-Caucasian War (1763–1864) (Glasheva, 2022, 31). The increasingly tense political situation in the region had a significant impact on the artistic perception of the Circassians. Feudal Kabarda, the most loyal of the Adyghe subethnic groups, was accessible to Russian artists, while democratic Western Circassia maintained greater ties with the Ottoman Empire (Kuraev et al., 2023, 163) and European emissaries (Kumykov, 2024, 120). For a long time, the Russian Empire's understanding of the Circassians, who had become a symbol of steadfastness and freedom, could only be obtained through engravings by foreign artists: A. Olearius, K. Geisler, F. Feroggio, and many others. These engravings can be found in a variety of history atlases¹⁵¹⁶¹⁷. The mythologem about the incredible beauty of Circassian women, prevalent in Europe and the Middle East, was

particularly reflected by foreign engravers in the images of Circassian females¹⁸. As Pochlebaeva M. B., Valueva A. E. points out, "the question of the nature of the ideal and its visual embodiment remains one of the central issues in art history, since it is precisely through the prism of ideas about the ideal that the deeper essence of cultural epochs is revealed" (Pochlebaeva, Valueva, 2026, 21). However, it is impossible to be sure that these images showed real women: many foreign artists had never personally visited the Caucasus (Kumykov, 2024) and relied on drawings by their predecessors or their own imagination. Images from life were extremely rare, and therefore any sketches were of great value to collectors and lovers of Orientalism.

An equally significant cause of the rarity of sketches drawn from life is the peculiarity of the Circassian ethnic mentality, i.e. unwillingness to sit for artists. Despite the sacred custom of Caucasian hospitality (Satusheva, 2025, 49), the Circassians were wary of sitting, which may have been accounted for by lingering pagan superstitions or the increasing Islamization of the population. However, in 1840, the British adventurer D. S. Bell published engravings from his life drawings as part of his *Journal of a residence in Circassia during the years 1837, 1838 and 1839*¹⁹. In the 1850s,

¹⁵ Hell, X. H. (1845). *Les Steppes de la Mer Caspienne, le Caucase, la Crimée et la Russie Meridionale: voyage pittoresque, historique et scientifique. Atlas historique*. Paris: P. Bertrand, 1845, 25 pl.

¹⁶ Olearius, A. A. (1986). *Moskowitische und Persische Reise. Die Holsteinische Gesandtschaft beim Schah 1633–1639*. Stuttgart: Thienemann, 1986.

¹⁷ Pallas, P. S. (1803). *Bemerkungen auf einer Reise in die südlichen Statthaltschaften des Russischen Reichs in den Jahren 1793 und 1794*. Leipzig: Martini, 1803.

¹⁸ Uncovering the Truth Behind Barnum's Circassian Beauties Hoax. (n.d.). The Collector. Available at: <https://www.thecollector.com/barnum-circassian-beauties-hoax/> (accessed on: 10 February 2026).

¹⁹ The Adventures of Agent 007 in Circassia (James Stanislaus Bell). (n.d.). Medium. Available

the Scottish artist W. Simpson also created watercolours and pencil sketches. It is important to note that the former lived in Circassian society for three years (The Adventures..., n.d.), and the latter – for less than a month (Simpson, 1903, 68–76). Similar processes of cultural representation and concealment can be observed in other regions that experienced dominant imperial influence. As A. Grasskamp notes in his analysis of the Japanese influence on the development of modern Chinese woodcuts, the role of the regional intermediary was often deliberately ignored in favour of national narratives. The author points out: "While the role of Japanese texts and translations in the shaping of Chinese art history is well-researched, and Sino-Japanese connections in painting, as well as lithography and collotype reproduction, have been investigated, the importance of Japanese agents, concepts, and artworks in the development of modern woodcut aesthetics, techniques, and motifs in China in the 1930s has not been fully acknowledged" (Grasskamp, 2023, 1).

The war between Circassia and the Russian Empire was the main reason why Circassians refused to sit for Russian artists. It is known that Emperor Nicholas I desired to acquire a portrait of the renowned Shapsug leader Sheretluqo Qizbech (Kizbech), but received a point-blank refusal. At the same time, the Circassian leader agreed to sit for J. S. Bell²⁰, an engraving of which was

published in the British emissary's *Journal of a residence in Circassia*. This difference in attitudes toward *our* and *foreign* artists reflects the broader context of the interaction between the empires. As M. Taroutina points out in her study, the visualization of various peoples played a key role in the imperial project: the author "also raises larger issues relating to colonialism, imperial identity formation, and the development of racial ideologies, and tackles a series of complex and interconnected issues such as the various ways in which the visualization of individuals, communities, social types, fictive characters, artefacts, and landscapes facilitated both Russia's understanding of the disparate peoples and cultures in its imperial orbit and its self-conceptualization as a European colonial power" (Taroutina, 2022, 5). As A. Frizon notes in her work on the representation of Africa in Russian culture, the Russian Empire, without overseas colonies, was nonetheless involved in the pan-European process of colonialism. Analyzing the theoretical concept of *colonialism without colonies*, A. Frizon writes: "Proposed by Barbara Lüthi, Francesca Falk, and Patricia Purtschert, this theoretical framework builds on previous research into the involvement of non-colonial European countries in a globally colonial environment. It also contributes to the discussion on the applicability of the same analytical framework of colonial vs. non-colonial Western political entities,

at: <https://vshtybin.medium.com/the-adventures-of-agent-007-in-circassia-james-stanislaus-bell-585ae00445f3> (accessed on: 10 February 2026).

²⁰ Bell, J. S. (1840). *Journal of a residence in Circassia during the years 1837, 1838 and*

1839 (Vol. 2). London: Edward Voxon, Dover Street, 1840.

or even to European vs. non-European forms of empire. According to Lüthi, Falk and Purtschert, countries without colonies "had an explicit self-understanding as being outside the realm of colonialism, but nevertheless engaged in the colonial project in a variety of ways and benefitted from these interactions". This perspective challenges the assumption that a country had to be directly involved in colonialism in order to participate in the creation of colonial knowledge. <...> examining its relationship with *external* colonized countries and the consequent creation of knowledge certainly makes a valuable contribution to the discussion" (Frison, 2026, 68–69). As Renaissance portrait researcher J. Hammond points out, "portraits were used by patrons for the careful presentation of self... The unstated pursuit of most portraiture was to encourage contemporary viewers to believe that the sitter lived up to the high standards of public life and other contemporary ideals. Neither portraits nor the Lives were merely empirical documents, they both also involved the promotion of particular ideals and individuals" (Hammond, 2023, 4).

In his autobiographical work, W. Simpson describes two situations demonstrating the complex, ambiguous attitude of the Circassians toward sitting. The artist, who was in Circassia in October 1855 and somewhat frustrated by the lack of female subjects, believes that the reason for the inaccessibility of Circassian women is the Islamization of the region (Simpson, 1903, 73). One day, while sketching a traditional dwelling, W. Simpson attracted the attention of Circassian girls

watching him from afar. The children, followed by the women, approached the artist, allowing to be sketched. Subsequently, W. Simpson specifically set out to depict houses, while carefully capturing images of local residents (Simpson, 1903, 74).

During another incident, W. Simpson witnessed a wedding procession and carefully sketched a ritual initially unknown to him. An equestrian, the bride's kidnapper, stopped next to him, suddenly throwing back his cloak and revealing a fair-haired girl to the artist. This act provoked the indignation of one of the Circassian elders, who forced the groom to continue on his way and stopped sketching (Simpson, 1903, 75). Thus, despite the religious and political situation in the region, it is important to note that the Circassians generally treated the familiar artists. W. Simpson himself wrote that he created sketches of Circassians "rather for costumes than for faces" (Simpson, 1903, 74).

The Russian Empire, like European explorers, was primarily interested in becoming familiar with the external characteristics of the new lands, rather than the inner, spiritual world of an individual highlander. We find a characteristic example of this approach in the descriptions of the traveller and historian A. N. Murav'ev. Having visited the Ateni-Sioni Church in Georgia in 1847, as researchers note: "Muravy'ev is therefore convinced that the church... belongs to a tradition that is emphatically not Armenian". He also addresses the question of the building's patrons, its restorations, and its decorations. Most

importantly, he does not hesitate a moment in explaining the quality of this artistic monument, writing that the best Georgian architectural production is the result of a *cultural transfer* from Constantinople. In other words, for Murav'ev, quality in a peripheral area like the South Caucasus can only be granted by cultural inputs from the center" (Nedd, 2023, 37–38). *Academic expeditions* undertaken in Russia at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries were largely based on the ideas of the Enlightenment. The genre of geographical descriptions or *description géographique*, which became an integral part of the Age of Enlightenment, "expanded the narrow boundaries of the known national space to the scale of the greater world" (King, 2008, 32). The *passion for description* that arose in Europe, the compilation of classifications and systematizations, were sensitively perceived by the Russian monarchy and put into practice. The first such expedition to the North Caucasus was initiated by Empress Catherine II during the Russo-Turkish War of 1768–1774.

For this mission, I. A. Güldenstädt, a Baltic German naturalist, was invited from Berlin. He compiled valuable descriptions of the Caucasus region's natural resources and dictionaries of local languages. It is important to note that the expedition's drafter was G. Beloy, a student at the Drawing Chamber of the Academy of Sciences (Abaydulova, 2019, 202) – to date; he is the first known Russian

artist to depict Circassians (Güldenstädt, 1787).

The illustrations of population types from the treatises of the *Academic Expeditions* share a number of formal and compositional similarities: the elaboration of the background, e.g. painted manure or a conventional landscape, anatomical inaccuracies in the depiction of people, and conventional facial expressions with slight smiles and blushes on the cheeks.

As Russian troops advanced in the Caucasus region, the need to study the annexed territories remained urgent: expeditions were organized for *military-strategic survey*, and new albums and atlases were published. E. M. Korneev, a graduate of the Imperial Academy of Arts, was recruited for the expedition led by General E. M. Sprengporten in 1802²¹.

The engravings, based on his drawings, display a wide variety of compositional, coloristic, and narrative solutions. The artist depicted people in traditional dwellings, on the streets of cities and towns, with sophisticated renderings of the light-air environment and the background landscape. In addition to individual population types, E. M. Korneev created genre scenes: in the *Circassian Dance* engraving, he captured not only Circassians of various classes, but also his self-portrait in the lower right corner (*Academician Korneev himself, sitting by a Tent and playing the Guitar*²²). In the lower left corner, there is a portrait of General E. M. Sprengporten

²¹ Depping, G. B. (1813). *Les peuples de la Russie, ou Description des mœurs, usages et costumes des diverses nations de l'empire de Russie* (Vol. 2). Paris: De l'Imprimerie de D. Colas, 1813, 48 pl.

²² Rovinsky, D. A. (1895). *Detailed dictionary of Russian engravers of the 16th–19th centuries* (Vol. 2, columns 449–1248). St. Petersburg: Printing House of the Imperial Academy of Sciences, 551. (In Russian)

with his wife. This decision testifies to the artist's new attitude towards the locals, his attempt to understand the world of the people from within, to become involved in their entertainment. The Russian Empire began to be interested in the Circassians as people, not only as inhabitants of strategically important territories, but portraits were not yet being created.

For a deeper understanding of this process, let us turn to the memoirs of General A.Kh. Benckendorff, who took part in this expedition while still an aide-de-camp (Benckendorff, 2012). In 1803, he accepted the invitation of the Kabardian prince Roslanbek Misostovich Atazhukin and paid a visit to his home. This was a very risky decision, since the prince, despite his rank of colonel, often took part in anti-Russian uprisings. A. Kh. Benckendorff decided to make a long and dangerous journey to see R. M. Atazhukin's sister: "It is almost impossible to see a single Circassian woman, and their beauty is so famous that I did not pay attention to the warnings they gave me about the danger I could be exposed to" (Benckendorff, 2012, 67). At the beginning of the 19th century, relations between the Kabardian leaders and the Russian officers were tense, and it was practically impossible for them to see Circassian women.

A similar interest in the beauty of Circassian women continued into the mid-19th century. N. Danilevsky wrote in 1846: "Whoever wants to understand the grace of beauty in our time must see a Circassian woman. Lively, fiery black eyes; a Greek outline; a charming white face, set off by

a vibrant blush <...> – this is the essence of a beauty from the mountains! ..." (Danilevsky, 1846, 123–124).

In the second half of the 19th century, the opinion of a representative of the Russian intelligentsia about the Circassian woman became more objective. Historian, academician, and Lieutenant General of the Russian Imperial Army N. F. Dubrovin argued that the concept of female beauty is relative: "... it cannot be said that all Circassian women without exception are beautiful, but, in any case, they serve as the finest representatives of the most beautiful white, or so-called Caucasian, tribe. Their beauty was greatly damaged by smallpox, for which no measures were taken to prevent it; the flatness of the body also detracted from their beauty" (Dubrovín, 2002, 138). This shift in the interpretation of Circassian beauty coincided with the development of realistic tendencies in Russian art.

In modern scholarship, interest in graphic art on Caucasian themes is gradually increasing. Images of the North Caucasus highlanders in Russian portrait art were touched upon by K. B. Kurbanova in a 2010 paper (Kurbanova, 2010). The study does not review images of Circassians: it is devoted to the iconography of Imam Shamil, a Dagestani religious and political figure. Nevertheless, this is one of the first research to raise the issue of the *Caucasian* portrait.

In L. N. Khludova's 2014 monograph, reprints of engravings from drawings by E. M. Korneev and Prince G. G. Gagarin are published (Khludova, 2014). The author analyses the depicted costumes

and weaponry from an ethnographic and historical perspective, and cites the memoirs of Russian officers and Western adventurers, revealing the historical and cultural context of the region.

In 2018, fragments of the *Caucasian Types* album by A. V. and A. S. Vysheslavitsev from the collection of the State Russian Museum were published for the first time in the book *Images of the Caucasus. Museum Rarities of the 19th Century* (Makhmudova, 2018). The author, Z. U. Makhmudova, accompanies a number of the drawings with original commentary by an unknown artist, as well as selected ethnographic artefacts. The book includes the drawing "Fatma, a Kabardian from the Babukovsky Aul" (Makhmudova, 2018, 91).

In a 2020 article, Z. U. Makhmudova raises the issue of attribution of the drawings in the *Caucasian Types* album (Makhmudova, 2020). According to the author, most of the images were created by A. V. Vysheslavitsev (1831–1888), a Crimean War veteran, military doctor, writer, artist, and art historian, as well as his uncle, the publicist and connoisseur A. S. Vysheslavitsev (1820–1889).

Domestic and foreign engravings depicting Circassians are presented in the catalogue of the 2022 *Legends of Three Centuries* exhibition by the private collector M. R. Tkhezeplov, who actively promotes

images of his people in global visual culture.

An overview of works created by Russian and Western artists in the Caucasus in the 19th and 20th centuries and their brief biographical notes are provided by M. G. Kuyok in a 2023 article (Kuyok, 2023). The author identifies the stages in the development of the Caucasus artistic image and describes the significant role of Prince G. G. Gagarin, author of the *Picturesque Caucasus*²³ and *Costumes of the Caucasus* albums²⁴.

Modern Western art criticism has also shown interest in Caucasian themes in Russian graphic art. In a 2023 article, A. M. Nedd examines the work of Prince G. G. Gagarin and V. F. Timm in the context of the foreign and domestic policies of the Russian Empire (Nedd, 2023, 77). The author analyses the image of Imam Shamil in the album and newspaper illustrations made by these two artists, referring to all the locals of the North Caucasus who resisted the Russian army, as Circassians, rather than to a specific people.

Thus, it can be concluded that portraits of Circassians in Russian graphic art, as well as graphic art on Caucasian themes in general, are currently virtually unstudied. The purpose of this article is to outline a historical interpretation of Circassians graphic portraits.

The work utilizes a comprehensive method based on:

²³ Le Caucase pittoresque. (1847). *Dessine d'après nature par Le Prince Gregoire Gagarine avec une introduction et un texte explicatif par le comte Ernest Stackelberg. Dedie a sa Majeste Imperiale Nicolas I-er Empereur de toutes les Russies*. Paris: Plon, 1847, 80 pl.

²⁴ Scènes, paysages, moeurs et costumes du Caucase dessinés d'après nature par le prince Grégoire Gagarine et accompagnés d'un texte par le comte Ernest Stackelberg. Paris: A. Hauser, 1845, 36 pl.

- a formal and stylistic analysis of graphic works: composition, line work, and tone;

- an attention to cultural and historical details necessary for understanding the authenticity of Circassian images.

However, the appeal to historical images in 19th-century art was rarely limited to purely aesthetic purposes. M. Mateo, analysing the role of the fictional monument in Spanish romantic nationalism, reveals a mechanism similar to that observed in Circassian portrait graphics. According to her, the art of that period often served multi-layered purposes: it not only recorded reality but also lent "it lent scientific credibility to a particular historical narrative of the nation; it helped construct and authenticate a national identity; it made that identity real; and it charted a pathway for the nation's future progress" (Mateo, 2023, 4). In this paradigm, the artist is not limited by the role of the creator – "the Spanish painter assumed the roles of artist, metaphorical architect, historian, and politician, blurring the boundaries between these domains" (Mateo, 2023, 4).

As M. Bowman notes in his review of Stephen Mooney's book on the analysis of American art criticism, Clement Greenberg's formalism, which has had a significant influence on global art criticism, should not be perceived as a set of rigid dogmas. On the contrary, Greenberg's key works demonstrate a complex dialectic, in which concepts such as *flatness* and *illusion* are in constant, fluid interaction. Bowman emphasizes that even in works such as *Collage*, Greenberg explores the *qualified defence of illusion*, and

his reflections on Cubism revolve around how works create *the illusion of forms in bas-relief* and achieve "sculptural effects through non-sculptural means" (Bowman, 2023, 4–5). This approach, which avoids a simplified understanding of artistic form, resonates with the authors' objectives in analysing graphic portraits of Circassians.

In Russian art, a special category of Circassians' graphic images is represented by the drawings from the *Caucasian Albums* of the 1840s–1850s, which belonged to A. V. and A. S. Vysheslavl'tsev and possess high artistic value, individual features, and a variety of imagery. The works were created in Kabarda and Eastern Circassia.

Fatma from Babukovsky Aul (Fig. 1) can be considered the first portrait of a Circassian woman in Russian art to date.



Figure 1. A. V. Vysheslavl'tsev or A. S. Vysheslavl'tsev (?). *Fatma*, a Kabardian woman from Babukovsky Aul. From the Vysheslavl'tsevs' *Caucasian Albums* Pencil, paper. 1840s–1850s. The State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg

The artist's commentary, written next to the drawing, enables a deeper understanding of the sitter's character: "...the Russians, the Cossacks, call her, by the sound of it, Katenka, and the Kabardins

follow suit. She is the wife of a nobleman, he was exiled to Siberia, and she, left a widow, earns a living in Pyatigorsk, where attends a course, sewing arkhaluks (traditional Caucasian male kaftans), knitting belts, and so on. Wooden stilts or clogs, which are worn on the street, are very comfortable against dirt and dampness" (Makhmudova, 2018, 90).

The artist masterfully conveys the varied textures of Fatima's clothing: dense cross-stitching in the depiction of the fur trim on the caftan, soft, sparse lines for the flowing drapes of the scarf, and parallel lines in the detailing of the metal belt and the braid on the cap.

Finding herself in a difficult situation, the noblewoman Fatma is forced to manage the family's affairs alone, which is reflected in the portrait. The Kabardian woman is depicted in an unsteady sit, as if she could lose her balance at any moment while standing on her buskins. At the same time, the woman confidently holds a rich belt with her right hand, as if trying to maintain composure in the current situation. Fatma's expression is distant, and her large, sad eyes are directed somewhere beyond the graphic page.

Fatma's portrait is rich in ethnographic details. Her footwear – wooden buskins, a privilege reserved for highborn Circassian nobility – attests to her noble origins. It is noteworthy that the artist describes their wearing in damp weather, whereas costume scholars consider buskins to be a purely class-specific attribute: noble Circassian women used these shoes for ceremonial purposes during receptions or dances (Kanokova et al., 2022, 118).

The Kabardian hairstyle is also typical of the period. Beginning in the 1840s, Circassian women used to cut their bangs and side strands, which particularly accentuated the whiteness of their skin and corrected the shape of their faces.

I. E. Repin, who created a graphic portrait of the Kabardian prince Tausultan Magometovich Nauryzov (also Tyu-sultan, Toghu-sultan) in 1888 (Fig. 2), deviates from ethnographic details to a greater degree than the author of the Vysheslavtsev album. The portrait was made during the artist's trip to the Caucasus with his son and most likely was a quickly made sketch.



Figure 2. I. E. Repin. Prince Nauryzov Toghu-Sultan. Pencil, paper. 1888. Collection of V. N. Baksheev (1862-1958). Moscow (New information..., 1969). Current location unknown

It is noteworthy that a Circassian officer named Khamzaev sit for I. M. Bunakov, the Chuguev artist, I. E. Repin's teacher painting. According to I. E. Repin's memoirs, the equestrian sat "for an entire summer day, without rest or food, like a heroic figure" (New information..., 1969, 32). Raised according to strict Caucasian customs, the officer, upon seeing himself in Bunakov's painting, displays an unusual reaction – he smiled

with childish joy and exclaimed "Horseman Khamzaev! No matter how much you feed the wolf, he still looks at the forest". Although the painting's condition and location remain unknown today, this biographical detail testifies to a new Circassian attitude toward sitting: Khamzaev expressed the highest possible approval that a man of his ethnic origin could afford.

I. E. himself Repin spoke highly of this portrait, believing that the portrait of the Circassian Khamzaev particularly revealed Holbein's influence on the work of I. M. Bunakov (New information..., 1969, 31). The teacher's embrace of Circassian imagery could have sparked a similar interest in his student, and in this light, it is interesting to examine the portrait of Prince T. M. Nauryzov, painted by I. E. Repin in 1888.

Prince T. M. Nauryzov's youth (1870–1929) coincided with the post-war decades, when the North Caucasian nobility was just beginning to recognize itself as part of a multinational empire. The Circassians who remained in their homeland continued the primary craft of their ancestors—the art of war. Tausultan, like his father, Prince Magomet Khatakshukovich (whose appearance is known from an engraving based on a drawing by the German artist T. Horschelt, Fig. 3), took an active part in the First World War as a member of the Kabardian Cavalry Regiment.



Figure 3. T. Horschelt (author of the drawing, 1859). Kabardian Prince Magomet Nauryzov. *Caucasian Campaign Drawings*. Paper, phototype. 1896.

In 1913, T. M. Nauryzov was also among the representatives of the locals of the Terek and Kuban regions at the celebration of the 300th anniversary of the reign of the House of Romanov. The prince would later become a deputy of the Nalchik Mountain Verbal Court and a member of the Society for the Dissemination of Education among the Kabardians of the Nalchik District (Babich et al., 2020, 154).

A half-length portrait by I. E. Repin depicts the young prince at the age of eighteen. The figure of T. M. Nauryzov is presented full-face, with his head in a three-quarter turn. On the right side of the drawing is an inscription in Russian with the name of the sitter: "Prince Nauryzov Tyu-Sultan", incorrectly rendered in the 1969 collection of articles and letters, "New about Repin", as "Prince Nauryzov Togu-Sultan"²⁵.

In terms of the time of its creation, the work can be dated to the heyday of I. E. Repin's creative work (1880–1890),

²⁵ New information about Repin. (I. A. Brodsky, V. N. Moskvinov, Comps. & Eds.). Leningrad: Khudozhnik RSFSR, 1969. (In Russian)

when his graphic work was dominated by a linear approach with a light and dynamic artistic style (Skorobogacheva, 2015, 92–93). The artist achieves a sense of movement by using the opposing directions of the youth's head and body, as if the prince had suddenly turned toward something beyond the graphic sheet.

The artist pays more attention to the prince's facial features than to the details of his clothing and weaponry. The Circassian coat, cartridge belts, and dagger are drawn quickly, even cursorily—with just a few strokes and no tonal detail. This does not detract from the prince's well-proportioned figure: the contrast between his broad shoulders and slender waist.

In contrast, I. E. Repin's depiction of his subject's facial features is much more detailed: an open forehead, thick eyebrows, eyes with drooping outer corners, a large, straight-bridged nose, a long, slightly cleft chin, and barely visible moustache and stubble. For the first time, the image of a Circassian was reflected in the prism of high Russian realism, when the artist creates a portrait of a highlander, rather than his exotic costume and weapons.

Researcher of Repin's works, G. Mardilovich, analysing Repin's famous painting *The Unexpected* notes the dual characteristic of the artist during this period: "On the one hand, this canvas has been lauded as the quintessential work of Russian realism... there is a certain discomfort in the contrast between the dark-clad exile standing in that doorway and his family's sunlit room with its vibrant blue and violet wallpaper. One

is struck by the brightness, colours, and by how Repin's canvas is painted... Repin seems to have given equal weight to the narrative as to his mark-making in producing this work" (Mardilovich, Taroutina, 2020, 50)

Conclusion

Summarizing the material under study, some of which have never been studied before, we have come to the following conclusions:

- Portraits of Circassians in 19th-century Russian art are unique and quite rare for a number of historical and political reasons;

- Their availability, both to the general public and to critics, dates back only to the 1840s, which largely explains the fragmentary nature of their study;

- Based on the materials uncovered, we have established that both renowned artists (I. E. Repin) and those relegated to the background (A. V. and A. S. Vysheslavtsev) depicted Circassians; these works play a significant role in their oeuvre, yet remain under-represented in art criticism. Researcher D. Singh, analysing similar processes in the historiography of Indian art, emphasizes the importance of studying such *selective processes* in art criticism. As the author writes: "German-speaking art historians presented a new, revisionist take on Indian art history by ascribing equal importance to the different legacies of Indian art". They circumvented the impasse between, on the one hand, colonial writing on art... and, on the other hand, the emergence at the beginning of the twentieth century of so-called

nationalist art historians... German-speaking exiles presented, instead, an inclusive take on Indian art that emphasized both its Hindu and Islamic legacies" (Singh, 2017, 395). In this regard, graphic portraits of the 19th century, which captured the Circassians in the period preceding large-scale changes in their identity, acquire special value. Thus,

beginning in the 1840s, Russian artists began to show interest in not only the general appearance of the Circassian people, but also in their individual representatives, which has been revealed in this study and which undoubtedly requires a more detailed and lengthy study.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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